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IMAGE AND RESURRECTION IN THE BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

– PHD THESIS –

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The contemporary scientific development has an essential contribution to the development of the immanentist speech "about man". The theme of *the image of God* in mankind can be the key to the fulfillment of the historical image in eschatology. As image of God, man is a personal being, placed in front of a personal God. God addresses him as a person and man responds to God as a person. Due to the fact that the person cannot be separated from the nature that exists inside, any imperfection, any non-likeness of the nature will limit the person and will darken the image of God.

Consciousness proves the imperfection of the fallen human nature, expressed in the loss of the likeness to God. Because his nature is darkened by sin, man is unable to see the real good and tends, most of the times, to what is "against the nature", and therefor he always confronts himself with the need of choosing. Thus, the consciousness will advance groping. Knowing and wanting through the unperfect nature, the consciousness is practically blind and powerless, no longer able to choose the good, and, too often, it gives in to the temptations of the nature, becoming the slave of the sin. Thus, what is inside us, in the image of God, is dragged into the abyss, yet remaining free to choose, to return to God again. The Holy Fathers tell us that the true telos of the human onto is just one: our resurrection *en Hristo* / in Christ and our living with and in God / *en Theos*. Of course, these things are more visible and evident in the New Testament, but we wanted to emphasize that the Old Testament is not extraneous to these themes or concepts, but it is the one who holds, in one way or another, the hope of the "christification of the mankind".

What has determined the approach of these two subjects, the image inside the man and the resurrection, is the fact that our fellows have forgotten the imprint they carry and that the distance between us and the Creator increases with each step of our history, as long as the step is a sin. Although God has turned His face toward us through the Incarnation, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of His Son, we keep turning our back to Him, unaware of the repercussions arising from this attitude. Thus, Christ, the Image / humanized Face of God, is coming to resurrect his face.

This thesis consists of two major parts: the first part is an exegetical-theological analysis of these two concepts, and the second part is an eschatological perspective of them. These are preceded by an effective introduction to the approached theme and a section of preliminaries,

where the terminological and conceptual delimitations of the two terms, image and resurrection, are presented.

The first part offers an exegetical-theological discourse on two important concepts in theology, in the biblical perspective of the Old Testament: the theme of the image of God and the theme of resurrection. We did/ this by approaching the most important and expressive scriptural texts of the Old Testament. So, on the subject of the image of God, we referred, in particular, to the texts from the book of Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7; 5:1-3; 9:6, but also to other direct and complementary texts that adorn the theology on the theme of the image of God in mankind. In this first part we analyzed the problem of the image and likeness, the creation of mankind, the preservation of the image of God in man and the image of man and the prohibition of bloodshed.

On the theme of resurrection, the focus was in particular on the texts of Job. 19:25; Ps. 15:10; 48:16; 3 Kgs. 17:17-23; 4 Kgs. 4:34-37; 13:21; Ezk. 37; Is. 26:19; Dan 12:1-3, but also on other direct or contextual texts linked to the theme. By this, we approached the personal resurrection, the wonders of the resurrection from the dead, the prophecy of the resurrection of the Messiah, and the general resurrection. The approach of each concept ends with a developed theological synthesis.

The second part consist in the eschatological perspective of the two concepts. In this part, our concern is focused on the relationship between image – resurrection – immortality, on some gifts of the image (freedom in God, the sight of God, partakers of the divine nature) and on the relation between the image and the Image and on its fulfillment in Him.

In the approach of the thesis we started from the "top" of the creation and from the question of what the image of God in man is and what the eschatological implications are, how he will go through the resurrection and how he will be dressed for immortality. It is not an easy answer, because the image is a component of the human person, which is itself a great mystery, and secondly, it is the face of God, the One above all nature and words. From the Holy Fathers to the older and contemporary theologians, many have tried to express themselves on this theme. Just as there is an apophatic theology focused on the mystery of the Divinity, there is also an apophatic anthropology which is focused on the mystery of mankind, which although fallen, is still, at the same time, the image of the glory of God.

In the accomplishment of our research we relied on Romanian and international works, studies and biblical commentaries relevant for the subjects, as well as on the patristic writings that approach the topic of our research. We also took into consideration the writings and perspective of the Jewish school, correlating the Christian meaning of these concepts (image

and resurrection) with the sense and meaning they have in the Jewish religious area. In this regard, we have emphasized the greatness, dignity and purpose of mankind, as bearer of the image of God, but also the one who can be resurrected by Yahweh in the rabbinical thinking and tradition of the Talmud. On this area of interest, a special importance is granted to Philon from Alexandria, commented and completed by other thinkers of the Jewish philosophical-religious tradition.

In addition to Romanian and international works, studies and biblical commentaries, such as the patristic and Jewish writings, we have also used works from other theological areas than the biblical one, from Romanian and international sources. Both Eastern and Western theology focused on the texts of Holy Scripture and on the writings of the Holy Fathers of the Church, especially on those describing the subject of creation, and they tried to bring into the light the teachings transmitted by both sources of theological teaching. In the beginning, Protestant theology and some of the western one neglected the Holy Tradition and based their works mainly on the Holy Scripture. In contract to them, the Eastern theology used both sources of Revelation from the very beginning.

The objectives of our research are: 1) to emphasize that the seal of God in the human being is the face, and that his telos is his resurrection and his eternalization together with the entire creation, in God; 2) this resurrection and eternalization can be achieved only through the attachment to Christ; 3) Christ unites all of us with Him, and through this He makes all of us united with the whole Holy Trinity, making us partakers to eternity.

In our approach we used, as research methods, the historical-critical exegesis, and its scientific elements. First, we performed the analysis of the two concepts, image and resurrection, we selected some exponential texts to interpret, taking into account the context and the religious, cultural and linguistic conditions in which the text to be analyzed was written, without forgetting the rigor of interpretation used by the Eastern Christianity, with its specific theologizing. We also proceeded to the identification of the spiritual perspective that enriches the analyzed biblical paragraphs, a perspective that resides especially in the writings of the Holy Fathers of the Church. We did not omit the Jewish interpretations regarding the approached texts, because, for us, the fact that the Jews were the first recipients of the scriptural texts matters; also, their contribution to the enrichment of the understanding of the scriptural text, is a consistent one.

Based on our scientific research we can say that mankind, as *image of the Image,* can fulfill its purpose or meaning only in Christ because, as Son of God, he became man for us and He raised the human nature to the highest level of its existence. By this, the mankind finds its

ontological content in the Absolute Image. Through this unification of people in Himself, by His humanity elevated to infinite love, Christ unites all of us with Him, and by this, He makes all of us united with the Father in the Holy Spirit too, making them partakers, through resurrection, to the eternity.

In the contemporaneity, and not only, the image of God, which is constantly threatened to play the role of a caricature, must become, through personal life, a symbol of ever lasting life, or in other words, the image must be seen as the essential element for the resurrection, resurrection as eternal dialogue with the Holy Trinity, as the likeness of God. Our ethic is the likeness of God, for God is the joy, the love and the freedom of mankind. This likeness becomes the true criterion of human actions, as unconditional respect of the person. The image can be defined in many ways (imprint, seal, nous, life, freedom, mastery or light), but the correct definition can be seen only in Christ, Who, through kenotic love, lives in each person and thus, through it, in creation.

The creation of man, presented in the biblical fragment of anthropogenesis, is presented as a very special one, comparing it to what was created before. The peculiarity of the way the man was created is given by the intra-trinitarian counsel that is realized in eternity (Gen. 1:26), by the creation and anchoring in history (Gen. 1:27), by the special and direct action of God (Gen. 2:7). The concept of "image" comes from the Hebrew word *ţelem* (לְמָצ). The Septuagint translates it into *eikon*, and Vulgata translates it into *imago*. Beside the biblical fragment of anthropogenesis (Gen. 1: 26-27), two other scriptural passages can be identified that refer to the image of God (Gen. 5:1-3; 9:6). In Genesis 5:1-3, the term "image" is used in connection with Adam, and in Gen. 9:6, God notifies Noah that life belongs to God and therefore, murder is an offense against God. These scriptural passages use the concept, but they do not show what it is and do not define it. This fact has led to many interpretations, both linguistic and theological.

By lecturing the pages of the Old Testament, we notice that mankind, as a paradoxical being of dichotomous composition (body and soul), is placed in two types of relationship with God: 1) we notice the inferiority of man in comparison with the greatness of God (man is just dust) and 2) the greatness of mankind in relation to the other creatures (as crown of creation). In the New Testament dimension, the concept of the image of God is relevant and receives new valences, both moral and Christological, soteriological and eschatological. The eternal Christ is "the Image of God the Father" (2 Cor. 4:4; Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:15.18; Phil. 2:6; Heb. 1:3; 1 Jhn. 3:2), and thus "as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man" (1 Cor. 15:49). The Holy Apostle Paul is mentioning the "new man" in

Christ, saying that he "is being renewed in knowledge, in the image (*eikon*) of its Creator " (Col 3:10) and about man as "being face (*eikon*) and glory of God" (1 Cor. 11: 7).

According to the fundamental principle of rabbinic anthropology, the creation of man is according to the image of God, the world is only for the benefit of man, and man was created only to serve God, marking the culmination of the creation. In later rabbinic literature, man becomes a "partner" of the Creator. The issue of doctrine regarding the creation of man and the image of God, which was imprinted on him, has been developed in different directions and is marked by multiple tones. Levinas speaks, about a "continuous creation", about the hierarchical relationship, God-man and the analogical structure in which man is framed by the special intimacy that Elohim grants and by this giving to the man the status of soul of the world, alongside to Elohim.

The conception of the Holy Fathers concerning man - *the image of God*, is a synthesis between the biblical conception (which is more concerned of the so-called anthropomorphism of God), according to which man was created as *image* of God to rule the world, and the spiritualist conception (from the Alexandrian current), according to which the soul is the *image of God*. Many of them wrote treatises in which they tried to show to their contemporaries and to us, over the centuries, the material and spiritual nature of man, the value of his life and his telos. Apologists emphasize the notion of Logos, and the concept of the image of God is perceived in relation to Christ - The Image of the Father: The Father revealed Himself by making His Logos visible. Byzantine parents develop and emphasize the spiritual, invisible part of man, starting from the conception of the dichotomous structure of man or in other words, the soul as representation of the image of God in man, and Christ is the Word and the Image of the Father. In the theologizing of the Cappadocian Fathers a Trinitarian order is observed, thus, Christ is the Image of God, which is the visible Image of the invisible God, and the Holy Spirit is the Image of the Son. Here we can also see the appearance and usage of the term *αρχέττυπον*, which is translated by archetype or model and that the true image is shown insofar as it possesses the attributes of its Model / Archetype (St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Gregory the Theologian).

In order to decipher as much as possible the teaching about the resurrection, as it appears in the Old Testament, we organized the verses under a thematic and gradual pattern, as follows: 1) about the personal resurrection, 2) about the wonders of the resurrection from the dead, viewed as evidence of the eschatological resurrection, 3) about before-seeing of the resurrection of the Messiah, as hope of our own resurrection, and (4) about the general

resurrection, which is the central point of the doctrine regarding the resurrection and the afterlife.

There are no direct references to the resurrection in the text of Old Testament. There is no passage that mentions the word "resurrection". Some passages where the idea of resurrection is suggested can be identified. These scriptural passages, not many, constitute the Old Testament's foundation on which - later on - in the apocalyptic literature and in the rabbinical tradition - the doctrine of resurrection is developed. From their content we understand that the resurrection represents the eschatological act by which God will restore the dead to rise from death to eternal life (Job. 19:25, Ps. 15:10, Ps. 87:11, Is. 26:19, Ezk. 37, Dan. 12:1-3, Hos. 6:1-3, Zeph 3:8 or 3 Kgs. 17:21 and 4 Kgs. 13:20-21). From these passages we can see that, in most of them, the Hebrew verb קוּם (*qum*) is used. This verb translates to "to rise up" and is generally used with reference to the physical action by which one, sitting or lying down, stands up (e.g. Dan. 3:24); to someone who, being asleep, wakes up (Dan. 6:19); to the act of raising (build) a construction (e.g. Ezr. 5:2) or, in some cases - which are relevant to the present thesis - to the act of resurrecting from death (e.g. Is. 26:19). Theological analysis of this term in the passages mentioned above has led to the framing of the terminological dimension of the anastasic discourse in the Old Testament.

In Judaism, it seems that the teaching of resurrection has two important directions. The first direction pursues the idea of judgment and reward only for the Jewish nation, with the different tones or personal opinions of some rabbis. This first direction developed from the idea of political restoration (Hos. 6:1-3; Ezk. 37:1-14). The second direction, equally important, shows that the body and soul are an indivisible unity and emphasizes the resurrection of each man with the body and that the judgment will be made to each man resurrected (regardless of nationality). In the times close to the contemporary, certain traditionalist and conservative groups keep the faith in the resurrection, emphasizing the idea that each one's salvation is in the hands of God and that man must be saved as a whole (body and soul), not just spiritually. In Reformed Judaism, the faith in the resurrection is almost denied, the concept being considered to be just a metaphor that leads to the immortality of the soul.

The teaching about the resurrection has gradually developed within the Church, and the Holy Fathers of the Church approach the concept starting with the resurrection of the Savior Jesus Christ, emphasizing that the resurrection of the Savior was corporeal, and that our resurrection will be as well (St. Justin the Martyr and the Philosopher, St. Athanasius the Great, St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. John the Golden Mouth, St. Basil the Great). Saint John of Damascus offers a synthesis of the patristic teachings developed before him,

showing that resurrection is the union of the soul and the body, which will become incorruptible and imperishable.

We can decipher the relationship between the image and the resurrection in the moment we see that the Spirit of the One who breathed life making man a living being (Gen. 2:7) will blow over the dead, and they will rise (Ezk. 37:9-10), so that some will rise to eternal life, and others to eternal doom (Dan. 12:2), depending on how they developed the image of God inside them. Theological synthesis sketches the way in which the concept of resurrection has developed in the Jewish and Christian thought. Each of the two mentioned thought systems has started from the biblical text, which makes them have many common elements on this doctrine, but the defining difference, between the two, is in the act of the resurrection of Christ, denied by the Jews and glorified by Christians. Our purpose is not to raise controversies, but to highlight the profound meaning offered by the Savior to the death and resurrection, through His example.

Man is resurrected / re-vivificated and becomes immortal through his relationship with God and even if he denies or breaks the relationship and becomes lonely, he is still immortal, because man is created for eternity. Even if he had a "fall" (the original sin) in the relationship with God, man did not lose the image, but with his soul, shaken by the imminence of the death of the body, he longs to overcome this end of his (physical) life, comforting himself in the same time, with the immortality and reunification of the human being through resurrection. The resurrection confirms the unique and unmistakable value of the human person, its identity and reward as a responsible and free being, as bearer of the divine image.

During creation, by sealing with the image of God, man received graces / divine gifts to help him fulfill his telos. Through these, man fulfilled, in his life, the personal mode of existence according to the divine model. This " gift" is the sign of God's success in us, and the ultimate goal will be to glorify God in us. There are many such gifts, and among them we could mention: purity, freedom, happiness, love, justice in moral judgment, life, reason, wisdom, etc. Of these, only a few were exposed: freedom in God (Gen. 2:17), the sight of God (Gen. 18; Ex. 19:20:32) and in God participation (sacred space).

In the last part of the research we demonstrated that man as "image of the Image" can fulfill his purpose *en Hristo / in Christ* only. If the entire Holy Trinity participated at the creation of the world from nothing, then we can mention the participation of the Logos too. And if this theological principle is unclearly seen in Pentateuch, the words of the beloved disciple, John the evangelist, "In the beginning was the Word", brings light on this problem of

beginnings. Thus, the Logos is the Principle of existence and the Reason of creation, He is the Archetype and the telos of human existence.

The human nature finds in Christ the fulfillment of its aspiration to the perfect union with God and through him all the creatures. By this, Christ is, as incarnated God, the true Mediator between God and all creation. Through his body the man is united with the created matter and, at the same time, through his infinite spirit he opens consciously to God and his infinity. All men meet in Christ with God, to whom they all tend, and through their bodies bring even the material nature in dialogue with God, His body, taken from the Virgin Mary, making the binder of the plunder of all in all (Eph. 1.23). Thus Christ truly fulfills the aspiration of men to meet all of them fully in God and among themselves, as sons of the father and brethren among them.

For the Fathers of the Church, the starting point and the center of the theology of the image is the teaching of Paul the Apostle that "the image of God" is Christ (Col. 1:15-18). The man is responsible for the creation, as the one who is summation and conscience of the whole creation, because its archetype, Christ, is the Summation and Savior of all.

Man is created by God's image so he can resemble Him, because Christ is the perfect model. So, it is obvious that the human's essence is not in the material he was made of, but in the archetype he was built after and towards which he aspires. The truth of the mankind is in his prototype, as the truth of the icon is in the painted/real person/model. The reason for this is the fact that the model is the one who organizes, seals and configures the material and also attracts it. The Model / Archetype represents the ontological content of the image (icon). It is natural for mankind having Christ as supreme goal, Christ being the goal of the humanity's ascension/evolution, beginning, but also end of the history.

Everyone wishes or should wish eternal unity with Christ and, together with Him, with the Holy Trinity. We know that as potential, mankind belongs to the eternity, by having Christ's image, and that it is part of a never-ending progress, as it can never get enough of the infinity God has in Himself from the beginning, by His nature. If Christ is the supreme and fulfilling hypostasis of each of us, than our members are His and so are our thoughts. So, every Christian is united with Christ and the intensity of the bondage to Christ is the intensity of the bondage to each other. By uniting the mankind with Himself through His humanity, Jesus, as Son of the Father, unites all of us with Him and through this, He brings us together with The Father in The Holy Spirit. That way, The God in Trinity makes Himself everything in all things that exist, without abolishing/destroying them, due to His love for everything. The way we gather/sit, we hide through/in The One Who has Eternal Life is resurrection.

In the end, we hope that all these can be found in this research and we can say that in front of God man is sanctified and sanctifies, he discovers and finds himself in His eternal love and by this he grows the novelty of the creation as new of eternity. Man is a doxology and, as image, he tends to the likeness to God. This doxology is the Eucharistic rearranging of the creation in eternity. The Adam is a person of himself and in himself, who does not exhaust himself, nor any other human being and he grows koinonic, through the others, in eternity and in the nature's ecumenical fraternity.

Therefore, we conclude, through a brief analysis on the way in which man, image of The Image, can bind history and eschatology by uniting with Christ and, with Him, with the Holy Trinity. Due to the fact that our research, Icon and resurrection in the biblical theology of the Old Testament, is an ample and complex theme and that the themes of image of God in humankind and resurrection have not been unitary treated in the Romanian biblical research, such a research on these two themes (unitary treated), which also includes non-orthodox researches, is welcome. This thesis cannot be considered exhaustive, but it can be a perspective or a landmark in the development of some other meanings. Thus, the main goal is bringing forward a research which shows that the man is image of The Image and the one who can bind history and eschatology. The way we can get from image to immortality (eternity) is resurrection, as only through resurrection we can open the gates of immortality.

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