

From Canaan to Babylon

Books of the Prophets

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1. This is the second presentation looking at the books of the Bible to determine the times and contexts in which they were written and, to the extent possible, to determine who did or did not write them.
2. Last week, we saw how Biblical scholars beginning in the seventeenth century began looking at the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament, to determine whether, as had long been believed, those books had been written by Moses.
3. As we saw, by the middle of the twentieth century, most scholars had accepted the so-called Documentary Hypothesis that attributes the Pentateuch to four independent sources writing long after the death of Moses.
4. As one author wrote in 1987: **“Until the past generation there were orthodox Christian and Jewish scholars who contested the Documentary Hypothesis in scholarly circles. At present, however, there is hardly a biblical scholar in the world actively working on the problem who would claim that the Five Books of Moses were written by Moses – or by any one person.”** Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* at 28.
5. Today, we will look at the books of the Old Testament that Jews call the Nevi'im, which means Prophets.
6. Jews divide these books into three sections – the Former Prophets, the Major Latter Prophets and the Minor Latter Prophets.
7. The Book of Ruth, which Christians place between Judges and 1 Samuel, is not included in the Nevi'im.

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1. The books of the Former Prophets are Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings.
2. Joshua, the first book of the Former Prophets, describes the Israelites' entry into Canaan under the leadership of Joshua, whom Moses had appointed his successor just before his death on the east side of the Jordan River.
3. Although nothing in the Book of Joshua says who wrote it and none of it is written in the first person, it has been attributed to Joshua since about 200 A.D.

4. In his book *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes wrote that the conclusion **“the Book of Joshua was . . . written long after the time of Joshua may be gathered out of many places of the book itself.”**
5. Among the evidence Hobbes cited were the large number of times the book said that things said to have been done by Joshua himself had persisted **“to this day.”** *E.g.*, *Joshua* 4:9; 8:29; 13:13.
6. Because, as Hobbes wrote, that phrase signifies **“a time past, beyond the memory of man,”** he concluded Joshua would not have used those words to describe something he had done.

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1. **“As modern scholars studied the book of Joshua, they noticed that it sometimes sounded surprisingly like the previous book, Deuteronomy.”** Kugel, *How to Read the Bible* at 368.
2. As we learned last week, in 1804 a German doctoral student named W.M.L.de Wette published a thesis in which he concluded that most of the Book of Deuteronomy was written independently of the remainder of the books of the Pentateuch.
3. According to one recent author: **“Modern scholars have accepted de Wette’s basic identification of D[euteronomy] as a separate source – [it] has a distinctive style, and they found that D[euteronomy] also frequently contradicts what is said in other parts of the Pentateuch.”** Kugel, *How to Read the Bible* at 308.
4. One example of the unique writing style of Deuteronomy is its repeated use of the phrase, **“with all your heart and with all your soul,”** which appears nine times in Deuteronomy but nowhere else in the Pentateuch.
5. The identical phrase is in the Book of Joshua. *Joshua* 22:5.

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1. One of the most interesting stories in the Book of Joshua involves two spies Joshua sent ahead of him to Jericho.
2. The spies decided to spend the night in the home of a prostitute named Rahab. *Joshua* 2:1, 8.
3. Rahab hid the spies from the King of Jericho and later let them out of her house on a rope because, according to the Book of Joshua, she knew that **“Yahweh your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.”** *Joshua* 2:11.
4. Rahab’s description of the God of Israel matches word-for-word the description found in Deuteronomy but nowhere else in the Pentateuch: **“Yahweh is God in heaven above and on the earth below.”** *Deuteronomy* 4:39.

5. The Book of Joshua also reports that Rahab told the spies she knew the Israelites would be able to conquer Canaan because of **“what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed.”** *Joshua* 2:10.
6. This description of Sihon and Og duplicates their description in *Deuteronomy* 4:47, which is not found elsewhere in the Pentateuch.

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1. The Book of Joshua quotes God as describing the territory promised to the Israelites: **“Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon and from the great river, the Euphrates – all the Hittite country – to the Great Sea on the west.”** *Joshua* 1:4.
2. This description duplicates almost word-for-word a description in *Deuteronomy* of the territory that would be given to the Israelites if they followed God’s law. *Deuteronomy* 11:24.
3. As one author writes, it appeared to scholars **“as if whoever was writing down the words in Joshua had a copy of Deuteronomy in front of him.”** Kugel, *How to Read the Bible* at 369.

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1. Scholars also noted a number of parallels between the description of Moses in *Deuteronomy* and the description of Joshua in the book named for him.
2. For example, *Deuteronomy* includes the story of the Red Sea closing behind the Israelites after they had crossed it on dry land. *Deuteronomy* 11:4.
3. The Book of Joshua reports that the Jordan River returned to flood stage after Joshua and the Israelites had crossed it on dry land. *Joshua* 4:18.
4. *Deuteronomy* describes the farewell speech that Moses gave just before his death, in which he admonished the Israelites to follow God’s laws. *Deuteronomy* 32:1-46.
5. The Book of Joshua describes the farewell speech that Joshua gave just before his death, in which he admonished the Israelites to follow God’s Laws. *Joshua* 23:1-16
6. At the time of Moses’ death, *Deuteronomy* calls him the **“servant of the LORD,”** a phrase not found elsewhere in the Pentateuch. *Deuteronomy* 34:5.
7. The identical phrase is used in the Book of Joshua to describe Joshua at the time of his death. *Joshua* 24:29.

8. Scholars found so many similarities in language and ideas between Deuteronomy and Joshua that some believed that Joshua should be considered part of the Pentateuch.

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1. Scholars also found a number of similarities in language between Judges and Joshua.

2. The Book of Joshua includes the following statement about the death of Joshua: **“Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of a hundred and ten. And they buried him in the land of his inheritance, at Timnath Heres in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.”** *Joshua* 24:29-30.

3. Judges includes identical language. *Judges* 2:8-9.

4. Joshua notes that the Israelites did not **“drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer,”** but instead made them do **“forced labor.”** *Joshua* 16:10.

5. Judges uses identical language in describing what happened to the Canaanites in Gezer. *Judges* 1:28-29.

6. Joshua reports that Hebron had been given to Caleb, one of Moses’s spies, who then drove out the three sons of Anak. *Joshua* 15:113-14.

7. Judges includes precisely the same information in very similar language. *Judges* 1:20.

8. Scholars seeing these parallels concluded that either Judges was based on Joshua or they both came from a common source.

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1. 1 Samuel also includes phrases and ideas found in Deuteronomy and both Joshua and Judges.

2. The phrase **“with all your heart,”** which is found in repeatedly in Deuteronomy and in Joshua, is found three times in 1 Samuel. *1 Samuel* 7:3; 12:20; 12:24.

3. The phrase **“do evil in the eyes of the LORD,”** found first in Deuteronomy and repeated in Judges, is also found in 1 Samuel. *Deuteronomy* 17:2; *Judges* 13:1; *1 Samuel* 12:17, 15:19.

4. One author points to a long speech in 1 Samuel that is **“full of phrases known elsewhere only or principally from Deuteronomy.”** Kugel, *How to Read the Bible* at 369.

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1. As scholars focused on language in the Books of the Former Prophets that matches that in Deuteronomy, they also noted that the Books of the Former Prophets include religious themes that originated with Deuteronomy.
2. For example, in the earlier narratives of the Pentateuch, God was thought to dwell in the Tabernacle. *Exodus* 25:8.
3. In Deuteronomy, the Tabernacle is no longer the dwelling place of God, but only the **“dwelling for his name”** because God is both in **“heaven above and on the earth below.”** *Deuteronomy* 4:39; 14:23.
4. Like Deuteronomy, 1 Kings repeatedly notes that the Temple is built only as dwelling for the **“name of the LORD.”** *1 Kings* 8:16-20.
5. And, as first articulated in Deuteronomy, 1 Kings quotes Solomon as saying that God cannot be confined to the Temple: **“But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built.”** *1 Kings* 8:27.

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1. These similarities could all be explained by assuming that the writers of the books of the Former Prophets copied from Deuteronomy.
2. But one similarity could not be explained that way.
3. Unlike the other books of the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy includes laws applicable to kings.
4. One law is very specific: **“The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the LORD has told you, ‘You are not to go back that way again.’ He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.”** *Deuteronomy* 17:16-17.
5. By itself, this law is curious – at the time of its purported announcement, the Israelites were still in the wilderness and hundreds of years would pass before Saul became the first king of Israel.
6. Before that time, **“Israel had no king.”** *Judges* 18:1.

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1. What is even more curious is how closely this Mosaic law matches the description of King Solomon who lived hundreds of years after Moses.
2. According to 1 Kings, Solomon had twelve thousand horses that he imported from Egypt. *1 Kings* 10: 26, 28.

3. Each year Solomon earned **“666 talents”** of gold, worth today almost one billion dollars, and **“had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines.”** *1 Kings* 11:3.
4. Using language identical to that in Deuteronomy, 1 Kings reports that Solomon’s many **“wives led him astray”** and **“turned his heart after other gods.”** *1 Kings* 11:3-5.
5. As a result, Solomon **“did evil in the eyes of the LORD.”** *1 Kings* 11:6.
6. This is the exact phrase first found in Deuteronomy about what would happen if a future king worshiped a foreign god. *Deuteronomy* 17:2.
7. It appeared to scholars as if whoever articulated Deuteronomy’s prohibitions on the excesses of a future king might also have written about the excesses of King Solomon.

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1. In 1943, Martin Noth, a German Bible scholar, put the pieces together and articulated **“a new hypothesis concerning the relationship between Deuteronomy and the subsequent historical books (Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings).”** Kugel, *How to Read the Bible* at 371.
2. Considering both the differences between Deuteronomy and the other books of the Pentateuch and the similarities between Deuteronomy and the books of the Former Prophets, Noth concluded that Deuteronomy and the books of the Former Prophets were a single literary work, compiled by one or more common authors.
3. Rather than being seen as the last book of the Pentateuch, Noth believed Deuteronomy should be seen as the introduction to an elaborate Jewish history running from the death of Moses to the time of the exile in Babylon.
4. Because of the relationship of the books of the Former Prophets to Deuteronomy, Noth called those books the “Deuteronomistic History.”
5. Noth’s idea **“won immediate acceptance among Western scholars.”** *Id.*
6. The unknown authors of these books became known as the “Deuteronomists.”

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1. In his groundbreaking work, Noth concluded that Deuteronomy and the Books of the Former Prophets had been written after 587 B.C., when Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar conquered the southern Kingdom of Judah, destroyed Jerusalem and its Temple, and exiled some of the residents of Judah to Babylon.
2. Noth based this conclusion on the fact that 2 Kings describes in some detail the conquest of Judah and the exile to Babylon. *2 Kings* 25:1-30.

3. In addition, in describing what would happen if the Jews worshipped other gods, Deuteronomy includes the following statement: **“Therefore the LORD’s anger burned against this land, so that he brought on it all the curses written in this book. In furious anger and in great wrath the LORD uprooted them from their land and thrust them into another land, as it is now.”** *Deuteronomy 29:27-28.*
4. This statement closely matched what actually happened, suggesting that it was written after the exile.

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1. But other scholars, who accepted Noth’s conclusion that the Deuteronomistic History could be considered as a single literary work, rejected his conclusion that all of it was written after the exile.
2. These scholars pointed to two different kinds of statements they believed must have been written before the exile.
3. First, there are a number of references in the books of the Deuteronomistic History to the continued existence of the Kingdom of Judah and the Temple, both of which ceased to exist after the Babylonian conquest.
4. For example, Joshua says that the Gibeonites continued to be woodcutters for the altar of the Temple **“to this day.”** *Joshua 9:27.*
5. 1 Kings says the poles of the Ark of the Covenant in the Temple **“are still there today.”** *1 Kings 8:8.*
6. Those statements clearly depend on the continued existence of the Temple, which was destroyed by the Babylonians.
7. A passage in 2 Kings says: **“To this day Edom has been in revolt against Judah.”** *2 Kings 8:22.*
8. As one author notes, this passage **“presumes the existence of the Judean state”** that had been destroyed by the Babylonians. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* at 275.

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1. Other statements in the books of the Deuteronomistic History proclaim that the Kingdom of Judah would never be destroyed because of David’s faithfulness to God.
2. For example, 2 Samuel quotes God as promising David: **“Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.”** *2 Samuel 7:16.*
3. 2 Kings repeats this promise: **“Nevertheless, for the sake of his servant David, the LORD was not willing to destroy Judah. He had promised to maintain a lamp for David and his descendants forever.”** *2 Kings 8:19.*

4. These promises of an eternal Kingdom of Judah suggested to scholars that they could not have been written by the same authors who wrote of the destruction of that very kingdom by the Babylonians.
5. As one author writes: **“Why would a person who had seen the fall of the kingdom write a work claiming that the kingdom was eternal?”** Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* at 107.

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1. In 1973, Frank Moore Cross, a noted Bible scholar, provided a response to this question.
2. Cross concluded **“that there were two editions of the Deuteronomistic history.”** Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* at 287.
3. The first edition, written before the exile, noted the continued existence of the Kingdom of Judah and predicted its perpetual survival because of God’s promises to David.
4. The writer or writers who added the description of the exile left in place the predictions of an eternal kingdom because of a practice **“not to omit words which were previously contained in the scroll he was editing.”** Doorly, *Obsession with Justice* at 87.
5. Today, virtually all scholars accept Cross’ conclusion that Deuteronomy and the books of the Former Prophets now in our Bibles include content that was written before the exile and content added after the exile.

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1. The Deuteronomistic History includes a number of clues about when the first edition may have been written, many pointing to the time of King Josiah, who ruled the Kingdom of Judah from about 640 to 609 B.C.
2. According to 2 Kings, Josiah became king at age 8 after the assassination of his father, King Amon. *2 Kings* 21:23-24; 22:1.
3. Josiah is the only person in the Deuteronomistic History identified by name as a future king before he was even born. *1 Kings* 13:2.
4. Even the great David did not get this honor.
5. While most kings of Judah after Solomon merit only a few verses in the Deuteronomistic History, Josiah gets almost two chapters. *2 Kings* 22, 23.
6. *2 Kings* proclaims: **“Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the Lord as he did—with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with all the Law of Moses.”** *2 Kings* 23:25.

7. The phrase claiming that Josiah loved God **“with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength”** mirrors word for word the command that Moses gave to the Israelites. *Deuteronomy* 6:5.
8. No other person in the Bible is described as having lived up to all three elements of this command.
9. Many scholars believe these statements indicate that the first edition of the Deuteronomistic History was **“the work of someone who lived at the time of Josiah, and the second edition was the work of someone living after the kingdom fell.”** Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* at 110.

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1. Both Josiah’s father and his grandfather, King Manasseh, had promoted the worship of the Canaanite god Baal. *2 Kings* 21:3, 21.
2. After reading to his people the Book of the Law that mandated worship of Yahweh alone, Josiah instituted a series of religious reforms intended to follow Yahweh’s laws **“to the letter.”** Armstrong, *The Bible* at 22.
3. Josiah destroyed the temples to foreign gods built by his father and grandfather.
4. He defiled the “high places” outside Jerusalem that were being used by priests for sacrifices to Yahweh.
5. According to *2 Kings*: **“Josiah slaughtered all the priests of those high places and burned human bones on them. Then he went back to Jerusalem.”** *2 Kings* 23:20.

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1. Most scholars now believe the Deuteronomistic History was written to support King Josiah’s religious reforms, which included centralizing worship in Jerusalem.
2. As Karen Armstrong writes: **“The reformers did not use their scripture to conserve tradition, as is often done today, but to introduce radical change. *** They wrote a history of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah in the books of Samuel and Kings, arguing that the Davidic monarchs were the only legitimate rulers of the whole of Israel. Their story culminated in the reign of Josiah, a new Moses and a greater king than David.”** Armstrong, *The Bible* at 23.
3. To support their reforms, **“[t]he Deuteronomists actually changed the wording of earlier law codes, sagas and liturgical texts to make them endorse their proposals.”** *Id.* at 22.
4. For example, a command in *Deuteronomy*, which scholars believe was written during Josiah’s reign, requires that worship take place only in **“the place the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his name.”** *Deuteronomy* 12:11.

5. Previously, Jews could worship God anywhere they built an altar of undressed stones. *Exodus 20:24-26*.
6. This temple in Arad in southern Israel reflects that earlier practice.

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1. The conclusion that the first edition of the Deuteronomistic History was written during the time of King Josiah matches the conclusion scholars had earlier reached about the Book of Deuteronomy that is now seen as the introduction to that history.
2. As we discussed last week, De Wette and later scholars concluded that a major portion of Deuteronomy is the **“Book of the Law”** that guided reforms during the reign of King Josiah. *2 Kings 22:8*.
3. Although *2 Kings* says that the Book of the Law was found in the Temple, after apparently having been lost for so long it had been forgotten, many scholars believe the book was written during Josiah’s reign, perhaps based on an earlier document.
4. As one recent author writes: **“Rather than being an old book that was suddenly discovered, it seems safe to conclude [Deuteronomy] was written in the seventh century B.C.E., just before or during Josiah’s reign.”** Finkelstein, *The Bible Unearthed* at 281.
5. Karen Armstrong agrees: **“[I]nstead of being an ancient work, Deuteronomy was an entirely new Scripture.”** Armstrong, *The Bible* at 21.

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1. The Deuteronomistic History blamed the earlier calamities of the Jewish people on their failures to worship Yahweh exclusively, as Deuteronomy commands.
2. As one author writes: **“[The Deuteronomists] saw the lack of fidelity to [the Mosaic laws] by the people, and especially by the kings, as the root cause of the disaster which their land had met.”** Ceresko, *Introduction to the Old Testament* at 129.
3. Time after time, the Deuteronomistic History attributes the defeats of various rulers to having worshipped other gods and therefore having done **“evil in the eyes of the LORD,”** a phrase first used in Deuteronomy. *Deuteronomy 4:25; 17:2*.
4. Judges describes numerous leaders who were defeated by their enemies because they turned away from the exclusive worship of Yahweh and therefore **“did evil in the eyes of the LORD.”** *Judges 2:11-15; 3:7-8; 4:1-3; 6:1; 10:6-8; 13:1*.
5. *1 Kings* says that God allowed the Kingdom of Israel to be separated from the Kingdom of Judah because Solomon **“did evil in the eyes of the LORD”** after his many **“wives led him astray”** and **“turned his heart after other gods.”** *1 Kings 11:3-13*.

6. 2 Kings says that God allowed the Kingdom of Israel to be destroyed by the Assyrians because Israel's kings had done **“evil in the eyes of the LORD”** by worshipping other gods. *2 Kings* 17:1-7.

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1. The message to the subjects of Josiah was clear – worship only Yahweh as commanded in Deuteronomy or we will suffer the same fate as those who did not.
2. As one author writes: **“Worshiping any other deity was, in the book of Deuteronomy, the gravest of sins, and it commanded that every effort be made to root out any vestige of Canaanite religion from Israel’s midst.”** Kugel, *How to Read the Bible* at 298.
3. So convinced were King Josiah and his supporters of this idea that they added a passage to Deuteronomy in which God expressly orders parents to stone their own children to death if they profess belief in other gods. *Deuteronomy* 13:6-11.
4. After all, the future of the kingdom was at stake.

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1. King Josiah's reforms did not have their expected effect.
2. In 609 B.C., Josiah was killed in battle with the Egyptians and Judah came under the control of Egypt. *2 Kings* 23:29-33.
3. Twenty-two years later, Babylon conquered Egypt and Judah, destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem and exiled many of Judah's citizens.
4. These facts created a theological dilemma for the Deuteronomists -- Josiah had done precisely what God had commanded and yet his kingdom had been destroyed, just like those of previous rulers who had ignored God's commands.
5. While in exile, the **“Deuteronomists added passages to their history to account for the disaster, which they attributed to Manasseh’s religious policies.”** Armstrong, *The Bible* at 25.
6. At the end of the earlier sentence that **“[n]either before nor after Josiah was there a king like him,”** writers added a sentence that Yahweh **“burned against Judah because of all that Manasseh had done to arouse his anger.”** *2 Kings* 23:25-26.
7. An exilic addition to 2 Kings explains: **“Surely these things happened to Judah according to the LORD’s command, in order to remove them from his presence because of the sins of Manasseh and all he had done, including the shedding of innocent blood. For he had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the LORD was not willing to forgive.”** *2 Kings* 24:3-4.
8. Some scholars believe they know who wrote those words.

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1. The Book of Jeremiah is part of the Nevi'im and Jeremiah is considered one of its Major Prophets, with his own scroll in the Hebrew Scriptures.
2. Jeremiah lived in Judah during the time of King Josiah. *Jeremiah 1:2.*
3. After the Babylonian destruction of Judah, Jeremiah went into exile in Egypt. *Jeremiah 43:5-7.*
4. Most scholars believe that Jeremiah dictated at least part of the book that bears his name to Baruch, his scribe. *Jeremiah 36:4.*
5. Chapters 24 and 25 of 2 Kings, describing the fall of Jerusalem and the exile to Babylon, are almost identical to the descriptions of those events in Chapter 52 of Jeremiah.
6. Because of these identical chapters, ancient scholars believed that Jeremiah was the author of 2 Kings, but never thought he might have been the author of other books.
7. Modern scholars also noted similarities of the language in Jeremiah to that in Deuteronomy.
8. For example, Deuteronomy includes an unusual command to **“circumcise your hearts.”** *Deuteronomy 10:16.*
9. The identical command is found in Jeremiah. *Jeremiah 4:4.*
10. Deuteronomy describes the Exodus as rescuing the Israelites from the **“iron-smelting furnace”** of Egypt. *Deuteronomy 4:20.*
11. Jeremiah uses exactly the same description. *Jeremiah 11:4.*
12. And Jeremiah uses the phrase **“with all my heart and soul”** that appears in Deuteronomy but not in other books of the Pentateuch. *Jeremiah 32:41.*
13. Because of the similarities in language between Jeremiah and Deuteronomy, some scholars concluded that Jeremiah should be considered a part of the Deuteronomistic History.

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1. In 1987, a Biblical scholar named Richard Elliot Friedman published a provocative theory.
2. Based on the similarities between the Book of Jeremiah and Deuteronomy and the identical chapters in Jeremiah and 2 Kings, he concluded that Jeremiah, with the assistance of his scribe Baruch, had compiled the entire Deuteronomistic History, from Joshua to 2 Kings.
3. Friedman then took that idea a step further.

4. He concluded that Jeremiah had written **“both editions of the Deuteronomist History.”** Friedman *Who Wrote the Bible?* at 145.
5. Friedman concluded that Jeremiah had added the report of the exile to his original work **“without, apparently, deleting a word of the original edition.”** *Id.* at 144.
6. Although not all scholars have accepted this idea, one author recently wrote: **“It is not outside the realm of possibility . . . that Jeremiah and Baruch . . . may have produced both the Josianic version and the exilic version of the D[euteronomistic] H[istory] by themselves with only the support of a few friends.”** Doorly, *Obsession with Justice* at 150.
7. Another author says: **“There does not seem to be much question but that Jeremiah and Baruch composed more of the Old Testament than did anyone else.”** Trickler, *Who Wrote the Books of the Bible?* at 153.
8. This conclusion could explain why Jeremiah, the most famous prophet of his time, is not mentioned in 2 Kings, which describes in great detail the time of King Josiah and the fall of Jerusalem during which he lived.
9. As one author says: **“The total absence of any mention of Jeremiah by the historian and the exilic editor supports the decision that Jeremiah made a decision to keep himself out of the narrative.”** Doorly, *Obsession with Justice* at 149.

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1. No matter who wrote Deuteronomy and the books of the Former Prophets, they did not write them from scratch.
2. The books themselves repeatedly refer to earlier books for facts about the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel and their kings.
3. For example, 1 Kings relies on the **“book of the annals of Solomon.”** *1 Kings* 11:41.
4. 1 and 2 Kings repeatedly refer to the **“book of the annals of the kings of Israel”** and **“books of the annals of the king of Judah.”**
5. Joshua and 2 Samuel quote from a book of poetry called “the book of Jashar.” *Joshua* 10:13; *2 Samuel* 1:18.
6. The entirety of *Judges* 5 is an ancient **“Song of Deborah.”**
7. Scholars have identified a number of other sources that may have been used in writing the books of the Deuteronomistic History. Doorly, *Obsession with Justice* at 48.
8. The fact that the books of the Deuteronomistic History may have been fashioned from earlier writings says nothing about their authenticity or the messages they convey.
9. As the author who first wrote that Jeremiah was responsible for the Deuteronomistic History writes: **“[The work of Jeremiah] appears to be a sincere**

attempt, by a sensitive and skillful man, to tell his people’s history—and to understand it. The historian painted his people’s heritage. The prophet conceived of their destiny.” Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* at 149.

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1. Hezekiah, the great grandfather of Josiah, was king of Judah from about 715 to 686 B.C.
2. Hezekiah is one of the earliest Bible characters identified in historical records outside of Israel.
3. The famous Assyrian Hexagonal Prism, now at the Oriental Institute in Chicago, confirms that “Hezekiah the Judahite” survived a long siege of Jerusalem by King Sennacherib of Assyria.
4. According to 2 Kings, Hezekiah survived the siege because he **“did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father David had done.”** 2 Kings 18:3.
5. Much of the material in 2 Kings about the reign of Hezekiah, including the siege of Jerusalem, is identical to that in the Book of Isaiah, which was probably its source. 2 Kings 18:13 to 20:11; *Isaiah* 36:1 to 38:8.

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1. Isaiah is one of the three Major Latter Prophets of the Nevi’im, along with Jeremiah and Ezekiel.
2. Isaiah lived in Judah during the reigns of Kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. *Isaiah* 1:1.
3. Of all the Jewish prophets, Isaiah is probably the one most familiar to Christians because his words are cited 22 times in the New Testament, often as prophecies pointing toward Jesus.
4. His most famous words are those repeated at Christmas time: **“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.”** *Isaiah* 7:12.

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1. Isaiah spoke these words to King Ahaz, who would become the father of Hezekiah.
2. One author states: **“To Isaiah’s audience, this child could be none other than Hezekiah!”** Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book* at 69.
3. Karen Armstrong agrees that the baby **“was in fact named Hezekiah.”** Armstrong, *The Bible* at 20.

4. No matter to whom the prophecy referred, there is no reason to believe the Prophet Isaiah did not speak these or similar words.
5. But most scholars today believe that someone else is responsible for a significant part of the Book of Isaiah.

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1. At the time of the Prophet Isaiah, “[a]lthough Assyria [had] conquered and exiled the northern kingdom [of Israel], Judah remained secure.” Kugel, *How to Read the Bible* at 559.
2. But Chapters 40 to 55 of the Book of Isaiah describe the exile of the Jews to Babylon and their return from exile, events that occurred almost 200 years after the time of the Prophet Isaiah.
3. The return is credited to Cyrus the Great of Persia, who conquered Babylon. *Isaiah* 44:28; 45:1.
4. Although it is certainly possible that an eighth century B.C. prophet could have foreseen a later exile, it seems unlikely that a prophet could have foretold the name of the later Persian king would allow the Jews to return from that exile.
5. In addition, scholars have noted that Book of Isaiah does not even identify Cyrus beyond his name, apparently assuming the readers would know his identity.
6. As a result, scholars as long ago as the eighteenth century concluded that Chapters 40 to 55 of the Book of Isaiah “**were written by an anonymous Jew who lived precisely in the time of Cyrus, when the Babylonian exile was just coming to a close.**” *Id.* at 561.
7. By the nineteenth century, this conclusion had gained “**widespread acceptance.**” *Id.*
8. This anonymous writer, who “**stood in the tradition of the ‘historical’ Isaiah,**” is known as “Second Isaiah” or “Deutero-Isaiah.” Ceresko, *Introduction to the Old Testament* at 209.

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1. Some scholars believe that writers or editors at the time of the exile also modified other books of the Nevi'im, including some books of the Minor Latter Prophets, twelve books that are combined as one in the Hebrew Scriptures but separated in Christian Bibles.
2. Micah, one of the Minor Latter Prophets, is known to Christians for having predicted that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. *Micah* 5:2.3.
3. Like Isaiah, Micah lived in Judah during the time of King Hezekiah, before the Babylonian conquest. *Micah* 1:1.

4. The Book of Jeremiah includes a word-for-word quotation from Micah, predicting that **“Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble, the temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets.”** *Jeremiah 26:18; Micah 3:12.*
5. At the time Jeremiah wrote these words, the Babylonians had, in fact, leveled Jerusalem and destroyed the temple.
6. Many scholars believe that Jeremiah or some other writer at the time of the exile modified the words of Micah to show him predicting what actually happened.
7. As we will see next week, it was not uncommon for Jewish writers to describe past events in the form of prophecies.

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1. The prophet Hosea was a contemporary of Micah, who lived in what had been the northern Kingdom of Israel after its conquest by the Assyrians. *Hosea 1:1.*
2. In what is thought to be the earliest version of Hosea’s writings, he blamed the collapse of the Kingdom of Israel on its having made alliances with Egypt and Assyria rather than relying on Yahweh. *Hosea 7:11; 8:9.*
3. But in other passages Hosea blames Israel’s problems on having **“built many altars for sin offerings”** and predicts that, as a result, they would **“return to Egypt.”** *Hosea 8:11-13.*
4. Some scholars believe these words were added to the writings of Hosea by the Deuteronomists, who railed against altars outside Jerusalem and saw their people eventually returned to Egypt after the Babylonian conquest.
5. In addition, Hosea includes an explicit description of the return from exile, which happened almost two hundred years later. *Hosea 11:11.*
6. Many scholars believe that the Book of Hosea, like those of Isaiah and Micah, was revised following the return of the Jews from their exile.

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1. The claim that the books of Isaiah, Micah, Hosea and perhaps others were not all written by the prophets whose names they bear has troubled many Christians, some of whom continue to reject this idea.
2. It is one thing to accept that Jeremiah, a prophet, might have compiled the books of the Former Prophets.
3. It is quite another to accept that the Bible includes writings by unknown authors who either sought to gain credibility by associating themselves with famous prophets or saw fit to modify the words of those prophets.
4. Why, for example, asks an Orthodox Jewish authority on the Hebrew Scriptures, should any credence be given to the writings of Second Isaiah if **“in fact, we know**

nothing about the author, save that for centuries people erroneously believed he was Isaiah”? Kugel, *How to Read the Bible* at 566.

5. That authority, James Kugel, provides an answer to his own question: “[T]he Bible’s authority—and consequently, its role in our lives today—does not derive strictly from the fact that its original authors were divinely guided prophets and sages, nor even from the authority of its (perhaps divinely guided) editors, but from those ancient Jews and Christians who first accepted it as the guidebook of their faiths. *** Its authority derives from its having been accepted in its present form—words of and words about God altogether—and given the status of Scripture, the great book of divine teaching.” *Id.* at 567.

6. In other words, the authority of the Bible as the word of God depends not only on who wrote its specific words but upon who determined that those words deserved recognition as Scripture no matter who wrote them.

7. As we will see in the final presentation in this series, people of faith determined which books and writings proposed for inclusion in the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament contained the authentic words of God and which did not.

8. It may be that that selection, made under God’s divine guidance, helps give the books in our Bibles their authority, regardless of who may have written their words.

9. This answer may not be entirely satisfactory to all of you and we will discuss this more in the final presentation.

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1. Next week, we will say more about the writings of Second Isaiah, which contains important teachings about the nature of God that form the basis for many Jewish and Christian beliefs.

2. We will then turn to the books the Jews call Ketuvim, meaning “Writings,” most of which were written or supplemented during or after the return from the exile and many of which reflect the influence of the Persians who ruled Israel after the return from exile.

3. Among many questions that we will address is whether David really wrote the Psalms.

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