

# **Dr. Robert Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 4, Text of Kings, Deuteronomistic History, Major Emphases Resources from NotebookLM**

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

## **1. Abstract of Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 4, Text of Kings, Deuteronomistic History, Major Emphases, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

**Dr. Vannoy's lecture provides an overview of the text of Kings, emphasizing its complexity and reliance on both the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint.** He discusses the "Deuteronomistic History," exploring interpretations from scholars like Martin Noth and Gerhard von Rad, who debated its nature and purpose. **The lecture highlights that Kings presents a history of Israel's monarchs from a covenantal perspective, assessing their actions based on obedience to Mosaic Law.** It underscores the role of prophecy and fulfillment, as well as the significance of prophets like Elijah and Elisha. **The promise to David is also central, serving as a beacon of hope amidst the nation's covenantal failures and eventual exile.** Ultimately, Kings seeks to explain the reasons for Israel's exile, but it doesn't erase the hope of a future Davidic king.

**2. 18 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, 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 → Historical Books → Exodus to Exile).**



**Vannoy\_ExtoExileK\_  
Session04.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 4, Text of Kings, Deuteronomistic History, Major Emphases

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Robert Vannoy's Lecture 4 on the Books of Kings:

#### Briefing Document: Dr. Vannoy on the Books of Kings

##### I. Textual Considerations

- **Masoretic Text vs. Septuagint (LXX):** The lecture begins by acknowledging the textual complexities of Kings. The Masoretic Text (MT) contains "numerous corruptions," making the Septuagint (LXX) an "invaluable aid" for reconstruction. The LXX is generally "shorter than the Masoretic text and thought to preserve more reliable variances." Fragments from Qumran suggest a Hebrew text existed closer to the LXX.
- **Example of Discrepancy:** The LXX includes "a second account of the disruption of the kingdom" after 1 Kings 12:24, which provides an alternate version of Solomon's death and Jeroboam's revolt.
- **Caution:** While the LXX can be valuable, the lecture warns against assuming the MT is completely unreliable. Many differences are "minor points that affect no substantive understanding of the text."
- **Chronology:** Edwin Thiele's work, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, is cited as demonstrating the accuracy of the Masoretic Text in preserving chronological data, despite initial perceptions of unreliability. The Septuagint translators often "altered numbers in the text in an attempt to eliminate some of these problems." Thiele demonstrates that the MT preserved the chronology accurately, but it was not understood until Thiele's work.
- **Further Research:** The lecture recommends Bruce Waltke's article, "The Textual Criticism of the Old Testament."

##### II. Deuteronomistic History: A Contentious Concept

- **Martin Noth's Influence:** The term "Deuteronomistic History" was popularized by Martin Noth, who posited a single exilic writer influenced by Deuteronomy (understood by Noth as originating in 621 B.C.) to have composed Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings.

- **Concerns about Noth's View:** Dr. Vannoy expresses concern that Noth's perspective can lead to viewing much of this history as unreliable because the writer is seen as "distorted history with recorded views that fit this theological mold." The historian is seen to be writing late and projecting his theology back on earlier times, thus "forcing things to conform to that pattern that in reality never occurred." Vannoy sees this as "incompatible with the Bible as Scripture."
- **A Legitimate Use of the Term:** The lecturer argues that "the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings do reflect the theological ideas of the book of Deuteronomy." He emphasizes placing Deuteronomy in its traditional context, "in the time of Moses," where the Sinai Covenant governed Israel's history. The writers of these books then recorded events "as they had been programmed... from the book of Deuteronomy," where obedience brought blessing and disobedience brought cursing.

### III. Key Emphases and Purpose of 1 & 2 Kings

- **A. Covenantal Perspective:** The writer presents a history of Israel and Judah through a covenantal lens. "The guiding thesis is that the welfare of the nation depended on the obedience of the king and the people to their covenantal obligations as defined in the Mosaic Covenant." This covenantal perspective is also found in Joshua, Judges, and Samuel.
- **B. Prophetic Assessment:** These books are considered "Former Prophets" in Jewish tradition, containing a "prophetic assessment of Israel's history, based on a covenant principle." This is seen as "an inspired interpretation" of history, providing God's view of the events' significance.
- **C. Covenantal Standpoint of Author/Compiler:** The author (or compiler) used sources, but his purpose was not a secular, political-economic history. Instead, he offers a "covenantal, rather than politico-economic, judgment on the significances of various kings and their actions." Examples include Omri and Jeroboam II, who were politically significant but receive little attention in Kings because of their covenantal failures. Josiah's first 18 years are ignored, with focus given to his later reformation.
- **D. Prophecy and Fulfillment:** The author emphasizes "the interrelationship between prophesy and fulfillment in the historical developments in the experience of the nation Israel." The lecture cites Gerhard von Rad's observation that prediction and fulfillment "pervades the whole book of Kings." This highlights God's sovereignty and control over history.

- **E. Prominence of Prophets:** Prophets, as "messengers of the covenant," are given prominence. Elijah and Elisha receive extensive coverage. Other prophets mentioned include Ahijah, Shemiah, Jehu, Micaiah, Huldah, Jonah, and Isaiah.
- **F. The Davidic Covenant:** While covenant obedience is central, the author acknowledges "the far reaching significance of the Lord's promise to David--that his dynasty would endure forever." This promise, symbolized by the "lamp," impacts Israel's historical experience (1 Kings 11:36, 15:4). God preserved the line of David because of this promise.
- **G. David as the Ideal:** "The life and reign of David" serve "as the ideal standard by which the lives of later kings are measured" (1 Kings 15:11). This demonstrates a positive attitude toward kingship, despite the kings' consistent failures.
- **H. Purpose: Explaining the Exile:** Ultimately, 1 and 2 Kings aims "to explain to a people in exile that the reason for their condition of humiliation is that they were a covenant-breaking people." This is demonstrated in 2 Kings 17:6-23 (fall of Northern Kingdom) and in the reign of Manasseh (2 Kings 21), which made exile inevitable for Judah. However, the promise to David remains, offering a basis for hope. The final section of 2 Kings (25:27-30), where Jehoiachin is released from prison, is seen as an indication that "the line of David has not come to an irrevocable end."

#### IV. Critique of Noth and von Rad's Approaches

- **Martin Noth:** Noth's view of the Deuteronomistic History lacks a vision for the future. He sees no eschatological dimension and believes the history is "a finished history," with no future restoration. Vannoy criticizes Noth's failure to give sufficient attention to the Davidic promise.
- **Gerhard von Rad:** Von Rad agrees with Noth's literary thesis but disagrees on the purpose. He focuses on the "Word of God" (law and gospel) as the driving force in *heilsgeschichte* ("salvation history"). For von Rad, *heilsgeschichte* and *historie* (history in the sense of what happened) are "sharply disconnected." Vannoy finds this problematic.
- **Von Rad's Subjectivity:** Vannoy criticizes von Rad's view that the Deuteronomistic historian applied later standards to earlier kings. He also points out von Rad's negative attitude toward the historicity of the historical narratives, seeing the "functioning of the word of God" as a "theological construct." Von Rad sees the

Davidic Covenant as "wholly undeuteronomistic" and reflects a conflict between the Mosaic and Davidic covenants.

- **Vannoy's Conclusion:** Vannoy argues that religious truth should be founded on historical truth and that the two work together, while Von Rad divorces the two. Vannoy believes you can learn from Von Rad but his approach creates an unnecessary conflict between history and religious truth.

In essence, the lecture emphasizes understanding the Books of Kings as a covenantal history, divinely interpreted, with a message of judgment and hope rooted in the promises to David. It also cautions against interpretations of the "Deuteronomistic History" that undermine the historical reliability and theological integrity of the text.

## 4. Study Guide: Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 4, Text of Kings, Deuteronomistic History, Major Emphases

### 1 & 2 Kings: A Study Guide

#### I. Review of Key Concepts

This study guide covers the major themes and discussions presented in Dr. Vannoy's Lecture 4 on 1 & 2 Kings. It focuses on understanding the text of Kings, the concept of Deuteronomistic History, and the theological emphases within the books of Kings.

#### A. Textual Considerations

- **Masoretic Text (MT) vs. Septuagint (LXX):** Understand the differences between these two textual traditions of Kings. The LXX is often shorter and based on a different Hebrew tradition than the MT. The MT is accurately understood and has preserved accurately chronological data.
- **Textual Criticism:** Be aware that the text of Kings has complexities and potential errors due to transmission. While textual variations exist, they often involve minor points that do not fundamentally alter the understanding of the text.

#### B. Deuteronomistic History

- **Definition and Origin:** Understand the concept of Deuteronomistic History (DH) as proposed by Martin Noth. The DH refers to Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings as a unified work written from a Deuteronomic theological perspective. Noth believed it was the work of an exilic writer.
- **Theological Perspective:** Recognize that the DH interprets Israel's history through the lens of covenant obedience and disobedience. Blessing follows obedience, and cursing follows disobedience.
- **Vannoy's Perspective:** Be familiar with Dr. Vannoy's perspective on the DH. He acknowledges the influence of Deuteronomic theology on these books but emphasizes that they are not necessarily the product of a single exilic writer distorting history.

#### C. Major Emphases in 1 & 2 Kings

- **Covenantal Perspective:** The books of Kings present a history of Israel and Judah's kings from a covenantal perspective. The nation's welfare is linked to the king's and people's adherence to the Mosaic Covenant.

- **Prophetic Assessment:** The books offer a prophetic interpretation of Israel's history, judging events based on covenant principles.
- **Author/Compiler's Standpoint:** The author of Kings had a purpose that was not to present a political, economic history of Israel's kingdom period in accordance with principles of modern, secular historiography.
- **Prophecy and Fulfillment:** The interrelationship between prophecy and fulfillment is a recurring theme. Divine promises and warnings are given in advance and then come to pass in Israel's history.
- **Role of Prophets:** Prophets play a prominent role as messengers of the covenant, calling kings and the people to obedience. Elijah and Elisha receive significant attention.
- **Davidic Promise:** Despite Israel's disobedience, the Lord's promise to David and his dynasty is a significant factor in the historical narrative. The "lamp" of David is a symbol of this enduring promise.
- **David as Standard:** The life and reign of David serve as an ideal standard by which the lives of later kings are measured.
- **Explanation for Exile:** The books of Kings ultimately explain to the exiled people that their humiliation resulted from their covenant-breaking behavior.

#### D. Perspectives of Noth and Von Rad on the Deuteronomistic History

- **Martin Noth:** Noth viewed the DH as a pessimistic work with no vision for the future.
- **Gerhard von Rad:** Von Rad saw the DH as focused on the "word of God" and heilsgeschichte (salvation history).
- **Historie vs. Heilgeschichte:** Understand the distinction between historie (history in the sense of what happened) and heilsgeschichte (believed or confessed history). Von Rad emphasized heilsgeschichte over historie, while Dr. Vannoy stresses that religious truth is founded on historical truth.

## II. Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. What are the Masoretic Text (MT) and the Septuagint (LXX), and what is their significance in studying the text of Kings?

2. What is Deuteronomistic History (DH), and who popularized the term?
3. According to Dr. Vannoy, how can the term "Deuteronomistic History" be used in both a legitimate and problematic way?
4. Explain the "covenantal perspective" in 1 & 2 Kings.
5. How does the author of Kings treat the reigns of Omri and Jeroboam II differently from a secular historian, and why?
6. What role do prophets play in the books of Kings?
7. How does the promise to David influence the narrative of Kings?
8. What is the primary purpose of 1 & 2 Kings, according to Dr. Vannoy?
9. Briefly describe Martin Noth's perspective on the Deuteronomistic History.
10. Explain the difference between "Historie" and "Heilsgeschichte" and why this is important to understanding Von Rad's views of the Old Testament.

### **III. Quiz Answer Key**

1. The Masoretic Text (MT) and Septuagint (LXX) are two textual traditions of Kings. The LXX is a Greek translation, often shorter and based on a different Hebrew tradition, while the MT is the standard Hebrew text. The LXX is used to reconstruct the text because it may preserve more reliable variances.
2. Deuteronomistic History (DH) refers to the books of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings as a unified work. It interprets Israel's history through the lens of covenant obedience and disobedience, and the term was popularized by Martin Noth.
3. The term "Deuteronomistic History" can be used legitimately to acknowledge the influence of Deuteronomic theology on the books of Joshua through Kings. However, it becomes problematic when it suggests that these books were written by a single exilic author who distorted history to fit a theological mold.
4. The "covenantal perspective" in 1 & 2 Kings means that the books interpret the history of Israel and Judah through the lens of the Mosaic Covenant. The nation's welfare is directly linked to the king's and people's obedience or disobedience to this covenant.
5. The author of Kings gives little attention to Omri and Jeroboam II, even though secular historians recognize them as politically and economically significant kings.



This is because the author of Kings prioritizes covenant faithfulness over political or economic success.

6. In the books of Kings, prophets serve as messengers of the covenant, calling kings and the people to repentance and obedience. Figures like Elijah and Elisha are prominent, challenging idolatry and urging a return to covenant faithfulness.
7. The promise to David influences the narrative of Kings by ensuring the continuation of his dynasty, even amidst Israel's disobedience. The "lamp" of David is a symbol of this enduring promise, providing a basis for hope despite the nation's failures.
8. According to Dr. Vannoy, the primary purpose of 1 & 2 Kings is to explain to the exiled people why they were in exile, the reason for their condition of humiliation: their covenant-breaking behavior. The books serve as a retrospective analysis of Israel's history, highlighting the consequences of disobedience.
9. Martin Noth viewed the Deuteronomistic History as a pessimistic work written during the exilic period with no vision for the future. He believed it was a completed history focused solely on explaining Israel's past failures, not on any potential restoration.
10. "Historie" refers to history in the sense of what actually happened, while "Heilsgeschichte" is a believed or confessed history with theological significance. Understanding this distinction is important because Von Rad prioritized Heilsgeschichte, emphasizing theological interpretations over the factual accuracy of historical events.

#### **IV. Essay Questions**

1. Discuss the textual challenges involved in studying the books of Kings. What are the main differences between the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint, and how do these differences impact our understanding of the text?
2. Explain the concept of Deuteronomistic History and analyze Dr. Vannoy's critique of Martin Noth's view. How does Dr. Vannoy suggest a more nuanced approach to understanding the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings?
3. Analyze the major theological emphases in the books of Kings. How do the concepts of covenant, prophecy, and the Davidic promise shape the narrative and purpose of these books?

4. Compare and contrast the approaches of Martin Noth and Gerhard von Rad to the Deuteronomistic History. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each perspective, and how do they differ in their assessment of the future hope for Israel?
5. Evaluate the role of prophets in the books of Kings. How do figures like Elijah, Elisha, and others contribute to the overarching message of the books, and what does their presence reveal about the relationship between God and Israel during the monarchy?

## V. Glossary of Key Terms

- **Masoretic Text (MT):** The standard Hebrew text of the Old Testament, meticulously preserved and transmitted by Jewish scholars known as the Masoretes.
- **Septuagint (LXX):** A Greek translation of the Old Testament, traditionally believed to have been produced by seventy Jewish scholars in Alexandria, Egypt.
- **Deuteronomistic History (DH):** A modern scholarly construct referring to the books of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings as a unified literary and theological work shaped by Deuteronomic ideology.
- **Covenant:** A binding agreement or relationship, especially between God and his people, outlining mutual obligations and promises.
- **Prophecy:** A message or revelation from God, often delivered through prophets, concerning future events or divine will.
- **Davidic Promise:** God's unconditional covenant with King David, promising that his dynasty would endure forever.
- **Heilsgeschichte:** A German term meaning "salvation history," referring to a theological interpretation of history that emphasizes God's saving actions.
- **Historie:** A German term referring to history in the sense of what actually happened, the factual or empirical events of the past.
- **Exile:** The forced removal of a people from their homeland, particularly referring to the Babylonian exile of the Israelites in the 6th century BC.
- **Synchronic:** Occurring at the same time.

## 5. FAQs on Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 4, Text of Kings, Deuteronomistic History, Major Emphases, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Here is an 8-question FAQ based on the provided text, formatted in Markdown:

### 1. What are some of the textual challenges in studying the Book of Kings?

The Hebrew text (Masoretic Text or MT) of Kings contains numerous corruptions due to transmission errors over time. The Septuagint (LXX), a Greek translation, is often used to aid in reconstruction because it is shorter, based on a different (and possibly earlier) Hebrew tradition, and thought to preserve more reliable readings. Fragments from Qumran also suggest a Hebrew text closer to the LXX may have existed. However, discerning which reading (MT or LXX) is preferable in a given case is often a complex and uncertain process, but these differences are often minor and do not impact the overall meaning.

### 2. How has the chronology presented in Kings been understood and what contribution did Edwin Thiele make?

For a long time the chronologies of Kings were considered unreliable. The translators of the Septuagint even altered numbers in an attempt to eliminate problems. However, Edwin Thiele's book, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, demonstrated that the Masoretic Text accurately preserved chronological data when properly understood, even though the synchronizations were complex. Thiele resolved apparent discrepancies between the reigns of the kings of the north and south.

### 3. What is the "Deuteronomistic History" and how did Martin Noth popularize this concept?

The "Deuteronomistic History" (DtrH) refers to the books of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, viewed by some scholars as a unified historical work. Martin Noth proposed that a single author, living during the exilic period, composed this history, influenced by the theology of Deuteronomy (which Noth believed originated in Josiah's time). Noth argued this author selectively presented history to fit a theological mold, thereby distorting the historical record. He saw Deuteronomy as a preface that contains the theology the writer wanted to reflect in the rest of the work.

#### **4. How can the term "Deuteronomistic History" be understood in a more conservative way?**

While acknowledging the influence of Deuteronomic theology on Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, a more conservative approach places Deuteronomy in the time of Moses and sees the subsequent writers as individuals working within the framework of the Sinai Covenant. They recorded events through a lens informed by Deuteronomy, where obedience leads to blessing and disobedience leads to cursing. Thus, the history reflects the outworking of the covenant.

#### **5. What is the primary covenantal perspective presented in the Book of Kings?**

The writer of Kings presents a history of Israel and Judah from a covenantal perspective, emphasizing that the welfare of the nation depended on the obedience of the king and the people to their covenantal obligations as defined in the Mosaic Covenant. This is why the books are called "The Former Prophets", because they contain a prophetic assessment of Israel's history based on covenantal principles. It's not meant to be objective history, but an inspired and interpreted telling of the significance of what happened.

#### **6. How does the Book of Kings prioritize theological concerns over political or economic history?**

The author of Kings isn't interested in presenting a political or economic history in the modern, secular sense. Instead, the emphasis is on a covenantal judgment of the kings and their actions. For example, Omri, a politically significant king, receives very little attention, while kings who notably renewed or violated the covenant (like Josiah, Hezekiah, Manasseh, or Ahab) receive more extensive coverage. International events are only referenced in the books when they relate directly to the kings' fidelity to the covenant.

#### **7. What role do prophecy and the Davidic covenant play in the Book of Kings?**

The author emphasizes the interrelationship between prophecy and fulfillment, highlighting that Israel's history is not accidental but divinely guided. Prophets are prominent as messengers of the covenant, calling the kings to obedience. The promise to David, that his dynasty would endure, also plays a significant role, influencing historical events. God preserved the line of David because of His promise, and David is used as the ideal by which other kings are measured.

**8. What is the overarching purpose of the Book of Kings, and how does it relate to the exile?**

The Book of Kings explains to the exiled people that their humiliation resulted from covenant-breaking. The author argues that God's judgment was just. Though focusing on past failures, the book also subtly maintains hope through the promise to David. Even in exile, the line of David is still intact, offering a potential basis for future restoration. The last section of Kings, where Jehoiachin is released from prison, indicates that the line of David is not irrevocably ended.