

Sunday, December 22

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Zechariah 2:1 - 3:10

2 **1** When I looked again, I saw a man with a measuring line in his hand. **2** “Where are you going?” I asked. He replied, “I am going to measure Jerusalem, to see how wide and how long it is.” **3** Then the angel who was with me went to meet a second angel who was coming toward him. **4** The other angel said, “Hurry, and say to that young man, ‘Jerusalem will someday be so full of people and livestock that there won’t be room enough for everyone! Many will live outside the city walls. **5** Then I, myself, will be a protective wall of fire around Jerusalem, says the LORD . And I will be the glory inside the city!’” **6** The LORD says, “Come away! Flee from Babylon in the land of the north, for I have scattered you to the four winds. **7** Come away, people of Zion, you who are exiled in Babylon!” **8** After a period of glory, the LORD of Heaven’s Armies sent me against the nations who plundered you. For he said, “Anyone who harms you harms my most precious possession. **9** I will raise my fist to crush them, and their own slaves will plunder them.” Then you will know that the LORD of Heaven’s Armies has sent me. **10** The LORD says, “Shout and rejoice, O beautiful Jerusalem, for I am coming to live among you. **11** Many nations will join themselves to the LORD on that day, and they, too, will be my people. I will live among you, and you will know that the LORD of Heaven’s Armies sent me to you. **12** The land of Judah will be the LORD ’s special possession in the holy land, and he will once again choose Jerusalem to be his own city. **13** Be silent before the LORD, all humanity, for he is springing into action from his holy dwelling.”

3 **1** Then the angel showed me Jeshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD . The Accuser, Satan, was there at the angel’s right hand, making accusations against Jeshua. **2** And the LORD said to Satan, “I, the LORD, reject your accusations, Satan. Yes, the LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebukes you. This man is like a burning stick that has been snatched from the fire.” **3** Jeshua’s clothing was filthy as he stood there before the angel. **4** So the angel said to the others standing there, “Take off his filthy clothes.” And turning to Jeshua he said, “See, I have taken away your sins, and now I am giving you these fine new clothes.” **5** Then I said, “They should also place a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean priestly turban on his head and dressed him in new clothes while the angel of the LORD stood by. **6** Then the angel of the LORD spoke very solemnly to Jeshua and said, **7** “This is what the

LORD of Heaven's Armies says: If you follow my ways and carefully serve me, then you will be given authority over my Temple and its courtyards. I will let you walk among these others standing here. **8** "Listen to me, O Jeshua the high priest, and all you other priests. You are symbols of things to come. Soon I am going to bring my servant, the Branch. **9** Now look at the jewel I have set before Jeshua, a single stone with seven facets. I will engrave an inscription on it, says the LORD of Heaven's Armies, and I will remove the sins of this land in a single day. **10** "And on that day, says the LORD of Heaven's Armies, each of you will invite your neighbor to sit with you peacefully under your own grapevine and fig tree."

Revelation 13:1 - 18

13 1 Then I saw a beast rising up out of the sea. It had seven heads and ten horns, with ten crowns on its horns. And written on each head were names that blasphemed God. **2** This beast looked like a leopard, but it had the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion! And the dragon gave the beast his own power and throne and great authority. **3** I saw that one of the heads of the beast seemed wounded beyond recovery—but the fatal wound was healed! The whole world marveled at this miracle and gave allegiance to the beast. **4** They worshiped the dragon for giving the beast such power, and they also worshiped the beast. "Who is as great as the beast?" they exclaimed. "Who is able to fight against him?" **5** Then the beast was allowed to speak great blasphemies against God. And he was given authority to do whatever he wanted for forty-two months. **6** And he spoke terrible words of blasphemy against God, slandering his name and his dwelling—that is, those who dwell in heaven. **7** And the beast was allowed to wage war against God's holy people and to conquer them. And he was given authority to rule over every tribe and people and language and nation. **8** And all the people who belong to this world worshiped the beast. They are the ones whose names were not written in the Book of Life that belongs to the Lamb who was slaughtered before the world was made. **9** Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand. **10** Anyone who is destined for prison will be taken to prison. Anyone destined to die by the sword will die by the sword. This means that God's holy people must endure persecution patiently and remain faithful. **11** Then I saw another beast come up out of the earth. He had two horns like those of a lamb, but he spoke with the voice of a dragon. **12** He exercised all the authority of the first beast. And he required all the earth and its people to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. **13** He did astounding miracles, even making fire flash down to earth from the sky while everyone was watching. **14** And with all the miracles he was allowed to perform on behalf of the first beast, he deceived all the people

who belong to this world. He ordered the people to make a great statue of the first beast, who was fatally wounded and then came back to life. **15** He was then permitted to give life to this statue so that it could speak. Then the statue of the beast commanded that anyone refusing to worship it must die. **16** He required everyone—small and great, rich and poor, free and slave—to be given a mark on the right hand or on the forehead. **17** And no one could buy or sell anything without that mark, which was either the name of the beast or the number representing his name. **18** Wisdom is needed here. Let the one with understanding solve the meaning of the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. His number is 666.

Psalm 141:1 - 10

141 **1** O LORD, I am calling to you. Please hurry! Listen when I cry to you for help! **2** Accept my prayer as incense offered to you, and my upraised hands as an evening offering. **3** Take control of what I say, O LORD, and guard my lips. **4** Don't let me drift toward evil or take part in acts of wickedness. Don't let me share in the delicacies of those who do wrong. **5** Let the godly strike me! It will be a kindness! If they correct me, it is soothing medicine. Don't let me refuse it. But I pray constantly against the wicked and their deeds. **6** When their leaders are thrown down from a cliff, the wicked will listen to my words and find them true. **7** Like rocks brought up by a plow, the bones of the wicked will lie scattered without burial. **8** I look to you for help, O Sovereign LORD . You are my refuge; don't let them kill me. **9** Keep me from the traps they have set for me, from the snares of those who do wrong. **10** Let the wicked fall into their own nets, but let me escape.

Proverbs 30:18 - 20

30 **18** There are three things that amaze me— no, four things that I don't understand: **19** how an eagle glides through the sky, how a snake slithers on a rock, how a ship navigates the ocean, how a man loves a woman. **20** An adulterous woman consumes a man, then wipes her mouth and says, "What's wrong with that?"