

## **1. Introduction: Christ prefigured in the Old Testament.**

When speaking of Christ prefigured in the Old Testament, we are implicitly speaking of an interpretative method. Certainly, the OT exists objectively, independently of the debate about the canon, but is there an objective interpretation of what is said about the messiah in the OT? This is not the case, since not only do we have the theological conflict between Jews and Christians and some minor discrepancies on this subject in both religions respectively, but we also have the scientific interpretation of secular character that disagrees with the Christian and Jewish interpretation.

### **1.1 The secular interpretation.**

In the first place, the secular interpretation, although helpful, sometimes falls into a positivist demythologization, which uses the Formgeschichte whose Sitz im Leben is used to find the origin of the passage from logos to mythos. That is to say, in a materialistic way, and in many occasions from a Marxist and Freudian vision, and by Marxist I mean the method of interpretation of history through the class struggle, by Freudian I mean the theory of the totem, the attempt is made to explain how religious concepts or ideas are arrived at from a historical social conjuncture.<sup>1</sup>

We cannot overlook the interpretative options opened by the secular method that rests, in large part, on philosophical and anthropological concepts. For example, the famous text of Gen 6:1-4, whose supernatural interpretation, that is, the literal interpretation of angels having conjugal relations with women and having giant offspring who become known as great warriors, has been amply demonstrated by Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Jacob J. Doedens in two works.<sup>2</sup> Stuckenbruck, makes a complete analysis of the text in question in the spätjudentum and Doedens examines the exegesis of the text in its ancient context, maintaining a grammatical analysis as well as the place of these verses of Genesis in the rest of the OT and the interpretation, not only, in the spätjudentum but also in the NT and patristics. Well, as brilliant as the works of both authors are, if one uses a secular interpretation such as the one I have described in the second paragraph of this section, the following analysis could be given: the angels are nothing more than invading peoples who, when subjugating a certain people, out of admiration and shame, interpret the occupying forces as divine beings or perhaps the conquerors themselves impose this thought on the conquered people. The sons of these warriors with the native women are called men of renown and are presented as dominators in the same way that the Creoles dominated in the American part of the Spanish empire. We have already found the origin of the logos to understand how the mythos arises.

In Spain, the philosopher Gustavo Bueno, considered by many to be one of the most

---

<sup>1</sup> Cuando hablo de marxismo como método de interpretación de la historia, hago uso la definición dada por Tierno Galván en el programa "La Clave" de RTVE el 11-11-79.

<sup>2</sup> Stuckenbruck L. The Myth Of Rebellious Angels. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck; 2014 / Doedens J. The Sons of God in Genesis 6:1-4. Kampen: Theologische Universiteit Kampen; 2013, Phd.

important scholars of our country, since his contributions and his thought called philosophical materialism have permeated several areas of the academic world, including that of religion, wrote an essay on religion from his materialistic philosophical system that does not go unnoticed. <sup>3</sup> In his work "The Divine Animal", Bueno introduces the idea that religion is born through dealing with animals, considering them as noumena with which it should be interacted. How would this type of analysis affect the interpretation of Genesis in which a serpent is one of the main characters? What would happen with the so-called chaoskampf and the Leviathan?

In my opinion, this method of interpretation is not the correct one for the achievement of a theological work, since such an undertaking would become a materialistic anthropological work with theological overtones. As for Christ prefigured in the OT, we would have nothing more than a deconstruction of the idea of the messiah in the Jewish scriptures, the figure of the Christ would be nothing more than a collective hope in times of anguish imagined and projected in a man always absent in order to whip up the spirits of the people through a vicarious messiah in the present time represented by the monarch. Likewise, the prophecies attributed to Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ are simply vaticinium ex eventu. Therefore, I consider it necessary to discard the secular interpretation for the present work, since it goes beyond the meaning of the words in the sentence that functions as the title of this work: Christ prefigured in the Old Testament. After all, when we speak of Christ and the Old Testament, within religious traditions, we are using the operative function of language by which that which we say is real or is realized, is an act of proclamation, since we speak of a concept in relation to us. Bonhoeffer put it this way:

Christ is Christ, not insofar as Christ for himself, but in his relation to me... This being pro-me of Christ is not a historical or optical affirmation; it is an ontological affirmation. That is to say, Christ can never be thought of in his being-in-itself, but only in his relation to me. This means, moreover, that Christ can only be thought of in his existential relationship or, in other words, can only be thought of in community. Christ is not a Christ in himself and also a Christ in the community. Rather, that unique being who is Christ is the present - pro me - in the community.... <sup>4</sup>

Without discarding critical interpretation, this work must be carried out without negotiating its premises, namely: Jesus is the Christ and the Old Testament is the Jewish scriptures where we find Jesus prefigured and thus understood by the apostles.

---

<sup>3</sup> Bueno G. El Animal Divino. Oviedo: Pentalfa; 1996.

<sup>4</sup> Bonhoeffer D. Jesucristo: historia y misterio. Madrid: Trotta; 2016, p. 28

## 1.2 The Jewish interpretation and the Christian interpretation

In the case of Judaism we find ourselves with a sort of chronological problem, since the Judaism of the authors of the Old Testament and their contemporaries is not the same as that of the Judaism that came into being after the Hellenization of Palestine. Especially the interesting turn in Judaism after the birth of Christianity.

The figure of the messiah in the OT is always that of a sort of Kaiser who will liberate his people from oppression and grant them complete salvation, although with variations, this is what is expected of the messiah who is a man. During and after the Maccabean struggle and the Hellenization of Palestine, different movements such as the Sadducees, the Pharisees and the Essenes began to emerge. The Pharisees are the ones who really have more importance since St. Paul himself was one and the Jews themselves after 70 AD, mostly come from this tradition, since they were the doctors of the law and who were dedicated to reflect on the scriptures with a canon beyond the Torah. Nevertheless, it is true that when we speak of Christianity we must take into account the Essenes, but this will be seen later.

At present it is very difficult to speak of Judaism since there are Judaisms in the plural. But it is possible to analyze the rabbinical discussions after 70 A.D., and in doing so, the findings are of uber-relevance. But why is the date 70 A.D. so important for the present discussion? Around that date, even earlier if we consider Philo of Alexandria as a reliable witness, the belief in "two powers in heaven" as Segal calls it, is condemned, partly because the rabbis perceived that belief to be a basis for the so-called Christian movement. Such a doctrine was also condemned in later Rabbinic Judaism, and it is striking that before the first century it was a valid and tolerable position.<sup>5</sup> This belief is based on affirming the existence of a second Yahweh whose throne is next to the Yahweh principle and thus speaks of two thrones in heaven. This is a significant change in terms of the beliefs of the Jewish people and makes Christianity the guarantor of a Jewish tradition and older than that of the group of Jews who condemned the postulate of the two thrones. This is one of the main theses of Barker's book, in which he also explains, citing the Jewish celeberrimo euridto Neuser, that the concept of the incarnation of God, because of the Old Testament theophanic anthropomorphisms, was rejected by Palestinian Judaism due to the theological conflict with the Christians but persevered by the Jewish sages in Babylon who were not involved in these kinds of discussions.<sup>6</sup>

Without waging the atavistic theological war between Jews and Christians, it can be affirmed that in various aspects Christianity possesses elements of greater antiquity than many of the Judaisms present today in reference to that primitive Judaism prior to Jesus of Nazareth himself.

---

<sup>5</sup>. James F. McGrath and Jerry Truex. "'Two Powers' and Early Jewish and Christian Monotheism" *Journal of Biblical Studies* 4.1 (2004): 43-71. (44)

<sup>6</sup>. Barker M. *The Great Angel*. London: SPCK; 1992, p.159

Definitely, talking about the theophanic anthropomorphism of God and two Yahwehs helps to present arguments for the religion we know as Christianity. But there is something much more popular and widespread in the form of questions, if Jesus was the messiah, why did he die defeated by his Roman enemies, isn't that messiah totally foreign to the victorious and chaste messiah of Judaism? Father Voltaggio presents a variety of texts from the Dead Sea Caves, OT apocrypha, targums and even Talmudic texts in which a reading and interpretation of the messiah as suffering and even dead is possible; some examples are: 11Q13 (II,1-25); 3 Enoch 45,5; TgZc 12,10.<sup>7</sup> Later, I will return to Father Voltaggio's work when necessary.

Finally, what to do about the messianic prophecies in the NT? In some cases the interpretation of the OT by the NT authors does not stand up to scrutiny according to modern principles of exegesis. However, the application of biblical terms from a text to illustrate an anachronistic event in reference to the same text is something also known among the Jews. For example, the deliverance from Babylon is presented with terms that evoke the deliverance from Egypt in the book of Exodus (Is 43:16-10); likewise the application of biblical texts for the interpretation of present events was a known practice in the Qumran community called *peshet*.<sup>8</sup>

My intention in this section is not to assert that Christianity is superior to any Judaism, but to demonstrate that Christianity is as Jewish as any other branch of Judaism and that in its roots, at times, it contains Jewish traditions older than those of the normative Judaisms known today.

Having demonstrated the Jewish character of Christianity, I will now explain my expository method for the present work, namely: I will proceed in a systematic chronological way involving the analysis of types-antitypes, and eschatology: prophecies and theophanies.

---

<sup>7</sup> Voltaggio F. "Il messia sofferente nella tradizione ebraica antica" 2018, *La sapienza della croce* 33/2 (2018) 9-50

<sup>8</sup> Pontificia Comisión Bíblica. *El Pueblo Judío y sus Escrituras Sagradas en La Biblia Cristiana*. (I D 1:12, 2:14)