Een ban om te mijden
Van der Molen, W.K.

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:
2008

Citation for published version (APA):

Copyright
Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Take-down policy
If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): http://www.rug.nl/research/portal. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.

Download date: 02-08-2021
SUMMARY

This thesis concentrates primarily on the function of the concept of דַּבָּר in Josh 7. Secondly it asks after the significance of that specific chapter in relation to the conceptualization and function of the concept of דַּבָּר in the narrative of the Old Testament. In order to do so, the דַּבָּר-references in the Old Testament are examined in their canonical chronology. This thesis does not ask after the historical origin and growth of the concept (diachronic reading), nor does it try to reconstruct this process.

The first chapter of this thesis briefly reviews the diachronic discussion on Josh 7 and continues with a more elaborate synchronic review of the chapter. The final form of Josh 7 offers a conditional interpretation of the covenant with YHWH. The success of the conquest of the Promised Land is made dependent on the obedience of the people to the דַּבָּר. The double accusation in the exposition Josh 7, 1 is essential to the story-line. Both the Israelites and Achan are accused of a violation of דַּבָּר, which enrages YHWH. From that moment on, the story evolves around the unawareness of the Israelites. They are unaware of Achans violation, and exactly that unawareness forms the core of their own violation of דַּבָּר. And in violating the דַּבָּר, they themselves have become דַּבָּר.

In the narrative of Josh 7 the antithesis between YHWH and all his promises (the land!), and the status of דַּבָּר becomes clear. The defeat at Ai is a foretaste of how things are about to change for the people of Israel now that they have chosen דַּבָּר instead of YHWH. YHWH himself explains the situation to the people and shows them the only way out: sanctification to restore the holiness of the people of YHWH and to remove the דַּבָּר out of their midst. YHWH and דַּבָּר are incompatible. As soon as the people become aware of their condition, they are able to restore it. Achan is pointed out and confesses. After the public display of the evidence the whole of the people of Israel lead him out of the camp to execute him. Nothing of דַּבָּר remains. The people of Israel belong to YHWH once more.

The narrative of Josh 7 needs to be understood as an illustration of precisely the problem it demonstrates. It subtly plays with the extra knowledge the reader has (due to the exposition) in contrast to the initial unawareness of the people in the story. Instead of repeating yet another warning against the violation of דַּבָּר, it just shows, not just the consequences, but the alluring way דַּבָּר works too. The narrative of Josh 7 in itself forms an illustration of
this subtle, alluring מִרְכֶּבֶּה, as well as the consequences of the condition מִרְכֶּבֶּה.
In that way Josh 7 forms an intense warning against any violation of מִרְכֶּבֶּה.
The second chapter discusses the concept of the corporate personality as once introduced to the exegesis of Josh 7 by H. Wheeler Robinson. The concept of corporate personality offers a solution to the uneasiness caused by the idea that the people of Israel suffered from the crime of Achan. Although more contemporary versions (and critiques) of this concept by Porter and Kaminsky differ hugely from the original concept, still some variation or other of the concept of 'corporate personality/responsibility' is maintained by most commentaries. It is shown that the concept doesn't apply to Josh. 7.
In discussing the many variations of the concept, a shift from the concept of the corporate personality towards the (alleged) contagious qualities of מִרְכֶּבֶּה in the interpretation of Josh 7 was recognized. This interpretation however, proved to be as problematic as the concept of the corporate personality. Both concepts offer a solution to a problem that does not exist. The narrative of Josh 7 consciously uses the double accusation to display the concept of מִרְכֶּבֶּה and its consequences. The uneasiness is part of the warning, not a problem that needs to be explained away.
The core message of Josh 7 obviously concerns מִרְכֶּבֶּה, so the next chapters concentrate on this concept. The third chapter gives an overview of the history of research on the concept of מִרְכֶּבֶּה in the Old Testament. The hypotheses of Brekelmans, Lohfink, Stern and Niditch are discussed, as are some minor contributors. Following that, all מִרְכֶּבֶּה-references in the Old Testament are discussed in the fourth chapter. This chapter describes the growth of the concept and image of מִרְכֶּבֶּה in the chronology of the canon of the Old Testament.
An analysis of this concept and its function is given in chapter five. According to context and interest, ten categories of מִרְכֶּבֶּה-references are recognized and defined. It is shown that the image of מִרְכֶּבֶּה slowly builds up to Deuteronomy and shatters again after the book of Joshua. The little shards of מִרְכֶּבֶּה-imagery still maintain some coherence however, which is due to the interpretation of מִרְכֶּבֶּה given by Josh. 7.
Between Deuteronomy and the end of the book of Joshua מִרְכֶּבֶּה transforms from a measure of protection against idolatry into an ordinance of faithfulness and obedience to YHWH. A correct application of מִרְכֶּבֶּה becomes the condition for a successful conquest of the land. It is the story of Josh 7 in particular which introduces this transformation, and which so convincingly illustrates its harsh consequences. The remaining מִרְכֶּבֶּה-references in the book of Joshua are pre-obsessed with proving that the מִרְכֶּבֶּה was maintained