

# BEST COMMENTARIES ON DEUTERONOMY

## BEST COMMENTARIES ON DEUTERONOMY

[Moses on Mt Nebo \(Deut 34:1+\)](#)

Listen to [Mt Nebo](#), as you Ponder How Moses' [May Have Felt](#)

There are many commentaries available on the book of Deuteronomy, so it is difficult to compile a comprehensive list. Most of the "Best" commentaries on Deuteronomy focus on the more recent works and tend to leave out some of the older works.

That said, I will begin my list with the commentary I compiled in 2021 which is over 1500 pages (book equivalent). The reason for listing this as one of the "top" commentaries is that it is one of the best for "multi-tasking" or "one stop shopping" if you are preaching or teaching though Deuteronomy. By "one stop shopping" I mean the following:

(1) First of all, this commentary is totally free and there are no banners or pop-up ads to disturb your reading of the text and comments. The only thing I ask is that when you use my material, please consider praying for all who use it (and the website), praying very specifically that they might continually "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.." (2Pe 3:18+). Thank you.

(2) There are comments on every verse, and the verses are formatted in such a way that they can be easily identified (as a banner with **bold font** with **grey background** - e.g., see Dt 1:1). In addition there are individual links to every verse at the top of each page to allow you to quickly jump to a specific verse (see example).

(3) Most verses include a "**Title**" (in **bold green font**) that somehow relates to some aspect of that verse (to highlight the main idea) (see example in Dt 1:2+).

(4) There are frequent Hebrew word studies (e.g., "expound" in Dt 1:5) which are marked with **yellow highlight**.

(5) There are numerous notes from the excellent NET Bible notes to help understand more technical issues in a passage. (e.g. NET Note - Suph in Dt 1:1)

(6) "**Related Passages**" (example) are included (full text, not just the chapter/verse) at the top of many verse comments.

(7) Extensive use is made of the Septuagint translation which can give helpful insight on the Hebrew text. In this way the Septuagint almost functions like a "commentary" on the passage.

(8) There links to other resources (e.g., [Wikipedia on Arabah](#) in Dt 1:1, [Bible dictionaries](#), etc.) a feature which you do not see in most commentaries, even those that are digital. And because this resource is only web based (no printed material), it can be easily updated/revise.

(9) There are numerous links and full articles from the excellent resource [Gotquestions.org](#) which amplify the understanding of a given passage. (E.g. on Dt 1:1 there is a link to [How did Moses write Deuteronomy if it records his death?](#))

(10) Every Bible reference pops up the passage so that you do not see just the reference (book/chapter/verse), but you can actually read the Word of His grace (like Dt 32:47+!) which is always edifying (Acts 20:32NET+) and which never returns void (Isa 55:11). And I attempt to incorporate many cross references in the commentary.

(11) There are devotionals that often offer illustrations you can use in teaching and preaching, especially the excellent devotionals from [Our Daily Bread](#) (e.g., "Trust Tally" on Dt 1:21).

(12) Maps (map associated with Dt 1:1) are included so you can see where you are in a chapter or verse.

(13) There are occasional pertinent pictures to help the scene come alive ("A picture is worth a thousand words!") (e.g., "Carrying a Cluster of Grapes" in Dt 1:25)

(14) Every verse has parallel cross-references from the Treasury of Scripture Knowledge (many of these will have a "+" indicating that there is an additional in depth commentary on that passage).

(15) There are specific "**Thoughts**" that help bring out a devotional thought or issue a call for personal application (e.g., see this "THOUGHT" related to Dt 1:1).

(16) Illustrations (example from Dt 1:1) are included (usually identified by **green highlighting**) when they relate to a passage and these can be useful in preaching or teaching the text.

(17) There is an "**Overview**" chart of the book at the top of every chapter page which will help you "get your bearings," by showing you where you are in that chapter in regard to the overall pattern of the book (e.g., see Deuteronomy Chart or Remembrances from the Past).

(18) There are numerous quotes from other respected, conservative sources (I am especially fond of C H Spurgeon - example).

(19) Each verse has a link to additional resources which relate to the chapter you are studying and include numerous additional commentaries and sermons to help provide ideas for your preaching and teaching.

(20) In summary, the text is interpreted literally, allowing context to guide the interpretation and using other Scriptures to aid interpretation of a specific verse (e.g., see this cross reference to Dt 1:1).

Another feature of this listing of "BEST" commentaries is that virtually every commentary can be **BORROWED** from archive.org free of charge, which makes this material available to anyone, anywhere in the world. Obviously some of the Deuteronomy Commentaries on the other lists of "BEST" commentaries would be worthwhile to list, but that would simply be repeating their listings, which is not the goal of this BEST list. In addition for the largest compilation of free resources on the Book of Deuteronomy including commentaries and sermons, [Click here for a list of more than 1000 resources.](#)

So here is the list and they are not in any particular order (I listed mine first to make it easier to read the comments on the specific chapter on which you may be preaching or teaching):

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**Deuteronomy Verse by Verse** - Bruce Hurt, MD, 2021 (equivalent to over 1500 pages if printed in a book - there is no print copy available, only internet. There is no charge.)

VERSE BY VERSE COMMENTARY	RELATED RESOURCES

- [Deuteronomy 1 Commentary](#)
- [Deuteronomy 2 Commentary](#)
- [Deuteronomy 3 Commentary](#)
- [Deuteronomy 4 Commentary](#)
- [Deuteronomy 5 Commentary](#)
- [Deuteronomy 6 Commentary](#)
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**Click here for 100's of additional resources on Deuteronomy, both commentaries and sermons.**

Thompson, John Arthur. [Deuteronomy. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. \(another source\)](#) (BORROW)

Cyril Barber - This work provides all that a Bible student could wish for, and in a handy format. **Comparable to the best works ever produced on Deuteronomy.**

James Rosscup - A helpful verse by verse work abreast of recent scholarship on many of the issues in Deuteronomy for the more serious reader. Thompson believes that the book is not authored by Moses, yet much of it goes back to the time of Moses. But "the present Deuteronomy represents the end-point of subsequent revisions both in language and in form," and is derived from "the re-application of the great principles of the covenant at Sinai to the changing conditions of a new age, be it that of Samuel, or Solomon, or Hezekiah, or Josiah" (pp. 46–47). The material is mostly from Moses' day and Israel's situation then. But it has been retouched to serve the needs of later generations in Israel. Cf. an evangelical evaluation of Thompson's concessions to critical scholarship along this line in Meredith G. Kline, review, Westminster Theological Journal, 39 (Fall, 1976), 168–70. Deuteronomy, to Thompson, shares in the pattern of the ancient form of a Near Eastern treaty (covenant). He does not interpret some things literally, e.g. the 40 days of Moses receiving the law could mean an indefinite time (p. 140). Though some conclusions run against the grain for one who holds to inerrancy, Thompson in general says things consistent with a rather high view of the Bible, and evinces a scholarship of depth and breadth.

**Knight, George A. A.** [The Song of Moses: A Theological Quarry](#). (BORROW) Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.

James Rosscup - Here are 156 pp. arguing that Deuteronomy 32:1–43, originated in Moses' day and composed by Solomon's scribes, is much used in other OT and NT Scripture. Knight furnishes detail verse by verse, usually good, and at times not agreeing with conservative opinion. In a postscript, he discusses main themes in the passage such as God's nature and fidelity to His covenant people.

**Deere, Jack S.** [Deuteronomy" in The Bible Knowledge Commentary - Old Testament](#), (BORROW) - Deere's comments cover pages 259–324.

James Rosscup - Conservative work showing expertise in scholarly literature and handling of Hebrew exegesis, history, customs, etc. Deere provides help on synopses of sections and also the verse by verse explanation an expositor needs.

**Christensen, D. L.** [Deuteronomy 1:1–21:9 - Volume 1 \(Word Biblical Commentary\)](#). ([Volume 2 - Deut 21:10-34:12](#)) (BOTH CAN BE BORROWED) Dallas: Word Books, 2001.

James Rosscup - This detailed liberal work (458 large pp.) has lists of scholarly specialist writings on each section, and sometimes ponderous comments on verses. It is geared to be mostly of use to OT experts and some more advanced students. For much pastoral benefit, it appears so focused on issues some scholars may be curious about that it will not be of steady profit to others. Help is available on many verses, and on other verses the author offers comments that seem limited in their real help, for example on boiling a kid, where much has been written that finds no mention (Ex 14:21).

**Craigie, Peter Campbell.** [The Book of Deuteronomy. New International Commentary on the Old Testament](#). (BORROW)

Cyril Barber - A learned and comprehensive treatment. Craigie shows that he is abreast of the latest trends in literary critical scholarship, yet defends the integrity of the Mosaic writings with discretion and skill. His comments on the text are illuminating, and he enriches his exposition with important historical information and a judicious use of archaeological data.

James Rosscup - Scholarly study of the text, based on analysis of the Hebrew and cognate languages, written in an attitude of faith and aimed at a broad (but serious) audience. Craigie notes and capitalizes on the book's similarity in structure to second-millennium ancient Near East vassal treaties, and holds the authorship to be Mosaic, finished by Joshua. Includes an 86-page introductory section, with a nine-page section on the theology of the book. Craigie, Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Calgary, is inclined toward a Mosaic date or shortly after, agreeing with M. Kline. He usually shows good awareness of views and recent books and articles (cf. his select bibliography, pp. 69–72). He even furnishes in Appendix III a "Concordance of Principal Qumran Manuscripts Relating to Deuteronomy" (pp. 84–86). The comments verse by verse are quite good, but sometimes lacking in detail on views and arguments (e.g. on 18:15, the conviction that the passage is "prophetic in foreshadowing another Prophet ... namely, Jesus" (p. 39), but with little discussion).—Dan Phillips

**Ridderbos, Jan.** [Deuteronomy. Bible Students' Commentary](#). (BORROW) Translated by E. M. Van der Maas.

Cyril Barber - An admirable, generally conservative commentary that was first published in Dutch in 1950–1951. The writer's treatment of critical problems is judicious without being tedious. His comments on the text are worthy of serious consideration.

James Rosscup - This work is frequently quite helpful, sometimes valuable in dealing with verses in a concise, competent, direct exegesis based on obvious wide knowledge. Ridderbos is conservative, discussing but finding Wellhausenian theory as to authorship and unity invalid; he argues that Moses was the author, with a few sections or parts by editorial work after Moses "under God's special providence" (p. 22). On many matters the commentary is satisfactory, getting at vital things fully enough for many teachers, preachers and diligent laypeople.

**Harrison, R. K.** ["Deuteronomy," New Bible Commentary Revised](#), (BORROW) ed. D. Guthrie et al. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970, pp. 201–29.

James Rosscup - This is a very good evangelical work by a skilled Old Testament scholar. He favors Mosaic authorship, but thinks Chapters 32–34 were added shortly after Moses' death, partly by Joshua (Moses' death) and partly by Eleazer (p. 203). Restricted by space, Harrison offers a helpful, concise commentary that contributes on most verses and problems.

**Schultz, Samuel J.** [Deuteronomy: The Gospel of Love. Everyman's Bible Commentary.](#) (BORROW)

Cyril Barber - A simple, thought-provoking exposition.

James Rosscup - This is in The Everyman's Bible Commentary series. It provides a good, brief explanation with a clear outline. Like Schneider, Schultz shows that God's love is the heart of this book by Moses the lawgiver.

**Kline, Meredith** - [Wycliffe Bible Commentary \(online\)](#) His comments on Deuteronomy

**Miller, Patrick D.** [Deuteronomy \(Interpretation series\).](#) (BORROW) Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990. 253 pp. (BORROW his [Israelite religion and Biblical theology : collected essays](#))

James Rosscup - This is a sweeping exposition with essays on structure, motifs and sections in the book and not a verse by verse discussion. Miller, Professor of Old Testament Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, follows the line of many in thinking final redaction took place during Josiah's career. However, here he does not devote much time to this but has many helpful perceptions on the meaning of the text we have. His well-organized work aims to help teachers, preachers and students by commenting on the RSV translation. Synopses at the outset of chapters orientate readers to the setting and how the section of Deuteronomy fits in the book and what the structure of this unit is, in Miller's opinion. At times Miller serves up such arbitrary ideas as: "It is highly unlikely that we have here an accurate historical report of words and actions by Moses on the plains of Moab" (p. 25). However, the book draws spiritual life lessons which are quite worthwhile (cf. chs. 3-4, for example). It just will not set well with conservatives to be told that the concern for possession of the land in Deuteronomy is because the book was done centuries later than the wilderness era when Israel was in danger of being uprooted from the land (44). Even then, Miller has many helpful things summarized about the land (44-52).

**Kline, Meredith.** [Treaty of the Great King.](#) (BORROW) Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963.

James Rosscup - A competent scholar wrote this book which most reviews hailed as an epochal work. Also see Kline's commentary on Deuteronomy in The Wycliffe Bible Commentary (Moody Press, 1962). The author investigates the relevance of recently discovered treaties of great kings to understanding the nature of the Decalogue and the covenant in Deuteronomy. He wrestles with the statements of higher criticism. It is conservative.

**Erdman, Charles Rosenbury.** [The Book of Deuteronomy: An Exposition](#) (BORROW).

Cyril Barber - A clear exposition of the love of God. Excellent for laypeople.

**Cumming, John.** [Sabbath Morning Readings on the Old Testament: Book of Deuteronomy.](#) (BORROW)

Cyril Barber - First published in 1856, these expository messages ably unfold the theme and purpose of Moses' last discourses. Of special value due to the fact that there are so few homiletic studies of Deuteronomy.

**Payne, David F** [Deuteronomy. Daily Study Bible. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985](#) (BORROW).

Cyril Barber - Defends the Mosaic authorship of this book and provides a concise, theologically astute commentary on the text. More conservative than some other works in this series. Leans in favor of accepting the Mosaic authorship. Condenses a remarkable wealth of information into a concise, practical commentary. A handy volume.

**Weinfeld, Moshe.** [Deuteronomy 1--11.](#) (BORROW) Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday and Company, 1991.

Cyril Barber - Set in bold, clear type, this volume is easy to read and publisher and author are to be commended for the handsome layout and overall appearance of the book. Weinfeld is one of the leading exponents of Deuteronomistic history, and readers should expect this to color his exegesis as well as his exposition. The archaeological and cultural, historical and geographical notes are of the utmost value; and throughout one becomes aware of the author's careful work. Contains relatively little data for the preacher, but is a must for the scholar.

**Mayes, A. D. H.** [Deuteronomy \(New Century Bible Commentary\).](#) (BORROW) Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981. 416 pp.

James Rosscup - This is by a lecturer in Hebrew and Semitics, University of Dublin. He is liberal, and his work is highly regarded by many. His exegesis is thorough and he has much excellent data on word meaning,

background, etc., plus a good bibliography (pp. 9–23) and a lengthy introduction with a 3-page outline (27–108). As many he is persuaded that Deuteronomy is part of a larger deuteronomic history of Israel running through 2 Kings, a history finalized during the exile. He theorizes that particular verses were written later, according to his opinion. He feels Levites of the Jerusalem temple (p. 107) give the distilled teaching, so the historical background is there, not in the wilderness (81–82). Still, much of the verse by verse commentary has basic, explanatory material which conservative users with discernment can fit where it belongs into the time of Moses and not in exilic days with Mayes. Mayes sees in 18:15 nothing of messianic connection, and has no reference to the New Testament use of it.

**Carmichael, Calum M.** [The Laws of Deuteronomy](#). (BORROW) Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1974.

James Rosscup - A scholarly study showing that the book of Deuteronomy is a carefully constructed, coherent treatise, written with a definite purpose in mind.

**Benjamin, Don C.** [Deuteronomy and City Life: A Form-Criticism of Texts with the Word City \('ir\) in Deuteronomy 4:41-26:19](#) (BORROW)

Cyril Barber - Questions contemporary histories and theologies of ancient Israel that stress the complete nonurban character of the Israelites. Provides some startling and insightful sidelights on this period of Israel's history.

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**James Rosscup also ranks the commentaries by type (exegetical, expositional, devotional)**

#### **Deuteronomy - Detailed Exegetical**

1. P. Craigie
2. J. A. Thompson
3. C. Wright
4. S. Driver (Lib)
5. J. Ridderbos

#### **Deuteronomy - Expositional Survey**

1. R. K. Harrison
2. J. S. Deere

#### **Deuteronomy - Devotional Flavor**

1. S. Schultz

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**Sources of the commentary critiques:** (Barber's resources are available online)

- **Cyril Barber** - [The Minister's Library - Volume 1](#) (436 pages) - This (and the two volumes below) are excellent resources to check for lists of "BEST" commentaries on all 66 books. Dr Barber is himself an author of several excellent expository commentaries and therefore is better equipped to critique other author's works than many of the "BEST" lists on the Web, because they are usually compiled by individuals who have not written commentaries.
- **Cyril Barber** - [The Minister's Library - Volume 2](#) (228 pages)
- **Cyril Barber** - [The Minister's Library - Volume 3](#) (171 pages) - Dr Barber's three volumes are much more than just a listing of the BEST commentaries on each book of the Bible as shown by the Table of Contents below (click links to go to that subdivision).
  1. [General Reference Works and Bible Commentaries](#)
  2. [Old Testament](#)
  3. [New Testament](#)
  4. [Doctrinal Theology](#)
  5. [Doctrinal Literature](#)
  6. [Pastoral Theology](#)
  7. [Social and Ecclesiastical Theology](#)
- **James Rosscup** [Commentaries for Biblical Expositors](#) - recommended resource which gives the BEST commentaries in all 66 books.

