

**Mark 13: 14-20; “The Desolation of the Jews”, Sermon # 100 in the series –
“Astonished at His Teaching”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
on May 26th, 2013, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

We saw in the last sermon which I preached to you from Mark, the signs of the approach of the destruction of Jerusalem. (verses 5-13) Now, this afternoon, we want to look at part of the second section of Mark 13, verses 14-20, in which the Lord Jesus speaks of the sign that would indicate that the actual destruction and desolation of Jerusalem had begun; the abomination of desolation. But, this afternoon I would like us to come to a better understanding of what the desolation of the Jews means. We 1st of all want to think about the “abomination of desolation” as it relates to the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. And 2nd – We want to understand that this desolation of the Jews as a nation is not permanent, but it shall someday come to an end. This is a passage about God’s judgment upon the Jewish nation and people; those who rejected their Messiah, and who crucified Him. But as we think about this, I will also be attempting to show you that God has had His elect people among them all the way down through this Church age, and that there is most certainly coming a time when He will bring them as a nation, to the great salvation which is in His Son; that salvation which so many of them in the past have rejected.

1st of all – We want to think about “the abomination of desolation” as it relates to the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

Verse 14 says: “So when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.” Our Lord, in this phrase, “the abomination of desolation”, is giving to His disciples, and all who would listen to them, or read their words in the Scriptures, a certain sign of the coming destruction of Jerusalem. God Himself would bring this destruction to the Jewish nation in 70 A.D. In verse 19 He calls this destruction, “a time of tribulation which has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be.” But we need to also understand that when the Lord Jesus is speaking here, He is very skillfully weaving into this prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, the prophecy of His own Second coming and the destruction of the wicked at end of the world. The prophecy of this chapter primarily refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, but it also has application to all generations of people following. It is meant to be a warning of what is going to come upon all the wicked, and what the righteous will escape; that is, eternal judgment. The Lord Jesus has spoken this way very deliberately so that these prophetic words would have their desired effect, not only upon all who would hear them then, but also those who would read them now; to all the generations of church history, so that they would prepare themselves for what is most certainly coming. It was only the people of that generation who would see the destruction of Jerusalem; but there is not one of us who will not see Christ’s Second Coming. “Behold, He is coming with the clouds,” it says in Revelation 1: 7, and every eye shall see Him, even those who pierced Him.” “And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him.” “Even so, Amen.”

What was the Abomination of Desolation anyway? I believe that these passages in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, make it very clear that it was the sign of the destruction and coming desolation of Jerusalem of old. We are told here in verse 14 that it was something which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, “standing where it ought not to be”. In order to understand what Jesus is referring to, we need to turn over to Daniel Chapter 9, verse 24. Here we read - “Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.” “Know therefore

and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty two weeks; the street shall be built again and the wall, even in troublesome times.” “And after the sixty two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.” “The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined.” “Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week, but in the middle of the week, He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.” “And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation which is determined is poured out on the desolate.”

Now, even though we do not have time to open up all the things in this passage, certain things need to be said. Seventy weeks, it says here, are determined for the people of the Jews and for the holy city of Jerusalem. The angel Gabriel is speaking of weeks of years here, not weeks of days. 490 years are being spoken of. The end of this prophecy is to tell Daniel, so that he could tell all of the Jewish people, and us too by the way, that at the end of these 490 years, all of the things mentioned in verse 24 would be fulfilled by Christ Jesus our Lord. There are some things mentioned here about the destruction of Jerusalem which would come later but they are not a direct part of the 490 years.

The prophecy first of all looks forward to the command of Cyrus, given to the Jews, and its being reissued by King Artaxerxes in Ezra 7, that the temple and everything pertaining to that, which eventually included the walls as well, would be re-built by those returning from the Babylonian captivity. The date of this re-issue would be 457 B.C. The first section of the 490 years prophecy was “seven weeks”, or 49 years. This is how long it would take to rebuild the city and the walls in troublous times. The second section of the 490 years is 62 weeks, or 434 years after the city was completed and the walls put up. We now have 69 weeks or 483 years of the prophecy complete. And it brings us up to the beginning of the ministry of John the Baptist in 26 A.D. It was shortly after, when Jesus was baptized that His ministry began, and it continued for three and a half years. In the midst of the last week of 7 years, the 70th week, the Lord Jesus was “cut off, but not for Himself”. But when He was raised from the dead, and ascended to heaven, He anointed the most Holy place; He sent His Holy Spirit to His Church, and He also anointed the most holy place of His Church, by giving His primarily Jewish Church power in their first evangelistic efforts in Jerusalem and Judea. This last half of the 70th week comprising three and a half years, was fulfilled by the Apostles preaching with great success on the Day of Pentecost and afterwards when multitudes of Elect Jews were brought into the kingdom.

But as time went on after the 70 weeks prophecy was fulfilled, the Apostles and the early Church continued to receive their greatest persecutions from their fellow unbelieving Jews, who were still rejecting their Messiah. And therefore God would send desolation to the unbelieving Jews through “the people of the prince who was to come”. This was the Roman prince Titus who would come to the city with his armies, in 70 A.D. He destroyed the city and the sanctuary; that is the most holy place of the temple. And then we find here, the length of time the Jewish nation and people would be desolate. It says in verse 26, “till the end of the war desolations are determined”. Although the Lord Jesus Christ would confirm the covenant of grace with many of the Jewish people, yet there were many who remained impenitent regarding their agreement in crucifying Jesus. Therefore, as we know from the book of Acts, the gospel went to the Gentiles and all the world, for this past two thousand years, while the unbelieving Jews have remained desolate. God says in Isaiah 65: 1 – “I was sought for by those who did not ask for Me; I was found by those who did not seek Me.” “I said, ‘Here I am, here I am,’ to a nation that was not called by My name.” And also Romans 11: 25 – “For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.”

The Jews partial hardening, or blindness, is because of their “war” against Christ being their Savior and Lord. And this condition of blindness will go on to the end of this war; that is it would go on until they are converted as a nation, as we shall see in just a few minutes. In verse 27, towards the end of the verse it says that this desolation will continue “even to the consummation which is determined is poured out on the desolate”. I take this “consummation which is determined” to be the end result, the outworking of all the plans which God has, to eventually bring the Jews back out of this state of desolation, after the fullness of the Gentiles comes in. It was their blindness and their not believing in Christ their Savior which brought to them the Abomination of Desolation which was spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing where it ought not to be. It was God, sending down to them the armies of the Romans, who would destroy their city and desecrate their temple. They desecrated their temple by their bringing their standards, the Roman ensigns into the temple and sacrificing to their gods there. It has been the Roman empire, in its Pagan and Papal forms which has persecuted the Jews in the Old Testament times, crucified our Savior, persecuted and oppressed Christians, both Jew and Gentile, during the times following the destruction of Jerusalem. It was Roman forces which brought to these unbelieving Jews the Abomination of desolation.

B.H. Carroll says that in the Greek, the word *βδελυγμα*, (bedeluema - abomination) means an “idol,” a graven image, and therefore an abomination. Abomination is a derivative meaning. It is an abomination because it is a graven image, contrary to the Second Commandment: “Thou shalt make no graven image to bow down before it.” He says – “Now, this second abomination of desolation is a desolation of desolations.” “This brings greater desolation upon the Jewish people than Antiochus had brought. What was that graven image? “We know exactly what it was.” “We first get acquainted with it when Jerusalem was not encompassed with armies and Josephus gives us the account.” “This same Pilate, at that time Roman Procurator, sent from Caesarea, the seaport of that country on the Mediterranean Sea, a legion of Roman soldiers and had them secretly introduced into the city and sheltered in the tower of Antonio overlooking the Temple, and these soldiers brought with them their ensigns.” “The Roman ensign was a straight staff, capped with a metallic eagle, and right under the eagle was a graven image of Caesar.” “Caesar claimed to be divine.”

“Caesar exacted divine worship, and every evening when those standards were placed, the Roman legion got down and worshiped the image of Caesar thereon, and every morning at the roll call a part of the parade was for the whole legion to prostrate themselves before that graven image and worship it.” “The Jews were so horrified when they saw that image and the consequent worship, they went to Pilate, who was at that time living in Caesarea, and prostrated themselves before him and said, “Kill us, if you will, but take that abomination of desolation out of our Holy City and from the neighborhood of our holy temple.” “While that was an abomination, Jerusalem at their time was not encompassed with armies. “When ye shall see the abomination which makes desolation spoken of by Daniel, the prophet, set up where it ought not to be, and see Jerusalem encompassed by armies,” that is the sign of the destruction of Jerusalem.” “The greatest desolation ever wrought in the world on a people, was made under that standard and by the Roman power.” “Therefore, it was the abomination that makes desolation.”(End of quote) This is confirmed for us if we remember what is said in Luke Chapter 21, verse 20. “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near.”

I hope that you will see the application of all that this Scripture is telling us. The long persisted-in sin of rejection of Christ, leads to certain destruction and desolation of both a land and its people; especially to those who have had the greater light of the truth of the Scriptures, as the Jews had. They had been God’s special people, and His only people, for thousands of years, yet they became desolate under the Old Covenant. Many of them sought for salvation through

ceremonial and sacramental works, and not by faith in Christ. Therefore, their temple and their worship were taken away from them. These are some of words which you find in the dictionary under “desolate”. “Joyless, disconsolate, and sorrowful through, or as if through, separation from a loved one <a desolate widow>, showing the effects of abandonment and neglect : dilapidated <a desolate old house>; barren, lifeless <a desolate landscape> devoid of warmth, comfort, or hope : gloomy <desolate memories>. All of this happened to the unbelieving Jewish people. Not only did over a million of them perish in the siege of Jerusalem, but the rest were scattered all over the face of the earth; some were made slaves, many were treated with contempt, and badly.

This happened to many generations of Jews all the way down through to our present day. Over 6 million of them were exterminated by Hitler during the Second World War, and yet God showed them the mercy of bringing them back into their own land. All of this ought to lead all who have never repented of their sins to the place where they would immediately flee any known sin, just as the people here were told by Jesus to flee. Verses 15 and 16 of our text: “Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house.” “And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.” Jesus is saying that each and every person should repent of their sins, and flee from the wrath of God; not just the temporal judgments that God brings, but the eternal judgment that is most surely coming upon the unbelieving. Fleeing, for people now, is for them to flee from false worship; the worship that they make up themselves, or approve of in others, which is contrary to the pure worship which is given to God, by faith, through Jesus Christ, in accordance with the Scriptures.

2nd – We want to understand that the desolation of the Jews shall someday come to an end.

I will develop this further, Lord willing, in my next sermon on “False Christs”, but let me introduce this idea to you now. This desolation which came to the Jews as a nation and as a people was never intended by God to be permanent and final. We all need to understand that God’s purpose for Israel was indeed, to break them off, because of their unbelief and rejection of Christ for a time, but not forever. First, a few verses from the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah 31: 35 – “Thus says the Lord, who gives the sun for a light by day, the ordinances of the moon and the stars for light by night, who disturbs the sea, and its waves roar (the Lord of hosts is His name): If those ordinances depart from before Me, says the Lord, then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before Me forever.” “If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done.” You can see here that even as the ordinances of the moon and the stars continue, so God’s purpose in regard to the “seed of Israel” continues. They shall not cease from being a nation forever.

The Apostle Paul confirms this truth in Romans 11: 1. He says this: “I say then, has God cast away His people?” “Certainly not!” “For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.” “God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew.” Verse 11 – “I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall?” “Certainly not!” “But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.” “Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!” So we see that a partial hardening has happened to the Jews until “the fullness of the Gentiles comes in”. When this blindness is lifted by God, someday in their national conversion, they too will have “a fullness” of blessing come to them; and through them to the world. Listen to verse 15 – “For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?” “For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches.” (The firstfruit and the root is the Apostles and the early Church which was primarily Jewish.) The branches of the unbelieving Jewish nation were broken off in 70 A.D. by God’s

judgment upon them. Verse 17 – “And if some of the branches were broken off, and you being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches.”

You see, there is only one tree here, and that tree is the Church of Jesus Christ, composed of both Jews and Gentiles. There are not two programs, one for the Church and another for Israel. The branches of much of Judaism were broken off for their unbelief, and we Gentiles grafted in. But we should not be arrogant and boast and say that there is no future for the Jews. Their future blessing is coming. They will be converted to Christ, and their long-standing desolation will be taken away. Look at verse 25 – “For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.” “And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.’” “Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election, they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.” “For the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable.” Let us learn to pray for, and to expect the conversion of the Jews.