

Hendrik J. Koorevaar
Mart-Jan Paul
(eds.)

The Earth and the Land

Studies about the Value of the Land of Israel
in the Old Testament and Afterwards

EDIS

Edition Israeologie

Band 11



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Edition Israelologie

Herausgegeben von Helge Stadelmann
und Berthold Schwarz

BAND 11

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Vorwort zur Reihe “Edition Israelologie”

Die Reihe “Edition Israelologie” will Beiträge zu einer erneuerten Israellehre liefern. Sie adressiert dabei allerdings nicht Forschungsbereiche wie die klassische Judaistik, die Judentumskunde oder die Orientalistik. Solche Forschungszweige beschäftigen sich primär mit der wissenschaftlichen Erforschung des Judentums in der Vielfalt seiner Erscheinungsformen, wie sie in der Geschichte, in der Kultur, in der Religiosität, in der Philosophie und in jeweils unterschiedlichen Literaturgattungen erfasst werden können. Dabei wird von einem eher neutralen Standpunkt aus versucht, das Judentum zu verstehen. Ähnliches wäre im Blick auf die Orientalistik auszusagen.

‘Israelologie’ demgegenüber verfolgt eine andere Zielsetzung. Als Forschungsbereich wird die ‘Israelologie’ dankbar auf die Forschungsergebnisse der Judaistik, der Wissenschaft vom Judentum, der Orientalistik und ähnlicher, sich mit Israel oder dem Judentum bzw. mit der Semitistik im Allgemeinen beschäftigender Forschungsbereiche zurückgreifen, auch die Ergebnisse der alt- und neutestamentlichen Forschung wird sie berücksichtigen und auswerten. Doch im Rahmen dieser Verlagsreihe soll ‘Israelologie’ grundsätzlich und dezidiert als ein Teilbereich der christlichen Dogmatik verortet werden. Dabei ist u.a. die Frage relevant, wie die christliche Lehrbildung durch dogmatische Aussagen zum theologischen Verhältnis von Israel bzw. Judentum und christlicher Gemeinde bereichert und qualitativ modifiziert werden kann (bzw. teilweise modifiziert werden muss). Wir befinden uns also bewusst auf christlich-dogmatischem Terrain. Eine Abgrenzung zu und ggfs. eine Überschneidung mit anderen Forschungsbereichen überdenkt der Dogmatiker stets im Bereich der Prolegomena, um die Aufgaben der Dogmatik zu konkretisieren. Dort wäre eine Diskussion der Judaistik oder ggf. der Orientalistik bzw. der Semitistik zu führen, ähnlich wie beispielsweise hinsichtlich der Philosophie, der Religionswissenschaften, der Geschichtswissenschaften, tangierender Geisteswissenschaften, der Ethik oder der Sprachwissenschaften.

‘Israelologie’ will also einen Aspekt des christlichen Glaubens beschreiben, der die Bedeutung Israels und des Judentums nicht auf marginale Randaspekte für ekklesiologische Aussagen reduziert (z.B. auf die Typologie), um schließlich doch bei der einen oder anderen Art der Substitutions- oder Enterbungslehre anzukommen. ‘Israelologie’ will vielmehr die biblischen Lehraussagen über Israel und das Judentum identifizieren und systematisieren und damit einen Beitrag dazu leisten, eine in sich konsistente, erneuerte christliche Dogmatik zu entwerfen, die eine christlich relevante Israellehre auch *vor* bzw. *außerhalb* der Ekklesiologie

definiert. Israels Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft sowie die Verknüpfungen mit anderen Lehraussagen sollen dabei eigenständig, wenn auch nicht unabhängig von den zentralen Aussagen des christlichen Glaubens ausformuliert und theologisch reflektiert werden.

Berthold Schwarz
im Namen der Herausgeber

Editor's Foreword to the series *Edition Israelologie*

The series *Edition Israelologie* has been initiated to contribute to a renewed discussion of the theology of Israel. However, the primary focus of the series is not the typical disciplines of classic Judaism, Jewish or Oriental studies. These areas of interest primarily emphasize the academic research of Judaism in the diversity of its manifestations, whether in history, culture, religion, philosophy or in various literary genres. These fields could be characterized as an attempt to understand Judaism from the perspective of objective neutrality. The subject of Oriental studies could be viewed in a similar light.

In contrast "Israelology" pursues other aims. As an academic discipline, "Israelology" gratefully draws on contemporary research in Jewish studies, Judaism, Oriental studies, et al., including exegetical research in the fields of Old and New Testament studies. In this series the subject of "Israelology" is to be understood as a Christian dogmatic pursuit. In essence, it raises the question as to how a systematic presentation of the relationship between Israel and/ or Judaism and the Christian Church might enrich the development of Christian doctrine and even demand doctrinal modification. We find this quite consciously in the realm of Christian dogmatics. Systematic theologians reflect on the limitation of, and possibly the overlap with, other academic disciplines, often delineated in the Prolegomena volumes, or introductions to Systematic Theology per se. In such works it would be appropriate to discuss Judaism, Oriental and Semitic studies, e.g. in relation to the disciplines of philosophy, religious studies, history, and in the tangent fields of the humanities, of ethics, and linguistics and philology.

"Israelology" seeks to describe an aspect of Christian faith that does not restrict the significance of Israel and Judaism to certain marginal aspects of Ecclesiology; as e.g. in typology, and that finally acquiesces to a replacement theology of one form of another, disinheriting Israel in the process. Rather Israelology strives to identify and systematize the biblical teaching about Israel and Judaism, thus contributing to the development of a consistent Christian dogmatic theology that in terms of the classic *loci theologici* articulates a relevant theology of Israel apart from Ecclesiology. Not only is proper understanding of Israel's past, present, and future valuable in its own right, its theological implications for the central tenets of the Christian faith also demand further theological reflection.

The Editorial Committee
Berthold Schwarz
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Content

<i>Vorwort zur Reihe "Edition Israelogie"</i>	5
<i>Editor's Foreword to the series Edition Israelogie</i>	7
<i>Content</i>	9
<i>Preface</i>	11
Part I Introduction about the Land	
<i>Hendrik Koorevaar</i>	
Chapter 1 Objective and overview of the study of the Earth and the Land	15
Part II The Land in the Old Testament	
<i>Hendrik Koorevaar</i>	
Chapter 2 The Land in the Book of Genesis.....	25
<i>Raymond R. Hausoul</i>	
Chapter 3 The Land in the Books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers	65
<i>Mart-Jan Paul</i>	
Chapter 4 The Land in the Book of Deuteronomy.....	97
<i>Siegbert Riecker</i>	
Chapter 5 The Conquest and Borders of the Land in the Books of Joshua and Judges.....	121
<i>Herbert H. Klement</i>	
Chapter 6 The Land of Israel during Israel's Monarchy according to the Books of Samuel and Kings	155
<i>Hetty Lalleman</i>	
Chapter 7 The Future of the Land and the Earth in the Books of the Prophets	177

Julius Steinberg

Chapter 8 The Land in the Book of Psalms 199

W. Creighton Marlowe

Chapter 9 The Land in the Four Wisdom Books: Job, Proverbs,
Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs..... 223

Geert W.Lorein

Chapter 10 The Land in a Time of Exile: Promises and Duties 249

Part III The Land after the Old Testament

Boris Paschke

Chapter 11 The Land in the New Testament 277

Heiko Wenzel

Chapter 12 Aspects of Islamic Perspectives on the Land of
Palestine or Land (^ʿ*ard*) in Islamic Sources..... 305

Kees de Vreugd

Chapter 13 The Land and the Zionist State of Israel 345

Part IV Conclusions about the Land

Hendrik Koorevaar and Mart-Jan Paul

Chapter 14 Summary, Conclusions and Perspectives 377

Contributors..... 401

Preface

In the Bible, the land of Canaan (later on: Israel) is more than a piece of ground. It is a theological symbol, because it was an essential part of Israel's practice of its relationship with God. The land is connected to a lifestyle and to the carrying out of religious acts, like the sacrifices and the celebrations. Aspects of this are the use of the land and the enactment of ecological and humanitarian obligations. The people of Israel came into existence outside the promised land, but they were allowed to capture it later on. The land has never been a possession to be taken for granted, because the conditions of the covenant at the Sinai indicate that an expulsion of the people out of that area is possible.

The way the current State of Israel deals with the land is very controversial. An appeal to the old promise to Abraham or the size of the empire of David collide with the Islamic convictions. In the Bible, the land is promised to Israel, but there is a distance between the promise and the realization. Several times the people have been driven out of the land, and a massive group returned in the twentieth century. This caused a lot of tension with the Palestinians and the surrounding people. Several wars have been fought, and in the meantime, it has been fifty years ago since the Israeli's obtained the old city Jerusalem (in 1967).

In this volume, we concentrate on the religious viewpoints, especially how the promised land can be seen from the Old and New Testament perspective. What was the value of the land and why was this so important for the theocracy of Israel? In the discussions, the topics continue to touch current themes, such as stewardship of the earth and taking care of the environment. At the same time, later Jewish and Islamic viewpoints will be dealt with in two separate chapters.

The origin of this volume can be found in the Evangelische Theologische Faculteit in Leuven (B). The department Old Testament has organized several study days over the past years with lectures and discussion about the land, Israel. The main goal was to map the entire Old Testament in regards to this subject. Subsequently, that goal has been broadened and the New Testament has been included, just as Islam and Judaism, and in particular the Zionist state. These lectures have been modified for publication purposes and other topics have been added to achieve a complete whole.

In particular, in the book of Genesis a close connection can be found between the earth as a whole and the land Canaan in particular. During later periods of exile, the descendants of Abraham spread out over different countries. All of this leads to the question of the relation between the earth and the land. This question

is intensified by the New Testament, in which Christians indeed begin in Jerusalem, but move throughout the earth from there. Do they leave the land and its capital city behind them or does a connection remain?

The approach in this volume is for the most part descriptive and mapping. Before practical conclusions are drawn, it is important to have a good overview of the subject in the entire Bible. The chosen approach is historic-canonical. This means that our starting point is the canon of the Old and New Testament, although other data are also added (for example from Qumran). The canonical approach also implies that we use the order of Bible books from the Hebrew canon. For a clarification of the chosen method, a reference can be made to our *Theologie des Alten Testaments. Die bleibende Botschaft der hebräischen Bibel* (Giessen, 2016). A large part of the authors that worked together on this volume have also worked together on that theology of the Old Testament. The publication on the land can be considered to be an extensive elaboration of one of the theme's that also comes up for discussion in the theology book. There, the earth and the land are characterized as one of the six main themes that the book of Genesis and the entire Old Testament provide.

We hope that the readers obtain more insight in the perspectives on the land that are visible through the entire Bible: a place in which Israel can serve God, so it can be a blessing to the entire earth. This goal remains, even if human failures threaten to obscure that perspective over and over again. God's faithfulness in the course of time also gives hope for the future when He will realize his Kingdom for Israel and the nations.

The practical consequences for our time continue to be difficult, because also national-judicial and political aspects play a role. Zionist ideals and Islamic convictions seem to collide with each other in a tough way. Believers, for whom the Bible serves as their starting point, know, however, that practical circumstances never have the final say. There is a God who guides history and works towards a promised future. Eventually, a new heaven and a new earth will be realized. In that perspective, we search for the meaning of this earth and the land Israel.

Hendrik J. Koorevaar

Mart-Jan Paul

Raymond R. Hausoul¹

Chapter 3

The Land in the Books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers

This chapter explores the place of the land in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. First, the theme of the land in the individual parts of these books will be explored. Secondly, three thematic relationships about the land will be brought into concern: (1) Yahweh Owns the land; (2) Yahweh brings Israel to the land; (3) Yahweh's presence in the land.

1. Introduction

It has been repeatedly noted that the Old Testament doesn't only emphasize God's dealings with his people the Israelites, but also shows how the people are related to the land. Walter Brueggemann states:² '[The] Land is a central, if not *the* central theme of biblical faith', and Norman Habel writes that the land 'could be ranked next to God in importance.'³ Thus the Old Testament notes a fascinating relationship between the Israelites' habitation both *in* and *outside* the promised land.

This chapter will consider the place of the land in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers as a literary unity.⁴ This approach is relatively new with regard to the Pentateuch. There has been insufficient attention for the literary structure of the Torah:⁵ 'Scholars looking at trees have overlooked the forest.' In the past, it has been suggested that Ex 19:1 to Num 10:10 formed one entirety.⁶ But given that there is no closure in Num 10:10 and the 'giving of the law is anchored to events in Israel's encounter with YHWH',⁷ it is difficult to separate these books.⁸ John Hartley writes:⁹

1 This essay was translated from Dutch by Joanna Groen and Pete Gifford, to whom the author is greatly indebted.

2 W. Brueggemann, 2002, 3.

3 N. Habel, 1995, 6.

4 See for questions about authorship and dating of these books: C. Nihan, 2007; E. Nicholson, 1998; J. Blenkinsopp, 1992; E. Blum, 1990.

5 T.C. Eskenazi, 1995, 28; Cf. J. Steiner, 2003, 544–556.

6 A. Ruwe, 2003, 59.

7 J. Hartley, 1992, xxxi.

8 Cf. M. Douglas, 1993; C. Houtman, 1996, 581–586; G. Wenham, 2008, 18.

9 Hartley, 1992, xxxi.

‘The giving of the law is anchored to events in Israel’s encounter with Yahweh,’ and Gordon Wenham supposes that Leviticus ‘is preceded by Exodus and followed by Numbers and therefore cannot be looked at in isolation.’¹⁰ Besides these comments on a macro level, there are many elements at the micro level of Exodus–Leviticus–Numbers, which indicate a unity of these three works. We list the main ones:

Lev 1:1 opens with וַיְקַרְא אֱלֹהִים מִשָּׁה, but waits till verse 1b to reveal who is speaking. The first word is a *waw consecutivum*. This *waw consecutivum* in the OT is only connected with another verb than הָיָה at the beginning of Leviticus and Numbers. Hence Leviticus appears to be a literary continuation of Exodus, and Numbers as a continuation of Leviticus. Also Exodus ends with the glory of YHWH which fills the tabernacle (Ex 40:34–35), and which allows no one to enter the tent. This explains why Lev 1:1 says that YHWH ‘calls’ from within the tabernacle. The tabernacle can only be accessed when the priests are ordained (Ex 28:1; cf. 29:1–37). Since Exodus 25–40 focuses on the construction of the tabernacle, the question arises when this ordination will take place. This will happen in Leviticus 8–9. Sacrifices are brought to YHWH, and Aaron and his sons are anointed. From that point onwards the sanctuary can be accessed by Moses and Aaron (Lev 9:23), while the people see the glory of YHWH (v. 24).

After Leviticus 25–27 has finally looked back on the speaking of YHWH on Mount Sinai, Numbers speaks about the situation of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai, one month after the tabernacle has been built (Ex 40:17; cf. Lev 7:38; Num 3:14; 9:1). Later decrees in the book of Numbers echo those same decrees which can be found in Leviticus: the sacrifices (Num 15:1–16, 22–31; 28:6; Lev 1–4), the feasts (Num 28–29; Lev 23), and the jubilee (Num 36:4; Lev 25). Some of the ordinances which are briefly mentioned in Leviticus will then be described in more detail: the offering by fire (Lev 23:8; Num 28:16–25), the Levites and their cities (Lev 25:32–34; Num 35:1–8).

This kind of similarity also exists between Exodus and Numbers. In Exodus we find information that goes beyond the boundaries of the book itself: (1) In Exodus 6:25 Pinechas is mentioned, who plays his major role only in Numbers 25; and (2) Exodus 16:35 indicates that Israel ate manna for forty years, which can only be confirmed in Numbers 33. Also Numbers harks back to Exodus and subsequently continues to build on this information. Therefore Gordon Wenham writes:¹¹ ‘The material in Numbers cannot be understood apart from what precedes in Exodus and Leviticus.’ For example: The journey in Numbers 33 be-

10 G. Wenham, 1979, 6.

11 G. Wenham, 2008, 18, cf. 63.

gins in Exodus; and Numbers 14:22 counts ten temptations, which can only be achieved when we start from Exodus (Ex 14:11–12; 15:23; 16:2,20,27; 17:2–7; 32:1–35; Num 11:1,4–34; 13:1–14:45). These analogies indicate that there is a unity between Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. The boundaries between these works are less obvious than those between Genesis and Exodus or between Numbers and Deuteronomy.

Joseph Blenkinsopp suggests that the separation between Exodus and Numbers was caused by the idea to put Leviticus in a theological center.¹² Leviticus contains important information, which should be readily available to the priest: questions about sacrifices (1–7), initiations (8–10), purity laws (11–15), holiness laws (17–24), and discharge (25–27). From this, it seems logical to take Lev 1:1 as a fault line because (1) only this verse speaks about YHWH who calls from within the tabernacle; and (2) this verse is the beginning of the institutions which the priests will consult several times. Also, the choices of Num 1:1 can be explained by the change in place (cf. *בְּמִדְבַּר סִינַי*; cf. Lev 27:34) and time. From this perspective, the demarcation of the biblical books that make up the Pentateuch, could be understood.

On an academic level little attention is given to these literary aspects that refer to a relationship between Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers.¹³ Hendrik Koorevaar analyses the literary relationship between these Bible books in detail and recognizes a chiasm.¹⁴

12 J. Blenkinsopp, 1992, 52.

13 See detailed: V. Steiner, 2003, 544–556; R. Hausoul, 2011, 121–129; H. Koorevaar, 2012, 104–119.

14 H. Koorevaar, 2012, 116. For discussion: R. Hausoul, 2011, 129–131.