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Abstract

This mini-dissertation is an investigation into wealth and poverty, land and class issues. These issues are very topical in the current South African political debate. The land issue, especially, is and will for the foreseeable future remain, a contentious issue especially on the African soil (cf. for instance the Zimbabwe situation, Khoi-San land claims). The question asked is, can the Bible make a valuable contribution to solving these problems?

This study investigates whether Qoheleth can make a meaningful contribution to issues such as wealth and poverty, class and land. The book Qoheleth was chosen for its apparent “revolutionary” stance against traditional wisdom. In wisdom literature and tradition, the sages are known to situate themselves between the wealthy and the poor. Forming part of the protest phase of development of wisdom thought, it was necessary to evaluate Qoheleth to determine on whose side he is on, the haves or have-nots? Does he also protest against economic injustice? An ideological appreciation of Qoheleth was done to determine this.

It was found that Qoheleth reinscribes the status quo of his time in terms of established hierarchies. He disappoints on the issue of the haves and the have-nots and does not provide a way out of social injustice. He certainly is not much of a voice for the have-nots. Qoheleth’s apparent “revolutionary” stance is rather an intellectual reaction against the doctrine of retribution, but not in a political or social sense. The Old Testament prophets might be far more useful in addressing current issues on social injustice.
Opsomming

Hierdie skripsie fokus op kwessies van rykdom en armoede, grond (-besit) en klassisme. Hierdie kwessies staan almal in die brandpunt van die huidige Suid-Afrikaanse politieke debat. Grondbesit is en gaan in die toekoms steeds ‘n kontensieuse saak bly op die Afrika-kontinent (vgl byvoorbeeld die Zimbabwe-situasie, die Khoi-San grondeise). Die vraag wat gevra word is, kan die Bybel ‘n bydrae maak tot die oplossing van hierdie probleme? Hierdie studie ondersoek of Prediker wel ‘n sinvolle bydrae te maak het oor kwessies soos rykdom en armoede, klas en grondbesit.

Die boek Prediker is gekies omdat dit oënskynlik “revolusionêr” vertoon in sy reaksie teen tradisionele wysheid. Die wysgere in die wysheidsliteratuur en tradisie is bekend daarvoor dat hulle nie kant kies vir die rykes of armes nie. As deel van die protesfase van die ontwikkeling van wysheidsdenke, was dit nodig om te bepaal aan wie se kant Prediker staan, die besitters of besitloses? Protesteer hy ook teen ekonomiese onreg? ‘n Ideologiese waardering van Prediker is gedoen om dit te bepaal.

Uit die studie het dit geblyk dat Prediker die status quo van sy dag in terme van die gevestigde hiërargieë, reïnskribeer. Hy stel teleur wanneer dit kom by die besitters en besitloses en bied nie ‘n oplossing vir sosiale onreg aan nie. Hy is nie veel van ‘n stem vir die besitloses nie. Prediker se “revolusionêre” indruk wat hy skep is eerder intellektueel van aard en gemik teen die vergeldingsdogma, maar nie in ‘n sosiale of politieke sin nie. Die Ou-Testamentiese profete hou veel meer belofte in om huidige kwessies van sosiale onreg aan te spreek.
# Table of Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Headings</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgment</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opsomming</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chapter One**

**Methodological Orientation**

1.1 Introduction 1
1.2 The Problem 2
1.3 Purpose and Aim 3
1.4 Methodology: Ideology Criticism 4
1.5 My Own Ideological Stance 6
1.6 Structure of Dissertation 10

**Chapter Two**

**The Importance and Centrality of Land in the Old Testament**

2.1 Introduction 11
2.2 Defining the Term “Land” 12
2.3 The Origins of Israel 14
2.4 A Theology/Ethics of the Land 18
  2.4.1 The Importance of Land in Relation to Yahweh 18
  2.4.1.1 The Historical Concept: The Land Promised to Israel 19
  2.4.1.2 The Cultic Concept: Yahweh’s Land 22
  2.4.2 Land, the Family and Yahweh 23
2.4.3 The Ethics that govern the Land 26
2.4.4 The land lost and regained 28
2.5 Wealth and Poverty in the Old Testament 29
2.5.1 Origins of Wealth and Poverty in Israel 29
2.5.1.1 Defining Wealth and Poverty in Israel 29
2.5.1.2 Wealth and Poverty in Israel 31
2.5.1.3 The Reality of Classism in Israel 33

Chapter Three
Qoheleth and Wisdom Literature

3.1 Understanding Wisdom Literature 34
3.1.1 What is wisdom? 34
3.1.2 Wisdom Books 36
3.1.2.1 Proverbs 36
3.1.2.2 Job 38
3.1.3 Development of Wisdom 40
3.2 Wealth and Poverty within the Wisdom Perspective 42
3.3 A Closer Look at Ecclesiastes 45
3.3.1 The Title/Name Qoheleth 45
3.3.2 Qoheleth, the Man 46
3.3.3 Qoheleth in the Old Testament Canon 49
3.3.3.1 Qoheleth within the Hebrew Literature Tradition 50
3.3.3.2 Qoheleth within the Old Testament Wisdom Traditions 51
3.3.4 The Structure of Qoheleth 54
3.3.5 The Message of Qoheleth 57
3.3.5.1 The Place of God in Qoheleth 60
Chapter Four

The Ideological Qoheleth on Class, Wealth and Poverty

4.1 The Ideological Qoheleth 63
4.2 Qoheleth the Protestor 67
   4.2.1 Qoheleth and the “haves” and the “have-nots” 69
4.3 Conclusion 83

Chapter Five

Summary

5.1 Summary of Study 85
5.2 Conclusion: Qoheleth’s Contribution? 86
5.3 Quo Vadis? 87

Bibliography 89