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Mart-Jan Paul
(eds.)

The Earth and the Land

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

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Band 11



In the Bible, the land of 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. In this volume, we concentrate on the religious viewpoints, especially how the promised land can be seen from the Old and New Testament perspective. 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 and implies that we use the order of Bible books from the Hebrew canon. Two additional chapters show the Jewish and Islamic viewpoints.

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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 anzu- kommen. '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

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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

Hendrik Koorevaar¹

Chapter 1

Objective and Overview of the Study of the Earth and the Land

The importance of the earth as a residence for man through God's creation is presented. After a semantic presentation about the locality, especially from Genesis, two places are brought forward as foundational: the garden of Eden, and the Land of Canaan. The final purpose of the study is to answer the question: Who is entitled to the earth?

1. Purpose

The purpose of this study is to research the value of the earth for mankind, from God's light on this topic. The research on this topic in the Old Testament serves as a broad base for the study. The earth as a whole is of importance for mankind (Ps 115:16). Nevertheless, the Bible does focus on some specific places with special value. First is the garden of Eden, planted by God himself, for the first people (Gen 2:4-3:24). Man receives a task in the garden of Eden. Second, many centuries after the loss of Eden, after the flood, God again points to a special area, which is the land of Canaan. God points to this place when he calls Abraham to go there (Gen 12:1-3). The land Canaan would later be called the land Israel. What is God's purpose with the special location of Eden and of the land of Canaan for the rest of the earth and the people that live there? That is what we want to investigate.

2. Historical-canonical approach

Several approaches to the texts of the Bible are possible. The historical-critical method especially investigates the genesis of texts, how the texts came to be. Over the last few decades, more emphasis has been placed on the literary aspects and the composition of the final Bible books. In this volume, we will especially focus on the final shape of text of the Bible. The discussion of the so-called introductory questions takes place somewhere else.

Furthermore, we also find it important to start with the manner of how the Bible books are arranged in the Hebrew canon, the TeNaKh; and we find it important to

¹ Translation from Dutch into English by Paul-Mattias Reitsma.

Mart-Jan Paul

Chapter 4

The Land in the Book of Deuteronomy

The speeches and legislation in the book of Deuteronomy focus on the dwelling of Israel in the promised land. God gives the land to his people, but the blessing- and curseconditions clarify that the dwelling in the promised land is conditional. At the end of the book, it even happens that a remainder of the people can return back after an exile outside the promised land.

1. Introduction

In this article the position of the land of Canaan comes up, like it is spoken of in the book of Deuteronomy. After some attention to the dating and the intent of the book, we will focus our attention to the special character of the land as God's gift to his people. This land also makes it possible that Israel serves its God in more aspects of life than this was the case in the desert time (e.g. due to the practice of agriculture). Out of the several references to the land we will especially concentrate on the chapters 27–30, because the land is mentioned often here. The formulations about blessing and curse have a lot to do with the ownership of the land and life in the promised land. From these formulations it is evident that the announced punishments aren't God's last word, but that gracious recovery is possible in the promised land. Because the book of Deuteronomy has been very influential, we will finally focus on and highlight some links to later bible books, the New Testament, and Jewish practices.

2. Deuteronomy: Dating and intent

2.1 Dating the Book of Deuteronomy

For centuries it has been assumed, in synagogue and church that the authorship of the book of Deuteronomy rests with Moses himself. In the last two centuries however, many scholars accepted the view that the book was composed during the time of the monarchy of Israel. Very likely in their view the main part of the book was written a short time before the reformation by King Josiah (7th century; 2 Kgs 22). In recent time many scholars admit that segments of the book might be much older.

Now I want to concentrate on only one aspect of the recent research on the book. In the last half century about 90 ancient treaties of kings of the ANE have

Boris Paschke

Chapter 11

The Land in the New Testament

In order to learn to what extent the land promised in the Old Testament is valued in the New Testament, the latter's references to the land, the city of Jerusalem, and the temple are studied. Whereas some passages spiritualize the land, other texts rather suggest that from a New Testament perspective, one should not spiritualize the land too hastily.

1. Introduction

This study investigates the value of the land of Israel in the New Testament. The main research question is: To what extent do the writings of the canonical New Testament attribute value to the land of Israel *as land*? Answering this question involves, for example, studying to what extent the land promised in the Old Testament (cf. Gen 13:15; 15:18–21; 17:8) is spiritualized, universalized, deterritorialized, or transcended in the New Testament. The findings of this study are relevant from both a theological and political perspective.¹

The investigation proceeds as follows: The remainder of this introductory section presents the study's terminology and methodology. The second section then offers a history of research. Here, it will become obvious that the majority of scholars think that the New Testament attributes value to the land of Israel *as such* only to a limited degree. Sections three and four react to this scholarly consensus: The third section presents and discusses those New Testament texts that seem to diminish the value of the land of Israel *as land*. The fourth section then introduces and investigates those texts of the New Testament that seem to attribute a considerable value to the land promised in the Old Testament. The conclusion summarizes the findings of this study.

1.1 Terminology

In accordance with the title of the book to which this study makes a contribution, the term "land of Israel" has been used thus far to refer to the 'subject matter'

1 Cf. S.J. Munayer/L. Loden, eds., 2012, xvii: "For the Christian in the twenty-first century, there are few subjects as important or as controversial as the theology of the Holy Land."

Heiko Wenzel

Chapter 12

Aspects of Islamic Perspectives on the Land of Palestine or Land (*ʿarḍ*) in Islamic Sources

A survey of "land" in the Koran lays the foundation for reflecting on (hermeneutical) aspects. The idea of Allah transferring land builds thereon and ties to some notes on the Hamas charter and its relevance for ongoing discussions. Thereby the essay seeks to enable the reader to interact with Islamic assumptions and arguments.

Choosing the title for this essay has been a challenge. When it discusses the "land of Israel" or when the focus is on the divine¹ promises to the people of Israel or on political and sociological aspects, it always indicates the scholar's specific interest and also some of the underlying or explicit assumptions. In addition, to cover all the important aspects of the topic with a reasonable scholarly breadth and depth requires a monograph-size treatment.

Since this volume discusses the theological significance of "land" in the Old Testament, my contribution starts with "land" (*ʿarḍ*) in the Koran, presents relevant linguistic data and thereby Allah's universal claim. A survey of different usages in the Koran also lays the foundation for important aspects of the essay,² in particular hermeneutical aspects. The notion of Allah's transfer of land builds on this foundation as do the notes on *ʿarḍ* in two important Hadith collections. This notion illustrates an important hermeneutical principle for Islamic thought that the Koran as final revelation validates, judges and corrects previous revelation. Thereby it does not only challenge but supersedes and subjugates biblical revelation. This claim rests on a hermeneutical reversal (the later validates the former)

-
- 1 In this article "Allah" refers to the divine name of the Koran. This choice is not a linguistic or theological statement. Rather, it seeks to describe some of a Koranic perspective before discussing or deciding the degree of overlap or of deviation from the Bible. I seek to provide the relevant data so that the reader may respond to these questions. Several times the word "God" is used, e.g., when summarizing the telling controversy (par. 1.) or when quoting an English translation of the Koran. In both cases I did not want to deviate from the terminology used by the respective authors.
 - 2 Quotations follow Arthur J. Arberry's translation, 1964. Since verse numbering is usually hard to identify in this translation, the references follow Rudi Paret's numbering, 1996⁷.

Kees de Vreugd

Chapter 13

The Land and the Zionist State of Israel

This article gives an outline of views that preceded the rise of political Zionism, emphasizing the choice for the land of Israel, as well as the traditional views of the land in the Talmud. Then follows a short introduction to Christian support for the State of Israel and a discussion of related theological questions. It concludes with an evaluation.

1. Zionism, overview of its origins

1.1 Introduction

In 1897, the First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, convened by Theodor Herzl, proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to national rebirth in their own country¹. Herzl had written *Der Judenstaat* (the Jewish state)², in which he describes an independent state for the Jews as the solution to the Jewish Question. After the Zionist Congress, he wrote in his diary³: "Were I to sum up the Basel Congress in a word - which I shall guard against pronouncing publicly - it would be this: At Basel I founded the Jewish State. If I said this out loud today I would be greeted by universal laughter. In five years perhaps, and certainly in fifty years, everyone will perceive it." On May 14th, 1948, David Ben Gurion on behalf of the Jewish People's Council declared "the establishment of a Jewish state in Eretz-Israel, to be known as the State of Israel". No less than "the realization of the age-old dream - the redemption of Israel" was envisioned in the declaration of independence⁴.

Every element referred to in this short introduction was the object of long, profound and sometimes bitter debates: a state, its character, the territory where it should be, even the concept of a Jewish people itself. In this article, I intend to give a brief outline of different views and opinions that preceded and preluded the rise of political Zionism, with an emphasis on the choice for the land of Israel. Then I will discuss briefly the traditional rabbinic views of the land as expressed

1 For this introduction, see W. Laqueur, 2003, 104 ff.

2 Th. Herzl, 1896.

3 W. Laqueur, 2003, 108.

4 English translation on the website of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/declaration%20of%20establishment%20of%20state%20of%20israel.aspx> (retrieved November 28, 2017).

Hendrik Koorevaar and Mart-Jan Paul

Chapter 14

Summary, Conclusions and Perspectives

1. Summary of the results of the earth and the land in the book of the Old Testament

Genesis starts with the creation of the heavens and the earth by God, who is the owner of the earth because he is its creator. Because of this he has authority over man, whom he made in his image. The earth is good, man is good. Man gets a place in the garden of Eden that God planted. He has to cultivate the garden to subdue the earth and populate the entire earth, starting from the garden. He may eat from the fruits of the garden, except from the fruit of the Right and Wrong Knowledge Tree. After humanity violated God's law, due to the temptation by the snake, the following problems emerged for man on earth:

- The exile from the garden in Eden. He lost his original place and his access to the Tree of Life.
- A difficult life, because the earth is cursed because of him.
- The perspective that humans will have to leave earth through death.

There is however in God's verdict to the people the perspective that the seed of the woman will crush the head of the snake.

Before the flood, that Enoch, the son of Jered, is taken from the earth (without dying) is notable. After the nations emerge, Yhwh calls Abram to the land of Canaan to be a blessing to all the nations. There, in the land of Canaan, the two covenant-fathers Abraham and Isaac are buried. After he leaves Canaan and after his death in Egypt, Jacob wants to be buried in the land of Canaan. Joseph, later on, wants the Israelites to take his embalmed body to the land of Canaan, when he dies. After the garden in Eden, the land called Canaan is the new geographical reference point for Yhwh, for blessing all the nations in the entire earth. God's taking of the non-deceased Enoch (who walked with God) and the funeral of Jacob (who walked in front of the face of God) set up a basis perspective that the land of Canaan will play a role for life and death for the entire earth.

In the book of Exodus-Leviticus-Numbers (Yhwh-Tora) Yhwh is preparing Israel to give them the land of Canaan. The nation will go there to function as a royal priesthood for Yhwh (for all the nations) (Exod 19:5-6). In the Law about



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Seit 2007 verleiht das Institut für Israelologie den **Franz-Delitzsch-Preis**. Prämiert werden wissenschaftliche Arbeiten, die in herausragender Weise sachkompetent und in Übereinstimmung mit den Forschungsschwerpunkten des Instituts eine heilsgeschichtliche Israel-Theologie (Israelologie) fördern. Auf den folgenden Seiten finden Sie Informationen über Franz Delitzsch, die Preisträger der vergangenen Jahre sowie die Teilnahmebedingungen.

Der Franz-Delitzsch-Preis 2018 wird an Prof. Dr. Hendrik J. Koorevaar und an Prof. Dr. Mart-Jan Paul für die Planung und Herausgabe der Aufsatzsammlung "The Earth and the Land. Studies about the Value of the Land of Israel in the old Testament and afterwards, EDIS 11, Frankfurt et al. 2018" verliehen.

<http://www.israelogie.de/2011/preistrager-2/>