

REVIEW

by prof. Emil Traytchev Stoyanov

for the fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy for the dissertation
of **Zoran Kalev**

on the subject of „**the evil in the eyes of the Lord**“ in **The Book of Judges**

The following dissertation text of Zoran Kalev is 317 pages in length. It contains a correct format for the citations and sources used. The dissertation features additional material with relevant information, including images. Most of the material is the result of the meticulous work of the doctoral student, all done with accordance with specialized databases that had not been previously cited in local biblical studies.

I accept that such choice for the systematization of the source material on the subject of the study provides a wider scope for the dissertation.

The subject of the dissertation „the evil in the eyes of the Lord“ in The Book of Judges has relevance and the doctoral student's treatment of the subject includes some clear thesis statements, included in the Introduction. Presented therein is the necessary explanation for the terminology used for the study. Motivation is given for the focus of Chapter One of the dissertation, related to isagogic notes on The Book of Judges.

A comparison is made between the processes of formation and redaction in light of the issues of the authorship, chronology and genre of the book in terms of the traditional and critical exegetical sphere. It is on this methodological basis that the contributing aspect of the dissertation is developed. The method of comparative biblical analysis of the genre of The Book of Judges is grounded as an instrument for

study in the main chapters of the dissertation.

Other methodological delineations are also visible in the Introduction. Provisional therein is the following explanation which is given as thesis-like: „The relevant issue for analysis in The Book of Judges can be summarized by the fact that the numerous sinful acts of the entire nation of Israel in this narrative composition are part of a century-long crisis in the worship of Yahweh“ (p. 7 of the Abstract).

The study gradually presents the development of „a notion of guilt among the Israelites as far as this notion concerns what the ancient way of worship was before the emergence of canonical descriptions of the remote events from the dawn of the Iron Age“. In this direction the usage of the term „the evil in the eyes of the Lord“ is explored and a development of the understanding of said term is noted. Showcased are the views of scholars who are authoritative figures in the discipline of Old Testament research, both locally and worldwide. Among them are the names of Martin Noth, Boyan Piperov, priest Nikolai Shivarov and many others. A contribution of the doctoral student is that he manages to compare and interpret from his personal viewpoint their positions throughout the dissertation.

In the course of his study, the doctoral student has considered that across countries the amount of articles and books dedicated on the subject grows larger every day. In many of the sources examined in the dissertation one can find diverse and at times conflicting opinions. An analytical survey of a major portion of these scholarly opinions is presented along with summaries of the essential and unquestionable reevaluation which exhibits the newly formulated critical solutions.

The dissertation includes a selection of reception theories from the past. The author brings forth arguments for the applicability of the theories of biblical scholars from the middle of the last century in a modern context. The thesis statement of the dissertation is defended via the use of viewpoints by Boyan Piperov, Martin Noth, Gerhard von Rad and others. What sparks interest is how their work is projected into

our contemporary field of research, saturated with all kinds of provocative messages. Put in discourse are those suggestions made by Martin Noth concerning the existence of a source titled „Deuteronomist“ in several books of the Bible: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges and 1– 4 Kings and whose main characteristic is the description of the consequences of idol worship (p. 7 of the Abstract). In order to be precise in his study, Zoran Kalev clearly has knowledge of the original critical literature and translates quotations from foreign languages. This honest approach makes the referential part of the study valuable for future analytical work of other scholars.

The historiographic inquiry of the dissertation is made in an orderly manner and proves to be effective for the subject. In Chapter Two of the study, the analysis of the unit Judges 2–3, the doctoral student refers back to the suggestion of priest Nikolai Shivarov concerning the existence of "theological compositions" in Old Testament units with similar provenance. The Conclusion presents an analysis of the compiled evidence and it expresses the opinion that there is commonality between the themes of The Book of Deuteronomy and the source to which The Book of Judges belongs. In addition, there is a discovery of the repetition of certain phrases, pertaining to issues of genre and chronology. It is according to these issues that the usage of the term „the evil in the eyes of the Lord“ is interpreted in the following chapters of the dissertation (Three, Four and Five).

What shines through the concluding remarks of the author is the intention for exhaustive research and decidedness within the chosen horizon. Kalev seeks a point of convergence for his remarks by using a wide range of analytical tools without any hint of absolutizing. The study itself is structured so that it creates the sense of complexity. For subsequent discussions is left the issue of determine the nature of the pre-monarchic „old religion of Israel“ (p. 27 of the Abstract).

In the end of the dissertation are included two excursuses. The first one presents material from the Jewish apocalyptic literature in which the application of

the term „the evil in the eyes of the Lord“ matches the one from The Book of Judges. The second excursus is a brief summary of the development of the theme of „the evil in the eyes of the Lord“ contained in the Kabbalistic text „Zohar“.

The scientific study has an individual perspective, reflecting the personal opinions of the doctoral student. The Abstract of the dissertation illustrates the contributions of Zoran Kalev. I accept the statement made in the contribution section of the Abstract, mentioning that the dissertation is an attempt to study The Book of Judges with the lens of source criticism, while simultaneously commenting on the Documentary hypothesis for the authorship of the Pentateuch. Thus, the doctoral student has achieved his intended research goals on a high level.

Considering the qualities of the presented dissertation on the subject of „the evil in the eyes of the Lord“ in The Book of Judges I accept the thesis of Zoran Kalev as successfully defended. I express my decision for him to be awarded with the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

I vote with YES.

Signed:



prof. Emil Traytchev Stoyanov