Israel’s Conflict, Israel’s Struggle and Conversion and the World’s Zero Hour

By Charles Feinberg

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Good morning friends, this is Brother Charles L. Feinberg pinch-hitting this morning for our chancellor Dr. Louis T. Talbot who is currently in a Bible conference ministry in Portland Oregon at the Central Bible church with our good friend Dr. John Mitchell. Dr. Talbot will be there throughout the week. And we know that he can depend upon your prayer ministry to sustain him. We should like to solicit your prayers your continued prayers for the healing and restoration physically of Mrs. Talbot. God is doing wonderful things there and we're looking to him for his continued blessing and his grace in restoring her. This morning we'd like for you to turn in the book of Zechariah next to the last book of the Old Testament. The twelfth chapter like to think in our Bible study. This morning on the theme Israel's conflict Israel's struggle and conversion or the world's zero hour.

This will this passage undoubtedly will throw a great deal of light on the events that are now transpiring in the Middle East and are due yet to take place in that so pivotal and significant a portion of the world. Zechariah then the 12th chapter. We'd like to take the entire 12th chapter of 14 verses and the first verse of the 13th Chapter shall we look to God in prayer. Our God and our father again we thank thee for thy precious word the written word indited directed by the
Spirit of God himself. We thank thee that in his infinite wisdom he used holy men of old to give this inerrant, infallible Word a way of life to reveal Christ in all of his glory and beauty and not only soul but to show men the manna of life that pleases thee here upon earth and then thy great plan and program thy will for the days that lie ahead for the body of Christ the church and then for Israel and then for the nations of the earth and even for all of creation the material creation round about us bless us in our study this hour we pray for Dr. Talbot. Thou give him rich and full ministry there in Portland this week Lord undergird him physically we know how much he needs strengthening in his body and then give him ease of mind and spiritual strengthening for a ministry in the word.

Bless his loved one Mrs. Talbot who is now in the hospital. We pray that thou will minister to her from thy gracious bountiful store we thank thee for her life and for her testimony and what she has meant to him and to all of us and to the work here bless abundantly. The study of thy truth. We pray in Jesus' name Amen. The twelfth chapter then of the prophecy of Zachariah we've said it relates to Israel's conflict and conversion or the world's zero hour. Perhaps we should explain right here what we mean by zero hour zero hour. Actually a military term a military expression it's a modern expression for the hour of attack. The out of conflict. The hour of decision the hour of decisive battle the hour of crisis the hour in which an ordeal is to begin and the world is rushing on to just such an hour a zero hour. I realize that important events of the past few years and even of the past months may have looked a great deal like it like the World's zero hour but the Bible clearly defines the world's zero hour the hour in which the death rattle will be heard very distinctly in the throat of the nations.

Now this great prophetic portion a marvel at how much the spirit of God has placed here in the twelfth chapter of Zechariah this great prophetic portion comprises three essential
divisions. The colossal Confederacy a universal Confederacy. You will find it in Zechariah 12 verses one to three and verse nine with your bible before you friend. Read with me the burden of the word of the Lord concerning Israel. Thus saith the Lord who stretcheth Forth the heavens and laid the foundation of the earth and form the spirit of man within him Behold I will make Jerusalem a cup of reeling unto all the peoples round about and upon Judah also shall it be in the siege against Jerusalem and it shall come to pass in that day that I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all the peoples all that burden themselves with it shall be sore wounded and all the nations of the earth shall be gathered together against it.

Verse nine, it shall come to pass in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. You'll notice. This prophecy is entitled A Burden. We read it numbers of times in the prophecy of Isaiah and perhaps even more in the prophecy of Jeremiah. In fact, his own contemporaries the contemporaries of Jeremiah used to quip him about it used to ridicule him about his oft-repeated expression the burden of the Lord the burden of the Lord the burden of the Lord. Are these but friends burdened in Scripture has the real meaning. This message was of a threatening character. It was of a judgmental nature. It involved the punishment of God upon his people and it was something that rested as a weight as a heavy burden as a sorrow upon the heart of the Prophet. Therefore, it's entitled The burden of the word of the Lord and it concerns Israel. Read on in the passage. It concerns specifically Judah and Jerusalem. They are primarily in the Vortex they are in the focal point. Who is giving this burden. It's thus saith the Lord It's the Lord. Who is the omnipotent one. In heaven. He is the creator who stretched out the heavens. He's not the only not only the omnipotent one in heaven he's the omnipotent one upon earth. He formed.
He laid the foundation of the earth. What a vast operation that was. What an enterprise that called forth omnipotent power that was. But he did it. He's the omnipotent one in heaven. He's the omnipotent one on earth and formeth the spirit of man within him. Here is the pre-eminent one in heaven on earth and in the realm of men thinking intelligent creatures God says. I that speak this am the one who has all these credentials now in verse two behold I will make Jerusalem a cup or reeling unto all the peoples round about. All the nations are going to come about Jerusalem and Judah both. They are going to come against these areas, the capital city and Judah and they're going to lay siege to the capital city. But instead of the city being a prize which falls to them which is granted to them it turns out in an altogether different way in an unpredicted way. As far as their own councils were concerned in an unprecedented way instead of Jerusalem being a great prize that falls into their hands. It turns out rather to be a couple of reeling. It's as though one took a staggering drink a drink that rendered one drunk. And Jerusalem is just that it's a cup of reeling how futile will there be attack, how futile will that attack be upon Judah and Jerusalem.

The cup the cup in Scripture often speaks of that which one thinks will be a delight to him. But turns out rather to be just the opposite turns out rather to be a source of burden a weight. And a source of sorrow. In Isaiah 51 Verse 17, we read awake awake stand up oh Jerusalem that hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his wrath. Thou hast drunken the bowl of the cup of staggering and drained it. There is none to guide her among all her sons whom she hath brought forth. Neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she has brought up these two things are befallen thee who shall bemoan thee desolation and destruction and the famine and the sword. How shall I comfort thee thy sons have fainted, they lie the head
of all the streets as an antelope in a net they're full of the wrath of the Lord. The rebuke of thy God. Therefore hear now this thou afflicted and drunken but not with wine.

Now you and I know that a person can be drunken with other than wine. We read of those and hear are those who are power drunk. We hear of pugilists fighters boxers who are said to be punch drunk. Well here, the nations of the earth come against Jerusalem and against Judah and they become drunk because of the wrath. And the dealing of God in judgment upon them. And you notice who they are that come all the peoples all the peoples. What a vast confederacy that is and in verse three all the nations of the Earth are gathered together against it all the nations. And in the early part of verse three all the peoples. The peoples of Earth will come in well-defined Confederacies in the south of Europe there will be a confederacy of ten nations the great diplomats the political figures the statesmen in Europe are talking about a United States of Europe. We are going to see a revival in the southern part of Europe such as held sway in the old Roman Empire. You'll find it in the second chapter of Daniel. In the seventh chapter of Daniel, you'll find it in the revelation the 13th Chapter in the first part of that 13th Chapter.

And then in the seventeenth chapter of Revelation and there will be the Northern Power the Assyrian power mentioned so prominently and clearly in the 11th chapter of Daniel. That’s north of the Holy Land. And then in the northern part of Europe to offset this Southern Confederacy in the southern century Confederacy is formed to offset the northern. You have the two great powers that I'm sure Dr. Talbot has spoken to you of time and time again and rightly so in Ezekiel 38 and 39 the Russian bear and the German. Nation. Russia and Germany in the north. The Roman Empire in the South. North of Palestine the Assyrian power or where the Assyrian was. In ancient times and then the kings of the East that have seemed to have taken a new lease on life, we read of them in the 16th chapter of the book of Revelation. Friends all the nations will
be bitten by the virus of anti-Semitism on that day and don't say it's impossible. Satan's working on it as a proposition of his tirelessly incessantly uninterruptedly. And here you have it. Our picture in those first three verses.

You have a tremendous picture given you of what lies before the world in a future day you have the same picture in Psalm 2, in Joel, the third chapter in the sixty-third chapter where Christ comes with dyed garments from [inaudible] were from Edom. He's been trampling out the grapes of the wine press of God's wrath and in the nineteenth chapter of the revelation where the birds that fly amid heaven are told to come and eat the flesh of kings and of princes and of captains and mighty men and a strong and great Bond and free. Oh what a day this colossal Confederacy. You see verse three leads us to a climax in thought. The cup just renders an individual powerless. Insensate drugged. The Stone actually wounds and bruises and lacerate it does more than stupefy. Then in verse 9. You have the top of the climax, it shall come to pass in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem it's the language of appearance. God not only wounds them he's not only rendered them powerless he is not only stopped them dead in their tracks and render them inoperative and inactive but he wounds and lacerates and he destroys these opposing armies.

This will be the world's decisive hour. Never forget it. They'll find God's final answer to their threat over Israel. An old preacher said when you stand and look at the sweeping flames of a prairie fire on an autumn day stretching leagues away or at night throwing its lurid strange terrifying light into the broad heavens above. You don't suppose that those vast flames were put there. The negligent Hunter after his evening meal sat smoking his pipe. He knocked a spark out of it and it kindled and grew. He watched it thinking that he might at any moment subdue it by the stroke of his boot but it escaped him and it ran and it spread here and there and everywhere
and it swung on and the wind caught it and nourished it. And it laughed and it roared and crackled as it sped along growing wider and more fierce consuming harvest and fence and hut and hovel and everything in sight. Friends it took care of itself. After it was once kindled, it had in itself multiplying power expansive explosive power. And so were the revealed rebellion of the nations against God and the Confederacy against Israel you have the colossal Confederacy in verses 1 to 3 and verse 9.

Now note if you will verses four to eight the conquering captives in that day saith the Lord I will smite every horse with terror and his rider with madness and I will open mine eyes upon the House of Judah and will smite every horse of the Peoples with blindness. This passage is going to tell us that God will give victory in a twofold way. He will personally himself. Overpower the enemy. He will empower Israel to triumph over their foes. It's as it were a twofold thrust. God overpowers the enemy. He can do it all alone. He doesn't need man's assistance but he wants to bring Israel his people into a cooperative partnership just as God today could do all the work of evangelization. But that's not his plan. He wants you and me to see that the message of redeeming grace gets out to the ends of the earth. That's why 50 years ago now. Thank God there was established the overall incorporation the Bible institute of Los Angeles incorporated that now includes the Bible institute a Bible college the school of missionary medicine and the Talbot theological seminary. God wants us to be in a working cooperative partnership fellowship with him and so he not only overpowers the enemy he empowers Israel to triumph over their enemies and in verse four you have the three plagues that are mentioned in Deuteronomy twenty eight twenty eight.

They were to be the plagues that would smite Israel if they were in disobedience. What were they? Terror, madness, blindness. But now these very same three plagues are predicted
upon those who come in disobedience and in hatred against God’s people Israel cavalry you read here about horses. Every horse. And smite every horse. Twice over in verse four Zechariah 12. Why so much about horses well cavalry has always had a large place in eastern warfare. Those who have been in the know tell us that before World War II Russia bought up about 75 percent of the horseflesh of the world on every continent that you could lay her hands on horse flesh. God will paralyze the forces of the enemy. He blinds the eyes of the enemy but he opens his own in compassion on Israel. I'll open mine eyes upon the House of Judah, do you catch the full force of this picture. I'll smite every horse with terror. Have you ever seen one horse take fright? A horse is a powerful animal even the greatest machines even the greatest planes are reckoned in horsepower. HP horsepower.

And here is not only one horse taken fright but every horse in the armies of nations and then on top of that horse that taken fright. Put a rider whose smitten supernaturally with insanity with madness and as though that were not enough confusion twice confounded we find that every horse that horse that's been smitten with terror with fright is now suddenly made blind a blinded, terrified horse. Every horse. And. Rider on top of him. That's insane. And that. Is the condition of all the cavalry. Can you imagine for just a short moment even the tremendous confusion we read in verse 5 and the chieftains in Judah, the leaders in Judah the heads of thousands shall say in their heart the inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength and the Lord of hosts their God. God will so work in the hearts of the leaders that they are going to realize it's not their own strength. Oh how leaders are proud and boastful. But here they will realize that their stay is the inhabitants of Jerusalem and not the inhabitants of Jerusalem as they naturally are but as they in turn have been strengthened and sustained and under girded and confirmed by the Lord of hosts their God.
They tell us that a million tons of water pass over Niagara Falls every hour. Do you think any man could stop that mighty torrent. You say impossible. Yet God did it. One winter. God froze those raging waters into solid ice. His power is boundless. The Psalmist said power belong to the Lord. And again I say power belongs unto the Lord, Verse 6. Of Zechariah 12 in that day will I make the Chieftains of Judah like a fire among wood and like a flaming torch among sheaves, they shall devour all the peoples roundabout on the right hand and on the left. And they of Jerusalem shall yet again dwell in their own place even in Jerusalem. What a vivid picture of the victory of the leaders in Israel. Their success will issue with the deliverance and settlement of the people in their appointed place. And notice it won't be a condition where one part of the nation will boast against the other part. The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first; the defenseless country is going to be delivered before the well-defended capital. They are going to be saved first delivered first that the glory of the House of David as the reigning dynasty and the glory in the inhabitants of Jerusalem as the dwellers in the capital city be not magnified above Judah the defenseless country.

I repeat will be delivered before the well defended camp so that the well defended capital may not boast over the defenseless countryside. Both of them will acknowledge the victory from God. In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem and he that is feeble among them the original Hebrew says. He that stumbles among them that day shall be as David one who never lost a battle. And the House of David the ruling house shall be as God as the Angel of the Lord who went before them of the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. In their utter helplessness, they will be endowed with superhuman power and strength. Cecil Rhodes that great empire builder of South Africa after whom has been named Rhodesia. Cecil Rhodes it was who said most men are after Peacock's feathers. But I am after power. How different from the
omnipotent one. Even our Lord Jesus who said I have all power all power in heaven and earth are given to me.

Go ye therefore. And now we turn to the last portion of this tremendous passage on the world's zero hour Israel's conflict and conversion we saw first of all the colossal Confederacy versus 1 to 3 and 9 the conquering captives in verses 4 to 8. Now the cleansing confession and I will pour upon the House of David one of the greatest verses in all the Old Testament on Israel's conversion and salvation in messiah the Lord Jesus of Nazareth the Lord Jesus Christ the Lord of glory. And I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplication and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced. They shall mourn for him as one mourns for his only son. And shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. What a picture. Where the Lord was rejected in Jerusalem. There he begins his work of restoration. Notice the divine order first conviction of sin God pours out his spirit and they're melted down.

The convicted broken down in their sin they're convinced of it they see the great sin of rejecting him away with him. He's not our king. We have no king but Caesar. We will not have this man to rule over us oh conviction of sin. And then the presentation of Christ just exactly what you had with Joseph and his brethren. We wonder as he deals with them there in Egypt oh Joseph. Isn't it enough that you have accused them of being spies? Isn't it enough that you have run their hearts so much so far? No they they've got to be brought to the point where they are completely melted down realizing the great sin of the rejection of their own brother Joseph. But here is Joseph's greater son. The son of David, the Lord Jesus Christ. They must be in their broken down condition. Then he presents himself to them as Joseph said [inaudible] from before me, made himself known and to his brother. Perhaps in a similar way. He will present himself to
his brethren to settle some past accounts to settle some old scores like unbelieving Thomas Israel
will not believe until they see his hands.

And oh that spirit of conviction was poured out upon them. Leads them. To lay hold upon
God’s grace and to supplicate his throne. And they look on the one they pierced he must have
been on Earth before because the son of God wouldn't be pierced in heaven. They look upon the
one they pierced. And then mourn for him and oh how Israel knows how to mourn in these high
holidays of New Years and the day of atonement. How many tears are shed in the synagogues.
They know how to mourn; they'll mourn for him as one mourns for his only son. Oh, what a deep
sorrow that is in Israel an only son the one who carries on the family name. And tradition they
shall mourn for him, as for an only son and they shall be in bitterness for him for his first-born
oh how near and dear is a first born in Israel. There is a special ceremony for the first-born
among the Jewish people even today in the 13th Chapter of Exodus God said you know that I
went through Egypt. And slew every first born.

Now you ought to be grateful that your first-born were spared. And now I want you to
redeem every firstborn I want you to have a ceremony where you realize that the firstborn
belongs to me I have the first right to him. But manifestly, God couldn't use all the first born in
all of Israel in Levitical in a priest capacity. So God said this just so you realize that and just so
you make the necessary. Ritual for it. You may have your first born in your own homes and here
the first born is dead. Bitterness for his only son and bitterness for the first born and then the
greatest personal sorrow private sorrow now verse 11 the greatest public sorrow in that day shall
there be a great mourning in Jerusalem as the mourning of Hadad-Rimmon in the valley of
Megiddo. What was that? That was the mourning for the death of Josiah the godly king in the
battle with Pharaoh Nico of Egypt mentioned in second chronicles the thirty-fifth chapter the
death of that godly King Marked the sunset of the Kingdom of Judah. And then we have it's not only a national sorrow but an individual one even husbands will separate for the moment from their wives in order that their mourning may have its full expression I want to be alone in the presence of God and the land shall mourn every family apart the family the house of David apart and their wives apart the family of the House of Nathan apart and their wives apart.

The family of the house of Levi apart and their wives apart the family of the Shemites apart and their wives apart. All the families that remain. Every family apart and their wives apart in that day there shall be a fountain opened to the House of David to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. You see it's going to be a national sorrow and an individual one too. The House of David the Kings were implicated. The House of Nathan the prophets were implicated. Levi the priests were. And Shemi the ordinary Levites were guilty. All classes. All ranks all positions are included and oh the result will be glorious indeed a purified cleansed Israel. It's from this verse Zechariah 13:1 that William Cowper wrote that wonderful hymn that we sing. There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins and sinners plunge beneath that flood. Lose all their guilty stains. Friends. There will be a purified cleansed Israel and its from that same fount of Calvary that you listening friend can be saved too. Trust Christ. He died the just one for you and me the unjust that he might bring us to God.

He poured out his blood unto death in order that God might have the payment for the penalty for your sins and mine. Years ago in Boston, there was a German who had received a wound in World War 1 and whenever he heard lively music he couldn't refrain from joining in and being a musician of ability whenever his pathos was stirred that wound would open couldn't be permanently or perpetually closed. Friends. Powers of earth and hell have conspired to obliterate the five bleeding wounds of a man of Calvary but blessed be God. There is this hour.
There still is a fountain open for sin and for uncleanness and bless God someday Israel will have its National Day of Atonement in realization in actuality and Israel will enter into the fullness of it. Oh friend, where do you stand on the matter of Calvary? What then shall I do with Jesus who is called the Christ? What have you done with the Christ of God? The Christ of Calvary receive him believe him. And may God abundantly bless you. Our God and our father make real to the hearts of those who listened in the great and gracious mercy that's extended to us in our Lord Jesus Christ as we hear of these things that have come upon the world. May we flee for refuge to Christ our Lord in his blessed name we pray amen.