

MONDAY
26 OCTOBER
Ephesians 4:32 – 5:8
Psalm 1
Luke 13:10-17

TUESDAY
27 OCTOBER
Ephesians 5:21-end
Psalm 128
Luke 13:18-21

WEDNESDAY
28 OCTOBER
Simon and Jude,
Apostles
Isaiah 28:14-16
Psalm 119:89-96
Ephesians 2:19-end
John 15:17-end

THURSDAY
29 OCTOBER
Ephesians 6:10-20
Psalm 144:1-2. 9-11
Luke 13:31-end

FRIDAY
30 OCTOBER
Philippians 1:1-11
Psalm 111
Luke 14:1-6

SATURDAY
31 OCTOBER
Philippians 1:18-26
Psalm 42:1-7
Luke 14:1. 7-11

REFLECTION

It's a peculiar way of exercising power, to tell people that they must not work. Yet the fourth Commandment, not to do any work on the sabbath, is a fundamental tenet of Jewish Law and it seems that any hint that it might be contravened or disregarded got the religious leaders of Jesus' day really worked up.

Monday's Gospel shows Jesus healing a woman who had been bent double for eighteen years by laying his hands on her. In Friday's reading he heals a man with dropsy and, knowing that the lawyers and Pharisees are watching his every move, he meets them head on. Surely it is compassionate on any day of the week, he says, to give an animal a drink of water, to rescue a child from drowning, or to set someone free from the bondage of a crippling illness? That stumps them.

That's not to argue with any of the Ten Commandments. It's sensible and magnanimous that time for rest and recuperation should be enshrined in the Law. But a compassionate deed should never be confused with work. When compassion becomes a chore, when our busy schedules don't allow us time to turn our attention to those in need of healing, it's time to ask God to reset our compassion button, and remind us of the joy that is to be found in reaching out to help others.

PRAYER

Christ, our supreme example of compassionate love, teach us to live fully and vibrantly, that we may honour you with our words and deeds and serve one another. To the glory of God the Father.



Jesus and the Bent-over Woman
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THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

PART XXVII – DANIEL – A SUBVERSIVE BOOK

Richard Greatrex continues our book-by-book series about the Bible.

On the surface Daniel looks straightforward: chapters one to six contain stories concerning the survival of exiles after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC; chapters seven to twelve consist of a series of visions and their interpretations. However, in the Hebrew Bible chapters one and eight to twelve are written in Hebrew, while 2:4b-7 are in Aramaic, a related language spoken and written by Jews from the Persian period onwards. No one has fathomed why this might be, but since chapters two to seven constitute the oldest material, it is possible that the whole book was written in Aramaic then only partly translated. There are also two Greek versions: one closely parallels the Hebrew/Aramaic text, the other is markedly different, including episodes placed within the Apocrypha of English Bibles, suggesting that at some stage different Hebrew/Aramaic editions were circulating.

The early "court stories" (traditional tales of Hebrew captives in foreign high royal courts) divide into two types – interpretations of dreams and deliverance from danger, such as Daniel's escape from the lions' den or Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego's salvation from the furnace. This is subversive literature, displaying hostility towards authority, championing resistance to cultural or spiritual assimilation, asserting that it is possible for minorities to survive and flourish in a foreign land.

Chapters seven to twelve also reflect antagonism towards those who are powerful, this time through apocalyptic literature, which is specifically concerned with the revealing and understanding of mysteries. Daniel sees four visions describing the rise and fall of four kingdoms, interpreted to him by a heavenly messenger, Gabriel. This material was not written during the Babylonian exile but much later, somewhere between 167 and 163 BC, during the reign of the Hellenistic tyrant Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who banned Jewish practice and desecrated the second Temple.

Antiochus' violence felt like the end of days for Jewish nationals. However, we know from the books of Maccabees that they fought back, prevailed and eventually restored the Temple. The book of Daniel was integral to that spirit of resistance and throughout history it has been inspirational as a radical text for cultural and theological revolution.

LIVE the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by Caroline Hodgson and Heather Smith



Last week after Trinity

Monday 26 October to Saturday 31 October 2020

WEEK