

4. THE ABOMINATION THAT CAUSES DESOLATION

As the world's history draws to a climax, there will be war in the heavenly realm, and Satan and his angels will be ejected and cast down to Earth. Satan will pursue God's people Israel in an effort to destroy her, because Israel and Jerusalem are prophesied to be the center of God's earthly kingdom. Israel will be protected in the wilderness for 3 ½ years, and Satan will then wage war against the Church, those who keep God's commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus (Rev 12:13-17).

❖ **Broken treaty—the Abomination that causes Desolation**

After making a treaty with Israel for seven years and sanctioning the building of a temple at Jerusalem, the Antichrist breaks the treaty at the midpoint, puts an end to sacrifice and offering to God, and sets himself up in the temple proclaiming himself to be God. The Abomination that causes Desolation is an event of such importance that it is referred to ten times in five books of the Bible: (Dan 9:27, 11:31, 12:11, Mt 24:15-16, Mk 13:14, 2 Thess 2:4, Rev 13:14, 14:9, 19:10, 20:4).

What is involved in this daring act testified to by Daniel, Jesus, Paul, and John?

1. God has a plan for his people Israel.
2. A temple will be built in Jerusalem before Jesus' return.
3. War will break out in heaven resulting in Satan's ejection. Satan, who leads the whole world astray, will be cast down to Earth with his demons.
4. He'll immediately empower the beast, the final world empire, by giving it his power, throne (control over people), and great authority.

5. An idol of the Antichrist is set up in the temple 3 ½ years before Jesus returns.
6. Israel is given a place of refuge in the wilderness for 3 ½ years.
7. The Antichrist wages war against Christians for 3 ½ years.

Daniel 7

The first nine verses describe Daniel's dream in which he saw four ferocious beasts arise from the ocean symbolizing the turbulent nations. His emphasis is on the fourth, a terrifying, and powerful beast with metal weapons that crush and devour its victims. It has ten horns, three of which will be uprooted by a little horn, human and arrogant.

The heavenly court sits and the little horn is destroyed and thrown into hell. Then Daniel sees a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He is presented to God, the Ancient of Days, who grants him sovereignty over all nations, and his kingdom lasts forever.

Daniel asks an angel for the interpretation of his dream. He was told that the beasts are kings and their empires, but the saints of the high places will inherit the kingdom and possess it forever. The little horn will wage war against them and defeat them, but God will come and pronounce judgment in their favor, and they will inherit the kingdom.

The fourth kingdom is different from previous kingdoms. It'll envelop the whole world, trampling it down and crushing it and will have ten contemporaneous kings. Three of them will be overthrown by the little horn. This new ruler will oppose God, oppress the saints, and try to change times and laws which are God's prerogative. He'll oppress the saints for 3 ½ years. The divine court will sit and the power of this man of lawlessness will be taken from him. Then the sovereignty of all the kingdoms on earth will be given to the saints. Their kingdom is everlasting, and all rulers will serve and obey them.

The four kingdoms are identical to those of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. The 3 1/2 years are described in Daniel and Matthew as a time of great distress unequaled from the beginning of the world (Dan 12:1, Mt 24:21), and by an angel as the

Great Tribulation (Rev 7:14) that occurs immediately before Jesus' return. Jesus used the words 'son of man' as a Messianic title for himself. The saints of the high places are the resurrected Church who will possess the kingdom and reign with Christ for a thousand years. Daniel is the only OT prophet who prophesies about the NT church, calling them the saints of the high places.

Daniel 8:13, 9:27, 11:31, 12:11

The 'Abomination that causes Desolation' is mentioned four times in Daniel. The word 'abomination' is often associated with idols, while 'desolation' can also mean horror. The meaning of the phrase then, is an act of idolatry that causes horror and desolation. It is an act of rebellion (Dan 8:13), which involves the surrender of the temple and its precincts, and the trampling down of God's people (Dan 8:13). Offerings and sacrifices to the Lord are abolished as an idol is set up in God's temple in Jerusalem (9:27). Those who have forsaken God's covenant with wicked behavior will be corrupted by false promises, but those who know God will firmly resist him. The perpetrator is the king of the North (Dan 11:28), the Antichrist. He vents his fury against the holy covenant (Mosaic religion) and shows favor to apostate Jews. The abomination that causes desolation is followed by 1290 days (3 1/2 years plus one month) when Jesus returns, and the Antichrist is killed. It takes another 45 days for the temple to be reconsecrated (Dan 12:11).

Many interpreters think that Daniel's prophecies were fulfilled by Antiochus Epiphanes in the second century BC when he sacrificed a pig on the temple altar but Gabriel told Daniel to understand that the vision concerns the time of the end, ... it concerns the distant future (Dan 8:17-19, 26).

Matthew 24

Jesus' comments about the sign of his coming and the end of the age are based on Daniel's dream. His comments relate to both Israel and the Church. He said many Christians will be persecuted and put to death and hated by all nations because of him. Many will turn away from the faith and betray and hate one another. The love of most will grow cold but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. The gospel

of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations and then the end will come. At the end of the age, during the time of great distress unequaled from the beginning of the world, the sun and moon will be darkened, and the Son of Man will appear, coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. He'll gather his elect (the resurrected Church) from all over the world. He alludes to Israel and a prophecy in Zechariah 12 which says that at Jesus' return, the land of Israel will mourn and "they'll look on me, the one they have pierced."

Jesus' words support a future fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy. When talking to his disciples about the end of the age he said: When you see standing in the holy place the Abomination that causes Desolation, spoken about by the prophet Daniel – let the reader understand – then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. There will be great distress unequaled from the beginning of the world until then, and never to be equaled again (Mt 24:15-21). He goes on to talk about his return and says: This generation (that sees all these things) will not pass away until all these things have happened.

2 Thessalonians 2

Paul's teaching concerns the Church at the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him. He says it won't happen until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, thus ruling out a pretribulation rapture. The man of lawlessness, described by Daniel as the little horn and by John as the Antichrist (1 John 2:18), will set himself up in God's temple in Jerusalem, proclaiming himself to be God. It presupposes a temple being built in Jerusalem (Mt 24:15, Dan 9:27, 2 Thess 2:4). Paul says: He sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. Satanically inspired and empowered, he will deceive those who are perishing with powerful acts and miracles. They are deluded and believe the lie because they have not accepted the truth but rather delighted in wickedness.

Revelation 13

Satan is the power behind the horrific end-of-age events. He brought evil into the world in the Garden of Eden and his evil reign comes to a climax at Jesus' return. He works through the beast that has ten horns

and its evil leader, the man of lawlessness. Satan gives him his power, his throne, and great authority. The Antichrist has a fatal wound that has healed, and the whole world follows him in wonder and worships him. He blasphemes God and slanders his name, his dwelling place, and those who live in heaven. He is permitted to wage war against the Church and to conquer them, believers from every tribe, people, language, and nation. This calls for faithfulness and endurance on the part of God's people who remain on earth during this time of great distress. This is not God's wrath being poured out on believers, it is the wrath of man. The Antichrist is supported by the False Prophet who promotes his worship. He performs miraculous signs like causing fire to come down from the sky. He orders an image of the Antichrist to be set up in the temple at Jerusalem and gives breath to it so that it can speak. Those who refuse to worship it are killed. This is the Abomination that causes Desolation, especially for the saints because everyone must receive the mark of the beast on their right hands or foreheads and worship the Antichrist. Without the mark, they cannot buy or sell.

When the sixth angel pours out his bowl of God's wrath on the Euphrates River in Iraq, demonic spirits perform signs, and Satan, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet gather the world leaders for battle on the great day of God Almighty, the battle of Armageddon in Israel. An army of 200 million is released from central and northern Asia and a third of mankind is killed in the ensuing battle. When Jesus returns, he strikes down these nations with the breath of his mouth and the splendor of his coming, and the Antichrist and False Prophet are captured and thrown alive into hell.

It is at Jesus' coming that the saints are resurrected. They'll rule the world with Christ for a thousand years in their supernatural resurrection bodies from their home in New Jerusalem.