

Reading I From the Old Testament – Alternate Funeral Readings List

The funeral readings below are alternatives to the traditional list.

1 Samuel 2:6-8

A Reading from the Book of Samuel

The Lord puts to death and gives life;
he casts down to the nether world; he raises up again.
The Lord makes poor and makes rich,
he humbles, he also exalts.
He raises the needy from the dust;
from the ash heap he lifts up the poor,
To seat them with nobles
and make a glorious throne their heritage.
He gives to the vower his vow,
and blesses the sleep of the just.
For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's,
and he has set the world upon them.

The word of the Lord

Job 1:21, 2:10b

A Reading from the Book of Job

Naked I came forth from my mother's womb, and naked I shall go back again.
The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!
"We accept good things from God; and should we not accept evil?" Through all
this, Job said nothing sinful.

The word of the Lord

Job 2:11a,c, 12-13

A Reading from the Book of Job

Now when three of Job's friends heard of all the misfortune that had come upon
him, they set out each one from his own place. They met and journeyed together
to give him sympathy and comfort. But when, at a distance, they lifted up their
eyes and did not recognize him, they began to weep aloud; they tore their cloaks
and threw dust upon their heads. Then they sat down upon the ground with him
seven days and seven nights, but none of them spoke a word to him; for they saw
how great was his suffering.

The word of the Lord

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Job 9:25-27, 10:8-12

A Reading from the Book of Job

My days are swifter than a runner, they flee away; they see no happiness; They shoot by like skiffs of reed, like an eagle swooping upon its prey. If I say: I will forget my complaining, I will lay aside my sadness and be of good cheer. Your hands have formed me and fashioned me; will you then turn and destroy me? Oh, remember that you fashioned me from clay! Will you then bring me down to dust again? Did you not pour me out as milk, and thicken me like cheese? With skin and flesh you clothed me, with bones and sinews knit me together. Grace and favor you granted me, and your providence has preserved my spirit.

The word of the Lord

Job 14:13-17

A Reading from the Book of Job

Oh, that you would hide me in the nether world and keep me sheltered till your wrath is past; would fix a time for me, and then remember me! When a man has died, were he to live again, all the days of my drudgery I would wait, until my relief should come. You would call, and I would answer you; you would esteem the work of your hands. Surely then you would count my steps, and not keep watch for sin in me. My misdeeds would be sealed up in a pouch, and you would cover over my guilt.

The word of the Lord

Reading I From the Old Testament – Alternate Funeral Readings List

Job 23:1-7, 10-14

A Reading from the Book of Job

Again Job answered and said: Though I know my complaint is bitter, his hand is heavy upon me in my groanings. Oh, that today I might find him, that I might come to his judgment seat! I would set out my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments; I would learn the words with which he would answer, and understand what he would reply to me. Even should he contend against me with his great power, yet, would that he himself might heed me! There the upright man might reason with him, and I should once and for all preserve my rights. Yet he knows my way; if he proved me, I should come forth as gold. My foot has always walked in his steps; his way I have kept and have not turned aside. From the commands of his lips I have not departed; the words of his mouth I have treasured in my heart. But he had decided, and who can say him nay? What he desires, that he does. For he will carry out what is appointed for me; and many such things may yet be in his mind.

The word of the Lord

Proverbs 31:10-31

A Reading from the Book of Proverbs

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. Like merchant ships, she secures her provisions from afar. She rises while it is still night, and distributes food to her household. She picks out a field to purchase; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard. She is girt about with strength, and sturdy are her arms. She enjoys the success of her dealings; at night her lamp is undimmed. 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 fears not the snow for her household; 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 she laughs at the days to come. She opens her mouth in wisdom, and on her tongue is kindly counsel. She watches the conduct of her household, and eats not her food in idleness. Her children rise up and praise her; her husband, too, extols 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. Give her a reward of her labors, and let her works praise her at the city gates.

The word of the Lord

Reading I From the Old Testament – Alternate Funeral Readings List

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

A Reading from the Book of Ecclesiastes

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 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

Ecclesiastes 3:10-15

A Reading from the Book of Ecclesiastes

I have considered the task which God has appointed for men to be busied about. He has made everything appropriate to its time, and has put the timeless into their hearts, without men's ever discovering, from beginning to end, the work which God has done. I recognized that there is nothing better than to be glad and to do well during life. For every man, moreover, to eat and drink and enjoy the fruit of all his 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

Reading I From the Old Testament – Alternate Funeral Readings List

Song of Songs 2:8-13

A Reading from the Book of Songs

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,
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!

The word of the Lord

Song of Songs 8:6-7

A Reading from the Book of Songs

Set me as a seal on your heart,
as a seal on your arm;
For stern as death is love,
relentless as the nether world is devotion;
its flames are a blazing fire.
Deep waters cannot quench love,
nor floods sweep it away.
Were one to offer all he owns to purchase love,
he would be roundly mocked.

The word of the Lord

Reading I From the Old Testament – Alternate Funeral Readings List

Wisdom 5:15-16

A Reading from the Book of Wisdom

But the just live forever, and in the LORD is their recompense, and the thought of them is with the Most High. Therefore shall they receive the splendid crown, the beauteous diadem, from the hand of the LORD- For he shall shelter them with his right hand, and protect them with his arm.

The word of the Lord

Sirach 18:1-11

A Reading from the Book of Sirach

The Eternal is the judge of all things without exception; the LORD alone is just. Whom has he made equal to describing his works, and who can probe his mighty deeds? Who can measure his majestic power, or exhaust the tale of his mercies? One cannot lessen, nor increase, nor penetrate the wonders of the LORD. When a man ends he is only beginning, and when he stops he is still bewildered. What is man, of what worth is he? the good, the evil in him, what are these? The sum of a man's days is great if it reaches a hundred years: Like a drop of sea water, like a grain of sand, so are these few years among the days of eternity. That is why the LORD is patient with men and showers upon them his mercy. He sees and understands that their death is grievous, and so he forgives them all the more. Man may be merciful to his fellow man, but the LORD'S mercy reaches all flesh.

The word of the Lord

Sirach 34: 13-17

A Reading from the Book of Sirach

Lively is the courage of those who fear the LORD, for they put their hope in their savior; He who fears the LORD is never alarmed, never afraid; for the LORD is his hope. Happy the soul that fears the LORD! In whom does he trust, and who is his support? The eyes of the LORD are upon those who love him; he is their mighty shield and strong support, A shelter from the heat, a shade from the noonday sun, a guard against stumbling, a help against falling. He buoys up the spirits, brings a sparkle to the eyes, gives health and life and blessing.

The word of the Lord

Reading I From the Old Testament – Alternate Funeral Readings List

Sirach 41: 1-4

A Reading from the Book of Sirach

O death! how bitter the thought of you for the man at peace amid his possessions,
For the man unruffled and always successful, who still can enjoy life's pleasures.
O death! how welcome your sentence to the weak man of failing strength,
Tottering and always rebuffed, with no more sight, with vanished hope. Fear not
death's decree for you; remember, it embraces those before you, and those after.
Thus God has ordained for all flesh; why then should you reject the will of the
Most High? Whether one has lived a thousand years, a hundred, or ten, in the
nether world he has no claim on life.

The word of the Lord

Sirach 44: 8-15

A Reading from the Book of Sirach

Some of them have left behind a name and men recount their praiseworthy deeds;
But of others there is no memory, for when they ceased, they ceased. And they are
as though they had not lived, they and their children after them. Yet these also
were godly men 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
progeny 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

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Sirach 51: 6-12

A Reading from the Book of Sirach

I was at the point of death, my soul was nearing the depths of the nether world; I turned every way, but there was no one to help me, I looked for one to sustain me, but could find no one. But then I remembered the mercies of the Lord, his kindness through ages past; For he saves those who take refuge in him, and rescues them from every evil. So I raised my voice from the very earth, from the gates of the nether world, my cry. I called out: O Lord, you are my father, you are my champion and my savior; Do not abandon me in time of trouble, in the midst of storms and dangers. I will ever praise your name and be constant in my prayers to you. Thereupon the Lord heard my voice, he listened to my appeal; He saved me from evil of every kind and preserved me in time of trouble. For this reason I thank him and I praise him; I bless the name of the Lord.

The word of the Lord

Isaiah 25: 4-9

A Reading from the Book of Isaiah

For you are a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in distress; Shelter from the rain, shade from the heat. As with the cold rain, as with the desert heat, even so you quell the uproar of the wanton. 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

Reading I From the Old Testament – Alternate Funeral Readings List

Isaiah 35: 1-10

(short version 3-4, 10 – marked with an *)

A Reading from the Book of Isaiah

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 he 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. Streams will burst forth in the desert, and rivers in the steppe. The burning sands will become pools, and the thirsty ground, springs of water; The abode where jackals lurk will be a marsh for the reed and papyrus. A highway will be there, called the holy way; No one unclean may pass over it, nor fools go astray on it. No lion will be there, nor beast of prey go up to be met upon it. It is for those with a journey to make, and on it the redeemed will walk.

*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

Isaiah 41: 9-10

A Reading from the Book of Isaiah

You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth and summoned from its far-off places, You whom I have called my servant, whom I have chosen and will not cast off-- Fear not, I am with you; be not dismayed; I am your God. I will strengthen you, and help you, and uphold you with my right hand of justice.

The word of the Lord

Reading I From the Old Testament – Alternate Funeral Readings List

Isaiah 43: 1-3

A Reading from the Book of Isaiah

But now, thus says the Lord, who created you, O Jacob, and formed you, O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name: you are mine. When you pass through the water, I will be with you; in the rivers you shall not drown. When you walk through fire, you shall not be burned; the flames shall not consume you. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in return for you.

The word of the Lord

Isaiah 51: 11-16

A Reading from the Book of Isaiah

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. I, it is I who comfort you. Can you then fear mortal man, who is human only, to be looked upon as grass, And forget the Lord, your maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth? All the day you are in constant dread of the fury of the oppressor; But when he sets himself to destroy, what is there of the oppressor's fury? The oppressed shall soon be released; they shall not die and go down into the pit, nor shall they want for bread. For I am the Lord, your God, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; the Lord of hosts by name. I have put my words into your mouth and shielded you in the shadow of my hand, I, who stretched out the heavens, who laid the foundations of the earth, who say to Zion: You are my people.

The word of the Lord

Reading I From the Old Testament – Alternate Funeral Readings List

Isaiah 57: 18-19

A Reading from the Book of Isaiah

I saw their ways, but I will heal them and lead them; I will give full comfort to them and to those who mourn for them, I, the Creator, who gave them life. Peace, peace to the far and the near, says the LORD; and I will heal them.

The word of the Lord

Isaiah 60: 19-20

A Reading from the Book of Isaiah

No longer shall the sun be your light by day, Nor the brightness of the moon shine upon you at night; The Lord shall be your light forever, your God shall be your glory. No longer shall your sun go down, or your moon withdraw, For the Lord will be your light forever, and the days of your mourning shall be at an end.

The word of the Lord

Isaiah 61: 1-3

A Reading from the Book of Isaiah

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 diadem 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

Reading I From the Old Testament – Alternate Funeral Readings List

Isaiah 65: 17-20a

A Reading from the Book of Isaiah

Lo, 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

The word of the Lord

Ezekiel 34: 11-16

A Reading from the Book of Ezekiel

For thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will look after and tend my sheep. As a shepherd tends his flock when he finds himself among his scattered sheep, so will I tend my sheep. I will rescue them from every place where they were scattered when it was cloudy and dark. I will lead them out from among the peoples and gather them from the foreign lands; I will bring them back to their own country and pasture them upon the mountains of Israel (in the land's ravines and all its inhabited places). In good pastures will I pasture them, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing ground. There they shall lie down on good grazing ground, and in rich pastures shall they be pastured on the mountains of Israel. I myself will pasture my sheep; I myself will give them rest, says the Lord God. The lost I will seek out, the strayed I will bring back, the injured I will bind up, the sick I will heal (but the sleek and the strong I will destroy), shepherding them rightly.

The word of the Lord

Reading I From the Old Testament – Alternate Funeral Readings List

Ezekiel 37: 11-14

A Reading from the Book of Ezekiel

Then he said to me: Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They have been saying, "Our bones are dried up, our hope is lost, and we are cut off." Therefore, prophesy and say to them: Thus says the Lord God: O my people, I will open your graves and have you rise from them, and bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and have you rise from them, O my people! I will put my spirit in you that you may live, and I will settle you upon your land; thus you shall know that I am the Lord. I have promised, and I will do it, says the Lord.

The word of the Lord

Jonah 2: 1-11

A Reading from the Book of Jonah

But the Lord sent a large fish, that swallowed Jonah; and he remained in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. From the belly of the fish Jonah said this prayer to the Lord, his God: Out of my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me; From the midst of the nether world I cried for help, and you heard my voice. For you cast me into the deep, into the heart of the sea, and the flood enveloped me; All your breakers and your billows passed over me. Then I said, "I am banished from your sight! yet would I again look upon your holy temple." The waters swirled about me, threatening my life; the abyss enveloped me; seaweed clung about my head. Down I went to the roots of the mountains; the bars of the nether world were closing behind me forever, But you brought my life up from the pit, O Lord, my God. When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord; My prayer reached you in your holy temple. Those who worship vain idols forsake their source of mercy. But I, with resounding praise, will sacrifice to you; What I have vowed I will pay: deliverance is from the Lord. Then the Lord commanded the fish to spew Jonah upon the shore.

The word of the Lord

Reading I From the Old Testament – Alternate Funeral Readings List

Micah 6: 6-8

A Reading from the Book of Micah

With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow before God most high? Shall I come before him with holocausts, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with myriad streams of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my crime, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? You have been told, O man, what is good, and what the LORD requires of you: Only to do the right and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God.

The word of the Lord

Zephaniah 3: 14-20

A Reading from the Book of Zephaniah

Shout for joy, O daughter Zion! sing joyfully, O Israel! Be glad and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The Lord has removed the judgment against you, he has turned away your enemies; The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst, you have no further misfortune to fear. On that day, it shall be said to Jerusalem: Fear not, O Zion, be not discouraged! The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a mighty savior; He will rejoice over you with gladness, and renew you in his love, He will sing joyfully because of you, as one sings at festivals. I will remove disaster from among you, so that none may recount your disgrace. Yes, at that time I will deal with all who oppress you; I will save the lame, and assemble the outcasts; I will give them praise and renown in all the earth, when I bring about their restoration. At that time I will bring you home, and at that time I will gather you; For I will give you renown and praise, among all the peoples of the earth, When I bring about your restoration before your very eyes, says the Lord.

The word of the Lord