The theological dialectic of creation and death in Hebrew Bible wisdom traditions
Lategan, Werner Andre

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2009

Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database

Citation for published version (APA):
RIJKSUNIVERSITEIT GRONINGEN

THE THEOLOGICAL DIALECTIC OF CREATION AND DEATH IN HEBREW BIBLE WISDOM TRADITIONS

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van het doctoraat in de Godgeleerdheid en Godsdienstwetenschap aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen op gezag van de Rector Magnificus, dr. F. Zwarts, in het openbaar te verdedigen op donderdag 11 juni 2009 om 13:15 uur

door

Werner Andre Lategan
geboren op 31 mei 1975
te Bellville, Zuid-Afrika
Promotor: Prof. dr. E. Noort

Copromotores: Dr. J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten
              Dr. M. Popović

Beoordelingscommissie: Prof. dr. F. García Martínez
                        Prof. dr. H.L. Bosman
                        Prof. dr. K. Spronk
TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ......................................................................................... vi
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ............................................................................................... ix
CHAPTER 1 .................................................................................................................. 1
INTRODUCTION: APPROACHING DEATH AS A THEOLOGICAL PROBLEM
WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THEOLOGIES OF CREATION
ASSOCIATED WITH THE HEBREW BIBLE WISDOM TRADITION ..................... 1
1.1 Considering the Research Problem ..................................................................... 2
1.2 Considering the Theological Character of the Hebrew Bible .............................. 3
1.2.1 Theological Diversity in the Hebrew Bible .................................................... 5
1.3 Creation as a Theological Problem in the Hebrew Bible .................................... 6
1.3.1 Creation Theology and the Significance of Worldview ................................. 8
1.4 Death as a Theological Problem in the Hebrew Bible ....................................... 10
1.4.1 Death and the Wisdom Tradition .................................................................. 14
1.5 The Creation-Death Relation as a Theological Problem in the Hebrew Bible .. 16
1.6 Delimitation of the Study: Accounting for the Selected Texts ........................... 18
1.6.1 Psalm 104 ....................................................................................................... 21
1.6.2 Job 3 ............................................................................................................... 22
1.6.3 Qohelet 11:7-12:8 ......................................................................................... 23
1.7 Procedure ........................................................................................................... 23
CHAPTER 2 .................................................................................................................. 26
PSALM 104: FIGURING DEATH AMIDST AN ABUNDANCE OF LIFE ............. 26
2.1 Delimitation of the Text ..................................................................................... 27
2.2 The Style, Structure and Thematic Division of Ps 104 ....................................... 29
2.3 Translation of Ps 104 .......................................................................................... 31
2.4 An Analysis of Psalm 104 .................................................................................. 34
Verses 1-4: Focus on the Heavens .......................................................................... 34
Verses 5-9: Focus on the Earth ................................................................................ 38
Verses 10-13: The Focus on the Earth Continues .................................................... 42
Verse 14-18: Focus on Divine Providence (Food and Safe Dwelling) ................. 43
Verses 19-23: Focus on Experiential Time .............................................................. 45
Verses 24-30: Focus on the Works of YHWH ....................................................... 47
Verses 31-35: YHWH is Praised for His Works ....................................................... 53
2.5 Thematic Discussion ......................................................................................... 56
2.5.1 Considering the Context of Psalm 104 .......................................................... 56
2.5.1.1 Psalm 104 and the Material from its Umwelt ............................................. 57
2.5.1.2 Psalm 104 and the Priestly Creation Account of Genesis 1:1-2:4a ........ 60
2.5.1.3 Psalm 104 and the Wisdom Tradition ..................................................... 63
2.5.2 Creation as a Theological Theme in Ps 104 .................................................... 65
2.5.2.1 The Rhetoric of God in Ps 104 ................................................................. 66
2.5.2.2 The Theology of Creation in Ps 104 ........................................................ 68
2.5.3 Death as a Theological Theme in Ps 104 ....................................................... 73
2.6 Conclusion ......................................................................................................... 77
CHAPTER 3 .................................................................................................................. 79
JOB 3: THE EMBRACEMENT OF DEATH AS RESTORATION OF LIFE .... 79
3.1 Delimitation of the Text ..................................................................................... 80
3.2 The Structure of the Text .................................................................................. 81
3.3 The Genre and Language of Job 3 ...................................................................... 82
3.4 Translation of Job 3 ........................................................................................... 86
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.5 An Analysis of Job 3:1-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verses 1-2: Narrative Transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: Verses 3-10: Curse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Verses 11-19: Lament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: Verses 20-26: Lament Continued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1: Verses 20-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2: Verses 24-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Thematic Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.1 The Context of the Book of Job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.2 Creation as a Theological Theme in Job 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.2.1 Creation as a Theological Theme in the Book of Job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.2.2 The Rhetoric of God in the book of Job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.2.3 The Rhetoric of God in Job 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.2.4 Creation as a Theological Theme in Job 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.2.4.1 The Creation Theology of Job 3 in view of Genesis 1:1-2:4a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.2.4.2 The Creation Theology of Job 3 and 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.2.5 Creator and Creation in Job 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.3 Death as a Theological Theme in Job 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.3.1 Death as a Theological Theme in the Book of Job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.3.1.1 Curse and Death in Job 3 and Jeremiah 20:14-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.3.1.2 The Wisdom of Job and the Theme of Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.3.2 Death as an Absolute End</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.3.3 Reconsidering the Theme of Death in Job 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.4 Conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7 Conclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER 4

QOHELET 11:7-12:8: DEATH AS IMPETUS FOR LIFE

4.1 Delimitation of the Text                                            |
4.2 The Structure of the Text                                            |
4.3 Translation of Qohelet 11:7-12:8                                      |
4.4 An Analysis of Qoh 11:7-12:8                                         |
A: Qoh 11:7-10                                                          |
B: 12:1-8                                                               |
4.5 Thematic Discussion                                                 |
4.5.1 The Context of Qohelet                                             |
4.5.2 Creation as a Theological Theme in Qohelet 11:7-12:8              |
4.5.2.1 The Rhetoric of God in Qohelet                                  |
4.5.2.1.1 Creation Theology in Qohelet                                  |
4.5.2.1.2 Creator and Creation in Qoh 11:7-12:8                         |
4.5.3 Death as a Theological Theme in Qoh 11:7-12:8                     |
4.5.3.1 The Wisdom of Qohelet and the Theme of Death                     |
4.5.3.2 The Rhetoric of Death in Qohelet                                |
4.5.3.3 God and Qohelet’s Rhetoric of Death                             |
4.5.3.4 Death as a Theological Theme in Qohelet 11:7-12:8               |
4.6 Conclusion                                                          |

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION: RECONSIDERING DEATH AS A THEOLOGICAL THEME WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THEOLOGIES OF CREATION ASSOCIATED WITH THE HEBREW BIBLE WISDOM TRADITION

5.1 The Theological Centrality of Creation in the Hebrew Bible Wisdom Tradition
5.2 The Theological Construct “God as creator” in the Hebrew Bible Wisdom Tradition................................................................. 189
5.3 The Significance of Death in the Hebrew Bible Wisdom Tradition............. 190
5.4 The Creation-Death Relation in the Hebrew Bible Wisdom Tradition ......... 193
5.5 Creation, Death and the Hebrew Bible Wisdom Tradition: Reconsidering the Nature and Potential of its Diversity.................................................. 194
BIBLIOGRAPHY................................................................................................. 197
NEDERLANDSE SAMENVATTING................................................................. 233