

Trinity Sunday Cycle C RCL

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31

Proverbs 8 celebrates wisdom's great value and her role in the creation of the world. Since the wisdom teachings we have from the time before the exile in Babylon (before 596/586 BCE) are basically aphoristic and experiential, and since Proverbs 8 shows significant commonalities with the Babylonian wisdom tradition in its understanding of creation, it is likely that the poem comes from the time of the rebirth of Hebrew wisdom at the end of the 6th century BCE. Verses 1-4 introduce wisdom as a female figure, a divine or, at least, semi-divine being that could address human beings. Verses 22-31 imagine wisdom as the first-born of creation, an entity that was with God when God created the earth. This section follows a Babylonian scientific method loosely called "list science" by modern researchers. As to what role wisdom actually played depends on whether one translates *'amon* in verse 30 as "master builder" or as "little child"—both are possible. Jewish and Christian tradition have preferred the first ("master builder") and applied it to the Torah (Judaism) or to Christ (Christianity).

Psalm 8

This *hymn* contains a very high view of human nature. In verse 6 the author marvels that human beings have been made only a little less than the *elohim*, "the gods," a reference to the heavenly beings. Like the Priestly Writer of Genesis (P; see Genesis 1:1-2:4a), our author believed human beings to be almost like the gods so as to have dominion over all of the earthly creation, even as the gods have dominion over the heavenly creation.

or

Benedictus es, Canticle 2 or 13 (Song of the Three Young Men 29-34)

In the Greek (Septuagint) version of Daniel, there is a song ascribed to Azariah (Abednego) and a song attributed to the three young men in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego). These songs stand between Daniel 3:23 and Daniel 3:24. The versification used here begins with the first word after 3:23 as verse 1 and ends on verse 68 before 3:24. Canticle 1 (= Canticle 12) derives from verses 35-65 and Canticle 2 (= Canticle 13) from 29-34. Canticle 2 (= Canticle 13) is a *hymn* that celebrates God's presence in the temple as king.

Romans 5:1-5

The positive results of suffering enumerated in 5:3 are difficult to render in English. Suffering produces "endurance" or "obedience." Obedience produces "certification" or "character." (The Greek *dokime* means "certified," "tested," or "proved.") Having passed the test of obedience, the believer has the hope of redemption. Reference to Christ dying at "the right time" (*kata kairon*, 5:6) corresponds to the general belief of apocalyptic Jews in the first century that they were living in the 70th week of years prophesied by Daniel 9:24, *i. e.* 490 years after the decree of Cyrus to rebuild Jerusalem. This 70th week would correspond to the beginning of a 10th Jubilee cycle as defined in Leviticus 25. The tenth and last Jubilee was to be the messianic age. For Paul, the death of Jesus inaugurated this last Jubilee, which would involve remission of all obligations and debts, including the obligations and debts of sin.

John 16:12-15

The Dead Sea Scrolls imagine human beings divided between those allied with the Spirit of Deceit or Belial and those allied with the Spirit of Truth or the Holy Spirit. The expression "Spirit of Truth" in verse 13 has convinced several commentators that the author of this Gospel

received some inspiration from the Qumran community. The main difference, however, is that at Qumran, people had no choice as to which group they belonged. At the beginning of creation, God had assigned each person to walk in one spirit or in the other. In John, on the other hand, the disciples have chosen to follow Jesus and so will be comforted by the coming of the Paraclete (Greek: "advocate" or "lawyer") who is the Spirit of Truth. In other words, the wording is similar but the ideas are not identical.

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