

Dr. Robert Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 4, Survey of Support for Mosaic 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 4, Survey of Support for Mosaic Authorship, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture excerpt from Robert Vannoy's course on Deuteronomy examines the debate surrounding the book's authorship and date. **The traditional view**, advocating Mosaic authorship, is supported by numerous scholars from the early 20th century to the present, as detailed by Vannoy. **Conversely**, critical approaches challenge this, suggesting later dates and multiple authors. The lecture then explores **Meredith Kline's argument** that Deuteronomy's structure closely aligns with ancient Near Eastern suzerainty treaties, which supports a Mosaic origin. **Finally**, the lecture contrasts Kline's approach with that of other scholars, highlighting different methodologies and interpretations of the book's structure.

2. 25 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 4 – 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 4, Survey of Support for Mosaic Authorship

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided lecture excerpts on Deuteronomy:

Briefing Document: Authorship and Structure of Deuteronomy

I. Introduction

This document provides a briefing on the lecture material concerning the authorship and structure of the book of Deuteronomy, particularly focusing on arguments for a Mosaic origin. The lecture reviews various critical approaches to Deuteronomy, and contrasts them with arguments made by scholars who support Mosaic authorship. A significant portion of the lecture is dedicated to the covenant treaty structure of Deuteronomy as argued by Meredith Kline, contrasting his views with other critical scholars.

II. Key Themes and Arguments

- **Authorship Debate:** The lecture primarily revolves around the question of authorship and date of Deuteronomy. It outlines the progression of critical views, culminating in the Documentary Hypothesis (Wellhausen) and its dating of Deuteronomy to the late monarchical period (621 BC). It also discusses challenges to the Wellhausen position, including arguments for an earlier monarchical date and some pre-monarchical dates. It highlights proponents of the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy throughout the past century, emphasizing that this is the traditional view, and that there has been a continuous defense of this view.
- **Wellhausen's View:** The Documentary Hypothesis places the writing of Deuteronomy around 621 BC, coinciding with King Josiah's reforms.
- **Challenges to the 621 BC Date:** Some scholars have argued for a date earlier than 621 BC, but still within the monarchical period, while others have pushed for a pre-monarchical date, attributing the book's compilation to Samuel.
- **Mosaic Authorship Advocates:** The lecture surveys scholars like James Orr, H.M. Wiener, J. Ridderbos, O.T. Allis, E.J. Young, and R.K. Harrison, who defend the traditional view of Mosaic authorship. These scholars, spanning the early 1900s to the present, represent a consistent counter-argument to the dominant critical view.

- The lecture notes, "So my purpose of giving you those names is just to show that over this whole period of a century of time where this Mosaic authorship has been attacked, there have been those that have defended the Mosaic position all along."
- **Mosaic Authorship as a Foundational Position:** The lecture emphasizes the foundational nature of Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch for a conservative view of Scripture. It notes a concerning trend where concessions to post-Mosaic authorship are often seen as a slippery slope, leading to more liberal interpretations of scripture, and highlights how that trend has played out in Dutch scholarship.
- "So is it fair to say then that this Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is a very foundational position in determining conservative books?" The professor then responds with, "Yes, I think so."
- This point is illustrated by the example of three Dutch scholars where successive concessions regarding the Mosaic authorship resulted in a shift from a conservative to a liberal view of scripture. The professor states, "You start, you open the door this much, and then it opens more and then the original position is gone."
- **Recent Support for Mosaic Authorship:** The lecture discusses recent scholarship that reinforces the Mosaic authorship, particularly the works of:
 - **B. Halwerda:** Focuses on the centralization of worship issue in Deuteronomy 12, a key chapter in Wellhausen's theory.
 - **G.T. Manley:** Compares the law codes in JE, D, and P, challenging the idea of a developmental relationship between these sources.
 - **Meredith Kline:** Argues that the structure of Deuteronomy closely corresponds to Hittite treaty texts of the Mosaic era, providing extra-biblical evidence for a Mosaic origin.
- Kline states, "The position to be advocated here is that Deuteronomy is a covenant renewal document which in its total structure exhibits the classic legal form of the suzerainty treaties of the Mosaic age."
- **Gordon McConville:** Emphasizes the unique theology of Deuteronomy, reflecting the concerns of Israel at the time of entering the Promised Land under Moses, showing how the laws of the book reflect this context and theology.

- **Structure of Deuteronomy:** The lecture covers both critical and traditional views of Deuteronomy's structure. It emphasizes the following contrasting points:
- **Critical Views:** These scholars often view the book as lacking structural unity. Wellhausen posits an original core (chapters 12-26) with additions. Some scholars see two introductions (chapters 1-4 and 5-11) and argue that Deuteronomy is part of the "Deuteronomistic History" (Deuteronomy to 2 Kings) rather than the Pentateuch. Adam Welch sees the book as hopelessly disordered.
- **Von Rad:** He recognized an organic whole with four sections: 1) historical introduction (1-11); 2) legal material (12-26); 3) covenant sealing (26:16-19); 4) blessings and curses (27ff). He saw this structure reflecting a cultic ceremony.
- **Meredith Kline's View:** Kline sees Deuteronomy as structured like ancient Hittite treaties, thus supporting the book's claims about itself. He breaks down Deuteronomy as follows: 1) preamble (1:1-5), 2) historical prologue (1:6-4:49), 3) stipulations (5:1-26:19), 4) sanctions (27:1-30:20), and 5) dynastic disposition (31-34).
- Kline notes, "Deuteronomy begins precisely as the ancient treaties began. 'These are the words of,' those are the first words of the book of Deuteronomy...."
- Kline points out that the "two introductions" issue is resolved by understanding Deuteronomy as a covenant structure where 1-4 function as the historical prologue and 5-11 function as the basic stipulations of the treaty. He concludes that, "The two introductions have obviated the real structure of Deuteronomy. A historical prologue regularly follows the preamble and precedes the stipulations of the treaty. And Deuteronomy 1 to 5, 1:5 through 4:49, qualifies admirably as such a historical prologue."
- **Hittite Treaty Analogy:** The lecture details the structural elements of Hittite treaties, showing their close correspondence to the structure that Kline identifies in Deuteronomy. It emphasizes the elements of preamble, historical prologue, stipulations (basic and detailed), deposit of treaty in the sanctuary, witnesses, and blessings/curses. Kline views the treaty document as a "libretto" of a covenant ceremony, thereby incorporating the book's presentation of itself as a series of addresses by Moses into its function as a covenant renewal document.
- The lecture notes, "When one therefore identifies Deuteronomy as a treaty text, we are also recognizing it as a ceremonial word of Moses."

- **Significance of Chapters 27-34:** The lecture explains that chapters 27-30 function as means of covenant ratification (a regular element of the treaty form), and the final chapters (31-34) present final arrangements that are integral to the covenant (not just later additions), including the song of witness and dynastic succession.

III. Important Facts and Ideas

- **The traditional view** is that Moses authored Deuteronomy, which is what the book itself claims.
- **The documentary hypothesis** places the writing of Deuteronomy around 621 BC during the reign of King Josiah.
- **Meredith Kline's treaty structure** argument strongly supports the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy.
- **Form-criticism can be used** to argue both for a late date and for the traditional Mosaic authorship, highlighting the importance of presuppositions and methodology.
- **There is a trend among some scholars** to make concessions regarding Mosaic authorship that the lecturer sees as a “slippery slope” towards more liberal readings of scripture.
- **Recent scholarship** has provided new arguments and analysis in favor of Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy.
- **The lecture advocates a deductive methodology** that takes the Scripture’s claims about itself as its starting point.

IV. Conclusion

The lecture underscores the importance of the debate surrounding the authorship and structure of Deuteronomy, highlighting the significance of the Mosaic authorship for conservative interpretations of scripture. It particularly emphasized the importance of Meredith Kline's work and its use of the Hittite treaty form analogy to support Mosaic authorship. Ultimately, the lecture aims to equip listeners with a more thorough understanding of the key issues surrounding this complex biblical book.

4. Study Guide: Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 4, Survey of Support for Mosaic Authorship

Deuteronomy Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. What is the traditional view of Deuteronomy's authorship, and which group of scholars argues for it?
2. According to the lecture, what are the three general chronological periods to which scholars have assigned a date to Deuteronomy?
3. What are the key arguments that scholars like Welch and Wright use to challenge the structural integrity of Deuteronomy?
4. What is the significance of the "centralization of worship" in the context of the Wellhausen theory?
5. According to the lecture, what are the four sections of Deuteronomy according to Gerhard von Rad?
6. Briefly explain Meredith Kline's thesis regarding Deuteronomy's literary form.
7. What is the significance of the Hittite treaty texts in Kline's analysis of Deuteronomy?
8. What is the "song of witness," and where does it fit into Kline's structural understanding of Deuteronomy?
9. How does Meredith Kline address the issue of the "two introductions" in Deuteronomy?
10. What methodological differences exist between Kline and von Rad's analysis of the book?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The traditional view is Mosaic authorship, meaning Moses wrote the book. This view is supported by conservative scholars who believe in the Bible's self-presentation.

2. Scholars have assigned dates to Deuteronomy in these three periods: post-exilic (after 539 BCE), monarchal (during the kingdoms of Israel and Judah), and pre-monarchal (but not as early as Moses).
3. Scholars like Welch perceive the book as chaotic and lacking order, and Wright believes the two introductions (chapters 1-4 and 5-11) to be independent and redundant.
4. The centralization of worship, particularly in Deuteronomy 12, is a key component of Wellhausen's theory. Wellhausen posits that centralized worship was a later development, which, if true, would place the writing of Deuteronomy later than Moses.
5. Von Rad's four sections are: (1) a historical presentation of the events of Sinai, (2) the law, (3) the sealing of the covenant, and (4) blessings and curses.
6. Kline argues that Deuteronomy is a covenant renewal document whose structure closely resembles that of ancient Hittite suzerainty treaties, which date to the time of Moses.
7. The Hittite treaty texts provide a comparative framework that demonstrates a similar structure to Deuteronomy, including a preamble, historical prologue, stipulations, and curses and blessings, suggesting a similar date of origin.
8. The "song of witness" is found in Deuteronomy 31-32. It is a literary element that stands as a prophetic testimony, outlining the consequences of obedience and disobedience to God's covenant.
9. Kline views chapters 1-4 as a preamble and 1:6 - 4:49 as the historical prologue, which together correspond to elements found in Hittite treaties, thereby solving the "two introductions" problem.
10. Kline and von Rad both use a form-critical methodology, but Kline seeks to understand the text in its own historical and covenantal context, while von Rad emphasizes a later cultic derivation theory and a theoretical development of the text.

Essay Questions

1. Compare and contrast the arguments for and against Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy presented in the lecture. In your answer, discuss the significance of the Wellhausen theory and how recent scholarship has challenged it.
2. Discuss the significance of Meredith Kline's use of Hittite treaty texts in his analysis of Deuteronomy. How does this analysis provide evidence for a Mosaic date? What are the strengths and limitations of his approach?
3. Explore the structural challenges in Deuteronomy, particularly the "two introductions" problem and the lack of unified structure asserted by scholars like Welch and Wright. How does Kline's covenant treaty approach attempt to address these problems?
4. Examine the role of the "centralization of worship" in the dating of Deuteronomy. How does the Wellhausen theory use this concept to support a later date, and what are the challenges to this view presented by scholars such as Halwerda and others?
5. Analyze the significance of the covenant renewal ceremony in understanding the structure and purpose of the book of Deuteronomy. How does the emphasis on covenant shape both its historical and theological content?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Mosaic Authorship:** The traditional belief that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible (the Pentateuch), including Deuteronomy.
- **Wellhausen Theory (JEDP Theory):** A theory that posits the Pentateuch was not written by Moses but compiled from four distinct sources (J, E, D, P) over a long period of time.
- **Post-Exilic:** Referring to the period after the Babylonian exile (after 539 BCE).
- **Monarchal Period:** The period when Israel was ruled by kings (e.g., David, Solomon, etc).
- **Pre-Monarchal Period:** The period before the establishment of kings in Israel, often associated with the time of the Judges.

- **Form Criticism:** A method of biblical criticism that examines the literary form of a text and seeks to identify the historical or social context.
- **Source Criticism:** A method of biblical criticism that seeks to identify the sources used in compiling a biblical text and the authors of each component.
- **Deuteronomistic History:** A theory (posited by Martin Noth) suggesting that Deuteronomy through 2 Kings constitutes a unified historical work written from a Deuteronomic perspective, likely during the exile.
- **Covenant:** A binding agreement between two parties. In the biblical context, it often refers to the agreement between God and the Israelites.
- **Suzerainty Treaty:** A type of treaty between a great king (suzerain) and a lesser king (vassal), common in the ancient Near East, with specific structural elements.
- **Historical Prologue:** In a treaty, a recounting of past events that establish the relationship between the parties, usually highlighting the suzerain's favor to the vassal.
- **Stipulations:** The laws, rules, or requirements that the vassal is obligated to follow in a treaty.
- **Sanctions:** The blessings or curses that would result from adhering to or violating the stipulations of a treaty.
- **Libretto:** The text of a musical work (such as an opera) or covenant ceremony.
- **Paranesis/Paranetic:** Exhortation, or a text designed to urge a specific action or attitude.
- **Centralization of Worship:** The concept that all worship should be conducted at a central sanctuary, as opposed to local shrines. It's a key issue for Wellhausen who argued this was a later development.
- **Dynastic Disposition:** The arrangements made for the succession of leadership, particularly at the death of a ruler.

5. FAQs on Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 4, Survey of Support for Mosaic Authorship, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on Deuteronomy Authorship and Structure

1. **What are the main competing theories regarding the authorship and dating of Deuteronomy?** The primary debate centers around whether Deuteronomy was written by Moses (Mosaic authorship) during the time of the Exodus or by later authors. The traditional view supports Mosaic authorship, while critical scholars propose various dates ranging from the monarchical period to the post-exilic period, often suggesting it was compiled from multiple sources (JEDP theory) with the core of the book being composed around 621 BC. Some scholars have moved to later dates, some to earlier dates within the monarchy, and some to pre-monarchy dates.
2. **What is the "Wellhausen theory," and how does it relate to Deuteronomy?** The Wellhausen theory (or Documentary Hypothesis) posits that the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) is not the work of Moses but rather a composite of four major sources, designated J, E, D, and P. Deuteronomy is considered the "D" source, and according to Wellhausen's view, it was a late composition primarily from the time of King Josiah's reforms (around 621 BC). Wellhausen argued that the centralization of worship advocated in Deuteronomy was a later development, not a Mosaic institution.
3. **What are some arguments for the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy, and who are some notable scholars who support this view?** Arguments for Mosaic authorship include the internal claims of the book itself that Moses is the author, the thematic consistency with the Mosaic era and theology, and the structural parallels with ancient Near Eastern treaty forms that predate the proposed later dates. Notable scholars who support Mosaic authorship include James Orr, H.M. Weiner, J. Ridderbos, G.C.H. Aalders, O.T. Allis, E.J. Young, R.K. Harrison, G.T. Manley, B. Halwerda, Meredith Kline, Peter C. Craigie, J.A. Thompson and Gordon McConville.

4. **What is the significance of the structure of Deuteronomy in the debate about its authorship and date?** The structure of Deuteronomy is central to the debate. Those challenging Mosaic authorship often claim it lacks structural unity, with elements such as the perceived "two introductions" suggesting a composite work. However, scholars who support Mosaic authorship argue that the structure of the book follows a covenant treaty form, similar to Hittite suzerainty treaties from the Mosaic era (second millennium BC). This is used to argue for the unity of Deuteronomy as a single, coherent document.
5. **How does Meredith Kline's work on treaty structures support a Mosaic date for Deuteronomy?** Meredith Kline argued that the structure of Deuteronomy closely matches the typical form of ancient Hittite treaties of the second millennium BC. These treaties have a preamble, historical prologue, stipulations (both general and specific), and provisions for ratification and succession. He posits that Deuteronomy is a covenant renewal document with a parallel structure, which suggests that the book was written during the same period as the treaties (the Mosaic era).
6. **What are some criticisms of the idea that Deuteronomy has a coherent structure and what arguments are used to refute them?** Some critical scholars have claimed that the book has structural problems such as "two introductions" (chapters 1-4 and 5-11) and a chaotic organization overall, suggesting the text was compiled over time and lacks an original editor. However, Kline argues that the so-called "two introductions" are actually a preamble (1:1-5) and a historical prologue (1:6-4:49), which are a part of the treaty structure. Other arguments state that the structural elements (such as stipulations, curses and blessings, and provisions for succession) support the view that the document is internally consistent.
7. **How does the idea of the "Deuteronomistic History" relate to the dating of Deuteronomy?** The "Deuteronomistic History" is a theory proposing that the books from Deuteronomy to 2 Kings were written or edited as a unified work with a consistent theological perspective (a perspective heavily influenced by the themes of Deuteronomy). Those proposing this theory say that Deuteronomy was not written until just before the time of Josiah and that its theology was projected backwards onto the history of Israel. Conservative scholars would say that Deuteronomy's influence in history comes from the fact that it was a Mosaic document and thus its influence should be found in the rest of the historical books that follow.

8. **What are the implications of these different viewpoints on Deuteronomy's authorship for one's understanding of the Bible?** The question of authorship and date significantly influences how one interprets Deuteronomy and its place in the biblical narrative. Accepting Mosaic authorship tends to support the idea of the Bible as a divinely inspired, unified, and historically reliable document. Alternative views typically see the Bible as a human construct with varied and sometimes contradictory theological themes. The position one takes will influence how they view both the Old and New Testaments and the overall relationship between them.