



Jewish Wisdom and the Lord's Prayer: Interview with Benjamin Wold

In October this year, the Institute and EES will be co-hosting an international symposium on the Lord's Prayer. One of the speakers at the symposium will be Benjamin Wold, who is Lecturer in New Testament at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland. We are very pleased that he is taking part in the symposium. This interview was conducted by email in April 2018.

Beth Langstaff: *You are no stranger to Germany--you spent time here in Tübingen as a Humboldt Fellow. What do you particularly remember about your stay? What was enjoyable and/or challenging about your time here?*

Ben Wold: I spent a year in Tübingen on an Erasmus Ph.D. exchange, in the third year of my degree programme at Durham University, before returning as a Humboldt Fellow. I really enjoy the German language and my greatest joy was learning and practicing Deutsch with new friends. I remember the café and Kneipe culture fondly and the many evenings out. Acquiring spoken German to the degree needed to fully understand an akademische Vorlesung was (and is) a challenge. What I remember most about Tübingen was the warm welcome I received at the Theologicum, especially from Prof. Hermann Lichtenberger and the late Prof. Martin Hengel.

Beth Langstaff: *What you have been doing in the years since you left Germany? Can you tell us something about your life and work in Dublin, and about your book on Early Christian Wisdom?*

Ben Wold: I left Tübingen to take up a position in New Testament and Christian Origins at Trinity College Dublin. My wife and I have settled into our adoptive home in Ireland and are now parents to a beautiful four-year-old girl. We have returned to Germany a few times, once with an AvH Ruckkehr Stipendium, and continue to find ways to visit. My Doktorvater, Prof. Loren Stuckenbruck, has since moved to LMU and our collaborations continue to the present.

I currently have a book in press with E.J. Brill's series Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah that takes as its focus 4QInstruction (*4QInstruction: Divisions and Hierarchies*, STDJ 123), the largest and most significant wisdom tradition found at Qumran. This has been a monograph long in the making. In it I argue for alternative reconstructions and translations of several key passages which, in turn, change the

interpretation and significance of the composition as a whole. Last year I had a sabbatical and during this time I began a new monograph that works out the significance of 4QInstruction for wisdom in the New Testament, especially in the letter of James and Matthew's Gospel. I am particularly interested in wisdom discourse that reflects: cosmology, eschatology, and revealed wisdom. This book is well developed and I hope to complete a draft within the next 12-18 months.

Soon after I began at Trinity College Dublin one of my first Ph.D. students began research on apotropaic prayer in the synoptic gospels. This is now published with Mohr Siebeck (Michael Morris, *Warding Off Evil*, WUNT.II 451). My own interest into this topic resulted in a short article on early Jewish apotropaic prayer and the end of the Matthean Lord's Prayer (*Deliver us from the evil one*).

Beth Langstaff: *You will be reading a paper at the Symposium on Wisdom and Apocalyptic in the Lord's Prayer. What sort of questions does this topic raise? And what light might the Dead Sea Scrolls throw on the Lord's Prayer?*

Ben Wold: There are several ways that research in early Jewish wisdom may be brought to bear on the Lord's Prayer. In terms of the big picture, there remains a lot to be said about the assessment of *wisdom* and *apocalyptic* in the Saying Source Q and 4QInstruction. Very little has been written on the paradigmatic shifts that have taken place in research on early Jewish wisdom and the significance for James, Matthew, and the Didache. In my paper I will signpost how these developments may influence our assessment of the double tradition and, specifically, the Lord's Prayer.

As my research has progressed I have become increasingly intrigued by parallels between Matthew and 4QInstruction. One parallel is the notion of the meek inheriting the earth, which is only known from the Matthean Beatitudes (5:5), 1 Enoch (5:7), and 4QInstruction (4Q418 81). The notion of being *poor in spirit* is also an idea, I argue, that is found in both 4QInstruction and the Beatitudes. In my paper, I plan to give some attention to these parallels; however, I am especially interested to discuss the significance of 4QInstruction as one background against which indebtedness and debt forgiveness (Matt 6:12) may be viewed.

Our warm thanks to Benjamin Wold for taking time for this interview! We'll be introducing other symposium speakers in the next few months.