

Abomination of Desolation

Daniel 9:24-27

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Provocative Question: What is this Great Tribulation that Jesus warned us about?

What is the Abomination of Desolation?

Jesus warned us about it in His Olivet Discourse:

Matt 24:15-16 – “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

It is an event that is an abomination or detestable to God and His followers that causes a place (Jerusalem & Judea) to be desolate or devoid of people.

What is the holy place?

It has to be a reference to the temple in Jerusalem (so, yet future).

Why don’t we hear more from the pulpit on the Abomination of Desolation?

- It is erroneously assumed that essentially all end-time prophecy was fulfilled by 70 A.D. (preterism)
- It is Bible prophecy; not considered relevant to the here and now (...and we’re in the Age of Scoffers)
- Even among orthodox pre-trib, premillennialists it is not considered all-that significant because the church will not be here.

Why is the doctrine of the Abomination of Desolation important?

- Jesus spoke of it... everything Jesus said has relevance for us.
- It is a key doctrine for understanding end time events... get the Abomination of Desolation wrong and your eschatology will be all mess up.
- As we see the birth-pangs of the Tribulation, it gives us a sense of urgency to get on with what God is calling us to do.

Daniel refers to the Abomination of Desolation several times which we’ll look at... Dan 8:11, 9:27, 11:31, & 12:11. But the key one that reveals so much important info about the Lord’s return is found in Dan 9...

Daniel 9:24-27

²⁴ “Seventy weeks are determined
For your people and for your holy city,

*To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins,
To make reconciliation for iniquity,
To bring in everlasting righteousness,
To seal up vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the Most Holy.*

²⁵ “Know therefore and understand,
That from the going forth of the command
To restore and build Jerusalem
Until Messiah the Prince,
There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;
The street shall be built again, and the wall,
Even in troublesome times.

²⁶ “And after the sixty-two weeks
Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;
And the people of the prince who is to come
Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.
The end of it shall be with a flood,
And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

²⁷ 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.”

V24 – What is the 70 weeks the angel Gabriel spoke of when he appeared to Daniel to explain his vision?

In context, this has to be weeks of years (seven-year periods)... $70 \times 7 = 490$ years.

Who are “your people” and “your holy city”?

That would be Daniel’s people, the people of Israel; their holy city was Jerusalem.

What was the state of Israel and Jerusalem when Daniel received this revelation (see Dan 9:1, first year of Darius ~539 B.C.)?

The people were in captivity in Babylon and Jerusalem along with the temple there were in ruins.

What things would happen during these 490 years?

- To finish the transgression,
- To make an end of sins,
- To make reconciliation for iniquity,
- To bring in everlasting righteousness,
- To seal up vision and prophecy,
- And to anoint the Most Holy.

Ephesians 5:32 - *This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

Which of these has happened in history?

The first three were effectively accomplished by Jesus on the cross. The last three will be accomplished by His return.

V25-26 – What value is the time frames given in this passage?

It provides the timing of the coming of the Messiah. $7*7+62*7 = 483$ years... Historians have calculated the time of the decree to restore Jerusalem to Palm Sunday works out to the day. The 70th week is yet to come.

What does it mean “Messiah shall be cut off”?

God’s own people will reject the Messiah. The people did not accept Messiah Jesus as King and crucified Him...

Luke 19:41-42 - *Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes."*

When does the 483 years until the Messiah is “cut-off” begin?

That from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem.

Nehemiah 2:1-8 says that Persian King Artaxerxes decreed that the wall of Jerusalem may be built in the twentieth year of his reign. From archeology we know Artaxerxes became king in 464 BC thus meaning the command to restore Jerusalem happened in 444 BC.

- Add the 483 years of the prophecy to 444 BC and we get 38 AD recognizing that there was no year “0”.
Allowing for the two to seven-year error scholars say there was in beginning the Gregorian calendar, we get 31 to 36 AD, about the time Messiah Jesus would have been “cut off” by dying on the cross.

Why is the 69 weeks of years until Messiah the Prince is “cut off” expressed as 7 plus 62 weeks?

- One explanation I’ve heard was that it took some time for Jerusalem to be re-populated and established since it happened “in troublesome times.” But there is a better explanation...
- Since the command to build and restore Jerusalem came in 444 B.C., the 49 years end in 395 B.C. which corresponds to the time that the last of the Old Testament books were written. It also corresponds to the end of the ministries of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Why isn’t the 69 and 70th weeks of Daniel continuous as between the 7 and 62?

The church age was a mystery during Old Testament times...

V26 – Who will destroy the city and the sanctuary?

The people of the prince who is to come will destroy the sanctuary.

What is the sanctuary?

The sanctuary is a reference to the temple in Jerusalem. Any study of the Old Testament would reveal that the temple is a very prominent part of Jewish life since King David.

Was the sanctuary destroyed?

Yes, by the Romans in 70 A.D. Future Roman emperor Titus lead the siege with 4 legions.

- Note: many believe the Antichrist will be Roman because a Roman led the forces against Jerusalem. But the verse says, “the people of the prince who is to come” and the soldiers making up the Roman legions were mostly conscripted from the nations around Israel who became mostly Islamic.

What does the "it" in "the end of it" refer to?

The “it” is a veiled reference to the church age, that period of time we are now in between the end of the 69 weeks and the beginning of the 70th week (v. 27).

How did Daniel describe the time leading up to the 70th week?

Daniel prophesied that the end of the church age would come with a flood, in other words, it would overwhelm people rapidly. Also, that the time leading up to Christ’s return would be a war opposing Him and there would be desolations happening along with this.

What are desolations?

Desolations are events that cause a place to be devoid of its inhabitants. These are serious calamities which serve as wake-up calls to drive us to God for salvation rather than the multitude of other things (aka gods) that people trust in for their salvation (government, bank account, self, etc...).

What kind of desolations have we had?

Both world wars were wake-up calls because they effected the whole world. The gulf war was another one which involved the whole world and it demonstrated the potency of a unified world power. I also believe the 9-11-01 terrorist attacks on the U.S. was a world-shaking event because it was not just an attack on the U.S., it was an attack on Western values. All the world has rallied around the idea that we need to work together to stamp out terrorism.

- Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans was another one... this storm formed the day following Pres. Bush congratulating Israeli PM Sharon for evicting Jews from Gaza.

V27 - What happens during the 70th week?

The prince who is to come will confirm a covenant, bring an end to sacrifice and offering, and make people desolate which means devoid of hope.

When does the abomination of desolation occur?

At the mid-point of the 70th week of Daniel. This timeframe is reinforced by Scripture in many other places...

- Rev 11:2 – *But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.*
- Rev 12:14 – *But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.*
- Rev 13:5 – *And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months*
- Daniel 7:25 – *the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.*
- Dan 12:7 – *it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished*

What is the sacrifice that is ended?

The temple sacrifices that the Jews practice according to the Mosaic Law.

What must there be for the sacrifice to be ended?

The sacrifices must have first started.

What is needed for Israel to have sacrifices?

The sacrifices must be done at the temple.

When was the last time Israel had sacrifices?

The sacrifices in Israel ended with the destruction of Herod's temple in 70 AD.

So when did this 70th week occur?

The 70th Week of Daniel hasn't happened yet and cannot until there is a temple so that the sacrifices may begin.

Why will Israel rebuild the temple and resume the sacrifices?

Besides the fact that God says it will happen, it is part of Israel's heritage as a people. They will do this in their zeal to please God and bring the Messiah. Certainly, there is a desire for this to happen as anyone who has visited the

Temple Institute in Jerusalem can attest. They already have the instruments they need to resume the sacrifices; all they need is the temple. There is also a building anticipation for the Messiah to come.

Does it seem likely that Israel will have a temple in Jerusalem any time soon?

No, it seems impossible today but the Lord loves to demonstrate His sovereignty over impossible situations. I wasn't yet living at the time but I understand that it seemed impossible for Israel to re-establish itself as a nation in the land prior to 1948.

So, what does this tell us about whether this passage talks about a past or future event?

It must be yet future because it says "Then he shall confirm a covenant." And the prince that is to come brings an end to the sacrifices which means there must be another temple.

When does the 70th week of Daniel begin?

When the prince who is to come confirms a covenant with many for one week.

What does it mean the prince will "CONFIRM a covenant with many"?

I believe this means that there is already a peace agreement involving multiple parties in place, the prince just reinforces it and gives it a guarantee.

Is this scenario being set up today?

The so-called "peace process" between Israel and their Arab enemies surrounding them. The power of the Revived Roman Empire, which is the Western Confederation of nations, will guarantee the treaty with Israel. This is what will give them the security to proceed with building a temple. It however is a false security that only lasts 3 ½ years (until the mid-point of the 70th week of years).

Who is it who causes the desolation of the people during the 70th week of Daniel?

The prince who is to come, the Antichrist.

Can this prince who is to come be Messiah the Prince? Could this say it is the Messiah who returns and brings an end to the sacrifice and offering?

- No, it has to refer to another prince... nowhere in Scripture do we see any prophecy of Jesus leading an army to destroy Jerusalem and the temple.
- Also, why would Jesus end the sacrifices? It is part of the Law and it honors Him as an ordinance that points to His ultimate sacrifice.

So, what is this abomination of desolation?

A less word-convoluted translation of Dan 9:27b helps:

Dan 9:27b – *And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him (NIV)*

It is also helpful to look at other passages referring to this event:

- Dan 8:11 – *He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down*
- Dan 11:31 – *And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation*
- 2 Thess 2:3-4 – *the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God*

...So, the Antichrist, the son of perdition sets up some sort of image of himself in the temple and declares himself to be god. When that happens, the Jews will realize they have been duped and the world leader they thought was their savior cannot be so they flee Israel.

Since we are talking time-frames here in relation to the Abomination of Desolation, there is another reference in Daniel to consider...

Dan 12:11-12 – *And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.*

Now, 3.5 years in the Jewish lunar calendar is $3.5 * 12 * 30 = 1260$ days ...and there are other references to 1260 days identifying the mid-point of the Tribulation:

- Rev 11:3 – *And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.*
- Rev 12:6 – *Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.*

So, what is this additional 30 and 45 days (1290 – 1260 = 30; 1335 – 1260 = 75)?

- It seems like the image of the Antichrist is permitted to remain in the temple for 30 days after Jesus returns and the Antichrist himself is cast into the lake of fire (Rev 19:20)

- What happens during the 45 days after that is not revealed, it is sealed until the time of the end. But if we were to speculate, it might be that this period includes the judgment of the sheep and goats (Matthew 25:31-46), environmental clean-up, the Messiah building the Millennial Temple (Ezekiel 40-48) and of course the inauguration of the Millennial Kingdom.

Note: The dimensions of the Millennium Temple complex are on such a grand scale that it would appear that the Millennium Temple will have to be built after the topographical and geological changes take place. Therefore, the future Millennium Temple must be a different temple than the future Tribulation Temple.

- In the messianic passage of Zechariah 6:9-15, where the coming Messiah is given the title of “the Branch” and unites the offices of King and Priest, we learn that He will personally direct the building of a future temple.
- More details:
<https://www.growingchristians.org/devotions/two-future-temples/>