



**A Postcolonial Study of Land Conflict in 1 Kings 21:1-16: Towards A
Theological Response to Land Clashes in Kenya.**

**Magdaline Chepkirui Koech, Prof. Chosefu Chemorion &
Dr. Julius Kithinji**

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*Magdaline Chepkirui Koech
Postgraduate Student, St Paul's University
Kenya

*Email of the Corresponding Author: magkoche@yahoo.com

Prof. Chosefu Chemorion
Faculty of Theology, St Paul's University
chemorion@spu.ac.ke

Dr. Julius Kithinji
Faculty of Theology, St Paul's University
Jkithinji@spu.ac.ke

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Abstract

This study used postcolonial biblical criticism to read 1 Kings 21:1-16 as a theological response to land clashes. Land clashes is part of post-colonial injustices that need to be addressed using the postcolonial perspective. The guiding objectives were to provide a background of 1 Kings 21:1-16 as a basis to exposed land conflicts and social injustices, to show how land clashes has affected the citizens and how postcolonial reading of 1 Kings 21:1-16 can be used to respond to land clashes. The aim of this study was to produce a useful tool for responding to land clashes and intellectual reference for other scholars. The key question addressed in this study is how 1 Kings 21:1-16 can be read to deal with land clashes. The study was qualitative in nature in that it utilized data from the library, books, journals, theses, online sources, and other relevant publications. The study is informed by the observation that there are few biblical scholars who previously dealt with theological responses on land clashes. It was hypothetical that land clashes can be addressed theologically. The researcher found out that perpetrators of land clashes should be prosecuted and justice delivered to the victims, capital punishment should be imposed on the perpetrators of land clashes, land laws should be revised to ensure that leaders do not misuse power to illegally relocate citizen in order to take their land. There is need for laws prohibiting leaders' spouses from accessing power functions for wrong use as did Jezebel. Finally there should be laws ensuring that all foreigners get well rooted and grounded in the new religious and cultural heritage.

Keywords: *Postcolonial, Land conflict, Theology, Land clashes*

1.0 Introduction

1 Kings 21:1-16 indicates that the view of land in Israel changed due to the introduction of the monarchy resulting to change of life from divine guidance to human control. Olson (1986:18) claimed that the major threat to the family land were from the kings. When the basic structure of the family land is seriously threatened, then some form of Judgment is likely to follow (1 Kings 21:17-28). Monarchy introduced rules and regulations that created classes which conflicted theocracy and kingship whereby kingship made land property for sale. This increased power-hunger and greed to amass wealth by the kings. God's laws were undermined by the kings rather protecting them (Anderson, 1997:191). They violated and substituted them with laws suiting their interests forcing the Israelites to live double standard lives. Some were able to relate to power for survival while the rest became vulnerable and victims of power misuse relating to land. Among them was Naboth who held to the tradition that God is the ultimate land owner while Ahab believed he had its control. Bright (1972:184) noted that the formation of the monarchy system in Israel resulted in racism, political conflicts, oppression, land loss, unstable governance, Baalism, and foreign interference. These factors led to imperialism as proximity to powers offered unwarranted privileges.

The narrative of 1 Kings 21:1-16 recounts land loss, value, ownership, and laws. Initially Israel was a theocratic nation given land through patriarchs (Genesis 12). 1 Kings 21:1-16 relates how the Israelites after establishment of monarch, lost land in the hands of the kings. This story portrays a powerful empire in the northern kingdom misusing power and disrespecting institutions to acquire land. This shifted land ownership from Yahweh to the kings making it a commodity for sale. Ahab deviated from the initial land laws and subjected people to serve him for land and as an appeal for social justice. This text depicts land as belonging to the King. Rice (1990:36) argues that this text deals with the theme of social injustices and abuse of authority by the powerful against the weak. It is a historical text that narrates the real community life contrarily to the life expected by divine guidance and rule. The king used state resources to rob the poor of their land.

Kenyatta (1938:22-52) expressed that missionaries came with the bible but when they told the Africans to close the eyes in prayers they replaced it for their land. Land conflicts started with missionaries emphasizing that Africans should hold onto the Bible for all their answers. They became landless, lost their original existence and survival which was taken by the missionaries. Missionaries gained more power, invited foreign administrations that formed colonies and took more land from the Africans. This made gospel bitter herbs to the Africans for being used as a weapon of taking their land. Land conflicts extended beyond post-colonial era. Powerful Africans use Bible for power and land control. Christianity brought imperialism and inequality whereby few control the majority at their expense. The paradigm shift was from communalism to individualism.

The land conflict in 1 Kings 21:1-16 mirrors land clashes in Kenya traced from the missionary and colonial era. While the missionaries came to spread the gospel in Kenya their intentions were short change by economic development for they needed land. Christianity influenced and shaped social and political life positively and negatively resulting from the biblical interpretation as the sole guide. Proper Biblical interpretation can play a big role in addressing these land conflicts. There are claims linked to the argument from Kenyatta (1938:20-52) that the Bible has been misused to

legitimize improper possession of land belonging to the poor through assassination by those in power as evidenced in cases whereby the Bible has been misused and misquoted in various situations from domestic violence to the political crisis. For example, during post-election violence some political leaders were suspects. Church leaders from these regions supported them by silencing the victims and praying for the offenders using biblical texts like (Ps 34:19, 1 Chron. 16:22, Rom. 13:1, John 8:7) which were wrongly interpreted. This exposes the church accepted double standard through favoritism.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Land is a central theme in Old Testament but due to the land conflict brought by introduction of monarchy (1 Kings 21:1-16), land has become the powerful resource that everyone yearns for. The land conflict in 1 Kings 21:1-16 is a replica of the Kenyan situation that has brought land clashes and injustices.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide theological response to the land clashes in Kenya through a postcolonial reading of 1 Kings 21:1-16.

1.3 Hypothesis of the Study

The research hypothesis is that, land clashes in Kenya can be addressed using a postcolonial study of land conflict in 1 Kings 21:1-16.

2.0 Review of Literature on 1 Kings 21:1-16 and a Demonstration on how Land Clashes affect the Kenyan Context

2.1 The Analysis of Land Conflict in 1 Kings 21:1-16

Traditionally in Israel, land is not a trade property. Following this view Mays (1988:321) argued that Ahab's personal denunciation is expanded in 1 Kings 21:21-22 to a condemnation of going against the traditions. Keck (1994:156) condemned supremacy idea of Ahab and his dynasty, he added that Israelite' laws stipulate that ancestral land should remained within the family with rights of inalienability (Num. 27:8-11; 36:1-12). The intentions were to preserve the territorial integrity of the original tribal assignment for example intermarriages were not allowed for such compromises could in inevitably result in the laws of Israelite property influenced by the foreigners. This was to guard against the loss of Israelites territory for economic resources among other reasons. Thus it was not merely for sentimental reasons that Naboth wants to hold on to his inheritance for it was a religious obligation. To do so would be literal profanation of trading with land.

The attachment with an inherited land made Naboth refused to part with his ancestral inheritance (1 Kings 21:3). This invoked a vision of land as a gift from Yahweh to all the people of Israel. According to Arnold & Williamson (2005:631-32) 1 Kings 21:1-16 reveals a hegemonic practices experienced in a societal setup. It entails a choice of serving Yahweh in sharp contrast to the type of the society that Ahab typically borrowed from of the ancient Near Eastern potentate craves. In his argument Arnold & Williamson (2005:631-32) acknowledged that the two religions contradicts

one another. Israel's religion states that 'everyone has an entitlement by virtue of the gift to possess land' (Deut. 15:4, Josh. 13-22) while the polytheistic religion introduced to Israel by king Ahab's reign under the influence of the Phoenician wife-Jezebel puts in question Yahweh's status in owning land.

Hamilton (2001:438) argued that the strong rejection of the King's offer (1 Kings 21:3) has two important principles. First, it strongly affirms that there is hope and rights to those oppressed for using law to challenge the oppressive system. Naboth represents the voice of the poor (Lev. 25:23-24). The kings and those in power should not compel their subjects to sell any part of their family estate. It is for this reason that the prophets played key roles in condemning this tendencies among the rich and powerful to foreclose on the land of their subjects.

Carson (1994:361) supported the ideas of the author of 1 Kings 21:1-16 on hegemonic rule with its interpretation of law. For him, 1 Kings 21:1-16 introduces different interpretation of laws by Ahab's Phoenician wife-Jezebel whose in a way empowers the position of the king. Israel's traditions clarifies that all Israelites are equal, the new system introduced by Phoenicians made the king powerful as should not. Hamilton (2001:438) is against Carson's (1994:361) interpretation which holds that Yahwist covenant still stands in Israel.

2.2 Land Clashes in Kenya

In chapter five of the Constitution of Kenya, article 61 (1) it explicitly states that land belongs to all citizens. The colonial government and the missionaries applied different views on land. They took land as belonging to all Kenyans. Kanogo (1987:23) argued that establishing colonial rule in Kenya was an attempt to turn the country into a white settlement area. This had a profound effect on the local African population. The alienation of Kenyans' lands for European settler-occupation disinherited and dislocated Kenyans.

Kenyan leadership after independence had a goal of land transfer from the colonial government to the locals. Land and freedom were the driving forces behind the mission of the Mau Mau-(Kenyan freedom fighters). While these two key factors were important, attaining political independence became the national leaders' major goal rather than ensuring that the Kenyans who had lost their land to the colonizers and the missionaries have gotten back their land. This is because the land taken by the missionaries and the colonizers did not get back to the legitimate owners but was taken by those who were in political leadership then (Kanogo, 1987:23; Lewis, 2007:41-5; Ochieng, 1995:42). Although "land was the most important objective, these leaders subjected the Kenyans to second colonization by taking their land, this became the genesis of land clashes in Kenya" (Kanogo, 1987:23). In support of this, Tarus (2019:1) argued that in Kenya, land clashes and political troubles are strongly intertwined.

With land ownership, Bruce (2009:7-8) explained that during pre-colonial period, land belonged to the communities. Chiefs and community elders addressed arising land issues of inheritance and boundaries through clan representatives. The community respected family or clan land. Kanyinga (1996:3) and Bruce (2009:7) note that colonial situation introduced new principles of land individualization. Kanyinga (1996) argues that since then the issues of ownership and control of land remained integral part of local and national political discourse.

Land ownership has become a thorny issue in Kenya. Ogot (1976:36) claimed that land is closely intertwined with the form and composition of the whole social power structure and the distribution of land which never took place. Those in power and the chiefs were the government agents who illegally took Kenya land. Kanogo (1987:23) noted that establishing colonial rule in Kenya changed the perceptions of how land is treated. Land became a trade property with profound effects to the Kenyans. Evicting Kenyans from their land devalue them through the loss their identity.

Ndung'u Report (2003) states that this is a post-independence phenomenon which intensified in the 1990s driven by external and domestic factors. Kieyah & Njoroge (2016:1) argued that this was the failure of the government to manage public land. The method of direct grant that had operated successfully during the colonial period became the basis of massive illegal and irregular allocation of public land by post-independence governments. Leo (1980:21) argued that although land reforms were driven by economic factors, there were political overtones to disinheriting Kenyans who had left their communities to join in the Mau Mau revolt. Kanyinga (1996:13) noted that regime leadership exploited the primacy of the land to win and maintain support in ethnic communities. They used land as a patronage resource to help weave political relations, create class and ethnic hatred.

3.0 Land conflicts and injustice in 1 Kings 21:1-16

3.1 Postcolonial Biblical Criticism

Sugirtharajah (2006:52) writing covers the background of the postcolonial biblical criticism locating its roots in postcolonial studies. He explains that postcolonial theory has its background in the rise of western empire and western domination of other people through colonialism. Sugirtharajah particularly noted that postcolonial emerged as an arm of literary studies scrutinizing the literature of common wealth countries which were part of British Empire as the colonized began to resist domination and subordination by the colonizer.

Dube (2000:16) has defined postcolonial theory as an act of resistance against imperial ideologies which were used to justify domination of foreign nation who regarded as inferior. She develops her critique against the misuse of the Bible by the colonizers as they took African land. She argued that the Bible has been repeatedly used to authorize the subjugation of foreign nations. However, biblical texts have been proclaimed in colonial settings and therefore contain a voice of justice that energizes faith to challenge injustice committed against the poor. Her view on the Bible as containing a voice of justice guided this study in suggesting ways of addressing land conflict in 1 Kings 21:1-16 in a way that challenges those in power and social injustices.

3.2 Post colonizing 1 Kings 21:1-16

Postcolonial biblical criticism is becoming popular tool for engaging the Bible. Engaging postcolonial hermeneutical in 1 Kings 21:10-16 reveals that the text is highly characterized with land conflicts. The author of Kings was influenced by Deuteronomistic historical context in which he wrote. The interpreters of this study have brought in the perspective of how land is viewed in Old Testament different to that of the author.

The aim of this study is not only to expose the monarchial power but to restore the dignity, power and equality of those othered. McKenzie (2013:123) rightly argues for the suitability for

postcolonial biblical interpretation for 1 Kings 21:1-16, basing his argument on the fact that it is 'a text that strongly reflects land'. Rice (1990:175) argued that '1 Kings 21:1-16 was written from the perspective of kingship in Israel and not from the perspective of Torah'. Hanes (2011:4) and McKenzie (2013:124) agree that postcolonial biblical criticism as a tool for biblical interpretation is relevant in reading 1 Kings 21:1-16 as it seeks to bring fore those who have been oppressed and endeavors to examine and challenge the structures that abuse, silence and killed. Postcolonial criticism further allows room for questioning author's view of royal rule and culture.

Using postcolonial biblical hermeneutics, the study has revealed that one cannot continue using pre-reading biblical approach as it could not allow the reader to recognize or resist unequal relationships and domination. The author of 1 Kings 21:1-16 uses a monarchical language which appears to be oppressive by silencing Naboth who is only mentioned twice, in 1 Kings 21:1-16- (relation to land principles) and in 2 Kings 9:25-26- (murder of Naboth and his sons). McKenzie (2013:125) questions the author's motive for having used monarchical language in power relations and the way Naboth is mentioned to popularize the action of those in power. Through author's narration, Naboth is presented as disrespectful and arrogant person who challenges the king and later denied a chance of defending himself before execution. It also exposes the dominion and subordination, the powerful and powerless, showing how monarchical system emerges in Israel which conflicts theocratic principles of land.

3.3 Exegetical Analysis (1 Kings 21:1-16)

3.3.1 Land Covetousness and Tradition (1 Kings 21:1-4)

In an attempt to bring out the understanding of who Naboth was as in 1 Kings 21:1, Keck (1994:124) claimed that the phrase *la[rzyB rva tbnl-* (*Naboth the Jezreelite*) was a link with the origin of the person inhabitant. In Israel community families or tribes were known through their possession. Naboth's place indicated that as per the allocation of land, his family was given land in Jezreel.

Jones (1984:353) explained that the phrase *lacrzyB - (in Jezreel)* shows the place where the vineyard was and gave an identity of the owner. He argued that *la[rzyB -(in Jezreel)* must be retained because it was intended to denote the location of the vineyard as it links the vineyard to the royal family which gave the basis of narration in relation to Ahab. Jezreel was an important base in the days of the Omride Dynasty as the home of the Omrides used as a base against Damascus. Rice (1990:174) argued that Jezreel's stands for royalty and lineage. For him, Jezreel seems to have been a favorite retreat place for the kings and their families. Rice (1990) seemed to indicate that Naboth is an intruder. To him, the description of Jezreel is a true reflection on the hegemonic society with distinction of their residences without neighbors.

In 1 Kings 21:1 Naboth is betrays by his name explain by Comay (1993:281) and Jones (1984:353) to mean offspring related to the land. The Hebrew name *tbn-* (*Naboth*) means fruit as derived from Arabic root *nabata*-to sprout or grow, used of plants or men. As per the name, Naboth protects family's inheritance governed by the inheritance tradition and law.

In 1 Kings 21:2 the basis of *\$mrk-ta - (give me your vineyard)* reflects author's authoritative language of Ahab demanding for Naboth's vineyard. The text shows Ahab's use of authority to

demand for the possession of the vineyard. Wallace (1995:152) and Dandala (2016:511) use *šmrk-xa* to describe Ahab's monarchical mentality of obsession for land, wealth and ambitious plans to enlarge his palace in Samaria against divine landholding belief. Pfeiffer (1962:336) and Wallace (1995:152) supported Ahab of having legal and moral right to purchase the vineyard from Naboth. According to them, Ahab's proposal was acceptable by the monarchical law. Ahab made a business proposition to his neighbor, offering to pay for the property in currency or to exchange vineyard for vineyard. Considering the acceptable law of proposal, Ahab was not erroneous of his request; he followed legal procedure and command of his position.

The laws in Israel intended to keep the ownership of farmland within a family. In case of extreme poverty, land could be leased, but it would revert to its original owner in the year of Jubilee (Lev 25:10-28). Keck's (1994:155) logic does not see the reason of inquiring ancestral land belonging to a kinsman because Ahab already had a place in Samaria and in Jezreel. According to him, Ahab covets additional property (Isa. 5:8, Micah 2:1-2). The narrator does not show Ahab's intents of covetousness in mind but recounts that Ahab intends to convert the vineyard into *qry-nql* - (vegetable garden). This expression occur only ones in the Hebrew Bible (Deut. 11:10). This passage contrasts the land that God promised Israel's ancestors with the land of Egypt where people depended on irrigation to grow vegetable gardens. Vegetable gardens had significance in Israel community. Deuteronomy presents the Promised Land as a place where vineyard thrives naturally (Deut 6:10-12, 8:8-10). It is not a surprise that vineyards in the bible are viewed as signs of God's blessings (Hos. 2:15). This study observes that Ahab wanted to take away Naboth's divine blessing.

In 1 Kings 21:3, the words used for forbidden and inheritance are of interest. The word *hlylh-* ((*forbidden*)) refers to profanation by depriving something of its sacred character. Naboth's response informs this study on how the divine's authority proceeds royal authority portrayed by Ahab who represents God. Jones (1984:353) supporting Naboth's tradition argues that Naboth's refusal is based on a religious conviction that God is proprietor of the land of Israel. For the word *hlylh-* (Lange (1872:243) and Spence (1897:507) argue that the word *hlhn* reveals that Naboth was a worshipper of the Lord who considered alienation of his patrimony as an act of transgression that violates the law of Moses (Lev 25:23, Num 36:7).

The word *hlhn* - (*inheritance*) in 1 Kings 21:2, 4 refer to possession received or given by family member to his offspring which should not be sold. Robinson (1976:236) refers to word *hlhn* as ancestral land. According to him, inheritance gives an identity and patrimony. Naboth's land gives him societal status in Jezreel. Another land could not give him status neither could money compensate him for its loss. Another possibility is that Naboth refused to sell his land is because the tombs of his ancestors were situated on the ancestral family land. Selling it would have been a shameful act of impiety and betrayal. Jones (1984:354) and Wallace (1995:153) in their argument against monarchy beliefs claim that the most sacred of the Lord laws was that 'no man could ever sell his land; land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine-(Lev. 25:23)'. Lange (1872) and Spence (1897) explain that the preservation of word *hlhn* was for covenant-keeping Israelite and keeping of religious sacred duties. Henry (1960:394) observes that Naboth foresaw that if their vineyard is sold to the crown, it would never return to its legal heirs even in the year of Jubilee. He could gladly oblige the king but must obey God rather than men.

In 1 Kings 21:4 the words *qczw ds* - (*vexed and sullen*) are related. The word words *qcz* - (*zevaah*) in royal context shows the lowering of King's position by a mere citizen. How would Naboth challenge the King's authority and command? Being in authority Ahab assumes that everyone and everything is under him. Being vexed and sullen expresses the King's humiliation by his subject thus demeaning his position and power (Henry, 1960:394). For Keck (1994:156) this is not the first incident Ahab is reacting in this manner. The statement in 1 Kings 20:43- (*Ahab returned home resentful and sullen*) results from the Lord's condemnation of Ahab's release by Ben-hadad (1Kings 20:43) but in 1 Kings 21:4 his return home resentful and sullen results from the rejection of his wish to purchase Naboth's ancestral estate. While Ahab sulks and acts peevish, he does not force the issue at this point, probably he knows the law. Henry (1960:694) in his view describes Ahab's royal behavior of his proud spirit aggravated the indignity Naboth did in denying him. Naboth's behavior cuts him off although he pretends to consult peace and secretly meditated revenge in whichever way. Henry (1960:694) further argues that, Ahab committed the sin of discontent defined as a sin that arises not from the condition but from the mind. Ahab was discontent in a palace, with all the delights of Canaan, that pleasant land, at command, the wealth of a kingdom, the pleasures of a court, the honors and powers of a throne, yet all this avails him nothing without Naboth's vineyard.

3.3.2 Murder Scheme (1 Kings 21:5-7)

In 1 Kings 21:5 the phrase *Tva lbza* - (*Jezebel his wife*) introduces Jezebel who affirms the behavior of kingship which was foreign to Israel 91 Sam 8:8-10). She utilizes her proximity to power to challenge the king who seems reluctant with his authority. Her name derives from the Hebrew *lbzy* meaning 'Baal exalts' indicates an introduction of conflicting deity to one used to by Israelites. Jezebel is identified in the Book of Kings as the daughter of Ethbaal king of Tyre (Phoenicia) and the wife of Ahab king of northern Israel. Her background reinforces hegemonic system in Israel. (<http://www.name-doctor.com/name-jezebel-meaning-of-jezebel>).

Comay (1993:40) argues that Jezebel was a strong-willed woman who dominated her husband and used her position at the Samarian Court to promote Phoenician culture and religion. The Phoenician culture and religion allowed the exercise of power at all cost to benefit the royalty. This contradicts the Israel's culture and religion but confirms the nature of the kingship Israelites demanded in 1 Samuel 8:10-18. Keck (1994:156) supports this argument and adds that Jezebel the Phoenician woman caused Ahab to patronize the Baal cult and she was not new in causing scandals in the Israel community. She tried to massacre the prophets of the Lord. When Ahab reported Elijah's annihilation of Baal's prophet, she threatened him. In 1 Kings 21 we see Jezebel mocking Ahab for not exercising his royal power as (Deut. 17:14-20) suggests that Jezebel has no knowledge of or regard for such constraints that Israelite law places on the king. In this regard, Jezebel arrogantly promised that she herself will give Ahab the vineyard as if it is within her rights to do so. This is an indication of the fulfillment of God's instruction to Israelites at the conquest, Yahweh warned them against marrying the foreigners because they will turn their hearts to worship other gods (Deut 7:3-4) which Ahab dishonored by marrying a Phoenician woman

The phrase *larfy l[hklm hf[T*-(*Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel?*) in 1 Kings 21:7 is significant as Jezebel introduces royal power in form of a question challenging the king who seemingly does not exercise his powers and disrespecting the divine authority over Israel. The

word *hkl* - (*melukah*) refers to power. The phrase above provokes the king who is in power. Jezebel challenges him of his position. Gray (1976:390) rationale with Jezebel who does not see the reason Ahab is not using his authority as a king. Adeyemo (2006:441) supports Gray (1976) who describes Jezebel as a Sidonian princess who is from a culture where all land belonged to a king.

3.3.3 Implementation of Murder (1 Kings 21:8-14)

Jones (1984:355) and Gray (1976:390) point out that the word *~rps* - (*letters*) in 1 Kings 21:8 is in plural but takes singular connotation. Gray recounts that letters were usually written by a scribe or amanuensis in the name of a correspondent who is usually depicted as speaking in the third person then sealed with clay or wax seal of the sender. This way, Jezebel acted in Ahab's position. The letter writing was a sign of authority acting as final orders given. It was not supposed to be questioned rather implemented. It is clear that from this argument Ahab abused the Israel's system by exercising power through foreign system that supported hegemony.

In 1 Kings 21:9 the word *arq* - (*to call*) is used for public proclamation of a fast, solemn assembly, or general military levy (Lev. 23:24, Joel 1:4). The occasion of the fast was no doubt towards circumstances locally experienced or apprehended (1 Sam 7:6). Buttrick (1954:175), and Gray (1976:390) argue that proclaiming fasting in Israel was a time of grave national emergency or calamities (Joel 1:14), after grievous defeats (Jg. 20:26, 1 Sam 31:13), after great sin (1 Sam 7:6, Joel 2:12), or for the turning away of apprehended misfortune (2 Chr. 20:2, 4). It signified penitence. Buttrick (1954:175) explains that the fast which Jezebel proclaimed was destined to prepare the people for the alleged approach of the deity, which in turn is due to a serious crime committed against him. Royal executors intelligently know how to fix the course to suit them. This text shows a successful plan perpetuating hegemony.

Instead of Naboth receiving honor, the text have double dimension of a King and Naboth defined by the tradition they shared. Buttrick (1954:175) notes that the text's placing of Naboth at the head of the people is ironically place of honor as at feast, but the place of the accused as two reprobates are set before him not to accuse but to support the accusation giving false evidence *hdw*-(*wi'iduhu*). Naboth is a tool of power, which the kingship tactfully uses to justify his royal authority. On their shared tradition, this study agrees with Gray (1976:391) who notes that Naboth had a place of honor. His title 'the Jezreelite' suggests that he was a representative figure, the head of an influential local family perhaps the equivalent of the *mukhtar* of the place. In virtue of this status, he was given the place 'at the head of the people' equating Naboth with Ahab.

Royal system uses disguising means to accomplish a mission. In 1 Kings 21:10, the words *l[y]b-nB* is a paraphrase used literally meaning 'sons of worthlessness'. The word *TkrB*-(*berakta*) refers to thou dist bless Yahweh which employs euphemism. Gray (1976:392) explains that anything related to a deity should be positive. The use of curse along with Yahweh is avoided in this text (Job 1:1). Lange (1872:243) and Jones (1994:356) argue that Naboth was accused of blasphemy or guilty of capital crime. Blasphemy was sin against God which was punishable by death (Lev. 24:10-16), and cursing the ruler was also regarded as an act of blasphemy, for he was God's chosen representative (Exod. 22:28). According to Gray (1976:392) the conjunction of Yahweh and the king is interesting. In (Ps. 1; 110), the same ideology and language are applied to

the king as to God. The king is God's visible guarantee of his cosmic relationships and functions. The text of 1 Kings 21:11-13) repeats the content of the proceeding section and states that all happened according to Jezebel's plan.

Lange (1872:243) and Keil (1982:271) argue that according to (Deut. 17: 6; 19:15) every crime punishable by death must be testified to by at least two witnesses. The intentions were that from the onset there appear to be justice through a legal process instituted before all the citizens and the stamp of veracity impressed upon the crime of Naboth's accusation. Pfeiffer (1962:337) and Keck (1994:156) indicate that the means applied by royal systems uses is bribery. The two scoundrels who committed perjury were always ready to sell their testimony for money and to alter it to suit the evil purposes of the one who hires them. This can compare to the witnesses during Jesus' trial (Mt 26:60-61).

1 Kings 21:14 the phrase *Rmal lbzya-la xlvyw* -(then they sent to Jezebel) is a subject given to a verb that lies as far back as the 'two base fellows' of 1 Kings 21:13a, but it is not to be assumed that they were responsible for the actions mentioned in 1 Kings 21:13b-14a. The council or court was responsible for the stoning in 1 Kings 21:13b and probably official messengers were sent to Jezebel by the elders and nobles in 1 Kings 21:14a. The task of the scoundrels had been completed when they acted as witnesses.

3.3.4 Land Confiscation (1 Kings 21:15-16)

The text in 1 Kings 21:15-16 concludes the impressions given that the events recorded happened in immediate successions without any delay. Jezebel takes the initiative in 1 Kings 21:15 since it is assumed that the news of Naboth's murder reached her that fitful day. Ahab too acted promptly (1 Kings 21:16) and probably confiscated Naboth's vineyard consequently. Lange (1872:243) argues that this immediate seizure of Naboth's property appears in consequence of his execution. This clearly shows that the hegemonic system had effect and well calculated.

This study supports Douglas (1990:479) argument of condemnation that Jezebel's plot and Ahab's excitement did not lie in the legal aspect of property tradition rather in inhuman leadership. Ahab and Jezebel got the property through the use of the power of the throne. According to Robinson (1976:239) the law was to ensure right dealings in the society and the king was to uphold that law (Deut. 17:18-20) but not manipulating the law to his own advantage. In hegemonic view, Douglas (1990) argues that this act had serious adverse consequences to Israel's throne causing the conflict between the powerful and powerless. Adeyemo (2006:441) attests that instead of Ahab protesting that Jezebel had usurped his authority, broken the law, and killed an innocent man and his family, he accepted what Jezebel did by surrendering his conscience and his will to hers. He set out to enjoy his new possession.

Dunn (2003:264) gives close parallel-story of David and Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11-12 arguing that in both stories the subject refuses to go along with the king's plans but appeals to the fundamental principle of the Israelite way of life. Therefore a plan is executed to conceal the reason for the subject's death. Barton & Muddiman (2001:247) suggests that 1 Kings 21:15-16 shows how unscrupulously the king's power over the poor rights can be misused. The queen (Jezebel) being the driving force behind this is a foreigner who does not respect Israelite ethics or perhaps does not know them.

3.4 Theological Insights from 1 Kings 21:1-16

The main theological insights drawn from the land conflict passage in 1 Kings 21:1-16 are among the following; the idea of the covenant (Heb. *tyrb* - *berith*- Gen17:19) because land is at the epitome of the Old Testament. 1 Kings 21:1-16 focuses on inheritance. Ahab commanding Naboth to sell his inheritance reflected a leadership that did not honour family history but aimed at destroying its lineages. There were the issues of power play and land laws of which the perpetuators of this conflict became adamant. The land conflict in 1 Kings 21:1-16 reveals the crime committed due to greed. This kind of injustice required the administration of capital punishment. This study observes that the theology of intermarriage was present as a profane practice in Israel (Deut 7) as it influences Israelites religion and behavior in the land.

4.0 Theological Ways of Addressing Land Conflicts and Injustice

4.1 Colonial Perspectives of Land in 1 Kings 21:1-16

The colonial perspectives of land in 1 Kings 21:1-16 were employed in postcolonial criticism for analysis. Employing these perspectives in this study formed basis for understanding Israel community viewed land against how monarchical context informed the author in his writing on land issue.

4.1.1 Covenantal Gift

This study notes that land conflict in 1 Kings 21:1-16 was a digression and symbol of breaching the covenant between God and Israelites. The land no longer had meaning, divine ownership and respect of law, boundaries but being made tradable commodity and accessible by those in power. The colonial influence changed land perspective in Israel community which understood land as a covenantal gift from God.

The idea of the covenant, in Hebrew *tyrb*-(*berith*- Gen17:19) is the theme at the epitome of the land issues in the Old Testament. Elwell (1984:276) defined covenant as a compact or agreement between two parties binding them mutually to undertakings on each other's behalf with an inclination to relationship with God. According to Botterweck & Ringgren (1975) covenant implied the notion of obligation, liability, or commitment from bond. A biblical covenant is synonymous to law or commandment and commitment confirmed by oath-(Gen 21:22; 26:26; Deut 29:9). Fahlbucsh (1999:50) and Rowley (1951:110) claims that the Old Testament covenant is a formal agreement between the Israelites and God, the Israelites were to worship God alone as His Chosen People that He gives Canaan as their Promised Land. This was in reference to the Sinatic Covenant between God and Israelites which was a loyal grant. Githuku (2011:131-2) and Elwell (1984:276) adopted the notions of commitment to covenant, oath, agreement, and swearing for compliance. They incorporated the idea of the ritual of covenant making which involved verbal statements for the undertaking, sacrifice, witness, and a shared meal. The study took the covenant to mean an agreement between God and Israelites. Conclusively, a covenant "is a solemn agreement held to be the basis of a relationship and commitment to God" (Stevenson 2011:330).

Anderson (1966:56) argued that Israel as a community is understood well in covenant relationship with Yahweh. In this relationship one cannot divorce land from covenant as governed by the Sinaitic laws (Ex. 19:5; 20:1, 12). This covenant was the basis of Israel's historical existence. It bound them to one another with its strong bonds. The nature of this covenant (Ex. 19:3-6) evoked a response from the people. Anderson (1966) and Bright (1972:164) agree that Israel is a society founded in covenant and that covenant law was a central factor in Israel's life from the beginning. Dyrness (1979:114) and Drane (1987:55) asserted that the idea of covenant is a means of regulating behavior between one another especially in the socio-economic and spiritual life. It regulated all sorts of behavior in the Israel community. The covenant relationship was to guide them in the gifted land.

According to Brown (1996:283-293) covenantal land provides an integral link between God and Israel. The covenant is a bridge connecting the communal character and the constitution. It brings into a coherent whole the narrative of Israel's divinely established formation and the promulgation of a national constitution. The covenantal centre set its character upon the covenanting God while delineating the character of the covenant-engendered community. He added that the concepts of covenant are its theocentric origin and its corporate inclusiveness. The covenant between God and Israel was established by God for them to become His people. Covenantal ethic constitutes a reciprocal orientation of love between God and Israel by which God's people embody the ethical character of the Divine. Israel's distinctive covenantal identity is set in relief within the arena of God's land (Ex. 19:5b). Gregerman (2014:410-425) states that the covenant relationship between God and Israel emphasizes progeny, land and divine favour. In the mosaic covenant God places conditions on Israel's right to enjoy possession of that which they own (Lev. 26 & Deut. 28).

The land occupied by the Israelites as explained by Brueggemann (2000:49) is a gift from Yahweh and binds Israel in new ways to the giver. He further claims that land is for satiation and listening. Land meant that the future for Israel is secured without anxiety. There are many issues of Israel involvement with land and with Yahweh. The land acts as an assurance, summon, nourishment, claim, symbol of family and Yahweh's peculiar listening partner in historical covenant. Brueggemann (2002:50) points out that the gifted land is the covenantal land and place. Israel's central task was to maintain and not to perceive it as a social or historical vacuum.

4.1.2 Land as an Inheritance

This study notes 1 Kings 21:1-16 destroys the essence of inheritance. Ahab commanding Naboth to sell his inheritance reflects a leadership that does not honor family history but aims at destroying its lineages. Rad (1962:296) and Zimmerli (1978:66) argue that the term heritage or patrimony-(*hlhn*) initially designated the defined property of a clan or tribe and is extended in deuteronomic usage to refer to the patrimony of Israel-(*larfy tlnh*). This term expressed Israel's right to occupy this land as own defined property. The land in this sense is the patrimony of Yahweh-(*hwhy tlnh*)-Yahweh's personal property.

The land as an inheritance from Yahweh has been explained by Marchadour (2007:1-57) who argued that inheritance symbolizes intimacy between God and Israel that guarantees continuity of belonging and harmony. It was a blessing for all generations (Gen. 12). Israel's land was a

heritage-(*vrm*) promised to the patriarchs (Ex. 6:8). He added that land as a gift and inheritance has its obligations (Deut. 30:16-20). The land obligations firmly linked Israel's status as a holy nation. In this context, Israel is reminded that the land belongs to God (Lev. 25:23). God gave Israel land for a special purpose and expected them to follow Torah religiously.

The ownership of land by God (Deut. 12:10) is a legal residual right as stated by Kitz (2000:601). According to him, this legal construct of inheritance (*lhn*) to Israel did not guarantee them the residual control (Gen. 24:7). Anderson (1997:250) and Kitz (2000:601) pointed out that Israel only had the privilege of owning the estate as stewards of Yahweh's property. God administered it for the welfare of the whole community in a way that rules out confiscation and illegal allotment or allocation or possession.

Therefore, this study agreed with Anderson (1997:249) that Naboth's refusal to give out his inheritance expressed an attitude of the owner showing that land was unique to Israel. It was not a 'private property' to dispose of as he pleased. It belonged to the whole family or clan passed on from generation to another as a sacred inheritance. In this view, the real owner of the land was Yahweh (*hwhy*) and as Zimmerli (1978:50) puts it, the substance of the promise is the possession of the land which is sealed by a covenant. This covenant has two components that 1 Kings 21:1-16 reveals. First, it expresses that according to Naboth the possession of the land is a gift. Second, Naboth acknowledges that land is special benefit not definable in terms of value materially but associated with the status of Israel as the 'people of Yahweh'.

Naboth's point of view represents the traditional covenantal language. Brueggemann (2000:88) supports Naboth's view that land is not owned in a way that permits its disposal. It is an 'inheritance' which should be held in trust from generations to generations. Naboth is responsible for the land but is not in control over it. He also perceived himself in covenantal relation. This relationship has a history of fidelity understood as a dimension of family history. Zimmerli (1978: 65) supports it by arguing that the possession of land is made conditional upon keeping God's law (Ex. 20:12, Deut. 11:8, 1 Chron. 28:8).

God's law is clear on land allocation which Naboth is aware of as a Divine means to allocate land, Kitz (2000:601-616) and Russell (2018:111-118) explain that the allotment of the land was determined according to the 'sacred dice' which revealed the divine will. The casting of lot was a 'sacred act' (Josh 14:2, 18:6, 8; Ezek 45:1) which demonstrated that God distributed the land Himself. This custom is a feature of God's right to bestow land as a gift. The divinely guided casting of lot established the region and dimension of tribal property. They add that the legitimate possession of the territory depended on individual tribal responsibility to dwell in it in the context of the family inheritance which applied to the nation as whole. Heirs (1993:121) argued that the provision for transferring real property (land, fields, and houses) was centrally important in biblical law and tradition (Num. 27).

4.2 Land in the Perspective of Torah.

This study observed that in 1 Kings 21:1-16 land laws were abused by those who were expected to protect it rather they used law to possessed illegal land. Ahab who was God's representative and his associates abused the entrusted office by confiscating and killing true owner of land thus

weakening the power of law moving forward. Schofield (1964:14) defined torah (הֲרָה) as a 'guidance' or 'direction'. It is used for the instructions given by a mother, a priest, or a prophet, as well as God. Torah is God's instructions or guidance spoken of as His covenant. According to Anderson (1997:90) Torah was intended to be the social expression of the covenant bond. Israel's law was covenant law not 'secular' law. The whole of life was to be lived under Yahweh's demand within the covenant. He added that the laws in the Bible were not copied from the 'Code of Hammurabi' which presupposes an aristocratic class system that did not prevail in Israel. Israel did not accept the view that the state is the custodian of the law. In Israel's covenant faith, even the kings were subject to the law given at Sinai (Deut. 17:18-20).

This laws guided on how land was allocated to Israelites. Schmidt (1984:37) noted that land belonging to a given tribe was sub-divided by casting of lot among the families. Casting of lots for the division of land as in the Old Testament is a one-time act but not a regularly recurring ritual (Josh 14:2, 18:6. 8; Ezek 45:1). An inherited land/ property was inalienable according to the Israelite laws but this differed from the Canaanite laws (Gen 23, 2 Sam 24, 1 Kings 16:24). Land was not to be dispose at will (1 Kings 21, Deut 27:17). Zimmerli (1978:67) added that God's laws were to prevent the gradual undermining of the Divine allotment. Possession of the land was a benefit entailing certain responsibilities towards God. Like the case of Ahab, land should not be treated as 'commercial property' rather a patrimony (1 Kings 21:3, Isa. 5:8, Micah 2:1).

As a patrimony, Yahweh had created a covenant community in which every person stood equal before the law, rich or poor, king or citizen. The nature of Sinatic Covenant was seen in the concept of law that succeeded it. The integral part of the covenant was the stipulations that the divine overlord laid upon his subjects. It defined the policy by which the members of the community must regulate their actions towards God and one another. This should apply to the daily situation and life. The whole community was responsible to the sovereign will of Yahweh. This was expressed in the absolute laws and refined legal usage. In the case of individual downtrodden by the powerful, Yahweh intervened (Anderson, 1997:250).

Torah was meant to take back Israelites to a divine way of life. For Brueggemann Torah (2000:54) explained that Israel was guaranteed an enjoyment of the given land and honoring torah led to success and prosperity. The link between torah and land was central to God. This was the reason to why the land of Israel had the year of Jubilee (Lev. 25) as a reminder that land was not from them but a gift to them. Jubilee was "the year of proclamation of liberty to the Israelites who had become enslaved for debts and a restoration of land to families who had been compelled to sell it out of economic need in the previous 50 years" (Freedmann, 1992:1025). Therefore, land had its own rights over against them and even its own existence. It was a covenant with them but not totally at their disposal. Brueggemann (2000:54) added that land was for sharing with all the heirs of the covenant as an opportunity also to administer justice (Deut. 24:17-18, Amos 5:10-12). Land was not intended to diminish the value or the presence of brothers and sisters.

The meaningless of land as explained by Brueggemann (2000:69) was brought by land management that Israel attempted through kingship. The Israelite kings presided over the organized life of Israel and were responsible for the land. Borrowed kingship ideas from the neighborhood of the Israelites made the Israel kings get inclined to the control of land as a

possession. Initially the kings were to manage land as a gift entrusted to them but not as a possessed. He added that the central activity of an Israelite king was to read the torah which he was as well subjected to. The kingship institution was to serve the fundamental commitment out of priority and authority of king. The kingship power was put in the service of a special faith and a peculiar vision. The way to keep, preserve, and control land was guided by the reading of torah which reminded the king that he is a brother of the other brothers and sisters.

4.3 The Old Testament Perspectives Prohibiting the Selling of Land

This study noted that Ahab regarded land as buy and sell commodity. According to Brueggemann (2000:87) Ahab's mentality of land perceived as a commodity demean a Divine gift 'I will give you a better vineyard for it or if it seems good to you, I will give you its value in money' (1 Kings 21:2). This contrasted the views of Naboth on land, for him land was not a commodity for trade rather an inalienable inheritance, 'God forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers' (1 Kings 21:3). The above expressions raise two views on land. Schmidt (1984:37) concurred with Brueggemann (2000:47) that God is regarded as the owner of land (Lev 25:23) who gave it to Israel as an inheritance (Deut 12:10, Ps 78: 55). This land did not belong to them and they should not take it for granted.

The monarchy mentality of demeaning the Divine gift has been analyzed by Brueggemann (2000:54), Freedman (1992:102), and Schmidt (1984:37) as a symbol of overthrowing the Divine ownership of land. To them there were conflicts between the old Israelite property laws and the prevailing interests of King Ahab. The former guaranteed Naboth's protection of selling or exchanging his inherited land, when the latter accommodated the expansion and consolidation of crown property. Ahab exploited the belief of the Ancient Orient that property could be freely traded, bought, exchanged, or mortgaged (1 Kings 21:2). His greed was thwarted by Naboth's implicit appeal to the Israelite law of property which prohibited sale or exchange of inherited land except for its transfer as an inheritance (1 King 21:3). This showed how Ahab employed the power of his loyal office to eliminate Naboth and his sons unlawfully and to gain possession of their land. This instance of might before right was a perversion of the king's role indicating that in some ways the Israelite monarchy borrowed from the Ancient Oriental despotism.

4.3.1 Hegemony in 1 Kings 21:1-16

Hegemony is a system by the ruling class which holds that the interest of those in power is for the interest of all, showing the necessity for predominance of one class over the other. Hegemony has an alternative creation of challenging the desires for the unprivileged to occupy better social class (Williams: 1977:111). Ashcroft (2007:106) claimed that hegemony is the power of the ruling class to convince other classes that their interests are the interests of all. It shows that it is natural for one group to dominate as important for the sake of stability, social order and advancement.

Hegemony is demonstrated in the text through the narration. The text reflected the behavior of the king and those related to power, on how they perceived land and treated the powerless. Ahab offered to buy or exchange the land in respect of the Israel's tradition of land. The reaction of Ahab endangered the life of Naboth to those executing King's orders. Naboth's beliefs which was also Ahab's beliefs were made as beliefs to be negotiated or compromised. In Ahab's world, land was land to others.

In failing to respect, God's principle, this study concluded that Ahab was supportive of the hegemonic system, as Naboth was murdered; Ahab was happy and ready to possess the land. Ahab would not have advocated for foreign values over those of the Israel community. Ahab would have protected Naboth using God's law in Leviticus 23:25. As Comay (1993:206) rightly argued 'Ahab failure to accept and respect Naboth's belief played a role in maintaining inequality of power, an authoritarian and hegemonic society that meant to oppress the poor.

This study also found that hegemony was supported throughout in this text. Critical reading showed that the author presented Ahab and Jezebel as the most powerful and influential to the elders. Naboth was never given a chance to utter a word in his defense. Author assumed Ahab's authority over Naboth as he writes. What happens in this case was that the author gave more power to Ahab and Jezebel compared to God's principles. Naboth was silence with his fate to be decided by those in authority.

4.3.2 Crime

This study observed that land conflicts reveals in 1 Kings 21:1-16 led to crime. In relation to crime as discussed by Elwell (1984:284), there were the codes formalized in existing laws for the protection of individuals and the life styles expected by the king and the deity. For him a crime was a rejection of deity. In close relationship, Stevenson (2011:338) defined crime as an action which constituted a serious offence against an individual or the state and was punishable by law. The contemporary understanding of a crime entailed "illegal activities" (McIntosh, 2013:357).

Both Ahab and his Phoenician wife-Jezebel committed a crime that deserved capital punishment. The crime committed by Ahab was seen in his confiscation of Naboth's vineyard. This presented him as having consented to Naboth's murder. Comay (1993:40) argued that Ahab did not merely tolerate Jezebel's activities but took an active part in them; therefore he was as guilty as his wife.

The crime committed by Jezebel was carrying out the murder plan for Naboth and the scheming on how to get false witnesses against him for her husband to confiscate Naboth's vineyard. According to Freedmann (1992:848) these biblical texts present Jezebel in a thoroughly negative picture of her as an undoubtedly powerful woman who contrived the legal death of Naboth the Jezreelite so that her husband could obtain his vineyard. This was indicated in her letters written in Ahab's name and the use of the king's seal which were her routine acts on her part rather than an illegitimate usurpation of authority. In support of these, Comay (1993:205) argued that Jezebel was a strong-willed woman who clearly dominated her husband upon Naboth's charges of blasphemy against God and the king to have him stoned to death. This judicial murder was carried out and the law stated that a condemned man's property was passed to hands of the king.

4.3.3 Capital Punishment.

In this study, God's justice should be administered in the land therefore God guides the prophets on how to administer through death sentence. Stevenson (2011:208) defined capital punishment "as an offence or charge liable to death penalty". According to Weingreen (1989:113-40) the most serious criminal offence in the Ancient Israel was murder. Capital offence was construed as the deliberate killing of a human being following a preconceived plan. In the modern legal terms it can be defined as premeditated homicide. Exodus 21:14, Deuteronomy 19:11, Numbers 35:16-21

describes an act of murder as treacherous and cunning. The penalty for premeditated homicide was execution.

Capital punishment in 1 Kings 21:1-16 was manifested by the order of Jezebel which assumed the socio-religious relationship between Naboth and Israelites. Jezebel's scheme to execute and confiscate gave Ahab confidence of possessing the land. 1 Kings 21:8, Jezebel showed that Ahab's had authority being the king, as his authority was anchored on Divine law which punished whoever sin against God (blasphemy) and king. The study questioned Jezebel's claim for the divine. Dube (2000: 116) argued that there was need for postcolonial readers to be suspicious of the ideological motives behind such divine claims. In associating with Israel's law Jezebel shows Ahab had supreme authority that cannot be questioned.

4.3.4 Intermarriage

This study observed that the intermarriage was a profane practice in Israel (Deut 7) as it influenced Israelites religion and behavior in the land. Intermarriage meant "a marriage between people of different races, castes, or religions" Stevenson (2011:741). According to Brueggemann (2002:88) the intermarriage between Ahab (Israelite) and Jezebel (Phoenician) introduced new ideas of perceiving land. It introduced the Canaanite kingship as an institution of ruling and manipulation, it introduced a mercantile view of land as a commodity to be secured by whatever means, it also introduced an alien view of torah that makes the king immune from his demands 'sullen and vexed' (1 Kings 21:8). He added that in the speech and action of Jezebel covenantal view of kingship, land and torah were all called into question. Jezebel's presence embodies an alien view of kingship in relation to land and torah. To her the notion of land as an 'inheritance' directly contradicted the royal notions of land management. The royal notions of land knew no limitation but sanction confiscation and royal prerogatives. Brueggemann (2002:88) further argued that Jezebel's culture allowed the king to use his power in all circumstances.

Jezebel's language and culture has being nurtured in the commercial civilization of Phoenicia as Anderson (1997:250) argued that Phoenicia tradition had different conceptions of property. Her Baal religion placed no limitations on the exercise of royal power. He added that Jezebel's behavior caused an explicit conflict between the religion of the Baal and Yahwistic faith. Brueggemann (2002:54) introduced a similar idea by arguing that the most dangerous behavior and central temptation of the land was the worship of other gods which brought about the contradiction of torah as a key guideline of the life in the land. It contained the guidelines for land management which entailed the obedience to Yahweh and honouring covenant. Therefore, Naboth suffered because of the hegemonic culture.

5.0 Conclusion

Postcolonial reading of 1 Kings 21:1-16 portrayed social injustices, equality, and also exposed the hegemonic power. Many scholars pointed at the place of Naboth in relation to land and like many Kenyans, suffered oppression and denial of accessing lands which rightly belong to them. Most scholars argue that in 1 Kings 21:1-16 God is perceived as the owner of land. Brueggemann (2002) expressed that land was a gift from God who owns it. Israelites were temporal residents who should live in it guided by faith and law. In (Lev. 25:23) land belonged to God who gave it out as an inheritance. Israelites inherited land from God and this inheritance should be shared and passed on

within families. The distinct factor with this land was that God gave it freely to Israelites in a covenantal relationship. It was guided by the divine laws as Keck (1994) claimed that land should remain in the family and if given to another person it was redeemable in the year of jubilee.

Postcolonial reading of 1 Kings 21:1-16 expresses how the text brings out the voice of a powerless oppressed sufferer who is made landless. In rising his voice to the understanding and perception of the land, May (1988) expressed that land was not for sale. Nothing amount to the value of land. This can be equated to life which was not portable. The way life was treated was the way land should for it gave identity, protection and voice. No one had supremacy over land apart from God. (Keck (1994) condemned the supreme idea that comes with power elaborated by Newsom (1992) that if not used well it legalizes abuse of office happening when the leader is weak in terms of jurisdiction and execution. Ahab portrayed a weak leader who allowed his associate (wife) to downplay him by using his power for unjustified benefit.

Postcolonial reading of 1 Kings 21:1-16 has exposed that the foreign leadership introduced in Israel destabilized God's community (1 Sam 8:8-10). It came with new leadership structure. Kings became the owners and caretakers of land and administrators of Israel. Israel no longer heeded instructions from God through the prophets but rather the new leadership gave humanly instructions. As Arnold & Williamson (2005) claimed monarchy introduced polytheistic and intermarriages which God had warned them before possessing Canaan (Deut. 7:1-4). The context of 1 Kings 21:1-16 is within monarchy. Robinson (1997) explained that monarchical power was exposed. Hamilton (2001) added that it raised the voice of powerless and that the confidence in which Naboth rejected the King's offer was an indication and hope that there was hope and rights of those oppressed. Naboth was empowered and aware of law as a tool to protect his property. Therefore he used it to challenge the oppressive system. Being aware of the law of land as an inheritance for his family and had land document in terms of boundaries and witness he rejected the offer with the rights he holds. Barton & Muddimann (2001) expressed that 1 Kings 21:1-16 was a text which empowered the silenced, ignored, oppressed and voiceless in the society.

Postcolonial reading of 1 Kings 21:1-16 exposed that those associated with power may misuse it to manipulate, abuse the law, and offices to achieve their goals. Jezebel being close to power indicated that there will always be conflict in power. Therefore there should be clear laws protecting the office and authority from the interference of spouses and relatives. Carson (1994) explained that Jezebel changing the law indicated that somehow Israel's law was at par with those in power. And whoever speaks means the voice of the king which should be implemented.

5.2 Recommendations

The findings from the postcolonial reading of 1 Kings 21:1-16 has presented useful responses to land clashes. This study recommends a rereading of 1 Kings 21:1-16 through a postcolonial perspective which gave an opportunity to theologically response to land clashes with enough resources, especially on God's perspective on land and how people should treat land.

Postcolonial reading of 1 Kings 21:1-16 proposes that all citizens be aware of the constitutional rights from human to property. This will enable them to protect themselves against any manipulations, harassments and threats. For instance the Constitution of Kenya states clearly that 'land belongs to all Kenyans'. What that means to Kenyans may not be clearly understood. There

is need to educate Kenyans through civil education which would be of great help. The land laws also should be revised. Many land laws were written during colonial time which suited their favours leading to land injustices. This affected Kenyans and benefited the post-colonial leaders and their associates. Revising laws will help in tracing historical land injustices and addressing them. This would mitigate the land clashes experience every election periods whereby politicians use land as a vehicle of wooing communities, creating tribal enmity to gain a wining vote.

Conclusively, the postcolonial insights gained in this study support the proposals that the perpetrators of land clashes should be prosecuted and justice delivered to the victims thereof. Capital punishment should be imposed on the perpetrators of land clashes. The laws should be revised to restate the powers of a leader to ensure that a leader cannot use power to illegally relocate citizen in order to take their land. There should be laws pulling away leaders' spouses (first ladies) from accessing power functions which is exemplified as used wrongly just as did Jezebel. Finally there should be laws ensuring that all foreign citizens get well rooted and grounded in the new religious and cultural heritage.

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