

A reading from the book of Proverbs:

(31:10-31)

Who can find a woman of worth? Far beyond jewels is her value. Her husband trusts her judgment; he does not lack income. She brings him profit, not loss, all the days of her life. She seeks out wool and flax and weaves with skillful hands

Like a merchant fleet, she secures her provisions from afar. She rises while it is still night, and distributes food to her household, a portion to her maidservants. She picks out a field and acquires it; from her earnings she plants a vineyard.

She girds herself with strength; she exerts her arms with vigor. She enjoys the profit from her dealings; her lamp is never extinguished at night. She puts her hands to the distaff, and her fingers ply the spindle.

She reaches out her hands to the poor, and extends her arms to the needy. She is not concerned for her household when it snows –all her charges are doubly clothed. She makes her own coverlets; fine linen and purple are her clothing.

Her husband is prominent at the city gates as he sits with the elders of the land. She makes garments and sells them, and stocks the merchants with belts. She is clothed with strength and dignity, and laughs at the days to come.

She opens her mouth in wisdom; kindly instruction is on her tongue. She watches over the affairs of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband, too, praises 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. Acclaim her for the work of her hands, and let her deeds praise her at the city gates.

*The word of the Lord*

*A reading from the book of Ruth 1:16-17*

Ruth said, "Do not ask me to abandon or forsake you! for wherever you go I will go, wherever you lodge I will lodge, your people shall be my people, and your God my God.

Wherever you die I will die, and there be buried. May the LORD do so and so to me, and more besides, if anything but death separates me from you!"

*The word of the Lord*

*A reading from the book of Job 19:1, 23-27*

Then 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 second Book of Maccabees 12:43-46*

Judas, the ruler of Israel,  
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,  
In as much 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 Book of Wisdom 3:1-6, 9*

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 in the eyes of 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 his elect.

*The word of the Lord.*

*A reading from the Book of Wisdom 4:7-15*

The just, though they 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 hoary crown,  
and an unsullied life, the attainment of old age.

Those who pleased God were loved;  
they who lived among sinners were transported—  
Snatched away, lest wickedness pervert their mind  
or deceit beguile their 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,  
they reached the fullness of a long career;  
for their souls were pleasing to the Lord,  
therefore he sped them out of the midst of wickedness.  
But the people saw and did not understand,  
nor did they take this into account.

*The word of the Lord.*

*A reading from the book of Sirach 2:1-11*

My son, when you come to serve the LORD, prepare yourself for trials.

Be sincere of heart and steadfast, undisturbed in time of adversity. Cling to him, forsake him not; thus will your future be great. Accept whatever befalls you, in crushing misfortune be patient; For in fire gold is tested, and worthy men in the crucible of humiliation. Trust God and he will help you; make straight your ways and hope in him.

You who fear the LORD, wait for his mercy, turn not away lest you fall.

You who fear the LORD, trust him, and your reward will not be lost.

You who fear the LORD, hope for good things, for lasting joy and mercy.

Study the generations long past and understand; has anyone hoped in the LORD and been disappointed? Has anyone persevered in his fear and been forsaken? Has anyone called upon him and been rebuffed?

Compassionate and merciful is the LORD; he forgives sins, he saves in time of trouble.

*The word of the Lord.*

*A reading from the book of Sirach 26:1-4,13-16*

Happy the husband of a good wife, twice-lengthened are his days;

A worthy wife brings joy to her husband,  
peaceful and full is his life.

A good wife is a generous gift,  
bestowed upon him who fears the LORD;

Be he rich or poor, his heart is content,  
and a smile is ever on his face.

A gracious wife delights her husband,  
her thoughtfulness puts flesh on his bones;

A gift from the LORD is her governed speech,  
and her firm virtue is of surpassing worth.

Choicest of blessings is a modest wife,  
priceless her chaste person.

Like the sun rising in the LORD'S heavens,  
the beauty of a virtuous wife is the radiance of her home.

The word of the Lord.

*A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah 25:6a,7-9*

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*

*43:1-3a, 5-7 NIV*

But now, this is what the LORD says-  
he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel:  
"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by  
name; you are mine.

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;  
and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over  
you.

When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned;  
the flames will not set you ablaze.

For I am the LORD , your God, the Holy One of Israel, your  
Savior;

Do not be afraid, for I am with you;  
I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the  
west.

I will say to the north, 'Give them up!'  
and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.'

Bring my sons from afar  
and my daughters from the ends of the earth-  
everyone who is called by my name,  
whom I created for my glory,  
whom I formed and made."

**The Word of the Lord**

*A reading from the Book of Lamentations 3:17-26*

My soul is deprived of peace,  
I have forgotten what happiness is;  
I tell myself 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 the prophet Daniel 12:1-3*

[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

*A reading from the Book of Ecclesiastes 3:1-8*

There is an appointed time for everything,  
and a time for every thing 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.

*The word of the Lord.*

*A reading from the Book of Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, 10-11*

There is an appointed time for everything,  
and a time for every thing 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;  
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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.

I have considered the task which God has appointed us to be  
busied about. He has made everything appropriate to its time, and  
has put the timeless into our hearts, without our ever discovering,  
from beginning to end, the work which God has done.

**The Word of the Lord.**

*A reading from the Acts of the Apostles 10:34-36, 42-43*

Peter proceeded to speak, saying:

“In truth, I see that God shows no partiality.

Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him.

You know the word that he sent to the children of Israel as he proclaimed peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.

He commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead.

To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name.”

*The word of the Lord.*

*A reading from the Book of Revelation 14:13*

I, John, heard a voice from heaven say, “Write this:  
Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.”

“Yes,” said the Spirit,

“let them find rest from their labors,  
for their works accompany them.”

*The word of the Lord.*

*A reading from the book of Revelation 20:11-21:1*

I, John, saw a large white throne and the one who was sitting on it. The earth and the sky fled from his presence and there was no place for them.

I saw the dead, the great and the lowly, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. Then another scroll was opened, the book of life. The dead were judged according to their deeds, by what was written in the scrolls.

The sea gave up its dead; then Death and Hades gave up their dead. All the dead were judged according to their deeds. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the pool of fire. (This pool of fire is the second death.)

Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the pool of fire. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

The Word of the Lord

*A reading from the Book of Revelation 21:1-5a, 6b-7*

I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth.  
The former heaven and the former earth had passed away,  
and the sea was no more.

I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem,  
coming down out of heaven from God,  
prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.  
I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,  
“Behold, God’s dwelling is with the human race.  
He will dwell with them and they will be his people  
and God himself will always be with them as their God.  
He will wipe every tear from their eyes,  
and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain,  
for the old order has passed away.”

The One who sat on the throne said,  
“Behold, I make all things new.”  
I am the Alpha and the Omega,  
the beginning and the end.  
To the thirsty I will give a gift  
from the spring of life-giving water.  
The victor will inherit these gifts,  
and I shall be his God,  
and he will be my son.”

*The word of the Lord.*