

# **The Abomination of Desolation in Daniel, the Gospels, and History**

## **1. The Prophetic Origins in Daniel**

The phrase “abomination of desolation” (shiqquts shomem in Hebrew) appears several times in the book of Daniel (Dan 8:13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11). In these contexts, it refers to a defiling act or object that desecrates the sanctuary and renders it unusable for proper worship. Daniel's visions anticipate a time when oppressive powers will abolish the daily sacrifice and install something abominable in its place, marking the temple's desolation.

## **2. Antiochus IV Epiphanes and Historical Fulfillment**

Most scholars agree that Daniel's “abomination of desolation” was fulfilled during the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 BCE), a Seleucid ruler infamous for his harsh policies toward the Jews. In 167 BCE, Antiochus outlawed Jewish practices, plundered the temple, and erected an altar to Zeus upon the altar of burnt offerings. Pagan sacrifices polluted the sanctuary, which devout Jews saw as the quintessential abomination. This sparked the Maccabean Revolt, led by Judas Maccabeus, culminating in the rededication of the temple in 164 BCE, celebrated as Hanukkah.

## **3. Jesus' Reference in the Gospels**

Jesus refers to the abomination of desolation in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt 24:15; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:20–24). For Matthew and Mark, it is a Danielic echo, while Luke interprets it as Jerusalem surrounded by armies. Interpretations vary: (1) historically fulfilled in Rome's destruction of the temple in 70 CE, (2) typologically recalling Antiochus as a paradigm of desecration, and (3) eschatologically anticipating a final anti-Messianic profanation.

## **4. Theological Significance**

The abomination of desolation symbolizes idolatry enthroned in God's place. In Daniel, it was Zeus' altar replacing Yahweh's sacrifices; in Jesus' teaching, it foreshadowed Rome's profanation of the temple. More broadly, it represents the climax of rebellion, when human power usurps divine authority and turns sacred space into a stage for false worship.

## **5. Conclusion**

The abomination of desolation weaves prophecy, history, and theology. It was rooted in Daniel's visions, fulfilled in Antiochus IV's desecration, remembered through Hanukkah, and reinterpreted by Jesus as a warning of Jerusalem's destruction. It continues to signify the perennial danger of idolatry and oppressive power seeking to displace God's rightful worship.

## **References**

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