



Lent course 2013

This is our story
Journeys of faith

Dyma ein Stori



Rhagarweiniad

Byddwn ni, fodau dynol, wrth ein bodd yn dweud storïau. Byddwn yn hoff o storïau ag iddynt siâp clir – dechrau, canol a diwedd, ac o uniaethu â'r cymeriadau y byddwn yn darllen amdanynt. Storïau dychmygol yw llawer o'n hoff storïau – o James Bond i'r Lord of the Rings. Y mae eraill, fel y storïau y byddwn yn eu hadrodd am ein teuluoedd neu amdanom ein hunain, wedi eu seilio ar hanes yn y cof.

Mae'r ffydd Gristnogol yn rhoi inni stori ardderchog. Mae'n sôn am Dduw cariadus yn creu'r bydysawd ac yn ein creu ni. Mae'n sôn am bobl yn pechu ac yn methu; am yr helyntion a'r anawsterau a wynebodd bodau dynol fel ni gydol y cenedlaethau. Mae'n sôn am Iesu, yr un bod dynol yr oedd Duw i'w weld mor eglur ynddo nes y gellid ei alw 'y Meseia [neu'r Crist], Mab y Duw byw' (Mathew 16:16). Yn y modd y bu fyw ac y bu farw – ac y cyfodwyd ef o blith y meirw – agorodd Iesu ffordd newydd i ddynolryw ddychwelyd at Dduw. Yn ôl y ffydd Gristnogol, tynged dynolryw yw dod o hyd i lawenydd a thangnefedd tragwyddol yn Nuw, y cyflawnir ynddo y bydysawd oll. Dyma'r stori fawr a grynhoir yng nghredoau'r Eglwys. Pan fyddwn yn adrodd y credo, byddwn yn dweud, yn gyhoeddus a chyda'n gilydd, 'dyma ein stori ni'.

Daw'r stori hon inni o'r Beibl, yn ei gyfanrwydd. Mae llyfrau'r Beibl ('llyfrau' yw ystyr y gair Groeg 'biblia') yn cynnwys cyfreithiau, barddoniaeth, diarhebion, llythyrau – amrywiaeth o ddeunydd ysgrifenedig. Llyfrau 'hanes' yw llawer o'r llyfrau – nid hanes yn yr ystyr fodern, lle y caeir allan bob cyfeiriad at weithgaredd Duw, ond hanes mewn ystyr hŷn, lle y mae Duw'n bennaf cyfrifol am bopeth sy'n digwydd. Pan fyddwn yn meddwl am hanes heddiw, mae arnom eisiau gwybod 'beth a ddigwyddodd' ar lefel ddynol. Roedd y rhai a fu'n ysgrifennu neu'n golygu'r hanes sydd gennym yn y Beibl am Israel a Iesu am ddangos sut yr oedd Duw ar waith yn y pethau a ddigwyddodd.

Bwriodd beirniaid modern lawer o oleuni ar y testunau beiblaidd trwy holi 'beth a ddigwyddodd' – gofyn cwestiynau ynglŷn â'r digwyddiadau y mae'r testunau'n eu cyflwyno a sut y casglwyd ynghyd y testunau eu hunain, sy'n ymddangos yn aml yn astrus iawn. Dangosasant fod y testun a ddarllenwn ni yn y Beibl yn gynnwys proses gymhleth o olygu a weod ynghyd wahanol ffynonellau ag iddynt wahanol bwysleisiau ac a ysgrifennwyd ar wahanol amseroedd ac mewn gwahanol leoedd. Y mae o hyd ddadlau bywiog ynglŷn â'r ffordd orau o ddarllen yr Ysgrhythur ac ynglŷn â 'beth a ddigwyddodd'. Mae gwahaniaeth barn ymhlith ysgolheigion ynglŷn â'r digwyddiadau hanesyddol y tu ôl i stori croesi'r Môr Coch, neu stori Moses yn derbyn llechi'r Gyfraith yn Sinai, neu stori Iesu'n mynd i mewn i Jerwsalem. Fodd bynnag, nid yn yr hanes yn unig y mae ein diddordeb ni yn y storïau hyn – yn enwedig a ninnau'n eu darllen yn rhan o Gwrs Garawys.

This is OUR story

Journeys of faith

INTRODUCTION

As human beings, we love to tell stories. We like stories that have a clear shape, with a beginning, a middle, and an end. We like to be able to identify with the characters we read about. Some of the stories we enjoy most – from James Bond to Lord of the Rings – are imaginary. Others, like those we often tell about our families and ourselves, are based on remembered history.

The Christian faith gives us a great story. It tells us about a loving God, who creates the universe, and creates us. It tells us of human sin and failure; of the trials and tribulations that human beings like us have gone through for generations. It tells us about Jesus, the one human being in whom God was seen with such clarity that he could be called ‘The Messiah [or Christ], the Son of the living God’ (Mt 16:16). By the way he lived and died – and was raised from the dead – Jesus opened a new way for humanity to return to God. The Christian faith speaks of the destiny of humanity, which is to find eternal happiness and peace in God, in whom the whole universe is brought to its fulfilment. This is the great story summed up in the church’s creeds. When we recite the creed, we are saying, publicly and together, ‘this is our story’.

This story comes to us from the Bible, taken as a whole. The books of the Bible (‘biblia’ means ‘books’ in Greek) include law, poetry, proverbs, letters – a variety of written material. Many of the books are ‘histories’ – not in the modern sense, where ‘history’ excludes all reference to God’s activity, but in an older sense where the prime mover behind everything that happens is God. When we think about history today, we want to know ‘what happened’ at the human level. Those who told, edited or wrote the histories of Israel or the histories of Jesus that we find in the Bible wanted to show how, in the events that took place, God was at work.

Modern critics have thrown a great deal of light on the biblical texts by asking questions about ‘what happened’. They ask about the events that the text presents and about the way the texts, which are often very puzzling, have been assembled. They have shown how the text we read in the Bible is the product of a complex process of editing. Various sources, with different emphases, written down at different times and in different places, have been woven together. There continue to be lively debates about the best ways to read Scripture and about ‘what happened’. Scholars have different ideas about what historical events lie behind the story of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea, or Moses receiving the tablets of the Law at Sinai, or Jesus’s entry into Jerusalem, but our interest in these stories – certainly if we read them as part of this Lent Course – does not depend on history alone.

Ar gyfer y cwrs hwn dilynais ffordd arall, a ffordd hŷn, o edrych ar y testunau beiblaidd. Dyma'r ffordd y darllenwyd yr Ysgrhythurau ers canrifoedd gan bobl y ffydd, pobl a oedd yn credu bod yr 'hanesion hyn a gofiwyd' wedi eu hysgrifennu yn y lle cyntaf i fod o gymorth i ni – ddarllenwyr y cenedlaethau diweddarach – glywed Gair Duw yn cael ei lefaru wrthym yn yr Ysgrhythurau a'i esbonio inni yng ngoleuni Crist. Wrth ddangos i Gristnogion Rhufain sut y mae Salm 69:9 ('Y mae gwaradwydd y rhai oedd yn dy waradwyddo di wedi syrthio arnaf fi') yn cyfeirio at Grist, dywed Paul, 'Ac fe ysgrifennwyd yr Ysgrhythurau gynt er mwyn ein dysgu ni, er mwyn i ni, trwy ddyfalbarhad a thrwy eu hanogaeth hwy, ddal ein gfael yn ein gobaith'. (Rhufeiniaid 15:4).

Mae'r storiâu y byddwn yn eu hastudio 'yn llefaru wrthym' am brofiad yr Israeliaid, am Grist ac am ein bywydau ni ein hunain. Gan eu bod yn llefaru wrthym mewn gwahanol ffyrdd, y mae llawer i'w ddysgu o gymharu'r gwahanol ffyrdd y maent yn llefaru wrth wahanol bobl. Nid ni yw'r rhai cyntaf i'w darllen yn y ffordd hon. I'r gwrthwyneb, ni yw'r diweddaraf mewn llinell hir o bobl, yn Iddewon a Christnogion, a fu'n darllen y storiâu hyn i gael eu goleuo ar sut y mae Duw'n ymwneud â dynolryw, ac yn ymwneud yn awr â ni. Wrth wneud hynny, yr ydym yn dweud 'dyma ein stori'.

Yn sicr ddigon, y mae gan y storiâu y byddwn yn eu darllen yn ystod y Cwrs Garawys hwn ddechrau a chanol a diwedd. Gellir ystyried stori dihangfa'r Israeliaid o gaethiwed yn yr Aifft, trwy weithred nerthol gan Dduw, yn ddechrau 'pobl Israel' a ddaeth, mewn modd unigryw, yn 'pobl Dduw'. Ffurir eu hunaniaeth yn yr anialwch, yn enwedig pan wna Duw gyfamod â hwy yn Sinai. Dychwelodd 'pobl Israel' drachefn a thrachefn at flynyddoedd yr anialwch, a'u cofio fel yr amser pan ddysgasant ymddiried yn Nuw a bod yn ffyddlon iddo yn yr amgylchiadau mwyaf anodd. Daw hanes creu 'Israel' trwy ei 'thaith ffydd' i ben pan eir i mewn i wlad yr addewid – sydd hefyd yn ddechrau newydd.

I Gristnogion, y mae stori taith fawr yr Israeliaid trwy'r anialwch yn rhan hanfodol o gyn-hanes stori'r Efengyl. Rhagdybia'r pedair Efengyl y gallwn, o ddeall ymwneud Duw ag Israel, ddeall yn well stori Iesu. Y mae cysondeb yn ymwneud Duw â dynolryw: rhydd Iesu inni'r allwedd i ddeall yn gliriach ac yn ddyfnach ddarnau yn yr Ysgrhythurau Iddewig y gwyddai ef amdanynt ac y bu'n myfyrio llawer arnynt. Yn dilyn yr atgyfodiad, dywedir wrthym i Iesu – nad oedd y ddau ddisgybl a oedd yn cerdded i Emaus wedi ei adnabod eto ... 'gan ddechrau gyda Moses a'r holl broffwydi, ddehongli iddynt y pethau a ysgrifennwyd amdano ef ei hun yn yr holl Ysgrhythurau' (Luc 24:27), ac wrth iddo wneud hynny, teimlai'r disgyblion fod eu calonau 'ar dân' (adnod 32). Awgryma dull y Testament Newydd o gyfeirio at storiâu o'r Ysgrhythurau Iddewig a'u hailddechongli y gall Cristnogion hefyd ddweud 'Dyma ein stori ni': gallwn weld y storiâu hyn fel storiâu sy'n rhagweld Crist.

Y mae ffordd arall y gall Cristnogion ddweud 'Dyma ein stori'. Bydd y darnau y byddwn yn eu hastudio, o'r Ysgrhythurau Iddewig a'r Testament Newydd, yn gymorth inni ddeall y teithiau ffydd a gerddwn heddiw. Dyna pam y byddwn yn eu darllen a'u hailddarllen, yn yr eglwys ac ar ein pen ein hunain: fe'u hysgrifennwyd 'er mwyn ein dysgu ni'. Ers cychwyn yr eglwys, bu storiâu'r Beibl yn gymorth i Gristnogion weld eu bywydau fel taith, fel taith yr Israeliaid trwy'r anialwch. Mae ein taith yn cychwyn pan awn allan mewn ffydd, gan ymddiried yn Nuw yn unig; fel yr â rhagddi, cawn brofiad o'r modd y mae Duw'n ein cynnal, yn rhoi inni'r hyn y mae arnom ei angen i fynd ymlaen, yn ein harwain â'i Ysbryd a'i gyfraith, yn ein hannog i ddilyn y llwybr cywir, yn maddau inni pan fethwn; daw ein taith i ben pan ddaw Duw â ni'n ddiogel i 'wlad yr addewid' y buom yn gobeithio ei chyrraedd gydol ein hoes – ac y mae'r diwedd hwnnw yn ddechrau newydd. Dyma'r stori a adroddir gan yr eglwys gyfan ac, mewn rhyw ffordd neu'i gilydd, gan bob Cristion sy'n dilyn ei daith ffydd unigryw ei hun.

Fy amcan wrth ysgrifennu'r cwrs hwn oedd cynorthwyo pob un ohonom i ddeall yn well y daith ffydd y galwyd ni arni fel 'pobl Dduw' ac fel unigolion. Wrth ddweud am stori Israel a stori Iesu, 'Dyma ein stori ni', golygwn ein bod am i storiâu fel y rhai sydd yn y Beibl, lle y gwelwn Dduw ar waith yn y gorffennol, lunio ein bywydau heddiw. Yr ydym am fod yn rhan o stori barhaus taith Duw gyda'r ddynolryw, stori'r Eglwys a stori'r holl fyd. Wrth astudio'r Beibl gyda'n gilydd, dysgwn sut y gallwn weld ein bywydau yn 'deithiau ffydd' tebyg i daith yr Israeliaid, taith Iesu, a thaith pawb a aeth o'n blaen gan ymddiried yn Nuw.

Fy ngweddi wrth gynllunio'r cwrs hwn yw y bydd y deunydd astudio'n galluogi aelodau Grwpiau Garawys eciwmenaidd i aros gyda'i gilydd wrth inni astudio'r Beibl a rhannu profiadau 'ein stori ni'. Rwy'n gobeithio y bydd yr amrywiaeth o brofiad Cristnogol a adlewyrchir yn y Gwasanaethau Sul ar y radio ac ar wefan Eglwysi Ynghyd ym Mhrydain ac Iwerddon, ac a rennir yng nghyfarfodydd y grwpiau bychain, yn anogaeth i bawb ohonom ar ein 'taith ffydd'. Rwy'n gobeithio hefyd y dysgwn fwy am deithiau ffydd rhyfeddol llawer o Gristnogion heddiw, sy'n dwyn bywyd newydd i'n heglwysi, ac y cawn ysbrydiaeth at y daith ffydd unigryw y mae Crist yn galw pob un ohonom iddi.

Nicholas Sagovsky

For this course, I have adopted another, and in many ways older, approach to the biblical texts. It's the way Scripture has been read for hundreds of years by people of faith, who believed that these 'remembered histories' were written down primarily to help us – the readers in later generations – hear the Word of God, spoken to us in the Scriptures and interpreted in the light of Christ. When Paul shows the Roman Christians how Psalm 69:9 ('The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me') applies to Christ, he goes on, 'For whatsoever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope.' (Rom:15:4).

The stories we shall study 'speak to us' about the experience of the Israelites, about Christ, and about our own lives. They speak to us in different ways, so there is much to be learnt by comparing the different ways in which they speak to different people. We are not the first to read them in this way. We are only the latest in a long line of people, both Jews and Christians, who have read these stories for illumination about the way God deals with humanity, and now deals with us. In doing so, we say 'this is our story'.

The stories we shall study in this Lent Course very definitely have a beginning, a middle and an end. The narrative of the escape of the Israelites from captivity in Egypt, through a mighty act of God, can be seen as the beginning of 'the people of Israel' who in a unique sense become 'the people of God'. Their identity is forged in the wilderness, especially when God enters into covenant with them at Sinai. 'The people of Israel' returned again and again to their wilderness years, remembering them as a time when they learned how to trust and be faithful to God in the most testing circumstances. The story of the creation of 'Israel' through their 'journey of faith' ends with the entry into the promised land – which is also a new beginning.

For Christians, the story of the Israelites' great journey through the wilderness is a vital part of the pre-history of the Gospel story. The four Gospels assume that if we know how God dealt with Israel, we can understand the story of Jesus better. God's dealing with humanity is consistent: Jesus gives us the key to a clearer and deeper understanding of passages in the Jewish Scriptures he would himself have known and thought about many times. We are told that after the resurrection, Jesus – as yet unrecognised by the two disciples making their way to Emmaus – 'beginning with Moses and all the prophets ... interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures' (Lk 24:27), and as he did so, the disciples felt their hearts 'burning' within them (v. 32). The way the New Testament refers to and reinterprets stories from the Jewish Scriptures suggests that Christians can also say 'This is our story': we can see these stories as, in anticipation, stories about Christ.

There is another way in which Christians say, 'This is our story.' The passages we shall be studying, both from the Jewish Scriptures and the New Testament, help us to understand the journeys of faith that we make today. This is why we read and re-read them, both in church and individually: they were written 'for our instruction'. Since the church began, the stories in the Bible have helped Christians see our lives as a journey, like the journey of the Israelites through the wilderness. Our journey begins when we step out in faith, trusting in God alone; as it continues, we experience the ways in which God sustains us, giving us what we need to keep moving on, guiding us by his Spirit and his law, encouraging us on the right path, forgiving us when we do wrong; our journey ends when God brings us safely to the 'promised land' we have hoped to reach all our lives – in that end, there is also a new beginning. This is the story told by the church as a whole and, in some form or other, by every Christian as we make our unique journey of faith.

My aim, in writing this course, has been to help each one of us understand better the journey of faith to which we have been called both as a 'people of God' and individually. By saying, of the story of Israel and the story of Jesus, 'This is our story', we are saying that we want stories like the ones in the Bible, in which we see God at work in the past, to shape our lives today. We want to be part of the ongoing story of God's journey with humanity, the story of the church and of the whole world. In studying the Bible together, we learn more about how we can see our lives as 'journeys of faith' like those made by the Israelites, made by Jesus, and by all those who have gone before us trusting in God.

My prayer, in planning this course, is that the study material will enable members of ecumenical Lent Groups to say together, as we study the Bible and share our experience, 'This is our story'. I hope we shall all find encouragement for our 'journeys of faith' through the variety of Christian experience reflected in the broadcast Sunday Services, on the CTBI website and shared amongst those who meet in small groups. I hope we shall learn more about the extraordinary journeys of faith that many Christians are making today and that are bringing new life to our churches. I hope we shall find encouragement for the unique journey of faith to which each one of us is called by Christ.

Nicholas Sagovsky

Achubiaeth trwy Ddŵr

Wythnos 1

Exod 14:21-30

Croesi'r Môr Coch;

Marc 1:9-13

Bedyddio Iesu a'i anfon gan yr Ysbryd i'r anialwch

Trafodaeth:

'Beth y mae bod yn Gristion bedyddiedig yn ei olygu?'

Pwnc i radio lleol:

Taith bersonol trwy'r anialwch



Fotograffau: Anastazzo/Shutterstock.com

Yr Ysgrythurau Iddewig

I'r Iddewon, dyma'r stori am sut y dihangodd disgynyddion Jacob (Israel) o'r Aifft a dod yn un bobl. Ar ddechrau Llyfr Exodus mae'r Israeliaid yn gaethweision yn yr Aifft, a'u beichiau'n rhy drwm i'w cario. Mae Duw'n rhoi arweinydd iddynt, sef Moses, a'i gynorthwywr, Aaron, i wynebu Pharo a mynnu ei fod 'gadael i'm pobl fynd'. Er gwaethaf sawl pla dychrynlyd ledled gwlad yr Aifft, mae Pharo'n gwrthod, nes i'r pla olaf a mwyaf dychrynlyd o'r cwbl daro plant cyntafanedig yr Eifftiaid. Arbedir yr Israeliaid trwy iddynt gadw defod y daethpwyd i'w hadnabod fel defod y Pasg, sef paentio gwaed oen ar ddrysau eu tai i'w gwarchod rhag marw o'r pla, a rhannu gwledd y Pasg. Yna dihangant, a'r Eifftiaid yn eu hymlid.

Mae'r darn yn disgrifio gwyrth fawr: ar orchymyn Duw mae Moses yn estyn ei law dros ddyfroedd y Môr Coch ac mae llwybr yn agor fel y gall yr Israeliaid groesi'n ddiogel. Mae'r Eifftiaid yn dilyn, ond yn mynd yn sownd yn y mwd. Yna, y mae Moses yn estyn ei law eto ac y mae'r dyfroedd yn cau am yr Eifftiaid. 'Felly achubodd yr Arglwydd Israel o law'r Eifftiaid y diwrnod hwnnw.'

Y Testament Newydd

Y mae stori bedydd Iesu ym mhob un o'r pedair efengyl (Mathew 3:13-17; Marc 1:9-13; Luc 3:21-22; ac Ioan 1:32-34, nad yw ond yn lledawgrymu i Iesu gael ei fedyddio, ond y mae'n dweud yn 3:22 bod Iesu'n bedyddio eraill). Mae'r pedair efengyl yn cysylltu bedydd Iesu â gweinidogaeth Ioan Fedyddiwr, ac fe gawn dystiolaeth i bwy yw Iesu: yn Marc, gwêl Iesu y nefoedd yn rhwygo'n agored a'r Ysbryd yn disgyn fel colomen, a chlyw lais yn dweud, 'Ti yw fy Mab, yr Anwylyd; ynot ti yr wyf yn ymhyfrydu'. Y mae amrywiadau ar hyn yn Mathew 3:16-17; Luc 3:22 ac Ioan 1:32-4.

Yn y tair efengyl arall, erbyn y deun at fedydd Iesu yr ydym eisoes wedi cael llawer o wybodaeth amdano. Yn Marc, y stori am Ioan Fedyddiwr yn bedyddio Iesu sy'n agor yr efengyl. Yn wahanol i'r tair efengyl arall, nid yw Marc yn rhoi inni unrhyw hanes blaenorol. Dyma 'ddechrau Efengyl Iesu Grist, Mab Duw' (Marc 1:1).

Cawn gan Marc adroddiad byr iawn am fedydd Iesu, ac yna dywedir wrthym i'r Ysbryd ei yrru ymaith i'r anialwch'. Mae'r sôn hwn am yr anialwch, ac iddo dreulio 'deugain niwrnod' (neu 'amser hir') yno, yn troi'r stori'n adlais o stori

Rescued through water

Week 1

Exod 14:21-30

Crossing the Red Sea;

Mark 1:9-13

Jesus is baptized and driven by the Spirit into the wilderness.

Discussion:

'What does it mean to be a baptized Christian?'

Topic for local radio:

A personal journey through the wilderness

Jewish Scriptures

For Jews, this is the story of how the descendants of Jacob (Israel) escaped from Egypt and became one people. The book of Exodus finds the Israelites living as slaves in Egypt. Their burdens have become too heavy to bear. God gives them a leader, Moses, with his assistant Aaron, to confront Pharaoh, and demand that he 'Let my people go'. Despite terrible plagues throughout the land of Egypt, Pharaoh refuses, until the last and most terrible plague strikes down the firstborn children of the Egyptians. The Israelites are spared by observing the ritual which became that of the Passover: the painting of the blood of the lamb around the doors of their houses to protect them from death by plague and the sharing of the Passover meal. Then they make their escape, pursued by the Egyptians.

The passage describes a great miracle: at God's command Moses stretches his arm over the waters of the Red Sea. A way opens up for the Israelites to cross safely. The Egyptians follow and are bogged down in the mud. Then Moses stretches out his arm again and the waters close over the Egyptians. 'Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians.'

New Testament

The story of the baptism of Jesus comes in all four Gospels (Mt 3:13-17; Mk 1:9-13; Lk 3:21-22; Jn 1:32-34, which only hints that Jesus was baptized, though John 3:22 says that Jesus himself 'baptized'). All the gospels link the baptism of Jesus with the ministry of John the baptizer, and with witness as to who Jesus is: in Mark, Jesus sees the heavens 'torn apart' and the Spirit descending like a dove, and he hears a voice saying, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well-pleased.' There are variations of this at Mt 3:16-17; Lk 3:22 and Jn 1:32-4.

In the three other gospels, by the time we come to Jesus's baptism we have already been given a good deal of information about him. In Mark, the story of John the baptizer and the baptism of Jesus opens the gospel. Unlike the other three gospel-writers, Mark gives us no pre-history. This is the beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Mark 1:1).

Mark gives us a very brief account of Jesus's baptism, and then tells us that 'the Spirit immediately drove him out into

croesi'r Môr Coch. Mae'n amlwg bod yr amser a dreuliodd Iesu yn yr anialwch, 'yn cael ei demtio gan Satan', yn rhan o'r newyddion da. Mae'r Ysbryd yn arwain Iesu yn union fel yr arweiniodd Duw'r Israeliaid trwy'r Môr Coch i'w hachub o gaethiwd yr Aifft.

Yr Eglwys

Ers dyddiau cynnar iawn, cysylltodd yr eglwys y modd yr achubwyd yr Israeliaid trwy ddyfroedd y Mor Coch â'r modd yr achubir Cristnogion trwy ddyfroedd y bedydd. Pan fedyddir Cristnogion trwy drochiad, mae'n hawdd gweld sut y mae bedydd – mynd trwy'r dyfroedd – yn cynrychioli 'marw ac atgyfodi', marw i'r hen fywyd a dechrau bywyd newydd yng Nghrist (cf. Rhufeiniaid 6:4). Yn y bedydd, ystyrir bod credinwyr yn cael eu mabwysiadu yn blant i'r Tad: dyma'r adeg y dywed Duw wrth y Cristion newydd: 'Ti yw fy merch ...' neu 'Ti yw fy mab, yr Anwylyd; ynot ti yr wyf yn ymhyfrydu'. Y foment honno, fe agorir ein bywydau'n llwyr i Ysbryd Duw, sy'n dechrau ein nerthu ar lwybr newydd trwy anawsterau a themtasiynau bywyd. Dyma ddechrau ein taith tua gwlad yr addewid.

Cwestiynau y gall y byddwch am eu trafod

1. Y mae stori Croesi'r Môr Coch yn bwysig iawn i'r Iddewon. Beth, dybiwch chwi, yw'r rheswm am hynny?
2. Pam ydych chi'n meddwl i Iesu ddewis cael ei fedyddio?
3. Mae rhai eglwysi Cristnogol yn bedyddio babanod a rhai nad ydynt yn bedyddio ond oedolion. Beth yw'r fantais o fedyddio babanod, ac o fedyddio oedolion?
4. Sut yr ydych chi'n meddwl y byddai Cristion o'r Aifft yn darllen stori Croesi'r Môr Coch?
5. Pan oedd Martin Luther yn amau a oedd ar y llwybr iawn, dywedir iddo ysgrifennu â sialc y geiriau 'baptizatus sum' ('Yr wyf wedi fy medyddio'). Pam ydych chi'n meddwl iddo wneud hyn a beth yw'r wers i ni?
6. Pe byddech chi mewn perygl heddiw, a fydddech yn gweddïo ar i Dduw eich achub?
7. A all aelodau eich grŵp weld adlewyrchiad o'r storïau y buom yn eu trafod yr wythnos hon yn eu taith ffydd eu hunain?

Gweddï

Arglwydd Dduw, a arweiniais dy bobl yn ddiogel trwy ddyfroedd y Môr Coch ac i'r anialwch, dyro i bawb a fedyddiwyd i Grist ras i ymddiried ynot gydol eu taith ffydd, yn enwedig pan fo'r llwybr yn anodd ac y bydd temtasiwn i droi'n ôl; trwy Iesu Grist ein Harglwydd, a fedyddiwyd ac a demtiwyd fel ninnau ac na pheidiodd ag ymddiried ynot ti. Amen

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the wilderness'. This mention of the 'wilderness' or 'desert' and the mention of his being there 'forty days' (or 'a long time') turns the story of the baptism of Jesus into an echo of the crossing of the Red Sea. It is clear that the time Jesus spent in the wilderness 'tempted by Satan' is all part of the good news. The Spirit is guiding Jesus just as the Israelites were guided by God to pass through the Red Sea so that they might be rescued from slavery in Egypt.

The Church

From early days, the church made links between the rescue of the Israelites through the Red Sea and the rescue of Christians through the waters of baptism. When new Christians are baptized by total immersion, it's easy to see why. Baptism – passing through the waters – represents 'death and resurrection' – death to the old life and the beginning of a new life in Christ (cf. Rom 6:4). In baptism, believers are seen to be adopted as children of the Father: this is the moment when God says to the new Christian 'You are my daughter ...', or 'You are my son ... the Beloved; with you I am well-pleased'. In that moment, our lives are opened fully to God's Spirit, who begins to guide and strengthen us in a new way through life's difficulties and temptations. It's the beginning of our journey towards the promised land.

Questions you may wish to use in discussion

1. The story of the Crossing of the Red Sea is of great importance for the Jewish people. Why do you think this is so?
2. Why do you think Jesus chose to be baptized?
3. Some Christian churches baptize infants and some baptize only adults. What is the advantage of baptizing infants, and what of baptizing only adults?
4. How do you think an Egyptian Christian would read the story of the crossing of the Red Sea?
5. It is said that when Martin Luther doubted whether he was on the right path, he wrote out in chalk the words 'baptizatus sum' ('I have been baptized'). Why do you think he did this and what can we learn from it?
6. If you were in danger today, would you pray for God to rescue you?
7. Are there ways in which the members of your group can see the stories we have discussed this week reflected in their own journey of faith?

Prayer

Lord God, who led your people safely through the waters of the Red Sea and into the wilderness, give to all who have been baptized into Christ grace to trust you throughout our journey of faith, especially when our path gets harder and we are tempted to turn back, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who was baptized, tempted as we are, and never failed to trust in you. *Amen*

Arweiniad gan Gyfraith Duw

Wythnos 2

Exod 20:1-20

('Y Deg Gorchymyn');

Rhufeiniaid 13:8-10

('Cyfraith Cariad')

Trafodaeth: 'Pa gyfreithiau y mae'n rhaid i Gristnogion eu cadw?'

Pwnc i radio lleol:

Taith bersonol i fywyd gwahanol



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Yr Ysgrythurau Iddewig

Fwy na thri mis ar ôl dianc o'r Aifft, daeth yr Israeliaid at Fynydd Sinai, sef, yn ôl traddodiad, Jebel Musa ym mhen-rhyn Arabian. Dyma lle y bu'r digwyddiadau a wnaeth Israel, mewn ystyr unigryw, yn 'bobl Dduw'. Yn Exodus 19, darllenwn am felt a tharanau, cwmwl, tân a mwg, ac am utgorn yn seinio ar y mynydd wrth i Dduw ddod i lawr i gwrdd â Moses ac Aaron. Yma y rhoddir iddynt y deg gorchymyn (Exodus 20:1-17) i arwain y bobl.

Yn stori'r Exodus, rhoddir cyfres fanylach o orchmynion (penodau 20-23) cyn yr adroddiad hollbwysig am sefydlu'r cyfamod rhwng Duw a'r Israeliaid. Ymrwma'r Israeliaid i gadw cyfraith Duw, a chaiff Moses ac Aaron, ynghyd â saith deg a dau o arweinwyr yr Israeliaid (24:9) weledigaeth ar y mynydd o 'Dduw Israel' yn ei ogoniant nefol (24:10). Dywedir hefyd wrth Moses sut yn union i godi tabernacl neu 'babell y cyfarfod' lle y mae Duw i gael ei addoli a sut i gysegru offeiriaid i weddio ac aberthu ar ran yr holl bobl.

Mae Moses i ffwrdd gyhyd nes bod Aaron a'r bobl yn troi at eilunaddoliaeth (pechod yn erbyn y gorchymyn cyntaf). Lluniant lo aur a dechrau addoli'r eilun a greasant (32:1-8). Pan ddaw'n ôl, caiff Moses syndod a braw: mae'n malurio'r llechi yr ysgrifennwyd y gorchmynion arnynt ac yn chwilfriwio'r llo aur (32:19-20). Rhaid puro Israel o'i phechod cyn y gall Moses ddychwelyd mewn edifeirwch at Dduw ar ei rhan a derbyn llechi'r gyfraith drachefn. Yna, rhaid i'r Israeliaid ymadael â Sinai, wedi adnewyddu eu cyfamod â Duw, ac yn cludo gyda hwy 'babell y cyfarfod' neu'r 'tabernacl', ac mae Duw'n eu harwain mewn colofn o niwl liw dydd a cholofn o dân liw nos (13:21-2, cf. 40:38). Maent yn awr wedi ymrwmo i gadw cyfraith Duw.

Y Testament Newydd

Yn y Testament Newydd, dengys Iesu barch aruthrol at gyfraith Duw, ond dengys hefyd ryddid i ddehongli sy'n golygu (er gwaethaf Mathew 5:18) nad yw ynghlwm wrth 'lythyren y gyfraith'. Dengys ei weithredoedd – iacháu ar y saboth, er enghraifft (cf. Marc 3:4) – ei fod wedi ymrwmo i gadw 'ysbryd y gyfraith', gan ddefnyddio'r gyfraith i'w arwain ef a'i ddilynwyr i wneud gwaith Duw (Mathew 5:17 ac yn dilyn.). Yr un neges sydd gan Paul yn ei drafodaeth estynedig ar y berthynas rhwng y gyfraith a gras yn y Llythyr at y Rhufeiniaid (ac mewn trafodaeth fyrrach yn y Llythyr at y Galatiaid). Ac yntau'n Iddew ei hun, hawlia ein bod, trwy'r hyn a ddywed am Grist, yn 'cadarnhau'r

Guided by God's law

Week 2

Exod 20:1-20
(‘Ten commandments’);

Rom 13:8-10
(‘The law of love’)

Discussion: ‘What laws do
Christians have to keep?’

Topic for local radio:
A personal journey towards
a different life

Jewish Scriptures

More than three months after escaping from Egypt, the Israelites come to Mount Sinai which has traditionally been identified with Jebel Musa in the Arabian peninsula. This is where the events which constituted the Israelites as, in a unique sense, the ‘people of God’ take place. In Exodus 19, we read of thunder and lightning, cloud, fire and smoke, and the blast of a trumpet on the mountain, when the Lord descends to meet with Moses and Aaron. This is where they are given the ten commandments (Exod 20:1-17) to guide the people.

In the Exodus story, a more detailed series of commandments is given (chapters 20-23) before the pivotal account of the establishment of the covenant between God and the Israelites. The Israelites commit themselves to keep the law of God, and Moses and Aaron, with seventy-two of the Israelite leaders (24:9) receive on the mountain a vision of ‘the God of Israel’ in his heavenly glory (24:10). Moses is also told precisely how to make the tabernacle or ‘tent of meeting’ in which God is to be worshiped and how to consecrate priests who will pray and sacrifice on behalf of the whole people.

Moses is away so long that Aaron and the people turn to idolatry (a sin against the first commandment). They make a golden calf and begin to worship the idol they have created (32:1-8). On his return, Moses is horrified: he smashes the stone slabs on which the commandments are written and pulverises the golden calf (32:19-20). Israel must be totally purged from its sin. Only then can Moses return to God in penitence on their behalf and receive, once more, the tablets of the law. The Israelites must now set out from Sinai, having renewed their covenant with God, carrying with them their ‘tent of meeting’ or ‘tabernacle’, guided by God in a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night (13:21-2, cf. 40:38), and committed to the keeping of God’s law.

New Testament

In the New Testament, Jesus shows immense respect for God’s law, but he also shows a freedom of interpretation that means (despite Mt 5:18) he is not bound to the ‘letter of the law’. His actions – such as healing on the sabbath (cf. Mark 3:4) – show he is committed to observing the ‘spirit of the law’, using the law to guide him and his followers in doing God’s work (Mt 5:17ff.). Paul follows this line in his extended discussion of the relation between law and grace

gyfraith' (Rhufeiniaid 3:31). Wrth sôn am 'fy mhobl o ran cig a gwaed', dywed, 'Israeliaid ydynt; eu heiddo hwy yw'r mabwysiad, y gogoniant, y cyfamodau, y Gyfraith, yr addoliad a'r addewidion. Iddynt hwy y mae'r hynafiaid yn perthyn, ac oddi wrthynt hwy, yn ôl ei linach naturiol, y daeth y Meseia'. (9:4-5).

Fodd bynnag, â rhagddo i ddweud mai'r hyn sydd bwysicaf iddo yn awr yw nid yn gymaint y 'cnawd' ond yr 'ysbryd'. Wrth drafod y gyfraith, 'ysbryd y gyfraith' sydd bwysicaf iddo. Yn Rhufeiniaid 13:8-10, mae'n crynhoi hyn mewn un gair, sef 'cariad'. Wrth ddweud hyn mae'n adleisio'r hyn a ddywedodd Iesu pan ofynnwyd iddo: 'Pa orchymyn yw'r mwyaf yn y Gyfraith?' Yr ateb oedd: "Câr yr Arglwydd dy Dduw â'th holl galon ac â'th holl enaid ac â'th holl feddwl." Dyma'r gorchymyn cyntaf a phwysicaf. Ac y mae'r ail yn debyg iddo: "Câr dy gymydog fel ti dy hun." Ar y ddau orchymyn hyn y mae'r holl Gyfraith a'r proffwydi yn dibynnu'. (Mathew 22:36-40)

Yn Rhufeiniaid 12:1, adleisia Paul ddysgeidiaeth Iesu ar y gorchymyn cyntaf ('Offrymwech eich hunain yn aberth byw, sanctaidd a derbyniol gan Dduw. Felly y rhowch iddo addoliad ysbrydol'), ac adleisia ddysgeidiaeth Iesu ar yr ail orchymyn pan ddywed (13:10), 'Ni all cariad wneud cam â chymydog. Y mae cariad, felly, yn gyflawniad o holl ofynion y Gyfraith'.

Yr Eglwys

Ers dyddiau cynnar yr eglwys, byddid yn paratoi'n ofalus iawn bawb a oedd i'w bedyddio, i sicrhau eu bod yn deall beth oedd yr eglwys yn ei ddysgu am Iesu ac am yr Ysbryd cyn eu bod yn gwneud ymrwymiad cyhoeddus trwy gael eu bedyddio i Grist ac agor eu calonau'n gyhoeddus i gyfranogi o'r Ysbryd Glân. Seilid llawer o'r dysgu ar Gredo'r Apostolion, sy'n dechrau â'r gair 'Credaf' ac sy'n crynhoi'r hyn y mae'r sawl sy'n dod yn Gristion yn cytuno o wirfodd ag ef – sef, mewn gair, mai 'Iesu yw'r Arglwydd'. Rhan bwysig o'r dysgu oedd – ac ydyw o hyd – dysgu sut i ddilyn Iesu mewn bywyd beunyddiol.

Dyma le dysgeidiaeth y 'deg gorchymyn'. Gydol ein bywydau fel Cristnogion byddwn yn parhau i ddysgu, yn aml trwy ein camgymeriadau, sut y gall gorchymynion Duw – y deg gorchymyn, er enghraifft, a dysgeidiaeth foesegol y Testament Newydd – ein harwain mewn bywyd. Dysgwn trwy brofiad sut i wybod pan fyddwn wedi crwydro oddi ar y llwybr a ddangosant inni. Weithiau, ni allwn weld sut i'w cymhwyso at sefyllfaoedd arbennig o anodd a byddwn yn ddiffuant ansicr sut i ddilyn 'ffordd cariad'. Ar amseroedd o'r fath rhaid inni weddio am arweiniad yr Ysbryd Glân. Dro arall, y mae'r ffordd i ddilyn gorchymyn Duw yn gwbl glir, ond nid ydym am ufuddhau. Rhaid inni wedyn weddio am nerth Ysbryd Duw. Dysg y Testament Newydd fod cyfraith Duw yn rhodd i bawb, ac yn enwedig i'r sawl a ymrwymodd mewn cyfamod ag ef, ond os ydym i gael ein harwain gan gyfraith Duw, rhaid inni wrth Ysbryd Duw i'n cadw ar y llwybr cywir.

Cwestiynau y gall y byddwch am eu trafod

1. A ddylai crefyddau fod yn dweud wrthym pa gyfreithiau i'w cadw heddiw?
2. A yw'r deg gorchymyn yn rhodd i bawb, ai dim ond i Iddewon a Christnogion?
3. Beth, yn ymarferol, yw ystyr 'caru Duw'?
4. Dywedodd Awstin Sant, 'Carwch a gnewch a fynnoch'. A oedd yn iawn?
5. Beth y dylid ei ddysgu am 'gyfraith Duw' mewn ysgolion eglwys?
6. A oes raid i Gristnogion bob amser gadw cyfraith gwlad?
7. A all aelodau eich grŵp weld adlewyrchiad o'r storïau y buom yn eu trafod yr wythnos hon yn eu taith ffydd eu hunain?

Gweddi

Arglwydd Dduw, a roddaist i bobl dy gyfamod rodd y gyfraith i'w harwain ar eu taith, bydded i ni barhau i ddysgu, wrth inni deithio ymlaen mewn ffydd, sut i'th garu di â'n holl galon, ein holl enaid a'n holl feddwl, a'n cymydog fel ni ein hun, trwy nerth ac arweiniad dy Ysbryd Glân. Amen

in the Epistle to the Romans (and more briefly in Galatians). A Jew himself by race, he claims that in what he now says about Christ, 'we uphold the law' (Rom 3:31). In speaking of his 'kindred according to the flesh', he says, 'They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah' (9:4-5).

What he goes on to say, though, is that he is now concerned not so much with the 'flesh' as with the 'spirit'. What concerns him, in discussing the law, is the 'spirit of the law'. This he sums up in Romans 13:8-10 in one word: 'love'. In saying this, Paul is echoing what Jesus says, when he is asked 'Which commandment in the law is the greatest?' and he replies, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets' (Mt 22:36-40).

Paul echoes Jesus's teaching on the first commandment in Romans 12:1 ('present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship') and then he echoes Jesus's teaching on the second commandment when he says, 'Love does no wrong to a neighbour ... for love is the fulfilling of the law' (13:10).

The Church

From the early days of the church, those who were going to be baptized as adults were prepared very carefully, to make sure they understood what the church teaches about Jesus and about the Spirit before they publicly committed themselves by being baptized into Christ and opened themselves publicly to share in the Holy Spirit. Much of this teaching concentrated on the Apostles' Creed, which begins 'I believe' and which summarises what it is that someone who becomes a Christian gives their free assent to: in summary, that 'Jesus is Lord'. An important part of this teaching was – and still is – teaching about how to follow Jesus in daily life. This is where the teaching of the 'ten commandments' comes in. All our lives as Christians we go on learning, often through our mistakes, how God's commandments – such as the ten commandments and the ethical teaching of the New Testament – can be our guide in life. We learn by experience how to identify when we have strayed off the path that they show us. Sometimes, we can't see how they apply in particular difficult situations and we are genuinely uncertain how to follow the 'way of love'. At such times we need to pray for the guidance of God's Spirit. At other times, the way to follow God commandment is quite clear but we don't want to obey. Then we need to pray for the strength of God's Spirit. The New Testament teaches that God's law is a gift to all people, and especially to those who are bound in covenant to him, but that, if we are to be guided by God's law, we need God's Spirit to keep us on the right path.

Questions you may wish to use in discussion

1. Should religions be telling us which laws we have to keep today?
2. Is it right that the ten commandments are a gift to all people, or are they only for Jews and Christians?
3. What does it mean, in practice, to 'love God'?
4. Saint Augustine said, 'Love and do what you like.' Was he right?
5. What should be taught about 'God's law' in church schools?
6. Do Christians always have to keep the law of the land?
7. Are there ways in which the members of your group can see the stories we have discussed this week reflected in their own journey of faith?

Prayer

Lord God, who gave your covenant people the gift of the law to guide them on their journey, may we go on learning, as we journey on in faith, how to love you with all our heart, soul and mind, and our neighbours as ourselves, through the power and guidance of your Holy Spirit, *Amen*

Bara'r Nefoedd yn Fwyd

Wythnos 3

Exod 16:2-5; 13-21a, 35
(Manna);

Ioan 6:30-35
(‘Myfi yw bara'r bywyd’).

Trafodaeth: ‘Beth y mae cyfranogi o'r cymun yn ei o lygu i ni?’

Pwnc i radio lleol:

Stori bersonol am newynu a derbyn bwyd



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Yr Ysgrythurau Iddewig

Ar ôl croesi'r Mor Coch yn ddiogel, rhaid mai araf iawn fu taith yr Israeliaid trwy wres anialdir Sinai. Ar ôl tridiau, roedd arnynt ddygn angen dŵr, ond roedd yr unig ddŵr y gallent ddod o hyd iddo yn anyfadwy. Darllenwn yn Llyfr Exodus i Dduw roi darn o bren i Moses ei dafu i'r dŵr, fel y gellid ei yfed. Pan oedd ar yr Israeliaid angen diod, fe'i darperid iddynt. Yn Elim (15:27), daethant o hyd i 'ddeuddeg ffynnon' o ddŵr – dŵr ddigonedd.

Yna, ar ôl chwech wythnos yn yr anialwch, aethant ymlaen drachefn ac, wrth gofio am y cig a'r bara dibrin yn yr Aifft, yr oeddent yn llawn cwynion yn erbyn Moses ac Aaron am ddod â hwy i'r anialwch i farw. Ymateb Duw yw addo 'bara o'r nefoedd', digon at angen pob dydd ac, ar y chweched dydd, digon am ddeuddydd.

Dyma a ddigwyddodd: Yn yr hwyr, daeth adar bychain a elwid yn 'sofieir', ac y gellid eu bwyta, o gwmpas y gwrsyll; yna, yn y bore, yr oedd y ddaear yn llaith ac arni gaenen o rywbeth bwytdwy a oedd yn debyg i lwydrew, a'i flas 'fel afrilladen wedi ei gwneud o fêl' (adnod 31). Galwodd yr Israeliaid ef yn 'fanna'. Dyma sut y darparodd Duw iddynt y diod a'r bwyd yr oedd arnynt eu hangen i'w cynnal yn yr anialwch.

Y Testament Newydd

Yn yr Efengyl yn ôl Ioan, gwna Iesu lawer o 'arwyddion' i ddangos pwy ydyw. Pan gaiff pum mil o bobl eu bwydo â phum torth haidd a dau bysgodyn (6:11), dehonglir hynny fel 'arwydd'. Atgoffir y dorf sy'n dilyn Iesu o'r modd y cafodd eu 'hynafiaid' y manna i'w fwyta yn yr anialwch. Yn awr y mae Iesu yn rhoi i'r bobl 'fara o'r nef'. (Yn stori Marc am borthi'r pedair mil, gofynna'r disgyblion [8:4], 'Sut y gall neb gael digon o fara i fwydo'r rhain mewn lle anial fel hyn?') Yn y Bedwaredd Efengyl, dywed Iesu wrth y dorf nad Moses a ddarparodd y 'bara o'r nef' ond 'y Tad'

Â Iesu ymlaen i awgrymu'n gryf mai ef yw rhodd Duw i Israeliaid ei oes: 'Oherwydd bara Duw yw'r hwn sy'n disgyn o'r nef ac yn rhoi bywyd i'r byd'. 'Syr,' meddent, 'rho'r bara hwn inni bob amser'. Dyma pryd y dywed Iesu, 'Myfi yw bara'r bywyd. Ni bydd eisiau bwyd byth ar y sawl sy'n dod ataf fi, ac ni bydd syched byth ar y sawl sy'n credu yno fi'.

Yn wahanol i'r tair efengyl arall, nid oes yn y Bedwaredd Efengyl unrhyw adroddiad am y Swper Olaf, a geiriau Iesu,

Fed by the Bread of Heaven

Week 3

Exod 16:2-5; 13-21a, 35
(Manna);

John 6:30-35
(‘I am the Bread of Life’).

Discussion: ‘What does it mean
to us to share in the eucharist?’

Topic for local radio:
A personal story of hunger
and being fed

Jewish Scriptures

The Israelites who crossed the Red Sea safely must have moved very slowly through the heat and barren land of the Sinai desert. After three days, they badly needed water, but the only water they could find was undrinkable. In Exodus, we read that God provided a piece of wood for Moses to throw in the water and then they were able to drink it. When the Israelites needed drink, it was provided for them. At Elim (15:27), they found ‘twelve springs’ of water – water in abundance.

When, after six weeks in the desert, they had moved on again, as they looked back on the plentiful meat and bread in Egypt, they were full of complaints against Moses and Aaron for bringing them out into the wilderness to die. God’s response is to promise ‘bread from heaven’, with enough for each day’s need and on the sixth day enough for two days.

This is what happened: in the evening small birds called ‘quails’ that could be eaten came around the camp; then, in the morning, the ground was damp, and there was an edible substance which looked like frost and tasted like ‘wafers made with honey’ (v.31). The Israelites called this ‘manna’. In this way, God provided both the drink and the food they needed to sustain them in the desert.

New Testament

In John’s Gospel, Jesus offers a number of ‘signs’ to show who he is. When the five thousand people are fed with five barley loaves and two fish (6:11) this is interpreted as a ‘sign’. The crowd who follow Jesus are reminded of the way their ‘ancestors’ were fed with manna in the wilderness. Now, Jesus is giving people ‘bread from heaven’. (In Mark’s story of the feeding of the four thousand [8:19], the disciples ask, ‘How can one feed these people with bread here in the desert?’). In the Fourth Gospel, Jesus tells the crowd, it wasn’t Moses who provided ‘bread from heaven’, but ‘the Father’.

Jesus goes on to hint strongly that he is God’s gift to the Israelites of his day: ‘For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.’ ‘Sir’, they say, ‘Give us this bread always.’ This is when Jesus says, ‘I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.’

'Hwn yw fy nghorff' a 'Hwn yw fy ngwaed' (ac yn Mathew 26:26, 'Cymerwch, bwyteu; hwn yw fy nghorff'). Yr hyn sy'n cyfateb yn y Bedwaredd Efengyl yw'r drafodaeth ym mhennod 6, lle y dywed Iesu, 'Myfi yw'r bara bywiol hwn a ddisgynnodd o'r nef. Caiff pwy bynnag sy'n bwyta o'r bara hwn fyw am byth. A'r bara sydd gennyf fi i'w roi yw fy nghnawd; a'i roi a wnaif dros fywyd y byd' (adnod 51). Mae'n anodd i Gristnogion sy'n cyfranogi'n rheolaidd o'r cymun beidio â gweld cyfeiriad yma at y manna ac at fara'r cymun.

Yr Eglwys

Yn I Corinthiaid 11:23-25, cyflwyno Paul ei adroddiad o eiriau Iesu yn y Swper Olaf â'r geiriau, 'Oherwydd fe dderbyniais i oddi wrth yr Arglwydd yr hyn hefyd a draddodais i chwi'. Â ymlaen wedyn mewn geiriau sy'n un yn eu hanfod â'r geiriau yn Luc (22:19): i'r Arglwydd 'gymryd bara; ac wedi iddo ddiolch, fe'i torrodd, a dweud, "Hwn yw fy nghorff, sydd er eich mwyn chwi. Gwnewch hyn er cof amdanaf"'.

Gwêl Paul a Luc eiriau Iesu fel gorchymyn i gofio amdano yn y modd hwn. Wrth gwrs, fe fu llawer o ddadlau ynglŷn â'r hyn a olygai Iesu, a sut y mae cyfranogi o fara a gwin y cymun yn dod â ni i i gymundeb ag ef ac â'n gilydd. Yr hyn y mae bron pob Cristion yn gytûn arno yw bod y cymun yn sacrament: yn ddull o gymuno – neu o gyfathrebu – rhwng Duw a'r eglwys. Daw cyfranogi o'r cymun â ni ynghyd yn 'gorff Crist'.

Yr hyn y mae ei angen arnom ni ar ein taith ffydd yw Crist. Yn y cymun, yr ydym yn derbyn Crist yn faeth; yn 'bwydo ar Grist'. Yn yr ystyr hon, gallwn sôn am y bara y byddwn yn ei rannu yn y cymun fel 'bara'r nefoedd' a gallwn fod yn hyderus y byddwn, trwy ymborthi ar y bara hwn, yn derbyn y maeth y mae ei angen arnom at ein taith trwy anialwch y bywyd hwn i wlad yr addewid.



Fotograffau: IngridHS/Shutterstock.com

Cwestiynau y gall y byddwch am eu trafod

1. Mae stori'r manna yn yr anialwch yn bwysig iawn i'r Iddewon? Pam hynny, dybiwch chwi?
2. Pam, dybiwch chwi, fod y Bedwaredd Efengyl yn dweud wrthym i Iesu ddweud, 'Myfi yw bara'r bywyd'?
3. Mae gwahanol draddodiadau eglwysig yn deall y cymun (neu Swper yr Arglwydd) mewn gwahanol ffyrdd. O'ch profiad chwi o'ch traddodiad eich hun, a allwch chi sôn am fara'r cymun fel 'bara'r nefoedd' ac, os felly, beth y mae hynny'n ei olygu i chwi?
4. Pe na allech chwi byth eto gyfranogi o'r cymun gyda'ch brodyr a'ch chwiorydd Cristnogol, faint o golled fyddai hynny i chwi? Faint, felly, ydym ni'n ei golli trwy fethu â chyfranogi o'r cymun gyda phawb o'n brodyr a'n chwiorydd yng Nghrist?
5. Beth yw'r cysylltiad rhwng y syniad o 'fara'r nefoedd' a'r deisyfiad yng Ngweddi'r Arglwydd: 'Dyro inni heddiw ein bara beunyddiol'?
6. Ai banciau bwyd a chynlluniau cyffelyb yw dull Duw o fwydo'r newynog ym Mhrydain heddiw?
7. A all aelodau eich grŵp weld adlewyrchiad o'r storïau y buom yn eu trafod yr wythnos hon yn eu taith ffydd eu hunain?

Gweddi

Arglwydd Dduw, a ddarperaist fwyd i bobl dy gyfamod i'w cynnal yn yr anialwch, dyro i ni y bwyd y mae ei angen arnom yn faeth i gorff ac enaid, a gwna ni'n haelionus ein gofal am bawb sy'n newynog oherwydd trachwant a difrawder dynolryw, trwy Iesu Grist, ein bara bywiol. Amen.

Unlike the other three gospels, the Fourth Gospel gives us no account of the Last Supper, with Jesus's words 'This is my body' and 'This is my blood' (and in Matthew 26:26, 'Take, eat; this is my body'). The equivalent in the Fourth Gospel is the continuing discussion in chapter 6, where Jesus says, 'I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh' (v. 51). For Christians, who share in the eucharist regularly, it is very hard not to see this as a reference both to the manna and to the bread of the eucharist.

The Church

In I Corinthians 11:23-25, Paul introduces his account of the words of Jesus at the Last Supper with the words, 'For I received from the Lord, what I also delivered to you.' He then goes on to quote essentially the same words as those in Luke (22:19): the Lord 'took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it [and gave it to them saying], "This is my body which is [given] for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Both Paul and Luke speak of Jesus's words as a command to remember him in this way. There has, of course, been much debate as to what Jesus meant, and how sharing the bread and the wine of the eucharist brings us into communion with Jesus and with each other. What almost all Christians agree on is that the eucharist is a sacrament: it is a means of communion – or communication – between God and the church. Sharing the eucharist brings us together as 'the body of Christ'.

What we need to sustain us on our journey of faith is Christ, and in the eucharist we are nourished by Christ; we 'feed on Christ'. In this sense, we can speak of the bread which we share in the eucharist as the 'bread of heaven' and we can be confident that as we feed on this bread, we receive the nourishment we need for our journey through the wilderness of this life to the promised land.

Questions you may wish to use in discussion

1. The story of the Manna in the wilderness is of great importance for the Jewish people. Why do you think this is so?
2. Why do you think the Fourth Gospel tells us that Jesus said, 'I am the bread of life'?
3. The understanding of the eucharist (or Lord's Supper) is different in different church traditions. From your experience of your church tradition, could you speak of the bread of the eucharist as 'the bread of heaven' and, if so, what does that mean for you?
4. If you could never share the eucharist again with your Christian sisters and brothers how much do you think you would miss it? How much, then, do we miss by not sharing the eucharist with all our brothers and sisters in Christ?
5. What is the link between the idea of the 'bread of heaven' and the petition in the Lord's Prayer: 'Give us today our daily bread'?
6. Are food banks and similar initiatives God's way of feeding the hungry in Britain today?
7. Are there ways in which the members of your group can see the stories we have discussed this week reflected in their own journey of faith?

Prayer

Lord God, who provided food for your covenant people to sustain them in the wilderness, give us the bread we need to nourish both our bodies and our souls, and make us generous in caring for all who go hungry because of human greed and indifference, through Jesus Christ, our living bread, *Amen*.

Canu yn yr Anialwch

Wythnos 4

Exod 15: 20-22
(‘Miriam’);

Luc 1:46 -53
(‘Magnificat’).

Trafodaeth: ‘Beth sydd gan
Gristnogion i ganu amdano?’

Pwnc i radio lleol:

Stori bersonol am sut y bu
cerddoriaeth a ffydd yn
gymorth i ddod trwy amser
anodd



Ffotograffau: GVictoria/Shutterstock.com

Yr Ysgrythurau Iddewig

Yn y stori feiblaidd, mae'r merched a gymerodd ran yn yr Exodus a'r daith trwy'r anialwch bron â bod yn anweladwy. O feddwl yn nhermau 'deugain mlynedd', rhaid bod cenhedlaeth gyfan o ferched wedi tyfu'n oedolion, llawer ohonynt wedi priodi a chael plant, a rhieni hefyd a fu'n gofalu am blant a phobl ifainc nes iddynt dyfu'n oedolion, a hyn oll mewn amgylchiadau hynod o anodd. Beth oedd gan y rhain i ganu amdano? Mewn un man allweddol, ar ôl arswyd croesi'r Môr Coch, cawn gipolwg ar Miriam, a oedd yn ôl traddodiad yn chwaer i Moses ac Aaron (Nomeri 26:59; 1 Cronicl 6:3), yn cymryd tambwrin ac yn arwain y merched i ganu a dawnsio wrth iddynt foli Duw. Ni ddywedir wrthym fawr ddim amdani heblaw ei bod yn 'broffwyd', a golyga hynny bod ganddi ddawn i fod yn agored i ysbryd Duw ac i lefaru neu ganu am ei weithredoedd. Yn ddiweddarach, dywedir bod Moses hefyd yn 'broffwyd' (Deuteronomium 34:10).

Mae'n bosibl mai'r un oedd Miriam â chwaer hyn ddiennw Moses a fu'n gwylio drosto pan adawyd ef yn faban ymhlith yr hesg a'i achub gan ferch y Pharo (Exodus 2:4-7). Ymddengys bod ei chân yn adleisio cân Moses (Exodus 15:1-17), ac fe all mai darn ydyw o gân am fawrion weithredoedd Duw a oedd yn wreiddiol yn llawer yn hwy ac yn debyg iawn i gân Moses. Y mae yn yr Ysgrythurau Iddewig ganeuon hir gan ddwy ferch arall: Debora, sydd hefyd yn broffwyd (Barnwyr 5:1-31) a Hanna, sy'n gweld ei rhodd o fab, Samuel, yn un o 'weithredoedd nerthol' Duw (1 Samuel 2:1-10).

Yn union ar ôl yr ymdaith fuddugoliaethus trwy'r Môr Coch, â'r Israeliaid rhagddynt i'r anialwch.

Y Testament Newydd

Ar ddechrau'r Efengyl yn ôl Luc, cyfarfyddwn â merch ifanc a elwir (yn yr iaith Roeg) yn 'Mariam'. Yn Hebraeg ac Aramaeg, 'Miriam' fyddai hynny. Daw angel a'r newydd iddi y bydd hi, er nad ydyw eto'n briod, yn fam i 'Iesu' (yn Hebraeg ac Aramaeg, 'Josua'). Fel y mae'r enw Mair yn adlais o enw'r ferch gyntaf o broffwyd yn yr Ysgrythurau Hebraeg, felly y mae enw Iesu'n adlais o enw'r arweinydd a olynodd Moses ac a ddygodd yr Israeliaid allan o'r anialwch i wlad yr addewid. Pan ymwel Mair â'i chyfnither, Elisabeth, sy'n feichiog a'r plentyn a ddaw i fod yn 'Ioan Fedyddiwr', y mae hithau, fel merched yr Ysgrythurau Hebraeg, yn canu cân o fawl i weithredoedd nerthol Duw. Mae'r themâu'n adleisio themâu'r caneuon cynharach a ganwyd gan ferched: 'gweithredoedd nerthol' Duw'n gwasgaru gelynion pwerus

Singing in the Wilderness

Week 4

Exod 15: 20-22
(‘Miriam’);

Luke 1:46 -53
(‘Magnificat’).

Discussion: ‘What do
Christians have to sing about?’

Topic for local radio:

A personal story of how music
and faith helped overcome
difficult times

Jewish Scriptures

The women who took part in the Exodus and journey through the wilderness are, in the biblical story, almost entirely invisible. If we are to think in terms of ‘forty years’ there must have been a whole generation of women who grew to adulthood, many who married and gave birth, parents who cared for children and young people who grew to adulthood, all in conditions of extreme difficulty. What did they have to sing about? At one key point, after the terrifying crossing of the Red Sea, we glimpse Miriam, held by tradition to be the sister of Moses and Aaron (Num 26:59; 1 Chr 6:3), taking a tambourine and leading the women in singing and dancing as they praise God. We are told almost nothing about her except that she is a ‘prophet’, which indicates that she has been given a special gift of openness to God’s spirit and speaking or singing about the works of God. Moses is also, later, spoken of as a ‘prophet’ (Dt 34:10).

It is possible that Miriam is to be identified with the unnamed elder sister of Moses who watched over him as a baby when he was left among the bulrushes and rescued by Pharaoh’s daughter (Exod 2:4-7). Her song appears to echo the song of Moses (Exod 15:1-17), and it may be that what we have is merely the remnant of a longer song of praise for God’s mighty acts, which was originally very like the song of Moses. Two other women in the Jewish Scriptures have lengthy songs: Deborah, who is also a prophet (Jg 5:1-31) and Hannah, who perceives the gift of her son, Samuel, as one of God’s ‘mighty acts’ (1 Sam 2:1-10).

Immediately after the triumphant crossing of the Red Sea, the Israelites set out into the wilderness.

New Testament

At the beginning of Luke’s Gospel, we meet a young woman called (in Greek) ‘Mariam’ – which would have been in Hebrew or Aramaic ‘Miriam’. She is given the news by an angel that, though she is not yet married, she will bear a ‘Jesus’ (in Hebrew or Aramaic, ‘Joshua’). Just as Mary’s name echoes that of the first woman prophet in the Hebrew Scriptures, so that of Jesus echoes the name of the leader who succeeded Moses and brought the Israelites out of the wilderness into the promised land. When Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth, who is pregnant with the child who will become ‘John the baptizer’, like the women of the Hebrew Scriptures, she sings a song in praise of the mighty acts of God. The themes echo those of other, earlier songs sung by women: the ‘mighty acts’ of God, which scatter the

Israel ac yn dyrchafu'r 'distadl' i'w wasanaethu. Mae Mair, fel y merched proffwydol a fu o'i blaen, yn llawenhau yn y modd annisgwyl y dengys Duw ei ffyddlondeb i'w addewid. Ymuna'r proffwyd Anna â hi yn ei llawenydd (Luc 2:36-8). Gadewir i Simeon, sydd hefyd yn broffwyd, sôn beth fydd cost bod yn rhiant i Mair: 'a thithau, trywenir dy enaid di gan gleddyf' (Luc 2:35). Mewn rhai ffyrdd, mae bod yn fam i blentyn fel Iesu yn alwad i'r anialwch.

Yr Eglwys

Mae'r eglwys yn dal i ymdrechu i wir gydnabod y weinidogaeth a roddodd Duw i ferched. Mae'n dathlu llais proffwydol merched yn yr Ysgrythurau Hebraeg ac yn y Testament Newydd. Mae swyddogaeth Mair fel mam Iesu yn hollbwysig i'n dealltwriaeth o beth a mae'n ei olygu, yn nerth yr Ysbryd, i 'ddwyn Crist i'r byd'. Yn dilyn traddodiad yr eglwys fore, rhydd llawer o Gristnogion le canolog i'r Magnificat ('cân Miriam') yn yr Hwylol Weddi. Mae'n rhoi inni eiriau i ddathlu nerthol weithredoedd Duw, a ffyddlondeb Duw i'w addewid, wrth inni wynebu adfyd yr anialwch. Ymunwn, yn ein cenhedlaeth ni, i alw Mair yn 'wynfydedig' (48) am ei bod yn enghraifft mor dda o ffyddlondeb Duw i'r ddynolryw ac o lawenydd y ddynolryw yn Nuw. Yn anad dim, y mae'r Magnificat, i ferched a dynion, yn gân o obaith, yn gân i'w chanu yn yr anialwch.

Cwestiynau i'w trafod

1. Pam fod cyn lleied o wybodaeth am brofiad merched fel Miriam yn stori'r Exodus a'r crwydro yn yr anialwch?
2. Pa ran y mae Miriam/Mair yn ei chwarae yn eich traddodiad eglwysig chwi?
3. A all Mair fod yn batrwm ymddygiad i ddynion yn ogystal ag i ferched, i'r sawl sydd heb blant yn ogystal ag i rieni?
4. I ba raddau yr oedd yr alwad a gafodd Mair yn alwad 'i fynd i'r anialwch'?
5. Beth a ddysgwn yn yr Ysgrythurau am 'daith ffydd' Mair'?
6. Sut y gall ffydd ein cynorthwyo trwy amser anodd, er enghraifft, trwy gyfnod o ddirwasgiad?
7. A all aelodau eich grŵp weld adlewyrchiad o'r storïau y buom yn eu trafod yr wythnos hon yn eu taith ffydd eu hunain?

Gweddi

Arglwydd Dduw, y llawenhaodd dy wasanaethyddion Miriam, Hanna a Mair ynot fel eu gwareddwr a'u hachubwr, dysg i ni gyda hwy ganu ein 'magnificat' lle bynnag y byddi di'n ein harwain a beth bynnag y byddi'n ei ofyn gennym, trwy Iesu Grist, a gyflawnodd dy holl addewidion ac y calonogir ninnau trwyddo i ddweud Amen.

powerful enemies of Israel and lift up the 'lowly' in his service. Mary, like the prophetic women who have gone before her, rejoices in the unexpected way God proves himself faithful to his promise. The prophet Anna joins in her rejoicing (Lk 2:36-8). It is left to Simeon, also a prophetic figure, to speak about the cost of parenthood to Mary: 'a sword will pierce your own soul too' (Lk 2:35). Being the mother of a child such as Jesus is, in some ways, a call to set out into the wilderness.

The Church

The church continues to struggle truly to recognise the God-given ministry of women. It celebrates the prophetic voice of women in both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament. The role of Mary, as the mother of Jesus, is vital for our understanding of what it means, in the power of the Spirit, 'to bring Christ into the world'. Following the tradition of the early church, for many Christians the Magnificat ('Miriam's song') has a central position in Evening Prayer. It gives us words to celebrate the mighty acts of God, and God's faithfulness to his promise as we face the hardships of the wilderness. In our generation, we join in calling Mary 'blessed' (48) because she is such an example of God's faithfulness to humanity and humanity's joy in God. The Magnificat is above all, for women and men, a song of hope, a song to sing in the wilderness.

Questions you may wish to use in discussion

1. Why do we learn so little about the experience of women like Miriam in the story of the Exodus and wilderness wandering?
2. What part does Miriam/Mary play in the worship of your own church tradition?
3. Can Mary be a role model for men as well as women, for the childless as well as parents?
4. To what extent was Mary's vocation a call to 'enter the wilderness'?
5. What do we learn in the Scriptures about Mary's 'journey of faith'?
6. How can faith help us through a hard time, for example a time of depression?
7. Are there ways in which the members of your group can see the stories we have discussed this week reflected in their own journey of faith?

Prayer

Lord God, whose servants Miriam, Hannah and Mary rejoiced in you as their saviour and deliverer, teach us with them to sing our 'magnificat' wherever you may lead us and whatever you may ask of us, through Jesus Christ, in whom all your promises find their 'yes' and we are emboldened to say, *Amen*.

Achubiaeth rhag Marwolaeth

Wythnos 5

Numeri 21:4-9
(‘Y sarff bres’);

Ioan 3:4-17
(‘A minnau, os caf fy
nyrchafu’).

Trafodaeth: ‘Pa synnwyr allwn
ni ei wneud o’r groes heddiw?’

Pwnc i radio lleol:
Stori bersonol am ddod trwy
argyfwng



Fotograffau: Maria Dryfhout's /Shutterstock.com

Yr Ysgrythurau Iddewig

Mae Mynydd Hor (Jebel Madurah, o bosibl) ryw hanner can milltir i’r de orllewin o’r Môr Marw. I’r gorllewin o’r mynydd, mae’r ffordd tua’r Môr Coch, y dihangodd yr Israeliaid trwyddo lawer blwyddyn cyn yr amser yr ydym yn darllen amdano’n awr. Awgryma’r stori feiblaidd i Miriam farw ychydig cyn i’r Israeliaid gyrraedd Mynydd Hor ac i Aaron farw ar y mynydd. Gan na allai Moses weld y ffordd ymlaen, parodd i’r Israeliaid droi’n ôl a theithio ymhell tua’r dwyrain i osgoi dod wyneb yn wyneb â’r Edomiaid a’r Moabiaid, cyn troi i’r gorllewin a chroesi afon Iorddonen i’r gogledd o’r Môr Marw. Nid rhyfedd bod y bobl yn cwyno, ac yn meddwl y byddent farw yn yr anialwch fel Miriam ac Aaron. Er gwaetha’r ddarpariaeth wyrthiol o fwyd a dŵr (cf. Numeri 20:9-13), cwynant yn erbyn Duw a Moses. Yna daw prawf arall: pla o seirff gwenwynig. Mae’r bobl yn edifarhau am gwyno ac yn erfyn ar i Moses weddio am i Dduw yrru’r seirff ymaith. Nid am y tro cyntaf, portreadir Moses fel eiriolwr grymus. Dywed Duw wrtho am wneud sarff bres a’i gosod ar bolyn. Dim ond i’r sawl a gâi ei frathu gan sarff edrych ar y sarff bres, fe fydd byw.

Gwelir y sarff bres un waith eto yn yr Ysgrythurau Iddewig (2 Brenhinoedd 18:4) lle y dywedir wrthym fod y Brenin Heseceia, fel rhan o’i ddiwygiadau crefyddol, wedidryllio’r golofn gysegredig a malu’r sarff bres, a elwir yn awr yn Nehustan, a oedd bellach yn wrthrych addoliad i’r Israeliaid.

Y Testament Newydd

Yn ei ymgom â Nicodemus, a gofnodir yn Ioan 3:1-20, mae Iesu’n cyfeirio’n benodol at stori’r sarff bres, ac yn ei gymharu ei hun â hi: ‘Ac fel y dyrchafodd Moses y sarff yn yr anialwch, felly y mae’n rhaid i Fab y Dyn gael ei ddyrchafu, er mwyn i bob un sy’n credu gael bywyd tragwyddol ynddo ef’ (3:14-15). Â ymlaen i ddweud nad ‘i gondemnio’r byd yr anfonodd Duw ei Fab i’r byd, ond er mwyn i’r byd gael ei achub trwyddo ef’ (17). Yr awgrym yw y caiff y sawl a edrycha ar Fab y Dyn pan ‘ddyrchefir’ ef ei achub yn union fel yr achubwyd yr Israeliaid a frathwyd gan seirff trwy edrych ar y sarff bres. Eglurir yn ddiweddarach (12:32-33) mai sôn am ei farwolaeth y mae Iesu pan y mae’n sôn am gael ei ‘ddyrchafu’. Ei air am yr ymateb dynol y mae’n ei geisio yw ‘credu’ (16): ‘Do, carodd Duw y byd gymaint nes iddo roi ei unig Fab, er mwyn i bob un sy’n credu ynddo ef beidio â mynd i ddistryw ond cael bywyd tragwyddol’. Yn y cyd-destun hwn, ystyr ‘credu’ yw ymddiried mai Iesu, er iddo gael ei ‘ddyrchafu’ mewn poen a gwaradwydd, yw’r un a ddaw ag iachâd ac iachawdwriaeth oddi wrth bechod. Cyfeiria’r Bedwaredd Efengyl yn benodol at y croeshoeliad fel

Saved from Death

Week 5

Num 21:4-9
(‘The brazen serpent’);

Jn 3:4-17
(‘I, if I be lifted up’).

Discussion: ‘What sense can we make of the cross today?’

Topic for local radio:

A personal story of coming through a crisis

Jewish Scriptures

Mount Hor (possibly Jebel Madurah) is some fifty miles to the south west of the Dead Sea. To the west of it lies the way to the Red Sea, through which the Israelites escaped many years before the time about which we now read. The biblical narrative suggests that Miriam died shortly before the Israelites reached Mount Hor and Aaron died at Mount Hor. Moses, finding no way forward, caused the Israelites to double back and make a huge detour to the east to avoid confrontation with the Edomites and the Moabites, before they turned west to cross the Jordan north of the Dead Sea. No wonder that the people complained, thinking they would die in the desert like Miriam and Aaron. Despite the miraculous provision of food and water (cf. Num 20:9-13), they grumble against God and against Moses. Then comes yet another trial: an infestation of poisonous snakes. The people regret their complaints and beg Moses to pray for the snakes to be taken away. Not for the first time, Moses is depicted as a powerful intercessor. He is told by God to make a serpent of bronze, place it on a pole. If someone was bitten by a snake, they could look to the serpent and they would live.

The brazen serpent makes one more appearance in the Jewish Scriptures (2 Kings 18:4) where we are told that, as part of his religious reforms, King Hezekiah broke down the sacred pole and smashed the brazen serpent, now called Nehushtan, which had become an object of worship for the Israelites.

New Testament

In his encounter with Nicodemus, recounted in John 3:1-20, Jesus specifically alludes to the story of the bronze serpent, comparing himself with the serpent: ‘Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life’ (3:14). He goes on to say that ‘God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him’ (17). The suggestion is that those who look to the Son of Man when he is ‘lifted up’ will be saved, just as the Israelites bitten by snakes were saved by looking at the brazen serpent. It is later made clear (12:32-33) that when Jesus speaks of being ‘lifted up’, he is speaking about his death. His word for the human response that he seeks is that we should ‘believe’ (16): ‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.’ To ‘believe’ is, in this context, to trust that Jesus, even though he is ‘lifted up’ in pain and

awr 'gogoniant' Duw. Wrth i Iesu nesáu at gael ei arestio a'i gondemnio, mae'n sôn am y digwyddiadau sydd i ddod yn nhermau 'gogoneddu' Duw: 'Y mae'r awr wedi dod i Fab y Dyn gael ei ogoneddu. Yn wir, yn wir, rwy'n dweud wrthyh, os nad yw'r gronyn gwenith yn syrthio i'r ddaear ac yn marw, y mae'n aros ar ei ben ei hun; ond os yw'n marw, y mae'n dwyn llawer o ffrwyth' (12:23-4; cf. 17:1-5).

Yr Eglwys

Ym mywyd yr eglwys, cysylltir seirff â'r sarff yn Genesis 3, sy'n personoli'r demtasiwn i anufuddhau i Dduw. O ystyried bod ar bobl at ei gilydd ofn nadroedd, mae hyn yn ddealladwy, ond yn annheg iawn â nadroedd. Ofnir nadroedd am y gallant fod yn wenwynig; maent yn fygythiad o farwolaeth. Mae'n bosibl bod Iesu, wrth ei gymharu ei hun â'r 'sarff bres', yn awgrymu ei fod yn ei uniaethu ei hun â drygioni gwenwynig – yn bendol at bwrpas iacháu. Fel y sarff bres, mae'n cymryd arno'i hun ffurf drygioni er mwyn cwmparu drygioni a dod ag iachâd

(cf. Philipiaid 2:7-8). Dyna pam y mae Paul mor benderfynol o bregethu i'r Corinthiaid 'Grist wedi ei groeshoelio'. I Paul, y mae'r groes – lle y 'dyrchefir' Iesu fel pe bai'n 'berygl i gymdeithas' – yn ganolog i neges yr efengyl (1 Corinthiaid 1:17). Yn ei dyb ef, dim ond y 'siocdriniaeth' hon a all iacháu eglwys ranedig Corinth (1 Corinthiaid 2:2).

Mae'r chwedl i Badrig alltudio nadroedd o Iwerddon, a'u gyrru i'r môr, yn adlewyrchu'r cysylltiad rhwng nadroedd a themtasiwn. Dywedir i'r nadroedd ymyrryd â'i ymryd ddeugain niwrnod – dramateiddiad, o bosibl, o'r demtasiwn i wneud drygioni. Fe'u gyrrir i'r môr – i drengi yn y dŵr fel yr Eiffiaid a ymlidiodd yr Israeliaid i'r Môr Coch.



Ffotograffau: Russell Shively/Shutterstock.com

Cwestiynau i'w trafod

1. Pam, dybiwch chwi, fod yr Ysgrythurau Iddewig yn arswydo cymaint rhag eilunaddoliaeth?
2. Yn y Bedwaredd Efengyl, beth y mae Iesu'n ei awgrymu wrth gymharu ei hun â'r sarff?
3. A oes ar bobl heddiw angen iachâd ysbrydol? Os oes, a allwch feddwl am enghreifftiau?
4. Ymhle y gallwn weld 'gogoniant Duw' yn awr?
5. Sut y gall stori'r sarff bres ein cynorthwyo i ddeall y croeshoeliad heddiw?
6. A oes i chwedlau fel yr un am Sant Padrig yn alltudio'r seirff unrhyw werth i ni heddiw?
7. A all aelodau eich grŵp weld adlewyrchiad o'r storïau y buom yn eu trafod yr wythnos hon yn eu taith ffydd eu hunain?

Gweddi

Arglwydd Dduw, a roddaist inni Iesu i'n hachub rhag popeth sy'n gwenwyno bywyd dynol ac yn chwalu'r berthynas rhwng pobl a'i gilydd, bydded i ni, wrth inni edrych arno wedi ei 'ddyrchafu' ac yn dioddef ar y groes, gael ynddo ein hiechyd a'n hymwared, er mwyn ei enw, Amen.

humiliation, is the one who brings healing and salvation from sin. The Fourth Gospel speaks distinctively of the crucifixion as the moment of God's 'glory'. As Jesus approaches his arrest and condemnation, he speaks the events that are to come in terms of God's 'glory': 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies it bears much fruit.' (12:23-4; cf. 17:1-5).

The Church

In the life of the church, snakes are associated with the 'serpent' of Genesis 3, who personifies the temptation to disobey God. Given the widespread human fear of snakes, this is understandable, but deeply unfair to snakes. Snakes are feared because they may be poisonous; they bring the threat of death. There is, perhaps, in Jesus's comparison of himself with the 'brazen serpent' the suggestion of his identification with poisonous evil – precisely for the purpose of healing. Like the brazen serpent, he assumes the form of evil, as a way of embracing the evil itself and bringing healing (cf. Phil 2:7-8). This is why Paul was determined to proclaim 'Christ crucified' to the Corinthians. For Paul, the cross – where Jesus is 'lifted up' as though he were a 'danger to society' – is central to the gospel message that he brings (1 Cor 1:17). It was this 'shock therapy', and this alone, that Paul believed could bring healing to the divided Corinthian church (1 Cor 2:2).

The legend that Patrick banished all snakes from Ireland, driving them into the sea, reflects the association of snakes with temptation. The snakes were said to have interrupted his forty-day fast – which could be taken as a dramatization of the snakes tempting him to do evil. They were driven into the sea – perishing in the water like the Egyptians who pursued the Israelites into the Red Sea.

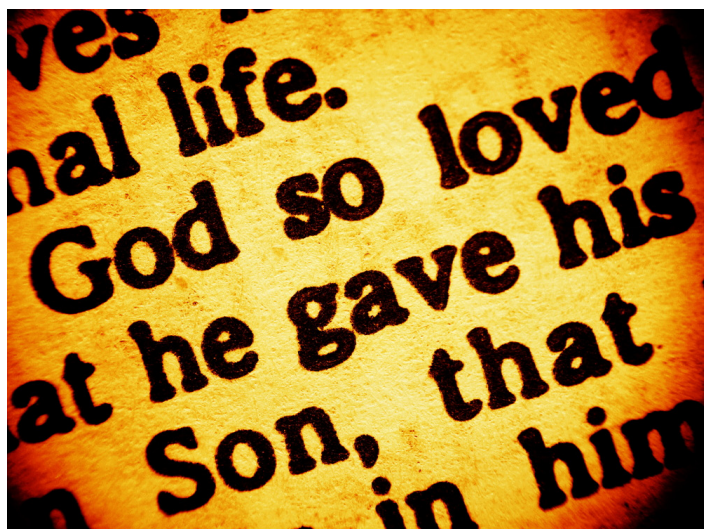


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Questions you may wish to use in discussion

1. Why do you think there is in the Jewish Scriptures such a horror of idolatry?
2. What, in the Fourth Gospel, is Jesus suggesting by comparing himself with the serpent?
3. Is there a spiritual sense in which human beings need healing today? If so, can you think of examples?
4. Where can we see 'the glory of God' now?
5. How can the story of the brazen serpent help us understand the crucifixion today?
6. Have legends like that of St Patrick banishing the snakes any value for us today?
7. Are there ways in which the members of your group can see the stories we have discussed this week reflected in their own journey of faith?

Prayer

Lord God, who gave us Jesus to rescue us from all that poisons human lives and destroys human relationships, as we look to him, 'lifted up' and suffering on the cross, may we find in him our health and our salvation, for his name's sake,
Amen

Byw mewn Gobaith am Wlad yr Addewid

Wythnos 6

Deut 34:1-12

(‘Dangosais hi i ti, ond ni chei fynd trosodd yno’);

Luc 19:28-40 (‘Bendigedig yw’r un sy’n dod yn frenin yn enw’r Arglwydd’).

Trafodaeth: ‘A ellir ystyried marw fel cyrraedd gwlad yr addewid?’

Pwnc i radio lleol: Stori bersonol am ddod yn agos at farw a chael ail gyfle



James Tissot, Brooklyn Museum

Yr Ysgrythurau Iddewig

O’r de-ddwyrain y caiff Moses ei olwg ar wlad yr addewid. Mae’n edrych i’r gorllewin dros afon Iorddonen. Mae’n edrych nid yn unig ar y tir ond hefyd i’r dyfodol. Mae’n gweld y wlad fel y bydd hi ar ôl i’r Israeliaid orchfygu Jericho a lledaenu i’r gogledd a’r dwyrain a’r gorllewin o’r Iorddonen a llenwi’r holl wlad.

Mae Gilead i’r gogledd-ddwyrain o’r Iorddonen; Naftali i’r gogledd, ac yn cynnwys y môr a alwyd wedi hynny yn Fôr Galilea; mae tiriogaeth Dan ymhellach fyth i’r gogledd; Manasse ac Efraim yn ymestyn i’r gogledd a’r gorllewin mor bell â Môr y Canoldir; mae Jwda’n cynnwys y tir yn union i’r gorllewin o’r Iorddonen; y Negef yw’r anialwch i’r de-orllewin, yn ymestyn tua’r Aifft. Mae Jericho ar y gwastadedd wrth y Môr Marw, i’r gorllewin o’r Iorddonen, fel yr oedd Soar, o bosibl, cyn iddi ddiflannu.

Gweledigaeth o gyfanrwydd yw gweledigaeth Moses: llwyr gyflawniad addewid Duw i Abraham, Isaac a Jacob (cf. Genesis 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 17:8; 26:3-4; 35:12). Fel Abraham, Isaac a Jacob, ni chaiff weld gwireddu’r addewid ond, cyn ei farw, gall edrych i’r dyfodol i weld sut y cwblheir y daith ffydd yr arweiniodd ef yr Israeliaid arni.

Rhaid iddo’n awr adael y gwireddu i Dduw, a derbyn beth yw ewyllys Duw iddo – sef ei bod yn amser iddo farw, a’i ewyllys i’w bobl – sef ei bod yn amser iddynt wynebu’r her enfawr o fynd i mewn i wlad Canaan. Josua yn awr fydd arweinydd yr Israeliaid. Mae gwaith bywyd Moses drosodd. Daw Llyfr Deuteronomium i ben trwy grynhoi lle unigryw Moses yn hanes Israel: ef yw’r unig broffwyd, meddir, ‘yr oedd yr Arglwydd yn ei adnabod wyneb yn wyneb’: ‘byddai’r Arglwydd yn siarad ag ef fel y bydd rhywun yn siarad â’i gyfaill’ (cf. Exod. 33:11).

Y Testament Newydd

Yn y cyfnod hir o orchfygu gwlad yr addewid, gellir dweud mai’r adeg y sefydlodd yr Israeliaid eu hunain yno mewn gwirionedd oedd pan orchfygwyd y ddinas a ddaeth i fod yn Jerwsalem (1 Cronicl 11:4-9). Dyma’r lle, o’r diwedd, y gosodwyd y tabernacl, a ddisodlwyd yn ddiweddarach gan deml Solomon. Ystyr yr enw Jerwsalem yw ‘dinas heddwch’. Dyma’r lle a ddewisodd Duw ‘yn drigfan i’w enw’ (cf. Deuteronomium 12:10-11) a lle y canolwyd addoliad yr Israeliaid. Yno hefyd y bu brenhinoedd mawr yr Israel unedig – Dafydd a Solomon – yn byw. Rhaid bod ymdaith Iesu i mewn i Jerwsalem ar gefn asyn (arwydd o heddwch), yn hytrach nag ar gefn rhyfelfarch, wedi dwyn ar gof y brenin

Living in Hope of the Promised Land

Week 6

Deut 34:1-12 ('I have let you see with your eyes but you shall not cross over there');

Lk 19:28-40 ('Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord').

Discussion: 'Can dying be seen as arrival at the promised land?'

Topic for local radio: A personal story of coming close to death and a second chance

Jewish Scriptures

The vision of the promised land that is granted to Moses is a vision from the south-east. Moses looks across the river Jordan to the west. He looks not only into the land, but also into the future. He sees the land as it will be when the Israelites have taken Jericho, and have spread northwards to the east and west of the Jordan and filled all the land.

Gilead is to the north, east of the Jordan; Naphtali is to the north and includes the later-named Sea of Galilee; Dan takes in the territory even further north; the land of Manasseh and Ephraim stretches north and west as far as the Mediterranean sea; Judah includes the land immediately to the west of the Jordan; the Negeb is the desert to the south-west, stretching towards Egypt. Jericho is on the plain by the Dead Sea, to the west of the Jordan, as Zoar may have been before it disappeared.

Moses' vision is one of completeness: the complete fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (cf. Gen 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 17:8; 26:3-4; 35:12). Like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses does not see the fulfilment of the promise. Before he dies, he is able to look into the future: to see how the journey of faith through which he has led the Israelites for forty years will be completed.

At this point, he must leave that fulfilment to God. He must accept God's will for himself – which is that it is time for him to die – and for his people – that it is time for them to face the huge new challenge of entry into the land of Canaan. The leadership of the Israelites will now pass to Joshua. Moses's lifework is done. The Book of Deuteronomy ends by summing up Moses' unique place in the history of Israel: he is the one prophet whom, it is said, 'the Lord knew face to face': the Lord spoke with him, 'as a man speaks to a friend' (cf. Exod. 33:11).

New Testament

In the long drawn-out conquest of the promised land, the moment when it could really be said the Israelites had established themselves was when they took over the city that became Jerusalem (1 Chron 11:4-9). This was the place where the tabernacle finally came to rest and was eventually replaced by Solomon's temple. Jerusalem (meaning 'city of peace') was the place where God 'made his name to dwell' (cf. Dt 12:10-11) and where the worship of the Israelites was centralised. It was also the place where the great kings of a united Israel – David and Solomon – had their residence.

mawr Dafydd yn mynd i mewn yn llawen i Jerwsalem gydag Arch y Cyfamod (2 Samuel 6:15) a'i gwneud hi felly'n ddinas unigryw, yn ddinas 'sanctaid' a hefyd yn brifddinas iddo'i hun. Ganrifoedd yn ddiweddarach, gwelir Iesu fel brenin annhebygol yn dod mewn heddwch i'w brifddinas, ac yn cael croeso gorfoeddus gan y dorf. Yn fuan wedyn, fe'i croeshoeliwyd o dan arwydd wedi'i ysgrifennu mewn Hebraeg, Lladin a Groeg (Ioan 19:20; cf. Luc 23:38) fel y gallai pawb yn Jerwsalem ddarllen y geiriau trawiadol: 'Iesu o Nasareth, Brenin yr Iddewon.'

Yn yr Efengyl yn ôl Luc, daw'r cyfarchiad 'yn y nef, tangnefedd, a gogoniant yn y goruchaf' â'r gân i gof a ganwyd gan y llu nefol i groesawu geni Iesu: 'Gogoniant yn y goruchaf i Dduw, ac ar y ddaear tangnefedd ymhlith y rhai sydd wrth ei fodd' (2:14). Daw Iesu â heddwch i Jerwsalem (cf. 41) mewn modd cwbl annisgwyl. Pan ddaw i mewn i'r ddinas fel brenin, mae'r tyrfaeodd yn gweiddi: 'Bendigedig yw'r un sy'n dod yn frenin yn enw'r Arglwydd; yn y nef, tangnefedd, a gogoniant yn y goruchaf' (19:38; cf. Salm 118:26). Ond ni ellir ar hyn o bryd ddirnad y tangnefedd a ddaw Iesu ond trwy ffydd: trwy edrych i'r dyfodol at sefydlu teyrnas Dduw.

Yr Eglwys

Cyfareddwyd dychymyg ysgrifenydd Cristnogol, hyd yn oed yn y Testament Newydd, gan y ddelwedd o wlad yr addewid a'r ddelwedd o Jerwsalem. Mae awdur y Llythyr at yr Hebreaid yn olrhain stori'r Beibl o'r cread hyd at orchfygu gwlad yr addewid: wrth sôn am Abraham, Isaac a Jacob, dywed: 'Mewn ffydd y bu farw'r rhai hyn oll, heb fod wedi derbyn yr hyn a addawyd'; yr oeddent 'yn ceisio mamwlad ... yn dyheu am wlad well, sef gwlad nefol' (Hebreaid 11:13-16). Mae'r hyn a oedd yn wir am y patriarchiaid yn wir am Moses (23-8) ac am bawb a ddaeth ar ei ôl. I'r Cristion, darlun yw 'gwlad yr addewid' o'r nefoedd.

Atgyfnerthir y syniadau hyn gan y syniad bod Jerwsalem ddaearol a Jerwsalem nefol (Galatiaid 4:25-6). Mae'r Jerwsalem ddaearol yn adlewyrchu gogoniant y Jerwsalem nefol. Sonia Llyfr y Datguddiad am y 'Jerwsalem newydd' sydd mor brydferth â phriodferch wedi ei thecáu i'w gŵr' (Datguddiad 21:2). Yn y Jerwsalem newydd 'ni bydd marwolaeth mwyach, na galar na llefain na phoen. Y mae'r pethau cyntaf wedi mynd heibio' (adnod.4). Gweledigaeth yw hon o deyrnas Dduw, a ddisgwylir yn y dyfodol, lle y bydd Iesu, a fu farw fel oen yr aberth i gymodi pobl â Duw, yn awr yn teyrnasu. Yn y 'Jerwsalem newydd' hon nid oes teml, oherwydd y mae aberth daearol Iesu ar y groes wedi dileu pob angen am aberth: 'A theml ni welais ynddi, oherwydd ei theml hi yw'r Arglwydd Dduw, yr Hollalluog, a'r Oen. Nid oes ar y ddinas angen na'r haul na'r lleuad i dywynnu arni, oherwydd gogoniant Duw sy'n ei goleuo, a'i lamp hi yw'r Oen'. Mae'r ddinas yn agored i bawb a fyn ddod i mewn iddi. Yn y geiriau a enwogwyd gan Gorws Haleliwia Handel: 'Aeth brenhiniaeth y byd yn eiddo ein Harglwydd ni a'i Grist ef, a bydd yn teyrnasu byth bythoedd' (Datguddiad 11:15).

Cwestiynau i'w trafod

1. Sut y dylai Cristnogion heddiw ddehongli'r 'addewid' o wlad?
2. Pam, dybiwch chwi, i Iesu ddewis mynd i mewn i Jerwsalem yn y dull y gwnaeth?
3. Ai diwedd taith bywyd yw marwolaeth, ai dechrau newydd?
4. Bu anghytundeb ymhlith Cristnogion a ddylem ddisgwyl i bawb yn y diwedd gael ei achub. Beth yw barn aelodau eich grŵp?
5. Mae'n debyg mai ystyr 'Jerwsalem' yw 'dinas heddwch'; eto, ni bu dinas yn y byd yn destun cweryla mwy chwerw. Beth allwn ni ei wneud heddiw i hyrwyddo 'heddwch Jerwsalem' (cf. Salm 122:6-9)?
6. Beth y mae'r syniad o 'wlad yr addewid' a'r 'Jerwsalem newydd' yn ei olygu i aelodau eich grŵp ar eu taith ffydd?
7. A all aelodau eich grŵp weld adlewyrchiad o'r storïau y buom yn eu trafod yr wythnos hon yn eu taith ffydd eu hunain?

Gweddi

Arglwydd Dduw, a arweiniais bobl dy gyfamod trwy'r anialwch i wlad yr addewid, gweddiwn arnat i'n harwain nin-nau i'r man hwnnw lle yr ymunwn i'th foliannu ac i gyfranogi o'th dangnefedd am byth, trwy Iesu Grist na fydd terfyn ar ei deyrnas ac y pery ei lywodraeth yn oes oesoedd. Amen.

The entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, riding on a donkey (a sign of peace), rather than on a warhorse must have evoked memories of the great king David, joyfully entering Jerusalem with the Ark of the Covenant (2 Sam 6:15) and so making it both a uniquely 'holy' city and his own capital. Hundreds of years later, Jesus is seen as an unlikely king coming in peace to his capital city, to a rapturous popular welcome. Shortly after this, he will be crucified under a sign written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek (Jn 19:20; cf. Lk 23:38), so that all in Jerusalem may read these telling words, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.'

In Luke's Gospel, the greeting 'Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heaven' evokes memories of the song sung by the heavenly host to welcome the birth of Jesus: 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours' (2:14). Jesus brings peace to Jerusalem (cf. 41), in a totally unexpected sense. When he enters the city like a king, the crowds cry out 'Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven.' (19:38; cf. Ps 118:26). Yet the peace Jesus brings can only as yet be discerned in faith: by looking into the future, to the establishment of the coming kingdom of God.

The Church

The imagery of the promised land and the imagery of Jerusalem captivated the imagination of Christian writers, even within the New Testament. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews traces the biblical narrative from the creation through to the conquest of the promised land: speaking of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, he says: 'these all died in faith without receiving the promise'; they were 'seeking a homeland' ... 'they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one.' (Hebr 11:13-16). What was true of the patriarchs was true of Moses (23-8) and of those who came after him. The 'promised land' is, for Christians, a picture of heaven.

These ideas are reinforced by the idea that there is an earthly Jerusalem and a heavenly Jerusalem (Gal 4:25-6). The earthly Jerusalem reflects the glory of the heavenly Jerusalem. The Book of Revelation speaks of the 'new Jerusalem' which is as beautiful 'as a bride adorned for husband' (Rev 21:2). In the new Jerusalem 'death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more' for the first things have passed away' (v.4). This is a vision of the hoped-for future kingdom of God, in which Jesus, who died like a sacrificial lamb to bring about reconciliation between humans and God, now reigns. In this 'new Jerusalem' there is no temple because the earthly sacrifice of Jesus on the cross has ended all need for sacrifice: 'I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of the Lord is its light, and its lamp is the lamb.' This is the city, which is now open to all who wish to enter. In the words made famous by Handel's Hallelujah Chorus: 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever' (Rev 11:15).

Questions you may wish to use in discussion

1. How should Christians interpret 'the promise' of the land today?
2. Why do you think Jesus chose to enter Jerusalem in the way that he did?
3. Is death the end of our life's journey, or is it a new beginning?
4. Christians have disagreed about whether we can expect everyone in the end to be saved. What do the members of your group think about this?
5. 'Jerusalem' probably means 'city of peace' yet no city in the world has been more of a focus for bitter dispute. What can you do to promote the 'peace of Jerusalem' today (cf. Ps 122:6-9)?
6. What do ideas of 'the promised land' or 'the new Jerusalem' mean for the members of your group on their journeys of faith?
7. Are there ways in which the members of your group can see the stories we have discussed this week reflected in their own journey of faith?

Prayer

Lord God, who guided your covenant people through the wilderness to their promised land, bring us, we pray, to that place where we shall join in your praise and share your peace eternally, through Jesus Christ whose kingdom shall have no end and whose reign will be for ever and ever. *Amen.*

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