

Zechariah 12:1-8 – Religious World War

Calvin, Delitzsch, Gill, Trapp, Clarke, Geneva, Poole, TSK, HebrewLexicon, Handfuls, Henry, Barnes, JFB, Phillips, Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: **The bad people of Israel rejected the Good Shepherd, killed him, and kept their bad shepherds.** So God cursed them with severe curses, including cannibalism(人吃人) . But even those harsh curses did not deter (阻止) Israel. **Soon after the false shepherds killed the Good Shepherd, they started to target his people** – the true Israelites again. These bad people even ignored the threats that were made against them for killing the Good Shepherd.

Today you will see how **God worked directly and indirectly to halt (阻止) the attacks from the false shepherds and build up his bride into a world force – a force that he promised would bring the world under his dominion.**

Our headings are:

God fights for the church

The church fights for herself

Our goals are: **That while you will learn that God fights for his church, you will always remember your responsibility to fight for the church, conquer her enemies, and lay the conquered all at your Savior's feet.**

God Fights for the church

1 The **burden of the word of the LORD against Israel.** Thus says the LORD, who **stretche s out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man** within him: 2 **"Behold...**

1. Consider 3 introductory things.

a. This was a weighted prophecy (有份量的预言) – “a burden.” Burden comes from the Hebrew word “massa,” a weight. We speak of “weighty matters.” “Burden” here is used in the sense of a burden on a donkey. This hearer had to **pay attention** to this weighty matter.

b. God, Covenant God of Israel, the one who made the heavens and the earth, and the one who made man in his own image - spoke. Because God was man's Creator, man had to **pay attention.**

c. God said: “Behold.” This meant the message was substantive(真实的) . This meant the hearer had to **pay attention.**

2. But how could this prophecy be against Israel? It was **against** Israel because they had rejected God. But this prophesy was directed **to** his church, the true Israel, the church.

2 ... **I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples,** when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem.

3. God would stop the surrounding peoples from conquering the New Jerusalem, the church, by making the peoples drunk.

The peoples thought they could easily conquer New Jerusalem (the church), but Jerusalem would be like a cup of wine laced with poison to them! **This was a direction intervention 介入, 干预 by God to confuse the enemy and save his people.**

Psalms 48:3 God is in her palaces; **He is known as her refuge.** 4 For behold, **the kings assembled,** They passed by together. 5 They saw it, and so they marveled; **They were troubled, they hastened**

away (赶紧离开) . 6 **Fear took hold of them there, And pain,** as of a woman in birth pangs (产痛) ,

Examples: **Alexander the Great** could not bring his violence on Israel when he entered and met Jaddus the High Priest. God directly intervened. God did the same thing when **to Sennacherib** when he tried to enter Jerusalem. He intervenes today!

Psalms 76:6 At Your rebuke, O God of Jacob, **Both the chariot and horse were cast into a dead sleep.**

It was like the wind the Lord brought to **help the tiny British navy against the Spanish armada in 1588...**

God assumed **the nations would try to take the church.** This has always been Satan's plan: Steal, kill, and destroy.

3 "And it shall happen in that day that I will **make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples;** all who would heave it away will surely **be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth** are gathered against it.

4. God would stop the surrounding people from capturing the New Jerusalem, the church, by making his people unmovable – like a stone.

One of the church fathers, Jerome, wrote how the Jewish men would prove their strength by lifting heavy stones. In our text God would use the solidity (坚固) of the stone buildings...that could not be moved...to illustrate his people's character and position. He knew **nations would try to move the church from its position.**

Psalms 83:4 They have said, **"Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation,** That the name of Israel may be remembered no more."

God would strengthen his people to be unmovable. How? **God would block the enemies' plan, cut them with the stone and cause them pain and distress.** Further, the Chief Cornerstone (房脚石) would crush the wicked ones.

Matthew 21:44 "And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, **it will grind him to powder.**"

4 "In that day," says the LORD, "I will **strike every horse with confusion,** and its rider with **madness;** I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will **strike every horse of the peoples with blindness.**

5. God would strike his people's enemies and their weapons and make them ineffective (无法使用)...just like he destroyed Pharaoh's horses to free Israel. (Horses were the chief weapons of war and they took time to train.) But **God would curse the horses with confusion. And he would curse the riders with blindness.**

Psalms 76:6 At Your rebuke, O God of Jacob, Both the **chariot and horse were cast into a dead sleep.**

5 "And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, 'The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in the LORD of hosts (万军之耶和华) , their God.'

6. When God protects his people their leaders would rightly attribute that work to God alone. They would look at the few inhabitants, see the victory God worked for them, and confess that the victory came through the Lord of hosts.

7. Lessons:

a. Jerusalem represented the church and the "peoples" here represented all the nations of the earth, enemies of the church of Jesus Christ. **These enemies of the church will have different weapons.** While they don't have horses today, they do have political power, social pressures, and compulsory (强制的) education as weapons against God's people. Yet, even with their powerful weapons, they will lose.

b. It is naïve (幼稚的 , 天真的) to think that the world wants to let all men live in peace, like John Lennon encouraged. Don't be fooled. The world despises (看不起) the Christian and will use whatever it at its disposal to harm you. Are you aware that politicians and judges don't want you to discipline your children like God commanded? Have you notice that the government now tries to force people to violate their consciences (昧着良心) to do business? Do you see how some cannot be lawyers in some provinces can't practice law because they vow to live a moral life... Do you know that Ontario is trying to force doctors to refer mothers to doctors to murder their babies? Are you startled that Ontario has redefined families this past week and have removed mother and father from legal documents? Hasn't our Federal Government redefined marriage? They forcefully want to steal what God has made...and then corrupt it. A Christian couple would likely lose their popular TV show because they go to a church that says homosexuality is sin. Our Prime Ministers, Premiers, and judges are doing the Devil's work.

c. But don't fear. Learn what God has promised to his church. God will destroy his church's enemies. If they don't embrace the Son of God, they would be made to drink the cup of bitterness – poison.

Isaiah 51:22 Thus says your Lord, The LORD and your God, Who pleads the cause of His people: "See,

I have taken out of your hand The cup of trembling, The dregs (渣滓 , 糟粕) of the cup of My fury;

You shall no longer drink it. 23 **But I will put it into the hand of those who afflict you...**

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but you must remember the name of the Lord your God. Our God is greater!

God directly intervenes against his people's enemies. Let God do his work in peace!

d. God will establish his church. She shall never be moved. Diocletian set up a stone monument (纪念碑) to mark the destruction of Christianity. Both he and the stone are gone, but Christianity remains.

Psalms 125:1 Those who trust in the LORD Are like Mount Zion, **Which cannot be moved, but abides forever.**

Daniel prophesied how Jesus (the Stone cut without hands) would destroy all 4 empires.

Daniel 2:45 "Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it **broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold** — the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."

Every false religion, totalitarian (极权的) government, and perverse (堕落的) ideology 意识形态 will be destroyed.

The Church Fights for herself

6 "In that day I will make the governors of Judah **like a firepan in the woodpile (如火盆在木柴中)**, and like a fiery torch in the sheaves (又如火把在禾捆里) ; they shall **devour all the surrounding**

peoples on the right hand and on the left, but **Jerusalem shall be inhabited again** in her own place — Jerusalem.

1. Through new fiery leaders, God would make the church powerful, strong enough for their work of conquering the nations.

These new good shepherds would be like a firepan in a woodpile of the enemies. This was common language.

Obadiah 1:18 The house of **Jacob shall be a fire**, And the house of Joseph a flame; But the house of **Esau shall be stubble; They shall kindle them and devour (吞灭) them...**

The good shepherds would be like a fiery torch among sheaves of the enemies. God commanded them to sing about this.

Psalms 83:14 As the fire burns the woods, **And as the flame sets the mountains on fire, 15 So pursue them with Your tempest (风暴)**, And frighten them with Your storm.

2. Through the new leaders God would make his church effective in their work of conquering the nations. The church **would grow again – into an unconquerable kingdom.** (Matthew 16:18)

7 "The LORD will **save the tents of Judah** first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem **shall not become greater than that of Judah.**

3. Through the new leaders God would save those who lived in tents even in Judah's villages.

a. God did not need bricks to keep people safe!

b. God kept the rich and the poor, the great and the small. So Jerusalem and Judah would be saved!

8 "In that day the LORD will **defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem**; the one who is **feeble among them in that day shall be like David**, and the **house of David shall be like God, like the Angel of the LORD** before them.

4. Through the new leaders God would defend New Jerusalem from future attacks.

It is true that David's house seemed a thing of the past and was in darkness and gloom, but...

a. Those who were weak (staggering) ones would be like man of valor, David.

b. And those who were like David would become like Jesus! How would they be like Jesus? They would conquer.

Exodus 23:20 "Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to **bring you into the place which I have prepared.**

5. Lessons:

a. What a beautiful symbolism 象征 of the Christians being a torch! You see this gloriously pictured at Pentecost 五旬节 when the Holy Spirit, the means by which men are captured, came as tongues of fire on their heads.

b. You are not to fight with weapons of this world – guns, clubs, butcher knives, and hammers, like other religions. Your weapon is the Sword of the Spirit – the Word of God. Confront evil inside and outside the church. Learn to wield your sword. Do it with love, but with boldness. **Stand your ground on doctrine and truth. Sing: "I love thy kingdom Lord."**

c. Ask God to make you brave to fight and remember God's Words to become brave.

Revelation 11:5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner.

d. Praise God that your rulers who love God and his church.

e. You will win! Henry: The church's infantry(步兵) would be more powerful than the enemies' cavalry (骑兵).

Conclusion:

God directly leads the fights against the church's enemies. God indirectly leads the fight against the church's enemies. God needed to defeat the enemy so his church could thrive (兴旺) ...the church he purchased with his Son's blood.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Christ conquered your enemies, sin, death and hell, on the cross. He made you safe. He made you strong by his Word and Spirit to serve.

2. What is your response? Will you work to conquer the enemies of the church and bring them into submission (顺服) to Jesus?

Are you ashamed to talk about Jesus to the world? Remember Apostle Paul: For I am **not ashamed of the gospel** of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

Are you afraid? Hear Apostle John: Greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world.

Finally: Will you surrender to the Savior and inherit all God's eternal blessings? Or will you be crushed in eternal damnation in hell? Only you can answer this question. I hope you will raise the white flag and surrender... and be saved! You can't save yourself. You need grace.