

Wednesday, December 25

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Zechariah 8:1 - 23

8 **1** Then another message came to me from the LORD of Heaven's Armies: **2** "This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies says: My love for Mount Zion is passionate and strong; I am consumed with passion for Jerusalem! **3** "And now the LORD says: I am returning to Mount Zion, and I will live in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the Faithful City; the mountain of the LORD of Heaven's Armies will be called the Holy Mountain. **4** "This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies says: Once again old men and women will walk Jerusalem's streets with their canes and will sit together in the city squares. **5** And the streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls at play. **6** "This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies says: All this may seem impossible to you now, a small remnant of God's people. But is it impossible for me? says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. **7** "This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies says: You can be sure that I will rescue my people from the east and from the west. **8** I will bring them home again to live safely in Jerusalem. They will be my people, and I will be faithful and just toward them as their God. **9** "This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies says: Be strong and finish the task! Ever since the laying of the foundation of the Temple of the LORD of Heaven's Armies, you have heard what the prophets have been saying about completing the building. **10** Before the work on the Temple began, there were no jobs and no money to hire people or animals. No traveler was safe from the enemy, for there were enemies on all sides. I had turned everyone against each other. **11** "But now I will not treat the remnant of my people as I treated them before, says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. **12** For I am planting seeds of peace and prosperity among you. The grapevines will be heavy with fruit. The earth will produce its crops, and the heavens will release the dew. Once more I will cause the remnant in Judah and Israel to inherit these blessings. **13** Among the other nations, Judah and Israel became symbols of a cursed nation. But no longer! Now I will rescue you and make you both a symbol and a source of blessing. So don't be afraid. Be strong, and get on with rebuilding the Temple! **14** "For this is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies says: I was determined to punish you when your ancestors angered me, and I did not change my mind, says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. **15** But now I am determined to bless Jerusalem and the people of Judah. So don't be afraid. **16** But this is what you must do: Tell the truth to each other. Render verdicts in your courts that are just and that lead to peace. **17** Don't scheme against each other. Stop your love of telling lies that you swear are the

truth. I hate all these things, says the LORD .” **18** Here is another message that came to me from the LORD of Heaven’s Armies. **19** “This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: The traditional fasts and times of mourning you have kept in early summer, midsummer, autumn, and winter are now ended. They will become festivals of joy and celebration for the people of Judah. So love truth and peace. **20** “This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: People from nations and cities around the world will travel to Jerusalem. **21** The people of one city will say to the people of another, ‘Come with us to Jerusalem to ask the LORD to bless us. Let’s worship the LORD of Heaven’s Armies. I’m determined to go.’ **22** Many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the LORD of Heaven’s Armies and to ask for his blessing. **23** “This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: In those days ten men from different nations and languages of the world will clutch at the sleeve of one Jew. And they will say, ‘Please let us walk with you, for we have heard that God is with you.’”

Revelation 16:1 - 21

16 1 Then I heard a mighty voice from the Temple say to the seven angels, “Go your ways and pour out on the earth the seven bowls containing God’s wrath.” **2** So the first angel left the Temple and poured out his bowl on the earth, and horrible, malignant sores broke out on everyone who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his statue. **3** Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse. And everything in the sea died. **4** Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs, and they became blood. **5** And I heard the angel who had authority over all water saying, “You are just, O Holy One, who is and who always was, because you have sent these judgments. **6** Since they shed the blood of your holy people and your prophets, you have given them blood to drink. It is their just reward.” **7** And I heard a voice from the altar, saying, “Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, your judgments are true and just.” **8** Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, causing it to scorch everyone with its fire. **9** Everyone was burned by this blast of heat, and they cursed the name of God, who had control over all these plagues. They did not repent of their sins and turn to God and give him glory. **10** Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was plunged into darkness. His subjects ground their teeth in anguish, **11** and they cursed the God of heaven for their pains and sores. But they did not repent of their evil deeds and turn to God. **12** Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great Euphrates River, and it dried up so that the kings from the east could march their armies toward the west without hindrance. **13** And I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs leap

from the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. **14** They are demonic spirits who work miracles and go out to all the rulers of the world to gather them for battle against the Lord on that great judgment day of God the Almighty. **15** “Look, I will come as unexpectedly as a thief! Blessed are all who are watching for me, who keep their clothing ready so they will not have to walk around naked and ashamed.” **16** And the demonic spirits gathered all the rulers and their armies to a place with the Hebrew name . **17** Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air. And a mighty shout came from the throne in the Temple, saying, “It is finished!” **18** Then the thunder crashed and rolled, and lightning flashed. And a great earthquake struck—the worst since people were placed on the earth. **19** The great city of Babylon split into three sections, and the cities of many nations fell into heaps of rubble. So God remembered all of Babylon’s sins, and he made her drink the cup that was filled with the wine of his fierce wrath. **20** And every island disappeared, and all the mountains were leveled. **21** There was a terrible hailstorm, and hailstones weighing as much as seventy-five pounds fell from the sky onto the people below. They cursed God because of the terrible plague of the hailstorm.

Psalm 144:1 - 15

144 1 Praise the LORD, who is my rock. He trains my hands for war and gives my fingers skill for battle. **2** He is my loving ally and my fortress, my tower of safety, my rescuer. He is my shield, and I take refuge in him. He makes the nations submit to me. **3** O LORD, what are human beings that you should notice them, mere mortals that you should think about them? **4** For they are like a breath of air; their days are like a passing shadow. **5** Open the heavens, LORD, and come down. Touch the mountains so they billow smoke. **6** Hurl your lightning bolts and scatter your enemies! Shoot your arrows and confuse them! **7** Reach down from heaven and rescue me; rescue me from deep waters, from the power of my enemies. **8** Their mouths are full of lies; they swear to tell the truth, but they lie instead. **9** I will sing a new song to you, O God! I will sing your praises with a ten-stringed harp. **10** For you grant victory to kings! You rescued your servant David from the fatal sword. **11** Save me! Rescue me from the power of my enemies. Their mouths are full of lies; they swear to tell the truth, but they lie instead. **12** May our sons flourish in their youth like well-nurtured plants. May our daughters be like graceful pillars, carved to beautify a palace. **13** May our barns be filled with crops of every kind. May the flocks in our fields multiply by the thousands, even tens of thousands, **14** and may our oxen be loaded down with produce. May there be no enemy breaking through our walls, no going into captivity, no cries of alarm in our town

squares. **15** Yes, joyful are those who live like this! Joyful indeed are those whose God is the LORD .

Proverbs 30:29 - 31

30 **29** There are three things that walk with stately stride— no, four that strut about: **30** the lion, king of animals, who won't turn aside for anything, **31** the strutting rooster, the male goat, a king as he leads his army.