

A Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah: Be glad, thou thirsty desert. Let the wilderness exult, and flower as the lily. And the desert places of Jordan shall blossom and rejoice: the glory of Lebanon hath been given to it, and the honor of Carmel; and my people shall see the glory of the Lord. Be strong, ye relaxed hands and palsied knees. Comfort one another, ye fainthearted; be strong, fear not. Behold, our God rendereth judgment, and He will render it. He will come and save us. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall hear. Then shall the lame man leap like a hart, and the tongue of the stammerer shall speak plainly; for water hath burst forth in the desert, and a channel of water in a thirsty land. And the dry land shall become pools, and a fountain of water shall be poured into a thirsty land. There shall there be a joy of birds, ready habitations and marshes. There shall be there a pure way, and it shall be called a holy way; and there shall not pass by there any unclean person, neither shall there be there an unclean way; but the dispersed shall walk on it, and they shall not go astray. And there shall be no lion there, neither shall any evil beast go up upon it, not at all be found there; but those redeemed and gathered on the Lord's behalf shall walk in it, and shall return, and come to Sion with joy, and everlasting joy shall be over their head; for on their head shall be praise and exultation, and joy shall take possession of them; sorrow, and pain, and groaning have fled away.

A Reading from the Wisdom of Solomon: The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die and their departure is taken for misery, and their going from us to be utter destruction; but they are in peace. For though they be punished in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality. And having been a little chastised, they shall be greatly rewarded; for God proved them, and found them worthy for Himself. As gold in the furnace hath he tried them and received them as a burnt offering. And in the time of their visitation they shall shine, and run to and fro like sparks among the stubble. They shall judge the nations, and have dominion over the people, and their Lord shall reign forever. They that put their trust in Him shall understand the truth and such as be faithful in love shall abide with Him for grace and mercy is to His saints, and He hath care for His elect.

A Reading from the Wisdom of Solomon: Though the righteous be prevented with death, yet shall he be in rest. For honorable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years. But wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age. He pleased God, and was beloved of Him; so that, living among sinners, he was translated. Yea, speedily was he taken away, lest that wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul. For the bewitching of naughtiness doth obscure things that are honest; and the wandering of lust doth undermine the simple mind. He, being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time; for his soul pleased the Lord; therefore hastened He to take him away from among the wicked. This the people saw, and understood not, neither laid they up this in their minds that His grace and mercy is with His saints, and that He doth visit His chosen.