Title: Holy place in Matthew 24:15

Author: Sun-hwan Kim

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Abstract:

This paper explores what the holy place refers to in the context of Matt 24:15, and why Matthew uses this unique phrase which is not seen in the Synoptic parallel passages. It employs the method of the grammatico-historical method of exegesis.

Since the abomination of desolation, which is described as standing in the holy place in Matt 24:15, is quoted from Daniel, OT background of the main words—abomination, desolation, holy, and place—is important, thus examined in chapter 2. Abomination in the OT, especially in the Prophets, is used in relation to the idolatry, which profanes the holiness of God. Desolation is used many times as a result of God’s judgment for abominations. The phrase “holy place” (vdo)q’ ~Aqîm’) in the OT is used to intend some designated spot within the sanctuary, not the entire sanctuary itself. On the other hand, Jerusalem is the most frequently modified place by holy in the form of holy mountain and holy city. In Dan 9, Jerusalem is explicitly emphasized as a holy place.

An exegesis of Matt 24:15 follows. A larger narrative unit, Matt 21-25, is treated first, and the examination of Matthew’s view of Jerusalem follows. After the structure of Matt 24 is explored, the meaning and significance of the holy place in the context of Matt 24:15 is probed. Additionally, the larger NT perspective on the holy place is examined at the end.
This research concludes that the *holy place* in Matt 24:15 most probably refers to the holy city, Jerusalem, rather than to the temple only. Matthew’s idea of Jerusalem being holy, the literal supporting evidence of Dan 9 for Jerusalem as a holy place, and the need for the open place where the sign for the immediate flight publicly stands seem to support the assertion that the *holy place* in Matt 24:15 is Jerusalem. However, Matthew seems to emphasize, by adopting the *holy place*, that Jerusalem contains the temple, which is God’s dwelling place.