

THE LAND

Walter Brueggemann, *THE LAND* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977),

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CHAPTER 1. LAND AS PROMISE AND AS PROBLEM

Land as a Prism for Biblical Faith

Israel as God's Homeless People

Israel as God's Landed People

Brueggemann organized his writing around three histories of the land:

(a) the history of promise into the *land*, (b) the history of management into *exile*, and (c) the new history of promise which begins in exile and culminates in *kingdom*.

Landlessness, homelessness: The sense of being lost, displaced, and homeless is pervasive in contemporary culture.

The yearning to belong somewhere, to have a home, to be in a safe place, is a deep and moving pursuit. Loss of place and yearning for place are dominant images. They may be understood in terms of sociological displacement, as Americans have become a "*nation of strangers*," highly mobile and rootless, as our entire social fabric becomes an artifact designed for obsolescence, and the design includes even us consumers! They may be understood in terms of psychological dislocation, as increasing numbers of persons are disoriented, characterized as possessors of "the homeless mind" (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1977: 1 (Walter Brueggemann, *THE LAND* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977),

Land means: The Bible promises precisely what the modern world denies. In the discussion follows, "land" will be used to refer to *actual earthly turf* where people can be safe and secure, where meaning and well-being are enjoyed without pressure or coercion. "Land" will also be used in a *symbolic* sense, as the Bible itself uses it, to express the wholeness of joy and well-being characterized by social coherence and personal ease in prosperity, security, and freedom (Walter Brueggemann, *THE LAND* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 2.

ISRAEL, AS GOD'S HOMELESS PEOPLE

Israel is a landless people. Although it is without place, it has a sense of being on the way of a promise, and the substance of it all its promises from Yahweh is to be in the land, to be placed, and secured where Yahweh is yet to lead it. As landless folk, yearning for land, Israel is presented under several images derived from several experiences. Each such image presents the *land as promise* to the *landless*:

1. The Genesis narratives present the radical demand of God that the way of faith requires leaving a land and accepting landlessness as a posture of faith: Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house ... (Gen. 12:1). I am Yahweh who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans ... (Gen. 15:7) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1977: 6-7).

The sojourn is freely chosen, not imposed. "Sojourner" is a word usually described as "resident alien." It means to be in a place, perhaps for an extended time, to live there and take some roots, but always to be an outsider, never belonging, always without rights, title, or voice in decisions that matter. Such a one is on turf but without title to the turf,

having nothing sure but trusting in words spoken that will lead to a place”(Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 7).

In English translation, the “sojourn” is occasionally called pilgrimage (Gen. 47:9; Ex. 6:4 in KJV). It is being where one does not belong and cannot settle in and having to survive there, all because of promise. To an observer, the sojourner-pilgrim is just there, coping and surviving. Perhaps only the insider can know that he is not just “being there,” but is on his way toward a promise. He can be observed as placeless, but he knows of a promised place, and that changes his sojourn”(Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 7).

2. During the period when Israel had left the slavery of Egypt and was not yet in the land of promise (forty years) it remembered itself as *wanderer*.

The very word “wander”(nua) suggests precariousness (Ps. 107:27) (불안정, 위협) (Num. 32:13). The [wanderer](#) is different from the sojourner-pilgrim because he is not on the way anywhere. He is in a situation in which survival is the key question. Israel experienced the bitterness of landlessness, being totally exposed and helpless, victimized by anything that happened to be threatening”(Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 8).

For Israel the wilderness period provided a [double image and memory](#). It is a route [on the way to the land](#), but it is also [a sentence of death](#) (Num. 32:13). In the wilderness, bereft of resources, faith is not easy (Deut. 1:32). When faithlessness is linked to landlessness, Israel is lost. It is destined to die the long death of the desert, on the way to nowhere. The anger and unrest of the wilderness wandering are quite in contrast to the sojourn of the fathers and provide a very different stance toward landlessness”(Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 8).

3. Israel’s third memory of landlessness is the *exile*. Although the northern tribes were exiled to Assyria in the eighth century, it is the sixth century Jews in Babylon that provide the central image of exile for the Bible. The exiled Jews were not oppressed, abused, or imprisoned. But they were displaced, alienated from the place which gave identity and security. During the exile the Jews were alienated from all the shapes and forms which gave power to faith and life”(Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 8).

[Exile without land](#) or even prospect of land was indeed Israel’s null point when every promise seemed void. This event of landlessness evoked rage and anger (Ps. 137) but also yearning pathos (Lam. 1:2, 3, 6, 7, 21). [Exile](#) is being cut off with no way back. But this “null point” also became the context for Israel’s most remarkable expression of faith, The lyrical celebration of God’s faithfulness to exiles. [Landlessness becomes the setting for the boldest gospel of newness](#) (Jer. 31:17-18; Ezek. 37:5-6; Is. 43: 18-21). Israel had a hint of the possibility of newness which perhaps could only happen there. [Precisely in the context of landlessness do the promises loom large](#). It is in the emptiness of Israel, exposed and without resources, that [promises are received](#) with power, that risks are run, and hope is energizing. Yahweh’s strange promise is either especially directed toward or

peculiarly discerned among the landless. Faith is precisely for exiles who remember the land but see no way to it”(Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 9).

ISRAEL IS GOD’S LANDED PEOPLE

Israel’s first moment of landed ness is its *settlement in Egypt* under Joseph. It is given the best of the land (Gen. 47:6) and made to dwell there in security and prosperity (Gen. 47:27). In that Israel did not sojourn; it *dwelt* there, securely settled in”(Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 9). But of course the story of Israel is that being in the land soon led to slavery. Its prosperity (Ex. 1:7) soon resulted in oppression (Ex. 1:8-9), and the Exodus narrative is about the unbearable situation of being in land as slaves, of yearning to leave to choose the freedom of the desert, of the fear of leaving the land and the oppression which kept them in the land. Land as locus of slavery posed for Israel an enormous choice, which it had to make again and again, between expulsion to the desert or continuation in slavery. Israel was left to wonder if land always leads to slavery. The promise quickly became problem”(Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 10).

A more significant dimension of landed ness in Israel is the *monarchy* which runs its course from the splendor of Solomon to the frightened, pitiful days of Jehoiachim and finally his helpless son who ends in disgrace and exile”(Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 10).

Israel was warned early that it was in the nature of kings to covet and exploit (1 Sam. 8). Solomon did not disappoint. During his forty years of security and prosperity in the land, he managed to devise a bureaucratic state built upon coercion in which free citizens were enslaved for state goals. In one generation, he managed to confiscate Israel’s freedom and reduce social order to the very situation of Egyptian slavery”(Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 11).

The very land that promised to create space for human joy and freedom became the very source of dehumanizing exploitation and oppression. Land was indeed a problem in Israel. Time after time, Israel saw the land of promise become the land of problem. The very land that contained the sources of life drove kings to become agents of death. Society became the frantic effort of the landed to hold onto the turf, no matter what the cost. Israel finally waited for Jeremiah to bring to full expression the grief and weariness as this great landed people faced the reality that land given can become land lost. He speaks of two kings, the keeper of the land: (Jer. 22:18-19; 22:28-29; 4:28; 12:4)”(Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 11) : it seems to be the same practice today by the wealthy.

Israel is always on the move from land to landlessness, from landlessness to land, from life to death, from death to life”(Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 14).

CHAPTER 2. TO THE LAND I WILL SHOW YOU – ABRAHAM

Abraham and History of Landlessness The Promise and Heirs of Abraham

The Book of Genesis presents two histories, both concerned with land. **One, presented in Genesis 1 – 11, is about people fully rooted in land living toward expulsion and loss of land.** Successively, Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah and his family, and finally the folks at Babel do everything they can to lose the land, and they eventually do. That history is about presuming upon the land and as a result losing it. The Bible ponders the folly and carelessness that cause people securely landed to give it up” (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 15). **I said about this part that God created home for the first human family. And**

The other history of Genesis 12-50. It features Abraham and his family, and is about not having land but being on the way toward it and living in confident expectation of it. The Bible considers that people without land have the resources and stamina to live toward a land they do not possess” (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 15).

These two histories set the parameters of land theology in the Bible: presuming upon the land and being *expelled* from it; trusting toward a land not yet possessed, but empowered by *anticipation* of it. Our lives are set between *expulsion* and *anticipation*, of losing and expecting, **of being uprooted and rerooted, of being dislocated** because if impertinence and being relocated in trust” (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 15).

Biblical faith begins with the radical announcement of **discontinuity** which intends to initiate us into a new history of **anticipation**. It challenges and contradicts a consciousness of land loss and expulsion as false consciousness. The remainder of biblical faith is the history of those who have broken off the old life of expulsion and have walked the risky way of anticipation” (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 16).

ABRAHAM AND THE HISTORY OF LANDLESSNESS

The new history begins in a word spoken. **This new history requires a wrenching departure, an abandonment of what is, for that which is not, but which is promised by the One who will do what he says, “And he went!”** Yahweh spoke and he went, and in so doing a new historical alternative began, alternative to the history of expulsion and dislocation. Sarah was barren. No way to the future. No heir to receive all the riches. God spoke and there was the newness. **The barren one went on a pilgrimage with the Lord of barrenness and birth, the Ruler of hopelessness and hope.** The family of Abraham left the history of expulsion and began the pilgrimage of promise” (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 18).

It is announced in Gen. 12: 1-3, with the promise, “I will make of you a great nation .. make your name great. .It is a new land, not like any of the old land, tired, sterile, unproductive, filled with thorns and thistles (Gen 3:18)” (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 18).

The second announcement occurs in what is regarded as an old, even primitive narrative of encounter, Gen. 15:7-21.” ... give you this land to possess. A new word is spoken which redefines the relation of people and the land in which they already sojourn. He speaks to restructure the relation of land and people. What had been threat becomes promise. What had been coveted now becomes gifted” (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 19).

God said, I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojourning, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.” The land is referred to as the “land of sojourning,” the place where they are but do not belong and do not have rootage. It is also called the “land of Canaan,” possessed by another and not by them. But the land of rootlessness, possessed by others, is Israel’s future. It will become ‘*olam ahazath*, everlasting possession. The *berith olam* leads to *ahazath olam*. The enduring covenant leads to enduring land. This is the new history. The rootless one is given land; the history of banishment is displaced by the history of promise against all the circumstantial evidence (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 21-22).

CHAPTER 3. YOU LACKED NOTHING –Wilderness

Exodus 16: Nourished though Alienated
 Number 14: The Two Histories in the Wilderness
 The Crisis of Presence
 On Lacking Nothing

A second component of Israel's memory of landlessness is that of the wilderness. This memory, expressed in Exodus 16:18, Num. 10:11ff., shares the experience of being displaced and without land with the sojourn of the fathers. It provides another angle by which Israel could discern itself as "having nothing yet lacking nothing" (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 28).

The wilderness wanderings are a surprise to Israel. That is not the promise of Exodus. The deliverance rhetoric of Exodus talks rather of going out of Egypt and into the land (Ex. 23:7-8). Clearly what happens falls short of the promise. Israel is victimized by a gross miscalculation of the post-Exodus possibility. Exodus is about freedom but it about freedom in the good land under the good word of promise" (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 28).

It turns out otherwise. This wilderness tradition is the most radical memory Israel has about landlessness. Wilderness is not simply an in-between place which makes the journey longer. It is space far away from ordered land. It is chaos which, like the darkness before creation, is "formless and void" and without a hovering wind (Gen. 1:2). Displacement, in that time and our time, is experienced like the empty dread of primordial chaos (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 29).

Wilderness is formless and therefore lifeless. To be placed in the wilderness is to be cast into the land of the enemy-cosmic, natural, historical –without any of the props or resources that give life order and meaning. To be in the wilderness is landlessness par excellence, being not merely a resident alien, as were the fathers, but in a context hostile and destructive" (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 29).

Jeremiah calls this *lo zeruah*, "not sown" (Jer. 2:2). Such a land is not only not sown, that is beyond cultivation, but it is seedless. Not only nothing growing, but nothing can grow. It is land without promise, without hope, where no newness can come. Perhaps that is a point of contact between the sojourning fathers who were without heir (*lo nathattah zara*) (Gen. 15:3) and the wilderness folk in a land not sown (*lo zeruah*) (Jer. 2:2). The missing heir of Abraham and Sarah and the missing growth in the wilderness are the same *zera*, either "heir or seed," both without entry to the future. This is Israel's dominant memory of landlessness, to be at the disposal of an environment totally without life supports and without any visible hint that there is an opening to the future. This is the central struggle of both the patriarchs with barren women (Gen. 11:30, 25:21, 29:31) and Israel in the barren land (Ex. 16-18)" (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 29).

The recipients of the gift of the Exodus become the victim of deathly wilderness. Buoyant trust is rapidly turned to grim resentment. Faith rapidly erodes in situations of landlessness, yet Israel is called to be precisely a people of faith in precisely a situation of landlessness” (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 30).

EXODUS 16: NOURISHED THOUGH ALIENATED

Exodus 16 is one of the focal memories of the wilderness tradition. Israel remembers wilderness landlessness as a place of murmur, protest, quarrelsome dissatisfaction (16:3). The protest is against the freedom-giving leadership of Moses. Egypt may have been slavery but it was filled with life-giving resources. Land always is. That is what land is. And wilderness is filled with hunger. Thus the correlation: Egypt: flesh/bread: fullness. Wilderness: hunger: death.” That is the choice Israel had made. It had chosen the freedom of deathly wilderness and found itself between oases (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 30).

The second component is the response to the protest. That is the wonder of the narrative. Even in the forsaken (God-forsaken?) wilderness, Yahweh is there with his answer:

16: 4: Yahweh: rain bread from heaven; 12 ;)

16: 8: Moses: meat in the evening;

16: 12: Yahweh: at twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread.

God gives bread from a different source, heaven, not Egypt. Flesh, bread, and fullness do not come from the land itself, but from heaven, from the Lord of landlessness. These resources are given to the landless by the Lord of chaos (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 31).

Protests answered, bellies filled, needs supplied, cries heard! These are dimensions of Yahweh’s wilderness which surprise the hopeless sojourners (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 31).

Church must represent Yahweh and Jesus in answering to the cry of the homeless.

NUMBER 14: THE TWO HISTORIES IN THE WILDERNESS

Having rejected safe slavery, Israel found its immediate destiny to be landlessness. But even in wilderness it discovered that one may be a participant in one of two histories, surely a continuation of the two histories we have discerned in Genesis.

Numbers 14 presents in rapid succession a series of images about facing the competing claims of the two histories. **One is driven by** a sense of banishment, characterized by mistrust expressed as quarrelsomeness and devoted to return to Egypt. **The other** is the history of hope, trusting in Yahweh’s promises, enduring in the face of want and need, sure that his was on its way to the new and good land (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 35).

Landlessness leads to bitter accusation, here expressed as two exclamations of indignation, two rhetorical questions, and a concluding appeal:

Exclamation: (a) Would that we had died *in the land of Egypt!*
 (b) Or would that we had died *in the wilderness!*

Question: (a) Why does the Lord bring us *into this land* to fall by the sword?
 (b) Would it not be better for us to go *back to Egypt?*

Appeal: Let us choose a captain and go *back to Egypt.*

Three times there is positive appeal to Egypt and two times sharp negative contrast; this wilderness, this land, the one abandoned without resources. This history is driven by a yearning for restoration to safe slavery, always a compelling model for being in the land, but surely appealing to the landless (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 36).

The wilderness is the *route of promise* on the way to land, or the wilderness is *unbearable abandonment* to be avoided to return to slavery. All the faith questions are put to Israel in wilderness. Only a few in Israel discern the true character of landlessness as the route to the new land (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 37).

THE CRISIS OF PRESENCE

Being in the wilderness is enough. Being there alone, abandoned, is unbearable. Inevitably the issue of God's presence is raised as a desperate question. The issue is raised in Exodus 16 not by Israel but by Yahweh. His response to the plea for food is to assert his presence as sustainer. He is there in the wilderness with Israel to transform the situation. Eating and being filled are the ways to know (Ex. 16:6-7) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 41).

“As Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, **the glory of the Lord appeared in a cloud.**” He is seen in a cloud and therefore not fully. **He is seen in the wilderness, the sure and certain sign that he is with his people in their land of abandonment.** O Lord, art in the midst of this people; for thou, O Lord, art seen face to face, and thy cloud stands over them and thou goes before them, in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night” (Number 14:14) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 41).

ON LACKING NOTHING

God is there with Israel. He enters into the desolation with his people. He subjects himself to the same circumstances as Israel. He also sojourns without rootage, with his people, en route to the fulfilling land of promise. The ancient statement of Exodus 15 ends with Yahweh himself taking his *place* after being with his people in the sojourn (Ex. 15:16-18), but it is only after the long sojourn (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 43). **Jesus is among the homeless (Matt. 25: 36-41).**

Wilderness, landless for Israel, is a place without resources. But it is also the place where Yahweh is present with and to his people.). **Jesus is among the homeless (Matt. 25: 36-41). God is present there among the homeless in their wilderness and the church must go there to meet the God and Jesus.** Deut. 2:7: Israel's conclusion: He knows your going through this great wilderness; these forty years the Lord your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing. Deut. 29:5: I have led you forty years in the wilderness; your clothing has not worn out upon you and your sandals have not worn off your feet. (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 44).

Israel's reflection on those forty years of landlessness leads to a remarkable affirmation. Wilderness should have been a place of death but life is given. Wilderness should have been a place of weariness, sickness, poverty and disease, but Israel is sustained and kept well. The place of all lacks, because Yahweh is present, is where nothing is lacking (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977:44).

Because Yahweh is there with his people, gifts are given, healings emerge, newness governs, and nothing grows old. It is against all the wise expectations of this age, of all those who would reasonably leave Israel there to die (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 44). **Yahweh promises homes to all the homeless. This is where the church should be. Churches must carry out Yahweh's promises.**

CHAPTER 4. REFLECTIONS AS THE BOUNDARY – At the Jordan

The Land as Gift

The Land as Temptation

The Land as Task

The Land as Threat

Israel comes to the Jordan. Finally Israel comes to the land. The Exodus is about to be completed. The promise is about to be fulfilled. Landless sojourning is about to end. Israel comes to the Jordan needs only to cross it and history will begin anew. **The Jordan** looms as a **decisive boundary** in the Bible. **It is the boundary between the precariousness of the wilderness and the confidence of at-home-ness.** The Jordan crossing represents the moment of the most radical transformation of any historical person or group, the moment of empowerment or enlandment, the decisive event of being turfed and at home for the first time (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 45).

Nothing is more radical than this that **the sojourner becomes a possessor.** The moment drastically redefines who Israel will be. **Land entry requires of Israel that it cease to be what it had been in the wilderness and become what it had never been before. Land makes that demand. At this moment Israel does indeed become a new creation, a slave becomes an heir, a helpless child becomes a mature inheritor (Ezk. 16: 1-14)** (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 45).

Deuteronomy more than anything else in the tradition provides the most radical and bold articulation of faith. **The long pause of Deuteronomy is presented as though Israel is reluctant to put its feet in the Jordan, dry though it would be, because Israel knows that in so doing, it is walking away from the inscrutable nourishment of wilderness. It is entering a context where all the tasks of self-identity have to be addressed again. There is no turning back. In the land, in contrast to the wilderness, there are no rocks to strike for water (Num. 20:2-13), no manna to be received.** Israel wants to enter the land, knows that it must, knows that for this it was called out of Egypt and away from slavery. But Israel hesitates. Perhaps the hesitation is not from fear, but in the face of an ominous recognition that life must be redefined. Moses' speech in Deuteronomy is filled with promise and demand. It is talk about land and about Israel, about gifts and covenant, about temptation and faith (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 46),

THE LAND AS GIFT

The land to Israel is a gift. It is a gift from Yahweh and binds Israel in new ways to the giver (Josh: 23:14). Israel reflects on how it is to regard the land. A land is different when it is given in speaking and received in listening. It is not just an object to be taken and occupied. It is rather a party to a relation. Because the land is the means of Yahweh's word becoming full and powerful for Israel, it is presented as a life-giving embodiment of his word: And when the Lord your God brings you into the land *which he swore to your fathers, Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you, with great and godly cities, which you did not build, and houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, and cisterns hews out, which you did not hew, and vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant ...*(Deut. 6:10-11).

The rhetoric at the boundary is that of pure gift, radical grace. It is all given by the giver of good gifts and the speaker of faithful words. At the boundary, Israel affirms that being landed is *sola gratia*: You did not build ... you did not fill; you did not hew...; you did not plant. The new land is in a peculiar way like the wilderness. It wells up with life-giving power, un-planned by Israel, in inscrutable ways. Deuteronomy reflects early: Israel cannot and does not and need not secure its existence for itself. It is all done for it by the same One who gave manna, quail, and water. Now it is cities and houses, cisterns, vineyards and trees. These gifts carry new temptations. Israel knows that at the boundary: Deut. I: 7-10 (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 48).

The gift land is contrasted with every land of coercion: (Deut. 11:10-12). The old land which Israel remembered so well, **the land of slavery, even of banishment, was land by effort. It was *demanding land*.** The new land, the land given beyond the Jordan, the land of restoration, is land by graciousness. And therefore, the land shall be secure and life-giving. It is land where security does not need to be manufactured, where well-being need not come by conjuring calculation. Here security and well-being are not from the grudging task-master, but from the benevolent rain-sender, the same one who was bread-giver. Both rain and manna come from heaven, from outside the history of coercion and demand (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 50-51).

THE LAND AS T E M P T A T I O N

The gift of the land provides secured people with dangerous alternatives. One alternative is to keep the gift as gift, to maintain the dialectic with land/with Yahweh, knowing one is gifted by land/addressed by Yahweh. This alternative is to maintain the rich vitality of the covenant (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 53).

But already at the boundary Israel reflected on the alternative handlings of the gift. Israel knows very early that the need to rework identity in the land can led to a new identity which perverts the land, distorts Yahweh, and destroys Israel. The land, source of life, has within it seductive power. It invites Israel to enter life apart from covenant, to reduce covenant place with all its demands and possibilities to serene space apart from history, without contingency, without demand, without mystery (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 53).

Land can be a place for historical remembering, for action that affirms the abrasive historicity of our existence. But **land can also be the enemy of memory**, the destroyer of historical precariousness. **The central temptation** of the land for Israel is that Israel will cease to remember. **Guaranteed security dulls the memory.** Guaranteed satiation erodes the capacity to maintain the distance and linkage between how it was and how it is and **deadens the capacity to be open to how it might yet be.** Where the distance and linkage are gone, one can no longer recall a time before the gift and then we can scarcely remember that it is gift. One can hardly reexperience one's presatiation days. The temptation of satiation is to transform an historical gift existence (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 54).

Israel's central temptation is to forget and so cease to be an historical people, open either to the Lord of history or to his blessings yet to be given. Settled into an eternally guaranteed situation, one scarcely knows that one is indeed addressed by the voice in history that gives gifts and makes claims. And if one is not addressed, then one does not need to answer. And if one does not answer, then one is free not to care, not to decide, not to hope, and not to celebrate (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 54). **We the modern people pretend to remember God's gift but tend to think we own everything and not God.**

Remembering Yahweh is not simply an act of religious devotion. It is confessing a relation which keeps life historical, which assures that newness comes from outside us, that life is not at our disposal, that gift can be given, that amazement and gratitude are possible. Remembering Yahweh is for Israel the source of the qualities of humanness and humanness which are its distinctive heritage. Nothing less is at issue in this warning to Israel than whether Israel will live a life rooted in words freely spoken and gifts freely given, or whether Israel will live a life of apathy under coercion, devoid both of passion and victory (Duet. 6:1-14; 8:11-17; 11:6, 16;) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 55).

The land tempts Israel to escape from history with Yahweh, to substitute for the vitality and precariousness of history the sureness, sameness, and closedness of dull existence in secure land without decision, without promise, without word, without mystery. There is only complacent and self-indulgence or there are uneasy despair, or perhaps there are both (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 58).

Land is in history with Yahweh. It is always a place where memories of slavery and manna are recalled and where hopes of fidelity and well-being are articulated. Land is always where Israel must come to terms with the Lord of memories and hopes. It is always the place for promises and demands, for words spoken and heard. And those who would have it otherwise, those who wish turf without being addressed, perish. (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 58).

The central temptation of the land is coveting. Israel is a community under gift (Josh. 8:1). That is how land is obtained and held. The introduction of self-seeking in a world of gift is an attempt to shift the grounds for security. It is an attempt to replace precarious trust with control, to substitute self-possession for covenantal assurance. Israel's memory is that land held in this way disturbs the well-being of all Israel. The temptation to private well-being is a way to death (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 59)

THE LAND AS TASK

The land with Yahweh brings responsibility. Landed Israel is under mandate. "Everyone to whom much is given, of him will much be required" (Luke 12:48). In Luke 12: 41-48, Jesus' saying is precisely in the context of possessions, owners, and stewards. It is a radical idea challenging our usual notions of possessions, for we think many possessions makes one immune from caring (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 59-60).

The link between Torah and land is central.

In a coercive society, the ones who control the land and the machinery of governance are the ones who need not so vigorously obey. They are the ones who can fix tickets or prices as needed, the ones before whom the judge blinks and the revenue officer winks (Mic. 3:11). It is the landless poor and disadvantaged who are subject to exacting legal claims of careful money management, precise work performance, careful devotion to all social jots and titles, not only last hired and first fired, but first suspected, last acquitted (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 61).

In Israel, the landed are the ones called to **Torah**, to honor it without tampering or modifying or compromising. **Torah** exists so that Israel will not forget whose land it is and how it was given to us. Only the landed are tempted to forget. Only the well-off and seemingly satiated are tempted to forget the history of barrenness and slavery, of hunger and manna of gifts and promises kept beyond all human expectation. **Torah** is precisely to preserve memory for those most emptied to forget. **Torah** is not to cramp behavior, not to coerce or control but to keep Israel in its historicity with Yahweh and with land (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 61).

Three tasks by Torah (Definition of **images**)

1. The first is prohibition of **images.** Images refer to making controllable representation to our best loyalties and visions. They are efforts to reduce to manageable and predictable form the sources of value and power in our lives. Images are temptation to the landed. When one is able to plan and manage everything else, one yearns to make a comfortable place in life even for ultimate values which can be managed. Thus mystery is reduced to manageable size. God is put at the disposal of his people. Transcendence is domesticated. When the land is fully controlled, it is easy to imagine that the land has been generated by the community and can be used for its own objectives (Deut. 8:17) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 62).

Images are a way of removing our land from history, a way of forgetting the terror that surrounds the land and the blood let even in and for our land. Images have a way of leaving memories and hopes into the deception that it is all present and given now, that there were no pre-image times nor will there be times yet to come without images (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 62). **We who live in an affluent country forget all the blessings come from God and exploit others. We are at risk of losing our lives by terrorist. Refer to articles of Terrorism class.**

2. The second task of landed Israel is to keep **Sabbath.** Sabbath in the earliest teaching is for **freeing slaves** (Ex. 21:1-11; Deut. 15:12-18), later for resting land (Lev. 25) and for **canceling debts** (Deut. 15:1-11). Sabbath is a voice of gift in a frantic coercive self-securing world. Land Sabbath is a reminder that (a) land is not *from* us but is a gift *to* us, and (b) land is not fully given over to our satiation. Land has its own rights over against us and even its own existence. It is covenant with us but not totally at our disposal. Sabbath is for honoring land (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 63-64).

Landed people are tempted to create a *Sabbathless* society in which land is never rested, debts are never canceled, slaves are never released, nothing is changed from the way it now is and has always been. The give and take of historicity can be eliminated, and all of life can be reduced to a smoothly functioning machine. That is the meaning of the producer-consumer consciousness which tempts Israel to betray the meaning of the land (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 65).

Sabbathless existence is for coveting without limit because there are no more covenanted brothers and sisters. Amos knew that and saw it happening:

Hear this, you who trample upon the needy, and bring the poor of the land to an end saying,
We may buy the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals ... (Amos 8:4-6).

Sabbath are the only events which protect the poor from being bought and sold. If Sabbath can be eliminated, life will be emptied of history. Land will be void of covenant. Everything can be bought and sold. Brothers and sisters, like land, become commodities. No wonder Israel at the boundary regarded Sabbath as a peculiar task (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 65).

3. A third for landed Israel announced at the boundary is care for the brother and sister. They are variously characterized: the poor (Ex. 23:6; Deut. 15:7-11), the stranger (Ex. 21:21-24; 23:9), the sojourner (Deut. 10:19), the widow and orphan (Deut. 24:19-22), and the Levite (Deut. 14:27). This diverse list has one feature of commonality. They are those who have no standing round in the community. They are without land and so without power and consequently without dignity. They have “no portion or inheritance with you” (Deut. 14:27). The landed are given a task at the boundary the care of these when they come to the land. It is one of the tasks that goes with covenanted land and keeps the land as covenanted reality; these who seem to have no claim must be honored and cared for (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 65-66).

At the boundary, all these landless poor are redefined as brother and sister, that is, as full participants in the promises of covenant (Lev. 25:25-55; Deut. 15:1-11, 12-18; 22:1-4). “Brother and sister” is a covenantal phrase. It is a term like “neighbor,” used to describe those for whom special care must be taken, for whom the memories are also operative and for whom the hopes are still applicable: And if your brother becomes poor, and cannot maintain himself with you, you shall maintain him; as a stranger and sojourner he shall live with you.

Land is for sharing with all the heirs of the covenant, even those who have no power to claim it. Israel at the boundary believed the new land is precisely for caring for brothers and sisters. Israel had the hope and vision at the boundary that covenantal relations can still operate in the land. Israel refused to think that being landed and covenanting were inimical (해로운) to each other (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 66).

Land is an opportunity to pervert justice (Deut. 24:17-18); Amos 5:10-12). Land tends to diminish the value and even the presence of the brother and sister. Israel knew the only defense against such self-deception is a sense of brothers and sisters being in history with us (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 66).

THE LAND AS THREAT

Spied the land. Be strong (Josh. 1: 6-9, 18).

Canaanites are always more impressive than Israelites. Israelites were threatened.

Bible knows from the beginning that promises are always kept in the midst of threats (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 68-70)

CHAPTER 5. ONE FROM AMONG YOUR BROTHERS

On Managing the Land
 Alternative to Royal Management
 Land between Word and Memo

Israel was on the other side of the Jordan. It is the history of *landed Israel in the process of losing the land* (Judge 2:6) (2 Kings 24:14-15).

This history began in secure settling and possession. It ended in shattering exile in which King Jehoiachin is treated as the chief exile in Babylon: (2 Kings 25:27-30).

The major temptation is to use up the land in wasteful, careless, self-indulgent ways and so to lose it. In the first history Israel kept the trust and refused to lose it. In the second history Israel resisted the demand, yielded to the temptation, and so the narrative ends in exile. The literature of Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings is the account of the tortuous route by which heirs became exiles, the same ones who in Genesis doubted ever becoming heirs and were surprised by grace. When exile came, they were surprised again (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 73).

ON MANAGING THE LAND (P. 73).

When Israel craved for kingship like the others, it was attracted to those examples which presumed to manage their own existence and seize initiative for their own well-being in history. Thus the request for kingship was a proposal to shift decisively the foundation of communal life in Israel (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 75).

The model for land management offered there consists of three parts:
First, permission is given to have a king, but demanding limits are set on his character: When you come to the land which the Lord your God gives you, and you possess it and dwell in it, and then say, "I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are round about me," you may indeed set as king over you whom the Lord your God will choose; you may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother (Deut. 17: 14-15).

A brother, not a foreigner: The land must be managed by someone nurtured barrenness and birth, slavery and freedom, hunger and manna, and above all the speeches to the boundary. "One from the brethren" means one in the context of covenant, one whose discernment of power concerns gifts and tasks, **one who will not reduce society to coercion and people to slaves**. This teaching thus calls for a radical redefinition of what kingship is all about. **It is not to control the land, but to enhance the land for the sake of the covenant partners to whom the king is bound by common loyalties and memories** (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 76).

The second element concerns the prohibition which this peculiar king must honor: "Only he must not multiply horses for himself, or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to multiply horses. And he must not multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away: nor shall he greatly multiply for himself silver and gold" (Deut. 17: 16-17).

This is very important factors for kings. What is rejected in this warning is land management organized around commodities and securities in which king and people value no initiative or security other than those they devise (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 77).

The third element is the positive alternative to those self-securing efforts:

And when he sits on the throne of his kingship, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, (Deut. 17: 18-20).

The central activity of the king is to read the **Torah**, that is, the primary function of the king is to keep management focused on the central memory and vision of Israel (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 77). The way to keep the land and power over it is to turn attention from land to Torah. The way to lose land is to be anxious about it to the neglect of Torah. (Cf. the enigmatic statements of Jesus, Matt. 6:25-33 (**do not worry**) ; Matt. 23:23-24 (**woe to scribes and Pharisees for hypocrisy**); and Luke 9:23-25 (**deny himself and carry own cross**) which are wholly consistent with this view (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 78).

Torah tells the king he is a brother of other brothers and sisters. It means the fundamental affirmation that Israel's sources are in Yahweh's graciousness, and Israel's character is to be holy to Yahweh (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 78). (**John Wesley's meaning of holy**).

ALTERNATIVES TO ROYAL MANAGEMENT

The alternative is described in 1 Sam. 8:11-17, and Israel is warned that such a model will undo Israel. In the alternative to be rejected (a) the king is primarily a confiscator, (b) Israel is reduced to slavery (cf. Deut. 17: 16; Hos. 8:13; 9:3, 6), back in Egypt as though Exodus history had not begun, (c) Israel is cut off from Yahweh, and there is no more covenantal history (1 Sam. 8:18), and (d) land is lost (1 Sam. 12:25). The royal apparatus designed to keep and enhance the land will cause Israel to lose it (cf. Prov. 13:23). Thus the alternatives are clear. Governance by a king will be either (a) "like all the nations that are round about," or (b) "one from among your covenant partners. It cannot be both ways. One leads to slavery, alienation, and finally expulsion. The other way leads to solidarity and well-being. And Israel must choose (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 79). **This is so important warning for contemporary U.S. government that has been focusing on accumulation of wealth at any and every cost victimizing the poor in the nation and in the world. The sign of it is 9/11 as scholars (in Terrorism class) pointed out. This is a good piece to be used in Chapter IV "What church and society must do."** Brueggemann 의 주를 읽을 것.

A major presentation of David as land-manager is the narrative of 2 Sam. 11-12, the account of Bathsheba and Uriah. In this story the king is secure. He does not accompany his troops into battle, but remains at home with too much leisure time. David sees her. He wants her. He takes her. And then she is pregnant. David presumed himself immune from Torah, as kings always are tempted to presume (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 80).

David writes a letter (11:14) to kill Uriah contrast to Hannah's song (1 Sam 2:6-8) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 82).

LAND BETWEEN WORD AND MEMO

The two represent two perception of life: one from desperate but hopeful people without land, the other from secure, anxious people with land. One relies completely on the initiative of the promise-maker and –keeper and takes the form of doxology. The other relies completely on royal management and takes the form of directive. And Nathan holds to the old notion that a royal land-manager can turn from directives to doxologies in his communication (2 Sam. 12:9) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 82).

The king tries to have life on his own terms and nearly destroys himself, or as v. 10 asserts, ultimately does destroy not only himself but the future of his dynasty. The offense is adultery and murder. And the result is despising; *a sword*. Land is held in relation to word. Land is lost without word. Even he king must learn that man (king) lives by word, not just by bread; by what is given and not by what is controlled (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 83).

Repentance to which he is called is for a total reorientation, a recognition that we are object and not subject, a reorientation most improbable for the landed. (Jeremiah thought it not only improbable but impossible for the landed, (13:23). He who would keep his land will lose it, but he who would risk his land may keep it. But being landed makes the word seem remote and improbable, not to say irrelevant. More in P. 84 (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 84).

Solomon is a king totally secure in his land which he got for himself, totally committed to keeping his land on his own terms and insensitive to either the cry of his fellows or the gifts and claims of Yahweh. The evidence is in I Kings 4; a settled bureaucracy preoccupied with itself.

I King 4:1-6 presents the bureaucracy, culminating in the minister of labor affairs. The program is not only labor, but forced labor (cf. 5:13; 9:15-22).

I King 4:7-19 presents a remarkable bureaucratic decision which reorganize Israel into effective taxation district, completely and no doubt deliberately disregarding the human bonds of normal tribal groupings (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 85).

Israel had not been so reduced since Pharaoh had organized and administered Israel. Solomon creates a situation not unlike that of Pharaoh. 4:22-28 reports the well-being and consumptive values which govern Israel, a picture of uninterrupted bliss. Land seems not really losable (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 86).

To ensure against losing the land, Solomon further secures himself by (a) fortification, arms, and the strengthening of the garrisons at every crucial place on the border (I Kings. 9:15) and (b) a network of strategic marriages which surely enhances his standing in neighboring courts (I kings 9:16; 11:1-5) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 86).

All this is capped by the building of the temple, the ultimate achievement of his reign. The temple serves to give theological legitimacy and visible religiosity to the entire program of the regime. He so manipulates Israel's public worship that it becomes a cult for a static God, lacking in the power, vigor, and freedom of the God of the old traditions. This God, in contrast to the Exodus deliverer, is a domesticated preserver of the regime. He dwells in silent, obedient, uninterrupted, and un interrupting security: (this regime even controlled God). The Lord has set the sun in the heavens, but has said that he would dwell in thick darkness. I have built thee an exalted house, a place for thee to dwell in for ever (I Kings 8:12-13). Yahweh is now cornered in the temple. His business is support of the regime, to grant legitimacy to it and to effect forgiveness for it as is necessary (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 86). **This can be reference to fundamental Christians who use God to support contemporary regime and confine God in the church building.**

The God who had given land and intended it to be handled as gift is now made patron of the king who now has the land. In the Solomonic period even God now apparently has no claim on the land. He is guest and not host. Religion becomes a decoration rather than a foundation. The God of the temple is subordinated to the royal regime. It is no longer remembered in public Israel that he maintains his freedom and that the land is indeed and always his. Solomon, not Yahweh, is clearly in charge with only a few charitable nods in the direction of Yahweh (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 87).

Yahweh makes three decisive disruptions in Solomon's serene tea party. First at the beginning, God said "Behold, *I give you* a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. *I give you* also what you have not asked for, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days (I Kings 3:12-13). This monarchy is rooted in the word (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 87).

The second and most remarkable appearance of Yahweh's word is in 9:1-9. It occurs just when the temple is completed and an era of good feeling is inaugurated. The very house designed to silence the word of Yahweh is completed. Just then it comes again: *If* you walk before me, as David your father walked, with integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you, and keeping my statutes and my ordinances, *then* I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father ... But *if* you turn aside from following me, you or your children, and do not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, *then I will cut off Israel from the land* which I have given them; and the house which I have consecrated for my name I will cast out of my sight (I Kings 9:4-7) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 88).

The land is still conditional, and the announcement of it is made at the center of unconditional possession, in the midst of the Solomon's deception. The term used *karat* is in other context the antithesis of *yaras*, to possess. Thus the loss is clearly intended as the negation of the possession. The land is still requires obedience, and without that, no other guarantee – temple or garrison, wives or wisdom – can keep the land.

This idea of man-made temple challenges contemporary churches that are preoccupied with church building and their priority is filling up the space with people at any cost including snatch people who belong to other congregations to boast the size of the congregation. (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977:

The third and ultimate coming of the word is in I Kings 11:29-39 by the prophet Ahijah: “Behold, I am about to tear the kingdom from the hand of Solomon, and will give you ten tribes ..because he has forsaken me, and worshipped Ashtroeth ... and has not walked in my ways, doing what is right in my sight and keeping my statues and my ordinances as David his father did” (vv. 31-33). The land will be lost. The kingdom will be revoked. The glory of Jerusalem will be diminished. To be sure the dynasty does survive for a time, but only in reduced form. The empire of Solomon is left in shambles for Israel to ponder. It is Israel’s primary attempt to have life on her own terms. Nothing here of Torah but only horses, wives, silver and gold (Deut. 17: 14-20) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 89).

But land is not what it seems, because it is always gift. History is not what it seems because there is always the word. Nathan was right. The sword does linger in such context (2 Sam. 12:10)! Solomon has done his best to eliminate the “if” from history. He has tried by religion, by organization, and by arsenal to silence the word. He has forgotten to be “one from the covenant partners.” So comes death (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 89).

CHAPTER 6. “BECAUSE YOU FORGOT ME”-Reason for Exile

The Land, the Prophet, and the King
 I Kings 21: The Land, the Torah, and Coveting
 The Royal Road to Exile

The presence of prophets in Israel characteristically causes problems for kings who want to be like other nations and other kings, because prophets always announce to kings the peculiarity of Israel and the peculiar means by which land is kept (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 90).

The prophet is presented to Israel, authorized by Moses, and described according to his authority and function (Deut. 18:9-22). Three elements:

1). The prophet is precisely for the time in the land: “When you come into the land ...the Lord God will raise up for you a prophet” (Deut. 18:9-15). At that time a prophet is needed, and one is given. It is the condition of being in the land which creates a prophetic situation. 2). The unit on the prophet follows soon after that on the king. *Prophets are intended precisely to address kings.* It is because of kings that prophets appear. (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 91). 3).The structure of 18:9-22 contrasts the gifts of the prophet in Israel with the temptation of the land, namely magical practices of self-securing and manipulation: “There shall not be found among you any one who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, any one who practices divination, a soothsayer or an augur, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a medium, or a wizard or necromancer (vv. 10-11). *The land and the illusion of self-sufficiency seduce and lull people into managing their lives and their land in ways that seem beyond the terrors of history. The prophet is Israel’s single source of insight and guidance. He exists to affirm continually to Israel its precariousness and contingency in the face of more attractive but illegitimate alternatives. The prophet is intended precisely for speech (a) in the land, (b) in the face of the king, (c) against idolatrous form of self-securing* (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 92).

The prophet is neither rooted in the model of “other nations” nor selected by Israel like the king. *He is, by contrast, raised up by Yahweh.* The language of resurrection is use to announce this one who strangely and peculiarly derives authority from Yahweh as does none other. But he has one important point of commonality with the king. *He also is “from among you, from your brethren,” that is, he is steeped in covenant and prepared to speak out of it.* The king might conceivably be a foreigner although that also is prohibited by the teaching, but a prophet is unthinkable from any such source. *He can come only out of the life and faith and history of Israel with Yahweh. He is designated to articulate that consciousness against all other seductions of power and security.* He is to assure that the land be discerned in covenantal ways. Thus the meeting of king and prophet provides a paradigm for one with “lifted heart” and one “raised of Yahweh,” one a self-securing manager, *the other committed to land as gift* (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 92).

I KINGS 21: THE LAND, THE TORAH, AND COVETING

One such model of king/prophet confrontation over land management is that of Ahab and Elijah in Kings 21. The narrative begins (vv. 1-4) with an encounter of Ahab and Naboth, each expressing a view of the land. Ahab regards the land as a tradable commodity; “Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a vegetable garden because it is near my house; I will give you a better vineyard for it; or, it seems good to you, I will give you its value in money” (v. 2). In contrast, for Naboth land is not a tradable commodity, but an *inalienable inheritance*: “The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers ... I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers” (v.3). The exchange sharply express two views of land. Naboth is responsible for the land, but is not in control over it. It is the case not that the land belongs to him but that he belongs to the land. Naboth perceives himself and the land in a covenantal relations, with the relation between the two having a history of fidelity which did not begin with him and will not end with him. Of course Ahab and Jezebel had no notion of that, because kings think everything is to be bought and sold and traded and conquered. The exchange embodies the alternatives expressed in Deut. 18:9ff., the one providing means of self-security, the other the risks and openness of covenantal history (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 93).

The response of Jezebel (vv. 4-7) introduces a new element presenting (a) Canaanite kingship as an institution which can rule and manipulate, (b) a mercantile view of land in which land is a commodity to be secured by what ever means, and (c) an alien view of Torah which makes the king immune from its demands. Thus in the speech and action of Jezebel covenantal views of kingship, land, and Torah are all called into question. The narrative hints that Ahab, in contrast to his wife, is at least cognizant of peculiarly Israelite perceptions, for he is prepared to honor the resistance of Naboth even if he does not like it. The distortion comes from Jezebel, clearly not “one from among the covenant partners.” Her presence embodies an alien view of kingship, land, and Torah. She has no appreciation at all for the inalienable quality of a family inheritance. ... The queen believes that persons and property are replaceable parts, each a component in a grand royal design which can be shuffled and rearranged at the whim of the managers. The queen believes societal arrangements are a human artifact, and therefore they can be handled with freedom and inventiveness, thus denying the shape of societal relations ordained in covenant and not subject to such administration (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 94).

Jezebel’s complete misunderstanding of Israelite notion of king, land, and Torah is evident in her rebuke and assurance to Ahab: “Do you now govern Israel? I will give you the vineyard” (v. 7). The first comment shows that “govern” (literally “do kingship”) means total control with capacity to dispose of land as one prefers. The second comment misunderstands “inheritance” because she proposes to give what cannot be given and in any case is not in her power to give. Inheritances are not given in Israel, surely not by a royal officer (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 94).

The narrative contains two noteworthy features. **First, the queen writes**, that is, issues of directive, not unlike David's action against Uriah. **Second**, the queen **uses** the Torah for her own ends. **Thus in her false charge** she appeals to the norm of Torah: "You shall not revile God nor curse a ruler of your people" (Ex. 22:28). But for her the teaching is not a norm. It is **a tool like everything else to serve royal interests**. Here is a ruler who no longer submits herself to Torah, but **now controls Torah**, just as she intends to control land and to control citizens (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 95).

The action really only begins in v. 17 with the appearance of Elijah, spokesman for Yahweh champion of Naboth, enemy of this kind of royalty. ..by v. 16 the narrative appears to reach a conclusion as the land issue is resolved. "And as soon as Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, Ahab arose to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it" (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 96).
Jezebel is Phoenician or Canaanite ?

The speech of Elijah: Indictment: "Thus says the Lord: 'Have you killed, and also taken possession'" (v. 19). Two offenses, guilty of both – killing and taking, both in the repertoire of Canaan but not of Israel. And then an answer of verdict: "Thus says the Lord: 'In the place where dogs licked up the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick your own blood.'" The land will be avenged precisely because land is not given over to any human agent, but is a sign and function in covenant (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 96).

Yahweh's purpose for land: "In the inheritance which you will hold in the land that the Lord your God gives you to possess, you shall not remove your neighbor's landmark, which the men of old have set (Deut. 19:14) : Remove not the ancient landmark which your fathers have set (Prov. 22:28): Prov. 23:10-11. The Lord is intervenor: (Prov. 15:25); (Deut. 17:20). **Yahweh is the Lord of tearing down and building up**. In our narrative **he tears down the proud**, that is, those elevated heart (Deut. 17:20) **and builds up the "widow,"** that is, **those who have lost power and standing in the community**. Most remarkable and most radical is the alliance of Yahweh with the poor against those who would seek to take the land from them (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 97).

Prophets condemn avarice in land seizure: Woe to those who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is no more room, and you are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land (Is. 5:8)/ Woe to those who devise wickedness and work evil upon their beds! When the morning dawns, they perform it, because it is in the power of their hand. They covet fields, and seize them; and houses, and take them away; they oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance (Mic. 2:1-3) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 97).

This last could well be a commentary on the Naboth episode. The ones who take the land are characterized by a sequence of harsh verbs; they covet, they seize, they take, they oppress. And these offense is against the man, but also against the inheritance, and if so, then against the God who arranged it so. Such a proprietary attitude toward land is oppression of the land as well. It takes the land out of covenant and reduces it to control.

The prophet announces the end, the end of haughtiness in which one takes priority over another, the one who has forgotten about covenant partners. This is not simply gentle concern for the poor folks, but it has to do with Yahweh, with his character and his commitments. He is allied with the poor against the rapacious wealthy. That is who he is and no royal wishing will have it otherwise (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 98).

The speech of Elijah announces a surprising thing, one not heard often by kings. When one in power forgets brothers and sisters, it is not only the brother and sister who suffer but the one who “lifted his heart over them.” The verdict of Elijah contains a word from Yahweh which always surprised the self-serving landed: Behold, I will bring evil upon you; I will utterly sweep you away and I will cut off from Ahab every male ..I will make your house like the house of Jereboam ...(v. 21-22).

The first formula is like that against David (2 Sam. 12:11) which in itself is radical enough – God against the landed. The second formula is more radical and echoes the threat of Samuel against landed monarchy (I Sam. 12:15) although the language is different. The third and fourth statements announce the end of monarchy, the end of promise, the end of landedness, the end of royal history. Royal history is terminated by the Lord of the land who is the Lord of the Torah. The initiative has passed from the royal family back to the land-giving God. He finally presides (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 98).

THE ROYAL ROAD TO EXILE

Brueggemann relates the land issue to Jesus’ observation about landless and landed. “Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Luke 14:11; cf. 18:14; Matt. 18:4; 23:12). In I Kings 17:8-16, by the authority of Yahweh Elijah puts himself at the disposal of a landless widow in an alien territory, and the presence of God’s word gave security and joy to the landless one: And she went and did as Elijah said; and she, and he, and her household ate for many days. The jar of meal was not spent, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord which he spoke by Elijah (17:15-16).

The care of Yahweh for the landless, in this episode of course is reasserted by Jesus in his Nazareth confrontation: But in truth I tell you, there were many widows of Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there came a great famine over all the land; and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow (Luke 4:25-26). Jesus’ statement asserts that God is not concerned with the landed, even in Israel. He acts especially for the landless as did Elijah and as did the prophet of the exile (Is. 61:1-4) whom Jesus quotes in Luke 4:18-19. That proclamation of Yahweh for the landless sounds this way: Good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed(Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 99-100).

The word against monarchy includes not only action against king but against the whole royal future as announced in I Kings 21:21-22. “And when he came to Samaria, he slew all that remained to Ahab in Samaria, till he had wiped them out, according to the word of the Lord which he spoke to Elijah” (2 Kings 10:17). Yahweh has taken sides and he acts powerfully for the landless, powerfully enough to overcome and defeat the enormous power of those who control land and sit on throne (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 100).

The prophet Amos consistent in his announcement of land-loss, especially to those who are complacent in their luxuriant self-indulgence: “hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are in the mountain of Samaria, who oppresses the poor, who crush the needy, who say to their husbands, Bring that we may drink? The Lord God has sworn by his holiness that, behold, the days are coming upon you, when they shall take you away with hooks, even the last of you with fishhooks. And you shall go out through the breaches, everyone straight before her; and you shall be cast forth into Harmon,” says the Lord (Amos 4:1-3).

Exile follows self-indulgent consumerism:

Woe to those who are at ease in Zion, and to those who feel secure on the mountain of Samaria,
Woe to those who lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat lambs from the flock, and calves from the midst of the stall; who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp, and like David invent for themselves instruments of music; who drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the finest oils, but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph! (6:1-6) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 101).

Due to their consumerism and luxurious life they will experience the end of their days. This is the cause for them to throw into exile. This is life of today also.

The passage describes with rich imagery the self-seeking complacency to which Israel in the land is seduced. It is the very temptation about which Israel was warned at the boundary (cf. Deut. 8:11-20). And the conclusion is that the land will be exiled, the revelry of the self-satisfied will be silenced: “therefore they shall now be the first of those to go into exile, and the revelry of those who stretch themselves shall pass away” (Amos 6:7). That history will end (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 101).

Amos warns again: Therefore, thus says the Lord: “Your wife shall be a harlot in the city, and your sons and your daughters shall fall by the sword, and your land shall be parceled out by line; you yourself shall die in an unclean land, and Israel shall surely go into exile away from its land” (7:17).

More on p. 102.

Announced exile.

The queen becomes harlot.

The princes and princesses, symbol of future, are dead.

The promised and possessed land is reassigned to others.

The king, focus of corporate life, is not only dead, but is dead apart from his land.

Israel, people of promise in land of promise, is off land in exile. And as though to stress the last, so that the point is not missed, the verb “exile” is expressed as infinitive absolute.

This is the surest announcement of the prophet; people of promise now promised only landlessness (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 102-103).

Humiliated Babylon (P. 103) Is. 47:1-3.

The announcement of Amos is not unlike that of Elijah. It is asserted that kings who violate Torah, who refuse to treat the land and the brothers and sisters in a covenant way, will be bethroned, such land possessors will be dispossessed, and Israel must again affirm its identity and destiny without land. Kings, the very land-managers entrusted to care for the land, are the instruments of land-loss (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 103-104).

The prophet of Hosea: He uses the idiom of marriage and fertility but turns the imagery to speak of fickleness, harlotry, and divorce. Concerning substance, the divorce theme negates all security, all possession of land, all control of the apparatus of well-being. Divorce is unthinkable in fertility religion because fertility religion characteristically celebrates growth and well-being. It contains no categories of fidelity or betrayal and therefore cannot speak of divorce. But covenant has to do with fidelity and betrayal, with embrace and abandonment. And that is the radical turn Hosea has discerned in the midst of his people. He utilizes fertility images to speak of *covenantal* realities. Covenant history, which had its fruition in the land, is now terminated. And the payoff is landlessness: *lest I strip her naked and make her as in the day she was born, and make her like a parched land, and slay her with thirst (Hos. 2:3)* (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 104).

Israel assumes its land gifts come from other sources: For she said, "I will go after my lovers, who give me my bread and my water. My wool and my flax, my oil and my drink (v. 5, 8, 9, 11-13). (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 105-106).

The voice of the end is relentless and devastating. *I will end. I will lay waste, I will make a forest, I will punish. And all because of forgetting. The certain result of harlotry and forsaking is exile. Land has caused amnesia (Deut. 32:15-18). Israel has forgotten everything about from whence it came, who gave the land, the demands that come with it. When landed folk do not remember, it all ends. And so the land is losable. There is perishing (Hos. 9:17; 10:15; 12:8-9). History with Yahweh and with land can end (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 106).*

CHAPTER 7. THE PUSH TOWARD LANDLESSNESS AND BEYOND

Jeremiah and the Terror of Land-Loss

Kings as a Way to Land-Loss

Exile and the New History

Exile: Kings in Israel refused or were unable to think that exile could be their ultimate end. But the prophets, the partners and challengers of kings knew where Israel was headed – to exile. Prophets think unthinkable thoughts and speak unspeakable words which kings can never tolerate or dare to face (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 106).

JEREMIAH AND THE ERROR OF LAND-LOSS

None saw this alternative picture more clearly than Jeremiah. And none expressed it more poignantly. In the Old Testament he is the poet of the land par excellence. None saw more clearly than he that land cannot be held the way royal Israel tried to hold it. He knew unmistakably that land would be lost. None treasured the land more than he and none understood more clearly than he the flow of royal history toward exile. And all the others denied it in their royal self-deception. **Brueggemann blames royal family to bring exile** (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 107-108).

His message to Israel, which thought it was ultimately secure and at home, is the coming ultimate homelessness. The mother of Israel – Israel in the land – should be celebrating, but the child Israel is dead:

“A voice is heard in Ramah, lamenting and bitter weeping.

Rachel is weeping for her children: She refuses to be comforted for her children,

Because they are not (31:15).

No comfort. They are not. Rachel grieves, and Jeremiah announces to those secure in the land that things that are, will not be (cf. I Cor. 1:28) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 108). **Contemporary churches must be prophetic voices for what is going on in the U.S. and the world. Churches don't say much about injustice that practiced by their own government toward the poor and sick in their own country and to the world people. This comment can be added to chapter IV. What churches can do.**

Call for Jeremiah: The beginning of the Lordly disruption of landed complacency is in the call of Jeremiah (1:4-10). The call is in the service of the message. And the message is:

“.....to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow,
to build and to plant.” (1:10).

This is the point of call. This is the point of Jeremiah's words. That is the only unbearable point for the landed, managing kings, for it affirms against all of them that initiative is retained by Yahweh. The land imagery is unmistakable. The message is for tearing down and plucking up, for destroying and overthrowing. The weight is on ending, not the beginning. Jeremiah knew, long before the others could face it, that history in land moves to exile (1:13-19).

Jeremiah has gone beyond his predecessors in the prophetic tradition. He now concludes about the end: “They are not!” (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 109).

Conflict between the perception of land being lost and being retained is deep and to the death – 11:18-20, 12:1-2 with disputes between Jeremiah and his fellows. And Yahweh’s response to Jeremiah dealing with the displaced anger is relentless and unbending (11:21-23, 12:5-6) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 110). **More on Jeremiah –P. 110-111)**

So land-loss means the end of history. And it will surely come. It comes because a relentless army moves from the north (cf. 1:13-16). The “north” is a geographical reference and it is finally about Babylon. It is an unnamed enemy with awesome power:

“Blow the trumpet through the land; cry aloud and say,
‘Assemble, and let us go in the fortified cities!’
Raise a standard toward Zion, flee for safety, stay not,
A lion has gone up from his thicket, a destroyer of nations has et out;
To make your land a waste; our cities will be ruined without inhabitants (4:5-7)

He comes with relentless speed and power and one can only flee:

Behold, he comes up like clouds, his chariots like the whirlwind;
His horses are swifter than eagles –
Woe to us, for we are ruined!..... Warn the nations that he is coming;
Announce to Jerusalem, “Besiegers come from a distant land;
They shout against the cities of JudahDisaster follows hard on disaster,
The whole land is laid waste (4:13-20)

He is still a distance off, but one can hear. One can hear and knows it won’t stop:

At the noise of horseman and archer every city takes to flight;
They enter thickets; they climb among rocks; all the cities are forsaken, and
No man dwells in them (4:29)

That coming nation is never named. Such reticence adds to the power of it. The enemy is unnamed and, if unnamed, cannot be resisted or tamed, nor can safety even be negotiated. Its identity is hidden. Its coming is inscrutable but it comes. And there will be an end to everything: (6:22-23) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 112-113).

Not only does the enemy come. But it is an enemy called by Yahweh. The destroyer is indeed an identifiable historical force. But it is an historical agent commissioned and sent. The one who will take the land away from Israel is not some alien power, but it is the Holy One who gave the land. Thus the end of Israel in land and the loss to Babylon is because, “I am bringing”:

Behold, I am bringing upon you(5:15)
(4:8)
(4:26)

(4:6)

Because you have not obeyed my words,behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north,and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, *my servant*, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants, and against all.....(25:8-9). Now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, *my servant*, (27:6) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 113-114).

Nebuchadnezzar, clearly the central enemy of landed Israel, is Yahweh's servant and instrument, doing his work (cf. Is. 10:5, 47:6). Nebuchadnezzar the land-grabber, the quintessence of imperial expansionism which threatened Israel, is doing the work of Yahweh. No wonder Jeremiah is called traitor. His argument is that land-loss is not only inevitable, but it is the intention of Yahweh (cf. 21:7, 22:25, 28:14, 29:21). Israel no longer fits Yahweh's purpose. Jeremiah, most powerful and most pathos-filled of all Israel's poets, announces to Israel that its time in the land is over. Because Yahweh rules! (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 114). **In case I need to write on Jeremiah, I can copy scripture text from the bible in the foot note). Israel's homelessness was brought by Yahweh. I can note the exploitation and oppression of contemporary government policies. Today's leaders are already homeless in the eyes of God.**

KINGS AS A WAY TO LAND-LOSS – P. 114 There was similar statement above.

For Jeremiah, Jehoiachim (Shallum) and Josiah are models of land-losing and land-keeping kings.

“Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness,
And his upper rooms by injustice;
Who makes his neighbor serve him for nothing,
And does not give him his wages;
Who says, “I will build myself a great house with spacious upper rooms,
And cut out windows for it, paneling it with cedar and
Painting it with vermilion” (22:13-14)

The word pairs governing the image are clear: not righteous/not justice, cedar/vermilion. He has discerned that kings and such landed ones tend to choose between cedar and righteousness, between justice and vermilion (cf. Deut. 16: 18-20), and especially v. 20: “justice and only justice, you shall follow, that you may live and *inherit the land* which the Lord your God gives you.” (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 115).

Then Jeremiah sets two questions which concerns the relation of land/Torah/kingship:
Do you think you are a king because you compete in cedar? Did not your father eat and drink and
Do justice and righteousness?

The first question asks about king and cedar, about power and self-seeking, about order and coveting, about whether cedar is definitive for royal power. The second presents an alternative model of kingship in his father, Josiah, a Mosaic effort at Davidic power. That is what the contrast of Josiah and Jehoiakim is all about. **Jehoiakim** embodies the worst pretensions of the dynasty after the manner of Solomon. **Josiah** embodies an effort to redefine the dynasty in terms of Torah. As Jehoiakim preferred cedar to righteousness and vermilion to Justice, so Josiah settled for justice and righteousness. He took his clue for keeping land from the voice of at the boundary. Father and son, land-keeper and land-loser, Mosaic personality and Solomonic self-seeking, are set in sharp contrasts:

He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well.
 For shedding innocent blood, and for practicing oppression and violence (v. 161-17) **Oppressed the poor and needy.**

Therefore, therefore, “your *wife* shall be a harlot in the city, and your *sons and your daughters* shall fall by the sword, and your land shall be parceled by line; you *yourself* shall surely go into exile away from its land” (Amos 7:17).

Therefore, therefore, they shall not lament for him, saying “Ah my brother! Or Ah sister!” dragged and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem (2 Kings 9:36-37) (Jer. 22:18-19) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 116)

King and people are abandoned, with none to comfort (cf. the refrain, Lam. 1:2, 9, 17, 21.). Not only is the kind dead, but the claims and pretension of royalty are now without force. It is over. Land is gone. History is ended (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 117). **I am not sure where these verse come from????????????????**

He (Jehoiakim), like his father, like his people like the whole history of Israel, in this moment is hurled and cast into an alien land, which for Israel is no land at all. **22:28 from where? (P. 116-117)**
 Amos 7:17.

Ezk. 22:29-31.

King grieves for the land: O land, land, land, hear the word of the Lord, ..Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not succeed in his days; for none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David and ruling again in Judah (vv. 29-30)??????????

King without throne is no king. Land without Israel is no place. And now Israel, king and land, have come to death (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 117).

Micah had announced it with cool symmetry (cf. Mic. 3:9-12, Jer. 26:16-19).
 My anguish, my anguish! I writhe in pain!
 Oh, the walls of my heart! 4:19
 My grief is beyond healing, my heart is sick within me (8:18) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 118). More on P. 118-119.

.....and the land vomited out its inhabitantslest the land vomit you out, when you defile it, as it vomited out the nation that was before you.” Lev. 18:14-25, 28

You shall not pollute the land in which you live; for blood pollutes the land,Num. 35:33). (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 119).

So Jeremiah tells the whole story of Israel as the story of land. Israel had been committed to Yahweh, addressing the one who makes promises and keeps them. But after wilderness (cf. 2:2), after the boundary, there were attractive alternatives:

They went far from me...(2:4) and went after worthlessness, and became worthless (2:5; cf. Hos 9:10).

They no longer recited their identity-giving credo. They forgot. They could not say:

Where is the Lord who brought us up from the *land* of Egypt, who led us in the wilderness. In a *land* of deserts and pits, in a land of drought and deep darkness, in a *land* that none passes through, where no man dwells?(2:6-7). (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 121-122).

Glory has been exchanged for shame (2:11, cf. Hos. 4:7). Well-being become the enemy (cf. Hos. 5:14-15, 7:11-12).

EXILE AND THE NEW HISTORY

When Yahweh has willed land-loss as, to cling to the land is an act of rebellion which can only fail. That is a fresh departure in Israel's faith: (a) Landholding is an act of disobedience (cf. Num. 14:39-45). (b) Land-loss is an act of faith. Exile is the way to new life in new land. One can scarcely imagine a more radical, less likely understanding of history. In covenantal categories, embrace of curse is the root to blessing. In New Testament categories, embrace of death is the way to life (Luke 9:23-27, Rom. 6: 1-11). Thus in the movement among images, exile=death and restoration of land=life. Jeremiah announces the central scandal of the Bible, that radical loss and discontinuity do happen and are the source of real newness. So he holds what merely must have been a minority view, that the *exile* are real *heirs*. And conversely those who cling to the land are the ultimate exiles (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 122).

Thus he transforms the evaluation of exile. Of the exile he declares: "Then the word of the LORD came to me: Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Like these good figs, so I will regard as good the exiles from Judah, whom I have sent away from this place to the land of the Chaldeans. I will set my eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up, and not tear them down; I will plant them, and not pluck them up. 7 I will give them a heart to know that I am the LORD; and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart (NRSV) (Jer. 24: 4-7)

The restorative part of his commission is in 1:10 is employed here. It concerns return to land or resurrection to new life. The people outside the land now have the attention of Yahweh as the land formerly had it (Deut. 11:10). Now his eyes are on exiles, not on land. The action of God is with the landless ones.

Of the ones who cling to the land against his purposes, he says: "But thus says the LORD: Like the bad figs that are so bad they cannot be eaten, so will I treat King Zedekiah of Judah, his officials, the remnant of Jerusalem who remain in this land, and those who live in the land of Egypt. I will make them a horror, an evil thing, to all the kingdoms of the earth--a disgrace, a byword, a taunt, and a curse in all the places where I shall drive them. And I will send sword, famine, and pestilence upon them, until they are utterly destroyed from the land that I gave to them and their ancestors. (NRSV) (Jer. 24:8-10).

The exiles whom the world does not value are the ones with heart, for whom the covenant formula is appropriate. The outsiders are the ones who belong. The ones remaining in the land are the finally cursed ones (Deut. 28:37) and the ultimately destroyed ones. The cursed are blessed, the blessed are cursed. That of course is nearly impossible for landed ones ever to believe (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 123).

Jeremiah has discerned the central surprise of the tradition that the sojourner gets the land, that the barren one mothers the child of promise, that slave people triumphs over Pharaoh, the desperate one get fed (**cf. Matt. 5:6; Luke 6:21**; and all the Beatitudes on the theme of transformation. The dying ones will be the bearers of life. **(when I deal with Jesus, pick up NT reference texts Brueggemann used in his writing such as in this case). God and Jesus seem to side with the oppressed dying ones in OT and NT)** (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 123-124).

So in a related text, there is a discounting of everything which landed history values – wisdom, might, riches, glory. This other One practices kindness, mercy, righteousness in the land. That is the way of Josiah and the ones who always lose but are the wave of Yahweh’s future (**Jer. 9:23-24, 1 Cor. 1:26-30**). **This was the attitude of Jesus also.** (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 124).

There is no more radical text than the parable of **Jeremiah 24**, for it is the Lord of land announcing **landlessness as the way of the future**. **Newness comes in discontinuity to those who have no claim. It is among exiles that he calls into existence things that do not exist (Rom. 4:17)**. This is the power of **resurrection**, that the one without form or comeliness (Is. 53:2) is the heir to the future. It is among landholders that he brings to nought (naught=nothing=無=平) the things that are (**I Cor. 1:28**).

That is what is happening in **Jeremiah 24**: (a) **He calls into existence that which is not (Rom. 4:17)**. (b) **He brings to nought the things that are (I Cor. 1:28)**. In this struggle over abandonment, displacement, and restoration are the seeds of **crucifixion/resurrection faith**. : Landed or not, Israel is pressed to radical reliance on the One who works newness precisely where it can’t seem to come. **The scandal of Jeremiah 24** (and a **model for much of the Bible under our theme**) is that landed folks have no claims or significance. Landless exiles have the promise affirmed to them. It should not be. We in our having land do not believe it. Nor could Israel at the time her landed history came to a startling end (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 124). **When I explain Jesus’ suffering and resurrection I need to apply this portion= Jeremiah’s concept of suffering ones and restoration. We who live in contemporary wealth do not believe such a thing and rather despise the homeless. Perhaps because the landless/poor/homeless have the heart ready to accept God from their own experience of pain. The landed ones might have hardened heart toward God relying on their own wealth.** More on P. 124 bottom.

“Relate to Jesus’ saying “those who want go gain lose but those who lose will gain” must apply to this concept of landed and landlessness concept.

Hosea had seen that land is for forgetting and forfeiting (2:12-13). Conversely wilderness, that is, exile, is for remembering and seducing and covenant-making (2:14-20) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 124-125).

So history ended in landlessness. “You shall be delivered into the land of the king of Babylon” (Jer. 37:17) Israel ended where it had begun, landless. The landless have no history. It takes land to make history. Israel had no land and therefore no history. It was over (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 125).

(land was given and history formed. Message was no one could own land because it belongs to God. When human beings decided to control the land, they became landless and lost land, history and God altogether).

There is another word from Yahweh. And now history begins anew, not continued but begun anew. And the word is precisely to exiles. It is a word of scandal and assurance: “Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. 6 Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. 7 But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare”. (Jer. 29:5-7).

The assurance is that what had seemed homelessness is for now a legitimate home. What seemed barren exile is fruitful garden. What seemed alienation is for now a place of binding interaction. The assurance is that the landless are not wordless. He speaks just when the silence of God seemed permanent. Exile is the place for a history-initiating word (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 125-126).

God is with the homeless because God is in them. This must be related to Matt. 25:31-46 where Jesus is with the homeless.

But the new word is also scandal. It is gospel in hard terms: “But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. What a way to welfare, that hated Babylon is the place of well-being. Thus exile is not only place of unexpected word. It is also place of unexpected unacceptable vocation – exiles seeking welfare for others! Seek only justice and righteousness, even in anxiety, and get the kingdom (Matt. 6:33). Seek *shalom*, and you’ll get the land (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 126). This is another place relate to Jesus’ gospel. Make a list of Old Testament text of landlessness and Jesus’ words of homelessness and write side by side.

Exile/homelessness is where Jesus is:

Exile is where Yahweh is with his people. But exile cannot contain him. He submits himself to the hopelessness of landlessness, but he is ruled by hope. He submits himself to the historylessness of exile, but he will make history. He enters the silence of exile but he will speak. And his speech, like his intention, is beyond the limits of exile. He is not defined by the possible or the expected: “For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. 12 Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. 13 When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart,” (29: 11-13), NRSV. He has an alternative design (cf. Is. 55:8-9). He will be found (Deut. 4:29-31, Is. 55:6-7). He will turn Israel’s fortune (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 126).

“I will let you find me, says the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile” (v. 14). That is the ultimate word of biblical faith. It is the word spoken to the first fathers in exile (Gen. 12:1-3) and the affirmation of the last man at Calvary. It is the surprise of the Easter which lies beyond all our landless and landed expectations. Exile ended history because the two are antithetical.

But exile did not end Yahweh's will for history, and he will, as he has before, being anew to make another history. The Bible never denies that there is landlessness or that it is deathly. **But it rejects every suggestion that landlessness is finally the will of Yahweh.** Exiles, like the old sojourners, live in this hope and for this plan which outdistances all reasonable hypotheses about history. The exiles know about endings and about waiting. They find it to be a beginning beyond expectation, nearly beyond celebration, but so his plan always (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 127).

So Jeremiah anticipates the beginning of a new history which will begin where history is not supposed to begin, with the landless outcasts. **So Jesus' history began with those homeless people in his days.** His entry into the new history is presented in the strange narrative of **Jeremiah 32**: Jeremiah goes to buy the land belonging to his family. He secured it by careful, legal means. He buys it precisely at the moment of total land-loss. There is no convincing human reason for such an act. **Wisdom is violated, and he acts in the foolishness of God's power (I Cor. 1:18-31)**, the God who works newness precisely in such a time (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 127).

It is an quite parallel to that of father Abraham, who left everything for the sake of unlikely promise. In that case it was like this: "To your descendants I will give this land" (Gen. 15:18). And history had begun, and all the rest were waiting to see if he would. And this history begins in a like statement: "For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land" (Jer. 32:15). Jeremiah believed the Lord and he acted. The promise is explicit and elaborated on in 32:42-44: "For thus says the LORD: Just as I have brought all this great disaster upon this people, so I will bring upon them all the good fortune that I now promise them. Fields shall be bought in this land of which you are saying, It is a desolation, without human beings or animals; it has been given into the hands of the Chaldeans. Fields shall be bought for money, and deeds shall be signed and sealed and witnessed, in the land of Benjamin, in the places around Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, of the hill country, of the Shephelah, and of the Negeb; for I will restore their fortunes, says the LORD. NRSV (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 127).

The recital of Yahweh is in lawsuit speech, indictment and sentence. That is unexceptional, and it is intended that Israel should not miss the covenantal significance Of land-loss. "Behold, I am Yahweh God of all flesh, is anything too hard for me"? The question echoes that to Abraham in Gen. 18:14. For Abraham and Sarah it seemed not possible for history to begin which a child of promise, for it violated their reason and conventional presupposition. Fro Jeremiah's time it seems not possible for history to end in exile, for that also violated the reason of conventional expectation. Btu Yahweh does begin history. He gives land. And he does end history. He takes away land. Israel does not deal with a safe, predictable, conventional God but with one free to work his purpose. And this terrifying word *pela*, "impossible," is used to assert his freedom against anything taken for granted. He does the thing that is too hard. He gives the land to Babylon which for so long seemed to belong to Israel. Impossible! (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 128).

Btu the other speech, (v.15-25). Jeremiah reflects on the potential of v. 15 and its future. He uses parallel words. “Ah Lord GOD! It is you who made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you. 18 You show steadfast love to the thousandth generation,a but repay the guilt of parents into the laps of their children after them, O great and mighty God whose name is the LORD of hosts, 19 great in counsel and mighty in deed; whose eyes are open to all the ways of mortals, rewarding all according to their ways and according to the fruit of their doings. 20 You showed signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, and to this day in Israel and among all humankind, and have made yourself a name that continues to this very day. 21 You brought your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with a strong hand and outstretched arm, and with great terror; 22 and you gave them this land, which you swore to their ancestors to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey” Jer. 32:17-22. (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 129).

The prayer of Jeremiah (vv. 16-25) stands in heavy tension with the lawsuit speech of Yahweh (vv. 26-35) which follows. One looks back to the fracture. The other looks forward to amazement. And between the two, history has turned. One impossibility is as great as the other. The language has shifted. The lawsuit speech is about the disobedience of “they” (Israel) and that is how history ends. The prayer of Jeremiah is about “Thou” of Yahweh and that is why history begins anew. Talk of “they” is about a hopeless past: Speech about “Thou” is about hopeful future. The new history is radically different because it is rooted not in Israel but totally in Yahweh who does what is impossible. His most impossible deed is landed history for exiles (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 129).

The turn is assured and the promise is secured in the decisive announcement of vv. 37-41:

Behold, I will gather them ...
 I will bring them back to this place and
 I will make them dwell in safety ...
 I will give them one heart ...
 I will make with them an everlasting covenant
 I will put the fear of me in their hearts ..
 I will rejoice in doing them good and
 I will plant them in this land in faithfulness ... (cf. Gen. 15:6).

And at the center of this extraordinary new initiative is the central formula of covenant: “And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.” And history has begun again. It is like the old history in many ways, and appeal is richly made to old history. But it is radically different. Now the future of his history rests more totally with Yahweh. He takes new responsibility for history (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 129).

Jeremiah more than any other has led Israel into and through radical land-loss. He has penetrated the inscrutable will of Yahweh who wills exile and resolves to do his special new history precisely among exiles (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 129).

CHAPTER 8. NONE TO COMFORT

Lamentations and the No of God
 I will Restore Your Fortunes
 This Land Shall Fall as Your inheritance
 Subdue and Fill the Land
 Not Comforted -Comforted

The second history of Israel, history of the land, came to an abrupt end when the landed ones thought it would not. **The end of that history had begun very early, likely with an announcement to David that “the sword shall never depart from your house” (2 Sam. 12:10). But even if the end of that history were in process for a long time, few noticed it.** And now in the words of Jeremiah and the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, landed history was ended (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 130).

Kings engaged in self-deception and desperate hope. Zedekiah, for all landed Israel, put the question to Jeremiah, “Is there any other word from Yahweh?” (37:17) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 130).

But the wrenching of 587 and the discernment of the prophets are about discontinuity. The land is really lost, and history is really ended. There is no king, no temple, no royal city, no Israel. It is ended (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 131).

Thus the beginnings of this third history, from exile to land, is as radical as the first history beginning in Gen. 12:1-3; cf. Heb. 11:12). This third history produced an enormous amount of literature, reflective material which considered in various ways the *brutality* of history ending and the *amazement* of history beginning again (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 131).

LAMENTATIONS AND THE “NO” OF GOD

The tragic reversal of Israel concerns the end of what had seemed forever. So Israel is presented like a homeless, forsaken widow who has abruptly lost everything and has no where to turn for help (cf. Is. 47: 1-7). This poetry most powerfully brings Israel into an articulation of landlessness, homelessness, abandonment (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 132).

The governing word which seems to express this sense of **ultimate homelessness** is “*in*” the **total, radical negation** which H.J. Kraus calls the “**no of God.**” Israel’s experience both in its first history to *the land* and in its second history *in the land* had lived by the faithful “yes” of God. And now Israel receives his non-negotiable, unqualified “no” about every dimension of historical existence (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 132).

Israel has “none to comfort “ (1:2, 9, 17, 21). Israel has “none to help her” (1:7; cf. 1:3, 5:5, 5:8). It is the end of everything. “They are not” (cf. Jer. 31:15; Lam 5:7), and Israel must cope.

In this most helpless circumstance, Israel can hope and can imagine a new history, one rooted in the character of God himself (3:22-24, 31-33) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 132).

Here is the vocabulary of the new history: *hesed*, *raham*, *emunah*! The language is that used in Hos. 2:20 long before, in which a new beginning is announced by Yahweh after another debacle, that of the Northern Kingdom. It is a beginning not rooted in Israel but in the fidelity of Yahweh who keeps his promise. Israel must trust the land-giver and the land-promiser precisely when there is no land (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977:132).

In the poetry of Lamentations Israel learns that this destroyed city is its home. That is where it must be rooted. But it also learns that the language of promise is the only way to be there (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 132).

“I WILL RESTORE YOUR FORTUNES”

Yahweh begins a new history with exiles. And the new history is toward the land. A new history begun in the same barrenness in which Abraham and Sarah began Israel’s first trusting venture to land (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 133).

Here is the heart of the **good news of the gospel**: things which seem hopeless need not stay as they are. Things which seem hopelessly lost, closed, and dead are the very region of God’s new action (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 133).

That is the **good news**, that God transforms those who are displaced and makes them a home, gives to them secure turf. And the good news is precisely to exile and precisely when no prospect for land is anywhere visible.

God restores: Good News: The bows of the mighty are broken,
but the feeble gird on strength. Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread,
but those who were hungry are fat with spoil. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children
is forlorn. The LORD kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up.
The LORD makes poor and makes rich; he brings low, he also exalts.
He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap,
to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the LORD’s,
and on them he has set the world (1 Sam. 2:4-8). **CF. Luke 4:18-19** (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress
Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 134)

Jeremiah announces this remarkable transformation of historical existence. His announcement is about the reliable *hesed* of Yahweh when all seemed voided.

Thus says the LORD:

The people who survived the sword
found grace in the wilderness;
when Israel sought for rest,
the LORD appeared to hima from far away.
I have loved you with an everlasting love;
therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.
Again I will build you, and you shall be built,
O virgin Israel!

Again you shall take c your tambourines,
and go forth in the dance of the merry-makers.
Again you shall plant vineyards
on the mountains of Samaria;
the planters shall plant,
and shall enjoy the fruit. (Jer. 31:2-5). NRSV. (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press.
Philadelphia. 1977: 135).

“The exhausted whore is renewed as a virgin”(Jer. 4:30-31); cf. Amos 5:2. Where there
had been grief (31:15) now there is joy and dancing, for the new age has come (cf. 31:10-
14). The prophet employs the theme of rebuilding and rejoicing: “Thus says the LORD:
I am going to restore the fortunes of the tents of Jacob,
and have compassion on his dwellings;
the city shall be rebuilt upon its mound,
and the citadel set on its rightful site.
Out of them shall come thanksgiving,
and the sound of merry-makers.
I will make them many, and they shall not be few;
I will make them honored, and they shall not be disdained.” (Jer. 30:18-19) NRSV. (Walter
Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 135).

The new history begins in his attentive compassion and ends with the covenant formula:
Deut. 17:14-20)(30:21-22). (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press.
Philadelphia. 1977: 135).

God is the cause and Lord of the new history:

6 I am going to bring it recovery and healing; I will heal them and reveal to them abundance d of prosperity
and security. 7 I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel, and rebuild them as they were
at first. 8 I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their
sin and rebellion against me. 9 And this city e shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and a glory before all
the nations of the earth who shall hear of all the good that I do for them; they shall fear and tremble because
of all the good and all the prosperity I provide for it. (Jer. 33:6-9). **Good News.**

And the center of it all is transformed:

0 Thus says the LORD: In this place of which you say, “It is a waste without human beings or animals,” in
the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without inhabitants, human or animal,
there shall once more be heard 11 the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom
and the voice of the bride, the voices of those who sing, as they bring thank offerings to the house of the
LORD:“Give thanks to the LORD of hosts, for the LORD is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever!”
For I will restore the fortunes of the land as at first, says the LORD. (Jer. 33:10-11)

Jeremiah is very clear. Israel does not belong to Babylon nor does it belong to exile.
It belongs to Yahweh in this alternative history, possessed by these words which have no
authority other than the compulsion of the fidelity of their speaker. Finally the visionary
must return to Israel’s most elemental promises: “This is what the LORD says: ‘If I have not
established my covenant with day and night and the fixed laws of heaven and earth, then I will reject the
descendants of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one of his sons to rule over the descendants
of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes e and have compassion on them.’ ” NRSV
(Jer. 33:25-26). (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 136-137).

“THIS LAND SHALL FALL AS YOUR INHERITANCE”

The second remarkable attempt to articulate the new history toward the land is **Ezekiel**. The end! The end has come upon the four corners of the land. The end is now upon you and I will unleash my anger against you. I will judge you according to your conduct and repay you for all your detestable practices. I will not look on you with pity or spare you; I will surely repay you for your conduct and the detestable practices among you. Then you will know that I am the LORD. (**Ezek. 7:2-4**). NRSV.

The harsh words are addressed not to Israel but to the land. The end first articulated by Amos is now actualized. In vv. 5-9, “Disaster after disaster! Behold, it comes. An end has come, the end has come; it has awakened against you. Behold, it comes. Your doom has come to you, O *inhabitants of the land*; the time has come, the day is near, a day of tumult, and not of joyful shouting upon the mountains (vv. 5-7). (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 137).

And then the prophet (Ezekiel) adds this other strange image: **Yahweh himself** departs from the land and from the city. The damage being done because of the abomination is not only to land and to people but **Yahweh himself**. He does not simply choose to leave, but he is forced out by conditions he cannot tolerate: “The guilt of the house of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great; the land is full of blood, and the city full of injustice; for they say, ‘The Lord has forsaken the land and the Lord does not see’” (**Ezek. 9:9; cf. 7:23**). In 9:9, he apparently forsakes. But in 8:6, he is forced out: “He said to me, “Mortal, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel are committing here, to drive me far from my sanctuary”(NRSV). This imagery is much more extreme than that of Jeremiah. In Jeremiah the prophet and perhaps **Yahweh** grieve over Israel’s exile. But now **Yahweh himself** is an exile. He situated, along with other exiles, in Babylon. In making the image powerful, Ezekiel has radicalized the history of **Yahweh**. Not only is history over for Israel. History has ended for **Yahweh** as well just as seen God’s glory is seen in wilderness (Ex. 16:10). **Gather up reasons why people were sent into exile. And it is very important to note that God/Jesus is forced out into homelessness when the needy are forced out into exile. God/Jesus in exile.** Jesus said, **I have no place to my head.** And in the New Testament **Jesus on the cross** is the presentation of the homeless God. He is at the disposal of his people and is forced out of his land by the work of his people (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 138).

Ezekiel has a high vision of holiness of God, but he is equally aware of the peculiarness of this God who is not serene in his place, not immune to the tribulation of his people but is decisively affected by their destiny. **So was Jesus.** (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 138).

First, God himself is exiled. The text puts it both ways, that he is forced to leave and that he chooses to leave (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 138).

Second, Israel’s occupation of land is covenantal, and when covenant is violated, land is lost. Now it is clear that **Yahweh’s being in the land is also covenantal**. His removal from the land is derived from covenant commitments. **This God suffers with and because of people.** The end of history is a fresh staggering statement about **Yahweh** (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 138).

People violated **Ten Commandments** half of which are to be obedient to God and the other half is about loving your neighbor. In the Old Testament, sections deal with Ten Commandments somewhere.

Third, Ezekiel's language consistently makes a double focus upon **departure from land and departure from city**. In this third history, the city with its temple takes on increasing importance. Israel, according to the imagery of Ezekiel, is now with an emptiness as its center. The central symbols of state religion are now void of meaning. History with its decisive and demanding movement robs every historical and institutional pretension, and Israel's watch becomes a reflection on absence (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 139).

Fourth, Yahweh's exile is with Israel. Being in land is a covenantal commitment for both Israel and Yahweh, then it is also possible that exile is covenantal. As the glory was in the wilderness, so the glory is along with Israel in exile. This is the boldness and radicalness of Ezekiel's land thinking. It is in exile that Yahweh in his glory feeds Israel. It is in his exile that Yahweh begins history anew (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 139).

Yahweh's sovereignty is in his peculiar capacity to end history: "I will make the land a desolation and a waste, and its proud might shall come to an end; and the mountains of Israel shall be so desolate that no one will pass through. Then they shall know that I am the LORD, when I have made the land a desolation and a waste because of all their abominations that they have committed (Ezek. 33:28-29). NRSV.

But his sovereignty is equally apparent to Ezekiel in his capacity to initiate history. Yahweh will not forever be exiled from his place. Nor will he forever permit his people to be landless. The prophet announces the new initiative of Yahweh when it all seemed over: **Good News**:

Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am **about to act, but for the sake of my holy name**, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. I will sanctify my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD, says the Lord GOD, when through you I display my holiness before their eyes. I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and **bring you into your own land**. I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. **A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. Then you shall live in the land that I gave to your ancestors; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God**" (Ezek. 36:22-28) (NRSV) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 140).

This extraordinary declaration contains a variety of important themes. Yahweh's new act is on a different basis. It is no longer to value a people or even to keep a promise, but **it is for his own sake and reputation**. The ground for a new history must be rooted in Yahweh himself and not in Israel. The will for land for Israel is rooted in Yahweh's very character as a covenant-maker and -keeper (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 140).

The old call for repentance (cf. 33:11-12) is no longer issued or expected. The motif of repentance is transformed to the gift of new heart and new spirit (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1977: 140). “Then you shall live in the land that I gave to your ancestors; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.” Surely the combination of *land formula* and *covenant formula* is not accidental. The two ideas, in land and in covenant, belong together. Ezekiel cannot imagine covenant apart from the land (**Hosea 2:21-22**). The description of land echoes the imagery of creation as well as the **speeches of the boundary** (Gen. 1:22-; 8:17). The speech also recalls the build/plant theme of **Jeremiah**:

“I will cause the towns to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be rebuilt. 34 The land that was desolate shall be tilled, instead of being the desolation that it was in the sight of all who passed by. 35 And they will say, “This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined towns are now inhabited and fortified.” 36 Then the nations that are left all around you shall know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places, and replanted that which was desolate; I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will do it “(Ezek. 36:33-36) (NRSV) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1977: 141).

In his bold imagery of **resurrection** in Ezek. 37:1-14, the prophet again speaks about the end of exile and return to the land. Again it is being in land which is both the destiny of Israel and the mark of Yahweh’s lordship: “The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, “Mortal, can these bones live?” I answered, “O Lord GOD, you know.” Then he said to me, “Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath a to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath b in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD.” So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude. Then he said to me, “Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.’ Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act,” says the LORD (Ezek. 37:12, 14), (Ezek. 37: 1-14) NRSV

Land-giving word does two things. First it brings Israel home, never meant to be homeless. **Second**, it establishes Yahweh’s sovereignty. It is land that fully permits Israel to be Israel. It is land that fully permits Yahweh to be known as Yahweh. It is land that permits Yahweh and Israel to have history together (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1977: 142).

Ezekiel presents three images:

First, Yahweh’s exile is ended. He returns to the temple in the same manner in which he left it (cf. 43:1-5; 44:4). The glory which had departed to Babylon, or been driven out,

has now returned. The return is not to the same conditions, for the temple has been radically restored. Note its decisive implication for the temple, that it is symbolic center of the new history. We also note that Yahweh is no longer an exiled God. His new history has begun, and as it begins for him, so it begins for Israel (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 142).

Second image of land restoration is in 47:13-48:29. Ezekiel engages in a powerful typology, so that the return to land and the reappropriation of the promise are presented after the manner of the land distribution of Joshua. The land has been conquered again by Yahweh. The land distribution proceeds as the original one, and as the first begins Israel's new history in the land, so this begins a new history in the land (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 142). The most characteristic word is *nahalāh*, used in this text, affirms that the generation coming out of exile is recipient of all the old covenant promises. The use of *nahalāh* serves to link the generation of exile to the most formative and fundamental images of Israel's memory (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 143).

The promise is expansive and inclusive. Now the alien is treated like the native born. The new history toward the land has a dimension of graciousness in it. The gift of land is now more decisively a free gift without qualification. It is a stunning statement (contrast 44:9) that aliens shall be included. However, the very generosity of the gift poses deep problems for the new land and its processors. (Ezek. 47:21-23): "So you shall divide this land among you according to the tribes of Israel. **You shall allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the aliens who reside among you and have begotten children among you. They shall be to you as citizens of Israel;** with you they shall be allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel. In whatever tribe aliens reside, there you shall assign them their inheritance, says the Lord GOD." (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 143).

The third dimension of new land which is the restoration of the city of Jerusalem as the abode of God. **The new city will be the perfectly designed city. "Yahweh is there"**(Ezek. 48:35). **That is the name for the temple, for the city, for the land, for the history.** The new history from exile is not just about free space but about an historical place in which the God of Israel's covenant (cf. 36:28: "**the name of the city from that time on shall be, The LORD is There**".) is present in the place formerly rejected. Thus rejected place is now inhabited space. Space abandoned by the land-giving God is claimed for the place-occupying God. Finally it is the abiding of the holy one which makes the land credible for Israel (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 143).

"SUBDUE AND FILL THE LAND" P. 144

The central theme of P is announced in Gen. 1:1-2:4a, the creation story commonly assigned to this sixth century effort. The land which God now creates for his people is **contrasted with chaos** (*tohu wabohu*, v. 2; cf. Is. 45:18 also referring to exile as chaos). While chaos is a term which may refer in an ontological sense to formlessness, here it describes the historical formlessness of exile. **The text contrasts Israel's land of future, characterized by all of Yahweh's blessings, with the land of the present, described as formless and void, dark, surely the experience of the faithful in Babylon** (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 144).

The promise at the center of this text (Gen. 1:28) is a direct and intentional refutation of exilic hopelessness. These promise-blessing mandates are not contextless assertions but careful refutations of exile perception to open to Israel the prospect of an alternative history in an alternative land. The text is a denial of every Babylonian claim, every exilic pretension, and every Israelite doubt (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 144).

It is important that the exile is the time when all the old stories were placed into a fixed form. Israel went back into its memories, to the time when the history-making, history-summoning words were spoken which gave Israel enduring identity. A central theme of these stories for exiles is that to the *barren* is born the *child of promise*, to the one without future or hope (Jer. 29:14) is given the impossible blessing (Gen. 11:30; 18:9-15; 25:21; 29:31). Israel's stories now shaped into final form are not about barrenness. Nor are they about children of promise. The stories are about *children of promise to the barren*. That motif is easily transposed: the land is always to the exiles. The old stories invited exiles to look again at their destiny. Their mothers and fathers were not for barrenness, so they are not for homelessness. The stories become protests against exile, denials that the exile of the present is the destiny of the future. Stories of impossible births are the way these displaced hoppers keep alive an alternative history. The stories prevent Israel from accepting the identity Babylon would bestow, for the empire wants to seduce the faithful into accepting a landless way outside history (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 145).

Israel never doubt that God's new history would end exile and yield rootage in land. God's will for Israel is against current circumstance. **He will bring the new blessing to exiles. The same blessing is announced to Noah (Gen. 9:1-7), faithful Israel who trusted in chaos, and then to Abraham (Gen. 16:2), Jacob (28: 3-4; 35:11), to Joseph (47: 27; 48:3-4), and finally to the liberated ones in Egypt.** Yahweh's will for land will finally triumph, and Israel can count on it.

NOT COMFORTED - COMFORTED

Already in the eighth century, **Hosea** had announced that Israel is "**not pitied**" (1:6). And he had envisioned a time when it would again be "**pitied**" (2:3). In the sixth century exile, **Lamentations**, as we have seen, had described Israel as "**not comforted**" (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 146).

Hosea had envisioned a reversal and transfiguration of Israel's situation. In the exile, Second Isaiah envisions the same reversal of Israel's exile. **He announces that Israel is "comforted."** It is this radical transformation of Israel's situation which is at the center of Second Isaiah's poetry and which requires such powerful lyrical style to say what must be said (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 147).

Second Isaiah: It is **Second Isaiah** more than any of his exilic antecedents who **announces a turn in history which will bring homeless Israel home again.** Whatever else the poetry means in terms of mission to Gentiles and vicarious, redemptive suffering, the base line is the return of Israel home again. History is inverted. Babylonian gods fall before Yahweh's power (46:1-4).

Babylonian tyranny yields to Persian liberation (45:1-7) at the behest of Yahweh. Dry places in the wilderness are transformed into nourishment (41:17-19). Forlorn Jerusalem will be restored and rebuilt (44:26). The temple will be reactivated (44:28). All of that is the new thing (43:18-19) which explodes in history just which it had seemed closed, managed, and controlled by hopeless, imperial policy (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 147).

The new thing is the beginning of new history for Israel who had given up on the old history and had concluded that no new history was possible. It is unexpected history, newness incredible and unexplained, generated not by kings and rulers but by the action of the One who forms light and creates darkness (45:7). The newness comes neither from Israel's faith nor from Persian generosity. It comes when Yahweh reasserts his rule over all turf and his restoration of his people in his land. Thus at the center of the poetry of the new history toward land is the enthronement formula of Yahweh's sovereignty:

“Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; [say to the cities of Judah, “Here is your God!” See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.](#)” (Is. 40:9-10) NRSV. (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 147).

That is the gospel. “Behold your God!” He comes, He rules. He gathers. He carries. He leads. That is the new history (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 147).

This assertion is matched by the second formula: “why says to Zion, ‘your God reigns’”(52:7). There the cluster of terms pressed to speak of newness: peace/good/good tidings/salvation. Second Isaiah makes a connection which will be important to the New Testament and for every homeless group. ***Kingship of Yahweh leads to homecoming.*** Rule by Yahweh means the end of homelessness because he is a God who wills land for his people. He wills neither chaos nor exile, neither alienation nor homelessness (Is. 45:18-19). He wills homecoming. He acts to have it so. That is the new thing, that in a history of homelessness his powerful purpose for home has intervened, and it is never the same again (51:2-3) (54:1-3; 54:9-10; 54:17): Gen. 9:1,7). Announce well-being in the new land (55:3; cf. 54:13). (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 148-149).

The total turn of unexpected newness is the kind of which Hannah (I Sam. 2:4-8) and Mary (Luke 2:51-53) sang. .. The land is redivided to prisoners and other outcasts. The land is gift given by the One who has pity Hos. 2:23), who leads and guides (cf. Ps. 23:1-3). The outcasts are given places and comforted. Indeed to be comforted is to be given place ([relate to Jesus also](#)) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 150)

CHAPTER 9. JEALOUS FOR JERUSALEM

Separatism as a Way to Save the Land Hellenization and Syncretism Revisited

Israel came once again to the land. Israel was determined not to make deathly compromises as in the first century. Joshua had found the land full with the Canaanites, and his management had to be in that context. Haggai, Zechariah, and Zerubbabel had found it surrounded by Samaritans, and later there were problems with the Edomites and “Arabs.” From the landlessness of the exile, Israel came once again to Jerusalem) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 151).

SEPARATISM AS WAY TO SAVE THE LAND

The God who leads his people back to Jerusalem and the beginning in the land is disciplined and single-minded, wanting Jerusalem kept and claimed for his exclusive purpose (*Zech.* 1:14-17; 8:2-3) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 152).

The jealousy of Yahweh for Zion is an appropriate theme under which to understand the new land entry (7:9; Mal. 3:10-12). In this context the purification and reconstruction under *Nehemiah and Ezra* can best be understood. Ezra’s Prayer of confession:

1. **The land is unclean, that is unacceptable** for covenantal life, and must be purged: “For we have forsaken your commandments, which you commanded by your servants the prophets, saying, ‘The land that you are entering to possess is a land unclean with the pollutions of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations. They have filled it from end to end with their uncleanness (Ezra 9:11) NRSV.
2. **The purification of the land requires an alternative**, separatist consciousness: “Therefore do not give your daughters to their sons, neither take their daughters for your sons, and never seek their peace or prosperity.. (Ezra 9:12; cf. the antithesis in Jer. 29:7). NRSV.
3. **The result of such an alternative is land**: “so that you may be strong and eat the good of the land and leave it for an inheritance to your children forever” (Ezra 9:12) NRSV. This is one form of the entire program of Ezra. It is to be noted that the purpose of it all is long life in a secure and prosperous land (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 153).

The offenses which most vexed this self-conscious leadership of restoration included several elements:

1. **Intermarriage**, that is, marriage with nonsectarian Israelites who did not qualify as “good gifts” from Babylon. Thus the urgent call for separatism is in the interest of land retention: “Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, ‘You have trespassed and married foreign women, and so increased the guilt of Israel. Now make confession to the LORD the God of your ancestors, and do his will; separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign wives.’ ... All these had married foreign women, and they sent them away with their children. (Ezra 10:10-11, 44). (NRSV) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 153).

“In those days also I saw Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab; and half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and they could not speak the language of Judah, but spoke the language of various peoples. And I contended with them and cursed them and beat some of them and pulled out their hair; and I made them take an oath in the name of God, saying, “You shall not give your daughters to their sons, or take their daughters for your sons or for yourselves. (Neh. 13:23-25) NRSV. (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 154).

With good reason were they preoccupied with this offense, for the singular model for land-loss was Solomon who “loved many foreign women (I Kings 11:1) and lost the land: “Did not King Solomon of Israel sin on account of such women? Among the many nations there was no king like him, and he was beloved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel; nevertheless, foreign women made even him to sin. (Neh. 13:26; cf. Matt. 6:29). NRSV. . (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 154).

2. They did not honor the Sabbath:

“In those days I saw in Judah people treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in heaps of grain and loading them on donkeys; and also wine, grapes, figs, and all kinds of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; and I warned them at that time against selling food. Tyrians also, who lived in the city, brought in fish and all kinds of merchandise and sold them on the Sabbath to the people of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I remonstrated with the nobles of Judah and said to them, “What is this evil thing that you are doing, profaning the Sabbath day. Did not your ancestors act in this way, and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Yet you bring more wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath.” (Neh. 13:15-18). NRSV. . (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 154).

For Judah, Sabbath is not only a social arrangement for maintaining humanness but it is a theological affirmation of Yahweh’s ownership of the land and of history . (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 154).

3. Disparities between the small landed citizens and the elite who ordered the bureaucracy. It happened that the power class taxed the citizens into debt:

“There were also those who said, ‘We are having to pledge our fields, our vineyards, and our houses in order to get grain during the famine.’ And there were those who said, ‘We are having to borrow money on our fields and vineyards to pay the king’s tax. Now our flesh is the same as that of our kindred; our children are the same as their children; and yet we are forcing our sons and daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters have been ravished; we are powerless, and our fields and vineyards now belong to others.’” (Neh. 5:3-5a) NRSV. (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 155).

The situation recalls the repeated drama in Israel, of Pharaoh, of Solomon, of Ahab. Each time land is either lost or another vision of social order displaces the covenantal one. The ultimate immobilization for visionary Israel is here: “and our fields and vineyards now belong to others.” (Neh. 5:5b) NRSV. Not only economically crippled which was evident, but one has lost the possibility of the promise of Yahweh to Israel. Nehemiah indicts these corruptions of Israel: “After thinking it over, I brought charges against the nobles and the officials; I said to them, “You are all taking interest from your own people.” And I called a great assembly to deal with them, and said to them, “As far as we were able, we have bought back our Jewish kindred who had been sold to other nations; but now you are selling your own kin, who must then be bought back by us!” They were silent, and could not find a word to say. So I said, “The thing that you are doing is not good. Should you not walk in the fear of our God, to prevent the taunts of the nations our enemies? Moreover I and my brothers and my servants are lending them money and grain. Let us stop this taking of interest. Restore to

them, this very day, their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards, and their houses, and the interest on money, grain, wine, and oil that you have been exacting from them.” (Neh. 5:7-11) NRSV.

The program of v. 11 is at the heart of Israelite faith and is in a precise refutation of royal confiscation (contrast 1 Sam. 8). (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 155).

Such an economic arrangement, no matter how pervasive or legitimate, is unacceptable because it denies to the poor “our fields and our vineyards.” That is the test of policy!

The concluding statement in the prayer of Ezra:

“Here we are, slaves to this day--slaves in the land that you gave to our ancestors to enjoy its fruit and its good gifts. Its rich yield goes to the kings whom you have set over us because of our sins; they have power also over our bodies and over our livestock at their pleasure, and we are in great distress.” (Neh. 9: 36-37). NRSV. **We are slaves in our land.** The verse suggests two appeals to Israel’s very oldest tradition.

First the Levites are pervasive in the reform of Ezra and Nehemiah. They provide links between the Ezra-Nehemiah attention to land and that of Deuteronomy (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 156).

Second, if George Mendenhall is right in his bold suggestion about conquest as a covenantal peasant revolt against oppressive Canaanite city-kings, it should not surprise us that covenant with Yahweh is viewed here as a weapon against a hierarchal denial of land and as the radical articulation of an alternative way of understanding, distributing, and managing land. Mendenhall’s suggestion locates land distribution as the identifying and most urgent mark of revolutionary Yahwism. Such a connection helps discern the rootage and passion of Nehemiah’s insistence. The oath includes:

1. Allegiance to Torah. “join with their kin, their nobles, and enter into a curse and an oath to walk in God’s law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord and his ordinances and his statutes. (Neh. 10:29). NRSV.

2. Avoidance of mixed marriages: “We will not give our daughters to the peoples of the land or take their daughters for our sons”; (Neh. 10:30) NRSV.

3. Honoring of Sabbath and Jubilee. “and if the peoples of the land bring in merchandise or any grain on the Sabbath day to sell, we will not buy it from them on the Sabbath or on a holy day; and we will forego the crops of the seventh year and the exaction of every debt”. (Neh. 10. 31) NRSV. (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 157).

HELLENIZATION AND SYCRETISM REVISTED –P. 158

Hellenization decisively changed the shape of Jewish self-consciousness. Persian toleration can be seen as the fortunate middle way between Babylonian hostility and Hellenistic seduction. (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 158). Whereas Judah was at the periphery of Persian concerns geographically, Jerusalem was positioned unfortunately at the center of imperial disputes after Alexander (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 159).

Development of Hellenization carried several features which were to affect post-Ezra Judaism in radical ways:

First, its mood and intent were cosmopolitan, denying every historical particularism not because it was Jewish, but because it was particular and historical. And the contrast is sharp, even total, between that urging and the earlier demands of Ezra.

Second, Hellenization was essentially an urban phenomenon, which focused in the cities and claimed them as vehicles for and expressions of the new vision of universal humanity. Although Alexandria was the model and central temptation against a Jewish consciousness, Jerusalem appeared to be a likely candidate for the new urbanism. It was the effort to transform an *ethnos* into a *polis*. (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 159).

Third, Hellenization was inevitably a program of cultural and intellectual enlightenment which was antithetical to the unquestioning fideism of Ezra. Here there was no urging about historical remembering and nothing about repentance (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 160). Such radical cultural alternative posed hard question for Jews. The temptation was not to deny Jewishness as such, but the subtle and inevitable tendency to change the nature of Jewishness. ... (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 160).

It favored the wealthy urban citizens who had access to and knew how to benefit from the decision-making apparatus. Concerning our theme of land, the new arrangement worked to make land accessible in bold ways to those who could figure angles to take from those who conversely relied on traditional claims and supports. Thus it is impossible to separate the religious, political, economic, and social dimensions of Hellenization.

Hellenization gave opening to the possibility of self-seeking by the knowing elite restrained neither by covenant nor by tradition. This matter of alternative in another form is the same as that expressed in (a) Deut. 17:14-20 about "one from the brother" and one with "lifted" heart, (b) the self-serving power of Solomon, (c) the triangle of Naboth-Jezebel-Elijah, and (d) Jeremiah's neat contrast of Josiah and Jehoiakim, justice and cedar (Jer. 22:13-17) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 161).

Finally Hellenization raised the issue about whether faith in Yahweh was possible or worth the price. Hellenization set a pattern for the knowing, uncaring rich to take advantage of trusting, helpless poor. The response to such alienated politics and faith came in several forms: (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 161-162).

1. It came in the literature and politics of resistance, centering in the Maccabean movement. It is the peasantry fighting for land held in covenant (I Macc. 2:19-22, 27 sees the battle in terms of fidelity). This understanding is consistent with the **ideology of holy war and the old conquest traditions** (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 162).

2. Ben Sira is a wisdom teacher in the Hellenistic period who presents the teaching of a conservative tradition. The teaching is conventional and in general urges old sapiential values against Hellenistic alternatives. The general reflection of Ben Sira is a rejection of a new mood besetting Jews whose faith now faced hard options. ..While teaches individual accountability, he also affirms social solidarity in which the more fortunate must care for the others. Hengel views Ben Sira as a protestor against “Hellenistic liberalism,” which provided a rationale for the exploitation of class against class (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 162).

3. Third response was apocalyptic. Apocalyptic is the visionary rage of those victimized by the present order. It arises among those who have trusted their symbol system to keep its promises and among those who obeyed commandments (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 163).

The response of apocalyptic returned to the most radical, particular tradition in Israel’s heritage, to the tradition of holy war, to the memories when Yahweh intervened on behalf of his faithful, helpless people against “unnumbered foes.” (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 164). The Hellenistic world had created a keen sense of alienation. The promise was for luxuriant at-homeness (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 166).

CHAPTER 10. BLESSED ARE THE MEEK – Jesus the homeless

On Gift and Grasp

Johannine and Pauline Use of Land Imagery

Crucifixion – Resurrection through the Promise of Land

Theology of Land in Christian context; faith confessed in the New Testament P. 167.

ON GIFT AND GRASP

Israel had learned that the problem of land and the possibility of land consisted on the one hand in *grasping with courage* and on the other hand *waiting in confidence for the gift*. In the period of the New Testament, there was a mood of *grasping* in the form of urbanized syncretism which had oppressive implications. *The movement clustering around Jesus appears to be a restatement of the theme of waiting in confidence for the gift*. The dominant tendency of the community of biblical faith was oriented to *scribalism*, an effort to manage and plan for securing. *The Jesus movement represents an alternative to that scribal consciousness because it focused on an apocalyptic perspective* (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 167). *The Jesus movement is centered on the sharp and radical transformation of the human situation*. While the visionary language permits alternative readings, *there were political and economic dimensions to the faith of the Christian movement* which were articulated especially by the disinherited. (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 168).

In contemporary thought it is likely that the same question seizing and waiting is central, and modern Israel is having to decide on it. In contemporary setting these alternatives are perhaps symbolized by the Wailing Wall and Masada. The Wailing Wall represents and embodies *the enduring and resilient conviction that the yearning of Israel will be honored and fulfilled “when Messiah comes.”* (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 168).

The wailing Wall is an expression of grieving hope which never doubts that his purposes will out. Conversely Masada, symbol of resistance, initiative and so to secure the land. The issue may be primarily theological, but it is expressed very practically and urgently in terms of Israel’s yielding for the sake of the promise on the one hand, that is, to try a risky course *against conventional military politics*, or on the other hand, *to use military power to secure what is promised* (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 169).

First, the issue of Wailing Wall/Masada is that waiting for land secures it and grasping land forfeits it. *Second, the issue of grasping/waiting, of Masada/Wailing Wall, is not one in which a clear Jewish posture can be distinguished from a clear Christian attitude. Things will not be divided that way. Thus there is a community of concern between Jews and Christians about grasping and waiting, about keeping and losing. Because both Christians and Jews are on both sides of the grasping and waiting, this may be an issue about which there can be new dialogue between them. Neither Jews nor Christians have a monopoly on either side of the issue.*

For both the question is a difficult and urgent one. For both Christians and Jews it is always a question of self-securing and a question of trust. Self-securing seems to work and yet leads to death. Trust seems unlikely and yet holds promise. This question can never be avoided by either Jews and Christians. For both it is the key question for faith (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 169).

In Christian context, the theme as it is handled in the New Testament has been reviewed by W.D. Davies. He concludes that in the history of Christianity the land as a central theme has been (a) rejected, (b) spiritualized, (c) treated historically, and (d) presented sacramentally. But the major thrust of Davies' study is to stress that in early Christianity the theme of land was displaced by the person of Jesus Christ (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 170).

1. The center of the New Testament proclamation is the end of one age, one kingdom, one political arrangement and the announcement of a new age, a new kingdom, a new political-historical arrangement. It is the dynamic of old age/new age which is central to the New Testament, which presents its radicalness, and which embodies the offense of the gospel. The imagery of the primitive preaching is to stress the discontinuity and the contrast between the two arrangement (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 170).

2. The most primitive and central image of this contrast is the image of kingdom. Kingdom of God and kingdom of this world. The primary claim is that a new kingdom has come (Mark 1:14-15; cf. Rev. 11:15). The theme of "kingdom" is crucial for our consideration. It clearly includes the idea of historical, political, physical realm, that is, land. The coming of Jesus is understood with reference to new land arrangements (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 171).

3. The new land arrangement is sharply contrasted with the old land arrangement. The contrast includes socio-economic-political concerns. The contrast between those who have and must lose and those who do not have but who bear the promise is clear (as described all along above). (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 171).

It is stated in raw and offensive categories by Mary:

51 He has shown strength with his arm;
 he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
 52 He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
 and lifted up the lowly;
 53 he has filled the hungry with good things,
 and sent the rich away empty.
 54 He has helped his servant Israel,
 in remembrance of his mercy,
 55 according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
 to Abraham and to his descendants forever." (Luke 1:51-55) NRSV.

Quite clearly this is a vision of land-loss by the graspers of land and land-receipt by those who bear promises but lack power. It cannot be accidental that this “poetry of inversion” parallels the song of Hanna (I Sam. 2:1-10), also out of a context of landless and precarious Israelites. The birth of Jesus presented in this fashion is about the land still being under promise when it seems not to be. Among other things, the climactic reference to Abraham leaves no doubt of this (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 171).

The theme of radical inversion of landed and landless is presented as the central clue that the messianic age has dawned: And he answered them, “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them.” (Luke 7:22). NRSV.

See also 4:18 which appeals to Is. 61:1-2; the passage announces the end of exile and the inversion of all of life. It is precisely the end of exile with the inversion of life for those denied turf which is recognized in the person and preaching of Jesus. This is both celebrated and resisted (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 173).

4. The radical inversion of landed-landless arrangements is evidenced in the teaching of Jesus. It is clear in his concise but enigmatic statements which reject the world of grasping and affirm the world of gifts. Thus:

“For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it” (Luke 9:24). NRSV.

“Indeed, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.” (Luke 13:30). NRSV.

“For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” (Luke 14:11). NRSV. (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 172).

Thus the narrative of Luke 7:36-50 contrasts the landed and the landless, the Pharisees and the nameless woman. While the narrative makes clear who in fact has turf and who does not, it is precisely the function of the narrative to show that Jesus inverts the situation. By the end of the story, the Pharisees have been dispossessed of any future security and the woman has been in fact secured. The change is wrought by the word and presence of Jesus who is the rearranger of the land (story of a woman who broke alabaster jar) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 172-173).

The story of Luke 16:19-31 makes the same point in the contrast between the rich man and the poor man. And their new situation are precisely inverted. The one who seems to possess all in fact is hopelessly without claim or power. The poor man is now the one “comforted” (cf. v. 25; Is. 40:1 on the end of exile and “comfort”) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 173).

5. It is likely that Jesus’ actions are also to be understood as the return of the dispossessed to the land from which they had been driven, that is, the rehabilitation of the rejected ones as bearers of the promise. This must be the intent of the action toward

Zacchaeus which ends with a promissory statement: “Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham” (Luke 19:9). This is not simply a general statement but is in fact a deliberate appeal to the land promise which is now affirmed as effective for this seemingly rejected heir. Jesus’ ministry affirms that the land promise is still in effect. His actions serve to fulfill that promise for the rejected heirs (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 173).

The actions of healing and cleansing are in fact actions which rehabilitate. Thus the paralytic is sent home (Mark 2:11). And likewise the demon-possessed man is restored to sanity and sent home (Mark 5:19). He had been living among the tombs, that is, in exile, homeless, among the dead and now he is sent home. Thus the contrast of tomb/home is clear and surely is not unrelated to the theme of exile/land. Jesus’ ministry is to restore the rejected to their rightful possession (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 174).

6. The radicalness of this ministry is in the calling into question those norms and values which serve to enfranchise and disenfranchise. Jesus and his gospel are rightly received as a threat. The new endowment is a threat to the old arrangements. He evokes resistance from those who wish to preserve how it had been. A proper understanding requires that we discern the socio-political, economic issues in the religious resistance which forms against him. A threat to landholders mobilizes his opponents, land here understood both in literal and symbolic senses (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 174).

Restoration evokes opposition: “The Pharisees went out, and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him” (Mark 3: 6).

He came to sheep without shepherd, surely an image of exile (cf. 6:34). He acted as king and fed them (cf. Ezek. 34), that is, he ended their exile. But the others were “hard hearted” and did not discern the act which ended exile (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 174).

The resistance Jesus encounters is among those who possess most and have most to lose. The new possibilities are among those who have least and who welcome what is given. Thus the issue is posed clearly between haves and have nots, between defenders of old land arrangement and recipients of new land: “The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people sought to destroy him; but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people hung upon his words” (Luke 19:47-48). The action, the preaching, and the person of Jesus, all attest to new law now being given (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 174).

The New Testament has discerned how problematic land is; when the people are landless, the promise comes; but when the land is secured, it seduces and the people are turned toward loss. Thus the proclamation of Jesus is about grasping and those open to gifts as receiving (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 175).

JOHANNINE AND PAULINE USES OF LAND IMAGERY P. 175

As Davies noted, **in the Fourth Gospel land** = “life in the new age” = “eternal life.”
Land-loss = crucifixion and land gift – resurrection.

The crucifixion of Jesus is his willing embrace of homelessness or landlessness. The resurrection of Jesus is the amazing restoration of power and turf when they had surely been lost (on this see the clear claim of restoration in Matt. 28:19-20).

It is likely that the imagery of *land-loss* and *land-gift* became one of the primary ways for understanding and confessing this homeless one who now has been given dominion (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 175).

The church claims that desperate attempts to seize and hold lead to displacement and death, and conversely, gracious risk lead to empowerment and security. That is the central gamble of the Gospel, not simply a gamble in piety or theology, but a gamble in history with valuable turf, with the best worldly wisdom, and with the greatest worldly power (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 176).

Beatitudes are clues to entry to the new age of enlandment:

“Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.

21 “Blessed are you who are hungry now,
for you will be filled.

“Blessed are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.

22 “Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you a on account of the Son of Man. 23 Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; (Luke 6:20-23. NRSV.)

3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

5 “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

10 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely a on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matt/ 5: 3-12. NRSV). (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 176).

Meekness leads to turf. Not powerful grasping but trusting receiving. Israel had long known this. But each time the reality lacks credibility. **Jesus is the meek and homeless one and he has home and land.** He is ruler of new age and invites his people there with him, but on his strange terms (Mark 10: 35-45) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 176).

An alternative reading of Paul is also possible. Davies denies that Paul has an interest in the land. But some factors hint otherwise:

1. It may well be that the law/gospel theme, especially prominent in **Romans** and **Galatians**, can be understood alternatively in terms of grasping land and receiving it freely. If Torah had become problematic for Paul it is significant that Torah has importance only with reference to land. If the law issue is related to having and seeking land, then grace/law becomes a prism for asking about keeping and losing turf (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 177).

2. The stress upon Abraham as the paradigm for faith warns us against deciding too quickly that the land motif is absent (cf. Rom. 4, Gal. 3-4). Freely given (as in the beginning) to one who had no claim and “was as good as dead” (Heb. 11:12).

3. It is instructive that the passages which focus on being “heirs” (Rom. 8:12-25; Gal. 3:27-29; 4:1-7) receive scant attention from Davies. But the assertions are clear: “For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. 14 If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void.” **Rom. 4:13-14) NRSV.**

“and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ--if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. “**(Rom. 8:17. NRSV) .**

“ in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. ... For if the inheritance comes from the law, it no longer comes from the promise; but God granted it to Abraham through the promise. **Gal. 3:14, 18. NRSV.**

“So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God. . Now you, my friends, are children of the promise, like Isaac. **(Gal. 4:7, 28. NRSV).** (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 177-178).

The assertion of Paul are about living faithfully in history, about being secure in a world which promises no security, about having a place in a displacing world). (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 178).

In Roman 8:17 the heirship is suffering and glory, but in light of our argument about crucifixion and resurrection, it surely is possible that suffering=crucifixion=landlessness and glory=resurrection=landedness. So the Pauline question is about “turf” and the **gospel answer** is that “at-homeness” comes by the homelessness of trusting joyous obedience). (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 178).

4. One other theme in Paul warrants attention.

In 2 Cor.1:3-7 the term “**comfort**” (*paraklesis*) is used nine times. This term, as for example in Lamentation and Second Isaiah, frequently is about restoration of exiles. In this passage, we may note a pair of words, “affliction/comfort,” which perhaps correlates with the other pairs we have suggested: crucifixion/resurrection, suffering/glory, landless/landed. The promissory element here also claims that exile is not the destiny of the church from Yahweh). (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 178).

Another clear dimension of the land theme in the New Testament is in Hebrew 3-4 which focuses upon the promise of “rest” and the condition of entry into it (P. 179).

It is sobering for New Testament exegesis to recognize that the single central symbol for the promise of the gospel is *land*. That language is evident in 11:13-16 in which the pilgrimage of faith is set in three scenes: (a) *a land from which they set out in faith*, (b) *the present context of exile*, and (c) *the hoped-for homeland (patrida)*. The last is characterized as “better,” “heavenly,” “a city.” (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 179).

CRUCIFIXION - RESURRECTION THROUGH THE PRISM OF LAND P. 180

While there is a series of symbols which express our theme, for example, (a) in the Synoptics, “Kingdom of God,” (b) in the Fourth Gospel, “eternal life,” (c) in Paul, “inheritance,” and (d) in Hebrews, “a homeland,” it is likely that *crucifixion/resurrection* is the core symbol in every tradition. This symbol is dialectical and is illuminated when linked to land (cf. Ezek. 37:1-14). In such a frame of reference, **crucifixion** may be understood as a call to leave the old land (cf. Mark 10:17-22) and to give up power and embrace the risk of powerlessness and turflessness. Or conversely crucifixion is land-loss in or that others may receive the same land as gift). (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 180).

Resurrection is the gift of power to the powerless (cf. Mark 5:1-20); Luke 19:1-10) and the invitation to the dispossessed to enter new power, freedom, and life, that is, “turf.” In the Old Testament the resurrection motif is expressed as the call to exiles to leave exile and return to the land). (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 180).

Thus crucifixion / resurrection echoes the dialectic of *possessed land lost / exiles en route to the land of promise*. Jesus embodies precisely what Israel has learned about land: being without land makes it possible to trust the promise of it, while grasping land is the sure way to lose. The powerful are called to dispossession. The powerless are called to power. The landed are called to *homelessness*. The landless are given *a new home*.). (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 180)
Both are called to discipleship, to be in “Christ,” to submit to the one who has become the embodiment of the new land. In the person of Jesus both histories are enacted:). (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 181)

Landless to land = resurrection

Gen. 12:1-3 _____ Josh. 21:43-45

Landed to landlessness = crucifixion

Judg. 2:6 _____ 2 Kings 24:14-15

It is the third history announced by Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and especially Second Isaiah which comes to dramatic fruition in Jesus, the utterly homeless one who is given dominion). (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 181).

Three texts may be noted which catch that double understanding of land. In Is. 52:13-53:12, surely a central form of gospel to exiles, we may note the dialectical movement.

- A. the promise (Is. 52:13)
- B. the exile (52:14-53:3)
- C. the new life in the new land (53:10-11)

(Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 182

Phil. 2:1-11 speaks of the full one (that is, with land) being emptied (that is, sent to exile), only to be enthroned again ruler over the land. The imagery of empty/full (cf. Luke 1:51-55) clearly refers to people with turf who abandon it, that is, do not grasp but instead have it given). (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 183).

This central insight and mystery of the gospel – that letting go is to have and keeping is the way to lose – are of special interest to Paul in 2 Corinthians. There he reflects on the possession/dispossession theme concerning Jesus: “For you know the generous act f of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich” (2 Cor. 8:9). NRSV.

He notes the state of the church after the manner of Jesus ...”as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.” (2 Cor. 6:10) NRSV. The ones who possess do not. And the ones who have nothing do possess (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 183).

To argue that land is or is not a New Testament concern, literally or spiritually, miss the point. It is rather the history of *gift and grasp* which concerns the church. It is a radical affirmation in the New Testament, but an affirmation which Israel surely learned: “Kings who grasp lose. Pilgrims who risk are given.” And Paul affirms what the whole history of land is finally about: “ For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift? (I Cor. 4:7). NRSV. Coveting yields nothing but anxiety. The meek, the ones claiming no home and living with homelessness, do indeed inherit the land. That scandal announces the absurdity of all alternative ways in the land, even if they seduce us (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 183).

CHAPTER 11. CONCLUDING HERMENEUTICAL REFLECTIONS

I may quote from this for the conclusion of my chapter II.

Land and Our Hermeneutical Categories
The Prospect for New Interfaces

LAND AND OUR HERMENEUTICAL CATEGORIES P. 184

In the Old Testament there is no timeless space but there also is no spaceless time. There is rather *storied place*, that is a place which has meaning because of the history lodged there. There are stories which have authority because they located in a place. This means that biblical faith cannot be presented simply as an historical movement indifferent to place which could have happened in one setting as well as another, because it is undeniably fixed in this place with this meaning. And for all its apparent “spiritualizing,” the New Testament does not escape this rootage. The Christian tradition has been very clear in locating the story in Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jerusalem, and Galilee (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 185).

As Yahweh is lord of events so he is also fructifier of the land. As he comes “in that day,” so also he watches over the land. He not only intrudes to do saving deeds but he also governs in ways to assure abiding blessings. Harrelson is surely correct that Yahweh is indeed a fertility god who gives life as well as an historical god who saves and judges. He is the Lord of places as well as times (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 185).

What are the central human yearning and vocation? The existentialist perspective in response to a comprehensive and containing idealism saw *emancipation* 해방 as the central human agenda, “freedom to be me,” in self-assertion apart from a larger totality. In more popular form, the human agenda, in postwar romanticism, has been a pursuit of *meaning* which is peculiarly appropriate to the *individual*. This hermeneutic then in romantic terms, in response to the terrors and failures of Western ideologies, located the possibility of faith in the realm of *private decision-making* which placed enormous burdens on the individual and which articulated promises, if there were any, in private terms (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 186).

Our study of land suggests that such an approach is a misunderstanding of biblical categories. The central problem is not emancipation but *rootage*, not meaning but *belonging*, not separation from community but *location* within it, not isolation from others but *placement* deliberately between the generation of promise and fulfillment. The Bible is addressed to the central human problem of homelessness (*anomie*) and seeks to respond to that agenda in terms of *grasp and gift* (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 187)

Brueggemann argues that a study of the land motif also provides a critique of the “mighty deeds of God in history” approach articulated especially by G. von Rad and G. Ernest Wright. This perspective focused singularly on the great events of God’s intrusive action from time to time which reversed historical circumstance and destiny.

This approach was concerned to establish the distinctiveness of Israel's faith, the free sovereignty of Yahweh, and the historical character of biblical faith, to all which he agrees. But in the making the case **in overstating the sharp discontinuities** from Canaanite factors, this view has tended to **fall into the space/time, nature/history antithesis in a one-sided way**. Moreover, the category of history has often been presented as though these events which happened between Yahweh and his people could have happened anywhere since only these two parties were involved and it was a covenantal stress on *covenant* to context or place. **And inordinate stress on *covenant* to the neglect of *land* is a peculiarly Christian temptation and yields to a space/time antithesis** (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 187). **We cannot separate the two issues (covenant and land). Brueggemann claims the two must go together.**

Brueggemann claims that **covenant never concerned only Israel and Yahweh or church and Yahweh, but the land is always present to the interaction and is very much a decisive factor**. The covenant and Yahweh and Israel is of course "historical" and not "natural." But it is characteristically **about land**, about **promise of land** not yet given, about **retention of land** now possessed, and about **land-loss** because of covenant-breaking. Israel never had a desire for a relation with Yahweh in a vacuum, but **only in land**. In the New Testament the crisis of exile/crucifixion is ultimately dealt with the same categories (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 188).

Brueggemann argues that our theme reasserts faith in Yahweh as land-governor and – maintainer, and creation not simply as innovative act but as resilient sustenance. Israel is to be discerned not as people waiting only for occasional intrusions but as living always with gifts that are entrusted and grasping that seduces (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 188)

Such a notion of *placed history* may be an important affirmation about the character of human life, about the strange struggle of homelessness and home, about the God who both leads out and brings in, about the Messiah who has no place and yet who is the very one with authority to give a place (Luke 9:58) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 188)

THE PROSPECT FOR NEW INTERFACES P. 189

Land history of Israel: The first is a history of risking homelessness which yield the gift of home. The second is the deep yearning for home, but in ways with result in homelessness. And in the third history, from exile to Jesus, we learn that Jesus embrace of homelessness (crucifixion) is finally the awesome, amazing gift of home (resurrection).

Brueggeman asserts that the learning is radically dialectical. It will not do, as one might be inclined to do with a theology of glory, to say that God's history is simply a story of coming to the land promised. Nor will it do, as one might be tempted in a theology of the cross, to say God's history is a story of homelessness. Either statement misses the main affirmation of the unexpected way in which land and landlessness are linked to each other (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 189).

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2. Brueggeman contends that the understanding of land in the Bible is never just about land, never only land possessed and managed. It is always a land of gift and promise, a gift given when it could never be taken or grasped or seized, a promise by a Promiser who stands outside history but has been found faithful in history. Land is both held and fruitful. When his vision of justice is ignored, the land is endangered (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 191).

He claims that there is commonality in the land concept but Marxism can be corrected of an inordinate materialism in which land is only turf to be managed, while Christianity can be corrected of its temptation to spiritualism in which we focus on the transcendent Promiser without taking responsibility for the gift given. The transcendence in the midst of materialism which Israel knew is the Holy Voice of the Promiser in the land, a voice of gift and of demand. Perhaps we are required to face that even modern society will not viable until that voice in the land leads us away from grasping to gift (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 192).

3. The interface of biblical faith with the cause of the disposed – the young, the black, the poor, and women. An important word for their commonality is *dispossessed*, that is, those denied land, denied power, denied place or voice in history. The essential restlessness of our world is the voice of the dispossessed demanding a share of the land. And the restlessness is a precise echo of the **biblical voice of the poor** (cf. Ex. 2:23-25, I Kings 12:4). The indignant voice of the prophets announces Yahweh's alliance with the poor against landed. In our time the voices of the dispossessed seem only threatening and boisterous, but biblical faith is the reminder to us that those boisterous voices may well be the voice of God himself allied always with the dispossessed against landed (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 193).

False spiritual interpretation of scripture which has made landlessness a virtue instead of a condition for receiving land. And from that interpretation has come the notion of poverty (landlessness) as virtue. We have so interpreted the Bible away from its agenda and so focused on spiritual matters that we have not caught the power of its claim or the richness of its dialectic. Not only have we failed to hear the gospel with its staggering promise but we have embraced the status quo inequities of landlessness and landedness. Spiritual Christianity, by refusing to face the land question, has served to sanction existing inequities (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 193)

The church is immobilized by phony polarizations, as though the issue was liberal/conservative, revolutionary/reactionary, when in fact the real radicalness is the agenda of land which undercuts all other postures. We have yet to face how odd and discomfiting is the biblical affirmation that **God wills land for his people and he will take it from others for the sake of poor**. We have failed to maintain the land/landless dialectic, so that we are immobilized on the issue without power to invite the landed to landlessness or to include the landless in the land.

The good news is not that **the poor** are blessed for being poor, but that to them belongs the **kingdom**, that is, the new land. Similarly **the meek** are not simply blessed but are identified as heirs of the land

(Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 194).

It is likely that our theological problem in the church is that our gospel is a story believed, shaped, and transmitted by the dispossessed; and we are now a church of possessions for whom the rhetoric of the dispossessed is offensive and their promise is irrelevant. And we are left to see if it is possible for us again to embrace solidarity with the dispossessed (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 194)

4. Finally the land theme is pertinent to our interface with the claims of urban technocratic values in America. It may be that it can call us away from total accommodation so that we are aware in new ways of an interface with unresolved and perhaps unresolvable issues (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 194).

What we have learned of dialectic of landlessness/landedness, of gift/grasp, of crucifixion/resurrection, suggests some alternatives among us:

a. The grasped land of the kings has important points of contact with a production-consumption set of values in which it is assumed some quarters that we have gone as far as we can with that line of effort, and it has not kept its promise. **The theme of land on the way to exile raises the hard question about the relation of production-consumption to the issue of justice and righteousness** (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 194).

b. The production/consumption value inevitably place a central priority upon utility, upon reward for people who can perform tasks. Such values tend to discard people without utility. And **Jesus**, the center of land history, announced and embodied the conviction that in the **new land (the kingdom) the issue of utility as means of entry was not pertinent** (cf. Luke 14:12-14, 21-24). **The articulation of gift/grasp issue is a warning against utility as a norm for land** (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 194).

c. If utility for production and consumption is not a norm for landedness, then we are given new pause about urban development and “progress” which claims the right to relocate and reassign people, to move them from storied place to history-less space. And in new ways urbanization will need to focus on the presence of stories for humanness and the difference between trusted place and coerced space (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 195).

d. Related to this is of course the crunch of pollution and energy. After an interlude, we have regressed to believe that pollution problems will not endure and helpfully will solve themselves. We are left to reflect on **biblical understanding of pollution which leads to exile** (cf. Jer. 3:1-5) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 195).

All of these issues revolve around our values which make us insatiable (cf. Lev. 26:26, Hos. 4:10). **We are consumed by aliens, alien values and alien loyalties, and we eat our way into exile** (cf. Hos. 7:9) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 195).

It may be that John Steinbeck has put the issue most eloquently. He has presented **two stories of the dispossessed**. In *Of Mice and Men*, Lennie holds to a vision which keeps him functioning: “We could live offa the fatta the lan.” He lives while he holds to that hope. When that hope is gone, he is a despairing exile. More fully, *Grapes of Wrath* is a story, as true today, about **disposed exiles**. **Two lines can serve as our conclusion**. First, as they set off from Oklahoma, Pa is sick atop the truck which holds all their belongs. (Exiles travel light). Pa cannot bear to leave the land because “Pa is the land.” And **land-loss is crucifixion**, because not many days out, Pa is dead, unable to live apart from his storied place. **Second**, when they arrive in California, they seek a place to settle. Like Israelites come to Canaan, they find that all the land is occupied. “Everything is tractored.” And when it is tractored, the dispossessed count for nothing. The Steinbeck picture parallel the tractored land of Pharaoh and Solomon in which there is enormous prosperity but the **dispossessed never enter history and never share in the prosperity**. **They die and they disappear**. But the ones who tractor the land stay anxious (cf. Matt. 6:25ff) (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 195-196).

The gospel is about the coming of the new age, the new kingdom, the new land. In that context there is no anxiety, no sorrow (John 16:20). There is only trust in the promise of a land of rest and joy. But surely such a gift is a scandal (Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1977: 196).

In today’s society, landlessness is homelessness. They are expelled to build high rises and rent it out at high price. The landless are always evicted into further homelessness.