

SUMMARY

On the publications of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Teodor Bozidarov Stoychev, in connection with the announced competition for the academic position of “Professor” at Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen, field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.4. Religion and Theology (Biblical Studies - New Testament), promulgated in State Newspaper 32/09.04.2024.

I. MONOGRAPHS

1. God manifest in the flesh. Current problems of New Testament Christology. Shumen, 2021, ISBN 978-619-201-487-2.

The present monographic study aims primarily to examine how some of the most frequently cited New Testament texts illuminate the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. To what extent do they give us reason to affirm His divine worthiness. In the exposition I have addressed issues relevant to Old Testament monotheism as well as various ways of defining the Christological question.

I believe that in the two main corpora of New Testament texts, the writings of St. John and St. Paul - Jesus Christ is portrayed through divine characteristics. The designation Son of God, considered in the light of Logos Christology, has left the usual horizontal connotations of meaning and is thought of in unity with God as Father. He participates in the creation of the world, for „all things were made through him“ - the visible and the invisible (John 1:3; Col. 1:16).

In Phil. 2:6 we read that He is equal with God, though it is not too clear how we are to understand equality, since the Father please to have all divine fullness dwell in Him (Col. 1:19). Col. 2:9 is particularly difficult with the clarification “bodily”. Is it in a purely Adoptionist sense that the Father is pleased at a certain point for the deity to become incarnate in Jesus, or is the Father pleased at a certain historical point for the Son, the Logos, to become incarnate/embodied. I think the second sense is preferable because both Philippians and Colossians clearly distinguish the pre-eternal Son from the Father.

What is not clear is the modus of Their unity. One of the key verses, not the only one, however, is John 10:30, 38. The first verse ("I and the Father are one") may mean "one in action," for according to the Savior's words He is sanctified by the Father (John 10:36). The second verse also does not clearly convey the way in which they are related. That the Son is in the Father finds support from the very first chapter of John's gospel, where it is recorded that the Logos is "in/with God," but how then are we to understand the words "the Father is in me." The

explanation that may help us is to recognize another translation of the phrase - "because the Father is with/through Me, I am with/through him." It therefore takes on a more relational sense, or to put it another way, a non-ontological sense. Nevertheless, it is striking that the Evangelist John attempts elsewhere to suggest a particularly close relationship of Son and Father.

In the two literary corpora under consideration, the sonship of Jesus Christ has been given a specific meaning. The apostle Paul completes the texts of John's gospel by calling the Son God-"and concerning the Son, 'Your throne, O God, is eternal...' " (Heb. 1:8). The tension in the New Testament texts remains, however. On the one hand, we read that "all things were created through him and for him" (Col. 1:16), and on the other that "the Son himself will submit to him who had subjected all things to him, that God may be all in all" (q.v.) (1 Cor. 15:28).

Of the divine dignity of Jesus Christ the apostolic man Ignatius of Antioch speaks in an unmistakable way. In addition to being the first to use the phrase "the sufferings of my God," like St. John he writes that the Son proceeded from the one Father, dwelt "with (or "in") the One, and returned to the One. The various readings leave no doubt that the martyr takes the Son to be God.

On the other hand, the texts of St. Clement of Rome and the Shepherd of Hermas create confusion in this picture. If the message of St. Clement is not christologically engaged and therefore the Savior stands in the shadow of the Father, in the Shepherd things are complicated by traces of Adoptionist terminology.

Generalization is difficult in any case, since we are not fully aware of the extent to which the New Testament texts were known and used in the time of the apostolic men. Also the question of the existence of various traditions connected with the Saviour's speeches cannot be ignored. The New Testament texts themselves are polyvalent, which is the main reason for the different interpretations that scholars offer.

2. The Old Testament in the light of archaeological evidence. Shumen, 2024, ISBN 978-619-201-754-5.

In this monographic study I have not intended to prove or disprove the historical reliability of the Old Testament narratives, but rather to view them objectively in the light of material culture. This is an established approach in world archaeology, which is not to say that we cannot draw on results derived by leading archaeologists. However, the discussion is undeniably complex and ongoing.

Basically, the exposition boils down to key historical persons and events of God's chosen people: Abraham, the Exodus, the invasion of Canaan, the reigns of David and Solomon, etc. until the fall of the southern kingdom. Alongside these themes I have tried to examine the origins and development of the beliefs of the Jewish people. For this purpose I have referred to biblical texts as well as to external sources, including iconographic ones.

The narratives of the patriarchs, even assuming they bear faint echoes of oral tradition, are highly ideologized, bearing the marks of later editorial intervention. Certainly one cannot reconstruct the patriarchal era on the basis of archaeological or historical evidence. However, I do not think that its extreme denial should be accepted either, for the same reasons - the ambiguous reason of the sources.

Concerning the life of the Jews in Egypt, one can assume the presence of a proto-Jewish group in the then culture center. The topography of the Exodus reflects the Ramesside period, as evidenced by the "stele of the four hundredth anniversary," the Anastassi VI manuscript, the stele of Merneptah, the four-roomed house of Western Thebes. The inscriptions of Seti I and Ramses II mention numerous wars against "shasu" (nomadic herdsman) who were located in Canaan. Therefore, during this period the number of nomads in these places increased, which is why Merneptah's campaign against Canaan may have been caused as a result of their disturbances, which is why he conquered many cities, among which he defeated a tribal group called "Israel." During the Ramses period, the ethnogenesis of Israel was not yet complete. In all likelihood, it was closely related to those groups from southern Lebanon that were in Egypt during the late Ramses period. It is known that through its military campaigns Egypt procured manpower for the spectacular building projects of the pharaohs. Such manpower was also taken from Canaan. It is difficult to assume the existence of a separate large homogeneous group with a definite ethnic identity, such as is spoken of in the pages of the Old Testament with regard to the Jews. The biblical image of the Israelite people having their own leader and a certain autonomy does not correspond to the information we have about the New Kingdom.

Despite the difficulty scholars face in trying to illuminate the story of the entry into Canaan, and in the context of the biblical narratives, there is not enough reliable information to support it the way we read it. The reconstruction I would advocate is closer to the view that Israel was a mixture of indigenous Canaanites who established their own settlements in the central highlands with a stable material culture and agrarian life, escaped slaves from Egypt who can be assumed to be the bearers of those traditions that underlie the forming ethnic identity, and indigenous foreigners.

The monarchical period is no less complex to explain and synchronize with the biblical texts because of the lack of indisputable material grounds for doing so. Despite attempts by nihilists to dismiss the historical information concerning the reigns of David and Solomon entirely, a large number of scholars are united around the view that circumstances such as the part of the material culture of Hazor, Gezer, and Megiddo, the presence of expanded settlements and urban planning, and the presence of a strong authority in Judah and the Negev capable of controlling trade routes and building fortresses can be linked to a strengthened central monarchy of this period.

The religious life of both kingdoms was dynamic, as the biblical texts attest. I am not yet sure of the hypothesis that Jewish religiosity goes from polytheism to monotheism. I think that the archaeological conclusions are not without a preconceived premise, namely that the above tendencies are evident behind the biblical texts. The desire to apply the evolutionary hypothesis to the topic at hand is not justified because monotheistic ideas coexisted with polytheistic ones during that era. Research, leaving the prevailing interest in large administrative and religious buildings, showed that the life of the common man was religiously engaged, adapting various practices in order to sanctify everyday life. The attempt to identify iconographic profiles with Yahweh is, in my view, unconvincing.

3. Early Christian identity: issues and challenges. Shumen, 2024, 978-619-201-757-6.

To speak of the identity of Christianity from apostolic times is as strange as it is imperative. It is strange because it is an established view in our circles that the same doctrine has been steadily handed down from Christ through the apostles to our own time. It follows that today we hear the authentic voice of the Saviour through the teaching of the Church. On the other hand, in Western biblical scholarship, and not only in Western biblical scholarship, this understanding is increasingly being criticized. A more balanced view of this same, kerygmatic integrity-denying strand holds that there were opposing groups in early Christianity, with only at a later stage was one able to prevail. The more radical reading is that there were no identifiable groups at all, but an unceasing stream of traditions that opposed and often coexisted.

Hence my central question is: can we speak of a leading strand of early Christianity coming directly from Jesus Christ that preserved His teachings? When did Christianity itself separate from Judaism?

To this end, I turn to the sources which testify to the attitude of the Roman authorities towards Judaism, and to the attitude of Judaism itself towards the Gentiles. I turn to the question of the acceptance and place of non-Jews in the newly formed Christian community, the controversies that had to do with the Law as a remaining means of salvation apart from the person of Jesus. I mainly stick to the texts of the Apostle Paul, though not exclusively, since they are most acutely engaged with the controversy surrounding the conversion of the Gentiles and hence with the theme of the preservation of the basic principles of Jewishness.

This analysis shows that it is incorrect to speak of the identity of early Christianity as a commonly agreed whole formed on commonly shared principles and understandings. Rather, those early years were characterized by a desire to make sense of the eschatological experience that comes with Christ. Old Testament eschatology is not itself a dogmatic constitution, but an intense expectation of a better future that implies, though not necessarily, the participation of an eschatological figure such as the Messiah, not necessarily a descendant of David, as well as a vague, not-so-implicit inclusion of Gentiles in that joy. Any desire to bring forth a universally formed and acknowledged faith is doomed to unwarranted difficulties. The conclusion is compelled by the existence of diverse traditions, relations which were not coherent, which in all probability were pursued in parallel, simultaneously, and at certain times came to internal antagonisms. Nevertheless, I believe that this new community found in the person of Jesus Christ a defining principle for the formation of a self-consciousness that provoked processes of separation from Judaism. It is in this understanding that I am wary of those modern scholars who reserve for Christianity the features of Judaism. Although there were believers in Christ who held to their old foundations of spirituality, the New Testament books, especially the letters of the apostle Paul, give us reason to assume that the idea of the Church as a new type of Israel finds ground. This is why I am of the opinion that we can speak for Christianity, for otherwise we remain without Christ.

The controversy over the time when Christianity separated from Judaism can hardly be resolved so clearly and simply. There is reason to assume that in the second half of the first century the processes of separation were in place. Moreover, the personality of the Saviour embodies eventful features that testify to a paradigmatic replacement of the old model by a new one. First, regardless of the different Christological emphases of the New Testament books, they all see in the eschatological Christ a being that differs, in my view, from the messianic connotations coming from the Old Testament. If in the books of Israel the Expected One is an earthly, ideal proxy for God, in the New Testament He is a heavenly co-regent. At the same time, this divine representative dies willingly to

save mankind. The only begotten dies for all to bring them into the kingdom of God. This radical thought creates a new relationship with God. It is in the light of these basic motifs-the divine dignity of Jesus and his death and resurrection-that the new identifying features of Christianity must be seen.

II. Training Manual

1. Introduction to the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament. Shumen, 2018. ISBN 978-619-201-234-2.

RESUME: The Introductory New Testament lecture course is designed to provide theological students with up-to-date information on issues that are part of their scholarly pursuits. It does not cover all the issues that are part of introductory New Testament studies, but combines topics from the private and general introductions. Special attention is given to the epistles of St. Paul the Apostle, and topics relevant to the theology in his respective book are included. In this way a synthesis is sought between the historical and theological reading of the themes. The choice of this approach is intended to highlight the relationship between history and theology.

III. Studies

1. The Heavenly Image of Jacob: Metaphor or Reality. // HC, issue 2. 2024. ISSN 1311 – 9761.

The contemporary discourse on the question of a second divine power that may have existed alongside God is particularly dynamic. In the light of this problematic stands the concept of the importance that the person of Jacob has received in Jewish thought. Consideration of his place in the various written testimonies is necessitated by the opinions expressed that in them he is either deified or elevated to the status of an angel. In the present paper, therefore, I dwell on frequently cited passages and try to suggest other possible readings.

The desire of prominent theologians to deify the image of James cannot find unquestioned support in the texts they often cite. The fact that he is on the throne, or receives a certain reverence, still proves nothing. There is undoubted weight in that passage which speaks of Jacob's creative abilities (Leviticus Rabbah 36:4), though if it is seen in the light of texts which speak of the world being created because of Jacob, this already refers to another sense of the above passage - because of Jacob/Israel's enormous role in communicating God's unique revelation to the world, he is somehow providentially complicit in God's

sanctifying acts. I think that because of Jacob's co-ecumenical function in relation to all that God does in/for the world, he is like an idea/logos with/in God. So too the Church realizes the actions of God in the world. I think there is an ideological relationship between the Church and Jacob/Israel. It is not impossible that some of the texts have a concept of Jacob as a pre-existent angel, possibly to indicate his pre-eternal predestination. In this connection, it can be assumed that the proposed discourse entails the question of possible influences both from Christianity on Judaism and from Judaism on Christianity. It is quite possible that the antagonism created the ideological constructs I am considering. Their resolution, however, must be sought not at the ontological but at the phenomenal level.

2. Orthodox biblical studies and the historical-critical method. Introductory study. - In. *The Interpretation of Scripture in the Orthodox Church: The Inclusion of Contextual Hermeneutics in Orthodox Biblical Studies*. Shumen, 2021. ISBN: 978-619-201-505-3.

In this study to the book by the Serbian professor of New Testament, I advocate the need for a discussion of methodological issues that, in my view, pose dividing lines between systematic and biblical theology. The traditional reading of the biblical texts through the writings of the Fathers and with the help of their vocabulary needs, in my opinion, to be reconsidered. I believe that a narrower contextual reading is also important because it helps to realize the real problems of the texts being interpreted. It also assists in a more objective assessment of the ideological dynamics they reflect. I therefore point out some of the weaknesses that I think the so-called 'traditional/ecclesiological method' brings, as well as the imperfections of more recent approaches. My desire is to seek a more balanced way of interpreting the biblical texts.

3. *The Dialogue About Christ Among Three Apostolic Fathers (Clement of Rome, the Didache and Ignatius of Antioch on the Doctrine of Christ)*. - In: Ivanov, E., Naydenov, I. *Der heilige Methodius, Bulgarien und Europa. Festschrift anlässlich des 50. Methodius-Gedenktags in Ellwangen und des 10. Jahrestags der Gründung des Südosteuropäisch-Bulgarischen Kulturinstituts in Ellwangen*. Brill, 2023. ISSN 2628-9741.

I have placed for consideration three apostolic men: St. Clement of Rome, St. Ignatius of Antioch and the Shepherd of Hermas. The reason is their historical proximity to the time in which the books of the New Testament were composed.

Therefore, I believe that the information that comes from them gives us another perspective on what is written in the New Testament books. This metatextuality further illuminates what was said in the previous era. Before us are three different contexts of writing and different authors with their individual specificities. In St. Clement of Rome we can hardly find a deification of Christ that is possibly due to the purpose of writing, a circumstance that is also true of the Shepherd of Hermas. With the latter things are still more complicated, for once he speaks of God as creator, another time of the pre-existent Spirit who created all creation, and a third time of the Son as sustaining the whole world. The language is to some extent triadological, inasmuch as we find the three persons mentioned with their designated functions. At the same time, the theology of the Son is close to an Adoptionist platform. We find the deepest Christological insights in St. Ignatius Antioch, who unquestionably calls Jesus God and defines him in a way close to the later period of the fathers.

4. History, Theology and Mission in the Epistles of St. Paul" - In. Christianity and Culture, 2022, no. 8, pp. 100-116. ISSN 1311 – 9761.

The main task of this study is to trace some of the major themes in the Epistles of St. Paul that are in relation to the Old Testament. Are they a real historical continuation of the Old Testament historical-theological perspective or are they a radical departure caused by the apostle's mission? To achieve this, the study will be divided into two main parts. The first will address the question of how history motivates theology. How historical narratives function to sustain and constitute desirable theological horizons, which in turn are conditioned by the historical situation. The second part, which is divided into subchapters, shows that the apostle, like the Old Testament writers, is not concerned with his own historical meaning, but re-reads it in the light of the new historical reality in order to create a different type of communal identity, which is the Church. Although the early Christian texts are very few and do not allow us to be definite in our conclusions, I think the epistles of St. Paul reveal a serious departure from basic Old Testament principles. The reasons vary, but one of the main ones is the need to establish a "new people" - the Church. Like the Old Testament model, it is constituted on oral traditions and the new needs that constantly confront the newly formed people.

IV. Articles

1. The Conversation between the Holy Apostles Paul and John the Theologian on the Person of the Saviour. In: *Christianity and Culture*, no. 4, 2020, pp. 70-76. ISSN 1311 - 9761.

The text aims to synoptically examine key christological texts that would inform us about the early Church's beliefs in Jesus Christ. The two apostles lay the foundations upon which subsequent church experience built.

John the Evangelist introduces distinct creeds that become the basis for the Church's later formulations. He puts the following words into the mouth of the Savior, "I and the Father are one" (Jn. 10:30). This text is certainly of the utmost importance, for it contains within itself one of the Church's fundamental creeds on the unity of the Father and the Son. However, one cannot help but recognize that this is not, or at least not explicitly, about the ontological unity of the Father and the Son. The context of the verse under consideration does give the impression that it has purely functional dimensions.

St. Paul, who, like the evangelist, appreciates the mediatorial function of the Savior in creation (Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2), also recognizes his divinity (Heb. 1:8). Of particular importance are Phil. 2:5-11, Col. 1:15-20 Heb. 1:3,8.

The relationship between the Father and the Son is not referred to the realm of the essential, but rather to the realm of the existent. The unity between the Father and the Son is therefore reducible to commonly shared manifestations. Even the term Word/Memory used by John is a reference to something that is outside of God.

2. The wearing of headscarves according to the First Epistle to the Corinthians. 1 Cor. 11:2-16 in the light of the socio-cultural context of the time. – In: *Christianity and Culture*, 2021, no. 161. ISSN 1311 - 9761.

This topic has a more practical focus, provoked by certain practices in Orthodox temples, namely the wearing of headscarves by some Orthodox Christian women. The above reflections illuminate, in my view, the contextual relevance of the problem posed. The veiling of women, though not universally applied in the same way, is clearly a cultural and theological issue. The language of St. Paul in 1 Cor. 11:2-16 is closely tied to leading religious-philosophical trends. The strange thing is that, when we reflect on these injunctions, we forget their relevance to the hierarchical construct of society at the time. The apostle places man above woman because he did not and could not write otherwise

because of the mindset of the people. Therefore his arguments are not pure metaphysics but depend on his own needs and ideological horizon. That is why I am trying to prove that wearing headscarves is not necessary for modern Christian women, unless it is permanently imposed by the tradition of the respective church.