

Dr. Robert Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 10B, Centralization of Worship [Dt. 12] Halwarda Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 10B, Centralization of Worship [Dt. 12] Halwarda, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture excerpt summarizes D. Halwarda's article critiquing Julius Wellhausen's theory on the centralization of Israelite worship. Wellhausen posited three stages of worship: initially multiple altars, then prophetic opposition leading to Jerusalem's dominance, finally culminating in post-exilic centralization. He linked Deuteronomy 12's command for centralized worship to Josiah's 621 BC reforms, arguing it contradicted earlier texts. Halwarda challenges this by citing examples from the historical books, showing that multiple altars were not consistently condemned before the time of Josiah, even by prophets. He ultimately disputes Wellhausen's chronological framework and interpretation of Deuteronomy 12.

2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 10B – 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).



**Vannoy_Deut_Sessi
on10B.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 10B, Centralization of Worship [Dt. 12] Halwarda

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided lecture excerpts, focusing on the debate surrounding Deuteronomy 12 and its implications for dating the Old Testament:

Briefing Document: Deuteronomy 12 and the Centralization of Worship

Introduction:

This document summarizes a lecture by Robert Vannoy on Deuteronomy, specifically focusing on the arguments presented by Dutch Old Testament scholar D. Halwarda regarding the centralization of worship mandated in Deuteronomy 12. Halwarda's work highlights the critical role this passage played in Julius Wellhausen's influential, but controversial, theory of the development of Israel's religious history (JEDP theory), and offers arguments against it. The core question is: does Deuteronomy 12 mandate a single, centralized place of worship from its inception, or is it a later development?

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. The Central Problem of Old Testament Study:

- Halwarda argues that the phrase "the place that the Lord your God shall choose" (Deuteronomy 12) is the "root problem of modern Old Testament study."
- This phrase is central to Wellhausen's theory and has had a profound impact on biblical interpretation.
- *Quote:* "Few Bible readers realize that in this phrase we are confronted with the root problem of modern Old Testament study, yet that is the case."

1. Wellhausen's Interpretation of Deuteronomy 12:

- Wellhausen argued that Deuteronomy 12 mandates the centralization of worship at a single sanctuary (ultimately the Temple in Jerusalem), making all other altars and sacrifices illegitimate.
- This interpretation is largely accepted by both Wellhausen and "Bible-believing exegetes," which shows a widespread understanding of the meaning of the text.

- *Quote:* "He read Deuteronomy 12 in the sense that all the offerings of Israel were to be bound to one sanctuary at a central place of worship, which ultimately became the temple. All the offerings were bound to that one place of central worship, and every altar outside of Jerusalem was illegal."
- The key point of disagreement is the date of authorship. Wellhausen places it in the time of Josiah (621 B.C.), who centralized worship in Jerusalem, while traditional scholars attribute it to Moses (ca. 1400-1200 B.C.)
- *Quote:* "The point in which Wellhausen and most Bible-believing scholars differ is that while the latter maintain Moses as the writer of Deuteronomy 12, Wellhausen placed the writing in the time of Josiah..."

1. **Wellhausen's Three Stages of Worship:**

- Wellhausen posited a three-stage evolution of Israelite worship, based on his reading of the historical books:
- **Stage 1: Multiple Sanctuaries:** Numerous altars and places of worship are accepted and widespread. This includes the high places and the altars present during the time of the Judges and Samuel, where religious observance was spontaneous and not tied to one specific place. The Lord is seen to have sanctioned some locations through theophanies (divine appearances), such as Bethel and Shechem.
- **Stage 2: Prophetic Opposition & Gradual Centralization:** Prophets like Amos and Hosea began to criticize the cultic focus of worship, stressing ethics over ritual. This moral criticism and political factors (such as the fall of the northern kingdom) led to the increasing importance of Jerusalem. The need for centralization and reform is attempted, but fails to take hold long term. This stage ends with Josiah's reforms in 621 BC.
- **Stage 3: Post-Exilic Centralization:** The exile disrupted the established system. Upon return from exile, there was a new generation that embraced the idea of a single place of worship in Jerusalem.

1. Wellhausen's Application to Law Codes:

- Wellhausen saw his three stages reflected not only in Israel's history but also in its law codes:
- **Exodus 20:** The altar law of Exodus 20 (specifically verses 24-26, allowing for altars "in all places where I record my name"), reflected the first stage, of multiple altars. Wellhausen assigns this to the combined J and E source.
- **Deuteronomy 12:** Demanding worship in one place, it corresponded to the second stage and is attributed to the D document, dating to the time of Josiah's reforms (621 B.C.).
- **P (Priestly Source):** Assumes only one sanctuary, thus reflecting the third post-exilic stage. There is no longer a struggle to oppose multiplicity of altars, they are presumed not to exist.

1. Consequences of Wellhausen's Theory:

- Wellhausen's interpretation undermines the traditional view of the Pentateuch, placing Moses at the *end* of the development, rather than the beginning.
- *Quote:* "Because Moses, rather than being the foundation for all that follows, Moses is the result. He's the outcome. He's the final point that is reached in the history of the Old Testament religion."
- It posits that Israel's religion began with early Semitic heathenism and evolved towards monotheism and centralized worship.
- *Quote:* "So that the starting point for Wellhausen's system is not Mosaic revelation, but early Semitic heathenism."
- Prophets are viewed as innovators and not defenders of Mosaic law, which is a stark departure from traditional views.

1. Halwarda's Response to Wellhausen:

- Halwarda argues that the core problem with Wellhausen's system is not the details, but the interpretation of Deuteronomy 12 and the "centralization of worship" issue.
- He argues that the historical books contain numerous examples where multiple altars and sacrifices were performed, and not condemned, including:
- Elijah rebuilding an altar on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18) and his lament at the destruction of altars (1 Kings 19:10).
- Samuel offering sacrifices at various altars in Ramah, Mizpah, Gilgal, and Bethlehem (1 Samuel 7, 9, 10, 11, 16).
- David's sacrifices and the custom of local offerings as seen in his absences from Saul's table in 1 Samuel 20.
- Absalom using the Hebron sanctuary for sacrifices, even after the time of David, also in 2 Samuel 15.
- Halwarda notes the lack of prophetic opposition to the *multiplicity* of altars *per se*.
- He challenges the idea that the "rest" mentioned in Deuteronomy 12 refers to external peace, arguing that it's an internal concept and was fulfilled during the time of Joshua (Joshua 22:4), not David (2 Samuel 7:11).

Conclusion:

Halwarda's analysis raises questions about the commonly accepted interpretation of Deuteronomy 12. While not necessarily disputing the final meaning of a need for a central place of worship, he emphasizes the common practice of multiple altars throughout much of Israel's history, a practice that was not always seen as inherently sinful or against the Law. His arguments challenge the assumption that centralization was a late, post-exilic development and raise doubts about the accuracy of Wellhausen's historical reconstruction of Israel's religious history based on this premise. The significance of Deuteronomy 12 is that it provides the basis for the Wellhausen hypothesis and, as Halwarda notes, it is a key battleground for modern biblical study.

4. Study Guide: Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 10B, Centralization of Worship [Dt. 12] Halwarda

Deuteronomy 12 Study Guide

Quiz

1. According to Halwarda, what is the root problem of modern Old Testament study? Halwarda argues that the root problem lies in the phrase, "the place that the Lord your God shall choose," from Deuteronomy 12, because it is the key point of disagreement between Wellhausen and more traditional interpretations regarding the centralization of worship in Israel. Wellhausen's interpretation of this phrase as demanding the destruction of all altars outside of Jerusalem led to his dating of Deuteronomy 12 in the time of Josiah.
2. What are the three phases of Israelite worship according to Wellhausen? Wellhausen's three phases of worship were (1) multiple sanctuaries at various locations including high places; (2) a move towards centralization influenced by prophets who opposed the unbridled cult and favored ethical living, ultimately resulting in the dominance of the temple in Jerusalem; and (3) the post-exilic era where a centralized temple at Jerusalem was the sole legitimate place of worship.
3. How does Wellhausen use the law in Exodus 20 to support his theory? Wellhausen argues that the altar law of Exodus 20, which permits altars in "all places where I record my name," corresponds to his first phase of Israelite worship with multiplicity of altars, showing a progression of law codes that parallels his view of the historical progression of Israelite worship.
4. Why does Wellhausen place the writing of Deuteronomy 12 during the time of Josiah? Wellhausen argues that the exclusive centralization of worship described in Deuteronomy 12 could not have occurred before Josiah's reign (621 B.C.), when the high places were destroyed and offerings were restricted to the temple in Jerusalem and when a law to that effect was discovered.
5. How do the prophets fit into Wellhausen's view of religious development? In Wellhausen's framework, the prophets are not seen as reformers calling Israel back to Mosaic law, but rather as innovators who bring about changes by moving from early Semitic heathenism to a more monotheistic practice centered in Jerusalem.

6. According to Halwarda, what is the main problem with the criticisms of Wellhausen's theory? Halwarda argues that much of the criticism against Wellhausen focuses on the details rather than the core issue of the centralization of worship as presented in Deuteronomy 12. Halwarda believes that the issue of centralization and its interpretation are the heart of Wellhausen's theory.
7. Give an example from the text where the multiplicity of altars was sanctioned. Elijah's construction of an altar on Mount Carmel in 1 Kings 18, which is not criticized as illegal and receives divine approval, and his complaint of the destruction of the altars of the Lord in 1 Kings 19, are examples of sanctioned worship at multiple locations.
8. What is significant about Samuel and his use of altars? Samuel, a prophet and reformer, built and sacrificed at various altars (e.g., Ramah, Mizpah, Gilgal) without any suggestion that his actions were unlawful or in opposition to religious custom at the time.
9. How does David's family's sacrifice in Bethlehem support Halwarda's argument? David's family's sacrifice in Bethlehem, mentioned in 1 Samuel 20, was a standard custom at that time and did not raise any questions of wrongdoing which suggests that local worship outside of Jerusalem was common and accepted.
10. According to Halwarda, when was the "rest" from enemies achieved? Halwarda argues that the "rest" mentioned in Deuteronomy 12 refers to internal, not external, peace, and was achieved in the time of Joshua, as referenced in Joshua 22:4, long before David, suggesting centralized worship could have been established much earlier than Wellhausen posited.

Quiz Answer Key

1. Halwarda argues that the root problem lies in the phrase, "the place that the Lord your God shall choose," from Deuteronomy 12, because it is the key point of disagreement between Wellhausen and more traditional interpretations regarding the centralization of worship in Israel. Wellhausen's interpretation of this phrase as demanding the destruction of all altars outside of Jerusalem led to his dating of Deuteronomy 12 in the time of Josiah.
2. Wellhausen's three phases of worship were (1) multiple sanctuaries at various locations including high places; (2) a move towards centralization influenced by prophets who opposed the unbridled cult and favored ethical living, ultimately

resulting in the dominance of the temple in Jerusalem; and (3) the post-exilic era where a centralized temple at Jerusalem was the sole legitimate place of worship.

3. Wellhausen argues that the altar law of Exodus 20, which permits altars in "all places where I record my name," corresponds to his first phase of Israelite worship with multiplicity of altars, showing a progression of law codes that parallels his view of the historical progression of Israelite worship.
4. Wellhausen argues that the exclusive centralization of worship described in Deuteronomy 12 could not have occurred before Josiah's reign (621 B.C.), when the high places were destroyed and offerings were restricted to the temple in Jerusalem and when a law to that effect was discovered.
5. In Wellhausen's framework, the prophets are not seen as reformers calling Israel back to Mosaic law, but rather as innovators who bring about changes by moving from early Semitic heathenism to a more monotheistic practice centered in Jerusalem.
6. Halwarda argues that much of the criticism against Wellhausen focuses on the details rather than the core issue of the centralization of worship as presented in Deuteronomy 12. Halwarda believes that the issue of centralization and its interpretation are the heart of Wellhausen's theory.
7. Elijah's construction of an altar on Mount Carmel in 1 Kings 18, which is not criticized as illegal and receives divine approval, and his complaint of the destruction of the altars of the Lord in 1 Kings 19, are examples of sanctioned worship at multiple locations.
8. Samuel, a prophet and reformer, built and sacrificed at various altars (e.g., Ramah, Mizpah, Gilgal) without any suggestion that his actions were unlawful or in opposition to religious custom at the time.
9. David's family's sacrifice in Bethlehem, mentioned in 1 Samuel 20, was a standard custom at that time and did not raise any questions of wrongdoing which suggests that local worship outside of Jerusalem was common and accepted.
10. Halwarda argues that the "rest" mentioned in Deuteronomy 12 refers to internal, not external, peace, and was achieved in the time of Joshua, as referenced in Joshua 22:4, long before David, suggesting centralized worship could have been established much earlier than Wellhausen posited.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of Deuteronomy 12 in the development of Wellhausen's JEDP theory. How does Wellhausen interpret the chapter to support his claims about the evolution of Israelite worship?
2. Compare and contrast Wellhausen's perspective on the role of the prophets in Israel's religious development with a more traditional understanding. How does each view impact the interpretation of the Old Testament?
3. Analyze Halwarda's critique of Wellhausen's theory, focusing on the issue of multiplicity of altars in the historical books. How does Halwarda use examples like Elijah, Samuel, and David to challenge Wellhausen's view?
4. Explain how Halwarda reinterprets the "rest" mentioned in Deuteronomy 12:10 and its implications for dating the law. How does this challenge the traditional understanding of centralization?
5. Considering both Wellhausen's and Halwarda's interpretations, discuss the role of historical and textual evidence in forming conclusions about the development of Israelite worship. Which approach is more convincing and why?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Centralization of Worship:** The concept that all legitimate worship in Israel should be conducted at a single location, ultimately at the temple in Jerusalem.
- **High Places:** Elevated locations, often remnants of Canaanite worship sites, where sacrifices and other religious rituals were performed by the Israelites before the centralization of worship in Jerusalem.
- **JEDP Theory:** The theory developed by Julius Wellhausen that the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament) is not the work of Moses, but a collection of sources (J, E, D, and P) that were written and compiled over a long period.
- **Theophany:** A visible manifestation of God to humankind.
- **Wellhausen:** Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) was a German biblical scholar known for his documentary hypothesis of the Pentateuch.
- **Prolegomena to the History of Israel:** Wellhausen's key work that outlines his theory of the JEDP sources and their place in the development of Israel's religion.
- **Josiah:** King of Judah who implemented religious reforms in 621 B.C., including the destruction of high places and centralization of worship in Jerusalem.
- **Halwarda:** A Dutch Old Testament scholar who wrote an article arguing against Wellhausen's theory and focused on Deuteronomy 12.
- **Exilic:** Relating to the time period in Israelite history when the people were exiled to Babylon (586 - 539 BCE).
- **Post-Exilic:** Relating to the time period in Israelite history after the people returned from Babylonian exile.
- **Mosaic Law:** The body of laws given to Israel through Moses, found in the Pentateuch.
- **Prophetic Movement:** A period of increased prophetic activity in Israel which advocated ethical living and challenged cultic rituals.
- **Cultic:** Relating to religious practices and ceremonies.

5. FAQs on Vannoy, Deuteronomy, Session 10B, Centralization of Worship [Dt. 12] Halwarda, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on the Centralization of Worship in Deuteronomy and its Implications

1. **What is the central issue at the heart of modern Old Testament study, according to D. Halwarda, and how does it relate to Deuteronomy 12?**
2. Halwarda argues that the phrase "the place that the Lord your God shall choose," found in Deuteronomy 12, is the root problem of modern Old Testament study. This is because this phrase and its interpretation concerning the legitimate place of worship in Israel was a key to Wellhausen's influential work on the history of Israel. Wellhausen's analysis of Deuteronomy 12 as demanding a centralized location for worship (the temple) formed the foundation for his broader hypothesis.
3. **What is Wellhausen's theory regarding the evolution of worship in ancient Israel, and what are the three stages he proposes?**
4. Wellhausen posited that the practice of worship evolved through three distinct phases. First, there was a time of multiple altars and diverse worship locations, including high places and local shrines. Next, under the influence of the early prophets (Amos and Hosea) and political shifts, there was a move toward the centralization of worship, primarily in Jerusalem. This phase reached its peak during Josiah's reign. Finally, after the exile, the concept of centralized worship at the temple in Jerusalem was firmly established.
5. **How did Wellhausen use Deuteronomy 12 to support his theory, and how does this challenge traditional interpretations?**
6. Wellhausen saw Deuteronomy 12 as a legal mandate for the centralization of worship at a single place, specifically the Jerusalem temple. He argued that this law was not from Moses as traditionally believed, but rather a product of Josiah's reforms in 621 B.C. This view is a challenge to traditional interpretations that hold Moses as the author of Deuteronomy, and the command for a centralized place of worship as being from the time of Moses. Wellhausen's analysis is the foundation for his dating of the composition of the Pentateuch as being much later than traditionally held.

7. **What are the different interpretations of "the place the Lord will choose" between Wellhausen and traditional, Bible-believing scholars?**
8. While both Wellhausen and most Bible-believing scholars agree that Deuteronomy 12 calls for centralization of worship, they disagree on the origin of this command. Wellhausen believed this command arose in the time of King Josiah's reforms in 621 B.C., and that it was a later development in Israel's history. Bible-believing scholars maintain that this law, along with the rest of Deuteronomy, was given by Moses (ca. 1400-1200 B.C.) and is of divine origin.
9. **How does Wellhausen relate the law codes of Exodus and Deuteronomy to his three phases of worship?**
10. Wellhausen correlates the altar law of Exodus 20 (allowing altars in multiple places) with the first phase of his theory. The law in Deuteronomy 12 (centralization of worship) then represents his second phase. Finally, according to Wellhausen, P assumes there is one place of worship without conflict. He does not feel the need to explicitly command it, because it is assumed, so this is his third phase and this is attributed to the post-exilic period.
11. **According to Halwarda, what evidence is there from the historical books of the Old Testament that contradicts Wellhausen's theory of a strict centralized worship before the exile?**
12. Halwarda points to several instances where multiple altars and sacrifices are sanctioned throughout the historical books. He cites examples such as: Elijah building an altar on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18), Samuel offering sacrifices at various places like Ramah, Mizpah, and Gilgal (1 Samuel 7, 9, 10, 11), and David offering sacrifices in Bethlehem (1 Sam 20) as well as sanctioning his son's journey to Hebron to offer sacrifices (2 Sam 15). These examples all suggest a more decentralized, flexible system of worship rather than a strict adherence to one single sanctuary in Jerusalem as Wellhausen posits.

13. What does Halwarda say about the idea that 2 Samuel 7 describes the fulfillment of the "rest" requirement for centralized worship found in Deuteronomy 12?

Halwarda argues that the "rest" mentioned in Deuteronomy 12 does not refer to the time of David, as many claim, but to the time of Joshua, as described in Joshua 22:4, after the conquest of Canaan when the land was settled and at peace. This, according to Halwarda, demonstrates that the conditions for centralized worship were already met, which challenges the idea that Deuteronomy 12 could only have been written after David.

1. **How does Wellhausen's understanding of the role of the prophets differ from a more traditional understanding?**
2. Wellhausen portrays the prophets as innovators and not as proclaimers of Moses' law and divine revelation. He sees the prophets leading the people away from heathenism towards monotheism and centralization of worship, rather than calling the people back to the law of Moses. This is in direct opposition to a traditional understanding of the prophets as figures who call Israel back to obedience to God's laws and Mosaic revelation.