

~ Choices for the First Reading ~

C1 ~ Expiation for the Dead

2 Maccabees 12:43-46

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 their sin.

The Word of the Lord.

C2 ~ My Vindicator Lives

Job 19:1, 23-27a

A Reading from the Book of Job

Job answered Bildad the Shuhite 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.

C3 Long Version ~ Counsels of God on Suffering

Wisdom 3:1-6, 9

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. 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 the elect.

The Word of the Lord.

C3 Short Version ~ Counsels of God on Suffering

Wisdom 3:1-6, 9

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.

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The Word of the Lord.

C4 ~ On Early Death Wisdom 4:7-15

A Reading from the book of Wisdom

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

He who pleased God was loved; he who lived among sinners was transported — snatched away, lest wickedness pervert his mind or deceit beguile 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, he reached the fullness of a long career; for his soul was pleasing to the Lord, therefore he sped him 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.

C5 ~ The Mountain of the Lord

Isaiah 25:6a, 7-9

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will provide for all peoples a feast of rich food and choice wines, juicy, rich food and pure, choice wines. 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.

C6 ~ It is Good to Hope in the Lord Lamentations 3:17-26

A Reading from the Book of Lamentations

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.

C7 ~ Many Who Sleep Shall Awake

Daniel 12:1-3

A Reading from the Book of Daniel

In those days, I, Daniel, 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.

~ During Easter Time ~

During the Easter season one of the following four readings from the New Testament is used as a first reading instead of a passage from the Old Testament.

C8 Long Version ~ Jesus Christ is Lord of All

Acts 10:34-43

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Peter proceeded to speak and said, “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, 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.

C8 Short Version ~ Jesus Christ is Lord of All

Acts 10:34-36, 42-43

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Peter proceeded to speak and said, “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.

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The Word of the Lord.

C9 ~ Blessed are the Dead who Die in the Lord

Revelation 14:13

A Reading from the Book of Revelation

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.

C10 ~ The Dead were Judged According to Their Deeds

Revelation 20:11-21:1

A Reading from the Book of Revelation

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.

The Word of the Lord.

C11 ~ There Shall Be No More Death

Revelation 21:1-5a, 6b-7

A Reading from the Book of Revelation

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.