

The Desolator is the Abomination of Desolation who stands up in the Church

written by Alfred Persson | November 17, 2024



*“Therefore when you see the`abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, **standing in the holy place** ” (whoever reads, let him understand), (Matt. 24:15 NKJ)*

Normally “holy place” would refer to the Temple area, that’s how Daniel would have understood it (Dan. 11:31). But Christ is speaking about a future event, and Daniel didn’t understand the prophecy as it applied to the end times because the words were “sealed”:

7 Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely

shattered, all these things shall be finished.

8 Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, "My lord, what shall be the end of these things?"

9 And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. (Dan. 12:7-9 NKJ)

The natural reason for words that describe the end time to be sealed is because they refer to different things in the end time. Christ's sacrifice changed everything, the Temple of God became the Church. If Daniel had a vision of a NT church while hearing the words, he would be totally confused. To him the words were "sealed".

Notice the Holy Spirit cautions the reader right after the words "holy place", "let him understand." We in the End Time are to understand the "Holy Place" is NOT the literal temple, its the new place where God's Spirit indwells, the Church.

Therefore, the following is sound:

1. Redefinition of the Holy Place in the New Testament

Under the Old Covenant, the **τόπος ἅγιος** (holy place) was primarily associated with the physical temple in Jerusalem, the locus of God's presence. However, the New Testament frequently redefines "holy" spaces and practices in spiritual terms:

▪ Believers as God's Temple:

- *"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"* (1 Corinthians 3:16, NKJV).
- *"You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."* (1 Peter 2:5, NKJV).
 - The shift from physical temple to spiritual community means that references to holy places can now be applied to the gathered Church, which is where God's Spirit dwells.

▪ Jesus' Redefinition of Worship:

- *"The hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father... God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."* (John 4:21, 24, NKJV).
 - Jesus eliminates the necessity of physical locations like the temple, further supporting a spiritual understanding of the holy place.

2. Matthew's Use of Symbolism

Matthew often employs symbols and typological language to connect the Old Testament with its fulfillment in Christ and His Church:

▪ The Abomination of Desolation in Daniel:

- In Daniel 9:27, 11:31, and 12:11, the abomination refers to

sacrilegious acts desecrating sacred spaces. Historically, this included Antiochus IV Epiphanes' desecration of the temple. However, in Matthew 24:15, Jesus points forward to events beyond the physical temple, as evidenced by His broader eschatological discourse.

- Matthew 24 addresses the end times, suggesting that the "holy place" could symbolize the spiritual domain of God's people, not merely a geographic location.

3. Paul's Parallel in 2 Thessalonians 2

Paul's discussion of the "man of sin" provides a framework for interpreting Matthew 24:15:

- *"Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."* (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, NKJV).
- Paul refers to the "temple of God," but in the New Testament, this phrase often denotes the Church rather than a physical temple. For example:
 - *"For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are."* (1 Corinthians 3:17, NKJV).
- The "man of sin" sitting in the temple symbolizes a spiritual corruption or apostasy within the Church, aligning with the broader New Testament theology.

4. The Church as the Covenant Community

In the New Covenant, the Church replaces the physical temple as the locus of God's presence:

- *"You are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord."* (Ephesians 2:19-21, NKJV).
- This new identity of the Church as God's holy temple suggests that references to the "holy place" may also apply to the collective body of believers.

5. Spiritual Desecration in the Church

The concept of the abomination standing in the holy place is consistent with warnings about apostasy and corruption within the Church:

- *"For false Christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect."* (Matthew 24:24, NKJV).

- Spiritual defilement occurs when false teachings and leaders usurp the authority of Christ within the Church, metaphorically standing in the “holy place.”
- This aligns with warnings in Revelation about the infiltration of evil within the community of believers (Revelation 13:6-8).

6. Historical and Eschatological Applications

While Matthew 24:15 may have had a historical fulfillment in events like the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in A.D. 70, its eschatological dimension points to broader spiritual realities:

- Just as the temple represented God’s presence in the Old Covenant, the Church represents His presence in the New Covenant. Thus, desecration of the “holy place” refers to the spiritual corruption of God’s people, consistent with the broader New Testament understanding.

Conclusion

The phrase **τόπω ἁγίῳ** in Matthew 24:15 can refer to the Church, understood as the spiritual temple of God under the New Covenant. This interpretation is supported by:

1. The New Testament’s redefinition of holy places.
2. Matthew’s use of symbolic language.
3. Paul’s parallel reference to the “temple of God” in 2 Thessalonians 2.
4. The Church’s identity as the locus of God’s presence.

This perspective shifts the focus from a physical temple to the spiritual community of believers, emphasizing the New Covenant’s theological framework.