

A reading from the Book of Wisdom:

The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead; and their passing away was thought an affliction and their going forth from us, utter destruction. But they are in peace.

For if before men indeed, they be punished, yet is their hope full of immortality; Chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed, because God tried them and found them worthy of himself. As gold in the furnace, he proved them, and as sacrificial offerings he took them to himself.

Those who trust in him shall understand truth, and the faithful shall abide with him in love: Because grace and mercy are with his holy ones, and his care is with the elect.

The Word of the Lord.

A blameless life is a ripe old age.

A reading from the Book of Wisdom:

The just person, though she/he die early, shall be at rest. For the age that is honorable comes not with the passing of time, nor can it be measured in terms of years. Rather, understanding is the venerable crown, and an unsullied life, the attainment of old age.

She/he who pleased God was loved; she/he who lived among sinners was transported- Snatched away, lest wickedness pervert her/his mind or deceit beguile her/his soul; For the witchery of paltry things obscures what is right and the whirl of desire transforms the innocent mind.

Having become perfect in a short while, she/he reached the fullness of a long career; for her/his soul was pleasing to God, therefore God sped her/him out of the midst of wickedness. But the people say and did not understand, nor did they take this into account. Because grace and mercy are with the holy ones, and God's care is with the elect.

The Word of the Lord.

A reading from the Book of Job:

Job answered and said: Oh, would that my words were written down! Would that they were inscribed in a record: That with an iron chisel and with lead they were cut in the rock forever!

But as for me, I know that my Vindicator lives, and that he will at last stand forth upon the dust; whom I myself shall see: my own eyes, not another's shall behold him. And from my flesh I shall see God; my inmost being is consumed with longing.

The Word of the Lord.

A reading from the Book of Lamentations:

My soul is deprived of peace. I have forgotten what happiness is; I tell myself that my future is lost, all that I hoped for from the Lord. The thought of my homeless poverty is wormwood and gall; Remembering it over and over leaves my soul downcast within me. But I will call this to mind, as my reason to have hope:

The favors of the Lord are not exhausted. His mercies are not spent; they are renewed each morning, so great is his faithfulness. My portion is the Lord, says my soul; therefore will I hope in him.

Good is the Lord to one who waits for him, to the soul that seeks him; it is good to hope in silence for the saving help of the Lord.

The Word of the Lord.

A reading from the Book of Proverbs:

When one finds a worthy wife, her value is far beyond pearls. Her husband, entrusting this heart to her, has an unfailing prize. She brings him good and not evil, all the days of her life. She is girt about with strength, and sturdy are her arms. She enjoys the success of her dealings; at night her lamp is undimmed.

She reaches out her hand to the poor, and extends her arms to the needy. She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs at the days to come.

She opens her mouth in wisdom, and on her tongue is kindly counsel. She watches the conduct of her household and eats not her food in idleness.

Her children rise up and praise her; her husband, too, extols her: "Many are the women of proven worth, but you have excelled them all."

Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting; the woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give her a reward of her labors, and let her works praise her at the city gates.

The Word of the Lord.

A reading from the Book of Daniel:

[I, Daniel, mourned and I heard this word of the Lord:]

"At that time there shall arise Michael, the great prince, guardian of your people; It shall be a time unsurpassed in distress since nations began until that time. At that time your people shall escape, everyone who is found written in the book.

Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; Some shall live forever, others shall be an everlasting horror and disgrace.

But the wise shall shine brightly like the splendor of the firmament, and those who lead the many to justice shall be like the stars forever."

The Word of the Lord.

It is good and holy to think of the dead rising again

A reading from the second Book of Maccabees:

Judas (the ruler of Israel) then took up a collection among all his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice.

In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the resurrection of the dead in view; for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been useless and foolish to pray for them in death.

But if he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought.

Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be freed from this sin.

The Word of the Lord.

A reading from the Song of Songs:

Hark! My lover—here he comes springing across the mountains, leaping across the hills.

My lover is like a gazelle or a young stag. Here he stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows, peering through the lattices.

My lover speaks; he says to me, "Arise, my beloved, my beautiful one, and come!"

For see, the winter is past, the rains are over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of pruning the vines has come, and the song of the dove is heard in our land.

The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines, in bloom, give forth fragrance. Arise, my beloved, my beautiful one, and come!

"O my dove in the clefts of the rock, in the secret recesses of the cliff, let me see you, let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet, and you are lovely."

The Word of the Lord.

A reading from the Song of Songs:

Set me as a seal on your heart, as a seal on your arm; For stern as death is love, relentless as the nether world is devotion; its flames are a blazing fire.

Deep waters cannot quench love, nor floods sweep it away. Were one to offer all he owns to purchase love, he would be roundly mocked.

The Word of the Lord.

Their virtues will not be forgotten

A reading from the Book of Sirach:

Now will I praise those godly people, our ancestors, each in their own time. Yet these also were godly people whose virtues have not been forgotten.

Their wealth remains in their families, their heritage with their descendants. Through God's covenant with them their family endures, their posterity for their sake. And for all time their progeny will endure, their glory will never be blotted out.

Their bodies are peacefully laid away, but their name lives on and on. At gatherings their wisdom is retold, and the assembly proclaims their praise.

The Word of the Lord.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah:

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will provide for all peoples.

On this mountain he will destroy the veil that veils all peoples, the web that is woven over all nations; he will destroy death forever.

The Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces; the reproach of his people he will remove from the whole earth; for the Lord has spoken.

On that day it will be said: “Behold, our God to whom we looked to save us! This is the Lord for whom we looked; let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!”

The Word of the Lord.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah:

The desert and the parched land will exult; the steppe will rejoice and bloom. They will bloom with abundant flowers, and rejoice with joyful song. The glory of Lebanon will be given to them, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon. They will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God.

Strengthen the hands that are feeble, make firm the knees that are weak. Say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not! Here is your God, who comes with vindication. With divine recompense God comes to save you.

Then will the eyes of the blind be opened, the ears of the deaf be cleared. Then will the lame leap like a stag, then the tongue of the dumb will sing.

Streams will burst forth in the desert, and rivers in the steppe.

Those whom the Lord has ransomed will return and enter Zion singing, crowned with everlasting joy. They will meet with joy and gladness, sorrow and mourning will flee.

The Word of the Lord.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah:

But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, offspring of Abraham my friend—You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth and summoned from its far-off places, You whom I have called my servant, whom I have chosen and will not cast off—

Fear not, I am with you; be not dismayed, I am your God. I will strengthen you, and help you, and uphold you with my right hand of justice.

For I am the Lord your God, who grasps your right hand; it is I who say to you, “Fear not, I will help you.”

The Word of the Lord.

I will heal them and lead them

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah:

For thus says the One who is high and exalted, living eternally, whose name is the Holy One: “On high I dwell, and in holiness, and with the crushed and dejected in spirit, to revive the spirits of the dejected, to revive the hearts of the crushed.

I will not accuse forever, nor always be angry; for their spirits would faint before me, the souls that I have made.

Because of their wicked avarice I was angry, and struck them, hiding myself in wrath, as they went their own rebellious way.

I saw their ways, but I will heal them and lead them; I will give full comfort to them and to those who mourn for them, I, the Creator, who gave them life.

Peace, peace to the far and the near,” says the Lord; “and I will heal them.”

The Word of the Lord.

The spirit of the Lord is upon me

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah:

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the lowly, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners,

To announce a year of favor from the Lord and a day of vindication by our God, to comfort all who mourn;

To place on those who mourn in Zion a diadem instead of ashes, to give them oil of gladness in place of mourning, a glorious mantle instead of a listless spirit.

They will be called oaks of justice, planted by the Lord to show his glory.

The Word of the Lord.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah:

Lo, I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the things of the past shall not be remembered or come to mind. Instead, there shall always be rejoicing and happiness in what I create; for I create Jerusalem to be a joy and its people to be a delight.

I will rejoice in Jerusalem and exult in my people. No longer shall the sound of weeping be heard there, or the sound of crying.

No longer shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or old people who do not round out their full lifetime; they die a mere youth who reaches but a hundred years, and they who fail of a hundred shall be thought accursed.

They shall live in the houses they build, and eat the fruit of the vineyards they plant.

The Word of the Lord.

I myself will look after and tend my sheep

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel:

For thus says the Lord God: I myself will look after and tend my sheep. As a shepherd tends his flock when he finds himself among scattered sheep, so will I tend my sheep. I will rescue them from every place where they were scattered when it was cloudy and dark.

I will lead them out from among the peoples and gather them from the foreign lands; I will bring them back to their own country and pasture them upon the mountains of Israel (in the land's ravines and all its inhabited places).

I myself will pasture my sheep; I myself will give them rest, says the Lord God. The lost I will seek out, the strayed I will bring back, the injured I will bind up, the sick I will heal (but the sleek and the strong I will destroy), shepherding them rightly.

The Word of the Lord.

I will put my spirit in you

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel:

Therefore, prophesy and say to them: Thus says the Lord God: O my people, I will open your graves and have you rise from them, and bring you back to the land of Israel.

Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and have you rise from them, O my people!

I will put my spirit in you that you may live, and I will settle you upon your land; thus you shall know that I am the Lord. I have promised, and I will do it says the Lord.

The Word of the Lord.

Do the right, love goodness and walk humbly with your God

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Micah:

With what shall I come before the Lord and bow before God most high? Shall I come before him with holocausts, with calves a year old?

Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with myriad streams of oil?

Shall I give my first-born for my crime, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

You have been told, O people, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: Only to do the right and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God.

The Word of the Lord.

There is an appointed time for everything

A reading from the Book of Ecclesiastes:

There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens. A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to uproot the plant. A time to kill, and a time to heal, a time to tear down, and a time to build. A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.

A time to scatter stones, and a time to gather them; a time to embrace, and a time to be far from embraces. A time to seek, and a time to lose. A time to keep, and a time to cast away. A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to be silent, and a time to speak. A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

God has made everything appropriate to its time.

The Word of the Lord.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Zephaniah:

On that day, it shall be said to Jerusalem: Fear not, O Zion, be not discouraged! The Lord your God, is in your midst, a mighty savior; He will rejoice over you with gladness, and renew you in his love; He will sing joyfully because of you, as one sings at festivals. I will remove disaster from among you, so that none may recount your disgrace.

Yes, at that time I will deal with all who oppress you: I will save the lame, and assemble the outcasts; I will give them praise and renown in all the earth, when I bring about their restoration.

At that time I will bring you home, and at that time I will gather you; for I will give you renown and praise, among all the peoples of the earth, when I bring about your restoration before your very eyes, says the Lord.

The Word of the Lord.