

Article

Leviticus 25—Towards a Common Home and an Integral Ecology

Marta García Fernández 

Departamento de Sagrada Escritura, Pontificia Universidad Comillas, 28108 Madrid, Spain; mgafernandez@comillas.edu

Abstract: This article aims to show the great potential of the biblical text of the Jubilee (Lev 25:8–22) from a socio-environmental interpretation. To do so, it uses two hermeneutical keys taken from the encyclical *Laudato Si'*: the common home and integral ecology. As a preamble, this essay dedicates the first section to reinforcing the importance and the wisdom of the metaphor of the home—an image of creation that goes back to antiquity. In the next two sections, it reads the text from the perspective of these two great concepts. With regard to the common home, it starts from the premise that for creation to be a common home, it is necessary for each human being to enjoy a space. From there, it studies how the text of Lev 25 manages the necessary relationship between private property and the universal destination of goods. The second section addresses the need to legislate not only for behavior but for effective and comprehensive conversion. And it shows the mechanisms that the text of Lev 25 uses to achieve this.

Keywords: Jubilee; Leviticus 25; common home; integral ecology; ecological conversion; inalienability of the earth; universal destination of goods



Citation: García Fernández, Marta. 2023. Leviticus 25—Towards a Common Home and an Integral Ecology. *Religions* 14: 1501. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14121501>

Academic Editors: Maria Isabel Pereira Varanda and Franz Gassner

Received: 8 October 2023

Revised: 23 November 2023

Accepted: 28 November 2023

Published: 4 December 2023



Copyright: © 2023 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

Since 1967, a heavy accusation has been hanging over the Bible. Lynn White blames it for having precipitated humanity into a voracious and predatory anthropocentrism towards nature (White 1967, pp. 1203–7).¹ Today, this hypothesis does not hold, as the multifactorial nature of the environmental crisis cannot be attributed to a single cause (Tatay 2018, pp. 381–84). However, the apologetic deployment to refute White's thesis has resulted in a revision of the theological heritage locked in the Scriptures about creation.

Certainly, the world that surrounded our ancestors—the worldview, the questions or concerns they had—is far removed from our reality. And it is not an easy task, nor is it obvious, to sketch from the biblical texts an answer that illuminates the complex issues raised by the current situation marked by climate change, the loss of biodiversity and the depletion of natural resources. However, a considerable number of exegetes argue that an exercise in ecological hermeneutics is possible for some biblical passages (Marlow 2009, p. 245).

In my opinion, the aspect to which exegesis can contribute most falls on a point that is currently in great demand: the need to forge a spirituality (Boff 1996, pp. 235–52; Panikkar 2021, pp. 35–37). Hans Jonas was a pioneer in raising his voice on the great moral challenge posed by the destructive power of technology (Jonas 1984). The crudeness of the methods used in the Second World War and the nuclear holocaust of Hiroshima and Nagasaki testify to this. In the face of the entropic acceleration to which we have subjected creation, this thinker argues that it is not enough to develop a heuristic of fear. Nor is it enough to find technical solutions to get us out of this quagmire. What is needed is a radical paradigm shift in the way humans inhabit this earth (Tatay 2018, p. 234).

Many thinkers and scientists now agree that achieving the desired goal of “sustainability” is insufficient in the long-term. It is essential to rediscover the value that creation

has in itself and, consequently, to eradicate the utilitarian style of relating to it and transform it into an ethical model based on gratuity as its main pillar. In this sense, religions become indispensable allies in perpetuating over time the values and behaviors required for a genuine “ecological conversion”. Religious motivation is a powerful driving force for lasting change. This is why religions have been called into the great areopagus of the sciences and why the ecological question has become an ecumenical locus.

Scripture can certainly contribute to generate a heuristic of gratitude, but it can also nourish and enrich the concept of “integral ecology” (cf. LS 62–100). Indeed, ancient societies—like some indigenous populations today—lived in deep solidarity with creation. While today’s dyslexic vision leads us to repeatedly point out the deep unity between ecology, ethics and religious experience, in Scripture it is taken for granted, perceived as obvious and lived as a matter of course. In other words, God, neighbor and creation are interconnected realities. This triad is inseparable in the religious experience of the Bible. While some texts explicitly recognize that “we cannot love God whom we do not see unless we love the brother whom we see” (cf. 1Jn 4:20), we could just as legitimately argue that the relationship we have with creation affects our relationship with God and with our brother.

The concept of “integral ecology” from a biblical perspective would imply the stitching together of these three realities. However, the expression “integral ecology” emphasizes one of the two aspects of ecology, without disassociating it from the other two. For we have left this aspect of creation unattended, as if the way we relate to creation does not affect our neighbor or is a foreign aspect of the experience of God. Hence, concepts such as “ecological sin” or “ecological conversion” have been coined with the clear intention of showing that what we do to nature has to do with the spiritual and fraternal sphere.

It is from this perspective that I approach the text of the Jubilee (Lev 25:8–22). While the first part of Leviticus (Lev 1–16) is traditionally attributed to priestly source P (*Priester*), this second part differs from the previous one and claims a different source called H (*Heiligkeitsgesetz*). Some exegetes date its composition to pre-exilic times on the grounds that Lev 17–26 contains denunciations like those of the eighth-century prophets. On the other hand, other scholars consider that Lev 17–26 is written as a post-exilic complement to Lev 1–16. However, despite this difficulty of dating, and even though the book of Leviticus contains ancient material, it is generally agreed that the date of its final composition is late and corresponds to the post-exilic period. Specifically, it dates to the Persian period of the restoration of the Second Temple around 515 B.C.

The reasons for choosing this date are that all the religious symbolism that Leviticus deploys points to the need to mark the boundary between the faithful and the unfaithful Israelite. The new Temple inaugurates a new way of relating to God, which the book endeavors to outline through a detailed system of prescriptions and rules covering both worship and social life, but also creation, because, among other reasons, the Babylonian invasion had devastated the land and provoked an “ecological crisis” condensed in the metaphor of the desert, the steppe, or the wasteland. A situation which, moreover, is read in a theological key, since according to the cosmogony of Gen 2, the desert is equivalent to the chaos of Gen 1 (cf. Jer 4:23).

The book of Leviticus presupposes the construction of the Tabernacle, which is nothing other than a Temple in the desert (de León Azcárate 2006, p. 20). Thus, and from the point of view of the priestly narrative, the culmination of the work of creation (cf. Gen 1:1–2:4a) ends with the construction of the Tabernacle (cf. Ex 25–31; 35–40). The repeated call to holiness—theologically founded on the fact that God is holy (cf. Lev 11:44–45; 19:2; 20:7.26)—“among other things, implies a rigorous respect for the order established in creation, for its limits and categories, as recounted in Gen 1” (de León Azcárate 2006, p. 29). Therefore, it could be said that the concept of holiness correlates with that of integral ecology.

It is from this hermeneutical perspective that I would like to approach the reading of the text of Lev 25:8–22, since the text of the Jubilee has generally been approached from a more social perspective. However, the text of the Jubilee has generally been approached

from a more social point of view; *Tertio milenio adveniente* (1994) already linked the tradition of the Jubilee year with the fact of establishing limits in the use of creation. On the one hand, the apostolic letter placed the practice of the Jubilee in its traditional locus, the socio-economic sphere (TMA 13). On the other hand, it offered a new rereading of this passage in an environmental key (TMA 6). This idea has been echoed by John Hart, who considers Leviticus 25 to be central to the development of an ecological ethic (Hart 2006, pp. 181–98). In a way, LS 71 also endorses this sentiment in that it points out that the land is a gift. In this essay, I would like to build on this thesis and go a step further by showing in what sense the text of the Jubilee year contains the metaphor of the “common home” and how its life proposal and vision are perfectly aligned with an “integral ecology”.

To construct the argument, the first step I will take will be to offer some considerations regarding the metaphor of the common home. The next two sections will focus on the passage from Lev 25, which I will interrogate from the perspective of the current problematic. In the first section, we start from the following premise: for creation to be our common home, it is necessary that every human being enjoys a plot of land. Then, the right to private property is necessarily intertwined with the universal destination of goods. We will illustrate how Lev 25 manages this articulation. The second section deals with the problem of how to legislate an effective switchover. The current climate emergency has placed humanity on the unavoidable precipice of having to act. However, it is not enough to find technical solutions. A paradigm shift is needed in the way we relate to creation. That is, an integral ecology. The text of the Jubilee year is inspiring in this respect.

2. Some Considerations on the Metaphor of the “Common Home” in Relation to the Concept of “Integral Ecology”

The full subtitle of the Encyclical *Laudato Si'* is “On Care for the Common Home”. The expression “Common Home” is not new in the magisterial or theological field. In documents of different kinds, the idea of the earth as a home already appeared sporadically (Tatay 2018, p. 77).² It was in 2007 that the *Aparecida Document*—with Jorge Bergoglio as chairman of the drafting committee—defined creation as “our common home” (cf. DA 125). Also in 2012, the Bolivian Bishops’ Conference in the pastoral letter, *El universo don de Dios* (UDDV), used the terminology “common home” on several occasions (cf. UDDV 3, 5, 11, 91). And from then on, it would be a common term in the pontificate of Francis.³

The earth understood as “home” has its roots in Mesopotamia. Subsequently, this cultural legacy is poured into the Bible (Keel 2007, pp. 15–57; Roitman 2016, pp. 17–27). Creation is seen as a great Temple which God and humanity cohabit (cf. Gen 1–2). Moreover, in the earliest theogonies, some gods inhabited our world, but over the centuries their dwelling place moved to heaven, while the earth became the proper habitat of human beings (Horowitz 2011, pp. 250–52)⁴. Psalm 115 states: “Heaven belongs to God, and the earth he has given to man” (Ps 115:16). And the rabbinic tradition completes: “that they may make it a heaven”. The ancient texts show how between heaven and earth there is continual interference. For the gods have their homes in temples. But, in addition, heaven is an active and decisive reality in the world since the earthly organization comes from the celestial sphere (García Fernández 2018, pp. 47–48). Therefore, ecology is theocentric.

But before I dwell on how the metaphor of the common home is closely related to the concept of integral ecology, I would like to briefly underline the importance of the use of a metaphor also in the religious imaginary. Lakoff’s studies show that metaphor is not simply a literary figure but the *modus operandi* by which our reasoning proceeds (Lakoff and Johnson 1981). Therefore, it could be said that our way of thinking is metaphorical. But, furthermore, metaphor is not only the end product of transposing one term by another through an operation by which the term of comparison remains hidden, but the new way in which a concept is represented subsequently influences the way we perceive it and relate to it. It can even generate affection or disaffection.

Our everyday language is full of metaphors. For example, in Spanish there is the expression “cargar con la responsabilidad” (bear the responsibility). The locution denotes

that responsibility is conceived as a burden. One could say that the expression is the product of a metaphORIZATION. But not only, for this understanding predisposes one to feel responsibility as a burden. Therefore, a metaphor has the power to suggest, albeit unconsciously. Hence, its importance. For this reason, the earth as a “common home” not only condenses and makes visible the approach of the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, but also predisposes us to relate to and feel creation as our home. Hence, its wisdom, its strength, and its relevance.

But, in addition, the metaphor of the common home has the capacity to interrelate the three elements which, from a biblical perspective, are inseparably linked in the conception of integral ecology: God, human beings and creation. For in the two creation stories (Gen 1,1–2,4a and Gen 2,4b–25), creation is visualized as a great Temple where everything refers to God (cf. LS 73–86). In this sense, the reality is sacramental. Creation, in addition to containing a message from God (cf. Ps 19), is also the place through which one gains access to the knowledge of the divinity (cf. Rom 1:19). The Bible's demythologizing of the Mesopotamian material does not amount to desacralizing creation (Flecha 2008, p. 171). For Scripture, creation has a value in itself that demands to be respected. The Bible also emphasizes the interdependence of humankind with all creation (cf. LS 89–92).

In fact, sin against God or against other human beings undoes creation, for everything returns to the pre-cosmos state. That is, to formless chaos (cf. Jer 4:23; also, Gen 6–9) or to the desert-steppe (cf. Jer 4:26; 22:6). And the reverse is also true, for in the biblical soteriological vision, creation participates in salvation. Thus, Second Isaiah presents the trees applauding, nature singing and praising God for the return of the exiles (cf. Is 42:10–12; 44:23; 49:13). That is, participating in the celebration of Israel's salvation, as the letter to the Romans will affirm: creation is in expectation and groans in travail, waiting for the manifestation of the Sons of God (cf. Rom 8:19). In other words, there is a harmony between God, human being and creation due to the profound interrelation and communion between them (cf. LS 84–88).

In this sense, creation is not a mere stage but a living organism, an interconnected whole. O. Keel observed that when we read the ancient texts, our modern representations make the mistake of depicting the earth as a kind of platform on which life takes place (Keel 2007, p. 57). However, the iconography left to us by the Ancient Middle East shows a very different worldview. In fact, the intention of these drawings is not to represent the world, but to explain it, for example, in the New Kingdom papyrus (1570–1085 B.C.) preserved in the Louvre. The world is a living organism in continuous interaction. On the goddess Nut—crowned with stars—travels the boat of the dead with the sun god (Ra) at the helm. On the other side awaits Geb—the earth god—with open arms to receive this boat. For the dead, they will follow the same path as the sun. That is, to fight all night with the world of darkness to wake up the next day and sail across the sky. In this sense, cosmogony and eschatology are intimately connected. Moreover, eschatology is already present and active in creation.

On the one hand, it could be said that the metaphor of the body as opposed to that of the home has its advantages. Indeed, it prevents the earth from being understood simply as the lifeless and lifeless stage on which human life takes place. And, consequently, it cautions against engaging in a purely utilitarian or mechanistic relationship. And, on the other hand, from a more feminist point of view, the abandonment of the myth of the earth as mother goddess, forged in the Palaeolithic, and supplanted by that of warrior gods, will introduce into the history of religions an element of domination that will be transferred to the relationship with creation.⁵

Possibly in order not to fall into a kind of pantheism or biocentrism (LS 118)—that is, to understand the world as an undifferentiated biotic unity—the encyclical *Laudato Si'* prefers to use the metaphor of the home. Nevertheless, it upholds the imaginary of the earth-body because it is more vivid and plastic. Thus, for example, it speaks of the wounds of the earth (LS 6), of its cry (LS 117) or of its voice (LS 85). Moreover, evoking in the first point the canticle of the creatures of Francis of Assisi, he offers a precious key, for the earth

receives special treatment. She is a sister like all other creatures, but she is also a mother: *sister and mother earth* (LS 1). In this way, *Laudato Si'* recovers the vivacity brought by the metaphor of the body and completes the metaphor of the home by enriching it with the imaginary of a living organism in continuous dynamism and interrelation.

Creation is a common home where God, man and all creation cohabit. As soon as God accepts to dwell on earth, the Temple becomes the model for a harmonious home. Ecology is, therefore, ordered from a theocentric principle, as is the mission of the human being. If the earth is not just a home but a common home, human beings cannot live as tourists or exploiters but as co-responsible inhabitants with others in the care of creation. Ecology, experience of God and the social sphere are thus welded together. And although the concept of integral ecology is richer, the fundamental skeleton of the Christian understanding of this question is sketched out. That is, the profound unity between the ecological problem and the social and spiritual dimensions. This welding that *Laudato Si'* brings about means that ecology is not disjointed from the Social Doctrine of the Church, but rather, on the contrary, it is poured over it and enriches all previous reflection (Tatay 2018, p. 417).⁶

3. Inalienability of Land and Universal Destination of Goods—Towards a Common Home

The emerging Social Doctrine of the Church inaugurated by the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891), among other things, addressed the question of private property (cf. RN 4–11; 16; 33). Faced with the two great blocs divided by adherence to either capitalism or communism, the papal magisterium defends the right to private property and seeks to outline a balanced articulation between the private good and the common good.⁷ But, as the century progresses and the effects of globalization take their toll on the planet, the Social Doctrine is forced to examine in depth how to articulate the right to private property with the universal destination of goods.⁸ For a free and voracious market is not only destroying the earth's stock, but is also causing poverty and misery for three quarters of the planet.

In a very different context, Scripture also has to address this issue. Its approach is based on the following reasoning: for the earth to be a “common home”, all beings need to have a place on it. Therefore, the Bible protects the right of every nation to enjoy a territory. According to Deuteronomy, God draws the borders of the nations and assigns each nation a place (cf. Deut. 32:8). A replica of the international level is found on the national level when it comes to settling in the Promised Land. In fact, each of the twelve tribes is given a portion (cf. Jos 13–21). And within this descending scale, the text of Leviticus 25 presupposes that each Israelite is given a plot of land in Israel to develop and develop his existence (cf. Lev 25:20).

Internationally, the imperialist model threatens to unbalance the system. Either through military invasion or through commercial or cultural deployment, some nations will extend their borders. The history of the fertile crescent is nothing but a succession of powers handing over the baton (Cogan 1993, pp. 403–14; Otzen; Eisenstadt 1979; Cogan 1974). For imperialism tends to suppress borders by imposing political, economic and cultural unification (Liverani 1994, pp. 43–49). To this end, invading nations justify their actions by developing official propaganda that, in a sense, endorses their aggressive policy (Liverani 1979, pp. 297–317; Mason 1997). The problem in putting an end to imperialism and implementing a world order was not unlike our own: the absence of a higher body to arbitrate relations between countries.

In the national context, the threat that Israel will have to face is latifundism. This expansionist project is viewed critically in the prophetic literature (Sicre 1985, pp. 253–70). The text of Isaiah 5:8 caricatures its *modus operandi* in a lapidary phrase: “woe to those who add house to house and join field to field, until they have no room and live alone in the midst of the land”. And Mi 2,1–2 delves into the internal origin of this dynamism: the irrepressible greed born of an uncontrolled and unsatisfied desire. In fact, not setting limits to desire will result in a violent way of dwelling that is leaving its mark on the planet

(cf. Wis 2:1–10).—“Contrary to what some have claimed, it is not the mass of poor people that destroys the planet, but the consumption of the rich” (Shellnhuber 2015, p. 2).

The Decalogue, aware of this, carries out an unprecedented operation in the tenth commandment (cf. Ex 20:17; Dt 5:21). For it takes up the prescriptions of the second table, but from the key of desire. And in doing so, it not only forbids adultery or stealing, but also vetoes lusting after one’s neighbor’s wife or his property. In this sense, it legislates the unlawful. For a law must restrict itself to behavior—for that is what is objectifiable—but it cannot interfere in the realm of willing. This fact shows, first, that the Bible is aware that it is not enough to regulate behavior. Regulation must touch the interior. Secondly, desire cannot become a right or the guiding principle of existence. What is normative is the other and his right to live.

This is the key to understanding all the biblical prophetism that denounces the legality that hides beneath injustice. For, since the brother is the ultimate horizon of the Decalogue, justice is not understood in relation to a law—this would be legality—but in relation to another person (von Rad 1962, pp. 382–83). Therefore, the face of the neighbor is what calls into question the way of possessing, of spending, of living on this earth. For, even if it is legal, it may be neither just nor ethical. And this same tendency is observed in the Holiness Code of Leviticus (Lev 17–26) and particularly in the text of the Jubilee year (Lev 25:8–22). For the concept of holiness is not static but dynamic (cf. de León Azcárate 2006, p. 30) and, therefore, it is based not on reproducing external behaviors but on assimilating ethical principles that will guide the choice.

However, the OT, as just another good, does not consider land; not even as real estate. In an agricultural society, land is necessarily a productive asset. But, moreover, in Israel, it is linked to the promise of Abraham and, therefore, it is a sign of belonging to the chosen people. Thus, the maneuver of economic expansion that Is 5:8 criticizes—joining house to house and field to field—leads to what the text itself formulates: “leave no room and live alone in the midst of the land”. In other words, taking away property makes these Israelites the only residents with the capacity to exercise their right in full, in the face of the rest who are impoverished and destitute. The control of the means of production and the accumulation of goods irremediably causes only a few to be able to live, while entire families are destined to precariousness and future generations are born mortgaged and indebted (Sicre 1985, p. 254).⁹ But Isaiah’s denunciation does not only condemn the structural poverty to which a part of society is subjected, but also the fact that his own brothers and sisters are turned into foreigners. That is, people who do not belong to the people of Israel. And, therefore, the greed of land grabbing breaks the brotherhood.

To extirpate this social scourge and put a stop to the exorbitant expansionist desire, the OT has a regulation that vetoes “extending” the confines of property (cf. Dt 19:14; 27:17; Hos 5:10). But its main weapon will be the inalienability of the land. For guaranteeing its possession was tantamount to guaranteeing the right to exist and to live in dignity. The legislation prescribed in Lev 25 on the Jubilee is categorical in this respect, since it forbids the sale of the property of the fathers (cf. 1Ki 21:3). And to justify this, the text of Lev 25:23 performs a surprising operation, arguing that God is the owner of the land (Ollenburger 2001, pp. 108–34). Then, the owner is stripped of the total possession of the land to make him its owner forever (Alfaro 1978, pp. 51–61). In this way, God becomes the guarantor of fraternity.

However, the law is realistic and, although it prevents selling, it does not prohibit buying. For it is aware that sometimes the inheritance has to be given up in order to undertake a loan. Even so, the law preserves the right of “redemption” (cf. Lev 25:25–33) (Neufeld 1961, pp. 29–40). And in the event of persistent financial insolvency, the law of the Jubilee year obliges the original owner to return it to the original owner every fifty years (cf. Lev 25:13). In other words, the new owner is obliged to renounce his contractual right so that his brother can live and develop. As was tacitly stated in the tenth commandment of the Decalogue, the normative is fraternity.

Therefore, the ultimate horizon and criterion is the brother's life and not the economic one. In this way, the right to private property—even legally acquired—does not only come up against the limit of the common good. That is, private property is given up for the sake of the common good. It is about something more. The value of human life in itself, its right to exist in dignity, is above the right to private property. God becomes the guarantor, but so does the earth. In fact, it could be said that the inalienability of the earth stems from its character as a "mother". This unique bond makes it the protector of our existence. For even if fraternity is undermined by greed, the right to the universal destination of goods is embedded in the fact that the earth is the mother of all. It is, therefore, "our common home" and, consequently, she also claims this right for all her children.

It is no coincidence that the text of Lev 25 connects the fruitfulness of the land to the fulfilment of this law: "keep my laws and observe my commandments and do them, and you shall dwell in the land in peace. The land will yield its fruit, you will eat your fill and dwell in peace" (cf. Lev 25:18–19). Later the Gospel will urge us not to worry about what we will eat or drink, but to seek the Kingdom and its righteousness and everything else will follow (cf. Mt 6:31–33). Similarly, when faced with the question posed in Lev 25:20—"If you ask yourselves, 'What shall we eat in the seventh year? We have not sown, and we have not reaped the harvest'"—is answered with the same logic, thus showing an understanding of integral ecology in which the earth and human brotherhood are not two separate entities. In a certain sense, its character as "sister and mother earth" underpins the right of every human being to own a space and to exist with dignity on it.

Therefore, it is not a simple economic measure or a redistribution of land, but rather the return of the plot of land to its original owner and, with this, fraternity is signified. That is, the inalienable right to enjoy a property. To have a place in this world where one can live. To have the means of production to be able to support one's own family and to develop as a community of life. Consequently, what the inalienability of land claims is the universal destination of property (cf. LS 93–95). The seizure of the means of production and their accumulation in the hands of a few makes it impossible for millions of human beings to enjoy decent living conditions. By making land an inalienable good, what the Leviticus passage defends is the inalienability of the right to live in dignity and to enjoy a space on this planet. For only in this way can the world be a "common home".

The current situation is certainly very different from the one reflected in Lev 25. However, the principles it puts forward are highly topical in relation to the prevailing neo-colonialism resulting from the monopolization of the means of production by large multinationals or the infamous plundering of the earth, as is reflected in the profound analysis of LS 17–61. But the concept of inalienability could also be "extended" to the issue of global deforestation and the loss of biodiversity (LS 145).

In the context of an international biblical congress, organized by the ABE (Spanish Biblical Association) in 2023, a theologian who had lived for a long period of time in indigenous populations related the following experience¹⁰. One day they needed a coconut to cook with and a local man offered to climb a palm tree. But when he got to the top, he found a snake and came down without the fruit. When he came down, he explained that he had spoken to it and had told it that today he would let it enjoy the place, as it had been there before, but that tomorrow he would need it to let him take the coconut so that he could eat.

Beyond the anecdote, the way of reasoning responds to a conception where the land is a common and shared home. Therefore, the habitat of other living beings must be respected. In this sense, I would point out that the concept of inalienability is still relevant today, because it is not only limited to the sphere of private property, but the universal destination of goods calls for a generous open-mindedness towards human beings, but also towards creation. Everything is interrelated and humanity is an interdependent being called to respect and care for all life as a gift from God.

4. Legislating an “Ecological Conversion” for a Common Home—Towards an Integral Ecology

The premise of this world being a common home is that everyone has a place in it. The inalienability of the land is the formula found in Leviticus 25 to guarantee the universal destination of goods. But there is still another major stumbling block to be faced: legislating an ecological conversion. On the one hand, the “ethical imperative to act” is emerging at the global level (Tatay 2018, p. 309).¹¹ That is, to implement actions that guarantee the equitable use of universal goods and put a stop to the infamous plundering of the earth. On the other hand, in our personal sphere, it is urgent to re-educate ourselves to adopt a more sober lifestyle in accordance with solidarity towards the entire human race and the other beings that inhabit the earth (Tatay 2018, pp. 509–14).¹² That is, an integral ecology.

About the former, there are innumerable problems encountered by the agreements reached at the major international summits and conferences such as those of Stockholm 1972, Rio 1992, Johannesburg 2002 and Rio 2020. Most nations believe that action must be taken to halt environmental degradation, climate change, resource depletion and biodiversity loss. But when it comes to making and then abiding by agreements, it is much more complex (Olabe 2022, pp. 107–201). For there is resistance to compromise for the universal good, as most measures clash with the economic interests of individual countries or large multinationals. In the absence of a neutral world body with the real capacity to enforce what has been agreed, it is enough for one nation to break what has been agreed for the domino effect to be triggered. Moreover, being a large-scale problem, it is inoperative for only a few to comply to reverse the situation. A joint effort by all is required.

The international effort must be matched by personal commitment. Large-scale measures will be ineffective if we do not transform our consumption style. We must unlearn and change the lifestyle habits to which our welfare society has accustomed us and which, moreover, we have introjected as a right. For, if we continue like this, in a few years the existence on our planet will not be sustainable. However, implementing a *heuristic of fear* is not the solution either (Tatay 2018, p. 234). A relational paradigm shift is needed in our way of inhabiting the earth. That is, an integral “ecological conversion” rooted in a spirituality of gratuitousness and humility. As the tenth commandment of the Decalogue already showed, a change in behavior does not in itself guarantee a change in attitudes. This is why regulations must aim at more than just regulating actions; they must trigger a *heuristic of gratitude*.

What light does the text of Leviticus 25 shed on this question? The passage inquires into a higher, transcendent value on which to base the regulations of the Jubilee year. Clearly, the biblical vision is theocentric and, in this sense, in Lev 25:23–25, God guarantees the inalienability of the land by affirming that it is his. But in the case of not professing the same religion and, therefore, not recognizing the legitimacy of the same God, the passage offers us guidelines to get out of the logic of one’s own right (Tatay 2018, p. 251).¹³ That is, the prescriptions promulgated on fraternity and land imply that both realities have a value in themselves and should be above a purely economic criterion (Tatay 2018, p. 217).¹⁴

In the Ancient Middle East, the practice of land redistribution was not unknown (Sollberger 1966, pp. 253–70). In fact, we have texts in which a sovereign orders its remission (Pritchard 2011, pp. 183–87).¹⁵ It was a decree “establishing land equity” (Finkelstein 1965, pp. 234–46) and its effects were threefold: cancellation of taxes, exoneration of debt and introduction of social and economic reforms (Westbrook 1991, pp. 45–46; de León Azcárate 2006, p. 297). Possibly to gain the benevolence of the population and to avoid riots caused by inequality between rich and poor, some monarchs practiced redistribution of property, especially at the beginning of their reign. Similarly, following was a common practice aimed at improving land yields (Zeder 2011, pp. 221–35).

However, although the biblical legislation takes on board these practices from the Ancient Middle East, it inserts them into its spirituality and, in so doing, removes them from its economic horizon. Firstly, the Jubilee is not simply a redistribution of land but the return of land to the original owner. Second, this practice is not left to the king’s discretion,

but is scheduled to take place every fifty years, regardless of whether this measure brings the monarch any political gain (Westbrook 1991, pp. 48–49). And thirdly, in the interest of the brother's life, the one who has legally acquired the property is urged to renounce the contractual right. Therefore, fraternity is established as a value in itself—a value that is above personal rights.

The same consideration applies to the land. Although the Decalogue's regulations on the Sabbath (cf. Ex 20:8–11; Dt 5:12–15) do not explicitly legislate rest from the land, they presuppose it insofar as in an agricultural society the cessation of labor implied the suspension of agricultural work (Castro Lodeiro 2020, p. 259). On the other hand, in the Sabbath provisions of Ex 23:12, as well as in the Sabbath year (cf. Ex 23:10–11; Lev 25:2–7) and the Jubilee year (cf. Lev 25:8–17), the right to rest from the land is contemplated. In addition, this fact shows that the land is given a value in itself. Firstly, because it is made the subject of this right. Secondly, because it is free of charge rather than a merely economic criterion. In other words, the aim of fallowing is not to increase productivity but to heal our labor and fraternal relations.

In fact, to the four verbs with which the creation narratives synthesize the mission of the human being—“dominate” (רדה) and “subdue” (כבש), according to the Gn 1 account, and “till/serve” (עבד) and “tend” (שמר), according to the Gen 2 account—we should add a fifth one: “cease” (שבח). The literal meaning of this verb in the *hyphil* causative conjugation is “to cause to cease” or “to allow to rest”. However, it is translated: “to bring to an end” (Stolz 1978, pp. 1083–85). And, in my opinion, this semantic oscillation would show that “to let creation rest” is a form of “to bring it to completion”. Or, in other words, that human beings develop the world not only by working but also by allowing it to rest. Gratuity is an indispensable element for the created and the other to reach their ultimate meaning and to develop fully.

This interpretation would be more in keeping with the real meaning of the verbs “dominate” (רדה) and “subdue” (כבש), the misunderstanding of which, in the opinion of some, has been the cause of a haughty and unbridled anthropocentrism. Both verbs are not very common in the Bible. For this reason, to clarify their meaning, recourse is had to the Semitic languages. For the verb “to subdue” (כבש), there is an Assyrian formula (*ana urdūti kabāsu*) which means “to put under the yoke”. However, it is a non-violent “to subjugate”. The same is true of “to subdue” (רדה), which finds in Akkadian similar expressions and with the same meaning as the previous verb. That is, to help vocational development (Castro Lodeiro 2020, p. 162).¹⁶

Just as the demystification effected by Genesis is not equivalent to a desacralization of creation, neither is its anthropocentrism to be understood in terms of a despotic dominion, but rather in terms of service and within a theocentric anthropology (Moltmann 2015, pp. 29–30).¹⁷ Certainly, the human being is entrusted with a special mission analogous to that of God: to develop vocationally, to bring creation to completion. This is understood in this way because, according to Gen 2:5–6, the earth was waiting for him, and centuries later in the letter to the Romans, Paul will offer a rereading of this idea: creation is in expectation and groans in travail, waiting for the manifestation of the Sons of God (cf. Rom 8:19). Now, precisely because human beings are placed in creation as a kind of “substitute for God” to develop their potentiality, they must follow the same pattern of gratuitousness with which God relates to them. The fact that God rests on the seventh day and contemplates his work is not trivial (cf. Gen 1:30–2:3), for it is an indication that God does not enter into a utilitarian relationship with either creation or human beings. For this reason, the motivation given in the Decalogue for not working on the Sabbath is that God rested on the seventh day (cf. Ex 20:11).

However, there is something ascetic about this rest for the human being. An indication of this is that the regulations on the Sabbath (cf. Ex 20:8–11; 23:12; Dt 5:12–15), the Sabbath year (cf. Ex 23:10–11; Lev 25:2–7; Dt 5:1–11) and the Jubilee year (cf. Lev 25:8–22) impose it as an obligation and do not formulate it as a right.¹⁸ Moreover, in the book of Leviticus, these pericopes are inserted as a colophon of the Holiness code (cf. Lev 17–26)

(de León Azcárate 2006, p. 292; Maged 2018). But in addition, the beginning of the Jubilee is made to coincide with the Day of Atonement (Lev 25:8–9) (Kim 2010, pp. 147–51). The Jubilee year is, therefore, experienced in the context of a conversion towards God, which ultimately refers to a conversion towards the earth and towards one's brother. For in the Bible, God, neighbor and creation are inseparable. And in this sense, we find ourselves before the germ of what we will later call "integral ecology", inserted, moreover, in a powerful spiritual current that runs through the whole of the OT and the NT.

If we dispense with the complex diachronic question (Bergsma 2007),¹⁹ and put in synopsis the regulations governing rest, we observe a crescendo of commitment to the brother and to the land from the law regulating the Sabbath to that of the Jubilee year. To argue this, I offer three points. The first is that there is a gradual loss of prominence of the Israelite in question. Thus, while in the Sabbath laws he is explicitly obliged to rest and to let the rest of those involved in the work rest (cf. Ex 20:8–11; 23:12; Dt 5:12–15), in the regulations on the Sabbath year and the Jubilee year, he is not obliged to rest. It is only indicated that he should let the land rest, neither sowing nor harvesting (cf. Ex 23:10–11; Lv 25:2–7,11–13), and his brother should forgive his loan or restore his property (cf. Lv 25:10; Dt 5:1–11). This loss of protagonism is indicative of a decentralization of one's own right to the right of others.

The second annotation supports what has been said above, for from the Sabbath regulations to the Jubilee year, there is a crescendo of demands both in relation to the brother and to the land. With regard to the brother, from allowing him to rest on the Sabbath, we move on to forgiving his debt in the sabbatical year (cf. Deut 15:1–11) and, finally, to giving him back his property and freedom in the Jubilee year (cf. Lev 25:10). At first glance, one might think that these demands are disjointed, but a heuristic of gratuitousness runs through them. For the normative horizon is that the brother should live. Fraternity thus becomes a value that is above economic criteria and, therefore, cannot become a lucrative activity. Nor can it be used as a labor force or objectified by entering into a self-interested relationship with others. This increase in responsibility emerges from the consequences of placing fraternity above one's own rights.

In relation to the land, the progression is in the number of days it is allowed to rest. The Sabbath comprises one day, while the sabbatical comprises one year and the Jubilee may be two (North 2000, pp. 13–14).²⁰ Regardless of whether or not every forty-nine-year Jubilee overlaps with the sabbatical year, not working the land during that year implies living from providence and, therefore, at the expense of what the land offers. In this line, the rules favor the establishment of a relationship of gratuitousness insofar as the cause-effect dynamic is broken. For they will eat without working. Moreover, even if the land is left to rest, it will continue to produce to feed them.

Finally, it is to be noted that while in the Sabbath laws the land does not appear as a subject of law, in the provisions for the Jubilee year in Exodus and Leviticus, it alone is the subject of law (cf. Ex 23:10–11; Lev 25:2–7). Whereas in Deuteronomy, it is only the brother (cf. Deut 5:1–11). The rights of the land and of the brother converge in the regulations governing the Jubilee year (cf. Lev 25:8–13). At first glance, this last pericope might appear to be a juxtaposition which seeks to summarize the previous ones. On the contrary, the text draws a deep connection between earth and brother. In the first place, and as we have already indicated, the fruitfulness and blessing of the land depend on "fulfilling" the provisions given for the Jubilee year (cf. Lev 25:18–19). And, therefore, that property and freedom be restored to the brother (cf. Lev 25:10).

Secondly, for a less obvious but no less compelling reason, in both the sabbatical and the Jubilee year, all will be fed by the earth. Given the Scriptural significance of eating together and eating the same food, this action makes them equal and makes them brothers and sisters. What is more, it makes them all poor (cf. Ex 23:12), since in that year they will all live from the providence and gratuity of the earth. The mother earth becomes the guarantor of fraternity, insofar as in its exercise of nourishing, it does so equally to all. This non-distinction had already appeared in the regulations of the Sabbath. In fact, Ex

20:8–11 eliminates any hint of difference by gender (son-daughter; slave-slave), by rank or hierarchy (you and your children; sons and slaves), by nationality or citizenship (strangers) and even between human beings and animals. In this sense, the right to rest makes them equal and, in so doing, makes them brothers and sisters. In the regulations of the sabbatical and Jubilee year, letting oneself be nourished by the earth will be the action that makes them equal and makes them more fraternal.

This is an integral ecology, because the relationship with the brother refers to the land and the relationship with the land to the brother. But the intention of the regulations is not only restrictive, in the sense of preventing harmful behavior. Respecting the laws on rest is intended to do more than just heal relationships that we are quick to reify. We are taught to live from a heuristic of gratuitousness and gratitude as the only possible way for us to carry out the mission entrusted to us: to develop vocationally. Consequently, Leviticus 25 has the audacity to legislate a conversion.

In some ways, this effort is comparable to the effort to elaborate the Sustainable Development Goals, some of which the biblical text is perfectly aligned with (cf. ODS 1; 10; 12; 16). A challenge that is not easy, for such a change requires that it be materialized in concrete acts, while at the same time, it must aspire to go beyond regulating behavior. In other words, it aims to generate a system of attitudes and values that will also survive and be maintained over time. In this sense, it could be said that “a socio-environmental interpretation of the Jubilee shows great potential to stimulate a sapiential understanding of life and to rehabilitate the ecological virtues of contemplation, rest and care” (Tatay 2018, pp. 525–26).

5. Conclusions

The text of the Jubilee (cf. Lev 25:8–22) has unfolded its potential richness not only from the classical perspective with which it has generally been approached—that is, socio-economic—but also by offering precious keys to the development of an ecological ethic. In this sense, the biblical worldview, despite its remoteness in time, provides a crucial and very valid perspective in the current context of environmental crisis.

Secondly, the remission of land imposed by the Jubilee—due to the inalienable character of land and framed within a horizon of fraternity that takes precedence over economic criteria—has proved to be novel, as it satisfactorily articulates the interrelation between private property and the common good, as well as the universal destination of goods. But this same logic that the text applies to the human sphere could be extended to creation. That is, for the earth to be truly a “common home”, all beings deserve a space on it, and human beings, in their mission to vocationally develop this great gift, should ensure this task.

Finally, a common home requires a common set of rules and an authority with the capacity to enforce them. The text of Lv 25 is a vivid illustration of the ethical imperative to act urgently on the problems, and at the same time not to be satisfied with merely regulating behavior. In fact, in the Jubilee law there converges a powerful flow coming from a spirituality of gratuitousness which has fraternity as its horizon. And in this sense, the biblical legislation outlines a socio-environmental and integral conversion.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created or analyzed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

- 1 Cf. (White 1967). Another author who supports this idea is (Passmore 1978).
- 2 Thus, for example, John Paul II, in his speech to the participants in the “Meeting for friendship between peoples” (29-8-1982), speaks of the world as a home. Also, the Bishops of the Balearic Islands in Ecology and tourism in our islands. Guidelines for Christian Action (15-4-1990) call the earth “our natural home” or “the home of the community”. Also, cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church (2006) 461. Cf. (Tatay 2018, pp. 77, 120–21).
- 3 Cf. *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013, pp. 183, 209–16); *Laudato Si’* (2015, pp. 16,78, 90, 214); *Message on the day of prayer for the care of creation* (1-9-2016, p. 5).
- 4 Cf. KAR 307 32–33; *Exaltation of Ištar*, 18–19; LKA 23 rev. 8’-9’; BE 31 12 rev. 24–25; RA 32 181:14–15. (Horowitz 2011, pp. 250–52).
- 5 According to Anne Baring and Jules Cashford’s study, with the emergence of more warlike societies, the ancient goddess begins to personify the chaos that a masculine, celestial god must subdue. Tiamat’s death at the hands of Marduk at Enuma Eliš and her subsequent control is just a hint. Then, not only from an earth-goddess to a sky-god, but also from a male god—who at the beginning was her husband—to a goddess who will lose her prominence and become a consort who, moreover, must be dominated. Cf. (Baring and Cashford 2005, pp. 321–50).
- 6 “LS represents, therefore, a particular and new way of elaborating moral theology in the 21st century: an ethical reflection of a spiritual and interreligious nature, an exercise in public theology and a political advocacy effort. In this sense, LS would be inserted with its own voice in the global movement of environmental justice, as defined by Martínez-Alier. However, the reception and implementation of LS by the Catholic community, as well as its capacity to influence international forums of debate and national and international deliberation, will be the ultimate test of the credibility and operability of the integral ecology proposal”. Cf. (Tatay 2018, p. 417).
- 7 Cf. Juan XXIII, *Mater et Magistra* (1961, pp. 30, 108–11, 111); *Pacem in Terris* (1963, p. 21); Vaticano II, *Gaudium et Spes* (1965, p. 69).
- 8 Cf. Leon XIII, *Rerum Novarum* (1891, p. 55); Pio XI, *Quadragesimo anno* (1931, pp. 25, 43, 56); Juan XXIII, *Pacem in Terris* (1963, pp. 21–22); Vaticano II, *Gaudium et Spes* p. 69; Juan Pablo II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (1979, p. 42).
- 9 Micah 2:1–5, through a play on words, points out that by losing the “house” (in the sense of territory) a whole “inheritance” (in the sense of family) is mortgaged. Cf. (Sicre 1985, p. 254).
- 10 This is the communication by Professor Susana Vilas Boas, “Ecología misionera: puntos de vista para una teología pastoral arraigada en la realidad” (Madrid 4 July 2023). ABE, IV Congreso internacional. *Biblia y Ecología: nuevas lecturas en un mundo herido* (Madrid 4 a 6 de Julio de 2023). This professor also explained how indigenous communities do not generate waste and reuse materials. Pope Francis, in a message on December 2013, to the Federation of ‘Cartoneros’ and ‘Recicladores’ in Argentina, appreciated how they contribute to the ‘circulatory system’ and the effective care of our ‘Common Home’.
- 11 “The consequences of environmental changes, which are already being felt dramatically in many states, especially the Pacific island states, remind us of the seriousness of inaction and inaction. The time for global solutions is running out. We can only find adequate solutions if we act together and in concert. There is, therefore, a clear, definitive and unpostponable ethical imperative to act”. Francis, “Letter to the Prime Minister of Australia, Tony Abbott on the occasion of the G20 summit” (6-11-2014). Quoted in (Tatay 2018, p. 309).
- 12 On the importance of the local and ordinary life, cf. (Tatay 2018, pp. 509–14).
- 13 Benedict XVI noted the link between “the brutal consumption of creation” and the fact that “we do not recognise any need greater than our own” (cf. Benedict XVI, Meeting with the clergy of the diocese of Bolzano-Bressanone” (2008). Quoted in (Tatay 2018, p. 251).
- 14 “Matter is not only a material for our use, but the earth itself has its own dignity and we must follow its indications”. Benedict XVI, Address to the German Bundestag (22.9-2011). Quoted in (Tatay 2018, p. 217).
- 15 Among them is the edict of King Ammicaduqa which correlates the practice of the andurārum with the so-called mišarum. Cf. (Pritchard 2011, pp. 183–87).
- 16 In fact, the formula, ina ilki tuššikki redûm, which contains the verb redûm from which the biblical verb “to dominate” (הָרָה) derives, has the meaning of “to direct personal service and performance”. (Castro Lodeiro 2020, pp. 162, 234).
- 17 “In the perspective of the new way of reading the biblical accounts of creation, the human being comes to be seen as the last of the created beings and therefore the most dependent of all. The human race is the one that depends on the existence of animals, plants, air, water, light and the time of day and night, the sun, the moon and the stars in order to preserve its life on earth. Without these elements it cannot survive. The human being exists, in fact, because the other created beings also exist. All of them can exist without man, but man cannot exist without them. It is precisely for this reason that it is not correct to interpret the human being as if he were the divine dominator or the solitary gardener of nature. In spite of his special position and his special vocation, the human being is also one more creature in the great communion of created beings”. Cf. (Moltmann 2015, pp. 29–30).

- ¹⁸ Most texts formulate it in the negative as a prohibition: not to do any work (מעשה עשה לא; cf. Ex 20:10; Dt 5:13); not to sow (לא זרע), not to prune (לא זמר), not to reap (לא קצר), not to harvest (לא בצר) (cf. Lev 25:4–5.11). Except for Ex 23:10–12 where the obligation is formulated in the positive. Thus on the Sabbath they are to “rest” (שבו) in order to “give rest” (נוח) and grant a “respite” (נפש) to those involved in the task (cf. Ex 23:12), while in the sabbatical year they shall let the land “rest” (שמט) and “lie fallow” (נטש) (cf. Ex 23:10). The verb שמט will be used in Dt 15:1–11 for the remission of debt in the sabbatical year.
- ¹⁹ For a diachronically sequenced study of these texts, cf. (Bergsma 2007).
- ²⁰ For according to Lev 25:8 the jubilee is declared every seven for seven years. That is, forty-nine. Whereas according to Lev 25:10, in the fiftieth year. Therefore, one solution is to think of the forty-ninth year as the sabbatical year and the fiftieth year as the jubilee year. Then two years in a row without working the land. Another option is that the two years overlap in the forty-ninth year. There are passages in biblical (Dan 9:24) and extra-biblical literature (Book of Jubilees 4:29; 10:16; 11QT 18:12; 21:13–14) that would tip the balance towards the idea that it is a single year. However, on the basis of Philo of Alexandria (Laws 2287–2290) and Flavius Josephus (Antiquities III, pp. 281–82), there is no lack of those who maintain that these were two years in succession. On this question, cf. (North 2000, pp. 13–14; de León Azcárate 2006, pp. 295–96; Bergsma 2007, pp. 30–32, 85–96, 225–31, 233–94).

References

- Alfaro, Juan. 1978. The Land-Stewardship. *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 8: 51–61. [CrossRef]
- Baring, Anne, and Jules Cashford. 2005. *El mito de la diosa. Evolución de una imagen*. Madrid: Editorial Siruela.
- Bergsma, John Sietze. 2007. *The Jubilee from Leviticus to Qumran. A History of Interpretation*. Boston: Brill.
- Boff, Leonardo. 1996. *Ecología: Grito de la tierra, grito de los pobres*. Madrid: Editorial Trotta.
- Castro Lodeiro, José Antonio. 2020. *Venid y trabajad ¡Es tiempo de alabar! La vocación del hombre en los relatos de creación mesopotámicos y bíblicos*. Estella: Verbo Divino.
- Cogan, Mordechai. 1974. *Imperialism and Religion. Assyria, Judah and Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries B.C.E.*. Missoula: Society of Biblical Literature.
- Cogan, Mordechai. 1993. Judah under the Assyrian Hegemony: A Reexamination of Imperialism and Religion. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 112: 403–14. [CrossRef]
- de León Azcárate, Juan Luis. 2006. *Levítico*. Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwer.
- Eisenstadt, Shemuel Noah. 1979. Observations and Queries about Sociological Aspects of Imperialism in the Ancient World. In *Power and Propaganda. A Symposium on Ancient Empires*. Edited by Mogens Trolle Larsen. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, pp. 21–33.
- Finkelstein, Jacob Joel. 1965. Some New Misharum Material and its Implications. In *Studies in Honor of Benno Landberger on the Seventy-Fifth Birthday*. Edited by Hans Gustav Güterbock and Thorkild Jacobsen. Assyriological Studies 19. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 233–46.
- Flecha, José Roman. 2008. Escatología cristiana y ecología. *Corintios XIII* 125: 167–92.
- García Fernández, Marta. 2018. Los primeros viajes al cielo. Recorrido por el Medio Oriente Antiguo. In *El cielo. Historia y espiritualidad*. Edited by María del Mar Graña Cid. Biblioteca Comillas Teología 14. Madrid: Pontificia universidad Comillas, pp. 37–57.
- Hart, John. 2006. *Sacramental Commons. Christian Ecological Ethics*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Horowitz, Wayne. 2011. *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
- Jonas, Hans. 1984. *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Keel, Othmar. 2007. *La iconografía del Antiguo Oriente y el Antiguo Testamento*. Madrid: Editorial Trotta.
- Kim, Young Hye. 2010. The Jubilee: Its Reckoning and Inception Day. *Vetus Testamentum* 60: 147–51. [CrossRef]
- Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. 1981. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Liverani, Mario. 1979. The Ideology of Assyrian Empire. In *Power and Propaganda. A Symposium on Ancient Empires*. Edited by Mogens Trolle Larsen. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, pp. 297–317.
- Liverani, Mario. 1994. *Guerra e diplomacia nell'Antico Oriente 1600–1100 A.C.*. Roma: Laterza.
- Maged, Alex. 2018. Sinai and the “Shabbat-cycle” laws. *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 46: 117–23.
- Marlow, Hilary. 2009. *Biblical Prophets: Contemporary Environmental Ethics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mason, Rex. 1997. *Propaganda and Subversion in the Old Testament*. London: SPCK Publishing.
- Moltmann, Jürgen. 2015. De la era de la modernidad al futuro ecológico. In *¿Hay esperanza para la creación amenazada?* Edited by Jürgen Moltmann and Leonardo Boff. Santander: Sal Terrae, pp. 23–92.
- Neufeld, Ephraim. 1961. Jus Redemptionis in Ancient Hebrew Law. *Revue Internationale des Droits de l'Antiquité* 8: 29–40.
- North, Robert. 2000. *The Biblical Jubilee*. Roma: Pontificio Istituto Biblico.
- Olabe, Antxon. 2022. *Necesidad de una política de la Tierra. Emergencia climática en tiempos de confrontación*. Barcelona: Galaxia-Gutenberg.
- Ollenburger, Ben C. 2001. Jubilee. The Land is mine. You are aliens and tenants with me. In *Reclaiming the Old Testament. Essays on Honour of W. Janzen*. Edited by Gordon Zerbe. Winnipe: Wipf & Stock Publishers, pp. 108–34.
- Otzen, Benedikt. Israel under the Assyrians: Reflections on Imperial Policy in Palestine. *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute Leiden 1977–1978*. 11: 96–110.
- Panikkar, Raimon. 2021. *Ecosofía. La sabiduría de la tierra*. Barcelona: Fragmenta editorial.
- Passmore, John. 1978. *La responsabilidad del hombre frente a la naturaleza. Ecología y tradiciones en Occidente*. Madrid: Alianza.
- Pritchard, James B. 2011. *The Ancient Near East. An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, vol. I.

- Roitman, Adolfo D. 2016. *Del tabernáculo al templo. Sobre el espacio sagrado en el judaísmo antiguo*. Estella: Verbo Divino.
- Shellnhuber, Hans Joachim. 2015. *Common Ground. The Papal Encyclical, Science and the Protection of Planet Earth*. Potsdam: Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research. Available online: <https://www.pik-potsdam.de/images/common-ground> (accessed on 27 November 2023).
- Sicre, Jose Luis. 1985. *Con los pobres de la tierra. La justicia social en los profetas de Israel*. Madrid: Ediciones Cristiandad.
- Sollberger, Edmond. 1966. *The Business And administrative Correspondence under the King of Ur*. Locust Valley: J.J. Augustin.
- Stolz, Friedrich. 1978. שבת, šbt, Cesar, descansar. In *Diccionario teológico manual del Antiguo Testamento*. Edited by Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann. Madrid: Editorial Cristiandad, vol. II, pp. 1083–85.
- Tatay, Jaime. 2018. *Ecología integral. La recepción católica del reto de la sostenibilidad*. Madrid: BAC.
- von Rad, Gerard. 1962. *Theologie des Alten Testaments. Bd.I: Die Theologie der geschichtlichen Überlieferungen Israels*. München: Christian Kaiser Verlag.
- Westbrook, Raymond. 1991. *Property and the Family in Biblical Law*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- White, Lynn. 1967. The historical roots of our ecological crisis. *Science* 155: 1203–7. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
- Zeder, Melinda A. 2011. The Origins of Agriculture in the Near East. *Current Anthropology* 4: 221–35. [[CrossRef](#)]

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.