

The First Abomination of Desolation

In Christ's description of events to take place before His return, He spoke of the abomination that would occur with the admonition that all read and understand it for themselves.

Matthew 24:15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

What is the abomination? Strong's Hebrew concordance defines it as such:

Hebrew 8251 from 8262; **disgusting**, i.e. **filthy**; especially idolatrous or (concretely) an **idol**:—abominable filth (idol,-ation), detestable (thing).

8262 a primitive root; **to be filthy**, i.e. (intensively) **to loathe, pollute**:—abhor, make abominable, have in abomination, detest, x utterly.

We may not in this day and age actually be bowing down to idols to worship, but as we shall see in the following quotes, we may be just as guilty of idolatry as those who actually do bow down to idols.

RH 3-15, 1906 "Self-dependence Is Idolatry.--Idolaters are condemned by the Word of God. Their folly consists in trusting in self for salvation, in bowing down to the works of their own hands. God classes as idolaters those who trust in their own wisdom, their own devising, depending for success on their riches and power, striving to strengthen themselves by alliance with men whom the world calls great, but who fail to discern the binding claims of His law."

9T 27 "The time demands greater efficiency and deeper consecration. O, I am so full of this subject that I cry to God, 'Raise up and send forth messengers filled with a sense of their responsibility, messengers in whose hearts self-idolatry, which lies at the foundation of all sin, has been crucified.'"

Before we look at some of the specific abominations recorded in the Scriptures, let us reflect on its fundamental characteristic, **idolatry**. According to Exodus 20, the law of God commands that we worship no other God but He who created us and who also redeemed us by bringing us out of bondage to sin. Would that include self worship?

Daniel refers to abomination also as transgression. Let's look at the definition of transgression.

Hebrew 6588 from 6586; a **revolt** (national, moral or religious):—rebellion, sin, transgression, trespass.

6586 a primitive root (identical with 6585 through the idea of expansion); **to break away** (from just authority), i.e. trespass, apostatize, quarrel:—offend, rebel, revolt, transgress(-ion, -or).

When was the first revolt or rebellion against God?

Revelation 12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,... 9) And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

What was at the very heart of this rebellion? We find that self exaltation was the sin that lay at the heart of rebellion.

Isaiah 14:12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 13) For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

After the rebellion which began in Heaven, when do we find the next recorded abomination or transgression? Was it not in the Garden of Eden when Satan tempted Eve to exalt her own wisdom above the command of God?

Genesis 3:4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 5) For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. 6) And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

We find the same characteristics of rebellion or self worship in the description of the antichrist, the serpent's main soldier in these last days in the battle between God and Satan, between good and evil.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4) Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

I believe Christ Himself summed up the abomination which brings desolation in Matthew 23:12 just before He predicted the desolation of Jerusalem and the temple (Matthew 24:2; Luke 21:20) that would follow the national, moral, religious revolt of Israel's rejection of Him.

Matthew 23:12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

Matthew 23:34 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: 35) That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. 36) Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. 37) O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! 38) Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

What is at the heart of self worship? A lack of trust in God and trust in one's self. The wisest man described it as such:

Proverbs 3:1 My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: 2) For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. 3) Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: 4) So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man. 5) Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6) In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths. 7) Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

Christ came and made provision to save man from the desolation that comes in consequence of the abomination. It is only when we learn that we cannot trust ourselves and come to trust Him implicitly that He is able to accomplish this for us individually.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

James 1:15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. 16) Do not err, my beloved brethren.

1 John 3:4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. 5) And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.

Christ's warning to His disciples of the abomination of desolation found in the gospels was three-fold in its meaning. The first would be the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. by the Roman army, the second was the self exalting, persecuting power of the papacy during the 1260 years of the predicted reign of the antichrist, and the last abomination will be when the papacy again exalts itself and persecutes the saints bringing the final desolation of the world at the end.

Matthew 24:15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) 16) Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains:

Mark 13:14 But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains.

Luke 21:20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 21) Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

In this study we will be focusing on the first abomination of desolation predicted by the Lord. Luke's account specifically addresses the events which took place in 70 A.D. with the destruction of Jerusalem.

Luke 21:20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 21) Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

Luke 19:43, 44 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

Luke 19:27 But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

Matthew 22:7 But when the King heard thereof, He was wroth: and He sent forth His armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

Luke 21:22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

James reveals a truth that we would do well to understand. Our wrath is not the same as our Lord's wrath.

James 1:20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

In Mark's account of the Pharisees' intentions to trap Jesus that they might accuse Him and have evidence that would lead to His arrest and death, we find a description of the wrath of Christ.

Mark 3:1 And He entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. 2) And they watched Him, whether He would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse Him. 3) And He saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. 4) And He saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. 5) And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

We read in Jeremiah that in *the "latter days"* we shall "*consider*" the anger of the Lord "*perfectly.*"

Jeremiah 23:19 Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked. 20) The anger of the LORD shall not return, until He have executed, and till He have performed the thoughts of His heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly.

So where are the "*days of vengeance...written?*" Daniel the prophet foretells those days of vengeance about which Christ warned His disciples. The reference to the abomination of desolation in Daniel 9 deals with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

Daniel 9:26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself: and the people of the Prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary: and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

Daniel 9:27 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.

Matthew describes the "*people of the Prince that shall come*" found in Daniel 9:26 as the King's armies.

Matthew 22:7 But when the King heard thereof, He was wroth: and He sent forth His armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

Daniel prophesied that after 490 years of the Lord prevailing with His people, they would finally reject Him when He came in His Father's glory and would close the door to His mercy and reap the consequences of their choice.

Daniel 9:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.

GC 25, 26 "Jesus declared to the listening disciples the judgments that were to fall upon apostate Israel, and especially the retributive vengeance that would come upon them for their rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah. Unmistakable signs would precede the awful climax. The dreaded hour would come suddenly and swiftly. And the Saviour warned his followers: 'When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand), then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.' [Matt 24:15, 16; Luke 21:20.] When the idolatrous standards of the Romans should be set up in the holy ground, which extended

some furlongs outside the city walls, then the followers of Christ were to find safety in flight. When the warning sign should be seen, those who would escape must make no delay. Throughout the land of Judea, as well as in Jerusalem itself, the signal for flight must be immediately obeyed. He who chanced to be upon the housetop must not go down into his house, even to save his most valued treasures. Those who were working in the fields or vineyards must not take time to return for the outer garment laid aside while they should be toiling in the heat of the day. They must not hesitate a moment, lest they be involved in the general destruction."

GC 30, 31 "Not one Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem. Christ had given His disciples warning, and all who believed His words watched for the promised sign. 'When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies,' said Jesus, 'then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out.' Luke 21:20, 21. After the Romans under Cestius had surrounded the city, they unexpectedly abandoned the siege when everything seemed favorable for an immediate attack. The besieged, despairing of successful resistance, were on the point of surrender, when the Roman general withdrew his forces without the least apparent reason. But God's merciful providence was directing events for the good of His own people. The promised sign had been given to the waiting Christians, and now an opportunity was offered for all who would, to obey the Saviour's warning. Events were so overruled that neither Jews nor Romans should hinder the flight of the Christians. Upon the retreat of Cestius, the Jews, sallying from Jerusalem, pursued after his retiring army; and while both forces were thus fully engaged, the Christians had an opportunity to leave the city. At this time the country also had been cleared of enemies who might have endeavored to intercept them. At the time of the siege, the Jews were assembled at Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, and thus the Christians throughout the land were able to make their escape unmolested. Without delay they fled to a place of safety--the city of Pella, in the land of Perea, beyond Jordan.

"The Jewish forces, pursuing after Cestius and his army, fell upon their rear with such fierceness as to threaten them with total destruction. It was with great difficulty that the Romans succeeded in making their retreat. The Jews escaped almost without loss, and with their spoils returned in triumph to Jerusalem. Yet this apparent success brought them only evil. It inspired them with that spirit of stubborn resistance to the Romans which speedily brought unutterable woe upon the doomed city.

"Terrible were the calamities that fell upon Jerusalem when the siege was resumed by Titus. The city was invested at the time of the Passover, when millions of Jews were assembled within its walls. Their stores of provision, which if carefully preserved would have supplied the inhabitants for years, had previously been destroyed through the jealousy and revenge of the contending factions, and now all the horrors of starvation were experienced. A measure of wheat was sold for a talent. So fierce were the pangs of hunger that men would gnaw the leather of their belts and sandals and the covering of their shields. Great numbers of the people would steal out at night to gather wild plants growing outside the city walls, though many were seized and put to death with cruel torture, and often those who returned in safety were robbed of what they had gleaned at so great peril. The most inhuman tortures were inflicted by those in power, to force from the want-stricken people the last scanty supplies which they might have concealed. And these cruelties were not infrequently practiced by men who were themselves well fed, and who were merely desirous of laying up a store of provision for the future."

MS 126, 1901 "The Lord urges His supremacy. But Satan well knows that the worship of the living God elevates, ennobles, and exalts a nation. He knows that idol-worship does not elevate, but that it degrades man's ideas, by associating with worship that which is base and corrupt. He is at work constantly to draw the mind away from the only true and living God. He leads men to give honor and glory to objects that human hands have made or to soulless creatures that God has created. The Egyptians and other heathen nations had many strange gods--creatures of their own fanciful imagination.

"The Jews, after their long captivity, would not make any image. The image on the Roman ensign or banner, they called an abomination, especially when these emblems were placed in a prominent place for them to respect. Such respect they regarded as a violation of the second commandment. When the Roman ensign was set up in the holy place in the temple, they looked upon it as an abomination...

Ironically, their eyes were blind to what lies at the very heart of idol worship and that is “self.” They were guilty of exalting themselves above their Creator, rejecting the principles of His government.

DA 587 “In every age there is given to men their day of light and privilege, a probationary time in which they may become reconciled to God. But there is a limit to this grace. Mercy may plead for years and be slighted and rejected; but there comes a time when mercy makes her last plea. The heart becomes so hardened that it ceases to respond to the Spirit of God. Then the sweet, winning voice entreats the sinner no longer, and reproofs and warnings cease.

“That day had come to Jerusalem. Jesus wept in anguish over the doomed city, but He could not deliver her. He had exhausted every resource. In rejecting the warnings of God’s Spirit, Israel had rejected the only means of help. There was no other power by which they could be delivered.

“The Jewish nation was a symbol of the people of all ages who scorn the pleadings of Infinite Love. The tears of Christ when He wept over Jerusalem were for the sins of all time. In the judgments pronounced upon Israel, those who reject the reproofs and warnings of God’s Holy Spirit, may read their own condemnation.

“In this generation there are many who are treading on the same ground as were the unbelieving Jews. They have witnessed the manifestation of the power of God; the Holy Spirit has spoken to their hearts; but they cling to their unbelief and resistance. God sends them warnings and reproof, but they are not willing to confess their errors, and they reject His message and His messenger. The very means He uses for their recovery becomes to them a stone of stumbling.”

When the Spirit of God continues to persist with man and is finally grieved away and there is nothing more God can reveal about Himself to save the wicked, the judgment of God will fall. How does this “*desolation*” come about?

DA 577 “Christ came to save Jerusalem with her children; but Pharisaical pride, hypocrisy, jealousy, and malice had prevented Him from accomplishing His purpose. Jesus knew the terrible retribution which would be visited upon the doomed city. He saw Jerusalem encompassed with armies, the besieged inhabitants driven to starvation and death, mothers feeding upon the dead bodies of their own children, and both parents and children snatching the last morsel of food from one another, natural affection being destroyed by the gnawing pangs of hunger. He saw that the stubbornness of the Jews, as evinced in their rejection of His salvation, would also lead them to refuse submission to the invading armies. He beheld Calvary, on which He was to be lifted up, set with crosses as thickly as forest trees. He saw the wretched inhabitants suffering torture on the rack and by crucifixion, the beautiful palaces destroyed, the temple in ruins, and of its massive walls not one stone left upon another, while the city was plowed like a field. Well might the Saviour weep in agony in view of that fearful scene.

“Jerusalem had been the child of His care, and as a tender father mourns over a wayward son, so Jesus wept over the beloved city. How can I give thee up? How can I see thee devoted to destruction? Must I let thee go to fill up the cup of thine iniquity? One soul is of such value that, in comparison with it, worlds sink into insignificance; but here was a whole nation to be lost. When the fast westering sun should pass from sight in the heavens, Jerusalem’s day of grace would be ended. While the procession was halting on the brow of Olivet, it was not yet too late for Jerusalem to repent. The angel of mercy was then folding her wings to step down from the golden throne to give place to justice and swift-coming judgment. But Christ’s great heart of love still pleaded for Jerusalem, that had scorned His mercies, despised His warnings, and was about to imbrue her hands in His blood. If Jerusalem would but repent, it was not yet too late. While the last rays of the setting sun were lingering on temple, tower, and pinnacle, would not some good angel lead her to the Saviour’s love, and avert her doom? Beautiful and unholy city, that had stoned the prophets, that had rejected the Son of God, that was locking herself by her impenitence in fetters of bondage,—her day of mercy was almost spent!”

BEcho Oct 1, 1894 “As Christ talked with the scribes and Pharisees, His prophetic eye was taking in the future. He heard the tramp of the Roman army, and saw Jerusalem given up to their avarice. He looked forward to the time when the protecting care of God would no longer be exercised for the rebellious city. He saw that the angel of mercy would fold her wings, and take her departure. Christ looked even beyond this, He saw the inhabitants of the world just previous to His second coming, and declared that the condition of society would be similar to that of the world at the time of the flood. He said, ‘As the days of Noah were, so shall the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day that Noah entered

into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.' What was it that caused the destruction of the people in the world before the flood?—It was their own sin; for the thoughts and imaginations of their hearts were only evil, and evil continually. They trampled upon the commands of God, as did the Jews, and suffered God's retributive judgment. 'Even so shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.'"

DA 600 "And on 'whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.' The people who rejected Christ were soon to see their city and their nation destroyed. Their glory would be broken, and scattered as the dust before the wind. And what was it that destroyed the Jews? It was the rock which, had they built upon it, would have been their security. It was the goodness of God despised, the righteousness spurned, the mercy slighted. Men set themselves in opposition to God, and all that would have been their salvation was turned to their destruction. All that God ordained unto life they found to be unto death. In the Jews' crucifixion of Christ was involved the destruction of Jerusalem. The blood shed upon Calvary was the weight that sank them to ruin for this world and for the world to come. So it will be in the great final day, when judgment shall fall upon the rejecters of God's grace. Christ, their rock of offense, will then appear to them as an avenging mountain. The glory of His countenance, which to the righteous is life, will be to the wicked a consuming fire. Because of love rejected, grace despised, the sinner will be destroyed."

In the explanations of how the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. happened, we seem to have conflicting descriptions. On closer examination we will find that they do in fact, harmonize. In this next quote we will read that angels of God were sent to destroy Jerusalem.

5BC 1098 "Men will continue to erect expensive buildings, costing millions of money; special attention will be called to their architectural beauty, and the firmness and solidity with which they are constructed; but the Lord has instructed me that despite the unusual firmness and expensive display, these buildings will share the fate of the temple in Jerusalem. That magnificent structure fell. Angels of God were sent to do the work of destruction, so that one stone was not left one upon another that was not thrown down." (MS 35, 1906).

Yet the next quote says angels do not come to destroy.

LHU 207.3 "Angels do not come to the earth to denounce and to destroy, to rule and to exact homage, but are messengers of mercy to cooperate with the Captain of the Lord's host, to cooperate with the human agents who shall go forth to seek and save the lost sheep. Angels are commanded to encamp round about those who fear and love God."

In the following quote we will see that Jerusalem was destroyed by Satanic control over the passions of men.

GC 35, 36 "The Jews had forged their own fetters; they had filled for themselves the cup of vengeance. In the utter destruction that befell them as a nation, and in all the woes that followed them in their dispersion, they were but reaping the harvest which their own hands had sown. Says the prophet: 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself;' 'for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.' Hosea 13:9; 14:1. Their sufferings are often represented as a punishment visited upon them by the direct decree of God. It is thus that the great deceiver seeks to conceal his own work. By stubborn rejection of divine love and mercy, the Jews had caused the protection of God to be withdrawn from them, and Satan was permitted to rule them according to his will. The horrible cruelties enacted in the destruction of Jerusalem are a demonstration of Satan's vindictive power over those who yield to his control.

"We cannot know how much we owe to Christ for the peace and protection which we enjoy. It is the restraining power of God that prevents mankind from passing fully under the control of Satan. The disobedient and unthankful have great reason for gratitude for God's mercy and long-suffering in holding in check the cruel, malignant power of the evil one. But when men pass the limits of divine forbearance, that restraint is removed. God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression; but He leaves the rejecters of His mercy to themselves, to reap that which they have sown. Every ray of light rejected, every warning despised or unheeded, every passion indulged, every transgression of the law of God, is a seed sown which yields its unfailing harvest. The Spirit of God, persistently resisted, is at last withdrawn from the sinner, and then there is left no power to control the evil passions of the soul, and no protection from the malice and enmity of Satan. The destruction of Jerusalem is a fearful and solemn warning to all who are trifling with the offers of divine grace and resisting the pleadings of divine mercy. Never was there given a more decisive testimony to God's hatred of sin and to the certain punishment that will fall upon the guilty."

God has not left us to be helplessly confused but has given us principles of interpretation that we might understand the seeming contradictions in the previous quotes.

GC 614 "A single angel destroyed all the first-born of the Egyptians and filled the land with mourning. When David offended against God by numbering the people, one angel caused that terrible destruction by which his sin was punished. The same destructive power exercised by holy angels when God commands, will be exercised by evil angels when He permits. There are forces now ready, and only waiting the divine permission, to spread desolation everywhere."

At first glance this quote might not be understood properly. However, if we do not isolate it from its context, it can be easily understood to say that God gives the command to His holy angels to cease holding back the forces of the evil angels who do the actual executing of the judgment.

GC 614 "When He leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent. God's long-suffering has ended. The world has rejected His mercy, despised His love, and trampled upon His law. The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation; the Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has been at last withdrawn. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one. Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old."

"A single angel destroyed all the first-born of the Egyptians and filled the land with mourning. When David offended against God by numbering the people, one angel caused that terrible destruction by which his sin was punished. The same destructive power exercised by holy angels when God commands, will be exercised by evil angels when He permits. There are forces now ready, and only waiting the divine permission, to spread desolation everywhere."

MR 1081 "I was shown that the judgments of God would not come directly out from the Lord upon them, but in this way: They place themselves beyond His protection. He warns, corrects, reprovcs, and points out the only path of safety; then if those who have been the objects of His special care will follow their own course independent of the Spirit of God, after repeated warnings, if they choose their own way, then He does not commission His angels to prevent Satan's decided attacks upon them. It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey. And storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. He knows his time is short and, if he is not restrained, we shall see more terrible manifestations of his power than we have ever dreamed of."

4SP 29-30 "The long-suffering of God toward Jerusalem, only confirmed the Jews in their stubborn impenitence. In their hatred and cruelty toward the disciples of Jesus, they rejected the last offer of mercy. Then God withdrew his protection from them, and removed his restraining power from Satan and his angels, and the nation was left to the control of the leader she had chosen. Her children had spurned the grace of Christ, which would have enabled them to subdue their evil impulses, and now these became the conquerors. Satan aroused the fiercest and most debased passions of the soul. Men did not reason; they were beyond reason,—controlled by impulse and blind rage. They became Satanic in their cruelty. In the family and in the nation, alike among the highest and the lowest classes, there was suspicion, envy, hatred, strife, rebellion, murder. There was no safety anywhere. Friends and kindred betrayed one another. Parents slew their children, and children their parents. The rulers of the people had no power to rule themselves. Uncontrolled passions made them tyrants. The Jews had accepted false testimony to condemn the innocent Son of God. Now false accusations made their own lives uncertain. By their actions they had long been saying, 'Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.' [ISA. 30:11.] Now their desire was granted. The fear of God no longer disturbed them. Satan was at the head of the nation, and the highest civil and religious authorities were under his sway. {4SP 29:1}

"The leaders of the opposing factions at times united to plunder and torture their wretched victims, and again they fell upon each other's forces, and slaughtered without mercy. Even the sanctity of the temple could not restrain their horrible ferocity. The worshipers were stricken down before the altar, and the sanctuary was polluted with the bodies of the slain. Yet in their blind and blasphemous presumption the instigators of this hellish work publicly declared that they had no fear that Jerusalem would be destroyed, for it was God's own city. To establish their power more firmly, they bribed false prophets to

proclaim, even when Roman legions were besieging the temple, that the people were to wait for deliverance from God. To the last, multitudes held fast to the belief that the Most High would interpose for the defeat of their adversaries. But Israel had spurned the divine protection, and now she had no defense. Unhappy Jerusalem! rent by internal dissensions, the blood of her children, slain by one another's hands, crimsoning her streets, while alien armies beat down her fortifications and slew her men of war!"

DA 65 "This calamity the Jews had brought upon themselves. If they had been walking in faithfulness and humility before God, He would in a signal manner have made the wrath of the king harmless to them. But they had separated themselves from God by their sins, and had rejected the Holy Spirit, which was their only shield. They had not studied the Scriptures with a desire to conform to the will of God. They had searched for prophecies which could be interpreted to exalt themselves, and to show how God despised all other nations. It was their proud boast that the Messiah was to come as a king, conquering His enemies, and treading down the heathen in His wrath. Thus they had excited the hatred of their rulers. Through their misrepresentation of Christ's mission, Satan had purposed to compass the destruction of the Saviour; but instead of this, it returned upon their own heads."

Not only did the Lord predict the rejection of the Messiah by the Jewish nation, but Christ confirmed it by His teaching of the parable of the vineyard and the parable of the fig tree. Israel, as we shall see, was known as a fig tree.

Hosea 9:10 I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her first time: but they went to Baalpeor, and separated themselves unto that shame; and their abominations were according as they loved.

In this following parables, Israel is likened to the vineyard, the husbandman were the leaders, the servants are the prophets that were sent unto them, the Son was Christ Jesus, and the new husbandman were the Gentiles. Jesus was revealing to them what would happen after their rejection of Him.

Matthew 21:33 Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: 34) And when the time of the fruit drew near, He sent His servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. 35) And the husbandmen took His servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. 36) Again, He sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. 37) But last of all He sent unto them His Son, saying, They will reverence my Son. 38) But when the husbandmen saw the Son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill Him, and let us seize on His inheritance. 39) And they caught Him, and cast Him out of the vineyard, and slew Him. 40) When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will He do unto those husbandmen? 41) They say unto Him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out His vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render Him the fruits in their seasons. 42) Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? 43) Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. 44) And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. 45) And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard His parables, they perceived that He spake of them. 46) But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitude, because they took Him for a prophet.

Mark 11:12 And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, He was hungry: 13) And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, He came, if haply He might find any thing thereon: and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. 14) And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And His disciples heard it.... 19) And when even was come, He went out of the city. 20) And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. 21) And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto Him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.

Matthew 21:18 Now in the morning as He returned into the city, He hungered. 19) And when He saw a fig tree in the way, He came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away. 20) And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!

Luke 13:6 He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in His vineyard; and He came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. 7) Then said He unto the dresser of His vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? 8) And He answering said unto Him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: 9) And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

Luke 6:44 For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

God repeatedly forgave Israel for her unfaithfulness, but foresaw that after the seventy weeks, (seventy times seven) or 490 years, Israel would finally seal her doom by the ultimate and final rejection of her Lord and Saviour. Jesus eluded to this time period in His answer to Peter regarding forgiveness.

Matthew 18:21 Then came Peter to Him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? 22) Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

God desires to forgive. He is filled with anger, with anguish, deep emotion over the hardness of our hearts and our unwillingness to allow Him to save us from our worse enemy, self. Will we seek forgiveness of our idolatry of self exaltation and force, the principles of Satan's kingdom and be filled with the selfless love and liberty as portrayed over and over again in the principles of Christ's kingdom?