

Study for the Months March & April 2018

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The 'Man of Sin' of Bible Prophecy and his activities and career

The 'abomination of desolation' and its dual application/fulfillments

FORTY YEARS before it took place, Jesus made a dire prediction to His first disciples which their ears could not believe nor their heads wrap around then, as rational or even possible: He revealed to them that His (and their) beloved city, Jerusalem, and incredibly so, the very sacred Temple itself—the literal dwelling place of God on earth since the first simple mobile sanctuary was meticulously built by Moses in the wilderness, according to Jehovah's precise specifications given him atop Mount Sinai, for forty days,---were to be *desolated*, literally and spiritually.

The Prediction of Jesus Regarding Jerusalem and the Jewish People as Recorded in the Gospels:

Luke 19: 42-44, K.J.V.: *"If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground."*

Matthew 23: 37-39: *"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! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."*

Matthew 24: 1-2: *"And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and His disciples came to Him for to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."*

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:)"**

Daniel's Prophecy Referred to by Jesus in the 70-week Prophecy:

Daniel 9: 24-27:

v 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.

*v 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto Messiah the **P**rince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.*

*v 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the **p**rince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and th end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.*

v 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 spreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured out upon the desolate.

NOTE: We cannot but study the details of this 70-week prophecy for several reasons—which we will do in the next issue. Clearly, the most compelling of these reasons is described as follows: “The burden of Christ’s preaching was, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.’ [Mark 1: 15] Thus the message, as given by the Savior Himself, was *based on the prophecies*. The ‘time’ which he declared to be fulfilled was the period made known by the angel Gabriel to Daniel. ‘Seventy weeks,’ said the angel, ‘are determined upon thy people and upon the holy city . . .’ Dan. 9: 24.”- E. G. White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 233.

This terrible event was to take place forty years *after* His crucifixion, A.D. 27., and “cutting off,” that is, forfeiture of their highly-coveted, singular “chosen people” status (prophesied earlier in the 70-week prophecy of Daniel 9) by their final national, crowning act of rejecting Christ, not fully in crucifying Him but in the stoning to death of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, three-and-a half years later, A.D. 34, by the Sanhedrin (or Sanhedrim), the highest religious authority of the people. The nation, as a whole, had learned, by the incessant teachings and urgings of their religious leaders and scholars, to unquestioningly depend on them as their conscience, taking the place of the Holy Scripture, even God Himself.

The Temple, housed within and protected from without by the seemingly-impregnable multiple-walls of Jerusalem, which was rebuilt over time from successive sackings, first by the Babylonians, would be ravaged, and the Jewish people would be killed en mass, the survivors taken as slaves and scattered among the nations.

In the final crisis and test of their chosen-people status, they chose their grand, gorgeous, man-made Temple, which, in time and through the misinterpretation of their religious leaders, had come to be considered the very pride and symbol of their nation and their chosen-people status. It was, to them, the very gates on earth to Paradise. The prophesied falling away of the church by the fourth century, gave birth to the Church of Rome, who unmistakably fulfills all the detailed specifications of the prophecies in Daniel, 2 Thessalonians 2: 1-12, and in the Revelation identifying her as “Mystery Babylon, the Mother of Harlots and the Abominations of the Earth” (Rev. 17) etc. She assumed the prominent features of the Jewish church and the typical earthly priesthood and ceremonial laws, mingling these with additional church-made laws and “Christianized” pagan beliefs and practices further on to this very day.

By the time Herod Antipas had rebuilt and fortified it in forty-three years into the time of Christ, the Jewish nation had come to regard the Temple invincible as “the city of God.” Yea, much more: they had come to the point of crossing the red line, as it were. The time of their visitation had arrived to chose between their temple that represented all their earthly ambitions over the living Savior---the very Messiah that their patriarchs and prophets saw in vision, prophesied of, and deeply yearned to see coming in their time but did not because His appointed time, “according to the volume of the book,” had not yet come. But now He was with and among them in person!

The faithful of old saw and listened to His voice through the warnings, admonitions, encouragements and writings of the prophets and chosen messengers. They communed and worshipped Him through the ceremonial law comprehending the system of the priesthood and the system of sacrifices, the feasts and ordinances---all typical of that which was to come--- in and through Christ. But now the very Messiah who was the center of all their hopes and reason for existence and purpose of their calling and distinction among all nations of the earth as the “chosen people” was with, and among them. What would they do? What they did is abundantly recorded for posterity and for all eternity, against them,—both by the Holy Scriptures and the secular historians.

He solemnly declared to His disciples then and now, both as a dire warning, and as an urgent call to study the prophecies, and to remember that the true gospel is based on prophecy! “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:*”).

When Christ prophesied of the destruction of Jerusalem and the desolation of the Jewish people, He referred His hearers to the prophecy of Daniel 9

“Rome Destroys Jerusalem. -- The next great enterprise of the Romans after the overthrow of Egypt, was the expedition against Judea and the capture and destruction of Jerusalem. The holy covenant is doubtless the covenant which God has maintained with His people under different forms in different ages [or periods] of the world. The Jews rejected Christ, and according to the prophecy that all who would not hear the Prophet [Christ Himself] would be *cut off*, they were destroyed out of their own land and scattered to every nation under heaven. While Jews and Christians alike suffered under the oppressive hands of the Romans, it was doubtless in the reduction of Judea especially that the exploits which are mentioned in the sacred texts were exhibited.”

“Under Vespasian [emperor currently in power at the time and father of Titus] the Romans invaded Judea, and took the cities of Galilee, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, where Christ had been rejected. They destroyed the inhabitants, and left nothing but ruin and *desolation*. Titus besieged Jerusalem, and drew a trench around it, according to the prediction of the Savior [70 years earlier]. A terrible famine ensued. Moses had predicted that appalling calamities would come upon the Jews if they departed from God. It had been prophesied that even the tender and delicate woman would eat her own children in the straitness of the siege. (Deuteronomy 28: 52-55.) Under the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, a literal fulfillment of this prediction occurred. Hearing of the inhumane deeds, but forgetting that he was the one who driving the people to such direful extremities, he swore the eternal extirpation of the accursed city [Jerusalem] and people [the Jews].

“Jerusalem fell in A.D. 70. As an honor to himself, the Roman commander [Titus] had determined to save the temple, but the Lord had said, ‘There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.’ Matthew 24: 2. A Roman soldier seized a brand of fire, and climbing upon the shoulders of his comrades, thrust it into one of the windows of the beautiful structure. It was soon ablaze, and the frantic efforts of the Jews to extinguish the flames, seconded by Titus himself, were all in vain. Seeing that the temple would be destroyed, Titus rushed in and bore away *the golden candlestick, the table of showbread, and the volume of the law, wrapped in gold tissue*. The candlestick was afterward deposited in Vespasian’s Temple of Peace and copied on the triumphal arch of Titus, where its mutilated image is yet to be seen.

“The siege of Jerusalem lasted five months. In that siege *eleven hundred thousand* [a million and a half] Jews perished, *ninety-seven thousand* were taken prisoners. The city was so amazingly strong that Titus exclaimed when viewing the ruins, ‘We have fought with the assistance of God.’ It was completely leveled, and the foundations of the temple were plowed up by **Tarentius Rufus**. The duration of the

whole war *was seven years*, and almost a million and a half persons are said to have fallen victims to its awful horrors. “- *Uriah Smith, “Daniel and the Revelation,, pp. 264-266.*

Great Controversy, Harvestime Books , Special Full-color, Large-print Edition Filled with Useful Historical Facts, Historical Background: How Christ’s Prophecy [Matthew 24:___] Was Fulfilled: The Siege, Capture, and Destruction on The Destruction of Jerusalem, chapter 1 on the Original. The editor wrote:

“It [is] significant that, when Christ foretold this coming suffering and destruction, He had carefully warned His followers that they must continue as usual to faithfully observe the seventh-day Sabbath (*Matt. 24: 20*). He also told them to flee when the Roman armies arrived (*verses 15-16*). This they did, when Cestius [mysteriously] withdrew from the city in October, A.D. 67. Heading east, they crossed the Jordan River and found refuge in the town of Pella.

“Soon after this, 68 [A.D.], Emperor Nero appointed his best general, Vespasian, to put down the rebellion. He immediately went to the region with the fifth and tenth legions [a legion is ___ men], and was later joined by his son Titus at Ptolemais, who brought with him the fifteenth legion. With a strength of 60,000 professional soldiers, the Romans prepared to sweep across Galilee and march on Jerusalem. Heading south toward Jerusalem, he quickly took Jotapata, Joppa again, and all of Galilee, and sold 30,000 Jews into slavery. At the Jordan he slew 15, 000 Jews.

“The history of the war was covered in dramatic detail by the Roman-Jewish historian Josephus in his work, *The Wars of the Jews*. Josephus, a leading Jew, had served as a commander in the city of Jotapata, when the Roman army invaded Galilee in 67 A.D. After an exhausting siege which lasted 47 days, the city fell, with an estimated 40, 000 killed. All the remaining Jewish resistance committed suicide,---except for Josephus and one of his soldiers, who surrendered to Vespasian. Immediately after meeting General Vespasian, Josephus dramatically predicted that he would soon become Roman Emperor. Startled by this, and finding Josephus totally willing to cooperate, instead of killing him, Vespasian used Josephus to provide the Romans with intelligence about the ongoing revolt.

“By 68, the entire coast and the north of Judea had been subjugated by the Roman army, with decisive victories won at Taricheae and Gamala, where Titus distinguished himself as a skilled General.

“There remained the last and most significant fortress of Jewish resistance, which was Jerusalem. Vespasian was preparing to march there when the campaign came to a sudden halt. Startling news had just arrived of Nero’s suicide on the outskirts of Rome on June 9, as the people of Rome were coming to kill him.

“Almost simultaneously, the Roman Senate had declared Galba, then governor of Hispania (modern Spain), as Emperor of Rome. Vespasian decided to await further orders, and sent Titus to greet the new princeps (leader). But before reaching Italy, Titus learned that Galba had been murdered and replaced by Otho, governor of Lusitania (modern Portugal), and that Vitellius and his armies in Germania (Germany) were preparing to march on the capital, intent on overthrowing Otho. Not wanting to risk being taken hostage by one side of the other, he [Titus] abandoned the journey to Rome and rejoined his father in Judea.

“Meanwhile Otho was defeated in the First Battle of Bedriacum and committed suicide. When the news spread across the armies in Judea and the province of Egypt, they took matters into their own hands and declared Vespasian emperor in July 1, 69. Vespasian happy that Josephus’ prediction might come true, quickly accepted. He then had Mucianus lead a strong force drawn from the Judean and Syrian legions to Rome, while Vespasian himself traveled to Alexandria, leading Titus in charge to end the Jewish rebellion. By the end of 69, the forces of Vitellius [of Germania] had been beaten and Vespasian was officially declared emperor by the Senate on December 21, thus ending the *Year of the Four Emperors*.

“Meanwhile, the thousands of Jews in Jerusalem had become embroiled in a civil conflict of their own, dividing the resistance against the Romans in the city into several factions, which were ultimately reduced to two: the *Sicarii*, led by Simon bar Giora, and the *Zealots*, led by John of Gischala.

“By this time, all Judea, except Jerusalem, was under the control of Titus, Vespasian’s thirty-year-old-son, who was now general of the combined Roman armies.

“On May 10, A.D. 70, with 65,000 men, Titus arrived at the gates of Jerusalem. Every type of horror was being experienced within its walls; and this would continue until Titus gained control, 139 days later.

“Titus now prepared for an assault on Jerusalem. The Roman army was joined by the twelfth legion, which had been previously defeated nearly four years earlier under Cestius.

“The Roman army (the 15th and 12th legions) under Titus arrived from Mount Scopus (near Bethsaida, where Lazarus, Mary, and Martha earlier lived), in the northwest. They encountered Jewish forces at the Women’s Gate on the north side of Jerusalem. Then they established their Main Camp outside the city on the west. As the fifth legion came from Emmaus to the west, the 10th legion arrived from Jericho to the east.

“Titus then surrounded the city, with three legions (5th, 12th, and the 15th) on the western side and one (the 10th) on the Mount Olives, to the east. He put pressure on the

food and water supplies on the inhabitants by allowing pilgrims to enter the city to celebrate the spring Passover, and then refusing to let them leave afterward. Jewish raids continuously harassed the Roman army.

“Titus decided to have Josephus plead with the men of the walls to surrender the city, in order to save themselves and the city. But they only hurled darts at their last human mediator [Josephus]. Their sudden, surprise response wounded Josephus wounded Josephus and narrowly missed killing Titus, standing by his side. Josephus then stood behind a barrier and, shouting, pled with them some more. But all to no avail.

“After attempts by Josephus to negotiate a surrender had failed, the Romans resumed hostilities and quickly breached the first and second walls of the city. To intimidate the resistance, Titus ordered deserters from the Jewish side to be crucified around the city wall. By this time, most of the Jews were thoroughly exhausted by famine (because a few stole their food); and, when the weak third wall was breached, bitter street fighting ensued.

“The three legions broke through outer wall and took the northern part of Jerusalem and the Fortress Antonia, which next to the Temple Mount. A siege dike was laid around the still-unconquered parts of the city, so no Jews could secretly escape.

“Near the Fortress Antonia, the Temple walls were breached. With the help of battering rams, banks, 75-foot towers, and hurling machines, the Romans had taken the Fortress Antonia by the end of July. From the Temple area, as a breach was made in the southwestern outer wall, two breaks were made through the inner city walls. The southerly ‘upper city’ (just south of the Temple Mount) was overrun and taken.

“He then began a frontal assault on the gates of the Temple. Having broken through them, Titus entered the edifice and found it to be so gorgeous that he ordered that it be not destroyed. The Temple and its approaches were remarkably beautiful. According to Josephus, the Temple itself was hewn of stones, covered with a flat roof composed of rafters and boards of cedar, overlaid with marble. Inside, the walls and roof were covered with cedar, and floors with planks of cypress. The sidewalls were covered over with carved work, representing cherubims, palms, garlands, and opening flowers. Overlaying everything were plates of gold.

“But, while the fighting around the gates continued, an unperceived soldier hurled a torch inside a main door—and quickly set the entire building ablaze. The date was **August A.D. 70.**

“Three more weeks, and all Jerusalem was burned to the ground. Totally unaware of Christ’s prediction, Titus ordered the city to be leveled flat. *Not one stone was left upon another.*

“There is no merit in vanquishing people forsaken by their own God.”

“The Temple was completely demolished, after which Titus’ soldiers proclaimed him *imperator* in honor of the victory. Jerusalem was sacked and much of the population killed or dispersed. According to Josephus, 1, 1000,000 people were killed during the siege, of which a majority were Jewish. In addition, 97, 000 were captured and enslaved, including the two leaders of the Jewish factions. Simon Bar Giora and John of Gischala. (Both were taken to Rome and slain.) Many fled to areas around the Mediterranean. Titus reportedly refused to accept a wreath of victory, as he claimed there is ‘no merit in vanquishing people forsaken by their own God.’ The Temple treasures were taken to Rome.

“Accompanied by Vespasian and Domitian he rode into Rome in A.D. 71, enthusiastically saluted by the Roman populace and preceded by a lavish parade containing treasures and captives from the war. Josephus describes a procession with large amounts of gold and silver, taken from Jerusalem, carried along the parade route, followed by elaborate re-enactments of the war. Also in the parade were Jewish prisoners and the treasures taken from the Temple of Jerusalem; this included the Pentateuch (first five books of the Bible) and the Menorah (the seven-branch candlestick, or lamp stand, made of gold). A carving of this was later included in a frieze near the top of the Arch of Titus.

“The triumphal Arch of Titus, which stands at one entrance to the Forum, was then built to memorialize the victory of Titus.

“Friends, I have lost a day.”

“Vespasian died of an infection eight years later on June 23, A.D. 79, and was immediately succeeded by his son Titus. Titus proved to be an effective emperor and was well-beloved by the population. As emperor he became known for his generosity. Suetonius states that, realizing he had brought no benefit to anyone a whole day, he remarked, “Friends, I have lost a day.’

“Titus had to deal with a number of disasters during his brief reign, On August 24, A.D. 79, barely two months after his accession **Mount Vesuvius erupted**, resulting in almost complete destruction of life and property in the cities and resort communities around the Bay of Naples. The cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum were buried under meters of stone and lava, killing thousands of citizens. Titus appointed two consuls to organize and coordinate the relief effort, while personally donating large amounts of money from the imperial treasury to aid the victims of the volcano. He visited Pompeii once after the eruption and again the following year.

“During the second visit, in the spring of A. D. 80, while Titus was out of town, a fire broke out in Rome which burned large parts of the city for three days and three nights. Although the extent of the damage was not as disastrous as the Great Fire of 64 (during Nero’s reign), many important public buildings were destroyed. Once again, Titus personally compensated for the damaged regions.

“Shortly after this, Titus died of a fever. *He had ruled the Roman Empire for just over two years*, from the death of his father in 79 to his own on September 13, A.D. 81.

“Josephus (born December 30, A.D. 39, and died on September 13, A.D. 81, at the age of 42) was only 31 in A.D. 70. He wrote most of his books later living near Rome on a government pension. They must be fairly accurate because, in May 2007, by studying them, Herod the Great’s tomb was discovered.

“In 1995, a large tablet in the Colosseum at Rome was analyzed and its inscription revealed that the heavy costs of building most of *that massive sports arena, where thousands of Christians were later slain*, was accomplished by Emperors Vespasian and Titus with the gold and silver which had been stored in the Temple in Jerusalem. This confirmed Josephus writings, which said that, *during the four-year war, all the personal wealth of the Jews was brought to the Temple and stored in it* [believing it was the ultimate safe?]. He also said that, by A.D. 80, the Roman government had spent all that money.” (End of quote from Editor’s notes, latest edition of Harvest Time Books’s *The Great Controversy* by Ellen G. White).

Source below: *Seventh-day Adventists Answers to Questions on Doctrine*, Review & Herald Publishing Association, Washington D.C., Prepared by a Representative Group pp. 292-294:

“10. FURTHER WOES TO FALL UPON THE JEWS. – Next is foretold the appalling adversities to follow, after the close of the 70 weeks. These came as a consequence of the Jewish rejection of the Messiah, and involved the destruction of the Temple, the razing of the city of Jerusalem, the scattering of the Jewish people, and a succession of calamities weeping over Jerusalem like a flood of desolation (Dan. 9: 26). The exact time was not predicted, but the events would take place *after* the 70 weeks of years had close, by A.D. 34. And it should be particularly noted that this tragic visitation was *not* one of the specified acts that were to mark the seventieth week---finishing the transgression, making an end of sins, making reconciliation, bringing in everlasting righteousness, sealing the vision, and anointing the most holy. It was the *fearful aftermath* and *inevitable consequences* of Israel’s rejection of their Messiah.

The dread ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken by Daniel the prophet, was referred to by Christ Himself in His own great prophecy: [Matt. 24: 15-20 quoted; compare Mark 13: 14)]. This is more explained in the words, “When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.” (Luke

21: 20). Hundreds of thousands were slain, tens of thousands sold into slavery, and war followed upon war.

II. FEARFUL PUNISHMENT COMES TO JERUSALEM. – Christ Himself, in foretelling the utter destruction to come upon Jerusalem because of her mounting iniquities, declared, ‘Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation’ (Matt. 23: 36). These prophesied judgments upon Jerusalem and the Temple fell *beyond* the close of the 70 weeks, but within the *generation period* specified. They were the inevitable consequence of the supreme sin of Israel in their rejection of the Messiah. Thus their cup of iniquity was filled (verse 32). As our Lord looked into the immediate future, He wept over the city, saying:

“If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes. 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 thee one stone upon another; because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation (Luke 19:42-44).

“Beginning in A.D. 66, wars broke out between the Jews and the Romans, reaching their climax in A.D. 70. The Temple was no longer the dwelling place of God, and its earthly sacrifices had lost their significance. The Zealots were denounced by Josephus as the direct cause of the destruction (*Wars* iv. 3.3). These *sicarii* (‘assassins’) desecrated everything that was holy, and their activities were characterized by atrocities, profanation, and violence. The consummation ended in utter destruction.

“A few days before the A.D. 70 Passover, the Roman destroyers under Titus, came to Jerusalem. They attacked the city and soon breached the wall. The city was overwhelmed. As the Temple precincts were entered, the daily sacrifices were stopped. The Temple was fired and destroyed, and the Jews ruthlessly slaughtered—their blood, according to Josephus, flowing in streams down the steps. The desolater had come. The city and Temple were in ruins; the desolation accomplished.” (End of quote)

“The time of Christ’s coming, *His anointing by the Holy Spirit*, His death, and the *giving of the Gospel to the Gentiles*, were definitely pointed out. It was the privilege of the Jews people to understand these prophecies, and to recognize their fulfillment in the mission of Jesus. *Christ urged upon His disciples the importance of prophetic study*. Referring to the prophecy given to Daniel in regard to *their time*, He said, ‘Whoso readeth, let him understand.’ Matt. 24: 15. After His resurrection He explained to His disciples in ‘all the prophets’ ‘the things concerning Himself.’ Luke 24: 27. *The Savior had spoken through all the prophets*. ‘The Spirit of Christ which was in them’ ‘testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.’ 1 Peter 1: 11.”- E. G. White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 234.

Are you, dear friend, following Christ’s urging to study the prophecies?

(Continued next issue)

