

Dr. Robert Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 1, Critical Theories, JEDP, Date and Authorship Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 1, Critical Theories, JEDP, Date and Authorship, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture excerpt from Robert Vannoy's "Deuteronomy" course discusses the JEDP theory of Pentateuchal authorship, a widely accepted but debated model proposing four distinct sources (Yahwist, Elohist, Deuteronomist, and Priestly) with Deuteronomy playing a crucial role as the cornerstone of the theory's chronology. The lecture examines the theory's historical development and central arguments, focusing on the dating of Deuteronomy to the time of Josiah's reforms (around 621 BC) and its emphasis on centralized worship. The speaker presents contrasting perspectives, highlighting challenges to the JEDP theory, particularly regarding the date and influence of Deuteronomy, and the debate surrounding the centralization of worship in ancient Israel. Different scholarly opinions on the relative dating of legal materials within the Pentateuch are also compared. The lecture concludes by briefly mentioning alternative viewpoints that challenge Wellhausen's dating of Deuteronomy.

2. 12 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 1 – 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 → Pentateuch → Deuteronomy).



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3. Briefing Document: Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 1, Critical Theories, JEDP, Date and Authorship

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided lecture excerpts on Deuteronomy, focusing on the JEDP theory and the significance of Deuteronomy within it:

Briefing Document: Deuteronomy and the JEDP Hypothesis

Introduction

This document summarizes key points from a lecture series focusing on the Book of Deuteronomy. The lectures, given by Dr. Robert Vannoy, delve into the authorship, dating, literary structure, exegesis, and influence of Deuteronomy on the Old Testament. A central focus is the critical role Deuteronomy plays within the widely debated JEDP theory of the Pentateuch's composition.

I. Course Overview & Key Topics

- **Four Main Topics:** The course will explore Deuteronomy through four primary lenses:
 1. **Authorship and Dates:** Examining the book's origins and historical context, including a critical review of various authorship theories. This involves a detailed look at the JEDP hypothesis.
 2. **Literary Structure and Scope:** Analyzing the book's arrangement and how it impacts interpretation, particularly regarding its connection to ancient Near Eastern treaties.
 3. **Exegetical Studies of Selected Passages:** In-depth analysis of specific passages to derive meaning and significance.
 4. **Influence on Prophetic Writings & Deuteronomistic History:** Investigating Deuteronomy's impact on later Old Testament books and prophetic messages.

II. Literary Criticism & the JEDP Hypothesis

- **JEDP's Enduring Influence:** The lecture emphasizes that despite its age, the JEDP hypothesis, formulated by Julius Wellhausen, remains highly influential in Old Testament scholarship.
- **Core Tenets:** This theory proposes that the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament) is a composite work created by combining four primary sources: J

(Jehovah, ca. 850 B.C.), E (Elohim, ca. 750 B.C.), D (Deuteronomy, ca. 621 B.C.), and P (Priestly, ca. 550-450 B.C.).

- **Order of Composition:** The accepted order of development is J, then E, then D, and finally P.
- **The Documentary Hypothesis:** The JEDP framework is often termed the "documentary hypothesis," and it is often presented as fact rather than as a hypothesis or theory.
- The documentary hypothesis is used to explain alleged problems in the Old Testament.
- **Modern Acceptance:** Despite challenges, many modern commentaries and textbooks for religious studies still use the JEDP framework as their basis for interpretation.
- Popular examples are: The Layman's Bible Commentary, Torch Bible Commentaries, SCM Commentary, The Westminster Guides, and the Bible Guides.
- This acceptance pervades university-level religious studies as well, with textbooks like *Understanding the Old Testament* by B.W. Anderson, and *A Light to the Nations* by Norman Gottwald as examples.
- **Challenges to JEDP and a Return to the Old Testament's Own Claims:** There has been a move in scholarship back towards the acceptance of the Old Testament as a reliable piece of literature in terms of the history of ancient Israel.
- While the most radical aspects of the Wellhausen theory have been removed, its basic structure remains largely intact.
- **Deuteronomy's Central Role:** The lecture highlights that Deuteronomy is a cornerstone of the JEDP argument.
- The dating of Deuteronomy is absolutely crucial to the entire theory of the literary criticism of the Old Testament.
- Developments in understanding Deuteronomy can provide powerful arguments against the Wellhausen approach.

III. Wellhausen's View of Deuteronomy

- **Deuteronomy's Claim vs. Critical Interpretation:** The book of Deuteronomy claims Mosaic authorship, depicting itself as Moses's farewell address on the plains of Moab. However, the Wellhausen school views this as a "pious fraud."
- **De Wette and Josiah's Reforms:** Wilhelm de Wette, a precursor to Wellhausen, proposed that the law book found during Josiah's reforms (2 Kings 22) is largely equivalent to Deuteronomy, placing its composition shortly before this time (c. 621 BC).
- **Deuteronomy as a Fixed Point:** This dating of Deuteronomy becomes a critical fixed point in Wellhausen's theory, as it provides a chronological marker for the other JEDP sources. Legal material found in the other sources is then argued to be earlier or later based on its relationship to Deuteronomy.
- **Deuteronomistic Code and Other Legal Codes:** The main legal section of Deuteronomy (chapters 12-26) is called the "Deuteronomistic Code" which is compared with the other codes in the Pentateuch.
- The Deuteronomistic Code's unique focus is the idea of centralized worship.
- The "Covenant Code" (Exodus 20-23) is assigned to the J or JE sources and is considered earlier than Deuteronomy, with an emphasis on localized altars rather than centralized worship.
- The "Holiness Code" (Leviticus 17-24) is seen as distinct from, but broadly contemporaneous with Deuteronomy.
- The "Priestly Code" (P) is dated to the exilic or post-exilic period (550-450 B.C.) and thus is the latest of the four codes.
- **Progression of Legal Codes:** Wellhausen argued for a progression from simpler to more complex religious practices, with the legal codes in the Pentateuch reflecting this historical development. The date of Deuteronomy is therefore crucial, as it functions as the fixed point in this constructed sequence.
- S.R. Driver, in his ICC commentary on Deuteronomy, argues that the laws in Exodus indicate that altars could be built anywhere, while in Deuteronomy there is a restriction involved.

- J.N. Callow Smith, in *The Origin and History in Hebrew Law*, sees the Deuteronomistic Code as a revision of a previous code with parallels to those in Exodus.
- Smith claims that the law in Deuteronomy is "requiring that all public worship and in fellowship must be carried on in the central shrine in the temple in Jerusalem."
- Smith also argues that the Priestly Code is associated with the time of Ezra.
- **Centralization of Worship:** The centralization of worship in Jerusalem, as emphasized by the Deuteronomistic Code, becomes the key issue for the Wellhausen theory. Wellhausen states that he always goes back to this centralization of the cultus.

IV. The Importance of Deuteronomy to the JEDP Theory

- **Keystone of the System:** Numerous scholars are cited who emphasize that Deuteronomy is the "keystone" or "fixed point" of the JEDP system and its chronology.
- G.W. Anderson states that "at no point has the conflict been keener than on the date and nature of Deuteronomy, the keystone of the Wellhausen system of chronology." He goes on to say that "if there is serious uncertainty here, the entire structure of the theory is weakened."
- H.H. Rowley states that "the code of Deuteronomy, therefore, is of vital importance in Pentateuchal criticism since it is primarily by relation to it that the other documents are dated."
- Otto Eisfeldt called it an "Archimedean point," "By this part of history a large section of Deuteronomy has been established, and a fixed point was discovered by which the age of the other component parts of the Pentateuch could also be determined."
- **Fixed Point for Dating:** The date assigned to Deuteronomy is crucial because it serves as the fixed point from which the other JEDP sources are dated.
- If the 621 BC date is challenged, the entire structure of the JEDP theory is threatened.
- **Centralization of Worship as the Key:** The theory argues that centralization of worship, a feature of Deuteronomy, did not exist until the 7th century BC.

V. Challenges to the Wellhausen Position

- **Ongoing Debate:** The lecture stresses that despite the widespread influence of the Wellhausen theory, the dating of Deuteronomy and its relationship to other legal codes remains highly debated.
- **Challenges from Various Directions:** Some scholars advocate for a **post-exilic date** for Deuteronomy: R.H. Kennett proposed a post-exilic date for Deuteronomy, around the time of Haggai or Zechariah (c. 520 B.C.).
- Other challenges come from those who want to push the date earlier or from a perspective that accepts Mosaic authorship.
- **Manley's Opposition:** The lecture recommends the book, *The Book of the Law* by Manley, for a detailed comparison of the arguments made by Wellhausen and his followers, and to see if the material truly supports these assertions and conclusions.

VI. Conclusion

The lecture highlights the central importance of Deuteronomy within the JEDP hypothesis and demonstrates that the date of Deuteronomy is not a settled question. The dating of Deuteronomy is essential to the entire theory and is key to determining the relationship between the other four documents. The lecturer plans to discuss the arguments against the Wellhausen hypothesis by engaging in a closer study of Deuteronomy in the following sessions. The lecture encourages students to critically engage with both the Wellhausen theory and its challengers, especially the debate over the centralization of worship and its relationship to the other legal codes within the Pentateuch.

4. Study Guide: Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 1, Critical Theories, JEDP, Date and Authorship

Deuteronomy: A Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. According to Vannoy, what four broad topics will be covered in the course on Deuteronomy?
2. What is the JEDP hypothesis, and who formulated it?
3. According to Gerald Larue, what basic premises of the documentary hypothesis are accepted by most present-day scholarship?
4. What are the four sources of the Pentateuch and their approximate dates according to the JEDP theory?
5. What is R.J. Thompson's conclusion regarding the Graf-Wellhausen approach a century after it was first advocated?
6. According to Vannoy, what is misleading about how study guides and textbooks often present the JEDP theory?
7. What is the traditional view regarding the authorship of Deuteronomy? When did this view begin to be questioned?
8. What is Wilhelm de Wette's view on the book of Deuteronomy and the law book found in the temple during the time of Josiah?
9. According to the Wellhausen school, what is the main legal section of Deuteronomy and when did it originate?
10. According to Wellhausen, why is the centralization of worship the cornerstone of his theory?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The course will cover the authorship and dates of Deuteronomy, the literary structure and scope of the book, exegetical studies of selected passages, and the influence of Deuteronomy on prophetic writings and Deuteronomistic history.

2. The JEDP hypothesis is a theory that the Pentateuch is composed of four main sources (J, E, D, and P) written by different authors at different times. It was formulated by Julius Wellhausen.
3. According to Larue, most present-day scholarship accepts that different source materials are found in the Pentateuch, that the labels J, E, D, and P are acceptable for major sources, and that the order of development is that proposed in the Graf-Wellhausen thesis.
4. The four sources of the Pentateuch are J (the Jehovah source, ca. 850 B.C.), E (the Elohim source, ca. 750 B.C.), D (the Deuteronomy source, 621 B.C.), and P (the Priestly source, exilic or post-exilic, ca. 550-450 B.C.).
5. Thompson concluded that a century after being advocated, the Graf-Wellhausen approach continues to be favored by a majority of scholars and has eroded conservative views.
6. Vannoy suggests that study guides and textbooks often present the JEDP theory as established fact rather than a theory that has been challenged and disputed by other scholars.
7. The traditional view is that Deuteronomy was written by Moses on the plains of Moab before entering the Promised Land. This view began to be questioned in the early 19th century.
8. Wilhelm de Wette identified the law book found during Josiah's time with Deuteronomy, arguing that it originated shortly before that time (around 621 BC), implying its claim of Mosaic authorship was a pious fraud.
9. The main legal section of Deuteronomy, according to the Wellhausen school, is chapters 12 to 26, known as the Deuteronomic Code, which they believe originated in the time of King Josiah (about 621 BC).
10. According to Wellhausen, the centralization of worship is the cornerstone of his theory because he deduced the particular divergencies in the Pentateuchal sources from it, arguing that it was a new development of the 7th century BCE and fixed the date of Deuteronomy, enabling him to relatively date the other sources.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of Deuteronomy's dating within the JEDP hypothesis. How does the dating of Deuteronomy serve as a "keystone" for the entire system, and what implications would challenges to this dating have on the theory as a whole?
2. Compare and contrast the different legal codes within the Pentateuch according to the JEDP hypothesis: the Covenant Code, the Deuteronomistic Code, and the Priestly Code. How does the JEDP theory use these codes to demonstrate a development of religious practice in ancient Israel?
3. How does the JEDP theory's emphasis on the centralization of worship in Deuteronomy affect its interpretation of the other books in the Pentateuch? How does the theory account for the lack of emphasis on centralization in earlier codes?
4. What are the major criticisms of the JEDP theory discussed in the lecture? How do these criticisms challenge the claim of the theory's broad acceptance and the idea of a linear development of religious practice in ancient Israel?
5. How does the lecture connect the popular, modern commentaries and textbooks with the acceptance of the Wellhausen theory? In what ways does it claim these secondary resources fail to recognize other legitimate options for dating and authorship?

Glossary of Key Terms

Deuteronomy: The fifth book of the Pentateuch. In the context of this lecture, it is considered central to discussions about authorship and dating of the Pentateuch.

JEDP Hypothesis: A literary critical theory proposing that the Pentateuch is composed of four distinct source documents: J (Yahwist), E (Elohist), D (Deuteronomist), and P (Priestly).

Literary Criticism: The study and evaluation of literature, often involving the analysis of texts for their historical, cultural, or authorial contexts.

Wellhausen: Julius Wellhausen, a German biblical scholar who formulated the classic form of the JEDP hypothesis.

Graf-Wellhausen Thesis: The view that the Pentateuch is the result of a long process of editing and combining different sources, as proposed by K.H. Graf and Julius Wellhausen.

Covenant Code: Legal material found in Exodus 20-23, often assigned to either J or JE, considered earlier than Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomistic Code: Legal material found primarily in Deuteronomy 12-26, which the Wellhausen school dates to around 621 B.C.

Holiness Code: Legal material found in Leviticus 17-26.

Priestly Code (P): Legal material from the Priestly source, typically dated to the exilic or post-exilic period (550-450 B.C.), found in scattered sections of the Pentateuch.

Centralization of Worship: The idea that all worship should take place at a single designated location, typically the Temple in Jerusalem. Central to the JEDP dating scheme.

Mosaic Authorship: The traditional view that the Pentateuch, including Deuteronomy, was written by Moses.

Pious Fraud: A claim that the Mosaic origin of Deuteronomy is a deliberate deception to give the book authority.

Archimedean Point: A fixed point from which other things are determined, referencing Archimedes' saying that he could move the world if he had a place to stand. In this context, the date of Deuteronomy is the Archimedean point from which the dating of other Pentateuchal texts is determined.

Deuteronomistic History: A term referring to the historical books of the Old Testament (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings) as being influenced by the theological perspective of Deuteronomy.

5. FAQs on Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 1, Critical Theories, JEDP, Date and Authorship, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on the Book of Deuteronomy and Literary Criticism

1. **What are the four main topics that will be covered in this course on Deuteronomy?** The course will cover four broad topics: (1) authorship and date of Deuteronomy, including a survey of critical approaches like the JEDP theory; (2) the literary structure and scope of the book, particularly in relation to ancient Near Eastern treaties; (3) exegetical studies of selected passages; and (4) the influence of Deuteronomy on subsequent prophetic writings and the Deuteronomistic history.
2. **What is the JEDP theory, and how does it relate to the Pentateuch?** The JEDP theory, or the Documentary Hypothesis, proposes that the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament) is not the work of a single author (traditionally Moses) but is compiled from four main sources, labeled J, E, D, and P. These sources are thought to be written at different times, with J being the earliest (ca. 850 BC), followed by E (ca. 750 BC), D (ca. 621 BC), and P (exilic or post-exilic, ca. 550-450 BC). The theory suggests an order of development for the Pentateuch, with the sources layered on top of each other.
3. **What is the significance of Deuteronomy within the JEDP framework?** Deuteronomy holds a central position in the JEDP theory. Its dating to the time of Josiah's reforms (ca. 621 BC) is considered a fixed point. According to the JEDP theory, the legal material in Deuteronomy serves as a pivotal point to place all other sources. Materials with similar legal ideas are placed before or after, based on a notion of how legal and religious ideas developed. The theory posits that Deuteronomy's emphasis on centralized worship was a new development at that time, with earlier sources suggesting decentralized worship. This dating and identification are critical to establishing the order and relative dating of the J, E, and P sources.

4. **How does the concept of centralized worship relate to the JEDP theory and the dating of Deuteronomy?** The JEDP theory argues that Deuteronomy mandates the centralization of worship in Jerusalem, a new development supposedly introduced during the time of Josiah's reforms (ca. 621 BC). The theory contrasts this with the so-called Covenant Code in Exodus, which supposedly does not require worship at a single location. According to this argument, this idea of centralization of worship is what dates Deuteronomy to the 7th century BCE. This shift in the understanding of worship is presented as evidence for the late composition of Deuteronomy and it being written as a "pious fraud," not written by Moses as it states.
5. **What is the "Deuteronomic Code," and how does it differ from other law codes in the Pentateuch, according to the JEDP theory?** The Deuteronomic Code, primarily found in Deuteronomy chapters 12-26, is considered a distinct legal collection by the JEDP theory. The JEDP theory considers this code as a revision and expansion of the earlier Covenant Code in Exodus. The Deuteronomic Code emphasizes centralized worship, and the theory argues that there are differences in how similar laws are presented in Exodus compared to Deuteronomy, implying a development in time of these laws.
6. **How does the JEDP theory position the "Holiness Code" and the "Priestly Code" in relation to Deuteronomy?** The "Holiness Code" (Leviticus 17-24), or H, is viewed as contemporary with or slightly before or after Deuteronomy, not coming from as far before as the "Covenant Code." The "Priestly Code" (P), found in parts of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, is dated to the exilic or post-exilic period (ca. 550-450 BC), significantly later than Deuteronomy. The JEDP theory posits that the Priestly Code incorporates and expands upon earlier legal material.

7. **What challenges have been raised against the Wellhausen position on Deuteronomy?** Challenges to the Wellhausen position on Deuteronomy come from various angles. Some scholars propose a post-exilic date for Deuteronomy, while others push it to a time period that makes the proposed sequence in the JEDP theory untenable. These challenges question the notion that the centralization of worship was new in the 7th century BC and whether the legal codes actually show the kind of linear development that the JEDP theory claims. Some scholars argue that the content of Deuteronomy is not what you would expect from a 7th century document. Additionally, others challenge the notion that there is a development of the religion within the text as proposed by Wellhausen, suggesting instead that the material is an accurate depiction of an earlier religious tradition.

8. **Why is the dating of Deuteronomy so crucial to the JEDP theory, and what happens if its date is called into question?** The date of Deuteronomy is a "keystone" in the JEDP framework. If the dating of Deuteronomy is not fixed, the entire structure of the theory weakens, according to many critical scholars of the Old Testament. If Deuteronomy cannot be placed at the time of Josiah, as proposed by Wellhausen, the relative dating and developmental trajectory of the J, E, and P sources may not stand. Many scholars argue that the entire theory rests on the assumption that Deuteronomy was a 7th-century text. The whole order and development is disrupted if that fixed point of 621 BCE is not accurate.