

The Abomination in the Temple

When speaking of the abomination in Matthew 24, Jesus makes two references to a single prophecy in Daniel. The first one is Daniel 11:31; . . . *they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate*. The second passage Jesus draws from this prophecy is found in Daniel 12:1, where the angel describes a tribulation such as never was. In this prophecy mentioned in Daniel chapters 11 and 12, an angel describes these events in an uninterrupted monolog running from chapter 11 and ends in chapter 12 verse 3.

Then in verse 4 till the end of chapter 12, the angel provides details about the timing of the abomination being placed in the temple and the great tribulation. To preserve the monolog's continuity, it may have been better if the chapter break between chapters 11 and 12 was placed after verse 3 of chapter 12. As lengthy and complex as chapter 11 is, the angel emphasizes only one verse in chapter 11 - verse 31 whose content is restated in chapter 12 verse 11. These two verses read as follows:

Daniel 11:31 . . . *they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.*

Daniel 12:11 *And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.*

These passages describe the same order of events: the daily sacrifice is removed from the temple and the abomination is set in its place. Jesus connects these events with the great tribulation spoken of in Daniel 12:1. Jesus says the placement of abomination in the temple indicates that the great tribulation has begun and that they should flee Judah. Matthew 24:15-22 says, *When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place . . . Then let them which be in Judaea flee . . . For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

Jesus refers to only two events in the prophecy of Daniel chapters 11 and 12, the abomination set in the temple (Daniel 11:31) and the great tribulation (Daniel 12:1). The abomination in the temple not only signals the beginning of the great tribulation but is also, in my opinion, the reason the temple is made desolate.

Matthew 24:15-22: *When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place . . . Then let them which be in Judaea flee . . . For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened.*

Israel's worship of the golden calf during Moses' day I believe is parallel to Israel's worship of the abomination that Jesus refers to. This golden calf provokes God to say to Moses, *I will destroy them and make of you a great nation*. This is similar to the time when Israel murmured against God and Moses. God then sent a plague in the camp of Israel which was stopped when Aaron offered incense in the camp; it says that Aaron stood between the living and the dead. Similarly, I believe the elect are a sweat saver by stopping the great tribulation as spoken of in Matthew 24.

I believe the abomination which makes desolate and the great tribulation is also spoken of in Daniel chapter 9 and is once again placed in the context of the temple. In verse 27 of the King James version, we read: he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations, he shall make it desolate . . . The phrase "abominations he shall make it desolate" has been translated from two Hebrew words. These words appear together in two other places in the Old Testament, in Daniel 11:31 and Daniel 12:11. The NIV translation of Daniel 9:27 reads: *"he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation"*.

When Daniel 9:27 says *"he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease"* I believe that the angel is here referring to the taking of the daily sacrifice from the temple and replacing it with the abomination which makes desolate. When Daniel 9:27 says *"that determined shall be poured upon the desolate"*, the angel speaks of the great tribulation referred to in Daniel 12:1. I believe verse 26 also speaks of the great tribulation: *"the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city (Jerusalem) and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood"*. As we can see, Daniel 9:26 and 27 are consistent with Daniel 11:31, 12:1, and 12:11, the abomination which makes desolate is set in the temple in place of the daily sacrifice. After this, the temple is made desolate in a tribulation that is described as like a flood.

At the beginning of verse 27 in chapter 9, it says *"And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease"*. In verse 24 the angel tells Daniel how to understand Jeremiah's 70-year

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prophecy. He tells him that 70 years means 70 weeks of years. Seventy prophetic years would be equal to 490 calendar years. In verse 27, it says "he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week."

One week of the 490 years would be 7 years, "in the middle of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." This means that the daily sacrifice will be taken from the temple and the abomination set in its place for the last half of the 7 years, which comes to 3½ years. Daniel 12:7 confirms that 3½ years will be the length of the great tribulation; . . . *How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? . . . it shall be for a time, times, and a half* (3½ years); *and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.* The scattering of the holy people's power takes place when the abomination is placed in the temple. It is this placement that scatters the power of the holy people.

Daniel 7:25 speaks of the same period, "And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until time times and the dividing of time (3½)". When this passage mentions the wearing out of the saints, it refers to what Daniel 12:7 calls the scattering of the power of the holy people. Then, when it says; changing times and laws, I believe it refers to changing temple procedures by setting the abomination in the place of the daily sacrifice. All this happens when the city and the sanctuary are handed over to the gentiles for 3½ years.

The prophecy in Isaiah 4:3,4 explains the same tribulation period, *and it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. These holy ones I believe are the elect for whom those days are cut short, and are those described as the stars who shine and lead many to righteousness in Daniel 12:2,3 and those who are sent to the nations in Isa 66:19 and bring many back to Zion.*

Ezekiel chapter 8 explains the state of Israel's temple just before the army of Nebuchadnezzar destroys it. What Ezekiel sees follows the pattern of Israel's worship of the gold calf at Mount Sinai. In Ezekiel 8, the abomination is described as the image which provoketh to jealousy and as we saw in Daniel 11:31, the abomination is placed in the temple, which causes God to give Jerusalem into the hand of the gentiles. This tribulation begins in Ezekiel chapters 24:2,24-27 when Ezekiel comes to know that Jerusalem is under siege. He then loses his ability to speak. In chapter 33: 21,22, when Ezekiel hears the city is destroyed, he is no longer dumb.

His inability to speak during the siege describes a period when the sun, the moon, and the stars are prophetically dark. When no prophetic words are heard from Ezekiel's mouth, there is silence in heaven. This would be like the time when king Saul inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him - neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Saul then consults the witch of Endor, 1 Samuel 28:6,7, Ezekiel 32:7-9 Joel 2:10,11 Isa 13:10,11 Micah 3:6,7 Amos 5:18-20.

In another helpful passage in Ezekiel 8, God sends men with swords to slay those who were not marked by the man with the writer's inkhorn; this would parallel the Levites who Moses sent into the camp of Israel to slay those who worshiped the gold calf. The return of Moses would be like Michael standing up. Moses then grinds up the calf and makes Israel drink of it. I believe this parallels the destruction of the temple in 70 AD.

I believe there is a reason the placement of the abomination in the temple is related to the great tribulation. We might think of Israel's daily sacrifice as a great barrier like a dam that holds back a flood of ungodly powers. Once the abomination is placed in the temple, the hedge that God has placed around Israel is removed. As a result, the dam breaks and the flood begins. I believe we can compare this to the time when Samson's hair was shaved; he awoke to find that his power was gone. Even though the great tribulation brings an end to the temple, the acceptance of the elect transfers God's favor to the church just as the spirit of God departed from King Saul and came upon David from that day onward. In Daniel 9:24, both the final punishment of Jerusalem and the transfer of power (to the elect) are spoken of as making reconciliation for Israel's sins and anointing the most holy.

In Matthew 23:35-37, Jesus also refers to the same great tribulation when he says God will reconcile all the righteous blood shed upon the earth. In Matthew 24:29,30, Jesus again speaks of the great tribulation and immediately after this we see the transfer of favor to the elect when the sign of the son of man appears in heaven.

Briefly stated, I believe it can be understood that the abomination being set in the temple in place of the daily sacrifice brings a 3½ year tribulation. This causes the desolation of the temple in Jerusalem and brings forth an elect class who gain God's acceptance, which, in turn, brings an end to the tribulation and a transfer of favor to the elect when the sign of the son of man is seen in heaven.