

# OLD TESTAMENT SELECTIONS FOR FUNERAL LITURGIES

(select one for first reading)

## 1. A reading from the book of Job (19:1, 23-27)

Job 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!*

*I know that my Redeemer lives, and that he will at last stand forth upon the dust;*

*Whom I myself shall see: my own eyes shall behold him, and in my flesh I shall see God;*

*my inmost being is consumed with longing.*

**The Word of the Lord**

## 2. A reading from the book of Proverbs (31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31)

When one finds a worthy wife, her value is far beyond pearls.

Her husband, entrusting his heart to her, has an unfailing prize.

She brings him good, and not evil, all the days of her life.

She obtains wool and flax and makes cloth with skillful hands.

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.

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**

### 2a. A reading from the book of Proverbs (31: 25-31)

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 reaches out her hands to the poor and extends her arms to the needy.

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**

### 3. A reading from the book of Wisdom (3:1-9)

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

But **they are in peace.**

For if before humanity, 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, as sacrificial offerings he took them to himself.  
In the time of their visitation they shall shine, and shall dart about as sparks through stubble;  
They shall judge nations and rule over peoples, and the Lord shall be their King forever.  
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.**

### 4. A reading from the book of Wisdom (4:7-15)

Those who are just, though they may die early,  
shall be at rest.

For the age that is honorable does not come  
with the passing of time;

It cannot be measured in terms of years.

Rather, *understanding* is the glorious crown for men and women.....  
and an *unsullied life* is the attainment of old age.

Those who pleased God were loved;

Having become perfect in a short while,  
they reached the fullness of a long career;  
for their souls were pleasing to the Lord.

**The Word of the Lord.**

### 5. A reading from the Song of Songs (2: 8-14)

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, and 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.**

**6. A reading from the Wisdom of Sirach (44: 1, 10-15)**

Now will I praise those godly men and women, our ancestors, each in their own time.  
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 offspring 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.**

**7. A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah (9:1-6)**

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
Upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone.  
You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing,  
As they rejoice before you as at the harvest, as men make merry when dividing spoils.  
For the yoke that burdened them, the pole on their shoulder,  
and the rod of their taskmaster you have smashed, as on the day of Midian.  
For every boot that tramped in battle, every cloak rolled in blood,  
will be burned as fuel for flames.  
For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests.  
They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace.  
His dominion is vast and forever peaceful, from David's throne, and over his kingdom,  
which he confirms and sustains by judgment and justice, both now and forever.  
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!

**The Word of the Lord.**

**8. 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;  
He will remove the reproach of his people 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.**

**9. A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah (35:1-6, 10)**

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. He 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.

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.**

**10. A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah (61:1-3)**

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 crown 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.**

**11. A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah (65:17-21)**

Behold! 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 an old man who does not round out his full lifetime.

They die a mere youth who reaches but a hundred years.

They and their offspring are blessed by the LORD.

Before they call, I will answer; while they are yet speaking, I will hearken to them.

**The Word of the Lord.**

**12. 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.**

**13. A reading from the book of Ecclesiastes (3:1-12)**

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 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 rend, and a time to sew; a time to be silent, and a time to speak.

What advantages have workers from their toil?

I have considered the task which God has appointed us to be busied about.

God has made everything appropriate to its time, and has put the *timeless* into their hearts,  
without people ever discovering the work which God has done.

I recognize that there is *nothing better* than to be glad and to do well in life.

For every man and woman to eat and drink and enjoy the fruit of all their labor is a gift of God.

I recognized that whatever God does will *endure* forever; there is no adding to it or taking from it.

Thus has God done that he may be revered.

What now *is*, has *already been*; what *is to be*, already *is*;  
and God restores what would otherwise be displaced.

**The Word of the Lord.**

***During the Easter Season, this reading may be selected as READING 1***

**14. A reading from the Acts of the Apostles. (10:34-43) (short form, 10:34-36, 42-43)**

*Omit the words in bolded brackets [ ] for the short form of this reading*

Peter proceeded to speak, saying:

"In truth, I see that God shows no favoritism.

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,

*[what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power.*

*He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the Devil, for God was with him.*

*We are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem.*

*They put him to death by hanging him on a tree.*

*This man God raised on the third day and granted that he be visible,*

*not to all the people, but to us, the witnesses chosen by God in advance, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.]*

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.**