FINDING A NEW LAND: FROM CANAAN TO THE RESURRECTION

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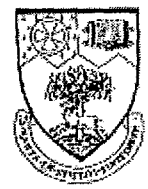

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ABSTRACT

Finding a New Land: From Canaan to the Resurrection

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An examination of sources of hope within the Old and New Testaments reveals that the OT focuses on land and the NT focuses on resurrection. This study traces out the development of both land and resurrection within biblical texts and important non-biblical Jewish texts.

The idyllic traditions of the OT demonstrate the pivotal role of the Promised Land of Canaan. Texts that describe events before the exile have very little emphasis on resurrection.

As Israel faced and experienced exile, they were forced to reflect on how that fit with beliefs in a Promised Land, including themes of judgment and restoration. It was during this exilic period that ideas about the afterlife began to increase.

As Judaism developed in the so-called "intertestamental period," the land began to decrease in importance. It was during this formative stage of Judaism that resurrection beliefs began to thrive.

By the time of the NT, the role of the land as a source of hope had decreased significantly, becoming an image for a spiritual inheritance. While land as hope had faded in the New Testament, the resurrection had risen in its place.

By examining the OT, early Jewish literature, and the NT, a clear trajectory can be traced. As uncertainty in the secure possession of the land increased, a greater emphasis on the resurrection developed in Judaism, setting the stage for the land-less and resurrection-focused Christianity.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary*
AJSL	*American Journal of Semitic Languages*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
BAR	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
Bib	*Biblica*
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentary
BO	Berit Olam
EBC	*Expositor's Bible Commentary*
HeythropJ	*Heythrop Journal*
ICC	International Critical Commentary
JHS	*Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSP	*Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
NIB	New Interpreter's Bible
NIBC	New International Bible Commentary
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
OTP	*Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentary
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
WBC	Word Bible Commentary

INTRODUCTION

Religious traditions play numerous roles in each culture, but one of the primary roles is the provision of hope. That hope may be in the individual fertility of a family or in the need for good weather and abundant crops, as seen in the ancient worship of the Canaanite Baal. Hinduism seeks to provide the hope for an end to the cycle of rebirth and Buddhism offers the hope of enlightenment that ends the suffering that accompanies desire. Hope is a universal component of religion, both ancient and modern.

Christianity, since it emerges out of Judaism, is unique in that it takes the Scriptures of one religion (Hebrew Bible or Old Testament) and adds its own Scripture (New Testament). When the test of hope is applied to each of these religious texts, the continuity is not immediately apparent. A survey of the Old Testament quickly reveals that there is very little emphasis on a hope for an afterlife, but abundant hope for a secure and prosperous habitation of the Promised Land. A survey of the New Testament results in almost the opposite outcome. The New Testament hope has very little to do with physical land and yet offers great hope in an afterlife, described most often as a resurrection.

After a simple reading of these texts, it could be concluded that Judaism, which is based on the Hebrew Bible, is a materialistic religion, while Christianity, which is based on the New Testament, is a spiritual religion. It also seems as if the appearance of Jesus and the teachings of the early church were a radical departure from the otherwise land-focused Judaism.

This, however, is not an accurate picture. The New Testament was not written immediately after the Old Testament as a correction of its materialistic tendencies.

Rather, there is a trajectory that can be found within the Old Testament and that is even more pronounced in the early Jewish texts that are often called intertestamental literature. The nature of this development is as follows: as the hope in the land became more uncertain, the hope for the resurrection became more important. This trajectory can be seen from the Old Testament texts through to the early rabbinic writings. Therefore, the Christian hope of resurrection was not a radical revolution against Jewish beliefs, but was rather a modified form of a movement that was already taking place within Judaism. This study will examine both the land and resurrection traditions of the Old Testament, early Jewish texts and the New Testament to trace out this trajectory. Both traditions will be seen to be related and to be moving in opposite directions as the political climate of Israel deteriorated over time.

There are a number of challenges to this study, due to the mix of canonical and non-canonical texts, and even with the variety within the canonical texts. This study will focus on the development of Judeo-Christian religion rather than on the development of the texts. The texts will be examined in such a way as to demonstrate the development of the religious thought. I will attempt to describe the influence of political and social crises on the religious thought by examining the shifts in tradition as recorded in the texts.

Issues of literary criticism will be acknowledged, although they will not be the focus of the study. With regard to Old Testament texts, they will be divided into two sections: pre-exilic and exilic. By this, it is not argued that one set of texts was fully written, collected or redacted before the exile and one after the exile. Rather one set of texts will offer a picture of foundational traditions on which the religion was built and the other records traditions that reflect on and interact with the ramifications of the exile,

whether anticipated or responded to. Although some later interpretations, such as certain early Jewish texts, will be used to demonstrate the clear connections to land and resurrection traditions, most of these biblical texts will be dealt with directly according to their self-described context in their final canonical form. There will be a shift in method in the early Jewish texts. The texts that belong to the Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha will be interpreted not in their pseudepigraphic context (e.g. time of Enoch) but will be examined in the contemporary social situation that led to their composition. What is important is not how the texts came about but what they say about the effect of political upheaval from either the Babylonian exile or Maccabean war. The greatest challenge will be in the study of Daniel, which has aspects of both canonical Old Testament texts and pseudepigraphic Jewish apocalyptic texts. Again, the focus will not be on the original composition of Daniel, but on the fact that it responds to increasing uncertainty about the land. The New Testament texts are much simpler to deal with as they were written closer to the time of the events or teachings that they describe.

This study will begin with the early traditions that demonstrate the foundation of Israel's religion as being land-focused with little interest in afterlife beliefs. From that, traditions that orbit the exile, that is prophetic texts that reflect on the reality of anticipated or experienced exile, will be examined to demonstrate an increased pessimism towards the land, as well as the beginnings of resurrection images. The early Jewish texts will be investigated to reveal a convergence of land and resurrection traditions. Qumran texts will be used as a control. Even though they vary from other Jewish traditions, they confirm the relationship between land and resurrection beliefs. Finally, New Testament texts will show a reversal in the Old Testament pattern, with resurrection beliefs

overcoming land images and the use of geographic terms being used to help describe the afterlife. This study will therefore demonstrate that increasing uncertainty regarding possession of the land accompanied the greater reflection on afterlife beliefs, especially in the form of the resurrection.

The goal of this study will be to present a clear trajectory of a land-focused faith system encountering challenges which result in an uncertainty about the land and an increased interest in the resurrection. What will begin as an image of land restoration will take on a life of its own, eventually becoming central to many forms of Jewish religion. As a result of this already existing trajectory, the early Christian church, with its lack of emphasis on the land, was able to assume and strengthen the contemporary Jewish beliefs about the resurrection. It will be argued that the resurrection will play a similar role as a source of hope in the New Testament as the land did in the Old Testament.

CHAPTER ONE:

LAND IN THE IDYLLIC TRADITIONS

It has long been understood that the three foundational concepts of ancient Judaism were the Law, the Temple and the land. While it is simple to affirm these foci, it is vital to actually trace out their development. This study will focus on the land alone, although studies in the Law and Temple would also be of value. Tracing out any Old Testament theme is a complicated task. Unlike the New Testament, where we are able to identify a basic chronology within a few decades, there is no consensus among Old Testament scholars as to what traditions are the oldest. Stories that seem to take place chronologically earliest may in fact have been composed in the latest stages of Israel's history.

It is beyond the scope of this study to wrestle with issues such as the documentary hypothesis or other forms of redaction criticism.[1] This chapter will examine certain traditions that gave idyllic descriptions of the hope of the land. Whether these are the earliest written traditions that helped forge the territorial hope of Israel or are late traditions created to give meaning to Israel and Judah's trials with the Assyrians and

[1] There are a wide range of opinions on the development of the Pentateuch. For versions of the documentary hypothesis see Richard Elliott Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987); Bernard W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1986), 19-23; Gerhard von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1966), 1-78; M. Noth, *A History of Pentateuch Traditions* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1972). For criticisms of the documentary hypothesis see T.D. Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 3-96; O.T. Allis, *The Five Books of Moses* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1964); D.W. Baker, "Diversity and Unity in the Literary Structure of Genesis," in A.R. Millard and D.J. Wiseman (eds.), *Essays in the Patriarchal Narratives* (Leicester: InterVarsity, 1980), 197-215. The position taken in this study is that of La Sor, Hubbard and Bush: "That there are sources is hard to doubt; that they can be extirpated so certainly from the closely-knit corpus that finally emerged is another matter. Of much more importance for interpretation is the final result of this long process, produced by the inspired authors, editors, and traditionalists of God's chosen people." William Sanford La Sor, David Allan Hubbard and Fredric William Bush, *Old Testament Survey* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 65.

Babylonians, the fact is that these traditions represent the ideal concept of possession of the land, traditions that helped the development of later Jewish reflections on the land. The importance of these traditions are of great value, whatever oral or textual history they may have had.

GARDEN OF EDEN

Genesis 2:8-15 is an important example of the Hebrew ideal regarding the land, even though on the surface, it does not seem to have anything to do with the Promised Land. The narrator is presumably in Canaan and the garden is described as being in the east, therefore not in the Promised Land itself. Even in later[2] use of this garden imagery, Eden is compared with cities of the plain that Lot chooses such as Sodom rather than the land of Canaan that Abraham possesses (Gen 13:10). However, some prophets began to use Eden as a symbol of what Israel could one day become. Isaiah 51:3 says: "For the Lord will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song."[3] Jerusalem is described in Ps 46:4 in terms of the Garden of Eden: "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High."[4] Norman Habel sees something similar when looking at the focus on peasant lands rather than cities in Lev 25-27 and concludes: "YHWH's land and abode is the garden of Canaan."[5] Garden imagery confirms this identification of

[2] It is assumed here that the Eden traditions found in Genesis are older than the prophetic reflections (whenever the final redaction of Genesis took place) based on the way prophetic texts seem to assume the reader knows the story of Eden.
[3] Unless otherwise noted, all Bible references are from the New Revised Standard Version.
[4] John E. Hartley, *Genesis* (NIBC; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2000), 73. It is possible the psalmist is using general ancient near eastern images rather than the particular Eden image.
[5] Norman C. Habel, *The Land is Mine: Six Biblical Land Ideologies* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 113.

Eden and the Promised Land as we see that God plants a garden in Eden and that God is also said to plant Israel, the land, as well as Temple/Jerusalem.[6]

The presence of the four rivers is an important part of the description of Eden. In connecting Eden to the Promised Land, my focus will be on the Gihon River. Gihon is often seen as either the Nile or one of the rivers or canals of Mesopotamia.[7] However, there may be another meaning. There is a spring to the east of Jerusalem named Gihon where Solomon was anointed king (1 Kgs 1:33, 38, 45). While the geography offered in the Genesis account makes it unlikely that the Gihon River is to be physically identified with the Gihon spring, the fact that an otherwise unknown river had the same name as a well known spring near Jerusalem would lead to a natural connection for readers of this passage. The rivers flowing out of Eden are later reused as the rivers in Ps 46:5 and Ezek 47:1-12.[8]

Although the Temple and the land are sometimes seen as separate aspects of Judaism's core traditions, they are actually closely connected. The goal of the biblical traditions is fellowship between YHWH and his people. The land is the place where the people are gathered and the Temple is the place where YHWH's presence dwells.[9] There may be an understanding of the land as an expanded version of the Temple. As the Temple had degrees of holiness from the holy of holies, to the rest of the Temple building to the outer court, so also the land had concentric circles of holiness beginning with the Temple, moving to the city of Jerusalem and then throughout the land of Israel.

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[6] Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 255-57.
[7] Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1987), 65-66; Victor P. Hamilton, *Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 169-70.
[8] Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 65.
[9] There were other Jewish temples such as the one in Egypt, but the presence outside the Promised Land made it a stumbling block for many Jews.

There are significant parallels between Eden and the Tabernacle or Temple, especially with regard to YHWH's presence.[10] Concerning the common use of the image of precious stones, Wenham states: "Paradise in Eden and the later tabernacle share a common symbolism suggestive of the presence of God."[11] Adding to the above parallels, Wenham also notes that the Garden "is seen as an archetypal sanctuary, prefiguring the later tabernacle and temples."[12] As Lawrence Stager states, looking at Eden from the perspective of the Temple: "For ancient Israel, the Temple of Solomon—indeed, the Temple Mount and all Jerusalem—was a symbol as well as a reality, a mythopoeic realization of heaven on earth, Paradise, the Garden of Eden."[13] Stager continues by saying:

> That the Temple replicated Paradise is clear from its iconography of flowers and trees. The cherubim, too, recall the creatures who "guarded the path to the tree of life" (Genesis 3:24). In the Eden traditions of the Yahwist (Genesis 2-3), later adopted and transformed by Ezekiel, Eden was identified with the garden of God in Jerusalem. It would not have taken much effort for Yahweh to rise from his throne in the holy of holies and stroll barefoot into the nearby gardens of the well-watered Kidron Valley, as he did when confronting the first couple, Adam and Eve.[14]

It is very clear that the Garden of Eden was an idyllic picture of the land in the Old Testament, especially in its most holy place of the Temple where YHWH dwelt in as intimate a way as he did walking with Adam in the cool of the day.

This Old Testament understanding is confirmed by some of the interpretations of Eden in the Pseudepigrapha.[15] In the book of *Jubilees*[16] there is a description of the

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[10] Alexander, *Promised Land*, 131 using the work of G.J. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," *Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies* 9 (1986), 19-25.
[11] Wenham, *Genesis 1-15,* 65.
[12] Wenham, *Genesis 1-15,* 61.
[13] Lawrence E. Stager, "Jerusalem as Eden," *BAR* (May/Jun 2000): 38.
[14] Stager, "Jerusalem," 66.
[15] Although this chapter is tracing out the traditions of the canonical Old Testament, these early Jewish texts confirm that early interpreters saw these traditions in terms of the land.

portions of the earth given to each of Noah's sons. Shem (the ancestor of the Hebrews) receives a portion that includes territory that "goes on toward the east until it draws near to the garden of Eden toward the south, to the south and east of all the land of Eden, and to all of the east." (*Jub* 8:16) Obviously the author considered the Garden of Eden to be within the territory of Shem, the most favoured of Noah's sons. In the *Life of Adam and Eve*,[17] especially in the version known as the *Apocalypse of Moses*, there is a close connection between Eden and the Temple. *ApMos* 40:6 says that Adam and Abel "were buried according to the command of God in the regions of Paradise in the place from which God had found the dust." M.D. Johnson notes that the Temple Mount is suggested in this passage and that the Samaritans had a similar tradition, identifying Eden with Mount Gerizim.[18] In the version of the *Life of Adam and Eve* known as the *Vita*, Adam gives this instruction to his sons: "bury me against the East in the great dwelling place of God" (*Vita* 45:2). Johnson further states that "There can be little doubt that the same site is intended in all such references and that the location is to be understood as the place of the Jerusalem Temple, where rabbinic sources fix the location of Adam's oratory."[19] This connection continues into the rabbinic period. Judah b. Tema[20] teaches in *m. Aboth* 5:20, "The shameless are for Gehenna and the shamefast for the garden of Eden. May it be thy will, O Lord our God and the God of our fathers, that the Temple be built speedily in our days, and grant us our portion in thy Law with them that do thy will." Here, not

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[16] Dated second century BCE by O.S. Wintermute, "Jubilees" in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *OTP*, vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 35.
[17] Dated first century CE by M.D. Johnson, "Life of Adam and Eve," *OTP*, vol. 2, 249.
[18] Johnson, "Adam and Eve," 293n.
[19] Johnson, "Adam and Eve," 254.
[20] End of second century CE.

only is Eden contrasted with the afterlife-related Gehenna, but it is suggested that receiving the portion of Eden includes the building of the Temple.

The story of Eden is basically the presence of God's people in a chosen place with a close communion with YHWH. The land is good, abounding with all the necessities of life symbolized by food. This is the ideal picture of the land, a place where every need, both physical and spiritual, is fully met. At the same time, God's people are tempted to look for more than YHWH allows and sin is committed. The result of sin is exile from the good land to a place where life would be difficult and God's presence lessened.[21] This primeval story was descriptive of Israel's later experience, both in presenting the ideal picture of life in the land "flowing with milk and honey" as well as the danger of losing that blessing as a result of disobedience.[22]

ABRAHAM

Abraham is a very important figure in the Hebrew religion and early Judaism which developed from it. Abraham, therefore, plays a vital role in the ideal understanding of the land for Israel. The various theories on how Genesis was compiled, whether or not it was pieced together from numerous documents ranging over hundreds of years from different geographical areas, can make the study of the Abraham narrative somewhat difficult.[23] Is the Abraham tradition an ancient story dating from pre-Canaanite times or is it an exilic attempt by later Jews to deal with the loss of their land? W.D. Davies, while acknowledging the issues, gives this helpful statement:

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[21] It is interesting to note that in Gen 3:24 God places cherubim to guard the entrance on the east side of the garden suggesting that Adam and Eve were sent eastward. This is the same direction that the Jewish exiles were sent after the Babylonian conquest.

[22] If the Garden of Eden is indeed a late composition to give theological meaning to the exile, it is significant that there is no promise of a return to Eden in the story, although later writers would include it.

[23] For references, see note 1 in this chapter.

> For the understanding of our proper task what is important is not the rediscovery of the origins of the promise to Abraham, but the recognition that that promise was so reinterpreted from age to age that it became a living power in the life of the people of Israel. Not the mode of its origin matters, but its operation as a formative, dynamic, seminal force in the history of Israel.[24]

It is not required for the present study to trace out all the subtle differences in an attempt to reconstruct the original traditions and contexts. It will be enough to present the Abrahamic traditions as it was received into the Jewish faith with all of its rich diversity.

Genesis 12:1-7

If the Garden of Eden is an esoteric picture of the Promised Land, the story of Abraham makes the promise explicit. Genesis 12:1 is a major transition in the Genesis narrative as an old history ends and a new history begins. Gerhard von Rad suggests: "Gen. xii. 1-3 thus teaches that the primeval history is to be taken as one of the most essential elements in a theological aetiology of Israel."[25] Brueggemann explains what happens in this passage: "It makes all things new when all things had become old and weary and hopeless. Creation begins anew, as a history of anticipation of the land."[26] Genesis 12:2-3 are considered be the Yahwist's key to the interpretation of patriarchal history.[27]

The story begins with Abram's journey with his family from Ur to Haran where the journey to the Promised Land stalled. There is some debate about the location of the Ur that was Abram's birthplace. For many years it was assumed that Abram's Ur was Sumerian Ur and many looked with great excitement to Sir Leonard Woolley's

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[24] W.D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine* (repr. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 18.
[25] Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology,* Vol. 1 (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1962), 164.
[26] Walter Brueggemann, *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise and Challenge in Biblical Faith* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 17. Habel sees this passage as part of a larger whole. *Land,* 117.
[27] Wenham, *Genesis 1-15,* 274-5.

excavations and its anticipated confirmation of the biblical account.[28] More recently, scholars lean towards the Ur of northern Mesopotamia at what is now Edessa.[29] Either way, the journey is a movement west (or south west) and perhaps is meant to be seen as a journey back to the eastern gates of Eden. Brueggemann confirms that there is a symbolic meaning to Ur by stating: "'Ur' is now a theological symbol without a known referent."[30] The mention of Ur thus becomes central to the Abrahamic tradition. The Promised Land is never described as something just stumbled upon but as the destination of a journey. This theme will continue in later traditions as people arrive in the Promised Land from Egypt/wilderness and from Babylon. Connected with this is the idea of the conditional nature of this promise. Possession of the land can only take place if Abraham agrees to make the journey.[31]

The passage in Gen 12 is not the covenant (Gen 15 and 17) but rather the commands and promise of God. God promises that Abram's descendants will be a great nation. Nation is not עַם, which would be expected but גּוֹי. Hamilton explains the difference: "Whereas *'am* refers to people or nations in terms of centripetal unity and cohesiveness, *gôy* is linked with government and territory. Abram's descendants will be those who grow into the status of a nation."[32] Habel confirms this by stating: "The promise of land to Abraham must also be considered in terms of nationhood." [33] Williamson agrees when he says: "Indeed, when God summons Abraham to leave his own land in Genesis 12:1-3, the promise of the land is subsumed under the concept of

[28] Sir Leonard Woolley, *Ur of the Chaldees* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1952).
[29] Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17,* 363-5.
[30] Brueggemann, *Land,* 17n. 4.
[31] Alexander, *Promised Land,* 120.
[32] Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17,* 372.
[33] Habel, *Land,* 120.

nationhood."[34] The mention of a great nation links this passage to the promises to Moses in Ex 32:10 and to David in 2 Sam 7:9.[35]

God does not identify land until they arrive in Canaan in v. 7.[36] Even without clear definitions, the land is important. Brueggemann explains:

> Nothing is known or said here of the land. No description or identification, no geographical reference. For now the land exists only as an intention of the promiser. It is a new land and that is enough, not like any of the old land, tired, sterile, unproductive, filled with thorns and thistles (Gen 3:18).[37]

It is in the lack of details that this passage finds its power. The reader is left anticipating further revelations to Abraham while at the same time greatly aware of the nature of the land to be discussed. Brueggemann points out the irony of this passage:

> Thus already in Yahweh's first utterance to Abraham, we notice the oddness of this testimony (Gen 12:1-3). Yahweh, the Creator of heaven and earth, the one who dwells high and lifted up, has as a most characteristic subject of utterance, land. *Holiness is thereby linked to the concreteness of material existence in the world.* Israel understands that full, whole life, life intended by Yahweh, requires land: a safe, fruitful, secure, productive place of one's own.[38]

Paul Williamson explains: "As an integral part of the divine blessing announced in the programmatic agenda of Genesis 12:1-3, land becomes an important focal point for the outworking of the divine promises made to Abraham."[39] This is also the first recorded theophany to a patriarch which happens to correspond with the first explicit promise of

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[34] Paul R. Williamson, "Promise and Fulfillment: The Territorial Inheritance," in Philip Johnston and Peter Walker (eds.), *The Land of Promise: Biblical, Theological and Contemporary Perspectives* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 41-42.
[35] Wenham, *Genesis 1-15,* 275.
[36] Promise of the land appears in 12:7; 13:14-15, 17; 15:18-21; 17:8; 26:3-4; 28:13-14; 35:12.
[37] Brueggemann, *Land,* 18.
[38] Brueggemann, *Theology,* 168-69. Italics are original.
[39] Williamson, "Promise and Fulfilment," 17.

the land (v. 7).[40] This is very important as land promises become very closely connected with the theme of God's presence.

Genesis 15:1-7

This passage gives a new perspective on the promise to Abraham. The lack of heir provides a dramatic tension in the story: "Abram's situation contradicts not only the general view of Genesis that divine blessing leads to a man being fruitful and multiplying (1:28; 9:1; 26:24; 35:11), but also the specific assurances already made to him."[41]

The theme of the land is subdued[42] but present: "There is no explicit reference to the land, but there is an implication in 15:4 that the land which Abraham possessed at the time was to be handed on to his son."[43] Hartley notes: "the occupation of the promised land by Abram's seed lay far in the future, God provided the covenant as a promissory note to guarantee their claim on the land."[44]

An interesting aspect of this passage is the parallel with the exodus tradition. "I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldaeans" (v. 7) is, as Wenham points out, an almost identical formula introducing the Decalogue (Ex 20:2; Deut 5:6) with "Ur of the Chaldaeans" as a substitute for "land of Egypt."[45] A further parallel is found in the actual promise of the land as Wenham explains: "This is one of only four passages in Genesis where God refers to himself as Yahweh (the LORD). Here the use of the name helps to enhance the analogy between God's call of Abram and his subsequent redemption of Israel from Egypt."[46] Hartley continues this thought by observing:

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[40] Wenham, *Genesis 1-15,* 279.
[41] Wenham, *Genesis 1-15,* 328.
[42] It becomes explicit in Gen 15:18-20.
[43] Davies, *Land,* 16.
[44] Hartley, *Genesis,* 159.
[45] Wenham, *Genesis 1-15,* 330-1.
[46] Wenham, *Genesis 1-15,* 331.

> This parallel is intentional as it interprets Abram's journey from Ur to Canaan as a foreshadowing of Israel's journey from Egypt to Canaan. Both had to leave a locale in which they had lived a long time. Both had to take a long journey before reaching the land of promise. Just as the children of Israel were delivered from bondage, Abram, by a journey from Ur, was delivered from a culture burdened by the worship of many gods.[47]

It seems that the Abraham tradition is meant by the final redactor of Genesis, to not only look back to Adam in the Garden, but to look forward to the experience of Moses in the exodus.

Genesis 17:1-14

Genesis 17 is the fullest treatment of the covenant between YHWH and Abraham. It includes the promises of descendants, land and the relationship to the nations. One of the significant aspects of this passage is the name change from Abram to Abraham. Name changes are important signs of a major shift in the direction for God's people, the other notable example being Jacob to Israel (Gen 35:10). The sign of the name change is used as the other side of the sign of circumcision that is also described in this passage. As Hamilton comments:

> One significance of the patriarch's new name is that it universalizes Abraham's experience with God. This point contrasts with the later emphasis in the chapter on circumcision, which particularizes Abraham's relationship with God. His circumcision identifies him as the father of Israelites. His new name identifies him as the father of the faithful, regardless of what particular ethnic group they represent.[48]

Whether it is national or international blessings, the newly named Abraham is given a command linked to the previous tradition. The note that Abraham will be fertile links to the first command given to Adam and Eve in Gen 1:28.[49] This is confirmation that, at

[47] Hartley, *Genesis,* 158. Brueggemann agrees that this sounds like an anticipation of the Exodus. *Theology*, 177.
[48] Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17*, 464.
[49] Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17*, 464.

least in its final form, the various idyllic stories are not be interpreted separately but to be seen as closely interconnected.

The covenant as described in this passage is expressed as being an eternal covenant. Hamilton explains the tension that is created by the expectations YHWH has for Abraham: "God has expectations concerning Abraham's behavior, but these do not become grounds for the establishment and authentication of God's covenant with Abraham. Rather, the covenant remains a personal commitment by God in which he binds himself to this open-ended promise to Abraham."[50] Habel explains that the entitlement to the land is offered as an unconditional trust and that Abraham's faith is sufficient evidence of allegiance, while circumcision is a sufficient sign of covenant faithfulness. [51] Terence Fretheim explains that this covenant, with the themes of eternity and unconditionality, is in the form of a royal grant, attested elsewhere in the ancient Near East and is similar to the covenants with Noah (Gen 9:10-17) and David (2 Sam 23:5).[52] This opens the door for punishment of one generation while keeping the covenant secure for future generations.

However, the question must be asked: is being eternal the same as being unconditional? In ch. 12, there is an expectation that Abraham will be obedient by leaving Ur and journeying to Canaan. In ch. 15, it seems as if YHWH is acting unconditionally, Abraham's journey being described not as an act of obedience but as the result of being brought by YHWH. Genesis 17, however, seems to give a more complex description of the nature of the covenant. The covenant is eternal in that YHWH will never revoke his covenant with Abraham and his descendants, but at the same time there

[50] Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17,* 465-6.
[51] Habel, *Land,* 123.
[52] Terence E. Fretheim, "Genesis," *NIB* 1:458.

is the possibility of individuals losing the benefits of the covenant through disobedience. The covenant will always be available from YHWH but the author acknowledges that not all of the descendants of Abraham will access these benefits through obedience. Brueggemann makes a good point when he points out the futility of sorting out the conditional and unconditional aspects of the covenant as "every serious, intense, primary relationship has within it dimensions of conditionality and unconditionality that play in different ways in different circumstances."[53] These themes would remain very important in Israel's later history. "During the exile, this promise of the land as an eternal possession, combined with the possibility for restoration expressed in the law and the prophets, kept alive the people's hope of returning to Canaan."[54]

The specific act of obedience that is required is that of circumcision. Circumcision was used both as a sign for God as a reminder of this covenant and as a sign for the people as a reminder for the need for proper sexual relations as they fulfill God's promise to become a large nation.[55] There is a play on words here as the sign of the covenant is the cutting of the foreskin, while those who disobey are cut off.[56] There is no agreement as to what is entailed in being cut off. Options include: being killed,[57] being excluded from worship[58] or being left to God to be dealt with.[59] Whatever the exact detail, it is clear that there were strong repercussions for those who took the covenant lightly. Despite these warnings, this passage is seen in continuity with a number of other texts in each division of the Old Testament regarding the בְּרִית עוֹלָם

[53] Brueggemann, *Theology*, 419.
[54] Hartley, *Genesis,* 172.
[55] Hartley, *Genesis,* 172-3.
[56] There is perhaps another play on words in that the usual term for making a covenant is to cut, although that is not used here.
[57] Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17,* 474.
[58] Hartley, *Genesis,* 173.
[59] Fretheim, *NIB* 1:459.

which "reflect theological witnesses in Israel that focus on Yahweh's sustained fidelity, witnesses that regard the exile as no major disruption in that commitment."[60]

The presence of the land in this covenant with Abraham is very important as Habel states: "YHWH is portrayed as present in the land and one with the God revealed at sacred sites within the land. YHWH and the destiny of the anticipated Abraham nation are inextricably bound to this land."[61] At the same time, the covenant is not just for a piece of property but for a relationship with YHWH. It was in this that the Hebrew religion was unique: "Pagan gods were identified with a place, but this God was identified with a people."[62] Although the people were closely identified with the land, YHWH's identification was with the people.

It is clear that there are variations in detail in the promises of YHWH to Abraham in Gen 12, 15 and 17. However, all of the material in the Abraham story, with all its various details, is related to the theme of blessing.[63] All that YHWH offers to Abraham from the immediate family level to the international scale revolves around blessing. Williamson explains the dynamic this way: "Although the Abraham narrative contains at least three core divine promissory threads (i.e. phenomenal posterity, national territory and global prosperity), the programmatic agenda is essentially twofold: it involves blessing on a national scale and subsequently, blessing on an international scale."[64] Williamson then brings it all together with this statement: "Since the [blessing of the nations] aspect of the divine plan is patently non-territorial (in the sense that it is not restricted to any one geographical location), the national dimension of the territorial

[60] Brueggemann, *Theology*, 310.
[61] Habel, *Land,* 131.
[62] Hartley, *Genesis,* 171.
[63] Alexander, *Promised Land,* 122.
[64] Williamson, "Promise and Fulfilment," 17.

promise should probably be understood as a transitional stage in the outworking of God's ultimate plan."[65]

It is obvious that the Abrahamic covenant is much more than just a deed to a particular piece of land. It is a covenant that expresses both the faithfulness of YHWH in its eternal nature and at the same time the need for the obedience of Abraham's seed. The covenant is primarily a promise of the creation of a people in fellowship with God. The practical needs of such a creation require land, at least in its earliest stages. The story of Abraham is connected with other traditions of Israel. Looking back to the beginning:

> The call to Abraham (Gen. 12) is the divine answer to the sin of Adam (Gen. 3), and the election of Israel always has the ultimate goal of the blessing of the nations (Gen. 12:3). The focus on the land of Israel was effectively a bridgehead within God's long-term purpose of reclaiming the *whole world* to himself and of bringing in his 'new creation', the restored Eden.[66]

At the same time, there are hints of what would happen in that defining moment in Israel's history when slaves would leave Egyptian bondage and find freedom in the Promised Land. Despite the focus on physical land, there remained room in this eternal covenant for a greater manifestation of fellowship between YHWH and his people.

MOSES

Moses is undoubtedly the most important figure in Judaism. Everything from the nature of the Messiah to the origin of the rabbinic teachings are tied to Moses. The idyllic picture of the land in Hebrew thought is also connected to Moses.

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[65] Williamson, "Promise and Fulfilment," 18.
[66] Peter W.L. Walker, "The Land in the New Testament," in Johnston and Walker (eds.), *Land of Promise*, 116.

When it comes to the Moses tradition and the land, it is more complicated than the traditions of Abraham. The Abraham cycle is only fourteen chapters with the land passages clustered in certain areas. The Moses tradition however is spread over four books with land material spread throughout it. A lengthy study could be done just on how the land is treated in Exodus-Deuteronomy.[67] For the purposes of this study, the focus will be on territorial limits in the Mosaic tradition and the restoration promises from Deut 30:1-10.

Territorial Limits in the Mosaic Tradition

Although there is a description of the borders of the Promised Land found in the Abraham narrative (Gen 15:18), the description is quite vague, simply the area between the river of Egypt and the Euphrates River. The descriptions become more precise when one comes to the Moses material. There are three passages in the Pentateuch that describe the borders of the Promised Land: Ex 23:31, Num 34:1-12 and Deut 34:1-4.[68]

The Exodus passage describes the limits of the land of Israel during the Davidic-Solomonic Empire.[69] This links this land tradition regarding Moses with the land tradition of two other idyllic leaders. The passage from Numbers includes Philistine and Phoenician territory that was never in Israel's possession.[70] The passage from Deuteronomy describing Israel just before entry into the land is seen by some scholars as describing a community that "is not an ancient community of Moses [but] is sixth-

[67] Norman Habel includes the agrarian material from Lev 25-27 as one of his six biblical land ideologies. *Land is Mine,* 97-114.
[68] There is also a description found in Josh 1:3 that will be dealt with below.
[69] Walter Brueggemann, "Exodus," *NIB* 1: 877. Cf. John I. Durham, *Exodus* (WBC; Waco: Word, 1987), 336.
[70] Horst Seebass, "'Holy' Land in the Old Testament: Numbers and Joshua," *VT* 55.1 (2006): 95-96.

century Israel, waiting in anticipation for an entry (reentry) into a land from which they had been displaced by the geopolitics of a Babylonian world."[71]

Williamson notes the variations among the accounts and suggests that there was purpose for the lack of harmonization of the material, as the land "was subject to at least some degree of expansion and redefinition."[72] Davies agrees when he says: "It is clear that 'the land of Israel' was never defined with geographical precision: it is an idea as well as a territory. It seems always to have carried ideal overtones without geographical and political precision."[73] Although these territorial limits are often taken literally, even in debates about the modern state of Israel,[74] the differences between them and the inclusion of these differences within the final form of the Pentateuch suggest that there is a richer meaning. Israelites in most periods of their history would be able to read these traditions and confess that they were far beyond what was currently being enjoyed. The message that would be received was that YHWH had much more to offer than the present experience, while the variety of descriptions would acknowledge that the final details of how those blessings would look would be left to YHWH.

Restoration After Exile

Deuteronomy is crucial in the understanding of the Old Testament view of land. Norman Habel, in his study, focuses on Deut 4-11. According to Habel, YHWH is described as a landowner whose role as a god is not acknowledged by the other nations. As a result: "The allocation of a piece of YHWH's universal domain to Israel and the establishment of Israel as a people in that land are crucial steps in the public demonstration of YHWH's

[71] Brueggemann, *Theology,* 210.
[72] Williamson, "Promise and Fulfillment," 20-21.
[73] Davies, *Land,* 17n.3. Although this does not require a spiritualization of the land, it does indicate a fluidity in the understanding of the land promises.
[74] Brueggemann, *NIB* 1:877.

sovereignty over all lands."[75] However, there are conditions of allegiance and service in order for the people to remain in the land. The focus in Deuteronomy seems to be on establishing a theocratic polity between Israel and YHWH. As a result, Habel concludes that the land is secondary and that allegiance to YHWH is the primary concern.[76] This is the context in which Deut 30:1-10 appears.

Deuteronomy 30:1-10 is very important as it is here that many of the themes that have appeared earlier in Deuteronomy reappear.[77] After describing the various blessing and curses as results of Israel's obedience to the covenant, Moses pessimistically assumes that at some point in the future disobedience will be so bad that exile will result. Despite this assumption, the possibility of return is held out as a real possibility. There are no cherubim at the gate preventing return as YHWH is willing to allow the return of his people under certain circumstances. The people were required to return to their senses, return to the Lord not just in name only, but in obedience to his voice, and the people of God were required to repent of the disobedience to the covenant that led to their exile in the first place. However, human action was not enough to reverse the effects of the curse. It would be YHWH who would restore their fortunes (v. 3) and bring them back to the Promised Land (v. 5).[78] This oracle which is portrayed as being at the threshold of entry into the Promised Land, both looks back to YHWH's faithfulness in the exodus and looks forward ultimately to the Babylonian exile.[79]

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[75] Habel, *Land,* 37.
[76] Habel, *Land,* 46.
[77] Peter C. Craigie, *Book of Deuteronomy* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 363.
[78] Craigie, *Deuteronomy,* 363-4.
[79] This does not require a composition during or just before the Babylonian exile, it is simply an observation that from a historical perspective that is where this prophecy was fulfilled. Von Rad *Old Testament Theology,* vol. 1, 346 does interpret it as the Deuteronomistic historian's encouragement that the judgment of 587 BCE did not mean the end of the people of God.

Later on in the Deuteronomistic history, in the book of Judges, there is a recurring cycle of disobedience, deliverance and obedience. That is not the phenomenon that is being referred to in this passage. The message of this oracle is that after the return, YHWH will perform some action that will prevent such disobedience from taking place again. This action is described as "circumcision of the heart" (v. 6).[80] This term appeared in Deut 10:16 seeming to refer to the exhortation to obey the covenant with human power. The meaning in 30:6 is that YHWH would perform some operation on the heart resulting in a spiritual transformation.[81] This prophecy anticipates the "new covenant" in Jer 31:31-34 and the "new heart" in Ezek 36:24-32.[82] The suggestion in this passage is that what is required is more than just human occupation of land but rather a transformation of the people by YHWH. "Here Moses envisages a time in the distant future when the Lord will intervene in order to overcome the inability of the Israelites to keep the covenant faithfully."[83]

Therefore, the traditions of the land that were connected with Moses portray an exalted view of the land that seems to be always just out of reach. It is an expanded territory possessed only for a few years during the Davidic-Solomonic Empire. Even when the border limits are given, they vary from account to account, suggesting that the details were not the key. The point of the tradition is that all land, even that possessed by other nations, belonged to YHWH and that he would distribute that land to Israel as he saw fit. This blessing of land was not without conditions as YHWH's ultimate goal was

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[80] This theme is reused in *Jub* 1:22-23 and may "imply a decisive and final event of salvation rather than a lengthy process." Mark Adam Elliott, *The Survivors of Israel: A Reconsideration of the Theology of Pre-Christian Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 636.
[81] Von Rad notes that this does not require an anti-cultic polemic, *Old Testament Theology,* vol. 1, 397.
[82] Craigie, *Deuteronomy,* 364.
[83] Alexander, *Promised Land,* 275.

not the habitation of one particular territory but rather the creation of a people in obedience to its God. Knowing that disobedience was inevitable, Moses explained the steps needed for restoration, noting that ultimately what was needed was a spiritual transformation to take place. The land is very important in this tradition and yet there are hints that the territory is not YHWH's main concern.

JOSHUA

During the times of Abraham and Moses, the land remained a promise, a promise assured by YHWH, but still only a promise. It is with the events described in the book of Joshua that the promises finally become a reality. The invasion of Canaan under the leader of Joshua marks an important development in the idyllic history of Israel. Richard Nelson explains the role of land in Joshua:

> Yahweh's gift of the land is the core plot action of Joshua, constituting an arc of promise and fulfillment that begins in 1:2-6. This promise had originally been made to Israel's ancestors, and its realization is referred to persistently. Because it was none other than Yahweh the Divine Warrior who granted the land, Israel had an inalienable right to it, unless Yahweh himself should choose otherwise.[84]

In many ways, the entire book of Joshua is about the land, however, there are certain passages that help clarify the hope of the land.

The book begins with the transition of leadership from Moses to Joshua. In some ways this story is a continuation of the story of Moses and in other ways it is the beginning of a new era.[85] Certainly, the book of Joshua assumes that the reader has

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[84] Richard D. Nelson, *Joshua* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 15. Scripture passages left out.

[85] For this reason, scholars have struggled to find the place of Joshua, considering it either the conclusion to the Pentateuch (therefore part of a Hexateuch) or as the introduction to Israel's history. It does perform both roles.

already read Deuteronomy.[86] The promises that were given to Moses are transferred to Joshua, including the details of territorial limits. The purpose of this description is the same as that given within the Pentateuch as described above. This description represents the most expansive form of Israel's traditional land claims, a territory that was at best only loosely controlled during the Davidic/Solomonic Empire.[87] The territory described here would naturally be compared with the smaller territory allotted to the tribes in Josh 13-21.[88]

Another important passage is the crossing of the Jordan River as described in Josh 3. As this entrance into the Promised Land is the sacred fulfillment of the promises to the patriarchs, the nature of the event is described in language that reflects its importance. Brueggemann believes that: "The crossing of the Jordan is the most momentous experience that could happen to Israel."[89] With the crossing of the Jordan, everything changed for the people of Israel. One of the important themes in the Jordan crossing includes the concept of fellowship with YHWH. The crossing of the Jordan only takes place with the presence of the ark of the covenant. The parting of the Jordan is described in ways similar to the parting of the Red Sea, linking this event with the Mosaic Exodus. Also, the one who is leading the people is not so much the human representative, Joshua, but the "Lord of all the earth" (אדון כל־הארץ). הארץ can mean "the earth" but it can also mean "the land."[90] The presence of YHWH in this pivotal moment helps to secure Israel's right to the possession of the land.[91]

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[86] Nelson, *Joshua,* 30.
[87] Nelson, *Joshua,* 33.
[88] Habel, *Land,* 59-60.
[89] Brueggemann, *Land,* 43.
[90] Habel prefers the translation of "land" as this demonstrates YHWH's role as owner of the land. *Land,* 61. Nelson points out that either interpretation would authorize YHWH to give the land to Israel. *Joshua,* 61.

One of the key descriptions of the possession of the land is the concept of "rest" (2:9, 14, 24; 5:6; 8:1; 9:24; 18:3; 22:4; 23:13, 15, 16; 24:13) which Nelson describes as "fundamental confessional language."[92] Von Rad describes "rest" in these texts as "the Deuteronomistic formula which expresses the greatest, the ultimate gift which Jahweh bestowed upon Israel in granting the land."[93] The concept of "rest" looks both back to Moses (Deut 12:9-10) and forward to the next idyllic land tradition with David's victories (2 Sam 7:1, 11; 1 Kgs 8:56).

Finally, there is a lengthy section of the book that deals with the division of the land among the twelve tribes of Israel (Josh 13-21).[94] It is significant that approximately one third of Joshua is devoted to the allotment of the land. These descriptions are used to confirm YHWH's authority being behind Israel's settlement patterns.[95] According to Habel, this theme is a major focus of Joshua: "Central to the ideology of the book of Joshua is the image of the land as a cluster of family lots or allotments."[96] Joshua conquers a cluster of royal lands and in their distribution they become a land of family lots.[97] It is notable that the allotment descriptions are framed by conquest narratives (Josh 13-21) and closing speeches by Joshua (Josh 23-24). Linked to this framing sequence are statements of fulfilled promises and complete victory, despite other comments of an

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Von Rad rejects the idea that any verse supports the idea of YHWH as owner of the land. *Old Testament Theology,* vol. 1, 300.

[91] Nelson, *Joshua,* 59.

[92] Nelson, *Joshua,* 31.

[93] Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology,* vol. 1, 304.

[94] The land memory in Joshua 13-19 will later become the prototype for a future land apportionment in Ezek 47:13-48:29. Brueggemann, *Land,* 192.

[95] Nelson, *Joshua,* 16.

[96] Habel, *Land,* 56.

[97] Habel, *Land,* 57.

incomplete conquest.[98] This paradox of the land as conquered but not conquered gave Israel a goal to work towards.[99] This sense of tension would remain a challenge to Israel throughout its history.

The Joshua traditions were very influential in Hebrew thought, especially as the Jews in the Babylonian and Persian periods reflected on their own relationship to the land and their anticipation of reentry. Nelson describes how Joshua shaped Israel's understanding of the land in their later history:

> For exilic and post-exilic readers, the land represented both fulfilled promise and defaulted legacy, simultaneously a sign of Yahweh's fidelity and Israel's infidelity. The land was the center of ethnic identity and the object of both regret and hope.[100]

Von Rad says it in this way: "When Israel spoke of the granting of the land of Canaan, what she said was far from being merely the recollection of a great past—it was rather an avowal of Jahweh which every age had to reformulate in its own way."[101] The book of Joshua is an epic story of the fulfillment of ancient promises that passed on divine authority of possession while leaving the door open to a future and greater fulfillment.

DAVID AND SOLOMON

Two Kings

Many of the ideal traditions connected with Moses and Joshua, with regard to territorial limits of the land, point to the time of the short-lived United Kingdom under David and Solomon. The earlier traditions are portrayed as history and yet in many ways are separated from the readers of the Deuteronomistic history by long periods of unrecorded

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[98] Von Rad notes that Josh 2-9 only describes the conquest of Benjamin in ch. 10 including a tradition from Ephraim and a Galilean tradition in ch. 11, *Old Testament Theology,* vol. 1, 301.
[99] Williamson sees the promise of land as being fulfilled both with Joshua and Solomon, leaving open the question of ultimate fulfillment, "Promise and Fulfilment," 28.
[100] Nelson, *Joshua,* 16.
[101] Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology,* vol. 1, 303.

history.[102] However, with the traditions about David and Solomon there is a closer connection as the exiles would have known the actual descendants of these great kings. The land traditions regarding David and Solomon bring us to our final ideal background of Jewish thought regarding the land.

David is portrayed as being, at least in part, the fulfillment of the three-fold promises of Abraham: "David is said to have a great name (2 Sam. 7:9; 1 Kings 1:47). The monarch is potentially ruler of a great nation and the mediator of blessing to other nations (Ps. 72:17)."[103] To some scholars, the Abrahamic promises were actually created with David in mind. Davies, following the work of Clements, explains: "The Yahwist saw a connection between Abraham and David: for him the Abrahamic covenant found its fulfillment in the extension of the Davidic Kingdom; the promise to Abraham was the rise and triumph of that Kingdom."[104]

Certainly David was much more successful at achieving the territorial goals hoped for in Joshua than any of his predecessors, whether Saul or the Judges: "By his wars David had succeeded in extending the frontiers far beyond the area hereditarily occupied by the former clan alliance; indeed, his kingdom had become an empire, comparable with the empires on the Nile and in Mesopotamia, in that, similarly organized, almost a whole garland of vassal states could be attached to it."[105]

Although the Deuteronomistic historian does not avoid the shortcomings of Solomon, there is much in his reign that would be seen as ideal to later generations, especially during the exile. The description of Solomon's reign in 1 Kgs 4:20-25 boasts

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[102] For example, the time of the Judges which describes historical events without interest in chronology or provision of a historical time line.
[103] Habel, *Land,* 120.
[104] Davies, *Land,* 19-20.
[105] Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology,* vol. 1, 36.

of his financial prosperity, territorial dominion and influence over foreign kings. That things were seen as ideal is seen in the claim: "Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand by the sea; they ate and drank and were happy" (1 Kgs 4:20). For Jews living during the exile, longing for the security of their own land, it was possible to forgive Solomon for his forced labour, gross polygamy, idolatry and extreme wealth because he still represented the ideal when it came to the land.[106]

Under Solomon there develops a royal ideology regarding the land. There is a shift from the land as the inheritance of the tribes to the land as resources for the king. Habel explains:

> Just as significant in the royal ideology of this text is the political designation of the land as Israel and Judah, a territory that is said to extend from "Dan even to Beer-sheba" (1 Kings 4:25). As such, this land is not viewed in terms of any tribal or ancestral traditions. Rather available territory to which the monarch claims entitlement to meet the royal needs.[107]

The description of Solomon's accomplishments moves beyond the status of kingdom into that of an empire.[108] From this, Habel sees a reflection of YHWH's reign in heaven:

> The monarch is promoted as the earthly representative of YHWH, the monarch of heaven who has established the cosmic order. YHWH is located in heaven and from their rules the entire world. As God's representative, the monarch claims all of the established earth below as a personal domain. The land is depicted as earthly empire.[109]

The empire of Solomon can be seen as a secondary (after Joshua) fulfillment of the territorial promises in Genesis.[110]

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[106] The Deuteronomistic historian does not necessarily offer this same forgiveness.
[107] Habel, *Land,* 21-22.
[108] Habel says that "Solomon is presented as the model empire builder." *Land,* 23.
[109] Habel, *Land,* 31.
[110] Williamson, "Promise and Fulfilment," 28.

Two Covenants

Any discussion of the land in connection with David and Solomon requires a comparison of God's covenants with these two kings. The covenant made with David is described in 2 Sam 7:11-16.[111] The importance of this passage can not be overstated. A.A. Anderson suggests "2 Sam 7 is, without doubt, the theological highlight of the Books of Samuel if not the Deuteronomistic History as a whole."[112] The covenant does not actually mention the land and yet there are two points of contact with the land traditions. In 2 Sam 7:12 the promise is to raise up offspring from David's body. This was the foundation and initial focus of the covenant with Abraham. The reader is meant to see the promise to David in continuity with that to Abraham, including the provision of land. Secondly, the covenant speaks of the establishment of the kingdom. It was understood that any kingdom would require land and, if the kingdom was secure, so would be the possession of the land. The immediate recipient of these promises is David's son, but they were applicable to the entire Davidic dynasty by extension. Although there are also promises of punishment for disobedience, the promise of a continued kingdom seems to be unconditional. Anderson explains the power this oracle retained for future generations: "They were confident that Yahweh would fulfill his promises if not in a contemporary figure, such as Zerubbabel, then at least in a future messianic figure."[113]

Although the promise to David is focused on his son, Solomon does not receive his version of the promise until 1 Kgs 9:4-9. In this version, the land is specifically mentioned, although it is in the context of the threat of loss. There is a change in the tone

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[111] This is commonly regarded as the interpretive pivot of messianism in Israel. Brueggemann, *Theology,* 604. Cf. A.A. Anderson, *2 Samuel* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1989), 123.
[112] Anderson, *2 Samuel,* 112. Anderson suggests that the dynastic oracle in vv. 11-16 may be the oldest part of the pericope.
[113] Anderson, *2 Samuel,* 123.

of this promise. Gone are the assurances of an everlasting kingdom and introduced are conditions of obedience. Some of the warnings in this passage come directly from Deut 28. The "if" in this passage is most likely meant as a "when," just as Moses in Deuteronomy assumed: "Obedience will inevitably give way to apostasy."[114] According to Brueggemann: "The land still requires obedience, and without that, no other guarantee—temple or garrison, wives or wisdom—can keep the land."[115] In this passage there is a pluralization of "you" indicating that the warning is not just for Solomon but for all of Israel.[116] The possibility of the people's unfaithfulness is contrasted with the faithful YHWH who brought Israel out of Egypt. The reader is left with two sets of promises: one that offers unconditionally an everlasting kingdom and a second with conditions of obedience and threats of loss. The tension of conditionality and unconditionality is part of the author's purpose. YHWH's faithfulness as promised to David is unconditional but that faithfulness will have to be adapted to Israel's unfaithfulness.

Despite the glories of the Davidic and Solomonic empire, there remained some tension in the fulfillment just as it did in Joshua. Williamson explains:

> ... even though the territorial promise met with a greater degree of fulfillment in the Davidic-Solomonic era, this still fell far short of the ideal encapsulated by the promised land. Like the earlier generation, the 'rest' experienced under David and his successor was short-lived. The economic prosperity envisaged in Deuteronomy (e.g. 15:4-6; 28:11-12) remained somewhat elusive. Soon the land was under threat once again, as history repeated itself with the cycle of covenant disloyalty and divine judgment.[117]

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[114] Iain Provan, *1 and 2 Kings* (NIBC; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995), 83.
[115] Brueggemann, *Land,* 82.
[116] Simon J. DeVries, *1 Kings* (WBC; Waco: Word Books, 1985), 127. Jerome T. Walsh explains that this obtrusive change in the narrative creates almost a direct address to the readers, *1 Kings* (BO; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996), 118.
[117] Williamson, "Promise and Fulfilment," 31.

While the glories of David and Solomon were greater than the later generations could ever hope for, there was a sense in which there was still room for fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises: "although the material in Genesis-Kings emphasizes how the territorial promise has been fulfilled in Israel's history, it nowhere suggests that this dimension of the divine plan has been fulfilled in its most comprehensive sense."[118]

CONCLUSION

As Judaism was developing in the wake of the exile and other territorial conflicts, there was a strong tradition of God's people dwelling in a secure land. The story of the Garden of Eden expressed the primeval desire of Israel to have intimate fellowship with YHWH in a peaceful land with abundant resources and at the same time spoke of the danger of disobedience and exile. The traditions about Abraham described extravagant promises that reminded the people of YHWH's ability to bless even those who did not have the natural ability to become a nation. These promises included a number of features, of which the land was very prominent. Judaism was founded on the traditions of Moses and it was vital that these traditions also help define the understanding of the land. The Pentateuch offers extensive territorial limits that would give hope in YHWH's power to provide while at the same time giving warnings of what would happen as the result of disobedience. The Jews remembered the moment when YHWH's promises became reality under Joshua and looked for a repeat of this success at some point in the future. Finally, in the traditions about David and Solomon, there were expressions of what Israel could look like: an empire at rest, free from foreign aggression and prosperous in every

[118] Williamson, "Promise and Fulfilment," 31.

way. Each of these ideal traditions provided a measure by which the Jews would compare their own experiences and offered a goal on which to seek in the future.

A significant concept within these idyllic traditions is that even in these past events, God's promises were not exhausted. The promises to Abraham spoke of abundant promises that were, at least partially, experienced through the land and yet seemed bigger than the land. In the Mosaic traditions the great but varied descriptions of the territory suggested that YHWH's blessings were bigger than what had been experienced and not easily definable in geographic terms. There is also a confession that possession of territory is not enough and that Israel's only hope is in some sort of spiritual transformation. While this spiritual transformation was still seen as a step towards secure habitation of the land, it is an indication of a movement away from simple possession. Although Joshua seemed to be the fulfillment, and God's promises were described as coming true, the story created a tension of land conquered and not conquered, pointing the reader to some other fulfillment. Tension was again created in the Davidic and Solomonic traditions with an unconditional promise to David and a conditional warning to Solomon. How will the kingdom be everlasting if Israel will disobey and will experience loss of land? How do these hopes fit within the context of other paradigms of hope in the religious consciousness?

CHAPTER TWO:

AFTERLIFE IN THE PRE-EXILIC TRADITIONS

As much as this study is about land, it is also about the afterlife, especially the concept of the resurrection. Although the afterlife is a prominent theme in the New Testament, it will be demonstrated that it is much more subtle in the Old Testament. Regarding the division of Old Testament material: this study will not deal extensively with the problems of dating different texts. By "pre-exilic traditions," it is not meant that all of these texts were written, compiled or redacted before the exile, but rather that they refer to events before the exile, that is they are considered the earliest traditions in their canonical context. This chapter will begin by putting these traditions in their cultural context, by looking briefly at other religions and the archaeological evidence. Then the concepts of death and afterlife from the pre-exilic traditions will be examined. It will be demonstrated that the early Israelite traditions about death are in continuity with their cultural neighbors and that they focus on the present world, despite a few hints of something more.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Egyptian Religion

Ancient Egypt had a very rich tradition regarding the afterlife. Many of the ancient Egyptian texts that have survived to the present day are concerned with death and the afterlife. One of the most important parts of Egyptian mythology is the Osiris-Horus cycle. In this cycle, Osiris, originally a human king, is killed by his brother but is granted by the gods a return to life in the underworld where he becomes the god of the dead. This

myth was popular enough to maintain influence even after the rise of Christianity.[119] Osiris's experience became the example that Egyptians hoped to emulate, to the point of calling themselves an "Osiris" in their tombs.

Originally, it was only the Pharaohs that had the hope of eternal life. The dead Pharaoh was considered the Osiris and the new Pharaoh was considered the Horus. Over time, the afterlife was democratized, allowing non-royal individuals to experience life after death by the performance of magical spells as described in the *Book of the Dead.*[120] Philip Johnston notes: "by the New Kingdom this (afterlife) was within the grasp of any commoner who had lived a good life and knew the correct responses and actions for the journey through the underworld."[121] This expansion brought the afterlife into a central position of society. Alan Segal describes how: "Even as the attainment of life after death became more and more democratic, more and more individual entrepreneurs of the afterlife sprang up, led by more and more needed priesthoods, embalmers, and funeral directors."[122]

The Egyptians had a complex understanding of the nature of the afterlife. Edwin Yamauchi explains the nature of the Egyptian hope regarding life after death:

> The Egyptians did not believe in a bodily resurrection from the dead. Nonetheless, separate aspects of a person's personality – or, as some have interpreted them, separate modes of a person – were believed to remain active after death, even though the person's corpse remained in the tomb.[123]

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[119] Plutarch recorded a version of the myth in Greek dated to 120 CE. See Plutarch, *Moralia* (vol. 5; Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 3-191.
[120] Literally called the "Book of Coming Forth by Day."
[121] Philip S. Johnston, *Shades of Sheol* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 231.
[122] Alan F. Segal, *Life After Death* (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 55.
[123] Edwin Yamauchi, "Life, Death, and the Afterlife in the Ancient Near East," in Richard N. Longenecker (ed.), *Life in the Face of Death* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 27.

The Egyptian dead were believed to do everything that the living did, including eating and drinking. These resources could be provided for the dead either through physical offerings or through magic spells.

The Old Testament records an ongoing interaction between Israel and Egypt and it would be expected that the strong Egyptian traditions would have been influential on the Israelites. But regarding the Hebrew concept of the afterlife: "No specifically Egyptian imagery can be seen in it, ... and had any putative Egyptian origin been known, it would have been sufficient to condemn it in Israelite eyes."[124] While Egyptian concepts did not influence the Old Testament, they may have had an effect on later Jewish development. In attempting to disprove any similarity to pagan views of resurrection, N.T. Wright claims: "they (Egyptians and other pagans) did not mean that the existence into which the dead passed immediately was a continuing bodily one, but that, at some point after death, there would be a new embodiment, a coming back into a this-worldly sort of life."[125] In attempting to present a completely unique Jewish/Christian view of resurrection, Wright may be defining resurrection too narrowly. However, it is granted that Egyptian imagery is not a major influence on the pre-exilic Old Testament traditions of the afterlife.

Mesopotamia

If Egypt was the one pole of influence on ancient Israel, Mesopotamia, whether the reigning empire was Assyria or Babylon, was the other. The religious traditions of that area greatly pre-date either of those empires. These traditions include myths about the

[124] Segal, *Life*, 65.
[125] N.T. Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 47.

descent of a goddess (Inanna/Ishtar) into the underworld.[126] However, these myths were not used to give people hope of life after death.

Another important Mesopotamian source is the *Epic of Gilgamesh.* At the death of his friend Enkidu, Gilgamesh embarks on a quest for immortality. This quest brings Gilgamesh to Utnapishtim, who gives Gilgamesh a number of tests, all of which are failed. On tablet 10, Utnapishtim encourages Gilgamesh to make the most of life while he can.[127]

The hope for an afterlife did not include heaven. An ascent to heaven presaged death, while a descent to the underworld was the normal path.[128] The Mesopotamian underworld had a number of names including *Irkallu* ("Great City"), *Kigallu* ("Great Below"), *Ersit la tari* ("Land of No Return") or simply *Ersetu*[129] ("Earth/Land"). The underworld was a grim place as described in the *Descent of Ishtar to the Nether World*:

> To the dark house, the abode of Irkal[la],
> To the house which none leave who have entered it,
> On the road from which there is no way back,
> To the house wherein the dwellers are bereft of light,
> Where dust is their fare and clay their food.
> (Where) they see no light, residing in darkness.
> (Where) they are clothed like birds, with wings for garments,
> (And where) over door and bolt is spread dust.[130]

However, the afterlife was somewhat less grim for those with large families, those who had fallen in battle and those who led good lives.[131]

While there is some greater reflection on the afterlife in the Mesopotamian traditions, they do share the fairly pessimistic view of death as found in the early Hebrew

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[126] Yamauchi, "Ancient Near East," 30-32. Segal, *Life After Death*, 79-82.
[127] James B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near East,* vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), 64.
[128] Segal, *Life*, 77.
[129] Related to the Hebrew אֶרֶץ.
[130] Pritchard, *Ancient Near East*, vol. 1, 80.
[131] Yamauchi, "Ancient Near East," 34.

traditions. Johnston notes: "Mesopotamia had significant similarities with those in Israel, notably a dark, gloomy and unwelcoming underworld deep below the earth."[132] Life in the present should be lived to its fullest without too much focus on eternity. The Mesopotamian underworld is similar to the sorrowful Sheol of the Old Testament. There are also some similarities between the *Gilgamesh Epic* and the story of Adam and Eve in that immortality is offered but lost.[133]

Canaanite Religion

It was the Canaanite religion that the Hebrews had the most contact with for it was the land of Canaan that the Hebrews inhabited.[134] Certainly the Old Testament is filled with responses to Canaanite culture and attempts to remain distinct from it. It is important to know how close Israelite religion was to Canaanite religion with regard to the afterlife. Much of the information we have comes from the texts found at Ugarit.

One of the central myths of the Canaanite religion was the conflict between the death god Mot[135] and the weather/fertility god Baal. In the myth, Baal is imprisoned by Mot in the underworld until rescued by Baal's sister Anath. This is repeated each year. However, this myth was not used so much to explain death as to explain why during certain months crops did not grow and at other times they were able to grow.

At death, it was believed that the soul or spirit (*npš*)[136] left the body. Segal explains that: "After the 'soul' or 'shade' left the body, life did not totally cease but continued on in another place—the kingdom of *Mot*, where it lived in the same kind of

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[132] Johnston, *Shades*, 232.
[133] Segal, *Life*, 91-93.
[134] Some scholars believe that the Israelites emerged from Canaanite culture rather than just coming into contact with them. William G. Dever, *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 168.
[135] Hebrew מוֹת ("death").
[136] Hebrew נֶפֶשׁ.

weak form that we saw in Mesopotamia."[137] There is not much information about the Canaanite underworld but Yamauchi explains what we do know:

> The Netherworld is referred to simply as "earth" (*ars*),[138] which is located in a deep, underground region, like a vast cave. It was also called the "city" (*qrt*) of Mot. Its entrance was seen as being located in the region of two hills at the edge of the earth, to the north of Ugarit. Its inhabitants are called "those who went down into the earth" (*yrdm ars*). In some texts the dead are also called "gods" (*ilm*),[139] that is, "divine beings."[140]

In many ways, the underworld of the Canaanites is similar to the Sheol of the Hebrew Bible. It is not a place of rewards after death but rather a reminder of the importance to make the most out of life.

Archaeology

Most often, people look to the Old Testament to describe the beliefs of the ancient Israelites. As will be demonstrated, there is not much emphasis on the afterlife in the Old Testament. While much of the Hebrew Bible does not focus on an afterlife, it is too hasty to conclude that the Hebrews did not believe in life after death. Richard Friedman and Shawna Overton have examined the evidence and have concluded that belief in the afterlife should be spoken of as a whisper rather than silence.[141] Archaeological evidence, such as Israelite tombs equipped to present offerings to the dead, jewelry and amulets used to protect the dead as well as other evidence of ancestor veneration, help to fill in the gaps of the biblical texts.[142] Segal states, based on the archaeological evidence, that "it seems likely that the First Temple Israelites lived in a cultural continuum with the

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[137] Segal, *Life*, 114.
[138] Hebrew אֶרֶץ ("land/earth").
[139] See 1 Sam 28:13 where Samuel arising from Sheol is described as an אֱלֹהִים ("divine being").
[140] Yamauchi, "Ancient Near East," 38.
[141] Richard Elliott Friedman and Shawna Dolansky Overton, "Death and Afterlife: The Biblical Silence," in Alan J. Avery-Peck and Jacob Neusner (eds.), *Judaism in Late Antiquity: Part Four* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 36.
[142] Friedman and Overton, "Death and Afterlife," 36-41.

Canaanites and shared many beliefs with them."[143] Segal continues by saying: "It is safe to say that in most respects the customs of the ordinary Israelites in burial scarcely differed from the Canaanites at all, and we often have difficulty distinguishing them in archaeological sites, especially before the end of the eighth century BCE, when the effects of the prophets and finally the Deuteronomic Reform (621 BCE) began to enforce a purified religion."[144] As a result, it can be concluded that the ancient Israelites, like their neighbors around them, did have beliefs about the afterlife. The question is: how does this fit with the scriptural witness?

AFTERLIFE BELIEFS IN THE PRE-EXILIC TRADITIONS

Garden of Eden

Not only is the Garden of Eden the first canonical allusion to the Promised Land, it is also the first reflection on life, death and immortality. In the description of the garden, there are two trees including the tree of life (Gen 2:9). The warning that is given to the first couple is to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The consequence of that disobedience was to be death (Gen 2:17). Adam and Eve fall to the temptation, but surprisingly they do not instantly die. In Gen 3:16-19, the results of the disobedience are portrayed as a troubled creation, both in nature and in relationships. Apparently, they were not yet immortal, but if they did eat of the tree of life, they would live forever.[145] To prevent this, God banished the couple from the garden (Gen 3:24). Commenting on this passage, Johnston states:

> Hence the earlier emphatic pronouncement, 'in the day that you eat of it you shall die', is seen in context to mean: 'On the day you eat of it, you

[143] Segal, *Life*, 124.
[144] Segal, *Life*, 142.
[145] Barr believes that humankind was not created immortal. James Barr, "Is God a Liar?," *JTS* 57 (2006): 22.

> will cut yourself off from the tree of life and will therefore eventually die. So the second creation account portrays human immortality as potential rather than actual, and ends with human death as certain because of human sin.[146]

Gen 2-3 provides the origin for the problem of death that later reflections on the afterlife seek to solve.

The image of the Garden and the tree of life were ones that appeared again in Jewish and Christian writings. It appears a number of times in the *Apocalypse of Moses.* In ch. 28, Adam requests to eat of the tree of life before leaving paradise. God refuses but does promise that Adam will eat of the tree of life at the resurrection (28:4). *1 Enoch* 25 describes a tree whose fruit will give life to the righteous in the eschatological future. In *T.Levi* 18, it is in the messianic age, when evil has been defeated, that the tree of life will be made available to the saints. In *4 Ezra* 8:52-54, paradise and the tree of life are closely connected with the resurrection. *2 Enoch* 8-9 describes Eden, with the tree of life in it, as the eternal resting place of the righteous. While the Genesis account does not offer a detailed description of the afterlife, it did provide symbols and images that were used by later writings for the afterlife.[147]

Sheol

Throughout much of the Old Testament, the primary description of the fate of the dead is that of Sheol.[148] Johnston explains the influence of this term on the Old Testament:

> 'Sheol' was not specific to any one period of Israel's literary endeavour. It occurs in texts from the Pentateuch, the early historical books, and various prophets, psalms and wisdom books. Regardless of the precise

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[146] Johnston, *Shades,* 41.
[147] Later Judaism acknowledged Eden as the final resting place of the dead, Segal, *Life,* 622-23. Christian examples include Lk 22:42-43 and Rev 22:2-5.
[148] Sheol is used 66 times in the Old Testament as the final disposition of the dead and is not used in this way in any other Semitic language, Segal, *Life,* 135.

> dating of these texts, references to Sheol are scattered across the centuries of Israelite writing.[149]

There is some confusion over the meaning of the name, but Sheol seems to come from the Hebrew שׁאל "to ask" which could make Sheol a "place of decision (of fates)," possibly referring to postmortem examination.[150]

While the Old Testament does not answer the question regarding the origin of the name, it does give some information on the nature of Sheol: "Sheol is at the opposite theological extreme to Yahweh, and the dominant feature for its inhabitants is their separation from him."[151] According to Jarick: "The picture so far painted, of a post-mortem realm devoid of all that pertains to life and hope, is the general view of the Hebrew Bible—indeed, the view is even expressed that this realm is devoid of God as well."[152] It is not used as the final destiny of all people:

> It is almost exclusively reserved for those under divine judgment, whether the wicked, the afflicted righteous, or all sinners. It seldom occurs of all humanity, and only in contexts which portray human sinfulness and life's absurdity.[153]

For others, death is described as "lying down with my ancestors" (Gen 47:30) or "being gathered to my people" (Gen 49:29, 33). There are hints of possible escape from Sheol (e.g. Ps 16:8-11; Job 33:15-30), although these more likely refer to a rescue of an untimely death rather than a deliverance from the underworld.[154]

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[149] Johnston, *Shades*, 72.
[150] This was made popular by William Foxwell Albright, "The Etymology of Še'ol," *AJSL* 34 (1918): 209-10. Johnston questions this but does not provide a more likely option. *Shades*, 78. John Jarick examines the connection of Sheol to the idea of asking and sees promise in the story of Saul's (another form of the word) inquiry of Samuel in Sheol from 1 Sam 28:6-7. "Questioning Sheol," in Stanley E. Porter, Michael A. Hayes and David Tombs (eds.), *Resurrection* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 28-30.
[151] Johnston, *Shades of Sheol*, 75.
[152] Jarick, "Questioning Sheol," 30.
[153] Johnston, *Shades*, 83.
[154] Wright, *Resurrection,* 103-5.

The Raising of Samuel

Most often, the dead are described as shades, as simply echoes of what they once were, barely having an existence.[155] In the midst of the general mystery of the state of the dead is the story of Saul's inquiry of the deceased Samuel in 1 Sam 28.[156] Saul had relied on the prophet for much of his troubled reign. Due to disobedience, Saul was cut off from this guidance and the possibility of reconciliation evaporated with Samuel's death. As Saul faced military defeat, he became desperate for counsel, desperate enough to break his own law and to consult the witch of Endor in 1 Sam 28.

There is a play on words in this passage as Saul (שָׁאוּל) attempts to inquire (שׁאל) of YHWH by seeking Samuel in Sheol (שְׁאוֹל).[157] As Samuel appears, he is described as an אלהים ("divine being")[158] (1 Sam 28:13). There is a tremendous amount of irony in this passage. The expectation is that the living are blessed and the dead are cursed. However, the promise of God was not just the possession of land but rather the enjoyment of rest. Saul, although he is the head of the Israelite army, is in distress rather than rest (v. 15). Samuel, although he is dead, is at rest, a rest that is being disturbed by Saul's séance (v. 15). Saul receives the answer that he does not want: he will lose the land of Israel to the Philistines and will join Samuel in the land of the dead (v. 19). 1 Samuel 28 is unique among the earlier texts in that it portrays the continued existence of an individual beyond death. According to Segal: "So far as the Bible is concerned, then, the dead can be recalled, and there is a technology available for doing so; but it is sinful

[155] There are hints of an afterlife in some passages, such as 2 Sam 12:23, although it is not clear that this is any more than the grave.
[156] This passage is regard by many as a pre-Deuteronomistic authentic account, Johnston, *Shades,* 156.
[157] Sheol is not mentioned in the story, but it is clear that Sheol is the location from which Samuel is raised.
[158] Perhaps a reference to the Canaanite belief in the divinity of the dead. Wright, *Resurrection,* 93-94.

to do so, because they are 'divine beings' and hence consulting them breaches the canons of Yahwism."[159] Samuel is able to speak and even prophesy despite his existence in the realm of the dead. However, this is described as a unique event, a special experience to highlight the desperation of Saul in his fall from grace. Johnston notes that this passage "reflects belief in the continued existence of the dead in some somnolent form, though it makes no comment on their post-mortem existence."[160]

CONCLUSION

Death is a concept that all cultures, ancient and modern, have had to reflect on. While the Egyptians had complex beliefs about the afterlife and detailed requirements on how to acquire life after death, their culture seems to have had limited influence on early Israelite religion. Mesopotamian and Canaanite religions had myths about the afterlife, but their focus was on living in the present life rather than facing a mysterious post-death existence. Mesopotamian and Canaanite pessimism have much in common with Israelite beliefs.

In the Hebrew canon, as good as creation is, death enters into the picture very quickly. The carefree paradise with the immortality-granting tree of life is lost and replaced with a cursed and death-filled world. Although later Jewish and Christian interpretations saw in the Garden of Eden a picture of what the resurrection would look like, in Genesis it is simply the story of paradise lost. The best that could be hoped for was Sheol, a place where any existence pales greatly to what was enjoyed during life. Although 1 Sam 28 does give a picture of a post-death experience, it is not designed to give hope to the average Israelite. As Jarick explains: "Death is, to all intents and

[159] Segal, *Life,* 126.
[160] Johnston, *Shades*, 158.

purposes, the end; if there is anything beyond it, that epilogue will be merely a shadow and inadequate aftertaste of what we experienced in life."[161]

The early Israelite hope had very little to do with the afterlife. As seen in the last chapter, the ideal traditions that Israel longed for were connected to the land.[162] The ultimate hope was a secure rest in a God-given land in which they would enjoy prosperity and fellowship with God. In the face of death, the most optimistic situation was a long life in the Promised Land. It will be demonstrated that this hope for Israel would soon be shaken to its foundation.

[161] Jarick, "Questioning Sheol," 22.
[162] It is significant that the very important Eden tradition explains both the loss of land and the loss of immortality.

CHAPTER THREE:

THE LAND AND THE EXILIC ERA PROPHETS

It is helpful in any study of the Old Testament to separate different traditions into manageable sections. However, it is difficult to divide the books of the Hebrew Bible into different time periods. It could be argued that the stories that are set in the distant past may have been composed more recently than other books that claim to be more contemporary. This study will not deal with those issues but rather will divide the texts by what they claim to be. The first chapter examined the idyllic traditions regarding the land in their ancient setting, that is descriptions of the way things ought to be. This chapter will focus on the prophetic traditions of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, which look at how things actually were. This plan does come with its own set of challenges, especially when it comes to the book of Isaiah. Redaction criticism has picked apart Isaiah and has dated parts everywhere from the time of the historical Isaiah ("First Isaiah") to that of the Maccabees ("Isaiah Apocalypse").[163] Again, these questions will not be the focus of this study as exact dates of composition are not required because, by the time of the New Testament, these traditions were firmly linked to the historical circumstances of the named authors. Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel will all be looked at as

[163] Kaiser argues for a date of the first third of the second century BCE for the Isaiah Apocalypse (chs. 24-27). Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 13-39* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), 179. Westermann gives a sixth century BCE date for Isa 40-66 (2 Isaiah). Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 3. Goldingay sees four different authors that he names Ambassador, Disciple, Poet and Preacher, who wrote between the eighth and sixth centuries BCE. John Goldingay, *Isaiah* (NIBC; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2001), 2-5, 28-30. Oswalt accepts the unity of the entire book of Isaiah and that it was written by the named author. John N. Oswalt, *Book of Isaiah 1-39* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 17-28. Accepting the division of Isaiah and its various dates, Gene Tucker notes: "In the last two decades of the twentieth century ... the attention of scholarship has turned to the interpretation of the book as a whole and from a variety of perspectives. Virtually all such approaches continue to acknowledge the validity of the evidence for different dates and circumstances, but question the relative significance of the history of the development of the book." Gene M. Tucker, "Isaiah 1-39," *NIB* 6:89. This is the holistic approach that will be taken in this study.

books orbiting the exile (whether Assyrian or Babylonian). What ties these books together is the reflection on how the once strong faith in the Promised Land could be accommodated into the real world of foreign aggression and internal corruption, while still hoping for a future comparable with the ideal past.

ISAIAH

Oracles of Judgment

The book of Isaiah in its final form begins with an oracle concerning the rebellious nature of Israel.[164] This first chapter sets the tone of the entire book of Isaiah. There is some question regarding who are the recipients of these prophetic warnings as the superscription in 1:1 refers to Judah and Jerusalem even though the actual oracles seem to be aimed at Israel, normally understood as the northern kingdom. This contradiction is more apparent than real as Isaiah sees Judah and Jerusalem as typical of the covenant people of Israel[165] and this is consistent with his other symbolic use of place names.[166]

Much of the oracle focuses on the nature of the people, including the introduction of the important theme of the remnant (1:9). Oswalt comments that "Isaiah believes there is hope for his people even if he himself does not live to see it, and he dares to believe that even out of a hut in a cucumber patch God can do great things."[167] Isaiah also speaks of the land in terms of the ancient covenants, especially with regard to the coming judgment:

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[164] This passage does not take place chronologically first as Isaiah does not seem to begin his prophetic ministry until Isaiah 6. Oswalt gives some options of why Isaiah's call does not occur until ch. 6. Oswalt, *Isaiah 1-39*, 80.

[165] Kratz notes that, in Isaiah, "Israel" is used in three ways: (1) in the name "Holy One of Israel," (2) as the northern kingdom as opposed to Judah and (3) as the covenant people of God including both Israel and Judah. Reinhard G. Kratz, "Israel in the Book of Isaiah," *JSOT* 31.1 (2006): 103-28. Cf. Silvio Sergio Scatolini Apóstolo, "On the Elusiveness and Malleability of 'Israel,'" *JHS* 6.7 (2006): 2-24.

[166] Oswalt, *Isaiah 1-39*, 82-83.

[167] Oswalt, *Isaiah 1-39*, 93.

> ... while Isaiah does not make specific reference to the old covenant traditions, his fundamental reliance upon them is obvious in the light of almost word-for-word similarities between v.7 and the curse formulas found in Lev. 26 and Deut. 28, 29. He is at one with those passages in believing that it is impossible to enjoy the fruits of nature without being in submission to nature's Lord.[168]

The sins of the people are described as having a destructive effect on the land that is meant to bless Israel, which is a natural result of breaking the covenant.

An important passage is the song of the vineyard from Isa 5:1-7.[169] There is a natural comparison with Eden traditions,[170] except this time the people have been merged with the vineyard rather than just being inhabitants of it. However, the result is the same: punishment for sin symbolized by the loss of the garden. The point of the story is that the lack of good fruit (i.e. justice) will result in its destruction. Von Rad warns that: "While we should not give an allegorical interpretation to all his labors (digging the vineyard, clearing it of stones, building a watch-tower and a wine vat), the recapitulation of all that the lover did for his vineyard does give the hearer some idea of the patience and sense of purpose with which Jahweh tended Israel throughout her history."[171] The use of the vineyard metaphor does express a realistic concern for what could happen to the land, as Tucker explains: "It is not difficult to translate the imagery of the vineyard, 'devoured,' 'trampled down,' its walls and hedge torn down (v. 5), into a scene of enemy military triumph over Jerusalem."[172] This song is used to contextualize other restoration oracles

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[168] Oswalt, *Isaiah 1-39*, 91.
[169] According to Gowan, this is "One of Isaiah's masterworks." Donald E. Gowan, *Theology of the Prophetic Books* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 63.
[170] Not necessarily an identification but an evoking of imagery.
[171] Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. 2 (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1965), 181.
[172] Tucker, *NIB* 6:89.

such as in 4:2-6. Oswalt reminds us: "Yes, there is hope, but that hope cannot annihilate the present, somehow removing us from its responsibility."[173]

A recurring theme in Isaiah is the transformation of the land as a result of the people's disobedience (7:18-25). Not only is there the threat of foreign invasion, but the result of this invasion is the withering of the edenic garden and the transformation into a thorny wasteland. Even when a foreign threat is mentioned, the danger is sent specifically by YHWH. Isaiah 10:6 specifies that the Assyrians are sent against a godless nation, a surprising description of Israel.[174] Closely tied to the land covenants was the idea of fellowship with God. It is a mark of how far Israel had fallen that they could be called "godless."

Isaiah 24 in the "Isaiah Apocalypse"[175] describes the devastation of the earth. It is uncertain as to whether this refers to the entire planet[176] or just the land of Israel. הארץ can mean both, however תבל ("world") appears in 24:4 suggesting a wider meaning. At the same time, the devastation is described as the result of the breaking of laws, statutes and covenant, and it is uncertain how that could apply to the Gentile nations.[177] There seems to be a mix of images.

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[173] Oswalt, *Isaiah 1-39,* 151.
[174] Gowan notes that "'Godless' may sound a bit too modern; the sense of the Hebrew word is to be alienated from God." *Theology,* 72. Cf. Oswalt, *Isaiah 1-39,* 263.
[175] Schmitz offers a survey of the possible dates of the Isaiah Apocalypse. Philip C. Schmitz, "The Grammar of Resurrection in Isaiah 26:19a-c," *JBL* 122.1 (2003): 145 n1.
[176] Tucker favors a curse upon the earth rather than the land. *NIB* 6:210-11. Elliott offers "land" as a possible option. *Survivors,* 596. Goldingay prefers "land" but admits that the ambiguity is purposeful, using Israel as a paradigm for God's dealing with the whole world, *Isaiah,* 138-39.
[177] Tucker offers either the transgression of the Noahic covenant or that the world suffers as a result of curse from Israel's breaking of the covenant. *NIB* 6:211.

YHWH's ability to save is great but it is limited by the people's disobedience. In Isaiah 59, we come across what is called a "community lament."[178] The ultimate result of this sin is separation from YHWH (59:2), a significant observation since the entire point of a Promised Land was for there to be a place for the people to be with YHWH. Christopher Seitz notes: "What the prophet wishes to emphasize is not only God's immunity from criticism, but the opposite: the people's massive accumulation of sin, taking the form of a barrier that separates them from God."[179] It is not difficult to make the connection between the loss of presence in this passage and the separation between YHWH and humanity in the Eden tradition.

It is significant that Isaiah, whatever its redactional history, begins with oracles of judgment and ends with oracles of judgment (ch. 65-66), thus clearly expressing its dire warning to the people. Even though Isaiah 40-66 has a greater stress on restoration, the last two chapters, along with some restoration themes, contain very strong words of judgment. Goldingay notes:

> The chapters form a conclusion to the book as a whole. The themes and actual language of chapter 1, the book's introduction, are repeated in this conclusion. Thus, we find references to the people forsaking Yahweh, to their rebelliousness, to their acts that displease Yahweh, to their religious observances in gardens, to their destiny to be shamed, and to unquenchable fire.[180]

It is noteworthy that Isaiah ends with not only the promise of the creation of a new heavens and a new earth (66:22),[181] but also the judgment of those who rebel. Instead of the land, the wicked are to gain an inheritance of fire and worms (66:24), an image which

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[178] Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 344.
[179] Tucker, *NIB* 6:500.
[180] Goldingay, *Isaiah,* 365.
[181] Oswalt notes that new earth is necessary for God to fulfill the promises to Abraham in the face of Israel's sin. John N. Oswalt, *Book of Isaiah 40-66* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 691.

would later be reused in concepts of hell.[182] As Oswalt notes, Isaiah ends as it began with the choice of either hope or judgment.[183]

Oracles of Restoration

It is significant that near the beginning of the book is an oracle of restoration as Isaiah wants from the beginning to introduce the twin themes of judgment and restoration.[184] Isaiah 2:2 speaks of the re-establishment of the Temple "in days to come."[185] The importance of this passage is demonstrated by the fact that it is almost word for word from Mic 4:1-3.[186] This is not necessarily a reference to an eschatological age[187] but rather it is an indication that at some point in the future, it will be clear that Israel's God is the true God. It is important to note that this revelation does not take place in philosophical reflection but rather in the journey to the mountain and the Temple that was the most holy point in the land. According to Gene Tucker: "Traditions concerning Zion as Yahweh's holy place and Jerusalem as the chosen city fuel the theology of Isaiah."[188] Restoration, even spiritual restoration, has a geographic component. It is described as an eschatological and miraculous change of geography in order that the relatively low Temple mount will be raised up so that all nations may be drawn to it.[189]

The land was very closely tied with that of the Davidic monarchy. While Judah continued to have a descendant of David on the throne, it was understood that the

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[182] Mark 9:47-48.
[183] Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66*, 693.
[184] Gowan, *Theology*, 65.
[185] NIV has "last days," following LXX and other ancient versions. Tucker, *NIB* 6:67. Goldingay says "The term generally denotes a period that is one step removed from speaker and audience." *Isaiah,* 42.
[186] Oswalt sees this as a drawing from a common heritage. Oswalt, *Isaiah 1-39*, 115. Tucker sees these verses as later additions to both Micah and Isaiah in the process of their formation. Tucker, *NIB* 6:66.
[187] Oswalt, *Isaiah 1-39*, 117. Von Rad does take it as an eschatological event. *Old Testament Theology,* vol. 2, 294.
[188] Tucker, *NIB* 6:67.
[189] Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology,* vol. 2, 294.

majority of the recent kings had fallen far short of the Davidic ideal. As Israel longed for the protection and safety in the land, they would naturally be attracted to the traditions of King David and the short time in which YHWH's promises seemed completely fulfilled. N.T. Wright notes that in the Hebrew tradition: "The king was the focal point of the dream of national liberty."[190] Therefore, in restoration oracles it was understandable that a renewal of the Davidic origins would play a prominent role. In Isa 11:1, the prophet speaks of a shoot from the stump of Jesse. While this root of Jesse is described in spiritual terms (11:2-3), he also is described as having a tremendous military and political benefit to Israel. Isaiah 11:10-16 describes how the root of Jesse will gather the exiles and will bring vengeance on Israel's enemies. In Isaiah 11 the prophet blends both the Davidic and Zion traditions.[191] The future king is described in terms of his character and activities as a ruler, confidence of which was based on 2 Samuel 7.[192] In Isa 55:3, there is a possible suggestion that the eternal covenant promised to David is now being reapplied to the whole people.[193]

The restoration of Israel is described in terms of more than just religious freedom or as a measure of political freedom under benevolent foreign rule. Possession of the land continues to play an important role and YHWH will settle his people in the land that he has chosen for them (Isaiah 14:1). There will be a reversal of roles as captors become captives and masters become servants (14:2).

The so-called "Isaiah Apocalypse" is an important witness regarding the land. At a time when all that could be hoped for was the safety of Jerusalem and the surrounding

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[190] N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 483.
[191] Tucker, *NIB* 6:140.
[192] Tucker, *NIB* 6:140.
[193] Peter R. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968), 125.

area, there is a promise not just for survival but for the enlargement of the nation and the extension of the borders of the land (26:15). It is notable that the prophet uses resurrection imagery to describe what will happen to the nation of Israel (26:19). Although there is some disagreement as to how much this reveals about afterlife beliefs, it is an example of resurrection metaphors for the land, an image that will appear again.[194]

In Isa 27:1-11, the author seems to turn the song of the vineyard around. Instead of a warning of what will happen to the unfruitful vineyard, now there are promises that "In days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will bud and blossom and fill all the world with fruit." (27:6) The same image is transformed from being about the people's unfaithfulness to being about YHWH's faithfulness. According to Tucker: "The materials in the chapter have in common more-or-less eschatological expectations of the Lord's decisive intervention both to judge and to save."[195] In this new prophecy, the prophet reuses and transforms some of the imagery of the earlier vineyard song.[196]

The restoration of the natural order described in Isaiah 35 is a common image for the renewal of Israel, suggesting a reversal of the curse and a return to Eden. Some of the rich imagery in this chapter regarding the restoration is often difficult to interpret. Tucker comments on some of the issues:

> Some interpreters, emphasizing the eschatological dimensions of the chapter as a whole, take the language to be literal, promising a radical transformation so that there will be no physical disabilities in the age to come. That is the sense of the loose citation of these lines in the NT (Matt 11:15; Luke 7:22). The force of the language in the poem cannot be determined with certainty, and in any case this may pose the wrong

[194] Tucker, *NIB* 6:222. The relation of this passage to the resurrection of the dead will be examined in the next chapter.
[195] Tucker, *NIB* 6:225.
[196] Tucker, *NIB* 6:226.

> question. In reflections on the future reign of God, physical and spiritual well-being are difficult if not impossible to separate.[197]

Although this passage is not about the resurrection, it is not difficult to see how this imagery would help in the development of hope beyond just possession of the physical land.

Isaiah 40 is seen by many scholars as the introduction to Deutero-Isaiah and thus a major shift in the overall message of the canonical Isaiah. In this chapter, the prophet begins to set up the link of the exile with the Exodus tradition.[198] Regarding this section of the book and Israel's history, Oswalt notes: "Whatever may lie ahead for the people of Judah and Jerusalem, God's ultimate plan for them is not destruction but redemption, not death but life."[199] What is significant about this passage is that the hope for the restoration is based not on Israel's righteousness but on the character of YHWH. The enthronement formula found in Isa 40:10-11 stands at the centre of the new history toward the land as YHWH reasserts his rule of the land.[200]

Isaiah 43:14-28 continues the description of Israel's ransom from Babylon that takes place in vv. 1-13. The restoration is described in terms of the same punishment the Babylonians inflicted upon others now coming upon them. However, the court case that takes place puts Israel on trial. Despite YHWH's offer of mercy, Israel continues in disobedience. The concepts of rebuke and mercy are balanced in this passage: "While the subject of this utterance is the vanity of Israel's worship and her mistaken history, it also contains, right at its centre, the proclamation of forgiveness."[201]

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[197] Tucker, *NIB* 6:281.
[198] Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 33.
[199] Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66*, 49.
[200] Brueggemann, *Land*, 138.
[201] Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 133.

Isaiah 44:3-5 is an important passage in the concept of restoration. Just as Deut 30:6 had explained that a transformation called the "circumcision of the heart" was required for full restoration, so Isaiah speaks of a need for YHWH to pour out his Spirit. Oswalt explains:

> Here, in a thought similar to that of Ezekiel (37:7-10), God promises that His own Spirit, the energy and vitality that made the world (Gen. 1:1), will pour out on the nation so that what the world would have said was dead and dry, even burned over (Isa. 6:12-13), will bloom with all the abundance of spring.[202]

Thus even on the national scale, the Spirit of God is necessary for life. Westermann notes that this event is not the same thing as the return to the land, but a subsequent blessing. [203] Even after the return to the land, Israel looked forward to a further blessing that would help keep their previously fragile inheritance secure.

Isaiah 49:8 speaks of a covenant that will be established to restore the land and to reassign its desolate inheritance. Throughout Isaiah, there are numerous allusions to the Mosaic Exodus, although often with modifications. In the first Exodus, Moses is the mediator of a covenant, in the new Exodus the servant of the Lord is the covenant: "He is the concrete means by which God's relationship with Israel is embodied and manifested."[204] The fact that the new covenant is not just revealed but is embodied in an individual is important for later Christian interpretation.

Whereas in the oracles of judgment there were warnings against the coming soldiers, now there will be more builders than destroyers (49:17). According to Westermann: "The purpose of the picture given in v. 17 ... is to highlight the miraculous

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[202] Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66*, 166.
[203] Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 136.
[204] Christopher R. Seitz, "Isaiah 40-66," *NIB* 6:430.

and sudden change from destruction to reconstruction."[205] The people will multiply so quickly that they will soon complain that the land is too small and will look for expansion (49:19-20). Oswalt summarizes this passage with this paraphrase: "The destroyers, those *who swallowed you up*, are gone, and in their place are so many inhabitants that once empty land is overflowing. Just imagination? No, the oath of God."[206]

The restoration of Israel and the mercy of YHWH are to be proclaimed as good news (52:7). The restoration is to be more than just survival it is to be an expansion, using the imagery of Joshua's conquest of the foreign cities (54:1-3) as well as a contrast with Sarah's barrenness.[207] According to Westermann: "The thing proclaimed is not God's act of deliverance, but the new state of salvation to which this gives rise."[208] Oswalt expresses the power of these promises:

> The expansive language of vv. 1-3 and 11-17 is almost that of explosive relief. All of God's cosmic desire to bless can finally be released (and by what other means than through what the Servant has done?), and it pours out in ways that only the most extravagant imagery can express.[209]

The hope of Israel has obviously moved beyond simple occupation of land, as Isa 60:17-21 describes the radical transformation that YHWH promised. The land plays an important role in these promises: "Trito-Isaiah expands the old promise of the land by adding the word *'ōlām*; they are to possess the land forever, never to be driven forth from it."[210] As Seitz explains: "Zion's exaltation has cosmic, transnational consequences."[211]

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[205] Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 220.
[206] Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66*, 308.
[207] Brueggemann, *Land*, 139.
[208] Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 271.
[209] Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66*, 414.
[210] Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 363.
[211] Seitz, *NIB* 6:509.

Oracles of Judgment

The subject of land loss is very important to Jeremiah, who is sometimes called the weeping prophet. Brueggemann puts in context the various oracles of judgment:

> Jeremiah reflected long about the having of land and the losing of land. ... He is impressed with the awesome reality of being entrusted with it, but he is equally urgent with the reality of its loss. He understands the covenantal dimension of landholding, the fact that being in land and possessing it depends on continual reference to Yahweh. He presents the grief of land-loss not from the perspective of Israel but from the view of Yahweh.[212]

It is from this point of view that much of the material in Jeremiah is presented.

Jeremiah 1:14-16 speaks of a coming invasion from the north[213] as punishment for the wickedness of the people in the land. This will not be just a passing aggression but rather the invaders will set up their thrones at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem. "The setting up of thrones at the gates of Jerusalem would be a symbol of conquest and subsequent rule over the land."[214]

YHWH's faithfulness is contrasted with the people's faithlessness in Jer 2:7. YHWH gave a fertile land and the people have turned it into a defiled land. The land had been defiled by ritual prostitution and idolatry of the fertility cults (3:1-2).[215] This image is then used to liken Judah "to an adulterous wife who has forfeited all legal claim upon

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[212] Brueggemann, *Land*, 111-12.
[213] The identity of the foe, later revealed to be the Babylonians, is left vague, producing simply a warning of coming disaster. John Bright, *Jeremiah* (AB; Garden City: Doubleday, 1965), 7. Thompson explains that "The *north* was a symbol for dark powers often of uncertain origin. J.A. Thompson, *Jeremiah* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 154.
[214] Thompson, *Jeremiah,* 154.
[215] Bright, *Jeremiah,* 23.

her husband, yet who fatuously continues to count on his indulgent forgiveness."[216] The defilement of the land is an important theme in Jeremiah:

> The polluted land is not merely some defiled object that can be discarded. Rather, the land is a victim who suffers intensely as a result of the crime and the punishment of Judah. The land is personified, not as a goddess or mother earth, but as a kind of personal extension of YHWH, the owner of the land.[217]

Since it is YHWH himself who is suffering, the punishment for Israel will be measured accordingly.

The concept of circumcision of the heart that was introduced in Deut 30:6 reappears in Jer 4:4. However, in Deuteronomy it was something that YHWH did after Israel's return, whereas here it is a command for the people to do to themselves to prevent the coming wrath. The mention of circumcision would bring to mind images of the Abrahamic covenant and the responsibilities of YHWH's people. Thompson explains it this way: "The interior dispositions of the people were more significant than any external practices, and the total commitment of the life (heart) to Yahweh by the removal of every inhibiting element was the only response acceptable to Yahweh."[218] In the overall context of Jeremiah, it was understood that the people would not make this choice and avoid exile.

Jeremiah 4:23-28 speaks of the form of YHWH's judgment. The land will become desolate and empty. In describing the land, YHWH sees it as the empty void that existed before creation. Habel explains the power of this imagery: "The audience senses the agony of the creator as the creation returns to the chaos, darkness, and desolation of the primordial. Creating a land and sky has been in vain. The land is becoming waste

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[216] Bright, *Jeremiah,* 25.
[217] Habel, *Land,* 84.
[218] Thompson, *Jeremiah,* 216.

and void as in the beginning."[219] The extent of the destruction will be as "if the earth had been 'uncreated' and reverted to its erstwhile primeval chaos."[220] There are also references to the desert and the fruitful land which points back to YHWH's care of Israel during its youth.[221] The ruin will be extensive but there is also the promise that it will not be destroyed completely. This assurance of incomplete destruction is repeated in 5:18.

Jeremiah 7:1-7, part of the "Temple Sermon," is a positive oracle of judgment. Although it is in the form of an offer to stay in the land, it is also about judgment because the result of disobedience was loss of land. This oracle is presented as an opportunity to be judged innocent rather than guilty. What YHWH is looking for is an end to the reliance on the Temple and a move towards acts of justice. The reward for obedience and the punishment for disobedience is the land that was promised to their forefathers. Sins of the people would have grave consequences for the land:

> ... God made a promise of both land and descendants. Each was important to the other. A people without a land was as unnatural a condition as a land without a people. So close was the link between these two that when the people sinned the land suffered.[222]

Despite the seeming possibility of repentance, the author knows that it will not happen. The promises found in the book of Jeremiah follow a judgment that can not be averted.[223]

Jeremiah 11:1-17 presents the events of Jeremiah's day in their covenantal context. A covenant was made after YHWH brought Israel out of Egypt where the people promised to obey.[224] As a result of their agreement, YHWH brought Israel into

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[219] Habel, *Land,* 87.
[220] Thompson, *Jeremiah,* 230.
[221] Patrick D. Miller, "Jeremiah," *NIB* 6:614.
[222] Thompson, *Jeremiah,* 280.
[223] Gowan, *Theology,* 106.
[224] Bright believes that the covenant mentioned is the one made with Josiah (2 Kgs 23:3) not with Moses. However, he also admits that the Josianic covenant was seen as a reactivation of the Mosaic covenant.

the land of milk and honey. Israel chose to disobey and YHWH sent the curses from Deuteronomy to attempt correction.[225] Israel continued in its rebellious ways and YHWH considered the covenant broken (v. 10), promising to respond with a decisive punishment.

Israel had been asked to obey but responded with rebellion. In Jer 25:8-11, the results of that disobedience are made explicit. Nebuchadnezzar, who is described as the servant of YHWH,[226] will be brought against the land. Brueggemann puts the power of these words into perspective:

> Nebuchadnezzar the land-grabber, the quintessence of imperial expansionism that threatened Israel, is doing the work of Yahweh. No wonder Jeremiah is called a traitor. His argument is that land-loss is not only inevitable, but it is the intention of Yahweh.[227]

The whole country will be made a desolate wasteland and they will serve the king of Babylon for seventy years.

Oracles of Restoration

Although judgment is a prominent theme in Jeremiah, there is also a strong tradition of restoration. Israel will not be totally destroyed in judgment as God will eventually exalt his people to the position described in the idyllic traditions.

In contrast to the threats of destruction, Jer 3:14-18 puts forth a generous offer of restoration.[228] The people are asked to return to Zion and YHWH will give to them shepherds after his heart. The people will increase greatly in the land and the presence of YHWH will be so real that the people will have forgotten the old reliance on the ark of

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Jeremiah, 89. Cf. Thompson, *Jeremiah,* 341. Considering the other Mosaic imagery, it is better to think of it as the covenant with Moses, even if the covenant had come to the forefront during Josiah's reign.

[225] This passage is filled with typically Deuteronomistic language. Gowan, *Theology,* 104.

[226] Gowan notes that "servant" is a term elsewhere used only for prophets in Jeremiah. *Theology,* 113.

[227] Brueggemann, *Land,* 107.

[228] Miller connects this text with the eschatological texts of Isa 2:2-4/Mic 4:1-5. *NIB* 6:605.

the covenant. Judah and Israel will be reunited and will return to the land promised to their forefathers. Miller notes: "The political dream of Josiah to reunite Israel and Judah lies in the background, but it takes shape in this instance in an even larger vision of the community of nations united before the Lord in obedience to the Lord's way rather than in stubborn insistence upon their own way."[229]

Promises of restoration are also found in Jer 16:14-15.[230] Miller explains: "In the midst of this fierce rhetoric comes a word that looks beyond all this to a future that is almost nonsensical in its context, a future beyond exile when a lost and destroyed people will be redeemed and reborn."[231] The Exodus from Egypt had long been a foundational event in Israelite religion and seemed to be the most important experience in Israel's history. However, this passage suggests that people will forget the Egyptian Exodus and will only remember the northern Exodus, the return from Babylonian exile that YHWH was promising.

Like Isaiah, Jeremiah prophesies about a Davidic king, a righteous branch,[232] who will rule wisely (23:5-6). "There was much in the representatives of the Davidic dynasty during Jeremiah's day which suggested that they were a sham, for they failed to demonstrate the true qualities of kingship (21:11-14; 22:1-3)."[233] Jeremiah makes explicit the connection between the Davidic king and life of Israel in the land that was only implicit in the Isaiah passage. There is a need to return to the idyllic experience

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[229] Miller, *NIB* 6:605.
[230] Bright sees this as being out of place and inserted here soften the harshness of the message of judgment. *Jeremiah,* 113.
[231] Miller, *NIB* 6:703.
[232] "In postexilic times the term (branch) became the classic technical one for the expected ideal king (Zech. 3:8; 6:12)." Thompson, *Jeremiah,* 489.
[233] Thompson, *Jeremiah,* 489.

when David ruled the land in obedience to YHWH. Thompson explains the expected context of this event:

> The forthcoming age was not seen as something reserved for the eschatological era, but as coming at the end of a particular era that had been marked by a failure in the functioning of the kingship in the context of the covenant. When kingship was exercised in light of the covenant, then the blessings of the covenant would be realized among God's people in the land of promise.[234]

The name of the king is "The LORD is Righteousness" (YHWH *Tsidqenu*), which may be an ironic comment on Judah's last king, Zedekiah (*Tsidqiyah*), meaning "YHWH is our righteousness."[235] This redemption will be so radical that again it is affirmed that it will replace the Mosaic Exodus in importance.[236]

While Jer 25:8-11 describes the exile that is the punishment for sin, vv. 12-14 describes the restoration.[237] Although seventy[238] years of exile is punishment, it is also an assurance that the curse is not permanent. The restoration is described in terms of the punishment of the Babylonians. As YHWH had punished the land for Israel's sin, YHWH would now punish the land of Babylon for their crimes.

An important passage in Jeremiah is the letter to the exiles (29:4-23) which explains what YHWH wants obedient exile life to look like. They are to see this experience as a correction and not as an abandonment. Jeremiah reaffirms the plan to limit the exile to seventy years. This letter includes promises that would have given

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[234] Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 491.
[235] Gowan, *Theology,* 116.
[236] "So definitive of the Lord's way and so powerful an act of redemption will be the Lord's deliverance of this destroyed and punished people that it will replace the exodus as the modifying clause whenever the Lord's name is taken in oath." Miller, *NIB* 6:745.
[237] LXX omits all mention of Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon and shortens the passage. It is uncertain whether the LXX or MT represents the more original form of the text. See Bright, *Jeremiah,* 163.
[238] There is some uncertainty concerning the number "seventy." Was it symbolic or was it a round figure for the approximate length of the exile? Thompson notes that the figure was not exact and that Jeremiah likely had a symbolic meaning. *Jeremiah,* 514. Miller takes it as equivalent to a generation. *NIB* 6:762.

tremendous encouragement to the exiles: "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" (Jer 29:11). Gowan commenting on this chapter and ch. 24 notes: "In these two chapters exile has thus taken on a radically new meaning. Prior to this it had been wholly negative, but Babylon now becomes a place of waiting, from which something new and transformed will come."[239] It has become apparent that restoration is not to be an instant solution but rather the culmination of process that begins with obedient exilic living.

Jeremiah 30:1-11 describes the restoration of both Israel and Judah from captivity. Brueggemann takes this one step further:

> 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 = life. Jeremiah announces the central scandal of the Bible, that radical loss and discontinuity do happen and are the source of real newness.[240]

It is no surprise that as resurrection imagery began to appear in the Hebrew Bible, it emerged in the context of territorial exile and restoration.

Jeremiah 32:8-15 is a unique prophetic act in that the message is presented through Jeremiah's purchase of a field in Anathoth.[241] Even though Jeremiah was the loudest predictor of the exile, by purchasing the land he was powerfully demonstrating that the exile was temporary and that people would purchase fields and vineyards once more. By this act, Jeremiah was made a sign of hope when there was no reason to

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[239] Gowan, *Theology,* 116.
[240] Brueggemann, *Land,* 115.
[241] Habel compares this to Abraham's purchase of a field in Genesis. *Land,* 91.

hope.[242] Gowan notes that, despite the fact that Jeremiah never occupied the field, "this is an important passage for the book's transition from judgment to promise, for it connects hope with an anticipatory experience of the prophet himself."[243]

Although earlier Jeremiah had commanded the people to circumcise their hearts, in 31:33 and 32:39-41 he prophesies a spiritual transformation that will make obedience possible. It is described as a new covenant but it is a covenant that is still related to the land (32:41). "If there was to be any hope for a better future that would not be perverted immediately by human sinfulness, people themselves will have to be transformed, and this prophet believed that was God's intention."[244] Commenting on these and other similar promises (Ezek 36:26-27), Brueggemann notes that these expansions of Torah "offer Torah as a vision and possibility for a peaceable, well-ordered world, within which Israel can practice joyous community as Yahweh's blessed people."[245] In other words, it is only by this transformation that the ultimate fulfillment of the promises to Abraham will take place.

In Jer 33:6-18, the promises of restoration are brought together. YHWH will bring healing and forgiveness to the people, the land will be restored to its fruitfulness and the Davidic king will once more reign. There is significance beyond the land of Israel as Thompson notes: "There is here an affirmation of Yahweh's universal dominion over the nations, which is by implication an affirmation of monotheism."[246] The blessing to other nations has obvious connections to the Abrahamic covenant. This promise is specifically linked back to the Davidic covenant.

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[242] Gowan, *Theology,* 110.
[243] Gowan, *Theology,* 110.
[244] Gowan, *Theology,* 117.
[245] Brueggemann, *Theology,* 594-95.
[246] Thompson, *Jeremiah,* 599.

Oracles of Judgment

Ezekiel 7 gives a grim picture of judgment that is coming upon the land.[247] It is important to note that the land is אדמה ("soil")[248] and not ארץ. Darr suggests that this word "carries a special pathos: a cherished, life-sustaining gift is about to be destroyed by the one who gave it."[249] The phrase "soil of Israel" reflects "the strong emotional bond between the land and the people's sense of nationhood."[250] It is also described as being an end that is coming upon the four corners of the land (v. 2),[251] and the land as being full of bloodshed and violence (v. 23). All levels of authority: prophets, priests, elders, kings and princes, will no longer be available for assistance (vv. 26-27).

In Ezekiel 10 there is a description of the Temple that has much in common with Isaiah 6, including the visible presence, cherubim/seraphim and the burning coals. However, in Isaiah 6 the presence of God was revealed to call Isaiah to preach to the people. In Ezekiel 10 there is a sense that it is too late for sermons of repentance. The coals that cleansed Isaiah to minister will now be used to purify by destruction. The heart of the passage is v. 18 as the glory of YHWH departs from the Temple. Block notes that "the departure of the glory signals the end of a relationship that had existed for almost four centuries. The divine king has abandoned his residence."[252]

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[247] Ezekiel 7 is closely related to Amos 5:18-20 and 8:2-3, 9-10 and has even been described as a sermon based on these passages. Katheryn Pfisterer Darr, "Ezekiel," *NIB* 6:1165.
[248] This phrase "the soil of Israel" appears only in Ezekiel (17 times).
[249] Darr, *NIB* 6:1165.
[250] Daniel I. Block, *Ezekiel 1-24* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 240.
[251] The specification of Israel and the inclusion of the four corners creates a tension for the reader regarding how extensive the destruction will be. According to Block: "Ezekiel has hereby adapted an eschatological term for use in a non-eschatological context to emphasize the severity of the disaster that awaits the land." *Ezekiel 1-24*, 249. Brownlee agrees that this is in relation to Israel. W.H. Brownlee, *Ezekiel 1-19* (WBC; Waco: Word, 1986), 106.
[252] Block, *Ezekiel 1-24*, 327-27.

With the removal of the glory of YHWH, there is a sense that the holy land has become less holy. According to Brueggemann, the removal of the glory is a major innovation of Ezekiel:

> The tradition of Ezekiel values the temple, but also breaks the one-to-one linkage between Yahweh and temple that had been featured in high temple theology. The glory of Yahweh, Yahweh's sovereign presence, may settle in the temple, but it is more than and other than the temple, and may indeed be seen and available elsewhere than in the temple.[253]

Regarding the description of the removed glory, Clements agrees when he says "this prophet has become our major bridge between the older pictorial symbolism of the physical temple (its iconography), in all its ornate splendor, and the inner spiritual vision of the divine heavenly reality."[254] This image of YHWH's presence leaving the Temple sets up both the crisis and hope of Israel. Before the people are exiled from their land, YHWH is exiled from his land. Before the people can return to their land, YHWH must return to his land.[255]

Ezekiel 33:21-33 seeks to explain the reasons for the judgment, aimed not only at the exiles but at those who remained in the land. "Those still in the land saw themselves as religious pioneers, typologically reliving not the occupation achieved by Israel under Joshua, but Abraham's earlier occupation."[256] Despite comparisons to Abraham by some who saw the punishment as unjust, it is demonstrated that this is a reasonable judgment for the people's sins. If the people want to be compared to Abraham they must follow his example of righteousness, which they have not. According to Block:

> The lack of spiritual sensitivity and the smug self-interest evident in the quotation contrast with Abraham's total dependence of God. ... The faith

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[253] Brueggemann, *Theology*, 672.
[254] Ronald E. Clements, *Ezekiel* (Louisville: Westminster, 1996), 45.
[255] Brueggemann, *Land*, 130.
[256] Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1990), 153.

> of Abraham has been replaced by Darwinian materialism – the fittest have survived. ... The survivors' world has shrunk to the physical property on which they are trying to scrounge a living.[257]

This contrast helps to give meaning for the desperate existence of the people left in the land.

Oracles of Restoration

Ezekiel 11:16-25 contains a promise of restoration to the land. Block notes: "In pointed contradiction of the claims of the Jerusalemites, and in terms reminiscent of the patriarchal promise (Gen. 15:18) and the granting of the land to Israel under Joshua (Josh. 1:2), Yahweh announces that after the people have been regathered, he will grant (*nātan*) to them the land of Israel."[258] Like Jeremiah[259] and Deuteronomy, this passage sees the need for a spiritual transformation for this to be possible. Now, instead of speaking of a circumcised heart, it is an undivided heart and a new spirit. Darr notes that "obedience to the Lord's statutes and ordinances will be the consequence of Yahweh's 'organ transplant' and the basis of the covenant God reinstitutes with this people."[260]

One of the most famous passages in Ezekiel is the valley of the dry bones[261] found in ch. 37. This passage is especially important for any discussion on the resurrection as it uses that particular image.[262] However, most scholars see this passage as being primarily about the restoration of Israel.[263] This passage is connected to the Eden narrative in the similarity between the breathing of life into a lifeless body (Gen

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[257] Daniel I. Block, *Ezekiel 25-48* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 260-61.
[258] Block, *Ezekiel 1-24*, 352.
[259] Block notes the reliance upon Jeremiah. *Ezekiel 1-24*, 352. Brownlee suggests that Ezekiel may have become familiar with Jeremiah's concept of the new covenant during his exile in Egypt. *Ezekiel 1-19*, 164.
[260] Darr, *NIB* 6:1188.
[261] Block explains that even the presence of unburied bones reflects the idea of covenant curses. *Ezekiel 25-48*, 377.
[262] The connection of this passage to the resurrection of the dead will be discussed in the next chapter.
[263] Darr, *NIB* 6:1502-3.

2:7).[264] Not only will YHWH bring the people back to the land, he will place/settle/establish them in their homeland (v. 12). The two part process of the resurrection image is important in explaining YHWH's intentions:

> For too long the nation had presumed upon their relationship with Yahweh by virtue of their presence in the land. Now Yahweh announces the good news that his physical revivification of the nation will be accompanied by a spiritual revival as well. In the end they will be reconstituted not only as a nation in their hereditary homeland but also as the people of Yahweh.[265]

The extent of YHWH's restoration of Israel could only be explained in terms of a human resurrection. This description explains the power of the restoration that YHWH would bring about:

> So far as detail is concerned, even though nothing is added to the portrayal of the new Israel that has not already been given, there is a new sense of its certainty. It is now clothed with a symbolism that emphasizes its total dependence on the power of God. Human weakness and emptiness and divine power and fullness are here set out as two complimentary realities that will ensure that Israel has a future.[266]

Through the image of resurrection, hope has been clearly presented to Israel as an attainable object.[267]

In Ezek 40-43 there is the lengthy description of a new Temple.[268] While this passage is not specifically about the land, it has been seen that the Temple is very closely connected to the land, being the most holy spot on the land.[269] Darr explains the purpose of these chapters for Ezekiel: "In this, his fourth and final vision report, Ezekiel describes a perfectly ordered Israelite society living in a perfectly ordered homeland under the

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[264] Both use "breathe" (from the root נפח) as well as see two stages of putting together a body and then giving life. Darr, *NIB* 6:1500.
[265] Block, *Ezekiel 25-48*, 382.
[266] Clements, *Ezekiel,* 166.
[267] Allen suggests that this prophetic experience "contained the seeds of hope for the people of God." *Ezekiel 20-48*, 187.
[268] It is uncertain as to whether this was to be seen as taking place in the eschatological future or if it was symbolic of something that would take place in history. See Block, *Ezekiel 25-48*, 504-5.
[269] Clements explains that "the primary feature of the restored Israel is to be the new temple." *Ezekiel,* 176.

leadership of a perfectly ordered priesthood serving in a perfectly ordered Temple complex."[270] Particularly important is 43:4 where the glory of YHWH finally returns to the Temple. Apóstolo, in discussing the various meanings of "Israel," particularly in Ezekiel, notes that the Ezekiel's understanding of the "true Israel" is a future reality, perhaps as a critique against of contemporary understandings.[271]

In Ezek 45:1-12, 48:1-29 there is a division of the land that is reminiscent of the division in Joshua 13-21. "The use of the lot reflects the conviction that Yahweh owns the land and has authority to distribute it to whomever he pleases."[272] Ackroyd considers this spiritualized geography and states that: "In a real sense, too, it is a new land, a land reordered so that it may adequately express both the restoration of ancient splendour and the establishment of a right relationship."[273]

Ezekiel 47:1-12 describes a river flowing from the Temple, bringing life to dead places. Imagery in this passage looks back to the Garden of Eden.[274] Ackroyd explains that in this description, "the link between the presence of God and the life of land and people—an ancient motif of Temple ideology—is made clear."[275] It is important to note that: "The revitalization of the landscape is not achieved through human ingenuity, technology, or effort; it is the result of Yahweh's lifting of the curse and replacing it with his blessing."[276]

Ezekiel 47:13-23 offers a new description of the boundaries of the land that YHWH has offered as an inheritance. Block explains the significance of this passage:

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[270] Darr, *NIB* 6:1532.
[271] Apóstolo, "On the Elusiveness and Malleability of 'Israel,'" 18.
[272] Block, *Ezekiel 25-48*, 651.
[273] Ackroyd, *Exile,* 114.
[274] Darr, *NIB* 6:1595.
[275] Ackroyd, *Exile,* 112.
[276] Block, *Ezekiel 25-48*, 701-2.

> From a human standpoint, the future of the nation was hopeless. But in this divine word Ezekiel hears a promise that the curse of intertribal alienation, separation from Yahweh, and exile from the land would be reversed. The command to apportion the land symbolizes the culmination of Israel's rehabilitation and declares concretely that *shalom* among deity, nation, and land has been fully restored.[277]

In this passage Ezekiel takes on the role of Moses in identifying the limits before entrance into the Promised Land (Num 34:1-15).[278]

CONCLUSION

The idyllic traditions of Eden, Abraham, Moses, Joshua and David/Solomon described things the way they should be: a secure land with abundant provision and intimate fellowship with YHWH. Although they hinted at the possibility of loss and exile, they were generally positive. At the same time, they created a tension in that not all that was promised was fulfilled, even in the supposed ideal descriptions.

The prophetic traditions of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel take the Hebrew faith from the assurance of these promises on a trajectory towards increasing uncertainty and instability. It is not a complete innovation as the prophetic traditions build on the idyllic traditions that included threats of loss. The possibilities of exile suggested[279] in the idyllic traditions become certainties in the prophetic oracles. Israel has sinned and has broken the covenant. The only option that YHWH has is to follow through with the promise of exile. The land that seemed to be secure because of their relationship with YHWH is now being taken away.

However, the prophetic traditions are not just about exile. There are strong restoration themes found in all three prophets. YHWH would not leave his people in

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[277] Block, *Ezekiel 25-48*, 709.
[278] Darr, *NIB* 6:1600.
[279] Deuteronomy 30:1-10 offers more than a suggestion and as is much closer in tone to the prophetic traditions concerning exile.

exile but would return them to the land. What is ironic is that it is only in a post-exilic restoration that YHWH promises to remake the land in ways similar to the idyllic traditions, especially the Garden of Eden. YHWH's promise is not simple occupation of territory but rather abundant blessings that will result in the Gentiles' envy and ultimately servitude.

These themes create a new tension for Israel. Although many Jews returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt the Temple approximately seventy years after the exile as Jeremiah predicted, the Promised Land was still not as secure or prosperous as these promises suggested. This left the people looking for some future fulfillment, either in history or in the eschatological future. This point seemed to be something described as a spiritual transformation of the people, either as the circumcision/transformation of the heart or as an outpouring of the Spirit. It would not be until a radical spiritual transformation of the people where God enabled them to keep the covenant that their inheritance would be secure.

CHAPTER FOUR:

EXILE AND THE DAWN OF THE RESURRECTION

As has been demonstrated, Israel's earliest hope was primarily focused on the land. The idyllic traditions looked to a secure possession of a large geographical area with abundant provisions and secure borders. As Israel and Judah approached and experienced the exile, the confidence in that land was greatly shaken. The depth of the people's disobedience was acknowledged and the unlikelihood of an easy possession of the land became apparent. The exilic prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, described God's judgment but also looked to the hope of restoration. However, that restoration was described often not as a simple return to the land but rather some sort of eschatological transformation. There was to be a transformation of the land as it returned to edenic conditions and a transformation of God's people as the tendency toward sin and disobedience was removed.

While this eschatological transformation contained the seeds for what would later be understood as the resurrection, there are some clearer hints of resurrection in the Old Testament. The three most important passages regarding the resurrection are found in the books of Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. While there are difficulties in dating the Isaiah[280] and Daniel[281] passages, all three passages are set in a historical context connected to the exilic era and are meant to be seen in that light.[282]

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[280] See previous chapter.
[281] See below.
[282] Even with a Maccabean date for Daniel, there is a strong connection with national insecurity.

ISAIAH

The first passage of importance regarding the resurrection is from Isaiah 26.[283] This section appears in something known as the "Isaiah Apocalypse," which is notoriously difficult to date.[284] What is important is that this passage is attributed to Isaiah, a prophet who preached in the midst of the northern exile and the threat of the southern exile. This resurrection passage is in fact very closely connected with the hope for the land.

Isaiah 26:19 states: "Your dead shall live, their corpses shall rise. O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a radiant dew, and the earth (אֶרֶץ) will give birth to those long dead." On the surface this seems to be a straightforward resurrection passage, plainly describing the raising of the dead.[285] This has led some scholars to give it a late date as it reflects the theology of later apocalyptic traditions.[286]

However, there are some challenges to this interpretation. Isaiah 26:14 explicitly states: "The dead do not live; shades do not rise — because you have punished and destroyed them, and wiped out all memory of them." This seems like a contradiction, although it could be a poetic technique to establish the impossible condition in which God puts forth his power.[287]

The opening verses (26:1-2) apparently indicate a national context for the prophecy. This has led many scholars to see this as a use of resurrection as an image of

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[283] This study is based on the Hebrew text. Pearson has done an interesting study on the LXX of this text and the influence of Greek mythology. Brook Pearson, "Resurrection and the Judgment of the Titans," in Porter, Hayes and Tombs (eds.), *Resurrection,* 33-51.

[284] For an overview on the issues surrounding the Isaiah Apocalypse, see Kaiser, *Isaiah 13-39,* 173-79.

[285] Oswalt calls this verse "the highest conception of the resurrection in the OT." *Isaiah 1-39,* 485.

[286] Kaiser takes Isa 25:8a and 26:19 as later interpolations as they contradict the traditional Hebrew view of the afterlife. *Isaiah 13-39,* 218.

[287] Johnston takes v. 14 as referring to foreign oppressors who will not be raised, while some Israelites will be raised. *Shades,* 225. At the same time Johnston acknowledges that this is primarily about national restoration.

the restoration of Israel as a nation in its hereditary territory.[288] Stanley Porter notes: "The passage is unclear, but is probably speaking of corporate or nationalistic revival, and not a bodily resurrection, not clearly found until its later LXX interpretation."[289] Gene Tucker agrees when he states: "When the verse is seen in its context to function as an oracle of salvation responding to the prayer of petition that precedes it, the most plausible interpretation is to understand the lines as an affirmation that the Lord will give life to the community that considers itself as good as dead."[290]

It is likely that the focus of the passage is the restoration of Israel.[291] At the same time, it is significant that it is resurrection that is used as the image. If resurrection had no power as an image, it would not have been used to describe the hope of the nation. The people must have had some concept of a bodily resurrection in order for it to convey the purposes of the prophet.[292] Wright explains: "It is still possible, of course, that here resurrection is, as we shall see in Ezekiel, a metaphor for national restoration; but the wider passage, in which God's renewal of the whole cosmos is in hand, opens the way for

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[288] George W.E. Nickelsburg, Jr., explains that this imagery is used elsewhere (Hos 5:15-6:3) for national restoration, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 17-18. Cf. Goldingay, *Isaiah,* 146. Gowan sees it either as referring to the nation, but if it is about the individual, it must be a late addition (*Theology,* 76). Schmitz suggests that "the passage envisions a political revival of the battered Judahite realm metaphorically," with a conceptual similarity to Ezek 37:1-14, but also claims: "The Isaian image is an adumbration of a mental representation already well formed but sparsely articulated in early Judaism" (Schmitz, "Grammar of Resurrection," 148-49).

[289] Stanley E. Porter, "Resurrection, the Greeks and the New Testament," in Porter, Hayes and Tombs (eds.), *Resurrection,* 58.

[290] Tucker, *NIB* 6:222.

[291] Segal (who accepts this passage as being from the historical Isaiah) sees this passage as a reflection on the destruction brought to Jerusalem by the Assyrians, interpreted through Canaanite myth. *Life*, 260-61.

[292] While stating that this passage is not meant to be literal, Segal does admit: "this very concrete resurrection imagery suggests that the belief was present in Israelite society" (*Life*, 258). Yamauchi accepts this and Dan 12:2 as the only Old Testament references to the resurrection ("Ancient Near East," 46).

us to propose that the reference to resurrection is intended to denote actual concrete events."[293] Nickelsburg explains the relation of resurrection to the restoration:

> Part of this restoration will include the resurrection of the dead Israelites. The restoration and the resurrection are acts of divine judgment. The righteous have been unjustly slain by the oppressor. By raising their bodies from the dead, Yahweh adjudicates the specific injustice. He gives back the lives that were wrongly taken.[294]

An interest in life and death is demonstrated elsewhere in the Isaiah Apocalypse, where YHWH is described as swallowing up death (Isa 25:8-9),[295] suggesting that these issues were also of interest in Isa 26:19. This passage became very influential on later reflections of the resurrection.

EZEKIEL

Perhaps the most well known passage using resurrection imagery is Ezekiel 37. In this passage, Ezekiel is brought into a valley full of dry bones. Ezekiel is told to prophesy to the bones, which results in their bodies coming together, piece by piece. The animation of the bodies is very similar to the creation of the first human in the Garden (Gen 2:7). First the body is physically put together and then life is created by the infusion of רוח (breath/spirit). What is described is the apparent resurrection of a group of people during the time of Ezekiel.[296]

If the Isaiah passage left it open as to the bodily or national nature of the resurrection, Ezek 37:11 explicitly states that the bones are the whole house of Israel. The opening of the graves is a picture of the return to the land (v. 12) and the breathing of the spirit as the placing on their own soil (v. 14). It is very clear that the resurrection of

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[293] Wright, *Resurrection*, 117.
[294] Nickelsburg, *Resurrection,* 18.
[295] Segal sees this picture of the perfected future as using the motif of Ba'al's victory over Mot. *Life*, 258.
[296] Segal rejects Zoroastrian influence, despite some similarities, due to chronological problems. *Life,* 256.

the dry bones is used as a picture of the restoration of Israel, particularly in reference to the return to the Promised Land. Clements states:

> It is a description of an act of resurrection, although we must recognize that it is not about personal resurrection and life after death but about the resurrection of the nation. Israel will be reborn. To this extent, the envisioned picture says nothing that Ezekiel has not already said in his description of national renewal in chapter 36.[297]

Wright explains: "There should not, then, be any question but that the original purpose was to provide a highly charged and vivid metaphor of the way in which unclean Israel would be cleansed, exiled Israel restored to the land, and scattered Israel regathered, by a powerful and covenant-renewing act of new creation."[298]

At the same time, as in Isa 26, it must be asked: why was resurrection used as an image? If a bodily resurrection was just gibberish to the people, why use that to describe what would happen to the nation?[299] The use of resurrection for Israel indicates a somewhat developed understanding of what could happen to an individual after death.[300] Segal notes: "Even if the passage is not meant to be a literal description of and promise of life after death, it can certainly furnish a new vocabulary of images of resurrection directly into Israelite thought and thus provide the language for belief in life after death in future generations."[301] Despite the firm territorial focus in Ezek 37, Wright does admit:

> This is where the solid hope of the earlier period (hope for nation, family and land) joins up with the emerging belief in the creator's faithfulness

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[297] Clements, *Ezekiel*, 165.
[298] Wright, *Resurrection,* 120.
[299] Segal sees the Isaiah and Ezekiel passages as "the reservoir of images that illustrate what resurrection means." (*Life,* 261). Johnston disagrees with the idea that prior knowledge of a bodily resurrection is assumed in this passage (*Shades,* 224). Darr states that it was the common knowledge that bodily resurrection is impossible that gave power to the promise of restoration to the nation, (*NIB* 6:1502-3). It is possible that the writer is using an image, not of a developed doctrine within Israel, but of a Hellenistic tradition (see chapter six).
[300] Block states that, at this point, the Jews had begun to grasp for the idea of resurrection but that it had not yet matured. *Ezekiel 25-48*, 375.
[301] Segal, *Life,* 257. Cf. *Sib.Or.* 2:221-226.

> even beyond the grave. This coming together of (what seem to us) different strands of thought demands closer investigation.[302]

This convergence will be examined in the chapters that follow.

DANIEL

The book of Daniel is dated to the Maccabean era by many scholars.[303] However, the narratives and prophecies are all attributed to an individual who lived during the exile. The exilic background is the necessary context in which the stories must be understood. Daniel is portrayed as an exile, who rises to a position of influence in the Babylonian and Persian empires. As great as his political stature, Daniel's greatest position is that of having access to the deepest mysteries of God.

Near the end of his career, Daniel is given a vision of what would take place in the future, in the time when the great prince Michael would arise (Dan 12:1). One of the things that would accompany his appearance is this:

> Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. (Dan 12:2-3)

This is the clearest description of resurrection in the Old Testament.

Although it is about a bodily resurrection, there are also applications of this passage to a national restoration. Norman Porteous explains: "It seems wisest to suppose that he is not primarily concerned here with the whole problem of life after death and

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[302] Wright, *Resurrection,* 121.

[303] Montgomery sees Daniel as the first specimen of technical apocrypha with visions that belong to a genre known from the third century. James A. Montgomery, *Book of Daniel* (ICC; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927), 76-78. Porteous argues for a date shortly before 164 BCE. *Daniel*, 13. Collins argues that Dan 7-12 are Maccabean additions to earlier folk tales found in Dan 1-6. John Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 88. Goldingay argues: "Whether the stories are history or fiction, the visions actual prophecy or quasi-prophecy, written by Daniel or by someone else, in the sixth century B.C., the second, or somewhere in between, makes surprisingly little difference to the book's exegesis." John E. Goldingay, *Daniel* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1989), xl.

certainly not with the fate of the individual as opposed to that of the righteous community, since it is undoubtedly the coming kingdom of God which he has in view."[304] John Goldingay explains the connection between the individual and the nation:

> There is both a community and an individual aspect to this awakening, as in the Psalms. Part of the sufferers' affliction is that one way or another it deprives them of a place in the people of God; their awakening restores them to that. Dan 12 promises the awakening of the people individually, but with a view to their sharing a corporate destiny.[305]

The author has a definite interest in the resurrection but has not lost sight of the hopes of a national restoration.

There are a number of aspects of this passage that must be noted. First of all, it seems to be connected with the Isa 26:19 passage, with the common image of dust and awakening.[306] Perhaps Dan 12:2-3 is a commentary and development of the earlier Isaiah passage. Nickelsburg notes one important development: "For Isaiah the resurrection of the righteous is *in itself* vindication for the righteous. For Daniel resurrection is *a means* by which both the righteous and the wicked dead are enabled to receive their respective vindication or condemnation."[307] Secondly, unlike the Isaiah and Ezekiel passages, resurrection is promised for both the righteous and the wicked. While this is not yet a full general resurrection,[308] it does broaden who will be involved in the resurrection. Finally, the resurrected righteous being described as shining as the stars seems to be a reference to

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[304] Norman W. Porteous, *Daniel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965), 170. This does not remove the importance of this passage for the understanding of the resurrection but rather demonstrates that at this point bodily resurrection and national restoration were still very closely linked.
[305] Goldingay, *Daniel*, 307.
[306] "The writer of Daniel has taken the ambiguous prophecy of Isaiah in a literal sense." Segal, *Life,* 263. Segal also notes the influence of Isa 66.
[307] Nickelsburg, *Resurrection,* 19.
[308] Johnston notes that the resurrection is only for a segment of the Jewish people in one generation, *Shades,* 226.

angelic transformation.[309] Astral transformation was a pagan image of the dead reaching a god-like state, a concept that was adapted to Jewish sensibilities by referring to angels rather than gods.[310] There is some irony in this passage, if indeed it has a Maccabean origin, that those who stay loyal to Torah are the ones that will receive the ideal pagan afterlife of apotheosis.

Although Daniel may be contemporary with other apocalyptic literature from the intertestamental period, such as *1 Enoch*, Dan 12:2-3 is the only undisputed reference to the resurrection in the Old Testament.[311] At the same time, this promise of resurrection must be seen in the context of the exilic restoration traditions. Pheme Perkins explains the important change in this passage:

> But this passage moves from the horizontal dimensions of changes in the nation's historical fate to the vertical one. The solution to the dilemma faced by the righteous is no longer found in Israel's triumph over the nations of the earth. Instead, it belongs to a completely new order of reality. Here the judgment does not concern nations but individuals within Israel.[312]

Regarding the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked: "This is how Israel's long exile will reach its climax, how the arrogant pagans will be judged, how the righteous will be delivered."[313]

CONCLUSION

It was demonstrated in the first chapter, as Richard Bauckham states, that: "evidence for a belief in life after death in the Old Testament is, at best, minimal."[314] The afterlife held

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[309] Segal, *Life,* 265.
[310] Note, however, in 1 Sam 28:13, the deceased Samuel is called an אלהים.
[311] It may be significant that Daniel did not make it into the Prophets but rather the Writings, the last section of the Hebrew Bible to be canonized. Even if this passage is purely Maccabean, it still demonstrates that resurrection imagery is strongest in terms of political and geographical uncertainty.
[312] Pheme Perkins, *Resurrection* (New York: Doubleday, 1984), 40.
[313] Wright, *Resurrection,* 114.

only a shadowy existence in Sheol. True hope was only to be found in a long life in the Promised Land, a life demonstrated in a number of idyllic traditions.

Over time, the stability of the hope in the land became much weaker. It was not just local conflict with other similar sized nations. The empires of Assyria and Babylon revealed that Israel could very easily lose all its hope with the sentence of exile. As the prophets who operated near the time of the exile proclaimed oracles of judgment, so did they also prophesy about a future restoration.

A number of images were used to describe that restoration and one image began to transform the traditional view of the afterlife. Ezekiel 37 with its vision of the resuscitation of dead bones is firmly in the tradition of land restoration. Yet, the image that is given reveals a crack in the pessimistic tradition of the afterlife. It was not a big step to move from the resuscitation as an illustration to seeing it as a real possibility for the people of Israel. Isaiah 26:19 holds more promise for the development of the resurrection. While still planted in the hope of national restoration, the prophet did look to a time when Israel's national hopes would be fulfilled through a bodily resurrection. Dan 12:2-3 is almost universally agreed to be a description of personal resurrection. At the same time, there is still aspects of the national restoration tradition.

The beginnings of the resurrection beliefs of Israel are very closely connected to the hopes for the land. Because of the late date and relatively minor role of these traditions, Johnston can say: "Thus resurrection remained marginal to Old Testament belief, whether chronologically or theologically."[315] This is true of the Old Testament as land hopes continued to overshadow the belief in resurrection. However, it will be

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[314] Richard Bauckham, "Life, Death, and the Afterlife in Second Temple Judaism," in Richard N. Longenecker (ed.), *Life in the Face of Death,* 81.
[315] Johnston, *Shades,* 227.

demonstrated that as disappointment in the unstable nature of the return from exile increased, the focus began to centre on the eschatological and transformational aspects of the restoration promises. Fed by the convergence of land and resurrection images in Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, what began as a symbol soon took a life of its own.

CHAPTER FIVE:

THE ROLE OF THE LAND IN EARLY JUDAISM

It has been demonstrated that a development in the understanding of the land from the idyllic traditions to the prophetic traditions connected to the exile took place. Since it is difficult to date each of these traditions in relation to one another, more information is required to chart a trajectory. Although dating is not as difficult for the next set of texts, the naming of the category is a challenge. There is a temptation to refer to this material as intertestamental literature. However, texts such as *1 Enoch* are contemporary with Daniel, and others such as *4 Ezra* post-date much of the New Testament. Pseudepigraphic literature has more promise but has its own difficulties because it excludes some of the Qumran texts. Instead, the material in this chapter will be referred to as early Jewish texts and will include works traditionally found in the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

PSEUDEPIGRAPHA AND APOCRYPHA

1 Enoch

1 Enoch 5[316] speaks of the eschatological "in those days" when the sinners will be punished and the righteous will be blessed. Verse 7 specifically says: "But to the elect there shall be light, joy, and peace, and they shall inherit the earth." This is interpreted by Mark Elliott as being not the whole world but rather the covenantal promise of the land.[317] In some ways this restoration seems to represent this worldly vindication[318] and

[316] Dated as late pre-Christian. E. Isaac, "1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch," *OTP*, vol. 1, 7.
[317] Elliott, *Survivors*, 86.
[318] John Collins suggests that the promise is of utopian life on earth. *Imagination,* 49.

yet within the Book of Watchers there are also cosmic aspects (1:3ff.). The author seems comfortable combining different views of judgment and vindication.[319]

In the Similitudes (*1 En* 37-71),[320] it is not entirely clear the nature of the place where the righteous will dwell. *1 Enoch* 45:4-5 states:

> On that day, I shall cause my Elect One to dwell among them, I shall transform heaven and make it a blessing of light forever. I shall (also) transform the earth and make it a blessing, and cause my Elect One to dwell in her.

This seems to be an expansion of Isa 65:17 which spoke of the creation of a new heavens and a new earth.[321] In this passage, the author is speaking of "the eschatological *communio sanctorum*, the society of the holy, the new, distinctive, eschatological people of God, consisting of both the elect in heaven and the elect on earth."[322]

1 Enoch 90:20[323] speaks of "a throne [that] was erected in a pleasant land." Davies notes that as "cosmic and supraterrestrial as are its visions of the future, at the End it was in the pleasant land of Israel that the throne of Yahweh was finally to be erected."[324] In many ways it looks as if it is simply a return to the land. However, Russell explains that this is more complicated: "The city of Jerusalem, as in the previous section, is to be the centre of the new kingdom. But here it is not simply a purified city; it is an entirely new city set up by God to replace the old and on its original site (90.28f.)."[325] The apocalyptic restoration is in continuity with the old understanding of the land but is also a transformation.

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[319] Elliott, *Survivors*, 528.
[320] 105-64 BCE. Isaac, "1 Enoch," 7.
[321] "The culmination is reminiscent of Isaiah 65, where the new heaven and new earth are interpreted as a transformed state where successive generations live in peace." Collins, *Imagination*, 65.
[322] S. Mowinckel, *He That Cometh* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1956), 290.
[323] 165-161 BCE. Isaac, "1 Enoch," 7.
[324] Davies, *Land*, 52.
[325] D. S. Russell, *Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964), 287.

The Apocalypse of Weeks (*1 En* 93:1-10; 91:12-17)[326] seems to suggest a restoration of the kingdom (presumably in the traditional territory), a rebuilding of the Temple (vv. 12-13) and a departing of sinners from the whole earth (v. 14). However, this earthly kingdom is temporary, being replaced by an eternal heaven (vv. 15-17).[327] As elsewhere in *1 Enoch*, there is a close connection between the earthly territory and the eternal.

Jubilees

Jubilees 1:22-25[328] contains a prediction of the restoration of the people. In the tradition of Deut 30:6, God promises: "I shall cut off the foreskin of their heart and the foreskin of the heart of their descendants. And I shall create for them a holy spirit, and I shall purify them so that they will not turn away from following me from that day forever." (1:23) Building on the Deuteronomic tradition from Ezekiel, the author continues the belief that perpetual restoration is only possible through a transformation from God.

Jubilees 15:26-28 demonstrates salvation is based on membership in the covenant of Abraham, marked by circumcision. Those that do not have the sign of circumcision will be rooted out of the earth/land. Those that do have the sign are promised fellowship with angels. Sanders notes: "Salvation here appears to be both eternal (with God and his angels) and temporal (in possession of the land), but in any case we see whatever salvation is, it is Israel's."[329]

Jubilees 23:22-32 describes the future in terms of both judgment and restoration. Life will become very difficult and "much blood will be shed upon the earth" (v. 23),

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[326] Early pre-Maccabean era. Isaac, "1 Enoch," 7.
[327] Russell, *Method and Message,* 291-92.
[328] Second Century BCE. O.S. Wintermute, "Jubilees," *OTP,* vol. 2, 35.
[329] E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 367.

although a time will come when people begin again to search the law and return to righteousness (v.26). There will be peace for the people and all enemies will be driven out (vv. 29-30). This sounds like territorial restoration. However, there is a reference to the resting of bones and the rejoicing of spirits (v. 31) which seems to be a reference to the afterlife, although without a resurrection.[330] Restoration is only complete when the dead experience God's blessing as well.

Jubilees 30:21-23 offers a warning against breaking the covenant. It speaks of those who are "rooted out from the land" (v. 22), which is similar to the Old Testament consequences for covenantal disobedience. However, along with those who are rooted from the land are those who are destroyed. Elliott notes that *yetehag*^{w}*alu* implies more than an earthly destruction and suggests an otherworldly judgment.[331]

Jubilees 50:5 expresses the hope of the author:

> And jubilees will pass until Israel is purified from all the sin of fornication, and defilement, and uncleanness, and sin and error. And they will dwell in confidence in all the land. And then it will not have any Satan or any evil (one). And the land will be purified from that time and forever.

The desire is to see a time when the land is secure as a result of the covenant obedience of the people. However, this is not just a return after exile. It describes a time when there has been a major change in reality as Satan is removed and land-depriving sin is no longer possible.

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[330] Collins, *Imagination*, 82.
[331] Elliott, *Survivors*, 92. Cf. 288-89.

Sibylline Oracles

Sibylline Oracle 3:702-709[332] offers a picture of God's people living peacefully around the Temple,[333] protected continually by divine assistance. 3:741-59 then goes on to describe the day of judgment which promises a return to edenic conditions, not just for Israel but for the whole earth. The eschatological kingdom described in 3:767-795 is that of a peaceful kingdom[334] that centers around the house of God and of a creation that has been transformed in terms of Isa 65:25.

Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs

T.Simeon 6[335] speaks of the blessing of Israel in terms of the land of Ham being punished and the glorification of Shem. When this takes place, not only will the earth be at rest, but people will have mastery over evil spirits, presumably a freedom from sin.

T.Levi 13 is a poem of praise of devotion to the Law. In this poem, the author acknowledges the insecurity of the territory and the need to have a more secure inheritance:

> Acquire wisdom in fear of the Lord because if a captivity occurs, if cities and territories are laid waste, if silver and gold and every possession are lost, nothing can take away the wisdom of the blindness of impiety and the obtuseness of sin. For if anyone preserves himself from these evil deeds, his wisdom shall be glorious, even among his opponents; it will be found to be a homeland in a foreign territory, and a friend in the midst of his enemies. (13:7-8)

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[332] 163-45 BCE. J.J. Collins, "Sibylline Oracles," *OTP,* vol. 1, 355.

[333] "The Jerusalem temple is of vital importance for the true religion and should become a place of worship for all nations." Collins, *Imagination,* 123.

[334] "For all peace will come upon the land of the good." (v. 780)

[335] Second century BCE. H.C. Kee, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," *OTP,* vol. 1, 775. There are some challenges in using this book as description of Jewish beliefs as there are known Christian interpolations. Kee does see this text as primarily Jewish with not more than twelve interpolations that are conceptually peripheral to the main thrust of the book. "Twelve Patriarchs," 777. Collins is less convinced, suggesting that this is a Christian work that incorporates Jewish material. *Imagination,* 133. Cf. James C. VanderKam, *Introduction to Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 100-102. Because of this uncertainty, this material will be used with extreme caution.

This is significant in that it holds out the hope of Israel not as territorial possession, but as faithfulness and obedience to God.

T.Judah 22 speaks of the reign of the house of Judah and that it would be terminated by an alien race. Even so, God had promised to preserve the rule of Judah's posterity and therefore the author looked forward to "the coming of the God of righteousness, so that Jacob may enjoy tranquility and peace" (v. 2). It is only with a supernatural intervention and the presence of God that Israel would be able to experience its promised peace.

T.Dan 5:7-13 in some ways describes a traditional view of judgment and restoration. Exile will be experienced because of sin (vv. 7-8) but if the people turn back to God they will receive mercy (v. 9). However, the author offers a surprising view of what that return will look like:

> And the saints shall refresh themselves in Eden; the righteous shall rejoice in New Jerusalem, which shall be eternally for the glorification of God. And Jerusalem shall no longer undergo desolation, nor shall Israel be led into captivity, because the Lord will be in her midst [living among human beings].[336] The Holy One of Israel will rule over them in humility and poverty, and he who trusts in him shall reign in truth in heavens (5:12-13).

There is to be a radical transformation that renews Eden and brings security that will prevent future disasters. This hope centers on the presence of God.

The *Testament of Asher* describes both exile and restoration with the tribes of Dan and Gad used as an example for Asher: "For this reason, you will be scattered like Dan and Gad, my brothers, you shall not know your own lands, tribe, or language. But he will gather you in faith through his compassion and on account of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." (*T.Ash* 7:6-7) The consequence of sin is the loss of land and separation from the

[336] Most likely a Christian interpolation. H.C. Kee, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," *OTP*, vol. 1, 810 n.e.

traditional culture. However, hope remains based on the covenant made with the earlier patriarchs.

1 & 2 Maccabees

The first two books of the Maccabees[337] describe the events surrounding the revolt against Antiochus Epiphanies, especially as led by Judas Maccabeus. The theme of the land runs throughout the books as the Jews sought freedom of religion.

> While the initial Maccabean campaigns combined religious and political motives in a way generally acceptable to the pious mind-set (their program successfully climaxed in the rededication of the Temple in 162 B.C.), a deliberate and provocative shift in attitude was soon to become evident. Seeds of change could already be seen in Judas, who was not satisfied with restoring religious freedom but sought also to repossess the political boundaries of the golden age of the monarchy—something that was eventually accomplished under Simon's successor John Hyrcanus.[338]

It was understood that in order to achieve this religious freedom, a measure of political and territorial freedom was also required. As the Maccabees became more and more successful, this hope only increased.

N.T. Wright notes that even after the exile seemed to have ended with the edict of Cyrus, Israel still regarded itself as in exile.[339] The reason for this is that the restoration promises of Isaiah 40-66, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Zechariah remained unfulfilled. Wright notes that the closest that the Jews got to fulfillment of these restoration promises is found in the exalted description of Judas:[340]

> He extended the glory of his people. Like a giant he put on his breastplate; he bound on his armor of war and waged battles, protecting the camp by his sword. He was like a lion in his deeds, like a lion's cub roaring for prey. He searched out and pursued those who broke the law; he burned those who troubled his people. Lawbreakers shrank back for fear of him;

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[337] 100 BCE and 124-63 BCE. VanderKam, *Judaism*, 62, 68.
[338] Elliott, *Survivors*, 226.
[339] The theory that the exile continued will be discussed in chapter seven.
[340] Wright, *Victory*, xviii.

> all the evildoers were confounded; and deliverance prospered by his hand. He embittered many kings, but he made Jacob glad by his deeds, and his memory is blessed forever. He went through the cities of Judah; he destroyed the ungodly out of the land; thus he turned away wrath from Israel. He was renowned to the ends of the earth; he gathered in those who were perishing. (1 Macc 3:3-9)

Judas is portrayed as one of the ideal leaders of ancient times who is gifted by God to restore the land.

In other ways, the campaigns of Judas are described in very realistic terms. The high point would seem to be the cleansing and rededication of the Temple (1 Macc 4:36-61). It was a great victory and yet there is a sense that it fell short of the Old Testament victories. In 4:46, it is noted that the stones of the old altar needed to be stored until a prophet should arise. While things were better than under Antiochus' full occupation, the leaders are not able to make all the decisions because of a lack of prophets. Even when Jews in Galilee are rescued, the result is not a secure northern territory but a journey of the Galilean families to Judea (5:21-23).

2 Maccabees begins with a letter to the Jews in Egypt. Those in Judea remind their kindred in Egypt of the covenant with Abraham, Jacob and Isaac (1:2). Obedience to the covenant unites the Jews against those who, like Jason, revolted against the holy land (1:7).

There is also a tradition in 2 Maccabees that the prophet Jeremiah hid the tent, ark and altar in the mountain where Moses had seen the inheritance of God (2:4-5). Those who witnessed this wanted to see this restoration in their life time. Jeremiah rebukes them with these words:

> The place shall remain unknown until God gathers his people together again and shows his mercy. Then the Lord will disclose these things, and the glory of the Lord and the cloud will appear, as they were shown in the

> case of Moses, and as Solomon asked that the place should be specially consecrated. (2 Macc 2:7-8)

Thus, the author looks to a future restoration beyond the victories of the Maccabees, where God's presence will be made known as in the days of old.

1 and 2 Maccabees tell an inspiring story of the Jewish resistance against Hellenistic overlords who attempted to stamp out Judaism. Great victories were won and a measure of political and territorial independence was achieved. Despite brief descriptions with exalted language, the Jewish revolt does not achieve the prophetic hopes for full restoration. Even after the Temple was cleansed, it remained in danger from invaders and trespassers (1 Macc 6:48-54; 7:33-38). Despite the valor of heroes like Judas Maccabeus, the land remained in a degree of insecurity.

4 Ezra

In *4 Ezra* 6:59,[341] the author struggles with how reality fits in the context of covenant promises: "why do we not possess our world[342] as an inheritance?" The angel reveals that the world was made to be Israel's portion but that the land had been judged because of Adam's transgression (7:10-11). In comparison to entrances to this world, which are described as "narrow and sorrowful and toilsome; they are few and evil, full of dangers and involved in great hardships" (v. 12), entrances to a greater world is promised which are "broad and safe, and really yield the fruit of immortality" (v. 13). As Ezra struggles with the sorry state of Israel, he is challenged to look at not the present things but the future things (v. 16), presumably the inheritance of immortality.

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[341] Late First Century CE. B.M. Metzger, "Fourth Book of Ezra," *OTP,* vol. 1, 517.

[342] Elliott suggests that the Latin *saeculum* may represent אֶרֶץ and therefore refer to the land of Israel, *Survivors*, 101 n.160.

The gaining of the future inheritance[343] is closely connected with the appearance of the Messiah in 7:26-44.[344] Very little is said about the Messiah's work except that after four hundred years he will die (v. 29).[345] After seven days, the resurrection will take place. The Paradise of delight will be revealed at this time (v. 36).[346] It seems that it is the resurrection which is described as the new land and new city.

The hope is that Israel "will see my salvation in my land and within my borders, which I have sanctified for myself from the beginning" (*4 Ezra* 9:8). This seems to be a "traditional formulation of restoration as a return to, and possession of, the land."[347] The only difference is that the restoration is only for the remnant rather than the entire nation.

Ezra remained concerned about Israel: "your people, for whom I am grieved, and about your inheritance, for whom I lament, and about Israel, for whom I am sad, and about the seed of Jacob, for whom I am troubled" (8:16). Reflecting on the destruction of the Second Temple, the author has little difficulty getting into the character of Ezra from the time of the first Temple destruction. After struggling with this discouragement, the divine answer is this: "But think of your own case, and inquire concerning the glory of those who are like yourself, because it is for you that Paradise is opened, the tree of life is planted, the age to come is prepared, plenty is provided, a city is built, rest is appointed, goodness is established and wisdom perfected beforehand" (8:51-52). God wants Ezra to look beyond the present destruction and to see the eternal inheritance that is being prepared for the righteous.

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[343] "The land which now is hidden shall be disclosed." (7:26)
[344] Christian tampering has been detected in this passage but Elliott notes that such tampering has had a limited effect on the originally Jewish passage. *Survivors,* 504.
[345] Jacob Meyers sees this intermediate period between the present and the future judgment as being analogous to restoration themes in Isaiah 40-66. Jacob Meyers, *I and II Esdras* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1974), 253.
[346] Verses 36-105 are missing from the Latin MSS but have been restored.
[347] Elliott, *Survivors*, 633.

It is likely that the author believed that his contemporary Israelites were still in exile, "the exile being understood as the epitome of the covenant curse."[348] At the same time, the author looked forward to an actual restoration of the land. In *4 Ezra* 13:21-58, the author explains that the northern tribes traveled at the time of the exile to a country called Arzareth. They are expected to return to the Promised Land in terms similar to the entrance to Canaan in the time of Joshua (vv. 46-47). However, this territorial restoration may have future ramifications as those "who are found within my holy borders, shall be saved" (v. 48). This seems to be primarily about geographical possession, but there are other themes involved. Elliott sees value in Mowinckel's theory that Arzareth is to be identified with the place of the righteous dead, Paradise or heaven.[349]

DEAD SEA SCROLLS

The Qumran community saw themselves as a covenant people. This is sometimes referred to as a "new covenant" (CD 6.19; 8.21; 20.12; 1QpHab 2.3-4). However, this is not to be seen as a replacement of the old covenants but rather as in continuity, being a return to the Law of Moses and a revelation of hidden secrets originally a part of that covenant (CD 15.5-11).[350] Obedience to the covenant offers expiation for the land (1QSa 1.3). The concept of atoning for the land is found also in 1QS 8.6, 10. According to Sanders: "The existence of the community provided constant atonement for the defilement of the Land, in order to preserve it for its future occupation by the sect after the destruction of the wicked."[351] Davies puts it this way: "The life of the community, in accordance with its own understanding of the Law, is designed to fulfill the function

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[348] Elliott, *Survivors*, 286.
[349] Elliott, *Survivors*, 511. Mowinckel, *He That Cometh,* 381-82.
[350] Sanders, *Paul,* 240-41.
[351] Sanders, *Paul,* 303.

which the sacrificial system had in vain sought to accomplish, that is, the acceptance of the land by Yahweh."[352]

4Q389 says "I have abandoned the land because they have hardened their hearts against Me ... I have removed its inhabitants and abandoned the land into the hands of the Angels of *Mastemoth*." The Qumran community seemed to see the majority of Israel as remaining in the apostate condition of the exile.[353] 4QpPs37 3.10-13 says:

> The interpretation of this concerns the Congregation of the Poor who [will possess] the inheritance of all [the land]; they will possess the lofty mountain of Isra[el], [and in] His holy place they will delight. [But those who are cursed by Him] will be cut off – they are the ones who do violence against the [Covenant, the wi]cked of Israel, who will be cut off and destroyed forever.

The Qumran community believed that they would receive the promised restoration while unfaithful Israel would receive punishment for the transgression of the covenant.[354]

The Temple Scroll is important for understanding the sectarian view of the land. In 51:15-16, it is revealed that taking or retaining possession of the land is conditional based on obedience to the covenant. Violation of the covenant results in destruction and repentance is the only route to restoration (59:2-11). This text offers a description of a Temple, the holiest part of the land, which differs from that of Solomon's, Ezekiel's or Herod's Temple.[355] The author seems to picture Israel as a square with each tribe in its allotment having equal access to the Temple.[356]

An important text from Qumran dealing with the land is the War Scroll. This document describes an end-time military campaign to defeat the wicked. The battle was

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[352] Davies, *Land*, 53.
[353] Elliott, *Survivors*, 417.
[354] Elliott, *Survivors*, 548.
[355] James Vanderkam states: "It was meant as a blueprint for a new temple to be built in the future when the right people were in control." James C. Vanderkam, *Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 59.
[356] Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 266-68.

to be led by the priests in the style of the conquest of Jericho from Joshua 6.[357] Davies notes:

> This offensive war, with the land as its base, was to be a holy war much more intense and widespread than holy wars conceived in the Old Testament, which were defensive. What concerns us here is the centrality of the land of Israel in the thought of the author, who is in line with Is. 2:1-5 and especially Ezek. 38ff.[358]

The sectarians saw the land defiled by the unfaithful majority of Israel. The presence of the community atoned for the land to an extent, but they looked forward to a future time when the remnant would rise up and by military power take full possession of the land according to the covenant.

CONCLUSION

We have seen that the land has played an important role in the Old Testament, both in the idyllic and prophetic traditions. There is some shift in this when it comes to the texts of early Judaism:

> The incidence of specific references to the land in the Apocrypha, the Pseudepigrapha, and the Qumran scrolls, especially in comparison with that in Hexateuch, is meager. But the awareness of the land—its holiness, its possible pollution by sin, and consequent need for purification—is unmistakably clear.[359]

The land is still an important theme, but there is a clear transition from the older traditions. The hope of Israel was building on and moving beyond the focus on possession of the physical Promised Land.

Early Judaism developed in a context of uncertainty and change. Despite the building of the second Temple, in many ways it seemed as if the glory days were gone, left in the ancient idyllic traditions. The words of Hag 2:3, "Who is left among you that

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[357] Hartmut Stegemann, *Library of Qumran* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 102.
[358] Davies, *Land*, 53.
[359] Davies, *Land*, 49.

saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Is it not in your sight as nothing?" aptly describe the discouragement regarding the return to the old times. This resulted in a major change of belief:

> The exile had the effect of placing in doubt that sense of security that belonging to the nation had previously brought with it. The resulting increase in the role of introspection in spirituality, the heightened importance of some aspects of the law brought about by life in a pagan context, and ensuing expressions of individualism in worship and piety all contributed to the sense of change.[360]

The people were in the land and the Temple was rebuilt but there was great uncertainty of how long that would last or how that would look.

The political events of the post-exilic period had a tremendous effect on Jewish beliefs. Elliott explains: "On the soteriological level one also witnesses a move away from a national 'soteriology' (better: covenantal nationalism), an increased attention to individual categories, and, finally, the emergence of a soteriology based on a renewed (but entirely redirected) experience of corporate consciousness."[361] Israel had experienced a physical return and understood the fragility of that restoration. They still hoped for a restoration of Israel but there was radical transformation in who Israel was and what the inheritance was to be. Israel was now the righteous remnant and the inheritance, while remaining in continuity with the land, increasingly took on an eternal nature.

> Throughout this whole process, from Daniel to II Esdras, we find evidence, then, of a tension between a this-worldly kingdom and an other-worldly kingdom. In the earlier period especially the former of these predominates and even when, in later years, the influence of the latter makes itself increasingly felt it does not oust from people's minds the

[360] Elliott, *Survivors*, 204.
[361] Elliott, *Survivors*, 354.

> earlier hope whose roots can be traced back into the ancient prophetic expectations.[362]

The prophetic traditions about the land continued to influence the hope of Israel, helping to define the expectations about the afterlife and eternity. Texts from the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha demonstrate a change in trajectory from the hope of a physical land to the hope of an afterlife. The Qumran texts are somewhat more concerned with the land, looking to a future battle in which they will occupy the Promised Land and build a pure Temple. This greater stress on the land is a reflection of the somewhat less emphasis on the resurrection with the Qumran sect, while within other Jewish groups, as the land became more uncertain, resurrection beliefs greatly increased.

[362] Russell, *Method and Message,* 297.

CHAPTER SIX:

RESURRECTION IN EARLY JUDAISM

The period of 200 BCE to 100 CE was the formative era for early Judaism. It was during this time that Israel's beliefs were formed, transformed and developed into what would ultimately become rabbinic Judaism. At the end of the Babylonian exile, circumstances looked promising. There were sympathetic kings on the Persian throne who allowed Jews to return to the land and sponsored the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple. There were hopes that this was the restoration foretold by the prophets.

The anticipation of a return to greatness for Israel never materialized into reality.[363] The Persians were eventually conquered by the Greeks under Alexander the Great. Although tradition gives the Jews a positive view of Alexander,[364] his victory did not improve the situation for Israel. With the division of the empire at Alexander's death, the situation became worse for Israel as they were caught in the conflict between the Ptolemaic and Seleucid kingdoms. The land, which had been Israel's hope for so long, had become just as insecure as it had been leading up to the exile.

One of the challenges of retaining hope regarding the land was the covenant understanding of disobedience. It was understood that the exile was the result of disobedience and that as long as Israel remained obedient, they would continue in the Promised Land. However, after the exile, things were much more complicated. For example, although many Jews remained loyal to the Torah during the time of Antiochus Epiphanies, many others abandoned the faith and joined the pagans (1 Macc 1:52-53).

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[363] Paul Hanson has done an important study on the development of apocalyptic thought taking place in the conflict with the Persian sponsored Temple authorities as certain groups discovered that there was no returning to the old ways. Paul Hanson, *Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975).
[364] *Antiquities* 11.332-339.

Israel was divided and there were no clear territorial results to this mix of obedience and disobedience. As seen in the last chapter, there had already been a shift in the understanding of the land, as it became more of an image for other eschatological experiences.

It was during this time that the concept of the resurrection really began to develop. Although there were hints of the resurrection in the Old Testament,[365] it was in the post-biblical period that deeper reflection on afterlife beliefs really took place. This chapter will look at the cultural background of Persian and Greek beliefs, competing forms of the afterlife, and the resurrection in the Pseudepigrapha, Apocrypha and Dead Sea Scrolls.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Persian Religion

For some time, Israel was a part of the Persian Empire and therefore it is important to examine evidence for any influence with regard to the afterlife. The religion of Persia is known as Zoroastrianism, after its founder Zoroaster, who probably lived in the eighth century.

In their concept of the afterlife, the Persians described the separation of the soul or self (*uruuan/urvan*) from the deceased body. Segal explains the Persian view of the afterlife:

> By talking of the *urvan*'s final disposition and the way to attain it, the Persians were expressing that part of our lives on earth is transcendent, that part of our earthly life lives on after us. For the Zoroastrian, it is the ethically good part of a person's deeds and self. The person survived

[365] The clearest statement of the resurrection found in Dan 12:2 actually belongs to this later period of Jewish thought.

> death as transformed into his *urvan* and achieved a happy afterlife through moral behavior.[366]

The *urvan* is described in later texts as appearing before a tribunal of gods for judgment. The dwelling place of the righteous dead is described as the House of Ahura Mazda.

Zorastrianism has an interest in an apocalyptic end of history, an end that includes a resurrection of the body. *Yasna* 54 states that: "The dead will rise in their lifeless bodies." In the *Yashts*, resurrection is described as accompanying the appearance of someone called the Undying/Incorruptible One (*Yasht* 19). Segal explains the resurrection in this way:

> The resurrection body for Zoroastrians ... is not exactly the body of this life, but a body which has entered a more perfected, spiritual state, called "the future body" (*tan i pasen*). It is somewhat like the spiritual body (*soma pneumatikon*) that Paul describes in 1 Corinthians Ch. 10.[367]

It is obvious that there are definite parallels between the bodily resurrection of Zoroastrianism and later Judaism and Christianity.

The nature of the relationship between the different traditions, however, is difficult to determine.[368] Segal claims:

> This is the most important and interesting candidate for borrowing by the Hebrews, for resurrection does not truly enter Jewish life until after they have made contact with Persian society. It does not become explicit in Jewish life until after the contact has been firm for centuries, though the hints start immediately.[369]

That some influence did take place is demonstrated by the fact that the Persian word for garden, "paradise," which is used to describe the House of Ahura Mazda, was later used by the Jews to describe the Garden of Eden as well as the afterlife. However, regarding

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[366] Segal, *Life,* 184.
[367] Segal, *Life,* 190.
[368] N.T. Wright rejects the idea of Persian influence on the Jewish idea of resurrection. *Resurrection,* 124-25. Cf. Johnston, *Shades,* 234-36.
[369] Segal, *Life,* 183-84.

the resurrection, there is no certain affirmation linked back to Zoroaster and the fullest account is found in the ninth century CE text *Bundahisn.*[370] Yamauchi claims: "It is, therefore, best to hold that belief in a resurrection was an inner-Jewish development and to abandon the appeal to a retrojection from very late Persian sources."[371] While there are similarities between the Persian and Jewish understanding of the resurrection, a clear relationship of dependence is impossible to establish.

Greek Religion

Attempting to summarize Greek beliefs about the afterlife is as difficult as summarizing Hebrew beliefs about the afterlife. A wide variety of beliefs were held over a long period of time by people from many different backgrounds. However, some general comments can be made, especially with regard to possible connections to biblical themes. As with all cultures, there are Greek inscriptions and writings that record a certain skepticism about the afterlife. This study will not examine the details of those doubts but will acknowledge that they did exist. More often, there were rich descriptions of a variety of beliefs in the afterlife.

N.T. Wright describes the writings of Homer as the "Old Testament" of the Greeks.[372] The afterlife for Homer is centred on the concept of the underworld of Hades. In a passage from the *Iliad*, Patroclus begs Achilles for a proper funeral as his unburied body is causing much grief for his soul: "Afar do the spirits keep me aloof, the phantoms of men that have done with toils, neither suffer they me to join myself to them beyond the River, but vainly I wander through the wide-gated house of Hades" (*Il.* 23.72-74). What

[370] Yamauchi, "Ancient Near East," 42. Collins explains the difficulties created by the late dates of the Persian texts. *Imagination*, 29-33.
[371] Yamauchi, "Ancient Near East," 49.
[372] Wright, *Resurrection*, 32.

seems to happen is that until a person experiences a proper funeral, their shade wanders around in a restless state. After the funeral, the deceased is released to cross the river Styx to find their proper place of rest.

Although Hades does not seem like an enjoyable afterlife, there were other options for certain heroes. Instead of descending to the underworld, some were granted the honour of ascending to the place of the gods: "... godlike Ganymedes, who was born the fairest of mortal men; and the gods caught him up on high to be cupbearer to Zeus because of his beauty, so that he might dwell with the immortals" (*Il.* 20.232-235).[373] This is an example of apotheosis, which Wendy Cotter defines as "a human hero's elevation to immortal life among the gods after his/her death."[374] Adela Yarbro Collins notes in reference to these examples from Homer: "All of these traditions imply that the human beings translated became gods, i.e., immortal. They seem to assume that in these cases, the soul (ψυχή) was never separated from the body."[375] Although the physical bodies were not always transported to heaven, the new gods did not exist as shades but lived in god-like bodies in which they could interact with one another.[376]

If Homer was the "Old Testament" to the Greeks, then, according to Wright, Plato is the "New Testament."[377] One of the best descriptions in Plato is from the tenth book of the *Republic* in the story of Er. Er was a man who was killed in a battle but whose body did not decay. Er returned to life and described what he witnessed in the afterlife. In his vision, Er saw a place with entrances leading upward and downward. There were judges

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[373] Cf. the story of Tithonius in *Il.* 11.1.
[374] Wendy Cotter, "Greco-Roman Apotheosis Traditions and the Resurrection Appearances in Matthew," in David Aune (ed.), *The Gospel of Matthew in Current Study* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 131.
[375] Adela Yarbro Collins, "Apotheosis and Resurrection," in Peder Borgen and Soren Giversen (eds.), *New Testament and Hellenistic Judaism* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997), 92.
[376] Wright acknowledges that the early Christian apologist Justin Martyr saw some analogy between apotheosis and resurrection, although not necessarily a relationship of dependency. *Resurrection,* 501.
[377] Wright, *Resurrection,* 47-48.

who determined each soul's direction based on their past deeds. Periodically, people who had been sent into the heavens and people who had been sent into the earth returned to this place and shared their experiences with each other. The wicked shared how they had suffered in the underworld for a thousand years, while the souls from heaven had only wonderful experiences. The souls were then brought before the Fates and were given tokens to determine their position in the lottery to choose their next life. Er witnessed a number of famous figures from the past as they chose the life, animal or human, in which they would be reincarnated. The souls then drank from the water that causes forgetfulness before they were sent out as shooting stars on their way to rebirth. Plato believed in an immortal soul that would survive death and would be punished or rewarded based the earthly life. However, he also believed in the transmigration of the soul, in which the soul would not remain disembodied but would return to some sort of physical existence.

There is sharp disagreement over how influential Greek beliefs were in the development of the Jewish doctrine of the resurrection. Wright claims: "In so far as Homer has anything to say about resurrection, he is quite blunt: it doesn't happen.[378] Beyond the views of Homer, Wright speaks more generally of the non-Jewish view of the resurrection when he says "the pagan world assumed it was impossible."[379] In denying the Greek belief in the resurrection, Wright focuses on the skepticism in a number of texts regarding of the dead coming back to life and continuing in their old life. The Greeks, as did the Jews, assumed that those that died would remain dead.[380]

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[378] Wright, *Resurrection,* 32.
[379] Wright, *Resurrection,* 83.
[380] Although there were exceptions in the ministries of Elijah and Elisha, as there was also in Plato's story of Er.

However, Stanley Porter suggests that it is time to rethink the possible Greco-Roman influence on the resurrection.[381] Porter concludes his study of various ancient Greek texts containing resurrection themes with the suggestion that "It appears that both Jewish thought and then, inevitably, Christian thought came under the influence of Greek and Graeco-Roman assumptions regarding resurrection."[382] Porter seems to be correct in this, especially when the Greek view of apotheosis is compared to the Jewish apocalyptic notion of angel transformation at resurrection later in this chapter. Even Plato, who is championed as the symbol of the immortal soul, saw a two stage afterlife similar to the Jewish view in which the soul exists for a period before becoming physical once more. Considering that both Greek and Jewish traditions also describe this process in terms of transformation into stars, the likelihood of a relationship is very high. If there is a possibility of Persian influence, there is a strong probability of Greek influence on the Jewish doctrine of resurrection.

AFTERLIFE IN EARLY JUDAISM

Although the afterlife was only a whisper in the Old Testament, it became an important doctrine in the intertestamental period. Sometimes the traditions from Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel were reused and developed, while other times new forms of afterlife traditions were introduced. As the hope for a secure and prosperous land did not materialize, people increasingly turned to an otherworldly hope. Forms of afterlife traditions can be divided into two categories: immortal soul and bodily resurrection.[383]

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[381] Porter, "Resurrection," 52-81.
[382] Porter, "Resurrection," 80. Wright responds to Porter's argument in *Resurrection,* 35.
[383] These categories are not completely clear cut. In some traditions there is the idea of a period as a disembodied soul before being clothed in a resurrection body. Also, the nature of the resurrection body is not always clear. What is the difference between an immortal soul and a person clothed with a spirit body?

Immortal Soul

Although rabbinic Judaism, as the heirs of the Pharisees, eventually embraced the idea of bodily resurrection, there is a strong tradition of the immortal soul, similar to some Greek ideas,[384] in the early Jewish texts. One example is found in *Jub* 23:31 which describes the state of God's servants, the righteous ones, after the final judgement and the defeat of Satan: "And their bones will rest in the earth, and their spirits will increase joy, and they will know that the LORD is an executor of judgment; but he will show mercy to hundreds and thousands, to all who love him." This seems to describe the bodies of the righteous dead remaining in the earth while their spirits experience eternal bliss.[385]

Similarly in *1 En* 103:4, the author speaks of a spiritual rather than a bodily destiny for the righteous: "The spirits of those who died in righteousness shall live and rejoice; their spirits shall not perish, nor their memorial from before the face of the Great One unto all the generations of the world." This theme is continued in *1 En* 104:1-6 with the fellowship of the righteous with the angels in heaven rather than a physical existence on a new earth. In the same way, the wicked will not be resurrected but will suffer torment in Sheol (*1 En* 99:11; 103:7). Nickelsburg explains this section of *1 Enoch* when he says:

> Nowhere in these chapters does the author speak of a resurrection of the body. Although he mentions the fact that the bodies of the righteous have been mistreated in life (102:5), he does not say that these bodies will be given new life. It is their spirits which will live and not perish, and for which good things are prepared.[386]

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[384] It has already been demonstrated that the Greek afterlife should not be identified with the immortal soul as there were several traditions of an embodied afterlife.

[385] Russell, *Method and Message,* 372. While Wintermute acknowledges this possibility, he also offers the alternative that this may be poetic hyperbole that the righteous die with assurance that justice has been done. O.S. Wintermute, "Jubilees," *OTP,* vol. 2, 102n. Cf. Perkins, *Resurrection*, 42.

[386] Nickelsburg, *Resurrection,* 123.

Although other books within *1 Enoch* will describe a bodily resurrection, the Epistle of Enoch does not.[387] Another example includes *T.Moses* 10:9-10 which describes the righteous in heaven rejoicing over the punishment of the wicked. Each of these texts describes an afterlife that includes eternal fellowship with God in heaven in some spiritual state without any mention of a resurrection body or an earthly immortal existence.

Non-apocalyptic texts such as *Pseudo-Phocylides* 115 continue this theme: "But (our) soul is immortal and lives ageless forever." *4 Maccabees* concludes with these words: "But the sons of Abraham, together with their mother who won the victor's prize, are gathered together in the choir of their fathers, having received pure and deathless souls from God, to whom be glory forever and ever." (*4 Macc* 18:23) This is intriguing as *4 Macc* seems to use as a source 2 Maccabees, which explicitly teaches the resurrection of the body. Wright sees this as a conscious redactional decision to remove all reference to the resurrection.[388] Finally, there is the Wisdom of Solomon,[389] examples of which include: "For righteousness is immortal. ...But the righteous live forever, and their reward is with the Lord; the Most High takes care of them" (Wis 1:15; 5:15). George Nicklesburg puts the Wisdom of Solomon into perspective when he explains:

> The eternal life that the righteous man anticipates is already present in his immortal soul. Since, for our author, "death" is not physical death, but a characteristic inherent in the ungodly, the righteous man does not really die, but only seems to die (3:2). The real fact of life for him is his immortality, already present now and continuing unbroken through physical death.[390]

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[387] Wright sees the Epistle of Enoch moving in a Hellenistic direction. *Resurrection,* 141.
[388] Wright, *Resurrection,* 143.
[389] Wright, *Resurrection,* 162-75 argues that Wisdom actually describes resurrection and not just immortality. While Wright succeeds in presenting the rich imagery used to describe immortality, his evidence is less than convincing.
[390] Nicklesburg, *Resurrection,* 88.

These non-apocalyptic texts confirm the immortality of the soul as one stream of thought found in some Jewish apocalyptic literature.

Resurrection of the Body

Despite these examples of an immortal soul, the common understanding is that of Russell: "Not the immortality of the soul, but the resurrection of the body is the key to the apocalyptic interpretation of the life beyond death."[391] The resurrection can take place in two ways. The first is the resurrection of only the righteous as was seen in Isaiah 26. *1 Enoch* 51:1-5 describes a resurrection of the righteous, which is significant because that resurrection is accompanied by the transformation of the earth or land.[392] In *1 En* 83-90 there is no reference to the resurrection of the wicked, even though the resurrection of the righteous may be implied in 90:33.[393] *2 Enoch* has no mention of the resurrection of the wicked but refers to the resurrection of the righteous in 65:10.

In addition to these apocalyptic texts, there is the *Psalms of Solomon* which is only remotely related to apocalyptic literature[394] but is often included in discussions because of their eschatological content. A typical view of the afterlife in the *Psalms of Solomon* is found in 3:10-12:

> [The sinner] adds sin upon sin in his life; he falls—his fall is serious—and he will not get up.[395] The destruction of the sinner is forever, and he will not be remembered when (God) looks after the righteous. This is the share of sinners forever, but those who fear the Lord shall rise up to eternal life, and their life shall be in the Lord's light, and it shall never end.[396]

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[391] Russell, *Method and Message,* 373.
[392] Perkins, *Resurrection,* 45. Although 51:1 begins as if it is a general resurrection, the rest of the passage indicates it is restricted to a national group. Porter, "Resurrection," 63.
[393] Russell, *Method and Message,* 369-70.
[394] Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination,* 143.
[395] Russell has "and he shall not rise again." *Method and Message,* 369.
[396] Cf. *Pss. Sol.* 13:11; 14:3; 15:13; 16:1-3.

There is clearly a stream of thought in Jewish apocalyptic literature, perhaps inspired by Isa 26:19, of a resurrection only for the righteous.

Before looking at the general resurrection, there is one more important non-apocalyptic book that must be examined. The literature that was named after the Maccabees is a study in itself of the spectrum of Jewish beliefs about the afterlife. 1 Maccabees continues the older tradition of the irrelevance of the afterlife and the focus of faithfulness to the covenant in this life.[397] *4 Maccabees*, as we have seen, teaches the immortality of the soul. 2 Maccabees, however, teaches the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. N.T. Wright describes the significance of 2 Maccabees when he says: "This book provides far and away the clearest picture of the promise of the resurrection anywhere in the period."[398] There are a number of references to the resurrection in 2 Maccabees.[399] 2 Maccabees 7:14 demonstrates the belief of only a resurrection of the righteous: "When he was near death, [the fourth brother] said, 'One cannot but choose to die at the hands of mortals and to cherish the hope God gives of being raised again by him. But for you there will be no resurrection to life!'" These passages provided great eschatological comfort to Jews throughout the centuries as they sought meaning and justice in the midst of persecution. It is significant that the resurrection of the body experiences an important development in a tradition that is recording the struggle for the control of the Promised Land. This is another example of the twin development of these traditions.

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[397] Nickelsburg suggests that the lack of afterlife in 1 Maccabees is because it was written as a Hasmonaean court history, riding the crest of that dynasty's success at a time without persecution. *Resurrection,* 130.
[398] Wright, *Resurrection,* 150.
[399] For example, see 2 Macc 7:9-11, 21-3. Perkins sees most references as pious responses to martyrdom and the one passage (7:11) that she does accept as describing the resurrection is about "metaphorical possibilities" rather than "theoretical development of the exegetical tradition." *Resurrection,* 44.

The resurrection is closely tied to the Maccabean period. Richard Bauckham notes that although the seeds of resurrection existed in the later Old Testament period, "the circumstances of the Maccabean period may well have been important for the spread of a belief that already existed, but which was not widely held until this time."[400] This is confirmation of the strong connection between the land and the resurrection.

Most often, apocalyptic texts speak of a general resurrection of all the dead. *1 Enoch* 5:7 describes the punishment of the wicked and the reward of the righteous, including the inheritance of the earth/land.[401] An important example is found in *1 En* 22 where the souls are divided into separate compartments. Enoch is told that this separation has taken place because the wicked have not been judged during their lifetime but they will be raised up to finally experience their punishment (22:13). *1 Enoch* 67:8-9 speaks of the eternal torment of both body and spirit of the wicked kings and rulers. *1 Enoch* 46 describes the fate of the wicked as: "Their dwelling place will be darkness, and their bed will be worms,"[402] whereas in *1 En* 58:4: "The righteous ones shall be in the light of the sun and the elect ones in the light of eternal life which has no end, and the days of the life of the holy ones can not be numbered."

There are five other apocalyptic books that speak specifically of the resurrection. There are two references to the resurrection in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. We find in *T.Judah* 25:4 that "those who died on account of the Lord shall be wakened to life," while the *T.Benj* 10:8 is even clearer when it says: "Then all shall be changed, some

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[400] Bauckham, "Life, Death, and the Afterlife in Second Temple Judaism," in Longenecker (ed.), *Life in the Face of Death*, 83.
[401] Although the word 'resurrection' is not used, the physical enjoyment of light, joy and peace in the land suggests resurrection. See Porter "Resurrection," 61-62.
[402] This reading is found only in the MSS Princeton Ethiopic 3 and EMML 2080. E. Isaac prefers the reading that omits "darkness". *OTP*, vol. 1, 134.

destined for glory, others for dishonor."[403] In *Sib.Or* 4 there is a description of the actual resurrection (181-3), the punishment of the wicked (185-6) and the joy of the righteous living on earth (187). In the *Life of Adam and Eve*[404] 28:4, God promises Adam: "at the time of the resurrection I will raise you again, and then there shall be given to you from the tree of life, and you shall be immortal forever."

Many of the apocalyptic and other early Jewish texts reflect the disappointment in the security of the land. However, *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* are important in that they are responses to the ultimate disappointment: the destruction of Jerusalem and the second Temple. *4 Ezra* confirms the general resurrection found in earlier texts when it speaks of the "nations that have been raised from the dead" (7:37) and that resurrection takes place for judgement (7:35). Regarding the resurrection in *4 Ezra*, Perkins notes: "The parallel between the new creation at the end of time and the primordial creation enables the author to mix imagery from the heaven/Gehenna tradition with the image of the renewed earth as the dwelling place for the righteous."[405] *2 Baruch* 42:8 speaks dramatically of the resurrection when it states: "dust will be called, and told, 'Give back that which does not belong to you and raise up all that you have kept until its own time." A similar statement with more detail is given in *2 Bar* 50:2-4 where it is revealed that the resurrection bodies will be recognizable in appearance. Perkins concludes that: "The tragedy of the war with Rome drives IV Ezra and 2 Bar. to turn to all of the eschatological images and traditions known to them."[406]

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[403] This resurrection seems to be for the purpose of ruling over a renewed Israel. Perkins, *Resurrection*, pp. 42-43. Cf. *T.Zeb.* 10:2.
[404] Also known as the *Apocalypse of Moses.*
[405] Perkins, *Resurrection*, 48.
[406] Perkins, *Resurrection,* 49.

Although there has been an attempt to classify the descriptions of the afterlife, it must be noted that these categories are somewhat fluid. Does being "raised" require the physical reconstitution of the body? What is the difference between an immortal soul and a person resurrected with a spiritual body for eternity? In reality, the main difference is whether the afterlife is a one stage or two stage existence. As Wright explains, the difference is really between a life after death and life after life after death.[407]

Angelic Transformation

It was demonstrated in chapter four that in Dan 12:2-3, resurrection is described in terms of angelic and astral transformation. If that is the case, it must be asked: is Daniel the only text that makes the surprising connection between resurrection and joining the stars/gods/angels? *1 Enoch* 104:2 tells the righteous that "you shall shine like the lights of heaven," and then in 104:6 that "you are partners with the good-hearted people of heaven" or as Collins has it, "companions to the host of heaven."[408] The images of stars and joining the angels are seen in close connection. Another passage that suggests the destiny of the righteous is to join the angels is *1 En* 39:5 which says: "So there my eyes saw their dwelling places with the holy angels, and their resting places with the holy ones."

Stars are also used to describe existing angels such as in this description of the fall of the wicked angel Azazel: "as I looked, behold, a star fell down from heaven." (*1 En* 86:1) This is followed by a multitude of falling stars (86:3) which represent the rest of the angels who were coming down to mate with human women. The image of a star by itself had no moral quality to it, but the idea of a falling star carried the idea of a loss of

[407] Wright, *Resurrection,* 86.
[408] Collins, *Imagination*, 113.

position. There is a sense in the Enochic literature of a reversal of fortune with the fallen angels (Watchers) losing their role as astral divinities and the righteous being lifted up to take their place. This theme is also found in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* 13 where Abraham seems to exchange angelic status with the fallen angel Azazel. *4 Ezra* 7:97 explains the fate of some people after death of how "they are to be made like the light of the stars, being incorruptible from then on." *2 Baruch* 51:10 in describing the resurrection, brings this all together when it says: "For they will live in the heights of that world and they will be like the angels and be equal to the stars." In the Hellenistic Jewish work *Pseudo-Phocylides* 102-4 we read these intriguing words: "It is not good to dissolve the human frame; for we hope that the remains of the departed will soon come to light (again) out of the earth; and afterward they will become gods." Commenting on this passage, Adela Yarbro Collins states:

> The coming to light of the remains of the departed out of the earth is a clear expression of hope in the bodily type of resurrection .... The statement that the dead become gods after being raised is an expression of the idea of resurrection in Greco-Roman terms. The word "god" in Greek is synonymous with the word "immortal." So Pseudo-Phocylides is using typical Greek language of the blessed dead to express the idea that the resurrected faithful are exalted to the angelic state.[409]

It seems clear that there was a strong belief in the resurrection, specifically in terms of angelic transformation, in Second Temple Judaism.

Qumran

There was a time when scholars claimed that the doctrine of the resurrection was absent from the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Qumran eschatology was seen to be realized to the extreme. According to Nicklesburg:

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[409] Collins, "Apotheosis," 96.

> The world outside ... is described as Sheol. Entrance into the community is construed as resurrection into the realm of eternal life and the presence of angels. What 'traditional' eschatology ascribes to the end time is said to be the present possession of the member of the sect.[410]

There is truth to this, if indeed many second Temple Jews saw the resurrection as angelic transformation. That some at Qumran saw this as a present state is seen in the War Scroll where in one fragment the author claims:

> ... my glory [is incomparable] and besides me no one is exalted. And he does not come to me, for I reside in [...], in the heavens... I am counted among the gods and my dwelling is in the holy congregation ... For I am counted among the gods, and my glory is with the sons of the king. (4Q491 11.13, 14, 18)[411]

According to Collins, "Despite its fragmentary nature, it seems clear that the author claims to have sat on the mighty throne in the congregation of the gods and to have been reckoned with the gods, to have undergone a virtual apotheosis."[412] While this does not connect angelic exaltation with the resurrection, it does demonstrate that some Jews held out hope for an almost divine exalted state. Although this is an extreme example, there are other instances in the Dead Sea Scrolls where people were identified as angels, even in this life.[413]

However, the view that at Qumran the resurrection was understood to be already experienced has been seriously questioned. The Messianic Apocalypse (4Q521) states: "for he will heal the badly wounded and will make the dead live..." (2.12) and "[he

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[410] George Nickelsburg, "Resurrection," *ABD* 5:687.
[411] Translation taken from Florentino García Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996).
[412] John J. Collins, "A Throne in the Heavens: Apotheosis in pre-Christian Judaism," in John J. Collins and Michael Fishbane (eds.), *Death, Ecstasy, and Other Worldly Journeys* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 53.
[413] George J. Brooke, "Men and Women as Angels in *Joseph and Aseneth*," *JSP* 14.2 (2005): 160-65. Brooke examines angelomorphism in the Dead Sea Scrolls as well *Joseph and Aseneth.* Cf. Collins, *Imagination,* 174.

makes] the dead of his people [ri]se" (5.6).[414] There are also other possible examples in 1QH 14.29, 34; 19.12-13.[415] Regarding the few resurrection passages, Wright states:

> These do seem to be straws in the wind, indicating that, if the question came up (not that it seems to have done very often), some at least of the Qumran Community would have agreed with the Pharisees rather than the Sadducees on the question of resurrection. However, even if this is so, it is a matter of note that despite the considerable volume of finds the belief in question rates so little mention.[416]

Johnston concludes: "bodily resurrection may not feature centrally in the community's own documents, but seems nevertheless to have been part of their beliefs."[417] Stanley Porter, however, questions this conclusion when he notes: "There is very much a sense here of restoration of previous existence, rather than transportation to a new idyllic realm."[418] A future bodily resurrection may have had some minor role, but for the sectarians, the resurrection was more of an experience in this life. Considering the relationship of hope in the land to the resurrection, this is not surprising. To a greater extent than many of their contemporaries, the sectarians held on to a firm hope that YHWH would return the land to the faithful. With that strong territorial hope, resurrection could never be more than a means to gain what they really looked for: the hereditary land.

Rabbinic Judaism

The close connection between the land and the resurrection in Judaism is confirmed by the rabbinic traditions. While rabbinic materials must be used with extreme caution in

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[414] Martínez, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 394. Johnston accepts 2.12 as a resurrection text. *Shades,* 229. Cf. Vanderkam, *Dead Sea Scrolls,* 81; Schiffman, *Dead Sea Scrolls,* 347-48. Wright sees 2.12 as a temporary resuscitation but accepts 5.6 as a future resurrection, *Resurrection*, 187.
[415] Wright accepts these passages as exalted visions of the age to come echoing Dan 12:2. *Resurrection,* 187-88.
[416] Wright, *Resurrection*, 188.
[417] Johnston, *Shades,* 230.
[418] Porter, "Resurrection," 67.

attempts to describe first-century Judaism, they do help to plot a trajectory based on earlier traditions. *Mishnah Sanhedrin* 10:1 says: "All Israelites have a share in the world to come, for it is written, 'Thy people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land forever; the branch of my planting, the work of my hands that I may be glorified' (Isaiah 60:21)." In the same section, "the world to come" is identified with the resurrection of the dead. The Mishnah gets past the lack of resurrection material by seeing a land restoration passage as speaking of an eschatological inheritance, specifically the resurrection.[419] There was also a tradition that the resurrection would only take place within the physical boundaries of Israel and claimed that Jews who died outside of Israel would be transported underground to experience the resurrection in Israel (*b. Kethuboth* 111a). This information is given not as an example of the beliefs of first century Jews but rather to indicate the direction such beliefs were moving.

CONCLUSION

The whisper of the afterlife that is found in the Old Testament becomes a shout in the early Jewish texts of the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, and to a certain extent the Dead Sea Scrolls. There is an active development of the theme of an afterlife, sometimes in terms of an immortal soul, but more often as a physical resurrection.

The concept of the bodily resurrection really began to flourish during the Maccabean period. Some of the most important texts are those such as Daniel and *1 Enoch* which were written at that time, or 2 Maccabees, a later text, which describes the events of that period. The reason for this is the theological reflection of faithfulness to the covenant, both for Israel and for YHWH. The Jews had accepted that the Babylonian

[419] Segal claims that in compiling the Mishnah, R. Judah excluded all resurrection traditions except this one. *Life*, 601.

exile was a just punishment for disobedience to the covenant and they were determined not to repeat that mistake. However, the results of attempted obedience to the covenant were not what was expected. Regarding the martyrdoms in 2 Maccabees, Segal notes:

> The persecutors have destroyed the bodies of these young martyrs, though Deuteronomy promised length of days to those who kept God's law. But God's mercy guaranteed that they would have their youth back and have the pleasures of their bodily existence again when God raises them.[420]

It was the Jews who were disobeying the covenant that were enjoying the security and prosperity of the land, while the faithful were suffering. The only way for God's faithfulness to be affirmed, was to find an eschatological fulfillment of the promises. This matrix of reinterpretation carried on through Jewish history since, despite Maccabean success, the land never achieved the security and safety that the Jews had hoped for. Segal continues by stating: "[Resurrection] was the remedy given by God to the Jews because of the cruelty and oppression of foreign domination, a notion which carried on directly into the Roman period."[421] Resurrection traditions were a response of groups that were resisting, whether actively or passively, the foreign domination of the land.[422]

An interesting aspect of this development is the example of the Qumran sect. Despite initial reports, there does seem to be some resurrection belief among the sectarians. However, this doctrine is rather subdued compared to other contemporary Jewish groups. The angelic transformation that other Jews looked forward to at the resurrection was anticipated in this life-time as the righteous joined the community of the elect. The reason for this is the nature of their eschatological hope. As demonstrated in

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[420] Segal, *Life,* 269.
[421] Segal, *Life,* 269.
[422] Segal, *Life,* 362.

the previous chapter, the Qumran sect still had a very strong land tradition. They looked forward to a time when the armies of the righteous would rise against the armies of the wicked, when the land would be freed from control by foreigners and unfaithful Jews and when the Temple would be cleansed or rebuilt. Hartmut Stegemann explains the future that the sectarians looked forward to:

> The central future place of salvation was, for the Essenes, the earthly Jerusalem surrounded by God's Holy Land with an exclusively Jewish population. All who would remain in neighboring lands after the Last Judgment were also to serve the Creator of heaven and earth in the Jerusalem Temple worship. More beautiful and spacious than anything ever built by human hands, a Jerusalem long since prepared in heaven by God would descend, with the Temple in its midst, to be served by those priests and their descendants who had remained faithful to God throughout the chaos.[423]

Any resurrection experience had value only as a way to achieve this ultimate goal. Unlike many other Jews, for the Qumran sect, resurrection was a means to a goal and not an end of itself.

Although Jews did not give up all hope in possession of the land, even after the disasters of 70 and 135 CE, the likelihood of full restoration in an individual's lifetime became less and less likely. This is the story from the time of the Maccabean revolt to the development of rabbinic Judaism. At no time in post-monarchial Israel was the land secure enough to achieve the hopes described in the idyllic traditions or in the later restoration oracles. The restoration hopes of the prophets were transferred from the land to the resurrection, while retaining some land connections in the eschatological age. This matrix of hope prepared the way for Christianity which inherited the doctrine of the resurrection but without the ties to the physical land.

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[423] Stegemann, *Library,* 209.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

THE LAND IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

When one tries to investigate the role of the land in the New Testament, the same challenges arise as in the examination of the resurrection in the Old Testament. There are hints and allusions but firm descriptions are rather elusive. This chapter will look at the hope of the land as found in the Gospels, Acts, Paul's letters, Hebrews and Revelation.

SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

As expected, Jesus, a Jew whose ministry was almost completely within the borders of Israel, had something to say about the land. However, there is a definite shift from the Old Testament picture.

Matthew 5:5, as part of the beatitudes,[424] promises: "Blessed are the meek, they shall inherit the earth."[425] The relevance of this passage faces the same challenge as the interpretation of אֶרֶץ in the Old Testament. The word γῆ can mean "the earth," as in the entire physical world, or the specific land promised to Abraham.[426] It is often difficult to determine which of these is the proper meaning.[427] The mention of the land as an inheritance strongly suggests that Jesus is using the Abrahamic promise as the image for the reward to the meek. Matthew is quoting from Ps 37:11, where the "land" is the physical Promised Land.[428] Davies, however, notes that the Christian inheritance is normally supra-terrestrial and that Matt 5:5 either refers to the spiritual state of being in

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[424] Wright sees the entire Beatitudes as a challenge for Israel to be Israel, that is to act as the true people of God. *Victory,* 288-89.

[425] There is no parallel to this in the beatitudes from Lk 6:20-22.

[426] Matt 5:5 is listed as a reference to the land of promise, although in an eschatological sense, in Hermann Sasse, "γῆ," *TDNT* 1:677.

[427] However, it is interesting to note that the beatitudes are framed by two promises regarding the Kingdom in vv. 3 and 10.

[428] R.T. France, *Matthew* (TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 110.

the Kingdom of God or the inheritance of a transformed earth in the age to come.[429] Witherington disagrees, arguing that this is a promise of land to a remnant of Israel to be inherited when the Kingdom of God comes in fullness.[430]

In Matt 19:28 (|| Lk 22:30), Jesus speaks of the "renewal of all things,"[431] using restoration imagery.[432] This passage includes the unusual mention of the twelve tribes. The twelve tribes are to be judged by the twelve disciples.[433] Particularly in the Lukan passage, the sense of judging (κρίνοντες) is not so much executing a sentence but rather the broader idea of joining in royal rule in the tradition of the judges and kings of the Old Testament.[434] Gundry sees this as an actual restoration of Israel on earth, of which the twelve disciples will assist in governing.[435] Davies suggests that "the restoration of the twelve tribes is understood not so much in terms of a restored land of Israel as of a renewed cosmos."[436]

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[429] Davies, *Land*, 362. France agrees, seeing this as "the ultimate vindication of the weak." *Matthew*, 110. Morris sees this as the certainty of a place in the messianic kingdom. Leon Morris, *Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 98. Gundry takes it as the earthly locale of God's kingdom. Robert Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 69.

[430] Ben Witherington III, *Jesus, Paul and the End of the World* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 135.

[431] παλιγγενεσία is more typical of Stoic philosophy but effectively conveys the Jewish eschatological hope of a new heavens and a new earth. France, *Matthew*, 287.

[432] The Matthew passage is focused on here because of the use of παλιγγενεσία, which Luke lacks. It is interesting that while Matthew focuses on a future event, Lk 22:29-30 speaks of a present conferring of the Kingdom, which opens the door to future table fellowship and the eventual judging of the twelve tribes.

[433] Traditionally it was the twelve tribes of Israel that were to judge the nations. France sees this transformation of the image as illustrating that the "true Israel" are now the followers of Jesus. *Matthew*, 288. Geldenhuys sees the "twelve tribes" as not being literal but rather an expression for members of the Kingdom. Norval Geldenhuys, *Gospel of Luke* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), 565. This symbolic interpretation is not necessary as Jesus does express interest in the literal people of Israel.

[434] John Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1993), 1067. Nolland also notes that the singling out of Israel was not anti-Jewish but an indication of the central role of Israel in God's purposes.

[435] Gundry, *Matthew*, 392-94. Cf. Wright, *Victory*, 300.

[436] Davies, *Land*, 365.

In Matt 21:33-46 (|| Mk 12:1-12; Lk 20:9-19),[437] Jesus tells a parable of a vineyard in the tradition of the Isaiah songs of the vineyard.[438] R. Alan Cole remarks:

> As soon as Jesus began to speak, seeing that the Old Testament 'back-cloth' of the parable was Isaiah 5:1-7, everyone would know that He referred to Israel – referred to them, in fact – and that this was yet another parable of judgment. All the details of the landowner's care and preparation of the vineyard are borrowed from Isaiah, though the concept of the tenant farmer is new.[439]

In this story, the failure is on the part of the tenants rather than the vines. There seems to be some sort of transition from one group of occupants of the vineyard to another. Matthew 21:43 makes it clear that the vineyard represents the Kingdom of God.[440] According to France: "There is thus both continuity and discontinuity: the reign of God continues, and remains focused on a 'nation', but the composition of that 'nation' has changed."[441] The new nation is a people made up of both Jews and gentiles, living in obedience to God. According to Gundry: "The believing Jewish crowds melt into the throngs of believing Gentiles to form the new group of tenant farmers."[442]

On the surface, Lk 12:13-15 seems to have nothing to do with Israel or the Promised Land but is simply a request for Jesus to settle a family dispute. However, Wright sees this passage in terms of the family allotments of the Promised Land. Wright interprets the message of Jesus in this passage in this way: "He has come to bring Israel to her real 'return from exile'; but, just as this will not underwrite Israel's ethnic

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[437] There are numerous wording differences between the parallels, although they have the same basic message. The Matthew passage is focused on by me because of the identification of the one who plants the vineyard as the landowner (οἰκοδεσπότης) in 21:33 and the explicit statement of transference found in 21:43.

[438] France, *Matthew*, 308. Lane refutes the idea that the Song of the Vineyard imagery is a later addition to the parable but rather is integral to the story. William Lane, *Gospel of Mark* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 417.

[439] R. Alan Cole, *Mark* (TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 258.

[440] Notice that Matthew does not use his more typical "Kingdom of Heaven."

[441] France, *Matthew*, 310.

[442] Gundry, *Matthew*, 430.

aspirations, so it will not reaffirm her symbolic, and zealously defended, territorial inheritance and possession."[443]

In the Jewish tradition, the concept of the land is very closely connected to the figure of Abraham. Jesus speaks of Abraham, but never in connection with the promises of land. Interestingly, Jesus connects traditions about Abraham with the afterlife. It is the Old Testament identification of God as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Ex 3:6) that is used as proof of the resurrection (Matt 22:32 || Mk 12:26-27; Lk 20:37-38).[444] While the grammar of this sentence is less than convincing to prove the resurrection, the covenant context of these individuals argues that God's faithfulness must extend beyond death. William Lane notes: "By designating himself the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the context of his self-revelation to Moses, the Lord presented himself as the God of the covenant concluded with the patriarchs; but here the accent is placed primarily on the action of God who protected the fathers and provided for their deliverance."[445]

The place for the righteous at the judgment is with the patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the punishment for the wicked is separation from these great men of God (Matt 8:11-12 || Lk 13:28-29).[446] According to Morris: "The patriarchs would undoubtedly be the recipients of God's blessing in the coming world; therefore, to be associated with them was to share the blessing."[447] In the parable of the rich man and

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[443] Wright, *Victory,* 404-5.
[444] The parallels are quite similar, although only Lk 20:34-35 includes the doctrine of the two ages.
[445] Lane, *Mark*, 429-30.
[446] Witherington suggests from these passages that "Jesus envisions the *basileia* as finally coming on earth to *eretz Israel* and having a material dimension." *End of the World*, 67. But there is a different focus in the Matthew and Luke passages. Luke gives a threat of punishment to those who are to lose the Kingdom, while Matthew offers a promise of inclusion to those who are not expected. Matthew 8:12 specifies that it is the heirs of the Kingdom who will be rejected.
[447] Morris, *Matthew*, 195.

Lazarus, Abraham's bosom is the description of the eternal abode of the righteous Lazarus (Lk 16:22).[448]

In Matt 24:1-2 (|| Mk 13:1-2; Lk 21:5-6), Jesus begins his apocalyptic discourse by putting the hope of the land in its proper context. The land, epitomized by the Temple, is seen by the disciples as the hope and glory of Israel.[449] Jesus corrects them by announcing the coming destruction (v. 2) and revealing that the only true hope is in his return, when the angels will gather the elect from the four winds (v. 31).[450] Matthew 24:31[451] uses a number of Old Testament images that originally referred to the regathering of Israel's exiles.[452] The fact that Jesus moves from the Temple[453] to the Mount of Olives, may be an echo of Ezek 11:23, where the glory of YHWH leaves the Temple and stops at the Mount of Olives.[454] According to France, Jesus' words concerning the fate of the Temple are "the starkest expression of his rejection of Jewish nationalism."[455]

There is also possible land imagery in the parable of the prodigal son in Lk 15:11-32.[456] While commentators have given this story numerous interpretations, N.T. Wright sees the parable as being primarily about exile and restoration.[457] The description of the

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[448] This may be a picture of sitting at the eschatological banquet in which Abraham would also be present (Lk 13:28-29) or a description of a reunion with the patriarchs after death. Walter L. Liefeld, "Luke," *EBC* 8:992.
[449] Mark and Luke give a fuller description of the beauty of the Temple of which the disciples are boasting.
[450] Wright denies that this passage has anything to do with a "second coming," stating that the entire passage is about the destruction of Jerusalem. *Victory,* 339-40.
[451] Luke omits this verse and Mk 13:27 omits the sounding of the trumpet.
[452] Including restoration oracles from Deut 30:4 and Isa 27:13.
[453] Morris notes that Jesus not only leaves the Temple, but abandons it. *Matthew,* 594. Matthew alters Mark's description to highlight this abandonment. Gundry, *Matthew,* 474.
[454] France, *Matthew*, 336.
[455] France, *Matthew*, 336.
[456] Elsewhere, Wright describes this parable as "a story of resurrection." *Resurrection,* 437.
[457] Wright, *Victory*, 125-31. Craig A. Evans agrees and gives a more detailed discussion in "Jesus and the Continuing Exile of Israel," in Carey C. Newman (ed.), *Jesus and the Restoration of Israel* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 77-100. Knibb claims that it was believed that the exile would "be ended

son leaving his home due to sinful attitudes, going into a far country where life was difficult and then returning home, seems to describe Israel's hope for restoration after exile. The older son represents the Israelites that did not go into exile, including the Samaritans. The younger son represents the Jews that went out to and returned from Babylon. Wright notes that many Jews considered the exile to still be in effect,[458] and, by telling this parable, Jesus was announcing the long hoped for restoration. However, this restoration has very little to do with the land. Wright explains:

> ... resurrection – forgiveness – restoration – return from exile – the reign of YHWH – were all happening under the noses of the elder brothers, the self-appointed stay-at-home guardians of the father's house. The covenant was being renewed, and Jesus' welcome to the outcasts was a vital part of that renewal.[459]

The restoration promised by the prophets was taking place, but with references to the land being notably absent.

There have been attempts to find further references to the land in the synoptic Gospels. For example, Wright has suggested that the parables of the treasure in the field and the pearl of great price (Matt 13:44-46) are about the giving up attachment to the ancestral inheritance of the land.[460] It is more likely that these parables teach the need for radical allegiance for those who would be disciples. As Snodgrass notes: "It is especially

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only by the intervention of God and the inauguration of the eschatological era." Michael A. Knibb, "Exile in Intertestamental Literature," *HeythropJ* 17.3 (July 1976): 255. For a critical response to this interpretation see Klyne R. Snodgrass, "Reading and Overreading the Parables in *Jesus and the Victory of God,*" in *Jesus and the Restoration of Israel*, 69-70 and Richard B. Hays, "Victory over Violence," in *Jesus and the Restoration of Israel*, 147-48.

[458] Not every scholar agrees that the Jews saw themselves as continuing in exile. Snodgrass notes that in some ways it is irrelevant whether or not the exile was understood as continuing as either way the prophetic restoration promises had not yet been fulfilled. "Reading and Overreading the Parables," 62. The exile may have ended, in that some of the people returned to the land and the Temple was rebuilt, but the cycle of exile and return had not ended.

[459] Wright, *Victory,* 128-29.

[460] Wright, *Victory*, 242.

difficult to see how the treasure in the field should be interpreted as the abandonment of attachment to the ancestral land when the finder in the parable sells all to buy land!"[461]

Throughout the synoptic Gospels, the concept of the Kingdom of God[462] plays a crucial, if not the most important, role. It could be argued that everything that takes place in the Gospels is defined by what it means for the Kingdom. What is the relationship of the Kingdom to the land? The original Jewish concept of the Kingdom of God was related to the land, as Wright explains: "Although 'kingdom of god' referred more to the fact of Israel's god becoming king than to a localized place, the sense of Holy Land was invoked by the phrase as well, since YHWH had promised this country to his people."[463] Brueggemann sees a very close connection to the land even in the New Testament usage:

> The theme of "kingdom" is crucial for our consideration. It clearly includes among its nuances the idea of historical, political, physical realm, that is land. It may and surely does mean more than that, but it is never so spiritualized that those elemental nuances are denied or overcome.[464]

Land imagery did indeed help give shape to descriptions of the Kingdom of God, as that was the only context that people had for a kingdom, and yet the New Testament understanding of the Kingdom transcends geography, as will be demonstrated.[465]

Seeing the concept of Kingdom as being identified with the land is difficult with passages such as:

> Once Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, and he answered, "The kingdom of God is not coming with things

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[461] Snodgrass, "Parables," 71.
[462] Called the "Kingdom of Heaven" by Matthew due to his Jewish reverence. See Morris, *Matthew,* 53 n.11; France, *Matthew,* 46. However, there are other possible interpretations. Gundry sees this phrase as stressing the universality of the Kingdom. *Matthew,* 8.
[463] Wright, *Victory,* 206.
[464] Brueggemann, *Land,* 160-61.
[465] According to Davies, the Kingdom of God transcends geography. *Land,* 362.

> that can be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you." (Lk 17:20-21)[466]

Ben Witherington explains: "*basileia* has more than one nuance, depending on the context—sometimes referring to God's present saving activity breaking into human history, sometimes referring to a future realm that one may enter as a result of that activity of God."[467] N.T. Wright gives a useful analogy to the Bar-Kochba revolt, where the kingdom was considered present enough to mint coins but at the same depended upon a future victory against Rome, which of course did not happen.[468]

The Kingdom seems more likely to be identified with the means of government and authority to be obeyed than a land to inhabit.[469] George Beasley-Murray speaking of the Kingdom in John, as well as in the synoptic Gospels, states: "One is constrained to ask ... where in the four Gospels βασιλεία, when referring to God's kingdom, means anything other than 'kingship.'"[470] The Kingdom or Reign of God, of course, does require a place in which it must take place, either in this world or in the place of the righteous dead.[471] The Kingdom is not the place where a person dwells but the state in which a person exists. Therefore, participation in eternal life is equated with the future Kingdom of God.[472] Witherington states:

> The future *basileia* is envisioned as having both elements of continuity and discontinuity with life as we know it. It is not merely seen as a

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[466] Witherington comments: "The thrust of this logion would then be that there is no need to be anxiously calculating or looking for future coming of the *basileia* (as a realm) when its presence and activity is already in the midst of Jesus' audience through his ministry." *End of the World,* 72.
[467] Witherington, *End of the World,* 59-60.
[468] Wright, *Victory,* 468.
[469] Regarding the Kingdom of God, Wright notes: "At the level of worldview, the regular Jewish *symbols* are missing. The *story* of the new movement is told without reference to the national, racial or geographical liberation of Israel." *Victory,* 218.
[470] George Beasley-Murray, *John* (WBC; Waco: Word, 1987), 330.
[471] Witherington sees *basileia* and Paradise as being in parallel in Lk 23:42, suggesting that they be identified. *End of the World,* 60-61. However, Paradise is more likely one of the places in which God's reign is made manifest.
[472] Witherington, *End of the World,* 65.

> utopian earthly situation, but one that also partakes in some of the eternal qualities of heaven.[473]

For Jesus, the Kingdom of God in its future aspect did have some things in common with the hope of the land but it was not to be identified with it.

JOHN

John 2:20-21 speaks of Jesus' own death and resurrection in terms of the destruction and restoration of the Temple.[474] In this passage, Jesus identifies himself as the Temple, thus radically redefining the hope of Israel in terms of geography. According to Davies:

> The phrase "the temple of his body" designates either a person or a community or both that is to replace the "holy space" of the physical temple. The Gospel is destined to personalize or Christify that space, or, rather, holiness is no longer to be attached to space at all.[475]

George Beasley-Murray explains what this judgment means when he says: "v 19 promises a creative intervention of God through his Son, it is seriously to be considered that the 'destruction' of the temple which it rectifies may be of a moral kind, a degradation that destroys the nature of the temple as the temple of the covenant of Israel."[476] The fact that John places this passage at the beginning, rather than near the end as in the synoptics, demonstrates that this transformation of the holy is essential to John's understanding of Jesus' ministry.

In Jn 4:20-24, Jesus has a conversation with the Samaritan woman about the nature of worship. The woman attempts to put the nature of worship into the old

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[473] Witherington, *End of the World,* 68.
[474] Tasker notes that this is not just an illustration, but that Jesus' death and the destruction of the Temple are closely linked together. R.V.G. Tasker, *John* (TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 64. This comparison is found in the synoptic Gospels only on the lips of Jesus' accusers (Mk 14:58). Other parallels are found in Acts 6:14 and *Gos.Thom* 71.
[475] Davies, *Land*, 290.
[476] Beasley-Murray, *John*, 41.

category of place: either on Mount Gerizim[477] or in Jerusalem. Jesus responds by announcing that there is different era now appearing in which place no longer matters, as God's people will worship in Spirit and truth. This fits with the ancient restoration prophecies:

> The prophets had spoken of a coming day when not one central sanctuary alone, but the whole earth, would be the habitation of the name and glory of God. While the manifest consummation of this hope, associated as it is with the universal knowledge of God, lies in the future even from our perspective, yet to faith the conditions of that coming age are present already.[478]

In a way, perhaps not suspected by the prophets, the restoration of God's people had already begun.

John 18:36 has Jesus defining at his trial, in a negative way, the Kingdom that he rules over. His Kingdom is not of this world (κόσμος). Bruce paraphrases in a positive way what Jesus is saying: "the kingdom of which I am speaking is the kingdom of truth; the citizens of that kingdom are those who love truth; and they listen to me because they recognize in me their true king."[479] Pilate identifies himself as not being a part of the Kingdom, not because of his Roman heritage, but because he does not understand the truth (v. 38). Bruce continues by stating that Jesus' "Messiahship cannot be confined to Jewish particularism; it has permanent and universal validity, and confers genuine liberation on those who acknowledge it."[480]

In reference to the source of hope in John, a hope that was closely connected with the land in the Old Testament, Davies explains:

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[477] It is noteworthy for this study that the Samaritan choice overlooked Shechem, the first place Abraham built an altar after entering the Promised Land (Gen 12:6-7) and that it was on Mount Gerizim that Israel was blessed after the settlement in Joshua's day (Josh 8:33).
[478] F.F. Bruce, *Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 110.
[479] Bruce, *John*, 354.
[480] Bruce, *John*, 354.

> What is noteworthy is that in the Fourth Gospel the concept of "life" or "eternal life" assumes a significant role. At no point is it connected with the land in any way. Rather it is always centred in Jesus himself, who, in this sense, has become "the sphere" or "space" where life is to be found.[481]

Beasley-Murray expands on this when he says:

> The Evangelist consistently represents the new existence in Christ by the Spirit to be a *present* reality. Life in the kingdom of God or new creation is *now*, not a hope reserved for the future.[482]

Within the Gospel of John, there seems to be a conscious effort to transfer the source of hope for God's people from a political kingdom to a kingdom of life, experienced in the present and future.

ACTS

In Acts 1:6, the disciples ask about Jesus' role in restoring the kingdom to Israel. Joseph Fitzmyer explains the nature of what the disciples were asking: "The apostles' question is formulated in terms of the restoration of self-rule to Israel, perhaps even of the theocratic kingship once enjoyed by Israel of old, and certainly of the elimination of the occupying power of the Romans."[483] This seems to reflect the traditional Jewish belief that the territory would be restored with Jewish political independence.[484] Jesus does not say that they are wrong in expecting this, rather, that it is not for them to know the timing. I. Howard Marshall suggests as a possibility that "the disciples would appear here as representatives of those of Luke's readers who had not yet realized that Jesus had transformed the Jewish hope of the kingdom of God by purging it of its nationalistic

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[481] Davies, *Land*, 331.
[482] Beasley-Murray, *John,* lxxxvi.
[483] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1998), 201.
[484] "Their present question appears to have been the last flicker of their former burning expectation of an imminent theocracy with themselves as its chief executives." F.F. Bruce, *Book of Acts* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 36.

political elements."[485] The purpose of Jesus at that time was to give the Holy Spirit rather than to restore land (v. 8). Ironically, it is through the Holy Spirit that the geographical barriers are broken and the disciples move beyond Jerusalem and Judea to Samaria and to the ends of the earth (γῆ).[486] This becomes one of the major themes of Acts as Luke describes the rapid geographical expansion of the church.

In Stephen's speech in Acts 7:1-53, we have a summary of Israelite history that includes reference to the land.[487] What is relevant to this study is the focus on the unfaithfulness of Israel. It is made clear that Israel's punishment is directly related to their sin, being fulfilled in the betrayal and murder of the Messiah (v. 52). In Stephen's list of individuals, a number of them (Abraham, Joseph, Moses) experienced God outside of the land of Israel.

Stephen is particularly critical of Israel's attempt to confine God within the Temple (vv. 48-50), which by extension comments on the land. Bruce explains the connection to the land:

> A major theme of the speech is its insistence that the presence of God is not restricted to any one land or to any material building. God revealed himself to Abraham long before Abraham settled in the holy land; he was with Joseph in Egypt; he gave his law to the people of Israel through Moses when they were wanderers in a wilderness. The people of God similarly should not be restricted to any one locality; a movable tent such as they had in the wilderness and in the earlier years of their settlement in Canaan was a more fitting shrine for the divine presence in their midst than the fixed structure of stone that King Solomon built.[488]

Stephen uses the phrase "uncircumcised in heart" (v. 51), which recalls the sinful state of pre-restoration Israel in Deuteronomy and Jeremiah. Davies, using the work of William

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[485] I. Howard Marshall, *Acts* (TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 60.
[486] Hans Conzelmann notes that the question of the restoration of Israel in v. 6 is used as a foil for the universalism in v. 8. Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 7.
[487] Davies suggests a possible connection with the Hellenist controversy from Acts 6:1-15. *Land*, 269.
[488] Bruce, *Acts*, 130.

Manson, argues that the focus of Acts 7 is "on the extra-territorial dimension of God's activity a direct challenge to the Jewish community and to the early Christian community, 'huddled' around the Temple in Jerusalem and in the land, to move forward, to cease to cling to the securities of the institutions of the past—the Temple, the Law."[489] This story is very important as it is the beginning of Luke's breaking of Christianity from its Jewish matrix, presumably including the hope of the land.[490]

PAUL

Although the theme of the land in the Gospels is subtle, it can be found. In contrast, some scholars have seen in Paul's letters that the land seems to be altogether absent.[491] In a way, this makes sense as Paul's ministry was focused outside the territorial limits of the Promised Land. At the same time, Paul does engage the traditions that were normally understood to be about the land.

In Galatians 3, Paul deals with the traditions about Abraham, but strangely ignores all mention of the land. The importance of these traditions is demonstrated in the way Paul uses "Scripture" (γραφή) as "more or less an extension of the divine personality."[492] This was no human tradition but rather the living Word of God that continues to shape later generations. Paul works with the actual promise to Abraham that the nations[493] would be blessed (3:8) but understands this blessing as the sharing of Abraham's righteousness through faith. Ben Witherington notes that there is a double

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[489] Davies, *Land*, 271.
[490] Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 368.
[491] Davies claims: "Paul ignores completely the territorial aspect of the promise. The land is not within his purview." *Land*, 178.
[492] F.F. Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 156.
[493] The Judaism of Paul's day accepted certain blessings for the nations including: "the creation of the world and its continuance in spite of mankind's sinfulness; and the existence of grace, monotheism, penitence, proselytism, scientific knowledge, cultural achievements, etc." Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 142.

link between Abraham and the gentile believers: "It is not just that Gentiles receive a blessing through faith just as Abraham did, but that in fact they are the objects of blessing referred to in the original promise to Abraham."[494]

Paul also speaks of the promise to Abraham (v. 16), although this promise is not that of land but of the Spirit (v. 14).[495] In the same way, the inheritance (v. 18) is not the land but rather the righteousness that comes by faith and is mediated by the Spirit.[496] According to Betz: "When the Galatians received the Spirit, this could not have been an illegitimate, premature, or deficient event; they must have experienced nothing less than the fulfillment of the solemn promise God had made to Abraham."[497] Gordon Fee clarifies things when he explains:

> The genitive, "the promise of the Spirit," in this case is probably not appositional in the strict sense, meaning either "the promise, that is, the Spirit" or "the promised Holy Spirit." Rather, the "promised inheritance"—which includes the Gentiles—is now interpreted in light of vv. 1-5 as having been *fulfilled* for "us" through the gift of the Spirit.[498]

N.T. Wright sees a connection in these verses to the resurrection: "The implicit narrative underlying this passage is that of Israel's subjugation and the divine rescue – in other words, that for which the picture of 'resurrection' had been used in various Jewish texts; and the reason why Paul can declare that the promises have been fulfilled is, obviously, the death and resurrection of Jesus."[499] There may be a hint regarding Paul's concern about circumcision. Not only is circumcision a work that is in opposition to faith, it also

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[494] Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 228.
[495] According to Lightfoot, the promise is "a gift graciously bestowed and not a pledge obtained by negotiation." J.B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (repr. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995), 140.
[496] Lightfoot notes that "the inheritance spoken of refers primarily to the possession of the land of Canaan, but the spiritual application here is only in accordance with the general analogy of New Testament interpretation." *Galatians*,142.
[497] Betz, *Galatians*, 153.
[498] Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 394.
[499] Wright, *Resurrection,* 221.

represents a physical inheritance, while the possession of the Spirit represents the eternal inheritance of right standing with God.

In Gal 4:22-31, Paul offers an allegory of the two children of Abraham, which is used to contrast the promise to Abraham and the Law of Moses. For Paul, it is only the promise to Abraham that brings true freedom. In demonstrating this point, Paul uses Isa 54:1, a verse found in one of Isaiah's many restoration oracles.[500] In Isa 51:1-3, the prophet explicitly connects the image of restoration and freedom with the experience of Abraham and Sarah.[501] According to Steve Di Mattei: "It would seem then that Paul sees in Isaiah a prophetic exclamation of the present eschatological fulfillment of the covenant which hearkens back to Abraham and Sarah."[502] The "Jerusalem that is above" is an eschatological concept, and according Richard Longenecker, Paul used it here because "the experience of the Galatian believers had come into the eschatological situation of already participating in that future reality, in that the promise made to Abraham was fulfilled in Christ."[503] Di Mattei continues: "Like Isaiah who encourages the exiled Jews in their current plight to recall the promises made to Abraham, so too Paul encourages the Galatians in their present plight to recall the promises made to Abraham and his seed, of which they are a part."[504] The focus of the interpretation of this passage should not be the controversy of allegory but rather the continuity between Paul and prophetic restoration oracles.

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[500] Paul is using a rabbinic method of interpretation in which one passage is connected with another because of the presence of the same word. In this case it is the connection between Gen 11:30 and Isa 54:1 with "barren" (στεῖρα). Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1990), 215.
[501] Witherington, agreeing with R.B. Hays, states that Isa 51:2 is presupposed by Paul, even though it is not quoted. *Grace in Galatia*, 335.
[502] Steve Di Mattei, "Paul's Allegory of the Two Covenants (Gal 4.21-31) in Light of First-Century Hellenistic Rhetoric and Jewish Hermeneutics," *NTS* 52 (2006): 118.
[503] Longenecker, *Galatians*, 216.
[504] Di Mattei, "Two Covenants," 119.

Bruce Longenecker notes, in his important work in the Abraham traditions in Galatians, that Paul frames the letter with comments that indicate the focus is on the eschatological death of one world and the inauguration of another. [505] Paul uses the Jewish concept of the two ages: a present evil age and a future age where sin is overcome. The two ages are defined in relation to Christ, who rescues Christians from the evil age and inaugurates a new sphere of existence.[506] Ethnic Israel plays an important role in God's eschatological plan:

> In effecting salvation in Christ, God has not avoided, neglected, trivialized or rendered irrelevant Israel's situation. Instead, the situation of Israel is the arena wherein God's transforming power has initially been operative before extending to universal proportions. The rectification of Israel's predicament, rather than its abandonment, stands as the prerequisite for the inauguration of the new world. ... Eschatological deliverance required the initial transformation of Israel's situation.[507]

Paul did not see the repeal of God's land covenant with Israel but an eschatological transformation that allowed salvation, which was the heart of the covenant, to be shared with the gentiles.

In Romans 4, Paul reuses the Abrahamic traditions in arguing for justification by faith. However, there are some modifications to Paul's argument. Now the promise to Abraham and his descendants is not the Spirit but the inheritance[508] of the world (4:13). The use of κόσμος suggests it is a larger inheritance than the relatively small Promised Land of Canaan. "When Abraham's heritage is delimited in geographical terms it lies between Egypt and the Euphrates, but in the spiritual and permanent sense in which the promises are interpreted in the New Testament it cannot be confined within such earthly

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[505] Bruce W. Longenecker, *Triumph of Abraham's God* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 36.
[506] Longenecker, *Triumph*, 45.
[507] Longenecker, *Triumph*, 94.
[508] The Jewish understanding of inheritance was almost exclusively in connection with the land of Canaan. James D.G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1991), 213.

frontiers: it is as world-wide as the gospel."[509] Peter Walker notes: "he is asserting that behind the promise of a particular land to Abraham there lay God's prior purpose to use this as a means of blessing 'all the nations of the earth.'"[510]

There is some disagreement over the role of the land in Paul's use of the Abraham traditions. Regarding the Abraham image as used by Paul, Brueggemann claims:

> While the Abraham image undoubtedly is transformed, it is inconceivable that it should have been emptied of its reference to land. The Abraham imagery apart from the land promise is an empty form.[511]

Unfortunately, Brueggemann does not give details of how Paul's use of the promise is connected to the land. Whatever the original focus of the promise,[512] it seems that Paul's reuse of the tradition has very little, if any, connection with the land.[513] James Dunn, agreeing with the work of W.D. Davies, states:

> Paul takes up the enlarged form of the promise, of course, not because it implies Israel's worldwide dominance, but presumably because it sets the narrower strand of salvation-history centering on Israel within the larger scheme of the creation: the blessing promised to Abraham and his seed (including "the nations") is the restoration of God's created order, of man to his Adamic status as steward of the rest of God's creation; over against a more nationalistic understanding of the promise, Paul's "interpretation of the promise is a-territorial," fulfilled "in Christ."[514]

Paul may have seen, as some scholars claim, that the land was a temporary stage in God's purposes as revealed to Abraham.[515] Davies sees this as the content of the Abrahamic

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[509] F.F. Bruce, *Romans* (TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 110-11. (Bruce here also links this to the heavenly country from Heb 11:16.)
[510] Peter W.L. Walker, "The Land in the Apostles' Writings," in Johnston and Walker (eds.), *Land of Promise*, 87.
[511] Brueggemann, *Land*, 166.
[512] Chapter one demonstrated that the promise to Abraham was not just about land but was about fellowship with God and abundant blessings.
[513] Davies suggests that there may have been political reasons to not mention land in a letter to the capital of the Roman Empire, although this does not explain its absence in Galatians. *Land*, 178.
[514] Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 213. Dunn quotes from Davies, *Land*, 179.
[515] Walker, "Apostles' Writings," 87.

promise: "Paul discovers in the promise to Abraham a supra-national hope for salvation apart from circumcision and the Law: the promise is pan-ethnic not pan-halakic."[516]

Paul sees in the miracle of Abraham fathering a child a picture of the resurrection as life comes to the dead. The God who made a covenant with Abraham is the one "who gives life to the dead" (v. 17), which in one way describes Abraham's non-fruitful body (v. 19) but also looked ahead to the resurrection of Jesus (v. 24).

In Romans 9-11, Paul deals with the role of Israel. Although Paul redefines Israel as those joined in faith rather than those descended genealogically (9:6-8), he also has a great interest in what happens to ethnic Israel.[517] Paul's ultimate hope is that all Israel will be saved (11:26).[518] However, it is significant that in all the advantages enjoyed by the people of Israel in Rom 9:4, the land is not mentioned.[519] Ridderbos helps to clarify Paul's understanding of the role of Israel: "Thus, on the one hand Paul is able to see the church of the gentiles as endowed with all the privileges and blessings of Israel, and to see it occupy the place of unbelieving Israel, and yet on the other to uphold to the full the continuation of God's original redemptive intentions with Israel as the historical people of God."[520] Having said that, the continuation of God's intentions have little to do with land and everything to with the core of the Abrahamic covenant which is in world-wide blessing.

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[516] Davies, *Land*, 176.
[517] "[Paul] feels the need to guard against the thought of such an exclusion of empirical and national Israel as the people of God and to deny it as not consistent with the historical election of Israel." Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 355.
[518] Bruce demonstrates that this means not every Jew without exception but Israel as a whole, using *m. Sanh.* 10.1 as an example. *Romans,* 209.
[519] Some have suggested that these items are all summaries of messianic predictions and each refers to the land in some way, although Davies makes it clear that there is no side glance to the land. *Land,* 167-68.
[520] Ridderbos, *Paul,* 360-61.

Although Paul has little to say about the land, he does have extended interpretations of Jewish traditions normally closely linked to the land. Davies explains what Paul has done with the land traditions:

> By personalizing the promise "in Christ" Paul universalized it. For Paul, Christ had gathered up the promise into the singularity of his own person. In this way, "the territory" promised was transformed into and fulfilled by the life "in Christ."[521]

Regarding Paul's redefinition of the seed of Abraham and the people of God: "It pertains to the essence of Paul's proclamation and of his overall significance in the history of redemption that with all pneumatic force, the adduction of evidence from the Scriptures, and theological argumentation, he placed beyond dispute this universal character of the Christian church as not bound to national, social, racial, or other anthropological prerequisites and embracing all sorts of men."[522]

HEBREWS

Hebrews is very important in understanding the New Testament transformation of the land traditions.[523] This comes up in particular with the use of the 'rest' (κατάπαυσις) image. In Heb 3:7-11, the author quotes Ps 95:7-11, which contains a warning based on the disobedience of the Exodus generation. Hebrews 3:12-19 continues by expressing the punishment of that generation as not entering into the promised rest, which is the Promised Land.

In Hebrews 4, the author defines 'rest' in terms of the experience of God on the seventh day, after creation was completed. Traditionally, it was understood that the rest

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[521] Davies, *Land*, 179.
[522] Ridderbos, *Paul*, 337.
[523] Although these passages are not specifically about the physical land, Brueggemann notes: "Nonetheless it is clear that, when the text becomes promissory in its affirmation, it has no language to say what must be said except the language of the land." *Land*, 168. Walker suggests that all that follows should be interpreted the light of a Jewish community in the years leading up to the destruction of 70 CE. "Apostles' Writings," 91.

was experienced under Joshua, as the Promised Land was occupied. Yet, Ps 95:7, written much later than Joshua, commands the reader to respond in obedience 'today.' Paul Ellingworth notes:

> The author of Hebrews stops short of saying that God's promise of a resting-place has already been realized. What he does say is that access to God's resting-place was closed to the rebellious exodus generation, but that it is still open to be occupied by those who believe, if they stand firm.[524]

The author of Hebrews concludes that there is another day coming when a rest will be available to God's people, a rest of the quality of God's rest on the seventh day (Heb 4:9-10).[525] The new rest seems to be not the occupation of land but eschatological salvation in heaven.[526] William Lane has demonstrated that the eschatological interpretation of the rest fits with the rabbinic discussions on Num 14:35 and Ps 95:11 from the early second century, concerning the desert fathers participation in the age to come.[527] This is the rest which each Christian is to seek, through obedience and faithfulness to God.

In Heb 6:13-20, the author deals with the covenant to Abraham. He sees Abraham as obtaining the promise (v. 15). In Gen 22:17, the promise includes both numerous descendants and possession of the land. By passing over the land, the author prepares the readers for the image of the "sacrifice" of Isaac (11:17-19).[528] God's people are the heirs of that promise (v. 17) and are commanded to seize the hope that is set before them (v. 18). This hope seems to be found in Jesus, who is able to enter into the Holy of Holies on behalf of the people. The result of the work of the great high priest is a

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[524] Paul Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 216.
[525] Bauerfeind states: "Since it is from God, it will and must bring a καταπαύειν which corresponds to that of God Himself (cf. 1 C. 15:28)." Otto Bauerfeind, "καταπαύω," *TDNT* 3:627.
[526] Walker, "Apostles' Writings," 89.
[527] William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1991), 98.
[528] Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 151.

hope of present and future salvation.[529] Ellingworth notes: "That for which Christians hope is already in heaven, like the κατάπαυσις of 3:11ff., but they now reach out to grasp it, filled with a hope which is secure because it is grounded in the work of Christ."[530]

In Hebrews 8, the author specifies that the covenant established in Christ is the new covenant promised in Jer 31:31-34 (vv. 8-12).[531] Hebrews 8 agrees with some parts of Jeremiah's prophecy and ignores others.[532] However, the Jeremiah passage regarding the new covenant is the best Old Testament description for how the author of Hebrews understood what Christ had accomplished. Regarding the new covenant, Lane comments:

> The new covenant thus brings to its consummation the relationship between God and his people, which is at the heart of all covenant disclosure from Abraham onward. The relationship between God and his people, which was the intention of the covenant concluded at Sinai but which was broken by the past failure of Israel to observe the conditions of the relationship established by God, will be restored.[533]

The new covenant is better than the old as the old covenant, including the physical objects such as the Tabernacle, were only shadows of the heavenly and eternal versions (vv. 5-6). The result of the new covenant is that the old covenant, presumably with all its land promises as well, has been made obsolete (v. 13).

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[529] Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 153.
[530] Ellingworth, *Hebrews,* 345-46.
[531] This promise is applied to Israel and Judah with no mention of the gentiles, an indication of the Jewish nature of the audience. Donald Guthrie, *Hebrews* (TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 175.
[532] They share the concern for the renewal of the whole of Israel, although there is no counterpart of the ingathering of the diaspora in Hebrews. Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 413-14.
[533] Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 209.

In Hebrews 11, the author provides a hall of faith, examples from Israel's past to encourage contemporary believers.[534] Prominent among these figures is Abraham, who receives the longest treatment (vv. 8-19). In many ways the author stays with the Genesis account, but there are some significant innovations. There seems to be a purposeful substitution in 11:8 of τόπος for γῆ which is found in the LXX of Gen 12:1. According to Lane, τόπος is "an appropriate term to anticipate the reference to the city whose designer and creator is God as the final goal of Abraham's migration."[535] Hebrews 11:10 says: "For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God." Ellingworth explains: "Abraham did not know where he was going when he set out; and, in a sense, he never knew on earth the realization of God's promise of a permanent home for his descendants."[536] This explanation for the hope of Abraham and Sarah is given more detail:

> All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them. (Heb 11:13-16)

This seems to be suggesting that the Promised Land for Abraham was not so much the physical territory of Canaan, but the heavenly country that is attained in the afterlife. The use of "homeland" (πατρίς) is significant as it is rare in both the New Testament and the Septuagint. It means more than a place of habitation, it is rather "a fatherland where the

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[534] Walker notes that the majority of the figures listed in Hebrews 11 were living outside the land. "Apostles' Writings," 90.
[535] William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9-13* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1991), 349.
[536] Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 582.

nation can find its roots."[537] A further mention of the afterlife is found in v. 19, when the promise seemed in danger, Abraham had hope because of his belief in the resurrection.[538] "Abraham was so certain that God would perform what he had promised that by faith he attempted to offer Isaac, in the conviction that God could revive the dead."[539] Abraham's faith is not based on a preconceived idea of the afterlife but in the confidence of God's faithfulness, which in this circumstance opened the possibility of resurrection.

REVELATION

While mention of the land is not as explicit in the book of Revelation as it is in Hebrews, there are hints. There is a sense in Revelation that the people of God are no longer defined ethnically but are from every nation, tribe, people and language. However, there is still an interest in the historical people of Israel, or at least the image of it. Paul speaks of the restoration of Israel, using the generic and somewhat flexible term of Israel. Revelation, however, is more specific, identifying each of the twelve tribes (Rev 7:4-8).[540] This may represent the same tradition of a restored Israel within Christian thought as described by Paul in Romans 9-11.[541] David Aune sees this as not a reference to ethnic Israel but rather as "a Christian symbol for the fullness of the new people of God, composed of both Jews and Gentiles, constituting the remnant of Christians who survive the eschatological woes."[542] According to Caird: "In Revelation John has already applied to the church so many descriptions of the old Israel that it would be perverse to treat the

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[537] Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 234.
[538] Since resurrection beliefs are absent from the earliest Old Testament traditions, this resurrection reference may therefore be based on early Christian tradition. Ellingworth, *Hebrews,* 602.
[539] Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, 362.
[540] It is significant that Dan is missing, that Joseph (instead of Ephraim) is listed with Manasseh (technically part of Joseph), and that Levi is included, which it often is not when two spots are given to the Joseph tribes.
[541] Aune summarizes the arguments for the 144,000 as being Jews or Jewish Christians. David E. Aune, *Revelation 6-16* (WBC; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 440-41.
[542] Aune, *Revelation 6-16*, 444. Cf. Leon Morris, *Revelation* (TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 112.

present case as an exception to the general rule."[543] Whatever the exact ethnic makeup of the 144,000, it does seem evident that they are meant to be seen in the context of Old Testament restoration promises.

It is important to note that much space is given to describe the judgment and fall of Babylon (Rev 17-18). While this does not give detail about the land, this is a recurrent theme in the prophetic books that is closely connected with the restoration of Israel. Babylon is described as a whore (17:5). In the Old Testament, Israel is described as the bride of YHWH that is continually tempted into fornication with the idolatry of the foreign nations (Hos 2:5; Isa 1:21; Jer 2:2; Ezek 16:36-42; 23:2-22.).[544] Israel can not be fully restored until the whore is dealt with and faithfulness of the bride can be assured.

Revelation 21 describes the new heaven and new earth, a promise that also appears in Isa 65:17; 66:22. As in the Isaiah tradition, the focus is that of the Jerusalem that is its capital. John is brought to a high mountain from which he can view the New Jerusalem (21:10), just as Moses was brought up Mount Nebo to view the Promised Land of Canaan (Deut 34:1-4).[545] As in other places, it is difficult to know if γῆ (v. 1) is meant as the Promised Land or the entire planet. The presence of Jerusalem could suggest the land of Israel and yet, with the cosmic transformation, it could just as likely mean that the whole world has now become the Promised Land. The gates of the New Jerusalem are inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. According to Aune: "The association of the names of the twelve tribes of Israel with the gates of the New Jerusalem implies the realization of one of the central concerns of Jewish eschatology,

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[543] G.B. Caird, *Revelation of St. John the Divine* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 95.
[544] Caird, *Revelation,* 212.
[545] David E. Aune, *Revelation 17-22* (WBC; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 1151. Caird disagrees, seeing the mountain not as the vantage point but as the site of the New Jerusalem. Caird, *Revelation*, 269.

namely, *the restoration of the twelve tribes of* Israel, which is repeatedly mentioned in post-exilic OT and early Jewish literature."[546] The twelve gates seem to be an allusion to Ezek 48:30-35, but with an important difference: "Ezekiel regarded the gates as exits through which the tribes were to go out to their allotted land, and John thinks of them as entrances, open to the nations of the world."[547] In many ways, this passage seems reminiscent of Ezekiel 40-42 with the measurements of the holy place.[548] However, in Ezekiel, the Temple is prominent, while in Rev 21:22, it is specified that there is no Temple in the city. What Revelation does have in common with Ezekiel and all of the ancient land traditions is the enjoyment of the presence of God.

CONCLUSION

What is the role of the land in the New Testament? The imagery of the land does appear throughout the New Testament, but it seems to be transformed from what is found in the Old Testament. Jesus uses the land, not as a source of hope for the people to look for, but as an image for an eschatological Kingdom that is experienced in some way in the present and that will be fulfilled in the future. The Temple, as the holiest point in the land, is not lifted up to be admired but is to be torn down, a picture of what would happen to Jesus, the true Temple of God. While acknowledging the importance of the Jewish people in salvation history, Jesus refuses to get involved in territorial disputes regarding worship but points to a more spiritual understanding of God's ways.

In the book of Acts, there are brief references to the land. Geography is important to Acts, but it is the opposite of the traditional Jewish hope. Instead of a strengthening of Israel's borders, there is an expansion of the faith far beyond the traditional land. Luke

[546] Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, 1155.
[547] Caird, *Revelation,* 271.
[548] Similar imagery is used in 5Q15=5QNJ. Cf. Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, 1159.

also uses Stephen's speech to address these issues, demonstrating that God is not to be imprisoned in the limited space of either the Temple or the Land.

Paul speaks less of the land than Jesus, presumably because Paul was less active in Israel than Jesus was. However, Paul does rely heavily on Abraham, the foundation of many of Israel's land traditions. Paul works with those traditions, ignoring the references to the land, and focusing on the presence of God that is available to those who have Abraham's faith. Closely connected with this is the importance of the Holy Spirit, a concept connected elsewhere in Paul with the resurrection.[549] Paul is concerned with the role of ethnic Israel, and looks to the salvation of all Israel, while still ignoring the land component of the traditional restoration hopes.

Hebrews is a very important book for this study. As the author reinterprets many Jewish beliefs, he also transforms the hope for the land. Like the Old Testament, the hope is not just for possession or occupation but for rest in the land. Yet the author demonstrates that even under Moses and Joshua, this rest was never experienced. True rest is found in the eschatological city that God has built where a rest that is of the nature of God's rest on the seventh day is to be enjoyed.

Finally, in Revelation, restoration hopes are again reflected on, especially in reference to the twelve tribes of Israel. But as in Paul, Israel is reinterpreted as being the people of God, either Jew or gentile, who have found life in Jesus Christ. The restoration hopes of Israel will take place, but it will be of a more universal nature than originally supposed. Ultimately, Isaiah's hope of a new heaven and a new earth will be fulfilled.

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[549] Regarding the "spiritual body" of 1 Cor 15:44, Fee explains: "The transformed body, therefore, is not composed of 'spirit'; it is a *body* adapted to the eschatological existence that is under the ultimate domination of the Spirit." Gordon Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 786.

God's people will be gathered to the New Jerusalem to enjoy for eternity the presence of God.

The Christian Church had become in one sense a landless people, not tied to any geographical territory. On the other hand, the Church held to the hope of an eschatological existence described in images of the land. This paradox finds its key in the transformation of the concept of the land. For Christians, it is a heavenly country with a New Jerusalem, where God's holiness is not mediated by a Temple but through his personal presence. In that land, the Kingdom of God will be in its fullness and the new covenant of the Jewish tradition that promised an end to all evil will be accomplished. However, none of these restoration promises could be experienced without the resurrection.

CHAPTER EIGHT:

RESURRECTION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

There are great challenges in summarizing the concept of the resurrection in the New Testament as it is such an important topic.[550] It is impossible to describe every detail in this belief but a general overview will be given. This study will not focus on the resurrection of Jesus but rather on the general resurrection. It is possible to believe in the resurrection of Jesus and to not believe in a general resurrection. Rather, the resurrection will be examined as the source of Christian hope and the resurrection of Jesus will be dealt with only in how it affects the general resurrection. Also, not every reference to eternal life or the Kingdom of God will be studied. Only passages that give detail to the Christian hope of resurrection will be presented.

SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

Although all of the synoptic Gospels[551] conclude with the resurrection of Jesus, it is much more difficult to discover what Jesus had to say about the general resurrection.[552] Witherington notes: "There is surprisingly little evidence of any detailed discussion by Jesus on the subject of resurrection in the arguably authentic material within the Synoptic Gospels."[553] Having said that, there is some evidence that resurrection was considered the hope of Israel by Jesus.

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[550] The resurrection was originally to be a chapter in N.T. Wright's *Jesus and the Victory of God* but it ended up being an independent book *Resurrection of the Son of God*, larger than the original book of which it was to be a part.

[551] Even without the longer ending, Mark concludes with an assumption that Jesus had been raised (Mk 16:6).

[552] Wright sees many more references to the resurrection, although many of them are describing the nature of the Kingdom rather than directly describing the resurrection. *Resurrection*, 401-49.

[553] Witherington, *End of the World*, 216.

There are a number of passages that describe an afterlife related to the Kingdom, although without mentioning the resurrection, including: Matt 8:11-12 || Lk 13:28-29 and Lk 22:28-30 || Matt 19:28.[554] There are also passages that threaten judgment in Gehenna (Matt 10:28-31 || Lk 12:4-7).[555] There is also possible resurrection language in Matt 12:41-42 (|| Lk 11:31-32)[556] where the words ἀναστήσονται (v. 41) and ἐγερθήσεται (v. 42) are used.[557] However, this may not refer to the actual resurrection of the men of Nineveh and the queen of the South but rather the raising up of their witness of judgment against Israel.

The clearest mention of bodily resurrection is found in Matt 22:23-33 (|| Mk 12:18-27, Lk 20:27-40)[558] where Jesus is confronted by the Sadducees about the resurrection. Using the concept of the levirate marriage, the Sadducees attempt to demonstrate the falsehood of the resurrection. Jesus responds by pointing out the relationship of God to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In this way Jesus, like the later rabbis, was able to find the resurrection in a Torah that is basically silent on the subject. Witherington explains: "Thus this text warrants our believing that Jesus affirmed a future resurrection of at least the believing dead, and that the state of those raised would be deathless and that no new marriage relationships would be initiated."[559] Lane states: "Jesus affirmed that the resurrection life is comparable to the life enjoyed by the angels.

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[554] For differences between the parallels, see previous chapter. Note that both passages have links to land imagery.
[555] The parallels are similar, except for the price of sparrows.
[556] The parallels are similar, except for the order of the rising of the queen of the South and the men of Nineveh.
[557] See Wright, *Resurrection,* 432-34.
[558] The parallels are very similar as noted in the previous chapter. The linking of the afterlife to the patriarchs who are identified with land promises is significant.
[559] Witherington, *End of the World,* 218.

Its great purpose and center is communion with God."[560] This is significant in that this communion with God had also been the heart of the land promises to Israel. Wright sees the placement of this story in its context by the synoptic Gospel writers as very significant. It is closely connected with Jesus' words of judgment against the nation and the Temple (Matt 21 || Mk 11-12, Lk 19-20). Wright explains that "the evangelists seem to think that the debate about resurrection belongs within this larger complex of thought, within the rich and explosive mixture of politics and theology that forms the climax of the synoptic narrative."[561]

The story of the rich man and Lazarus from Lk 16:19-31 is a prominent passage in the study of New Testament descriptions of the afterlife. This passage is not specifically about the resurrection, but rather contains the denial of a request to raise someone from the dead. Norval Geldenhuys gives the important warning: "The Saviour related this parable not in order to satisfy our curiosity about life after death but to emphasize vividly the tremendous seriousness of life on this side of the grave—on the choice made here by us depends our eternal weal or woe."[562] However, it does presume a picture of the afterlife where the dead are physical enough to recognize one another and to feel pain. That this is not a description of resurrection conditions is demonstrated by the fact that the story takes place while the rich man's brothers are still alive and not at the eschatological end of history.[563] It is interesting to note the prominence of Abraham, a figure normally identified with the land.

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[560] Lane, *Mark*, 428.
[561] Wright, *Resurrection*, 419.
[562] Geldenhuys, *Luke*, 427.
[563] This story does invoke themes of judgment that are common in Jewish apocalyptic literature.

Also important is Lk 23:39-43 which describes the conversation between the thief and Jesus on the cross concerning the Kingdom. Jesus promises that they would be in Paradise (v. 43) that very day. In the Jewish tradition, the Persian concept of Paradise was used to describe the Garden of Eden as the destination of the righteous dead. The enjoyment of a garden suggests some sort of physical existence and yet the immediacy of experience argues against the eschatological resurrection. It is significant that the thief's request comes in terms of Jesus' coming into his Kingdom. For many Jews, Kingdom would invoke land images but this thief seems to have understood it in terms of an afterlife. This makes sense, for in Lukan thought, Jesus' coming into his Kingdom takes place only by his passage through death.[564] Also important is that this type of theme in Jewish thought is often a part of a martyr theology. However, the thief is definitely not a martyr. The Kingdom has been opened up to a wider group of people.

Although Jesus speaks of eternal life numerous times, in the synoptic Gospels Jesus teaches on the resurrection only once, and then only because the Sadducees introduced the subject. Considering the importance of the resurrection in early Judaism and early Christianity this is surprising. Perhaps it is because of Jesus' anticipation of his own death and resurrection. There was no point of explaining the general resurrection until Jesus' own resurrection had been witnessed and integrated into the confession of the early church.

JOHN

There is much in John that is about eternal life without specifying the resurrection. John 3:16 explains that the reason that God sent Jesus was to save people from death and to offer them eternal life. In John 6:27, Jesus offers bread, in the tradition of Moses and the

[564] Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53*, 1152.

manna, that will give eternal life. He clarifies in 6:35 that he himself is the bread of life. This bread is superior to the manna in the wilderness in that those who partake will never die (6:50-51). According to C.H. Dodd, in the Gospel of John "the evangelist is developing his doctrine of eternal life with reference to the Jewish idea of the Age to Come, qualitatively as well as quantitatively different from this life."[565]

In John 5:21, Jesus explains that his life-giving ministry is based on God's role in raising the dead.[566] It is uncertain if this is a description of the resuscitations of the Old Testament and Jesus' ministry, or, as Bruce believes, in the giving of life in the age to come.[567] Tasker states that "His present almost unconscious exercise of that right is a prelude to the final judgment which He will pronounce upon all mankind after the general resurrection on the last day."[568] Wright explains, regarding the present experience of eternal life:

> But this does not permit us to collapse the promise of future resurrection which follows immediately into the metaphorical meaning of the events taking place during Jesus' ministry. Rather, it shows that those still-future events are casting their light before them, so that the reactions of people to Jesus, in belief or unbelief, are true present signs of their future fate.[569]

Andrew Lincoln agrees when he states: "The present experience of eternal life is, therefore, an anticipation of – but not a substitute for – the physical resurrection."[570] What is clear is that the entire eschatological process has been remitted into the hands of Jesus.[571]

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[565] C.H. Dodd, *Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 146-47.
[566] This may go back to the second benediction of the '*Amidah*. Bruce, *John*, 129.
[567] Bruce, *John*, 129.
[568] Tasker, *John*, 88.
[569] Wright, *Resurrection*, 443.
[570] Andrew T. Lincoln, "I am the Resurrection and the Life: The Resurrection Message of the Fourth Gospel," in Longenecker (ed.), *Life in the Face of Death*, 128.
[571] Beasley-Murray, *John*, 76.

In John 11, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead, which is not a true resurrection but rather a resuscitation. However, in a conversation with Martha about the general resurrection, Jesus claims that he is "the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). Lincoln explains this by saying: "Jesus declares himself to be the fulfillment of traditional Jewish eschatological expectations, the one who embodies the power to raise from the dead, and the one who is the source of the positive verdict of eternal life."[572] Beasley-Murray explains the significance of this statement: "The greatest gift of God's saving sovereignty is precisely *life eternal* under that sovereignty and entry upon it through *resurrection.* The power to initiate it resides in Jesus ('the Resurrection') and to grant it in its fullness ('the Life')."[573] It is only through Jesus that the Jewish hope of the resurrection could be attained. However, in John the ideas of resurrection and life go beyond just a future eschatological event. Dodd explains: "The miracle of Lazarus's bodily resurrection, which anticipates the final resurrection, is a symbol of the real resurrection by which a man passes from merely physical existence, which is death, into the life which is life indeed, and which is proof against the death of the body."[574] John agrees with Paul that in a sense Christians are raised with Christ in this life (Rom 6:4), without denying that this will be ultimately fulfilled at the general resurrection.

In John 14:1-6, Jesus comforts his disciples by assuring them that he goes to prepare a place for them. Although resurrection is not specifically mentioned, the confidence is in a statement about Jesus similar to John 11:25, this time that Jesus is "the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6). The description of a house with many rooms connotes some kind of physical existence. According to Beasley-Murray: "the Father's

[572] Lincoln, "Resurrection and the Life," 142.
[573] Beasley-Murray, *John*, 190.
[574] Dodd, *Fourth Gospel*, 148.

'house' with its many dwellings is most plausibly a pictorial representation of the transcendent dwelling of God, such as depicted under the figure of 'the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem' in Heb 12:22, a symbol which is greatly elaborated in the apocalyptic vision of the City of God in Rev 21:9-22:5."[575] The timing of it with Jesus' return (14:3) would suggest to early Christians that he was speaking of the resurrection rather than an intermediate state. Jesus' return "is introduced here as the consummation of the personal fellowship between him and his disciples."[576]

ACTS

The resurrection of believers does not play a major role in Acts, for the Holy Spirit is described as the inheritance, but resurrection does appear, particularly in traditions associated with Paul. In Acts 17:18, the Athenians seemed to think that Paul is preaching about two gods: Jesus[577] and Resurrection (ἀνάστασιν).[578] This could be a reference to Jesus' resurrection or it could be a proclamation of the general resurrection. Although the Greeks could understand a bodily afterlife through apotheosis, they thought of resurrection as the reanimation of a corpse.[579] Their confusion about this term could easily lead to a misunderstanding of Resurrection as a separate god.

In Acts 23:6, Paul proclaims that the reason for his trial is his hope in the resurrection of the dead. For Paul, this hope was closely connected with the resurrection

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[575] Beasley-Murray, *John*, 249.
[576] Bruce, *John*, 297-98.
[577] They may have associated Ἰησοῦς with ἴασις ("healing") or with Ἰασώ, the goddess of health. F.H. Chase, *Credibility of the Book of Acts* (London: Macmillan, 1902), 205-6.
[578] N. Clayton Croy, "Hellenistic Philosophies and the Preaching of the Resurrection (Acts 17:18, 32)," *NovT* 39.1 (1997): 23.
[579] Marshall sees a Greek dismissal of a bodily resurrection as just as likely as seeing Resurrection as a goddess. Marshall, *Acts*, 284.

of Jesus.[580] That he also had in mind the general resurrection is revealed by his use of this belief in turning the Pharisees against the Sadducees. F.F. Bruce paraphrases this statement in this way: "I am a Pharisee, my forebears were Pharisees, and the charge on which I am now being examined concerns the national hope, which depends for its fulfillment on the resurrection of the dead."[581] Bruce continues by saying: "Paul and [the Pharisees] agreed that the ancestral hope of Israel was bound up with the resurrection of the dead."[582] According to Paul, the Christians and the Pharisees ultimately have the same hope, the difference is in how that hope is achieved. Conzelmann states that, according to Paul, "the belief in a general resurrection is the link between (genuine) Judaism and Christianity. Hence the Jews should realize that their faith comes to fulfillment in Christianity."[583] Paul's teaching is made even more explicit in Acts 26:6-7, where Paul claims that the hope of the resurrection was given to his Hebrew ancestors and that hope continues with the twelve tribes. Joel Green explains: "In their proclamation of a future resurrection, then, Jesus' witnesses in the Acts of the Apostles testify that God's ancient promises have been fulfilled in Jesus' resurrection, and that those who embrace this viewpoint also share in Israel's hope."[584] This is significant in that purely from an Old Testament perspective, the resurrection of the dead is barely mentioned much less the foundation of their hope. This passage reveals not only how far Judaism had come, but also how close Paul saw Christianity to the Pharisaic sect in this particular doctrine.

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[580] Marshall notes that "Although the issue is introduced in general terms, the real point is the possibility of the resurrection of Jesus." Marshall, *Acts*, 364.
[581] Bruce, *Acts*, 427.
[582] Bruce, *Acts*, 428.
[583] Conzelmann, *Acts*, 192.
[584] Joel B. Green, "Witnesses of His Resurrection: Resurrection, Salvation, Discipleship, and Mission in the Acts of the Apostles," in Longenecker (ed.), *Life in the Face of Death,* 243.

PAUL

The subject of the resurrection, both of Jesus and the believer, is very important to Paul's theology. This section will not give an exhaustive study of all the relevant passages[585] but will look at some important and representative passages.

1 Thessalonians may be the earliest of Paul's letters and within it, the doctrine of the resurrection has a prominent role. This doctrine is based on Jesus' experience of the resurrection (4:14),[586] which is then shared with his followers. The timing of the resurrection is given as the return of Christ (4:16), when all Christians, both living and dead, will be raised. The arrival of Christ is accompanied by a trumpet call (4:16). This image is common in the Old Testament and perhaps is an allusion to Isa 27:13 where the sound of the great trumpet calls the people out of exile.[587] The focus of the hope is in the fellowship of the people with the Lord (4:17). It is not specified where the final destination of the Lord and his followers is to be but it may be a return to earth. Bruce describes the image being used here: "When a dignitary paid an official visit (παρουσία) to a city in Hellenistic times, the action of the leading citizens in going out to meet him and escort him back on the final stage of his journey was called the ἀπάντησις."[588] The use of these Greek words in vv. 15 and 17 suggests such a context for the appearance of Christ and the resulting resurrection.

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[585] See Wright, *Resurrection,*209-398; Witherington, *End of the World,* 184-215; Longenecker (ed.), *Life in the Face of Death,* 147-226; Segal, *Life*, 399-440.
[586] Leon Morris states that: "The resurrection [of Jesus] is the guarantee of the Christian hope." Leon Morris, *First and Second Thessalonians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 139.
[587] F.F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (WBC; Waco: Word, 1982), 100. Perkins sees this in terms of the traditional Jewish image of the gathering of the righteous, *Resurrection,* 298.
[588] Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 102.

This is the basis on which Christians can build their hope (4:13). These promises provide the same assurance of the Old Testament restoration oracles with regard to a final victory for the people of God. Regarding Paul's words, Leon Morris states:

> They convey the assurance that the power of God will never be defeated. God is supreme, and when he sees that the time has come, he will draw this age to its close and usher in the new age with the parousia. Whether we live or whether we die, we do not go beyond his power. Even in the face of death, that antagonist that no human can tame, we can remain calm and triumphant, for we know that those who sleep sleep in Jesus and that they have their place in the final scheme of things.[589]

This was a hope with that no anticipation of land possession could ever compare.

The most detailed description of the resurrection in Paul, if not in the entire Bible, is found in 1 Corinthians. As elsewhere, Paul grounds the general resurrection in the personal resurrection of Jesus. Paul provides strong evidence from an earlier tradition that lists witness to the risen Christ (15:3-7). Paul reasons that the resurrection is central to the Christian faith and that a denial of the general resurrection is a denial of Jesus' resurrection, which leaves the Christian without hope (15:12-19). Paul's opponents may have believed that the resurrection had already taken place and Paul's correction of this is not contradicted by Paul's belief that in a sense, every Christian has already been raised with Christ. C.K. Barrett describes Paul's understanding of resurrection, including the relationship to Christ's resurrection: "So, in a sense, did Paul himself believe, for in his view also Christians had been raised with Christ (Rom. vi. 5-8; 2 Cor. v. 15; Gal. ii. 19 f.; Col. iii. 1-4); the resurrection of Christ was not simply a test case which proved that resurrection was a possibility, but the actual source of supernatural life; yet in Paul's

[589] Leon Morris, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 94.

view this had not happened in such a way as to leave nothing over for a resurrection in the future."[590]

Whatever the relationship between the Christian's present life and the future resurrection, it is clear that both are defined by Christ's resurrection. Orr and Walther explain how important resurrection was for Paul in this passage:

> Though Christ's death expressed forgiveness of sin, the forgiveness does not become effective unless the victim of sin survives. Forgiveness of sins requires that the evil of sin be canceled out, and human hate against God and fellow beings is canceled out by Christ's love expressed in his forgiveness. As long as the victims of human hate and evil are dead, however, the process is blocked. Resurrection turns the evil into good.[591]

Hope for Christians is strongly connected to the assurance of an eschatological resurrection.

Paul goes from there into a discussion on various matters regarding the resurrection. Paul teaches that the resurrection is both in continuity and discontinuity with earthly bodies (15:35-49). This is demonstrated in the example of Jesus' resurrection, as Gordon Fee explains: "The continuity existed because he who had been crucified was also seen, visibly and corporeally, after his resurrection; but his current heavenly existence also meant for Paul that there was obvious transformation."[592] The discussion centers on the movement from incorruption to corruption (15:42). Barrett explains what this means in the context of Paul's theology:

> *Corruption* is an evil power, by which the world is dominated in the old age (Rom. viii. 21). It affects not only human life, but the whole of creation. Its dominion will be ended in the age to come, at the beginning of which the resurrection takes place. Thus Paul's point is not simply that we shall have a new body, no longer subject to change and decay, but that

[590] C.K. Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians* (BNTC; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2000), 348.
[591] William F. Orr and James Arthur Walther, *I Corinthians* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1976), 326-27.
[592] Fee, *Corinthians*, 777.

> the new body will be appropriate to the new age in which God, having reasserted his sovereignty, is *all in all* (xv. 28).[593]

Both the dead and those living at the parousia will be transformed into spiritual bodies (15:51-54). Orr and Walther see Paul as building on traditional Jewish eschatology but with the addition of transitional eschatology to incorporate the time between Jesus' resurrection and the general resurrection.[594]

The reason for the transformation is that the Kingdom of God is such that only spiritual and immortal bodies can inherit it (15:50). "Thus those who are currently in Christ's kingdom (v. 25) are thereby also destined for God's final eschatological kingdom."[595] The language of inheriting a kingdom is significant. One who relied solely on the Hebrew Bible would assume that this was the Promised Land of Canaan. However, at this time and in this context, the Kingdom is an eschatological state that requires the resurrection as a preliminary description. The inheritance of the Kingdom is not based on military and political control of Canaan, but on God's victory over death through Christ. Paul concludes with quotations from Isa 25:8 and Hos 13:14[596] mocking the power of death and using victory language that reflects the fulfillment of the hopes of restoration. It is important that Paul speaks of a transformation to be experienced by all believers.

Although he does not quote the relevant Old Testament passages,[597] the need for transformation with regard to restoration of the spiritual transformation is described by Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. It is unlikely that those prophets had resurrection in mind

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[593] Barrett, *Corinthians*, 372.
[594] Orr and Walther, *I Corinthians*, 344-45.
[595] Fee, *Corinthians*, 799.
[596] Paul modifies these Old Testament passages to make his point. See Fee, *Corinthians*, 803-4.
[597] Writing to gentiles, Paul did not need to rely on Old Testament proof texts but those passages are obviously influencing his theology.

and yet for Paul it is in the transformation that accompanies resurrection that God's people will finally be able to receive their inheritance without fear of exile. Regarding the difference between the physical body and the resurrection body, Robertson and Plummer state: "In the material body the spirit has been limited and hampered in its action; in the future body it will have perfect freedom of action and consequently complete control, and man will at last be, what God created him to be, a being in which the higher self is supreme."[598] Wright puts it this way: "The main feature of God's new world will be, as Paul said in verse 26, that death itself will be defeated. Victory is assured, because that which caused death from the beginning, namely sin, has been dealt with (verses 56-7)."[599] Restoration motifs run throughout this passage:

> In Isa. xxv. 8 it is said that God will swallow up death—the death which came by the hand of the Assyrian. In the Prophet's vision the deliverance from death is limited by the necessities of his own age. The Apostle's view is much wider. He knows that all death will be swallowed up now that Christ has conquered death by rising again.[600]

This is confirmed by the unexpected mention of sin in v. 56 as it is at the resurrection that the problem of sin, which is made manifest in death will finally be taken care of.

Resurrection also plays a role in Romans although it is not the central issue of the letter. Particularly important is Rom 8:18-25. In this passage, Paul speaks of the need for transformation for not only human bodies but for all of creation. In 8:17 Paul speaks of the identity of Christians as heirs and co-heirs with Christ. The concept of inheritance[601] is extremely important. James Dunn explains:

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[598] Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians* (repr. ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999), 372.
[599] Wright, *Resurrection*, 357.
[600] Robertson and Plummer, *Corinthians*, 378.
[601] Sanday and Headlam note that hope originally referred to the possession of the land and later the permanent and assured possession of the land. William Sanday and A.C. Headlam, *Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; New York: Charles Scribners, 1898), 204.

> Central to Jewish self-understanding was the conviction that Israel was the Lord's inheritance, the people chosen out of all the nations of the earth to be his own (Deut 32:9). Integral to that national faith was the conviction that God had given Israel the inheritance of Palestine, the promised land. It is this axiom which Paul evokes and refers to the new Christian movement as a whole, Gentiles as well as Jews. *They* are the heirs of God; Israel's special relationship with God has been extended to all in Christ. And the promise of the land has been transformed into the promise of the *kingdom*; the thought of Christian inheritance as inheritance of the kingdom was evidently well enough established in the churches known to Paul so that he has no need to be more explicit.[602]

Dunn is correct in that the inheritance has been transformed, but Paul gives more explanation than just the Kingdom.

What exactly is the inheritance of the Christian?[603] It may be the sharing in Jesus' resurrection by receiving glorified bodies. The discussion of a renewed creation may also suggest that there is geographical aspect to the eschatological inheritance, not just Israel but a transformed earth. As Dunn notes: "Paul's thought is clearly that creation itself must be redeemed in order that redeemed man may have a fitting environment."[604] Bruce explains:

> These words of Paul point not to the annihilation of the present material universe on the day of revelation, to be replaced by a universe entirely new, but to the transformation of the present universe so that it will fulfill the purpose for which God created it. Here again we hear the echo of an Old Testament hope – the creation of 'new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells' (2 Pet. 3:13, quoting Is. 65:17; 66:22; *cf.* Rev. 21:1).[605]

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[602] Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 462-63.
[603] Fee sees it as "God's eternal glory, that is the eschatological denouement of our story." Fee, *Empowering Presence*, 569.
[604] Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 471.
[605] Bruce, *Romans*, 161.

Despite popular beliefs of eternity in heaven, as Witherington notes: "The kingdom will be inherited on earth and that requires not only transformed persons but also a transformed earth."[606]

The Spirit is the first fruits[607] of the new creation that assures the Christian that God will fulfill all of his eschatological promises (8:23). "For [Paul] and the Judaism he represented, the outpouring of the Spirit and the resurrection of the dead were the key elements to their eschatological hopes."[608] Finally, in 8:24 Paul explicitly links all of these promises to the concept of hope. The hope of the Christian is not just the present forgiveness of sins but the future transformation of the body and the world. In many ways, resurrection has taken on the role the land played as the hope for Israel in the New Testament.

REVELATION

There are a number of references to the resurrection found in Revelation.[609] In 20:4-6 the author describes what is called the first resurrection.[610] This seems to be limited to martyrs who gave their lives in resistance to the beast. G.B. Caird demonstrates that Judaism in its development of the resurrection had room for either a heavenly or an earthly existence. Caird suggests that John wanted the best of both worlds and the first

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[606] Witherington, *End of the World,* 202.

[607] In 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23 Paul describes Christ as the first fruits of resurrection. Witherington suggests that the Spirit was not used as first fruits in 1 Corinthians because that would have played into the hands of the spiritists. *End of the World,* 194.

[608] Fee, *Empowering Presence,* 573.

[609] Lambrecht notes that Rev 20-22 is dependent on Ezek 37-48, which includes one of the earliest resurrection motifs, although there are some modifications to the Ezekiel material. Jan Lambrecht, "Final Judgments and Ultimate Blessings: The Climactic Visions of Revelation 20.11-21.8," *Bib* 81 (2000): 366, 375.

[610] Morris does not see the "first" resurrection as suggesting there will be a "second" resurrection. *Revelation,* 231. Aune accepts Rev 20:12-13 as the second resurrection. *Revelation 17-22,* 1090.

resurrection is the place for the earthly paradise that takes place during the millennium.[611] David Aune explains that: "Since the venue of the vision segment in 20:1-3 and the prophetic segment in 20:7-10 is apparently the *earth*, the author may be implying that the reign of the resurrected martyrs with Christ also occurs on the earth,"[612] although this is not made explicit.

In Rev 20:11-15 there is another resurrection that takes place after the thousand years. Unlike Paul who only describes the resurrection of the righteous, this resurrection is for all people.[613] The sea, death and Hades all give up the dead that are within them. The dead are judged by their works and those who are not found in the book of life are thrown into the lake of fire.[614] In this passage, John is using traditional Jewish imagery as Aune explains:

> The final judgment is depicted in vv 11-15 in the traditional eschatological imagery derived from the role of kings as dispensers of justice. The second resurrection, implied but unmentioned, enables the rest of the dead, both righteous and wicked, to stand before the throne of God awaiting their sentence (traditional imagery). ... The metaphor of two sets of heavenly tablets or books on which the righteous and wicked deeds are recorded for reference on the day of judgment is common in early Judaism.[615]

In addition to this Jewish imagery, the resurrection leads up to the establishment of the new heavens and new earth in Revelation 21 with the New Jerusalem as its capital. This is clearly traditional restoration material that has been fused with resurrection themes.

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[611] Caird, *Revelation*, 254. Leon Morris disagrees, arguing this passage describes events in heaven and that these people remain souls without bodies. *Revelation,* 230. The language of resurrection makes this unlikely.
[612] Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, 1089.
[613] Morris affirms that this judgment is for all people and not just the wicked. *Revelation,* 235. However, Lambrecht argues that the second resurrection is only for the wicked. "Final Judgments," 370. It is likely that if John meant only the wicked, he would have explicitly stated that.
[614] For the Old Testament background to the heavenly books, see Johnston, *Shades*, 214-16.
[615] Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, 1104.

That the book of Revelation is important for understanding not only the resurrection but also how the resurrection fits with Israel's restoration hopes, is explained by Wright:

> Revelation is as resurrection-soaked as any other book in the New Testament, for all that the key words occur only seldom (Revelation is anyway notoriously full of lexical peculiarities). The whole scenario only makes sense within the worldview of second-Temple Judaism, and in particular of that end of the spectrum which, longing for the coming kingdom, saw judgment on the wicked nations and the vindication of God's suffering people as the moment to be longed for, prayed and worked for.[616]

Although there are adaptations and transformations of traditional hopes, in Revelation, the resurrection is seen as a key event in the restoration of Israel.

CONCLUSION

The doctrine of the resurrection is not a minor theme in the New Testament. Although the general resurrection is not prominent in the synoptic Gospels, the concept of eternal life as the test and the motivation for a moral life is. When it comes to the resurrection, it is Jesus' personal resurrection that takes the most important place. The resurrection of Jesus is not just a vindication of one man's ministry but is a picture of what all believers will experience.

Resurrection and eternal life are more complicated in the Gospel of John. For John, eternal life is something to be experienced in the present. However, this does not negate the hope for a bodily resurrection in the future. What is experienced spiritually in the present is a taste of what God's people will enjoy bodily in the future.

In Acts, the resurrection of Jesus is central to the church's proclamation. It was so prominent that when Paul preached in Athens, the Greeks mistook his message as

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[616] Wright, *Resurrection*, 476.

being about two gods: Jesus and Resurrection. As Paul faced increasing opposition from the Jewish authorities, he turned to the common Christian and Pharisaic belief in the resurrection to divide his opponents. For Paul, the Gospel of Christ and the promise of the resurrection were the fulfillment of Israel's ancient hope.

For Paul, resurrection was vital to his theology. Like John, Paul saw eternal life and resurrection power as already available to Christians in the present. However, there was a greater experience to be looked for in the future. At the parousia, Jesus will return for his people, both living and dead. It will be a triumphant return that reminds one of Israel's hopes of YHWH's final victory over evil. Those living at the parousia will be transformed so that they will able to enter the Kingdom of God. For Paul the resurrection/transformation was a required experience for the enjoyment of the Kingdom, which was the Christian's inheritance. The need for transformation was not only for the human body, but also for the entire planet. Like the ancient Hebrew hopes, the people of God will have some geographical inheritance, although it will be much greater than that which was originally looked for.

Finally, in the Book of Revelation, the hope for those that suffer persecution is that of resurrection. Those who become martyrs for their faith will experience the first resurrection and will reign with Christ, most likely on earth. After the thousand years, all the dead, both righteous and wicked, will be raised and judged based on the heavenly books that record their deeds. The righteous who are raised will enjoy eternity on a renewed earth in the New Jerusalem.

Throughout the New Testament, from the Gospels to Revelation, the resurrection is a central theme. Like the ancient Israelites who found hope in the past event of the

exodus out of Egypt, the Christians found hope in the past event of the resurrection of Jesus. In the same way, the promise that got Israel through many difficult times was that God would give them a secure and prosperous possession of the Promised Land. The promise that helped the Christians through equally difficult times was the belief that they would one day share in the bodily resurrection that was demonstrated in the experience of Jesus Christ. In this way, the resurrection of the dead had become the central hope for the Christian church.

CONCLUSION

How did Christianity, with its New Testament emphasis on resurrection, develop from Judaism, which was so influenced by a land-centred Old Testament? It was a long and gradual process, but what became Christianity was built on a transformation that was already taking place within Judaism.

Central to the Jewish hope were certain ideal pictures in the Old Testament of how things ought to be. The Garden of Eden provided an image of a land where life was easy and the relationship with YHWH was intimate. Life in Eden ended in exile, and yet there were hints that YHWH still had great plans for his people. Extravagant promises were given to Abraham regarding great blessings for his own people, as well as for the nations. Central to these promises was a covenant that included possession of land. The traditions concerning Moses continued the importance of the land, giving details on the borders and warnings of loss for disobedience. These longed-for promises began to see fulfillment as Joshua led the people across the Jordan and the land was divided among the tribes. A greater fulfillment seemed to come in the days of David and Solomon, as Israel achieved its largest territorial limits and greatest financial prosperity. These were the ideal concepts of the land that gave hope to Israel in more difficult days as they looked for YHWH to complete his promises. At the same time, each of these ideals held a tension within them: blessing to the nations did not require land, ideal borders shifted over time, and there was a fluctuation in the conditional and unconditional nature of the promises. There seemed to be room for a greater fulfillment of the promises beyond possession of territory. In this period, the afterlife did not seem to qualify as this fulfillment. Holding to the present-world focus of the Mesopotamian and Canaanite

cultures, Israel saw the afterlife as a gloomy existence in Sheol. While there were hints of something more in the images of immortality in Eden and the raising of Samuel, by far the focus of Israel was on a land in this world rather than the next.

Ideals must always wrestle with real world situations. As much as Israel longed for a secure and prosperous possession of the land, reality was that there were very serious threats to that dream. Israel and Judah were forced to reflect deeply on the ramifications of the threatened and then experienced exiles brought on by the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions. Even the Jerusalem Temple, the most holy part of the Promised Land, was not immune from foreign destruction. The prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel brought theological meaning to the destruction experienced by God's people. These foreign invasions were not because YHWH was weak but because Israel had sinned and YHWH was using the Assyrian and Babylonian empires to punish his people. But this was not the end. Those same prophets also proclaimed restoration oracles in which Israel would return, not just to its pre-exilic state but to a glorified and exalted position only hinted at in the idyllic pictures of the past. While some oracles only spoke of a return to the land, there was increasingly an eschatological element that included a spiritual transformation of the people described as either an outpouring of the Spirit, a new covenant or a new heart. It was at this same time that resurrection imagery began to emerge. At first, Isaiah and Ezekiel used resurrection images to describe the restoration of Israel, although Isa 26:19 could suggest the beginnings of belief in personal resurrection. It was not until the much later Dan 12:2 that there is an explicit promise of the resurrection of the dead. It is important that it was in the period of uncertainty that the beginnings of resurrection beliefs emerged.

The physical end of the exile was not the conclusion of Israel's troubles. Despite a promising start under the Persians, circumstances quickly deteriorated. The situation came to a head during the time of Antiochus Epiphanies, with the outlawing of Jewish traditions and the killing of Jewish martyrs. Jewish literature continued to speak of the Promised Land but in the midst of the political uncertainty, the land dramatically fell in importance. At the same time, reflections on the afterlife greatly increased. Perhaps due to concerns about God's justice and the death of the martyrs, texts began to develop complex ideas of afterlife that included both an immortal soul and a bodily resurrection. At times, images previously used for the land (such as Eden) were reused in descriptions of the resurrection. During the biblical era, resurrection was used as a symbol of the restoration of the land. In the "intertestamental" period, the situation reversed and the land became a symbol for resurrection hopes.

It was in this context that Jesus appeared and the early church developed its beliefs. Jesus acknowledged the land, but it was far from the central place it had in the Old Testament. Essential to Jesus' message was the Kingdom of God, which was not the possession of land, but the current reign of God and the final eschatological dominion of God. Paul had less to say about the land, but he did interact with the Abraham traditions. Paul seemed to purposely ignore the land aspects of the promise and to spiritualize Abraham's inheritance. Land images also appeared in the books of Hebrews and Revelation, and in both cases they were transformed into more eternal concepts. While the land plays a minor role in the New Testament, eternal life, especially in the form of a bodily resurrection, appears as the ultimate hope for God's people. Jesus emphasized more eternal life than resurrection, perhaps to keep it distinct from his own anticipated

resurrection. In Acts, resurrection is so central to the early message of the church that some Athenians mistook Paul's preaching as referring to two gods: Jesus and Resurrection. For Paul in his letters, the resurrection of the dead and the transformation of the living at the parousia is the source of the Christian's hope. Paul understood the resurrection as the only way to fully participate in the Kingdom of God. Finally, in Revelation, history concludes with the resurrection of the dead and the habitation of the New Jerusalem.

The resurrection message of the New Testament is not a reaction to or a replacement of the Old Testament land promises. Rather, the New Testament takes land images and reuses them to describe an eternal inheritance provided by God, following the example of other early Jewish texts. As N.T. Wright explains: "The earlier national hope thus transmutes, but perfectly comprehensively, into the hope that Israel's god will do for a human being what Israel always hoped he would do for the nation as a whole."[617] It is in the resurrection of the body that the circumcision of the heart and other descriptions of spiritual transformation are finally fulfilled. While sin is forgiven in the present, it is only with the full transformation at the parousia that sin is removed as a factor in the Christian's life. It is also with the resurrection that the Christian is enabled to enjoy a new land, not necessarily the traditional land of Israel but a transformed earth, as prophesied by Isaiah. The biblical tradition reflected deeply on what God's promises meant in the face of an increasingly uncertain world. Hints of something greater than territorial possession grew under the pressure of foreign oppression. It was in this thought world that the resurrection emerged as the primary source of hope for the Jew

[617] Wright, *Resurrection,* 123.

first, but even more so for the Christian as all hope of the Promised Land disappeared. In this way, Christianity went beyond Canaan to find a new land in the resurrection.

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