

Episode #915 Matthew 24 Part 4-The Abomination of Desolation

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. The Lord was answering His disciples as to what would be the sign of His Parousia, and what will be the sign of the consummation of the eon. He had talked about the beginning of sorrows. They would be delivered up to tribulation and persecuted. Many will betray each other and false prophets will arise. Lawlessness will abound, and the self-sacrificial love of many will grow cold. The one who endures to the end, however, will be saved. Now He continues.

III. Tribulation and Deception. Matthew 24:9-14.

A. Verse 14. “This gospel” not “the gospel.” The Greek word *euangelion*.

1. A “gospel” means a message: a good message, a true message, and a message delivered at the right time. What message here? The kingdom message. This message is not something remote from this passage, but contained right here, “this gospel.” It begins with verse 4 and continues to verse 13. It is brief, and could be heralded in a short time. This message at that time is to be announced in all the world for a witness. How long will it take? If you have the idea of missionaries needing to learn the language and then go out and carry the message, it might take several generations. Yet if you understand this to be what it should be in an honest, grammatical, historical interpretation, then this could be done in five minutes if the heralds have access to the internet.
2. Kingdom means government. This is a government message: the gospel of the government. Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation was a government message, not his own personal message. When he made it, it had to be posted at the courthouse of every county. It was a slow process at the time. Yet here is a different condition of things. It is useless for us to think that there will be no information technology like the Internet in the kingdom of God. These things could be a blessing to mankind and be used for the glory of God, and they will be in the kingdom.
3. “Preached” means heralded or announced.
4. “All the world” means in the whole system, the entire inhabited earth. The Greek is *oikoumene*, and means the world as inhabited. Bullinger says it is the civilized world as opposed to the barbarian.
5. A witness brings those who hear under responsibility.
6. The word here to these twelve disciples who will be men in authority and leaders who have responsibility is that this Divine message of the government is to be heralded in all nations, and then the end will come. People say that this means that when missionaries reach every inhabited place, then the end will come. As far as we can tell the missionaries have done that and gone into all the world and been a witness to all nations, and the end did not come. This never applied to missionaries going out. This is a Divine directive to the leaders in that day who can make this announcement to all the world at that time, and then the end will come.
7. “The end” is the Greek *telos*, the conclusion.

IV. The Abomination of Desolation. Matthew 24:15-20.

- A. Verse 15. A good thing always to keep in mind is what Christ said in Luke 16:15, that many things that are highly esteemed among men are abomination in the sight of God. There are many such things in our world today. Idolatry was one such thing in their day, and this abomination will be a man making himself a living idol. We read of this in II Thessalonians 2:3-4, where we see the abomination is the man of sin himself seating himself in the temple, and declaring himself to be God.
1. Other than the parallel verse in Mark 13:14, the only other reference we have to desolation is that Jerusalem will be a desolation after it is surrounded by armies in Luke 21:20. The abomination that causes desolation does so because it brings on the special wrath and punishment of God.
 2. "Daniel the prophet" is a reference to the book of Daniel, where this is mentioned in 11:31 and 12:11.
 3. "Standing" means taking his stand.
 4. The holy place is a place in the temple of God. We know from II Thessalonians 2:4 that there is a man of sin who will seat himself in the temple of God and who will set himself forth as God and the one to be worshiped. This is the abomination that will make the temple desolate.
 5. Before this can ever be fulfilled, there has to be a temple built in Jerusalem. It has to be the temple of God. It has to be owned by God. There has to be in it the holy place. Since the temple does not exist today, it will have to be rebuilt.
 - a. We must keep in mind Psalm 127:1. The temple cannot be built by a decree of the United Nations. It cannot be built because the Jews win a war with the Muslims. It cannot be built by the efforts of man. Even if it were built on the proper site, if it was built without Jehovah, it would not be His house, so its holy place could not be holy, and none of this would be true. I might as well build a temple in my backyard as on the temple site in Jerusalem if Yahweh is not involved in building it. There is no difference, if the LORD does not build the house. When it is built, He must be involved. And He will never be involved as long as Israel remains in rebellion against Him and His Christ.
 - b. Only Israel can build the temple, and only an Israel submissive to and obedient to God can ever do it. They cannot do it while they continue to stubbornly and rebelliously reject their Messiah. Only after they learn to say "Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord," Matthew 23:39, only then will they be able to rebuild the temple and have it truly be God's house and truly contain His holy place.
 - c. This will take place in the premillennial kingdom of God. It is as this kingdom is drawing to a close that the rebellion described here takes place and the man of sin defiles the holy place.
 6. Whoso readeth = a significant phrase, not spoken by Christ at the time but to us who are reading this gospel. Also in Mark 13:14.
- B. Verse 16. When this man of sin takes over and takes his stand in the holy place, then will be the time for those in Judea to flee into the mountains. I do not expect to be in Judea in that day any more than I am there now.
1. Many talk like fleeing to the mountains is something all believers everywhere in the world will have to do. But I am in the flat Midwest of the United States.

There are no mountains anywhere near me. Where would I flee? But those in that day who are in Judea need to flee to the mountains right nearby in Judea.

2. Why is it those in Judea who need to flee? In studying prophecy about Judea and Jerusalem and Israel, it is most evident that Jerusalem will not be a city whose chief purpose is a place for people to live, though there are those who will live there, but it will be chiefly a center of government, like our Washington D.C. Jerusalem is the city and Judea compares to what we would call the county that it is in. In that day, this is where the government of Israel, the most significant nation on earth, will be centered. The many, many people who make up that government will be living there. When the man of sin desires to move against and wipe out God's government, the people who live there are the ones he will be interested in wiping out. That is why God warns them that they need to flee into the mountains.
3. The mountains there today and probably in the kingdom are not unfriendly, although they could get cold at night in the wintertime. There is not much water. You can see these are instructions for these people at this time.

V. Conclusion: The gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed in the inhabited world for a witness, but this is not something we are doing today. The abomination of desolation seems to be the man of sin himself, setting himself up in God's temple as God. Yet this requires a legitimate, God's temple and holy place, something that cannot happen until Israel acknowledges Jesus as their Messiah. Once this abomination is set up, those in Judea are to flee to the mountains. Yet you and I are not in Judea, and many of us have no mountains to flee to. We must keep this in its proper place and context.