

## A Major Sign of the End – *An Abomination*

### Introduction

In Christ's Olivet discourse, His prophecies regarding the end of Jerusalem and its temple AND the end of the world, He said:

1. "When ye shall see Jerusalem **compassed with armies**," then flee – you know **desolation** is near (Luke 21:20).
2. "When ye shall see the **abomination of desolation**, spoken by Daniel the prophet, **standing where it ought not**," then flee (Mark 13:14-15).
3. "When ye therefore shall see the **abomination of desolation** spoken by Daniel the prophet, **stand in the holy place**" – then flee (Matthew 24:15-16).

The "holy place" is identified as God's church (temple, sanctuary) (Acts 21:28, Psalm 24:3). Something horrible comes into the church.



"Jerusalem," in end-time prophecy, refers to **God's people**.

- In Revelation 12:22 the "city of the living God" is the "heavenly Jerusalem" (Hebrews 12:22). The city of my God is "New Jerusalem" (Revelation 3:12).
- God calls that city His bride (Revelation 21:9-10, 19:7-9), which refers to all the saints.
- When it says in Revelation 11:2 that the Gentiles will tread underfoot the holy city for 42 months, it means that God's people will be persecuted for that period of time.<sup>1</sup>

Some "force" that is an **abomination**, which appears to be under the force of arms or civil power, surrounds them and comes into the Christian Church.

- From our previous studies, **the antichrist is the leader in this evil**.
- For the rest of the story, we must go to Daniel, where the words "abomination" and "desolation" are used.

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<sup>1</sup> Beale, Gregory K.; *The New International Greek Testament Commentary; The Book of Revelation* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan – 1999), pp. 568-570.

## “Abomination” – meaning:

God uses this emotional word for something He hates. The divine judicial end is desolation – eternal ruin.

Different Hebrew and Greek lexicons describe this word: *shiggets* – H or *bdelugma* – G:

1. A foul thing – a detestable thing (*Thayer Lexicon*)
2. A horrible thing (*Louw-Nida Lexicon*)
3. Something sacrilegious that desecrates a sacred place (*UBS Greek Dictionary*)
4. That which is extremely hated or abhorred that is especially connected with the worship of the antichrist (*Friberg Lexicon*)

John even says that the antichrist himself will be worshiped (Revelation 13:4).

The antichrist does something horrible, detestable and sacrilegious against God within His church (and against God’s people).

- Neither Matthew, Mark nor Luke tells us **what this is**.
- But Matthew and Mark both say that we **can understand it** (Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14).
- They both say that we must go to Daniel for that discovery.

## Daniel Speaks

*“And arms shall stand on his part [legally forces its will], and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength [that ‘holy place’], and shall **take away the daily** [sacrifice], and **they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate**”* (Daniel 11:31).

*“And from the time that the **daily** [sacrifice] **shall be taken away**, and the **abomination that maketh desolate set up**, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days”* (Daniel 12:11).



Those are the key places in Daniel where these phrases are found. Notice also the words “*set up*” and “*place*.”

- The abomination is “*set up*” or “placed.”
- This refers to some legal move or law that is made.

The Hebrew word for these expressions is *natan* (H). This is used nearly 2000 times in the Old Testament with many meanings. Its overriding meaning here conveys the concept of “exchange.”

- Contextually, the **daily** is legally exchanged for the **abomination**.<sup>2</sup>
- **Who is behind this?** Daniel says a “vile person” (11:21). This individual plus his “armies” (11:31), a “king” (11:36), “king of the north” (11:40) – all different names for the antichrist.
- Daniel notes that this antichrist:
  1. Hates God’s “holy covenant” (Daniel 11:30)
  2. Works with those who have forsaken the covenant (Daniel 11:30)
  3. Corrupts others through flattery (Daniel 11:32)
  4. Magnifies himself above all gods (Daniel 11:36)
  5. Criticizes God himself (Daniel 11:36)
  6. Doesn’t regard women properly (Daniel 11:37) – nuns not allowed to lead or marry
  7. Loves material things like gold, silver, precious stones and lovely things (Daniel 11:38) (is the wealthiest institution in the world)
  8. Has a strange god that he acknowledges and gives glory to (Daniel 11:39) (Mary)

### **An Interpretation Issue – that is a Problem**

Between 175 and 164 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanes IV was the king over Syria (the Seleucid Empire) and a man of war. He captured Judah and sacrificed a pig in front of the temple of Jerusalem.

- This defiled the temple. **To the Jews, this was Daniel’s abomination.**
- A large Jewish family, the Maccabees, rose up and succeeded in defeating Antiochus.
- A major cleansing rite of that Jewish temple followed.

These events were so profound that the Maccabean family wrote books on them. They became part of the apocryphal books of many Bibles. But that information tainted numerous translations of the Bible, beginning with the Septuagint.

- This all led to a big problem.

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<sup>2</sup> Akadiana Research House, Wisemenn Research group, The Sumerian Classical Academy, London.  
[https://www.academia.edu/7471727/The\\_Biblical\\_Exegesis\\_Does\\_natan\\_mean\\_give\\_or\\_receive](https://www.academia.edu/7471727/The_Biblical_Exegesis_Does_natan_mean_give_or_receive)

- Many concluded that the antichrist was Antiochus Epiphanes IV – that Syrian king.
- In fact, much of the Christian world still believes that!



Our challenge: ***What does the Bible say?*** There are timing prophecies that tell us when this is to occur.

- The antichrist in Daniel’s prophecies relates to the “time of the end,” called the “appointed time” (Daniel 11:35; cf. 8:17, 19).
- Gabriel speaking (Daniel 12:4) and then Christ (Daniel 12:9) notes: The “time of the end” is at the time of God’s wrath (Daniel 8:17, 19), at a future time, referred to as *aharit* (related to Christ’s Second Coming) (Daniel 8:19).

***This is why the details of the prophecy are so important!*** (Daniel 8–12 is one continuous unit in Hebrew).

- In addition, Jesus already said that Daniel’s prophecy was for the time when He would come again (Matthew 24, Mark 13)! Important !!!

### **The “Abomination” – A Deeper Focus**

In so many places the Bible associates this abomination with God’s wrath. Its end always means ***nothing left – desolation.***

Wrath – major example:

*“And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the **cup of his indignation**; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb” (Revelation 14:9-10).*

End – “Desolation” – what God Means by this Word:

*“I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn [antichrist] spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his **body destroyed, and given to the burning flame**” (Daniel 7:11).*

*“And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These **both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone**” (Revelation 19:20).*

*“And the devil that deceived them was **cast into the lake of fire and brimstone**, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Revelation 20:10).*

This all provokes a very important question: **What sin causes God to call it an “abomination”** that is so bad He has to destroy its adherents?

The clue is in Daniel 8. That’s where the end-time antichrist story really began (symbolized as a “*little horn*”). Here it is:

- *“And an host [his army – his followers] was given him against the daily [sacrifice] by reason of **transgression** [that’s the sin], and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practiced, and prospered” (Daniel 8:12).*
- *“Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily [sacrifice], and the **transgression of desolation**, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?” (Daniel 8:13).*

That’s it! That sin casts truth to the ground. The antichrist prospers. God’s church and people are persecuted.

- That sin translated “*transgression*” – or often “rebellion” – will lead to “*desolation*.”
- The Hebrew word for “*transgression*” is *pesha*. And here in prophecy it is *be•pesha* – “**the** sin.” It means rebellion against God and that **it is** a sin that is well known!

*Pesha* is one of **three main words** for “*sin*” that God’s people must eliminate (Daniel 9:24) before righteousness reigns.

1. “*sin*” (*het*) – of ignorance, inadvertently, forgetfulness or result of failure to carry out some duty. Today we might call it a mistake.
2. “*iniquity*” (*avon*) – sins committed deliberately, giving in to temptation, usually against another.
3. “rebellion” (*pesha*) – deliberate decision to break one of God’s commandments. A breach in keeping the covenant – it is against God.

It is presumption: “God won’t mind.”

***Pesha* (rebellion) is the sin that God calls an abomination!**

What does it really mean?

1. Deliberately going against something important to God.

## 2. Rebellion against God's **law, authority and covenant.**

It is really a rebellion against God's character. We say His character is **love** – and it is. The Bible defines that love in a very special way.

Christ came to our world to represent the character of God as it is represented in His holy law – for His law is a transcript of His character.

- John, that beloved disciple, said: *"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law"* (1 John 3:4).
- "But – didn't love take the place of that law?" John wrote that after the Cross.

The principles within God's law are repeated over and over in the New Testament (Matthew 19:18, Luke 18:20, Romans 13:9, Galatians 5:19, James 2:11).

- **How do we know what love is?** Our natures are so sinful, we misinterpret what love is! Yes, the life of Christ is our **living example**. The Ten Commandments define love for God and man – it fills in the details.
- Jesus **never** said that the law was changed! Nothing in the New Testament indicates a change in anything except the Mosaic Laws. In fact, as part of His example, He kept His Father's commandments and He connected love with the commandments: *"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love"* (John 15:10).
- God is saying through the Ten Commandments: **"That's what love really means!"**

Let's look at this more deeply for a moment:



*"The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; **he will magnify the law, and make it honourable**" (Isaiah 42:21).*

*"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: **I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil**. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled"* (Matthew 5:17 – New Testament).

- "Fulfill" (*pleromai* – G) means to bring it to its highest meaning (*Louw-Nida Lexicon*), give it its true meaning (*Friberg Lexicon*), to obey it as it should be (*Thayer Lexicon*).
- Some use this word to try to justify that the law was done away with. But a little later in this very chapter Jesus talks of the vital meaning of the Decalogue.
- Scholars have addressed this verse in great depth:

1. This confirms that we must obey the law.<sup>3</sup>
2. Christ is bringing the law to its intended purpose.<sup>4</sup>
3. This chapter reveals the permanency of the law.<sup>5</sup>

Even Paul noted: *“For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified”* (Romans 2:13).

Also, James said: *“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves”* (James 1:22).

Those are comments after the Cross as well!



Jesus asked us to go to Daniel for the rest of the end-time story, where it talks about the **abomination** and **desolation**. We have noted that the Greek word for “transgression,” which is that abomination **in Daniel**, is *be•pesha* (the sin).

**What ONE law or imperative embodies God’s (1) authority, His (2) covenant and His (3) law (pesha)? Here it is:**

*“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it”*  
(Exodus 20:8-11).

**Let’s analyze this Fourth Commandment:**

1. It says “remember.” What does that mean? The Sabbath was given to man at Creation (Genesis 2:1-3)! The Bible says that God *“sanctified it.”* It was set apart and made holy. It was given approximately 2100 years before the call of Abraham. It was God’s gift to man 2400 plus years before God organized the Jewish nation! God is saying here in the Decalogue: “Remember” – it is a special **set aside time** – right from Creation.
2. The *“seventh day”* was to be the Sabbath. Archeological records go back to very close to the flood (approx. 2350 B.C.), addressing the Mesopotamian people – likely descendants of Ham (e.g., Nimrod and the “tower of Babel”). The weekly cycle has never been broken. Even when Christ died, He rested in the tomb during the seventh day (John 19:31).

<sup>3</sup> Keener, Craig S.; *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Grand Rapids, MI), p. 177.

<sup>4</sup> Turner, David L.; *Matthew* (Baker Academic; Grand Rapids, MI), p. 162.

<sup>5</sup> Marshall, I. Howard, *The Gospel of Luke* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Grand Rapids, MI, 1978), p. 630).

3. It says that it is the "*Sabbath of the Lord thy God*"! That "time" belongs to God. It really is not man's, in which to do what he pleases. It is holy time. Regular work must be set aside during this period of time. It is a weekly date God has set up with us.
4. It was written in "**stone**" by the "**finger of God**" (Exodus 31:18, Deuteronomy 9:10).
5. God's **authority** is within the Sabbath commandment. "Remember," He's the **Creator!!!** "I made you. I even bought you back with the 'price' of my blood (I Corinthians 6:20, 7:23). And I am your **re-creator**/sanctifier (Exodus 31 below)."
6. Those Ten Commandments are called God's **covenant**: "*And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments*" (Exodus 34:28).

Those tables of stone were placed in the ark which was housed in the Most Holy Place in the Tabernacle. It was called: "**the ark of the covenant of the LORD**" (Deuteronomy 10:8).

### There's even more!

*"Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for **it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you....** Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. **It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever:** for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed. And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God" (Exodus 31:13-18).*

**Amazing as it may seem** – one of the characteristics of the antichrist is given in Daniel 7:25:

*"And he shall speak great words against the most High [**blasphemy**], and shall wear out the saints of the most High [**persecution**], and think to change times and laws [**God's laws and times are changed**]: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time [**that's the 3½ years we already studied in Daniel 12:7**]."*

The early church kept the seventh-day Sabbath. In the next study, we'll show exactly how the seventh-day Sabbath was changed to the first-day sabbath.

**You may be "protesting" in your heart:** "The Cross did away with the Sabbath!" or "Christ fulfilled the law, therefore, it is no longer binding!"



## The New Testament Sabbath (it is there!)

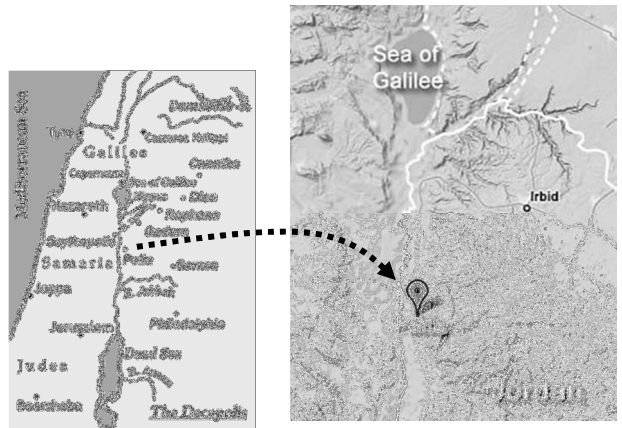
First – there is no verse in the New Testament that says the Ten Commandments were changed or that the Sabbath was done away with. In fact, the Decalogue is the only part of the Bible that God personally wrote.

Amazing as it may seem, when Jesus was giving that incredible end-time prophetic outline in Matthew 24, in His counsel as to when and where to flee, He said: “*Pray ye that your flight be not ... on the Sabbath day*” (Matthew 24:20). That wouldn’t occur until 70 A.D.

- The word for Sabbath here is *sabbaton* (G – singular), which represents the seventh-day Sabbath.
- That word may refer to the sacred feast days or even the week in general, but in those cases they are always used with qualifiers.
- For those who have Greek references and would like a study exercise:  
[Gingrich lexicon]: **1. Sabbath**, the seventh day of the week, held sacred by the Jews—**a.** sing. Mt 12:8; Mk 2:27f; Lk 6:7, 9; J 5:9f, 18; Ac 1:12; 13:27, 44.—**b.** pl., of more than one Sabbath Ac 17:2.—**ta.** sa,bbata for a single Sabbath day Mt 28:1a; Mk 1:21; 2:23f; Lk 4:16; 13:10; Ac 16:13.—**2. week**—**a.** sing. Mk 16:2 v.l., 9; Lk 18:12; 1 Cor 16:2.—**b.** pl., of a single week Mt 28:1b; Mk 16:2; Lk 24:1; J 20:1, 19; Ac 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2 v.l.\* [pg 178]

Historically, it appears that Jerusalem and the temple had been destroyed (70 A.D.) *by the time the book of Hebrews was written.*

- Christians, heeding the warning of Christ in His Olivet discourse, had fled Jerusalem and Judea to Pella, northeast of the Jordan River, in a mountainous area.
- Canaan or Palestine was to have been their “resting place” – but a new era came to the Jewish people.
- Paul, likely the author of the Book of Hebrews, gave wonderful hope and encouragement to the new Christian believers – to all those who were scattered abroad.
  - “*Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest [the rest in Jesus – Matthew 11:28] still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it*” (Christ’s saving message).
  - “*Now we who have believed enter that rest*” (Hebrews 4:3 – NIV).



Then – as if in their discouragement they might forget:

- “*There remains, then, a **Sabbath-rest** for the people of God*” (Hebrews 4:9 – NIV).

THAT “Sabbath-rest” is *sabbatismos* (G). It has a strong emphasis: You still have the seventh-day Sabbath Rest.<sup>6</sup>

Christ said that He was the “*Lord of the Sabbath*” (Mark 2:28), alluding directly to His setting aside that day as holy because it was when He “*rested*” from creation (Genesis 2:3-4). Christ said also that it was made for man (clearly to follow His example) (Mark 2:27)!

- It was man’s time to “*rest*” from the usual labor of the week.
- It was sacred time to “remember” Him as the Creator.
- “***As his custom was***, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read (Luke 4:16).

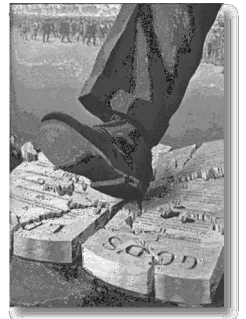
What reflects God’s character the most in the Bible?

1. The life of Christ. How?
2. By bringing those commandments, a reflection of God’s character, to their most elevated purpose.

### **Back to the Future**

From our study we’ve seen the Sabbath commandment was broken. ***Even more***, its rejection will be an end-time sign or issue by some law against it.

- Jesus said in Matthew and Mark: Go to Daniel for this end-time story.
- God uses harsh language regarding the breaking of this law.
- “*And from the time that the daily [sacrifice] shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days*” (Daniel 12:11 again).



What about the “*daily*” being taken away?

- The “*daily*” represents the Sabbath.
- A false Sabbath is “*set up*” in exchange for the true Sabbath.

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<sup>6</sup> Ellingsworth, Paul (Translation Consultant, United Bible Society); *NIGTC, The Epistle to the Hebrews* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI; 1993), p. 255.

You may be thinking: ***“I have to work on the seventh day, Saturday!”***

- We have a challenge.
- Our biggest concern is, “What does the Bible say?”
- What is truth?
- What has God asked us to do, especially as we approach His soon coming?

Someday, somehow, sometime very soon, you will have a decision to make.

- Keeping the Sabbath is a very important topic.
- In fact, it is an issue that eternity pivots on!

Jesus said it means:

- Following Him – or
- Following the antichrist

We leave this study with words from Peter:

*“Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).*

Next study: How did Sunday come to be the common worship day?

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