

Come to Understanding

**They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24**

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The Abomination of Desolation: Part 1

One of Yahshua's (Jesus') disciples showed Him the beauty of the temple in Jerusalem:

1 And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings *are here!* -Mark 13

About a thousand years earlier, Yahweh had shown to David the pattern for the temple:

19 *All this, said David, Yahweh made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern.* -1 Chronicles 28

Even though Yahweh had shown David the pattern for the temple, he was disqualified from building it because he had "shed blood:"

3 But God said to me, You shall not build a house for my name, because you *have been* a man of war, and have shed blood. -1 Chronicles 28

Even though Solomon, David's son, built the first temple, he did evil by worshipping other gods and goddesses:

5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.

6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of Yahweh, and went not fully after Yahweh, as *did* David his father. -1 Kings 11

Because of Solomon's sin, the united Kingdom of Israel was lost. It was divided, with the temple remaining in the southern kingdom of Judah (see 1 Kings 12).

The temple was the center of worship for the people of Judah. However, it had become so important to them that they trusted in the temple more than trusting in Yahweh and obeying His word. Consequently, Yahweh sent Jeremiah to the gate of the temple to call them to repentance:

3 Thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.

4 Trust you not in lying words, saying, The temple of Yahweh, The temple of Yahweh, The temple of Yahweh, *are these.* -Jeremiah 7

However, instead of repenting, Judah gathered in the house of Yahweh under the pretense of worshipping Him. In doing so, they converted it into a place to practice their "abominations!"

8 Behold, you trust in lying words, that cannot profit.

9 Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom you know not;

10 And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations? -Jeremiah 7

Having utterly corrupted its purpose, which was the place for Yahweh's exclusive name, they turned the temple into a "den of robbers:"

11 Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen *it*, says Yahweh. -Jeremiah 7

Yahweh warned Judah to learn a lesson from history. He told them to go to Shiloh, the place where He had first set His name, and see what He did to it because of the wickedness of Israel:

12 But go you now to my place which *was* in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel. -Jeremiah 7

After Israel had entered into the promised land, the tabernacle of Yahweh rested at Shiloh;

1 And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them. -Joshua 18

The ark of the covenant also rested in the tabernacle at Shiloh. However, the corrupted priests removed it. Trusting in its power, rather than in Yahweh, to save them from the Philistines, they were destroyed:

10 And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen.

11 And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain. -1 Samuel 4

Like Israel, Judah was also trusting in inanimate objects rather than in Yahweh. In addition to trusting in the temple and in the abominations that they were committing therein, they also put their trust in the image representing the "Queen of Heaven." They openly and defiantly worshiped her in the streets of the cities of Judah, as well as in Jerusalem:

18 The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead *their* dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke me to anger. -Jeremiah 7

**So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8**

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Yahweh finally judged Judah. Using Babylon to destroy the cities, as well as the temple (see 2 Kings 25:8-9), He made them desolate.

After the temple had been desolate for seventy years, King Cyrus of Persia, having also become the “King of Babylon,” ordered it to be rebuilt!

13 But in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon *the same* king Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God. -Ezra 5

The first temple measured 60 x 20 x 30 cubits:

2 And the house which king Solomon built for Yahweh, the length thereof *was* threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty *cubits*, and the height thereof thirty cubits. -1 Kings 6

Rather than building the new temple according to the pattern of the first one, Cyrus ordered it to be built much larger! If the length of the second temple was the same as the first, then the new temple was to measure 60 x 60 x 60 cubits. (Therefore, its size was 216,000 cubic cubits compared to only 36,000 cubic cubits for the first temple.) Cyrus’ temple was six times larger than Yahweh’s temple!

3 In the first year of Cyrus the king *the same* Cyrus the king made a decree *concerning* the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be built, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, *and* the breadth thereof threescore cubits; -Ezra 6

This temple was reportedly plundered, desecrated by idols and swine, made desolate, and restored numerous times before the birth of the Messiah (see *The Works of Josephus 12-13*). It was finally rebuilt by King Herod of Judah, who, unlike David, did not disqualify himself from temple construction because he shed blood. While David had shed blood in war, Herod’s atrocities included the massacre of infants and shedding their innocent blood:

16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked by the wise men, was exceedingly angry, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. -Matthew 2

Nevertheless, Herod rebuilt the temple. Unhappy with the size of the existing temple, which was six times larger than the temple of Yahweh, he tore out the old foundations and started over. If the existing temple had the dimensions of Cyrus’s temple, then Herod’s temple was 100 x 60 x 80 cubits, or 480,000 cubic cubits!

So Herod took away the old foundations, and laid others, and erected the temple upon them, being in length a hundred cubits, and in height twenty additional cubits, which [twenty], upon the sinking of their foundations fell down... -*The Works of Josephus 15:11:3 (391), p. 508.*

The stones that the disciple showed to Yahshua were likely the magnificent white stones used by Herod’s builders:

Now the temple was built of stones that were white and strong, and each of their length was twenty-five cubits, their height was eight, and their breadth about twelve; -*The Works of Josephus 15:11:3 (391), p. 508.*

This grandiose temple was standing high above the ground and built of beautiful white stones. Nevertheless, this place had become a “den of thieves” (see Mark 11:17), which Yahshua declared to be “desolate:”

38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. -Matthew 23

Consequently, Yahshua said this temple and its “great buildings” would again be destroyed:

2 And Yahshua answering said to him, See you these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. -Mark 13

His prophecy was fulfilled in 70 A.D. This temple, like the first one, was utterly destroyed. (see *The Works of Josephus, The War of the Jews, 4, p. 888.*)

After Yahshua told them about the destruction of the temple, some of His disciples privately asked Him for a sign showing when all these things would be fulfilled:

4 Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled? -Mark 13

Yahshua said many deceivers would come, pretending to be Him. He also said there would be wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, famines, false accusers, and the gospel would be published among the nations (see Mark 13). Those who know and proclaim His name will be hated. Even so, He said those who continue in faith until the end “shall be saved:”

13 And you shall be hated by all *men* for my name’s sake: but he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved. -Mark 13

Yahshua then said we should pay close attention to this one sign, which He called the “abomination of desolation,” prophesied by Daniel. He said that when we see it standing where it shouldn’t be, it is time to flee to the mountains!

14 But when you shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that reads understand,) then let them that are in Judaea flee to the mountains: -Mark 13

What is the “abomination of desolation?”

(*To be continued in Part 2.*)

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