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## **DOCTORATE THESIS**

### **THEOLOGY OF DIDACTIC AND POETIC BOOKS - A VISION OF CREATION**

-Summary-

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IASI  
2013

## **Introduction**

The theology of didactic and poetic books constantly occupies the forefront in the endeavors of biblical theologians and creation, in its turn, is a subject on which theological research bent with increasing attention in the last century.

The book of Job, Psalms, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes provide a dense material to our approach, that is why we have chosen them as basis and field for research.

Creation can be approached from a variety of perspectives; depending on the purpose, from cosmology to ecology the topic is very diverse. I preferred talking about a vision upon creation because the shaping of such a vision, from visionary to target horizon, hasn't been the object of concentrated concern in the last century's theology, but may be an element on which orthodox approach has the necessary attributes to provide a most necessary addition.

This paper tries to outline, on a limited segment of Scripture, a vision of God, His works and creation, searching for everything that supports the perceiving of these works by man, his integration in their line and sphere of activities, his positioning in the optimal angle of vision and action, his learning from biblical authors and characters, and the acquisition of the appropriate tools for all mentioned above. The extraction method used aims both at extracting conclusions and at its

traceability to the reader, for easier understanding and critic.

### **Part I - Etymological study**

Hebrew language uses many verbs and nouns related to the process and outcome of creation: בָּרָא (to create), בְּרִיאָה (creation), בְּרִיאוֹת (creatures), בּוֹרֵא (creator), עָשָׂה (to do), מַעֲשֵׂה (doing), עֲלִילָה (deed), פָּעַל (to work), פִּעַל and מְלַאכָה (work), יָסַד (to found), יָצַר (to knead), יָצַר (leaven), כּוֹן (strengthen, prepare), בָּנָה (to build), נָטַע (to plant), sketching the portrait of God in His works of creation, design, founding, modeling, reinforcement, doing and making generally, defining nuances that reveal Him as a peerless inventor, planner, worker, perfectionist and Artist in His work.

### **Part II - The Book of Job**

Dialogues are a classic form of ancient oriental literature for the presentation and discussion of a topic, the suffering of the righteous in this case.

Starting with Satan and culminating with God, all the characters of the book reveal by words their vision of creation.

Satan starts the study of the world in general and of Job in particular with prejudice and refuses the direct divine invitation to reconsider them. Driven by Satan, Job's wife interprets the righteous state less rationally but

emotionally, and proposes a solution limited to worldly life.

The three friends propose, based on the experience of past generations and personal observation, a set of solutions that prove lack of sufficient empathy with theological truth and the heart of their friend. Elihu speaks in the name of God and as His mediator. After briefly proving cataphatic knowledge of creation and divine providence, he tries through subtle and apophatic argument and to break through Job's ignorance and pride, assuring him that after returning to the true perspective upon creation, he will understand and appreciate it.

Job speaks theology in circumstances other than those in which his interlocutors speak, and yet - or perhaps because of that - he does it better. Waiting for his redeemer, he proves capable of introspection, analysis of his past life, of noticing details, of intuition, not losing general vision and detailed panorama of nature, history and the world.

The vision upon creation begins at conception and does not end with death. It remains, despite the vastness and consistency, just edges of His way, a whisper in the incomprehensible thunder of His voice. Human conclusions cannot be definitive, since man doesn't know wisdom, its road and its lodging. His measured share of wisdom is the fear of God and that of discernment, departing from evil. It therefore provides a

benchmark, a balance, reporting to the only one knowing and working wisdom, respectively a way to penetrate inside wisdom, the permanent effort to discern what's related to it or not. Chapter 23 also offers a solution: while the man cannot find God, but is confident that He knows his way, He supervises him, he can follow His road, His footsteps, guided by the words of His lips, trying, looking to overlap the two roads.

God placed above all, even creatures, a seal, so that they recognize (themselves) his work (MT reading) and admit their weakness (LXX reading). Job shows by his lengthy final speech that he correctly understood God's work, His gifts, but the effect was opposite than expected. He no longer expects wordy answer, but by a person, a mediator and redeemer, not Elihu, but God Himself, Whose final theophany, to speak only about one aspect of it, resolves the issue of wisdom as far as it is reserved to man, with a lexical minimum and sensory maximum segment.

If Job offers and invites to a basis for discussion, more emotional than theological, then strives to bring his friends on his frequency, proving that he had already taken into account all the elements on which they base their discourse, expecting something else and more from them, God invites Job to do the same in His case, Job but Job cannot because this basis for discussion, in addition to the emotional side, also means experience, superior panoramic and microscopic vision, power and

management science. At the end of divine speeches, Job no longer requires an explanation, but teaching, adopts solution of silence, and a quiet one without inner turmoil, and for the theoretical experience, it enlarged his heart – following to understand more afterwards, as Elihu said – making him an intercessor for others, focal point for family and his society.

The Church Fathers regard Job as messianic type and model of the complete man.

### **Part III - Book of Psalms**

The book of Psalms is defined by Saint Basil as *an angelic work, a heavenly inheritance, a communal treasury of good doctrine, giving each after his diligence what befit him (...), the perfect teaching (...), the key to mysteries*. The Psalter is traversed researching and analyzing elements of theology of creation, showing the method of research, trying to grasp as many laws, ordinances and constants, and in the end, because of the vast and various material, we present both the theology of creation and the result from browsing the Psalms.

Book of Psalms offers foundation for like apophatism and incomprehensibility of God, the relationship between the divine being and the divine energies, the rationality of creation, its sensitivity and aspirations; the owner of creation is the one who made it, the Father, and then the Son, man claiming the same through good governance which entitles him to the transfigured state one; possessions are relative in value

below the spiritual, the supreme possession being God Himself; human identity is bound to the matrix of his creation, otherwise it dissolves; the world is a place of communion with its fruit that foretaste of the one of saints with God, a place relationship with the divine name in prayer, of closeness and bonding with Him; it develops a theology and spirituality of the body and its participation in the spiritual life with different functions and different poses, of the heart, of the spiritual senses, of eternal life, of foretasting eschatological realities, contemplating His face and the divine light, of life path to true existence and it announces themes like the Good Shepherd, the vine, the rock, the water of life, Lord's food and chalice; verses are not lacking on the topics of the way of darkness, insinuation of the disease of sin in man, its ontological effects, as well as distancing from God or the foretaste of a God forgotten existence.

The Book of Psalms presents a diverse picture, showing the God and man, the chosen people and nations, believers and sinners, the righteous and the Messiah. Despite the "theoretical" non-viability of the relationship, God leaves to man and the relationship can be traced from Moses until the time of each psalmist. As Creator and Provider of providence, in view of the special status given to man and supported by Him, God wants an open and profound relationship and condemns human attempts to hide from Him, in the world or the depths of his inner being.

Discovering both richness and pleasure that spring from the divine wisdom, man most strongly attaches to this, accepts the discipline, wants life and to be placed on the path of life. For effective communication, the need for face to face communion with God need to be accomplished through use of the inner deeps vibrating strong enough to open a frequency on which the strong of mind and affection climbs up and His mercy climbs down. Psalm 118 talks at length about the relationship with God through virtue and especially his statutes, and Psalm 50 provides a ritual order of true repentance, certified as effective by the prophet Nathan.

At the root of the fear of God is the restraint of tongue. This fear leads to appetite to mitzvot and commandments. Without inner availability and virtue, God forbids man to give voice to the most basic theology. For thorough theological research, Psalms speak of a disposition, special appetite grown from the root of fear of God, which matures to understanding and happiness. In addition to this pathway, the believers' joy dwells in their integration into the wonderful works of God. The interface of that relationship with God is His name, His business card – until today he is called Hashemite by the chosen people, and the temple, where the tumult becomes peace and the potential sources of scandal, collected in the world, are lost.

He pours his riches to all, even if sinners harden with them, claim possession of them, depart from the



Giver and threaten those managed by believers. The beginning of secession lies in the loss of fear, followed by self-deception, devising plans, cunning words, wrongdoings, leading to duplicity, atheism, heresy. It's not just mind that sickens without this ingredient, but full heart, which grows to not recognize the true sources one should be afraid of and will of course, the most visible one in the Psalms.

Because of sin, man becomes animal, meat in the slaughterhouse of Hell, losing his glorified status, his reason, perverting his natural power of clinging to another person or being, behaving worse than animal. In his desire to have a conscious dialogue with man, God doesn't want to lead man like a horse or mule by the reins, because it does not match his status.

Because of their longstanding use in both Jewish and Christian worship, the Psalms are proving effective in communicating with God. In this communication inhabit various elements of creation, history, community, spirituality, which find expression in them. The frequency of communication and communion with God is based on His compassion, His goodwill to lean toward man who must open as wide as possible to communion and communication, to abstain from evil, whose springs are revealed to him, and follow some steps, some requirements in order to investigate and theologize, to get closer to God and be heard, to feel the joy of this relationship and to receive in his soul the hope of eternal

perpetuation of this relationship in the perspective of heavenly temple, after whose model the earthly one was built.

#### **Part IV - Book of Proverbs**

At the beginning of the book, King Solomon announces that proverbs, parables, teachings are for the young and the initiated, to know wisdom and self-mastery, deep words to achieve a guidance of conduct, righteousness, judgment and impartiality, so that the young and / or simply to receive cunningness, knowledge and careful thought and the wise - increased education and skill to fully understand the parables and deep teachings, subtle meanings from the words of the wise.

Using the known method of contrasts, Proverbs of Solomon reveal the two paths that man can go up or down, towards God, justice and happiness, or down into death by stupidity, lawlessness, immorality, and conspiracy. Solomon recommends following God's wish that the Law be imprinted into the heart, into the inner man by the special feeling that he always puts next to wisdom and justice; at first fear, respect, obedience, and then pleasure in good and hope.

Solomon uses many examples from nature, based on the laws and regularities observed in its bosom to substantiate practical and moral observations. Agur considers the observation of creation a great fatigue because God's knowledge differs from the human, its

standard is higher, it doesn't support additions, so his balance is the life situated along two lines: staying away from the desert words and the measure of the strictly necessary in the worldly needs. His hesitations themselves in counting certain elements demonstrate a certain limit and relativity in the science accumulated by of human.

The Proverbs draw spiritual steps from childhood to the stability in wisdom, proven by righteousness. Each step is outlined with people involved in education, its methods and means, blessed fruit and poisoned temptations.

Lack of wisdom is mocking ignorance, stubborn and careless, willful and contemptuous, payable expensive when circumstances demand on the rejected and despised. Haste and folly, in word and deed, don't bring expected results. Through neglect, pride, self-sufficiency, combined with sensuality, after the sweetness of the beginnings in wisdom may follow loss of vital force, time, wealth and social position; the rich have no patience or internal sense of proportions, they surround themselves by many companions, lacking in quality that they despise.

The wise possesses the science of priorities and order, of ritual of actions, he slowly accumulates material and spiritual, without unnecessary idealisms, but by labor, and sustainable; he knows to privately enjoy the fruits acquired on both plans, and he is a

blessing for the community. Guarding his heart, he accumulates knowledge using discernment, understanding, and does not allow evil to approach, but he has the spiritual amplitude to cover the mistake of the neighbor, as righteousness opens up person, while evil impoverishes one, losing judgment and thereby losing the ability to acquire science.

Although it knows nothing, stupidity presents with confidence and guile its offer of sin, its vain concerns leading to Sheol. Lacking humility, refusing reproof, the stupid is denied access to wisdom, and then he denounces it. The sluggard has many aspirations and plans, but his immobility cancels them all and his intelligence is consumed on justifying his state. Craftiness is based on hatred of God and neighbor, which leads to a splitting of self that is manifested by word. It seeks shortcuts, slanting, evil roads, using the heart's lack of strength to lower man to animal. The fool and the stupid use worldwide as an outlet of his uncontrolled anger and of his unrest, unlike wisdom, which works in the secret depth of the soul.

Wisdom is fully compatible with the human soul, which opens up to it, enjoys it, and has a natural aversion to evil. Wisdom's open invitation offers stability, depth, and if accepted, it enhances man and all become clear to him, evident, straight, gaining the science of strength and sustainable development. Wisdom has a wide range of uses, from brute force optimization and efficiency,

continuing with predictive power, to prevent dangers, even death, because its path is only life without death.

Silence and measured word, advice and rebuke are favorable to it and the word by which is manifested reflects the wise's soul, needing to be calibrated even in tone, volume, so that the meaning be transmitted and received accurately and constitute a veritable fountain of life. The transmitter of the message sends it in accordance with his inner self and cares for quality and reliability of the courier for the effect to be the expected one. In addition, he tries to pedagogically soften the form that will show the word and not be violent in transmitting the message, making evil with good content. Recipient must be able to moderately delight the most enjoyable posts, because the excessive sweetness can sicken him. State of mind has a tendency to influence the reception of the message, which hurts or helps, depending on the case.

The glory of God is visible in His transcendence, in concealing wisdom, and the kings' is in its research and popularization. God oversees and maintains the succession of wisdom, through the righteous, from generation to generation. He allows its understanding when appreciated, valued, and a sign that it is working in the righteous spirit is generosity. God does not like shortcuts and trickery, so when justice is not observed, there is punishment, and when it is, blessing comes. Standards and measures are to Him, and human works

acquire foundation when they entrust Him their carrying out.

Always seconded by skill / judgment (בִּינָה), wisdom (חִכְמָה chokma) is the means by which man goes on the path of life that leads upwards to avoid the path of hell, which goes downwards. It offers novice cleverness, science and insight, and the advanced, extra information and advice. It begins with the fear of God, continues with understanding the use of this attitude toward Him, with valuing and attaching to it, giving then fruit to the virtue of righteousness. Righteousness brings the delighting of the soul in wisdom and thus completes itself. God follows the righteous' path with interest, assisting him, saving him, to finally offer him the hope of eternal life. Inner tremor, knowledge, insight and wisdom, righteousness and inner extension, in contrast to imbecility, foolishness, stupidity and madness, are the practical tools practically described and studied, in different and eloquent situations, in the perspective of life and hope, respectively emptiness and death.

### **Part V of - Ecclesiastes**

In his book, Qoheletul is defined as the one who speaks, teaches the crowd, the people, so the conclusion: הֶבֶל hebel, vanity, and with it, the working method, not like in a human study, to validate the result, but to recommend the method along with the conclusion.

What Ecclesiastes does is a theology of creation, focusing on creation and not theology. For the devout believer, the speech doesn't soak of the presence of God and His works, which only binds and seasons the King's words, but the reader is directed to a line of known and accessible thought, and sensitively left to the conclusions to appropriate them on the authority of Ecclesiastes, anointed in a position that allowed him to travel the path of wisdom in all its complexity and richness, with maximum intensity.

In contrast to the double theophany received by, nothing is considered valuable and as a result, worthy of effort, hence the conclusion of futility, and in the perspective of death, uniform, universal and painfully unifying, Solomon has no definitive solution, but suggests two attitudes, one having a relationship with God the Creator and Judge and the other with enjoying the terms of life.

Qualitatively and quantitatively, the man is overwhelmed by the large mass of information. Its powers from God push him towards apofatism, where man remains, arrived at the borders of contemplation, to the judgment of God, having at hand the means fear of Him and righteousness in the Law.

During this way, one can enjoy time to time given by God to enjoy the fruits of his labor, but to a degree, preparing early extent for judgment. He must select everything he opens his heart to, seek wisdom in

order to make life easier, not to let paradoxes, inequities confuse him, push him to anger, thoughtlessness, trickery, to seek balance in all, avoiding the excesses, both in justice commission, which may ruin, but also in sin, which attracts sudden manifestation of divine wrath. The wise welcomes the seemingly negative things like rebuke, tears, patience, even death, and seeks to sweeten life building upon the advantages of brotherhood.

Unable to penetrate the divine wisdom, sinners resort to deceit as unnatural and mechanistic way of reasoning, although human meaning must rely on brute force to supplement what wisdom does constantly and relentlessly by itself, and finally, madness exhausts, it affects the most elementary cognitive processes.

Qohelet is not bothered by the fact that he could not reach final conclusions, left to God, nor he gives up searching for or changes camp to fools, because he wants to remain open to purpose linked to God. He recommends life open to God and His commandments, so that what comes after death to contain hope, because one cannot be inferior inanimate nature.

St. Nicholas Velimirovic says that *the one who reads the book of nature without spirit or understanding, reads all about death, sees only death, he gets death. And the one who sees nature as receiving a material thing, and not as a perceptible reflection in the mirror of the spirit, that one sees no more than first class pupil ... all knowledge leads him to idolizing spelling and letters*



*without any meaning.* Through his vast and unequaled experience, Ecclesiastes seeks to prevent man from sinking into endless and meaningless spelling, offering verified conclusions, beyond the letter that kills.

### **Conclusions**

This paper tries to outline, on a limited segment of Scripture, a vision of God, His works and creation, searching for everything that supports the perceiving of these works by man, his integration in their line and sphere of activities, his positioning in the optimal angle of vision and action, his learning from biblical authors and characters, and the acquisition of the appropriate tools for all mentioned above.

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