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PhD THESIS SUMMARY

EBED-YAHWEH (*ISAIAH* 53) AND THE PASSIONS OF THE LORD IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

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This PhD thesis is part of the Old Testament biblical research, proposing to explore two themes that are connected in the linearity of the two Testaments: the passion of the Lord's Servant (Ebed Yahweh) from the book of Isaiah and the Passion of the Savior Jesus Christ emblazoned in the synoptic gospels. The main objectives of our research exercise come from this linearity: highlighting the portrait of Ebed Yahweh in the theological and prophetic horizon of the book Isaiah, observing whether or not the Christ passions correspond or not in the anticipated way in the passions of the Lord's Servant and the use of Deutero-Isaiah in the synoptic Gospels.

Our approach seems somewhat straightforward at first glance, but by going into the theological problems from the historical, prophetic and isagogical point of view, it will be possible to observe the complexity of this research. The use of the Old Testament in the New Testament highlights a thematic and justified correspondence on the foundation of prophecy, of those preached by the prophets and fulfilled in the Holy Gospels. This framework circumscribes the whole history of humanity.

In the introduction of the subject, the passions in the light of the Old Testament prophets, we must notice that this statement seems paradoxical for the following reasons: first of all it is applied an unusual language that uses a direct style sometimes contoured in different metaphorical figures, and the presence of a contradictory combination between some texts in which the Messiah appears in a double hypostasis: one as the supreme Victor, and the other as a Mediator disfigured by suffering. Exeges and theologians have discovered in the Gospels 250 quotations from the Old Testament. Some of these are quite long. Besides, the specialists also included 900 allusions and references, both in phrases and facts, as well as in examples. The place occupied by the Old Testament in the New Testament is therefore considerable. These results received a double interpretation, negativist and positivist, respectively. The first interpretation is caused by some critical scholars who said that Jesus did not bring anything new, that He had an identical teaching with the Torah, the Mosaic Law, and the prophets. The positive side of these considerations is that Jesus in His Messianic activity decided to fulfill the divine will, which is why He always appealed to what the Scripture said. According to the primary sermons, Jesus was identified with 'Ebed Yahweh, who "died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor 15: 3b). This soteriological vision of the sufferings of Christ, on the line of the theology of the Lord's Servant in Isaiah, is a characteristic of the Church of the first centuries. But what is the reason for this connection created between Jesus and the image of the Lord's Servant? Is it entirely a meditation of the Church, or was it even assumed by Jesus, and then deepened by the Christian community?

Some scholars refuse to accept any reference made by the Savior to the Lord's Servant theology. Others, however, attribute this connection to the "Jesus of

History" who would have seen in His sufferings the fulfillment of the expectations of the law that gives His life for "the many" (Is 53:12). This dilemma automatically refers to the discussion of Jesus' consciousness of his own messianic identity, in which many schools of thought were manifested.

At the same time, however, a reference is made to another issue, which deals equally with the study of the predictions, namely the way in which the texts of the Lord's Servant were interpreted in the pre-Christian period, and the way in which this theology is reflected in the other Gospels. In this way, we will be able to see if we can speak of a messianic interpretation of the texts of Isaiah, which would imply some expectation from the followers of the various Messianic currents about a suffering Messiah. If this current exists, we need to see if Jesus appealed to this way of thinking or not. And if this way of receiving Isaiah is lacking, we will have to realize whether Jesus himself introduced this Messianic view of the Lord's Servant or ignored it in accordance with the trends of the time. Ultimately, we must see if Jesus appealed to the image of the Lord's Servant when He spoke of the suffering, death, and resurrection of the Son of Man, that is, if He equated the image of the Servant of the Lord with that of the Son of Man, understood as a Messianic title.

The relevance of the researched theme lies primarily in the fact that it theologically questions, on biblical arguments, the linearity between the two Testaments on the basis of the anticipation of prophecy and its fulfillment. Practically, in this equation, the man is welcomed and brought "home" through the redemption work of the Savior Jesus Christ. Desensitized because of the consumerist society in which it operates, the promise and fulfillment may be criteria of the legitimacy of its significance in this world.

The secularized man is not a man touched by this phenomenon, sickened and stigmatized by specific characteristics, but is the ordinary man, for whom the manifestation of religious beliefs and feelings has acquired entirely different valences than those that the traditional society knew. Probably that is why most theologians use the word secularization, associated with contemporary times, or contemporary man, but without realizing that this phenomenon is not a disappearance of the sacred / religious, but a mutation, a metamorphosis of religious manifestations. No society has become secularized until the final liquefaction of faith in the transcendent and supernatural entities. Even in a secular society, there must be a certain system that ensures the integration of the fundamental values, their ritual expression and the emotional adaptation required by catastrophes, deception and death.

The central objective of the present work is to present the linearity between the Messianic prophecies of the Passion of Isaiah and the acts of Christ's passion in the Synoptic Gospels, using an appropriate research methodology. That is why I presented the methods, techniques and procedures used in this scientific

approach. Using the biblical scientific approach as a reference point, I will use the specific research methods of this kind:

a) *Exegetic-hermeneutical method* through which there were interpreted in a biblical and dogmatic perspective the Old and New Testament texts referring to Ebed Yahweh and the passions of Christ. The interpretation of the various passages in the Psalms was made on the basis of the works of the Holy Fathers, the Romanian theologians, but also on the works of modern and contemporary theologians belonging to the Western space. Special emphasis was placed on the diachronic exegesis, by orientating my thesis towards the author(s) of the biblical texts and the context in which they appeared, but also on the synchronous one by focusing on biblical text and recipients as their receivers. Thus, attention was paid both to the intention of the Bible authors and to the intent of the text among its recipients, with great relevance to the contextualization of theology about Ebed Yahweh.

b) *Systematical-analytical method* by which we aim to highlight analysis of each concept in the register of our attention in the horizon of theology.

c) *Historical method*, which has helped in structuring the prophetic framework of Ebed Yahweh.

Regarding the considerable amount of research undertaken on Pauline anthropology, the PhD thesis resorted in consulting with bibliographic resources. Thus, in close connection with the fundamental notions with which this work operates, are the historical sources and the specialty literature. For a more complete approach of the subject and conceptual delimitations, I have used various dictionaries and magazine and high reputation western journal articles, namely: *Biblical Dictionary*, Vol. I, translated from French by Constantin Moisa, Stephanus Publishing House, Bucharest, 1995; *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Ed.), Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, 2005; *Dictionary of the Later, New Testament & Its Developments*, Ralph P. Martin and Peters H. Davids (Eds.), InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, 1997; *Harper Collins Bible Dictionary, Revised Edition*, Paul J. Achtemeier (Ed.), Harper San Francisco, New York, 1996; *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Ed.), Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, 2005.

The present thesis proposes an exhaustive analysis of the prophetic linearity between Deutero-Isaiah and the synoptic Gospels. In conclusion, only the following scenarios are possible for accepting an influence of the Lord's Servant theology in the predictions of the Passion and Resurrection:

(a) the texts of the Lord's Servant were interpreted in the Messianic sense in pre-Christian Judaism, Jesus has seen and used this interpretation, the preaching of the Passion and the resurrection reflect this theology;

(b) the texts of the Lord's Servant were interpreted in the Messianic sense, Jesus knew and used this interpretation, but this theology does not emerge from the preaching of the Passion and Resurrection;

~~the texts of the Lord's Servant were interpreted in the Messianic sense, but Jesus did not use this~~

(c) the texts of the Lord's Servant were interpreted in the Messianic sense, but Jesus did not use this interpretation, neither in the preaching nor in the rest of His teachings, but the Church introduced this meditation into Christian theology;

(d) the texts of the Lord's Servant were interpreted in the Messianic sense, but Jesus did not use this interpretation; instead, this theology is present in the preaching of the Passion and Resurrection, which transforms them into the creations of the Church;

(e) the texts of the Lord's Servant were not interpreted in the Messianic sense, Jesus being the one who introduced this interpretation, the preachings of the Passion and the Resurrection reflecting this theology;

(f) the texts of the Lord's Servant were not interpreted in the Messianic sense, but Jesus introduced this interpretation, but this theology does not emerge from the preaching of the Passion and Resurrection;

(g) the texts of the Lord's Servant were not interpreted in a Messianic sense, so neither did Jesus use this interpretation, nor in the preaching, nor in the rest of His teaching, the Church being the one who introduced this meditation in Christian theology;

(h) the texts of the Lord's Servant were not interpreted in the Messianic sense, so neither did Jesus understand them in this way; Instead, this theology is present in the preaching of the Passion and Resurrection, which transforms them into the creations of the Church.

This reconstitution might seem exaggerated at first glance, introducing hypothetical scenarios that were not supported by anyone. However, taking each element, we find that he found supporters among biblical scholars, making these logical combinations plausible at the theoretical level; thus, even if they have not been sustained so far, could be invoked in the future in the analysis of the relationship between the Passion and Resurrection predictions and the texts of the Lord's Servant in Isaiah. But the implications for the theology of the preaching of the Passion and the Resurrection exist only if we can demonstrate the existence within them of some elements of the Lord's Servant theology. So far, we can leave

from a safe and accepted premise by the entire scientific world: the image of the Lord's Servant in Isaiah was used by the Primary Church to interpret the meaning of Jesus' death (and resurrection), which is evidenced by many biblical texts (e.g., I Cor. 15: 3b). We also assume that the preaching of the Passion and Resurrection, in their evangelical form, is the real speech of the Savior, as demonstrated in a separate chapter; thus eliminating the final scenario of those listed above, which has quite a lot of support.

It remains to be discussed whether this association is based on the common use of Messianic interpretation of the Lord's Servant, the teaching of the Savior (in general), or His (in particular) predictions, or the simple attempt of the Church to find a sense of the death of Jesus in the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

What was profitable for our research was the fact that the Orthodox theological fulfillment of the Passion of Christ is accomplished only at the time of the resurrection. The reality of resurrection is the core of the Old Testament prophecies about the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, of Christ's predictions of suffering, death and resurrection, and above all of the act of passion, from the beginning of suffering to death, finding its purpose in fulfilling the event resurrection. The suffering acquired as a new experience of Christic life now is the only way in which the kingdom of God could be proclaimed, present and real in the history of humanity. The Christological Passions described by the synoptic Gospels have their purpose, both as a messianic mission made for the salvation of humanity, and as an end to the price paid by God for salvation in the great act of resurrection. Therefore, God had to become a man and die on the cross to give satisfaction to both justice and divine mercy and thus to maintain the moral order of the universe. His death on the cross gave God the moral possibility to forgive. "The means by which to enter into the Kingdom of God already present is the forgiveness or atonement of the punishment received through the sacrifice of Christ by His death on the cross. But only Resurrection makes sense to the Cross. The resurrection of Jesus defines His capacity of eternal Emperor, which establishes an immortal Kingdom, which here is unfulfilled and in an eschatological expectation. The kingdom through eschatological consumption will be full in the future. Eschatological consumption represents the same God that has acted in history and will finally establish His kingdom. Therefore, in the person and mission of Jesus, the kingdom of God erupted in history through the fulfillment of all Messianic prophetic hopes; but now It is about to come into eschatological consumption in the future, at a time known only by God.

If the Kingdom is the reign of God, then every aspect of the Kingdom must come from the character and action of God. The presence of the Kingdom must be understood from the nature of God's present work and the future of the Kingdom is the redeeming manifestation of His royal reign at the end of the age. God will fulfill the eschatological hope of the present Kingdom through the final action of establishing the Kingdom at the end of the age. The inauguration of the present Kingdom that Jesus did in a particular way through His passions demonstrates that God is active in history in a redeeming manner towards His people. "This does not clear the eschatological aspect of the Kingdom from its content, because God who has acted in history in the person and mission of Jesus will again act at the end of the age to manifest His glorious and saving power. Both the present and the future present the Kingdom of God, because both the present and the future are the scene of God's redemptive work. "The Kingdom of God requires man's relationship with God and that is why it came through the mission of Jesus, which through His suffering, He overcame the evil and freed people from its power. The kingdom will eventually include the ultimate redemption of man, who will also be revived to eternal life. "If the Kingdom of God is the divine redemptive act of seeking the lost, bringing salvation to those who received it, but judgment to those who rejected it, then we must draw a final conclusion: The kingdom is entirely the action of God not man's work. It is self-evident that the eschatological manifestation of the Kingdom will be God's action altogether. It is a "pure miracle". It will transcend all previous human experience and be so distinct from human historical events that, to describe it, modern experts use the phrase "beyond history." The present Kingdom is a gift of salvation, a gift of forgiveness and a gift of righteousness. The passions of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the form of final fulfillment, in the eschatological consumption of the Kingdom, is the dynamic rule of God that reveals itself in history through Messianic salvation. And in the old age of mortality and sin, Jesus introduced the age of the Kingdom, and the age to come, eschatological consumption belongs to the future. So, the Kingdom of God that Jesus established through the path of passion in human history was the dynamic rule of God, who invaded the evil age with the blessings of the Messianic age, which would manifest again at the end of the age, in order to bring this Messianic salvation to fulfillment.

The reality of Jesus' death, the despair of the disciples, the unexpected and persuasive manifestations of His presence after the resurrection, the fact that Jesus interprets the Scripture as referring to Him, the spiritual conviction that convinced them all when He spoke to them - all these were convincing evidence that through the person of Jesus something new happened on earth. The Lord, through the

messianic age, shared the prophetic tension between history and eschatology, that is, the work of God in the Kingdom of history with the mission of leading it to eschatological consumption. The ultimate goal of this eschatological consumption is to gather the people of God and to bring the redeemed by the sacrifice of Christ to the eternal life of the apocalyptic Kingdom. But this Kingdom can only be manifested after the resurrection and ascension of Christ.

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