

OLD TESTAMENT READINGS

1. A reading from the book of Job 19:1. 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.'

Reader: The Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God

2. A reading from the book of Wisdom 3:1–9

The souls of the virtuous are in the hands of God, no torment shall ever touch them. In the eyes of the unwise, they did appear to die, their going looked like a disaster, their leaving us, like annihilation; but they are in peace. If they experienced punishment as men see it, their hope was rich with immortality; slight was their affliction, great will their blessings be. God has put them to the test and proved them worthy to be with him; he has tested them like gold in a furnace, and accepted them as a holocaust. When the time comes for his visitation they will shine out; as sparks run through the stubble, so will they. They shall judge nations, rule over peoples, and the Lord will be their king for ever. They who trust in him will understand the truth, those who are faithful will live with him in love; for grace and mercy await those he has chosen.

Reader: The Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God

A shorter form of this reading is also permitted

A reading from the book of Wisdom 3:1–6. 9

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Reader: The Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God

3. A reading from the book of Wisdom 4:7–15

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, this is 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. He has been carried off so that evil may not warp his understanding or treachery seduce his soul; for the fascination of evil throws good things into the shade, and the whirlwind of desire corrupts a simple heart. 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 wickedness 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.

Reader: The Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God

4. 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 for ever. 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.

Reader: The Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God

5. A reading from the book of Lamentations 3:17–26

My soul is shut out from peace; I have forgotten happiness. And now I say, 'My strength is gone, that hope which came from the Lord'. Brooding on my anguish and affliction is gall and wormwood. My spirit ponders it continually and sinks within me. This is what I shall tell my heart, and so recovers hope: the favours of the Lord are not all past, his kindnesses are not exhausted; every morning they are renewed; great is his faithfulness. 'My portion is the Lord' says my soul 'and so I will hope in him.' The lord is good to those who trust him, to the soul that searches for him. It is good to wait in silence for the Lord to save.

Reader: The Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God

6. A reading from the prophet Daniel 12:1–3

I, Daniel, was doing penance when I received this message from the Lord: 'At that time Michael will stand up, the great prince who mounts guard over your people. There is going to be a time of great distress, unparalleled since nations first came into existence. When that time comes, your own people will be spared, all those whose names are found written in the book. Of those who lie sleeping in the dust of the earth many will awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting disgrace. The learned will shine as brightly as the vault of heaven, and those who have instructed many in virtue, as bright as stars for all eternity.'

Reader: The Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God

7. A reading from the second book of Maccabees 12:43–45

Judas, the leader of the Jews, took a collection from the people individually, amounting to nearly two thousand drachmae, and sent it to Jerusalem to have a sacrifice for sin offered, an altogether fine and noble action, in which he took full account of the resurrection. For if he had not expected the fallen to rise again it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead, whereas if he had in view the splendid recompense reserved for those who make a pious end, the thought was holy and devout. This was why he had this atonement sacrifice offered for the dead, so that they might be released from their sin.

Reader: The Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God