

MONDAY
10 JANUARY
1 Samuel 1:1-8
Psalm 116:10-15
Mark 1:14-20

TUESDAY
11 JANUARY
1 Samuel 1:9-20
Canticle:
1 Samuel 2:1, 4-8
or Magnificat
Mark 1:21-28

WEDNESDAY
12 JANUARY
1 Samuel 3:1-10,
19-20
Psalm 40:1-4, 7-10
Mark 1:29-39

THURSDAY
13 JANUARY
1 Samuel 4:1-11
Psalm 44:10-15,
24-25
Mark 1:40-end

FRIDAY
14 JANUARY
1 Samuel 8:4-7,
10-end
Psalm 89:15-18
Mark 2:1-12

SATURDAY
15 JANUARY
1 Samuel 9:1-4,
17-19, 10:1a
Psalm 21:1-6
Mark 2:13-17

REFLECTION

The buzz continues as we read straight through Mark's Gospel this week. Jesus sweeps into Galilee, proclaiming the good news; in Monday's reading he calls Simon, Andrew, James and John, who respond immediately. He continues, astounding people with his authoritative teaching, driving out unclean spirits and demons, healing those who are sick and disabled, defying convention and causing outrage by consorting with the "wrong" people.

Something that leaps off the page in this passage is the extraordinary way in which unclean spirits and demons recognise and respond to Jesus. The spirit he encounters in a man in Capernaum says: "I know who you are, the Holy One of God." That might be a good prayer for us this week.

Jesus' power is such that he commands respect and obedience even from bad spirits. Another remarkable thing is the time and energy that he has – not only for healing, recruiting disciples and standing up to the authorities – but to stop, turn aside, to feel and show pity for a leper. Last week we read that he was "filled with the power of the Spirit" – and here he is, showing the potential of that awesome power.

PRAYER

Holy Spirit, fill us with the energy and resources to reach out to others who are in need, to show compassion and healing where they are needed, that we may serve you and others with joy and love.



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THE APOCRYPHA

PART III – LIVING IN A NEW WORLD

The Old Testament grew up in a world centred on Jerusalem. It tells how the people of God were chosen, rescued, and established in their land, how they went into exile and returned, and how their faith survived their loss of independence as a nation.

But time moved on. Not all Jews returned from exile. Many made their homes in Egypt, in Persia, and around the Mediterranean. They began to speak the Persian and Greek languages. They encountered new faiths and new ideas, the angels and astrology of the religion of Persia, the philosophy of the Greeks. These new ideas posed a challenge to the traditional faith of Israel, a challenge taken up by two of the Apocrypha's writers.

Jesus ben Sirā lived in the second century before Christ. His book is sometimes known by his Hebrew name, Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus, meaning "churchy," because the early Church liked it. Sirach writes about God's wisdom, following on from the tradition established in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. This Greek stuff is all very well, is his basic argument, but look how much better Judaism is. "All wisdom is from the Lord," he declares at the beginning of his work. And in chapters 44-49 he shows how wise were the famous men in the Jews' history.

The anonymous author of the Wisdom of Solomon also writes about the wisdom of the Lord, but he is much more willing to use Greek ideas. In the language of Greek philosophy he describes wisdom as, "penetrating through all spirits that are intelligent, pure, and altogether subtle" (7:23). He shows how Judaism can adopt Greek thinking as its own.

Faith constantly needs to be reinterpreted for new times and situations. These writers looked at the ideas and practices around them and thought carefully about what their traditional faith could take on board, and what it should reject. If we read the letters of St Paul, we can see how he continued this task, and it is still a subject for Christianity today.

LIVE
the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU
THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by
Caroline Hodgson
and
Heather Smith



First week
of Epiphany

Monday 10 January to
Saturday 15 January
2022