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NEW STUDIES IN BIBLICAL THEOLOGY 34

*Series editor: D. A. Carson*

# **Bound for the Promised Land**

THE LAND PROMISE IN  
GOD'S REDEMPTIVE PLAN

*Oren R. Martin*



APOLLOS

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INTER VARSITY PRESS

DOWNERS GROVE, ILLINOIS 60515

**APOLLOS**

*An imprint of Inter-Varsity Press, England  
Norton Street  
Nottingham NG7 3HR, England  
ivpbooks.com  
ivp@ivpbooks.com*

*InterVarsity Press, USA  
P.O. Box 1400  
Downers Grove, IL 60515-1426, USA  
ivpress.com  
email@ivpress.com*

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*Inter-Varsity Press, England, is closely linked with the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship, a student movement connecting Christian Unions throughout Great Britain, and a member movement of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students. Website: www.uccf.org.uk*

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*First published 2015*

*Set in Monotype Times New Roman*

*Typeset in Great Britain by CRB Associates, Potterhanworth, Lincolnshire*

*Printed and bound in Great Britain by Ashford Colour Press Ltd, Gosport, Hampshire*

*USA ISBN 978-0-8308-2635-3 (print)*

*USA ISBN 978-0-8308-9800-8 (digital)*

*UK ISBN 978-1-78359-189-3*



*As a member of the Green Press Initiative, InterVarsity Press is committed to protecting the environment and to the responsible use of natural resources. To learn more, visit [greenpressinitiative.org](http://greenpressinitiative.org).*

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**British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

*A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.*

---

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

*A catalogue record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.*

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**P** 21 20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1  
**Y** 33 32 31 30 29 28 27 26 25 24 23 22 21 20 19 18 17 16 15

*To Cindy,  
a daily reminder that God's grace  
is stunning, undeserved and freely given*



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# Series preface

*New Studies in Biblical Theology* is a series of monographs that address key issues in the discipline of biblical theology. Contributions to the series focus on one or more of three areas: (1) the nature and status of biblical theology, including its relations with other disciplines (e.g. historical theology, exegesis, systematic theology, historical criticism, narrative theology); (2) the articulation and exposition of the structure of thought of a particular biblical writer or corpus; and (3) the delineation of a biblical theme across all or part of the biblical corpora.

Above all, these monographs are creative attempts to help thinking Christians understand their Bibles better. The series aims simultaneously to instruct and to edify, to interact with the current literature, and to point the way ahead. In God's universe, mind and heart should not be divorced: in this series we will try not to separate what God has joined together. While the notes interact with the best of scholarly literature, the text is uncluttered with untransliterated Greek and Hebrew, and tries to avoid too much technical jargon. The volumes are written within the framework of confessional evangelicalism, but there is always an attempt at thoughtful engagement with the sweep of the relevant literature.

Theologies of 'the land' of Israel have taken various forms. One thinks of earlier works, such as the magisterial tome by W. D. Davies that was descriptively rich but did not attempt a biblical synthesis. Of course, there have also been many contributions that attempt to tie the various 'land' promises to the re-founding of the nation of Israel more than half a century ago. Dr Martin paints his biblical theology of the land on a grander scale. He argues that the land promises constitute part of a trajectory that begins with the loss of 'land' at the expulsion from Eden and ends, finally, in the new heaven *and the new earth*. The resulting synthesis of the land promises, kingdom promises and eschatology is thought-provoking and sometimes moving.

*D. A. Carson*

*Trinity Evangelical Divinity School*



# Author's preface

This book is a substantial revision of my dissertation (Martin 2013), and though it bears my name by no means do I claim sole credit. The Lord has brought countless people across my path to encourage me along the way. Most of all, I am thankful for the wonderful opportunity to spend concentrated time mining the riches of his Word for a crucial theme in biblical theology. In this endeavour I have found much delight, and for these blessings I am deeply grateful.

Though it would take another book to thank the inestimable number of people who prayed for and encouraged me, I offer special thanks to a few. I thank my parents, Bob and Nancy Wilson, and in-laws, Lou and Mary Ann Abshire, for their constant support and encouragement. Moreover, I thank friends who have both taught and encouraged me throughout this process and, as a result, have made this work better: Ryan Lister, J. T. English, Matt Hall and John Meade.

I am grateful especially for Bruce Ware, Tom Schreiner and Stephen Wellum, who teach at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, not only for their supervision and guidance, but also for their continued encouragement and counsel. It is a privilege to say that I studied with these men and, even more, to call them friends. Thanks also to Clifton Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky, where I formerly served as a pastor while writing this book, for the countless ways he has used the saints there to increase our love for God's glory in Christ and his people. Moreover, I am thankful for the men with whom I pastored, especially John Kimbell, Jeremy Pierre, Tom Schreiner and Shawn Wright, who constantly encourage me to be faithful and look to Christ. They are treasured gifts from God.

I am grateful to Philip Duce, senior commissioning editor for theological books at Inter-Varsity Press (UK), for his gracious interaction, encouragement and editorial work that have made this work better. I am particularly grateful for Michael Dietzel, Joseph Pieri and Joel Rosario, who ably assisted me and performed a huge task of editing the bibliography and footnotes. Their labour of love saved me countless hours and I can scarcely thank them for their work. Thanks

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also to Don Carson, the series editor, for initially accepting this work. Over the years I have developed a deep appreciation for him through his writings and for this series, and I appreciate him even more as a result of his helpful and encouraging feedback. I consider it a great privilege to contribute to a series that has contributed much to my own growth in Christ and understanding of his life-giving Word.

I am dedicating this book to my beloved wife, Cindy, who not only has given us three sweet and beautiful children – Jonathan, Anna and Benjamin – but who also has been my best friend and most trusted counsellor. I love her more than ever and cannot imagine life without her. She is a daily reminder to me that God’s grace is stunning and undeserved.

Finally, and most importantly, I am grateful that the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. This work is not a product of my gifts, but of our great God’s transforming grace. It is my prayer that God, who fulfils all of his saving promises in Christ and works all things according to the counsel of his will, receives all the glory for any good that comes out of this book, for his glory in Christ and the everlasting joy of his people.

*Oren R. Martin*

# Abbreviations

4QpPs 37	<i>Peshar on Psalm 37 (Dead Sea Scrolls)</i>
AB	Anchor Bible
AUSDDS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series</i>
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BDAG	W. Bauer, F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt and W. F. Gingrich, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , 3rd ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BST	The Bible Speaks Today
BTNT	Biblical Theology of the New Testament
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
Chm	<i>Churchman</i>
ConBOT	Coniectanea biblica: Old Testament Series
DJG	<i>Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels</i>
DOTHP	<i>Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books</i> , ed. Bill T. Arnold and H. G. M. Williamson, 2005
DOTP	T. D. Alexander and D. W. Baker (eds.), <i>Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch</i> , Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002
DTIB	<i>Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible</i> , ed. Kevin Vanhoozer, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005
EBC	The Expositor's Bible Commentary
ERT	<i>Evangelical Review of Theology</i>
EvQ	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
Hebr.	Hebrew
IBC	Interpretation Bible Commentary
IBR	Institute for Biblical Research
ICC	International Critical Commentary
Int	<i>Interpretation</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>

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<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series
<i>JTI</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Interpretation</i>
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NAC	The New American Commentary
NACSBT	NAC Studies in Bible and Theology
<i>NDBT</i>	<i>New Dictionary of Biblical Theology: Exploring the Unity and Diversity of Scripture</i> , ed. B. S. Rosner, T. D. Alexander, G. Goldsworthy and D. A. Carson, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press; Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000
NIBC	The New International Biblical Commentary
NICNT	The New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	The New International Commentary on the Old Testament
<i>NIDOTTE</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i> , ed. W. A. VanGemeren, 5 vols., Grand Rapids: Zondervan; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997
NIGTC	The New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIVAC	The NIV Application Commentary
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
PNTC	The Pillar New Testament Commentary
<i>SBET</i>	<i>Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology</i>
<i>SBJT</i>	<i>Southern Baptist Journal of Theology</i>
SHS	Scripture and Hermeneutics Series
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SOTBT	Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology
SP	Sacra pagina
Str–B	H. Strack and P. Billerbeck, <i>Kommentar zum Neuen Testament</i> , 4 vols., Munich: Beck'sche, 1926–8

## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Them</i>	<i>Themelios</i>
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
tr.	translation, translated, translated by
<i>TrinJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
<i>TynB</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament



## Chapter One

# Biblical theology and the land promise

Place matters. Just as Genesis begins with creation, where humans live in the presence of their Lord, so Revelation ends with an even more glorious new creation where all of the redeemed dwell with the Lord and his Christ. But the historical development between the beginning and the end is crucial to observe, for the journey from Eden to the new Jerusalem proceeds through the land promised to Abraham. In other words, the Promised Land occupies a special place for God's people after the fall and exile from Eden, because it is the place where they will once again live under his lordship and experience his blessed presence. The Promised Land, then, connects the beginning and the end.

From a broader perspective, Eden is presented as the inaugural kingdom, and the new Jerusalem is presented as the consummated kingdom, where the kingdom of the world is the kingdom of God (Rev. 11:15; 21:1 – 22:5). It is no surprise, then, that the Old Testament focuses the extension of God's kingdom on Israel's land. In other words, God's programme with and through Abraham is to restore the original conditions of God's creational kingdom described in Genesis 1 – 2, which will not finally be accomplished until the former things have passed away and all things are made new (Rev. 21:4–5). Thus the intersection of land and kingdom that commences in Eden will be consummated in the new Jerusalem. Between these historical book-ends, God will re-establish his kingdom on earth through Abraham and his seed living in the land of promise.

The aim of the present study is to demonstrate that the land promised to Abraham advances the place of the kingdom that was lost in Eden and serves as a type throughout Israel's history that anticipates the even greater land – prepared for all of God's people throughout history – that will come as a result of the person and work of Christ. In other words, the land and its blessings find their fulfilment in the new heaven and new earth won by Christ. When each place of God's people is situated within the redemptive-historical

framework of God's unfolding plan, the land promised to Abraham is seen to be a progressive fulfilment of God's kingdom on earth. Subsequently, the land promised to and, on more than one occasion, possessed by God's people throughout the Old Testament pointed to something greater that his people throughout all time, in relation to Christ, will enjoy in the new creation for eternity.

To unpack the land promise in the plan of God, we will examine the theme of land as it progressively unfolds across the story line of Scripture. That is, an examination of this theme will take place as it develops from the Old to the New Testament, from promise to fulfilment. This examination will demonstrate that the land promised to Abraham, which was inhabited and lost throughout Israel's history, is important because it picks up the place of God's kingdom that was lost in Eden, thus serving as a subsequent place in God's unfolding plan. Furthermore, from the perspective of Israel's exile, this place anticipates and prepares the way for the coming of Jesus Christ, who wins a new creation for his people. And although those united with Christ by faith in the present era of salvation history enjoy every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, they await their final destiny – the new heaven and new earth – to which the land of promise pointed.

## The land promise in biblical scholarship

The theme of land in Scripture is an important component in the biblical framework of promise and fulfilment.<sup>1</sup> Remarkably, it has not received a great deal of attention in terms of a whole-Bible biblical theology.<sup>2</sup> The interest in land as a theological theme is relatively recent in the church's history.<sup>3</sup> This observation is not surprising given the focus on Israel since the mid-twentieth century. Even so, exegetically driven, biblically robust and systematically sensitive theologies of land are relatively few. However, on the interest of land from a socio-political perspective, or on the relationship between land/property

<sup>1</sup> Martens 1998: 114.

<sup>2</sup> Most treatments of the land promise are embedded in works that cover much broader topics. Furthermore, broader hermeneutical issues such as the Israel–church relationship or the relationship between the covenants are brought into the picture. See e.g. works on theological systems, such as Bateman 1999; Blaising and Bock 1993; Saucy 1993; Feinberg 1988; Robertson 1980; see also works on eschatology, such as Hoekema 1979; Venema 2000; 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Martens 1998: 114.

and ethics, of books there is no end.<sup>4</sup> This section, then, will summarize and briefly evaluate past theological treatments of the land.

The significance of land as a theological theme was described by Gerhard von Rad.<sup>5</sup> Following in his wake, several works have been devoted to the theme of land. Two books published around the same time treated land as a more comprehensive biblical-theological theme – Walter Brueggemann and W. D. Davies – and both cited von Rad's earlier essay.<sup>6</sup> Although these works present comprehensive treatments on the biblical theme of land, both fall short for various reasons. For example, in terms of a 'whole-Bible biblical theology',<sup>7</sup> Brueggemann gives little attention to New Testament texts, which limits his treatment of the development of land across the entire Christian canon. Furthermore, his existential and sociological emphases influence his understanding of the land.<sup>8</sup> For Davies, when it comes to the nature of Scripture, his work is fraught with a dated form-critical view of the Gospels. Also, he concludes that the New Testament spiritualizes the land and relocates it to Christ.<sup>9</sup> As this book will show, this view does not sufficiently present the New Testament fulfilment of what the Old Testament anticipated.

Three additional works examine the concept of land from within the Old Testament. First, Moshe Weinfeld contributes a substantive exegetical piece to the discussion of land.<sup>10</sup> Although helpful in his exegetical work on the relevant Old Testament texts, he fails to

<sup>4</sup> For books on land that focus on the sociopolitical aspects of the Israel–Palestine conflict and conclude with (some) theological/ethical reflection(s), see Ateek 1989; 2008; Barclay 2004; Sizer 2007; Weber 2004; Burge 2004. For books on the relationship of land/property and ethics, see C. J. H. Wright 2004; 1990.

<sup>5</sup> Von Rad 1966; see also Hanson 2005.

<sup>6</sup> Brueggemann 1977; Davies 1974 and, more recently, 1982, which is a summary of his earlier work along with concluding essays by various scholars on the meaning of land and theology in the light of current events.

<sup>7</sup> Carson 2000: 100. A 'whole-Bible biblical theology' is not merely a theology that is biblical, although it is certainly not less than this. The phrase picks up on the discipline of biblical theology, which, as Carson (ibid.) says, 'even as it works inductively from the diverse texts of the Bible, seeks to uncover and articulate the unity of all the biblical texts taken together, resorting primarily to the categories of those text themselves'. See also Rosner 2000: 3–11. This is what James Barr (1999) calls a 'pan-Biblical theology'.

<sup>8</sup> E.g. Brueggemann (1977: 3) says, 'Biblical faith is a pursuit of historical belonging that includes a sense of destiny derived from such a belonging.' A similar perspective is found in Inge (2003), ch. 2.

<sup>9</sup> E.g. Davies (1974: 336), after examining the NT data, says, 'We have discovered in the New Testament, alongside the recognition of the historical role of the land as the scene of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, a growing recognition that the Christian faith is, in principle, cut loose from the land, that the Gospel demanded a breaking out of its territorial chrysalis.'

<sup>10</sup> Weinfeld 1993.

synthesize it into a coherent theology. For example, when it comes to the varying views of the borders of the Promised Land, he detects redactional activity and concludes that they are contradictory.<sup>11</sup> This lack of coherence is no doubt attributed to his subscription to critical views of Scripture, specifically the documentary hypothesis. Secondly, Norman Habel identifies six ideologies in the Old Testament regarding land: royal, theocratic, ancestral household, prophetic, agrarian and immigrant.<sup>12</sup> But rather than offering a comprehensive biblical theology, Habel aims to connect the land to economic, social, political and religious ideas. Finally, and closer to the approach of this book, Arie Leder treats the land as a coherent and progressive biblical theology.<sup>13</sup> However, he limits his study to the Pentateuch before making application to the church. Thus a more comprehensive biblical theology of the Promised Land is needed.

There are also chapters and articles that treat the theme of land within their overall argument. First, some Old Testament theologies isolate the discussion of land to, at most, a few chapters, which often are limited to Deuteronomy and/or Joshua.<sup>14</sup> Other Old Testament theologies integrate land into one of their central themes; thus giving it greater prominence.<sup>15</sup> Secondly, chapters and articles are devoted to one or more aspects of a theology of land from various theological traditions.<sup>16</sup> While each of these chapters and articles illumines the theme of land in a unique way, they are not comprehensive. Finally, G. K. Beale has provided a chapter in his New Testament theology on the relationship of Israel's land promises to the fulfilment of Israel's

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. ch. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Habel 1995.

<sup>13</sup> Leder 2010.

<sup>14</sup> See e.g. House 1998: 197–213, 512–522; Goldingay 2003: 451–528; 2006: 438–449; Preuss 1996: 117–128; Rendtorff 2005: 220–225, 457–469; von Rad 2005: 296–305; Dumbrell 2002: 57–75. Waltke with Yu (2007: 512–587) is a notable exception that offers a more comprehensive treatment of land as it progresses from the Old to the New Testament. Two biblical theologies that also treat land within their overall schema are Kaiser 2008 (90–110), which is based in part on his earlier work (1978: 122–142), and Scobie 2003 (541–567).

<sup>15</sup> See e.g. Dempster 2003; Martens 1998 (the land sections from this work were reprinted in Martens 2004); Alexander 2012; and Dumbrell 1984.

<sup>16</sup> For journal articles, see Miller 1969: 451–465; Kaiser 1981: 302–312; C. J. H. Wright 1993: 153–167; for chapters in books, see Martens 2009, who organizes the land theme around the concept of metaphor; Holwerda 1995: 85–112; Robertson 2000, who presents the land theme from a covenantal perspective; and Horner 2007 (223–252), who presents the land theme from a dispensational perspective. And finally, systematic theologies have not traditionally included in their organization a locus devoted to land; although one exception is Rushdoony 1994 (957–1018).

restoration and new-creation prophecies in Christ and the church.<sup>17</sup> Although similar to the argument of this study, Beale's treatment of the development of the land promise in the Old Testament is brief before he shows the fulfilment in the New Testament.

Other, more recent, works come closer to this study. First, an edited volume by Philip Johnston and Peter Walker is similar in some ways to the present examination of the land theme; especially the first two chapters by Paul Williamson and T. Desmond Alexander.<sup>18</sup> The contributors attempt to provide biblical, theological and contemporary perspectives on the land of promise, albeit from different perspectives.<sup>19</sup> The treatment of land, however, is limited due to the contributors' conflicting views (e.g. Palestinian Christian, Jewish Christian). Secondly, a recent work by Gary Burge holds out even more promise when it comes to the nature and breadth of Scripture.<sup>20</sup> Burge seeks to integrate both Old and New Testament before showing how Jesus and the New Testament reinterpret the land. He argues that Jesus is the 'great rearranger' of the land and that all the properties of the holy land are now relocated in him.<sup>21</sup> However, many will dismiss his conclusions because he does not show sufficient Old Testament warrant for his New Testament conclusions.<sup>22</sup> Thirdly, Craig Bartholomew connects the land promised to Abraham to the broader theme of place.<sup>23</sup> Through a biblical, theological, philosophical, historical and practical investigation, he alerts his readers to the importance of place for humanity as it seeks 'playmaking' in its cities, gardens, homes and a myriad of different types of places. However, the primary purpose of Bartholomew's work is not to examine comprehensively the land promise and its place in redemptive history, but rather to reorient his readers by Scripture and the best of the Christian tradition towards a recovery of place today.<sup>24</sup>

Finally, Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum have contributed a *via media* between dispensational and covenant theology that examines God's overarching plan to bring about his kingdom through covenant

<sup>17</sup> Beale 2011: 750–772.

<sup>18</sup> Johnston and Walker 2000. See also Walker 1994; 1996.

<sup>19</sup> E.g. dispensational, non-dispensational, covenantal and Jewish.

<sup>20</sup> Burge 2010.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* 41, 129.

<sup>22</sup> E.g. he spends only ten pages on the biblical heritage of land in the OT before moving on to intertestamental literature and the NT.

<sup>23</sup> Bartholomew 2011.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* 5; see also Inge 2003.

by unpacking in detail each biblical covenant in its own redemptive-historical context and its relationship to the arrival of the new covenant in the person and work of Jesus Christ. The final chapters summarize and apply the theological implications of *kingdom through covenant* to various doctrinal loci, such as the land promise.<sup>25</sup> While my study is in substantial agreement with Gentry and Wellum's *Kingdom Through Covenant*, it aims to go into greater depth by restricting its focus to the theme of land.

Some conclusions can be drawn from this brief survey. First, though a variety of books and articles deal with the topic of land, at many points their theological focus is intertwined with ethics and/or the sociopolitical Israel–Palestine conflict. Secondly, though various theologies study the theme of land, many are restricted to Old Testament theology. Furthermore, Old Testament theologies that treat the theme of land often limit their study to Genesis, Deuteronomy and/or Joshua. Thirdly, because many argue that the New Testament does not advance the promise of land, New Testament theology has not, by and large, examined how the theme of land arises.<sup>26</sup> Hence a theology of land remains problematic for New Testament theology. Finally, further study is needed on the theme of land from the standpoint of a whole-Bible theology. This work, therefore, aims to clarify and complete what is lacking.

## Approach and assumptions

Recent studies in biblical theology have tried to argue that no one centre or theme exhaustively captures the rich and multifaceted message of Scripture.<sup>27</sup> Paul House asserts, 'We should give up arguing that one theme and one theme only is the central theme of the Bible and highlight major themes that allow other ideas as subpoints.'<sup>28</sup> This conclusion finds support given the diversity of the

<sup>25</sup> Gentry and Wellum 2012: 703–716.

<sup>26</sup> A notable exception is Beale 2011.

<sup>27</sup> Scobie 1991: 178; he repeats the same sentiment in *The Ways of Our God* (2003: 87). For further discussion of this topic, see Martens 1997: 57. For a bold argument for the centre of biblical theology, see J. M. Hamilton 2006a: 57–84; 2010; for a response to Hamilton, see Köstenberger 2012: 445–464.

<sup>28</sup> House 2002: 276. E.g. an attempt to describe some of the major themes in Scripture has been made by Hafemann and House 2007. See also Carson (1998: 810), who in his assessment of the search for a centre concluded, 'pursuit of a center is chimerical'. For more discussion on this topic, see related chapters in Hasel 1991; 2003.

Old and New Testaments. According to James Dunn, a centre for New Testament theology is more easily seen due to its unified focus on Christ and faith in him as Lord, but when the Old Testament is added in the scope of a theological centre, the quest for such a single formulation has never been satisfactorily resolved.<sup>29</sup> This conclusion is often reached because no single centre is broad enough to integrate the multitudinous variety of biblical texts.<sup>30</sup> This does not mean, however, that there is not unity in the diversity. The assumption of an evangelical-theological framework, says Richard Lints, 'ought to be the unity-in-diversity of the Testaments – with unity being prior to the diversity since it is the one God who manifests himself in the diversity of historical epochs'.<sup>31</sup> Hence the continuity between the various parts of Scripture, between Old and New Testament, can and should be anchored in the one triune God who authored it. With these qualifications in mind, a canonical theology can be pursued.

The purpose of this work is not to summarize and engage the debate over a/the centre of biblical theology. If one centre is chosen, it is possible that other central themes that arise from the text will be ignored. At the same time, it is defensible that some themes are better than others at explicating the message of Scripture in so far as they are connected to and incorporate other important themes. J. L. McKenzie states that Old Testament theology should be based on those themes that occur most frequently and that appear to be vital in giving Old Testament belief its distinctive identity.<sup>32</sup> This idea can be broadened to a 'whole-Bible biblical theology',<sup>33</sup> for just as a New Testament theme cannot be examined apart from looking at its Old Testament roots, so also an Old Testament theme cannot be examined apart from its New Testament fulfilment.<sup>34</sup> So themes that progress along the story line of Scripture must be followed to their end, and climax in the person and work of Christ.

For example, various Old Testament, New Testament and canonical-biblical theologies have been organized around central themes such

<sup>29</sup> Dunn 2004: 175.

<sup>30</sup> Merrill 2006: 27.

<sup>31</sup> Lints 1993: 277.

<sup>32</sup> McKenzie 1974: 24–25; see also Scobie 2003: 85.

<sup>33</sup> Carson 2000: 100; Rosner 2000: 3–11.

<sup>34</sup> For a survey of the various approaches to biblical theology, see Klink and Lockett 2012.

as God or kingdom of God,<sup>35</sup> covenant,<sup>36</sup> God's presence,<sup>37</sup> election,<sup>38</sup> Messiah,<sup>39</sup> human viceregency (Gen. 1:26–28)<sup>40</sup> and new creation.<sup>41</sup> Others have focused on some multithemed variation.<sup>42</sup> Works such as these demonstrate that in Scripture there is a unity in diversity – a wholeness in the light of the parts – that displays the richness of God's Word. There are, as Al Wolters writes, 'connections between any given part of the Scriptures and the overall biblical story'.<sup>43</sup> Along with these important interconnected themes, additional themes arise from a careful reading of Scripture that demonstrate the treasures of God's Word and his redemptive plan in history, a plan that has been inaugurated and will culminate in uniting all things in Christ: things in heaven and things on earth (Eph. 1:10). The aim of the present study is to demonstrate that the theme of 'land' is an important one because it shares 'in the complex connections of biblical covenants'.<sup>44</sup>

It is important to note the multifaceted nature of the interpretative process in formulating any particular theme or doctrine. Therefore attention must be given to theological method. First, scholars have rightly noted the relationship between exegesis, biblical theology and systematic theology. It is too simplistic to reduce the hermeneutical process to a series of logical steps (e.g. exegesis, biblical theology, systematic theology). Rather, each discipline informs and checks the others. Secondly, this process takes into account and is informed by historical theology, for every person approaches the text with certain (confessional) presuppositions.<sup>45</sup> Theological method is neither formulated in a vacuum nor merely theoretical. Nor should methodology impose foreign categories on to the text. Rather, the content of

<sup>35</sup> Goldsworthy 1991; 2000; Ridderbos 1962; Kline 2006; Waltke 2007; Schreiner 2013.

<sup>36</sup> P. R. Williamson 2007; Dumbrell 1984; Horton 2002. There is also covenant theology, the theological system organized around the covenant. Covenant theology is traditionally traced back to Johannes Cocceius, the seventeenth-century Dutch theologian. See Van Asele 2000. On covenant theology's major emphases and the variations within the general system, see Golding 2004.

<sup>37</sup> Terrien 1978.

<sup>38</sup> Preuss 1996: 24–25.

<sup>39</sup> Bateman, Bock and Johnston 2012; Barnett 2009; Alexander 1998.

<sup>40</sup> Merrill 2006.

<sup>41</sup> Alexander 2008; 2012; Beale 2011; 1997; 2002.

<sup>42</sup> See e.g. Dempster 2003; Martens 1998.

<sup>43</sup> Wolters 2004: 261.

<sup>44</sup> Poythress 1991: 70. Brueggemann (1977: 3) says, 'Land is a central, if not *the central theme* of biblical faith. Biblical faith is a pursuit of historical belonging that includes a sense of destiny derived from such belonging. In what follows I suggest that land may be a way of organizing biblical theology' (emphasis original). Brueggemann may claim too much in this statement, though all would agree that land is an important theme.

<sup>45</sup> Osborne 2006: 350.

theology ought to shape its methodology by developing its own intra-systematic categories.<sup>46</sup>

This interpretative and theological process is set forth by Richard Lints, in what he calls the three horizons of redemptive interpretation – the *textual* (immediate context at the grammatical-historical level), *epochal* (context of the period of revelation) and *canonical* (context of the entirety of revelation) horizons.<sup>47</sup> That is, equal study must be given to all texts, rightly interpreted within their respective contexts, with careful attention paid to literary genre in the light of their overall place in redemptive history and the canon to reach sound biblical and theological conclusions.

This theological framework presupposes that Scripture constitutes a unified text with a developing story. God's Word reveals and interprets his redemptive acts, which develop across time, from creation to new creation. 'Biblical revelation', says Lints, 'progresses because it mirrors the progressive nature of redemption.'<sup>48</sup> Theology must keep the redemptive-revelatory and redemptive-historical nature of Scripture in its focus. But not only is God's revelation redemptive-historical; it is redemptive-historical/eschatological. That is, it has a divine *telos*. Horton is correct when he says that when reading Scripture, 'eschatology should be a lens and not merely a locus'.<sup>49</sup> This eschatological permeation of Scripture is rooted in a sovereign God, who is moving history along to his appointed ends.

Another important methodological component for this study is typology, which involves correspondence(s) between persons, events and institutions, and later persons, events and institutions.<sup>50</sup> That is, God's past dealings with his people serve as patterns, or types, for his future dealings with his people. Robert Plummer writes, 'Because God is completely sovereign over history, *all* Old Testament-era saving events, institutions, persons, offices, holidays and ceremonies served to anticipate

<sup>46</sup> Horton 2002: 19; Lints 1993: 270–274.

<sup>47</sup> Lints 1993: 293–311; see also Clowney 1961: 16.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* 262.

<sup>49</sup> Horton 2002: 5. So also Dumbrell (2002: 9), who further explicates this idea when he says, 'The Bible is a book about the future in light of the human failings of the past and present. In this sense the entire Bible is eschatological, since it focuses upon the ushering in of the kingdom of God, the fulfilling of the divine intention for humanity and society. In very broad terms the biblical sweep is from creation to the new creation. Yet the end is not merely a return to the beginning, for the Bible reveals a great deal more about the divine intention than what is shown at the beginning of Genesis. Regarding eschatology, we must recognize how the Bible develops its theme of God's purpose from the beginning of Genesis to the end in Revelation.'

<sup>50</sup> Ribbens 2011: 81; Hoskins 2006: 19.

the final saving event, the final saving person, the final saving ceremony, etc.<sup>51</sup> For example, Old Testament prophets anticipated and looked for a new David, a new exodus, a new covenant and a new city of God: the old had thus become a type of the new and was important in pointing forward to it.<sup>52</sup> Subsequently, the New Testament authors saw in Christ and his work the fulfilment, or antitype, of these prophetic hopes.

There are several important components in typology. First, typology pays careful attention to textual and historical/theological correspondences that develop across the canon.<sup>53</sup> These correspondences provide the hermeneutical controls for linking types with their antitype(s). Secondly, typology is prospective and prophetic. That is, God intentionally planned certain persons, events and institutions in redemptive history *in order that* they would serve later redemptive – and Christological – realities.<sup>54</sup> Darrell Bock writes:

*Typology, or better typological-prophetic usage, expresses a peculiar link of patterns with movement from the lesser OT person or event to the greater NT person or event. . . . God's pattern of salvation is being reactivated in a present fulfilment. This fulfilment takes place both in accordance with messianic hope and promise and in accordance with the pattern of God's activity in salvation.*<sup>55</sup>

Thirdly, typology stresses escalation as the Old Testament story line moves forward to its New Testament fulfilment.<sup>56</sup> As a result, God's

<sup>51</sup> Plummer 2010a: 206; emphasis original; see also 2010b: 54–61.

<sup>52</sup> Von Rad 2005: 323.

<sup>53</sup> Baker 2010: 187.

<sup>54</sup> One view of typology is that it is only retrospective. This view has, however, been challenged to see a prospective component because of the nature of Scripture. In favour of the prospective component, Waltke with Yu (2007: 137) rightly says, 'The Bible's unique [divine] Authorship and unity lays the basis for eschatological typology – that is to say, God intended earlier persons, acts, and institutions to present a type or shadow or pattern of future greater fulfilment.' It is essential in this view to tie typology to a dually authored text, for the prospective aspect of the typological connections become clearer at the epochal and canonical levels. Other advocates of prospective typology include Davidson 1981; Goldsworthy 2006: 245–257; Beale 1994: 387–404. Opponents, who favour retrospective typology only, include Baker 1994: 313–330; 2010; France 1998: 39–40. For a brief discussion on this issue, see Marshall 1988: 15–17.

<sup>55</sup> Bock 1987: 49; emphasis original.

<sup>56</sup> In Goppelt's (1982: 18) seminal work on typology, he says, 'If the antitype does not represent a heightening of the type, if it is merely a repetition of the type, then it can be called typology only in certain instances and in a limited way.' Baker (2010: 183), however, does not see heightening between type and antitype as a necessary feature because 'this is simply an aspect of the progression from Old Testament to New Testament'. In any case, there is a pattern of escalation or progression from type to antitype.

redemptive purposes in the Old Testament are unfinished and thus cannot be *fully* understood apart from their fulfilment in the New Testament.<sup>57</sup> Lints notes, ‘The Old Testament record of history is prophetic in the sense that it describes a revelation and divine action that are as yet incomplete. And the New Testament points to a consummation of history that now we understand only in part, as through a glass darkly.’<sup>58</sup> Promises in the Old Testament point forward to their fulfilment(s), and the type is fulfilled and surpassed by its antitype.<sup>59</sup> Finally, these typological connections find their terminus in the person and inaugurated-yet-not-consummated work of Christ.<sup>60</sup> In making typological connections – types with their antitypes – promises and fulfilments are linked, which are made clear by textual and historical connections developed both within the Old Testament itself and then from the Old Testament to the New.<sup>61</sup>

By allowing the textual, epochal and canonical horizons and progressive typological connections to illuminate the theme of land, this study will demonstrate how the development of the land promise across the canon provides hermeneutical warrant to see its ultimate fulfilment in the new creation won by Christ. This way of reading Scripture will hopefully help to overcome the impasse of conflicting conclusions concerning the land.

But before embarking upon the task of a biblical theology of land, theological assumptions must first be addressed. There is no such thing as a presupposition-*less* theology. A positive contribution of

<sup>57</sup> Goldsworthy 2006: 243.

<sup>58</sup> Lints 1993: 309.

<sup>59</sup> Scobie 2003: 90.

<sup>60</sup> Davidson 1981: 97.

<sup>61</sup> Seitz (2007: 228) defines intertextuality (or intratextuality) as ‘how the Bible relates to itself in its own system of cross-reference . . . it has to do with the way in which parts of the Bible and finally the two Testaments themselves relate to one another’. There are many examples of these relationships, a few of which will demonstrate a pattern in Scripture. Adam was a type of Christ who was to come, as Paul’s use of Gen. 1–2 in Rom. 5:12–21 makes clear. Jesus links himself with Moses, the representative prophet in the OT (John 3:14–15; 5:45–46; 6:32–35). Similarly, from Heb. 3:1–6 it is clear that Jesus is the ultimate and final prophet like Moses, spoken of in Deut. 18, for he embodies and speaks God’s Word perfectly. Other examples include Israel, in which ‘son’ language is particularly important (Hos. 11:1; Matt. 2:15); the role of leaders as prophets, priests and kings; David, to whom God promised the Messiah and eternal kingship from his line; institutions, such as the temple, Passover and the sacrificial system; and events such as the exodus, which served as a type of the greater redemption that would come in Christ. These examples are not to stand isolated from their place(s) in redemptive history. Rather, they can be fully understood only in their respective redemptive-historical contexts and placement in the canon in relation to the person and work of Christ.

postmodernism has been the raising of the interpreter's awareness that there are no neutral approaches to theology.<sup>62</sup> It is, therefore, essential to recognize presuppositions and evaluate them under the authority of Scripture. To be sure, to defend each one is beyond our scope; nevertheless, these presuppositions are justifiable because they are grounded on the triune God, who has created humans in his image, made himself known in his Word and has graciously and savingly acted on humanity's behalf in history through the person and work of Jesus Christ.<sup>63</sup> These broader assumptions include the commitment to the total truthfulness and reliability of God's Word,<sup>64</sup> the divine and human authorship of Scripture,<sup>65</sup> the possibility of a 'whole-Bible biblical theology',<sup>66</sup> and the unity and continuity of God's saving plan progressively revealed to his people through the Bible's textual diversity.<sup>67</sup>

## The plan of the book

This book comprises ten chapters. Following chapter 1, chapter 2 provides the biblical-theological framework from which a theology of land can be canonically understood, and, more specifically, the *framework* for understanding the place of God's people is the kingdom. Chapters 3–6 focus on God's promise of land to Abraham and, subsequently, evaluate the progress of God's fulfilment of his promise in four plot movements across the Old Testament. Chapter 3 considers the importance of Genesis 1 – 11 for the entrance of Abraham into God's redemptive plan and examines the nature and scope of the Abrahamic covenant and the promise of land. Chapters 4–5 look at the progress and fulfilment(s) of God's promise of land throughout Israel's history. Chapter 6 examines the loss of land in exile and the prophetic anticipation of an international and universal restoration brought through a new covenant, which advances God's cosmological

<sup>62</sup> See e.g. Grenz and Franke 2001.

<sup>63</sup> See e.g. Feinberg 2001: 37–80; Frame 1987.

<sup>64</sup> See e.g. Beale 2008; Carson and Woodbridge 1986; Woodbridge 1982; Lillback and Gaffin 2013; Frame 2010. This assumption includes the conviction that Scripture is a coherent and established canon composed of sixty-six books, which should be understood 'as a collection of historical texts written over a long period of time, utilizing different literary forms and manifesting diverse perspectives, and as the word of God who spoke and continues to speak through its books' (Schnabel 2000: 36).

<sup>65</sup> See e.g. Ward 2009; Vanhoozer 1998; Goldsworthy 2006; Adam 2008; Carson and Woodbridge 1992; Schnabel 2000.

<sup>66</sup> See e.g. Carson 2000; Rosner 2000.

<sup>67</sup> See e.g. Blomberg 2000: 64–72; Carson 1992: 65–95.

plan from Adam through Abraham, and is cast in terms of an Edenic land, city and temple – all of which are coextensive. These chapters demonstrate, then, that the land is a type of something greater that will come through Abraham's seed and a Davidic son, who will triumphantly bring God's new covenant people into a new creation.

Chapters 7–9 examine the most relevant passages in the New Testament from the Gospels (ch. 6), the epistles (ch. 7) and Revelation (ch. 8). These chapters demonstrate that the land promised to Abraham will finally be in the (physical) new heaven and earth won by Christ. Now, however, the fulfilment is primarily focused on Christ, who has inaugurated a new creational kingdom through his physical resurrection and has made new creations out of those united with him. This united people – both Jew and Gentile – live between the inauguration and consummation of the kingdom, and anticipate the final fulfilment in the new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21 – 22).

Chapter 10 concludes the study by making theological connections and applying the interpretative findings of the previous chapters to theological systems. More specifically, the chapter evaluates how the land promise is interpreted and fulfilled in the theological systems of dispensationalism and covenant theology. In the end, the chapter provides a *via media* in the light of the arguments presented throughout the book.