



Junia heute

Lead us not into temptation

...I already found this request in the "Our Father prayer" strange as a child. Does God really lead us into temptation? Does that fit in with a loving God, with the image of a kind Father in heaven that we have of God?

Temptation and seduction are terms commonly associated with the devil. In Genesis, it was the serpent who tempted Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit, and Eve in turn tempted Adam to taste that fruit as well. The consequences are well known: The two were expelled from paradise and Eve has since been regarded as the seductress and cause of the Fall. Seduction was declared a "woman's business", so to speak.

And the devil did not even stop at Jesus and wanted to tempt him to make bread out of stones or to throw himself from the battlements of the temple to demonstrate his divine power.

Such an approach suits a devil, a Satan, the personified evil - but that God, the Loving One, the Almighty also wants to tempt us, and that we have to ask him not to tempt us? That did not and does not enter my head.

Why would God want to test me to see if I am tempted to do something evil? Legally, such a course of action would be incitement to commit a crime - somehow not fitting for a loving God. Quite apart from the fact that God does not have to test us, because he knows us inside out, because he is omniscient.

I once got an attempt to explain that behind this request is the thought that God may help us in temptation and that we are thus asking for strength to resist temptation. But why don't we pray "guide us in temptation" or something similar, but instead express ourselves "from behind through the breast into the eye"? Jesus also spoke plainly to the disciples...

Fortunately I am not alone with this question. Recently I came across a book by Günther Schwarz, who deals with the translation of the gospels from the Aramaic and has published several books about it. It is called "The Gospel of Jesus". In it you can also read the "Our Father Prayer" in the original text.

The answer lies, among other things, in the fact that Jesus spoke to his disciples and to the people in his mother tongue, Aramaic. At that time, "official" prayers were said in Hebrew, but the "Our Father" was more of a private prayer and therefore Jesus most likely taught it

to his disciples in Aramaic. Jesus' words and deeds were only passed on orally for two generations - as was customary at the time. Only then was his life and work written down - albeit in Greek. At that time, however, Aramaic was as far removed from Greek as Arabic is from German today. It is obvious that some translation errors crept in or words were translated differently than originally said by Jesus.

In his book "The Gospel of Jesus", Günther Schwarz also shows very clearly that the "Our Father" in Aramaic was written in verse, almost poetically - a common form of passing on important content at that time. In this way, it was possible to convey a text without changing it much.

In the translation from the Aramaic, the "temptation passage" reads:

Save us from temptation!

That sounds coherent to me - I can live with this formulation, because it fits the image I have of my God. He saves us from temptation, helps us through it. He certainly does not protect us from temptation, but he does not leave us alone in it, and he is certainly not the one who leads us into it.

What I also find interesting is that the Italian Bishops' Conference has already changed the petition to "...do not leave us to temptation". Already in 2008 they had decided on the change for the new Bible translation, and in 2020 the changed text was also adopted in the Italian prayer books.

In 2018, the German Bishops' Conference made clear in a five-page statement why it wants to stick to the previous translation "and lead us not into temptation". On the one hand, there are philological and exegetical reasons: The previous translation is closer to the Greek original - although the Greek version does not come from Jesus, but is itself already a translation. There are also ecumenical reasons: The Lord's Prayer as the unifying prayer of Christians is also spoken in this translation in the Protestant Church. (Source: kiz-online.de)

So in Germany, for the time being - unfortunately - it will remain with the previous translation.

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Further book tips:

- Günther and Jörn Schwarz „Das Jesus-Evangelium“ ISBN 98-3-927950-09-2
- George M. Lamsa „Die Evangelien in Aramäischer Sicht“ ISBN 978-3-907119-03-7

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