

Always in the Shadow of the Empire: Brueggemann
in The Church as Countercultural, Suny 2000

Practice in Early Israel was syncretistic but Tanach distinctly ideological.

EGYPT

Gen 47: Egypt as source of life for Israel, yet enslaves. No bondage/no food.
Disciplines of resistance:

1. **liturgical resistance.** – maintains alternative world.
Groaning in pain –
Ridicule of established power. – Egypt could not.
liturgical world more reliable – thrown into the sea & women dance.

2. **Torah resistance**
'Shema' Listening
Sabbath – be but not having
Release Year – forgiveness, refusal to exploit, revenge, hold grudges.

ASSYRIA

Tiglath Pilezer III – Ashurbanipal 627. Cruel.

1. Yahweh is adequate. Unfaith is subaltern view. Isaiah 8.
2. Vision of Peace. Torah and Shalom. Is 2:1-5
3. Covenant Society (Deuteronomy) Relational Kingdom each taking responsibility for neighbour.
 - a. Economically: Yr of Release
 - b. Liturgical – Passover
 - c. Political – King studies Torah

BABYLON

1. Priestly material – sacrament sustains sense of community.
2. Order amidst chaos – Creation and Temple is reliable environment.
3. Presence – tabernacle of God's dwelling with them.
4. Ethics – you shall be holy as YHWH is holy. Distinctiveness. Purity.
5. Hope vs Despair – How beautiful are feet of prophet proclaiming Your God reigns. (Is 52:7)

PERSIA

1. Self-assured assertion imposed by Neh & Ezra elite Babylonian Jews.
2. Community Listens to Torah
3. Sacramental feast of Booths.
4. Ethnic cleansing.
5. Rejects money-lending.

A: self-conscious community

B: political and economic but above all theological

C: rigorous disciplines

D: word and sacrament. (dramatised)

Sawicki:

Jesus' actions contradict Empire's reasonableness.

- Jesus distributes free fish & bread. Against Roman market economy & food tithes.
- Jesus disrupts Fatherhood/Motherhood ties – vs. lineage purity. Belonging?
- Calls Matthew away from table
- Eats with 'sinners'
- Beatitudes vs Empire's logic.

Demoniac's self-mutilation is classic symptom of Colonialism.

He is used to being pathological so lies.

Impossible to separate ourselves from Empire. Paralyzed.

Galilee:

Syria, Philipp, Decapolis boarder – frontier of empires. The Roman cities were hated.

Gentiles and Jews mixed in villages. Symbolised backwardness, impurity.

Ineffective?

When states say kill, Christians will kill. Hutu and Tutsi both Catholic.

Christianity has become trivialized. Jesus did not expect us to run the Empire.

But strings are always attached to Christians as to others.

For poor to organize themselves in BEC runs counter to Empire.

Spirituality which transcends the 'bottom line'.