

## THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A PRINCIPLE OF LIFE AND INSTRUMENT OF SALVATION HISTORY

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Alexandru Salvan, *Discursul lui Isaia despre Duhul Sfânt [Isaiah's Discourse on the Holy Spirit] – Ruah Hakodesh* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2021), 274 p.

With the publication of the volume by Archdeacon Alexandru Salvan, PhD entitled: *Isaiah's Discourse on the Holy Spirit – Ruah Hakodesh*, which is based on the author's doctoral thesis, the theological research dedicated to the Old Testament in Romania has been enriched with a new valuable work. The author himself, a man with an impressive ecclesiastical and cultural track record (he has been a deacon of the Metropolitan Cathedral of Cluj-Napoca since 2017, an archdeacon since 2019, and since 2021 he has received from His Eminence Archbishop and Metropolitan Andrei the "Nicolae Ivan" order for clerics) has already distinguished himself through a series of articles dedicated to the subject, but also by the fact that he has deepened the thought of the prophet Isaiah both in his undergraduate and Master's studies at the "Babeş-Bolyai" University of Cluj-Napoca.

Written according to all the methodological norms in force, the research benefits from an ample foreword by Rev. Prof. Ioan Chirilă, PhD (pp. 11-15), the master of the person in question. The reputed biblical scholar from Cluj underlines here the multiple valences of the interdisciplinary investigation that Father Alexandru undertook and points out that: "The presence and work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament sheds light on that of the Old Testament. The roots of pneumatology lie in the First Testament of Scripture. Father Alexandru-Adrian Salvan's work highlights this fact starting from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, which, because of the prophecies it launched and the way they were fulfilled in history, was considered among the Church Fathers as the *Gospel of the Old Testament*." (p. 15)

Segmented into three main chapters and accompanied by an introductory part (pp. 16-24) and a preliminary chapter (pp. 25-48) in which issues such as the historical dimension of pneumatology in early Christianity, how the various schisms and splits

contributed to the definition of a certain perception of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, the pan-Orthodox perspective on the issue, as well as the identification of issues related to the proper noun concerning the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and how it was perceived by leading representatives of patristic exegesis such as: St Ambrose the Great, St Athanasius the Great, St Cyril of Alexandria, Clement the Alexandrian, Eusebius of Caesarea, Dydimus of Alexandria, Dionysius the Areopagite, St Gregory of Nyssa, St Photius of Constantinople, St Dionysius the Areopagite, St John Cassian, St John Damascene, St Irenaeus of Lyons, St Justin Martyr and Philosopher, St Macarius the Egyptian, St Maxim the Confessor, St Nicetas of Remesian, St Simeon the New Theologian, St Basil the Great, or the writer Origen (p. 24). Once the patristic framework has been established, the author reviews the specialized literature on the subject in Romania and abroad. Among the reference authors who have produced works dedicated to Isaiah, the names of biblical scholars such as Josep Blenkinschopp, George Buchanan Gray, D. Litt, R. Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, A. R. Brown, D. Brown, John D. W. Watts, Hames M. Hamilton Jr. are mentioned, Lloyd R. Neve, C. Ryrrie, Leon J. Wood, Fathers Constantin Coman, Petre Chiricuță, Vladimir Petercă, Ioan Chirilă and Petre Semen, or Most Reverend Father Lucian Făgărășanul (pp. 24-25). Alexandru Salvan manages to position himself critically about each of them, to present their contributions by identifying the originality they bring, to identify how his research converges with the one he proposes and to show which the niche of investigation he wishes to pursue. The work is thus, in this section, a valuable synthesis of literature in which the Romanian reader is invited to know and understand how the book of Isaiah has been understood by biblical research and to identify its particularities in the works written by Romanian authors. The philological analysis of the concept of *ruah* (pp. 32-37) and its correlation with *nephesh* (pp. 37-45), as well as with other similar concepts relevant to pneumatological research, is another valuable part of the work. The author thus succeeds in demonstrating both the necessity of the process he undertakes and the value of his investigation, to speak of the current state of research and to invite the reader on a journey through the Old and New Testaments starting from the prophecy of one of the most relevant authors in the first section.

Later, in the first chapter of the book, the author discusses the *ruah* in the Old Testament (pp. 49-76), systematically addressing its use and meanings in the *Torah* (pp. 49-54), historical (pp. 55-62), didactic-poetic (pp. 63-64) and prophetic (pp. 65-76) books. The second and densest thematic subunit of the work, entitled *Ruah Ha kodesh*

in the book of the prophet Isaiah – an exegetical approach (p. 77-210), is in turn segmented into seven subchapters. Alexandru Salvan begins with the passage in chapter 4, verse 4 of the book of Isaiah (p. 77-79), continues with verses 2 and 3 of chapter 6 of the same work (p. 101-130), with the first four verses of chapter 11 (p. 131-152), verse 19 of chapter 26 (p. 153-165), verse 15 of chapter 32 (p. 166-175), verse 13 of chapter 40 (p. 176-188), chapter 42, verse 1 and chapter 61, verses 1-3 (p. 189-210), thus creating a symphony between the exegetical and theological framework of the texts mentioned in the book of the prophet Isaiah, inviting the reader to glimpse the mystery of the Person of the Holy Spirit. The last part of the book is devoted to the theological landmarks concerning the key term of the investigation (pp. 211-244). The author analyses the concept of *Ruah Hakodesh* from the perspective of its quality as a principle of life and instrument of salvation history (pp. 215-221), as a sustainer of the life of God's people (pp. 222-225) and as a power of perfection in eternity (pp. 226-243).

An extensive, pioneering work and a bibliographical synthesis relevant to theological research in the biblical area, the book by Archdeacon Alexandru Salvan entitled: *Isaiah's Discourse on the Holy Spirit – Ruah Hakodesh*, published by Presa Universitară Clujeană in 2021, is therefore, as we have tried to show, a valuable and useful contribution for those who want to better understand the depths of the book of Isaiah and an example of how the complementarity between the Old and New Testaments can be seen.