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# ISRAEL'S SENSE OF PLACE IN JEREMIAH

It is a delight to offer this essay to James Muilenburg, the only one of his kind in our discipline. His delicate balance of rigorous objectivity and passionate subjectivity is a rare model for us. This paper, which seeks to pursue themes and methods important in his own work, is presented with the gratitude only his students can understand.



## Time and Space

Recent Old Testament study, in addressing the issue of Israel's view of time and space, has tended to celebrate time and minimize space as an important faith motif.[1] This emphasis was shared not only by Bultmannian scholars[2] but also by some of Bultmann's sharpest critics, who stressed the "Mighty Deeds of God in History."[3] Such a focus was an effective one in a

1. The most comprehensive statement of this stance is that of Bowman, *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek*. But a number of other scholars, including Orelli, John Marsh, H. Wheeler Robinson, have contributed to the same tendency. Muilenburg himself, in "The Biblical View of Time," 229, could write, "Of the two great peoples who have exerted a major influence upon the mind and soul of Western Man, Hellas and Israel, the one lived and throught primarily in the world of space, the other primarily in the world of time."

2. This has received its most extreme form in Fuchs and Ebeling, who regard revelation as "saving event" and that as "language event." Cf. James M. Robinson, "Hermeneutic since Barth," 57 and passim.

3. Cf. Wright, *The Old Testament and Theology*, chap. 2; and Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis*, chap. 2, for two reviews of that stress. Both Bultmann and the accent on

time preoccupied with meaninglessness and boredom, as the recent post-war period was perceived to be.

It is clear in more recent time that the issues of theological concern have shifted radically; instead of speaking of meaninglessness, we may better speak of rootlessness, a sense of the loss of meaningful place.[4] This shift provides an opportunity to look again at the time–space problem in Israel's faith. Without denying the importance of the time emphasis recently made, it is possible to restore a more justified balance. Israel was *par excellence* a people with a place, a land of promise, and she was intensely concerned with it.[5]

A movement may be discerned in Israel's faith that moves between *landless people yearning for land* (the fathers, the sojourn, the exile), and *landed people preserving and/or perverting their land* (monarchy and prophets, the restoration under Ezra and Nehemiah). Land (and therefore space) is an important component in Israel's faith.[6] Her faith revolved around the question of land, either a desperate yearning for it or problematic possession of it.

As Boman has written of "the uselessness of the Western concept of time"[7] for understanding Israel's notion of time, so also modern notions of space and land do not discern what Israel meant by נחל ה.[8] Here I shall examine some uses in Jeremiah. Jeremiah's time, just before and just after 587, was a time when the land question was acute and urgent for Israel. For then she had to ask: How can we keep the land? Why are we losing it? How shall we live without it? How can we regain it?

Behind this exploration lies the suggestion that we cannot understand the extremity of Israel's crisis of exile (read loss of place) unless we face the *space* category in Israel's faith.



"Mighty Deeds in History," stressed timefulness as the crucial category.

4. This emphasis is reflected in Toffler's popular *Future Shock*, which is concerned with rootlessness.

5. The concern of this paper only accidentally intersects with the vigous arguments of Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language*; and Barr, *Biblical Words for Time*. Whereas Barr is concerned that certain words have been wrongly or over-stressed, my point is that we have simply neglected rather obvious concerns of the texts, no doubt because of our hermeneutical frame. At that point I share Barr's conclusions.

6. On land as a theological theme, see especially Wildberger, "Israel und sein Land"; Dreyfus, "Le Theme de l'heritage dans l'AT"; Horst, "Zwei Begriffe für Eigentum (Besitz)."

7. Boman, *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek*, 129.

8. See von Rad's essays, "The Promised Land," and "There Remains Still a Rest."

## Jeremiah 2:4–13

This text is easily isolated as a distinct and separate unit. Its genre is widely accepted as lawsuit.[9] Williams' observations relating it to Deuteronomy 32 both secure its genre and place it in the context of a very ancient tradition.[10] The issue of this lawsuit is: Who is to blame for loss of land—Yahweh or Israel?[11]

In this pericope, vv. 6–7 specifically concern us:

They did not say:
Where is Yahweh
who ***brought us*** up from the ***land*** of Egypt
who ***led us*** in the wilderness
in a ***land*** of deserts and pits
in a ***land*** of drought and deep darkness
in a ***land*** that none passes through
where no man dwells.
Indeed, ***I brought you*** to the land of bounty
to eat its fruit and its good things
But ***you came*** and you defiled my ***land***
my inheritance you made for an abomination

Verse 6 describes Yahweeh's action governed by two participles (המעל ה and המול יך)[12] that not only express Yahweh's faithfulness but describe two *places* of Israel: a) a place of slavery, and b) the place of precariousness.

In v. 7 the rhetoric shifts and is sharpened. Verse 7a is a statement of Yahweh's innocence: "I brought you" (אביא). Verse 7b is a statement of Israel's guilt: "But you came" (ותבאו). With Yahweh's act, the place of slavery and the place of precariousness are now displaced by the place of well-being. The statements are clearly parallel and symmetrical, governed by the same verb. Yahweh's action leaves the land fruitful and good. Israel's action leaves it defiled and abominable.

It is striking that in this brief passage the term ארץ occurs six times, four times as negative land:

9. Huffmon, "The Covenant Lawsuit in the Prophets"; and Gese "Bemerkungen zur Sinaitradition," 151 n. 57. Gese suggests a very close parallel to Isa 1:2–3.

10. Williams, "The Fatal and Foolish Exchange."

11. It is striking that the use of lament-complaint form (as in Job, Jeremiah, Lamentations) is especially intense when the land is in jeopardy.

12. Williams, "Fatal and Foolish Exchange," 22.

- land of Egypt
- land of darkness and pits
- land of drought and deep darkness
- land where none passes through

and the contrast, two times as positive land:

- land of abundance
- my land

The contrast is complete in affirming Yahweh's fidelity. He not only leads out but also in. But v. 7b moves to a sharp climax by the use of chiasmus:

> You defiled ***my land***
> ***my inheritance*** you set to abomination.

It has been "land," then "my land," but now it is named and identified "my inheritance." The word pair is as striking and abrasive as can be imagined: inheritance — abomination.

The crisis of the years before and after 587 is placed in the drama of "salvation history," which is presented here presented, vv. 6–8, as a *history of land*. Israel's career with Yahweh is from place to place: from land of slavery to land of precariousness to land of well-being and now to abominable land.[13]

In this same pericope we may note the conclusion of v. 13. As he has made a dramatic contrast in v. 7, so in v. 13 the contrast is simple and total:

> fountain of living waters // cisterns hewn out for themselves

The fountain of living water, i.e. a source of fertility given and not manufactured,[14] is closely linked to the imagery of Deut 6:11:

> houses full of all good things which you did not fill,
> cisterns hewn out which you did not hew,
> vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant . . .

Thus the contrast:

13. The return of creation to chaos is more fully stated in 4:23–26, and earlier in the same tradition in Hos 4:3. The chaos–creation theme is important for exile and displacement as I have shown in Brueggemann, "Weariness, Exile and Chaos."

14. In an important but neglected article, Visher, "Foi et Technique," comments on Deut 11:10–15, and contrasts the land of Israel that must be worked, a contrast very similar to the one we have suggested.

in the land of abundance: חצובים אשר לא חצבת

(Deut 6:11)

in the land of defilement: לחצב להם בארות

בארת נשברים אשר לא יכלו המים

(Jer 2:13)

While the relation of Jeremiah and Deuteronomy is complex and difficult,[15] clearly the two texts speak of the same reality and they carry the same power as the previous contrast:

> The land of נחלה has cisterns you do not hew out which yield life, but the land of טועבה has broken cisterns you made but they hold nothing.

Jeremiah has discerned the next relocation of Israel even as her whole history is one of relocation. This relocation is dislocation. Israel now faces a future in defiled space.

## Jeremiah 3:1–5, 19–25; 4:1–4

This extended poem, which now has prose elements in its midst, revolves around the motif of turn, turn away, and return, as has often been asserted.[16] Again we are concerned with the passage only in respect to our theme of land and landlessness.

The pericope clearly appeals to the older material of Deut 24:1–4. I have previously argued that the original material about marriage in Deut 24:1–4 has been extended to concern the land.[17] Whereas in Deuteronomy it is an actual marital relation that defiles the land, in Jeremiah 3 the relation of land and defilement is now through the harlotry of the entire people.

The motif occurs several times in the poem:

> Would not that land be greatly ***polluted*** (חנוף תחנף)
> You have played the ***harlot*** (זנית) wih my lovers . . .
> by the wayside you have sat awaiting lovers like an Arab in the wilderness

15. See the bibliography of Bright, *Jeremiah*, lxxi nn. 19–21; and recently Nicholson, *Preaching to the Exiles*.

16. See Muilenburg's perceptive comments, "Form Criticism and Beyond," 9–10.

17. Brueggemann, "A Form-Critical Study of the Cultic Material in Deuteronomy," 327–28.

> You have ***polluted*** (תחניפי) the land in ***your harlotry*** (זנותיך)
> Therefore . . . (Jer 3:1–3a)

The opening statement of v. 1 simply makes the link to the old tradition, then the theme of marital faithlessness is not mentioned until v. 20. The motifs in vv. 2–4 are very different. They include the double mention of חנף (once with infinitive absolute) and in both cases the three-fold pattern of: a) pollute, b) harlot, and c) land. The older link of harlotry and land is exploited to the full,[18] for in vv. 3–5 it is the destruction of the land in drought, which is paramount.[19]

A secondary motif is the wordplay on רע:

> You have played the harlot with many lovers (רעים). (v. 1)
>
> You have polluted the land with your harlotry and with your evils (רעתך). (v. 2c)
>
> You have done all the evil (הרעות) that you could. (v. 5)

Thus the play on lovers and evil is clear. So also the term ארץ stands in v. 2c as expected, but it is also in v. 1c, where one expects האשה.[20] The land is the abused land. The marriage imagery is completely transformed to apply to the land. (The use of חנף, here and in v. 9, is used elsewhere in Jeremiah only in 23:9, where it also refers to land.)

In 3:1–5, the rhetorical question form is noteworthy:

> Have you (*interrogative* ה) not just now called to me . . . ? (v. 4a)
>
> Will he (*interrogative* ה) be angry forever? (v. 5a)
>
> Will he (אם) be indignant to the end? (v. 5b)

The question pattern is utilized to ask about the father–son relation and suggests a context of familial relations, perhaps not unlike those of which

18. Von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, 150, argues that unchastity and defilement of land is a standard connection.

19. The cluster of notions related to rain, drought, curse, pollution, and abundance, bears investigation but lies beyond our theme. These notions have been largely ignored in the frame of Yahweh versus fertility gods. Cf. the titles expressing this stance, Wright, *The Old Testament against Its Environment*; and Habel, *Yahweh versus Baal*. More recently Harrelson, *From Fertility Cult to Worship*, has moved to a better balance as he is able to assert that "Israelite religion was also a religion of fertility" (12–13).

20. The LXX has the expected "woman," but that is likely a removal of a dramatic and unexpected "land" as the object of pollution. Cf. the point made by Martin, "The Forensic Background," 83, and his entire discussion.

Wolff and Gerstenberger have written.[21] Thus the form functions in a way most convenient to the matter under discussion, i.e., how is life to be ordered to secure well-being, when the father gives the inheritance to his son, and the son betrays the father?

This unit then has a surprising and diverse develoment: a) question that appeals to old law (v. 1a); b) chiastic structure that begins with a question and ends with a corresponding declaration (v. 1b–2); c) statement of consequence resulting from the actions in vs. 2 (v. 3); and d) rhetorical qustion about father–son relation (vv. 4–5).

In terms of theme: a) v. 1a husband and wife relation; b) vv. 1b–3 violation of land; and c) vv. 4–5 father–son relation. The images of the two relationships (husband–wife in v. 1a and father–son in vv. 4–5) frame the theme of pollution of land. Clearly the issue is not simply perverted relation—as is often suggested in the stress on שוב[22]—but is *loss of place*.

The poem continues in vv. 19–25 by stating Yahweh's intention:

> And I, I said,
>
> How I will set you among my sons!
>
> and I will give to you a pleasant ***land***
>
> a ***heritage*** of all nations most bounteous!
>
> And I, I said,
>
> My ***father*** you will call me and from after me you will not turn.

The structure of this verse is controlled by the double "I said." The first announces Yahweh's intention: land for Israel. The second announces Yahweh's condition: call me "my father." The two belong together. Israel will have the land only when the land is perceived as inheritance from the father: i.e., only when Israel knows itself as heir.[23] In these motifs of נחל ה and **אבי**, the balance of: a) eventual, relational time (**אב**); and b) covenantal space (נחל ה) is affirmed.[24]

21. Wolff, *Amos' Geistige Heimat*, 7–12 [ET: *Amos, the Prophet*]; Gerstenberger, *Wesen und Herkunft*.

22. Cf. the exposition of Vischer, "Return, Rebel Sons!" which completely ignores the power of the land imagery.

23. It is striking how very differently the father–son imagery can be viewed when the balance of space and time is recovered. An alternative reading of the image is that of Wright, "How Did Early Israel Differ."

24. Not only is the Father addressed twice (vv. 4, 19), but Israel is twice called "sons" (vv. 14, 22). Thus land and father–son imagery are closely linked In the same context, note the repeated use of נעורים (vv. 4, 24, 25).

Finally, the poem concludes with an allusion to the land promise. Though only the last blessing to Abraham is mentioned, clearly the land promise is in purview.[25]

The call to turn is closely linked to care for land. In 4:1 the call for repentance is to "remove your abomination" (שִׁקּוּץ). In 3:1–2 it is called "polluted" (חָנֵף), as in 2:7, "abomination" (תּוֹעֵבָה). It is cogent to understand the removal of abomination as a restoration of נַחֲלָה. Jeremiah, seeing the Bablonian threat as Yahweh's will for loss of land, in these poems holds out hope that Israel's destiny may still be the "pleasant land, bounteous heritage, plentiful land," but he also faces the prospect that the place for Israel may be one of defiled land, of drought and death. The judgment of Yahweh in the Babylonian invasion is not perversion of a relationship or distortion of an event, but perversion of place and therefore loss of space.[26]

## Jeremiah 12:7–13

Whereas 2:4–13 and 3:1–5, 19–25 hoped for rescue, with profound pathos 12:7–13 sets forth the hopelessness of Israel (and of Yahweh). The land has now been irrevocably lost. The passage is easily divided into two parts.

### *Images of Deserted and Perverted Land (Jer 12:7–9a)*

I have forsaken my house
    I have abandoned ***my heritage***
I have given the beloved of my soul
    into the hands of her enemies.
***My heritage*** has become to me like
    a lion in the forest.
She has lifted up her voice against me;
    therefore I hate her.

25. Cf. Wolff, "The Kerygma of the Yahwist," 156. Note also the land imagery of v. 3. See my discussion of Hos 10:12, which is closely linked to this verse; Brueggemann, *Tradition for Crisis*, 80–82.

26. Note that the dependent prose passage of 3:6–10, 15–18, which promises restoration, also operates with land imagery. On the relation of the prose and poetry, cf. Nicholson, *Preaching to the Exiles*; and Miller, *Das Verhältnis Jeremias und Hesekiels sprachlich und theologisch untersucht*, 90–91.

Is ***my heritage*** to me like a speckled bird of prey?
Are the birds of prey against her round about?

The key term נחל ה occurs three times with remarkably diverse images: a) given over to enemies, also called "delight of my life," treasured and now lost (v. 7); b) become a lion in the forest, hostile, defiant, destructive, rejecting everything Yahweh had intended (v. 8); and c) a peculiar bird, attacked by other birds (v. 9). The imagery is abrupt and inconsistent. In the first usage the heritage is simply lost, but in the second it is hostile. In the third, the imagery is unclear, but probably it is closer to the first usage. In any case, the entire review is governed by the opening verb, "I have forsaken."[27] All the trouble follows because Yahweh has left the land to its own resources, which leads to destruction and death. Again, land without father is not viable.

The imagery is reinforced by the torrent of first person pronouns: three times "my inheritance," three first person verbs, and a number of pronominal suffixes. The stunning conclusion: "therefore I hate her," is one of Jeremiah's most radical statements of a time to tear down and pluck up.[28] Yahweh has turned against his own inheritance, i.e., rejecting the promises he has made and the election he has affirmed. The language and imagery is consistently about the land, not about people.



*The Destiny of the Land (Jer 12:9b–13)*

Go, assemble all the wild beasts
bring them to ***devour***
many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard,
they have tampled down ***my portion***,
they have made my pleasant ***portion***
a desolate wilderness.

27. Cf. Muilenburg, "The Terminology of Adversity," 52–54.

28. The total rejection of what he is expected to value is perhaps illuminated by Würthwein, "Amos 5:21–27," in which the word "hate," along with others, is the antithesis of cultic acceptance by Yahweh. Cf. Rendtorff, "Priestliche Kulttheologie und prophetische Kultpolemik," for a similar point. The use of cultic terminology may suggest why polluted land is abominable, i.e., repugnant to Yahweh's presence. This is supported by the peculiar use of טמא in an earlier passage (2:7). The balance of: a) defiled place; and b) absent deity, is of course reflected in Ezekiel.

They have made it a ***desolation***:
***desolate*** it mourns to me.
The whole land is made ***desolate***,
but no man lays it to heart.
Upon all the bare heights in the desert
destroyers have come;
for the sword of Yahweh ***devours***
from one end of the land to the other;
no flesh has peace.

They have sown wheat and have reaped thorns,
they have tired themselves out but profit nothing.
They shall be ashamed of their harvests
because of the fierce anger of Yahweh.

This section is linked to the proceeding by the double use of my "portion" (חלק, v. 10), which echoes my "heritage." But the major note is the rich vocabulary of destruction: "devour," אכל, vv. 9, 12); "destroy," שחת (v. 10); "trample," בסס (v. 10); "desolate," שמם (vv. 10, 11);[29] "mourn," אבל (v. 11); "desert," מדבר (vv. 10, 12); "destroyers," שדד (v. 12); "anger," חרון (v. 13). The land's inescapable destiny, when Yahweh has abandoned it, is death (cf. v. 13 as failure in harvest). This poem vividly describes death at the hands of invaders. The description is introduced in v. 9a and concluded in v. 12 with the same word "devour." The first use is with "wild beasts," the final one is "sword," both characteristic curses.[30] Between these two is the powerful imagery of vineyards being trampled and destroyed, the bountiful spot being reduced to a wast, and finally in v. 13, the land is totally unproductive. The place of life is reduced to a place of death.

The entire poem is Yahweh's lament following Jeremiah's lament (vv. 1–6), though perhaps this connection is not original. Yahweh himself, according to the form, laments. But in v. 11 it is the land that mourns. Worth noting is the fact that in 12:4 the prophet uses the same language to describe the land as mourning.

Clearly Yahweh's judgment and Israel's hope concern land. The historical upheavals in the midst of Jeremiah's period are understood primarily

29. Cf. Muilenburg, "The Terminology of Adversity," 50–52.

30. Cf. Hillers, *Treaty-Curses*, 54–56 and passim; and Fensham, "Common Trends in Curses," 160, 166–68 and passim.

as loss of land.[31] Thus the movement is clear from vv. 7–9a, which speaks about the land being deserted and perverted, to 9b–13, which describes the reality of death and the subsequent mourning by the land. In contrast to the earlier poems we have considered, here the issue is settled, and the land is gone.[32]

## Reversing the Curse

This experience of disinheritance, an obvious but neglected theme, is essential to understanding the proclamation of exilic hope. Only when the enormity of displacement is discerned is the promise of return as gripping as it is intended by the poets to be.

Jeremiah himself in a dramatic act performs a sign that ends this way:

> Houses and fields and vineyards
> shall again be bought in the land (אֶרֶץ). (Jer 32:15)[33]

This promise, which reverses the curse (cf. Deut 28:30, 38–39; Amos 5:11; Zeph 1:13), grows out of a narrative that gives legal force to the conviction of inalienable right of inheritance.[34]

The theme of regained inheritance is more fully presented in Ezek 47:13–23, in which the return from exile is interpreted as an act of land allocation paralleling that of Joshua:

> And you shall divide it equally: I swore to give it to your fathers,
> and this land shall fall to you as your ***inheritance***. (47:14)
>
> You shall allot it as an ***inheritance*** for yourselves and for the aliens
> who reside among you. (47:22a)

31. This is the key component in the theme of "tragic reversal" described by Gottwald, *Studies*, chap. 3.

32. Again note the derivative prose passage of 12:14–17, which speaks of hope in terms of land. On the passage, see Nicholson, *Preaching to the Exiles*, 84–88; Gottwald, *All the Kingdoms*, 294; and Herrmann, *Die Prophetischen Heilserwartungen*, 162–65. Space does not permit comment upon 16:18–21; 17:1–4; 22:28–30—all of which bear upon our theme.

33. See Fohrer, *Die symbolischen Handlungen der Propheten*, 42–44 and passim.

34. A closely paralled text, Genesis 23, is a crucial text in P for linking that tradition to land. The structure of Genesis 23 moves from landlessness (vv. 1–4 to land (vv. 17–20), a movement structurally important to P. Cf. Brueggemann, "The Kerygma of the Priestly Writers," on the priestly tradition and land theology.

> This is the land which you shall allot as an ***inheritance*** among the tribes of Israel, and these are their several portions, says the Lord Yahweh. (48:29)

It is no accident that the Ezekiel tradition, which utilizes land-division as a motif of restoration, also speaks of resurrection from the dead (cf. Ezek 37:14), for the land is the essential component in the resurrection of Israel. Thus Macholz writes: "Nur in diesem Land ist die Existenz Israels für den Verfasser denkbar; auch das neue Israel kann nur existieren in diesem selben, freilich erneuerten und umgestalteten, Lande."[35]

All three exilic prophets—Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Deutero-Isaiah—understand the inherited land to be the most visible, most significant embodiment of deliverance from exile and restoration. This balance of loss of land and gift of land provides an important model for exilic faith. Among the themes derived from and related to this model are:

1. The tradition of Jeremiah as it now stands is dominated by the motif of "building and planting, plucking up and tering down" (Jer 1:10; 12:14–17; 18:7–9; 24:6; 31:4–5, 27–28; 32:41; 42:10; 45:4), which may well be an image of loss of land and restoration of land.
2. A parallel motif is that of scattering–gathering, which has clear and obvious derivation from loss of land and regaining land (cf. Jer 23:2–3; Ezek 11:17; Isa 54:7). The motif is frequent, especially in Ezekiel.
3. through a careful analysis of vocabulary, Raitt has been able to show that rejection–election is a theme especially appropriate to Jeremiah and Ezekiel.[36] The notion of rejection–election concerns not simply Yahweh–Israel, but Yahweh-over-the-land and Israel-in-the-land.
4. The use of divorce–remarriage in both Hosea 2 and Jeremiah 3 moves back and forth between covenantal relations and placement in the land. Thus the vocabularies of abandonment (עזב) and harlotry, which Muilenburg has analyzed,[37] are not simply relational motifs as they have often been presented, but they concern place-

35. Macholz, "Noch Einmal," 349 [ET: Only in this land is Israel's existence thinkable for the author; the new Israel can also only exist in this same fully renewed and reconstituted land]. Cf. Isa 49:8 for the same motif handled differently by Deutero-Isaiah.

36. Raitt, "Function, Setting and Content in Jeremiah's Oracles of Judgment."

37. Muilenburg, "The Terminology of Adversity," 52–54.

ment in the land as the image of produce and fertility as Hosea 2 clearly indicates. That the Valley of Trouble becomes the Door of Hope (Hos 2:17 [ET 2:15]) is imagery of reentry into the land, for which the type is Joshua 7. All these models suggest that we have read space concerns as realtional concerns, and in the process we have neglected a primary dimension of the text.

## Conclusion

The prominence of land as space is a central motif of biblical faith, which has been largely unexplored both by an existential and by an historical hermeneutic concerned with covenantal, relational, eventful categories. Biblical faith in the upheaval of exile returned to the basic land of promise (cf. Jer 4:1–2;[38] Ezek 20:42; Isa 51:2). In so doing, it affirmed that Yahweh wills rootage and not rootlessness for his people (or chaos; cf. Jer 4:22–26; Isa 45:18–19).

The persistent concern of biblical faith for the poor and disenfranchised (widows, orphans, lepers, "publicans and sinners") is precisely that they have been *dis*-inherited and rendered both rootless and powerless—and Yahweh does not will it so! This central concern of biblical faith has been lost and can be rightly appreciated only when land as rootage and place is understood, when the biblical gospel is understood as Yahweh's "territorial imperative."[39]

This motif makes contact between biblical faith and contemporary social and theological upheavals. The domesticated quest for "meaning" has been largely replaced by a demand for place. This is true of the Jews, who must perennially struggle with the "disenlandisment," and the problem is only more clearly focused by the modern state of Israel.[40] This is true for the

38. Wolff, "The Kerygma of the Yahwist," 156–57, has shown how this links to the older tradition.

39. Eliade, in his various writing, has described the significance and function of sacred space. Cf. *Cosmos and History*, 12–21; *The Sacred and the Profane*, chap. 1. Remarkably, even Eliade (*Cosmos and History*, 102–12) overstates the case for time in Israel. Again, it is the contrast of Israel and other peoples that causes one to overlook land as place, which is so crucial for Israel's self-understanding. The crisis of exile can hardly be understood apart from this, nor is the return expressed in a different idiom.

40. This has been given various forms of expression, most passionately in the several writings of Richard Rubenstein. Cf. Jacob, "Israel History and the Church"; Neusner, *American Judaism*, 105, who uses the infelicitous term "enlandisement."

Black, who "like the Jew, has always had a land problem."[41] And it is true in a parallel way for every person who in a time of upheaval and future shock experiences rootlessness: "They will not want to play Russian Roulette with their children's schools, and they will see, one hopes, that a child is better reared in a neighborhood than in a glorified bus terminal . . . Without this early experience of territoriality it is doubtful if anyone can learn to regard the whole earth as his turf."[42]

Our hermeneutical investments influenced by salvation history or existentialist categories have led us to neglect this aspect of biblical theology. Perhaps these categories have been a reaction against the fascist tendency to equate religion and land.[43] In any case, a very different situation calls for fresh categories. Thus the point of the Jeremiah exegesis in this paper is to call attention to the blindness created by our recent hermeneutical categories, which has closed off motifs especially significant in a time of rootlessness.

The meaning of the notion of inheritance as space in the New Testament lies beyond the scope of this paper. But attention may be called to Paul's use of the motif of inheritance in Rom 8:16–17 and Gal 4:4–7. It is striking that in both cases the phrase "Abba, Father" is linked not only with sonship but with *heirdom*. The convergence of motifs is the same as in Jer 3:4, 19: "claiming the inheritance" is related to confessing the father.[44]

Even more striking is Gal 4:1–7, where the motifs of father and inheritance are joined with the notion of "fullness of time." It may be an interesting development of hermeneutical stress on time to note that the full time is the time when the son receives inheritance, i.e., it is a time for receiving space in which to live.

41. Williams, "Toward a Sociological Understanding," 261. Having said this, Williams quickly subordinates space to time, but his point is made.

42. Snow, *On Pilgrimage*, 38.

43. Curiously, Rubenstein uses rhetoric for "religion of the soil," not unlike that of the Hitler movement. Thus, for example, he speaks of "Israel's earth and the lost divinities of that earth," *After Auschwitz*, 70.

44. Jeremias, *Abba*, 64–67, views the matter differently, denying the tradition connection suggested here.

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