

**Thursday, December 26**

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**Zechariah 9:1 - 17**

**9 1** This is the message from the LORD against the land of Aram and the city of Damascus, for the eyes of humanity, including all the tribes of Israel, are on the LORD . **2** Doom is certain for Hamath, near Damascus, and for the cities of Tyre and Sidon, though they are so clever. **3** Tyre has built a strong fortress and has made silver and gold as plentiful as dust in the streets! **4** But now the Lord will strip away Tyre's possessions and hurl its fortifications into the sea, and it will be burned to the ground. **5** The city of Ashkelon will see Tyre fall and will be filled with fear. Gaza will shake with terror, as will Ekron, for their hopes will be dashed. Gaza's king will be killed, and Ashkelon will be deserted. **6** Foreigners will occupy the city of Ashdod. I will destroy the pride of the Philistines. **7** I will grab the bloody meat from their mouths and snatch the detestable sacrifices from their teeth. Then the surviving Philistines will worship our God and become like a clan in Judah. The Philistines of Ekron will join my people, as the ancient Jebusites once did. **8** I will guard my Temple and protect it from invading armies. I am watching closely to ensure that no more foreign oppressors overrun my people's land. **9** Rejoice, O people of Zion! Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious, yet he is humble, riding on a donkey— riding on a donkey's colt. **10** I will remove the battle chariots from Israel and the warhorses from Jerusalem. I will destroy all the weapons used in battle, and your king will bring peace to the nations. His realm will stretch from sea to sea and from the Euphrates River to the ends of the earth. **11** Because of the covenant I made with you, sealed with blood, I will free your prisoners from death in a waterless dungeon. **12** Come back to the place of safety, all you prisoners who still have hope! I promise this very day that I will repay two blessings for each of your troubles. **13** Judah is my bow, and Israel is my arrow. Jerusalem is my sword, and like a warrior, I will brandish it against the Greeks. **14** The LORD will appear above his people; his arrows will fly like lightning! The Sovereign LORD will sound the ram's horn and attack like a whirlwind from the southern desert. **15** The LORD of Heaven's Armies will protect his people, and they will defeat their enemies by hurling great stones. They will shout in battle as though drunk with wine. They will be filled with blood like a bowl, drenched with blood like the corners of the altar. **16** On that day the LORD their God will rescue his people, just as a shepherd rescues his sheep. They will

sparkle in his land like jewels in a crown. **17** How wonderful and beautiful they will be! The young men will thrive on abundant grain, and the young women will flourish on new wine.

## **Revelation 17:1 - 18**

**17 1** One of the seven angels who had poured out the seven bowls came over and spoke to me. “Come with me,” he said, “and I will show you the judgment that is going to come on the great prostitute, who rules over many waters. **2** The kings of the world have committed adultery with her, and the people who belong to this world have been made drunk by the wine of her immorality.” **3** So the angel took me in the Spirit into the wilderness. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that had seven heads and ten horns, and blasphemies against God were written all over it. **4** The woman wore purple and scarlet clothing and beautiful jewelry made of gold and precious gems and pearls. In her hand she held a gold goblet full of obscenities and the impurities of her immorality. **5** A mysterious name was written on her forehead: “Babylon the Great, Mother of All Prostitutes and Obscenities in the World.” **6** I could see that she was drunk —drunk with the blood of God’s holy people who were witnesses for Jesus. I stared at her in complete amazement. **7** “Why are you so amazed?” the angel asked. “I will tell you the mystery of this woman and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns on which she sits. **8** The beast you saw was once alive but isn’t now. And yet he will soon come up out of the bottomless pit and go to eternal destruction. And the people who belong to this world, whose names were not written in the Book of Life before the world was made, will be amazed at the reappearance of this beast who had died. **9** “This calls for a mind with understanding: The seven heads of the beast represent the seven hills where the woman rules. They also represent seven kings. **10** Five kings have already fallen, the sixth now reigns, and the seventh is yet to come, but his reign will be brief. **11** “The scarlet beast that was, but is no longer, is the eighth king. He is like the other seven, and he, too, is headed for destruction. **12** The ten horns of the beast are ten kings who have not yet risen to power. They will be appointed to their kingdoms for one brief moment to reign with the beast. **13** They will all agree to give him their power and authority. **14** Together they will go to war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will defeat them because he is Lord of all lords and King of all kings. And his called and chosen and faithful ones will be with him.” **15** Then the angel said to me, “The waters where the prostitute is ruling represent masses of people of every nation and language. **16** The scarlet beast and his ten horns all hate the prostitute. They will strip her naked, eat her flesh, and burn her remains with fire. **17** For God has put a plan into their minds, a plan that will carry out his purposes. They will

agree to give their authority to the scarlet beast, and so the words of God will be fulfilled. **18** And this woman you saw in your vision represents the great city that rules over the kings of the world.”

#### **Psalms 145:1 - 21**

**145** **1** I will exalt you, my God and King, and praise your name forever and ever. **2** I will praise you every day; yes, I will praise you forever. **3** Great is the LORD ! He is most worthy of praise! No one can measure his greatness. **4** Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts; let them proclaim your power. **5** I will meditate on your majestic, glorious splendor and your wonderful miracles. **6** Your awe-inspiring deeds will be on every tongue; I will proclaim your greatness. **7** Everyone will share the story of your wonderful goodness; they will sing with joy about your righteousness. **8** The LORD is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. **9** The LORD is good to everyone. He showers compassion on all his creation. **10** All of your works will thank you, LORD, and your faithful followers will praise you. **11** They will speak of the glory of your kingdom; they will give examples of your power. **12** They will tell about your mighty deeds and about the majesty and glory of your reign. **13** For your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. You rule throughout all generations. The LORD always keeps his promises; he is gracious in all he does. **14** The LORD helps the fallen and lifts those bent beneath their loads. **15** The eyes of all look to you in hope; you give them their food as they need it. **16** When you open your hand, you satisfy the hunger and thirst of every living thing. **17** The LORD is righteous in everything he does; he is filled with kindness. **18** The LORD is close to all who call on him, yes, to all who call on him in truth. **19** He grants the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cries for help and rescues them. **20** The LORD protects all those who love him, but he destroys the wicked. **21** I will praise the LORD, and may everyone on earth bless his holy name forever and ever.

#### **Proverbs 30:32**

**30** **32** If you have been a fool by being proud or plotting evil, cover your mouth in shame.