

Abomination of Desolation

In Matthew 24:15-20, our Lord Himself spoke of the “abomination of desolation.” However, first let us note the different references to this idol: there are actually two:

1. This one was of Zeus Olympus and was set up in the Holy of Holies by Antiochus Epiphanes. It is referred to in Daniel 11:31.
2. This one will be the idol representing the king of the West during the Tribulation. It, too, will be set up in the Temple in the Holy of Holies. It is referred to in Daniel 9:27, Daniel 12:11, and in Matthew 24:15ff. It is also referred to 5 times in Revelation by the Apostle John.

Now, Matthew 24:15-20 reads as follows: “So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel – let the reader understand – then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath.”

The reference to Judea refers to Israel in the time of the Tribulation. And “the mountains” to which they are to flee are the higher mountains in Edom, Moab and Ammon; these mountains are named in Daniel 11:41. Once the idol goes up in the Temple, and it will in the middle of the Tribulation (3 and one-half years), then the believing Jews are to immediately flee to the mountains.

“The one on the roof” refers to the person working in his/her garden; this person is not to stop and come down from the roof to collect items from his house. “The one in the field” is the person at work; this one must not go back to his/her desk to get their jacket. They must leave immediately. Hesitation will get them killed. And since pregnant women and mothers with small children move more

slowly than those without, these women are to be doubly alert.

And then our Lord commands them to pray for the removal of obstacles to traveling. They are to pray that their departure does not occur during bad weather (winter) or during a holiday (sabbath). Because traveling through mountains during storms is extremely hazardous, and traffic jams are common on holidays.

Matthew 24:21 then goes on to say, “For at that time (from the idol going up in the Temple till the end of the Tribulation) there will be great, great tribulation (adversity), such as has not occurred from the beginning of history, until this time; no, nor ever will occur.” Here, then, our Lord states that the Tribulation will be a time of complete and total lawlessness, violence, crime, rape, murder, pilage, plunder; mankind will be animalistic.

Matthew 24:22 “And unless those days had been cut short (and they are), no flesh would have been delivered; but because of the excellent ones (the tribulational believers) those days will be cut short.”

God shortens the Tribulation only because of spiritually mature believers existing at that future time. This is the “remnant according to grace.”

Matthew 24:23 “At that time, if anyone communicates (lies and propaganda) to you (those believers now hiding in the mountains), ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it.” Here, our Lord warns the future believers of Jerusalem that propaganda will be disseminated to try to entice them out of the mountains. They must remain true to the doctrines of Christ, and the true doctrine is that darkness will cover the earth as He returns, and “every eye will see” Him, including theirs. If they fall for the trick, they will return and be killed.

Matthew 24:24 “For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect – if that were possible.” The “false Christs” refer to political leaders

of that time; and the “false prophets” refer to religious leaders.

Matthew 24:25 “See, I have told you ahead of time.” The future generations alive during the Tribulation have the doctrines of Christ in written form, as do we. If they study Scripture, they will know what to do, when to do it, and will be able to discern the lies from the truth. They will also know the circumstances of the Second Advent.

Matthew 24:27 “For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.” Just as lightning can be

seen by all during a storm, so will be the Second Coming of our Lord, Rev. 1:7. And just as lightning travels at great speeds, so the Second Advent will come rapidly, Rev. 22:7,12. Thus, as lightning can alarm the uneducated, so Christ’s return alarms unbelievers, Rev. 6:15-16. And the lightning that precedes a storm warns of what is to come; so also will lightning warn of coming judgment and death at our Lord’s return. ¹

The title ‘Son of Man,’ of course, is the title of our Lord in His hypostatic union, which is the essence of true God and the essence of true man united in one Being.

¹An extrapolation from the scholarship of Robert Thieme.