

Richter, Spring XXX

RS 101
The Pentateuch
The Book of Deuteronomy

Westmont College
Spring XXX
Carroll Hall
Tues-Thurs 1:15-3:05 pm

Instructor:

Dr. Sandra Richter
srichter@westmont.edu
Porter Center, Rm 7// (805) 565-6168

Office Hours:

Tuesdays 3:30-5:00 pm, Porter Center
Wednesdays 9:30-10:30 am Porter Center
Wednesdays 12:30-1:30 pm, lunch at the Dining Hall
**Appointments can be made outside these hours via email 😊

Course Description:

This class is designed for those who have already laid a foundation in exegetical study by means of an introduction to the history and literature of ancient Israel. We will begin with the larger historical, sociological, and canonical context of the book of Deuteronomy, then pursue a "big picture" understanding of the contents of book as a whole, then delve into strategic passages. Our objective is to develop exegetical competence in the interpretation of biblical texts in general, exegetical competence in the Book of Deuteronomy specifically, and to transform our lives by the content of this God-breathed text.

Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- 1) Identify the literary form and genre of the book as a whole.
- 2) Be familiar with the distinctive vocabulary and phraseology of the book.
- 3) Responsibly discuss the debate surrounding the dating and *Sitz im Leben* of the Book of Deuteronomy.
- 4) Confirm and refine the literary, syntactical, and grammatical structure of individual pericopes within the book.
- 5) Distill from any given passage the message intended to its original audience and interpret and articulate its present theological import for the Church.
- 6) For those students who choose an oral presentation for their final projects, students will effectively communicate orally as informed by rhetorical situation, audience, genre, and purpose.

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- 7) Come to understand the character of the God of Israel in a profoundly new way.

Method of Instruction:

A central ambition of this class is to integrate the exegesis of this ancient book with contemporary concerns. In light of this goal, our class will consist of weekly lecture, inductive assignments, and group discussion. The second half of the class will consist of student-projects engaging the messages of the Book of Deuteronomy in juxtaposition with contemporary law and various disciplines of the liberal arts.

Textbooks:

Christopher, J. H. Wright, *Deuteronomy*. Understanding the Bible Commentary. Baker Books, 1996
Raymond Westbrook & Bruce Wells, *Everyday Law in Biblical In Israel: An Introduction*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009
Journal articles, book chapters, and primary source material available on Canvas
The Bible

Accommodations: Students who have been diagnosed with a disability are strongly encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services as early as possible to discuss appropriate accommodations for this course. Formal accommodations will only be granted for students whose disabilities have been verified by the ODS. Please contact Sheri Noble, Director of Disability Services at snoble@westmont.edu or for more information: <http://www.westmont.edu/offices/disability>

Library Stuff: The subject librarian for Religious Studies is Jana Mayfield Mullen jmayfield@westmont.edu. Like all our librarians, she is available to help you with planning and organizing your research and locating resources.

Writers' Corner: "The **writing center** is a creative, collaborative space where you can improve in writing skill and confidence. Peer tutors serve as friendly "test readers" for your projects, helping you develop and revise your writing before submitting it. We encourage you to meet with a tutor at least 48 hours before your writing deadline. Be ready to share your assignment prompt and your latest draft, no matter how rough. All tutorials are free of charge. **Make an appointment** at [Writers' Corner](#). We hope to see you soon!"

Presence, preparedness, and participation are always expected. If you are sick, injured, or otherwise dealing with catastrophic circumstances and need to miss an evaluation, you **must communicate with me prior to the evaluation**. If you alert me only after the fact, you will receive a zero for the assignment. **You are allowed one week of absences** from our class. Anything beyond those two sessions will affect your final evaluation. **Use those cuts wisely!**

Academic Integrity. Anything less will cost you the assignment and possibly a passing grade in the course. If you **cheat** on an assignment or *allow someone to cheat* from you, you will receive a zero for the assignment and be reported to the Provosts Office. See <https://www.westmont.edu/office-provost/academic-program/academic-integrity-policy> to help with definitions of **plagiarism** and proper uses of **AI**—often issues as one enters college. Students will NOT substitute **AI-generated text** for any written academic work including: discussion posts, extra credit, or written essays.

Requirements:

10% Short Essay on Exegesis. Having engaged intelligently with the classroom lectures and read all of the assigned readings on exegesis, write a 2-3 page essay describing what you understand to be a responsible and effective interpretive method. Tag the major issues discussed. College level composition required. SBL Handbook of Style citation required.

7.5% Map & History Quiz: This quiz will be based on essential geographic locations and dates for understanding the book of Deuteronomy.

7.5% 10 minute oral presentation: Here the student will orally introduce their chosen topic from Deuteronomy. The expectation is (1) to describe the topic you have chosen clearly and succinctly; (2) flag the primary reason you chose to investigate this particular law and why it is important to a contemporary audience; (3) name the involved passages and having made use of at least three of your approved bibliographic resources, introduce why these passages create conflict in the realm of biblical interpretation; (4) get your audience excited about your upcoming presentation; and (5) name three critical questions you want to answer in the course of your research project. Be creative; stay within your allotted time; rehearse, rehearse, rehearse. You will be evaluated by professor and peers for clarity of thought, ability to connect to your audience, delivery skill, and quality of content.

15% Inductive studies: These weekly, personal, inductive studies will draw the student into both interpretation and application.

25% Read the Book!

Read: On your own and/or with a small group, read the Book of Deuteronomy three times. One read with your favorite paraphrase (*The Message* is a good one); a second in a "dynamic equivalent" (that would be the NIV or the NLT); a third via a "wooden" translation (RSV, NAS, KJV). It doesn't matter the order you utilize the various translations. The goal here is that you as an English reader get a variety of perspectives on the text.

Title each chapter: As you read, offer your own title for each chapter. I encourage you to **defy the chapter and verse designations** offered by the scribes of previous generations and allow the biblical author's own agenda to drive where you open and close the messages offered. 30%

Ten reoccurring words/phrases. Identify ten reoccurring words or phrases that capture you as you read. I suggest color coding to keep track as you move through the book. When you're done reading, go back and list (chapter and verse!) and **tally** the number of times you encountered the term/phrase. Record this in your assignment. 30%

Offer an **inductive definition** of 1-2 sentences for each term/phrase you have identified. Utilizing Richter's macro-map, think through how your reoccurring terms/phrases speak into the larger message/structure of the book and incorporate that into your definition. 30%

Commented [s2]: This requirement addresses # 1, 2, 3, 4, partly fulfills #5.

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Map out for me at least five intra-book relationships (e.g. preparation, particularization, expansion, repetition, resolution, etc.). You are answering the question: "How does one section of the book relate to another?" Make use of Richter's book map as you process that question. See Bauer and Traina "Part I" for a detailed description of this process. Pages 127-130 offer a summary list. 10%

Conclude the project with a one, substantive **paragraph** that narrates the overall message of the book 15%

Style: Header or title page identifying the project, author, course; three-four written pages (feel free to include charts) with clear headers, page numbers, correct spelling and college-level composition that clearly communicates your message.

35% **Interpretive Project** (see description at the end of the syllabus)

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OUTLINE OF CLASS SCHEDULE



1/9 Introductions & The Task of Exegesis

1/11: Eisegesis vs. Exegesis

Jeannine K. Brown, *Scripture as Communication* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2007), 11-56, 166-88.

Douglas Stuart, "Exegesis" *ABD* II: 682-687 (Canvas)

Gordan Fee & Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, "Introduction: The Need to Interpret," 16-32

William Dever, "The Bible as History, Literature, and Theology," *What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did they Know it?* pp. 1-21 (Canvas)

1/16 No Class Monday Schedule!

1/16 Exegesis essay due!

1/18 The First Discourse & The Real Time & Space of Deuteronomy

IVP Atlas, 38-56

Deuteronomy 1-4:49

Richter, *The Epic of Eden*, 21-46

Christopher Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 1-44

Bauer & Traina, *Inductive Bible Study*, "Observing and Asking," 74-78; "Survey of Books-as-Wholes," 79-142.

Question: Pay attention to the places named in chapter one. What is the setting of this sermon? Who is the audience? What does our narrator accomplish by using time and space to introduce this "Book of the Law"?

1/21 Inductive Assignment #1

1/23 The Book of Deuteronomy as Discourse & Covenant

Exodus 19-23, "The Book of the Covenant"

Sandra Richter, "The Concept of Covenant," *The Epic of Eden* (IVP, 2008), 69-91.

Moshe Weinfeld, "*b^erîth*" *TDOT* 2:253-79.

Bill Arnold, *Readings from the Ancient Near East*, 96-103 "Covenants and Treaties"

Wm Moran, "The ANE Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy" *CBQ* 25 (1963), 77-87.

Question: Come prepared to recite the six parts of a 2nd millennium Hittite treaty. Know something about the history of scholarship and the relationship to a 1st millennium Assyrian treaty.

1/25 Map Quiz!

1/25 The Second Discourse: "The Shema Discourse"

Read Deut 4:44-11:32

Christopher Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 45-107

Daniel Block, "How Many is God? An Investigation into the Meaning of Deuteronomy 6:4. *JETS* 47/2 (June 2004): 193-212.

Watch BibleProject video on the *Shema*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6KQLOuIKaRA>

Can we get a volunteer to read and report on : Jon Levenson, *The Love of God : Divine Gift, Human Gratitude, and Mutual Faithfulness in Judaism* Princeton Univ Press, pp. 60-89



Question: Find out everything and anything you can on the Shema. Come prepared to share and to discuss the role that the Shema plays in the structure of the 2nd Discourse.

1/30 The Shema & the New Covenant

Read Deut 6:1-9

Read Matthew 22, paying special attention to vv. 23-46

Read Mark 12, paying special attention to vv. 28-34.

Question: Why do you think Jesus used the Shema at these times and in this fashion?

2/1 The Shema and Praxis

Read Deut 6:1-11:32

Christopher Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 108-152

Question: Talk to me about the distinctiveness of Israel. How does Yahweh command them to be different; **why** does he command them to be different?

2/6 The Shema Concluded

Reread Deut 11:1-32

Read Deut 27:1-26; Joshua 8:30-35

Christopher Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 153-157

What the following video lecture on the BAS website:

<https://library.biblicalarchaeology.org/video/could-mt-ebal-be-deuteronomys-place-of-the-name/>

Question: Make sure you know where all of this is happening—where in real space and where in real time, and in the book itself do the events predicted in Deut 11 occur?

2/8 The Second Discourse: Laws and law codes

Read Deut 12:1-17:3

Arnold, *Readings from the ANE*, 104-117 "Law Codes"

1/6 Inductive Assignment #2

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Westbrook & Wells, *Everyday Law in Biblical Israel*, 1-52

Sacred space article?

Question: *Where will you find the law codes in the Old Testament? How did litigation work in Israelite society?*

2/13 The Second Discourse: Laws and law codes

Read Deut 17:13 -26:19

Christopher Wright, *Deuteronomy* 158-202

Westbrook & Wells, *Everyday Law in Biblical Israel*, 53-90.

Questions: *Track down a favorite parallel law in either Arnold's or Westbrook's material. Know what country and time period it came from and how it compares with its biblical parallel. Come ready to tell the class about it and why it drew your attention.*

2/15 The Second Discourse: Laws and law codes

King & Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel*, 85-122

Westbrook & Wells, 91-133

Richter, "Environmental Law in Deuteronomy: One Lens on a Biblical Theology of Creation Care" *BBR* 20.3 (2010): 331-354.

Or

Richter, "The Question of Provenance and the Economics of Deuteronomy" *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 42.1 (2017): 23-50.



Question: *Choose one Richter essay. Come to class prepared to discuss the intersection of your article and contemporary law and practice.*

2/16 Draft of Proposals Due!

2/20 No class, Four Day!



2/22 Work on your "Read the Book" project!

2/27 The Second Discourse: Prophets, priests, and kings

Deuteronomy 16:18-19:21

Christopher Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 203-254

2/29 The Second Discourse: Sexual Agency anyone?

Deuteronomy 20:1-24:22

Christopher Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 255-269

Richter, "Rape in Israel's World ... and Ours: A Study of Deuteronomy 22:23-29" *JETS* 64.1 (2021): 59-76

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A popular piece on the history of marriage https://getpocket.com/explore/item/can-t-buy-me-love-how-romance-wrecked-traditional-marriage?utm_source=emailsynd&utm_medium=social

3/5 The Second Discourse: Curses and Covenant Renewal

Reread: Deuteronomy 11:22-32; 27:1-29:1

Christopher Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 270-84

Richter, "The Place of the Name in Deuteronomy," *Vetus Testamentum* 57 (2007): 342-366.

Handout: Wiseman, Donald J., *The Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon*. London : British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 1958, lines 419-430.

M. Weinfeld "bērit" *TDOT* 2:253-79 revisiting his arguments about literary dependence

3/4 Read the Book Due!

Question: *What is your opinion of the interrelatedness of Esarhaddon's Vassal Treaties and the curse section of Deuteronomy? What do you think of the "exact" parallel that Weinfeld draws between these two corpora? Come prepared to discuss specifics and the implications of your conclusions.*

3/7 The Third Discourse: "Choose Life!"

Deuteronomy 29:1-31:29

Christopher Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 284-293

N.T. Wright, *The Climax of Covenant*, pp. 231-57 (chptr 13)

3/7 Final draft of Proposal Due!

Question(s): *What parts of Deuteronomy's covenant structure do you find represented in the Third discourse? "Choose life! How would you describe the role of this third discourse, and specifically this exhortation to the **Book** of Deuteronomy?*

MARCH 11-15TH NO CLASS- SPRING BREAK!!!



3/19 The Fourth Discourse, Epilogues: "The Song of Moses"

Deuteronomy 31:30-32:47

Christopher Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 294-307

Covenant Lawsuit (*rīb*) Handout

Herbert B. Huffmon, "The Covenant Lawsuit in the Prophets" *JBL* 78.4 (1959): 285-295

3/19 Inductive Assignment on Deuteronomy 32 due

Question: *The "Song of Moses" (Deuteronomy 32:1-43) is the "curse" that ends the Book of Deuteronomy. It is also a Covenant Lawsuit. Working through your inductive assignment, we are asking: what are the accusations against the offender; what is at stake in this lawsuit; what strikes us about the prophet's lament and his promised restoration?*

3/21 Fourth Discourse, Epilogues: "The Blessing of Moses" & the Last Mountain

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Deuteronomy 32:48-34:12
Christopher Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 308-315
Luke 9:28-31

3/26 Deuteronomy & the Deuteronomistic History

Atlas, pp. 68-71

Read 2 Kgs 22 & 23 and 2 Chron 34 & 35

JEDP handout

R. K. Harrison, "Deuteronomy, *ISBE* 1:934-40

Richter, "The Deuteronomistic History" *Dictionary of the Historical Books* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2005), 219-230

Question: Now that you know this book, and the debate that surrounds its provenance, Who do you think wrote this book and why? What motivated the biblical author(s) to write the book?

*** Deuteronomy and the New Testament: What Role Does the Law Play in the Christian's Life?

N.T. Wright *The Climax of Covenant*, pp. 231-57 (chptr 13)

S. Richter, *The Epic of Eden*, 225-229

Scott Haffemann?

Discussion project

WATCH TOGETHER:

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/the-law/>

March 28-April 25th Student Presentations!

***4/29 Is our Final Exam time slot, we may or may not use this time for final presentations**

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3/28

4/2

4/4

4/9

4/11

4/16

4/18

4/23

4/25

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Interpretive Projects

Students will exegete a biblical law and compare and contrast it to contemporary legal practices.

Students will present their research via a classroom presentation. Pick a deuteronomic law or cluster of laws that you find really interesting. Utilizing your "Read the Book" work, launch your presentation with *your* single-spaced translation of the pericope in question. Use footnotes to comment on unexpected translation choices. (1) Using at least three recommended commentaries and two technical articles, fully explain this law in its literary and socio-historical context taking time to say something about *why* you think this law is in the book. (2) Using Westbrook, *ANET* and COS compare and contrast the deuteronomic law with ancient law on the same topic. How is Deuteronomy the same or different? (3) Compare and contrast the deuteronomic law to **current laws** on the same topic. (4) Now explain this deuteronomic law to someone in *your* community—how might this particular law teach you about the character of Scripture and the character of your God?

Presentations:

In teams of two, class members will choose either an issue of law to present to the class as an **integrative** exercise in exegesis. As with the essay, collegiate level research that fully contextualizes your chosen oracle is expected. Intelligent, engaging, and pedagogically effective presentation is expected as well. In sum: (1) what does Deuteronomy say about this topic; (2) how does the ancillary discipline represented on your team help **us** to understand this oracle better; (3) how might we compare this ancient topic/law with current ones; (4) how do we apply this to our lives right now? You and your partner will be responsible for **45 minutes** of our class on your assigned teaching day. Hence, the teaching section of the presentation should be approximately **35 mins, the discussion approximately 10 minutes**. Speak to contemporary concerns. BE CREATIVE!

Commented [s5]: This requirement addresses # 1, 2, 3, 4, partly fulfills #5.

- (1) A one-two page, single-spaced proposal naming team members and their disciplines, a succinct description of the team's anticipated findings and applications, and a **bibliography of at least ten respectable sources**. These will be returned with corrections and suggestions within ten days (10%).
- (2) Engaging and intelligent visuals—all images and data must be cited on the slides and handouts! (10%)
- (3) A presentation outline offered to your classmates (10%)
- (4) A preparatory reading/viewing/listening assignment (less than 15 pages of reading) is also welcomed (bonus points?). Due one week before your presentation

The presentation will be evaluated by the professor and by peers for preparation, content, and engagement! (60%).

Potential Topics.

1. Treatment of **POW's** (cf. the "law of the beautiful POW Deut 21:10-14). There are many resources involving the modern realities of rape in war, particularly the Rwandan genocide. Controlled by the various Geneva conventions to which the US is a party. US law is controlled by the various Geneva conventions to which the US is a party. See <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/y3gctpw.htm>

2. **Environmental terrorism.** See Richter's *BBR* articles, "Environmental Law in Deuteronomy" and "Wisdom from the Ancients" as a launching point. Geneva conventions environmental terrorism. See "Additional Protocols I and II" of which the US is not a signatory. here: <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/misc/57in38.htm>
3. **Homeowners liability.** Each state has its own law codes with respect to responsibility to others. Normally, there is no affirmative responsibility to the stranger or his property that you find. In other words, in the Good Samaritan story the the priest nor the levite would have been legally responsible under American law to help the injured guy. Here's an excellent summary of illinois law on homeowners' legal responsibility - <http://injury.findlaw.com/accident-injury-law/premises-liability-who-is-responsible.html>
4. **Marriage & Divorce Law.** Start with Deut 22:22-29. Project should include betrothal, bride gift, sexual agency, and adultery. You will need a culturally-appropriate understanding of women's sexual agency in Israel's tribal society. For the modern side of the discussion, each state has its own criminal codes involving marriage and divorce. Raymond Westbrook's "Adultery in the Ancient Near Eastern Law" *Revue Biblique* 97. 4 (1990), pp. 542-580 will be an important resource.
5. **Rape Law** . . Deuteronomy 22:22-29. (Some say this topic overlaps with POW's as regards Deut 21:10-14.) Make sure you discern the difference between "rape" and "adultery." You will need a culturally-appropriate understanding of women's sexual agency in Israel's tribal society. Richter "Rape in Israel's Word ... and Ours" *JETS* 64.1 (2021): 59-76 is a good place to start. For the modern side of the discussion, each state has its own criminal codes involving rape. See rape in illinois http://www.uk.sagepub.com/lippmancc12e/study/supplements/Illinois/IL_10.pdf
6. **Kidnapping** Deut 24:7. Kidnapping continues to be a horrific crime in our nation—often a first step in **sex trafficking**. Kidnapping was the launch point of African slavery, it is often part of the profile of many serial crimes. Each state has its own criminal codes involving kidnapping. Although there is federal law on kidnapping when state lines are crossed. See kidnapping in California <http://kidnapping.uslegal.com/state-kidnapping-abduction-laws/illinois-kidnappingabduction-laws/> <https://www.shouselaw.com/kidnapping.html>
7. **Slave law.** You must be able to articulate the difference between chattel slavery and debt slavery. In America we continue to be affected by our dark history in slave trafficking. There are so many resources, I will happily share my list. For refugee slave law you can begin with http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fugitive_slave_laws
8. **Manumission.** Deuteronomy 15:12-18. Explore what manumission looked like in Israel versus American practice during the "Reconstruction" era after the Civil War. What efforts were made to "furnish him liberally" when the African slaves were freed? Did they succeed or fail? Now move this conversation forward to modern day reparations. Offer us one faithful model for reparations toward the African-American community. How does this model compare with the law of

Deuteronomy 15? Any ideas on how to apply this posture in Deuteronomy to our current economic world?

9. Seizure of **debtors' property** (Deut 24:10-15) is governed by the states. See <http://www.slk-law.com/portalresource/lookup/wosid/cp-base/417904/media.name=/Prejudgment%20Attachments%20and%20Fraudulent%20Conveyance.pdf>

10. **Murder versus manslaughter** and the cities of refuge (Deut 19:11-13).
<http://statelaws.findlaw.com/illinois-law/illinois-involuntary-manslaughter-laws.html>

11. **Environmental law**. This assignment will require you to investigate farm legislation, industrial agriculture, and the various protections of the EPA. You are looking for issues of sustainable agriculture, humane animal husbandry, and care for the wilderness and the wild creature. Richter has several articles/book chapters that inform on biblical standards and offer bibliography.

12. **Care for the marginalized**. Deuteronomy speaks often of the citizen's responsibility to care for the "the alien, the orphan and the widow." This triad is your focus. The term "alien" *gēr* is of particular interest (see *TDOT*). What are these laws and how might they translate into our current situation? Understanding the structure of the *bēt 'āb* and who is entitled to the title "citizen" will be essential. What privileges are being defended for these folk on the margins, and how does US law/social services do the same?

Recommended Resources:

- Class textbooks
- Anson Rainey & Steven Notely, *The Sacred Bridge* (Jerusalem: Carta)
- Raymond Westbrook, *A History Of Ancient Near Eastern Law* (Brill Reprints; Atlanta: SBL, 2017)
- Martha T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor* (Atlanta: SBL, 1997)
- *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (dated, but very accessible)
- *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (less dated)
- *The Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (for particular terms/phrases)
- *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (for particular terms/phrases)
- Search ATLA for articles on your pericope

Recommended Commentaries:

Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament (great for biblical theology)
Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, Anchor Bible Commentary Series (Yale Univ Press, 1995)
Christensen, Duane L. *Deuteronomy*, 2 vols. WBC. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001.
Craigie, Peter. *The Book of Deuteronomy*, NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976 (detailed intro).
Driver, S. R. *Deuteronomy*. ICC. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1902.
*McConville, J. Gordon, *Deuteronomy*. Apollos Old Testament Commentary. Leicester, England: IVP, 2002.
Nelson, Richard. *Deuteronomy*. OTL. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.

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*Tigay, Jeffrey H. *Deuteronomy*. JPS Torah Commentary. Philadelphia: The Jewish Pub Society, 1996.¹
Wright, Christopher, *Deuteronomy*. Understanding the Bible Commentary Series. Baker Books, 1996


