

**MONDAY**  
**24 JANUARY**  
**2 Samuel 5:1-7. 10**  
**Psalm 89:19-27**  
**Mark 3:22-30**

**TUESDAY**  
**25 JANUARY**  
**Conversion of Paul**  
**Jeremiah 1:4-10**  
**or Acts 9:1-22**  
**Psalm 67**  
**Acts 9:1-22 or**  
**Galatians 1:11-16a**  
**Matthew 19:27-end**

**WEDNESDAY**  
**26 JANUARY**  
**2 Samuel 7:4-17**  
**Psalm 89:19-27**  
**Mark 4:1-20**

**THURSDAY**  
**27 JANUARY**  
**2 Samuel 7:18-19.**  
**24-end**  
**Psalm 132:1-5. 11-15**  
**Mark 4:21-25**

**FRIDAY**  
**28 JANUARY**  
**2 Samuel 11:1-10.**  
**13-17**  
**Psalm 51:1-6. 9**  
**Mark 4:26-34**

**SATURDAY**  
**29 JANUARY**  
**2 Samuel 12:1-7.**  
**10-17**  
**Psalm 51:11-16**  
**Mark 4:35-end**

## REFLECTION

**T**he scribes say he is possessed by demons.

His family fear he's lost his mind. When he calms a storm on the lake his disciples wonder "Who then is this?" Who then is this Jesus?

To the experts on religion Jesus uses powerful logic: "How can Satan cast out Satan?" To his family he redefines the meaning of family to include everyone who does God's will.

He tells stories about sowing seeds, growth and harvest, secrets and revelations. And always he wants people to listen carefully, to allow his word-seeds to take root in their minds and grow naturally until the kingdom of God fills their lives, reaching out to offer others shelter.

His disciples have the benefit of his private teaching and they've seen his miracles of healing and deliverance. Out on the lake, though, in a raging storm, all this is forgotten as they face a real threat of drowning. They wake Jesus up, but are they expecting him to command the wind and the waves to be still? Surely not, because when he does just that they are filled with awe and wonder – only God has that sort of power!

So who, then, is this Jesus?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, help us to listen carefully to your words of life.

Let them take root in our hearts and grow under your care and protection, so that they bear fruit for the kingdom of God. Bless us with your peace whenever life is stormy and we are afraid.



## THE APOCRYPHA

### PART V – FAITH PRESERVED

**S**o what do the writers of the Apocrypha offer us?

- Guides to the complex period of history between return from exile and the New Testament period, focusing on the difficulty and danger of being a subject people, and the need for courage in defence of faith (Maccabees, 1 and 2 Esdras).
- Reflections on the meeting of Jewish and Greek thought between the Testaments, showing us how faith can be enriched by careful use of ideas from the world around (Ecclesiasticus, Wisdom of Solomon).
- Writings adding extra flavour to books and stories we already know (additions to Daniel and Esther, Psalm 151, Jeremiah's letter, Baruch, Manasseh's prayer).
- New stories of heroic faith and of God's activity among God's people (Judith, Tobit).

All these works tell us something of what was going on in the time between the writing of the Old Testament and the appearance of Jesus. They fill in some history, helping us to make some sense of a time of international turmoil. They also tell us something of what Jewish scholars and writers were thinking as they looked back over the story told in their scriptures and pondered what God was doing in their own time.

The books of the Apocrypha can be confusing and difficult to understand. In some cases they are rather gruesome, and often it is not hard to see why they were eventually excluded from the canon of Jewish and then Protestant scripture. But they are also fascinating. The stories of Tobit and Judith alone are well worth a read, just for fun.

And in some ways these books are also miraculous. The faith of Israel shines through them, faith in the God who chose these people, who saved them from slavery, gave them a land, and stayed involved in their lives, however faithless they were. We see the Jewish faith surviving and developing, sometimes despite fierce opposition. The apocryphal books prepared the ground for the appearance of God's final and greatest act of salvation. They are part of our heritage of faith.

LIVE  
the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU  
THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by  
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and  
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Third week  
of Epiphany

Monday  
24 January to  
Saturday  
29 January 2022

WEEK