

October 2020

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THE PROPHECIES OF MATTHEW 24 PART 1

WHAT IS THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION?

COMMENT: This is the first in a series of 3 articles, which will examine all 51 verses of Matthew chapter 24. There are a number of prophecies in this chapter, which have been mostly misunderstood. This present article will cover the first 15 verses of chapter 24.

Outside of the Book of Revelation, Matthew chapter 24 is the most important passage in the entire New Testament that deals with prophecies. The prophecies in this chapter are linked to both the prophecies in the Book of Daniel, and the prophecies in the Book of Revelation. The words of Jesus Christ in this chapter form a bridge between the past (i.e. the Book of Daniel) and the future (i.e. the Book of Revelation).

THE SETTING

In Matthew 23 Jesus Christ had given a very strong rebuke to the Pharisees regarding their hypocrisy. Then He left the Temple area. As they were leaving the area, His disciples wanted to draw Christ's attention to the splendor and the impressive size of the Temple and the associated buildings.

And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and His disciples came to *Him* for to show Him the buildings of the temple. (Matthew 24:1)

The disciples themselves were clearly very impressed by the sheer magnitude of the Temple. And you and I would undoubtedly have been equally impressed. The stones were absolutely massive.

For example, **the largest stone** in the Western Wall of Jerusalem is dated to the Herodian age. It is a foundational stone in the ancient wall. It is not a part of the Temple itself, but it was built by Herod at the same time as he extended the second Temple. That stone is **44 feet** long and **11 feet** high. The depth is unknown, but believed to be about **6-7 feet**. It weighs around **250 tonnes**. This is one of the largest, if not the largest cut stone anywhere in the world, which has ever been used for building some structure.

250 tonnes is a huge stone. Even the smaller stones which were used in the Herodian Temple still weighed around 30 tonnes each. So we're talking about massive stones. No wonder that the disciples were impressed.

When the disciples pointed these things out to Jesus Christ, He replied as follows:

And Jesus said unto them, See you not all these things? verily I say unto you, **There shall not be left here one stone upon another**, that shall not be thrown down. (Matthew 24:2)

So Jesus Christ told them that all those buildings would be "thrown down". Keep in mind for later that Jesus Christ **did not say** that the Temple would be "**destroyed**". He said that all the stones would be **thrown down**. And those stones were massive. As history has recorded, all those stones would be thrown down by the Romans.

Jesus Christ and His disciples then went to the mount of Olives, where Jesus Christ sat down.

And as He sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him **privately**, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and **what shall be the sign of Your coming**, and of **the end of the age?** (Matthew 24:3)

Now keep in mind that those disciples were thinking in terms of perhaps 10-50 years. They expected Christ's return more or less in their own lifetimes. Here they were asking two questions:

- 1) What is the sign for Your second coming?
- 2) What are the signs to indicate that the end of this present age is here?

These are the questions Jesus Christ then addresses and answers in this 24th chapter of Matthew.

But these two questions are also answered in great detail in Revelation. Specifically, the second coming of Jesus Christ and the end of this age are shown as the ultimate outcome of a process that is represented by "seven seals". So we should be able to see some correlation between Jesus Christ's words in Matthew 24, and the more detailed discussion of those events in the Book of Revelation.

Now the first six of the seven seals in Revelation are opened in Revelation chapter 6. We'll be looking at some of those seals. But now let's continue with Matthew 24.

And Jesus answered and said unto them, **Take heed that no man deceive you.** (Matthew 24:4)

Being deceived by people is a **daily occurrence**, right? People deceive us about the real value of the things they want to sell to us. They deceive us about what really happened, regarding them not having followed our clear instructions. They deceive us about the things that need to be repaired on our cars or A/Cs. They deceive us about the real value of medicines and beauty treatments and health foods. They deceive us about whose fault it is that something went wrong. They deceive us about their real intentions, if only we will give them the positions of power and authority that they covet. Etc. In our world today **deception is all around us.**

So what did Jesus Christ really mean with His statement?

Jesus Christ really meant: don't let anyone deceive you **regarding when I will return**. Don't let anyone deceive you **regarding when this age will come to an end**. The focus is on deception in connection with Christ's return and on the end of this present age.

In other words: anyone who claims to know the year when Jesus Christ will return is either knowingly lying, or else he doesn't know what he is talking about. And if we believe the people who tell us when this age will supposedly end, then we are being deceived.

With this warning as a preface Jesus Christ then proceeded to discuss various events and conditions that would come about before His second coming.

For **many shall come in My name**, saying (that) I am Christ; and they shall deceive many. (Matthew 24:5)

The most common form of deception regarding these two questions comes from people who tell us: Jesus Christ is the Lord, and He is coming back to this earth. **They will tell us some things that are true!** And after that they then present their own false ideas regarding Christ's second coming and the

end of this age.

Over the past 1,500 - 1,900 years there have been **dozens of predictions** regarding when Jesus Christ should have returned. Of course, all of them were wrong. And that holds true for all those predictions that come down to our age ... predictions for 1975 or 1982 or 1997 or 2008 or 2026 ... or any other year. For example, there isn't really anything to suggest 2026, other than some cute parallels. **There is no scriptural indication at all that would suggest any specific year for the return of Jesus Christ.**

So if anyone, prior to the start of the ministry of the two witnesses, puts forward a specific year for the return of Jesus Christ, then the people who would accept that idea would be deceived. Christ's return is simply not something that can be calculated in advance in some way.

As far as people coming in Christ's name is concerned, the first seal in Revelation 6 reveals "a rider on a white horse".

And I saw, and behold **a white horse**: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and **he went forth conquering**, and to conquer. (Revelation 6:2)

The rider on the white horse represents **religious deception**, a false religious system coming in the name of Jesus Christ. The fact that this religious deception has "a crown" identifies this as the Roman Catholic Church, which for many centuries exerted its influence over the emperors and kings reigning in Europe. And it is the only church ever thus far to have possessed that type of influence over secular rulers.

Let's continue with Matthew 24.

And you shall hear of **wars** and **rumors of wars**: see that you be not troubled: for all *these things* must come to pass, but **the end is not yet**. (Matthew 24:6)

Rumors regarding the imminency of war are very troubling, making many people very fearful. There would be many wars all around the world. But as far as their second question was concerned: those wars would not yet be the sign that the end of the age was approaching. And so Christ clearly said: "the end is not yet".

The second seal in Revelation revealed the following:

And there went out another horse *that was red*: and *power* was given to him that sat thereon **to take peace from the earth**, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. (Revelation 6:4)

Taking peace from the earth is another way of saying that there will be wars. In the last century we had two great world wars, wars that were fought simultaneously on many different fronts, as well as many lesser wars. As Jesus Christ elaborated in Matthew 24:

For **nation** shall rise **against nation**, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be **famines**, and **pestilences**, and **earthquakes**, in divers places. (Matthew 24:7)

There is a lot in this one verse.

The first part of this verse refers to the wars mentioned in verse 6. After that Jesus Christ then mentioned three distinct things:

1) Famines

2) Pestilences

3) Earthquakes

(Here "earthquakes" is a mistranslation! We'll look at this shortly.)

These three things are presented in more detail in Revelation 6. The third horseman refers to famines, and the fourth horseman refers to pestilences.

And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo **a black horse**; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, **A measure of wheat for a penny**, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou **hurt not the oil and the wine**. (Revelation 6:5-6)

This is **a picture of famine!** The balances refer to food scarcity, with the seller making sure he didn't give you too much. "A penny" was a day's wage, and **normally** you could buy **more than ten measures of wheat "for a penny"**. Because of the famine conditions, prices have been highly inflated, to the point where you now have to pay ten times as much for your food, when compared to the money's buying power before the famine started.

The expression "hurt not the oil and the wine" is a bit unclear. This expression literally means "**don't do wrong to the oil and the wine**". The reason is that the crops of olives and grapes will also be greatly diminished. So **don't waste either oil or wine**. Use them sparingly and carefully, because there isn't really much there. Both of these liquids were used for medicinal purposes, in addition to being a part of the normal diet.

Famines commonly follow wars, and pestilences commonly follow famines. So let's look at the next horse.

And when he had opened the fourth seal ... and behold **a pale horse**: and his name that sat on him was **Death**, and **the grave** followed with him. And power was given unto them over **the fourth part** of the earth, **to kill** with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth. (Revelation 6:7-8)

The pale horse represents all forms of pestilence and diseases. And so the rider's name is "Death". And what follows this rider is "the grave", not some kind of "hell".

The last three of the four horsemen will be responsible for the deaths of 25% of all people on earth. Currently the world population stands almost at 8 billion people (7.8 billion right now). So those last three horsemen will cause the deaths of close to two billion people.

The total deaths for both World Wars combined, for military personnel plus civilian deaths, amounted to close on 100 million. So these last three horsemen will be responsible for **20 times as many deaths as WW I and WW II combined**. That is something that still lies ahead of us.

Next, the Greek word translated "earthquakes" is "seismos". This word simply means "a shaking". **It could be** the earth that is shaken; **it could also be** that the seas are shaken, and **it could also be** that the heavens are shaken. Later, in Part 3 of this series of articles, we'll focus more on these "shakings" when we discuss verse 29. Suffice it here to say that famines represent the 3rd seal, pestilences represent the 4th seal, and "shakings" are associated with the 6th seal.

So let's continue with Matthew 24.

All these *are* **the beginning of sorrows**. (Matthew 24:8)

This summary statement applies to the four horsemen in Revelation 6. They are pictured as belonging together. They will be responsible for the deaths of around two billion people, leaving about six billion people still alive.

And then things get worse! That's why Jesus Christ said that the things mentioned thus far are only the beginning. God will after that also deal with the remaining approximately six billion people on earth.

Then shall they **deliver you up** to be afflicted, and **shall kill you**: and **you shall be hated of all nations** for my name's sake. (Matthew 24:9)

Now Jesus Christ brings members of God's Church into the picture.

"Hated of all nations" means that God's people will be **hated** in every country on earth. And many of God's people will be **killed**. What is that all about? I mean, today, right now, most countries don't even know that we, the people of God, exist. They don't know who we are or where we are. **Right now we are pretty well anonymous on the world scene**. As far as the world is concerned, we are flying under the radar, so to speak.

So **something major has to happen** to get this worldwide hatred and persecution started. So what is going to happen? Let's read on.

And then shall many be **offended**, and shall **betray** one another, and shall **hate** one another. (Matthew 24:10)

First of all, this is where the 5th seal of Revelation chapter 6 ties in.

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw **under the altar the souls of them that were slain** for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, **How long, O Lord, holy and true, do You not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?** (Revelation 6:9-10)

"The souls under the altar" are true servants of God who have been killed in the past, **from Old Testament times right up until the start of the ministry of the two witnesses**. The timing of this verse is when the two witnesses start their ministry. The next verse will explain.

And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, **until their fellow-servants also** and their brethren, that **should be killed** as they *were*, should be fulfilled. (Revelation 6:11)

When are their "fellow-servants" killed?

They will be killed **during the** three and one half year **ministry of the two witnesses**. Those killed will be the people from the Laodicean era, those who at that late point in time make an unconditional commitment to God.

In very general terms here is how I believe this will go.

- 1) **Right now** God's people are pretty well **anonymous** on the world scene.
 - 2) At some point Jesus Christ's **two witnesses** (see Revelation 11:3) will start their 42-months ministry.
 - 3) That will also be the time when God will take His "Philadelphian era Christians" to **a place of safety**, where God will protect them "from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth" (see Revelation 3:10). They are the five wise virgins of Matthew 25:2.
 - 4) At the same time when God protects "the wise virgins", the **five foolish virgins** (i.e. the Laodiceans) will have their **last chance** to make a firm commitment to God.
 - 5) Also at the same time the **two witnesses** start pouring out God's punishments on a rebellious humanity. Those punishments will be focused on destroying all of Satan's systems, through which Satan has controlled humanity. Those punishments will include calling for a lengthy drought, turning waters to blood, and **hitting this earth with any number of plagues**. In addition to that, they will say the word and their personal enemies will **die instantly** ... that is the meaning of "fire proceeding out of their mouth" (see Revelation 11:5-6).
 - 6) These things will take place on a worldwide basis. So this will get the attention of all nations on earth. **All people will hate the two witnesses**. But at that point the two witnesses are fully protected by God. People who attempt to harm the two witnesses are killed on the spot by God. So the people in the world will be **searching for some way to destroy the two witnesses** ... kind of like the Philistines looking for Samson's weak point.
 - 7) Now **the Laodiceans**, the five foolish virgins, are still around at that time. They **will be mostly incognito**. But their unconverted relatives will know that **they have the same religion as the two witnesses**. And those unconverted relatives are also looking for a solution, to get rid of the two witnesses.
- Those unconverted relatives will in fact "be offended" by the universal suffering that "the church leaders of their relatives" (i.e. the two witnesses) have brought on the world. These worldly people will have developed **a hatred** for their own Laodicean relatives. And **so they betray them** to the authorities. For example, they might tell the authorities: "you should know that **my uncle** (nephew, cousin, brother, father, son, etc.) **is a member of the same church** as those two perverse evil men that are destroying all of us (i.e. the two witnesses)".
- 8) In that way the **Laodiceans come to the attention of the perverse religious and political leadership in power**. So these perverse leaders then vent their rage against these Laodiceans, because the Laodiceans seem to have something in common with the two witnesses ... like a dictatorial regime killing all the relatives of those of their people who managed to escape to another country.
 - 9) So now the Laodiceans are known, and they are persecuted and killed. Those who are **faithful to God throughout this process** become a part of "the fellow-servants" of the souls under the altar.
 - 10) In this way the God-required number of 144,000 people for the first resurrection will be achieved.
 - 11) At the end of their 42-months ministry the two witnesses are killed (Revelation 11:7).
 - 12) After three and a half days Jesus Christ returns, the two witnesses are resurrected, and the first resurrection takes place (Revelation 11:9-12).

That's a basic overview. Anyway, we've gotten a bit ahead of the story in Matthew 24. So let's go back

there and pick up where we left off.

And **many false prophets shall rise**, and shall deceive many. (Matthew 24:11)

While this statement is presented in the time context of the two witnesses being active, in principle **this statement holds true for the entire past approximately 2,000 years**. The nasty thing about "false prophets" is that they don't focus on deceiving the world at large. Oh no. They almost always focus on trying to deceive the people who are seeking to obey the true God. They almost always focus on **trying to lead God's people astray**.

The "many" they deceive are not people in the world, who are already deceived. The "many" they deceive are people who have known and understood the truth, and who then walk away from the truth with these false prophets.

This means that **false prophets are heading for the lake of fire**, and not for the second resurrection. That's the penalty for leading anyone away from the truth (see Matthew 18:6). Deliberately leading people away from the truth is something that God will punish with the second death.

Next, Jesus Christ presents a major reason why so many people at that time will just walk away from the truth of God. Here is what Christ said:

And because iniquity shall abound, **the love of many shall wax cold**. (Matthew 24:12)

This is a statement for and about members of God's true Church. **It is only the love of a truly repentant person that can "wax cold"**. Unrepentant people don't have a true love for God. This is an extremely serious and troubling statement! **This is a statement about people who have a love for God, and then lose it!**

That is a scary statement, because if we have a love for God and for God's way of life, this statement implies that in certain difficult circumstances **there is the possibility that we could lose it**. This refers to people who kept the commandments of God, and then they stopped obeying God's laws. That is scary ... at least it should be!

Now **why** do these people lose their love for God (i.e. why do they stop living by all of God's laws)?

They lose their love for God because of the utterly perverse and depraved and sick way of life of the whole society all around them ... with "same sex marriages" and "abortions right up to the moment of birth" and "the sale of body parts of aborted fetuses" and the acceptance of blatant immoral customs and practices. Constant exposure to evil can destroy godly character.

The society in which we live has a profound effect on us. The worse the society is, **the more tolerant of evil we become**. That is why when iniquity abounds there is such a devastating consequence ... people giving up on living God's way of life. When the world becomes perverse, there is enormous pressure on us to lower our standards.

When iniquity abounds all around God's people, then it becomes increasingly difficult to hold onto God's way of life. Jesus Christ in essence acknowledged this difficulty with His next statement.

But **he that shall endure unto the end**, the same shall be saved. (Matthew 24:13)

Because it will be difficult, therefore we must endure right through those difficult times. If we do endure, we have Jesus Christ's promise that we'll be granted salvation by God. Now the specific context of this

statement by Jesus Christ in verse 13 is the time when the two witnesses will be preaching, and when the Laodiceans are facing severe persecution, because they are associated with the two witnesses. That's why they will be persecuted.

So Matthew 24:13 is addressed specifically to the Laodiceans!

The principle of this verse applies to all Christians throughout the ages. But the focus of this statement is on those in the last era, the last ones with an opportunity to still have a part in the first resurrection.

This focus on the time of the two witnesses is also made clear in the next verse.

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; **and then shall the end come.** (Matthew 24:14)

When does the end come? It comes when the two witnesses are killed. Specifically, it comes three and one half days after they have been killed. "The end" refers to when Jesus Christ will return, and when the first resurrection takes place.

So here is something we should understand:

Matthew 24:14 is a statement of fact! This verse is not an instruction to anyone to do anything. **It is not a commission to anyone.** It is a factual observation that **something is going to be done.** Specifically, it doesn't matter whether some leader in the Church of God has personally spoken to one world leader or to one hundred world leaders. It doesn't matter whether the Church of God has broadcast a message on radio and TV in one country or in every country on earth. As far as this specific verse is concerned:

It simply doesn't matter how many countries or nations have heard the gospel of the Kingdom of God from a leader in the Church of God before the two witnesses will start their ministry. This verse is not about what the Church can achieve before the two witnesses start their job. This verse is not an instruction to the Church.

This verse is a factual statement about the ministry of the two witnesses!

This verse is a factual observation that the three and one half year ministry of the two witnesses will achieve the preaching of the gospel (i.e. God's message to humanity) in all the world for a witness to all nations. And when the two witnesses have achieved that goal, **then the end will come.**

To make this clear:

It is not a case of God's Church today still having to preach the gospel in all the world! Yes, God's Church is instructed to go and teach all nations. But that doesn't mean that the Church will actually achieve that goal of preaching to all the world! The Church will not achieve that goal!

Keep in mind that Jesus Christ very clearly said:

But when they persecute you in this city, flee you into another: for verily I say unto you, **you shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.** (Matthew 10:23)

And if the Church does not even accomplish covering all "the cities of Israel", then there will also be many non-Israelite countries which the Church was also not able to effectively reach with the gospel of the kingdom of God.

It is not "the Church" that will achieve the preaching of the gospel in all the world.

It will be the two witnesses who will accomplish the preaching of the gospel in all the world for a witness to all nations.

That is their God-given job!

SOME CONCLUSIONS FROM THAT PRESENTATION

The original questions are presented in verse 3. Verses 4-14 then present the answers to those questions. Starting with verse 15, Jesus Christ then starts to present some conclusions that we need to draw from knowing the general outline of what lies ahead.

When you therefore shall see **the abomination of desolation**, spoken of **by Daniel the prophet**, stand in the holy place, (whoso reads, let him understand:) (Matthew 24:15)

Jesus Christ here referred to something that Daniel recorded in Daniel chapter 11.

And arms shall stand on his part, and **they shall pollute the sanctuary** of strength, and shall take away the daily *sacrifice*, and **they shall place the abomination that makes desolate**. And **such as do wickedly** against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but **the people that do know their God** shall be strong, and do *exploits*. (Daniel 11:31-32)

In Matthew 24 Jesus Christ refers to these verses in Daniel 11, saying that when we see these verses fulfilled, then we are to take certain actions. Before we look at those "certain actions", let's first understand these verses in Daniel 11.

In Daniel 11 these verses referred to Antiochus Epiphanes who was defeated by Ptolemy of Egypt. Ptolemy had a fleet from Rome helping him against Antiochus Epiphanes. In defeat **Antiochus Epiphanes** retreated back to Syria through Judea, and in 168 B.C. he entered Jerusalem and **desecrated the Jewish Temple**.

"The abomination" means "the detestable thing"; and "to make desolate" means "to make appalled". The whole expression "placing the abomination that makes desolate" basically means: **to place in the Temple a detestable thing which would appall religious Jews**. Antiochus Epiphanes had a pig sacrificed at the Temple. And Antiochus Epiphanes was "the vile person" of Daniel 11:21. The Hebrew for "vile" here also means: despised, contemptible.

It was the intention of Antiochus Epiphanes **to destroy the religion of the Jews**.

At that time there were **two major groups** amongst the Jews. There were those Jews who "did wickedly against the covenant", and there were "the people who do know their God". **The bad guys** (i.e. those Jews who did wickedly) cooperated with Antiochus Epiphanes in this attempt to destroy the Jewish religion. And **the good guys** (i.e. the people that knew their God) opposed those efforts to destroy their religion.

This situation is what Jesus Christ referred to in verse 15. Then, **for those who would understand Daniel 11:31-32 correctly, Jesus Christ gave the instruction to flee!** But if we don't understand the significance of Daniel 11:31-32 correctly, then we can't flee!

Jesus Christ's instructions in the next five verses apply to all those who will correctly understand the significance of those events in 168 B.C. So before we look at those instructions from Jesus Christ, let's first ask ourselves:

What is it that Jesus Christ wants us to see in Daniel 11:31-32? Would something like what happened in 168 B.C. happen again at some point after Christ's ministry? Or would something like that perhaps even happen twice after Christ's ministry? How are we to apply the things that happened with Antiochus Epiphanes?

The answers to these questions are:

Yes, there would indeed be **two future fulfillments of Daniel 11:31-32** at some point after the ministry of Jesus Christ.

1) **The physical temple** in Jerusalem was defiled and then destroyed by the Roman armies in 70 A.D. The Romans were the people who threw down the Temple Herod had built. They are the ones who threw down the stones, as Christ had predicted in Matthew 24:2. And they had defiled the Temple before destroying it.

2) **The spiritual temple** is the true Church of God. And as with Antiochus Epiphanes, so also in our time there has been a **"vile" person who intended to destroy the true Church of God**. Where the original "vile" person had a pig sacrificed in the physical temple in Jerusalem, the latter "vile" person **introduced pigs into the spiritual temple**, into God's Church. He made eating pigs acceptable to the spiritual temple.

And just like in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, so also in this latter fulfillment in our age, there were **two groups**: firstly there were "such as do wickedly against the covenant", who went along with this "vile" person. And secondly there were also "the people who do know their God", who refused to go along with the "vile" person.

Somewhat oversimplified, in general terms the Laodiceans went along with the "vile" person; and the Philadelphian era Christians were those who refused to go along.

Let me try to make this clearer:

1) The **first** fulfillment of Daniel 11:31-32 applied to the **physical Temple** in Jerusalem. That Temple was **defiled** in 168 B.C., long **before Jesus Christ's ministry**. But the Temple itself was only **thrown down after Jesus Christ's ministry**; it was thrown down in 68-70 A.D. by the Romans.

2) Converted Church of God members are "the temple of God". That's what Paul plainly tells us in 1 Corinthians 3:16.

Know you not that **you are the temple of God**, and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? (1 Corinthians 3:16)

So do the prophecies from NT times onwards focus on **this** "temple", or will the prophecies be more concerned with a **physical temple that doesn't exist**? The Church of God exists right now. This "temple of God" exists right now. It doesn't somehow first have to be built. It is here. But a physical temple is not here! **A physical temple doesn't exist** right now.

3) Now consider the foolishness involved in looking for a physical temple. **Why** does another temple supposedly have to be built before Christ returns? Do you know? **The only reason a temple**

supposedly has to be built is so that it can then be defiled by some abomination of desolation. There is no other reason for needing another temple in our age.

Does it make sense to say: we need the Jews to build a temple **so that we have something that can be defiled**? If it wasn't for Jesus Christ's statement in Matthew 24:15 about the abomination of desolation, then nobody would expect a physical temple before Christ's second coming. We just need a temple to fulfill this Scripture; there is no other reason why we want to see some temple built. We don't care about **the impossibility of finding "some priests of the line of Aaron"** to function in that temple we want to see built. We just need a temple so that it can then be defiled.

4) We don't say: **maybe we have thus far misunderstood** what Jesus Christ is telling us in Matthew 24:15. Maybe that's why this verse includes the admonition **"whoso reads let him understand"** ... because we haven't understood correctly thus far. Since there **isn't** a physical temple in existence, and since "the temple of God" (the Church) **is** in existence, maybe this instruction in Matthew 24:15 is supposed to be applied to the "temple of God" that is in existence right now.

And that is exactly right.

5) So when the abomination of desolation occurred in the spiritual temple from 25-35 years ago now, then we were required "to flee" from that defiled and polluted "spiritual temple", i.e. **we were required to flee from the Worldwide Church of God.** And that's what we did.

6) Now a lot of people who saw that Worldwide was introducing heresies **did not flee!** They stayed even as Worldwide introduced more and more appalling teachings. Those people didn't understand Matthew 24:15. And **because they didn't flee, therefore their minds were destroyed.** I personally was in contact with people who could see the heresies that were being introduced, but who **refused to flee!**

THERE WILL NOT BE A PHYSICAL TEMPLE

The abomination of desolation is not going to be set up in some physical building called "a temple". The Jews will not be building another Temple!

When we read the account in Daniel, then we need to "understand" that before Jesus Christ's second coming it will be **the spiritual temple** that will be defiled and thrown down.

Recall that Jesus Christ did not say that the Temple would be "destroyed". He said that it would be "thrown down". The stones were only thrown down but not destroyed. They are lying around for archaeologists to discover.

Notice what Jesus Christ actually said:

Jesus answered and said unto them, **Destroy** this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and will You rear it up in three days? (John 2:19-20)

The Greek word here translated as "destroy" is "**luo**". But "luo" does not mean "to destroy"! It means "to loosen". And if the Temple was "loosened", then it would obviously be "thrown down".

There are **11 different Greek words** in the New Testament which are all at times translated as "destroy". Those 11 words are: apollumi, exolothreuo, portheo, kathaireo, katargeo, phtheiro, olothreuo,

oithora, diaphtheiro, luo, and kataluo. Not all of them really mean "to destroy". The word that really means to destroy in the sense of "doing away with" is "katargeo".

This is illustrated, for example, in 1 Corinthians 15:26 ("The last enemy *that* shall be **destroyed** (**katargeo**) is death") and in 2 Thessalonians 2:8 ("And then shall that Wicked One be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall **destroy** (**katargeo**) with the brightness of His coming"). Both death and that Wicked One (i.e. the beast and also the false prophet) will really be "destroyed" by being done away with completely.

Now none of the above Greek words are of importance in our context. The point is simply that there were perfectly good Greek words available to convey the meaning of "destroy". But the word "luo" is not one of them.

So we have a mistranslation in John 2:19. There it should really read "**throw down** this temple, and in three days I will raise it up".

This was also correctly understood by the people who mocked Jesus Christ when He was dying on the stake. But our translators also mistranslated this statement. In Matthew 27:40 these people said: "You that **destroy** (**kataluo**) the temple ...". "Kataluo" also means "to loosen, to throw down". A correct translation of Matthew 27:40 should read "You that **throw down** the temple ...".

You may be wondering why I am making an issue over "thrown down" versus "destroyed". Here is what we need to understand.

The physical Temple was defiled in 168 B.C., well before Jesus Christ's ministry; and it was then not destroyed, but thrown down in 68-70 A.D., well after Christ's ministry. There was a period of over 200 years between the original abomination of desolation and the throwing down of the Temple.

The spiritual Temple was defiled very soon after Mr. Herbert Armstrong's death in 1986. But it was not really "thrown down" until about 10 years later, when God's people fled in very large numbers from those defiled doctrines that had been introduced. Note that the spiritual temple was not "destroyed"! It was only "thrown down", for God's people to regroup in different organizations. But with the spiritual temple it was also a case of there being around 10 years between the defiling and the subsequent throwing down.

So what is "the abomination of desolation"? It is **the abominable teachings that were introduced into the spiritual temple of God**. They defiled the Church of God!

I will have more to say about this abomination in Part 3 of this series of articles. This will have to suffice for now.

So understand that there will be no physical temple built in Jerusalem before Jesus Christ returns, and there will be no priesthood performing animal sacrifices. And all those people who expect a temple to be built in Jerusalem before Christ's return are waiting for something that will never happen.

Part 2 of this series will continue with verse 16 in Matthew 24.

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