

## The Abomination of Desolation (3)

We continue this month our answer to the question: “I’ve been told that the phrase, “abomination of desolation” in Matthew 24:15 refers to the Antichrist. Is this true, and if it is, what proof is there in Scripture? Also, if the phrase refers to the Antichrist, why is this name used for him in Matthew 24?”

Matthew 24:15, 16 reads: “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) then let them which be in Judea flee unto the mountains...”

We have seen that the abomination of desolation was revealed first of all, near the time of Daniel, in Antiochus Epiphanes, the Syrian King who desecrated the temple and caused the worship of God there to cease for time during the four hundred years between Malachi and Christ. It was the idolatrous worship that Antiochus established in place of the true worship of God and which ended the daily sacrifice for a time. To this Daniel refers in chapter 11:31.

That abomination of desolation was further revealed in the desecration of the temple by the Romans in 70 A.D. under the general and future emperor, Titus. Then the worship of God in the temple ceased altogether and the idolatrous worship of the Emperor was promoted in its place. To this Jesus refers in Matthew 24:13, 34 when He tells the disciples that *they* would see this abomination and speaks of His own generation not passing until these things were fulfilled.

However, the abomination will be fulfilled again in the Antichrist, who will set up the worship of himself in place of the true worship of God and leave the holy place, God’s church, desolate. Of this Matthew 24 hints when it connects the abomination of desolation and the persecution that results from it with the darkening of the sun and moon and the falling of the stars (vs. 29f). A comparison of Daniel 11:36, one of the first passages to speak of this abomination, and II Thessalonians 2:3 confirms that the “man of sin” and the abomination of desolation are one and the same.

Even this, however, does not exhaust Daniel’s prophecies. Since the abomination has to do with false worship and idolatry, especially the idolatry of man worshipping himself in the place of God, and since this always desolates and destroys the true worship of God, there is a fulfilment of Daniel’s prophecies throughout the New Testament.

The abomination that makes desolate is seen in all false doctrines that make man the master of his own fate and deny the sovereignty of God. The rise of Pelagianism and Arminianism and free-willism and their persistence in the church are part of the revelation of Daniel’s abomination. These teachings are all a form of idolatry, in that they set man in the place of God, making his will supreme. Such teaching always detracts from and ultimately destroys the worship of God, for a God who depends on man cannot really be worshipped.

All cults and groups within the Christian church that exalt a man, whether it be the pope or some charismatic leader set up the abomination that makes desolate. When men and women become followers of a man, then the worship of God begins fade away. Whenever they listen to a man and pay no heed to the Scriptures, this abomination is set up once again in the holy place. Wherever God is forgotten and the inventions of men set up in the place of Biblical worship, then we see what the Jews saw in the years before the coming of Christ and in the days of the destruction of the temple and what many will see just before the world ends.

May that abomination never be set up among us.

*R. Hanko*