



Land in the Torah as a Source of Christian Religious Education

Noh Ibrahim Boiliu¹ , Haryadi Sarjono²  & Harun Y. Natonis³ 

¹ Department of Christian Religious Education, Christian University of Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia.

² GLOW Theological Seminary, Jakarta, Indonesia.

³ Kupang State Institute of Christianity, Indonesia.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to carry out a theological analysis of "land" as one of the important theological themes in the Old Testament. The approach used in this article is the deductive paradigm. Based on the results of the analysis of the theme of land theology in the Old Testament, the theological theme of the "land" refers to the land that belongs to God which was inherited (*mahala*) by Israel. The land became one of the prominent features of the series of stories and life in the Old Testament. Israel's responsibility on YHWH's land is to establish the Torah as a source of religious education. The paper recommends that any Christian that God places anywhere and in any field of work should strive to strengthen Christian teaching that is rooted in the Word of God as a source of teaching authority. It recommends that an understanding of "land" in the Old Testament should become the theological starting point in building the paradigm of Christian Religious Education.

Correspondence

Noh Ibrahim Boiliu

Email: boiliunoh@gmail.com

Publication History

Received 19th December, 2022

Accepted 15th March, 2023

Published online 24th March,
2023

Keywords: *Land Theology, Torah, Strengthening Torah, Christian Religious Education*

INTRODUCTION

Research on the land of Israel has been carried out by Aviv Cohen.¹ Cohen conducted a study of the land as a starting point to build the argument that the teaching of geography is connected with nationalism and Citizenship Education as an exploration of history. Roy Charly H. P. Sipahutar also conducts studies on land. Sipahutar's study of land is from "an eco-theological perspective".² All of these studies are on the same theme, land. While Cohen studies land from the Citizenship Education perspective, Sipahutar's is from an eco-theological viewpoint. The paper is looks at land from the perspective of Christian Religious Education. The paper focuses on the group of Israelites with Moses as their leader who entered the land and built in the land YHWH. It proposes that biblical theology for Christian religious education studies must focus on land in the Old Testament.

¹ Aviv Cohen, "Teaching the Land of Israel as Civic Education: A Historical Exploration," *Journal of Geography* 117, no. 2 (2018): 51–63, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221341.2017.1307437>.

² Roy Charly Sipahutar, "Kajian Ekoteologis Tentang Konsep Tanah Dalam Perjanjian Lama Dan Implikasinya Bagi Pemeliharaan Tanah," *BIA': Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Kristen Kontekstual* 2, no. 2 (2019): 166–78, <https://doi.org/10.34307/b.v2i2.95>.

The Old Testament describes 'land' as "*Eretz* and *adamah*." The first term, more often mentioned is also more comprehensive. Land (*eret*) can refer to the whole earth (Gen. 11: 1). The term land also refers to "land in general (Ex. 8:12; Deut. 11:25) and specifically land as territory (2 Sam. 24:8) and as an area with political boundaries (Deut. 1:5)."³ Instead, the word *adamah*, is connected to the root word (*dm*).⁴ The root *dm* refers to or reflects where humans came from (Gen. 2:7; 3:19; Ps. 90:3; 104:29), and "land as *eret* and *adamah* is a social entity."⁵

Land in the Pentateuch perspective is an "important theme and even described as a central theme of biblical faith".⁶ This explanation has been discussed by Norman C. Habel in "The Land is Mine."⁷ Land is also an essential subject in Historical Books. "The land was seen as an integration of theological motives (cf. Boda and McConville⁸),"⁹ because "under Joshua's leadership, the land would be conquered and inhabited as in the book of Joshua."¹⁰

Eretz refers to the earth, in general, or to the land, specifically, to the theme of land area in the Bible. When the word *eret* is used, it carries or gives the image of God's sovereignty over the entire earth because of his ownership rights. This is the idea of God "walking" on earth, how He promises to "walk" with His people on the ground (*ha eretz*) if they are obedient and in God living with humans permanently on the new earth (Canaan).

The Hebrew word for land, "*eret*", is the fourth noun in the Old Testament."¹¹ This word refers to the common word "earth, cosmology, and land, territorial. However, when combined with *ha eretz* it will specifically refer to the land of Canaan."¹²

Israel's liberation from Egypt was seen as an act of God's redemption and presented a "special" people placed in a specific place. This place is often referred to as "land" in the Hebrew Bible. As discussed above, the term "land" has become one of the central themes of theology and the main ethics of the Israeli religion. The land became the "binder and sign" of God's relationship with Israel. The land is a means of developing a relationship between God and His people. What about the expression "the land of Israel?"

The expression "the land of Israel" is rarely used in the Hebrew Scriptures (1 Sam. 13:9; Ezr. 40:2; 47:18; 1 Chron. 22: 2; 2 Chron. 2:17).¹³ Instead, the Hebrew Bible generally refers to that land as "the land of Canaan" or the land of Canaanites and Amorites. This expression is still used long after Israel settled in the country to remind Israel that Israel does not wholly own the land; Israel only "leases" land from YHWH, because God chose to give it to Israel, and Israel, has "land rights"¹⁴ with strict terms of the treaty.

The strictness of the treaty can be seen in YHWH's request to Joshua. "Giving (*ntn*, giving) land is a central theme in the book of Joshua (cf. George¹⁵)."¹⁶ The first fulfilment of the promise of land is recorded in Joshua 1. The passage shows the notion of fulfilment: God gave Israel land as an

³ Horst Dietrich Preuss, *Old Testament Theology: Volume 1* (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 118.

⁴ Preuss, *Old Testament Theology*, 119.

⁵ Norman C. Habel, *The Land Is Mine: Six Biblical Land Ideologies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 3.

⁶ T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker, eds., *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 487.

⁷ Habel, *The Land Is Mine: Six Biblical Land Ideologies*, 3.

⁸ Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville, eds., *Dictionary of the Old Testament Prophets: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 489.

⁹ T. Bill Arnold and H.G.M. Williamson, eds., *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 639.

¹⁰ J. A. Soggin, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1999), 165.

¹¹ Victor Hamilton, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 74.

¹² J.G. Millar, *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology: Exploring the Unity & Diversity of Scripture*, ed. Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL, 2000), 518.

¹³ W. Janzen, *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman, 4th ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 144.

¹⁴ Habel, *The Land Is Mine: Six Biblical Land Ideologies*, 3.

¹⁵ W. George, "The Book of Joshua: Heroic Saga or Conquest Theme?," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 12, no. 38 (1987): 15–32, <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.1177/030908928701203802>.

¹⁶ Richard D. Nelson, *Joshua: A Commentary* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 31.

inheritance, but "Israel still needs to go conquer and receive land."¹⁷ In Joshua 1:12, Israel will change their land ownership from a promise to complete ownership. The chronology of Joshua 1-5 indicates that "Israel crossed the Jordan ... This chronology in Braber Wesselius's conclusion in his review of the Jordan crossing is of great significance, and the time indication in Joshua 1-8's chronology is very serious."¹⁸

Representatively, "Joshua became a model (character) in obedience (post-Moses)." "Joshua must obey the law as it was told to Moses (7-8)."¹⁹ This aspect of obedience to the law must be carried on to generations in the land given by God. This means the law (*Tora*) must be enforced on God's land.

METHODOLOGY

The method used in this research is a literature study containing relevant theories. The writer will first explain the land theology in the Old Testament studies and finally build the concept of Land Theology to Strengthen the Torah as a Source of Christian Religious Education.

LAND IN THE TORAH

According to Dyrness,²⁰ the Old Testament story of election and covenant begins with God's promises to the forefather, Abraham. The central element of the promises, as stated and repeated in the stories of the patriarchs, was that God would give land to Abraham and his descendants.

Norman C. Habel explains the six biblical earth ideologies. Of the six themes, three themes can be seen as an essential part of this article. "Land is given as conditional land. This is a theocratic ideology and the land belongs to God."²¹ These conditions refer to the law enforcement on all land given. The law must be responded to by "fear and trembling" relating to the *Shema* and loving God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind (Deut. 6:4,5). The land is God's territory, and God's law covers the land. This means the ideology Habel refers to as (Deuteronomy) promotes a theocracy God (overcomes) gave to Israel. The law became a symbol of God's authority over the land and there were no other gods on the land.

This land (will be) "owned by many families; personally, God bequeathed (*nahalah*) the land."²² God gave the land to Israel as a promotion to the ancestors of Israel. This certainly refers to God's promise to Israel's ancestors and the promotion of YHWH as a mighty and powerful God in heaven and on earth (overland).

The land revealed "prophetic ideology and God as inheritor of the land."²³ YHWH, Israel, and land are a series that describes the close relationship that exists, and (all three) are in a covenant in which Israel and the land are bound to God. Therefore, there is no tolerance for other gods in that union (three parties). Deviations (on the part of Israel) would undermine the unity of the relationship. The ideology is theocratic ideology. Deviations are also pollutant actions on land (pollutant actions are not in an ecological context but prophetic). The land must become idolatry-free land.

¹⁷ Stephen C. Russell, "Enemies, Lands, and Borders in Biblical Crossing Traditions," *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History* 4, no. 1–2 (2018): 163–76, <https://doi.org/10.1515/janeh-2017-0024>.

¹⁸ Marieke den Braber and Jan Wim Wesselius, "The Unity of Joshua 1-8, Its Relation to the Story of King Keret, and the Literary Background to the Exodus and Conquest Stories," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 22, no. 2 (2008): 253–74, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09018320802661218>.

¹⁹ Nelson, *Joshua: A Commentary*, 32.

²⁰ William Dyrness, *Tema-Tema Dalam Teologia Perjajian Lama* (Malang: Gandum Mas, 2014), 95-107.

²¹ Habel, *The Land Is Mine: Six Biblical Land Ideologies*, 38-53. See, the first theme, Land as Conditional Grant: A Theocratic Ideology..

²² Habel, *The Land Is Mine: Six Biblical Land Ideologies*, 54-57. Second theme, Land YHWH's Personal *nahalah*: A Prophetic Ideology.

²³ Habel, *The Land Is Mine: Six Biblical Land Ideologies*, 75-96. Third theme, Land YHWH's Personal *nahalah*: A Prophetic Ideology.

From the "Etan Levine" perspective, geographically, the land of Israel is the Center of Biblical literature.²⁴ This is to the unique relationship between God and the chosen people. All subsequent generations will inherit the land as a legacy. This is an indispensable important part of the covenant between God and the nation of Israel.

For Preuss, the description of the land, which consciously reaches beyond its empirical character, seeks to underline the beauty and size of the territory given by YHWH to His people. The promised land is easily marked as "land flowing with milk and honey."²⁵ Preuss also provides a topographic analysis of the land flowing with milk and honey: "This land is not depicted as the land of the gods or painted with the colours of heaven but is depicted as habitable land, even more, likely as a nomadic land. Milk and honey are likely to be food from the point of view of farmers who use the land." Observing Levine's analysis, Levine is closer to Roland de Vaux,²⁶ in that, unlike Israel, their ancestors were not like Bedouins who were camel breeders. The ancestors of Israel raised goats and sheep. When we encounter them in history, the ancestors of Israel came as a settled people. This is one factor we can take to limit comparisons when comparing the wandering of the Bedouins and the ancestors of Israel.

The land to be inhabited is "the land that was promised to the ancestors of Israel and will be realised through the group of Moses in the narrative of the group of Moses."²⁷ John van Seters sees the land in the theological theme as pure land God gave. "The land that YHWH, your Lord has given you, is equal, and often uses the law or introduces the law as a legal motivation, ethical or religious attitude." The function of law is to regulate and protect life and blessings on the land given by YHWH. "Land is immovable property of God whereas Israel is the moveable (divine) property of God."²⁸ The three of them are bound by a treaty relationship.

Seters added, "There is a connection or connectivity between land and law. Israel as God's people entered and inhabited God's land."²⁹ On that land, the law of God (*Torah*) became the absolute regulation as conveyed to Moses. It passed on to Joshua to govern Israel's social, religious, political, economic and educational life. Social, religious, political, economic and educational regulations are based on the law (*Torah*). Land connectivity and law cannot be seen literally (land and law) but rather in Israel's relationship with God on that land. Israel's socio-political situation is a marker of Israel's relationship with God, whether near-far, harmonious-not harmonious. In that situation, whether the law is enforced or not will be known.

"Preuss"³⁰ sees the land as one of the prominent features of the series of stories and life in the Old Testament. Israel's departure from Egypt had the goal of entering the promised land (Ex. 3:71). In presenting the promise of land as conquest, the traditions of the ancestors and the group of Moses are united in a Deuteronomistic summary which is then given a Deuteronomistic interpretation in which all of Israel (Josh. 1:2; 3:1,7) is united in different groups. In addition, the gift of land is another purpose of the Deuteronomistic creed in Deuteronomy 26:5-9. YHWH gave the land as a gift from His promise to maintain the country's character as a legacy. In the Psalms, the word land is *nahala* from Israel (Ps. 37:18; 47:5; 105:11; 135:12). Only Psalm 79:1 calls it your land. Psalm 79:1 puts YHWH as the owner

²⁴ Etan Levine, "The Land of Milk and Honey," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 87 (2000): 43-57, <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.1177/030908920002508703>.

²⁵ Levine, *The Land of Milk and Honey*, 43-57.

²⁶ Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Social Institutions*, 1st ed. (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1965), 4.

²⁷ Preuss, *Old Testament Theology: Volume 1*, 119.

²⁸ Norbert Lohfink, *Great Themes From The Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1982), 119. YHWH's land is not God's land is a concept development from Lohfink's theological theme, "People of God." Lohfink call it "the people of Yahweh not the people of God. When we search then there is presupposition about "people of Yahweh not people of God. Lohfink's argument based on these data is that there will be differences in the mention of people of Yahweh where Israel as Yahweh's people is not the god of Moab or the god of Moabites. So the use of the term YHWH's land not "god" land is that the land was given by YHWH and not another god.

²⁹ John van Seters, *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis*, (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2009), 229-230.

³⁰ Preuss, *Old Testament Theology: Volume 1*, 120.

of *nahala*. "Israel, as God's chosen people, received the land as a gift and lived on God's land."³¹ Legally, Israel's life on the land took place under YHWH's regulations as the land owner. "YHWH was identified as the owner and ruler of the land and Israel lived under the *torah* as stated in Deuteronomy. The law will apply throughout Canaan, and Israel must agree."³² Habel conveyed a theocratic ideology of land, the position of Israel, and the theocratic regulations that apply to inherited land.

Theocratic ideology frames YHWH's claim of ownership of land and people (Israel), and also frames the divine relationship between God and Israel. This is a claim from above (religious claim). In line with the claims from above, Israel has the right to claim the land as land owned by Israel (claim from below) for generations. Israel is the holder of rights in land.

For Barth, "The land of Canaan occupied by Israel was a gift from God."³³ The land God gave was a consequence and necessity on the part of God as the fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham. This promise applies to Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 17:8,18). The guarantee to give land was also given to Isaac (Gen. 26:3) and Jacob and his descendants (Gen. 28:13).

The involvement of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as heirs of the promised land implies that the promise of giving the land was not fulfilled shortly while they were alive just as God's promise to make Abraham a great nation did not occur in a generation (Gen 12:2; 17:2). Even though the promise was certain, during Abraham's lifetime the land could not yet be claimed as his own. The Bible describes Abraham as a "stranger and foreigner" (Gen. 23:4; 35:27). Jacob also described himself as a stranger before Pharaoh like Abraham and Isaac, wandering as a stranger (Gen. 47:9). The Odyssey confronts the ancestors of Israel (Abraham) living in the tension between the promise and its fulfilment. The fulfilment of a promise is always expected to be the end of the tension.

In Preuss's perspective,³⁴ this promised land is not just a space but a place. A space can be understood as something open and neutral, but this is not the case with a place that can be understood as a space with a special history and meaning, where important events occur, important words are spoken, and where oaths and promises are made so that the land occupied by Israel is not just space, but a place that provides an identity relationship with YHWH. Israel and land are two social entities in the Old Testament. "The history of the Israelites in the Old Testament may be said to center on the promised land (Canaan), which would later be called "the land of Israel" (*Eretz yisrael*) or "holy land."³⁵ Land is a sign of relationship and treaty and "through the composition of Joshua 13-19, the level of holiness of the land is achieved. The place of worship in Shiloh is of concern because God is present at Shiloh."³⁶

Barth asserts that theologically speaking, the Israelites believed that God ruled over the whole world, so according to that belief that the very small land of Canaan was also one of His domains.³⁷ This is the basis for the overall activity of the Israelites in the land of Canaan. Land was given to meet the daily needs of Israelite families. Joshua carried out the division of land by casting lots (Josh. 14:1-2; 18:1-10). "Verse 14:1,2 is the beginning of the division of land." "Through Joshua, the land was shared (Deut. 19:14). Thus, the boundaries of the family land are fixed and not removed (Deut 19:14). Whoever shifts the boundaries of someone else's land will be cursed (Deut 27:17). Every eviction in

³¹ C.J.H. Wright, *God's People in God's Land: Family, Land, and Property in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1990), 3-4. In chapter 1, Wright describes the Land and Israel's Relationship to God. The land was given in fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham. The promise of the land to Abraham as a meeting point to see the history of the land.

³² Habel, *The Land Is Mine: Six Biblical Land Ideologies*, 36-39.

³³ Christopher Barth, *Teologia Perjanjian Lama*, 2nd ed. (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2001), 5.

³⁴ Preuss, *Old Testament Theology: Volume 1*, 118-119.

³⁵ Preuss, *Old Testament Theology: Volume 1*, 118-119.

³⁶ J. Cornelis De Vos, "'Holy Land' In Joshua 18:1-10," in *The Land of Israel in Bible, History, and Theology*, ed. Jacques van Ruiten and J. Cornelius De Vos, 124th ed. (Leiden-Boston, 2009), 61-72, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004175150.i-474.33>.

³⁷ Barth, *Teologia Perjanjian Lama*, 5.

the Old Testament, even if it was done by a ruler and was legitimate was still against God's law (Hos. 5:10)."³⁸

The land is given so that people will have a permanent relationship with God. Wright said, "Land is proof of this special relationship. The Lord called the Israelites my firstborn (Exodus 4:22; compare with Deut. 32:5-6, 18-19 and figuratively in Deut. 8:5)."³⁹ Israel knows that they are God's people (community of Jewish) because they have received the inheritance. This gift proves the relationship between God's covenant with Abraham and Sinai's covenant with the whole nation (group of Moses).

Drummond explains, "As sons, the Israelites had a part (*kheleq*) in God's land (Josh. 22:25, 27), a plot of land called inheritance (*nahala*) or inheritance (Deut. 4:21, 38; 12:9; 15:4; 19:10; 26:1)."⁴⁰ In the story of The Exodus, God called Israel as "my firstborn" (Ex 4:22), who wanted to be delivered from captivity to bring him to the promised land.

DISCUSSION

According to Nelson, "The view of the promise of land is an indication of the time of Josiah."⁴¹ The concept of total conquest (Josh. 11:23) is "a snare to the optimism of nationalism at that time."⁴² The land boundary in Deuteronomy 1:7 and Joshua 1:4 is imperialism based on David's hegemony in Syria. On the other hand, "Edom, Moab and Ammon were removed from the promise of the land by *historians* (Deut. 2:5, 9, 11), so Josiah did not conquer it. The tribal lands across from Jordan (Deut. 2:26-3:8, 12-13; Josh. 1:10-18; 12: 1-6; 2 Kings 10:32-33) were Josiah's targets to expand his territory. The interest in trans-Jordan was understood as a history of exile."⁴³ For the disposal editor, the land was an ambiguous gift, because it could lead to destruction if they did not "listen" to God (2 Kings 21:9). It was not surprising, therefore, that returning from exile was a form of hope (1 Kings 8:50). Listening to God parallels to enforcing the law and keeping away from destruction."⁴⁴

Theologically, Nelson holds that "Deuteronomy presents the law for life in the land given by YHWH."⁴⁵ This land came from the promise YHWH gave to the patriarchs (6:10, 18, 23; 8:1; 11:9, 21). The land is very good (6:10-11; 8:7-9; 11:9-12). The land was the place where "Israel lived to obey the law (6:1, 10; 12:1; 16:18; 17:14; 18:9; 19:1), to create the social justice described in it. A land is a safe place to "rest" (12:9-10; 25:19; compare with 15:14). However, the continued occupation of the promised land and life depends on obedience (4:26; 7:12-15; 11:8-9, 13-17; 25:15; 30:16-18)."⁴⁶ Good soil refers to land full of milk and honey and deserves to be inhabited.

The final form of Deuteronomy, "The giving of land is a framework that threatens the exile from there, after which the possibility to return (4:25-31; 29:21-30:10)."⁴⁷ Mayes differs from Nelson in thought as he links the land and the law. "A treaty binds both."⁴⁸ The covenant came after the Israelites left Egypt, where this "was a deliverance from God."⁴⁹ According to Mayes, the relationship established by the treaty (covenant) "was regulated by the law established by the contract."⁵⁰ The law

³⁸ Barth, *Teologia Perjanjian Lama*, 5.

³⁹ Christopher J.H Wright, *Hidup Sebagai Umat Allah: Etika Perjanjian Lama* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1993), 53.

⁴⁰ Celia Deane Drummond, *Teologi Dan Ekologi* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2011), 29.

⁴¹ Richard Nelson, "The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History: The Case Is Still Compelling," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 29, no. 3 (2005): 319–37, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309089205053477>.

⁴² Nelson, The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History, 319.

⁴³ Nelson, The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History, 320.

⁴⁴ Nelson, The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History, 320.

⁴⁵ Richard D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy* (Louisville: Westminster, 2004), 252.

⁴⁶ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, 252.

⁴⁷ Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, 253.

⁴⁸ A.D.H. Mayes, *The New Century Bible Commentary: Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1981), 72.

⁴⁹ S.R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary On Deuteronomy* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992), 102.

⁵⁰ Driver, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary On Deuteronomy*, 102.

"was not addressed to the court, but rather to the teaching."⁵¹ Jean Louis Ska posits that "the Torah is to be didactic as well as liturgical and judicial (the court)."⁵² Torah is embodied in advice and encouragement that persuades the targeted people. The legal motives in which casuistic and apodictic were contained in the clauses of the Book of Promises (17 per cent) and Deuteronomy (60 per cent). The types of clauses were: ethics (Deut. 24:6), cult theology (Deut. 17:1); Israel's salvation history (Deut. 15:15).⁵³ Everything was integrated with the purpose of persuasion in the context of teaching rather than in the context of lawsuits.

The land is the Center of Deuteronomy theology and it springs from traditions and for special purposes. "This context was in the Israeli occupation of the land. This was likely in the early post-occupation period. Through this tradition, Israel was judged for losing ownership of the promised land."⁵⁴

Mayes was of the view that "The book of Deuteronomy has emphasized promise and pressed it as the centre of theology."⁵⁵ The land is a "focus of promise, as a place of reward for obedience or a place where the law is obeyed, as well as an expression of Israel's status as YHWH's chosen people. Life for Deuteronomy is living in a land that is in a covenant with YHWH."⁵⁶ The basis of Israel's obedience refers to the *Torah* on God's land, and on that basis, they were taught (didactic) and put on trial (judicial).

The regulations that will take place on the land belonging to God refer to "*torah*"⁵⁷ as law. "The *TORAH* occupies the primary place of authority, significance, and influence in the mediation of Yahweh's purpose, presence, and power to Israel."⁵⁸ In this regulation, the Torah functions as a mediator, director and instruction on how Israel should live. This is an "epistemological"⁵⁹ reference for Israel's teaching. "*Torah* is the authoritative rendering of this relationship between YHWH and Israel."⁶⁰ The *Torah* is not only a mediator, instruction and reference, but the *Torah* is a medium and YHWH's approach demonstrates His power. As a medium of demonstration, the *Torah* was presented to Musa as the subject of the first receiver but as the interpreter and first giver. After Moses, there were "the Levites, Joshua, Samuel, Josiah, and the prophets"⁶¹ as the subject of the *Torah* mediators. "The *Torah* is concerned with transmitting the one will of one God creator"⁶² and giving it to Israel as a guide. Israel must respond to the Torah as God's will. The response includes "response in words and response in action." The response in words, Claus Westermann refers to "lament and praise ... In Lament and praise people speak to God," while the response in action is "in action includes the execution of what is commanded for daily life as well as the specific act directed towards God in the sanctuary, particularly the sacrifice."⁶³ "The response in words and action are two sides of Israel's response to God through the *Torah* as a mediator.

⁵¹ Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary On Deuteronomy*, 102.

⁵² Jean Louis Ska, "From History Writing to Library Building: The End of History and the Birth of the Book," in *The Pentateuch as Torah: New Models for Understanding Its Promulgation and Acceptance*, ed. Garry N. Knoppers and Bernard M. Levinson (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 145–70.

⁵³ Mayes, *The New Century Bible Commentary: Deuteronomy*, 72.

⁵⁴ Mayes, *The New Century Bible Commentary: Deuteronomy*, 73–81.

⁵⁵ Mayes, *The New Century Bible Commentary: Deuteronomy*, 81.

⁵⁶ Mayes, *The New Century Bible Commentary: Deuteronomy*, 81.

⁵⁷ Frank Crusemann, *The Torah: Theology and Social History of Old Testament Law* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 1. The Torah is in the theme of law.

⁵⁸ W. Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 578.

⁵⁹ Noh Ibrahim Boiliu, *Filsafat Pendidikan Kristen* (Jakarta: UKI Press, 2017), 221.

⁶⁰ Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy*, 578.

⁶¹ Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy*, 585–588.

⁶² Crusemann, *The Torah: Theology and Social History of Old Testament Law*, 3.

⁶³ Claus Westermann, *Elements of Old Testament Theology* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 2010), 28–31.

Mark O'Brien, through his article "Deuteronomy 16:18-18:22: Meeting the Challenge of Towns and Nation,"⁶⁴ O'Brien conducted a critical analysis with a synchronous approach to suggest that this section aims to maintain Israel's firm commitment to the *Torah*. The *Torah* is YHWH's special characteristic and status separated from others. Israel must not withdraw YHWH on YHWH's land. "Israel must pay close attention to the *Torah*."⁶⁵ The order to enforce the law (*torah*) does not only relate to Israel receiving a land inheritance. Both land and law "were given as a consequence of a relationship with God."⁶⁶ The most important of them is the relationship between God and Israel: "The direct relationship between Israel's obedience to the divine law which must be carried out as a 'rule of life' in the promised land."⁶⁷ There is no other choice but the law (*torah*) in regulating the life of Israel and God as the legal regulator.

The order is a continuity of "Israel's election and responsibility"⁶⁸ as a "Jewish community. The Jewish community is an Israeli-Exodus community as an Exodus community."⁶⁹ The Exodus community is a community with a Jewish faith. Israel is called "the people and community of Jewish," so "all of Israel's law is connected with YHWH, Moses and Sinai". Even the law to be carried out "is not only related to human norms but to show the will of God and God is behind this jurisprudence."⁷⁰

Israel is entitled to the inheritance of the land, while Israel is prosecuted and is responsible for enforcing the law (*Tora*). Removing other gods from YHWH's presence is imperative in line with the commandments in the Decalogue. The Decalogue is "God's will for Israel"⁷¹ in the land of inheritance while affirming the "monotheistic formula."⁷²

Through Israeli law initiated by YHWH, we can see (its) moral dynamics expected by YHWH. By the statement, "Be holy because I am holy" it is important to look at the moral dynamics of Israeli law. The law has the features of "holiness are truth, justice."⁷³ Observing Birch's explanation of *The Moral Authority of Israelite Law*, "Law becomes the identity of the community, the law becomes a moral identity, and law is a divine will"⁷⁴ because "law as *Torah*."⁷⁵ This law (*torah*) becomes Israel's identity. Therefore, it is unethical if Israel as YHWH withdraws from Him and worships other gods, or escapes from the *Torah* (Josh. 1:8; Ezr. 7:10). Law (*torah*) is also a source of Israel's moral epistemology teaching. In other words, Israeli morality is based on the teaching of the law (*torah*).

The response in action is the internalisation of the *Torah* in daily life. The response in words must be in line with the response in action as proof that there is no gap between "words (recognition) and action." Both of these had to be demonstrated by Israel when they were on God's land. The *Torah* must be enforced or responded to in words and actions. The absence of these two things indicates Israel's negligence in establishing the *Torah* on God's land.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the explanation, we recommend that understanding the land in the Old Testament should become the theological starting point in building the paradigm of Christian Religious Education.

⁶⁴ Mark O'Brien, "Deuteronomy 16:18-18:22: Meeting the Challenge of Towns and Nations," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 33, no. 2 (2008): 155–72, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309089208099254>.

⁶⁵ O'Brien, "Deuteronomy 16:18-18:22," 155-72.

⁶⁶ Mirosław Łanoszka, "The Relationship between God and Israel as a Biblical Portrayal of the Bond between God and the Person in the Light of Deuteronomy 1:1–4:43," *The Person and the Challenges. The Journal of Theology, Education, Canon Law and Social Studies Inspired by Pope John Paul II* 4, no. 2 (2014): 5, <https://doi.org/10.15633/pch.658>.

⁶⁷ Łanoszka, "The Relationship between God and Israel," 5.

⁶⁸ Preuss, *Old Testament Theology*: Volume 1, 46.

⁶⁹ Preuss, *Old Testament Theology*: Volume 1, 46.

⁷⁰ Preuss, *Old Testament Theology*: Volume 1, 81.

⁷¹ Preuss, *Old Testament Theology*: Volume 1, 102.

⁷² Preuss, *Old Testament Theology*: Volume 1, 111.

⁷³ B.C. Birch, *Let Justice Roll Down: The Old Testament, Ethics, and Christian Life*, 1st ed. (Louisville: Westminster, 2009), 148-156.

⁷⁴ Birch, *Let Justice Roll Down*, 164-167.

⁷⁵ Birch, *Let Justice Roll Down*, 171.

CONCLUSION

Land theology is preceded by a treaty in which Israel was previously freed from oppression in Egypt. Thus, Israel has obtained the blessing of deliverance and the promise of land in Canaan. The purpose of the land given is not only a promise of blessing from God but also a charge to live by the law or the *Torah*, which aims to be didactic or educational and which coexist or together in it, is liturgy and court or judicial. This education is manifested in the liturgy to worship God and in the life of social society, namely a fair trial. This is land theology. Thus, the land extends beyond the limits of matter, but the law for education or didactics, and fair worship and trials.

The *Torah* is YHWH's special characteristic and status that is separated from others. Israel must not withdraw YHWH on YHWH's land. Israel must pay close attention to the *Torah*. It is unethical if Israel as YHWH withdraws from Him, worships other gods, or escapes from the *Torah*. Israel is required to provide a response in words (confession) and a response in action.

There is a connection or connectivity between land, law (*torah*) and Israel as God's people. Israel entered and inhabited God's land. On this land, the law of God (*torah*) must be an absolute regulation governing Israel's social, political, economic, religious and educational life. Social, political, economic, religious and educational regulations are sourced from the epistemology of teaching on law (*torah*).

Israel's life reference must be the law (*torah*) as the regulation. Disclaimer and attempts to avoid (deviate from) the law impact economic, social, and political life, and vice versa.

Response in words and action must be shown by Israel when it is on God's land. The *Torah* must be enforced or responded to in words and actions. The absence of these two responses in God's land indicates Israel's negligence in strengthening/implementing the *Torah*.

In the context of Christian Religious Education, efforts to strengthen the Word of God must be in line with efforts to teach the Word of God. The status of Christianity is not only the verbal response (response in words) but also the response in action.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alexander, T. Desmond, and David W. Baker, eds. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003.
- Arnold, T. Bill, and H.G.M Williamson, eds. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005.
- Barth, Cristopher. *Teologia Perjanjian Lama*. 2nd ed. Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2001.
- Birch, B.C. *Let Justice Roll Down: The Old Testament, Ethics, and Christian Life*. 1st ed. Louisville: Westminster, 2009.
- Boda, Mark J., and J. Gordon McConville, eds. *Dictionary of the Old Testament Prophets: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012.
- Boiliu, Noh Ibrahim. *Filsafat Pendidikan Kristen*. Jakarta: UKI Press, 2020.
- Braber, Marieke den, and Jan Wim Wesselius. "The Unity of Joshua 1-8, Its Relation to the Story of King Keret, and the Literary Background to the Exodus and Conquest Stories." *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 22, no. 2 (2008): 253-74. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09018320802661218>.
- Brueggemann, W. *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997.
- Cohen, Aviv. "Teaching the Land of Israel as Civic Education: A Historical Exploration." *Journal of Geography* 117, no. 2 (2018): 51-63. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221341.2017.1307437>.
- Crusemann, Frank. *The Torah: Theology and Social History of Old Testament Law*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000.
- Driver, S.R. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary On Deuteronomy*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992.
- Drummond, Celia Deane. *Teologi Dan Ekologi*. Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2011.

- Dyrness, William. *Tema-Tema Dalam Teologia Perjanjian Lama*. Malang: Gandum Mas, 2014.
- George, W. "The Book of Joshua: Heroic Saga or Conquest Theme?" *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 12, no. 38 (1987): 15–32. <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.1177/030908928701203802>.
- Habel, N. C. *The Land Is Mine: Six Biblical Land Ideologies*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.
- Hamilton, Victor. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Edited by R. Laird. Chicago: Moody Press, 1980.
- Janzen, W. *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by David Noel Freedman. 4th ed. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
- Łanoszka, Mirosław. "The Relationship between God and Israel as a Biblical Portrayal of the Bond between God and the Person in the Light of Deuteronomy 1:1–4:43." *The Person and the Challenges. The Journal of Theology, Education, Canon Law and Social Studies Inspired by Pope John Paul II* 4, no. 2 (2014): 5. <https://doi.org/10.15633/pch.658>.
- Levine, Etan. "The Land of Milk and Honey." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 87 (2000): 43–57. <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.1177/030908920002508703>.
- Lohfink, Norbert. *Great Themes From The Old Testament*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1982.
- Mayes, A.D.H. *The New Century Bible Commentary: Deuteronomy*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1981.
- Millar, J.G. *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology: Exploring the Unity & Diversity of Scripture*. Edited by Brian S. Rosner. Downers Grove, IL, 2000.
- Nelson, Richard. "The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History: The Case Is Still Compelling." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 29, no. 3 (2005): 319–37. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309089205053477>.
- _____. *Deuteronomy*. Louisville: Westminster, 2004.
- _____. *Joshua: A Commentary*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997.
- O'Brien, Mark. "Deuteronomy 16.18–18.22: Meeting the Challenge of Towns and Nations." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 33, no. 2 (2008): 155–72. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309089208099254>.
- Preuss, Horst Dietrich. *Old Testament Theology: Volume 1*. Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995.
- Rendtorff, Rolf. *The Old Testament: An Introduction*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2010.
- Russell, Stephen C. "Enemies, Lands, and Borders in Biblical Crossing Traditions." *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History* 4, no. 1–2 (2018): 163–76. <https://doi.org/10.1515/janeh-2017-0024>.
- Seters, John van. *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2009.
- Sipahutar, Roy Charly. "Kajian Ekoteologis Tentang Konsep Tanah Dalam Perjanjian Lama Dan Implikasinya Bagi Pemeliharaan Tanah." *BIA': Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Kristen Kontekstual* 2, no. 2 (2019): 166–78. <https://doi.org/10.34307/b.v2i2.95>.
- Ska, Jean Louis. "From History Writing to Library Building: The End of History and the Birth of the Book." In *The Pentateuch as Torah: New Models for Understanding Its Promulgation and Acceptance*, edited by Garry N. Knoppers and Bernard M. Levinson, 145–70. Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2007.
- Soggin, J. A. *Introduction to the Old Testament*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1999.
- Vaux, Roland de. *Ancient Israel: Social Institutions*. 1st ed. New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1965.
- Vos, J. Cornelis De. "'Holy Land' In Joshua 18:1–10." In *The Land of Israel in Bible, History, and Theology*, edited by Jacques van Ruiten and J. Cornelius De Vos, 124th ed., 61–72. Leiden-Boston, 2009. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004175150.i-474.33>.
- Westermann, Claus. *Elements of Old Testament Theology*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 2010.
- Wright, C.J.H. *God's People in God's Land: Family, Land, and Property in the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1990.
- _____. *Hidup Sebagai Umat Allah: Etika Perjanjian Lama*. Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1993.

ABOUT AUTHORS

Noh Ibrahim Boiliu is a Lecturer at the Department of Christian Religious Education, Christian University of Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia. He teaching and research focuses on the Old Testament and the Philosophy of Christian Education.

Haryadi Sarjono, is a Graduate student at the GLOW Theological Seminary, Jakarta, Indonesia.

Harun Y. Natonis, is a Rector and Lecturer at the Kupang State Institute of Christianity, Indonesia.