The World’s Zero Hour Pt. 1

By Charles Feinberg

Charles Feinberg:

This study is entitled The World's zero hour. It is. Taped by Dr. Charles Lee Feinberg, dean emeritus and professor of Old Testament at Talbot Theological Seminary in La Mirada California. Our theme the world's zero hour is found in Zechariah. Chapter 12. Through the first verse of Chapter 13. 12 1. Through 13 1 then of the book of Zachariah. What do we mean. By Zero Hour. Zero hour is the modern expression for the hour of attack. The Hour of Decision. The hour of conflict. The hour of crisis the hour in which an ordeal is to begin. The world is rushing on to just such an hour. Now important events of the past few years may have looked very much like it. But the Bible clearly defines the world's zero hour. The Hour in which the death rattle will be heard in the throat of the nations of the earth. We look then to Zechariah Chapter 12 1 through 13 1. This wonderful past Drees the burden of the word of the Lord concerning Israel. Thus, says the Lord who stretches forth the heavens and laid the foundation of the earth and formed the spirit of man within him.

Behold I will make Jerusalem a cup of reeling or a cup of stumbling a cup of staggering unto all the peoples round roundabout 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. In that day said 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 and the Chieftains of Judah shall say in their heart the habitants of Jerusalem are my strength in the Lord of Hosts. Their God.

In that day will I make the chieftains of Judah like a pan of fire among wood and like a flaming torch among sheaves and they shall devour all the peoples round about on the right hand and on the left and they of Jerusalem shall yet again dwell in their own place even in Jerusalem. The Lord also shall say the tents of Judah first that the glory of the House of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem may not be magnified above Judah. In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David and the House of David shall be as God as the Angel of the Lord before them and it will come to pass in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem and I will pour upon the House of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplication and they look unto me whom they had pierced and they shall mourn for him as one mourns for his only son and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is embittered his for his first born.

In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo. and the land should mourn every family apart. the family of the house of David apart and their wives apart the family 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 this remarkable prophetic passage verses one to three and verse 9 speak of the colossal. We could even say the universal the colossal confederacy. Notice what verse 1 indicates, it's a burden of the word of the Lord concerning Israel. Whenever you find the word burden in the old testament in the Bible it speaks of that which is a burden upon the heart of God.
and then a burden upon the prophet. It is a threatening, judgmental prophecy. It speaks of judgment, punishment yet to come. And it's not just anyone's burden but as we said it's the word of the Lord and it concerns Israel. that is there going to be numbers of others involved but the focal point its center. Is Judah, Jerusalem primarily.

Now who is going to tell us this tremendous burden. Again, he's already said the word of the Lord. But he says thus says the Lord God is going to be the guarantor. He is going to vouch for the truthfulness of the events here to be foretold. Thus, as the Lord who stretches forth the heavens he is the all-powerful one the omnipotent one in heaven he lays the foundation of the earth he is the omnipotent one on earth and he forms the spirit of man within him. Notice the realms that are combined here. He is also the omnipotent one in the sphere of humankind. Then verse 2. Begins with behold in the Bible is as good as our modern stop look and listen. This is an attention getting and attention arresting word. What is it that he wants us to harken to see. Well what he is going to be doing. No question throughout this chapter. Who is the great moving personality it's the Lord God himself. I will make in verse two and then in verse three we read. I will make Jerusalem.

Then we read in verse four I will smite. I will open mine eyes. I will smite every horse. It's God. Sixth verse. Well I make the chieftains of Judah. The Lord is the one moving out. Heaven has been silent for lo these numbers of centuries now God begins to speak, and he speaks as he espouses and champions the cause of his downtrodden people who have been trampled underfoot through so many centuries. So, it is the Lord we must see who it is that is speaking to whom he speaks. On what occasion. And why. And then we have just finished saying that it concerns Israel Judah and Jerusalem. How can that be misunderstood? When in verse two we have the word Jerusalem twice in verse three we have Jerusalem in verse four, notice. The Lord
is going to be smiting the people and so on. There you have Judah or Jerusalem verse 5 you have Judah and Jerusalem in verse 6 we have Judah in that same verse we have Jerusalem twice. Verse 6 and then we have in verse 7 Judah we have Jerusalem and Judah again in verse seven in verse eight we have Jerusalem.

Then in verse 9 we have Jerusalem verse 10 we have Jerusalem and so we go on, verse 11 has Jerusalem. And in verse 1 of chapter 13 Jerusalem Jerusalem is the revolving center around which this truth is now being declared. Here's what God says Behold I will make Jerusalem a cup, it should read basin in the original. Because it's more than a small receptacle, the word fir cup was kavas, which means a basin because so many are going to partake from it. Behold I will make Jerusalem a Basin, B A S I N of reeling, of staggering unto all the peoples round about and upon Judah also shall it be in the siege against Jerusalem. Something is going to be happening to Jerusalem. But it is not going to be confined there it's going to spread out into all the surrounding area of Judah. What is the picture in a basin of reeling? it's a picture of one partaking of a liquid of a drink and being sent into a staggering condition a stupefying condition. There's more than one way of being drunk. There can be drunkenness from alcoholic liquors wine and the like. But there is also such a thing. They speak of it in the language of the pugilists of the boxers. Such and Such a boxer was punch drunk.

Some are power drunk some are fame drunk some are money drunk. But here it is. Punch drunk. Nations that have tried for so many times to take Jerusalem. To destroy it completely so that it would never rise again. These nations have said what bunglers we have been through the years. Why don't we now work out a plan a foolproof plan. And smite Jerusalem once and for all so that they'll never never forget it again. Why don't we do just that very thing. Why don't we take them here and immediately see that they never rise again? God said is that your plan. I'll see
to it then that the moment you touch that city of Jerusalem the city the great king city outside whose walls the Lord Jesus gave His life for the sin of the world. I'll see to it that instead of this being a marvelous objective of yours something that you desire. To delight your heart. I'm going to send you reeling just spinning. You're going to be rendered insensate. I am going to make Jerusalem a basin of reeling to whom all the peoples I find so many when they read the scripture and find the word peoples either in the old or in the New Testament. They are afraid to read that S on P E O P L E S and I know why when they were little they saw crowded in a certain place and they came running home and told mother. I've seen so many peoples and she said no don't use that word peoples use the word people people means a crowd. But she didn't mean that you're never allowed to use the word s on the word people when it is pluralized it means nations it means national entities. It means different tongues people with different languages and so on here it means nations.

So here Jerusalem is rendered as a basin of reeling, of staggering to all the nations around about and they're not only satisfied. Come to Jerusalem laying siege there. Verse 2. But on Judah as well. Their attack then is futile. It's appears as a basin from which they're sent reeling just as in Isaiah 51 17 to 20 Jeremiah 25 15 and 16 who are all the peoples they're the all people mentioned all the peoples mentioned in Isaiah 63. In Joel three that are gathering together into the Valley of Jehoshaphat. In revelation 11. They are going to be in well-defined Confederacies, the revived Roman Empire of Daniel Chapter 2 and 7 and of Revelation Chapter 13 and 17. There's going to be the Assyrian power in the north Daniel 11 then Ezekiel 38 and 39. Mention a confederacy of Russia and Germany and revelation 16. The Kings of the Sun rising, the kings of the east. Notice how widespread. Notice how comprehensive. Notice how universal is going to be this Confederacy all the nations in that day will be bitten and smitten by the virus of anti-Semitism
Notice in verse 3 we go even beyond verse two it shall come to pass in that day that I'll make Jerusalem, the same city 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. What is the spirit of God trying to tell us now through the prophet Zechariah. He's saying simply that there is more than just. The nations being rendered powerless thrown out of the ring as we say in boxing language. There's going to be more. There are going to find Jerusalem as a stone. That's too much for them to handle. Today we have military presses as we call them folk lifting high above their head. Great weights been in the Olympics more than once but in those days, they didn't have that particular type of equipment. Those iron facilities they did have contests whereby different ones who want to show their athletic prowess and strength they had contests whereby they tried to see which one of the contestants could only lift the heaviest load and here's a picture of one who's engaged himself with more than he can handle.

How did he find he finds himself lacerated and wounded and bruised that's more than just being thrown senseless here is wounding and lacerating and bruising but more even than that verse 9 we read it shall come to pass in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem? But the Lord doesn't have to make a try. He is speaking here after the manner of man he wants to show us that he doesn't do things hastily or precipitously. That's why in Genesis 11 I'm going to go down and see what they're doing at Babel. That's why we read in Genesis 18. I'm going to send these angels down to Sodom and Gomorrah and see if the actuality of the case is such as has come up in my knowledge here in high heaven and then so here again when he says he's going to seek to destroy it's just a way of saying that he will finally decide not only to send them reeling not only to have them wounded and bruised grievously wounded, sore
wounded is the old way of saying it, grievously wounded but he says he's going to destroy those nations that doesn't mean all nations of the Earth are going to be gone.

It means the armies of those nations that have come against Jerusalem. My friends that's going to be the world's decisive hour. The nations are going to find God's final and all conclusive answer to what to their threat over his people Israel. It was the great preacher Henry Ward Beecher who said once when you stand and look at the sweeping flames of a prairie fire on an autumn day stretching miles away or at night throwing its terrifying light into the broad heaven above you don't suppose that those vast flames were just put there he said. A negligent hunter in all probability after his evening meal satisfied sat smoking his pipe. He knocked a spark out of it and fire is always an interesting phenomenon. It kindled, and it grew but he kept watching it it fascinated him thinking any moment he could subdue it by the stroke of his boot. But it escaped him, and it ran, this fire did, and it spread Here there everywhere swung on and the wind caught it and nourished it.

You know when fire gets started. Even the fastest horse cannot outrun it because it fills the whole atmosphere sucks in all of the oxygen in order to keep the flames burning and, in a forest, it can leap hundreds and hundreds of yards from one treetop to another. So, the wind caught it nourished it and it laughed and it roared. This fire did, and it crackled as it sped along growing wider. Fiercer consuming the harvest and the fence and the hut and everything in sight. That fire took care of itself after it was once kindled. It had in itself multiplying power. My friends that's the way with the revealed rebellion of the nations against God of the Confederacy against Israel. It will go on feeding feeding feeding and before it's all over. Great will be the agony great will be the havoc that's wrought on every side and there will be no reversing the consequences.
So, we have the colossal Confederacy in verses one to three and verse nine. Then notice the intermediate verses between three and nine verses 4-8. 4 5 6 7 8. These five verses speak of the conquering, the conquering captives. Verse four, in that day said the Lord I will smite every horse with terror and his rider with madness and I'll open mine eyes upon the House of Judah and will smite every horse of the Peoples with blindness and the Chieftains of Judah shall say in their heart. The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength and the Lord of Hosts their God And that day will I make the chieftains of Judah like a pan of fire among wood like a flaming torch among sheaves and they shall devour all the peoples round about on the right hand and on the left in every direction and they of Jerusalem shall yet again dwell in their own place even injurious to the people of Jerusalem will live in their own city. Jerusalem.

The Lord also shall see the tents of Judah first that the glory of the House of David or the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem be not magnified above Judah. In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David and the House of David shall be as God as the Angel of the Lord before them. This passage states plainly that God is going to give victory in this tremendous world conflict in a twofold way. First of all, he is going to. Personally, empower Israel to triumph over their enemies and he will personally overpower the enemy. Probably we should put the second as first he personally overpowers overwhelms the enemy with one stroke coming after another in a rapid staccato succession and then he's going to empower Israel strengthen her undergird her to triumph over her enemies. In verse four we have terror mentioned and madness and blindness. These three plagues are mentioned in Deuteronomy 28:28 where God is warning Israel of disobedience and God is no partial God is no respecter of persons of Israel being in disobedience.
They would have these three plagues come upon them now, but the nations of the Earth are going in defiance and opposition to God. They have to experience these three plagues. Now it mentions horses every horse and riders and then you have every horse of the Peoples with blindness. Is that an important issue? It certainly is. Unlike our armies cavalry has always held a large place in eastern warfare. God is going to paralyze the forces of the enemy. And while he does that he blinds the eyes of the enemy and opens his own in compassion on Israel. Not many know that one of the great decisive factors in World War II. In fact, many think it was what changed the whole course of the war was that after Great Britain had been pushed down trampled down in the Battle of Britain till she was on her knees. The Demons drove Hitler on when just a few more strokes it would seem would have put Britain out of the running altogether. Suddenly Hitler driven on I believe by demons. Turned eastward he'd already made. A contract he he'd already made a treaty an alliance with Russia so that they wouldn't come and attack him in the rear while he was going westward toward the British Isles.

Now he turned having subjected Britain as far as he thought he could go at the moment. Turned around and did something that scarcely the Western powers ever prayed for and he opened the warfare on the eastern front as well on both fronts he was going to fight and he went in Germany did the German forces went in, Hitler went in to Russia forgot to read about what happened to Napoleon in the last century went in. My dear friends went in on mechanized warfare. The Wehrmacht and oh they had the tanks they had all the might. Of Germany the greatest armies in Europe at the time trained that is and prepare to the hilt. They went in with this mechanized warfare. And they succeeded from one city to another until I well remember it seemed as if it was a travelogue. They took this city. And then they went on took another city and took another city and another city.
And then something happened when the whole reel as it were of the scene was being replayed. They were coming out but in a different way. What happened. The most severe snowstorm. In a century struck Russia and. The German forces that had come in on mechanized warfare. Were bogged down. In the snow and couldn't go they were so high in drifts and all. And then the Russians. Had already prepared for a last ditch thrust because before the war those who had traveled around in many places of the world couldn't quite figure out why it was the agents of Russia were buying up so much horseflesh in the world someone even computed I don't know how we could verify it but had computed that Russia had bought up 75 percent of the horseflesh of the world and they came down against these German tanks that were immobilized and mowed them down. Oh yes. So, horses, cavalry, are always important. Notice what happens every horse is smitten with terror and it is a supernatural terror.

Have you ever seen a horse take fright? A horse is a massive it's a massive animal. Even our greatest engines today even in planes we speak of them as HP horse power. They are calibrated, they are reckoned according to horse power and so God supernaturally strikes every horse of the enemies against Israel with terror. As if that's not bad enough not enough of a confused [inaudible] here God supernaturally smites the rider sitting on that horse with what. With insanity a sudden insanity. And at the same time all this happens God is opening his eyes in solicitude and concern and care on the House of Judah and then as though to finish it all off climax it.

God says I'm going to smite every horse of those people what horse the horse that has taken fright the horse on whose back is an insane rider. God said that horse. I'm going to smite with blindness. Can you see the confusion many times over confounded God personally
overpowers the enemy? And then as we shall see in a moment the remainder of this passage five to eight. The Lord is going to empower Israel to triumph in a specific way. Over her foes.

[End Part 1]