
Question Time: What is the Abomination of Desolation?

--- by Elder Aaron Smith

It is the same as God's wrath (D&C 85:23b). God promised the Israelites many things if they would remember to keep His law. He also told them of things that would occur if they forgot Him.

“And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me; Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat. And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, And I will bring the land into desolation; and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you; and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.” -Leviticus 26:27-33



This scripture is AFTER the Lord would have tried four times to bring the Israelites to repentance by the things they suffered. Because of the abominations which the Israelites would commit, God would bring desolation upon them. This is validated by II Kings 22, II Chronicles 30, Ezra 9, Isaiah 17 and Jeremiah 25. Because the Israelites would forget their God and not heed His calls to repentance, then God would bring this last call to repentance upon them. It was a punishment, but as always, Gods punishments are designed to bring us closer to Him.

There are times when God has tied this term to the temple (Ezra 9, Psalms 74:3 & Ezekiel 7:27). Many make the mistake that without a temple, this cannot occur. The Book of Mormon tells us differently. The people of Nephi named a land after God's wrath, "The Land of Desolation" because of what they found there. This was in response to the Jaredites' rejection of the God of "this land." Because of their rejection and failing to repent despite repeated warnings from Ether, God destroyed them (Ether 1-5). They were not the first to have this happen (see the story of Noah).

We also have the example of the Babylonians and the Chaldeans. God took away their power and destroyed them as well (Isaiah 47) because of their arrogance and pride. One of the key things in this chapter is the time-frame given – it would occur within ONE day. This is consistent with how God speaks of the fall of Babylon at the end of the world (Revelation 18:17).

We know that God's wrath, or His making desolate because of our abominations, will occur in the last days (Psalms 46:8, Isaiah 24:12, 64:10, D&C 85:23b, D&C 83:24a-b). In fact, before Christ comes, it will be like the days of Noah.

In the Bible, Jeremiah was the first prophet to use the terms "abominable" and "desolation" together. Ezekiel also uses these two terms together. Then Daniel, shortly after those prophecies were given, speaks of the Gentiles treading underfoot the sanctuary of God. Jesus references this in Matthew 24. Daniel MacGregor has described the fulfillment of these two time frames with the coming forth of the Restoration in 1830 in the book, "A Marvelous Work and A Wonder." Jesus' reference to the coming desolation was about the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

As always, though, there are types and shadows in all these things. God cleansed the temple because of the burning of incense to false Gods (Jeremiah 44). God is going to bring a fire in the last days to cleanse the earth (Revelation 18:8, 19:12). Just as there was a physical Israel in the days prior to Jesus, there is now a spiritual Israel in the last days (America – the place where the church was restored). Just as God delivered Israel from the Babylonians/Chaldeans, God will deliver His saints in the last days from Babylon (Revelation 17-9). In Noah's time God's judgment was with water, in the last days it will be by fire.

In light of the coming judgment upon the all those who will not repent – the call today is the same as it has been since the inception of the gospel to the earth – REPENT (D&C 6:4b, 10:4b). Those who have been repentant have always been delivered in the midst of the judgment (Israel from Egypt, Daniel from Jerusalem, the early Christians from Jerusalem, Noah from the flood, etc.).

Solomon in all of his wisdom expresses it this way, "Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the **desolation of the wicked**, when it cometh. For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken." (Proverbs 3:25)

[For a more complete study of this concept, please visit our website www.oqrb.org and read/download the complete article under "Resources."]