

Toetrede

Liturgie van die Lig

Ek glo in die skeppende God
van die wordende heelal
wie se naam te heilig was om uit te spreek:
Jahwe, die God van Israel,
wat 'n vader geword het
vir Jesus van Nasaret,
die wonderskone boodskapper
van die onmoontlike liefde,
deur wie God my vader maar ook my moeder is.
Ek glo in die Heilige Gees
wat mense in alle tye inspireer tot werke
wat die stempel dra van die ewige.
Ek glo dat omdat ek lewe ek aan alle lewendes
sorg en deernis verskuldig is
en ek glo dat as ek sterf ek opgeneem sal word
in die durende siklus van vernuwing en verval
en dat die lewe triomfeer in elke geboortekreet
omdat die lewe magtiger is as die dood.
(Die Geloofsbelydenis van 'n Afvallige — Lina Spies)

Woorddiens

Kruiskerk Preekreeks: Wat glo ons? Geloofsbelydenis van 'n "Vakleerling"

Tema 2: Wat glo ons... van die Bybel?

Lesing 1 : Eksodus 12:1-14

¹ EN die HERE het met Moses en Aäron in Egipteland
gespreek en gesê:
² Hierdie maand moet vir julle die begin van die maande
wees; dit moet vir julle die eerste van die maande van
die jaar wees.
³ Spreek tot die hele vergadering van Israel en sê: Op
die tiende van hierdie maand moet hulle elkeen 'n lam
neem volgens die families, 'n lam vir 'n huisgesin.
⁴ Maar as 'n huisgesin te klein is vir 'n lam, dan moet hy
en sy buurman wat die naaste aan sy huis is, dit neem
volgens die sieletal; na wat elkeen gewoon is om te
eet, moet julle die getal op die lam bereken.
⁵ Julle moet 'n lam hê sonder gebrek, 'n jaaroud
rammetjie. Van die skape of van die bokke kan julle dit
neem.
⁶ En julle moet dit in bewaring hou tot die veertiende dag
van hierdie maand; en die hele vergadering van die
gemeente van Israel moet dit slag teen die aand.
⁷ En hulle moet van die bloed neem en dit stryk aan die
twee deurposte en aan die bo-drumpel, aan die huise
waarin hulle dit eet.

⁸ En hulle moet die vleis in dieselfde nag eet, oor die
vuur gebraai; saam met ongesuurde brode moet hulle
dit met bitter kruie eet.
⁹ Julle moet daarvan nie eet as dit rou is en as dit in
water gaar gekook is nie, maar oor die vuur gebraai, die
kop en pootjies saam met die binnegoed.
¹⁰ Julle mag daar ook niks van laat oorbly tot die môre
toe nie; maar wat daarvan tot die môre oorbly, moet
julle met vuur verbrand.
¹¹ En só moet julle dit eet: Julle heupe moet omgord
wees, julle skoene aan jul voete en julle staf in jul hand;
baie haastig moet julle dit eet. 'n Pasga van die HERE is
dit.
¹² Want Ek sal in hierdie nag deur Egipteland trek en al
die eersgeborenes in Egipteland tref, van mense sowel
as van diere. En Ek sal strafgerigte oefen aan al die
gode van Egipte, Ek, die HERE.
¹³ Maar die bloed sal vir julle 'n teken wees aan die huise
waarin julle is: as Ek die bloed sien, sal Ek by julle
verbygaan. En daar sal geen verderflike plaag onder
julle wees wanneer Ek Egipteland tref nie.
¹⁴ En hierdie dag moet vir julle 'n gedenktag wees, en
julle moet dit as 'n fees tot eer van die HERE vier. Julle
moet dit in julle geslagte as 'n ewige insetting vier.

Broodjies vir die Pad

The Passover event marks the beginning of a new cultic identity for the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: while the stories of the people prior to Moses' time include many instances of prayer, vision, communication with God, and individual ritual (e.g., the covenant ceremony in which Abraham laid out halves of sacrificial animals and in a trance saw God's flaming torch and smoking firepot pass between them), there have been no communal ceremonies to mark a peculiar relationship between God and the people as a people. This Passover ceremony gives them that mark. The long process of their release from slavery, wilderness sojourn, formation as God's faithful, and eventual settlement in the land of promise, thus begins with the people's recognition of themselves as the people who keep this remembrance and celebrate this festival as the sign of their unique communal identity before God; they therefore measure their calendar, their communal time, as beginning with the Passover month. Moreover, the character of the ceremony marks the character of the people: the urgency of the meal — the lamb roasted, the bread unleavened, the diners dressed for the road, leaving nothing but ashes behind in the morning — is a sign of the people's radical dependence on God. This is not the ceremony of the rich and the powerful, it is not a rite for celebrating wealth and prestige in the world; this is the ceremony of those who know that their purpose, their direction, their life itself comes only from God. This urgency in creating a new beginning of cultic identity for God's people makes this story a pivotal point in the historical track of the lectionary sequence. (PaF)

Brood vir die Pad

The Origins of the Hebrew Bible and Its Components

The sacred books that make up the anthology modern scholars call the Hebrew Bible - and Christians call the Old Testament - developed over roughly a millennium; the oldest texts appear to come from the eleventh or tenth centuries BCE. War songs such as Exodus 15 and Judges 5 are very archaic Hebrew and celebrate Israelite victories from the time preceding the Israelite monarchy under David and Solomon. However, most of the other biblical texts are somewhat later. And they are edited works, collections of various sources intricately and artistically woven together.

The five books of Pentateuch (Genesis-Deuteronomy), for example, traditionally are ascribed to Moses. But by the eighteenth century, many European scholars noticed problems with that assumption. Not only does Deuteronomy end with an account of Moses' death (a tough assignment for any writer to describe his or her own demise), but the entire Pentateuch shows anomalies of style that are hard to explain if only one author is involved.

By the nineteenth century, most scholars agreed that the Pentateuch consisted of four sources woven together. This notion of four sources came to be known as the Documentary Hypothesis, and, in various forms, it has been the prevailing theory for the past two hundred years. Israel thus created four independent strains of literature about its own origins, all drawing on oral tradition in varying degrees, and each developed over time. They were combined together to form our Pentateuch sometime in the sixth century BCE.

By this time, many of the other biblical books were coming together. Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings form what scholars call a "Deuteronomistic History" (because the work's theology is heavily influenced by Deuteronomy), a history of the Israelite states over a five-hundred-year period. This work contains much of historical value, but it also operates on the basis of a historical and theological theory: i.e., that God has given Israel its land, that Israel periodically sins, suffers punishment, repents, and then is rescued from foreign invasion. This cycle of sin and redemption shapes the work's way of writing history and gives it a powerful religious dimension, so that even when the sources behind the biblical books are "secular" accounts in which God is far in the background, the theology of the overall work places history in the service of theology. The last edition of the Deuteronomistic History, the one in our Bible, comes from the sixth century BCE, the time of the Babylonian Exile. In this context, it offers an explanation for Israel's poor condition and implicitly a reason to hope for the future.

Another section of the Hebrew Bible consists of the prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the twelve "minor," i.e., brief, prophets). Here again, it's important to understand how these developed. In the book of Isaiah, from which Jesus quotes, the original Isaiah of Jerusalem lived in the eighth century BCE in Jerusalem, and much of Isa 6-10 clearly reflects the political and social events of his time. Another part of the book, however, comes from a prophet who lived two hundred years later: Isaiah 40-55, famous in the New Testament (early Christians thought the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 was Jesus) and prominent in Handel's **Messiah**, speaks of the Persian king Cyrus the Great (d. 530 BCE), and so the text must come from that time. Other parts of

the book of Isaiah are even later, and the entire book was carefully edited together, perhaps by the fifth or fourth century BCE. The extraordinary poetry of the book offers the reader hope in a God who controls historical events and seeks to return his people Israel to their own land.

In addition to the prophets, the Hebrew Bible contains what Jews often call the "Writings," or the Hagiographa, hymns and philosophical discourses, love poems and charming tales. These include Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes (or Qoheleth), Song of Songs, Esther, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles. These books were the last completed and the last to be received as Scripture, although parts of them may be very ancient indeed. The books of Psalms, for instance, contains many hymns from Israelite temple worship from the monarchic period, i.e., before the Babylonian Exile in the sixth century BCE; songs such as Psalm 29 may be borrowed from the Canaanites, while Psalm 104 closely resembles Egyptian hymns. In its current form, the 150 psalms fall into five "books," modeled on the five books of the Pentateuch.

Proverbs also has many old parts, including one apparently translated from the second-millennium BCE Egyptian text the "Instructions of Amenemope" (Proverbs 22). The remaining books in this part of the Bible are somewhat later: the latest is probably Daniel, which comes from the mid-second century.

From Many Books to the One Book

How did these various pieces come to be regarded as Scripture by Jewish and, later, Christian communities? There were no committees that sat down to decree what was or was not a holy book. To some degree, the process of Scripture-making, or canonization as it is often called (from the Greek word **kanon**, a "measuring rod"), involved a process, no longer completely understood, by which the Jewish community decided which works reflected most clearly its vision of God. The antiquity, real or imagined, of many of the books was clearly a factor, and this is why Psalms was eventually attributed to David, and Proverbs, Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes (along with, by some people, Wisdom of Solomon in the Apocrypha) to Solomon. However, mere age was not enough. There had to be some way in which the Jewish community could identify its own religious experiences in the sacred books.

This occurred, at least in part, through an elaborate process of biblical interpretation. Simply reading a text involves interpretation. Interpretative choices are made even in picking up today's newspaper; one must know the literary conventions that distinguish a news report, for example, from an op-ed piece. The challenge becomes much more intense when one reads highly artistic texts from a different time and place, such as the Bible.

The earliest examples of interpretation we have appear in the Bible itself. Zechariah reinterprets Ezekiel, Jeremiah often refers to Hosea and Micah, and Chronicles substantially rewrites Kings. These reinterpretations are in themselves evidence that the older books were already becoming authoritative, canonical, even as the younger ones were still being written.

But some of the oldest extensive reinterpretations of our Bible come from the third or second centuries BCE. For example, the book of **Jubilees** is a rewriting of Genesis, now arranged in 50-year periods ending in a year of

jubilee, or a time for forgiveness of debts. A related work is the **Genesis Apocryphon**, also a rewriting of Genesis. Ezekiel the Tragedian wrote a play in Greek based on the life of Moses. And the Essenes, the sect that produced the Dead Sea Scrolls, composed commentaries (**peshers**) on various biblical books: fragments of those on Habakkuk, Hosea, and Psalms survive. From the first century BCE or so, come additional psalms attributed to David and the **Letter of Aristeas** (about the miraculous translating of the Bible into Greek), among others. And during the life of Jesus himself, Philo of Alexandria wrote extensive allegorical commentaries on the Pentateuch, all with a view toward making the Bible respectable to philosophers influenced by Plato.

Despite their great variety of outlook and interests, all of these works shared certain common views. They all believed the author of the Bible was God, that it was therefore a perfect book, that it had strong moral agendas and that it was abidingly relevant. Interpretation had to show how it was relevant to changing situations. They also thought the Bible to be cryptic, a puzzle requiring piecing together. The mental gymnastics required to make the old texts ever new is one of the great contributions of this era to the history of Judaism and Christianity, and therefore Western civilization itself.

Bible Etymology

The English word "Bible" is from the Greek phrase **ta biblia**, "the books," an expression Hellenistic Jews used to describe their sacred books several centuries before the time of Jesus. Christians adopted the phrase "Old Testament" to refer to these sacred books they shared with Jews.

Jews called the same books **Miqra**, "Scripture," or the **Tanakh**, an acronym for the three divisions of the Hebrew Bible: **Torah** ("instructions" or less accurately "the law"), **Neviim** ("prophets"), and **Kethuvim** ("writings," including Psalms, Proverbs, and several other books). Modern scholars often use the term "Hebrew Bible" to avoid the confessional terms Old Testament and Tanakh.

As for the New Testament, its current twenty-seven book form derives from the fourth century CE, even though the constituent parts come from the first century. Christians did not agree on the exact extent of the New Testament for several centuries. (Mark Hamilton Harvard University)

A Brief History of the New Testament

In the two thousand years since the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, the world of Christendom has seen incredible changes, including a split with the Eastern Orthodox Church and a Protestant Reformation, accompanied by a rejection of much core ideology. Yet throughout it all, the collection of scripture called the New Testament has remained unchanged and largely unquestioned, even though it was assembled by the same church leaders whose beliefs many now refute.

To challenge the veracity of the canonical New Testament is, at best, an uncomfortable position; such questions strike at the very heart of most Christians' faith. Nevertheless, these sacred writings have come to us only after decades of oral traditions and centuries of scribal rewrites, much according to the beliefs of select groups in the early days of Christianity. It is only by attempting to study the origins and evolution of the New

Testament scriptures that one can hope to discover the true historical Jesus—a worthy goal of any Christian believer.

The source texts:

Sifting through the scores of different English versions of the New Testament, one is poignantly reminded of how translation, particularly of archaic language, is subject to personal interpretation. It is therefore vitally important that we get as close to the original source as possible. The oldest surviving complete text of the New Testament is the Codex Sinaiticus, dating back to the middle of the fourth century. The oldest fragments, the Bodmer and Beatty Papyri and Papyrus 52, date back to the second century but only contain bits of the Gospel of John. All of these texts are Greek. This presents a few disturbing problems.

First, Jesus's native tongue was Aramaic, and even if he knew Greek, he certainly did not speak it to his apostles, many of whom were uneducated fishermen. Without any surviving Aramaic texts, the actual words of Christ are lost forever, mired in a sea of subjective translation by ancient scribes. Second, we are faced with a gap of as much as three hundred years between the composition of a text and our surviving copies. In a world without a printing press, texts would often undergo drastic evolution through centuries of handwritten duplication.

Origins of the canon:

Our four canonical gospels did not begin their lives as the gospels of "Matthew," "Mark," "Luke" and "John." Different groups of early Christians maintained their own oral traditions of Jesus's wisdom, as writing was a specialized skill and not every fellowship enjoyed the services of a scribe. When written accounts of Jesus's teachings began to circulate (i.e., the theoretical "sayings" gospel *Q* and the Semeia or *Signs* source), the independent groups would supplement them with their own traditions about the savior, each believing their own versions to be "the Gospel." Eventually, as these expanded writings spread through other communities, some versions were viewed as having more authority than others. It was not until the pronouncement of Bishop Irenaeus (185 C.E.) that Christians began to accept only the four familiar gospels as authoritative, and to refer to them by their modern titles.

The rest of the canon was much slower to develop. For the next two centuries, the four gospels would be coupled with a myriad of different letters, epistles, stories and apocalypses, according to what a particular congregation judged as relevant to their understanding of Jesus Christ and his message. Catholicism was only one of the dozens of "denominations" within the early church—Gnosticism was prevalent throughout Egypt, Montanism in Asia Minor, Marcionism in Syria. Eventually, the Catholic church was adopted as the state religion of the Roman Empire, and all other systems of belief were branded as heresies. Following the Epistle of Athanasius in 367 C.E., the Church finally reached agreement upon which writings were truly authentic and representative of apostolic tradition, thus forming what we know today as the canonical New Testament. Although factions of the Church continued to debate the merits of various books for centuries, and many even used other writings in their liturgy, most uncanonical writings were ordered to be destroyed. In many cases, possession of heretical literature was punishable by death. We are extremely fortunate that many of these

texts have survived the millennia, giving us insights into the development of various early Christian traditions. (Geoff Trowbridge)

Die Steeds Roepende Liefdeskreet

deur Wilhelm Jordaan

Daar word baie gepraat oor geloof as verwondering oor die dinge van God. Sulke verwondering kom in baie gestaltes; met permutasies en kombinasies.

Sommige reken verwondering is om met nuwe oë na alles te kyk asof jy dinge vir die eerste keer raaksien; en om dan in 'n toestand van durende vervoering te leef.

Ander voel dit behels 'n intense belewenis van ekstase; iets wat by geleentheid gebeur – soos wanneer jy oorweldig word deur verruklike, haas onsêbare skoonheid. God is dan as't ware die skoonheid self; die uiteindelijke estetiek.

Nog ander sê verwondering word gedra deur gevoelens van gelyktydige eerbied en ontsag; emosie wat jou in die gemoed “beweeg” – soos die Latynse woorde “emotus” en “movere” te kenne gee.

Die eeue oue kerklied “Hoe groot is U” (Lied 464 in die *Afrikaanse Liedboek*) bevat die beweegkrag van gelyktydige eerbied en ontsag:

“O Heer my God, as ek in eerbied wonder / en al U werke elke dag aanskou: / Die son en maan, die aarde, sterre, wolke, / hoe U dit elke dag so onderhou?/?Dan moet ek juig ...”

In dié geval word eerbied en ontsag gewek deur 'n meesleurende, byna weemoedige melodie en beeldryke liriek oor 'n grootse skepping.

Dit is wat musiek en poësie soms aan 'n mens doen.

Wat egter dikwels onderskat word, is hoe wetenskaplike kennis verwondering kan voed; nie as 'n bewys van God se bestaan nie, maar as die feitelike grondslag van jou verwondering.

Sulke kennis vervang nie die Bybelse storiwerklikheid, of die musiek, of die poësie nie, maar vertel 'n wetenskaplik geordende verhaal wat die vroeëre onvoltooide prentjies oor ons en die kosmos uitbrei tot 'n ontsagwekkende, steeds onvoltooide, skouspel.

Deel van die skouspel is die idee van 'n oerknal waarvolgens die kosmos ongeveer 15?miljard jaar gelede 'n beginpunt gehad het toe tydruimte in die aller kleinste fragment van 'n sekonde dáár was.

George Smoot, medewenner van die Nobelprys vir fisika in 2006, beskou dié fragment as die punt van uiterste eenvoud toe “iets” uit “byna niks” gevorm is.

Die iets uit die byna niks is die oerstof wat evolusie aan die gang gesit het en steeds gestalte gee aan die uitdyende kosmos. En dit sal aanhou en aanhou ontwikkel tot 'n steeds groeiende, oneindige kompleksiteit.

As wetenskaplike kan jy verskeie hipoteses oor die oerknal hê, sê Smoot. En voeg dan by: “Vir 'n gelowige mens is die oerknal soos om God te sien.”

Want, sê hy, dít is die uiteindelijke vrae: Wat was daar voor die oerknal? Wat was daar voordat tydruimte begin het? Wat was die byna niks waaruit die iets gekom het? Waarom het dinge juis só gebeur en nie anders nie?

Die antwoorde, sê Smoot, lê buite die huidige verklaringskrag van die wetenskap weens ons onvermoë om anderkant die oerknal die begin vóór die begin te sien.

Dan vra hy: Is dit waar God “oorneem” as die gewer van die aanvanklike enkelvoudigheid?

Wat Smoot te kenne gee, is dat jy 'n keuse het oor hoe jy die gegewens oor die oerknal wil verstaan. Enersyds kan jy sê tydruimte se ontstaan was 'n blote toevalligheid. So ook die mens.

Andersyds kan jy aanvaar die fisieke werklikheid word onderlê deur 'n fundamentele spirituele “kode” wat aan alles uit die oerknal se nagloed 'n gerigtheid, 'n plek, simmetrie, skoonheid en orde gee. En dat ons, gelowig én met verwondering, dié kode “God” kan noem.

Aanvaar ons dít, vul stories, poësie, musiek en wetenskap mekaar aan én laat ons toe om met verbeelding te sê die oerknal is God se oorspronklike liefdeskreet wat ná al die eeue steeds tot die mens roep.

Wegsending

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Gebed

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