

### Scripture Readings

*The Old Testament Scripture reading is received from **Genesis** chapter **45** verses **1-15**, which can be found on page **52** in the **old testament** of your pew bible.*

<sup>1</sup>Joseph could no longer control his feelings in front of his attendants, and he called out, 'Let everyone leave my presence.' So there was nobody present when Joseph made himself known to his brothers, but so loudly did he weep that the Egyptians and Pharaoh's household heard him. Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph; can my father be still alive?' His brothers were so dumbfounded at finding themselves face to face with Joseph that they could not answer. Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'Come closer', and so they came close. He said, 'I am your brother Joseph whom you sold into Egypt. Now do not be distressed or take it amiss that you sold me into slavery here; it was God who sent me ahead of you to save men's lives. For there have now been two years of famine in the country, and there will be another five years with neither ploughing nor harvest. God sent me ahead of you to ensure that you will have descendants on earth, and to preserve you all, a great band of survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God, and he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord over all his household and ruler of all Egypt. Make haste and go back to my father and give him this message from his son Joseph: "God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; do not delay. You shall live in the land of Goshen and be near me, you, your sons and your grandsons, your flocks and herds and all that you have. I will take care of you there, you and your household and all that you have, and see that you

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are not reduced to poverty; there are still five years of famine to come.” You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that it is Joseph himself who is speaking to you. Tell my father of all the honour which I enjoy in Egypt, tell him all you have seen, and make haste to bring him down here.’ Then he threw his arms round his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin too embraced him weeping. He kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and afterwards his brothers talked with him.

*The New Testament Scripture reading is received from **Hebrews** chapter **4** verses **1-16**, which can be found on page **281** in the **new testament** of your pew bible...*

<sup>1</sup>Therefore we must have before us the fear that while the promise of entering his rest remains open, one or another among you should be found to have missed his chance. For indeed we have heard the good news, as they did. But in them the message they heard did no good, because it met with no faith in those who heard it. It is we, we who have become believers, who enter the rest referred to in the words, ‘As I vowed in my anger, they shall never enter my rest.’ Yet God’s work has been finished ever since the world was created; for does not Scripture somewhere speak thus of the seventh day: ‘God rested from all his work on the seventh day’? – and once again in the passage above we read, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’ The fact remains that someone must enter it, and since those who first heard the good news failed to enter through unbelief, God fixes another day. Speaking through the lips of David after many long years, he uses the words already quoted: ‘Today if you hear his voice, do not grow stubborn.’ If Joshua had given them rest, God would not thus have spoken of another day after that. Therefore, a Sabbath rest still awaits the people of God; for

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anyone who enters God's rest, rests from his own work as God did from his. Let us then make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by following this evil example of unbelief.

For the word of God is alive and active. It cuts more keenly than any two-edged sword, piercing as far as the place where life and spirit, joints and marrow, divide. It sifts the purposes and thoughts of the heart. There is nothing in creation that can hide from him; everything lies naked and exposed to the eyes of the One with whom we have to reckon. Since therefore we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast to the religion we profess. For ours is not a high priest unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who, because of his likeness to us, has been tested every way, only without sin. Let us therefore boldly approach the throne of our gracious God, where we may receive mercy and in his grace find timely help.

*May the Lord God help us to apply this scripture in our lives.*