

# Abomination of Desolation

<sup>24:15</sup> "So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand)..."

Matthew 24:15

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## Nicolae Carpathia?

IN THE 9<sup>TH</sup> BOOK of the Left Behind series, *Desecration*, “Amidst the glitzy fanfare of a new world regime, control is unraveling for self-proclaimed god and Global Community potentate Nicolae Carpathia. It’s 25 days into the Great Tribulation, and Carpathia evinces an increasing fondness for gruesome killing. He’s thrown into turmoil when the first two ‘bowls of wrath’ from the biblical book Revelation are poured out on the world. Water turns into blood, and those who are branded with the mark of loyalty become covered with loathsome sores. When Carpathia commits the ultimate act of desecration against the Judeo-Christian

community, chaos ensues.” So wrote **Cindy Crosby** in her summary of the book.<sup>1</sup>

**What is this ultimate act of desecration?** In the book, the third Jewish Temple has been rebuilt. Carpathia [a.k.a. the Antichrist] has raised himself from the dead now he seeks to desecrate the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem by mocking God and Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem just a week before he was crucified. Carpathia rides into the city on a large pig, thus making fun of the journey Jesus made. Then he sacrifices said pig in the temple and smears blood all over the Holy of Holies. This is supposedly all done in fulfillment of Daniel’s “**abomination of desolation**,” which is talked about in three places in Daniel (**9:27; 11:31; 12:11**).

The famous (or infamous) “**Abomination of Desolation**” is **the subject of the sermon** this morning. As Left Behind shows, there is a lot of speculation about this event today and many people are confused about what this thing is, why and how it is important for them to understand it today. I want to answer these questions today and give you a biblical understanding that will teach you about God, his covenantal faithfulness (to judge), and what that means for you.

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<sup>1</sup> The following are also summaries of the book taken from Amazon.com.

There is a relationship that Jesus makes in the **Olivet Discourse** between Daniel's abomination and (what for Him is) a future abomination. In Matthew Jesus says, "When you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand)..." (**Matt 24:15**). He then goes on to describe what the discerning reader is supposed to do. There are two ways to understand what Jesus is talking about. The first is to **study the book of Daniel** and the second is to **compare the synoptic Gospel's** treatment of this passage. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all discuss Jesus' Olivet Discourse, but they are not all identical. A comparison of the three is very informative and in fact gives you the definitive interpretation of Jesus' words.

## 70 Weeks

The first thing I want to do is look at Daniel. Of the three references in Daniel to the abomination of desolation, **Daniel 9:27** is the first. Yet, it is the most difficult to interpret. So I want to spend some time looking at the entire chapter.

In the first year of **Darius the Mede**<sup>2</sup> (**Dan 9:1**) Daniel was reading the book of Jeremiah and discovered that 70 years of captivity were prophesied for the Jews (**9:2**). Around the year **605 BC**, Daniel had been carried off into Babylon as a captive in one of the many waves of captivity that came upon the Jews. Now it is around the year **539 BC**, almost seventy years later. Daniel is an old man. Babylon has fallen to the Persians. Now Daniel is greatly concerned that God remember his promises and end the captivity of Israel in a timely fashion.<sup>3</sup>

The next verses record one of the **great prayers of repentance** in the Bible. Daniel prays for himself and his people (**vs. 20**). In this prayer, Daniel calls upon God to remember his covenant [with Abraham] (**vs. 4**). It is not for Israel's sake that Daniel prays, because they are nothing but covenant breakers. Daniel is **concerned for God's great name** because God has become identified as the protecting God of Israel among the nations. If his word to Jeremiah does not come true, then he will become the laughing stock of all the gods.

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<sup>2</sup> Probably also known as Cyrus, king of Persia. See 2 Chron 36:21-22; Isa 44:28.

<sup>3</sup> See Meredith Kline, "Covenant of the Seventieth Week," [http://www.covopc.org/Kline/Covenant\\_70th\\_Week.html](http://www.covopc.org/Kline/Covenant_70th_Week.html)

Out of this prayer arises an other-worldly answer. The angel **Gabriel** comes to Daniel with a message (**vs. 21-27**). **Gabriel is an important figure** as I will mention later on. He says that **70 weeks** are decreed for the Jews and for Jerusalem. These weeks will see six things occur. They will **finish the transgression**. They will **put an end to sin**. They will **atone for iniquity**. They will **bring everlasting righteousness**. They will **seal up visions and prophecies**. They will **anoint a most holy place** (**vs. 24**). If you just take a moment to ponder the first thing that comes to your mind, you will quickly acknowledge that this must have something to do with the work of *Messiah*. Indeed, “**Messiah the Prince**” is explicitly named in **vs. 25** and **vs. 26**.

Now, these **seventy weeks** of Daniel’s are **divided up into three parts**. You see this in **vs. 25-26**. First there is a group of seven “7s”. Then there is a group of sixty-two “7s”. Finally, there is one last “7” which is split in half so that something important happens half way through the final “7”. You see the split in **vs. 27** when it says, “**for half of the week**.” **But what in the world is a “7”?** Why does Daniel talk about seven “**weeks**,” or sixty-two “**weeks**,” or one “**week?**”

# Jubilee

The answer to this is found in *Leviticus*. **Leviticus 25:1-4** for example describes Israel's mandate to observe Sabbath years of rest for the land. Remember, the number "seven" is fundamental to the Sabbath. For six years they may work. On the seventh, they must not sow or plow or do anything because this is a Sabbath *year* for the land. This 6+1 series of years makes up what we might call a "Sabbath year" which is like but not identical to a Sabbath day. A Sabbath year occurs every 7 years.

Something very special was supposed to happen at the end of seven Sabbath years, "seven sevens" or 49 regular years. This was to be a **year of jubilee** (**Lev 25:10**). In this year, everything was turned over. Property went back to original owners. Slaves were set free. Etc. In other words, it was the **year of freedom, the year of liberty**.

What is completely interesting about this very same section in *Leviticus* is that it talks about what will happen to the people if they do not give the land rest. If they commit this and other sins, then ***they will go into captivity***. God *will*

give the land its rest if he has to force the Jews out of it for a while. For, the land is his and Israel is but a steward and caretaker (**Lev 25:23**). Captivity, of course, is exactly what is in mind in **Daniel 9**. But there is more here, much more indeed!

**Leviticus 26:40ff** says that if the people will confess their sins after God has sent them to “**the land of their enemies**” (**Lev 26:44**), then he will not utterly destroy them. Nor will he break his covenant with them. He is the LORD their God. He will remember the covenant that he made and will bring them back to the land which he gave them. This is the covenant promise which Daniel so boldly sets God’s mind upon. This is why he confesses the sins of Israel. The seventy years of captivity followed by Daniel’s prayer of forgiveness followed by Gabriel’s announcement is the fulfillment of **Leviticus 25-26**.

So then, if we want to understand the meaning of seven years of sevens, for example, all we have to do is go back to Leviticus to interpret it. **Scripture interprets Scripture**. This is the fundamental rule of interpreting bible prophecy. The first seven “sevens” would be another way of talking about one jubilee year.

## Back to Daniel

**What about seventy sevens?** The common way of understanding this is to multiply 7 times 70. You come up with 490. Literally, that's 490 years that Gabriel's prophecy has in mind. However, these numbers are highly symbolic.<sup>4</sup> Seven years of seventy also makes up 10 Jubilee years. (Remember, we have a normal year [12 months], a Sabbath year [7 years], and now a jubilee year [49-50 years]). By breaking the "weeks" up into 7, 62, and 1 the angel places the emphasis on the idea of Jubilee, especially *the last* Jubilee. The two interpretations are roughly the same in time frame, but the emphasis is entirely different. One focuses upon a **calendar**, the other upon *theology*.

This whole chapter in Daniel 9 is about *theology*. God gave the land its Sabbath rests, in accordance with Leviticus. This is why he declared 70 years of captivity as **2 Chron 36:21** says, "To fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth

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<sup>4</sup> Seeing the 490 years as the key of the prophecy, many have tried to make the "countdown" begin a great deal of time after 539, when Cyrus issues the decree. Larkin, for example, puts it on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March, 445BC (Larkin, *Revelation*, p. 50). This is when Artaxerxes issued a decree to Nehemiah (Neh 2:1ff). Of course, these same literalists have to insert a gap of thousands of years between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> weeks in order to come up with the futuristic interpretation of Daniel 9 and Matthew 24. I prefer to see the 490 as incidental to the symbolic nature of the "sevens" and the Jubilee to which they point. Starting in 539 is therefore not a problem.



of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years” (cf. [Jer 25:11-12](#)).

The very next verse and the very last words of 2 Chronicles says, “Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: ‘Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the LORD his God be with him. Let him go up’” ([2 Chron 36:22-23](#)). Just so you get the point, the book of Ezra opens with the exact same words. Hundreds of years earlier God had spoken through the prophet Isaiah, “God says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose’; saying of Jerusalem, ‘She shall be built,’ and of the temple, ‘Your foundation shall be laid’” ([Isa 44:28](#)). Cyrus is an important figure in Gabriel’s prophecy.

*Jesus Christ, Not Antichrist*

Here is what you won't see unless you have a commentary by your side. **Darius the Mede is effectively Cyrus the Great.**<sup>5</sup> It is interesting that Daniel's vision took place the same year that Cyrus gave the command to rebuild the temple. Therefore, this is the beginning of the prophetic clock. At the end of 69 weeks would come “**an anointed one**” [*Mashiyach*] “**a prince**” (**Dan 9:25**) who will be “**cut off and have nothing**” (**26**). *He* will put an end to sin, *he* will atone for iniquity, *he* will bring in everlasting righteousness, *he* will seal up visions and prophecies, *he* will be anointed (**24**). *He* will make a “strong covenant” with many for one week. Half way through this week, *he* will put an end to sacrifice and offering (**27a**). Finally and most important for this sermon, ***he* will come on the wing of abominations** and shall make something desolate until the end is poured out on the desolate (**27b**).

The last half of **vs. 27** is the sticky point. **J.A. Montgomery** calls the history of this verse a **dismal swamp**

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<sup>5</sup> There are a number of suggestions as to the relationship between the two. Darius may have been a title of Cyrus. He may have been an uncle of Cyrus. He may have been a servant of Cyrus. It may be a misspelling of Cyrus. But effectively they all produce the same outcome: Darius and Cyrus do the same thing, they bring the Jews back to Israel and begin rebuilding the temple.

of interpretation.<sup>6</sup> Let us look at it again. I will read from the NKJV. “Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate.”<sup>7</sup> (The KJV and ASV read the same).

Let me stop and ask you who this person that we see in **Daniel 9:27b**? *Left Behind* makes it very clear that it is **Antichrist**. Antichrist makes a covenant with the Jews during the Great Tribulation and half way through it breaks his covenant by slaughtering the blood of a pig on the altar of a rebuilt temple during the future seven year Tribulation.

For your historical information, they take this from 1 Maccabees which describes the horrific events of Antiochus Epiphanes, king of the Greeks, who in 167 BC entered Jerusalem and slaughtered a pig on the altar in the temple, then forcing the priests to eat its unclean flesh or die. **1 Mac 1:54** calls this “**The abomination of desolation upon the altar.**” Futurists (premillenarians, Dispensationalists etc.) take this idea and apply the same thing to a future Antichrist

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<sup>6</sup> Ferguson, *Daniel*, 185.

<sup>7</sup> I reject modern interpretations of the last word as something like “the desolate one” (ESV, NAS, NIV, etc.). The reason will be made clear later.

and then remark that nothing like this seems to have happened since Antiochus (i.e. Titus is not recorded as having slaughtered a pig in the temple in 70 AD) and this is one reason why the temple must be rebuilt. Something that is rarely noticed here is how they basically interpret Daniel and Jesus through the lenses of the apocrypha!

However, they also have to do something quite **un-literal** in order to get this to work. They must **insert a gap** of some 2,000 years between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel, a gap that is nowhere to be found in the text. They rightly recognize that Christ came at the end of the 69<sup>th</sup> week, but then they say he postponed the 70<sup>th</sup> week because Israel rejected him. The 70 weeks only concern national Israel, not the church or anyone else. Therefore, they feel justified in placing time-gaps between words of prophecy. Thus, at least this part of Gabriel's prophecy is still future. Many even believe that the whole of **Daniel 9:24-27** is still future.<sup>8</sup>

*In the future*, God will finish the seventy weeks. The first sixty-nine have already occurred, but a 2,000-year gap will see the completion of the seventieth week. During this last week, which they call **The Great Tribulation**, God will once

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<sup>8</sup> Larkin writes that Israel has not yet made an end to her transgression, citing Rom 11:26-27. Therefore, this is about the Jews rather than Christ. The other five things in the chapter are likewise future events yet fulfilled.

more deal with the Jews and save many of them, though it will be a time of horrible persecution unequaled in world history. On this reading, all of the plagues of revelation, the bowls, the trumpets, the seals are read literally (or at least that's the way they would have us to think).

To see where this idea of the tribulation comes from, let me take you back to the Olivet Discourse. After talking about the abomination of desolation Jesus says, “flee to the mountains... leave your cloak... pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. For then there will be [A] great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be” (Matthew 24:16-21). You see, because Jesus attaches the abomination of desolation with Daniel 9, Dispensationalism attaches [the] Great Tribulation to the seventieth week of Gabriel's prophecy. Even though Jesus calls it “great tribulation” rather than “The Great Tribulation,” they still read this entire sermon as being in the not too distant future. They then write all kinds of fanciful novels which sell millions of copies and scare children and parents alike to death.

But my friends, I must be you to look at Daniel again. It is not Antichrist who puts an end to sacrifice in a future

covenant in a rebuilt temple. It is *Jesus Christ* in the *new covenant* in the *temple of his own body*! This is the correct interpretation. I must tell you about my Savior and all that he has done in fulfillment of this tremendous prophecy at the lips of the angel Gabriel. And please let me remind you that Gabriel only appears in two places in the entire bible. Here in Daniel 9 and at the birth of *Jesus Christ* in Luke 1. This is surely no accident. The arrival of Gabriel in Luke signals that Gabriel's prophecy is about to come true!

In my Lord's [passive] obedience *he broke sin's power* over God's people and so "finished transgression." **Romans 6:1-2**, "What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin." He also *took away sin's condemnation*. "If the many died by the trespass of the one man [Adam], how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! The gift of God... followed many trespasses and brought justification... The result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men... Through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous" (**Rom 5:12-19**).

My Lord atoned for iniquity, “Righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. All are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood... so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus” (Rom 3:21-26). As Kim Riddlebarger notes, “through these acts, Jesus Christ will take away all of the consequences of the curse.”<sup>9</sup>

By his [active] obedience Christ brought in everlasting righteousness through his perfect obedience as the final priest (Rom 5:19). He became the last great prophet, thus sealing up the need for an infinite number of future visions and prophecies. He was anointed the Messiah, king of Israel. In fact, Jesus takes up the scroll of Isaiah and begins reading from Isaiah 61:1 which says, “He anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives. To proclaim the *year of Jubilee!*”

Did you hear that? Jesus came to proclaim the final, great, eschatological *year of Jubilee!* In fact, this is the very first thing he tells us about his ministry. You see, his ministry begins the last of the seventy weeks. Or to put it

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<sup>9</sup> Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, p. 153.

another way, his ministry, which begins by certain reckoning 490 years after the temple is rebuilt, **begins the 10<sup>th</sup> and final year of Jubilee!** This is the final Jubilee that Gabriel predicted. The seventieth week is not future. It has already begun. And it is an unending Jubilee Sabbath, which you may enter into and rest eternally from your works if you will but have faith in Jesus Christ. In other words, the beginning of the 70th week ushers in the **Messianic Age.**<sup>10</sup> So all of this talk in Daniel 9 is focused from beginning to end, from Sabbath to Sabbath, from Jubilee to Jubilee, from Leviticus to 2 Chronicles, from Gabriel's prophecy to Daniel to Gabriel's announcement to Mary and Joseph upon Jesus Christ, not antichrist.

How repulsive, how twisted, how abhorrent, how *demonic* is it then to turn around and say that Daniel is talking about the Antichrist? **Kim Riddlebarger** makes the very important observation here, “**The failure to acknowledge the obvious covenantal context of the messianic covenant maker of verse 27, who confirms a covenant with many, leads dispensationalists to confuse Christ with antichrist. A more serious interpretive error is hard to imagine.**”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 153.



**Daniel 9:27a** says that the anointed one will make a strong covenant with many for one week. During this time he will be cut off and shall have nothing. He will put an end to sacrifice and offering. **To what does this refer?** The NT is always talking about this. Jesus is the mediator of a new covenant, with sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel (**Heb 12:24**). In a short while Jesus will tell his disciples, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you” (**Luke 22:20**).

His death put an end to sacrifice, **once for all** (**Heb 7:27; 9:12; 26; 10:10**). Therefore, listen carefully, *those sacrifices which continued to take place in the temple in Jerusalem after his once for all sacrifice are nothing but an abomination to the Lord* and his blessed Son who paid the price for sin with his own blood. I use that word abomination very intentionally. **Can anything be more profane than continuing to slaughter animals which can never take away sin after hearing that the Sin Offering himself came to do away with it forever?** In this way, I believe that the abomination that makes desolate begins with the very first Jewish animal sacrifice that occurred after the death of Messiah who was cut off for sin.

In **Daniel 9:27** there is a progression that takes place from the first abomination of desolation until the very end which is decreed is finally poured out. After the new covenant is confirmed in the blood of Jesus on the cross, which takes place approximately 3 ½ years (or half of seven) after Jesus' ministry begins, an abomination begins. This particular verse says it occurs “**on the wing of abominations.**” The wing refers to the temple. “Wing” (*kanap*) is literally and “extremity.” It could refer to the pinnacle of the temple. This is why the NIV supplies “of the temple” even though this doesn't appear in the Hebrew.

I do not believe the prophecy refers to some future pig-slaughtering in the temple, but to the temple itself. **The temple has become an abomination to God** and it must be destroyed. Why? Because the True Temple has come in the person of Jesus Christ (**John 1:14, 2:21**). After his ascension, his Church becomes God's temple on earth (**1 Cor 3:16, Eph 2:21** etc). Therefore, the physical temple in Jerusalem only represents that which is passing away. When animal sacrifices continue to be offered upon it after Messiah's completed work, it becomes a detestable thing to God. Notice, the word “desolate” has come up in Matthew 23:38

when Jesus is talking to the Pharisees. He says, “See, your house is left to you desolate.” And why? Because they have just completed their rejection of Jesus as their Messiah. Their trust is in the temple, not in the Messiah of the temple.

In Jeremiah’s day they said, “The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord” (Jer 7:4) too. But their trust was to be in the heavenly temple, not the physical type on earth. God’s spirit departed from the first temple in Ezekiel’s day. He does the same in at Pentecost as he comes now to indwell his people like a cloud.

Therefore, what Gabriel is saying is that the temple has become an abomination and therefore one will come to make it desolate. This, he says in Dan 9:27b continues until the consummation or the end which is determined or predestined to take place is completely poured out upon the desolate.

This last word has been a terrible problem for many people. Most modern translations say “the desolate one.” The older KJV, not biased by our contemporary futuristic obsessions, says “the desolate.” Either is grammatically acceptable. But the small change is all the difference in the world. If you pick up an ESV, NIV, NAS you will be

tempted to read it this way: “Someone comes to make an abomination of desolation and he will do so until the end is poured out upon *him*.” Since there is no end poured out upon Jesus after the cross, this becomes justification for seeing the Antichrist. But on the older reading, and the reading of *LXX*, it would be read this way: “The temple has become an abomination and it will continue to be so until the one who makes desolate has finished his predetermined work, that is, until the end is poured out upon *it*.” Him vs. It. That’s a big difference.

How do we know which is the better translation? Context. First Daniel, then the Gospels. **Daniel 9:26** says, “The people of the prince who is to come (that is Jesus) shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed.” What are desolations and destruction decreed upon? The city and the sanctuary; that is **Jerusalem** and the temple.

Who make them desolate? The people of the prince, that is the Jews by offering detestable sacrifices after the once-for-all sacrifice has been offered. But you could also read it another way. Who will destroy the city? The people of the

prince, that is his chosen instrument to carry out his wrath. This would then refer to the Roman Empire.

I have mentioned to you Cyrus. Cyrus was not a Jew. He was a Persian. Yet the Scripture calls him “my shepherd” who will “fulfill all my purpose” (Isa 44:28). As you heard earlier, Cyrus recognized this himself and this is one reason why he let the people return to rebuild their temple. In the same way, Rome could be viewed as God’s child, his agent of wrath to bring about final judgment upon national Israel for her rejection of Gabriel’s Messiah.

**Daniel 11:31** also refers to the abomination of desolation. It says, “Forces shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate.” While Antiochus became a blasphemous prototype of this, Jesus says it will occur in [his] future as well. This verse in Daniel makes it clear that it will be accompanied by a great army that will enter the city and profane the temple.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> I will not deal with **Daniel 12:11** which says “And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days.” This verse gives us some reason to believe that Jesus’ death actually *begins* the seventieth year. On this reading, 1,290 days is a symbolic way of referring to the destruction of the temple in 70 AD. The last 3 ½ years then refers to the 1,000 years of Revelation 20:3, which amillennialists call the realized millennium.

Now it is finally time to go to the NT. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all refer to these things. Let us look at **Matthew 24:15**. “So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand).” Mark is very similar, “When you see ‘the abomination that causes desolation’ standing where it does not belong – let the reader understand – then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains” (**Mark 13:14**). When Mark says in this verse, “Let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains,” he says the very same thing that Matthew says in the next verse (**Matt 24:16**), “Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”

This little phrase is actually very important. Luke has the same phrase in **Luke 21:21**. But what precedes Luke is very different from what we have read about in Matthew and Mark. Yet, at the same time, it is refreshingly familiar to what we have just been talking about. **Luke 21:20** says, “When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near.” Now, that is not very similar to Matthew or Mark except for the use of the word “desolation.” Yet, this key word is found in Daniel. Specifically, we see it in Gabriel’s prophecy of the

destruction of Jerusalem. Therefore, Luke confirms our interpretation that it is a thing which is made desolate at the end, not a person. “You know that Jerusalem’s desolation is near.” This is why I believe the modern translations are wrong in Daniel 9:27b.

Matthew and Mark probably also talk about this. They mention the abomination “standing in the holy place.” The word ‘place’ here is not the word for the Holy of Holies. There is no sign that Jesus is talking about some desecration taking place on the altar inside the temple. We must remember, this was to be a public sign that anyone could see. But I have no idea how anyone could see a pig being slaughtered inside the holy of holies in the temple. The word *place* may just as easily refer to the *holy city* of Jerusalem, which the armies of Rome did stand around and inside. In this way, Matthew is even closer to Luke than we might have suspected.

Dispensationalists actually admit that *Luke* is talking about the destruction of the temple in 70 AD. What they do not see is that *Luke is describing the abomination of desolation*. Luke is interpreting Matthew and Mark. There is a parallel going on here which is set off by the words, “let

the reader understand.” Basically Matthew is writing to Jews who know their OT well. When he says, “let the reader understand,” he is signaling that he is speaking in prophetic and therefore rather cryptic terms. But Luke, whose audience is the Hellenist Theophilus, speaks plainly. That’s why he doesn’t have to tell Theophilus to be careful to discern his meaning. When he says, “Jerusalem will be surrounded by armies,” it is perfectly clear what this means. When Jerusalem is surrounded by armies, this is the predetermined end for the now already spiritually desolate Jewish people who have not trusted in their Messiah. This is the abomination of desolation spoken of in **Daniel 11:31**.

It does not refer to some future antichrist who slaughters a pig in a rebuilt temple during the Great Tribulation. The disciples have asked Jesus a question which Jesus has said will be answered within their own lifetime. “When will the temple be destroyed?” Jesus says within a generation.

## Here and Now

Well, what does this mean for you today? That’s a good question. I believe we can discern several things. First, it means that you do not have to be seduced by profiteering



book publishers and modern-day false prophets. When Jesus says something, he means it. When Jesus predicts something, it comes true. Jerusalem, as we will see next time, was utterly destroyed in 70 AD by Titus. Not one stone was left of that second temple. Jesus was right. The skeptics who think he blew it are wrong. He may be trusted completely in all that he says.

God says that the quintessential mark of a god is that he knows the future. “I declare the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose’” (Isa 46:10). Has not the Lord Jesus proven himself to be the LORD of the future? This passage is not proof that we should not believe Jesus because he makes mistakes. It is proof that he is the only God of the universe.

But in the destruction of the temple, has he not also proven himself to be the *Lord of the covenant*? God swore that if the people forsook him, that he would forsake them. Psalm 89:31 says, “If they violate my statutes and do not keep my commandments, then I will punish their transgression with the rod and their iniquity with stripes.” Certainly, the greatest commandment is to love the LORD

you God by believing in his Son! This, most Jews never came to do. So throughout this gospel of Matthew, Jesus has been telling them that their days are at an end. He says it with great sorrow, for these are his own people. Nevertheless, they rejected him on the whole, and so he now predicts their final rejection as a nation. Our God keeps his promises, be they promises of blessing or curses.

But even the destruction of the temple was done in some ways for the good of the Jews. God does not want people trusting in false things, even if they were once used for good purposes. The Jewish faith was almost entirely wrapped up in the temple. But once it is gone, what will become of them? I believe the message to both Jew and Greek is that God wants you to trust in the Son.

He is the true temple. His temple is not profane, but as Daniel predicted it has been anointed. For this reason Jesus says, “**For their sakes I sanctify Myself**” (**John 17:19**). In this temple, Christ cut a new covenant. It is superior to the old covenant, because the obedience to this covenant comes from Christ rather than you. Christ obeyed the terms of the covenant perfectly and offers you the righteousness that he earned if you will trust in his works rather than your own.

If you come to Christ, you will become a true Jew (**Rom 2:28-29**), true Israel (**Gal 6:16**), Israel born of God rather than the flesh (**Rom 9, John 1:12-13; 8:39**). In this way, God will keep his covenant with the Jews, never to finally forsake them or remove his steadfast love forever. This is the great hope of Christ's Church.

Future speculations only cause you to worry and fear and be anxious. But in Christ you may be reassured, at peace and untroubled. He came to set the captives free. His ministry brings to the world the year of Jubilee. Enter into his Sabbath rest by faith in the work of the Son of God who was cut off for the many. And come into the temple of Christ and of the church of the firstborn which may never be profaned by any abominable act of man.