

CHAPTER TWO

The Abomination of Desolation

Jesus made remarks about the end of the age, and events to unfold in Jerusalem and in Judea, Matthew 24. (See also Mark 13 and Luke 21.) In Matt 24:15 Jesus gave us a crucially important statement. It is a critical warning to all of God's people.

Matt 24:15

Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation spoken through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, the one reading should understand . . .

What did Jesus mean by an abomination of desolation?

The Greek words are βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως, *bdelugma tees erimuseous*, literally "abomination of desolation."

Many erudite scholars and false prophets proposed that this was an idol placed in the temple. The idea is suggested by the phrase "in the holy place." Many came to believe that the "holy place" was the temple, without giving regard to the possibility that it could just as easily mean the city of Jerusalem or the land of Judea. This concept was based on historical interpretation, not on future prediction. Godless minds see holy forecasts as historical allusions. The historical view went back to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and his defilement of the Jerusalem temple when he attempted to place idols within. That was the only event in history that seemed to fit. The idol was the abomination. This idea then led to the parallel idea of sacrilege. The sacrilege would be the idol, the abomination. Modern godless translators then imposed this interpretation upon the translation, as we find in RSV. The phrase "desolating sacrilege" became a substitute for "abomination of desolation," thus eliminating the literal significance of the warning by Jesus.

For purposes of discussion I offer here the explanation found in "*Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*."

Abomination of Desolation

A despicable misuse of the Temple of the Lord during a time of great trouble — an event foretold by the prophet Daniel.

The phrase is found in Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14 as a quotation from Daniel 11:31 and 12:11. In Daniel, the words mean "the abomination that makes desolate."

In other words, Daniel prophesied that the Temple would be used for an “abominable” purpose at some time in the future.

As a result, God’s faithful people would no longer worship there — so great would be their moral revulsion, contempt, and abhorrence at the sacrilege — and the Temple would become “desolate.”

According to the verses in the gospels, a similar misuse of the Temple would take place in the future. This would show that a time of great trouble was coming on Judea. People should take warning and flee to the mountains, Matt. 24:16; Mark 13:14.

Some believe Daniel’s prophecy was fulfilled about 165 B. C. when Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), Greek ruler of Syria, polluted the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem by sacrificing a pig on the holy altar. This sacrificing of an UNCLEAN pig was the worst kind of abomination that could have taken place. These people also believe the prophecy in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark was fulfilled when the Romans sacked the Jewish Temple about A. D. 70. But others believe just as strongly that neither of these prophecies has yet been completely fulfilled. They insist that the abomination of desolation refers to the idolatrous image or the “man of sin” who will take over God’s place in the Temple and make people bow down and worship him, 2 Thes. 2:3-4. According to this interpretation, this will be the final act of sacrilege that marks the beginning of the end time.

These interpretations depend upon cold assumptions, taken without textual foundation.

Jesus did not use the word *Temple*. His phrase was *holy place*. Temple is an inference and assumption. The context shows that Jesus meant Jerusalem and Judea, a place holy to Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

Jesus did not use the word *sacrilege*. His word was *desolation*. Desolation means destruction or complete despoliation.

Jesus did not use the word *idol*.

He did not use the word *pig*.

Without a proper context understanding could not come. If Jesus spoke about the future, then no person on earth could understand what he meant until events unfolded to bring recognition.

The godless view failed to adhere to the literal significance of the words. An abomination is a detestable object or act that is disgusting or revolting. It is hated. Desolation is exactly that, a complete despoliation or destruction. What object would bring complete destruction and would be loathed by men?

How could an idol or other sacrilege bring such catastrophe?

Matt 24:19

And alas for those who are with child and for those who give suck in those days!

The remark about pregnant women and nursing mothers helps to identify the abomination. This extreme event will cause bereavement at childbirth and for small suckling children. They will be subject to severe harm or death because of the abomination.

Matt 24:21-22

For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. And if those days had not been shortened, no human being would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.

Clearly, the events to unfold from this abomination will bring great suffering all around the world. The dire circumstances are so drastic no human being will survive if God does not limit use of the abomination.

When put together, these remarks help to solve this puzzle. A mystery was kept since the days of Jesus. Information was given to man but it could not be recognized until now. In the light of social developments we can understand why. It would have been impossible for anyone in prior generations to understand what is truly meant by the abomination of desolation. They could speculate year after year, generation after generation, and not know. They could devise many ingenious explanations but would fail to understand. But we today, in the latter part of the twentieth century, can now recognize what Jesus meant. He described nuclear weapons. He told us about a device that is loathsome, and which can bring complete destruction, a true abomination of desolation.

We can see the drastic conditions for survival.

Matt 24:16-18

... then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; let him who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house; and let him who is in the field not turn back to take his mantle.

Those who are in Judea should flee to the mountains because they will be destroyed if they remain. Those who are with child will experience woe because atomic radiation will cause abortive births and deformed babies. Those who give suck will have chemical radioactive levels concentrated in their milk, causing greater affliction. Even more important, if God does not take a hand to shorten these days and limit radioactive levels no human being will survive. But for the sake of his chosen people he will shorten these days. The passages show that his people will remain on the planet. If he did not care for us he would not provide such warnings.

The abomination of desolation is also mentioned in Dan 11:31 and 12:11. This is at the time of the end, Dan 11:35, 12:4, 9, 13, 14, when those who have understanding will instruct many, Dan 11:33. This corresponds to the end of the age specified in Matt 24:3.

The manner in which the translators were influenced by the historic interpretation of this passage may be seen in the *New American Standard Version*.

And forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation.

The *Revised Standard Version* offers this:

Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the continual burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate.

One uses "regular sacrifice"; the other uses "continual burnt offering."

KJV says they will "pollute the sanctuary of strength" instead of "desecrate the sanctuary fortress" or "profane the temple and fortress."

But the latter explanation was merely borrowed from traditional notions of a human figure somehow defiling the Temple. Little did anyone realize that Jesus meant an inanimate object, and not some human figure.

With the advent of nuclear weapons this passage took on an altogether different possibility. Now it had clear implications. The *abomination* still was a despicable or loathsome object. The *desolation* was now easily nuclear destruction. The interpretation is simple, without any assumptions about historic or future personalities defiling the Temple.

Thus we have understanding of his warning to get out of Judea and flee to the mountains. If God's people among the Jews remain in Judea, in the modern state of Israel, they will be destroyed by nuclear missiles. And we can now recognize how his remarks confirm the passage in Joel 2.

How simple it is when fulfillment comes. Until it comes mankind can only engage in wild speculations.

We can now return to Daniel and see those passages in a completely different light.

Unfortunately, as in other critical passages, the translators could not recognize the allusion, and added words to make sense of it in their eyes. The phrase *burnt offering* has no foundation in the text. It is assumed from similar passages in the Old Testament where the Hebrew phrase *olah tameed* means *burnt offering continual*. But the word *olah* is missing here.

A list of words in literal translation shows the following:

forces from him = forces from, out of, on account of
 shall appear = to stand, to remain
 and profane = to profane, to defile, to pollute, to desecrate
 the temple = a sacred place, a sanctuary, a holy place and fortress
 = a place or means of safety, a protection, a refuge
 and shall take away = to turn aside, to depart

the continual burnt offering = continuity, perpetuity, continual
 And they shall set up = to give, to put, to set, to bestow,
 the abomination = a detestable thing, an abominable thing, an abomination
 that makes desolate = to be desolate, to be appalled, a horror-causer

We can see that the word *temple* is not in the text. *Fortress* could mean Judea (or modern Israel) as the place of refuge, or safety, or protection, sought so avidly by modern Jews.

But more importantly, the phrase *and shall take away the continual burnt offering*, is only three Hebrew words, *shall remove the continual*. Burnt offering has nothing to do with this passage. That the passage implies a burnt offering is borrowed from the use of the word *tameed* in other OT passages where it is found along with the word *olah*. But what is meant by *continual*? It has no modifier. Could the phrase mean *to take away continuity*, or *to remove perpetuity*? Could it mean the removal of the continuity of Jewish identity?

More realistically, proper translation of the verse provides:

“Forces from him shall appear and profane the holy place and the refuge, and shall remove the continuity, and they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate.”

The placing of the abomination will cause defilement of the Holy Land. In 12:11 the Hebrew verb does not mean a “setting up”; it means a “using” of the abomination of desolation. Those who are in Judea shall fall by the edge of the sword and shall be led away captive (shall flee) into all nations. This is confirmed by other remarks by Jesus.

Luke 21:20-26 But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it; for these are days of vengeance, to fulfil all that is written. . . . For great distress shall be upon the earth and wrath upon this people; they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led captive among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Jerusalem will not be safe.

The “setting up” of the abomination of desolation is a most crucial clue given for our benefit. Since the 1970’s the state of Israel has possessed nuclear bombs. Refer to *Time Magazine* for April 12, 1976, *How Israel Got the Bomb*. This fact was confirmed by former President Jimmy Carter on the ABC news program, *Close Up: The Fire Unleashed*, broadcast the evening of Thursday, June 6, 1985. This news was leaked earlier to dissuade Arab nations from attacks

upon Israel. Those loathsome objects, those abominations, now stand in the holy place, in Judea. If God's people among the Jews do not flee they will be destroyed. God is beginning to work evil at the city called by his name. As he told us plainly,

Jer 25:7 You have not hearkened unto me, says the LORD, that you might provoke me to anger with the works of your hands to your own harm.

We built those loathsome objects. They are the works of our hands. We brought this judgment upon ourselves. Nuclear warfare will erupt. The world will be baptized in fire. If God does not shorten these days no human being will survive.

Jesus told us plainly, but how many understood:

Luke 12:49-51 I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled! I have a baptism to be baptized with and how I am constrained until it is accomplished! Do you think I have come to give peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division . . .

For two thousand years people thought Jesus meant a spiritual baptism. Most modern interpreters still see this passage in that light. But the words show that Jesus did not mean a spiritual baptism; he meant literally that he came to cast fire on the earth. Would a great baptism in spiritual fire bring division among the people of the earth? Would he say in the same breath that he came to give us spiritual fire but no peace? He meant true literal fire. And how he felt constrained until it was accomplished; he wanted it over and done with. Refer also to Isa 42:14-16.

Many passages in the Bible tell us of the consequences of those abominations.

When people see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, in Jerusalem and Judea, those living there should flee to the mountains. They should hurry; they should not worry about their personal possessions nor about extra clothing. They should quickly leave. They should also hope that their flight is not in winter; without proper shelter or protection they may suffer and die from the cold.

(A warning not to flee on the sabbath makes no sense. Under grave danger of death we would not be concerned about sabbath travel. Witness modern Jewish and Christian sabbath travel. The phrase probably was inserted by an early editor who wished all to observe strict Jewish laws on sabbath travel.)

Although some may feel Jesus was warning of the coming destruction of Jerusalem by Roman armies in 70 AD the context is clearly the end of the age.

Furthermore, whom is he warning? Hardly unbelievers; they would not heed such warnings. The warnings must be for all those who truly believe in God. Are they Christian Gentiles? Are they Jews? Are they both? Who are God's chosen people, his elect?

It is crucially important to understand that these repeated warnings in prophecy, both in the Old Testament and in the New, show that no one is saved from the tribulation of fire in a so-called mysterious Rapture. Interpretation of prophecy as a means of avoiding life-and-death decisions is in direct contradiction to these exhortations by Jesus. Such false prophecy is a perversion of truth.

If God's people are saved in a Rapture why is Jesus concerned about his elect fleeing from Jerusalem?

We could devise different ingenious explanations. For example, his elect are enraptured away but they do not want the earth to be completely destroyed; they want it to be saved; they do not want to see all flesh perish. For the sake of those who must remain on the planet he shortens the days, even though the elect are taken away. Or perhaps these elect are converted Jews who remain on the planet but who need protection from complete annihilation.

The true reality is that Jesus shortens the days because all his people, his elect, both Christian Gentile and Jew, remain on the planet. Those who are taken away after the baptism of fire are a small portion; they will be used in a special program for the future rehabilitation of this world. God could not bring such future rehabilitation unless the majority of his people remain here. Refer to my book, *Our Celestial Visitors*.

Jesus' words in Matthew 24 are in full agreement with Joel; the two passages are perfectly compatible with one another. However, the statement in Joel 2 is broader in scope, not limited to Jewish residents of Judea. "Among the survivors" means those people called by the LORD anywhere around the globe.

Jer 31:1-2 "At that time," says the LORD, "I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people." Thus says the LORD: "The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness; when Israel sought for rest . . ."

His people fled to the wilderness. Afterwards, after the great tribulation, when he renews the earth, he will bring them back to the Promised Land.

The fact of an unusual period of the modern state of Israel is also indicated by other New Testament passages.

Luke 21:20-22

But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it; for these are days of vengeance, to fulfil all that is written.

Rev 11:2-3

But do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample over the holy city for forty-two months. And I will grant my two witnesses power to prophesy for one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.

This is a highly important prophecy. While we may debate the literal designation of 1,260 days, (since some early Christian editor may have transformed the numbers to suit his notions), or use of the term "sackcloth," (probably meaning informal dress), the events show when Jews should make their decisions to escape.

Baptism In Fire

Baptism of the world by fire is stated many places.

Jer 51:58 Thus says the LORD of hosts: The broad wall of Babylon shall be leveled to the ground and her high gates shall be burned with fire. The peoples labor for nought, and the nations weary themselves only for fire.

Hos 8:14 For Israel has forgotten his Maker, and built palaces; and Judah has multiplied fortified cities; but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour his strongholds.

Amos 2:4-5 Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment; because they have rejected the law of the LORD, and have not kept his statutes, but their lies have led them astray, after which their fathers walked. So I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the strongholds of Jerusalem."

God would not provide these warnings if he did not desire his people to use the information, to make decisions, and to act for survival.

Isa 45:20-25 "Assemble yourselves and come, draw near together, you survivors of the nations! They have no knowledge who carry about their wooden idols, and keep on praying to a god that cannot save. Declare and present your case; let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the LORD? And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me. "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. By myself I have sworn, from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness a word that shall not return: 'To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.' "Only in the LORD, it shall be said of

me, are righteousness and strength; to him shall come and be ashamed, all who were incensed against him. In the LORD all the offspring of Israel shall triumph and glory.”

Clouds and Thick Darkness

Time and time again the same images are invoked.

Isa 29:5-6 In an instant, suddenly, you will be visited by the LORD of hosts, with thunder and with earthquake and great noise, with whirlwind and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire.

Isa 5:30 And if one look to the land, behold, darkness and distress. And the light is darkened by its clouds.

God asked his messengers to declare the judgment. Those messengers came in days of old, and they come today. How many will heed?

Joel 2:1-2 Blow the trumpet in Zion! Sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness.

Isa 28:22 Now therefore do not scoff, lest your bonds be made strong. I have heard a decree of destruction from the Lord God of hosts upon the whole land.

Isa 28:19 From the time that it goes forth it will take you; for morning by morning it will pass through, by day and by night. It will be sheer terror to understand the message.

How many, indeed, will heed? Certainly not those who have their hearts and their hopes centered in the secular and godless systems of this present world.

Bitter Waters

When the nuclear holocaust is let loose the waters of the earth will be contaminated with radiation. They will turn to bitter wormwood; many will die because of the bitterness of the waters.

Jer 9:15 Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Behold, I will feed this people with wormwood, and give them poisonous water to drink.’

Jer 23:15 Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets: 'Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and give them poisoned water to drink; for from the prophets of Jerusalem ungodliness has gone forth into all the land.'

Rev 8:10-11 The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the fountains of water. The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died of the water, because it was made bitter.

Baldness On All Heads

Atomic radiation causes hair to fall out.

Ezek 7:16-19 And if any survivors escape, they will be on the mountains, like doves of the valleys, all of them moaning, every one over his iniquity. All hands are feeble, and all knees weak as water. They gird themselves in sackcloth, and horror covers them; shame is upon all faces, and baldness upon all heads. They cast their silver into the streets, and their gold is like an unclean thing; their silver and gold are not able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD; they cannot satisfy their hunger or fill their stomachs with it. For it was the stumbling block of their iniquity.

Why will they be on the mountains?

Radioactive debris will fill the atmosphere. As it filters down from the sky it will concentrate in the lower elevations, in the valleys, and on the plains.

Men and women will be clothed in sackcloth (rags). Who will harvest cotton and wool? Who will spin and weave? Who will sew and bind? There will be no factories, no railroads, no highways, no trucks, no warehouses, no stores. There will be no hospitals, no medical supplies, no doctors to serve. All will be destroyed.

The pride of men and women will be laid low. How awesome it really is:

Isa 3:18-26 In that day the Lord will take away the finery of the anklets, the headbands, the crescents, the pendants, the bracelets, the scarfs, the headdresses, the armllets, the sashes, the perfume boxes, the amulets, the signet rings and nose rings, the festal robes, the mantles, the cloaks, the handbags, the garments of gauze, the linen garments, the turbans, and the veils. Instead of perfume there will be rotteness; instead of a girdle, a rope; instead of well-set hair, baldness; instead of a rich robe, a

girding of sackcloth; instead of beauty, shame. Your men shall fall by the sword and your mighty men in battle. And her gates shall lament and mourn; ravaged, she shall sit upon the ground.

The indictment is against Jerusalem and Judea.

Isa 22:12-13 In that day the Lord GOD of hosts called to weeping and mourning, to baldness and girding with sackcloth . . .

Isa 15:2-3 The daughter of Dibon has gone up to the high places to weep; over Nebo and over Med'eba Moab wails. On every head is baldness, every beard is shorn; in the streets they gird on sackcloth; on the housetops and in the squares every one wails and melts in tears.

Amos 8:10 I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; I will bring sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness on every head; I will make it like the mourning for an only son, and the end of it like a bitter day.

Rocks And Caves

When Jesus was making his way in that last journey to the Cross the women of Jerusalem wept over him.

Luke 23:27-30: And there followed him a great multitude of the people, and of women who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never gave suck!' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us'; and to the hills, 'Cover us.'"

Why would they ask for the hills to cover them? Why would they seek shelter among the mountains?

Shelter in the depth of the earth is the only sure protection against nuclear destruction.

The daughters of Jerusalem might bewail the crucifixion of Jesus because of its deep personal pain and hurt, but there was coming upon that city an event that would far outweigh the affliction of one human mortal.

We might resort to fanciful causes why the descendants of those women would sincerely wish they had never borne children, or why they would call on the hills and the mountains to cover them, but there is no need to seek elusive and mystical causes. There is one simple cause. That cause is nuclear destruction.

Jesus did not wish anyone to be in doubt. The future tribulation would far outweigh any trauma an individual might endure in his day, beyond compare.

In some places John's descriptions are explicit but, again, we have been blind to them.

Rev 6:12-17 When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale; the sky vanished like a scroll that is rolled up, and every mountain and island were removed from their place. Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the generals and the rich and the strong, and every one, slave and free, hid in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand before it?"

The image is vivid. A wind strikes a tree and the figs fall to the ground in a burst of broken fruit here, there, everywhere. In the vision stars fall from the sky as shaken by the winter gale, and burst into brilliant light here, there, everywhere. Nuclear bombs are miniature stars. When they are sent forth they will indeed fall from the sky. And when they strike they will burst into horrible destruction here, there, and everywhere.

Now the great men of the earth the kings, the generals, the rich and the strong, and every one, clerk and supervisor, manager and technician, will seek shelter in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They will cry out with fear at the great day of the Lord.

The people of Switzerland now have nuclear shelters in caves and among the rocks of the Alpine mountains. The citizens of that country have provided for every man, woman, and child. Norway also has huge fall-out shelters. The people of Russia and the United States also built shelters in caves and among the rocks of the mountains.

Scattered throughout the hills of Maryland and Virginia are large man-made caves to be used when nuclear war erupts. They are within easy distance of Presidential and defense centers in Washington, DC. Other large caves and shelters exist in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, the center of our national defense commands. The generals have already found shelter in these caves and among the rocks of the mountains. The kings are prepared to run to them at a moments notice. These rich and strong, certain chosen Senators and Representatives, elected business leaders and managers, their free servants and their slaves all will seek shelter at the threat of nuclear war.

When I first read this passage I was struck by the vivid reality of John's description. If one were to stand off in space and gaze at the earth from great distance one could easily witness to nuclear explosions. Those brilliant bursts

would look like miniature stars exploding upon the surface of the earth. They would fall here, there, and everywhere. What an awesome sight it truly must have been for John to witness such visions.

Many places we were told of that generation which would seek shelter among the caves, the rocks, and the mountains.

Hos 10:8 The high places of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed. Thorn and thistle shall grow up on their altars; and they shall say to the mountains, "Cover us," and to the hills, "Fall upon us."

Isa 2:19-21 And men shall enter the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground, from before the terror of the LORD, and from the glory of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth. In that day men will cast forth their idols of silver and their idols of gold, which they made for themselves to worship, to the moles and to the bats, to enter the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs, from before the terror of the LORD, and from the glory of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth.

Extremity of Judgment

God brings the judgment but men execute it upon themselves. Could anything be more merciful? Do men not bring their just deserts?

There will be no food; men and women will eat one another in their great affliction:

Isa 49:26 I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh, and they shall be drunk with their own blood as with wine. Then all flesh shall know that I am the LORD your Savior, and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

Isa 9:17-21 Therefore the Lord does not rejoice over their young men, and has no compassion on their fatherless and widows; for every one is godless and an evildoer, and every mouth speaks folly. For all this his anger is not turned away and his hand is stretched out still. For wickedness burns like a fire, it consumes briars and thorns; it kindles the thickets of the forest, and they roll upward in a column of smoke. Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts the land is burned, and the people are like fuel for the fire; no man spares his brother. They snatch on the right, but are still hungry, and they devour on the left, but are not satisfied; each devours his neighbor's flesh, Manasseh Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasseh, and together they are against Judah. For all this his anger is not turned away and his hand is stretched out still.

Jer 19:7-9 And in this place I will make void the plans of Judah and Jerusalem, and will cause their people to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hand of those who seek their life. I will give their dead bodies for food to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the earth. And I will make this city a horror, a thing to be hissed at; every one who passes by it will be horrified and will hiss because of all its disasters. And I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and their daughters, and every one shall eat the flesh of his neighbor in the siege and in the distress, with which their enemies and those who seek their life afflict them.

Lam 2:20-22 Look, O LORD, and see! With whom hast thou dealt thus? Should women eat their offspring, the children of their tender care? Should priest and prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord? In the dust of the streets lie the young and the old; my maidens and my young men have fallen by the sword; in the day of thy anger thou hast slain them, slaughtering without mercy. Thou didst invite as to the day of an appointed feast my terrors on every side; and on the day of the anger of the LORD none escaped or survived; those whom I dandled and reared my enemy destroyed.

Even as early as the time of Moses, when the people of Israel showed their stubbornness and failure to devote themselves to their Maker they were warned.

Deut 28:47-57 Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, by reason of the abundance of all things, therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness, and in want of all things; and he will put a yoke of iron upon your neck, until he has destroyed you. The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you do not understand, a nation of stern countenance, who shall not regard the person of the old or show favor to the young, and shall eat the offspring of your cattle and the fruit of your ground, until you are destroyed; who also shall not leave you grain, wine, or oil, the increase of your cattle or the young of your flock, until they have caused you to perish. They shall besiege you in all your towns, until your high and fortified walls, in which you trusted, come down throughout all your land; and they shall besiege you in all your towns throughout all your land, which the LORD your God has given you. And you shall eat the offspring of your own body, the flesh of your sons and daughters, whom the LORD your God has given you, in the siege and in the distress with which your enemies shall distress you. The man who is the most tender and delicately bred among you will grudge food to his brother, to the wife of his bosom, and to the last of the children who remain to him; so that he will not give to any of them any of the flesh of his children whom he is eating, because he has nothing left him, in the siege

and in the distress with which your enemy shall distress you in all your towns. The most tender and delicately bred woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot upon the ground because she is so delicate and tender, will grudge to the husband of her bosom, to her son and to her daughter, her afterbirth that comes out from between her feet and her children whom she bears, because she will eat them secretly, for want of all things, in the siege and in the distress with which your enemy shall distress you in your towns.

A Nation Afar Off

Time and again God spoke to us, but we were blind to his warnings. How many times did he speak? How many times did we reject his teachings? If only we had hearkened to his words!

Isa 5:26-30 He will raise a signal for a nation afar off, and whistle for it from the ends of the earth; and lo, swiftly, speedily it comes! None is weary, none stumbles, none slumbers or sleeps, not a waistcloth is loose, not a sandal-thong broken; their arrows are sharp, all their bows bent, their horses' hoofs seem like flint, and their wheels like the whirlwind. Their roaring is like a lion, like young lions they roar; they growl and seize their prey, they carry it off, and none can rescue. They will growl over it on that day, like the roaring of the sea. And if one look to the land, behold, darkness and distress; and the light is darkened by its clouds.

The nation that brings the destruction of Jerusalem will not be a near neighbor. It will be one that is literally at the ends of the earth, across the globe. Her weapons of destruction are trimmed to sleek perfection. Not a waistcloth is loose, not a sandal-thong broken. The roar of their rocket blasts will be like the young lion, with great thundering noise. And the nuclear explosions will truly be the roaring of young lions, devouring flesh and stone alike.

Now judgment comes. Now comes the end of the nations who denied God. Now comes a renewal of the earth. Now God will transform it. Now comes a miracle of creation, to bring this worn and torn planet back from millennia of degradation and woe.

The Day Of The Lord

This is the Day of the Lord.

Ezek 30:1-3 The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, prophesy, and say, Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Wail, 'Alas for the day!' For the day is near, the day of the LORD is near; it will be a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations."

This phrase *The Day of the Lord*, is found nearly two dozen times in the Old Testament prophets. It is found only in the Old Testament prophets. It denotes a time of world judgment.

I quoted a few of those passages in previous illustration. The literal significance, as illustrated in the Ezekiel passage, is not hidden from our eyes. It is a time of doom for the nations.

Scholars, theologians, and biblical students struggled with these passages for more than two thousand years. More reverential persons recognized the judgments that were pronounced. The truths of the passages, even though the technicalities may not have been understood, were preserved in devout Jewish and Christian tradition during that long period. Only modern godless minds deny the significance.