

The Abomination

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Jesus said to watch for the abomination that causes desolation.

Part 1

In Matthew 24, Jesus told the disciples what would happen before He returned. At one point in that discourse He said,

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.” [Matthew 24:14-16, NIV]

Jesus said the end will come, “when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel.” Sadly, many Christians seem not to have heard about “the abomination that causes desolation spoken of through the prophet Daniel. Daniel spoke about an abomination three times, in Daniel 9:27; 11:31; and 12:11. We will read those three verses, and the surrounding verses to give them context, a little bit later. But first, let’s talk about the book of Daniel in general to give us the background we need to appreciate his prophecies.

Most Christians have heard about Daniel in the lion’s den, and Daniel’s friends in the fiery furnace. These are stories of faith that inspire children in Sunday school. Fewer Christians know that the book of Daniel contains several prophecies which use different symbols to make the same point about God being in control of human events. Sadly, public schools don’t do a very good job of teaching the relevant history necessary to understand how and when these prophecies were fulfilled, so we must start with a short history lesson.

In 606 BC, Judah and the other Middle Eastern countries were conquered by Babylon. Daniel was among those who were captured. Seventy years later, the Babylonian Empire fell to the joint empire of the Medes and Persians, who were later conquered by the Greeks, who fell to the Roman Empire, which eventually fractured into the various European nations. God predicted this geopolitical sequence in four separate visions given to Daniel. One vision used a statue. Two visions used animals. The last vision told of a battle between the King of the North and the King of the South. The symbolism was different, but the message was the same. Each subsequent vision gave more details.

The second chapter of the book of Daniel describes the vision of a large statue made of various materials. The head was made of gold. Daniel was told that this represented Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. Then Daniel was told that the chest of silver, belly of brass, and legs of iron represented the three subsequent kingdoms. Finally, the feet of iron and clay which would not stick together represented the failure of any subsequent attempt to achieve complete world domination. Today, all of these predictions about world empires have already come to pass. The last thing Daniel saw in this vision was a Rock that would come from heaven to smash the statue and become an everlasting kingdom. This represents the second coming of Christ, which has not yet happened. Since, the first part of the vision has been perfectly fulfilled, we can be sure the last part is true, too, and we can have faith that Jesus will come again and establish the everlasting kingdom of God.

In Daniel 7, Daniel was shown the same sequence of events, using different symbols, and given more specifics. He saw four beasts coming up out of the sea. The first was a lion. The second was a bear. The third was a leopard. The last was a strange and terrible beast unlike any other. Finally, Daniel saw Jesus (the Son of Man) approaching God the Father (the Ancient of Days) at the conclusion of Earth's history.

I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

There was an angel nearby, so Daniel asked the angel what the vision meant.

“I, Daniel, was troubled in spirit, and the visions that passed through my mind disturbed me. I approached one of those standing there and asked him the meaning of all this.

“So he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things: ‘The four great beasts are four kings that will rise from the earth. But the holy people of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever—yes, for ever and ever.’

The vision of the statue made of four metals in Daniel 2 which was crushed by the Rock from heaven, and the vision of the four beasts and the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven in Daniel 7, both make the exactly the same prediction, using different symbols.

But wait! There's more. In Daniel 8, Daniel saw another similar vision. At this point in time, the Babylonian Empire was on its last legs, so the vision showed what would happen after the fall of Babylon. This vision involved a two-horned ram, a shaggy goat, and a little horn that grew and became very powerful. An angel told Daniel what they meant.

He said: “I am going to tell you what will happen later in the time of wrath, because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end. The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia. The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between its eyes is the first king. The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation but will not have the same power.

“In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a fierce-looking king, a master of intrigue, will arise. He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy those who are mighty, the holy people. He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power.

In Daniel 2, Daniel was told that the head of gold represented the kingdom of Babylon—but he wasn't told what the next three kingdoms would be. Here, in Daniel 8, he is told the next kingdom to arise would be the joint kingdom of Media and Persia. Then, Medo-Persia would fall to Greece. We don't have to guess what the beasts represent because the symbolism was explained by the angel. He said the ram had two horns because it represented the joint kingdom of Media and Persia. The angel specifically said the shaggy goat represents Greece, adding the detail that it had one great horn, which would be broken and succeeded by four smaller horns. It is a historical fact that the first ruler of the Greek Empire was Alexander the Great. When he died, the Greek empire was divided up by Alexander's four less powerful generals. Unlike the kingdoms of Medo-Persia and Greece, the next world empire, Rome, isn't identified

by name. It is simply described in detail, making it clear that it must be Rome from our knowledge of history.

Because Babylon, Persia, and Greece were specifically named and accurately described, atheistic scholars have come up with a so-called “late date” for Daniel. That is, since they don’t believe in a God who foretells the future, and since the predictions are so specific and accurate, they don’t believe the book of Daniel could have been written during the Babylonian captivity. No human being could have been smart enough to see that far into the future so accurately. Therefore, from an atheistic perspective, it had to have been written after the fact. That’s why they believe Daniel had to have been written near the end of the Greek Empire. They can’t place it any later than that because the book of Daniel was translated into a Greek translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint near the end of the Greek Empire. Furthermore, higher critics claim that Rome wasn’t specifically named because the book of Daniel was written before Rome conquered Greece.

But if the “early date” for the book of Daniel is correct; that is, if Daniel really did write it while he was a captive in Babylon, the book was completed at the beginning of the Medo-Persian Empire. At that time, Rome was just a Podunk village hundreds of miles away that nobody in the Holy Land had ever heard of. When Daniel lived, Rome literally was not even on the map. Daniel could not have said the fourth kingdom would be Rome because the word “Rome” was not in his vocabulary. That’s why Rome is described in such accurate detail, rather than specifically named.

So, let’s look at the description of the last worldly empire, the one that will still be in existence when Jesus comes back to set up an everlasting kingdom, and see what Daniel said about it.

In the vision of the statue in Daniel 2, we are told,

Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron—for iron breaks and smashes everything—and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others. Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay. As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay. [Daniel 2:40-43]

The Roman Empire certainly was powerful; but when it fell, it divided into ten parts (represented in the vision by ten toes) which eventually evolved into the European nations. Despite the attempts of Napoleon and Hitler, Europe has not been united under a single leader since the fall of Rome. Daniel saw this long before the word “Brexit” was coined.

Just like the ten toes in the statue, the fourth beast in Daniel 7 had ten horns. We know that the horns represent kings or kingdoms because the two-horned ram represented Media and Persia, and the shaggy goat had a big horn representing Alexander the Great, which was broken off and replaced by four smaller horns, representing the four generals who divided the Greek Empire into four divisions. In the same way, the fourth beast had ten horns representing the kings of the Alemanni, Anglo-Saxons, Franks, Burgundians, Visigoths, Suevi, Bavarians, Ostrogoths, Heruli, and the Vandals. The first seven of these tribes were the forerunners of modern European nations. The last three, the Ostrogoths, Heruli, and the Vandals, have disappeared from modern society. This is important because Daniel said,

“Then I wanted to know the meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others and most terrifying, with its iron teeth and bronze claws—the beast that crushed and devoured its

victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell—the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully. As I watched, this horn was waging war against the holy people and defeating them, until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the holy people of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.

“He gave me this explanation: ‘The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time.

“But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.’ ”[Daniel 7:2-27, NIV]

Historians recognize that pagan Rome evolved into the Holy Roman Empire, during which the pope had more power than all the European kings and princes. Protestant scholars recognize that the little horn represents the papacy, which waged war against the Protestant movement. This little horn said blasphemous things, claiming to have the power of God. Daniel was told it would “change the set times and the laws.” Indeed, the little horn changed the time for worship from Sabbath to Sunday, and changed the laws by removing the commandment against idols and images from the Ten Commandments.

Daniel was told, “The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time.” The Hebrew calendar at that time consisted of 12 months, each of which was 30 days long. Therefore a year was considered to be 360 days. Sometimes a year was referred to as a “time.” So, “time, times, and a time” was 360 plus 720 plus 180, which was 1260 days. In prophecy, a day represents a year.

The Catholic Church persecuted Christians who would not bow to the power of the pope, from 508 AD (when the last of the 3 horns was plucked up) until 1798 AD (when Napoleon’s general Berthier arrested the pope and put him in prison). This 1260 year period of papal rule was referred to in Daniel’s prophecy as “time, times and half a time.”

John, in Revelation, saw a fantastic beast remarkably like the one Daniel saw, and John said,

The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise its authority for forty-two months. [Revelation 13:5]

Forty-two months, times thirty days in a month, is 1260 prophetic days, representing the same 1260 calendar years as time, times, and half a time. Just like the beast John saw in Revelation, the fourth beast Daniel saw also had a mouth that uttered proud words and blasphemies, and it exercised its power 1260 prophetic days, matching the number of years of unbridled papal power. Both beasts must represent the same world power because they both ruled for the same length of time and did the same things.

In 1798, the pope was captured and died soon afterwards. That would seem to be a fatal wound to the Catholic Church—but the Church still exists today. Somehow that fatal wound healed. John said,

One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was filled with wonder and followed the beast. [Revelation 13:3]

Let's see what else John said about this beast in Revelation chapter 13.

The dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was filled with wonder and followed the beast. People worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can wage war against it?"

The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise its authority for forty-two months. It opened its mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. It was given power to wage war against God's holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.

Whoever has ears, let them hear. [Revelation 13:1-9]

John's beast had 10 horns, just like Daniel's beast originally had. But three of the horns were plucked up by a little horn, leaving 7 horns. Although John's beast had 10 horns, it only had 7 heads, as if it had lost three heads. John's beast was an amalgamation with characteristics of leopard, bear and lion, which were the three beasts from Daniel 7. John's beast waged war against God's holy people, just like the Catholic Church waged war against the Jews in the 4th Century, and against Protestants in the 16th Century.

The secular scholars who think Daniel must have been written near the end of the Greek Empire because it so accurately describes those world empires, cannot use that excuse to explain how Daniel so accurately described the evolution of pagan Rome into the Holy Roman Empire.

Thousands of years ago, Daniel and John both described the political events that would lead up to today. Both agreed that after all these events took place, Jesus would come in the clouds to recreate the Earth and usher in an everlasting kingdom. There is nothing more to write in the human history books, so Jesus could come at any time—but we don't know exactly when.

So, let's take a short break as Pat Tillmanns and JoAn Witzel reflect upon Jesus' return as they perform, We Know Not the Hour.

[music Pat Tillmanns and JoAn Witzel—We Know not the Hour]

Part 2

We are talking about the abomination that causes desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, which Jesus warned us about in Mathew 24. We haven't gotten there yet because we needed to establish the background of Daniel's prophecies first.

In the first part of the broadcast we discussed three prophecies in Daniel which perfectly predicted the sequence of political power in Europe and the Holy Land from the Babylonian Empire up through the Persian and Greek empires, and the evolution of pagan Rome into the Holy Roman Empire. We saw that Daniel was even told the number of years that the papacy would rule Europe.

The 1260 years of papal rule of Europe isn't the only time prophecy in Daniel. There is also the so-called "Seventy Week" prophecy in Daniel 9:20-27. It tells how there will be 69 prophetic weeks (483 literal years) from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem until the Messiah would come. That prophecy pointed to 27 AD, which was the year Jesus was baptized. It says in the middle of the 70th prophetic week, 3½ literal years after Jesus' baptism, the Messiah would be cut off. That is exactly when Jesus was crucified. The 70th prophetic week ends with the stoning of Stephen in 34 AD. This 70 week prophecy of the probationary time of the Jews is what Jesus was referring to when He had this discussion with Peter:

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times seven times. [Matthew 18:21-22]

When Jerusalem was rebuilt, the Jews were "God's People," who were supposed to be witnessing about God to the world in preparation for Jesus' birth. Jesus was reminding Peter that Daniel had said God would be patient with the Jews for 490 years, but the 490 years of forgiveness was about to run out. Jesus was in the process of fulfilling the 70 times 7 prophecy in Daniel, right on schedule; but Peter might not have realized it.

This brings us back to the beginning of this broadcast, where Matthew quoted Jesus talking about "the abomination that causes desolation." For those of you who tuned in late, here it is again.

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains." [Matthew 24:14-16]

In the 70 Week prophecy, which predicted the coming of the Messiah, Daniel was told,

And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. [Daniel 9:27, KJV]

As we said earlier, a prophetic week is seven calendar years. Jesus came to Earth to confirm the covenant of salvation during the final 7-year "week" of the Seventy Week prophecy. The confirmation began with His baptism. But then, 3½ years later He was crucified, which ended the sacrificial system. Because Jesus has given His own blood to save us, there was no longer any need to offer the blood of animals, which merely foreshadowed the saving blood of Christ. But the church leadership rejected the teachings of Jesus, and crucified Him, and (as Daniel predicted) for this abomination He made the Jewish priesthood desolate.

It was an abomination to reject the Messiah. As a result, the Romans attacked Jerusalem and completely destroyed the temple. Those who were in Judea, and who understood the situation, and fled to the mountains before the Romans attacked Jerusalem, finding blessed safety in the mountains. Daniel's prophecy, cited by Jesus, was fulfilled.

Let's be clear about the end of the Seventy Week prophecy. The end of the seventy weeks was the end of the Jewish priesthood and the beginning of the Apostolic Church as God's instrument of ministry to the world. The Jewish priesthood and the symbolic sacrificial system were rejected, but individual Jews weren't. The Apostolic Church consisted almost entirely of Jews in the beginning. Thousands of Jews were added to the Church on Pentecost. Many Pharisees joined and had significant positions in the early church. The end of the Seventy Week prophecy was not the end of salvation for the Jews—it was merely the end of an institution which God had used up to that time to proclaim the Gospel and predict the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. The sanctuary service, with its ceremonies and offerings, were symbolic of how Jesus would come and save mankind. After Jesus was crucified and resurrected, the church leaders had 3½ years to recognize that Jesus was the Messiah and proclaim Him as such. They failed to recognize Jesus. That was the abomination that caused the desolation of the Jewish institutional church.

But that isn't the only abomination that causes desolation that Daniel saw. He saw another, future abomination, which we will examine, right after this short break.

[music – Nothing But the Blood]

Part 3

Today we have been talking about the abomination that causes desolation, which Jesus warned us to look out for. In the last segment, we saw that failure to recognize Jesus as the Messiah when He came to Earth the first time was an abomination that caused the destruction of the temple. But that isn't the only abomination that causes desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet. Daniel saw a second desolation that is still future, and could occur in our lifetimes. Let's look very carefully at that one.

In all the visions we have discussed previously in this broadcast, the visions were explained to Daniel by an angel. In Daniel chapter 10, Daniel saw a vision that was given to him by Jesus himself. We know it was Jesus because Daniel said,

I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. His body was like topaz, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude.
[Daniel 10:5-6]

This is remarkably like how Jesus looked to John when John saw Him in Revelation.

I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. [Revelation 1:12-16]

Ezekiel described Jesus the same way when he saw Jesus in a vision.

Then there came a voice from above the vault over their heads as they stood with lowered wings. Above the vault over their heads was what looked like a throne of lapis lazuli, and high

above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking. [Ezekiel 1:25-28]

From these three descriptions, it is clear that the being who Daniel saw must have been Jesus. Perhaps the vision was too important to have been given by a mere angel and had to be delivered by Jesus Himself. Jesus clearly thought the vision was important because Matthew reported that Jesus said to understand it, as we mentioned at the beginning of this broadcast.

It was during the reign of the Persian king, Cyrus “the Great”, that Jesus told Daniel,

“Now then, I tell you the truth: Three more kings will arise in Persia, and then a fourth, who will be far richer than all the others. When he has gained power by his wealth, he will stir up everyone against the kingdom of Greece. Then a mighty king will arise, who will rule with great power and do as he pleases. After he has arisen, his empire will be broken up and parceled out toward the four winds of heaven. It will not go to his descendants, nor will it have the power he exercised, because his empire will be uprooted and given to others. [Daniel 11:2-4]

Jesus predicted the reigns of Cambyses, Darius, Xerxes, and the final Persian king, Artaxerxes. The mighty Greek king who rose up against Artaxerxes was Alexander the Great, who ruled with great power and did as he pleased. Alexander’s empire was parceled out to his four generals when he died because Alexander did not have an heir. Since these four generals did not have the power Alexander had, the empire was uprooted and given to others, who we know from history were the Romans. This very specific prophecy was fulfilled in perfect detail.

Then Jesus told Daniel about a long, seesaw battle between the King of the North and the King of the South, which correlates well with the crusades, if the King of the North represents Christianity and the King of the South represents Islam. With the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Islam lost all of its power, so 20th century scholars began to identify the King of the South with Christianity’s other great enemy, atheism. Now that Islam is regaining its strength, it is waging war against Christianity again, and Islam is starting to look like the King of the South again. Perhaps the identification of the King of the South as Islam or atheism alone might have been an overly specific interpretation. The King of the South probably represents any anti-Christian coalition of Muslims, atheists, and other religious or political groups.

Following this long battle between the kings of the North and South, Jesus told Daniel of a second abomination that causes desolation.

“At the appointed time he will invade the South again, but this time the outcome will be different from what it was before. Ships of the western coastlands will oppose him, and he will lose heart. Then he will turn back and vent his fury against the holy covenant. He will return and show favor to those who forsake the holy covenant.

“His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation.” [Daniel 11:29-31]

Unfortunately, we don’t know what the “daily” actually is. If you read Daniel 8:12 and 13, Daniel 11:31, and Daniel 12:11 in the King James Version of the Bible, you will see that the word “daily” is always followed by the word “sacrifice” in italics. In the King James Version of the Bible, italics are used to

alert you to the fact that the italicized word is not actually in the manuscript, but has been supplied by the translators because, in the opinion of the translators, that makes the most sense. Since daily sacrifices weren't being performed when the King James Bible was translated, it made sense to them to add the word "sacrifices" after daily. Some people believe the "daily" refers to daily pagan power being replaced by religious power. Whatever the daily is, the King of the North will abolish it, desecrate the temple, and set up an abomination that causes desolation.

Certainly this is a different abomination that causes desolation than we saw in the Seventy Week prophecy because it will be done at a different time by a different person. The Seventy Week prophecy was about Jesus abolishing the need for animal sacrifices during His ministry on Earth. The prophecy in Daniel 11 begins by saying it happens, "At the appointed time," which is after the crusades between the King of the North and the King of the South. Apparently, the appointed time is shortly before the Second Coming; but we don't know how long before the Second Coming. The pronoun "he" apparently refers to the King of the North because he attacks the King of the South. Earlier in this prophecy the King of the North represented Christianity. His unsuccessful attack against the King of the South, who has represented Islam and/or atheism previously in the prophecy, causes him to get discouraged. This causes him to show favor to those who forsake the holy covenant, and to redirect his fury against Christianity by setting up an abomination that causes desolation. It sounds like Christian leadership will set up some sort of abomination that desolates the Christian church just before the Second Coming.

This won't happen until "the appointed time," so we can't find a historical fulfillment because it hasn't happened yet. But, because all the other prophecies in Daniel have been fulfilled at the appointed times, we can expect this one to be fulfilled, too.

We must be careful not to have a preconceived notion about how this prophecy will be fulfilled. Many of the Jews in Jesus' day had an incorrect, preconceived notion about Jesus' first coming, and therefore didn't recognize Him when He fulfilled all the Messianic prophecies. If we have incorrect preconceived notions about who the King of the North is, and what he will do, we will fail to recognize the prophecy when it is fulfilled before our eyes. Someone who is convinced that the King of the North is going to invade Israel, and is watching for every sign that is about to happen, might not notice the ordination of gay and lesbian ministers who flaunt their sexual perversion from the pulpit. Couldn't that be an abomination that could cause desolation of Christianity? Perhaps. Priests abusing children is abominable, too. That might be how Christian leadership desolates the church. Or, it could be some other abomination that hasn't happened yet.

The Bible doesn't tell us specifically what the abomination will be; but Paul warned us that there will be abominable corruption and rebellion against God in the Christian church before Jesus returns.

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter—asserting that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will

overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness. [2 Thessalonians 2:1-12]

Paul said the man of lawlessness will set himself up in God's temple as a church leader, and at Satan's direction he will use all sorts ways to deceive men from inside the church. The man of lawlessness could be Paul's name for the King of the North. The powerful delusion about freedom from the law, which Paul warned about, could be the abomination that causes desolation which Jesus said to watch out for.

Please bear in mind that in Daniel's vision of the statue, the head of gold represented one man, Nebuchadnezzar. But the chest of silver represented all the kings of Media and Persia, and the belly of brass represented Alexander and his four generals. So, the "man of lawlessness" might not be an individual man. It could be lawless doctrine promoted by many church leaders, not necessarily by a single person in a single denomination.

Here's the point of this entire broadcast. Daniel made very specific prophecies. There is no way that anyone could have predicted in advance exactly how they would be fulfilled—but looking back they were unquestionably fulfilled perfectly. Nobody could have known in advance that the three horns that would be plucked up would be the Ostrogoths, Heruli, and the Vandals—but they were.

There are only a few prophecies in Daniel which have not been fulfilled, and they all pertain to what will happen immediately before Jesus returns. Since all Daniel's prophecies about would happen up to this point in history have been perfectly fulfilled, there can be no doubt that the remaining ones will be fulfilled, too.

It would have been impossible to predict exactly how Daniel's prophecies about the Roman Empire would be fulfilled in advance; but looking back we can see their remarkable fulfillment. In the same way, it is impossible for us to predict exactly how the remaining end-time prophecies will be fulfilled; but looking back after their fulfillment it will be unmistakable that they were fulfilled. Despite this, when the end-time prophecies are fulfilled, some people won't recognize them because they are distracted by other things and not paying attention. Or, their fulfillment might not be recognized by people who have incorrect preconceived notions about exactly how these prophecies will be fulfilled, and are looking for the wrong events.

I don't know what the abomination that causes desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel will be—but I know that Jesus said to watch for it. Furthermore, I believe that the future fulfillment of Daniel's end-time prophecies will be unmistakable, after they have happened, to people who know what Daniel said and compare his prophecies to current events. I don't know what the abomination that causes desolation will be, but I am confident that I will recognize it when it happens.

Furthermore, the prophecies in Daniel tell us that God has been in control in the past, so we can be sure He will not lose control in the future, no matter how it appears. If we trust in God to guide and save us, we will not be disappointed when Jesus returns.