OT 710 Exegesis in the Pentateuch

Sandra Richter

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OT 710 Exegesis in the Pentateuch

Deuteronomy

Fall, 2003
Wednesdays 1-3:45 pm

Instructor:
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Office Hours: TBA

Course Description:
This class is designed for advanced seminarians who have already laid a foundation in exegetical method by means of IBS, basic Hebrew grammar, and an Introduction to the history and literature of ancient Israel. Beginning with the larger historical, sociological, and canonical context of the book, we will exegize selected passages of the Book of Deuteronomy in order to enable students to develop the linguistic and exegetical competence required for interpreting the Hebrew text. The distinctive exegetical questions arising in the study of this specific section of the OT canon are addressed as well. The end goal of this class is to enable the student to develop the exegetical competence required for interpreting the Hebrew text, and responsibly representing that text to a contemporary audience.

Course Objectives:
Upon successful completion of this course, the student will:
1) Be able to responsibly discuss the debate surrounding the dating and Sitz im Leben of the Book of Deuteronomy.
2) Identify the literary form and genre of the book as a whole.
3) Be familiar with the distinctive vocabulary and phraseology of the book.
4) Confirm and refine, by recourse to the Hebrew text, the literary, syntactical, and grammatical structure of individual pericopes within the book.
6) Present the biblical-theological significance of key terms in a given passage by using basic Hebrew language word-study tools and techniques.
7) Distill from any given passage the message intended to its original audience, and interpret and articulate its present theological import for the Church.

Course Procedures & Requirements
Method of Instruction:
The format of the class will be quite varied. Lecture and discussion will augmented by in-class Hebrew translation and analysis and student presentation of research. Student discussion and presentation will play a major role in the weekly class meetings. Hence, students will be expected to come to class prepared to demonstrate and discuss the readings and exercises assigned.

Textbooks:
PREVIOUSLY REQUIRED

Either BDB (A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament)
Requirements:
10% - class participation
15% - class presentation(s)
15% - IBS-style Book Survey of Deuteronomy
20% - Word Study
35% - Final Exegetical Project on Deuteronomy
*As this is a seminar class, presence and preparedness are expected. One full absence will be waived. Following absences will significantly affect student’s final evaluation.

Word Studies:
The student will select one of the following words/phrases for study. The student will analyze the semantic range and theological significance of the word in question for Deuteronomy and for the larger biblical text. Potential words/phrases include:

- בִּרְיָה “luxuriant tree”
- חֹבֶֽלְלָתָּה “to burn incense upon the roofs”
- Leb “tophet”
- שָׂפֵטִים “detestable things”
- מִקְטֶֽחֶת “from the iron furnace”
- כְּרֵדֶר “treasured people”
- נֶחֲיָה “an outstretched arm”
- נְוֵאָתָה וּנְוֵאָת הָעָם “signs and wonders”
- הַלָּל “covenant”
- הִלָּחַת “to walk”
- בָּשָׂר “to guard, to keep”
- פָּר “to turn”
- הַכֹּלֶנָה “to cling”
- הַקָּשֶׁת שׁוּרָה “to stiffen the neck”
- נִוְּעֵה “possession”
- נִוְּעֵה וּנִיֵּעֵה “peoples vs. people” (cf. Weinfeld, Appendix A, 321-65).

It is perfectly acceptable to choose a word/phrase which plays a major role in the student’s final project and to thereby “layer” these two assignments.
Class Presentations:
Each student will present their personal research to the class on one or two occasions (depending on class size). These presentations will be 10-15 minutes in duration. These presentations will cover material that the class as a whole needs to learn (e.g., the historical provenience of Deuteronomy), and material from class projects (i.e., Book Survey findings, Word Study findings, the outlining [segment analysis] of a pericope). A clean and clear presentation is expected; visuals will typically be needed; and the student will provide a typed outline of the presented material for class colleagues.

Final Projects:
The student will select a pericope upon which to write a 10-15 page exegesis paper. The paper will show evidence of a strong exegetical method as defined throughout the course of the semester. The student must clear the chosen pericope with the professor by Wednesday, October 22nd. The student may choose one of two forms of presentation in the writing of this paper: either an academic (technical) presentation or a sermon format. Both presentations will require thorough citation, although the latter will necessarily involve more material in the footnotes.

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OUTLINE OF CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1 (9/3):
Introduction to Deuteronomy and the task of Exegesis
Kaiser, 7-66
See handout for discussion questions

Week 2 (9/10):
More on the task of Exegesis
Kaiser, 69-163 (carefully consider his examples in 165-184)
Gorman, 1-33 (cf. Appendix A, 195ff, a very helpful summary chart); skim 34-63 (recreating IBS here), read 65-90
Comparing and contrasting method; what do Kaiser and Gorman add to IBS for you? Whose method appears to be the clearest and/or most accessible?

Week 3 (9/17):
The Canonical Context of Deuteronomy: The Biblical Theology of Covenant
Yehezkel Kaufemann, The Religion of Israel, 1-59
Suzerain/Vassal Treaty handout
Bibliography:
Kenneth Kitchen, Ancient Orient and the OT, 90-102.
**Week 4 (9/24):** The Book of Deuteronomy

Polzin, Robert, *Moses and the Deuteronomist*, 25-72

Reports (3): How do you see the book fitting together and …

Synchronic questions (literary):
What are the various sections of the book, and how do they fit together to make a literary whole?
What does the narrator of this book communicate by indicating the setting of the sermon, the composition of the audience before and after the sermon, and the audience’s reaction to it?
What is the function of the sermon in the Pentateuch’s portrayal of God, Moses, and Israel?

**Week 5 (10/1):** The Historical Context of the Book of Deuteronomy

2 Kings 21-23
JEDP handout
Harper’s: 34-41, 68-69, 76-77, 86.
*ISBE*, “Deuteronomy,” 1:934-40

Reports (5): Wellhausen (and DeWette’s) view, S. R. Driver, R. K. Harrison, G. von Rad, M. Kline

Diachronic questions (historical critical):
What written or oral sources did the writer adopt, adapt, and combine to compose this book?
What are the various components of the book (introduction, law code, songs/hymns/poems, etc.) and what is their origin and development in Israelite tradition, the career of the nation of Israel, and the development of the New Covenant?
What does the narrator’s use of these traditional components reveal about his theological interests?
To what degree do these teachings represent the words or ideas of the historical Moses?

**Week 6 (10/8):** Deuteronomy 1-4:43

Review Kaiser, 165-81 “Syntactical Analysis”
Read Kaiser 197-210 “Narrative in Preaching”
Gorman, 91-121 “Detailed Analysis of the Text”

Pertinent section of chosen commentary.

Reports: Section Analysis. Outline of section demonstrating: (1) Main thesis of author [title]; (2) major subject(s) of section [paragraph breaks and transition statements]; (3) evidence author uses to support these major subjects. You will also discuss sections you found difficult to place with an explanation of why they are where they are; and whether the author’s thesis gets its full argumentation here or elsewhere.

**Week 7 (10/15):** Word Studies

Richter, S. *The Deuteronomistic History and the Name Theology*, 1-40 “Introduction”; 96-120 the šškn section.

Word Study handout and one sample word study

**Week 8 (10/22):** Deuteronomy 4:44-11:32

Translation: Deut 5:1-22
Cf. Mt. 22:37 (Deut 6:5); 4:4 (Deut 8:3), 7 (Deut 6:16), 10 (Deut 6:13)
Pertinent section of chosen commentary

[Review: Kaiser, 165-81 “Syntactical Analysis”; Gorman, 91-121 “Detailed Analysis of the Text”]
Reports: Section Analysis (2)

**Week 9 (10/29):**  
*Text Criticism*  
Word Study due  
Translate Deut 12:1-6. Translate all of the text critical apparatus associated with the pericope.  
Pertinent section of chosen commentary  
Wm. Scott, 18-24,61-87  
Würthwein, 3-82  

**Week 10 (11/5):**  
*Deuteronomy 12:1-6*  
Translate Deut 12:7-28  
Pertinent section of chosen commentary  
[Review: Kaiser, 165-81 “Syntactical Analysis”; Gorman, 91-121 “Detailed Analysis of the Text”]  
Reports: Section Analysis (2); Word Study (1)

**Week 11 (11/12):**  
*Deuteronomy 19-26:19*  
Pertinent section of chosen commentary  
[Review: Kaiser, 165-81 “Syntactical Analysis”; Gorman, 91-121 “Detailed Analysis of the Text”]  
Reports: Section Analysis (2); Word Study (1)

**Week 12 (11/19):**  
*Deuteronomy 27-32*  
Kaiser, 211-231 “Poetry in Preaching”  
Pertinent section of chosen commentary  
[Review: Kaiser, 165-81 “Syntactical Analysis”; Gorman, 91-121 “Detailed Analysis of the Text”]  
Reports: Section Analysis (2); Word Study (1)

Translation and text critical of chosen passage due by 5:00 pm on Nov. 21st

**Reading Week: November 24-28th**

**Week 13 (12/3):**  
*Synthesis & Reflection: the affect of this book on the Deuteronomistic History, the post-exilic perspective of Yahweh and Israel’s relationship, the NT, and the Church today*  
Gorman, 123-145 (skim 148-195)  
Kaiser, 197-247 “Narrative in Preaching” “The Exegete/Pastor and the Power of God”  
Reports: NT uses of chosen pericope (4) asking …  

**Existential questions (canonical criticism/theological exegesis):**  
To what kind of contemporary faith and practice does the sermon call contemporary readers?  
How might the text about “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth” be interpreted within the New Covenant, and what potential problems do you see in its modern application?  
Does the exclusive privilege of the people of Israel restrict the access of the present generation to the blessings of God?  
How does this book call the present day believer to live?  

**Final Projects due, Wednesday December 10th at 5:00 pm**