

1. A reading from the book of Sirach (Eccles. 3:1-8)

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven” a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace. What gain have the workers from their toil? I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. He has made everything suitable for its time.

The Word of the Lord.

1a. A reading from the book of Sirach (3: 1-12)

There is a time for everything,
A season for every activity under the heavens,
A time to be born and a time to die,
A time to plant and a time to uproot,
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 refrain from embracing,
A time to search and a time to give up,
A time to keep and a time to throw away,
A time to tear and a time to mend,
A time to be silent and a time to speak,
A time to love and a time to hate,
A time for war and a time for peace.

What do workers gain from their toil? I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart, yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live.

The word of the Lord.

2. A reading from the book of Wisdom

The virtuous man, though he die before his time, will find rest.

Length of days is not what makes age honourable,

Nor number of years the true measure of life;

Understanding, that is a man's grey hairs,

Untarnished life, this is ripe old age.

He has sought to please God, so God has loved him;

As he was living among sinners, he has been taken up.

Coming to perfection in so short a while, he achieved long life;

His soul being pleasing to the Lord,

He has taken him quickly from the evil around him.

Yet, people look on uncomprehending;

It does not enter their heads

That grace and mercy await the chosen of the Lord,

And protection, his holy ones.

The Word of the Lord.

3. A reading from the prophet Isaiah (25:6-9)

On this mountain,
the Lord of hosts will prepare for all peoples
a banquet of rich food.

On this mountain he will remove
the mourning veil covering all peoples,
and the shroud enwrapping all nations,
he will destroy Death forever.

The Lord will wipe away
the tears from every cheek;
he will take away his people's shame
everywhere on earth,
for the Lord has said so.

That day, it will be said: See this is our God
in whom we hoped for salvation;
the Lord is the one in whom we hoped.
We exult and we rejoice
that he has saved us.

The Word of the Lord.

4. A reading from the Acts of the Apostles (10:34-36. 42-43)

Peter addressed Cornelius and his household: 'The truth I have now come to realise,' he said, 'is that God does not have favourites, but that anybody of any nationality who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to him. It is true, God sent his word to the people of Israel, and it was to them that the good news of peace was brought by Jesus Christ - but Jesus Christ is Lord of all men, and he has ordered us to proclaim this to his people and to tell them that God has appointed him to judge everyone, alive or dead. It is to him that all the prophets bear this witness: that all who believe in Jesus will have their sins forgiven through his name.'

The Word of the Lord.

5. A reading from the book of the Apocalypse (20:11- 21:1)

I, John, saw a great white throne and the One who was sitting on it. In his presence, earth and sky vanished, leaving no trace. I saw the dead, both great and small, standing in front of his throne, while the book of life was opened, and other books opened which were the record of what they had done in their lives, by which the dead were judged.

The sea gave up all the dead who were in it; Death and Hades were emptied of the dead that were in them; and every one was judged according to the way in which he had lived. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the burning lake. This burning lake is the second death; and anybody whose name could not be found written in the book of life was thrown into the burning lake.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth had disappeared now, and there was no longer any sea.

The Word of the Lord.

6. A reading from the book of the Apocalypse (21: 1-7)

I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth had disappeared now, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the holy city, and the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, as beautiful as a bride all dressed for her husband. Then I heard a loud voice call from the throne, 'You see this city? Here God lives among men. He will make his home among them; they shall be his people, and he will be their God; his name is God-with-them. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes; there will be no more death, and no more mourning or sadness. The world of the past has gone'.

Then the One sitting on the throne spoke: 'Now I am making the whole of creation new,' he said. 'I will give water from the well of life free to anybody who is thirsty; it is the rightful inheritance of the one who proves victorious; and I will be his God and he a son to me.'

The Word of the Lord.

7. A reading from the book of Job (*Is. 19:23-27*)

Job said: 'Ah, would that these words of mine were written down,
inscribed on some monument
with iron chisel and engraving tool,
cut into the rock for ever.
this I know: that my Avenger lives,
and he, the last, will take his stand on earth.
after my awaking, he will set me close to him,
and from my flesh I shall look on God.
He whom I shall see will take my part:
these eyes will gaze on him and find him not aloof.'

The Word of the Lord.

8. A reading from book of Apocalypse (14:13)

I, John, heard a voice from heaven say to me, 'Write down: Happy are those who die in the Lord! Happy indeed, the Spirit says; now they can rest for ever after their work, since their good deeds go with them.'

The Word of the Lord.

9. A reading from the book of Sirach (34: 14-20)

No one who fears the Lord need ever hesitate,
or ever be daunted, since the Lord is his hope.

Happy the soul of one who fears the Lord.

On whom does he rely? Who supports him?

The eyes of the Lord watch over those who love him,
he is their powerful protection and their strong support,
their screen from the desert wind, their shelter from the midday
sun,

a guard against stumbling, an assurance against a fall.

The Word of the Lord.

10. A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Romans (6:3-4. 8-9)

When we were baptised in Christ Jesus we were baptised in his death; in other words, when we were baptised we went into the tomb with him and joined him in death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father's glory, we too might live a new life.

But we believe that having died with Christ we shall return to life with him: Christ, as we know, having been raised from the dead will never die again. Death has no power over him any more.

The Word of the Lord.

11. A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans (8:31-35. 37-39)

With God on our side who can be against us? Since God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up to benefit us all, we may be certain, after such a gift, that he will not refuse anything he can give. Could anyone accuse those that God has chosen? When God acquits, could anyone condemn? Could Christ Jesus? No! He not only died for us - he rose from the dead, and there at God's right hand he stands and pleads for us.

Nothing therefore can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried, or being persecuted, or lacking food or clothes, or being threatened or even attacked. These are the trials through which we triumph, by the power of him who loved us.

For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, or height or depth, not any created thing, can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Word of the Lord.

12. A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans (14:7-12)

The life and death of each of us has its influence on others; if we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord, so that alive or dead we belong to the Lord. This explains why Christ both died and came to life, it was so that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. We shall all have to stand before the judgement seat of God; as scripture says: By my life - it is the Lord who speaks - every knee shall bend before me, and every tongue shall praise God. It is to God, therefore, that each so us must give an account of himself.

The Word of the Lord.

13. A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Philippians

(3:20-21)

For us, our homeland is in heaven, and from heaven comes the saviour we are waiting for, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he will transfigure these wretched bodies of ours into copies of his glorious body. He will do that by the same power with which he can subdue the whole universe.

The Word of the Lord.

14. A reading from the second letter of St Paul to the Corinthians (5:1 6-10)

We know that when the tent that we live in on earth is folded up, there is a house built by God for us, an everlasting home not made by human hands, in the heavens.

We are always full of confidence, then, when we remember that to live in the body means to be exiled from the Lord, going as we do by faith and not by sight - we are full of confidence, I say, and actually want to be exiled from the body and make our home with the Lord.

Whether we are living in the body or exiled from it, we are intent on pleasing him. For all the truth about us will be brought out in the law court of Christ, and each of us will get what he deserves for the things he did in the body, good or bad.

The Word of the Lord.

15. A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians
(5:20-231)

Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep. Death, came through one man and in the same way the resurrection of the dead has come through one man. Just as all men die in Adam, so all men will be brought to life in Christ; but all of them in their proper order: Christ as the first-fruits and then, after the coming of Christ, those who belong to him.

The Word of the Lord.

16. A reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians (4:13-18)

We want you to be quite certain, brothers, about those who have died, to make sure you do not grieve about them, like the other people who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and that it will be the same for those who have died in Jesus: God will bring them with him. We can tell you this from the Lord's own teaching, that any of us who are left alive until the Lord's coming will not have any advantage over those who have died. At the trumpet of God, the voice of the archangel will call out the command and the Lord himself will come down from heaven; those who have died in Christ will be the first to rise, and then those of us who are still alive will be taken up in the clouds, together with them, to meet the Lord in the air. So we shall stay with the Lord for ever. With such thoughts as these you should comfort one another.

The Word of the Lord.

17. A reading from the first letter of St. John (3:1-2)

Think of love that the Father has lavished on us,
by letting us be called God's children;
and that is what we are.

Because the world refused to acknowledge him,
therefore it does not acknowledge us.

My dear people, we are already the children of God
but what we are in the future has not yet been revealed;
all we know is, that when it is revealed
we shall be like him
because we shall see him as he really is.

The Word of the Lord.

18. A reading from the second letter of St Paul to Timothy (4:6-8.16-18)

My life is already being poured away as a libation, and the time has come for me to be gone. I have fought the good fight to the end; I have run the race to the finish; I have kept the faith; all there is to come now is the crown of righteousness reserved for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day; and not only to me but to all those who have longed for his appearing.

The first time I had to present my defence, there was not a single witness to support me. Everyone of them deserted me - may they not be held accountable for it. But the Lord stood by me and gave me power, so that through me the whole message might be proclaimed for all the pagans to hear; and so I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from all evil attempts on me and bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom.

The Word of the Lord.

