



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Zechariah 1:7-17:

"Zechariah - Vision:

The Man Among the Myrtles"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We are studying the prophecy of Zechariah in our morning studies and last Sunday morning we began our series of messages by looking at the opening six verses in which the prophet issues a call for repentance on the part of the returning exiles in the land of Palestine.

Now, today we're going to read the first of the apocalyptic visions, which the prophet Zechariah had. And the Scripture reading is therefore, chapter 1 the prophecy of Zechariah verses 7 -17. So will you turn in your old testament to the prophecy of Zechariah chapter 1, verse 7.

Now, also for some of you who were not here last Sunday you'll remember that the children of Israel came back into the land of Palestine from the Babylonian captivity about fifty thousand strong in all. They came back into the land they began the temple, that was their chief purpose in coming back, but after a little while because of indifference and also some opposition they abandoned the construction of the building; in the meantime they constructed for themselves very lovely homes, Haggai makes reference to this he was the other prophet of the return, in the first chapter of his book. They made for themselves paneled homes, luxurious, in the meantime the Lord's house was laying

waste. God had judged them for this and brought upon them certain calamities, which are also described by the prophecy Haggai. About fifteen years later they began to reconstruct the temple at the urging of the two prophets and finally completed the temple in 516 BC.

Now, the vision that we are to read now is dated in 519 BC, and so it is dated after the prophecy of Haggai in which he stirred up the people to begin work again but during the time of the construction of the temple, it was designed as we shall see to comfort the children of Israel in the work that they were doing for the Lord. Now, verse 7:

" Upon the four and twentieth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Sebat, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, (that is Zechariah, the prophet) saying, I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, sorrel, (you have speckled in your text) and white."

Now, don't worry about speckled at this point, I'm sure your probably are inclined to begin to think just what in the world could a speckled horse look like and you might miss the rest of the vision so forget about if for the moment; verse 9:

"Then said I, O my lord, what are these? (Now, that is plural and is a reference to the three groups of horses behind the man on the red horse.) And the angel who looked with me said unto me, I will show thee what these are. And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, 'these are they whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth.' And they answered the angel of the Lord that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, we have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest. Then the angel of the Lord answered and said, O Lord

of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years? And the Lord answered the angel that talked with me with good words and comforting words so the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, thus saith the Lord of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy. And I am very much displeased with the nations (or with the heathen) that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction. Therefore thus saith the Lord; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem. Cry yet, (or still) saying, thus saith the Lord of hosts; my cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the Lord shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem."

[Message] May God bless this reading from his inspired word; let's bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Our Heavenly Father we come to thee through the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ we thank thee that thou are the great and powerful Lord of the Universe thou art the God of Heaven and therefore, the affairs of earth take place within thy will. Thou doest work all things according to the counsel which thou doest have within thou self and the Godhead and so we thank thee that as we look out upon the affairs of the earth at no matter what juncture they may be that we can rest secure in the knowledge that our God is sovereign and also that he is over all.

And so we come with confidence and assurance through the revelation that has come to us in Jesus Christ, we thank thee for the word of God and for the comfort that it is to us in days such as these. And Lord we pray that as we study the word today together, that thou mayest minister to us, and comfort and console us, enlighten us, and also motivate us to find the will of God for our lives. Enable us Lord as we study the

word to learn the great truths whereby we shall be able to live well pleasing before thy sight and usefully.

And Lord we pray especially for these who are gathered here in this auditorium, we pray for any who may not know Jesus Christ. O Father, by the Holy Spirit will thou set them apart for faith in our Lord Jesus and for the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ as Peter has put it. May they be born again receiving Christ as personal savior and know the joy of everlasting salvation. And Lord for believers who are here, many of them troubled and disturbed will thou minister to them. For those who are perplexed we pray that thou will give solution for their lives.

We pray again, particularly for the young people who are here and pray O Lord that thou wilt impress upon their hearts the importance of putting thee first in their lives at this early stage in their human existence. We thank thee for this country, for the freedom of utterance, which we have for the opportunity to proclaim the undying word of God. And we ask Lord thy blessing upon each one today who ministers the truth no matter where he may be, may this meeting honor and glorify thee for we ask in the name of our Lord Jesus and for his sake. Amen.

[Message] Subject for this morning as we continue our studies in the prophecy of Zechariah in the light of current events is the man among the myrtles, which is the title to the first of the apocalyptic visions which the Prophet Zechariah had one of the most astonishing developments of our time in the political and historical world is the eclipse of Europe. I can remember when I was studying history in high school and college; that was a long time ago. Europe was the giant of the continents. Out of the eight important countries at the time of the first world war five of them were European and one of them, Russia was part European and part Asian. Since that time things have happened which have been of tremendous significance in the world. Arnold Toynbee in his book *Civilization on Trial* has referred to the eclipse of Europe as the dwarfing of Europe.

When I was studying in Britain my wife and I obtained a very very wonderful little book, it's a spoof on English history; it's called *Ten Sixty-Six and All That*. For a long time it was not sold in the United States. It was written by two men who were Oxford men and they began by saying, "Ten sixty-six and all that," and had a little subtitle which read a memorable history of England, comprising all the parts you can remember including one-hundred and three good things, five bad things and two genuine dates." But what I remember about the book, in addition to a number of very very humorous and funny things, was the fact that the history concluded with the conclusion of World War I, and the book ended with this sentence. "America was clearly top nation and history came to a period. History came to a-- and that's all it was -- a dot a period in the text. In other words history had ended when Britain was no longer the top nation. Well, now, Europe has been eclipsed.

Now, the other astonishing thing, which may have some relation to it, is the reappearance and re-emergence of the ancient biblical powers. I know when I first started studying the Bible twenty-five years ago and read of Egypt, and Ammon, and Moab, and Persia, and Assyria. And noticed the tremendous prominence that they had in the prophetic portions of the word of God, I wondered if it were even conceivable credible if such a thing could really come to pass in our day that these powers should become powers again. And today as we open up the newspapers we read of Syria, of Lebanon; we read of Iran, which is ancient Persia; we read of Iraq, which is more or less Assyria; we read of Jordan, which is more or less Ammon and Moab; we read of Egypt, and of course, now, and perhaps most remarkable of all we read of Israel. Is there a connection between the eclipse of Europe and the re-emergence of the Middle East as significant in world history?

In 1492 the Spanish Jews were driven out of Spain, that was the very same year that Columbus opened up the new country almost as if God were at the time that the Jews were being driven out of Spain opening up a place for oppressed people such as

they. And of course, the United States has been the greatest home of the Jewish people so far as oppression is concerned. It was less than one hundred years after the Jews were driven out of Spain that the Spanish Armada was destroyed by an act of God on the northern shores of Great Britain.

Now, in 1939 to 1945 Hitler and the German Reich destroyed six million Jews, they were Jews in Germany and Jews in Poland. They were largely orthodox Jews and Jews who believed in assimilation, the German Jews. Today there are thirty thousand Jews in the land of Germany. Now, the six million Jews that were destroyed by Hitler finally convinced a number of the other European Jews that it was impossible for them to ever hope to have any kind of peace in the land or content of Europe. And as a result of that European Jews began to exist for Israel in large numbers so that today in Israel, in Russia and in the United States, almost in New York City and Miami are the greatest number of Jews to be found. Now, I wonder if there is any connection there, is the eclipse of Europe due to the fact that Germany and others have engaged in such persecution of them that now, God has determined to open up again another land for a home for oppressed peoples. It is remarkable this connection. In other words, God marches on to the consummation of his program and time is his servant.

Zechariah is a prophet of the end and his four-part book sets forth the details. The first part we looked at last time his opening call to repentance for after all, all of the blessings of God are ultimately dependent upon repentance a change of mind and heart on the part of people.

Now, in the second division of this book, which begins in the seventh verse of the first chapter and does not conclude until the end of the sixth chapter the prophet describes for us eight apocalyptic visions, by apocalyptic I mean primarily symbolic visions, which he had apparently in one night. Now, this is the great section, which we are beginning.

Now, in this apocalyptic vision section of the book the prophet sets forth in vision after vision each one giving some aspect of this great broad theme which is namely Israel and the coming kingdom and so we want to look at the first of the visions this morning and notice how it is something of the story of Israel in a nutshell. The story in its entirety it is very fitting the first of the visions because it gives in broad outline that which is going to follow the remainder of these visions.

Now, the prophet's vision is described in the seventh and eighth verses. Now, remember this when you turn to the word of God you have all types of revelation. It is a revelation from God but speaks at times in the plain words. Some times he speaks in prophecy, prediction; some times he speaks in vision; some times he speaks by dream. Now, in these apocalyptic visions, God is speaking in a different way but it is still God who is speaking. Now, the writer of the Epistle of the Hebrews refers to this fact in the first chapter of his book when he says, "In many parts and in many ways God having spoken of old to the Father, by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." In other words, in the old testament he spoke in many ways, by dream, by vision, by direct confrontation and so on. Now, he has spoken finally through Jesus Christ.

In this section he is speaking by vision and of course, as you look at these visions you see that they are not ordinary visions they are symbolic visions; that is the vision is given and beyond the vision there is an interpretation, meaning is to be sought for the feature of the vision. It is apocalyptic in the sense that it is that type of unveiling it is like the book of Revelation in the New Testament.

Now, at this point some people are inclined to say well if this is an apocalyptic vision and full of symbolic language how shall we ever expect to understand these things. Let me say and I say this with some experience of attempting to interpret the apocalyptic, that strictly speaking apocalyptic literature is relatively easy to interpret. Now, of course, all of the details may not be absolutely clear to us but the major features of apocalyptic

visions are very simple. If we will observe one or two cautions, number one, if we shall be careful to investigate the context of the passage in the book. Now, that's something we should do with all literature the Bible, especially. Secondly, we do have to know something about previous or other scriptural revelation. Some times we have difficulty with apocalyptic because we don't know much about the Bible. And finally, occasionally, the apocalyptic visions rest upon some knowledge upon the culture of the time.

Now, unfortunately the major meaning of symbols in the Bible rest upon the biblical usage and therefore for the man who knows the Bible the apocalyptic symbols become relatively easy.

It was February 519, Haggai had finished his prophecy in December of 520, and now, Zechariah on the twenty fourth day of what is for us roughly February, had a vision, in this vision there are three persons predominant; number one, there is the prophet Zechariah who sees the vision. There is also, an individual who is called the angel who spoke with me. You will notice in the ninth verse: "Then said I, 'O my Lord what are these, and the angel that talked with me.'" So there is an interpreting angel, he is called an *angelus interpretis* or an interpreting angel. Then also there is the angel of Jehovah, will you notice the twelfth verse: "Then the angel of the Lord answered."

Now, for those of you that have been following us as we have studied various portions of the Bible you will remember when we studied the life of Gideon, not too long ago, that Gideon had an encounter with the angel of the Lord and in that encounter it was revealed that this angel of the Lord was really the Lord.

Now, from the study of all of the passages of the old testament and we do not have time to go into that today; it becomes evident that the angel of Jehovah, the angel of Jehovah is our Lord Jesus Christ, who appears in his pre-incarnate days to carry out various ministries on behalf particularly of Israel. And so here the angel of the Lord is identified with the man who is on the horse, the red horse in the midst of the myrtle trees. In other words, there is the prophet Zechariah, there is the interpreting angel, there

is the man on the red horse who is identified as the angel of Jehovah or our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, the vision is very simple, it's just this. Zechariah in the night in prophetic ecstasy looks out and sees before him a man. This man is seated or mounted upon a red horse. I'm translating the Hebrew word *robiev* as “mounted,” I think that's what it means he was mounted upon a red horse. Now, this man was not only mounted upon a red horse but behind him there followed three troops of beings. Now, the people who are sitting upon the horse are not mentioned, I'm just assuming that, and so if the horses are without riders; well, we won't know that I guess until we get to heaven. I am assuming since the first horse had a rider the others had riders too. But the important thing is not the riders upon the horses, well, in fact, we know they did have riders because they speak here in just a moment, they did have riders. But, their identity is insignificant; the colors of the horses are significant because they are specifically mentioned. These horses are red; they are bay, which is a combination of red and brown or reddish brown color, and white. Now, they are halted amidst a little grove of myrtle trees. We do not have any myrtle trees such as these; so far as, I know, the Crape myrtles, which are blooming so beautifully in Dallas right now, are not the myrtle trees of Palestine. These myrtle trees were imported from Persia so far as we can tell, were nevertheless, a low bush or tree extremely fragrant and consequently very desirable in the land they were in a bottom that is in a valley.

So he looked out and saw a man upon a red horse followed by three troops of beings, angelic beings apparently, on red horses, bay horses and white horses and they were in the midst of a grove of myrtle trees in a valley or in a bottom. Now, that 's the vision, not very exciting is it; did you expect to find something really thrilling or sensational well, it isn't it isn't very sensational at all, but it is significant because it is define revelation and we are interested in it for that reason of course.

Now, then there follows secondly. Well, let me stop for a moment and say it right now a few words about these symbols and what they may mean. The red horse by almost all students of the Bible is referred to judgment and blood. In other words, the man who sits upon the red horse is a man who is prepared for judgment a judgment that may issue in blood shed. The myrtle trees almost all interpreters agree is a symbol of Israel. Now, if you want to indicate this from previous Scripture you should turn to the passages in the book of Isaiah in which the myrtle tree is mentioned and Israel is likened to a myrtle tree. "In the future Israel shall no longer be a brier bush," Isaiah says. Israel shall be a myrtle. In Isaiah, chapter 55 and verse 13. And, also in Isaiah, chapter 41 and verse 19 I think it is very significant that this tree was imported because the Jews have not come back from the Babylonian captivity. And it was a lovely fragrant tree of Palestine and thus was beautifully designed by God to represent the fragrance of the nation Israel to him and that is especially mentioned in the explanation that follows. So the interpretation of the symbol agrees with the context of the revelation that follows. The bottom or the valley is suggestive of course, of affliction and degradation. We ourselves speak about being in the valley of the shadow of death. A valley is low; lowness speaks of affliction and degradation. So we have a red horse a man prepared for judgment, we have three types of horses, speckled and white, apparently agents of judgment; and then since the bay horses were a combination of colors most commentators feel that these agents are agents of judgment and mercy; and finally, the white horse is suggestive of victory throughout the word. So we have then a man on a red horse, who is prepared for judgment, we have horses agents of judgment, judgment and mercy and victory in that order. They are in the midst of a grove of myrtle trees suggestive of Israel, but nevertheless, in a valley suggestive of the degradation of Israel.

So to sum it all up what the vision means if we did not have anything else would be simply this: Israel has been brought low in affliction and degradation this is a reference first of all to the Babylonian captivity which as just been completed. It is

ultimately a reference to the fact that Israel is to be scattered throughout all the world and today Israel dwells as a myrtle tree in a valley, very precious to God, but nevertheless, in the valley of affliction and degradation. Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that Israel is in affliction and degradation in the valley the man, the man, the angel of Jehovah is in their midst. Now, that is our Lord Jesus Christ, he is the pledge of God's covenant to Israel, he is still among them mounted on the red horse symbolic of the judgment which he shall soon effect for them against their enemies accompanied by angelic helpers who shall minister with him judgment, judgment and mercy, mercy to some and ultimate victory he stands and he waits. He waits for the word from God, in a moment this man this angel of Jehovah will cry out to God and say, "O Lord how long?"

It's very interesting to me that when the Lord Jesus was here upon the earth when the subject of the second coming came up he said, "The day or hour, no man, no angel, not even the Son of Man knows that day." And here we have the angel of Jehovah in the midst of Israel symbolically crying out, "O Lord how long?" And so then it is a picture of Israel in degradation, but of God's covenant with them, the covenant man, the Lord Jesus in their midst with all of the power to execute judgment in their behalf and bring them to victory waiting for the time to do so.

Now, the prophet I think he must have understood a great deal of all of this for he does not ask about all of the details he doesn't say what does the vision mean. He ask specifically about the Calvary troops, they are the ones that disturb him, and so in the ninth verse we read: "Then said I, 'O my Lord what are these?' And the angel who talked with me and said unto me, I will show thee what these are. And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, 'These are they that walk to and fro in the earth.'"

In other words the Lord had just sent the company of men or angelic beings upon the red horses, the sorrel horses or bay horses and the white horses on a patrolling mission and they have gone to and fro throughout all the earth and they have come back

with their report. "And they answered the angel of the Lord who stood among the myrtle trees, and said, we have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sixtieth still, and is at rest." Now, this was a very disturbing report, you would think that peace was good news, but you see peace is not good news to Israel, that is the Israel that knows the promises of God.

Now, if you would turn in your Bibles and turn over just a page or so I wouldn't want to send you off on a patrolling mission saying turn to the book of Haggai because some of you would never get back to Zechariah, but just a clue for you Haggai is the immediately preceding book. So turn over just a page to the book of Haggai and let's read a verse or two, and let's remember as we read now the prophecy of Haggai that Haggai had just been prophesying and his words were now upon the minds and upon the hearts of those to whom Zechariah was addressing his prophecy. They knew about Haggai's prophecy. Will you notice the second chapter and the seventh verse and here is a prophecy which Haggai makes, as he contemplates the rebuilding of the temple, he says: "And I will shake all nations and the desire of all nations shall come and I will fill this house with glory saith the Lord of host the silver is mine and the gold is mine saith the Lord of host the glory of this latter house shall be greater than its former saith the Lord of host and in this place will I give peace saith the Lord of host." Now, I want you to notice that he says he is going to shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea and the dry land. Now, look at the second chapter and the twenty-first verse: "Speak to Zurebbable the governor of Judah saying I will shake the heavens and the earth and I will over through the throne of kingdoms and will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations."

Now, that's enough for us at this point you will notice from this prophecy that Haggai has told the Jews of that day that he is going to shake the kingdoms, he's going to shake the heaven, he's going to shake the earth, he's going to shake the land, he's going to shake the sea. And as a result of that great shaking he is going to bring to pass a

restoration of the kingdom to the nation of Israel and that is to be done at the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus, not the First Advent. The writer of the book of Hebrews knows how to interpret Scripture and in the twelfth chapter he says, that this prophesy in Haggai has reference to the second coming of Christ not the first coming. So what Haggai has been told then to tell to the people is that Israel's blessings depend upon a shaking of all creation, the nations, the earth the heaven's everything.

Now, when the angelic ministers or agents come back and report that all the earth is at peace and sitting still that is bad news for the angel of Jehovah, that is bad news for Israel because they know that time has not yet come for them to have their blessings promised to them through Abraham. And so in the twelfth verse of our first chapter of the prophecy of Zechariah we have the Lord's prayer of the Old Testament. "Then said the angel of the Lord or then the angel of the Lord answered and said, 'O Lord of hosts how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?'"

Now, it's very wonderful I think to remember that the angel of Jehovah who stands among the children of Israel among the myrtle trees on the red horse also intercedes for them. It's good for us who are in the church of Jesus Christ to remember that thou we belong to the Lord Jesus he has never forgotten his great love for Israel and he intercedes for them and stands in their midst.

Well, let's move on in the latter part now we have the prophets commission he has had the vision he has had a little discussion about these angelic helpers who ride upon the three troops of horses but now a conversation follows. Now, he is told here to cry, this is his commission from the Lord; by the way that term "cry" does not mean the same thing as cry in crybaby; it means to cry a loud. Now, some crybabies can cry mighty loud, but this word means to proclaim and so we read in the thirteenth verse after the angel of Jehovah has prayed to the Lord; "The Lord answered the angel that talked with me (the interpreting angel) with good words and comforting words."

Now, this has been called the text of the book of Zechariah if I were to give one message of this book I think this would be the text I would single out and say this is my text for the book of Zechariah for it contains good words and comforting words for the nation Israel. What are these good and comforting words? That's the general character of the message that follows, its special character is given in verses 14 and 15: "So the angel that talked with me said unto me, Cry thou, (proclaim, Zechariah you're a prophet do your prophetic work) cry thou, saying, thus saith the Lord of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy."

Have you ever thought of God as being a jealous being? Have you ever thought of God as being afflicted with the green-eyed monster? It's kind of interesting to notice how Scripture speaks of God. We use the term anthropomorphism. We mean by that that the Bible describes in human terms some attribute of God for example, if the Bible speaks about the nostrils of God we say that is anthropomorphic, God doesn't have a nose but he of course, is able to, because of his infinite character do all of the things that we are able to do with a nose, he doesn't lack because he doesn't have a nose. The prophets speak of God's nose; they speak of God's hands they speak of the fact that we are in God's hand.

We used to have a seminary student who insisted that all of the Bible was to be taken literally even down to the anthropomorphic expressions of the Bible, that's just plain ignorance, and this man and his type of interpretation is the reason why so many reject to the literal interpretation of the Bible. Some fanatic non-sensical kind of interpreter goes out and spreads abroad his poor hermeneutics and true and biblical hermeneutics has to suffer for it. And so when we come to something like this we remember that this is anthropophagi that is this is a passion that is like a human passion but God doesn't really have passion like we have he's not jealous like we are.

To be jealous comes from a Hebrew word that means to be red. And if you noticed how people when they are really jealous get real red. My wife gets red all the

time of course, from jealousy. No, seriously that's what the word means. Now, the human use of the word jealousy is to describe the fear and suspicion of losing one's love. I referred to the green-eyed monster; it is Shakespeare who refers to this in Othello, he says, "O beware my lord of jealousy it is the green-eyed monster which doth mock the meat it feeds on."

The other night I was out with my wife and we were visiting in the home of some friends and there were two conversations going on in the room, and we were discussing something in one corner of the room and they were discussing something else in the corner of the room and I all of a sudden heard Mary say, "If I divorce somebody." I said wait a minute now, if you divorce somebody? Who is that somebody? [Laughter] You see I was in the control of the green-eyed monster; I was already beginning to think about somebody else having my Mary. Well, that's the human picture of jealousy. I should have replied something like, "Down to Gehenna or up to the throne he travels the fastest who travels alone," [Laughter] but I wasn't as fast on the trigger. [Laughter]

Now, the divine use of this term jealousy in the Bible, you will find that God is referred to as a jealous God, right in the beginning of the commandments. Now, the force of that of course, is that he tolerates no unfaithfulness, and so what is stated here is his great love for Israel and the fact that he tolerates no unfaithfulness on their part. That's the positive, I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy I wish you had the Hebrew old testament before you because there are a number of things in the text here that stress the great love that God has for Israel. I would like also for a lot of my friends who do not think that Israel has any national future to read that text in the Hebrew also because there is a great stress I say upon this.

Now, not only is this stated but in the fifteenth verse God goes on to say: "I am very much displeased with the nations that are at ease for I was but a little displeased and they helped forward the affliction." What does he mean by this? Well, he means simply this. God you see had been displeased with Israel because they had disobeyed him and

as a result of that they had been sent out into captivity but instead of being subject to God in captivity the nations of the earth had punish Israel beyond the desire of God. In other words, he had said because your disobedient I'm going to send you out among the nations in captivity and you will have to suffer for it. The nations, however took advantage of that fact and they did more than God desired. And because of that fact, God says I'm going to have to deal with the nations.

It's just as if I was getting ready to discipline my son and I were getting ready to spank him with a switch and something came up and I had to leave and I turned to a friend of mine and I said would you finish spanking my son and he would reach over and take an iron rod and beat the living day lights out of him. I wouldn't be too happy about that. Well, that's what happened to Israel, God sent them into captivity Nebuchadnezzar treated them relatively well. Nebuchadnezzar was a man who believed in the God of heaven ultimately, he treated them relatively well, but when Belteshazzar and others came to the throne they really took it out on the Jews. Their anti-Semitism, which had not begun then flourished at that time and as a result of it God said he was going to do something about it, he was jealous for Israel and also he was going to punish those who had gone beyond his desire with them.

That brings up the subject of the evil anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism has existed from the days of the earliest chosen of God. Anti-Semitism arises out of the fact that God has chosen the Semites. That is he chose Abraham, and he chose Isaac, and he chose Jacob and their successors and he has said in the word that he has a national future for them. Anti-Semitism did not begin with Joseph Goebbels, who said, "A Jew is for me an object of physical disgust. I vomit when I see one. I treasure an ordinary prostitute above a married Jewess."

It began with the day that Abraham was chosen of God. Why are men anti-Semitic? I've been doing a good bit of thinking about that the past week. I've drawn up some reasons, which I think contribute to this, I don't think they're very profound but

nevertheless, for me at least they kind of satisfy at this point. First of all, anti-Semitism is hatred of the God of Israel. This is seen in the obedient Israelites of the old testament, particularly against whom the nations reacted because they were representatives of the true God. And when the reacted against Israel they reacted against Jehovah, who was their God.

Now, I think this is also seen in the Jews of today, now, they are not obedient today but there are many things about the Jew that are true to the revelation of the old testament. For example, their belief in the unity of God and also their uniqueness of their God, now, there is much reaction against this. Houston Chamberlain said, "The Jew came into our gay world and spoiled everything with his ominous concept of sin with his law and with his cross." And so consequently even though the Jews have now veered from the truth of God. Some of the anti-Semitism of the day is hatred of Israel's God but that doesn't explain it all. There is also the penal judgment of God. Israel because of their rejection of Jesus Christ ultimately is persecuted, and part of that persecution is the anti-Semitism that follows.

Now, many of course, of so-called Christians have gone far beyond the truth, the Roman Catholic rituals for example, which states such terrible things about Jews are illustrations of that. The forced baptisms that took place during the middle ages are also instances of the so-called Christian church, going far beyond what it should have done. Also, the national discipline of God is a reason for anti-Semitism, Renoir said, "Common sorrow unites man more than common joy." But unity is more than in the mind of God when he disciplines Israel, he has sent them out among the nations for discipline and that discipline is designed to bring them to a place of obedience. In other words, in Israel there is the struggle of the divine will as over against the human will. Israel is to be trained for her divine mission as a missionary to the nations of the earth and part of the anti-Semitism is the result of God's discipline.

Now, from the standpoint of the Jew himself he is a proud and self-righteous man. I know lots of Gentiles can say now, you are really getting to the heart of the matter, for anyone who knows a Jew knows that he is characterized by pride and self-righteousness. Of course, we Gentiles do not have any of that; they have almost all of it. Now, he is a man, who is proud, in fact, in Leviticus chapter 26 God says, "I will break the pride of your power." Their attitude of pride and self-righteousness is a specific prediction of Moses in that great chapter in Leviticus chapter 26. For example, one of the chief Rabbi's said a few years back, "We require no mediator to save us from the effects of our guilt, our own sincere repentance suffices to achieve for use divine forgiveness." That's why you will never hear a Jew sing, "I Need Thee Every Hour" of Moses. Nor will you ever have a Mohammad and sing, "O Mohammed Lover of My Soul."

Another reason, a fifth, for anti-Semitism is Gentile jealousy for Jewish excellency his excellency in economics. Who has read the history of the Rothchilds and not had a little envy in his heart. Who has ever investigated the ramifications of Jewish financiers and have not at the same time admired the skill with which they have been able to achieve the top. We are jealous of them often, from Rothchilds to Morgenthau and the rest. They are also excellent in science and who has not been jealous of them there, and Einstein for example. Or in art and music and as a result of this Gentiles are anti-Semitic we forget that we forced the Jew frequently into these areas. Did you know that most of the Jews in Europe could not even hold property in the middle ages? They could not hold property so what could they do? The only thing that they could engage in was commerce, they were a farming people, a pastoral kind of people, and so the Gentiles forced them into commerce, money lending, financing and so they became the chiefs of the world in that, because they were forced into it. Did you know today that the Jews are educated to a degree that is far beyond the average Gentile? Did you know that? Did you know in the United States that that is true; for example, to proportion to the numbers almost three times as many Jews in the United States go to college as men and women in

the population generally. That's why they get ahead of us and that's why Gentiles do not like it, because we too are full of pride and greed, and self-righteousness, and envy and as a result of this we persecute the Jew. I'm speaking as a Gentile.

Sixthly, there is Jewish separation, which produces a Xenophobia, that is a fear of strangers. We don't like someone who's different from us, and after all the Jews are different, they have different laws, they have different ritual, they have different culture, they have different habits. It's just like so many Christians do not really trust a Roman Catholic, they think that his ultimate loyalty is not to the United States but to Rome or the Vatican. Isn't that true, don't you wonder about that? If a Catholic is a genuine Catholic he must ultimately respect according to his own set-up he must ultimately be subject to the Pope in Rome. And what do we think about a Jew? Well, the Jew is not ultimately an American, he's not ultimately a German, he's not ultimately a member of Great Britain or the Commonwealth. So many think they have tried their best to assimilate themselves particularly in Germany. But nevertheless, because of their separateness God will never allow them to be ultimately assimilated. Balaam prophesied early in their history, "They shall dwell alone, alone." And that separation has been the mark of them.

I was kind of amused recently when the crises came up in the Middle East and who should stand up as the United States Ambassador at the UN, but Goldberg. And of course, the comments were to be expected one Arab got up and he said he couldn't really figure out whether the Ambassador stood for the United States or for some other country. Well, of course, because deep down in the human heart there is the recognition of the fact that ultimately an Israelite's loyalty ought to be to the God of Israel and to the land of Palestine or the land of Israel.

And finally, Jewish political liberalism and philosophical rationalism; now, I have some conservative friends, they are very fine friends and I am very conservative, probably more conservative than some of them but some of them hate or very strongly dislike the Jews because of their political liberalism. I do not like the political liberalism of the Jews.

However, I want to say one thing that the political liberalism of the Jew has often been the product of anti-Semitic reactionary, conservative control in many countries. And this is particularly true in Russia. Now, any Jew will remember Russia and the Czars with a great deal of strong antipathy. They were often forced into the political underground into the liberal and radical movement because it was the only hope for them. They discovered of course, afterwards that there was not hope at all ultimately. But the political liberalism of the Jew and almost all of them are, as you know, has caused a great deal of anti-Semitic thinking in this country. Now, I am very much against socialism, very much against communism, very much against liberalism and consequently, I find myself with a kind of divided feeling. I cannot persecute a Jew I cannot persecute anyone, but I am very much opposed to the kind of philosophical thinking that many of them engage in.

Now, their philosophical rationalism has led them to a reaction to the Christianity, and a very strong one. For many years the Jews four times a week pronounce the *byrkath hamonin* which was a curse upon Hebrew Christians. And so the anti-Semitism of many Gentiles is often matched by the anti-Gentilism of many Jews and has been down through the years.

Now, some believers in the light of Genesis 12:3 in which God says, "I will bless him that blesses thee Abraham, and I will curse him that curses thee;" is not willing to say anything against the Jew. I think that is a false philosophy. I have some Christians who will never criticize a Jew. Why? "O, anybody who curses a Jew is going to suffer." That's right. But what does God mean in Genesis chapter 12 in verse 3; as a matter of fact, the Bible says if you persecute anybody, if you curse anybody you can expect divine judgment. What is there that is special about Genesis 12:3? Well, the thing that is special about Genesis 12:3 is the religious side. He has said, that out of Abraham he has created a nation and a seed and he is to give them a land and they are to have a future. In other words, bound up in that prophecy in Genesis chapter 12 are the Abrahamic promises of a national future for Israel and for the land. Now, the man who curses Israel is the man

who says Israel has no future; the man who curses Israel is the man who says Israel has no covenant; the man who curses Israel is the man who says that Israel has no divine relationship to God which shall ultimately issue in a Messiah who shall die for Israel, and in the land promises ultimately fulfilled to them with the kingdom of God upon the Earth. That is the man who is guilty of cursing the Jew. It is the religious side of things that is referred to there.

Consequently, I feel perfectly free to criticize a Jew if I think that he has faults in his political philosophy, if he has faults in his religious philosophy, if he has faults in anything, and he of course, feel the perfect right to criticize me. I criticize the Jews that so many of them were involved in the Russian revolution. Seventy-five percent so it has been said, up to ninety-percent of the fifty leading men were Russian communist, that is they were Jewish, leaders in the Russian communist conspiracy. Now, that is something to criticize; we criticize Marx, we criticize Lenin, we criticized Trotsky, whose real name was Bronstein. It's perfectly alright to do that, a Christian does not suffer the judgment of God for criticizing that which he thinks, with his limited understanding, is wrong and contrary to God. That is perfectly all right, as a matter of fact, we are expected to do it. If we do not speak out against that which is wrong, regardless from its source, we are not true to God. But if we ever should say that Israel has no future; that Israel has not promise; that Israel has not land; that Israel has nothing, we will drive them into the sea as the Assyrians and Egyptians are saying today, and they will not exist as a nation. Then we are guilty of transgressing the promise of Genesis 12. And down through the years the nations that have done that have discovered the judgment of God. The Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Greeks, the ancient Romans, the Germans, the Spanish and right down to the present day and they shall.

My time is up. Anti-Semitism takes a little longer to develop than I anticipated. The remainder of these verses which we will consider next time as well as the next vision,

give the details of the promises of blessings that arise out of the covenant and in them specifically there is set-forth the future of the nation Israel.

Now, in this prophecy then we have a summary of the message of a book in a nutshell. It is, that God is concerned with Israel jealous over them with a divine jealousy. He is determined to fulfill the Abrahamic promises; he will surely bring them to pass. In the midst of the present dispersion and judgment of Israel the man, the angel of Jehovah is still in their midst they are disobedient to him but he is careful to work toward the end of the fulfillment of the promises that have been made to them. The key of course, is their personal response to the Messiah whom they have crucified.

Two years ago the Israel Ambassador to Canada spoke to a group of Christian Missionary Alliance missionary's and leaders who had gathered in Toronto. He addressed them and he said to them, "I want you to leave us alone, the Jew will never convert to Christianity." He does not know what he is talking about, they shall. They shall become believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, ultimately, that is the clue to the fulfillment of the promises.

Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father we thank thee and praise thee for the privilege of opening the word of God. We thank thee for it's teaching, for the clarity of it. We pray O God that we may always be in the center of they will. Look at the facts of life as they truly are by the help of the Holy Spirit. Enable us to cooperate with thee in the great plans and purposes, which thou hast for earth. And Lord, we pray especially if there should be someone in this audience who has not yet believed in Jesus Christ. May in their hearts they turn to him and thank him for giving himself for them and may our blessings go now as we part in Jesus' name. Amen.

“Vision: The Man Among the Myrtles” by S. Lewis Johnson
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