

longer yet similar prophecies of Revelation should also be Continuous-Historic in character?

In fact the last of the four main prophecies in Daniel (chapter 11) is not symbolic, and is by far the longest. This illustrates the fact that symbols can say more in a shorter space. The language of Revelation is highly symbolic in character, and,

as we have seen, the prophecies themselves are much longer. We should therefore expect that the fulfilment takes place over a long period of time, not a few years at the time of the return of Christ.

In the next article, God willing, we shall look at further reasons for interpreting the Apocalypse on the Historic basis.

(To be continued)

## The abomination of desolation— let the reader understand

Russell Ebbs

**T**HE SUBJECT OF the abomination of desolation must be particularly important, since, after Jesus spoke about the abomination, he added the exhortation: “whoso readeth, let him understand” (Mt. 24:15); “let him that readeth understand” (Mk. 13:14). His words, uttered in the context of the casting down of the stones of the temple, were addressed to his disciples, and clearly relate to an event that they were to experience, for he says: “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place . . . then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains” (Mt. 24:15,16).

Jesus changes from “ye” to “they” in verse 30: “and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory”. The latter event is therefore not current with the former; that is to say, it does not occur during the lifetimes of his immediate hearers.

The use of the following terms further shows that the historical context of the prophecy was the events of A.D. 70:

- “stand in the holy place” (Mt. 24:15)
- “them which be in Judaea” (v. 16)
- “neither on the sabbath” (v. 20)
- the stones of the temple were to be thrown down (vv. 1,2).

Luke’s record of Jesus’s words adds further information confirming the A.D. 70 link: “And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh . . . For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled . . . And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and

shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (21:20-24).

### The Greek and Hebrew words used

The New Testament Greek word for ‘abomination’, *bdelugma*, is used six times (the number of the flesh), nine times if cognate words are included (nine is the number of finality or death). The word has the meaning of something detested or abhorred, and comes from a root word ‘to stink’. It appears always to be associated with idolatry, as for example in Romans 2:22: “thou that abhorrest [*bdelussomai*] idols”. The word for ‘desolation’ in Matthew, Mark and Luke is *erēmōsis*, a good translation since the word signifies something laid waste or brought to nought.

In Daniel 11:31 and 12:11, cited by Jesus, ‘abomination’ (Hebrew *shiqquts*) carries the concept of something disgusting, filthy, polluted. Again it is associated with idolatrous practices, as for example in 1 Kings 11:7: “Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the *abomination* of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the *abomination* of the children of Ammon”. The Hebrew word *shamem*, translated ‘desolation’, carries the idea of something numbed or stunned—by extension, made of none effect.

### Daniel’s use of these terms

It will help us to understand Daniel’s references to “the abomination that maketh desolate” if we

examine how he has used these words in earlier chapters.

In the vision of chapter 8, Daniel heard a holy one saying: "How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation [mg. making desolate], to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?". The reply comes in the following verse: "And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days [mg. evening morning]; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (vv. 13,14).

It was in 333-2 B.C., when Alexander the Great came to Jerusalem, that this period of 2,300 years began—a period which ended in 1967, when, in the Six-Day War, Jerusalem was liberated from Gentile treading down.<sup>1</sup> The cleansing would therefore take place after this latter date. However, it was Antiochus Epiphanes who prevented continuance of the sacrificial law, in 168 B.C.; and, on a day-for-a-year basis, 2,300<sup>2</sup> years would conclude in A.D. 2132, when the cleansing might well be complete, with the temple of Ezekiel's prophecy fully operative by then. The term 'desolation' is therefore connected with the suspension of sacrificial law.

There is a further important point. It was not only the invading Roman and Greek armies who brought desolation, but also the Jews' own abominable behaviour, which matched that which Yahweh permitted to happen to His sanctuary. This is apparent, for example, in Ezekiel 8, where the prophet is shown in the temple in Jerusalem "the seat of the image of jealousy . . . the great *abominations*<sup>3</sup> that the house of Israel committeth here" and "women weeping for Tammuz"<sup>4</sup> (vv. 3,6,14). It was appropriate therefore that Yahweh should warn: "Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the *abominations* which they commit here? . . . Therefore will I also deal in fury: Mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity" (vv. 17,18).

There is, then, a direct link between the faithless abominable behaviour of Israel and "the abomination that maketh desolate", in that both Israel and the desolating army which came in judgement polluted the sanctuary.

### Daniel 9

In Daniel's wonderful chapter 9, the root word for 'desolate' is used three times. In his supplication in verse 18, Daniel prays: "O my God, incline Thine ear, and hear; open Thine eyes, and behold our *desolations*, and the city which is called by Thy name". Under Babylonish subjugation,

and in captivity, Daniel's nation was no longer able to pursue its religious and political aims, it was not a kingdom of priests and a light to the nations. It was 'numb' to such ideals, desolate in fact.

In his reply the Angel Gabriel uses the term twice, again in the context of A.D. 70:

"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. 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" (vv. 26,27).

In A.D. 70 Jesus Christ, at the head of his Roman armies, fulfilled this prophecy, bringing to an end the Aaronic priesthood; but, here again, the conduct of the Jews in the temple and Jerusalem was appropriate to the desolation that followed it.

Indeed, this point is made in the words, "and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate". Jerusalem was filled with such violence and iniquity at this period that even the Roman invaders were shocked by what they saw on entering the city. Further, Josephus records the high priest in A.D. 70 as referring to the temple being "trampled upon by these wild beasts [the Zealots] born among ourselves". This

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1. The dating of the former era is precise because historians record an eclipse of the moon the day before the battle of Gaugamela at 9 pm on 20 September 331 B.C.
  2. A period of 2,300 years is an almost perfect solilunar cycle, which indicates that Brother Thomas was most likely wrong in his preferred textual reading of 2,400 years. The solilunar cycle is appropriate for this interaction between desolating Gentile powers and things Israelitish.
  3. The word for 'abominations' used six times in this chapter and five times in Ezekiel 7 is *toebah*, meaning something loathed.
  4. The first letter of the name of Tammuz may have brought about the worship of the cross in Christendom. Tammuz was considered to be the faithful 'son-deity', whose return to the earth as a new-born spirit of sinlessness in the human heart was perhaps being pleaded for by these women.

is the abomination of desolation in Daniel 9, to which Jesus refers in Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14.

#### Daniel 11

Having seen that the terms 'abomination' and 'desolation' have a direct relevance to the temple worship and laws of sacrifice and offering, it is interesting to turn to Daniel 11:31: "And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate".

In the second century before Christ the Seleucid Emperor Antiochus IV Epiphanes came in great vengeance against Jerusalem, shedding the blood of temple worshippers and, through Athenaeus, commanding the Jews to eat pork and set up shrines to other gods. In June 168 B.C. he forbade the Aaronic sacrifices and offerings. The temple was dedicated to Jupiter Olympus, and a fort was also set up to control the temple site, the castle of Acts 21:37. The desolation, literally the 'stunning', making inoperable the priesthood and sacrificial law, thus took place at that time.

When Jesus referred to the abomination of desolation in his Olivet discourse, his hearers would have been very familiar with the fulfilment of Daniel 11:31 by Antiochus Epiphanes and would therefore have perceived that something similar would again occur. They would have been encouraged to consider the prophecy of Daniel 9:26,27 concerning the coming of their Messiah at the head of the Roman armies in judgement.

#### Daniel 12

Daniel's final reference to our subject occurs in chapter 12. Having been taken through history as far as the resurrection and judgement, and the glories of the Kingdom of God on earth, Daniel is taken through some key questions as to the period before the sufferings of Israel and the desolation of Jerusalem and the temple would be accomplished. "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" (v. 6) is a question about Israel's dispersion which receives its answer in verse 7: "it shall be for a time, times, and an half",<sup>5</sup> that is, 360 years, 720 years and 180 years, a total of 1,260.<sup>6</sup> There then follows, as it were, a second answer (relating to the suspension of the daily sacrifice) in verses 11,12: "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away,

and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days". This latter time, a third answer, relates to the patient waiting of the faithful.

These three periods have to do with the end of the sufferings of Israel, the holy people, whose sufferings commenced with the taking away of the daily sacrifice and the establishment of the abomination of desolation. On the face of it, it might appear that these periods commenced in A.D. 70, but Brother Thomas makes an interesting point on this:

"The notion that the duration of the abomination was to be dated from A.D. 70 is derived from the English version of Daniel; twelfth chapter and eleventh verse. It is there written, 'And from the time *that* the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate be set up, *there shall be* 1,290 days'. In the Hebrew the italic words are not in the text. Leaving out these words, or rather, giving a more literal version without supplying any words at all, the passage appears intelligible enough. 'And at the time of vengeance the daily shall be taken away, in order to set up an abomination that maketh desolate a thousand two hundred and ninety days [The AV margin translation says something similar to this]'".<sup>7</sup>

Brother Thomas's point is that the daily sacrifice was taken away in A.D. 70 to make way for the abomination to be set up at a later date. Whilst therefore there was a Roman "abomination that maketh desolate" established in A.D. 70, as described above, a parallel Jewish abomination developed, firstly with the 'Judaizers' and then merging into the Gentile Roman Catholic apostasy, which matured in its doctrines with the decree of Phocas in A.D. 608. Indeed, Daniel 8:19-26 treats of much of this development, whereby the oppression of the ethnic Jew and of spiritual Israel run parallel from that time.

However, the time periods of Daniel 12 have to do with the 'stunning' of (making impossible

5. When prophetic time is expressed in terms of 'times', it appears to be a reference to Gentile domination of the Israel of God, spiritual or ethnic. When it is expressed as 'days' (vv. 11,12) the issue appears to be related to the 'daily' sacrifice.
6. 1,260 years is a near perfect soli-lunar cycle, as 2,300 (see above).
7. *Elpis Israel*, fourteenth edition, p. 396.

### The “time, times, and an half” (1,260 years) of Daniel 12:7: The issue of Israel’s restoration

A.D.		A.D.	
608-10	Decree of Phocas, establishing the primacy of the Church of Rome	1868-70	Pope loses his temporal power. Zionism begins to develop as a political force, with Jews starting to return to the land
622-7	Mahomet swore to subdue Jewry	1882-7	British forces, having entered the Middle East, facilitated return of Jews to the land following pogroms
637-8	Omar the Mohammedan captured Jerusalem; predecessor of the Dome of the Rock built	1897	Zionist Conference in Basle
688	Dome of the Rock built	1948	State of Israel formed

to be carried out) the daily sacrifice and the temple worship, but those time periods run from the time of maturity of the abomination of desolation in the seventh century. The table gives some suggestions for the 1,260 years, 1,290 years and 1,335 year periods.

#### Let him that readeth understand

Why then is it so important for us, the readers of Daniel referred to by the Lord Jesus, to “understand” “the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet”? The answer is contained in the Apostle Paul’s speech in Rome, when he refers to “the hope of Israel” (Acts 28:20). Further, the final question of the apostles to Jesus before he ascended to heaven was: “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (1:6). This latter question is indeed the core of Daniel 12. When Peter addresses the men of Israel in Acts 3, he also picks up the same issue from Daniel 12 in his words, “. . . whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things” (v. 21).

The Israelitish nature of our hope, when properly understood, will preserve us from the abominations of the apostasy; and the prophecy of

Daniel is a key to such preservation. It is Daniel who precisely identifies for us Roman Catholicism as the power that speaks “great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time” (7:25). Any person who reads the Old Testament Scriptures with a good and honest heart will reject the doctrines of the Trinity and immortal soulism—the two pillars of the apostasy.

It is Daniel who imprints on our minds the picture of the stone made without hands smashing into the image of the kingdom of men and destroying it utterly, before becoming a great mountain to fill the whole earth. Where is there room for a doctrine of heaven-going with an understanding of such things? It is Daniel who concludes his prophecy with a description of the resurrection and judgement in chapter 12, together with the promise of the restitution of Israel to their land, of Jerusalem delivered out of the hand of the oppressor, and of the restitution of the laws of sacrifice. By implication, this must also mean that the temple of Ezekiel’s prophecy will be built.

### The 1,290 days (years) of Daniel 12:11: The issue of the abomination of desolation

627	Saracens capture Jerusalem	1917	Turks driven out of Palestine, and Balfour Declaration
688	Dome of the Rock built	1979	Israel signs first peace treaty with a neighbour, Egypt.

**The 1,335 days (years) of Daniel 12:12: The issue of the reward of those who wait patiently**

533	Decree of Justinian	1868	End of temporal power of papacy
632	Abubeker and the Saracens dominate the Middle East, including the land	1967	Jerusalem, Golan, West Bank and Sinai under control of Israel following Six-Day War
688	Dome of the Rock built	2023	Temple of Ezekiel's prophecy to be built?

Finally, a consideration of the abomination of desolation and the time periods of Daniel will prevent any trend towards minimising the place

of Israel in the purpose of the Almighty, as Christendom does. "Let him that readeth understand" the hope of Israel.

## Where did Noah's Ark land?\*

Tony Benson

**I**N NORTHEAST Turkey, close to the border with Iran and Armenia, is the 16,853 foot (5,137 metre) volcanic peak of Mount Ararat. Here, it is popularly supposed, is the place where Noah's Ark came to rest as the flood waters began to ebb. But is this so?

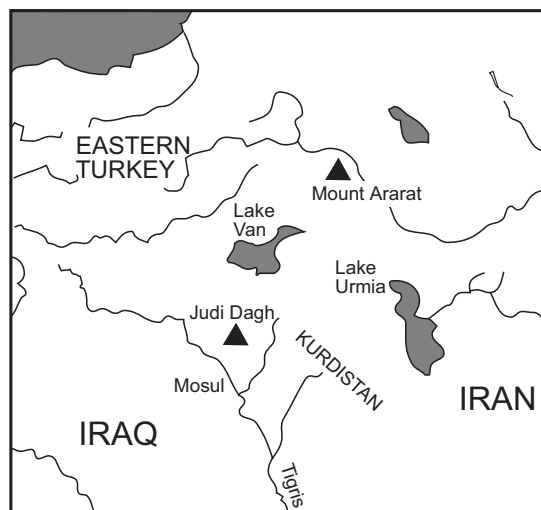
According to Genesis, "the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat" (8:4). Ararat is the name of a country; in secular history it is usually referred to as Urartu. It is referred to again as Ararat in Jeremiah 51:27, and in 2 Kings 19:37 and Isaiah 37:38 as Armenia. It occupied the mountainous area to the north of the Tigris valley where Assyria was situated. Although linked with Armenia it was in fact centred on the area considerably to the south of the present-day nation of Armenia, formerly part of the Soviet Union and now independent.

Urartu largely corresponds today to Kurdistan, the home of the Kurdish people, now part of Iraq and Turkey, and to a lesser degree Syria and Iran. Their struggles for independence have made the news in recent years, bringing them into conflict with Saddam Hussein's murderous regime in Iraq and also with Turkey's less dictatorial but still oppressive rule.

The first person to identify the mountain now known as Ararat as the place where the Ark came to rest was a traveller called Vincent de Beauvais in the thirteenth century. Other travellers, such as Marco Polo, took it for granted that this was correct, and it has become an accepted fact. However, before this the Ark was believed

to have come to rest on a much lower peak, situated well to the south. This mountain is a peak about 6,000 feet (2,000 metres) high called Judi (or Chudi) Dag, situated north of the Iraqi city of Mosul in the Iraq/Turkey border area.<sup>1</sup> It is part of the Zagreb mountain range, which rears into the sky to the northeast of the Tigris valley.

Both Josephus and the Koran say that the Ark came to rest on Mount Judi. On this mountain a Kurdish tribe called the Yezidis were found



\* This article is based on material in David Rohl's book *Legend: Genesis of a Civilisation*, reviewed in March 1999 (p. 75).

1. I cannot ascertain whether it is actually located in Iraq or Turkey.