

Dr. Robert Vannoy, Exodus to Exile, Session 4B, Treaty, Tabernacle, Apostasy, God's Relenting Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Vannoy, Exodus to Exile, Session 4B, Treaty, Tabernacle, Apostasy, God's Relenting, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Robert Vannoy's lecture 4B, "Exodus to Exile," explores several key themes within the biblical book of Exodus. It analyzes the relationship between Ancient Near Eastern vassal treaties and the Sinai covenant, arguing for the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy. The lecture highlights the significance of the tabernacle as God's dwelling place among His people and the role of the Holy Spirit in equipping craftsmen for its construction. Vannoy also examines the Israelites' apostasy with the Golden Calf and Moses' intercession, and discusses the theological implications of God "relenting" (naham) in response to human actions and prayers. Finally, Vannoy stresses the importance of observing the Sabbath as a sign of the covenant between God and Israel.

2. 21 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Vannoy, Exodus to Exile, Session 4B – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Historical Books → Exodus to Exile).



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3. Briefing Document: Vannoy, Exodus to Exile, Session 4B, Treaty, Tabernacle, Apostasy, God's Relenting

Here's a briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided excerpts of Robert Vannoy's lecture, "Exodus to Exile, Lecture 4B":

Briefing Document: Robert Vannoy, Exodus to Exile, Lecture 4B

Main Themes:

- **The Sinai Covenant and ANE Vassal Treaties:** The lecture explores the analogy between Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) vassal treaties and the Sinai Covenant, particularly as it relates to the book of Deuteronomy.
- **The Tabernacle:** The lecture discusses the instructions for the construction of the Tabernacle and its significance as the visible presence of God in the midst of his people.
- **The Golden Calf Apostasy and God's Relenting:** The lecture examines the incident of the Golden Calf, Moses's intercession, and the theological implications of God "relenting" (Hebrew: *naham*) from his intended judgment.

Key Ideas and Facts:

1. Deuteronomy and ANE Vassal Treaties:

- **Deuteronomy as a Treaty Document:** Vannoy highlights Meredith Kline's argument that Deuteronomy's literary genre resembles ANE vassal treaties. This has implications for understanding its date of origin and transmission.
- "The literary genre of Deuteronomy also has important implications for the way in which, having once been produced, this document would have been transmitted to subsequent generations. By their very nature treaties like Deuteronomy were inviolable. They were sealed legal contracts."
- **Prohibition Against Alteration:** A key characteristic of these treaties was a prohibition against altering the document, suggesting Deuteronomy should be viewed as an intact document without significant modification over time.
- "In some of the Hittite treaties, as well as the biblical material, there's an explicit prohibition against altering anything in the treaty."
- **Challenge to Critical Theories:** This understanding challenges critical theories that view Deuteronomy as a product of multiple additions and revisions over

centuries, particularly the "Josiah Date (621 BC)" which is "Still Held by Most Critics" today.

- "According to the current speculations Deuteronomy was produced by an extended process of modification and enlargement of a pliable tradition...They were in fact protected from all alteration, erasure, and expansion by the most specific, solemn, and severe sanctions."
- **Grace and Law in the Covenant:** Wenham's perspective on grace and law connects to the treaty-covenant analogy. Obedience to the law isn't the source of blessing but augments an already-given blessing.
- "The Sinaitic covenant is not modeled on a royal grant but on a vassal treaty...But even here the laws are set in a context of a gracious, divine initiative. Obedience to the law is not the source of blessing, but it augments a blessing already given."
- **Historical Prologue and Stipulations:** The covenant structure includes a historical prologue (God's saving acts) preceding the stipulations (laws), emphasizing that the laws are based on grace.
- "The structure of the covenant form, with the historical prologue preceding the stipulations section, makes it clear that the laws are based on grace. In Deuteronomy the saving acts of God, Deuteronomy 1-3, are related before the stipulations are imposed on Israel in Deuteronomy 4 and following."

2. The Tabernacle:

- **Centrality of the Tabernacle:** The Tabernacle is central to God's covenant dealings with Israel, representing His presence among them.
- "The tabernacle is central to God's covenant dealings with his people. This is the covenant promise – that 'they should be my people and I will be their God' – and the tabernacle is the visible focus of the covenant – 'I will dwell among the children of Israel, and be their God. They shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, in order that I might dwell among them.'"
- **Climax of Redemption:** Motyer argues that the Tabernacle is the climax of redemption, the purpose for which God brought Israel out of Egypt.
- "God's tabernacle is the climax of redemption; he brought them out of Egypt for this very purpose that he might dwell among them."

- **Workmen Provided by the Lord:** The Lord provided workmen, anointed by His Spirit, to do the skilled work of artistic design and craftsmanship required to build the Tabernacle (Exodus 31:1-11).
- "I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skilled ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship."
- **Importance of the Sabbath:** The Sabbath is stressed, even with all the work to be done. It's a sign between God and the Israelites, emphasizing rest and holiness.
- "The Sabbath is stressed – Exodus 31:12-17...This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so that you may know that I am the Lord who makes you holy."

3. The Golden Calf Apostasy:

- **Violation of the Covenant:** The Golden Calf incident is presented as a violation of the covenant, occurring even before the covenant documents were fully established.
- **Possible Interpretations:** The lecture discusses various interpretations of the Golden Calf, including it being a pedestal for Yahweh or a symbol of Yahweh's power, both of which ultimately reduce Yahweh to a nature god.
- **Violation of the Second Commandment:** Hodge's view is presented, suggesting that the Golden Calf was primarily a violation of the second commandment (against graven images) rather than the first (against other gods).
- "Their sin then lay, not in their adopting another god, but in their pretending to worship a visible symbol of him whom no symbol could represent."
- **Moses's Intercession:** Moses intercedes for the people, using arguments based on God's past actions, His reputation among the Egyptians, and His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel.
- "Why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand?...Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self."
- **God Relents (Naham):** The Lord relents from destroying the people in response to Moses's prayer. This raises the theological question of God's immutability vs. his "repentance" or relenting.

- "Then the Lord relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened."
- **Anthropopathic Language:** The lecture explains that when *naham* is used of God, it's anthropopathic, meaning it describes God's actions in terms understandable to humans. It's not a change in God's essential character but a response to human actions.
- "When *naham* is used of God, however, the expression is anthropopathic, and there is not ultimate tension. From man's limited, earthly, finite perspective it only appears that God's purposes have changed."
- **Jeremiah 18 and Conditionality:** Jeremiah 18:7-10 is cited to illustrate that God's pronouncements are often conditional on human response.
- "'If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned.'"
- **Strategy vs. Tactics Analogy:** The lecture introduces an analogy to warfare strategy and tactics. God's unchangeableness represents the overall strategy (eternal purposes), while His relenting represents changes in tactics (the means to accomplish those purposes).
- "Strategy" is the larger plan, the ultimate goal and purpose. "Tactics" are the means used to accomplish the ends. In any given war, the tactics may change, while the strategy remains constant, and this writer was suggesting that in the Old Testament, you might view the texts that speak of God's relenting, his repentance, as at the level of tactics, while his unchangeableness functions at the level of the strategic plan, his eternal purposes that remain constant."

Implications:

The lecture highlights the importance of understanding the historical and literary context of the Old Testament. By drawing parallels to ANE treaties and exploring the theological implications of God's actions, Vannoy offers a deeper understanding of the Sinai Covenant, the Tabernacle, and the nature of God's relationship with His people.

4. Study Guide: Vannoy, Exodus to Exile, Session 4B, Treaty, Tabernacle, Apostasy, God's Relenting

Exodus: Treaty, Tabernacle, and Apostasy

Study Guide

This study guide is designed to help you review and understand the key concepts from Robert Vannoy's Lecture 4B, "Exodus to Exile," focusing on the treaty analogy, the tabernacle, and the golden calf apostasy.

I. ANE Vassal Treaties and the Sinai Covenant

- Understand the analogy between Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) vassal treaties and the Sinai covenant.
- Explain Meredith Kline's argument regarding the implications of the treaty-covenant analogy for the dating and transmission of Deuteronomy.
- Discuss the significance of treaties being considered inviolable and the practice of depositing them in sanctuaries.
- Summarize the differences between the modern critical approach to Deuteronomy and Kline's view.
- Explain how the covenant setting of the law emphasizes that salvation is not based on works.
- Explain the structure of the covenant form, with the historical prologue preceding the stipulations section, and why that is important.
- Discuss the role of grace in the covenant relationship as described by Wenham and how it relates to the Shema in Deuteronomy 6:4.

II. The Tabernacle

- Explain the significance of the Tabernacle in the book of Exodus.
- Summarize Motyer's perspective on the Tabernacle as the climax of God's redemptive covenant program for his people.
- Discuss the tension between God's presence and accessibility as symbolized by the Tabernacle.

- Understand the connection between the Tabernacle and the idea of God dwelling in the midst of his people.
- Explain the significance of the work of the Holy Spirit in equipping individuals like Bezalel and Oholiab for artistic design and craftsmanship related to the Tabernacle.
- Know the importance of the Sabbath observance in connection with the Tabernacle construction, and that Sabbath law is part of that foundational law.
- Understand that the ten commandments were written by the finger of God on stone tablets.

III. The Golden Calf Apostasy and God's Relenting

- Describe the circumstances surrounding the golden calf incident and the people's request for "gods" to go before them.
- Analyze the potential interpretations of the golden calf, whether as a pedestal for Yahweh or as a symbol of Yahweh's power.
- Explain Charles Hodge's perspective on the golden calf incident as a violation of the second commandment.
- Contrast God's instructions for making his presence visible through the Tabernacle with the people's attempt to create a visible symbol of God through the golden calf.
- Summarize Moses' first intercession for the people after the golden calf incident, including his arguments based on God's past actions, Israel's enemies, and previous promises.
- Explain the concept of God "relenting" (naham) and how it relates to God's immutability, addressing potential contradictions and differing interpretations.
- Discuss the anthropopathic nature of language used to describe God's emotions, as well as the tension between divine immutability and the idea of God responding to human actions.
- Understand Jeremiah 18:7-10 and its connection to God relenting based on human response.
- Differentiate between human and divine repentance.

- Explain the distinction between "strategy" and "tactics" as a helpful framework for understanding God's immutability and relenting.

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. According to Meredith Kline, how did the literary genre of Deuteronomy affect its transmission to subsequent generations?
2. Why does Wenham believe the Sinaitic covenant is not modeled on a royal grant but on a vassal treaty?
3. According to Motyer, what is the ultimate significance of the Tabernacle described in Exodus?
4. Explain the role of the Holy Spirit in the construction of the Tabernacle, specifically referencing Exodus 31.
5. What is the significance of the Sabbath in the context of the Tabernacle construction, and how does it relate to creation?
6. How does Exodus 32:1 relate back to Exodus 24:18 in the narrative?
7. What are two possible interpretations of the golden calf incident and what did it symbolize for the Israelites?
8. Summarize Moses' main arguments during his first intercession for the Israelites after the golden calf incident.
9. Explain the meaning of the Hebrew word "naham" and how it relates to the concept of God "relenting."
10. How does the "strategy" and "tactics" distinction help us understand God's immutability and relenting, and how it can be viewed with warfare terms?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Kline argued that, because Deuteronomy was a treaty, it was considered inviolable and protected from alteration or expansion. This meant it would have been transmitted as an intact document, contradicting theories of additions and accretions over time.
2. Wenham states that the Sinaitic covenant is modeled on a vassal treaty because the vassal's obligations are much more prominent. However, he emphasizes that

even in this model, the laws are set in a context of gracious, divine initiative, where obedience to the law is not the source of blessing, but it augments a blessing already given.

3. Motyer emphasizes that the Tabernacle is central to God's covenant dealings with His people, and the visible focus of the covenant. The Tabernacle represents the climax of redemption, symbolizing God coming to dwell in the midst of His people.
4. In Exodus 31, the Holy Spirit is described as equipping individuals like Bezalel and Oholiab with skilled ability, knowledge, and artistic design for the construction of the Tabernacle. This highlights the Holy Spirit's broader role in enabling craftsmanship and artistic endeavors, not just spiritual matters.
5. The Sabbath is stressed in connection with the Tabernacle construction, emphasizing the importance of rest and holiness. The Sabbath law is a reminder of God's creation and establishes a sign between God and Israel, but it is also part of the foundational law.
6. Exodus 32:1, where the people ask Aaron to make them gods, relates back to Exodus 24:18, which states that Moses entered the cloud and stayed on the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights. The people's request occurs because Moses' prolonged absence creates a sense of uncertainty and leads them to seek a visible representation of God.
7. One interpretation is that the golden calf was intended as a pedestal for Yahweh, a visible symbol without being a direct image of God. Another interpretation is that the calf symbolized Yahweh's power and fertility, reducing Him to a nature god and violating the prohibition of graven images.
8. Moses argues that God should not destroy His people because He brought them out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand. He also argues that the Egyptians would misinterpret their destruction, questioning God's motives, and reminds God of His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel.
9. The Hebrew word "naham" means "to relent" or "to be sorry." It is used to describe God changing His dealings with men according to His purposes, but in a way that maintains his immutability.

10. The distinction between "strategy" and "tactics" helps explain God's immutability and relenting by comparing them to warfare terms. The "strategy" (God's unchangeableness) represents His constant, eternal purposes, while the "tactics" (God's relenting) represent the means used to accomplish those ends, which may change in response to human behavior.

Essay Questions

1. Compare and contrast the modern critical approach to the Book of Deuteronomy with Meredith Kline's perspective based on the ANE treaty analogy. What are the key differences, and what evidence does Kline use to support his view?
2. Discuss the significance of the Tabernacle in the book of Exodus. How does it function as a symbol of God's presence among His people, and what theological implications does it have for the relationship between God and humanity?
3. Analyze the golden calf incident in Exodus 32. What factors contributed to the Israelites' apostasy, and how did this event impact their relationship with God?
4. Examine the concept of God "relenting" (naham) in Exodus 32 and other Old Testament passages. How does this idea relate to the doctrine of God's immutability, and what theological challenges does it present?
5. Discuss the role of Moses as an intercessor in Exodus 32. What arguments does he use to plead for the Israelites, and how does his intercession demonstrate the nature of God's grace and justice?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **ANE Vassal Treaties:** Agreements between a dominant king (Suzerain) and a lesser king (vassal) in the Ancient Near East, outlining obligations and stipulations.
- **Sinai Covenant:** The covenant established between God and the Israelites at Mount Sinai, characterized by laws, promises, and a unique relationship.
- **Deuteronomy:** The fifth book of the Hebrew Bible, presented as a series of speeches by Moses before the Israelites enter the Promised Land.
- **Form Criticism:** A method of biblical criticism that analyzes the literary forms and genres used in the Bible to understand their origin and meaning.
- **Josiah Date (621 BC):** The theory that Deuteronomy was written or compiled during the reign of King Josiah in the 7th century BC.
- **Mosaic Authorship:** The traditional belief that Moses authored the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible), including Deuteronomy.
- **Shema:** A Jewish prayer and declaration of faith found in Deuteronomy 6:4, proclaiming the oneness of God: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one."
- **Tabernacle:** A portable sanctuary or tent of meeting used by the Israelites during their wanderings in the wilderness, serving as a place for worship and God's presence.
- **Apostasy:** The abandonment or rejection of a religious or political belief or principle.
- **Relent (naham):** A Hebrew word used to describe God changing His mind or actions in response to human behavior or circumstances, often translated as "repent."
- **Anthropomorphism:** The attribution of human characteristics or behavior to a god, animal, or object.
- **Anthropopathism:** The attribution of human feelings or emotions to a god.
- **Immutability:** The quality of being unchangeable or constant.
- **Intercession:** The act of intervening on behalf of another, especially in prayer.

5. FAQs on Vannoy, Exodus to Exile, Session 4B, Treaty, Tabernacle, Apostasy, God's Relenting, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on Exodus Themes

- **What is the significance of the Sinai Covenant being modeled after ancient Near Eastern (ANE) vassal treaties?**
- The analogy between the Sinai Covenant and ANE vassal treaties suggests that Deuteronomy should be viewed as an intact legal document from the Mosaic era, rather than a product of later modifications. This analogy highlights that the laws were given within a context of God's grace, obedience to the law augments a blessing already given, and emphasizes salvation isn't based on works. The structure, with a historical prologue followed by stipulations, underscores that the laws are based on grace, stemming from God's prior saving acts.
- **What does the construction of the Tabernacle reveal about God's plan for His people?**
- The Tabernacle represents the climax of God's redemptive plan, signifying His permanent presence among His people. It was God's dwelling place among the Israelites, symbolizing a deepening of the covenant relationship initiated during the Exodus from Egypt. The Tabernacle embodies God's intention to dwell in the midst of his people.
- **How does the Holy Spirit's role extend beyond sanctification and spiritual matters, as illustrated in the construction of the Tabernacle?**
- The Holy Spirit is not limited to sanctification and spiritual matters but also equips individuals with skills in artistic design and craftsmanship. Exodus 31:1-11 highlights the Holy Spirit's role in providing the craftsmen like Bezalel with the skilled ability and knowledge to create the Tabernacle, indicating a broader scope of the Spirit's work.

- **Why is the Sabbath so strongly emphasized in the context of the Tabernacle's construction?**
- The Sabbath is emphasized to remind Israel to keep the Sabbath holy and not to work on the seventh day. Observing the Sabbath is a sign between God and Israel, signifying that God is the one who makes them holy and serving as a lasting covenant. It is a reminder of God's own rest after creation and a call to prioritize rest and worship amidst the demands of work, and connect with God.
- **What is the significance of the Golden Calf incident in Exodus 32?**
- The Golden Calf incident represents the first great apostasy of Israel, highlighting the fallen nature of God's covenant people. It was a violation of the prohibition of making a graven image and occurred while Moses was receiving instructions for the Tabernacle. The calf was a symbol of power that attempted to represent God in a physical form. This shows that Moses was establishing the way in which God was going to establish His presence among His people through the construction of the Tabernacle.
- **What arguments did Moses use in his first intercession for Israel after the Golden Calf incident?**
- Moses interceded on behalf of the Israelites by arguing: (1) God brought them out of Egypt with great power; (2) the Egyptians would misinterpret Israel's destruction; (3) God had previously promised Abraham, Isaac, and Israel that their descendants would be numerous.
- **What does it mean when the text says God "relented" or "repented" (naham) after Moses' intercession, and how does this reconcile with God's immutability?**
- When the text says God "relented," it doesn't imply a change in His character but rather a change in His dealings with humanity based on their response. It reflects God's willingness to respond to human repentance and prayer while maintaining His unchanging character and ultimate purposes. The unchanging nature of God functions at the level of the strategic plan, whereas his relenting functions at the level of tactics.

- **How does the concept of God's "relenting" or "repenting" (naham) relate to the principles outlined in Jeremiah 18:7-10?**
- The concept of God's "relenting" (naham) aligns with the principles in Jeremiah 18:7-10, which illustrate that God's pronouncements of judgment or blessing are conditional upon human response. If a nation repents of its evil, God will relent and not inflict the disaster He planned, and vice versa. This shows how God will reconsider the good He had intended to do if they turn to evil.