I see myself as, among other things, a Jewish confessional biblical scholar who attempts to expound for non-Orthodox Diaspora Jews and non-Orthodox Israeli Jews the abiding messages contained in Hebrew Scripture as understood against the background of modern scientific history. It should be noted that what is now called “biblical theology” was born of the attempt of people like Henry Churchill King (1858–1934), writing at the end of the nineteenth century, to explain how the Bible could be more meaningful than ever before if persons were willing to study it anew against the background of modern natural science including the theory of evolution and modern, scientific history including biblical criticism.  

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1 The two important contributions of W.M.L. de Wette, *Dissertatio critico-exegetica, qua Deteronomium* (1805) to the study of the Book of Deuteronomy and the books of the so-called Early Prophets (Joshua-Judges-Samuel-Kings) were his thesis that Deuteronomy was the book discovered in the Temple in the eighteenth year of the reign of King Josiah (see 2 Kgs. 22:3; an idea already floated by Jerome in the fourth century C.E.) and his thesis that the so-called Early Prophets have been edited by a school, which adopted the ideology of Deuteronomy (referred to as D) and that an adherent of this school should be designated therefore as a Deuteronomist [Dtr]. However, according to the rival thesis of Martin Noth, *Ueberlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, vol. 1 (Halle, 1943), pp. 12–18, the Book of Deuteronomy and 2 Kgs. belong to a single work called “the Deuteronomic history.” The latter theory fails to distinguish between the diverse ideologies and diverse terminologies with respect to legitimate and illegitimate holy places found in Deut. 11–12 (D); the Books of Kings [Dtr] and in the Book of Jeremiah. Hence our distinction, following both de Wette and Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford, 1972), between D (Deuteronomy) and Dtr (especially various passages in the Books of Kings, which inveigh against the worship of Yahweh at *bamot*).

2 This article is expanded from the author’s paper read at the session on Hebrew Bible Theology (aka Jewish Biblical Theology) chaired by Wonil Kim and organized by Isaac Kalimi and Marvin Sweeney at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta, Georgia, November 23, 2003.

For the contemporary non-Orthodox Jew, the sacred books of Judaism and of ancient and modern Israel are primarily the Hebrew versions of the books found in the Lutheran canon of the Old Testament. Rabbinic literature is essentially a closed book. Moreover, it is assumed a priori by members of the aforementioned communities—the non-Orthodox Israeli and the Conservative and Reform Jews in the Diaspora—that unless proven otherwise in a specific instance, whatever Rabbinic literature has to say about a given text of Hebrew Scripture is probably wrong. The common and shared background of both the non-Orthodox Jews who are the primary target audience of publications such as *The Jewish Study Bible* edited by Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler (Oxford and New York, 2003) and my professional colleagues in the Society of Biblical Literature, most of them professing Christians, are the a priori assumptions that 1) Judaism is not the natural and necessary continuation of the religion of ancient Israel; and 2) any biblical scholar who studied...