

Last Days - Part Five

The Abomination of Desolation

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Matthew 24:15, 16

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains.

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation . . . Notice, He said, when you SEE it. When men see this event coming to pass, they will know. And when they see it, they will see it in the holy place.

Daniel's Prophecy

Daniel 9:27

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, and for the overspreading of abominations He shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Daniel the prophet foretold an event, and we find the Lord referring to that same event: the abomination of desolation.

Before going further, let's notice a few outstanding points that have been given to us in these Scriptures:

In the Holy Place

God's Word is clear to point out to us that this particular event would take place in a particular place. When this event occurs, it will take place in the holy place.

Mark 13:14

But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains.

We have already seen in Matthew 24 that the abomination of desolation will be seen standing in the holy place, where it ought not be. What is the abomination that maketh desolate? Paul explains it in Thessalonians:

II Thessalonians 2:3, 4

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

The abomination of desolation is a man — called here *that man of sin, the son of perdition* — who will set himself up in the temple of God, the holy place.

The holy place, therefore, is referring to Jerusalem, the holy land, the place where the holy prophecies had their origin.

We can see that the day is coming when a man is going to set himself up in the world as God. He is going to set himself up in the temple of God. He is going to set himself up to be worshipped above all that is called God.

I John 2:18

Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

Note that John talked singularly when he said, *Ye have heard that antichrist shall come*. That word, *antichrist*, means *against Christ*.

Paul the apostle did a good job of explaining this to us. He left no doubts as to what Antichrist will do: The world is going to take it upon itself to worship this man who is the Antichrist; this man will set himself up as a god and cause the world to begin to go whoring after him.

This particular period of time is brief yet is packed full of events and happenings. It staggers the mind and imagination to think of so much taking place in such a short period of time.

Jesus addressed this issue: He said that, when you see this, it is going to be a sign unto you of the very end. And He gives some specific instructions of what should be done when that day arises.

Realize that He addresses this prophecy to those who live and dwell in the holy land. Understand that the holy land is the center of Bible prophecy. Any time you want to understand Bible prophecy, put yourself as being one who is in the land of Israel. Know that many of the great events of the end time are centered there.

Matthew 24:16-19

Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

Great Tribulation

Matthew 24:20-22

But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day: 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.

One thing is clear from these Scriptures: When a man sees the abomination that makes desolate standing in the temple in Jerusalem, he knows from that sign that the Great Tribulation has begun!

Now, the word *tribulation* means trouble, and this will be a time of trouble on this earth such as the world has never seen. Nothing like it will have ever happened before.

Matthew 24:15

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

All the prophecy that is said about the Roman Empire is not completed. Antichrist is directly tied to the old Roman Empire. He will come forth out of the ruins and roots of that old empire.

The Little Horn

Daniel 7:8

I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

Antichrist is referred to in the book of Daniel as the "little horn." When Daniel saw that little horn rising, he took note of what he saw. One thing that stood out was that this horn had eyes like a man and a mouth that spoke great things.

Daniel 7:21

I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them

This man is going to make war with those who are referred to in his day as "the saints." And he is going to prevail against them!

Daniel 7:25

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 a time and times and the dividing of time.

When the Antichrist arises, his mouth will be speaking great things against the God and Father of our Lord Jesus. Talking down Jesus will be his game.

He is going to set himself up in the world as God.

Now, we need to explore this as far as we can in the Word, that we may learn as much as possible about it.

John's Revelation

Revelation 13:1

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

John saw a beast rising up out of the sea. It had seven heads and ten horns. Upon the horns were ten crowns, and upon the heads was the name of blasphemy. This certainly was a crude-looking creature!

Revelation 13:3

And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

Here we find one of his heads being wounded to death; and, later on, the deadly wound is healed, and the world wonders.

Revelation 13:4

And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

John refers to the little horn of Daniel as "the beast." This beast has many names in the Word, but we always find the same identifying marks.

He is called:

- the Antichrist
- the beast
- the little horn
- the false Christ
- the son of perdition

Revelation 13:5

And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

Both Daniel and John refer to the mouth of this beast as an identifying mark.

Revelation 13:6, 7

And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

It shakes one to think of a man rising up in the last days with such power!

Revelation 13:8

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Just think of this! Everyone who dwells on the earth will worship the Antichrist with the exception of those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Let's dwell on this for a while. Imagine a man gaining this kind of power. That's just what every power-thirsty tyrant wants. It's what Hitler sought for. He wanted to gain control of the entire world. He wanted to be head of the master-race and to rule the world.

The Antichrist will do all that Hitler ever dreamed of doing and more. We can see from the Word that he will accomplish all that he sets out to do.

War with the Saints

And it was given unto him to make war with the saints.

Who are these saints? When will this take place?

Jesus tells us it will happen as a sign at the end of the age when the Antichrist is coming.

We want to stop and consider how the Antichrist will be able to cause the entire world to follow after him and worship him. It won't be easy, but, according to the Word, he will succeed in doing it. We must understand that he's not going to do it all by himself. He's going to have a lot of help:

Revelation 13:11

And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

Another beast rises up. The first one rose out of the sea, while this one comes out of the earth. His appearance is like a lamb, yet his mouth is like a dragon.

We can discern that he is a pretender in what he is doing. Also, he is empowered of the devil in doing it. It is his goal to cause the entire world to worship the beast that rose out of the sea.

Revelation 13:12

And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

Here we see his work being accomplished, causing the whole earth to worship the man whom we call the Antichrist.

We can look in the Word to see further what his identifying marks are:

Revelation 13:13, 14

And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

Deceived

He is going to deceive the world by the miracles which he has power to do. His miracles are going to be great signs, which will be convincing to the world.

One of these signs will be fire prayed down from heaven.

This was a sign from God in the Old Testament. Back then, only the men of God had power to do this. But we find that this man, who is called the beast out of the earth, is going to have the power to pray down fire from heaven in the sight of men. This is certainly going to be a convincing sign unto all the world!

This beast is going to deceive all who dwell on the earth by the miracles which he has power to do in the sight of the first beast. Realize that he is going to deceive *by performing miracles*.

There has to be a reason why the devil would be allowed to have this kind of power in the sight of men. Remember, there was a reason for God's bringing the flood in Noah's day, and there was a reason why He brought fire and brimstone in the days of Lot.

Know that there is also a reason why God is going to permit the devil to gain this power in the last days — such power that the whole world will worship him with the exception of those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Now, before we examine the reason for this, let's look further at the power that will be manifested by this beast:

Revelation 13:15

And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

When he makes an image of the beast, he is going to bring forth world-wide idolatry. The entire world is going to bow down to this image and worship it. He is going to give life to this image. Any who refuse to worship it will be killed.

The Mark of the Beast

Revelation 13:16,17

And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

This is where this phrase, *the mark of the beast*, originates. Nobody will be able to work, buy, or sell without this mark. In other words, you won't be able to buy so much as a slice of bread, you won't be able to rent even one room, and you won't be able to earn any money by selling or by working.

All business is going to be transacted only by having this mark.

If you don't take the mark, you'll be like a vagabond, driven out into the earth to search for shelter and food. This is how the beast is going to succeed in forcing the world to worship him.

Revelation 13:18

Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

This pressure is going to cause those who wouldn't normally want to bow to an idol to bow, merely for the sake of their livelihood. They'll bow to save their lives — but in the process of saving their life, they will surely lose it.

This is a serious matter. Could you get along tomorrow without buying or selling? In our modern society, that would be nigh to impossible.

Now, when the time for the mark of the beast comes around, men will know who this man is. They will know him by his number. In Roman numerals you use letters to represent specific numbers. If you took this man's name, you'd find a sufficient number of letters in it to equal the number 666 when placed in order.

Why?

Note that the apostle Paul speaks of two events. He makes it clear why such a terrible time of God's wrath will be poured out upon the earth, why the Great Tribulation, why the judgment to come.

II Thessalonians 2:3

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition

First: There would be a time of great falling away!

Following that: The man of sin would be revealed, the son of perdition.

In connection with these two things, Paul speaks about Antichrist rising:

II Thessalonians 2:4

Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

This is Antichrist being established in a temple yet to be built in Jerusalem. There in the holy place he will be established and received by the Jews as their Messiah. Temporarily, they are going to embrace this man when he rises into power.

II Thessalonians 2:8

And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming

Paul starts to talk about the events that will take place when the Antichrist is revealed. When he rises in power, he will reign right up to the time when Jesus comes back to establish His kingdom upon the earth.

At the Battle of Armageddon, the Lord will return in the brightness of His coming. He will put the Antichrist down and destroy him.

II Thessalonians 2:9

Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders

We ought to take note of this!

In **Revelation 13**, we saw that the beast of the earth will work miracles — praying down fire in the sight of men, causing the image of the beast to speak — and killing all who will not worship.

Here, in **II Thessalonians**, we find how he is going to accomplish all of this. Notice that it says he will do it with lying wonders. It won't be real, though it will look real. And it will be done with Satan's power at work through this man called the beast out of the earth.

II Thessalonians 2:10

And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love the truth, that they might be saved.

No Love for the Truth

Here we find a rejection of the truth — a lack of love for the truth of God's Word.

Because the Jews rejected Jesus when He came, they were dispersed among the nations for 1900 years. My, the judgment that came forth! The desolation that came to the house of Israel! It's just in the past sixty years that they've been a nation once again (which, in itself, is a sign of the end).

They rejected the love of the truth that they might be saved; and, because of their rejection, judgment and wrath fell on them. God, in His mercy, preserved them, but we have to realize that their house became a desolation.

Today, we find many Gentile believers also rejecting the Lord. They are fast losing their love for the truth. Paul said there would be such a falling away from the love of the truth.

More and more, we find men don't want the old paths any longer. They don't want the Word of God. It's old fashioned, worn out. It served it's time; now it is time to modernize the Word (so they say). But God's Word is truth, and we can't water it down or do away with it. It is still the Word of God, and we should cherish it.

As time goes on, it will get worse and worse until nobody will want to serve Jesus, nobody will want to walk according to the Word. There will be a great falling away from the truth.

II Thessalonians 2:11

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie

Strong Delusion

This is how Antichrist will be able to deceive through his lying signs and wonders: The world will be reprobate. Their minds will easily follow after the devil. And it will be because they rejected the love of the truth.

People will love the lie of Satan, so much so that they will fall for it hook, line, and sinker. When they see his lying signs and wonders, they will believe, because of strong delusion.

It says it right here in the Word: God will send strong delusion because they wouldn't receive the love of the truth that they might be saved. Therefore, they will believe a lie that they might be damned.

II Thessalonians 2:12

That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Here is God's reasoning in a nut shell. This is His reason for bringing the Great Tribulation upon the earth: because of the rejection of truth. They choose to serve the devil, rather than to serve the Lord in truth.

John 5:39

Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me.

You're going to either believe the truth and get saved, or you're going to believe a lie and be damned. Which is it going to be?

A Falling Away

Jesus said that the time of the end would be like as it was in the days of Noah: They lost their love of the truth. They fell away from the truths which God had revealed to them. They fell from their separated walk as sons of God and they intermingled with the world, marrying the daughters of Cain and bringing forth a corrupted seed upon the earth.

The righteous and the unrighteous were so intertwined, so mixed together, that it brought an apostasy upon the earth. And God destroyed the world of that day, all except for the eight who were safe in the ark.

Jesus also said to remember Lot's wife.

Lot lost his separation. He moved down into Sodom and married a woman who was from there. Yes, he lost his separation, and he also nearly lost his soul as the result of it!

Lukewarm

Revelation 3:14-16

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth.

Here we find a rejection of a multitude of church-going people: *Because you're lukewarm, I'm going to spit you out. I would that you were either hot or cold.*

We want to look further to see what this lukewarmness is really like. We find the falling away that Paul predicted is in the Laodicean church:

Revelation 3:17a

Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing . . .

My, the affluent church of this generation: getting away from the love of the truth; away from that born-again experience; away from having a transformed, on-fire life; away from the power and blessing of God!

This is the danger signal: when the church begins to say, *I am rich. I have need of nothing.* This is the trend in many church circles of our day. They have left the love of the truth that one must be born again, and they have established a social way.

Revelation 3:17b

. . . and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked

This is the state of the church at the end of the age. And this is why there is going to be a great tribulation. God's judgment will be poured out at the end of the age, because men will *say* rather than *do*.

Revelation 3:18

I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

The Lord tells this church what to do to get out of their dilemma. He counsels them to buy of Him gold tried in the fire.

In other words, you must have a born again experience, tried in the fiery trials of the faith, with the righteousness of Christ applied to your heart, that you might be clothed with white raiment.