

SUMMARIES

Gen. 6:1-4

F.H. Breukelman

The elaboration of the theme “the Genesis of Israel amidst the peoples” ties the Book of Genesis together as a composition in which all the elements function.

First in 1:1-2:3, the story of creation and in 2:4-4:26, the complex of stories about man on this land *coram Deo* are told.

Next, in 5:1- 20:26 (with three main parts: 5:1- 11:26; 11:27- 37:1; 37:2- 50:26), the “Book of the Toledoth of Adam, Man” follows.

Throughout the book the crucial issues are *fathers*, and *sons*, who are each other’s *brothers*.

In the first main part attention is focused on the contrast between the lives of Israel’s fathers *ante et post primogenitum natum* and the lives of all peoples *ante et post diluvium*, which contrast is maintained during the next main parts.

Israel, being *firstborn* among the brethren, is the blessed, representative of man among mankind.

In the way that God is “vere Deus” among the gods, so Israel the partner of God is “vere homo” among all men. In this connection Genesis 6:1-4 functions as a “fragment” to express the way in which the Torah criticizes the people’s myth.

It was inserted here to make clear, with reference to the giants and the heroes, who is *not* the real man. As a contrast to the hero in the people’s myth the *saddiq* of Israel’s Torah appears.

Sara’s grave, Gen. 23

K.A. Deurloo

The author claims that, as far as Gen. 23 reflects neo-babylonian treatises, it is concerned with a contract which is *narrated*. The function of the story within the Abraham-cycle puts the exegete on the right track.

Significant moments of this cycle are related in the chapters Gen. 11:27 – 16:15 (around the theme “land”) and Gen. 17:1 – 22:19 (“sons”). Gen. 22:20 – 24:67 offer an epilogue and a transition to the next cycle.

In Gen. 24 the son’s wife (introduced in Gen. 22:23) ensures continuance after the mother’s death (Gen. 23)

By means of her grave and burial (within the inclusions of “the land Canaan”, vs 2 and 19) Sara’s death brings “the land-which-YHWH-will-give” nearer to Abraham and the reader of the story; the field which Abraham must buy *with* the grave is a symbol of the land.

Through his life with Sara face to face has come to an end, through the field-and-grave Abraham gains sight of the promised land.

The *Stichwörter* such as “*land*”, “*from before (the face of)*”, “*to give*” and “*to rise*” may be called clues for the interpretation of this periscope, as they agree with the general theme of the cycle as a whole.

The ark in the land of the Philistines

K.A.D. Smelik

The author defends the proposition that the book of Samuel is an original composition from the period of the Babylonian captivity and also that very little reliable historical information on the time before Salomon was available to its authors.

Starting with this dating one can gain new insights into the story of the ark in 1 Sm. 4:1 – 7:1 and the relation of this passage to the book of I Samuel as a whole. It is no *hieros logos* for the edification of the pilgrims in Jerusalem (as Rost has proposed); it is a retrojection of the crisis of 586 into a distant past, in which the ark represents the temple and the sacred vessels. When the authors, inspired by the religious-political vision of the prophet Jeremiah tell their story, they have the rebellion of Zedekiah, the destruction of the temple, and the carrying away of the sacred vessels to Babylon in mind. They want to show the reader why YHWH allowed this disaster and also that the end of the temple did not mean the end of the people of Israel inasmuch as the defeat of 586 did not affect the power of YHWH.

‘Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done’. I. Inquiry into the composition of II Kings 8: 1-6 and 4: 8-27.

Aleida G. van Daalen

The texts of II Kings 8:1-6 and 4:8-37 prove to have been carefully arranged, in parallel and concentric structure, characteristic of the Old Testament way of telling a story. II Kings 8:1-6 shows a circular composition, as does each of the three sequences of II Kings 4:8-37 that, in a 2-2-1 proportion, together form the first periscope (vss 8-11, 12-15, 16-17).

The second and third periscopes, each of the same size as the first one, and divided by a ‘turning point’. Vs.28, show manyvaried parallels, each by itself as well as in respect to each other, and even with the first periscope.

The verses which in this composition take the central stand, are closely interdependent. Formally and in content the expression “Did I not say: *lô’ tasle ’oti* (do not talk me into carelessness)”(vs 28b) is coherent with *sâlôm* (vs 26b), with *hasã’ altî* (vs 28a), with the woman’s request not to lie unto her (vs 16b), and also with the carelessness by which the woman rejects Elisha’s proposal to talk to the king on her behalf, saying “I dwell among mine own people” (vs13e).

Both vss 28b and 13e need as sequel: the story in which there is made an appeal to the king on the woman’s behalf.

The famine creates a situation in which, for the time being, she cannot live “among her own people”, and after which she calls in the king’s aid for her house and field.

What the king hears about “the great things that Elisha hath done” urges him to honour her request for help.

That the woman, not her husband, speaks to the king, is not due to the fact that she is a widow, but that she is the feature star of the story.

The reason that Elisha himself does not speak to the king and why the question is: “Tell me all the great thing that Elisha hath done”, will be dealt with in a later article.

The prologue to the Gospel of Mark

C.J. den Heijer

At first glance the beginning of Mark’s gospel may not seem very interesting. John’s gospel has the famous prologue on the logos; Matthew and Luke have their Christmas stories, but we find none of

these in Mark. He abruptly starts telling. In a few sentences John the Baptist is introduced and Jesus of Nazareth is hardly accorded more space. All this is dealt with much more extensively in the other gospels.

The aim of the article is to explain why those few words by Mark are worth reading. John's call for conversion and his clothing remind the reader of Malachi 3. He is the Elijah redivivus (cf. Mark 1:6 and II Kings 1:8).

Obviously everyone understands the symbolism for *all* the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem come to be baptized and to confess their sins. Malachi's prophecy is being fulfilled: "Then shall the offering of Judah and of Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years." John refers to someone coming after him, a stronger one. Who is he? Malachi 3 and 4 make the reader understand that it is God himself on his day; cf. Malachi 4:5-6.

In the second part of the prologue Jesus of Nazareth in Galilee fills the scene. Will he be the stronger one? He also is baptized, just as the others, but there is a difference. He does not confess his sins; had he none? And something further special happens during his baptism. He is the Messiah! He is the bearer of the "good spell" that is announced in the first verse of this gospel.

Will all the prophecies be fulfilled now? Will the Kingdom of peace come now? Bitter disappointment is to follow.

Jesus is thrown into the desert by the Spirit and tempted by Satan. John is put in prison and later beheaded. Tragic end of a hopeful beginning, but at this very moment Jesus speaks for the first time, proclaiming the coming of the Kingdom of God.

This prologue contains the gospel in a nutshell. Like the overture to an opera it sounds all the important themes, the paradox being the basso continuo, Jesus the Messiah is *not* like we expected him to be. He is just an "offspring from Galilee", not even from Jerusalem. His predecessor is jailed and killed. God calls him "His beloved Son", but still he is tempted by Satan. This paradox is to rule his whole life, cf. Mark 10:45.

'Blessed is he – the king – that cometh in the name of the LORD

Ben Hemelsoet

Reading the pericope Luke 14:1-6 in the traditional way, within the framework of the theme of cures on Sabbath days leads to misunderstanding Luke's intention which can only become clear with a careful look at the context. In the foregoing passage Jesus makes known his going to Jerusalem, signifying it with the quotation Psalm 118:26 "Blessed be he that cometh" (the King! Cf. 19:38) and by saying that their house would be left unto them (Luke 13:35). Going to Jerusalem and the kingship are drawn by Luke in the same perspective. When the question of the Sabbath comes up in this perspective, one should think in terms of the day of the Lord rather than of the Sabbath disputes.

The word "until" connecting Jesus' prediction about "their house" and the quotation from the Psalm is fulfilled in this story which was introduced by the pregnant clause "and it came to pass". Jesus comes in the name of the Lord on the day of the Lord to eat bread (cf. 14:15) on the Sabbath day (vss. 1,3,5), a day to be kept holy (Ex. 20:8). Is this day being observed in the house he visits? In any case, Jesus is observed there, Jesus and the Sabbath here seem to be parallel.

With the coming of the Blessed the presence of the man with dropsy is revealed, a man who is ill because of the lack of bread (cf. 14:15).

The question "is it lawful" focuses the attention on man and the Sabbath; the lawyers and Pharisees cannot but silently concede this point. Man, created in God's image, exists for the sake of the day of the Lord, and the purpose of creation, the Sabbath is kept for the sake of man (Gen. 1).

“Sending away” (cf. most translations) is impossible in this story. Just as in 13:12, *apoluein* should be translated here as *to set free* (from disease). The man is free from dropsy because he shares in the bread of the Sabbath. Jesus takes him i.e. includes him (vs. 4). This is confirmed by the parable of the man who rescues his property (son or animal) on the Sabbath.

The man with dropsy is not mentioned further, because he is present with and within Jesus, the Blessed.

Short note on Romans 1:18-21

Rochus Zuurmond

This short note deals with the problem of “knowing God from nature”. It is argued that Paul’s argument in Rom. 1:18-21 does not necessarily imply this concept.

Paul has to be interpreted primarily against the background of the Old Testament and Jewish hermeneutics. The “revelation of the wrath of God against the unrighteousness of men” (vs 18) must be seen in relation to the stories of the Flood and the Judgment on Sodom, and in particular to the Jewish idea of the “generation of the flood” and the “men of Sodom”. “That which is known of God” has little to do with a concept of the world, but indicates His *action*, the way He dealt with Israel and the nations. His “works” (Greek: *poièmata*) therefore are not “nature”, but the history of His covenant. “Work” must be interpreted in the sense of the Hebrew “*ma’asè*”: a thing that is *done* (e.g. Psalm 143:5). In rabbinic Hebrew it even denotes *the story* of what is done. Vs. 21 does not describe the failure of human knowledge of God, but the rebellion against this God of liberation and humanity, who in Israel and in the Old Testament reveals Himself openly “for the eyes of all the nations” (Psalm 98:2,3).

This short note was originally written in 1966 in response to G.C. Berkouwer *De Algemene openbaring* (Kampen 1951). It was published for the first time in the Dutch periodical “In de Waagschaal”.

Step by step. A chronicle as background to “A translation to be read aloud”

F.J. Hoogewoud

This article is a survey of the discussions on the desirability of a Dutch “idiolect” translation of the Old Testament, a translation which primarily aims at paying full justice to the idiom, atmosphere, style and dynamics of each book of the Bible and of the Bible as a whole. In this view Hebraisms and Graecisms are not to be rejected.

Participants in these discussions were, among others: F.H. Breukelman, members of the Societas Hebraica Amstelodamensis (an Amsterdam Society for Old Testament Study), members of the Prof. dr. G. van der Leeuw-stichting (centre for the encounter of Church and Art, at Amsterdam) and consultants and staff members of the Nederlands Bijbelgenootschap (the Protestant Dutch Bible Society) and the Katholieke Bijbel Stichting (the Catholic Bible Society).

Up until now “idiolect” translations of the Books of Ruth and Jonah, subtitled as “*A Translation to be Read Aloud*”, have been prepared by members of the Societas Hebraica Amstelodamensis and published by the Dutch Bible Societies (1974, 1977). This translation forms a counterpart to the “common language” translation of the Old Testament in preparation at the Nederlands Bijbelgenootschap.

Plans have been made to speed up the translating process and to publish material on the theoretical aspects of the work.

To this chronicle, three appendices have been added: 1. The directives to the translators of the “Satenvertaling”, the classic Dutch Protestant translation of the Bible finished in 1637. 2. Three translations of Jonah 1:1-3 – specimens of a “compromise translation”, a freer translation and an “idiolect” – offered by members of a special research committee (1967). 3. “Twenty theses” and “A Concept of Directives for (“idiolect”) Bible Translation” by Maria de Groot (1969).