

## The Hebrew Bible and Environmental Ethics

The environmental crisis has prompted religious leaders and laypeople to look to their traditions for resources to respond to environmental degradation. In this book, Mari Joerstad contributes to this effort by examining an ignored feature of the Hebrew Bible: its attribution of activity and affect to trees, fields, soil, and mountains. The Bible presents a social cosmos in which humans are one kind of person among many. Using a combination of the tools of biblical studies and anthropological writings on animism, Joerstad traces the activity of nonanimal nature through the canon. She shows how biblical writers go beyond sustainable development, asking us to be good neighbors to mountains and trees, to be generous to our fields and vineyards. They envision human communities that are sources of joy to plants and animals. The biblical writers' attention to inhabited spaces is particularly salient for contemporary environmental ethics in their insistence that our cities, suburbs, and villages contribute to flourishing landscapes.

Mari Joerstad is a research associate at the Kenan Institute for Ethics at Duke University, where she works on “Facing the Anthropocene,” a project funded by the Henry Luce Foundation.

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Mari Joerstad  
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Humans, Nonhumans, and the Living Landscape

MARI JOERSTAD  
*Duke University*



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Go, eat your bread with gladness, drink your wine with a happy heart, for God already approves of your work. Let your clothes always be white, and do not let oil be lacking from your head. Enjoy life with a [man] whom you love, all the days of your fleeting life that are given to you under the sun, all the days of your fleetingness. For this is your portion in life and in your toil, at which you toil under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 9:7–9)