

**Monday, December 16**

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**Micah 5:1 - 7:20**

**5 1** Mobilize! Marshal your troops! The enemy is laying siege to Jerusalem. They will strike Israel's leader in the face with a rod. **2** But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel, whose origins are in the distant past, will come from you on my behalf. **3** The people of Israel will be abandoned to their enemies until the woman in labor gives birth. Then at last his fellow countrymen will return from exile to their own land. **4** And he will stand to lead his flock with the LORD 's strength, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. Then his people will live there undisturbed, for he will be highly honored around the world. **5** And he will be the source of peace. When the Assyrians invade our land and break through our defenses, we will appoint seven rulers to watch over us, eight princes to lead us. **6** They will rule Assyria with drawn swords and enter the gates of the land of Nimrod. He will rescue us from the Assyrians when they pour over the borders to invade our land. **7** Then the remnant left in Israel will take their place among the nations. They will be like dew sent by the LORD or like rain falling on the grass, which no one can hold back and no one can restrain. **8** The remnant left in Israel will take their place among the nations. They will be like a lion among the animals of the forest, like a strong young lion among flocks of sheep and goats, pouncing and tearing as they go with no rescuer in sight. **9** The people of Israel will stand up to their foes, and all their enemies will be wiped out. **10** "In that day," says the LORD, "I will slaughter your horses and destroy your chariots. **11** I will tear down your walls and demolish your defenses. **12** I will put an end to all witchcraft, and there will be no more fortune-tellers. **13** I will destroy all your idols and sacred pillars, so you will never again worship the work of your own hands. **14** I will abolish your idol shrines with their Asherah poles and destroy your pagan cities. **15** I will pour out my vengeance on all the nations that refuse to obey me."

**6 1** Listen to what the LORD is saying: "Stand up and state your case against me. Let the mountains and hills be called to witness your complaints. **2** And now, O mountains, listen to the LORD 's complaint! He has a case against his people. He will bring charges against Israel. **3** "O my people, what have I done to you? What have I done to make you tired of me? Answer me! **4** For I brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from slavery. I sent Moses, Aaron, and Miriam to help you. **5** Don't you remember, my people, how King Balak of Moab tried

to have you cursed and how Balaam son of Beor blessed you instead? And remember your journey from Acacia Grove to Gilgal, when I, the LORD, did everything I could to teach you about my faithfulness.” **6** What can we bring to the LORD ? Should we bring him burnt offerings? Should we bow before God Most High with offerings of yearling calves? **7** Should we offer him thousands of rams and ten thousand rivers of olive oil? Should we sacrifice our firstborn children to pay for our sins? **8** No, O people, the LORD has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. **9** Fear the LORD if you are wise! His voice calls to everyone in Jerusalem: “The armies of destruction are coming; the LORD is sending them. **10** What shall I say about the homes of the wicked filled with treasures gained by cheating? What about the disgusting practice of measuring out grain with dishonest measures? **11** How can I tolerate your merchants who use dishonest scales and weights? **12** The rich among you have become wealthy through extortion and violence. Your citizens are so used to lying that their tongues can no longer tell the truth. **13** “Therefore, I will wound you! I will bring you to ruin for all your sins. **14** You will eat but never have enough. Your hunger pangs and emptiness will remain. And though you try to save your money, it will come to nothing in the end. You will save a little, but I will give it to those who conquer you. **15** You will plant crops but not harvest them. You will press your olives but not get enough oil to anoint yourselves. You will trample the grapes but get no juice to make your wine. **16** You keep only the laws of evil King Omri; you follow only the example of wicked King Ahab! Therefore, I will make an example of you, bringing you to complete ruin. You will be treated with contempt, mocked by all who see you.”

**7 1** How miserable I am! I feel like the fruit picker after the harvest who can find nothing to eat. Not a cluster of grapes or a single early fig can be found to satisfy my hunger. **2** The godly people have all disappeared; not one honest person is left on the earth. They are all murderers, setting traps even for their own brothers. **3** Both their hands are equally skilled at doing evil! Officials and judges alike demand bribes. The people with influence get what they want, and together they scheme to twist justice. **4** Even the best of them is like a brier; the most honest is as dangerous as a hedge of thorns. But your judgment day is coming swiftly now. Your time of punishment is here, a time of confusion. **5** Don’t trust anyone— not your best friend or even your wife! **6** For the son despises his father. The daughter defies her mother. The daughter-in-law defies her mother-in-law. Your enemies are right in your own household! **7** As for me, I look to the LORD for help. I wait confidently for God to save me, and my God will certainly hear me. **8** Do not gloat over me, my enemies! For though I fall, I will rise again. Though I sit in darkness, the LORD will be my light. **9** I will be patient as the LORD punishes me, for I have sinned against him. But after that, he will take up my case and give me justice for all I have

suffered from my enemies. The LORD will bring me into the light, and I will see his righteousness. **10** Then my enemies will see that the LORD is on my side. They will be ashamed that they taunted me, saying, “So where is the LORD — that God of yours?” With my own eyes I will see their downfall; they will be trampled like mud in the streets. **11** In that day, Israel, your cities will be rebuilt, and your borders will be extended. **12** People from many lands will come and honor you— from Assyria all the way to the towns of Egypt, from Egypt all the way to the Euphrates River, and from distant seas and mountains. **13** But the land will become empty and desolate because of the wickedness of those who live there. **14** O LORD, protect your people with your shepherd’s staff; lead your flock, your special possession. Though they live alone in a thicket on the heights of Mount Carmel, let them graze in the fertile pastures of Bashan and Gilead as they did long ago. **15** “Yes,” says the LORD, “I will do mighty miracles for you, like those I did when I rescued you from slavery in Egypt.” **16** All the nations of the world will stand amazed at what the LORD will do for you. They will be embarrassed at their feeble power. They will cover their mouths in silent awe, deaf to everything around them. **17** Like snakes crawling from their holes, they will come out to meet the LORD our God. They will fear him greatly, trembling in terror at his presence. **18** Where is another God like you, who pardons the guilt of the remnant, overlooking the sins of his special people? You will not stay angry with your people forever, because you delight in showing unfailing love. **19** Once again you will have compassion on us. You will trample our sins under your feet and throw them into the depths of the ocean! **20** You will show us your faithfulness and unfailing love as you promised to our ancestors Abraham and Jacob long ago.

### **Revelation 7:1 - 17**

**7 1** Then I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds so they did not blow on the earth or the sea, or even on any tree. **2** And I saw another angel coming up from the east, carrying the seal of the living God. And he shouted to those four angels, who had been given power to harm land and sea, **3** “Wait! Don’t harm the land or the sea or the trees until we have placed the seal of God on the foreheads of his servants.” **4** And I heard how many were marked with the seal of God—144,000 were sealed from all the tribes of Israel: **5** from Judah 12,000 from Reuben 12,000 from Gad 12,000 **6** from Asher 12,000 from Naphtali 12,000 from Manasseh 12,000 **7** from Simeon 12,000 from Levi 12,000 from Issachar 12,000 **8** from Zebulun 12,000 from Joseph 12,000 from Benjamin 12,000 **9** After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in

front of the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes and held palm branches in their hands. **10** And they were shouting with a great roar, "Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne and from the Lamb!" **11** And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living beings. And they fell before the throne with their faces to the ground and worshiped God. **12** They sang, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and strength belong to our God forever and ever! Amen." **13** Then one of the twenty-four elders asked me, "Who are these who are clothed in white? Where did they come from?" **14** And I said to him, "Sir, you are the one who knows." Then he said to me, "These are the ones who died in the great tribulation. They have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb and made them white. **15** "That is why they stand in front of God's throne and serve him day and night in his Temple. And he who sits on the throne will give them shelter. **16** They will never again be hungry or thirsty; they will never be scorched by the heat of the sun. **17** For the Lamb on the throne will be their Shepherd. He will lead them to springs of life-giving water. And God will wipe every tear from their eyes."

### **Psalm 135:1 - 21**

**135** **1** Praise the LORD ! Praise the name of the LORD ! Praise him, you who serve the LORD, **2** you who serve in the house of the LORD, in the courts of the house of our God. **3** Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good; celebrate his lovely name with music. **4** For the LORD has chosen Jacob for himself, Israel for his own special treasure. **5** I know the greatness of the LORD — that our Lord is greater than any other god. **6** The LORD does whatever pleases him throughout all heaven and earth, and on the seas and in their depths. **7** He causes the clouds to rise over the whole earth. He sends the lightning with the rain and releases the wind from his storehouses. **8** He destroyed the firstborn in each Egyptian home, both people and animals. **9** He performed miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt against Pharaoh and all his people. **10** He struck down great nations and slaughtered mighty kings— **11** Sihon king of the Amorites, Og king of Bashan, and all the kings of Canaan. **12** He gave their land as an inheritance, a special possession to his people Israel. **13** Your name, O LORD, endures forever; your fame, O LORD, is known to every generation. **14** For the LORD will give justice to his people and have compassion on his servants. **15** The idols of the nations are merely things of silver and gold, shaped by human hands. **16** They have mouths but cannot speak, and eyes but cannot see. **17** They have ears but cannot hear, and mouths but cannot breathe. **18** And those who make idols are just like them, as are all who trust in them. **19** O Israel, praise the LORD !

O priests—descendants of Aaron—praise the LORD ! **20** O Levites, praise the LORD ! All you who fear the LORD, praise the LORD ! **21** The LORD be praised from Zion, for he lives here in Jerusalem. Praise the LORD !

**Proverbs 30:5 - 6**

**30 5** Every word of God proves true. He is a shield to all who come to him for protection. **6** Do not add to his words, or he may rebuke you and expose you as a liar.