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The Torah Begins with Creation to Defend Israel’s Right to the Land?

The theme of a divine creator’s right to assign territory to his people is pervasive in the Bible and ancient Near Eastern literature. Perhaps the rabbinic midrash which suggests that the Torah begins with creation to defend Israel against the accusation they stole the land of Canaan were onto something.

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Pikrepo

Beginning the Torah with a Cosmogony

Why does the Torah begin with the creation of the entire world? This question appears in Midrash Tanchuma (Bereishit 11, Buber ed.):

אמר ר' יצחק: לא היה צריך לכתוב את התורה אלא מהחדש הזה לכם, ולמה כתב מבראשית?

Rabbi Isaac said: “The Torah only needed to begin with ‘This month is for you…’ (Exod 12:2). So why did it start writing from creation?”

The verse to which R. Isaac refers is about how the Israelite calendar should begin in the spring. Rashi (R. Solomon Yitzhaki, 1040–1105) includes this question in his opening gloss on the Torah and explains: שהיא מצוה ראשונה שנצטוו ישראל, “for this is the first commandment given to Israel.”[1]

Midrash Tanchuma answers by quoting a verse:

להודיע כח גבורתו, שנאמר (תהלים קיא:ו) כֹּחַ מַעֲשָׂיו הִגִּיד לְעַמּוֹ לָתֵת לָהֶם נַחֲלַת גּוֹיִם.

To demonstrate the extent of his might, as it says, “He revealed to His people His powerful works, in giving them the heritage of nations” (Ps 111:6).

R. Isaac’s answer is that YHWH wishes the Israelites to know how powerful He is, so he describes creation.[2] Rashi quotes this answer but takes it in another direction, claiming that the (or a) purpose of the creation story is to give Israel a defense against the accusation that they stole the land of Canaan:

שאם יאמרו אומות העולם: לסטים אתם שכבשתם ארצות שבעה גוים, והם אומרים להם: כל הארץ של הקב"ה היא, הוא בראה והוא נתנה לאשר ישר בעיניו, ברצונו נתנה להם וברצונו נטלה מהם ונתנה לנו.

For should the peoples of the world say, “You are robbers, because you took by force the lands of the seven nations,” they (Israel) may reply to them, “All the earth belongs to the Holy One, blessed be He; He created it and gave it to whom He pleased. When He willed, He gave it to them, and when He willed, He took it from them and gave it to us.”[3]

As God is the sovereign creator of the entire world in all its particulars, God is entitled to place people into whichever lands God decides. Rashi’s answer is based on a different midrash on this verse found in Genesis Rabbah:

ר' יהושע דסכנין בשם ר' לוי פתח כח מעשיו הגיד לעמו לתת להם נחלת [גוים]—מה טעם גילה הקדוש ברוך הוא לישראל מה שנברא ביום ראשון וביום ב' וג', מפני אומות העולם שלא יהו מונים את ישראל ואומ' להם הלא אומה שלבזזות אתם אתמהא, וישראל משיבין להם ואתם הלא בזוזה היא בידכם הלא כפתרים היוצאים מכפתור השמידום וגו' (דברים ב כג), העולם ומלאו שלהקב"ה הוא, כשרצה נתנו לכם וכשרצה נטלו מכם ונתנו לנו הדא היא דכת' לתת להם נחלת גוים, כח מעשיו הגיד לעמו הגיד להם את הבראשית בראשית ברא אלהים וגו'.

R. Joshua of Sikhnin opened in the name of R. Levi: “He revealed to His people His powerful works, in giving them the heritage [of nations].”—For what reason did the Holy One, blessed be He, reveal to Israel what was created on day one, day two, etc.? So that the nations would not point to Israel and say to them with amazement, “You are a nation of despoilers!” Israel can answer them, “And what about you? Was not the land [of Canaan] despoiled by you? Are you not “Cretans who come from Crete” (Deut 2:23)?! The world in its entirety belongs to the Holy One, blessed by He. When he wanted to, he gave it to you, and when he wanted to, he took it from you and gave it to us. This is what scripture says, “To give them the heritage of nations, he revealed to his people his powerful works.” He told them the creation story, “in the beginning, God created…”

According to this, Israel’s understanding of God’s position as creator of the world was the prerequisite for the conquest. If God had not ordained it, wouldn’t Israel be nothing more than a group of despoilers or thugs, stealing other peoples’ land?

Was It a Good Question?

The Jewish folklorist and philosopher Micah Joseph Berdichevski criticized the question of why Torah does not begin directly with law, saying that such a question represents rabbinic disregard for the natural world represented by creation, in favor of an excessive valuation of law as the sole purpose of Torah.[4]

On one level, Berdichevski is correct; the Torah indeed expresses interest in nature, other peoples, and of how things came to be the way they are (“etiology”). Nevertheless, by linking the themes of creation and land rights, the rabbis are picking up on a deep connection between the two, that appears elsewhere in the Bible as well as in the wider ancient Near East.

Biblical Support for Creation Narrative as Land Entitlement

The idea that land is apportioned to human groups by God (or gods) appears in several biblical passages.

Deuteronomy 32

The song of Haazinu (Deut 32), speaks about Israel’s past:

דברים לב:ח בְּהַנְחֵל עֶלְיוֹן גּוֹיִם בְּהַפְרִידוֹ בְּנֵי אָדָם יַצֵּב גְּבֻלֹת עַמִּים לְמִסְפַּר בְּנֵי אלהים.[5] לב:ט כִּי חֵלֶק יְ־הֹוָה עַמּוֹ יַעֲקֹב חֶבֶל נַחֲלָתוֹ.

Deut 32:8 When the Most-High gave nations (their) inheritances, at his dividing the human-race, he stationed boundaries for peoples by the number of the gods. 32:9 Indeed, the portion of YHWH became his people, Yaakov, the lot of his inheritance. (Fox trans.)

According to this, every nation has its boundary determined by Elyon or by its own god. YHWH specifically chooses the people of Israel and places them within the borders of his land, the land of Israel.[6]

Other biblical texts present similar accounts, describing YHWH as the most important and powerful being in the world, and thus entitled to do what he wishes.

Amos 9

The final chapter of Amos describes God’s power over the chaotic forces of nature:

עמוס ט:ה וַאדֹנָי יְ־הוִה הַצְּבָאוֹת הַנּוֹגֵעַ בָּאָרֶץ וַתָּמוֹג וְאָבְלוּ כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי בָהּ וְעָלְתָה כַיְאֹר כֻּלָּהּ וְשָׁקְעָה כִּיאֹר מִצְרָיִם. ט:ו הַבּוֹנֶה בַשָּׁמַיִם (מעלותו) [מַעֲלוֹתָיו] וַאֲגֻדָּתוֹ עַל אֶרֶץ יְסָדָהּ הַקֹּרֵא לְמֵי הַיָּם וַיִּשְׁפְּכֵם עַל פְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ יְ־הוָה שְׁמוֹ.

Amos 9:5 It is my Lord YHWH of Hosts at whose touch the earth trembles and all who dwell on it mourn, and all of it swells like the Nile and subsides like the Nile of Egypt; 9:6 Who built His chambers in heaven and founded His vault on the earth, who summons the waters of the sea and pours them over the land—His name is YHWH.

Immediately afterwards, the text turns to the placement of Israel in their land in the context of how YHWH has treated other nations:

ט:ז הֲלוֹא כִבְנֵי כֻשִׁיִּים אַתֶּם לִי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל נְאֻם יְ־הוָה הֲלוֹא אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל הֶעֱלֵיתִי מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וּפְלִשְׁתִּיִּים מִכַּפְתּוֹר וַאֲרָם מִקִּיר.

9:7 To Me, O Israelites, you are just like the Ethiopians—declares YHWH. True, I brought Israel up from the land of Egypt, but also the Philistines from Crete and the Arameans from Kir.

The verse here warns Israel that YHWH is the God of all nations, and his gift of land to them is no different than the gift of land he gave other peoples. The text will continue by warning the people that this gift is contingent on their behavior.

Psalm 74

Psalm 74 begins by asking God to remember his chosen people and city:

תהלים עד:ב זְכֹר עֲדָתְךָ קָנִיתָ קֶּדֶם גָּאַלְתָּ שֵׁבֶט נַחֲלָתֶךָ הַר צִיּוֹן זֶה שָׁכַנְתָּ בּוֹ.

Ps 74:2 Remember the community You made Yours long ago, Your very own tribe that You redeemed, Mount Zion, where You dwell.

The text continues by grounding God’s right to choose in his power, which is illustrated first through his defeat of primordial monsters:

תהלים עד:יג אַתָּה פוֹרַרְתָּ בְעָזְּךָ יָם שִׁבַּרְתָּ רָאשֵׁי תַנִּינִים עַל הַמָּיִם. עד:יד אַתָּה רִצַּצְתָּ רָאשֵׁי לִוְיָתָן תִּתְּנֶנּוּ מַאֲכָל לְעָם לְצִיִּים.

Ps 74:13 It was You who drove back the sea with Your might, who smashed the heads of the monsters in the waters; 74:14 it was You who crushed the heads of Leviathan, who left him as food for the denizens of the desert;

Such a battle of a god defeating a wild monster of nature is called a *Chaoskampf*, or chaos-struggle, a fairly common theme in ancient Near Eastern mythologies especially involving creation. In keeping with this, the text continues to describe God’s shaping of the world:

תהלים עד:טו אַתָּה בָקַעְתָּ מַעְיָן וָנָחַל אַתָּה הוֹבַשְׁתָּ נַהֲרוֹת אֵיתָן. עד:טז לְךָ יוֹם אַף לְךָ לָיְלָה אַתָּה הֲכִינוֹתָ מָאוֹר וָשָׁמֶשׁ. עד:יז אַתָּה הִצַּבְתָּ כָּל גְּבוּלוֹת אָרֶץ קַיִץ וָחֹרֶף אַתָּה יְצַרְתָּם.

Ps 74:15 It was You who released springs and torrents, who made mighty rivers run dry; 74:16 the day is Yours, the night also; it was You who set in place the orb of the sun; 74:17 You fixed all the boundaries of the earth; summer and winter—You made them.

God’s fixing the boundaries likely includes Zion, God’s dwelling place in verse 2; at the very least, it establishes his right to establish borders however he sees fit.

Psalm 89

Psalm 89 links the selection of Israel’s royal house with a cosmic creative event. Like in Psalm 74, the creation event is combined with a *Chaoskampf* battle between YHWH and tempestuous water creature called Rahab:

תהלים פט:יא אַתָּה דִכִּאתָ כֶחָלָל רָהַב בִּזְרוֹעַ עֻזְּךָ פִּזַּרְתָּ אוֹיְבֶיךָ. פט:יב לְךָ שָׁמַיִם אַף לְךָ אָרֶץ תֵּבֵל וּמְלֹאָהּ אַתָּה יְסַדְתָּם. פט:יג צָפוֹן וְיָמִין אַתָּה בְרָאתָם תָּבוֹר וְחֶרְמוֹן בְּשִׁמְךָ יְרַנֵּנוּ.

Ps 89:11 You crushed Rahab; he was like a corpse; with Your powerful arm You scattered Your enemies. 89:12 The heaven is Yours, the earth too; the world and all it holds—You established them. 89:13 North and south—You created them; Tabor and Hermon sing forth Your name.[7]

God’s violent act of creation culminates in the selection of David as king:

תהלים פט:כ אָז דִּבַּרְתָּ בְחָזוֹן לַחֲסִידֶיךָ וַתֹּאמֶר שִׁוִּיתִי עֵזֶר עַל גִּבּוֹר הֲרִימוֹתִי בָחוּר מֵעָם. פט:כא מָצָאתִי דָּוִד עַבְדִּי בְּשֶׁמֶן קָדְשִׁי מְשַׁחְתִּיו. פט:כב אֲשֶׁר יָדִי תִּכּוֹן עִמּוֹ אַף זְרוֹעִי תְאַמְּצֶנּוּ.... פט:כו וְשַׂמְתִּי בַיָּם יָדוֹ וּבַנְּהָרוֹת יְמִינוֹ.

Ps 89:20 Then You spoke to Your faithful ones in a vision and said, “I have conferred power upon a warrior; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. 89:21 I have found David, My servant; anointed him with My sacred oil. 89:22 My hand shall be constantly with him, and My arm shall strengthen him…. 89:26 I will set his hand upon the sea, his right hand upon the rivers.”[8]

What we see from the passages above is that YHWH’s right to decide on the fate of nations, including where they live—and in this case, even who rules over them—is predicated on his position as the creator of the world and his power over nature’s forces.[9]

Creation and Primacy of Place in Ancient Near Eastern Literature

The *Chaoskampf* combats between the creator God and one or more chaotic water creatures finds a famous antecedent in the Babylonian creation story, the *Enuma Elish*.[10] In this tradition Marduk, god of Babylon, receives the kingship over the other gods in exchange for his agreeing to slay the water goddess Tiamat, which he does:

Tiamat and Marduk, sage of the gods, drew close for battle, they locked in single combat, joining for the fray. The Lord spread out his net, encircled her, the ill wind he had held behind him he released in her face. Tiamat opened her mouth to swallow, he thrust in the ill wind so she could not close her lips. The raging winds bloated her belly, her insides were stopped up, she gaped her mouth wide. He shot off the arrow, it broke open her belly, it cut to her innards, it pierced the heart. He subdued her and snuffed out her life, he flung down her carcass, he took his stand upon it (The Epic of Creation, Tablet 4).[11]

After defeating Tiamat, the victorious Marduk uses her leftover pieces to form the universe, after which the Anunna-gods[12] build him a city, Babylon (perhaps=Bab-ili, “Gate of the Gods”[13]), and a Temple, the Esagila (Sumerian for “House with lofty head”):

The three hundred Igigi-gods[14] of heaven and the six hundred of Apsu all convened. The Lord, on the Exalted Dais, which they built as his dwelling, seated the gods his fathers for a banquet. “This is Babylon, your place of dwelling. Take your pleasure there, seat yourselves in its delights!” The great gods sat down at the feast, after they had taken their enjoyment inside it, and in awe-inspiring Esagila had conducted the offering, all the orders and designs had been made permanent, all the gods had divided the stations of heaven and netherworld… (The Epic of Creation, Tablet 6)[15]

The gods are assigned various places for themselves in the universe, while Marduk receives Babylon. While on one level, this text is an exaltation of Marduk, it really is about the exaltation of his city, Babylon, complete with the construction of the city and its temple.[16]

A similar claim appears on the Shabaka Stone, a 25th dynasty Egyptian inscription that scholars call “the Memphite theology” or “the Memphite cosmology.”[17] In emphasizing the importance of Memphis and the temple there, it describes the supreme power of Memphite creator-god Ptah:

Thus it is said of Ptah: “He who made all and created the gods.” And he is Ta-tenen (primordial material), who gave birth to the gods, and from whom every thing came forth, foods, provisions, divine offerings, all good things. Thus it is recognized that he is the mightiest of the gods…. He gave birth to the gods, he made the towns, he established the nomes, he placed the gods in their shrines, he settled their offerings, he established their shrines, he made their bodies according to their wishes…[18]

Another Egyptian text, Papyrus Leiden, has Amun, god of Thebes, as the ultimate source of creation, who assigned to the gods their places.[19] In Persia, the major Zoroastrian text dealing with cosmogony is the Avesta, which begins with Ahura-Mazda distributing all the lands to the nations.[20]

While we should not make an overly structuralist argument that all ancient Near Eastern cosmogonies are about assignments of lands and the elevation of the chief god’s land, it can be seen that attention to the chief god’s favored place in relation to other places is present in these texts and important to their authors.

Theological Implications

The evidence from the Bible and the cognate ancient Near Eastern literature demonstrates that there is a strong connection between accounts of world creation and the designation or elevation of a specific land as the special home of the creator deity and/or that deity’s people. Although R. Levi could not have been familiar with the ancient Near Eastern sources discussed here, he seems to have intuited the connection between establishing a deity as the creator God and supporting the claims of that deity’s people to the importance of their homeland, and their divine right to it.

In support of this reading, Eckart Otto observed that the classic theory that Genesis forms the beginning of a six-book “Hexateuch” ending with Joshua would make creation and the conquest the bookends of the whole composite work, such that creation really does culminate in the conquest of Canaan.[21]

An Ethical Twist

The Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas observed that such a claim of divine right to land, if attributed to a deity whose very nature is supposed to be ethical, expresses the concern of the classical rabbis that the Israelite conquest of Canaan had to be ethically justifiable not only to outside critics, but also to themselves.[22]

In his gloss on the opening verse of the Torah, Moses Nahmanides (Ramban, 1194–1270) quotes Rashi’s treatment of the verse and adds a further point:

אם כן, ראוי הוא, כאשר יוסיף הגוי לחטא, שיאבד ממקומו ויבא גוי אחר לרשת את ארצו, כי כן הוא משפט האלהים בארץ מעולם... כענין שכתוב: ויתן להם ארצות גוים ועמל לאמים יירשו בעבור ישמרו חוקיו ותורותיו ינצורו – כלומר, שגירש משם מורדיו, והשכין בו עובדיו, שידעו כי בעבודתו ינחלוה, ואם יחטאו לו, תקיא אותם הארץ כאשר קאה את הגוי אשר לפניהם.

If this is the case, it is fitting that if the nation sins, that it forfeits its place and another nation can come and inherit its land, for that has been the way of divine justice on earth from the beginning of time… as it says (Ps 105:44–45): “He gave them the lands of nations; they inherited the wealth of peoples, that they might keep His laws and observe His teachings.” This means to say that [God] expelled those who rebelled against him from there, and brought those who serve him in to dwell there, so that they would know that they are inheriting the land on account of their service to him, and if they sin against him, the land will “vomit them out” the way it vomited out the nation that was there before there (Lev 18:28).

Nahmanides thus connects the creation story’s defense of Israel’s prerogative with the threat in Leviticus that Israel will go the way of the other nations if they displease God with sinful behavior. To be banished from the land is to be distanced from God, as David says to Saul, when he is forced to run away to Philistia:

שמואל א כו:יט ...כִּי גֵרְשׁוּנִי הַיּוֹם מֵהִסְתַּפֵּחַ בְּנַחֲלַת יְ־הוָה לֵאמֹר לֵךְ עֲבֹד אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים.

1 Sam 26:19 For they have driven me out today, so that I cannot have a share in YHWH’s possession, but am told, “Go and worship other gods.”[23]

The Israeli scholar of Bible Shimon Gesundheit observed that Ramban’s treatment of the creation reveals his strong grasp of the underlying theological content and purpose of the Torah.[24] Gesundheit sees the Torah as featuring a theological triad of *adam/adamah/Adonai* or people of Israel, land of Israel, and obedience to God, that shows that obedience to God’s commandments is not an end in itself but rather the means to the goal of taking or remaining in the land.

This theology underlies both the threats of expulsion that Ramban observed in Leviticus, as well as the statement in Deuteronomy 16:20:

דברים טז:כ צֶדֶק צֶדֶק תִּרְדֹּף לְמַעַן תִּחְיֶה וְיָרַשְׁתָּ אֶת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְ־הוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נֹתֵן לָךְ.

Deut 16:20 Justice, justice shall you pursue, so that you may live and occupy the land that YHWH your God is giving you.

The goal for the Torah legislation then is the harmonious relationship of the three parts—people, land and God—with obedience to the Law as the means to the goal of living in the land of Israel.

Balancing Divine Claims with Moral Obligation

The classical rabbis examined here regarded God’s placement of the people of Israel in the land of Israel as part of the purpose of world-creation, and that this divine right both justified the conquest of Canaan but also placed ethical and religious obligations on the people of Israel to live up to the land they had been given.

[View Footnotes](https://www.thetorah.com/article/the-torah-begins-with-creation-to-defend-israels-right-to-the-land)

1. For R. Isaac in the Tanchuma, as for Rashi, the purpose of the Torah is legislative; even the stories of the patriarchs and matriarchs are unnecessary. The notion that the Torah is a work of “law,” narrowly defined, rather than more generally “instruction,” dates at least as far back as the second century B.C.E.; see Thomas C. Römer and Marc Z. Brettler, “Deuteronomy 34 and the Case for a Persian Hexateuch,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 119.3 (2000): 401-419, [p. 418 fn. 83]. To be clear, Rashi’s source is the Tanchuma—the opinion often expressed that this R. Isaac is Rashi’s father is mistaken. As will be seen below, Rashi frequently combines distinct rabbinic sources in his Torah commentary.
2. This is similar to what we see in the book of Job, in which God shuts down Job’s questioning by asking him where he was when God was creating the universe and forming all of its wonders.
3. The Hebrew text of Rashi is from alhatorah.org, which uses (in this passage) on MS Florence Pluteo III.03. The translation is based upon Morris Rosenbaum and Abraham M. Silbermann, *Pentateuch with Rashi’s Commentary* (London: Shapiro and Valentine, 1929–1934). Accessed via [Sefaria](https://www.sefaria.org.il/Rashi_on_Deuteronomy.33.7?lang=bi).
4. Micah Joseph Berdichevski, “In Two Directions,” in *The Zionist Idea*, ed. Arthur Hertzberg (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1997), 295–297. Hebrew original in *Ba-Derekh* 2 (Lipsiah, 1922): 18–20.
5. This follows the reading in 4QDeutj and the LXX. The Masoretic Text and the Samaritan Pentateuch read ישראל here, which would mean that the boundaries of nations was determined based on the number of Israelites, an odd notion that is likely best explained as a late attempt by a scribe to correct the non-monotheistic implications of the original text. For more on this, see Jonathan Ben-Dov, [“Are There Gods, Angels, and Demons in Deuteronomy?”](https://www.thetorah.com/article/are-there-gods-angels-and-demons-in-deuteronomy) *TheTorah* (2018).
6. The text is unclear about whether YHWH and Elyon, the Most-High, are the same deity, and thus that YHWH is effectively in control of the entire world, or whether YHWH is merely a favored member of Elyon’s pantheon, who can choose his people and land.
7. In the Greek and some English versions, this is vv. 10–12.
8. Again, in some English versions this would be vv. 19-21, 25.
9. God’s violent defeat of monsters appears again in Isaiah 51:9–11, where the defeat of Rahab culminates not in the founding of ancient Israel but in its re-founding in the return from Babylonian exile.
10. Named for its first words, “When on high,” the *Enuma Elish* has been seen by many scholars as an influence on the depiction of God as dividing waters to form the world in Genesis 1.
11. English text from, Benjamin Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Bethesda: CDL Press, 2005), 460.
12. Here, earthly gods.
13. Etymology of “Babylon” disputed by Ignace J. Gelb in 1955 in “The Name of Babylon,” available in Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura (eds.) *I Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 266–269.
14. Here, heavenly gods.
15. Foster, *Before the Muses*, 471.
16. Another Mesopotamian text relating creation to the exaltation of a specific deity and thus, on the human plane, a specific place, is the Sumerian *Eridu Genesis*. In this text the gods create humanity and the animals, and apportion themselves among the cities, with the first and foremost being the city of Eridu, home of the god Enki. As another victory of water management, Enki saves humanity from the gods’ foolhardy flood, thus maintaining worship service for the gods who almost destroyed their worshippers completely. This act of saving humanity exalts Enki and Eridu.
17. The inscription itself dates to around the late eighth or early seventh century, but the content of the inscription may be far older.
18. Translation from Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 1.55.
19. This papyrus dates to the mid-13th century, but its text is possibly centuries older. The various Egyptian cosmogonies generally feature the god of one city as the prime creator.
20. Eckart Otto, *Das Deuteronomium im Pentateuch und Hexateuch: Studien zur Literaturgeschichte von Pentateuch und Hexateuch im Lichte des Deuteronomiumrahmens* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, FAT 30, 2000) p. 108 and 247, argues that the Genesis 1:1–2:4a creation account is written to directly oppose the Persian/Zoroastrian claim that Ahura-Mazda is the creator and land distributor.
21. Otto, op. cit. pp. 75, 108, 247. From p. 108: “Die Hexateuch Redaktion, die durch die Integration von P einen von der Schöpfung (Gen 1) bis zum Bundeschluß in Sichem (Jos 24) reichenden Zusammenhang herstellt, interpretiert den Landbesitz als Skopus ihres Werkes als Ziel der Schöpfung und unter Einbeziehung der Urgeschichte auch der Weltgeschichte.” According to Römer and Brettler, above, narrowly seeing Torah only as “Law” prejudices interpreters against the theory of the Hexateuch as a canonical reality.
22. *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990): 16–17 (from “A Religion for Adults”).
23. We see this claim as well with Cain, who was banished from the face of the land and from God (Genesis 4:14, 16).
24. Shimon Gesundheit, “Der Anfang der Tora: Ansätze jüdischer Exegeten des Mittelalters zu einer theologischen Interpretation der Urgeschichte und mögliche Berührungspunkte zur modernen theologischen Forschung,” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 119 (2007): 602–610.