

DEUTERONOMY 6–8 AND THE HISTORY OF INTERPRETATION: AN EXPOSITION ON THE FIRST TWO COMMANDMENTS

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Deuteronomy has been hailed one of the most important theological works in the OT, both in terms of its place in the canon and its place in Jewish and Christian traditions and practices. It stands between the promise of land to the patriarchs (Gen 17:18–21) and its fulfillment in the conquest and United Monarchy. The material in the so-called parenetic section (Deut 5–11) presents the great statements of Jewish faith, the Decalogue (Deut 5:6–21) and the *shema* (6:4–5), which are both upheld in the NT teachings of Jesus (cf. Matt 22:37–38; Mark 12:29–30; et al.). This significance is particularly highlighted in Deuteronomy 6–8, which emphasizes the themes of promise (6:3, 10; 7:8–9, 12, 14; 8:1, 18) and fulfillment (6:3, 10–11, 18–19, 23; 7:1, 13–15, 22–24; 8:7–10), and functions as an exposition upon the Decalogue and its positive restatement in the *shema*.

Since the nineteenth century, however, Deuteronomy, and chapters 6–8 in particular, have come under attack by higher critical scholars. Although the book presents itself as Mosaic, that is, speeches given by Moses to Israel before crossing the Jordan River and entering the promised land (Deut 1:1), scholars since W. M. L. de Wette (1805) have sought a Josianic date (c. 622/621 BC) due to (1) 2 Kgs 22:8's reference to "the book of the law," which only appears in Deuteronomy among the books of the Torah (Deut 28:58, 61; 31:26; cf. Josh 1:8); (2) the centralization of worship reflected in Deuteronomy 6–8, 12 and Josiah's reforms (2 Kgs 23:4–5); (3) the prohibition against foreign altars, idols, pillars, and Asherim (Deut 7:5; 12:3; 16:22; 2 Kgs 23:4–20); (4) references to astral worship in both Deuteronomy and Josiah's reforms (Deut 4:19; 17:3; 2 Kgs 23:4–5); (5) connections between the Passover of Deuteronomy 16 and 2 Kgs 23:21–23; 2 Chronicles 30; (6) the evaluation of Josiah in light of Deut 6:5 (cf. 2 Kgs 23:25); and (7) similarities in language between the Neo-Assyrian Vassal Treaty of Esharhaddon (c. 672 BC), the seventh- and eighth-century prophets (Hosea, Jeremiah, 2 Isaiah, Ezekiel), the Deuteronomistic history (Joshua, Judges, 1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings), and the wisdom literature (Proverbs).

In light of these attacks, this paper seeks a more plausible context for Deuteronomy 6–8 due to its importance within the book and its significance

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within Jewish and Christian traditions.¹ After first surveying the history of interpretation and providing critical assessment, we shall offer a positive proposal, arguing the Decalogue (Deut 5:6–21)² and the covenant ratification ceremony at Sinai (Exodus 24)³ offer a more plausible context. Rather than viewing these similarities as later (seventh-century) dependency on an earlier (tenth- or ninth-century) JE exodus tradition, I shall argue that these similarities demand a similar Mosaic context, especially in light of Deuteronomy's Mosaic claims. Furthermore, similarities with later OT literature (prophets, historical books, wisdom literature) suggest dependency on Deuteronomy; the authors of these texts utilized the Mosaic Deuteronomy to shape their later writings.

I. HISTORY OF INTERPRETATION

The history of interpretation can be divided into four distinct, yet overlapping, phases: (1) the emergence of source criticism in Deuteronomy (W. M. L. de Wette to G. von Rad); (2) traditio-historical criticism and ancient Near Eastern treaty forms; (3) the emergence of the Deuteronomistic history (DtrH) and its aftermath; and (4) literary criticism. We shall treat each of these phases individually, and then present additional problems in regard to Deuteronomy 6–8, which do not follow the overall trend of each phase.

1. *The emergence of source criticism in Deuteronomy.*

a. *W. M. L. de Wette (1805).* According to Gerhard von Rad, “[M]ethodical scholarly research” in Deuteronomy began with W. M. L. de Wette’s 1805 *Dissertatio Critica-Exegetica qua Deuteronomium a Prioribus Pentateuchi Libris Diversum*.⁴ Prior to this, critical scholars studied Deuteronomy under the parameters of the Yahwist (J) and Elohist (E) documents of the Pentateuch. Following J. Astruc’s (1753) division of Genesis into these two documents, J. G. Eichhorn (1781) applied the two sources to the Pentateuch as a whole.⁵ De Wette, however, was dissatisfied with the results of this approach. He argued that Deuteronomy was different from the rest the Pentateuch in

¹ Since our analysis is limited to Deuteronomy 6–8, any conclusions we make are limited, especially in regard to the dating of Deuteronomy as a whole.

² There is much debate over numbering the ten commandments. Jewish tradition views 5:6 as the first commandment; Lutheran and Catholic traditions view 5:7–10 as the first commandment; and Reformed and Wesleyan traditions view 5:7 as the first commandment and 5:8–10 as the second commandment. For the purposes of this paper, 5:6 shall be considered the prologue; 5:7 the first commandment; and 5:8–10 the second commandment.

³ In Deuteronomy, Sinai is always called Horeb (Richard Elliot Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed: A New View into the Five Books of Moses* [San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2003] 309).

⁴ Gerhard von Rad, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966) 11.

⁵ Bill T. Arnold, “Pentateuchal Criticism, History of,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (ed. David W. Baker and T. Desmond Alexander; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003) 622–31.

style and content.⁶ Deuteronomy presented itself as parenesis, a series of exhortations given by Moses to Israel (cf. Deuteronomy 5–11, for example), whereas the remainder of the Pentateuch presented itself as narrative, genealogy, and law. The distinct parenetic style indicated that Deuteronomy was separate from Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers in authorship and time. Through a comparison between Exodus 23 and Deuteronomy 6–7 (cf. Deuteronomy 7; Exod 23:20–33), de Wette concluded that Deuteronomy was based on Exodus 23, and, therefore, the latter of the texts.⁷ Since he believed the Tetrateuch to be Mosaic in authorship, he suggested another context for Deuteronomy. Following Jerome’s (4th century AD) and Ibn Ezra’s (1089–1164) suggestion that Deuteronomy was “the book of the law” found in 2 Kgs 22:8, he hypothesized that Deuteronomy was created as a “blueprint” for Josiah’s reforms (ca. 622/621 BC), due to 2 Kgs 22:8’s reference to “the book of the law” (cf. Deut 28:58, 61; 31:26) and the centralization of worship in Deuteronomy 12.⁸ Unlike Hezekiah’s centralization (2 Kgs 18:4, 22), Josiah’s centralization was based in a written text (2 Kgs 22:8).⁹ The connection between Josiah’s reforms and Deuteronomy has remained central to the documentary hypothesis ever since.

Since de Wette, additional similarities have been noted between Deuteronomy and the accounts of Josiah’s reforms in 2 Kings 22–23 and 2 Chronicles 29–30. These include the prohibition against pillars, idols, altars, and asherim (Deut 12:3; 16:22; 2 Kgs 23:4–20; 2 Chr 34:1–33); similarities in the descriptions of the Passover (Deuteronomy 16; 2 Kgs 23:21–23; 2 Chronicles 30); and references to astral worship (Deut 4:19; 17:2; 2 Kgs 23:4–5).¹⁰ In addition, scholars have noted similarities between Deuteronomy 6–8 and Josiah’s reforms, including the centralization reflected in the call to abandon other gods (6:14; 7:4, 16, 26; 8:19); the prohibition of altars, idols, pillars, sacred stones, and asherim (7:5; cf. 7:25); the repeated references to follow/fear/remember Yahweh and not forget/test Yahweh (6:2, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 25; 7:12, 18; 8:1, 2, 6, 11, 14, 18, 19); and the evaluation of Josiah in terms of Deut 6:5 (cf. 2 Kgs 23:25)—the only two OT references to combine heart, soul, and might.¹¹ Suzuki also connects the *herem* of Deut 7:1–5 with Josiah’s reforms, and Preuss refers to the expression יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד (“Yahweh our God, Yahweh one”) as “the slogan of the Josianic reformation” (6:4).¹²

⁶ J. G. McConville, *Deuteronomy* (Apollos Old Testament Commentary 5; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002) 21.

⁷ Alexander Rofé, *Introduction to the Composition of the Pentateuch* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 62.

⁸ McConville, *Deuteronomy* 21; Rofé, *Composition* 63.

⁹ Rofé, *Composition* 63.

¹⁰ Moshe Weinfeld, “Deuteronomy, Book of,” *ABD* 2:168–83; “Deuteronomy,” *EncJud* 5:1573–83; *Deuteronomy 1–11* (AB 5; New York: Doubleday, 1991) 81–82.

¹¹ Most occurrences of the phrase include only heart and soul (cf. Deut 4:29; 10:12; 11:13; 13:3; 30:2, 6; Josh 22:5; 1 Sam 12:20; 1 Kgs 2:4; 2 Kgs 10:31; Jer 32:40); Nathan MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the Meaning of “Monotheism”* (FAT 2; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003) 62.

¹² MacDonald, *Monotheism* 59, 111.

b. A. Kuenen (1875) and J. Wellhausen (1878). In *The Religion of Israel to the Fall of the Jewish State* (1875) and *The Prophets and Prophecy in Israel* (1875), A. Kuenen argues for an evolutionary understanding of Israelite monotheism. Monotheism was the result of theological development beginning with the ten commandments and culminating in the prophets. Whereas the ten commandments contained the “germs” or seeds of an incipient monotheism, the seventh- and eighth-century prophets were “the creators of ethical monotheism,” that is, full-fledged monotheism.¹³ With regard to Deuteronomy 6–8, many point to the *shema* (6:4–5), as an expression of full-fledged monotheistic faith,¹⁴ consequently connecting it with the prophetic material of Hosea, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Second Isaiah.¹⁵ This approach suggests a seventh- or eighth-century date, and is used as further proof of de Wette’s hypothesis.

Julius Wellhausen continued this approach in his 1878 *History of Israel*, arguing that “the prophetic idea of God found expression in the Deuteronomic legislation.”¹⁶ As a result, he linked Deuteronomy’s full-fledged monotheism with the prophets of the seventh and eighth centuries to provide an adequate basis for dating the four documents of the Pentateuch (J, E, D, P). Since J and E reflected less developed ideas, he ascribed them to an earlier period (J [c. 840 BC], E [c. 700 BC]). Similarly, since P reflected more developed ideas, he ascribed it to a later period (c. 500–450 BC).¹⁷ Deuteronomy (D), therefore, became the middle term, dependent on the JE material, but independent from the P material.

As with de Wette’s theory, Wellhausen’s theory has remained prominent. Friedman, for example, assigns nearly every allusion in Deuteronomy 6–8 to J or E: Deut 6:10 (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) = Exod 3:13 (E), 15 (E), 16 (E); 4:5 (E); Deut 6:3 (milk and honey) = Exod 3:8 (J), 17 (E); 13:5 (E); 33:3 (E); Lev 20:24 (P); Num 13:27 (J); Num 14:8 (P); Deut 6:16 (Massah) = Exod 17:1–7 (E); literary connections between Deut 6 and Exod 13 (E); Deut 7:1 (list of nations) = Gen 15:19–20 (J); Exod 3:8 (J), 17 (E); 13:5 (E); 23:23 (E); Num 13:29 (J); Deut 7:6 (holy people, treasured possession) = Exod 19:6 (E); literary connections between Deut 7 and Exod 23:20–33 (E); Deut 8:3 (manna) = Exod 16:4 (J); 8:7 et al. (abundance of the land) = Num 13:20–27 (J/P).¹⁸ Those that do reflect P have at least one reference to J or E as well.

¹³ Ibid. 23–24.

¹⁴ Eugene H. Merrill, for instance, states that the ideas of the *shema* contain “an unmistakable basis for monotheistic faith” (*Deuteronomy* [NAC 4; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994] 163).

¹⁵ S. R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy* (2d ed.; ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1896), xxvii, xciii–xciv; *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1972) 88.

¹⁶ MacDonald, *Monotheism* 27.

¹⁷ Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994).

¹⁸ Friedman, *The Bible* 54–55, 122–24, 141–42, 147, 149, 151, 159, 175, 222, 263–64; John J. Van Seters disagrees with this analysis, arguing the J material is dependent on the D material (*The Law Book for the Diaspora: Revision in the Study of the Covenant Code* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003]).

Wellhausen also argued that the original D was the law code of Deuteronomy 12–26. Due to the redundant parenthetic material in 1:1–4:40 and 4:44–11:32, he hypothesized two editions of D, one with each section as its introduction. These two sources were eventually redacted together to become the current document.¹⁹ This view was followed by O. Eissfeldt (1917) and adapted slightly by Fohrer. According to Fohrer, 4:44–9:6 and 10:12–11:32 were the original introduction; because an introduction exists in ancient Near Eastern law codes such as the law code of Hammurabi, one would expect an introduction in Deuteronomy as well.²⁰

c. C. Steuernagel (1894, 1923) and W. Staerk (1894). Following Wellhausen's source-critical approach, C. Steuernagel (*Das Rahmen des Deuteronomiums*, 1894; *Kommentar*, 1923) and W. Staerk (1894) sought a systematic approach to discerning layers within D. Although working independently of one another, both pointed to the alternation of the second-person singular and the second-person plural, the so-called *Numeruswechsel*, as evidence.²¹ They suggested the second singular was the earlier layer, and the second plural, the later layer. This alternation is most problematic between 4:44–11:32, especially in Deuteronomy 6–8. The singular alone is used in 6:2–13, 18–19; 7:1–3, 6, 9–11, 13–20, 21–24, 26; 8:2–19; the plural alone in 6:1, 14, 16–17, 22–25; 7:5, 7–8; 8:20; and both in 6:15, 20–21; 7:4, 12, 21, 25; 8:1, 19.²² In his more detailed 1923 exposition, Steuernagel went on to distinguish additional source layers within the *Numeruswechsel* due to repetition within each of the layers, creating two second singular layers and two second plural layers. He identified 8:14b–16 as a secondary single layer due to its repetition of 8:2–5 and the natural flow between 8:14a and 8:17.²³ Though the *Numeruswechsel* was received well, Steuernagel's more detailed approach did not receive much support.

Although many, such as G. Seitz (1971) and F. García López (1982), still utilize this approach, many (both conservatives and liberals) find it unconvincing since the *Numeruswechsel* does not coincide with the textual tensions.²⁴

¹⁹ Rolf Rendtorff, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986) 150; A. D. H. Mayes, *Deuteronomy* (New Century Bible Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979) 38.

²⁰ Mayes, *Deuteronomy* 38.

²¹ Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1–11* (WBC 6A; Dallas: Word, 1991) 1.

²² McConville, *Deuteronomy* 151; cf. KJV, which translates the singular as “thy,” “thou,” and “thine” and the plural as “ye,” “you,” and “your.”

²³ Mayes, *Deuteronomy* 37.

²⁴ Seitz sees the alternation as evidence of two originally separate topics: (1) the command to destroy and remain separate from the nations (7:1–3, 6, 17–24); and (2) the destruction of religious paraphernalia (7:4–5, 7–15, 25–26). García López sees the alternation as evidence of four chronologically distinct units: (1) 7:1–3, 5–6, 12b, 17–19, 21 (Northern Kingdom); (2) 7:8b–11 (another Northern Kingdom layer); (3) 7:4, 13–16, 20, 22–24 (Judahite monarchy); and (4) 7:7–8a, 25–26 (Josiah); Richard D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002) 98.

M. Weinfeld (1992), N. Lohfink (1963), and J. G. McConville (2002), for instance, argue that the evidence points to literary stylistics: the singular refers to the collective, and the plural emphasizes individual responsibility. Weinfeld also finds evidence for this alternation in ancient Near Eastern treaty documents and pre-D sources (cf. Exod 22:21–23).²⁵

d. *S. R. Driver (1896, 1899)*. Following the work of de Wette, S. R. Driver (Commentary, 1896; Introduction, 1899) argued that Deuteronomy presented a “Deuteronomic” style and language.²⁶ Deuteronomy was characterized by a repetitive parenthetic style with stereotyped phrases and language. These included the entrance into the promised land; the call to keep the covenant; the call to walk in Yahweh’s ways; the call to worship Yahweh where Yahweh would choose to place Yahweh’s name; the call to “love Yahweh with all one’s heart, soul, and might”; references to other gods; the phrase “which I am commanding you this day”; the phrase “a mighty hand and an outstretched arm”; the oath Yahweh swore to the patriarchs; the phrase “Yahweh your God”; references to laws, statutes, judgments, and the good land; the command not to forget; and the phrase “Hear, O Israel.”²⁷ This language, which is prominent in chapters 6–8, led Driver to argue for the internal unity of D. Since D reflected a unified style and language, chapters 12–26 and the two introductions (1:1–4:40; 4:44–11:32) worked together (contra Wellhausen). Deuteronomy 5–26, for Driver, was the core of the book; 4:44–49 served as the introduction for the legislative material (Deuteronomy 12–26), and 1:1–5, the introduction for D.²⁸ However, Driver did not believe D was the work of a single author. As Driver states, “Certain parts of Dt., while displaying the general Deut. style, connect imperfectly with the context, or present differences of representation, which make it probable that they are the work of a later Deuteronomic hand (or hands), by whom the original Dt. was supplemented or enlarged.”²⁹ The original D contains 1:1–2; 1:4–3:13; 3:18–4:28; 4:32–30; 5:1–26:19, 27:9–10; 28:1–29:9; 30:11–31:13; 31:24–27; and 32:45–47, while the Deuteronomic redactor(s) are accorded 3:14–17; 4:29–31; 4:41–49; 27:1–4; 27:7b–8; 27:11–26; 29:10–30:10; 31:16–22; and 31:28–32:44.³⁰ The entirety of Deuteronomy 6–8, for Driver, is part of the original D.

Driver also highlighted, in more specificity, the connections between D and the seventh- and eighth-century prophets, particularly those in Hosea, Jeremiah, Second Isaiah, and Ezekiel (as Kuenen, Wellhausen).³¹ Thus, he

²⁵ Weinfeld, “Deuteronomy, Book of” 173–74; Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy* 15; McConville, *Deuteronomy* 140, Rendtorff, *Old Testament* 151.

²⁶ J. G. McConville, “Deuteronomy, Book of,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, 182–93.

²⁷ See Driver, *Deuteronomy*, lxxviii–lxxxiv for a more comprehensive list with references.

²⁸ Driver, *Introduction* 70; idem, *Deuteronomy* lxvi.

²⁹ Driver, *Introduction* 72.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ See Driver, *Deuteronomy* xxvii–xxviii, xciii–xciv; idem, *Introduction* 88 for specific examples.

again posits a late date for the book. Unlike those before him, however, he rejects de Wette's notion of a blueprint. For Driver, D was written *prior* to its discovery under Josiah. It was written either during the reign of Manasseh or in the early years of Josiah's reign at a time when idolatry ran rampant (cf. 2 Kgs 21:1–18, 22:3).³²

e. *G. Hölscher (1922)*. G. Hölscher ("Komposition und Ursprung des Deuteronomiums" [1922]) took a supplementary approach to the introductions in 1:1–4:40 and 4:44–11:32. Like Wellhausen, he believed the original D was Deuteronomy 12–26. However, rather than posit two editions, he argued that each introduction was a supplement, added to D at a later phase in its development.³³

2. *Traditio-historical criticism and ancient Near Eastern treaty forms.*

a. *G. von Rad (1938, 1966)*. According to A. D. H. Mayes, G. von Rad's 1938 "The Form-Critical Problem of the Hexateuch" marked the "beginning of a new era of research into Deuteronomy."³⁴ Building on Wellhausen and H. Gunkel's form criticism in Genesis (1895), von Rad argued that D emerged from elaboration on an early Israelite credo, which he identified as Deut 26:5–9 (cf. 6:21–23/25).³⁵ This early credo, which emerged separately from the Sinai tradition, included the patriarchs, oppression in Egypt, deliverance from Egypt, and deliverance to the Promised Land. According to von Rad, this credo expanded alongside a separate Sinai tradition, before coming together in the compilation of J, E, D, and P.³⁶ In his section on "The Form of Deuteronomy," he argues that D is an organic whole composed of four parts: (1) a historical presentation of the Sinai event and the parenthetic material attached to that event (Deuteronomy 1–11); (2) the law code (12:1–26:15); (3) the sealing of the covenant (26:16–19); and (4) blessings and curses (Deuteronomy 27–28).³⁷ This form, he hypothesized, derived from the cult setting at Shechem as a liturgy of covenant renewal, preparing for the form and *Sitz im Leben* of Hittite and Neo-Assyrian suzerainty treaties in the years to come.³⁸

In his 1966 commentary, von Rad argued that Deuteronomy 6–8 was originally a series of independent sermons, artificially woven together to derive the covenant renewal form found in D: 6:10–15; 6:16–19; 6:20–25; 7:1–11; 7:12–16; 7:17–26; 8:1–6; 8:7–20. Second, he suggested the Decalogue

³² Driver, *Introduction* 89.

³³ Mayes, *Deuteronomy* 38.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 31.

³⁵ Gunkel sought to find the original oral form and *Sitz im Leben* behind Genesis (Ernest W. Nicholson, foreword to *Genesis*, by Hermann Gunkel [trans. Mark E. Biddle; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997] [3]–[9]).

³⁶ Gerhard von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (trans. E. W. Trueman Dicken; New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966) 1–26.

³⁷ Von Rad, *Problem of the Hexateuch* 27.

³⁸ *Ibid.* 33–40. See further below.

(5:6–21) was not original, due to its presentation as a speech by God rather than a speech by Moses (cf. 5:1–5, 22ff.).³⁹ However, if the Decalogue was a source, this would be expected. Finally, von Rad argued that 8:19–20 was not original: “The warning against serving strange gods does not really fit in with [the] theme.”⁴⁰

b. *M. Noth (1948)*. Following von Rad’s approach, M. Noth’s 1948 *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* expanded the early Israelite credo to include five elements: (1) guidance out of Egypt; (2) guidance into the good land; (3) the promise to the ancestors; (4) guidance in the wilderness; and (5) the revelation at Sinai.⁴¹ All five elements are present in Deuteronomy 6–8. Because God delivered Israel from slavery in Egypt (6:12, 21–22; 7:8, 18–19; 8:14), provided in the wilderness (6:16; 8:2–4, 15–16), and vowed to uphold the oath given to the patriarchs (6:3, 10; 7:8–9, 12, 14; 8:1, 18) by bringing Israel into the good land (6:3, 10–11, 18–19, 23; 7:1, 13–15, 22–24; 8:7–10), the Israelites are to remain faithful to the Sinai covenant (6:1–2, 6–9, 13–14, 17–18, 20, 24; 7:2–5, 11–12, 16, 25–26; 8:1, 6, 11, 19–20) expounded by Moses on the plains of Moab. The only theological theme absent from Noth’s fivefold credo, but found in Deuteronomy 6–8, is the conquest (7:1–5, 17–26). However, this theme is closely associated with the good land and the oath given to the patriarchs; the land of conquest is specifically the good land that Yahweh swore to give to the patriarchs.

c. *G. Mendenhall (1954)*. Although G. Mendenhall did not work directly with the book of Deuteronomy, his analysis of late bronze age (LBA) Hittite suzerainty treaties from Hattusha (modern Boghazköy) in his 1954 “Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition” helped prepare the way for the adaptation of von Rad’s fourfold form of Deuteronomy to the Hittite treaty form. In this article, Mendenhall offered both an analysis of the elements of the Hittite treaty and a comparison with the Decalogue (Exod 20:1–19; Deut 5:6–21).⁴² Most important for our purposes is his delineation of the elements in LBA (15th–13th cent. BC) Hittite treaties: (1) title/preamble; (2) historical prologue; (3) general stipulations; (4) specific stipulations; (5) divine witnesses; (6) blessings and curses; and (7) recital of covenant and deposit of tablets.⁴³

d. *M. G. Kline (1963) and K. A. Kitchen (1967)*. The similarities between Mendenhall’s presentation of LBA Hittite suzerainty treaties and von Rad’s fourfold division of Deuteronomy were soon noted by conservative scholars M. G. Kline (*Treaty of the Great King*, 1963) and K. A. Kitchen (*Ancient Orient*

³⁹ Von Rad, *Deuteronomy* 60, 63–74.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 73. This view is followed by Friedman who assigns 8:19–20 to Dtr2 for the same reason (*The Bible* 324).

⁴¹ Antony F. Campbell and Mark A. O’Brien, *Sources of the Pentateuch: Texts, Introductions, Annotations* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) 8.

⁴² Merrill, *Deuteronomy* 28; Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976) 22.

⁴³ Weinfeld, “Deuteronomy, Book of” 170.

and the Old Testament, 1967), who systematically applied the LBA Hittite treaty to Deuteronomy: (1) title/preamble (1:1–5); (2) historical prologue (1:6–4:49); (3) general stipulations (Deuteronomy 5–11); (4) specific stipulations (Deuteronomy 12–26); (5) divine witnesses (30:19; 31:19; 32:1–43); and (6) blessings and curses (Deuteronomy 27–28).⁴⁴ Under this framework, Deuteronomy 6–8 serves as general stipulations, preparing for the specific stipulations of Deuteronomy 12–26. Moreover, these scholars mark an important shift in the history of interpretation. On the one hand, their application of Hittite treaties highlighted the literary unity of the text (with Driver). On the other hand, the use of LBA (15th–13th cent. BC) treaties undermined the Josianic connection on which the documentary hypothesis was founded.

e. *Frankena (1965) and M. Weinfeld (1972, 1991)*. Kline and Kitchen soon came under harsh attack by higher critics, particularly Frankena (“The Vassal Treaties of Esharhaddon and the Dating of Deuteronomy” [1965]) and M. Weinfeld (*Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* [1972]). While acknowledging similarities between Deuteronomy and Hittite treaties, these scholars argued that Neo-Assyrian treaties, particularly the Vassal Treaty of Esharhaddon (c. 672 BC; discovered in 1956) provided a more appropriate background for understanding Deuteronomy, due to close affinities in form, structure, and phraseology, especially with the curse list of Deuteronomy 28. Neo-Assyrian (seventh-century BC) treaties, unlike Hittite (15th–13th century-BC) treaties, have long curse lists. Hittite curse lists are shorter and more generalized. However, Deuteronomy 28, like the Vassal Treaty of Esharhaddon (VTE), has a long and elaborate curse list.⁴⁵ Weinfeld also argues that the ordering of the curses in 28:23–35 parallels the order in the VTE, and notes similarities in having the population gather (29:1–11); taking a pledge for future generations (29:14); the demand for love/loyalty with all one’s heart (4:29; 6:5; 10:12; 11:13; 13:3; 30:2, 6); self-condemnation for violation of an oath (29:20–21); teaching future generations (6:6–9); and the expressions “go after/follow,” “fear,” “hearken to the voice of,” “do as . . . commands,” “act in complete truth,” and “be sincere,” which are prominent in Deuteronomy 6–8 (cf. 6:10–19).⁴⁶ By pointing to these parallels with a treaty from c. 672 BC, only fifty years prior to Josiah’s reforms, higher-critical scholarship maintained the Josianic date, despite connections with LBA Hittite treaties.

However, the Neo-Assyrian identification is not without problems. Neo-Assyrian treaties, unlike Deuteronomy and Hittite treaties, have no historical prologue.⁴⁷ Weinfeld argues that this critique is weak since most

⁴⁴ Meredith G. Kline, *Treaty of the Great King: The Covenant Structure of Deuteronomy: Studies and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963); Merrill, *Deuteronomy* 28; Craigie, *Deuteronomy* 22–23; McConville, “Deuteronomy” 184–85.

⁴⁵ Craigie, *Deuteronomy* 26.

⁴⁶ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy* 7–8; idem, “Deuteronomy” 1576; *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972) 59–157.

⁴⁷ Craigie, *Deuteronomy* 26.

Neo-Assyrian treaties are fragmentary at this point. In fact, the VTE is the only fully extant Neo-Assyrian treaty, making overarching conclusions difficult.⁴⁸ All we know with certainty is that the VTE has no historical prologue. In spite of this, current evidence suggests close affinities with both Hittite and Neo-Assyrian treaties as various points (Hittite with the historical prologue; Neo-Assyrian with the curse list). Thus, treaty parallels in and of themselves cannot provide a date for Deuteronomy. This evidence must be understood in conjunction with other textual evidence. As McConville states, "It is not possible . . . to settle the dating of Deuteronomy on the basis of treaty analogies alone, or to explain them as the result of the exclusive influence of either the Hittite or the Assyrian types. It is best to think of Deuteronomy as drawing on the treaty tradition of the ANE rather freely."⁴⁹ The adaptation of the treaty form by Deuteronomy is a way of speaking into the ancient Near Eastern environment.

f. *Frankena (1965) and Perlitt (1969)*. In addition to arguing that the Neo-Assyrian VTE is the appropriate background for Deuteronomy, Frankena argued that the covenantal form of Deuteronomy, and the Josianic covenant renewal it reflected, was evidence of replacement of the Neo-Assyrian VTE previously held by Josiah: "Josiah's covenant with God was considered a substitution for the former treaty with the king of Assyria, thereby expressing vassalship to Yahweh instead of vassalship to the king of Assyria."⁵⁰

Picking up on this, Perlitt (1969) argued that Deuteronomy's theology of covenant and land emerged from the seventh-century Assyrian crisis. The notion of the land (Deut 6:3, 10–11, 23; 7:1–5, 13–15, 17, 20–26; 8:1, 7–10, 12–13) and the conditional element of covenant theology (Deut 6:3, 15, 17–19; 7:4, 12; 8:1, 19–20) emerged from the threat posed to the land by Assyria. Prior to this, the gift of land was unconditional, as evident from references to Yahweh bringing the Israelites into the land as Yahweh swore to the patriarchs (6:3, 10, 18, 23; 7:1, 6–9, 12; 8:1, 7, 18). Perlitt highlights an important tension in Deuteronomy 6–8. On the one hand, the gift of land is unconditional. On the other hand, the Israelites must remain faithful to receive the land, so therefore, it is conditional. According to Perlitt, the unconditional element reflects an earlier reality, whereas the conditional element reflects the threat of Assyrian invasion and loss of the land.⁵¹ Covenant theology is, therefore, a product of the seventh-century crisis with Assyria.

The problem with Perlitt's theory, however, is that he fails to note how the unconditional and the conditional work together. It is not God's gift that is threatened, for the oath given to the patriarchs will be fulfilled. The conditional element concerns whether or not the people receive the blessings of God *once in the land* (Deut 6:3, 18; 7:12–15; 8:1; cf. 5:16), and whether or not the people will *remain in the land* or be driven from it (Deut 6:15; 7:4;

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ McConville, *Deuteronomy* 24.

⁵⁰ Weinfeld, "Deuteronomy" 1576–77.

⁵¹ McConville, *Deuteronomy* 25–29.

8:19–20). Moreover, the “commands, decrees, and laws” are specifically those to be carried out “in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess” (Deut 6:1).

3. *The emergence of the Deuteronomistic History and its aftermath.*

a. *M. Noth (1943).* According to D. L. Christensen, M. Noth’s 1943 *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, took “subsequent discussion [of Deuteronomy] in new directions.” Building on the work of de Wette and Driver, Noth hypothesized, on the basis of similarities in language and style, that Deuteronomy was incorporated into a comprehensive work known as the DtrH (Joshua, Judges, 1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings). This work, he argued, was written by a single exilic (sixth-century BC) author, who incorporated the pre-existing Deut 4:44–30:20 into his work, supplementing it with the introduction of 1:1–4:40 and the conclusion of 31:1–34:12, which have strong verbal similarities with the beginning of Joshua (Deut 3:28; 31:6, 7, 23//Josh 1:9; Deut 1:21; 31:8//Josh 8:1; 10:25; Deut 31:8//Josh 1:5; Deut 1:38; 3:28; 31:7//Josh 1:6–7).⁵² Important Deuteronomistic language present in Deuteronomy 6–8 includes the command to love God with all one’s heart and soul (Deut 4:29; 6:5; 10:12; 11:13; 13:3; 30:2, 6; Josh 22:5; 1 Sam 12:20; 1 Kgs 2:4; 2 Kgs 10:31; cf. Jer 32:40), and the command to follow God exclusively and walk in God’s ways (Deut 6:1, 2, 6, 13, 14, 17, 24–25; 7:11, 12, 16; 8:1, 6, 11, 19–20; Josh 22:5; Judg 2:17; 3:4; 1 Kgs 2:3; 3:14; 6:12; 8:58, 61; 9:6; 11:38; 14:8; 18:19; 2 Kgs 17:13, 16, 19, 34; 18:6; 23:3; etc.). Since this time, Noth’s theory has achieved near universal consensus, with the exception of his notion of a single exilic author.

b. *G. Minette de Tillesse (1962).* In the 1962 article “Sections ‘tu’ et sections ‘vous’ dans le Deuteronome,” G. Minette de Tillesse (followed by Mittmann, 1975), sought to explain Steuernagel’s and Staerk’s observations regarding the alternation of the second singular and second plural in light of Noth’s DtrH. As with Steuernagel and Staerk, Minette de Tillesse suggested the second singular passages were original. However, he did not see this as evidence of source data. The original second singular text was modified during the Deuteronomistic redaction. The second plural, therefore, became evidence of Deuteronomistic redactional activity.⁵³ Since Minette de Tillesse, this has become the standard approach to the second plural/second singular problem in Deuteronomy.

c. *E. W. Nicholson (1967) and M. Weinfeld (1972, 1991).* Both E. W. Nicholson (*Deuteronomy and Tradition* [1967]) and M. Weinfeld (*Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* [1972]) modify Noth’s emphasis on a single

⁵² Steven L. McKenzie, “Deuteronomistic History,” *ABD* 2:160–168; Weinfeld, “Deuteronomy, Book of” 170. For a discussion of the central theological ideas of the DtrH see Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup 15; Sheffield: JSOT, 1981) 89–99.

⁵³ McConville, *Deuteronomy* 29; von Rad, *Deuteronomy* 12.

exilic author in favor of a Deuteronomistic school beginning in the seventh century BC and culminating in the exilic (Nicholson) or post-exilic (Weinfeld) periods.⁵⁴ Due to connections with Hosea, Nicholson argues for the emergence of Deuteronomy in the prophetic circles of the seventh century (composition during the reign of Manasseh).⁵⁵ Weinfeld, on the other hand, sees the emergence of Deuteronomy in the scribal school of the royal court, due to connections with the wisdom literature, particularly Proverbs. As in Deut 6:7–9, 20–25, the wisdom literature emphasizes the role of teaching future generations (cf. Prov 1:8; 4:1, 10; 5:7; 7:24; 8:6, 32, 33; 22:17, 23; 23:19, 22).⁵⁶ For Weinfeld, this first Deuteronomistic phase of composition is during the reign of Hezekiah. Although 2 Kgs 18:1–6 does not mention a written text as motivation for the reforms, Weinfeld sees the turn to centralization as evidence of Deuteronomic influence or evidence that a writer during the reign of Manasseh looked to Hezekiah's reforms for inspiration. The reign of Manasseh, where prophets were heavily persecuted and idolatry flourished (2 Kgs 21:1–18), offered adequate opportunity for losing the book. Weinfeld also points to expansion under Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:8; 1 Chr 4:41–43) as evidence for the conquest/land motif of Deuteronomy (cf. esp. Deut 6:3, 10–11, 15, 18, 23; 7:1–5, 13–26; 8:1, 7–10, 12–13, 19–20).⁵⁷ The “blueprint” connection to Josiah is no longer the consensus. The majority understand D as composed (1) during the reign of Hezekiah; (2) during the reign of Manasseh; or (3) during the early years of Josiah's reign. Reform is needed due to Manasseh's rule; inspiration comes from Hezekiah's centralization.

d. *F. M. Cross and R. E. Friedman (2003)*. A second form of modification occurred in the work of F. M. Cross, who argued for a Deuteronomistic redactor (“Dtr2”), rather than a Deuteronomistic school.⁵⁸ This approach is followed by R. E. Friedman in his 2003 *The Bible with Sources Revealed*, identifying 8:19–20 as the work of Dtr2, due to the presence of uncharacteristic phrases and themes: (1) the use of the infinitival emphatic *אָכַד תִּאָכַדְוּ*, “you will surely perish” (8:19, cf. 4:26; 30:18); (2) the use of the expression “I call to witness” (8:19); and (3) the theme of being removed from the land due to following other gods (an exilic theme).⁵⁹ However, these claims do not hold water in the context of Deuteronomy 6–8. Though that precise form of *אָכַד* (“perish”) does not occur elsewhere, the word does appear one other time in our text (7:20), making it likely that this is original. Secondly, Deuteronomy 6–8 consistently warns Israel not to go after other gods, threatening that they will be removed from the land (6:15; 7:4). Likewise, the nations of 7:1 are disposed from the land (7:1–5, 17–26) because they served other gods (9:5), making the threat consistent with the rest of Deuteronomy 6–8.

⁵⁴ McKenzie, “Deuteronomistic History” 162.

⁵⁵ Patrick D. Miller, *Deuteronomy* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox, 1990) 5–6.

⁵⁶ For a comprehensive list of connections with the wisdom literature, see Weinfeld, *Deuteronomistic School* 244–319; idem, *Deuteronomy* 62–65.

⁵⁷ Weinfeld, “Deuteronomy, Book of” 178–79.

⁵⁸ McKenzie, “Deuteronomistic History” 164.

⁵⁹ Friedman, *The Bible* 324.

4. *Literary criticism.* The most important literary approach to Deuteronomy came in N. Lohfink's 1963 *Das Hauptgebot*. Lohfink sought unity in the text through "literary stylistics," that is, the repetition of language and phrases (with Driver and Noth).⁶⁰ As a result, he rejected an original D of Deuteronomy 12–26, arguing that Deuteronomy 5–11 was the "principle command" on which Deuteronomy 12–26 was based. Second, he suggested that the *Numeruswechsel* was due to stylistic reasons—each alternation was a new form of address, the singular addressed the collective Israel, and the plural, the individuals.⁶¹ Third, he argued that 8:19–20 were original, claiming they were dependent upon 6:10–15.⁶² Lohfink also examined the structure of various portions of Deuteronomy using chiasitic analysis, including chapter 8.⁶³

- A) Parenetic Frame (8:1)
- B) Wandering in the Desert (8:2–6)
- C) Richness of the Land (8:7–10)
- D) Do not forget Yahweh (8:11)
- C') Richness of the Land (8:12–13)
- B') Wandering in the Desert (8:14–16)
- A') Parenetic Frame (8:19–20).

This chiasitic analysis is helpful in connecting 8:19–20 with the rest of the chapter, and overriding the alternation between the second singular and second plural in chapter 8.⁶⁴ Moreover, it emphasizes the command "do not forget Yahweh" (8:11), which, as we shall see, is connected to the overarching theme of Deut 6–8's exposition of the first two commandments.

5. *Other interpretive issues and textual tensions.*

a. *The land flowing with milk and honey (6:3).* Before moving to our assessment and positive proposal, it would be helpful to briefly highlight some other interpretive issues and tensions in Deuteronomy 6–8. Early on, A. Dillmann and S. R. Driver noted the disruptive nature of the phrase "the land flowing with milk and honey" in 6:3: וְשָׁמְעָה יִשְׂרָאֵל וְשָׁמְרָתָּ לְעִשׂוֹת אֲשֶׁר יִיטֵב לָךְ וְאֲשֶׁר תִּרְבוּן: 6:3: וְשָׁמְעָה יִשְׂרָאֵל וְשָׁמְרָתָּ לְעִשׂוֹת אֲשֶׁר יִיטֵב לָךְ וְאֲשֶׁר תִּרְבוּן: וְזָבַת חֶלֶב וְדָבַשׁ מְאֹד כִּי אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶי אֲבֹתֶיךָ לָךְ אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וְדָבַשׁ ("O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as Yahweh, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey"). As a result, Dillmann suggested moving the phrase to 6:1, placing it in apposition with the land they are entering to possess. Driver added the additional phrase "in the land Yahweh your God is giving you" to resolve the problem.⁶⁵ Neither solution is entirely satisfying;

⁶⁰ Christensen, *Deuteronomy* 1.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy* 328, 397.

⁶³ *Ibid.* 397; Nelson, *Deuteronomy* 108.

⁶⁴ See also Lohfink's chiasitic analysis of 7:6–16 in McConville (*Deuteronomy* 151), which overrides the *Numeruswechsel* in one of the most problematic alternation texts in Deuteronomy.

⁶⁵ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy* 322–23.

the best solution is likely to supply an implied \aleph , and tie it to the preceding \aleph clause, as in the NIV: “so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers promised you.”

b. *The shema (6:4)*. Throughout the history of interpretation, several different positions have been taken in regard to the translation and meaning of the shema, $\text{יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד}$ (6:4), each with its own strengths and weaknesses: (1) Yahweh our God, Yahweh is one;⁶⁶ (2) Yahweh our God is one Yahweh;⁶⁷ (3) Yahweh is our God;⁶⁸ Yahweh is one; (4) Yahweh is our God, Yahweh alone;⁶⁹ (5) our God is one Yahweh;⁷⁰ (6) our one God is Yahweh, Yahweh;⁷¹ and (7) Yahweh, Yahweh our God is unique.⁷² Of these positions, the first four are the most heavily supported and the most likely. Since the verb “to be” is absent from the Hebrew, how one translates this phrase will remain an open question, and is beyond the scope of this paper.⁷³ However, we can derive meaning from the phrase, though it, too, has remained a matter of dispute. Some view the clause as a statement about Yahweh, whereas others see it as a statement about the relationship between Yahweh and Israel, that is, Yahweh is Israel’s God. For those who take the former option, the dispute resides over whether the statement expresses the oneness or the uniqueness of Yahweh.⁷⁴ In my opinion, however, these options are not mutually exclusive, and the statement is likely left purposely ambiguous to express *both* the identity of Yahweh as one and unique, and Israel’s relationship to Yahweh.⁷⁵

c. *The nation list (7:1)*. In the article, “The Structure and Historical Implications of the Lists of Pre-Israelite Nations” (1979), T. Ishida argues the list of nations occurs in various numerical combinations throughout the OT, the six-nation list being the most basic: Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. Of these six, he claims the last three are typically at the end of the list, whereas the first three vary in order based on

⁶⁶ LXX; Matt 22:37–38; Mark 12:29–30; NIV; ESV; NKJV; McConville, *Deuteronomy* 140–41; MacDonald, *Monotheism* 67; Merrill, *Deuteronomy* 162.

⁶⁷ KJV; ASV; RSV; Craigie, *Deuteronomy* 167; Driver, *Deuteronomy* 89; Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy* 330; Mays, *Deuteronomy* 176; von Rad, *Deuteronomy* 62.

⁶⁸ NASB; Friedman, *The Bible* 321.

⁶⁹ NLT; NRSV; NJPS; Ibn Ezra; Nelson, *Deuteronomy* 86; Christensen, *Deuteronomy* 142; Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996) 76.

⁷⁰ Vladimir Orel understands the first יְהוָה as the verb “is” on the basis of Exod 3:14–15 (“The Words on the Doorpost,” *ZAW* 109 [1997] 614–17).

⁷¹ According to MacDonald, *Monotheism* 68, this position is supported by F. I. Andersen.

⁷² According to MacDonald (ibid.) this position is supported by M. Dahood.

⁷³ For a good discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of each position see MacDonald, *Monotheism* 62–70.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 69–74.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 75–78.

time of composition. The texts in which Canaanites come first are the earliest (15th–13th century BC, reflecting the use of the term *Kinahhu* in the Egyptian province of Syro-Palestine at this time). The texts in which Amorites are listed first are the second phase of development (ninth century BC, reflecting the use of the term *Amurru* to refer to the peoples of Syro-Palestine in Neo-Assyrian inscriptions of this time). The texts in which Hittites are first are the latest phase of development (seventh century BC, reflecting the use of the term *Hatti* to refer to the peoples of Syro-Palestine in Neo-Assyrian inscriptions of this time).⁷⁶ Assuming Ishida is correct, the placement of “Hittites” first in 7:1 indicates a 7th-century date, again supporting a Josianic date for D.

This analysis, however, is not without problems. As McConville points out, Ishida’s analysis uses these terms in a generalizing sense, whereas the text uses them to distinguish particular people groups.⁷⁷ Moreover, Ishida cannot account for the continued use of Amorites and Canaanites in the later period, nor the emergence of Amorites and Hittites in the earlier period. Thirdly, he does not attempt to explain the presence of the seventh name in 7:1, that is, the Girgashites. Finally, certain identification between the biblical and Egyptian/Neo-Assyrian terms is difficult to ascertain.

d. *Herem and prohibition of intermarriage (7:2–3)*. There is also a contradiction between the *herem* of 7:2 and the prohibition of intermarriage in 7:3. If the Israelites obeyed the first, the second is illogical and unnecessary.⁷⁸ MacDonald understands the *herem* as a metaphor for “what fulfilling the *Shema* might mean.” The *herem* is not to be understood literally, but as a metaphor, expressed in harsh language to emphasize the full extent of covenant faithfulness to Yahweh.⁷⁹ While MacDonald is certainly correct in understanding this as an expression of covenant faithfulness, this understanding does not necessitate arguing for metaphor. To see this as a metaphor demands that the threats against Israel (6:15; 8:20) lose their power and validity. A better approach is to see 7:3 as further stressing the desperate reality in 7:2, or, more likely, that Moses anticipates the failure of the people. In fact, the use of the infinitive absolute in 8:19 (“if you shall surely forget”), as well as the repeated references to the wilderness period in 1:1–4:40; 6:16; 8:2–5, and the golden calf episode in 9:7–29 suggest that Moses expects failure.

e. *Quick destruction by Israel (7:1–5) vs. slow destruction by Yahweh (7:17–26)*. Finally, J. Van Seters points out a contradiction between the quick destruction of the peoples of the land in 7:1–5, which the Israelites themselves are to carry out, and the slow destruction in 7:17–26, which God is to carry

⁷⁶ Tomoo Ishida, “The Structure and Historical Implications of the Lists of Pre-Israelite Nations,” *Bib* 60 (1979) 461–90.

⁷⁷ McConville, *Deuteronomy* 152.

⁷⁸ MacDonald, *Monotheism* 112.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* 108.

out.⁸⁰ However, 7:1–5 never mentions the speed of the action. The only contradiction lies in the action of Israel versus the action of Yahweh, though these are not mutually exclusive. God acts on Israel’s behalf through Israel.

II. ASSESSMENT

While some assessment has already been made, we have yet to critique the primary argument against Mosaic authorship. As we saw throughout the history of interpretation, the so-called “scholarly consensus” connects the origin of Deuteronomy with the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah, placing its origin between Hezekiah’s reforms and Josiah’s reforms. The book is then found in the temple, giving impetus to Josiah’s reforms (2 Kgs 22:8). This argument is supported by (1) an evolutionary understanding of Israelite religion, including the move toward centralization in Deuteronomy 6–8; 12, the move toward full-fledged monotheism in connection with the prophets (cf. 6:4–5), and the development from an early Israelite credo; (2) similarities between the later historical (DtrH), prophetic (Hosea, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Second Isaiah), and wisdom literature (Proverbs); (3) similarities with the Neo-Assyrian VTE; and (4) the placement of Hittites at the head of the nation list in 7:1. Since we have already addressed the last two, our assessment shall focus on the first two.

Since the time of Noth’s hypothesis, modifications made to his theory have viewed the book as the product of a Deuteronomistic school or several redactors, who incorporated the preexisting book into the work, making use of its language throughout its formulation. If we assume Noth is correct, we would expect similarities in language between Deuteronomy and the DtrH, which includes the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah. Since this theory demands multiple authors/redactors working from a Deuteronomistic perspective, why place Deuteronomy at the time of Hezekiah or Josiah? Assuming the Deuteronomistic authors patterned their language on Deuteronomy itself, one could make the book Mosaic, attributing the similarities with Hezekiah and Josiah to the use of “Deuteronomistic” language. Similar arguments can be made in regard to connections with the seventh- and eighth-century prophets and the wisdom literature. In fact, this approach is typical in assessing similarities with Hosea. Since Hosea, which has the closest parallels with Deuteronomy, was an eighth-century prophet, and thus too early for the seventh-century Deuteronomy, it has become commonplace to ascribe the similarities between Hosea and Deuteronomy to a Deuteronomistic redactor.⁸¹ Likewise, Weinfeld claims that Jeremiah’s similarities are the last phase of the Deuteronomistic school.⁸² If some form of patterning is present in all these works, which are typically used to date Deuteronomy to the seventh century, why not conclude that they use the language of an earlier LBA Mosaic work, especially since the treaty evidence of either period offers a plausible backdrop?

⁸⁰ Van Seters, *Law Book* 79.

⁸¹ McConville, *Deuteronomy* 27–28.

⁸² McKenzie, “Deuteronomistic History” 162.

Second, the evolutionary understanding of Israelite religion, especially in light of the previous arguments weakening the connection with the prophets, is highly speculative and questionable at best. As W. F. Albright rightly pointed out, this understanding of the history of religions is highly dependent on Hegelian philosophy, a worldview not present at the time of Deuteronomy's creation.⁸³ Moreover, von Rad's and Noth's approaches, which trace the development of the Israelite credo in the oral traditions behind the text, have no data on which to rest their feet. As Whybray states,

The task to which the tradition-historians have addressed themselves is . . . considerably more difficult to carry out. . . . [T]hey believe it to be possible to penetrate back beyond the extant words of the Pentateuch and to discover and identify earlier forms of the material which no longer exist and for which there is no direct evidence.⁸⁴

In this light, it is difficult to argue that Deuteronomy 6–8 is about centralization of worship and full-fledged monotheism.

Finally, it is problematic to view Deuteronomy in light of Hezekiah's or Josiah's reforms. For one, all the laws, commands, and regulations found in Deuteronomy do not appear in the reforms (cf. especially Deuteronomy 12–26). There is neither condemnation of intermarriage nor destruction of treaties in the reform accounts, as in Deut 7:1–5. If the book was written around the time of these reforms, we would expect the *entirety* of the Deuteronomic legislation (both its general and specific stipulations) to be part of these reforms. However, the only parts that appear in the reforms are the destruction of cult paraphernalia (Deut 7:5, 25; 12:3; 16:22; 2 Kgs 18:4, 22; 23:4–20; 2 Chr 29:1–36; 31:20–21; 34:1–33), the constant appeal to follow Yahweh alone by not worshipping other gods (Deut 6:14; 7:4, 16, 26; 8:19), the celebration of the Passover (Deuteronomy 16; 2 Kgs 23:21–23; 2 Chronicles 30), and the presence of astral deities (Deut 4:19; 17:2; 2 Kgs 23:4–5).⁸⁵ Such evidence, as we shall see below, finds a better context in the first two commandments of the Decalogue: "You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them. . . ." (Deut 5:7–9a). Moreover, higher critics ignore the similar account of Asa's reforms (1 Kgs 15:12–13; 2 Chr 14:3–5), which occurs *before* those of Hezekiah and Josiah. Asa is said to have "removed the foreign altars and the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles. He commanded Judah to seek Yahweh the God of their fathers and to obey his laws and commands. He removed the high places and incense altars in every town in Judah. . . ." (2 Chr 14:3–5; cf. 1 Kgs 15:12–13;

⁸³ MacDonald, *Monotheism* 30; R. N. Whybray, *The Making of the Pentateuch: A Methodological Study* (JSOTSup 53; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987) 43.

⁸⁴ Whybray, *Making of the Pentateuch* 138.

⁸⁵ Though many suggest there is no evidence for astral deities until the seventh century in Palestine, the Israelites would have known of such deities, particularly from their time in Egypt where the sun god was prominent.

2 Kgs 18:4, 22; 23:4–20; 2 Chr 29:1–36; 31:20–21; Deut 7:5, 25; 12:3; 16:22). Such evidence suggests that the notions found in Deuteronomy existed *before* the reforms of the seventh century. In addition, the Hezekiah and Josiah accounts cannot account for the land/conquest motif in Deuteronomy 6–8. Although 2 Kgs 18:8 and 1 Chr 4:41–43 do describe expansion under Hezekiah, these accounts do not concern expansion *into the Promised Land*, as in Deuteronomy 6–8. Moreover, 2 Chronicles 34 suggests that Josiah’s reforms were already underway before the “book of the law” was found.⁸⁶ The combined effect of this evidence is to suggest that Deuteronomy was not written at the time of these reforms, though the similarities that do exist may indicate it served as a part of the motivation.

III. AN EVANGELICAL PROPOSAL

In light of these problems with the “scholarly consensus,” it is necessary to reexamine the data in search of a more plausible context for the authorship of Deuteronomy. In doing so, we shall discover that the decalogue, particularly the first two commandments, and its prologue (Deut 5:6–10), as well as the covenant ratification ceremony at Sinai (Exodus 24), offer a more plausible context for the issues raised in the higher-critical discussion—especially the evidence for centralization, monotheistic faith, and covenantal theology found in Deuteronomy 6–8. In order to demonstrate this thesis, we shall begin our analysis by examining the literary and grammatical parallels between the Decalogue and Deuteronomy 6–8. Second, we shall examine the relationship between the first two commandments (5:6–10) and the *shema* (6:4–5), arguing that the *shema* is the positive restatement of the negative commandments. Third, we will exposit our passage in order to demonstrate how its unified, narrative flow further expands what it means to love God alone, as demanded in the first two commandments (5:6–10) and the *shema* (6:4–5). Fourth, we shall examine the context of the book, as well as insights from Deuteronomy 6–8, that point to the function of Deuteronomy as a covenant document. Fifth, we shall examine connections with the theophany narrative of Exodus 19–24 in order to suggest that the renewal ceremony of Deuteronomy reflects the covenant ratification ceremony at Sinai (Exodus 24). In light of this evidence, we shall conclude by suggesting that the Decalogue and the Sinai event serve as the most appropriate backdrop for the higher-critical issues, thus providing the reader with a likely Mosaic date for authorship.

1. *Parallels between the Decalogue and Deuteronomy 6–8.* Since the time of Driver’s claim that Deuteronomy 5–11 “consists essentially of a development of the first commandment of the Decalogue,” it has become commonplace to view the paraenetic section (Deuteronomy 5–11), and particularly Deuteronomy 6–8, as an exposition of the Decalogue, due to literary and

⁸⁶ Craigie, *Deuteronomy* 48.

grammatical connections between 5:6–21 and 6:1–8:20.⁸⁷ Deuteronomy 6–8 is part of a continuous speech that began prior to the Decalogue. In 5:1, Moses summons the people of Israel to hear and follow “the decrees and laws” he declares in their hearing. No break is found in the speech until 27:1, indicating that 5:1–26:19 is one speech. Since the Decalogue is at the head of this speech, we would expect it to be central. It should come as no surprise, then, that the opening summons in 5:1 is repeated at the head of our section (6:3, 4; cf. 9:1), signifying what follows as a highly significant teaching moment. In addition, the teaching of Deuteronomy 6–8, like the summons of 5:1, is focused on obedience to the commands, decrees, and laws that Moses speaks before the Israelites (Deut 6:1, 2, 6, 17, 20, 24–25; 7:11; 8:1, 6, 11), indicating there is similarity in content with 5:1–21. In particular, 6:1–3 serves as the bridge between the commandments of 5:6–21 and the exposition of chapters 6–8, recalling 5:22’s description after the Decalogue and tying it to the main themes of 6:4–8:20: covenant faithfulness and blessing in the land. Although it is difficult to ascertain the precise identity of the commands, decrees, and laws, due to the frequent occurrence of the phrase throughout the book and the multiplicity of terms used, דְּבָרִים (“words”), מִצְוֹת (“commandments”), הִקְדָּשׁ (“statutes”), מִשְׁפָּט (“judgments”),⁸⁸ it is likely that the placement of the Decalogue, at the head of the speech, indicates that these terms refer to the Decalogue.⁸⁹

These more general identifications are strengthened by specific literary links with the Decalogue: (1) reference to the covenant (Deut 5:2, 3; 7:2, 10, 12; 8:18); (2) Yahweh as the deliverer of the people from Egypt, the land/house of slavery (Deut 5:6, 15; 6:12, 21; 7:8, 18–19; 8:14), with “a mighty hand and an outstretched arm” (Deut 5:15; 6:21; 7:8, 19);⁹⁰ (3) the command to have no other gods (Deut 5:7; 6:14; 7:4, 16; 8:19; cf. 6:4; 7:2);⁹¹ (4) the prohibition against idols (Deut 5:8; 7:5, 25); (5) the prohibition against worshipping/serving idols (Deut 5:9; 6:5, 13; 7:4, 16; 8:19); (6) the description of Yahweh as a “jealous God” (Deut 5:9; 6:15), who punishes those who do not keep the commandments (Deut 5:9; 6:15; 7:10, 26; 8:19–20), but shows love to those

⁸⁷ It is not clear whether by “first commandment” Driver means 5:7 or a combination of 5:7–10; Driver, *Deuteronomy* 82.

⁸⁸ דְּבָרִים (Deut 1:1, 22, 25, 34; 2:26; 4:2, 10, 12, 13, 36; 5:5, 22, 28; 6:6; 9:10; 10:2, 4; 11:18; 12:28; 13:3; 16:19; 17:19; 18:18, 19, 20, 21; 27:3, 8, 26; 28:14; 58; 29:1, 9, 19, 20; 30:14; 31:1, 12, 24, 28, 30; 32:44, 45, 46); מִצְוֹת (Deut 4:2, 40; 5:10, 29, 31; 6:1, 2, 17, 25; 7:9, 11; 8:1, 2, 6, 11; 10:13; 11:1, 8, 13, 22, 27, 28; 13:4, 18; 27:1, 10; 28:1, 9, 13, 15, 45; 30:8, 10, 11, 16; 31:5); הִקְדָּשׁ (Deut 4:1, 5, 6, 8, 14, 40, 45; 5:1, 31; 6:1, 17, 20, 24; 7:11; 11:32; 12:1; 16:12; 17:19; 26:16, 17; 27:10); מִשְׁפָּט (Deut 1:17; 4:1, 5, 8, 14, 45; 5:1, 31; 6:1; 7:11, 12; 8:11; 10:18; 11:1, 32; 12:1; 16:18, 19; 17:8, 9, 11; 24:17; 25:1; 26:16, 17, 19; 30:16; 32:4, 41; 33:10, 21).

⁸⁹ Other possibilities include the *shema*, the entirety of Deuteronomy, or the specific regulations of chapters 12–26.

⁹⁰ This connection is strengthened by the adaptation of Deut 5:15, justifying the commandment on the basis of the exodus from Egypt, rather than God’s rest on the seventh day of creation as in Exod 20:11 (cf. Gen 2:2).

⁹¹ Mayes claims that to make a treaty with another nation is to recognize their gods; *Deuteronomy* 183.

who love Yahweh and keep the commandments (Deut 5:10; 7:9; cf. 6:5); (7) following the commands “so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land Yahweh your God is giving you” (Deut 5:16; 6:3, 18; 8:1); and (8) the verb חָמַד, “covet” (Deut 5:21; 7:25).⁹²

In the last two connections, the context from the Decalogue has changed. In the Decalogue, the reference to live long and do well in the land is connected to the command to honor one’s father and mother (Deut 5:16). In the exposition, however, these references are related to obedience to Yahweh’s commands. Likewise, the term “covet” has moved from the realm of thy neighbor (5:21) to that of the *herem* (7:25). Both are transferred from the realm of one’s relationship with others, to one’s relationship with Yahweh, suggesting that the Decalogue, including commands five through ten, should be interpreted as commands for covenant faithfulness to Yahweh, not others.

The connections with the Decalogue also draw together references to Egypt, the good land, and the Sinai covenant (three of Noth’s elements in the early Israelite credo), making the Decalogue itself the origin of Israel’s confession; it is the framework upon which Moses’ exposition is based. This is not due to a long history of development, culminating in the seventh century, but to Moses’ expansion of the Decalogue in his exposition, resulting in its connection with the conquest (Deut 7:1–5; 17–26), the wilderness period (6:16; 8:2–5), and the promise to the ancestors (6:3, 10; 7:8–9, 12, 14; 8:1, 18).

Grammatical connections also exist between the Decalogue and Deuteronomy 6–8. Whenever a command is given in the negative, the text follows the structure provided by the Decalogue, placing אֵל (“not”) at the head of the verbal clause (Deut 5:7, 8, 9, 11 (2×), 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 (2×); 6:12, 14, 16; 7:2 (2×), 3 (3×), 16 (2×), 18, 21, 25, 26). Though this is a typical Hebrew construction, and therefore not a reliable argument by itself, alongside the literary evidence given above, it provides further evidence for the use of the Decalogue in the exposition of Deut 6:1–8:20, especially since the majority of these references are the very places connection is made to the Decalogue (Deut 6:12, 14; 7:2, 3, 16, 25, 26).

2. *The shema and the first two commandments.* In addition to these specific emphases and connections, thematic connections can be made between the *shema* and the first commandment, which both emphasize the relationship between Yahweh and Israel, and the oneness and uniqueness of Yahweh. At the opening of the Decalogue, Deut 5:6 declares who Yahweh is and what Yahweh has done on Israel’s behalf, establishing a relationship between Yahweh and Israel. This statement is followed by the first commandment, which demands covenant exclusivity: “You shall have no other gods before me” (Deut 5:7).⁹³ Similarly, in the *shema*, the declaration “Yahweh our God”

⁹² There are also possible connections between sons (5:9) and the instruction of sons (6:7, 20), false testimony (5:20) and oaths (6:14), the *herem* (7:1–5, 17–26) and murder (5:17), and intermarriage (7:3) and adultery (5:18).

⁹³ As with the *shema*, there is difficulty in translating the first commandment. Seven positions have been taken including (1) “You shall have no other gods before me/in front of me” (NIV; NASB;

(or “Yahweh is our God”) expresses the identity of God as Yahweh and establishes a relationship between Yahweh and Israel through the use of the personal pronoun “our” (Deut 6:4). As in the Decalogue, this expression is followed by a declaration of “oneness” in the expression “Yahweh is one” (or “Yahweh alone”), again establishing covenant exclusivity to Yahweh alone. In both instances, Yahweh’s identity and Yahweh’s relationship with Israel serves as the basis for what follows. Because Yahweh delivered Israel from Egypt and established a relationship of covenant exclusivity with her, Yahweh prohibits the creation and worship of idols (Deut 5:8–9). Likewise, because Yahweh is Israel’s God and is one/unique (Deut 6:4), the Israelites are to love Yahweh with all their heart, soul, and might (Deut 6:5; cf. 5:10) by keeping Yahweh’s commandments. Both statements make the same claim about Yahweh’s relationship to Israel and Yahweh’s demand for covenant exclusivity as the basis for the instruction/commands to follow. The only difference between the two statements is that the first (Deut 5:7) is expressed in the negative, whereas the latter (Deut 6:4) is expressed in the positive.⁹⁴ As Miller states concerning the *shema*,

One may speak of these verses as a summary of the law or of the Ten Commandments. More specifically, they are a summary of what Israel heard commanded of them in the prologue and in the first and second commandments. The commandment against worshiping other gods is in every sense the *first* commandment, the *first* word, and the Shema is a positive restatement of that primary commandment. The Shema was the touchstone for Israel’s faith and life, the plumb line by which their relationship to the Lord of history was constantly being measured.⁹⁵

Since this is the positive restatement of the first commandment and the command to love Yahweh is based upon it, as the second commandment is based upon the first, the command to love Yahweh is also, by implication, based on the first, a connection strengthened by Deut 5:10’s reference to love in conjunction with the second commandment.

3. *Deuteronomy 6–8 and loving God.* In light of the connections between the *shema* and the Decalogue, as well as the literary and grammatical parallels noted above, Deut 6:5 and what follows should be understood as an

KJV; ESV; NKJV; Merrill, *Deuteronomy* 143; Christensen, *Deuteronomy* 111); (2) “You shall have no other gods next to me/besides me” (NLT; Craigie, *Deuteronomy* 152; Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy* 247; Nelson, *Deuteronomy* 80); (3) “You shall have no other gods opposite me/before my face” (Friedman, *The Bible* 319; McConville, *Deuteronomy* 126); (4) “You shall have no other gods except me” (LXX Exod 20:3; Targums, Peshita); (5) “You shall have no other gods to my disadvantage” (von Rad in MacDonald, *Monotheism* 76); (6) “You shall have no other gods in defiance of me” (König in MacDonald, *Monotheism* 76); and (7) “You shall have no other gods over against me” (MacDonald, *Monotheism* 77; Mayes, *Deuteronomy* 166). Regardless of how one translates the verse, it refers to covenant exclusivity; the question is whether this is an expression of monotheism, or if it allows the existence of other gods, which Israel is not to worship due to the relationship established in 5:6.

⁹⁴ Walter Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy* (Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries; Nashville: Abingdon, 2001) 67; MacDonald, *Monotheism* 75.

⁹⁵ Miller, *Deuteronomy* 97–98.

exposition on what it means to love Yahweh by keeping Yahweh's commandments, as demanded in the second commandment: "[for Yahweh shows] love to a thousand generations of those who love [Yahweh] and keep [Yahweh's] commandments" (Deut 5:10). In this light, the term אָהַב ("love") carries connotations that transcend the typical understanding of love in our twenty-first-century world. Love is more than emotion and feeling; rather, it concerns covenant faithfulness and loyalty to Yahweh through obedience to the commands, as is typical of expressions of love in ancient Near Eastern treaty formulations.⁹⁶ When modified by the expressions "heart," "soul," and "might," אָהַב "emphasizes in the strongest possible terms the total commitment and whole-hearted devotion to be shown towards YHWH."⁹⁷ There is no time when the commands of Yahweh are not to be on the hearts and lips of Yahweh's children; they are to "talk about them" whether at home or on the road, from the time they wake in the morning to the time they lie down at night (Deut 6:7). Even more drastic is the need to have physical reminders on the city gates, the doorposts of their houses, and even their bodies (Deut 6:8–9).⁹⁸ The covenant exclusivity demanded by the Decalogue and the *shema* demands drastic loyalty and love.

This reality is further demonstrated in Deut 6:10–19 in conjunction with references to the Decalogue in Deut 6:12, 14, 15, and 18. Though the term אָהַב is not used in 6:10–19, other similar verbal expressions are used, which express in greater detail, what it means to love Yahweh: שָׁכַח ("forget," 6:12), יָרָא ("fear," 6:13), עָבַד ("worship," 6:13), שָׁבַע ("swear," 6:13), הִלַּךְ ("follow," 6:14), נִסָּה ("test," 6:16), עָמַד ("do," 6:18), and עָשָׂה ("possess," 6:18).⁹⁹ Loving Yahweh demands that the people not forget Yahweh and follow after other gods, but that they revere Yahweh by serving Yahweh alone and swearing upon Yahweh's name (Deut 6:12–14). Loving Yahweh demands that the people not test Yahweh, but that they keep Yahweh's commands and decrees and do what is good and right (Deut 6:16–18). The alternation between the second singular and second plural, which is prominent in this section, signifies that loving Yahweh demands both communal and individual responsibility. Likewise, the two references to instructing future generations (Deut 6:7, 20–25) that frame this section emphasize the central terms for loving Yahweh (Deut 6:10–19). Moses highlights the primary characteristics of what it means to love Yahweh, both now and for all future generations: The people must serve Yahweh alone by keeping the law and remembering Yahweh's past deeds (Deut 6:12–13, 17–18), forsake all other gods (Deut 6:14), and refuse to question Yahweh's faithfulness in keeping the promises given to the ancestors (Deut 6:10–11, 16, 18–19). A third emphasis is given through the use of conditional elements; those who are faithful will receive Yahweh's blessings (Deut 6:18–19; cf. 5:10, 16), while those who fail to show love will be destroyed "from the face of the land" (Deut 6:15; cf. 5:9).

⁹⁶ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy* 8.

⁹⁷ MacDonald, *Monotheism* 99.

⁹⁸ 6:8–9 may be interpreted as either literal or symbolic.

⁹⁹ MacDonald, *Monotheism* 104–8.

A comparison of this passage with its parallel in Exodus 13 can also be instructive.¹⁰⁰ In this passage, (1) Moses instructs the people (Exod 13:3; Deut 5:1); (2) Moses commemorates Yahweh's activity in bringing Israel out of Egypt, the land of slavery, with a mighty hand (Exod 13:3, 9, 14-15; Deut 6:12, 21); (3) Yahweh promises to lead the people to the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites, and Jebusites (Exod 13:5; Deut 7:1); (4) the land is referred to as a land of milk and honey (Exod 13:5; Deut 6:3); (5) the land is the land promised to the patriarchs (Exod 13:5; Deut 6:10, 18); (6) instructions are given for the people once in the land (Exod 13:11-13; Deut 6:1); (7) there is a discussion concerning the instruction of children (Exod 13:14-16; Deut 6:7, 20-25); and (8) there are references to placing signs on one's hand and forehead (Exod 13:9, 16; Deut 6:8). In spite of these similarities, there are two significant differences. In Exodus 13, the text is primarily concerned with the Passover and the consecration of the firstborn, which are noticeably absent in Deuteronomy 6. The law in Deuteronomy 6, that is, the Decalogue and the *shema*, functions in the same manner as the Passover—both are based in Yahweh's action of delivering the people from Egypt. In addition, rather than consecrating the firstborn, Deuteronomy 6 emphasizes the consecration of the heart, soul, and might through its emphasis on covenant loyalty to Yahweh alone. Moses' exposition turns the former tradition into a demand placed upon all people; all must be consecrated to Yahweh alone in covenant loyalty. Deuteronomy 6 is not concerned with centralization and monotheistic faith, as the critics claim, but covenant loyalty to Yahweh alone. The fact that Moses must command the people to follow Yahweh and not other gods indicates that other gods do exist. However, the establishment of the relationship between Yahweh and Israel demands that Israel be fully devoted to Yahweh, resulting in monotheistic practice.

Chapter 7 continues the emphasis on loving Yahweh with all one's heart, soul, and might. This is evident, first of all, through the use of a parallel structure with chapter 6. Deuteronomy 7:1 begins with the same clause found in 6:10. It is then followed by a series of commands echoing the Decalogue (6:10-18; 7:2-11), a list of blessings for the one who obeys (6:18-19; 7:12-16), and a final section for further clarification, which begins with a question and recalls prior material in the chapter (6:20-25; 7:17-26; cf. 6:7-9; 7:1-5).¹⁰¹ Conceptually, there are also strong links between 7:4's concern with serving other gods and 7:5's command to destroy the altars, idols, pillars, sacred stones, and Asherim of the land. In this light, the *herem* (7:1-5; 7:17-26) should be understood as a radical expression of loving Yahweh with all one's heart, soul, and might, not a turn toward centralization. As in 6:8-9, love and loyalty to Yahweh must be expressed through drastic action: "The *herem* indicates that devotion to Yahweh is an act of radical obedience; an obedience that may act against natural impulses."¹⁰² The people must follow Yahweh no matter the cost. They are not to make treaties or intermarry with the

¹⁰⁰ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy* 328-29.

¹⁰¹ MacDonald, *Monotheism* 108.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* 115.

people of the land, because these actions threaten to lead the people away from covenant loyalty. Yahweh has set the Israelites apart to be a “holy people” and a “treasured possession” (Deut 7:6; cf. Exod 19:6). They are not to interact with anyone who would threaten to destroy their covenant loyalty to Yahweh alone. The *herem* is an “external test” of Israel’s love for Yahweh; it is “an expression of covenant commitment demonstrated in action.”¹⁰³ As in Deut 6:10–19, this section emphasizes both personal and communal responsibility through the alternation of the second singular and the second plural. The faithful will be blessed (Deut 7:9, 12–15), and the unfaithful will be punished (Deut 7:10) according to the promises of the Decalogue (Deut 5:9–10, 16).

Again, the parallel passage in Exod 23:20–33 is instructive. Both passages discuss the *herem* (Exod 23:20–33; Deut 7:1–5, 17–26); Yahweh bringing Israel into the land of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites, and Jebusites (Exod 23:23, 28; Deut 7:1); the destruction of cult paraphernalia (Exod 23:24; Deut 7:5); the role of the hornet (Exod 23:28; Deut 7:20); the slow destruction of Israel’s enemies (Exod 23:29; Deut 7:22); and references to the worship of foreign gods as a snare (Exod 23:32; Deut 7:16). However, Exodus 23 includes the role of an angel (23:20–23) followed by the role of Yahweh (23:27–30), whereas Deuteronomy shifts from the role of the people (7:1–5) to the role of Yahweh (7:17–26). In doing so, Moses’ exposition emphasizes the need for *human* action. Rather than appealing solely to Yahweh’s supernatural activity, the people are called to participate in Yahweh’s action.

Chapter 8 also emphasizes loving Yahweh with all one’s heart, soul, and might; it continues the themes found in Deut 6:4–7:26, calling Israel to follow the commandments (8:1, 3), walk in Yahweh’s ways (8:3), fear Yahweh (8:3), and remember Yahweh’s past deeds (8:2–5, 11, 14, 18, 19) that they receive the blessings of Yahweh in the land (8:1, 7–10). As Lohfink’s structural analysis points out (see section on literary criticism above), the central theme of chapter 8 is 8:11’s “Be careful that you do not forget Yahweh your God.”¹⁰⁴ The term *שָׁכַח*, which first appeared in 6:12, and its opposite *זָכַר* (“remember”) occur frequently in this chapter (8:2, 11, 14, 18, 19), highlighting the importance of remembering the past. Deuteronomy 8 also highlights the historical events of the past, both the exodus (8:14) and the wilderness period (8:2–5, 15–16). Though these events occurred in 6:12, 21 and 6:16 respectively, the wilderness period is given its most detailed exposition here (8:2–5, 15–16) to highlight the importance of remembering the past as a part of loving Yahweh. Such detailed exposition on the theme of remembrance is important, since forgetting Yahweh’s actions results in turning to other gods (8:19). Just as failure to fulfill the *herem* (7:4) led to the worship of other gods, so failure to remember Yahweh’s past acts leads to the worship of

¹⁰³ Daniel I. Block, “How Many is God? An Investigation into the Meaning of Deuteronomy 6:4–5,” *JETS* 47 (2004) 193–212.

¹⁰⁴ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy* 397.

other gods (8:19; cf. 9:7–29). This is emphasized through the use of the threat in 8:19–20. Moses highlights the desperate need to love Yahweh by remembering Yahweh’s deeds, since the inability to remember leads to apostasy. Those who fail to remember, as those who failed in chapters 6–7, shall be punished; like the nations before them, they will be driven from the land (8:20; cf. 6:15, 5:9).

Besides the thematic and literary connections, Block highlights structural connections between Deuteronomy 8 and Deuteronomy 6–7. Deuteronomy 8 is the parallel “internal test” to the “external test” of chapter 7, each with three parts: (1) “Moses’ announcement of the test of exclusive devotion” (7:1–16; 8:1–16; cf. 6:10–19); (2) “Moses’ introduction of a hypothetical interlocutor who responds verbally to the test” (7:17; 8:17; cf. 6:20) and (3) “Moses’ answer to the hypothetical interlocutor” (7:18–26; 8:18–20; cf. 6:21–25).¹⁰⁵ Moreover, Block highlights the use of the term שָׁמַע (“hear”) in 8:20 as an *inclusio* with the *shema* in 6:4, demonstrating the unified contents of Deuteronomy 6–8.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, the appearance of “Hear, O Israel” in Deut 9:1 hearkens back to the similar expression at the head of the Decalogue (Deut 5:1) and at the head of its positive restatement in the *shema* (Deut 6:4). The entirety of Deuteronomy 6–8 expresses what it means to live in covenantal loyalty to Yahweh alone; it expresses what it means to love Yahweh with all one’s heart, soul, and might (6:5). Deuteronomy 6–8 calls Israel to love Yahweh by keeping the commandments (5:10) in light of what Yahweh has done for Israel (5:6), and Yahweh’s desire for covenant exclusivity found in the first commandment (5:7) and restated positively in the *shema* (6:4). The entire narrative is, therefore, an exposition on the Decalogue.

4. *Deuteronomy as a covenant document.* Since the time of Kline and Kitchen, it has been typical to view Deuteronomy as a covenant document. The layout of the book reflects a typical covenant treaty document: preamble (1:1–5), historical prologue (1:6–4:40), general stipulations (5:1–11:32), specific stipulations (12:1–19), divine witnesses (30:19; 31:19; 32:1–43), and blessings and curses (27:1–28:68). Moreover, as we argued in the previous sections, the connections with the Decalogue call the Israelites to covenantal loyalty in God alone; the people are to serve and worship no other gods (5:7; 6:13–15; 7:4, 16; 8:19–20). The term “covenant,” in fact, occurs four times in our passage (7:2, 10, 12; 8:18), twice in conjunction with the Decalogue (5:2, 3), and a total of twenty-seven times in the book, only equaled in Genesis and Chronicles, and surpassed by none.¹⁰⁷ The threat language in 8:19–20 also points to a covenantal context, similar to the curses of Deuteronomy 28. Deuteronomy 27:1–8 describes a ceremony for the ratification of the law to be completed once in the land (cf. Joshua 24).

The ceremony that takes place, however, is not the ratification of a new covenant. The fact that the Decalogue was the foundation for the first

¹⁰⁵ Block, “How Many is God?” 207.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* 193.

¹⁰⁷ P. R. Williamson, “Covenant,” *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* 139–55.

covenant ratification ceremony in Exodus 24, and that Moses recounted the prior failures of the people (Deut 1:1–4:40; 9:7–29), signifies that this is a renewal of first covenant. The speeches are both retrospective, recalling the failure of the people to uphold the terms of the covenant in the past (Deut 1:1–4:40; 6:16), but also looking forward to the Promised Land (Deut 6:10–11; 7:12–15; 8:7–10). The location of the people, on the banks of the Jordan River prior to entering the promised land (Deut 1:1), serves as an ideal location for covenant renewal, since it was at this precise location that they rejected Yahweh's ability to lead them into the promised land forty years earlier (Deut 1:19–46; Numbers 13). "The book is essentially an invitation to the next generation to renew the covenant that Yahweh formerly established at Sinai: the new generation has to obligate themselves to the Mosaic covenant before taking possession of the Promised Land."¹⁰⁸ Moses' speech in chapters 6–8, therefore, functions to invoke the covenant renewal ceremony. By summoning the people and recounting the law in the hearing of the people, Moses renews the covenant given by Yahweh at Sinai.

5. *Deuteronomy and the covenant ratification ceremony at Sinai.* By placing this exposition on the Decalogue in a covenantal framework, the speech functions as the covenant ratification ceremony at Sinai. The entire framework of Exodus 19–24 appears in Deuteronomy 5–9. Deuteronomy 5:2–5 reflects the theophany at Sinai (Exodus 19). Deuteronomy 5:6–21 reflects the Decalogue found in Exod 20:1–21. Deuteronomy 7:6 refers to the Israelites as a "holy people" and "treasured possession" as in Exod 19:6. The echoes between the *herem* (7:1–5) and Exod 23:20–33 reflect a portion of the laws given at Sinai, as do the specific laws of Deuteronomy 12–26.¹⁰⁹ Finally, the narrative of the golden calf (Deut 9:7–21) reflects the events that happened during the giving of the Decalogue (Exodus 34). In light of these parallels, the speeches of Moses should be understood as a renewal ceremony functioning in the same manner as the covenant ratification ceremony of Exodus 24. The parallels do not demand a later development on the earlier JE tradition, as suggested by the critics, but that the *same events* served as the *motivation* for the covenant renewal ceremony. This is not, however, to deny literary dependence. Literary dependence can be ascribed to a common hand, that is, Moses. My point in emphasizing the event is to highlight this as a likely backdrop for Deuteronomy. The Sinai event, including the covenant ratification ceremony and the giving of the Decalogue, provide all that is needed for the higher-critical issues of Deuteronomy 6–8.

IV. CONCLUSION

In light of the parallels noted with the Decalogue and the covenant ratification ceremony of Exodus 24, one need not postulate connections to Hezekiah's or Josiah's reforms. The passages typically used to defend cen-

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. 152.

¹⁰⁹ Driver, *Introduction* 73–75.

tralization of worship, full-fledged monotheism, and covenantal theology all find their emergence at Sinai. The move to monotheistic faith and the prohibition against altars, idols, pillars, and asherim have their origin in the first two commandments. Likewise, the covenantal context finds its origin in the covenant ratification ceremony at Sinai. Though literary connections may exist with the Hezekiah and Josiah material, it is more likely that a later writer imitated the style of Deuteronomy. Since Deuteronomy ascribes itself to Moses, and all that is needed for Mosaic authorship is present in the Decalogue and the Sinai event, it is likely that Deuteronomy is Mosaic. Connections with the later literature (prophets, historical writings, wisdom literature) can be understood as a later hand using Deuteronomistic language in the construction of their writings.