

Monday, December 23

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Zechariah 4:1 - 5:11

4 **1** Then the angel who had been talking with me returned and woke me, as though I had been asleep. **2** “What do you see now?” he asked. I answered, “I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl of oil on top of it. Around the bowl are seven lamps, each having seven spouts with wicks. **3** And I see two olive trees, one on each side of the bowl.” **4** Then I asked the angel, “What are these, my lord? What do they mean?” **5** “Don’t you know?” the angel asked. “No, my lord,” I replied. **6** Then he said to me, “This is what the LORD says to Zerubbabel: It is not by force nor by strength, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies. **7** Nothing, not even a mighty mountain, will stand in Zerubbabel’s way; it will become a level plain before him! And when Zerubbabel sets the final stone of the Temple in place, the people will shout: ‘May God bless it! May God bless it!’ ” **8** Then another message came to me from the LORD : **9** “Zerubbabel is the one who laid the foundation of this Temple, and he will complete it. Then you will know that the LORD of Heaven’s Armies has sent me. **10** Do not despise these small beginnings, for the LORD rejoices to see the work begin, to see the plumb line in Zerubbabel’s hand.” (The seven lamps represent the eyes of the LORD that search all around the world.) **11** Then I asked the angel, “What are these two olive trees on each side of the lampstand, **12** and what are the two olive branches that pour out golden oil through two gold tubes?” **13** “Don’t you know?” he asked. “No, my lord,” I replied. **14** Then he said to me, “They represent the two anointed ones who stand in the court of the Lord of all the earth.”

5 **1** I looked up again and saw a scroll flying through the air. **2** “What do you see?” the angel asked. “I see a flying scroll,” I replied. “It appears to be about 30 feet long and 15 feet wide.” **3** Then he said to me, “This scroll contains the curse that is going out over the entire land. One side of the scroll says that those who steal will be banished from the land; the other side says that those who swear falsely will be banished from the land. **4** And this is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: I am sending this curse into the house of every thief and into the house of everyone who swears falsely using my name. And my curse will remain in that house and completely destroy it—even its timbers and stones.” **5** Then the angel who was talking with me came forward and said, “Look up and see what’s coming.” **6** “What is it?” I asked. He replied, “It is a basket for measuring grain, and it’s filled with the sins of everyone throughout the

land.” **7** Then the heavy lead cover was lifted off the basket, and there was a woman sitting inside it. **8** The angel said, “The woman’s name is Wickedness,” and he pushed her back into the basket and closed the heavy lid again. **9** Then I looked up and saw two women flying toward us, gliding on the wind. They had wings like a stork, and they picked up the basket and flew into the sky. **10** “Where are they taking the basket?” I asked the angel. **11** He replied, “To the land of Babylonia, where they will build a temple for the basket. And when the temple is ready, they will set the basket there on its pedestal.”

Revelation 14:1 - 20

14 1 Then I saw the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him were 144,000 who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads. **2** And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of mighty ocean waves or the rolling of loud thunder. It was like the sound of many harpists playing together. **3** This great choir sang a wonderful new song in front of the throne of God and before the four living beings and the twenty-four elders. No one could learn this song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. **4** They have kept themselves as pure as virgins, following the Lamb wherever he goes. They have been purchased from among the people on the earth as a special offering to God and to the Lamb. **5** They have told no lies; they are without blame. **6** And I saw another angel flying through the sky, carrying the eternal Good News to proclaim to the people who belong to this world—to every nation, tribe, language, and people. **7** “Fear God,” he shouted. “Give glory to him. For the time has come when he will sit as judge. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all the springs of water.” **8** Then another angel followed him through the sky, shouting, “Babylon is fallen—that great city is fallen—because she made all the nations of the world drink the wine of her passionate immorality.” **9** Then a third angel followed them, shouting, “Anyone who worships the beast and his statue or who accepts his mark on the forehead or on the hand **10** must drink the wine of God’s anger. It has been poured full strength into God’s cup of wrath. And they will be tormented with fire and burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. **11** The smoke of their torment will rise forever and ever, and they will have no relief day or night, for they have worshiped the beast and his statue and have accepted the mark of his name.” **12** This means that God’s holy people must endure persecution patiently, obeying his commands and maintaining their faith in Jesus. **13** And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this down: Blessed are those who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, they are blessed indeed, for they will rest from their hard work; for their good deeds follow

them!” **14** Then I saw a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was someone like the Son of Man. He had a gold crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. **15** Then another angel came from the Temple and shouted to the one sitting on the cloud, “Swing the sickle, for the time of harvest has come; the crop on earth is ripe.” **16** So the one sitting on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the whole earth was harvested. **17** After that, another angel came from the Temple in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle. **18** Then another angel, who had power to destroy with fire, came from the altar. He shouted to the angel with the sharp sickle, “Swing your sickle now to gather the clusters of grapes from the vines of the earth, for they are ripe for judgment.” **19** So the angel swung his sickle over the earth and loaded the grapes into the great winepress of God’s wrath. **20** The grapes were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress in a stream about 180 miles long and as high as a horse’s bridle.

Psalm 142:1 - 7

142 1 I cry out to the LORD ; I plead for the LORD ’s mercy. **2** I pour out my complaints before him and tell him all my troubles. **3** When I am overwhelmed, you alone know the way I should turn. Wherever I go, my enemies have set traps for me. **4** I look for someone to come and help me, but no one gives me a passing thought! No one will help me; no one cares a bit what happens to me. **5** Then I pray to you, O LORD . I say, “You are my place of refuge. You are all I really want in life. **6** Hear my cry, for I am very low. Rescue me from my persecutors, for they are too strong for me. **7** Bring me out of prison so I can thank you. The godly will crowd around me, for you are good to me.”

Proverbs 30:21 - 23

30 21 There are three things that make the earth tremble— no, four it cannot endure: **22** a slave who becomes a king, an overbearing fool who prospers, **23** a bitter woman who finally gets a husband, a servant girl who supplants her mistress.