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A THEOLOGY OF FUTURE HOPE IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

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A THEOLOGY OF FUTURE HOPE IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

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To Ashley,

A woman of wisdom, my bride and best friend,

You are God's gift to me,

Proverbs 18:22

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANE	ancient Near East
<i>BA</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
<i>BS</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BZAW	Beiheft zur <i>ZAW</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>EBC</i>	<i>Expositor's Bible Commentary</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>Jets</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Old Testament</i>
JSOTsup	Journal for the Study of Old Testament – Supplement Series
MT	Masoretic Text
NAC	New American Commentary
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary
NICOT	The New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIV	The New International Version
NT	New Testament

OT	Old Testament
OTL	Old Testament Library
<i>RQ</i>	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
<i>SBJT</i>	<i>Southern Baptist Journal of Theology</i>
<i>TB</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum, Supplements

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PREFACE

The fact that this project is completed is possible only because of the grace of Almighty God. God's grace toward me is evident in so many who have helped me along the way. Kenneth Mathews, my supervising professor, has challenged me not only to be a scholar who thinks well but also to be a disciple of Christ who pursues Him in prayer and study of the Word. I cherish not only his immense expertise in the field of Old Testament scholarship, but also his intense and warm piety to King Jesus so evident in the way he prayed for me and encouraged not only my writing but my family and local church ministry. Dean Russell Moore, one of my readers, has uniquely impacted the way I read the Bible as all about Jesus, and for that I am forever grateful to him. The same is true of Professor Jim Hamilton. Through personal conversations and reading his writing, I have been trained in Christocentric reading and proclamation.

President R. Albert Mohler Jr. has been a constant encouragement and hero to me. He has modeled contending for the faith. Also, to the entire faculty of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary I am eternally indebted. I cannot name and thank adequately all of the men who invested in my life. I pray that I will pass down God's Word to others in the way they have faithfully passed it in me.

My father and hero, Danny Akin, is the reason I am who I am today. Before I knew what Christocentric hermeneutics were I was taught to know and love Jesus both in word and deed by my dad. He and my mother, a Proverbs 31 woman, embodied the

parents of Proverbs as they instructed their sons in wisdom, and in the one who is God's Wisdom for us.

The questions asked by my church members at the Valley Station Campus of Highview Baptist Church set me on a journey of learning the Proverbs. I am grateful for the time I got to shepherd them. I am overjoyed that God led our family to Fairview Church. They are the sweetest and most encouraging people on the planet.

There is no way for me properly to thank my wife and best friend, Ashley Akin, or our sweet girls, Maddy and Emma Grace. Ashley has been a constant source of encouragement throughout this long journey. She was compassionate to me when I needed support. She challenged me to get things done when they needed to get done. She is a Proverbs 31 woman, the wife of my youth and forever. Maddy and Emma have brought joy and sweet distraction during the stress of this project.

Finally, to the Greater Solomon, my Savior and King, the Lord Jesus, be all glory now and forevermore. Amen.

Jonathan David Akin

Lebanon, Tennessee

May 2012

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND SURVEY OF RESEARCH

One of the most beloved books in the church today is the Book of Proverbs. Christians love to read it devotionally because the content is immensely practical and helpful for daily living. Some have said that the wisdom given in Proverbs is skill for daily living.¹ This skill enables one to navigate through life in a successful way that brings joy and avoids trouble. Indeed, the Book of Proverbs is concerned with the matters of everyday life.

This emphasis on practical, daily living has led many Old Testament (OT) scholars to argue that Proverbs is solely concerned with day-to-day existence and is unconcerned with a future hope. Brueggemann writes, “There is no ‘reward’ in heaven, no differed dividend....Wisdom represents a protest against such a deferred goal....Any talk of the will of God which doesn’t lead to life for the community here and now is idolatry.”² Many OT scholars agree with Brueggemann’s assertion that there is no future hope in the wisdom literature in general or in the book of Proverbs specifically. Most discussions on this theme argue that the reward for wisdom is “life,” which means

¹Warren Wiersbe, *Be Skillful: God’s Guidebook to Wise Living* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 1995), 11. See also Waltke’s definition of wisdom. Bruce Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs 1-15*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 76ff.

²Walter Brueggemann, *In Man We Trust: The Neglected Side of Biblical Faith* (Richmond: John Knox, 1972), 15-16.

prosperity in the here and now instead of a future life or future reward.³ Other scholars are open to the possibility of a future hope that is in seed-form in Proverbs and developed progressively in later biblical texts.⁴ These scholars do not think one can speak definitively of a future hope as an explicit teaching in Proverbs, but when Proverbs is read in the light of the NT one may be seen. Scholars who are open to a future hope see the hope usually in an individual form as a hope in an afterlife. There is no thought given to a future hope for Israel collectively or the monarchy in Proverbs. This dissertation will be distinct from other scholarly approaches to future hope in Proverbs because it sees a corporate, royal aspect to the future hope of Proverbs which has not been argued for in regard to Proverbs.⁵

Relevant Research

Discussing the concept of future hope in Proverbs necessitates a brief discussion regarding the scholarly debate over retribution in this book. Proverbs teaches that the righteous wise will be blessed while the wicked fool will be cursed. This has

³John J. Collins, *Seers, Sibyls and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism*, in *Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism*, ed. John J. Collins (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 354. R. Laird Harris, "The Meaning of the Word *Sheol* as Shown by Parallels in Poetic Texts," *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society* 4, no. 4 (1961): 129-35. Edmund Sutcliffe, *The Old Testament and the Future Life* (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1946), 118-19. R. N. Whybray, *The Book of Proverbs: A Survey of Modern Study*, History of Biblical Interpretation Series, ed. Robert Morgan, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 64, 118.

⁴Derek Kidner, *The Proverbs: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1964), 53-56. Tremper Longman III, *Proverbs*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 86-87.

⁵A complete survey of scholarly approaches to the book of Proverbs is beyond the scope of this dissertation. The next section focuses on scholarly approaches to a future hope in Proverbs. For a good survey of the interpretation of Proverbs in general, see R. N. Whybray, *The Book of Proverbs: A Survey of Modern Study*. See also Bruce Waltke and David Diewert, "Wisdom Literature," in *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, ed. David W. Baker and Bill T. Arnold (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 295-328.

been called the “retribution principle.”⁶ Klaus Koch originated the view called the “deed-consequence nexus” that God does not impose the retribution, but rather there is an automatic process in which the consequences are inherent in the deeds themselves.⁷ He observes that the majority of verses in Proverbs that speak of consequences do not mention God at all.

While Koch’s view enjoyed some influence, it was mainly rejected by scholarship. One scholar who argued against Koch was Boström who contended that Proverbs did not teach a deed-consequence relationship but rather a “character-consequence relationship.”⁸ Fox points out, “This modification is important because Proverbs is not so mechanical as to imagine a precise correlation between every action and its result.”⁹

Those who oppose Koch agree that there is a moral order, but they cannot envision a believer in Yahweh conceiving of this order apart from Yahweh.¹⁰ Therefore, texts that do not mention Yahweh specifically just assume his sovereignty. Proverbs does teach retribution, and while there are texts that do not mention Yahweh specifically, there are many texts that do mention his active involvement in reward and judgment while not always revealing how he will reward and judge. He watches over the affairs of men and

⁶J. H. Walton, “Retribution,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament Wisdom, Poetry & Writings*, ed. Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2008), 647-55.

⁷Klaus Koch, “Gibt es ein Vergeltungsdogma im Alten Testament,” *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 52 (1955): 1-42.

⁸Lennart Boström, *The God of the Sages* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1990), 90.

⁹Michael Fox, *Proverbs 1-9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible, vol. 18A (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 91.

¹⁰One representative of this view is Hartmut Gese, *Lehr und Wirklichkeit in der alten Weisheit. Studien zu den Sprüchen Salomos und zu dem Buche Hiob* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1958), 1-50.

weighs their hearts (Prov. 5:21; 15:3, 11; 16:2; 17:3; 21:2, 12). Not only does Yahweh watch over a person's life but he also will repay men according to what they do (24:12).

There is debate about whether or not Proverbs “promises too much.”¹¹ Some scholars believe Proverbs teaches retribution too neatly without taking into account the complexities of life where things do not always work out the way they are supposed to work out. At times things go well for the wicked and the righteous suffer. Murphy, referring to Job and Ecclesiastes, argues that the sages “ultimately succeeded in breaking through this ‘certain’ and over-confident view of divine retribution.”¹² The argument is that Proverbs is optimistic in its view of retribution while Job and Ecclesiastes provide a realistic corrective. However, van Leeuwen and Waltke provide two very helpful ideas that reveal Solomon does understand how life works in a fallen world. First, van Leeuwen points out that there are “better-than” proverbs that teach there are times on earth when the wicked will prosper while the righteous do not.¹³ For example, Proverbs 16:8 states, “Better is a little with righteousness than much revenue without justice.” There is no naïve optimism here. Secondly, Waltke takes it a step further by arguing that the “promises” of Proverbs can only be rightly understood if there is a blessed future hope. These are not mere probabilities; rather, they are promises that when read in the

¹¹There is discussion on whether or not Proverbs offers promises or merely probabilities. See Waltke's superb discussion “Does Proverbs Promise Too Much?” in which, as will be seen below, he argues that the teachings of Proverbs only make sense if there is a future hope. Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 107-09. Many scholars argue that the proverbs are not promises or absolutes, but rather situational and relative. Collins argues that the Proverbs are “paradigms” not laws and that their truth is conditional and relative, not absolute. John J. Collins, *Encounters with Biblical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 109.

¹²R. Murphy and E. Huwiler, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, NIBC, vol. 12 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 9.

¹³R. C. Van Leeuwen, “Wealth and Poverty: System and Contradiction in Proverbs,” *HS* 33 (1992): 25-36.

context of eternity always come true. The execution of justice will come, indeed must come, but it will come in a realm beyond human experience.¹⁴

Many scholars do see God actively involved in the affairs of men administering justice to the wise and foolish. The question is the nature and timing of this retribution. What is the reward for the wise, and is it future or immediate or both? The promised reward for adhering to the wisdom of Proverbs is “life” and the threat for wicked foolishness is “death” (1:18, 32; 3:2, 16, 18; 4:10; 5:23; 6:23; 7:2, 22-23; 8:35-36; 9:6, 11, 18; 10:2, 16, 21, 27; 11:4). The father reveals that wisdom is a matter of life and death by repeatedly exhorting his son to “keep my commandments and live” (4:4; 7:2). But, to what does the reward “life” refer in Proverbs, and is it connected with a future hope? The next section will examine the three basic answers given to this question in contemporary scholarship.¹⁵

No Future Hope Beyond this Life

First, the predominant opinion is that there is basically no future hope in Proverbs. Those who affirm this position do not think there is a latter reward or hope for being wise that extends beyond the individual’s clinical death, whether that hope is eternal life or something else. There is one possible reward for the wise that could extend beyond clinical death, and that is the reward of posterity. These scholars would be open to using the term “future hope” and by it they would mean that present wisdom can lead

¹⁴Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 107-09. Mark Dever argues similarly that “Individual proverbs are always *ultimately* true.” Mark Dever, *The Message of the Old Testament: Promises Made* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 510.

¹⁵There are no formal phrases that identify each of these positions, so these headings merely describe what different scholars teach.

to a reward (i.e., things going well for you) sometime in the future in this life, or perhaps with children and grandchildren beyond.

Collins says there is “general agreement” that Proverbs does not believe in life after death. In fact, there is no view of life after death in the OT until Daniel in his mind.¹⁶ This view that afterlife teaching is a late development is fairly standard in OT scholarship.¹⁷ Most Proverbs scholars would agree that there is no concept of afterlife in the book, and that it fits in line with the teaching of most of the OT. Instead, the wicked fool and the righteous wise ultimately share the same fate of Sheol after death.

The reason why some Proverbs scholars opt for this interpretation seems to be an assumption that the OT in general does not teach a blessed afterlife rather than individual exegesis of texts within the book. They assume a perceived consensus in OT scholarship that there is no afterlife teaching and Sheol is the unquestioned destiny of both the righteous and the wicked. In regard to the Proverbs, the basic argument from scholars for all of the verses that seem to teach eternal life or a future hope beyond this life is that they do not because they cannot which is a circular position.¹⁸ Most scholars under this heading would argue that the future hope of life after death for the righteous wise is a late development in wisdom literature that does not appear until the *Wisdom of Solomon* and is not accepted in Proverbs.¹⁹ They argue that the teaching found in the

¹⁶Collins, *Seers, Sybils and Sages*, 355.

¹⁷Sutcliffe, *OT and Future Life*, 20.

¹⁸R. N. Whybray, *Proverbs*, NCBC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 234.

¹⁹John J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 178-95. Toy, *Proverbs*, 54.

Wisdom of Solomon, that immortality comes through wisdom, was developed from the qualitative teaching of life in the earlier wisdom writings.²⁰

For these scholars, the reward of “life” in Proverbs is seen as referring to longer life and better life. Life can refer to quality of life and prosperity for the wise, as well as length of life before the grave. Death can also be used in a qualitative sense as a “metaphor” for the things that detract from the life that Yahweh intends his people to live, whereas life is living life to the full.²¹ Not only will walking in the way of wisdom bring prosperity, but it will also help the simpleton avoid an early death and live on into old age. Waltke and Diewert summarize this, “Unstated here is a correlative, common assumption that ‘life’ in this book refers to physical life before the grave, and that ‘death’ refers to a premature physical death.”²² The emphasis is on the quality of life in the here and now that the wise receive as a result of their wisdom and the length of life.

The OT emphasis on this life, as opposed to the next, is obvious. When the sages wrote about the tree of life, or the fountain of life, they envisaged blessings from God such as riches, good health, many years (“gray hair is a crown of glory,” 16:31), a large family, and prestige in the community.²³

Toy argues that the reward for the righteous wise is not life beyond the grave; rather it is simply long life and prosperity (2:21; 3:7-8; 10:27-28; 13:22; 14:32, as opposed to the

²⁰Collins, *Seers, Sybils and Sages*, 364.

²¹See L. R. Bailey, *Biblical Perspectives on Death* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 40-41. See also Suzanne Boorer, “A Matter of Life and Death: A Comparison of Proverbs 1-9 and Job,” in *Prophets and Paradigms: Essays in Honor of Gene M. Tucker*, ed. Stephen Breck Reid, JSOTsup 229 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 188.

²²Waltke and Diewert, “Wisdom Literature,” 314.

²³Murphy and Huwiler, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, 234. This is akin to the “abundant life” spoken of in contemporary evangelicalism.

wicked 10:28; 11:7).²⁴ Scott combines longer life and better life together as the “earthly reward” for the wise when he argues that “Health, wealth, honor, and long life are to be seen as visible evidences of divine approval (22:4). An untimely death, on the other hand, is the reward of wickedness; it is Yahweh’s ‘Day of wrath’ (11:4).”²⁵

Proverbs says that if one finds wisdom “there is a future (אַחֲרָיִת) and your hope (תִּקְוָה) will not be cut off” (24:14). To what do future and hope refer? Those who hold to the position that Proverbs is merely concerned with this life see future and hope referring to the same things as life.

There is here a qualitative element in *'hryt*, ‘good end’...but neither in it nor in the reference to the hope which will not be cut off is there any widening of the horizon beyond death...The thought is that of a fully-rounded, mature life which attains its climax and consummation in well-being and honour, and is not foreshortened by disaster or retribution and denied fruition. The advantages of sin (cf. v.17a), however real they may seem, are in the long run illusory, for only in the fear of Yahweh is life gathered up into a fitting and hopeful fulfillment.²⁶

Fox argues similarly that the “practical and worldly” rewards of wisdom are wealth, protection, life, a future, strength, effectiveness in speech, favor, and joy to one’s parents.²⁷ Fox interprets the rewards of future and hope in Proverbs 24:14 as a “good future in life, and perhaps beyond, in the form of posterity.”²⁸ So, hope and future refer to

²⁴Crawford Toy, *Proverbs*, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1899), 434-35.

²⁵R. B. Y. Scott, *Proverbs Ecclesiastes: Introduction, Translation and Notes*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1965), 25.

²⁶William McKane, *Proverbs: A New Approach*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), 387-88.

²⁷Michael Fox, *Proverbs 10-31: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible, vol. 18b (New Haven: Yale, 2009), 927.

²⁸*Ibid.*

a later time in your clinical life before death, and possibly in Proverbs 23:18, 24:14, and 24:20 to posterity.²⁹

In conclusion, the dominant position of Proverbs' scholarship is that the rewards of wisdom are longer life and a better life, with the possibility of offspring beyond your life. It sees no future hope beyond this life in terms of an afterlife, and it certainly does not argue in any way for a national or monarchical eschatology. Indeed, it sees the wisdom literature as unrelated to the salvation-history of the rest of the OT.

Possible Future Hope in Light of the NT

The first position argues that the OT, for the most part, depicts all people without exception going to Sheol and never returning.³⁰ This raises an important question that Olinger points out, “If everyone ends up dead, what use is there in being wise?”³¹ This question leads to a second position in which some scholars argue that while Proverbs does not explicitly teach a future hope, it does open up possibilities for a future hope in an afterlife, or that Proverbs read in light of the NT may be consistent with a hope in the afterlife. There are some texts where Proverbs appears to suggest the idea that life may mean more than simply living a longer or better life.

Kidner argues for a qualitative interpretation of life and death in Proverbs, but he says there are verses that open up possibilities.³² Kidner believes that in a few places

²⁹The LXX translates אַחֲרָיִת in 23:18 and 24:20 as “posterity,” but Toy thinks this translation is less likely (see discussion in chap 2). Toy, *Proverbs*, 449.

³⁰Sutcliffe, *OT and Future Life*, 49-50.

³¹Danny E. Olinger, “Is Wisdom Literature Eschatological?” *Kerux* 1 (1996): 20.

³²Kidner, *The Proverbs*, 53-56.

“life” means fellowship with God. This is seen in expressions like “tree of life,” “fountain of life,” and “way of life,” which are figures of “God’s source of renewal” and the “blessings of a right relation to God” (e.g., Prov 3:18; 10:17; 11:30; 13:14; 14:27; 15:24). Kidner says this is reinforced by the overtones of the tree and the fountain in Genesis 2 and 3 and later in Ezekiel. Kidner writes, “The Old Testament affirms that what was lost with Paradise and waits to be regained can be enjoyed in some measure here and now when man walks with God.”³³ He argues that the phrase “way of life” is qualitative, referring to one being truly alive. Kidner contends that the phrase “path of life” in Psalm 16:11 is probably seen as eternal life because the context is about the defeat of death, but there is no such context in Proverbs. Christians know of eternal life but it is not mapped out here in Proverbs. Kidner concludes that life after death is beyond the scope of Proverbs, but states there are two sayings that draw attention to a hope that the wicked lose at death and the righteous keep (Prov 11:7 and 14:32). He writes, “Later revelation was to fill in that outline.”³⁴

Longman is one of the main proponents of this view. He sees an argument for future hope in terms of life after death when Proverbs is read in light of Jesus’ death and resurrection. Longman argues that in some contexts the minimalist reading of many scholars that sees life only in a qualitative sense makes the sages seem incredibly naïve. He writes, “What does it mean to promise life to those who are wise and death to those who are foolish when everyone knows that all die?”³⁵ In regard to Proverbs 14:32,

³³Ibid., 54.

³⁴Ibid., 55-56.

³⁵Longman, *Proverbs*, 87.

Longman is not sure if the verse was understood in its ancient context to be teaching life after death, but he does see how one could adopt that conclusion. Longman points out that Van Leeuwen and Murphy favor a textual change in Proverbs 14:32 simply because their theology will not allow Proverbs to teach eternal life. He accuses them of using circular reasoning.³⁶ He also cites passages like Proverbs 12:28, 15:24, and 23:13-14 as possible examples of more being taught than merely long life. When discussing Proverbs 24:20 Longman cautions against using this as an afterlife proof-text but says “it seems banal to the extreme to think that the sages were thinking only of this life.”³⁷ He asserts, “Though we cannot answer this question with regard to the intention of the human composers and ancient speakers of these proverbs, those who read the same texts in the light of the fuller revelation of the NT do so with more confident teaching on the nature of the afterlife.”³⁸ He does not see, however, future hope in a corporate sense or tied to the Kingdom in Proverbs in any way.

Eternal Life

Bruce Waltke does argue for a future hope in Proverbs in terms of eternal life after clinical death for individual wise, righteous persons.³⁹ Waltke makes this argument by first pointing out that there was clearly an Egyptian belief in the afterlife, and Israel

³⁶Ibid., 308. R. Van Leeuwen, “Proverbs,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. L. E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), 144. Murphy, *Proverbs*, 71. Toy also favors emendation for this reason. Toy, *Proverbs*, 300.

³⁷Longman, *Proverbs*, 440.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Interestingly, while von Rad does not argue for an afterlife in the Book of Proverbs, he does argue that life beyond death is the reward in Ps 49, which is a wisdom Psalm. Gerhard von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, trans. James D. Martin (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1972), 204.

borrowed some of its wisdom literature from Egypt. This leads Waltke to conclude, “It would be surprising if ‘life’ meant less with the living God than the Egyptian hope of life with a ‘no god.’”⁴⁰

Next, Waltke challenges whether or not longer life is an adequate translation of some verses in Proverbs by means of inter-canonical interpretation. Waltke points to one of the phrases in Proverbs that is used to argue that life is merely longer clinical life, “length of days and years of life,” which is used to speak of the Suffering Servant’s life after his clinical death in Isaiah 53:10.⁴¹ Part of the issue for those who do not see afterlife taught in Proverbs is that it would mean physical life here on earth after clinical death.⁴² Waltke’s use of Isaiah 53 as a cross-reference shows that this idea, which would mean bodily resurrection from the dead, can be exactly what is in view here in Proverbs.

Finally, Waltke exegetes key passages to make his argument. He argues that righteousness is the path to immortality in Proverbs 12:28. He translates the verse, “In the path of righteousness is life, and the journey of its byway is immortality.” The translation is highly debated for two reasons: (1) לֹא is the negation of verbs not nouns in Hebrew, and (2) scholars object theologically that Proverbs cannot teach immortality. Waltke answers the lexical difficulty in a couple of ways. First, this reading is clearly more difficult to account for than “unto death,” which is the proposed change.⁴³ Many times in

⁴⁰Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 106. See the whole discussion pp. 104-07. While Fox does not agree with Waltke’s contention about eternal life in Proverbs, he does argue that in “Egyptian literature, ‘life’ means both this world and the next.” Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, 130.

⁴¹Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 104.

⁴²Sutcliffe, *OT and Future Life*, 120.

⁴³McKane, *Proverbs*, 451-52. Murphy and Huwiler, *Proverbs*, 63.

text critical problems the more difficult reading, if it is not impossible, is preferred. This reading is not impossible because the construction אֵל-מָוֶת is actually a word in Ugaritic for “immortality.” It is therefore a *hapax legommonon* here.⁴⁴ That leads to the second objection that Proverbs cannot teach immortality. Waltke contends that the tenor of the book has been to argue for eternal life.

Clifford interestingly makes the case that Proverbs 1-9 adapts a Canaanite myth in order to confront it and prove the search for wisdom and life is in the orbit of Israel and her God. The Canaanite myth is the story of Aqht who is deceived by the goddess Anat. Anat prepares a banquet and invites Aqht (cf. Prov 9), and then she offers Aqht eternal life (literally “not-dying” and “everlasting life”), which she has no power to give. Ultimately Aqht makes the unwise decision to unite with the goddess, and this encounter leads to his death. Clifford points out linguistic parallels between Aqht and Proverbs 9. What is most significant for our discussion is that the Aqht narrative uses the phrase that “years” will be added like Proverbs 9:11, but in Aqht it is used to speak of eternal life. The Ugaritic word that Waltke argues for as immortality in Proverbs 12:28 is used here.⁴⁵

Another passage that Waltke depends on is Proverbs 14:32, which he translates, “By his own evil the wicked person is thrown down, but the righteous takes refuge in the Lord in his dying.” Waltke makes the point that Sheol, the place of the dead, is never described as a refuge in the Bible. “Refuge” (חֹסֶה) refers in 34 of its 37

⁴⁴Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 544.

⁴⁵Richard J. Clifford, “Proverbs IX: A Suggested Ugaritic Parallel,” *VT* 25, no. 3 (1975): 298-306.

instances to Yahweh, not including this passage. Thus, this verse seems to teach that the Lord is a refuge for the righteous beyond death. Opponents opt for the textual variation of the LXX (ὁσιότητι) which reads “in his holiness” instead of the MT “in his dying” (בְּמוֹתוֹ). The Syriac version agrees with the Greek that the idea is trusting “in his innocence” rather than a refuge in death. The explanation for how this came about is a possible metathesis (בְּתַמוֹ instead of בְּמוֹתוֹ).⁴⁶ Waltke argues strongly for “in his death” though because it makes better lexical sense of the word “refuge” (חֹסֶה) and exegetical sense. Proverbs never encourages a person to trust in their own piety, but instead in the Lord.⁴⁷ Waltke has persuasively made the case throughout his exegesis that life means more in Proverbs and makes sense here as well.

Waltke argues his case in regard to many passages (cf. 3:1-10, 18). He believes that Proverbs 15:24 promises “everlasting life in relationship with the Lord.”⁴⁸ Waltke ultimately makes the argument that if deliverance from death in Proverbs is only rescue from an untimely or premature death, then life is ultimately “swallowed up” in death, and that contradicts the whole message of Proverbs.⁴⁹ These texts cast serious doubt on the traditional view that no eschatology is presented in Proverbs. Waltke concludes, “In sum, ‘life’ in the majority of Proverbs texts refers to abundant life in fellowship with God, a living relationship that is never envisioned as ending in clinical death in contrast to the

⁴⁶Murphy and Huwiler, *Proverbs*, 73.

⁴⁷Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 582-83.

⁴⁸Ibid., 634.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 106.

wicked's eternal death....If death is the final end of the wicked, we should assume that life is the final end of the righteous."⁵⁰ While Waltke does see a future hope for the wise in regard to eternal life, he does not connect future hope with Israel corporately or the monarchy.

Mathison adopts Waltke's conclusions on Proverbs teaching eternal life. While he argues for some general messianic overtones in that the wisdom of the coming son of David was imperfectly prefigured by the wisdom of the first son of David to sit on Israel's throne, he ultimately concludes that Proverbs is not explicitly eschatological in nature.⁵¹ Proverbs does teach eternal life as a reward for the wise but does not exhibit messianic expectation.

Summary of Research

The focus of future hope arguments in regard to the Proverbs by scholars is almost exclusively in the realm of the individual, even for those who do not believe there is any future hope in Proverbs. The seemingly lone exception is the idea of posterity for the wise. Scholars do not see a royal or messianic future hope being taught in Proverbs. Longman argues against Proverbs raising messianic expectations.

Even within the book of Proverbs wisdom is not restricted to the royal office, so it is too far an extension to argue that the wisdom of Proverbs is a messianic type of wisdom, and in any case the book of Proverbs does not strike an eschatological tone and thus did not raise messianic expectations.⁵²

⁵⁰Ibid., 105. Duane Garrett also argues for life as eternal life. Duane Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, NAC, vol. 14 (Nashville: Broadman, 1993), 82, 134.

⁵¹Keith A. Mathison, *From Age to Age: The Unfolding of Biblical Eschatology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2009), 135-40.

⁵²Longman, "Messiah," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament Wisdom, Poetry & Writings*, 471.

This dissertation will argue that there is a messianic expectation raised by Proverbs, and that wisdom is not individual in the storyline of the OT; rather it is national and monarchical. Wisdom has more to do with effectively ruling a people and establishing a safe and enduring kingdom than it does with getting one's own rewards.

Thesis

This dissertation investigates whether or not there is a theology of future hope in the Book of Proverbs, specifically a royal hope. Is there a future hope connected to the monarchy in Proverbs? Is it consistent with or informed by the future hope of the rest of the OT? Does Proverbs' future hope influence the future hope found in the rest of the OT? This dissertation argues that there is a future hope in the Book of Proverbs for a wise king who establishes an eternal kingdom. Proverbs functions to explain how King Solomon trains the Davidic prince to be the ideal king who through wisdom – living life under the covenant – establishes an eternal, righteous kingdom in the land. The failure of Solomon's sons (the Judean monarchy) to fulfill the wisdom of Proverbs contributes to the future hope of Israel for a wise son of David who fulfills this picture and ushers in this promised kingdom.

A factor that influences interpretations that downplay any messianic future hope in the Proverbs is that Proverbs is often read without attention to its canonical context as if it were independent from the rest of the OT.⁵³ It is read as merely a piece of wisdom literature closer in affinity to other ANE wisdom texts than to the OT because it lacks the salvation-historical aspects contained in the Law, the Psalms, and the

⁵³Gese, *Lehre und Wirklichkeit*, 2. He calls Wisdom Literature a “foreign body” to the Israelite canon.

Prophets.⁵⁴ Collins points this out as well when he argues that the wisdom literature is treated differently in interpretation because of either its foreign origin (H.D. Preuss) or its failure to mention salvation-historical acts done by God (G.E Wright).⁵⁵ Collins contends that the wisdom tradition in the OT is a “self-contained body of literature that is independent of the traditions of Israel’s history.”⁵⁶ Clifford argues similarly.

Few of the books except the latest wisdom books, Sirach 44-50 and the Book of Wisdom 10-19, say anything about the history of Israel, its major institutions of covenant and kingship, and its great personalities, such as Abraham and Sarah, Moses, and David. . . . Righteousness in the books is not linked to observance of the law and covenant or to performance of rituals as it is elsewhere in the Bible.⁵⁷

Most of the confusion in wisdom studies stems from a failure to recognize that wisdom literature is at home in the OT and should be read that way.⁵⁸ This kind of

⁵⁴The publication of Budge’s *The Teaching of Amenemope* and Fichtner’s work comparing Israel’s wisdom literature with other wisdom writings in the ancient Near East led scholarship to connect Israel’s wisdom with the wisdom of the ANE. E. A. W. Budge, “The Precepts of Life by Amen-em-Apt, the Son of Ka-nekht,” in *Recueil d’études égyptologiques dédiées à la mémoire de Jean-François Champollion* (Paris: Ancienne Librairie Honoré Champion, 1922), 431-46. J. Fichtner, *Die altorientalische Weisheit in ihrer israelitisch-judischen Ausprägung*, BZAW 62 (Giessen: Topelmann, 1933). Murphy speaks of the lack of salvation-historical references in the book. Roland Murphy, *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 1. The affinity with ANE wisdom and the lack of salvation-historical references in the book are the reasons why scholars approach it as different from the rest of the OT.

⁵⁵Collins, *Encounters*, 105. H. D. Preuss, “Das Gottesbild der älteren Weisheit Israels,” in *Studies in the Religion of Ancient Israel*, VTSup 23 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), 117-45; G. E. Wright, *God Who Acts: Biblical Theology as Recital*, SBT 1, no. 8 (London: SCM, 1952). It is astounding that scholars do not deal with the fact that other ANE texts do teach a future hope of eternal life, and even talk of a final judgment for the deceased. See item 639 in James B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 210 and 326.

⁵⁶Collins, *Encounters*, 106.

⁵⁷Richard J. Clifford, “Introduction to Wisdom Literature,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. L. E. Keck, vol. 5 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), 2.

⁵⁸Waltke makes the case for a covenantal connection in Proverbs, though he wants to distinguish wisdom and law. He believes that it is plausible that the Prophets and the Sages drank from the Mosaic covenant. He writes, “The close affinity between Proverbs and Deuteronomy finds a plausible explanation in the Law’s injunction that the king ‘write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law’ (Deut. 17:18).” Waltke, “The Book of Proverbs and OT Theology,” *BS* 136 (October-December 1979): 316-17. He also argues that Proverbs presents covenant obligations for the son and covenant rewards from Yahweh. Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 240. Plus, affinity with other ANE texts is true with much of the OT. Mendenhall

analysis fails to see that the whole book of Proverbs is introduced and meant to be read under the phrase “The Proverbs of Solomon, Son of David, King of Israel” (1:1). It is meant to be read in light of the monarchy. Reading Proverbs in isolation from the rest of the OT significantly colors how one understands the text.⁵⁹

Indeed, this isolation of wisdom from the rest of the OT has been a constant problem in the study of OT theology.⁶⁰ Garrett claims that OT theologians have struggled to integrate wisdom literature into the rest of the OT, mainly because of its lack of covenantal themes.⁶¹ Hamilton contends that this is “largely because books such as Proverbs are not usually interpreted with primary reference to their canonical context.”⁶² These books have been included in the canon, and are meant to be read as part of its story.

One result of isolating the book of Proverbs from its setting in the OT is a failure to grasp its theology of future hope and its contribution to the future hope of Israel in the OT. When Proverbs is read in its canonical context there is a future hope portrait that emerges for a wise, covenant-keeping king who establishes a righteous and stable dynasty in the land that lasts forever. The failure of Solomon’s sons (the Judean

demonstrated this in his landmark study on the covenant. G. E. Mendenhall, “Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition,” *BA* 17 (1954): 50-76. The difference of the Proverbs with the rest of the OT has been grossly overstated as the rest of this dissertation shows.

⁵⁹Murphy says that the neighboring cultures influence on Proverbs has been exaggerated and has led “to the neglect of sober analysis of what the biblical wisdom books intend to say.” Roland Murphy, *Proverbs*, WBC, vol. 22 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), xxvii.

⁶⁰Gerhard Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 139-72.

⁶¹Garrett, *Proverbs*, 55.

⁶²James M. Hamilton Jr., *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 272.

monarchy) to fulfill this wisdom also contributes to the future hope of Israel for a wise Son of David who is yet to come and who will usher in the promised kingdom.

The OT links the book of Proverbs with Solomonic wisdom (Prov 1:1), so it is intended to be read in the context of the Solomonic narrative. Solomon understands that wisdom is needed for a king to rule his people and establish a kingdom that endures (cf. 1 Kgs 3; Prov 8:15). Solomon's purpose in Proverbs is to train his son in wisdom, and the wise life is the life that obeys the Law of Moses. Hamilton makes the case that the "book of Proverbs results from Solomon's obedience to Deuteronomy 6, filtered through his obedience to Deuteronomy 17, as he creatively teaches the Torah to his son."⁶³ The purpose for training his son in wisdom is so that his son can be the ideal king who establishes a wise, righteous and enduring kingdom. He trains him negatively by warning him that wicked folly will lead to nothing short of exile and the collapse of the kingdom (cf. Prov 2:12-22; 29:4), but he also trains him positively by holding out to his son the good outcome of wisdom, which includes an enduring kingdom (cf. 29:14).⁶⁴

This picture painted by the book of Proverbs is consistent with the portrait of Israel's future hope in the rest of the OT (i.e., the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings). Future hope in the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings focuses on such themes as kingly dominion, obedience to the Law written on the heart, and a worldwide, enduring

⁶³Ibid., 290. Again, Hamilton maintains that scholarship does not see connections like this: "Most interpretations of Proverbs do not read Deuteronomy 6 and 17 as the impetus for Proverbs as I am here. It seems to me that the dichotomizing tendency of critical scholarship works like a reverse magnetic force, preventing these kinds of connections, while the broader context of ancient Near Eastern parallels can easily distract interpreters from the nearer context of the Old Testament canon." The author has been helped by Hamilton's work but arrived at this conclusion independently in a 2007 paper entitled, "The Pentateuch and the Proverbs," presented in a doctoral seminar.

⁶⁴It seems that Solomon knew the monarchy would fail and exile would become a reality. However, he also hoped that once Israel turned back toward the temple and toward the Lord in prayer, the Lord would return them to the land and pour out his blessings (1Kgs 8:22-53 cf. Deut 4 and 30).

kingdom. In fact, Israel's messianic expectation for a wise and righteous ruler is described in the language of Proverbs (cf. Isa 11).

Israel's future hope is for a king who lives up to the wisdom of the Proverbs and through wisdom establishes an eternal kingdom. Primarily because of the idolatry of Solomon and the Davidic heirs, they consistently fail to live up to the wisdom presented in Proverbs which leads to the downfall of the kingdom in exile. Yet, this does not destroy Israel's hope for the future but instead bolsters it. Hamilton writes, "The discrepancy between the ideal picture in Proverbs and the accounts of Solomon's life and the behavior of his sons in Kings provokes hope for an anointed king of Israel who will live out the wisdom Solomon articulated."⁶⁵ Those who read Proverbs after the fall of the monarchy long for the day when one greater than Solomon will come to fulfill the wisdom of Proverbs and realize the potential future described in the book.⁶⁶

The treatment of this dissertation will be distinct from other approaches to future hope in Proverbs because, instead of an emphasis on the individual, it sees a corporate, kingdom aspect to the future hope of Proverbs, which has not been widely argued for in regard to Proverbs.⁶⁷

⁶⁵Hamilton, *God's Glory*, 291.

⁶⁶Scholars who have made the case for pieces of this overall framework are the following. Stephen Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of Hebrew Bible*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 15, ed. D. A. Carson (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2003), 202-07. Hamilton, *God's Glory*. Leonidas Kalugila, *The Wise King: Studies in Royal Wisdom as Divine Revelation in the Old Testament and Its Environment* (Lund: Gleerup, 1980). Kim Ian Parker, *Wisdom and Law in the Reign of Solomon* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1992).

⁶⁷Laato does connect wisdom with royal ideology as a development in post-exilic Judaism. He argues that personified Wisdom was an idea that developed in post-exilic Judaism, was modeled on royal ideology, and transformed that ideology into a transcendental eschatological expectation of a pre-existent divine figure. Antti Laato, *A Star is Rising: The Historical Development of the Old Testament Royal Ideology and the Rise of the Jewish Messianic Expectations* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 248-55. Perrin argues for a Messianic expectation in Ecclesiastes. N. Perrin, "Messianism in the Narrative Frame of Ecclesiastes?" *Revue Biblique* 108 (2001): 37-60.

Methodology

This dissertation is a biblical-theological analysis of the possible theme of future hope in Proverbs. The investigation will begin by exegeting the chief texts debated on the issue of future hope (2:1-22; 24:13-20; 29:14), and this exegesis will examine whether or not a theology of future hope emerges in the book. Proverbs is intentionally placed within a context, both canonically and in terms of the presented storyline of the OT. After exegeting Proverbs this dissertation will place the book in its canonical setting and allow it to converse with the Writings, the Law, and the Prophets to see whether or not its conception of future hope is consistent with that of the rest of the OT, or if the OT canon's view of future hope helps explain the message of Proverbs.⁶⁸ The conclusion will synthesize the data and consider what contribution the book of Proverbs makes to the idea of Israel's future hope. The conclusion will also conduct a Christian reading of the OT from the perspective of the NT. The NT authors do not impose on the OT something that is not there, but rather they clarify and magnify what can be seen in the OT texts themselves. This is true for the future hope of Proverbs as well.

⁶⁸The phrase "canonical setting" means the whole OT. Proverbs will be read as commentary on the mega storyline of God's covenant and dealings with ancient Israel as presented in the OT. This is similar to the approach of Dempster. Dempster writes, "The Latter prophets provide commentary on the grand narrative from creation to exile.... The first half of the Writings continues this commentary, before the narrative resumes with the book of Daniel." He states this is the specific purpose of Proverbs as well. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 191-207. Hamilton also argues for a similar approach to biblical analysis when he writes, "I am going to deal with the canonical form of the OT text, and I am going to study the texts on the basis of the story that the text tells." James Hamilton, "The Skull Crushing Seed of the Woman: Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Genesis 3:15," *SBJT* 10, no. 2 (2006): 30-54. See also the treatment by Garrett, *Proverbs*, 54-55. The dissertation will deal with the OT on its own terms, interacting with the storyline it presents. It will only address background issues of authorship and dating that have direct impact on the thesis.

CHAPTER 2

THE FUTURE HOPE OF PROVERBS

As the first chapter showed, the history of scholarship is skeptical of the idea of a future hope or eschatology in the book of Proverbs. What is agreed among scholars is that there are rewards for wisdom and negative consequences for folly. The question revolves around when these rewards or consequences are received, in the here-and-now or some future time. Scholars agree that some rewards are future, but not beyond physical death.¹

The wisdom of Proverbs is inherently future oriented. Solomon's teaching method is to motivate the young man to pursue wisdom in the present precisely because there are future consequences for present wisdom or foolishness. The so-called "instructions" so prevalent in Proverbs 1-9 are given in a form of teaching and motivation. The motivation is future-oriented, describing what will happen to a person if he does or does not do what the teacher is calling him to do.² Proverbial sentences are frequently conditional statements, and conditional statements denote a future orientation. If one does "this" (*protasis*) in the present, "then" (*apodosis*) here is what will happen in

¹Waltke refers to this as "clinical life." Bruce Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs 1-15*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 104.

²Roland Murphy, *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 160-61.

the future.³ Now, the question that remains is how distant the future is. Is it a distant, eschatological future or just a present result of making these kinds of decisions?

A survey of Proverbs reveals that there are rewards promised for the wise. Some of these rewards are received quickly, almost naturally upon walking in wisdom. However, the survey will also reveal that there are some rewards that are not received immediately but are future, and some are not experienced until a distant future. Some are experienced in the present and continue into the distant future or eternity. Some are experienced personally, while others are experienced corporately.

This survey takes a two-tiered approach. First, there are the “rewards of wisdom” found in Proverbs as a whole.⁴ These are given in Table A1.⁵ Some of the key reward themes that emerge are: life versus death (8:35-36), wisdom (2:5), *shalom* versus calamity (1:32-33), material and social blessings (10:4-5), punishment and recompense (16:5; 24:11-12), hope (23:17-18), ruling authority (12:24), posterity (13:22), dwelling in the land (2:21-22), and a perpetual kingdom (29:14).

Second, this section examines if any of these rewards can be characterized as a future hope. Examining the previous survey on the “rewards of wisdom” reveals there are some “promises” that are different in nature from the rest and seem to open up the possibility for a future hope. There are promises for individuals that seem to extend

³For a discussion of conditional sentences, see A. E. Cowley, ed., *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, 2nd Eng. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910), §159. See also Paul Joüon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, trans. T. Muraoka, vol. 2 (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 2000), §167.

⁴Michael Fox provides a similar listing for chaps. 10-31 as this survey. Michael Fox, *Proverbs 10-31: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible, vol. 18b (New Haven: Yale, 2009), 927. Waltke touches on this too with “The Wise and Their Rewards: Life” and “Does Proverbs Promise too much?” in Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 104-09.

⁵The themes listed in the table are representative of the rewards promised through wisdom, but are not necessarily exhaustive. See Appendix 1.

beyond “clinical death.”⁶ Also, there are promises that are given to the kingdom (monarch), the nation, or a city that are corporate in nature instead of individual. The enduring and future stability of the nation in the land is dependent upon wisdom and righteousness, and these promises also are given to the king as the representative of the nation. His throne depends on whether or not he is wise.⁷

This second survey reveals these future hope themes that outlast clinical death or are corporate in nature:⁸ memory (10:7),⁹ posterity (17:6),¹⁰ eternal life (12:28; 14:32),¹¹ hope and future (24:14; 24:19-20), enduring kingdom (28:2, 16; 29:4, 14),¹² and inheriting the land (2:21-22; 10:30; 12:3; 12:7).¹³

⁶Waltke writes, “At issue is whether ‘life’ refers to eternal life or temporal life terminating finally in clinical death. To put it another way, is the threatened death of the wicked in Proverbs an eternal death or a premature death?” The phrase “clinical death” from Waltke contrasts with most scholars who see the rewards of wisdom, with exceptions of reputation and posterity, as terminating at physical death. Thus, looking at promises that seem to outlast clinical death is a helpful criterion for distinguishing between rewards for wisdom in the present and a deferred future hope. See Waltke’s discussion, *Proverbs 1-15*, 104-09.

⁷If a king did not uphold justice, then it would “bring Yahweh’s punishment down upon the king and the whole of his empire.” Leonidas Kalugila, *The Wise King: Studies in Royal Wisdom as Divine Revelation in the Old Testament and Its Environment* (Lund: Gleerup, 1980), 83-84.

⁸See Appendix 2 for a table containing these themes and texts.

⁹This is an example of a future hope that most scholars would see. William McKane, *Proverbs: A New Approach*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), 422-23.

¹⁰This is another example of a future hope that scholars would accept. Some scholars would put Prov 23:18 and 24:20 under this heading because the LXX translates “future” as “offspring” (see exegesis below). Fox, *Proverbs 10-31*, 735, 749, and 927. Under this heading there are also verses for one’s lamp being “put out” (see exegesis below).

¹¹Waltke persuasively make this argument in *Proverbs 1-15*, 104-09.

¹²Some of these are corporate referring to the people or city, and others refer to the king and how his conduct will determine the longevity of his dynasty.

¹³Many of these would be contested by other scholars. This chapter deals with their objections by examining representative texts from a few of the categories.

Three representative texts from Table A2 will be dealt with at the exegetical level to see the validity of deeming them future hope. The scope of this dissertation is narrowed to focus on a corporate, royal future hope. Therefore, texts that deal only with hope for an individual will be excluded from the examination. Waltke has argued extensively for eternal life as a reward for the wise and has presented a convincing case, so there is no need to duplicate his work. Plus, that category deals with individual future hope.¹⁴ This analysis will focus on the categories and texts that are most debated in this discussion. The three representative texts that will be examined in their immediate and canonical contexts are 2:1-22 (land versus exile), 24:13-20 (hope and future), and 29:14 (a perpetual kingdom/dynasty). The conclusion will synthesize the data to see if Proverbs argues for a future hope.

Proverbs 2:1-22

Flow of the Passage

The passage in question is Proverbs 2:1-22, but the focus will be on the concluding summation in 2:20-22. In order to rightly interpret the concluding verses a brief walk through the text is in order.¹⁵

Solomon, the sage according to Proverbs 1:1, instructs his son with conditional clauses, motivating the son to embrace the father's teachings. If the son will

¹⁴The hope for eternal life beyond the grave and the corporate hope for an enduring Davidic dynasty laid out in Proverbs come together in the life of the Greater Solomon, Jesus of Nazareth. For the promise of 2 Sam 7 to come true there either had to be an eternal succession or an eternal son, and these come together on Resurrection Sunday (cf. Rom 1:4).

¹⁵See Murphy for a good discussion of the unity of this passage and the features of Hebrew poetry. R. Murphy and E. Huwiler, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, NIBC, vol. 12 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 20.

receive and internalize his father's wise commandments, then he will receive wisdom (2:1, 5-6). This is a treasure hunt the son must commit himself to in order to receive knowledge, and this commitment must take place at the heart level (2:2). The apodosis in 2:5 gives the future result if the son meets this condition.¹⁶ If he commits to the father's teaching, then he will understand the fear of Yahweh (2:5), which is the key that unlocks wisdom according to the book (1:7). The fear of Yahweh is the key to wisdom because wisdom comes from his mouth (2:6).¹⁷ If he commits to wisdom, then not only will Yahweh give him wisdom but he will give him safe passage in all his paths and watch over his way (2:8).¹⁸ Another apodosis starts in 2:9 saying that those who commit and seek wisdom will then understand righteousness (צְדָקָה) and justice (מִשְׁפָּט) and uprightness (מִישָׁרִים). This is the same trio of synonyms for wisdom as in the Prologue (1:3). The purpose of the book is for Solomon to impart instruction in these matters to the reader, and in 2:9 it is a promise to the reader that if he will commit to the teachings of the book then he will gain these moral qualities. There is a cyclical nature to wisdom, where if one internalizes it (2:1), then it will enter his heart (2:10), and it will guard him (2:11).

¹⁶Gesenius argues that this type of conditional clause is used when the condition is regarded as possibly (or probably) occurring in the present or future. *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, §159l.

¹⁷Is this verse implying that the father's wise words are also Yahweh's wise words? Yahweh mediates his wisdom through the human king to the crown prince and the nation.

¹⁸The OT says a lot about Yahweh watching over the way of his "godly ones" (חֲסִיד): 1 Sam 2:9; Pss 37:28; 97:10. David is confident that Yahweh will not allow his חֲסִיד to see corruption (reference to Jesus' resurrection in Ps 16:10; cf. Acts 2:25-32).

From what will Yahweh and wisdom shield the son? Committing to the wisdom of the sage will lead to deliverance from two dangers: (1) the path of evil (2:12-15)¹⁹ and (2) the strange woman (2:16-19) which lead to destruction.

The transition is in 2:12 where the sage says his wisdom will deliver the son from the way of evil. The path of evil is described as the man who speaks perversely. The worthless person of Proverbs 6:12-15 is described as having perversity in his heart and continually devising evil and sowing discord (6:14; cf. 16:28). The father's wisdom, Yahweh's protection, will deliver the son from these people who leave the right path for the way of darkness.²⁰ The path of darkness is a path of delighting in wickedness, instead of rejoicing and walking in the straight paths (2:14-15).

The second deliverance for the son is from the "strange woman" (2:16). This is the reader's first introduction to a character who will figure prominently in the book. This woman is Solomon's competitor for the young man's attention because her smooth words (2:16) rival the father's words (2:1; Yahweh's words 2:6). Who is she? There are a lot of theories given.²¹ Older theories focused on a cultic interpretation that argued she was a fertility goddess, but that has been rejected by many who see her simply as an adulteress. Even those who argue for adulteress believe cultic elements have been used to add to her

¹⁹Waltke terms it deliverance from the "Wicked Man." Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 228.

²⁰Waltke likens this to abandoning the covenant, which is interesting given the fact that he argues against the land of Israel being in view in 2:21-22 (see below). Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 229.

²¹Read Yee for an excellent discussion of her function in Proverbs. Gale Yee, "'I Have Perfumed My Bed with Myrrh': The Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9," *JSOT* 43 (1989): 53-68. Yee points out that she is the counterpart to Woman Wisdom vying for the affection of the simple. Yee believes she is an adulterous wife. However, Yee seems to be open to more in her interpretation of this woman because she writes that she is a personification in woman's form of "all that is evil and destructive" (66).

appeal, and the personification of Ladies Wisdom and Folly use cultic language.²² Others argue that she is a prostitute.²³

She is called a “stranger” (זָרָה) and a “foreigner” (נְכַרִּי). This woman is the subject of the father’s warnings many times in Proverbs 1-9 and the rest of the book (2:16-19; 5:1-23; 6:24-35; 7:1-27; 22:14; 23:27; 27:13). She refers to a literal person with whom the son can commit adultery, but she also is personified in Proverbs 9:13-18 as Woman Folly, the rival to Woman Wisdom (Prov 1:20-33; 8:1-36), who can destroy the son.²⁴ The immoral woman and Woman Folly are given the same description. These are women who use flattering words to lure their prey. The immoral woman’s lips drip honey (5:3). She lures the son in with enticing words (7:14-21). The same is true of Woman Folly (9:13, 15-17). Embracing the immoral woman or Woman Folly results in going to the place of the dead/the shades (רְפָאִים 2:18; 9:18). It also means going to שְׂאוֹל (7:27; 9:18).²⁵ Hence, embracing the immoral woman reveals that the young man has rejected the father’s teachings and Woman Wisdom (ultimately Yahweh himself) for Woman Folly.

The cultic interpretation laid out by Longman is very helpful. Longman argues that Woman Wisdom is Yahweh and Woman Folly is Baal/idols. His argument is based

²²See the discussion in James Crenshaw, “The Wisdom Literature,” in *The Hebrew Bible and Its Modern Interpreters*, ed. Douglas A. Knight and Gene M. Tucker (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 369-77.

²³Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 119-25.

²⁴The figures of Woman Wisdom and Woman Folly can also be referred to as Lady or Dame by scholars.

²⁵Yee makes a strong case for identifying the Foreign Woman with Woman Folly, “I Have Perfumed My Bed,” 53-68.

on their houses in Proverbs 9 which are at the highest point of the city, and that is where temples were placed in the ANE.²⁶ The reason why cultic interpretations have been so influential is because physical adultery and spiritual idolatry are intimately related in the OT. Waltke argues that this prostitute is paradigmatic for spiritual infidelity to Yahweh.²⁷

The warning is clearly against physical adultery in this passage, but the adultery and idolatry themes are right at home when one considers who is writing this passage. It is quite astounding that most scholars ignore the Solomonic connection with this passage. This woman has striking similarities to the “foreign” (נְכַרִּי) women who destroyed Solomon’s reign, indeed, the same word refers to both of them (cf. Prov 2:16; 1 Kgs 11:1, 8). Solomon’s kingdom ultimately crumbles, and is torn from his son,²⁸ because Solomon falls for foreign women, who then drag his heart after idols (1 Kgs 11:1-13).²⁹ It is possible that Solomon understands through his own experience how sexual sin leads to spiritual unfaithfulness to the Lord and his covenant, so he is constantly warning his son with the intent that his heart not be pulled away from Yahweh

²⁶Tremper Longman III, *Proverbs*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 58-61. This view differs some from Boström’s work on the cultic interpretation of Woman Wisdom and Woman Folly. He argues that Woman Folly symbolized foreign prostitutes who represented the goddess Ishtar-Astarte. These foreign women seduced Israelite young men into acts of adultery and idolatry. Woman Wisdom was the alternative that the young men were to embrace. G. Boström, *Proverbiastudien: Die Weisheit und die fremde Weib in Spr. 1-9* (Lund: Gleerup, 1935).

²⁷Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 125.

²⁸Historically, this comes to fruition when Rehoboam loses the northern tribes due to taxation (1 Kgs 12).

²⁹J. K. Wiles argues that the woman in Prov 2 is an unfaithful foreign woman married to an Israelite. J. K. Wiles, “The ‘Enemy’ in Israelite Wisdom Literature” (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1982), 50. Guttman argues that a “foreigner” is one who retains his political and social connections with his home country instead of severing those connections. M. Guttman, “The Term ‘Foreigner’ (*nkry*) Historically Considered,” *HUCA* 3 (1926): 1. If these works are correct, then the woman of Prov 2 might very well be connected with Solomon’s wives in 1 Kgs 11.

and his kingdom will be established. Wisdom is meant to lead the son away from this woman who will ultimately destroy him.

This leads to the concluding summary that gives the reward for keeping to the path of righteousness and the curse for following the path of evil.³⁰ What are they? The son is to commit to the father's wisdom so he can walk the righteous paths and avoid the evil man or woman who will direct him to darkness and death, because the upright will dwell in the land and the blameless will remain in it (2:20-21). On the other hand, the wicked will be cut off and plucked up from the land (2:22). At face value this would seem to say that wise righteousness leads to remaining in the land of promise whereas wicked foolishness will lead to exile.

Interaction with Scholarship

There are basically three interpretations given for the concluding summary of Proverbs 2. First, these verses refer to the righteous wise dwelling in the land of Israel while the wicked fools are exiled.³¹ Second, the reference to the land is a metonymy for life and death as taught elsewhere in Proverbs. Most scholars do not read these verses as referring to keeping the land. Instead, they argue that the reference to dwelling is a metaphor for a good quality of life and a longer life for the wise person versus a premature death for the fool. This is the same thing argued for life everywhere else in Proverbs. For example, Murphy writes, "The 'land' is a new metaphor to express the security of the wise, but it picks up a theme strongly entrenched in biblical teaching; e.g.,

³⁰The concluding summary is marked by a *lāmed* preposition. Murphy and Huwiler, *Proverbs*, 21.

³¹Duane Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, NAC, vol. 14 (Nashville: Broadman, 1993), 77.

Deut 28:1-14; Ps 37. The fate of the wicked continues the metaphor; they shall be cut off from the land.”³² While Murphy recognizes the similarity of the theme, he argues that it means something different in Proverbs. Third, there is the possibility that both interpretations are in view because life and land are intimately connected in the OT.³³

At face value, Proverbs 2:21-22 would seem to be referring to the loss or retention of the land. Solomon urges his son to keep to the path of the righteous because the upright will dwell in the land (יִשְׁכְּנוּ אֶרֶץ) and remain in it (יִתְּרוּ בָהּ). The reward for those on the righteous path is dwelling in the land, but the punishment for the wicked is being “cut off” (יִכָּרְחוּ) from the land and “uprooted” (יִסָּחֵף) from it (2:22). The word נָסַח is used only 4 times in the OT (Deut 28:63; Ps 52:7; Prov 2:22; 15:25). The first occurrence of the word is in the cursing passage of Deuteronomy 28:63 and refers to exile, “You will be pulled up from the ground you go to possess.” נָסַח is used again in Proverbs, and it refers to land as well (Prov 15:25). There are several scholars who agree with the land interpretation.

It is notable that Proverbs here threatens the loss of the land, presumably the land of Israel, for the land is not a major part of the explicit theology of the book (though see also 10:30)...these verses sound a lot like the covenant blessings and curses described in passages such as Deut. 27-28.³⁴

³²Roland Murphy, *Proverbs*, WBC, vol. 22 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 17. So also Michael Fox, *Proverbs 1-9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible, vol. 18A (New Haven: Yale University Press), 123.

³³Toy does not argue for both views, but he does contend for the close connection between the land and sustenance. To be outside of the land is to be cut off from the blessing of God. Crawford Toy, *Proverbs*, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1899), 52-53.

³⁴Longman, *Proverbs*, 125. See also Graeme Goldsworthy, *The Tree of Life* (Sydney: Aio, 1993), 55. McKane, *Proverbs*, 288.

However, some scholars disagree with the land interpretation because Proverbs is wisdom literature. Waltke discusses the reference to the land in 2:21-22.

Were this the law and the prophets, it would undoubtedly refer to the Lord's land grants to his covenant people in Canaan. But in the wisdom literature, which treats humanity apart from Israel's historic covenant, [אֲרָצָה] more likely refers to the ground in general with its fatness (Gen. 27:28), increase (Lev. 26:4, 20), and fruit (Num. 13:20); as such it is a metonymy for life.³⁵

What is interesting is that two of the three texts Waltke appeals to for his argument are covenantal passages talking about the land of Promise. Throughout the OT Israel's life is tied to the land. Toy favors the metaphor argument, but believes it grew out of the historical land blessing. He argues that Israel, along with other ancient peoples, believed that gods and men were attached to the soil. The god would protect his land, and his people would enjoy the benefits of this protection.

To leave the land was to lose one's connection with its deity (1 Sam. 26:19; 2 Kings 5:17) and to give up the rewards which his favor promised.... Thus the expression *dwell in the land* (Psa. 37:3, 11, 29; cf. Mt. 5:5) came to be equivalent to *enjoy the divine favor and all the blessings of life* , and such is its sense here.³⁶

Toy's argument is helpful because life and dwelling go together in the OT, as well as death and exile. This is true in the beginning when Adam and Eve's "death" is presented as losing access to God in the garden (Gen 3:24), and it is true for Israel as well where her exile is described as a graveyard (Ezek 37). Since life and land are so intimately connected, it does not make sense to make a dichotomy here between life and land when

³⁵Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 234. Fox takes the same view as Waltke, and he asserts that the issue is whether or not the wisdom literature deals with the traditions of Israel or the "particular beliefs of Yahwism." Fox, *Proverbs 1-9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible, vol. 18A (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 123.

³⁶Toy, *Proverbs*, 52.

they are tied together.³⁷ Israel would enjoy no blessing, life, or fatness outside of the covenant Land of Promise. The main reason scholars reject covenantal interpretations of these verses is that most of them interpret Proverbs as disconnected from the salvation-historical focus of the rest of the OT. Toy argues in reference to Proverbs 2, that while the wicked in the prophetic and historical books refers to those who violate the moral law, in Proverbs wicked is much more general and refers to any nation who does not do what is right.³⁸ This dichotomizing is puzzling given the fact that Proverbs is a book accepted in the Hebrew canon and was therefore placed in that canon by editors who recognized its place within the faith of Israel, and it must be interpreted in that way (see below).³⁹

Another reason for rejecting these verses as a reference to the land of Israel is that given by Fox. He claims that these verses are part of a certain *topos* that is found in other texts, specifically Psalm 37 (37:9, 11, 22, 28, 29, 34 and 38), and the *topos* always refers to individual life and death.⁴⁰ These verses basically say that the wicked will be cut off from the אֶרֶץ but the righteous/meek will inherit/dwell in the land (cf. Matt 5:5).⁴¹

³⁷See the discussion by Wright on the connection of death and exile, and how intimately intertwined they are. N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God, vol. 3 (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 119-24.

³⁸Toy, *Proverbs*, 53.

³⁹James Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 272.

⁴⁰Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, 123.

⁴¹Jesus does say in Matt 5:5 that the meek will inherit the earth, but given the scope of the entire biblical witness it at least seems to mean more than simply eternal life. In fact, the inheritance spoken of for God's people is an inheritance of land like his people in the OT. This inheritance will not be Canaan alone, but will be the entire cosmos (cf. Rom 4:13; Rom 8; Rev 21). Waltke and Fox's view is not without merit, but the OT and NT do not describe the eschatological hope of the believer as eternal life without

Fox admits that Deuteronomy promises possessing the land if Israel is obedient and exile if they are disobedient, but he does not believe that is the case here, and his main contention is that this *topos* refers to individuals whereas the exile refers to a nation.

Fox's argument is weakened in four ways. First, he admits that the *topos* does include national possession of the land in Isaiah 60:21, though he says, "the sense of long lifespans is possible" and one should not "retroject" eschatological occurrences on earlier ones.⁴² The admission that the *topos* does not always hold and can refer to national life in the land weakens Fox's argument, and it appears as though his explanations of "long lifespans" and "retrojection" are cases where he tries to mold the exegesis to fit his system.

Second, Fox also wavers on his view slightly in regard to one of the promises in Psalm 37. One of the interpretations he gives as a possibility for Proverbs 2:21-22 is that the promise of retaining the land refers to a righteous family passing their land portion down to their offspring. He rejects this option for Proverbs 2, but he admits that it is in view in Psalm 37 (cf. 37:18), and in so doing modifies his *topos* slightly to the righteous man's descendants living on after him and continuing his line.⁴³

Third, the largest challenge for Fox, and others who share his view, is that in Psalm 37, Proverbs 2, and other places where this *topos* is used the text says that the inheritance is the יְרֵכָה not continued life. These scholars need to answer the question of

connecting it to land, the new creation. See the discussion in Andrew Steinmann, *Proverbs*, Concordia Commentary (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2009), 104-05.

⁴²Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, 128. Again, there does not have to be a dichotomy between life and the land.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 123-24.

why the sage chose to refer to the land when phrases for talking about the continuation of life are frequent in Proverbs (3:2, 16), as well as verses on sustenance (3:10).

Fourth, there is a way to connect this *topos*' emphasis on the individual with the collective emphasis of most of the OT. Waltke quotes Mays on the verb in 2:22 to "cut off" (כרת).

Mays suggests that the verb "cut off" (*kārat*) is colored by the purifying laws of excommunication in Israel (e.g., Lev. 17:10; 19:19; 20:3, 5, 6, 18), a sacred measure designed not only as a judgment on a person but to preserve the corporate people in the face of the Lord's wrath against the unholy.⁴⁴

This raises the question, what would this preservation be? Leviticus 20:22 tells the Israelite that the reason they should avoid these defiling practices is so that the "land will not vomit you out." Transgressing individuals should be cut off because if they are not dealt with then the nation will lose the land.⁴⁵

Land

Scripture interprets scripture. This text must be examined in its immediate context, then the context of Proverbs as a whole, and finally in the context of the whole canon. Analyzing the passage in that light will yield several reasons for seeing these verses as promising and threatening the same things promised and threatened throughout the OT, namely that heeding Torah will lead to remaining in the land while violating it will lead to exile.

⁴⁴Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 235.

⁴⁵The reward/punishment of parts of the nation and not the whole is not a foreign concept to the OT. In Jer 24 those in exile will be brought back but those who remain in the land will go into exile and be destroyed. There is also the idea of the remnant. Indeed, McKane argues for the land being in view in Prov 2, and he says the nation of Israel has been divided into the righteous and the wicked. McKane, *Proverbs*, 288.

The immediate context. The interpretation that wisdom and folly are directly tied to Israel (the king) remaining in or losing the land seems to make the best sense in the immediate context of Proverbs 1-3. There is interplay between life and death, land retention and exile.

Woman Wisdom is introduced in the passage immediately preceding this one (Prov 1:20-33). She is the competitor to Woman Folly, who is represented by the strange woman in Proverbs 2. Wisdom offers herself and her teaching in the public squares to the simple.⁴⁶ Woman Wisdom is a prophetess calling for the attention of the young man. If the young man will turn to her she will give him her spirit and reveal her words, but if he spurns her invitation then calamity will befall, for rejecting Wisdom is a rejection of the fear of Yahweh (1:29). Those who decline her offer are called “apostates” (מְשׁוּבֵּת, 1:32). מְשׁוּבֵּת is always used of those who turn from the Mosaic covenant with Yahweh: Jeremiah 2:19; 3:6; 5:6; Hosea 11:7.⁴⁷ This apostasy is described as adulterous cheating on Yahweh (cf. Jer 3:8). The ultimate threat for breaking covenant with Yahweh was exile (cf. Deut 28:64-65).

What will happen to the apostates in Proverbs 1, and what will happen to the faithful? In Proverbs 1:32 Woman Wisdom says, “the מְשׁוּבֵּת of the simple will kill

⁴⁶Woman Wisdom is a literary personification of Solomon’s wisdom. See Bruce Waltke, “Lady Wisdom as Mediatrix: An Exposition of Proverbs 1:20-33,” *Presbyterion* 14, no. 1 (1988): 2. Perhaps she represents Yahweh himself (see below).

⁴⁷Proverbs 9 reveals that a turn away from Woman Wisdom is a turn toward Woman Folly, who Longman describes as an idolatrous figure. Could this rejection of Wisdom, which is described as infidelity to Yahweh (1:32), anticipate the sexual, perhaps spiritual, infidelity warned of in regard to the strange woman? See the discussion of the identity of Ladies Wisdom and Folly in Longman, *Proverbs*, 58-61. Indeed, could the infidelity forewarned against throughout Proverbs be referring to breaking covenant?

(הַרְגָה) them and the complacency of fools will destroy them.” Therefore, infidelity to the covenant leads, it would seem, to a premature or horrible death. Indeed, Waltke calls this “a bald, unambiguous statement” since the Mosaic Law also uses הַרְגָה for the punishment of apostasy (Exod 32:27; Num 25:5; Deut 13:9).⁴⁸

However, the parallel line in 1:33 may indicate something more is in view. It promises those who embrace Wisdom will “dwell safely” (יִשְׁכֶּן בְּטָח). This phrase most often means dwelling safely in the land (cf. Deut 33:12, 28; Jer 23:6). Both the law and the prophets indicate that the result of keeping Torah (i.e., not apostazing) is retention of the land. If Proverbs 1:33 is talking about safe-dwelling in the land,⁴⁹ then the faithful will dwell securely whereas the apostates will die, and this may be connecting death and exile. Fox points out that this passage parallels the prophetic speech of Jeremiah (specifically Jer 7 and 20; cf. Jer 7:13 and 16). God speaks often but the people do not listen; he calls but they do not answer (cf. Prov 1:28). Fox writes that “this stubbornness seals the fall of Jerusalem.”⁵⁰ The language of Proverbs 1:20-33 parallels the prophetic speech of the stubbornness of Israel and the fall of Jerusalem in the exile (cf. Jer 7:14-15). However, Fox doubts whether the reader of Proverbs 1 would be “necessarily expected to recall Jeremiah or the disaster he predicted.”⁵¹ Yet, the language and concepts are the same.

⁴⁸Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 212.

⁴⁹Roland Murphy, “The Kerygma of the Book of Proverbs,” *Interpretation* 20 (1966): 8. He believes safe dwelling in the land is in view.

⁵⁰Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, 105. He believes that Jeremiah predates Proverbs.

⁵¹*Ibid.*

The two women of Proverbs 1 and 2 show the cohesiveness of these chapters. In Proverbs 1 the father presents an alluring woman that he wants his son to embrace, but in Proverbs 2 he exhorts his son to avoid the wicked woman. The outcome for embracing the strange woman is the same as the outcome for rejecting Woman Wisdom. The unfaithfulness of the apostates here to Wisdom (Yahweh) foreshadows and mirrors the warning to the son to avoid unfaithfulness with the strange woman (Folly) in the rest of Proverbs including 2:16-22 (cf. 5:1-23; 7:1-27; 9:13-18).⁵² Fidelity with Woman Wisdom leads to safe dwelling (1:33; 2:21) and infidelity with the strange woman leads to death and exile (1:32; 2:22). This lends support to the view that 2:20-22 is dealing with exile.

Another factor that bolsters this reading of 2:20-22 is that the passage immediately following it deals with many covenantal themes. Proverbs 3 starts with Solomon exhorting his son not to forget his תּוֹרָה and to let his heart keep the father's commandments. Following the תּוֹרָה will add days and years to the son's life (cf. Deut 17:20, the same promise given to the king who follows Torah).⁵³ Covenantal themes from the Law and the Prophets come together in Proverbs 3:3 (cf. 7:3). The son is commanded to write the father's teaching on the tablet (לִבְיָהוּ) of his heart. According to Exodus 31:18, the old covenant was written on stone tablets (לִבְיָהוּ). According to Jeremiah 31:33, the new covenant will be written on the heart. Proverbs combines these images so that

⁵²This is the major drama that will play out in Prov 1-9. Will the young man choose Woman Wisdom or Woman Folly? The choice will mean either life or death. See the discussion in Tremper Longman III, *How to Read Proverbs* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2002), 28-36.

⁵³There is an intimate relationship between doing Torah and wisdom according to Deut 4:6. See chap. 4 of this dissertation. See also C. Hassell Bullock, "Wisdom, the 'Amen' of Torah." *JETS* 52, no. 1 (2009): 5-18.

Solomon's תּוֹרָה is written on the לֵב of the heart rather than stone. The instruction of Solomon is covenantal, "Honor Yahweh from your wealth, and from the firstfruits of all your increase. Then your storehouses will be filled with plenty and your vats will burst with new wine" (3:9-10). This command is covenantal (cf. Exod 23:19; 34:26; Lev 2:12; 23:10), and the reward is also covenantal (cf. Deut 28:8). While Waltke argues against a covenantal interpretation for Proverbs 2:20-22, he does argue for a covenantal interpretation of 3:1-12 that follows it. Throughout his discussion of this passage he talks about the covenant obligations of the son in the odd verses, and the covenant promises that Yahweh upholds in the even verses.⁵⁴ The highly covenantal nature of Proverbs 3:1-12 lends credibility to seeing 2:20-22 as covenantal in nature and referring to the land of Israel. It looks as if the father is saying that wisdom is the path to the crown prince and the nation remaining in the land, and folly is the path to exile.

Proverbs as a whole. Interpreting Proverbs 2:20-22 as referring to the land of Israel is buffeted by two realities in the book of Proverbs as a whole. First, there are several places in Proverbs that talk about the safety and stability of the land being tied to wisdom. One should not be too quick to rule out references to the land (10:30; 11:11; 14:11; 14:32; 15:25; 16:12; 20:28; 21:12; 24:30; 28:2; 28:16; 29:4; and 29:4).⁵⁵ Since Proverbs is concerned elsewhere with safety in the land, this interpretation for Proverbs 2:20-22 would not be an isolated reading.

⁵⁴Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 236-50.

⁵⁵See Table A1 in Appendix 1.

Proverbs 15:25 says that “Yahweh will pluck up (רָצַח) the house of the proud, but he will establish the border of the widow.” This is the same verb used in Proverbs 2:22. Waltke makes a similar argument in this verse saying that the “house” is a synecdoche for “a person’s indispensable means of sustaining life.”⁵⁶ Therefore, when his means of sustenance is gone the person will die. Establishing the boundary (גְּבוּל) of the widow means “the Lord puts the widow in a particular life-sustaining land.”⁵⁷ What is clear is that sustenance and land are connected together. The two other times גְּבוּל is used in Proverbs it refers to the sinful practice of moving a landmark (גְּבוּל) and thereby cheating someone out of their allotted land inheritance (Prov 22:28; 23:10).⁵⁸ This principle is derived from the law in Deuteronomy 19:14, “You shall not move your neighbor's boundary marker which men at the first set in your inheritance which you will inherit in the land which Yahweh your God gives to you to possess.” Boundary markers refer to land inheritance. While Waltke agrees that in Proverbs 22:28 the boundary markers refer to Joshua allotting the land in Joshua 14-19, he fails to mention the land of Israel in regard to Proverbs 15:25.⁵⁹ Sustenance may be partially in view in Proverbs 15:25, but for the Israelite sustenance is found in a specific land and inheritance.

There are other instances where judgment, exile and the stability of the land are in view in Proverbs. Proverbs 10:30 says that “the righteous will never totter, but the

⁵⁶Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 635.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Weinfeld connects Proverbs and Deuteronomy here. Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 260-319.

⁵⁹Waltke, *Proverbs 15-31*, 234-35.

wicked will not dwell in the land (יִשְׁכְּנוּ-אֶרֶץ).” Proverbs 14:11 says that the “house of the wicked will be destroyed, but the tent of the upright will flourish.” Proverbs 11:11 says, “By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted, but it is pulled down by the mouth of the wicked.” Waltke sees a metaphorical use in Proverbs 11:11, but thinks a literal sense was probably preserved because the verb is used of destroying cities, walls, strongholds, and houses.⁶⁰ Consequently, while death is the major warning of Proverbs, the loss or destruction of the land is taught as well.

Second, while a lack of “salvation-historical” themes in Proverbs is the most frequent reason presented for disregarding this interpretation, this argument fails to take into account that Proverbs is directly tied to the monarchy from its outset (Prov 1:1). The heading for Proverbs is that they belong to Solomon, the “son of David,” “the king of Israel.” Regardless of whether or not one accepts Solomonic authorship (which this dissertation does), what is clear is that the Proverbs are meant to be read in light of the Solomonic narrative.⁶¹ This book is not written by some general sage, but rather by the king of Israel, the son of David who is very concerned with the land and Jerusalem. At face value when an Israelite King mentions remaining in the land or being plucked up from it to his son (or to the youth of the nation as a whole) it would make sense that he’s referring to Israel. This king and his kingdom fell when he embraced strange women. Solomon’s son ended up losing land because of his father’s idolatry (1 Kgs 12). Solomon is trying to train his son to avoid the strange woman and retain the land, thereby establishing stability in his kingdom instead of chaos.

⁶⁰Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 493.

⁶¹Hamilton, *God’s Glory*, 274-75.

When Proverbs 2:21-22 is read in that light it seems reasonable to argue that wisdom is the path to life in the land, and folly is the path to death for an individual, but ultimately the “death” of the nation in exile.⁶² Ultimately the king is the one who embodies the nation as its head, and is the reason for retaining or losing the land.

The flow of the canon. Finally, this interpretation fits the entire flow of the OT where death and exile are intimately connected, and life and dwelling in the land are as well. Adam and Eve were warned that if they ate the forbidden fruit they would surely die. After eating the fruit, their “death” included exile from the garden to the “east” (Gen 3:24; same for Cain in Gen 4). Being cut off from the land God gives to a people is also being cut off from him, so it is described as death. Exile was the ultimate punishment Israel would face for playing the harlot and breaking covenant with Yahweh (Deut 31:16; 28:41). Disobedience to the law would mean exile. In the flow of the canon being “uprooted” from the land in Proverbs 2:22 for unfaithfulness with the strange woman is the same word used in Deuteronomy 28:63 (אָרָץ) to refer to the eschatological punishment for unfaithfulness to Yahweh and his Torah.⁶³ The eschatological promise in the Torah is that Israel will rebel, be exiled (die as a nation), and then return to possess the land while their enemies are judged (Deut 30:1-10). The choice between covenant loyalty and unfaithfulness, exile or continued possession of the land, is a choice between life and death (Deut 30:15-20). The eschatological promise in the prophets is that after

⁶²Kenneth J. Turner, *The Death of Deaths in the Death of Israel: Deuteronomy's Theology of Exile* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011).

⁶³So also C. F. Keil, *The Pentateuch*, Commentary on the Old Testament, ed. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001), 970.

the “death” of exile (cf. Ezek 37) there will be a resurrected return to the land under blessing and new creation (cf. Isa 11).

Proverbs, like the rest of the OT, ties death and exile together. In Proverbs the choice between following the paths of wisdom and folly is a choice between life and death. Yet, the reward of life for following the way of wisdom in Proverbs appears to be described in 2:21-22 in a similar way to the rest of the OT. Life and retention of the land are intimately tied together, but the connection of the two motifs does not require a metaphorical interpretation in these verses.⁶⁴

Much of the future hope of the OT is connected with Israel’s place in the land of Promise. The promise of Deuteronomy is that Israel will be unwise by forsaking the law (cf. Deut 4:6-31), so they will be exiled, but then God will bring them back, write his law on their hearts, and they will stay in the land. This passage fits in that flow. This passage stood as a warning to the crown prince and the nation while they still lived in the land of what would happen if they were unfaithful to the covenant, but it also provides hope for those who read it outside of the land.⁶⁵

Proverbs 24:13-20

Flow of the Passage

These verses are a part of the highly debated “Sayings of the Wise” (22:17-24:22). These sayings share a great similarity with the Egyptian work the *Instruction of*

⁶⁴See Stephen Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of Hebrew Bible*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 15, ed. D. A. Carson (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2003), 170.

⁶⁵While Scott does not agree with this interpretation, he does argue that the language used in Proverbs is traditional language used to refer to the promise of possessing the land for those who obey Yahweh’s commandments (Gen 17:8; Deut 4:1). Also, it recurs in Messianic prophecy (Jer 23:5-6) and in the Beatitudes of Jesus (Matt 5:5). R. B. Y. Scott, *Proverbs Ecclesiastes: Introduction, Translation and*

Amenemope.⁶⁶ Several scholars argue for thirty sayings, though they do not always agree on where exactly to demarcate the sayings.⁶⁷ Scholars do not put these verses together as a unit, but rather see Proverbs 24:13-20 as separate sayings (sayings 26-29). There may be profit in dealing with these verses together in some way because of catchwording since sayings 26 (24:13-14) and 29 (24:19-20) both deal with “future” (אַחֲרַיִת). Seeing its usage throughout the sayings may help one understand the nature of אַחֲרַיִת in Proverbs.

The sayings are again addressed to the son.⁶⁸ The father commands the son to eat honey because it is good and sweet to the palate. He says, “Know wisdom is such to your soul, if you find it then there is a future (latter end) and your hope (expectation) will not be cut off” (24:14).

Wisdom is compared to honey in its sweetness and goodness. The command is to internalize the father’s words of wisdom (similar instructions are found throughout the book; 2:1, 10; 3:3; 7:3).⁶⁹ This dissertation has already contended for the similarity of the

Notes, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1965), 42.

⁶⁶For a good overview of the debate, see R. N. Whybray, *The Book of Proverbs: A Survey of Modern Study*, History of Biblical Interpretation Series, ed. Robert Morgan, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 6-13 and 78-85.

⁶⁷McKane, *Proverbs*, 369-406. Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 21-24.

⁶⁸The “sayings of the wise” should be seen as theologically concurrent to Solomon’s wise teaching elsewhere in Proverbs. It would not be strange for wisdom similar to that of ancient Egypt to be found in a book that largely has Solomon as its source because his wisdom is mentioned in connection with Egypt and the surrounding countries of the ANE (cf. 1 Kgs 4:29-34). See Bruce Waltke, “The Book of Proverbs and Ancient Wisdom Literature,” *BS* 136 July-September (1979): 221.

⁶⁹The idea is to ingest and internalize God’s word. That is what is happening in Ezek 2 and 3 where Yahweh commissions Ezekiel to speak His words to rebellious Israel. He instructs Ezekiel to eat a scroll with words of woe written on it, and by eating it he internalizes God’s word so that he can now speak it to the house of Israel. The scroll is as sweet as honey (3:3).

Torah and wisdom (see chapter 4 for a fuller discussion). The Torah is compared to honey in the Psalter (Pss 19:11-12; 119:103).⁷⁰ In the same way honey is compared elsewhere to God's Word and the Law, it is here in Proverbs used to speak of the teachings of the book. The father compares his teaching to honey from the comb, whereas the father's competitor, the strange woman, attempts to mimic the father (God?) with lips that drip honey from the comb (Prov 5:3).

The text says that wisdom is sweet because when it is found it produces a future (אַחֲרַיִת) and a hope (תִּקְוָה) that is not cut off. Similar phrasing is found three times in the sayings of the wise. In order to analyze the meaning clearly one needs to examine all three texts (23:18; 24:14, 20). In the other two verses the sage exhorts the son not to envy sinners because the wise have a future and a hope whereas the wicked's hope is cut off. Hence, even if things go well for the wicked right now, and poorly for the righteous, one should not be jealous of the wicked because the tables will be set right in the end (23:18; 24:20).

Interaction with Scholarship

The main question for this investigation is to what do future and hope refer here? There are basically three positions. First, future and hope refer to a happy end to someone's clinical life or longer life.⁷¹ They refer to similar things as "life" in Proverbs, as argued by these scholars. The wise avoid a premature death and live a long and

⁷⁰Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000), 335.

⁷¹Ibid., 31. Michael Fox, *Proverbs 10-31: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible, vol. 18b (New Haven: Yale, 2009), 749.

prosperous life. According to Toy on Proverbs 23:18 future is a reference to the last part of life, “the outcome of the righteous man’s life...is long life and prosperity, as in 2:21, 3:7-8, 10:27-28, 13:22, 14:32 (*contra*, of the wicked, 10:28, 11:7), not the life beyond the grave.”⁷² McKane argues that there is no widening of the horizon beyond death, but rather a fully-rounded, mature life.”⁷³ Murphy contends that it is not eschatological, but rather an “honorable death which is not foreshortened.”⁷⁴ Second, future and hope refer to eternal life. Waltke argues the future hope is “unending eternal delight.”⁷⁵ He says, “God will fulfill the hope of the righteous for an abundant life both for time and for eternity.”⁷⁶ Third, future and hope refer to posterity beyond death. Some scholars who argue for a happy end to life or a longer life would see this as a possibility also.⁷⁷

Before examining these verses, it bears commenting that option one does not do justice to the text. How can a good death be what is meant by the phrase “your hope will not be cut off?” The young man would have reason to envy the prospering sinners in 23:17 and 24:19, if they both will ultimately share the same fate. If death is the end, then the righteous’ hope will have ceased. Longman comments on Proverbs 24:20, “it seems banal to the extreme to think that the sages were thinking only of this life. After all, if the passage is alluding to physical death in v. 20, the sages were smart enough to know that

⁷²Toy, *Proverbs*, 434-35.

⁷³McKane, *Proverbs*, 387.

⁷⁴Murphy, *Proverbs*, 176.

⁷⁵Waltke, *Proverbs 15-31*, 282.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 255.

⁷⁷See Fox, *Proverbs 10-31*, 927.

the wise too died, and some of them died at a young age.”⁷⁸ Therefore, the first option should be rejected. The future hope does extend beyond physical death. The context of these sayings necessitates this. Proverbs 23:14 states that disciplining your child will rescue his life from Sheol, and Proverbs 24:16 declares that the righteous man rises again. Subsequently, this has to extend beyond death, but is it a promise to an individual?

Posterity

This section will contend that posterity is the best interpretation for these passages, but this cannot be maintained with certainty. Posterity is a future hope for Israel and the monarchy, and it is one presented in Proverbs as well.

The LXX interpretation of future. The LXX translates Proverbs 24:14 as “your death (τελευτή) shall be good.” Thus, the LXX translation of אֶת־רֵיִךְ seems to give weight to the interpretation of a good end in life, though it is not consistently treated as such in the LXX, even in this passage (24:20).⁷⁹ This may lend credence to the view that sees the future hope as a good death, but it does not help one understand hope not ceasing and seemingly living on beyond death. The other two translations in the LXX are helpful in answering how one can experience a hope that does not cease at death.

The LXX gives another interpretation for אֶת־רֵיִךְ in Proverbs 23:18 and 24:20. Those verses translate אֶת־רֵיִךְ as “posterity” (ἐκγονα). Therefore, according to the

⁷⁸Longman, *Proverbs*, 440.

⁷⁹If אֶת־רֵיִךְ does mean death here then what does the parallel phrase “hope does not fail” actually mean? Does death swallow up hope ultimately? That would mean that the future hope of the wicked is the same as that of the righteous.

LXX in these two verses the future hope is posterity for the righteous but an extinguished lamp, death with no heir, for the wicked. This is not an unheard of translation for אַחֲרֵיָתָיִם. It is used to speak of “a happy close of life, suggesting sometimes the idea of a posterity, promised to the righteous (Prov 23:18; 24:14; Jer 29:11), withheld from the wicked (Prov 24:20).”⁸⁰

Some translate אַחֲרֵיָתָיִם as posterity in Psalm 37:37-38, though others translate it simply as future.⁸¹ Anderson argues for posterity in these verses because although it is not a common meaning for אַחֲרֵיָתָיִם “the total loss of descendants would be a greater disaster for the Israelite because, in a way, one continued to ‘exist’ in one’s children.”⁸² It is also translated “posterity” in Psalm 109:13 when it speaks of the wicked's posterity being "cut off" (same verb as hope being cut off in Prov 23:18; 24:14). The second line says "in the generation following let their name be wiped out" (Ps 109:13). Covenantal loyalty would mean a long family line, whereas breaking the covenant leads to the line being cut off.⁸³ אַחֲרֵיָתָיִם refers to posterity in Daniel 11:4 where it says that a king’s kingdom will not be given to his posterity.

There are texts where this usage is debated. It is also translated in a similar way in Ezekiel 23:25 to speak of one’s “survivors.” Also, Amos 4:2 and 9:1 refer to

⁸⁰Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 31.

⁸¹The NAS translates it as posterity. See also Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, in vol. 5 of *EBC*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 351.

⁸²A. A. Anderson, *The Book of Psalms: Psalms 1-72*, NCBC, vol. I (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 300.

⁸³VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 809. He says posterity is the best translation of “future” here.

“what is left to them.” Some of these verses could be translated “remnant.” Shalom Paul on Amos 4:2 says “remnant” (so Hasel, Sellin, Driver, Cripps, Weiser and Wolff), but medieval commentators Rashi, ibn Ezra, and Kimchi take progeny as the translation.⁸⁴

This translation for אַחֲרָיִת could come from אַחֲרַיִת which means “after.” This word is used to speak of posterity, or those who come after a person. 1 Kings 16:3 speaks of the posterity of King Baasha being wiped out. His line, like Jeroboam, is not carried on. The same is said for King Ahab (1 Kgs 21:21; cf. Ps 49:14).

One other connection, in Jeremiah, is helpful to understand the word. The two words used together in Proverbs are אַחֲרָיִת and תִּקְוָה to speak of future and hope.

These two are used together again in Jeremiah 29:11 where they are paired as a hendiadys for “the hoped-for future.”⁸⁵ The hoped-for future is return from exile. But, Jeremiah 31:17, where this pair is found together again, clarifies this is not an individual hope, but rather a hope for their posterity, when it says, “‘And there is hope for your future’ says Yahweh ‘and your children will return to their own border.’” The hope is that their offspring will once again live in the land.⁸⁶ Therefore, viewing the future hope of Proverbs 23:18, 24:14 and 24:20 as a hope for posterity is not foreign to the usage of the words in the OT.

⁸⁴Shalom Paul, *Amos*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 135. Doug Stuart contends that either translation is possible. Douglas Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, WBC, vol. 31 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1987), 328.

⁸⁵Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 876.

⁸⁶So also VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 351.

The lamp. What does it mean for the lamp of the wicked to be put out (24:20)?

Analyzing this will be helpful because it parallels **לַמְּנִיחַ** in the first line. Murphy says lamp is a metaphor for life, but that would not seem to make sense because both the lamp of the wicked and righteous would be put out.⁸⁷ It is possible that lamp refers to a person's life being carried on in his children. The reference to a person's lamp is used three times in Proverbs (13:9; 20:20; 24:20), and some scholars do interpret it as progeny.⁸⁸ Proverbs 13:9 says, "The light of the righteous rejoices, but the lamp of the wicked will be put out." Proverbs 20:20 says, "Whoever curses his father or mother, his lamp will be put out in deep darkness."

There is an interesting connection here with the Davidic dynasty because in 2 Samuel 21:17 King David's life is called "the lamp of Israel." This is similar to the use in Proverbs which is credited to David's son, Solomon, and who is concerned with the lamp of his son. McKane argues that the "source of this metaphor may be the *nēr tāmīd* which not only symbolized the constant presence of Yahweh in his sanctuary, but also the enduring covenant between Yahweh and the Davidic king."⁸⁹ McKane also connects the image with Psalm 132 that says the Lord has set up a lamp for his Messiah. He writes, "It is in this temple that a lamp has been set up for David, with whom Yahweh has made a covenant and whom he has installed as the founder of an enduring dynasty (vv. 11-18; cf. I Kings 11.36; 15.4: 'the David, my servant, may always have a lamp before me in

⁸⁷Murphy, *Proverbs*, 182.

⁸⁸Fox, *Proverbs 10-31*, 564.

⁸⁹McKane, *Proverbs*, 405.

Jerusalem’).”⁹⁰ This is interesting because the promise of Psalm 132 is that the fruit of David’s body will be on the throne, David’s sons forever, if they keep the covenant. The hope is for eternal succession and an eternal dynasty. Fox sees a similar connection to the metaphor of the lamp in Proverbs. He says it signifies the continuation of the Davidic dynasty and cites verses like 1 Kings 11:36 and 1 Kings 15:4.⁹¹ In 1 Kings 11:36 the prophet Ahijah tells Jeroboam that Yahweh will take the kingdom out of Solomon’s son’s hand and give it to Jeroboam, but he will give one tribe to Solomon’s son so that David will always have a lamp before Yahweh in Jerusalem. 1 Kings 15:4 speaks similarly that the Davidic line is continued so that David has a lamp in Jerusalem. This use of lamp argues for posterity as the future hope of Proverbs 24:20, and the attribution of the book to Solomon argues for a Messianic concern here.

The canon. It would seem that future, hope, and lamp in Proverbs refer to posterity, but again that must be interpreted in the light of the flow of the canon. The canon is supremely concerned with “seed” (posterity) when it comes to eschatology. The proto-gospel of Genesis 3:15 says that the seed (posterity) of the woman will crush the serpent’s head. Genesis 12, and following, narrows the line and makes the promises to the posterity of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Finally, the line is narrowed to David. Indeed, it is the posterity of David who is responsible for the wisdom of Proverbs. Yahweh promised David that his posterity would sit on the throne of Israel forever (2 Sam 7:12-13). This promise included victory

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Fox, *Proverbs 10-31*, 672. Fox does not accept a messianic interpretation for Proverbs, but just that the Davidic texts help explain the metaphor.

over David's enemies (cf. Prov 16:7), a land to "plant" Israel in where they would not be afraid of enemies (cf. Prov 1:32-33; 2:20-22), and offspring who will establish an eternal kingdom (cf. Prov 29:14). This was a promise, but experiencing the full blessing was dependent on keeping the law. David's final instructions to Solomon are to obey the Law so that he will not lack a man on the throne (1 Kgs 2:4). Perhaps Solomon references this teaching in Proverbs 4:3, and indeed the whole book of Proverbs appears to be instruction in the Law (see chapter 4). In light of this it seems that Proverbs is concerned in Proverbs 23:18, 24:14 and 24:20 with the posterity of David, the messianic line. The promise of an eternal kingdom ultimately brings an overlap of posterity with eternal life.⁹² There either had to be an eternal succession of faithful posterity or eventually an eternal son who lives forever.

Part of the difficulty in interpreting these passages is that scholars approach them with a Western mindset of individualism, whereas the Semitic mind was more concerned with the collective. Western individualism assumes that if one does not reap the benefits of wisdom personally then wisdom does not account for much, but in the Semitic mind there is hope not just for personal reward, but rather for the family or clan to experience wisdom's rewards. In the Semitic worldview there is a corporate solidarity that supersedes the individual.⁹³ When Proverbs 24:13-20 is read in the context of the Davidic monarchy and the covenant, it reveals a future hope of posterity so that

⁹²Waltke makes the case for eternal life in these verses, and while it seems the author of Proverbs had posterity in mind, ultimately these two ideas intersect in the resurrection of Jesus. Waltke, *Proverbs 15-31*, 282.

⁹³I am grateful to Russell Moore for giving these insights on his critique of a paper I submitted to him entitled, "The Eschatology of Proverbs" in a 2008 doctoral seminar. On this topic, see further H. Wheeler Robinson, *Corporate Personality in Ancient Israel* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1981).

adherence to wisdom will preserve the Davidic dynasty and lead ultimately to the Messiah, whereas folly will derail this hope.

Proverbs 29:14

The text says, “The king who judges the poor in truth, his throne will be established forever/in perpetuity.” The throne can be a metonymy for the kingdom itself and is often used with verbs about setting up or establishing.⁹⁴ The meaning seems to be simple and straightforward. If a king executes justice by judging the poor in truth and not letting them be oppressed, then his throne, kingdom, or dynasty will be stable and perpetual (everlasting?). This text will be examined to see if it refers to a future hope.

The Picture of the Ideal King

The first line of Proverbs 29:14 fits a major theme in Proverbs where a portrait is given of the ideal king.⁹⁵ One of the main roles of the king is as judge who executes justice. This requires wisdom because Wisdom is the means by which rulers govern and judge (טָפַשׁ; Prov 8:16; cf. Solomon in 1 Kgs 3:9). One way that kings are to execute justice is by upholding the cause of the poor and not allowing them to be oppressed. A wicked ruler who does not take up the cause of the poor (רָעַל) is like a roaring lion, scary and oppressive (Prov 28:15), and is the opposite of the king in 29:14. King Lemuel’s mother tells him, “open your mouth, judge righteously and plead the cause of the poor

⁹⁴Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 491.

⁹⁵Toy agrees that Proverbs paints the picture of the ideal king, but he does not think it is messianic. He writes, “A fine conception of political equity is given in the picture of the king (not a Messiah, but an ideal sovereign in general), who is represented as the embodiment of justice in his dealings with his people; the references to royal authority occur almost exclusively in chaps. 16-29 (the other instances are 8:15, 14:28 35, 30:31, 31:2-9).” Toy, *Proverbs*, xii.

and needy” (Prov 31:9). This will have a direct impact on the stability and longevity of the king’s throne. Mercy and truth (חַסֵּד וְאֱמֶת) preserve the king, and in mercy his throne is upheld (20:28).

Another role of the ideal king in executing justice is punishing evildoers (Prov 20:8). The king must do this in order to protect his throne and dynasty. Proverbs 16:12 states, “Evildoers are an abomination to the king, because a throne is established in righteousness.” Proverbs 25:5 says, “Remove the wicked from before the king, and his throne will be established in righteousness.”⁹⁶ Righteousness and justice establish the throne, but tolerated wickedness threatens it. The kingdom (dynasty) will be stable and perpetual if the king upholds justice by punishing the wicked and protecting the needy. The throne is at stake when it comes to the king’s ability to uphold justice and punish evil.

The motive clause signifies not that the king’s tenure of rule depends on the righteousness of his personal conduct, but that the throne, i.e., the regime, has stability only where there is a broad base of social justice which is not undermined by the wrongdoing of any subjects.⁹⁷

Interaction with Scholarship

The key question for determining whether or not Proverbs 29:14 teaches a future hope is “how long will this kingdom last?” Many scholars are open to it teaching an enduring or perpetual kingdom. Toy writes, “The perpetual duration of the dynasty is made to depend not on physical or intellectual but on moral character; the sage has in mind probably divine blessing, possibly economic and other social laws; cf. Psalm

⁹⁶Both Prov 16:12 and 25:5 have the same verb and idea as in Prov 29:14.

⁹⁷McKane, *Proverbs*, 492.

18:50(51); 45:6(7); 72:17.”⁹⁸ Scott claims that the idea is perpetuity.⁹⁹ Waltke agrees, “The symbol of the king’s authoritative rule will endure into a future whose end cannot be envisioned (cf. 20:28; 25:5; 29:4).”¹⁰⁰

Some scholars do not discuss the length of the dynasty but rather emphasize the strength and security of the king’s reign. McKane claims that the king who upholds justice for the poor “need have no fear for the stability of his throne.”¹⁰¹ Garrett does not mention the length of the king’s reign in his comments on Proverbs 29:14, but instead refers to the security of it.¹⁰² Longman highlights the strength of the king’s reign.¹⁰³ These scholars stress the stability of the dynasty but do not address the question of whether or not it is an enduring or eternal one. There are those who state that an enduring or eternal dynasty is not in view at all, rather this verse just refers to the lifetime of the king.¹⁰⁴

Eternal Kingdom

The ideal king, who upholds justice, will establish an eternal kingdom, a dynasty, which will endure forever. Not only is the strength of his reign in view, but also

⁹⁸Toy, *Proverbs*, 511.

⁹⁹Scott, *Proverbs*, 169.

¹⁰⁰Waltke, *Proverbs 15-31*, 442. So also Fox, *Proverbs 10-31*, 839.

¹⁰¹McKane, *Proverbs*, 638.

¹⁰²Garrett, *Proverbs*, 230-31.

¹⁰³Longman, *Proverbs*, 505.

¹⁰⁴Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 723.

the duration of it. There are a couple of reasons for adopting this understanding of Proverbs 29:14.

The use of לָעַד. This form of עָרַךְ is used in Proverbs 12:19, “the truthful lip shall be established forever.”¹⁰⁵ “Forever” is the best translation given its usage here and elsewhere. While the editors of *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* state that לָעַד refers just to the clinical life of the king in Proverbs 29:14, they also associate the same form elsewhere with the eternal promise to David in Psalm 89:30 that his offspring and throne will be established forever.¹⁰⁶ Similar verbs and phrases are used to speak of the eternal establishment of David’s throne in the historical books (cf. 2 Sam 7:16; 1 Chr 17:14). Not only this but עָרַךְ is used to speak of God’s perpetuity (Ps 111:3; Isa 57:15; Mic 7:18), and the perpetuity of his throne (Exod 15:18; Pss 10:16; 45:7).¹⁰⁷

The context of Proverbs in the canon. When Proverbs is read in its context, as well as the context of the canon, then it makes sense that Proverbs 29:14 is teaching the eternal establishment of the Davidic kingdom through wisdom. This section of Proverbs is attributed to the Davidic dynasty by means of Solomon and Hezekiah’s men (cf. Prov 25:1). It would seem that these two Davidic kings were concerned with training their sons in wisdom, and thus preserving the teachings of this book. Perhaps that is because they knew the duration of the kingdom was at stake.

¹⁰⁵“Established” (עָרַךְ) is the same verb used in Prov 29:14.

¹⁰⁶Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 723. Again, the same concept of a throne being established is found in Ps 89:30 as is found in Prov 29:14.

¹⁰⁷Waltke, *Proverbs 15-31*, 442.

Proverbs 29:14 states that upholding justice is the key to the duration of the kingdom, and this makes sense in the flow of the canon. Solomon requests wisdom so that he might judge the people (1 Kgs 3:9), and then immediately puts that wisdom to work (cf. 1 Kgs 3:16-28). Indeed, the people knew God’s wisdom was in Solomon to do justice (1 Kgs 3:28). His throne depends on this. Indeed, the promised characteristic of the Messiah and his kingdom is that he will judge the poor in righteousness and slay the wicked (Isa 11:4; cf. Psa 72 – the ideal portrait of kingship), and this kingdom will last forever (2 Sam 7:16). The ideal Davidic king will establish his never-ending throne by founding it on justice (Isa 9:5-6).¹⁰⁸ The canon is clear is that the stability and perpetuity of the Davidic throne is determined by whether or not the king upholds justice, and this idea is set forth in Proverbs 29:14 as well.

Therefore, Solomon is training the Davidic prince in how to be the ideal, wise, righteous king who through wisdom and justice establishes the Davidic dynasty forever. Proverbs is concerned in part with the establishment of the Messianic kingdom.

Steinmann asserts that this verse finds its fulfillment in the reign of Jesus. He writes of לְעֶד in 29:14, “Its literal meaning (“forever”) is fulfilled by the everlasting reign of Christ the King over God’s people.”¹⁰⁹

Synthesis of the Data

This biblical-theological-canonical analysis of key future hope passages in Proverbs reveals an emerging future hope in Proverbs. It bears striking similarity to the

¹⁰⁸John Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah 1-39*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 248.

¹⁰⁹Andrew E. Steinmann, *Proverbs*, Concordia Commentary (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2009), 568.

three-fold pattern found in Genesis 12:1-3 and elsewhere in Genesis for land, seed and blessing. The future hope presented in Proverbs is for two of the three ideas found in Genesis 12: (1) land, (2) posterity, and (3) an eternal kingdom. Solomon (the Davidic dynasty) is training his son in wisdom, which is keeping the covenant, because the eternal duration of the dynasty depends on it.

CHAPTER 3

FUTURE HOPE IN THE WRITINGS AND PROVERBS

This dissertation has contended that in order to rightly interpret the future hope of Proverbs it must be read in its canonical context. Proverbs was accepted as a part of the canon, so it was recognized by Israel as being similar in nature to the rest of Scripture and should be read as part of their story.¹ In order to do that this chapter conducts a brief survey of future hope themes in the Writings and then discusses possible connections with Proverbs. A full analysis of future hope in each of the books is beyond the scope of this dissertation.² This investigation is narrowed to the Wisdom Literature (Ecclesiastes and Job), because of its affinity with Proverbs, before surveying Psalms, and concluding with a very brief discussion of Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles.

Wisdom Books

The books assumed to be closest in nature to Proverbs in the OT are the wisdom books of Ecclesiastes and Job. As discussed in Chapter 1, there is great debate as to whether or not these books teach a future hope at all. As Mathison points out, “The contribution of the canonical wisdom books to an understanding of biblical eschatology is difficult to discern because these books do not focus on redemptive history per se. They

¹Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 15, ed. D. A. Carson (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2003), 206.

²For a good discussion of the overall themes of these books see, James Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010).

simply presuppose it.”³ The next section examines what they do say, if anything, about the theme of future hope.

Ecclesiastes

Skepticism of scholarship. In similar fashion to the scholarly approaches to Proverbs there is doubt as to whether Ecclesiastes describes a future hope that can be known. Enns writes, “Everything is absurd because there is no payoff for anything we do. The main reason why this is so is that death cancels out any such potential profit.”⁴ The book is instead about life in the gritty here-and-now of this world. However, there are scholars who are open to the idea of an eschatology in Ecclesiastes. For example, Dillard and Longman connect Paul’s mention of the frustration of creation in Romans 8 with the Septuagint translation of “meaninglessness” in Ecclesiastes. The vanity of life argued for in Ecclesiastes should be read in light of God’s curse upon creation for human sin and call one to look forward with Paul to a consummation.⁵

The royal nature of Ecclesiastes. Ecclesiastes is connected with Proverbs and the Davidic monarchy because of similar opening headings, “the son of David, king in Jerusalem” (Eccl 1:1) and “son of David, king of Israel” (Prov 1:1). Like Proverbs, Ecclesiastes appears to be Solomonic, written by the king-sage himself. Before the modern era there was almost no debate that Solomon was the author of Ecclesiastes, but

³Keith A. Mathison, *From Age to Age: The Unfolding of Biblical Eschatology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2009), 135-36.

⁴Peter Enns, “Ecclesiastes 1: Book of,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament Wisdom, Poetry & Writings*, ed. Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2008), 121-132.

⁵Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 254-255. See also Mathison, *From Age to Age*, 142.

this is no longer the case.⁶ With the rise of modern critical scholarship, the debate has swung decidedly in favor of non-Solomonic authorship.⁷ The Hebrew title given to the book is Qohelet, which means “preacher.”⁸ Mathison argues that there is evidence for a narrator (e.g., 1:2; 7:27; 12:8).⁹ Dillard and Longman call it a “framed autobiography.”¹⁰ However, Hamilton gives four reasons for Solomonic authorship. First, the book identifies the author as David’s son (1:1). Second, it says he gained more wisdom than all who came before him (1:16). Third, it points to his building projects and great wealth to prove that he excelled everyone before him in Jerusalem (2:4-9).¹¹ Fourth, Hamilton argues that the author was either Solomon or someone trying to convince others that he was Solomon, and it seems unlikely that those who included Ecclesiastes in the canon were deceived.¹² Given the OT storyline that Solomon received wisdom from Yahweh and wrote it down (1 Kgs 3:4-14; 4:29-34), it is at least credible to attribute authorship to Solomon.¹³ Regardless of whether one accepts the authorship of Solomon, it is clear that canonically this book is meant to be read as connected to him and the Davidic Monarchy.

⁶Huwiler writes, “Both Christian and Jewish interpreters assumed Solomonic authorship until modern times.” R. Murphy and E. Huwiler, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, NIBC, vol. 12 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 173.

⁷For a good overview of the discussion see Duane Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, NAC, vol. 14 (Nashville: Broadman, 1993), 254-67. See also Longman, *The Book of Ecclesiastes*, 2-7.

⁸Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000), 875.

⁹Mathison, *From Age to Age*, 140.

¹⁰Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 252.

¹¹Hamilton, *God’s Glory*, 314.

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³*Ibid.*

Because of its connection with David, some argue that it is Messianic.¹⁴ The Davidic King is instructing his people, and by means of his messianic wisdom he intends to “shepherd” the people of Israel (12:11).¹⁵

Final judgment based on the law. At the conclusion of the book, Solomon exhorts his son to “fear God and keep his commandments” (Eccl 12:13). The language of Deuteronomy and Proverbs comes together here. The fear of the Lord is covenantal language used throughout Deuteronomy (Deut 6:2, 13, 24; 10:12, 20). The fear of the Lord is also the key to unlocking wisdom in Proverbs (1:7; 3:7; 9:10). Chapter 2 made the case, as will chapter 4, that wisdom is obeying the Law (cf. Deut 4:6).¹⁶ The fear of Yahweh is the key to obedience to the law and wisdom.

The reason Solomon exhorts his son to fear God and keep the Law appears to be eschatological judgment. Ecclesiastes 12:14, “For God will bring into judgment every work with every hidden thing whether good or evil.” There is not much given to determine exactly what that final judgment will look like, but what is clear is that the Davidic Prince’s relationship to God and his law is the deciding factor for one’s future hope.¹⁷ Hamilton argues that these verses reveal that Solomon is obeying the exhortation

¹⁴See Perrin’s discussion that argues for a much later date to Ecclesiastes than that provided by the biblical witness. Nicholas Perrin, “Messianism in the Narrative Frame of Ecclesiastes?” *Revue Biblique* 108 (2001): 37-60.

¹⁵Hamilton, *God’s Glory*, 315.

¹⁶Kalugila argues that they are synonymous. Leonidas Kalugila, *The Wise King: Studies in Royal Wisdom as Divine Revelation in the Old Testament and Its Environment*, (Lund: Gleerup, 1980) 83-84.

¹⁷The same is true in Proverbs. See chap. 4.

to parents in Deuteronomy 6 to teach Torah to their children and the command to kings in Deuteronomy 17 to be men of Torah.

According to the one whose wisdom surpasses all in Jerusalem before him (1:16), the son of David (1:1), who is shepherd king in Jerusalem (1:1; 12:11), the “end of the matter” is to “fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil” (12:13–14; cf. 3:17). Like Proverbs, Ecclesiastes is a Solomonic attempt to obey Deuteronomy 6 and 17.¹⁸

Job

Job is difficult to analyze because no author is given, nor is there any historical data given to help locate the book.¹⁹ The book is about the suffering of the righteous. God allows his servant Job to be afflicted by Satan. The key future hope theme that is expressed in the book is Job’s expectation of a future vindication.²⁰ Hamilton argues that Job shows that “if God is not immediately glorified in salvation through judgment, the afflicted should, like Job, wait and trust that one day they will be vindicated.”²¹ Indeed, it would seem that Job is confident that vindication will come, even if it must come in a future beyond death, in perhaps a resurrection (Job 19:25-26). He is trusting that God will be his kinsman-redeemer.²²

This brief survey of the OT wisdom literature reveals a couple of possible links to Proverbs that will be discussed in more detail at the close of the chapter. First,

¹⁸Hamilton, *God’s Glory*, 320.

¹⁹The rabbinic tradition is that Moses is the author of Job. Franz Delitzsch, *The Book of Job*, Commentary on the OT, ed. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, vol. 4 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001), 254.

²⁰Mathison, *From Age to Age*, 145.

²¹Hamilton, *God’s Glory*, 301.

²²See the discussion by David R. Jackson, *Crying Out for Vindication: The Gospel According to Job*, The Gospel According to the Old Testament (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2007), 110-11.

one's future judgment is based on whether or not one follows the Law. Second, there is a possible messianic link because so much of the wisdom literature is attributed to David's son, Solomon. Mathison argues that because the wisdom literature is associated with Solomon that it "seems possible, then, that the wisdom described in these books does prefigure in some ways certain attributes of the Messiah, the eschatological Son of David."²³ Third, Job shows that the rewards of wisdom do not always naturally follow in this life, and at times the righteous must hope in a future vindication.

Psalms

The Psalms appear to be more fruitful in connecting with the future hope of Proverbs. The Psalms are eschatological in their final composition according to recent studies.²⁴ This conclusion is part of the remarkable wave of recent Psalter studies that now approach Psalms not as a collection of texts but as a unified whole.²⁵ The landmark study for this approach was done by Gerald Wilson in his 1985 dissertation.²⁶ Wilson argues for two overarching frames to the Psalter. There is a Royal Covenantal Frame (Pss 2, 72, 89 and 144) and a Wisdom Frame (Pss 1, 73, 90, 107 and 145) at the beginning of

²³Mathison, *From Age to Age*, 136. He points out that Jesus identifies himself as "the way," which is a common wisdom literature theme, and that Jesus is identified as the Wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:24, 30).

²⁴D. C. Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter: An Eschatological Programme in the Book of Psalms*, JSOTSup 252 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997). Jinkyu Kim, "The Strategic Arrangement of Royal Psalms in Books IV-V," *Westminster Theological Journal* 70, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 143-57. See also B. S. Childs, *Introduction to the OT as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1979), 516-17.

²⁵For a good overview of the new trend in Psalms studies, see David M. Howard, Jr., "The Psalms and Current Study," in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*, ed. David Firth and Philip S. Johnston (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2005), 23-40.

²⁶G. H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, SBLDS 76 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985).

each of the five Books of Psalms, and the ending of the last Book. Wilson contends that the Wisdom Frame trumps the Royal Frame, so that trust in human kingship is given up for trust in the rule of Yahweh. Wilson asserts that there is not an eschatological or messianic thrust to the Psalter. Other scholars have questioned Wilson's conclusions. They view Psalms 1 and 2 as the introduction to the Psalter, and they argue that these two psalms place the Davidic and Divine kingships together as the hope of the book. Indeed, Mitchell makes the case that the book is eschatological in nature, and that the central future hope of the book is for a Davidic Messiah.²⁷

Hamilton argues similarly that each of the five Books of the Psalter tells a story and that it ends with an eschatological hope. Book 1 (Pss 1-41) tells the story of David's rise to power through suffering. Book 2 (Pss 42-72) tells the story of David's reign up to the reign of Solomon. Book 3 (Pss 73-89) tells the story from Solomon to exile. Book 4 (Pss 90-106) contains exilic reflections on Yahweh's past deliverance of Israel. Book 5 (Pss 107-150) looks beyond exile and hopes for Yahweh to deliver his people from their enemies in the future through the Davidic king.²⁸ Thus, the Psalter is eschatological, hoping for a return from exile and the eternal establishment of the Davidic kingdom. The next section briefly examines the characteristics of the future hope of the Psalms, and there will no doubt be some overlap: observance of Torah, deliverance from enemies and return to the land, and an eternal, worldwide kingdom.

²⁷Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter*. Mitchell contends that when the Psalter was redacted the house of David had fallen. Therefore, royal Psalms placed at prominent positions in the Psalter (i.e., Ps 2 in the prologue and Ps 89 as the close to Book 3) refer to a "Davidic scion not yet come." See David C. Mitchell, "Lord, Remember David: G. H. Wilson and the Message of the Psalter," *VT* 56, no. 4 (2006): 526-48.

²⁸Hamilton, *God's Glory*, 275.

Torah

The future hope of the Psalter is for an ideal king who delights in and obeys the Law of Yahweh, thus fulfilling the command to kings in Deuteronomy 17. This hope is set forth at the outset of the book in the introduction of Psalms 1 and 2. These Psalms are meant to be read together.²⁹ Cole gives three evidences for connecting the two Psalms. First, there is no superscription for Psalm 2. Second, there is an *inclusio* formed by אֲשֶׁר־י at the beginning and end of the unit (1:1; 2:12). Third, there are numerous *Stichwörter* (verbal parallels) present that strongly indicate an integrated understanding for the Psalms.³⁰ In addition, the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds considered Psalms 1 and 2 as one psalm (*Taanith; Berakhot 9b*), and in some early Acts manuscripts Acts 13:33 quotes from Psalm 2 and refers to as the first psalm (τὸ πρῶτον).³¹ Thus, seeing Psalms 1 and 2 as one psalm means that the blessed man of Psalm 1 is the Messianic king, the Son of God, in Psalm 2 who rules as Yahweh's representative on earth. It also means that the wicked fools of Psalm 1 are the kings and nations who rage against Yahweh and his Messiah in Psalm 2.

This successful, messianic king is characterized as one who delights in the Torah (1:2). His success is tied to his observance of Torah. He is a "new Joshua" who meditates on Torah (cf. Josh 1:1-9), drives out the enemies and possesses the land (cf. Pss

²⁹Robert Cole, "An Integrated Reading of Psalms 1 and 2," *JSOT* 98 (2002): 75-88.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 77.

³¹Origen, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Cyprian and others refer to this as well. Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek NT*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 363-65.

1:4; 2:1-6; 2:8-9).³² Cole argues that he is an ideal royal figure greater than Joshua because he does not waver in his dedication to the Torah.

It becomes increasingly clear that Psalms 1 and 2 at the head of the Psalter do not present two different themes of wisdom and/or Torah and kingship respectively, but rather *both* depict the ideal kingly warrior who enjoys complete domination of his enemies. His meditation in the Torah (1:2) simply means complete adherence to the deuteronomic command for the king (Deut. 17:18-20), which was also repeated to Joshua.³³

The connection of wisdom, Torah and kingship here provides fruitful ground for connections with Proverbs (see connections below).³⁴

Throughout the Psalter, royal and Torah Psalms are placed together indicating the character of the coming Davidic king as one who observes Torah. Some argue that the Psalms are overly positive about the kingship when the rest of the OT is not.³⁵ Grant maintains, however, that the OT is “positive about kingship which is practised in accordance with the law of the King, and negative about kingship that rejects Yahweh and his ways.”³⁶ David’s line failed because they rejected Torah. Grant contends that the editors of the Psalter wanted to direct the readers to understand the future Davidic king in a specific light by placing some of the royal Psalms in a specific context. They did this to create the hope for a future king who will fulfill the ideal of kingship in Deuteronomy’s

³²Psalms 1 and 2, as the introduction to the Psalter, give a picture of what the coming Messiah will look like. All three characteristics of this section’s investigation are present in this text.

³³Cole, “Integrated Reading,” 80.

³⁴See C. Hassell Bullock, “Wisdom, the ‘Amen’ of Torah.” *JETS* 52, no. 1 (2009): 5-18.

³⁵J. G. McConville, *Deuteronomy*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary, vol. 5 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2002), 306.

³⁶Jamie A. Grant, “The Psalms and the King,” in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*, ed. David Firth and Philip S. Johnston (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2005), 113.

kingship law (Deut 17:14-20), and thereby experience a universal and just rule.³⁷ What is that context? Royal psalms are often placed adjacent to Torah Psalms in the Psalter (seen above in Pss 1-2). After, Psalm 2 the next “explicitly” royal psalms are 18, 20 and 21 which are juxtaposed with a Torah Psalm (Ps 19). The supreme Torah Psalm is Psalm 119, and it is placed next to Psalm 118 where the king leads the people in antiphonal worship.³⁸ Hence, the ideal, messianic king will be a king who obeys Torah, and thereby establishes his dominion.

Land and Enemies

Another characteristic of the hoped-for future king is that he will deliver his people from their enemies and bring them back into the land. This is evident in the introduction to the Psalter in Psalms 1 and 2. This is implied with the “planting” language for the blessed man in Psalm 1. Unlike the wicked who are driven away like chaff, the blessed man (messiah) will be planted and prosper (Ps 1:3-4). He will possess the ends of the earth, and he will break the nations with a rod of iron (Ps 2:8-9). The Psalms actually widen the scope of the “promised land” to include the whole of the creation (cf. Ps 72). The enemies of the Messiah will be completely under his subjugation, bowing to kiss him (2:12).

Psalm 72 gives David’s hope for his descendants.³⁹ He is hoping for the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant. The Davidic king will rule in justice and righteousness, upholding the cause of the poor and delivering them (72:1-4). His

³⁷Ibid., 114.

³⁸Ibid., 115.

³⁹Hamilton, *God’s Glory*, 284.

dominion will be over the entire earth (72:8). He will conquer his enemies; indeed, they will lick the dust.⁴⁰ Psalm 72 shows the Davidic hope for a just king who delivers his people, defeats his enemies, and reigns over the whole earth.

Again, the Psalter is giving Israel's storyline. Book 3 tells of Israel going into exile away from the land. The fall of Jerusalem is alluded to in Psalm 89.⁴¹ But, in Psalm 110 (Book 5) a new David arises after exile, and Yahweh crushes the head of his enemies. Then, the Songs of Ascent in Psalms 120-134 "appear to herald the return from exile made possible by the triumph of the new David."⁴² Therefore, the new David will defeat the enemies of his people and re-establish the nation in the land.

An Eternal, Worldwide Kingdom

The hope is for a new David to arise who will serve as Yahweh's faithful vice-regent on earth (Ps 2). God will establish his kingdom on earth through the Davidic king who will reign as the new Adam (Ps 80:17; cf. Ps 8:4-8). As discussed above, this new David will establish a worldwide kingdom, and he will also establish a kingdom that is everlasting. Indeed, Yahweh promised David an eternal dynasty (Ps 89:4, 29, 36). The hope for an eternal kingdom intensifies because the sons of David behave poorly and lose the kingdom in exile (Ps 89:38-52). Then, in Book 5, Psalm 132 restates Yahweh's promise to David that his dynasty will last forever, as long as David's sons keep Yahweh's commands (132:11-12). The failure of the Davidic kings to delight in Torah

⁴⁰This is an allusion to the Messianic promise of Gen 3:14-15. See James Hamilton, "The Skull-Crushing Seed of the Woman: Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Genesis 3:15," *SBJT* 10, no. 2 (2006): 39.

⁴¹Hamilton, *God's Glory*, 285.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 279.

faithfully deepens the hope for one yet to come who will be dedicated to Torah and thereby establish a lasting kingdom.

Therefore, the future hope of the Psalms is for a future David who will obey the Torah, defeat Israel's enemies, return her to the land, and establish a worldwide, eternal kingdom where he rules as Yahweh's vice-regent.⁴³

Other Writings

This survey of the future hope of the rest of the writings could be extensive, but space does not permit it. This section quickly surveys some of the main themes that emerge. Daniel is about God's kingdom breaking into the world and dashing the wicked kingdoms of men to pieces (Dan 2). Dempster connects this with David when he writes, "The gigantic stature of the image that is destroyed by a small stone cannot help but bring to mind also the confrontation of David with Goliath.... This is the Davidic rock, which will grow to be a kingdom without borders."⁴⁴ God's inbreaking kingdom will be given to a human, the Son of Man, and it will extend over all the peoples of the earth (Dan 7; cf. Ps 80). The Son of Man will reign over an eternal kingdom. He is called the Messiah, again connecting him with the Davidic promises, and he will end the exile and usher in everlasting righteousness (Dan 9:20-27).⁴⁵

Ezra-Nehemiah tells the story of the partial fulfillment of the prophets' promises of a new exodus. Indeed, the Jews do return to the land of Promise, having plundered the Persians (Ezra 1:6), and they begin to rebuild what was destroyed.

⁴³Mathison, *From Age to Age*, 125-30.

⁴⁴Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 214.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 218.

Unfortunately, the people do not experience the fullness of the future hope promises. They are still ruled by foreigners, and they are not keeping the Torah. They are falling back into the same patterns of violating Torah and compromising with the Gentiles, which is seen so clearly in the issue of inter-marriage. Ezra-Nehemiah presents a “deep dissatisfaction” with this state of things and is hopeful for a future fulfillment of all the glorious promises Yahweh made to Israel.⁴⁶

Chronicles tell the story of Yahweh’s faithfulness to his covenant with David as a means of bolstering the people’s hope that a future David would reign and the promises would be fulfilled. One example is the story of Manasseh’s repentance while in exile in Babylon and his return to the throne. This story is mentioned in Chronicles, but it is not mentioned in the Kings’ account of Manasseh’s life (cf. 2 Kgs 21:1-18; 2 Chr 33:1-20). The inclusion of this account in Chronicles teaches that Yahweh is willing to be gracious and return the fortunes of the Davidic line, and thus this teaching was intended to strengthen the hope of the post-exilic Jews reading the book. Yahweh promises to establish an eternal dynasty for David and defeat his enemies. The might of Solomon’s reign contrasted with the eventual fall of the Davidic line in exile anticipates a day when a greater son will arise to become the ideal king over an eternal kingdom. As McConville states, “Parading the glories of Solomon before the eyes of post-exilic Judah can only have been intended to arouse hopes that the heirs to the promises to Israel could again be great.”⁴⁷

⁴⁶Read McConville’s excellent discussion of the eschatology of Ezra-Nehemiah. J. G. McConville, “Ezra-Nehemiah and the Fulfilment of Prophecy,” *VT* 36, no. 2 (1986): 205-24.

⁴⁷McConville, “Ezra-Nehemiah,” 206.

Connection with Proverbs

How does the future hope of the writings inform or connect with Proverbs?

The writings paint a portrait of future hope that complements nicely with this dissertation's analysis of Proverbs. Here are some representative examples of the connections.

Trust in a Future Hope

Job does not map out much of a covenantal future hope. However, it is helpful because Job shows that the consequences of wisdom do not always work out immediately. Sometimes there is a long waiting period before the promised rewards come. While scholars want to use this message from Job to assert that the purpose of the book is to correct the optimistic view of wisdom and its rewards in Proverbs, it seems the exact opposite is true.⁴⁸ Job is a corrective to scholarship that sees wisdom's rewards as only being experienced in the here and now. There is no naïve optimism in Proverbs. The rewards of wisdom do not always follow immediately, and the sage of Proverbs knows that just like the sage of Job. There are times in life when the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer. Van Leeuwen helpfully points to the "Better-than" Proverbs (i.e., Prov 16:8) to show that Proverbs is aware of this problem, and Waltke argues that the promises of Proverbs only make sense if there is a future hope because sometimes the rewards do not come until after this life, just as Job recognized.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Murphy argues that Proverbs is overconfident. Murphy and Huwiler, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, 9.

⁴⁹R. C. Van Leeuwen, "Wealth and Poverty: System and Contradiction in Proverbs," *HS* 33 (1992): 25-36. Bruce Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs Chapter 1-15*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 107-09.

Torah

The writings are concerned that Israel keep the Torah, and that the king, as the head of the nation, be a faithful observer of Torah (cf. Chronicles). Ecclesiastes and Psalms are concerned that the king be a man of the Torah. The sage of Ecclesiastes exhorted his son to fear God and keep his commands because there will be a final judgment. The Psalter hopes for a future David who delights in the Torah, and thereby establishes an eternal kingdom. As chapter 4 will examine in-depth, there is an overlap between Torah and Wisdom in the OT (cf. Deut 4:6; Ezra 7:14, 25). This overlap is also seen in that the so-called “Wisdom Psalms” are often also identified as “Torah Psalms.”⁵⁰

This is illustrated by Psalms 1 and 2. The wise man of Psalm 1, who is the Messiah of Psalm 2, does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners (1:1). Walk, counsel, wicked, and path are all proverbial terms. The wise man of Psalm 1 is described in similar categories as the wise man of Proverbs because they are both law-keepers. This is essential for the future Davidic kingdom according to Psalm 2.⁵¹ As will be argued in Chapter 4 this is the function of Proverbs. Solomon is training his son in Torah in obedience to Deuteronomy 6 and 17, and this is the same picture as that of Ecclesiastes, Psalms, and the other writings. The wisdom of Torah-observance is the key to retaining the land in Proverbs (cf. 2:20-22), and it is key to life in the land in the rest of the writings.

⁵⁰Philip S. Johnston, “Index of Form-Critical Categorizations,” *Interpreting the Psalms*, 295-300.

⁵¹The connection of wisdom and monarchy in Pss 1 and 2 is fruitful for understanding how the wisdom of Proverbs is at home in Israel’s canon. Wisdom is often said to have an international character that is more general. However, Pss 1 and 2 reveal that the generalizations of wisdom can be juxtaposed with the national character of the monarchy. The wise man is the messianic king, and the fools are the raging nations. Proverbs has a more general character than many books in the OT but is juxtaposed with the monarchy (Prov 1:1) and is meant to be read in that way. See Grant, “The Psalms,” 118.

Land and Defeat of Enemies

There is overlap with other categories, but another aspect of the future hope of the writings is a connection of return from exile with peace from enemies (cf. Pss 2; 72; and the dissatisfaction of the returned exiles in Ezra-Nehemiah who are still under the rule of the Persians). There will be stability in the land in the future without trouble from the nations. This is also a concern in Proverbs (see Chapter 5 of this dissertation). Texts like Proverbs 1:33; 28:16; 29:4, and 14 reveal that Proverbs is concerned not just with having the land but being safe and at home in the land without fear of the nation toppling. This will only happen if the king is wise and just. Indeed, wisdom is the path to peace with your enemies (Prov 16:7).

Ideal King and Eternal Kingdom

A final feature of the hope of the writings is an eternal kingdom. One of the striking things the Psalter points out is that God establishes his rule on the earth through his human vice-regent, the Messiah (cf. Ps 2).⁵² This dissertation has already argued for an eternal kingdom in Proverbs (29:14), but there is also vice-regency taught.

Proverbs 16:1-15 is a description of Yahweh and his ideal king. In similar fashion to the portrayal of the king and Yahweh in the Psalter, Proverbs 16:1-9 describes the sovereignty of Yahweh over human affairs, and then 16:10-15 describes Yahweh's representative on earth, the king.⁵³ The wise king is endowed by Yahweh with the ability

⁵²See Mark J. Boda, *After God's Own Heart: The Gospel According to David, The Gospel According to the Old Testament* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2007), 79-82.

⁵³For a discussion of the unity of Prov 15:30-16:15, see Udo Skladny, *Die ältesten Spruchsammlungen in Israel* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), 7-46. See also Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 15-17. The main reason for seeing a unity is the "catchwords" in the passage, although Murphy argues for an *inclusio* in 16:1-33. He does however agree that there is a linkage between Yahweh

to decree justice.⁵⁴ Proverbs 16:10 says that “divine oracles” (מִקְּוֵי) are on the lips of the king. Usually מִקְּוֵי is a negative word, but in a context concerning justice and the ideal king it “denotes a legitimate method of reaching a verdict in legal disputes.”⁵⁵ Kings should speak right judgments and not transgress the law in judgment (16:10). Indeed, Yahweh “inspires” his wise king to give “infallible verdicts that do not betray justice,” and this anticipates the actions of Messiah.⁵⁶ The next verse references just weights and standards, thus giving an example of how the king is to uphold justice. Why is the king to rule in Yahweh’s stead upholding justice? The reason is that those who practice wickedness are an abomination (תוֹעֵבָה) to the king, and his throne is established in righteousness (16:12).⁵⁷ Again, this shows a connection between Yahweh and his king. Most often in Proverbs an “abomination” is done against Yahweh (3:32; 6:16; 11:1, 20;

and the king who rules as his representative on earth. See Roland Murphy, *Proverbs*, WBC, vol. 22 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 119. Skladny and Waltke argue that this is an introduction to section B of collection II. Some of the catchwords are: the mentioning of organs like the eyes (15:30;16:2), the heart (15:30, 32; 16:1, 9), the bones (15:30), the ear (15:31), the tongue (16:1), lips (16:10, 13), mouth (16:10), and face (16:15). “Life” is a keyword in 15:31 and 16:15 (*inclusio*). Other catchwords like “favor” (16:7, 15), “abomination” (16:5, 12), and “atonement” (16:6, 14) are used in both sections and applied to the “main” characters of the passage, Yahweh and the king. Agreeing that the passage is a unity is not necessary to see the ideal picture of the king in Proverbs, but one who does not take this interpretation will not see the Yahwistic connection to the ideal king as clearly.

⁵⁴Crenshaw points out the similarity here with Egyptian instructions to kings. The king “has direct access to the god’s will and consequently renders accurate judicial decisions.” James Crenshaw, “A Mother’s Instructions to Her Son (Proverbs 31:1-9),” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 15, no. 4 Winter (1988): 21.

⁵⁵Bruce Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs 15-31*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 17.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 17-18.

⁵⁷There is some discussion about the phrase עֲשׂוֹת רָשָׁע. It can either mean those who practice evil or that it is an abomination for kings to commit evil. Either translation declares that righteousness is essential to the king’s kingdom enduring.

12:33; 15:8, 9, 26; and in our passage 16:5). But, here in Proverbs 16:12, it is an abomination against the king.⁵⁸

The stability of a king's kingdom depends on his ability to uphold justice, so the wicked and corrupt are an abomination in his sight. That is also why 16:13 says that those who speak what is right earn the favor and pleasure (רְצוֹן)⁵⁹ of the king. Like Yahweh, the Israelite king holds the power of death and life (16:14-15). The king's wrath is "messengers of death," and the wise man will appease (כִּפֶּר) it (16:14). But favor in the king's sight is "life" (16:15). This reminds one of the Messiah in Psalm 2:12 who must be kissed so his anger is not kindled. Thus, the ideal king is one who divinely upholds justice as Yahweh's representative on earth and punishes the wicked so as to ensure the stability of his kingdom.

One of the reasons why there is stability in the kingdom of a wise king is because a wise man is given victory over his enemies. This idea comes from Proverbs 16:7, which says, "When a man's ways please Yahweh he causes his enemies to live at peace (שָׁלוֹם) with him."⁶¹ Another place where this concept is found is Proverbs 14:19,

⁵⁸In fact, Prov 20:23 says that diverse weights are an abomination to Yahweh, and here after mentioning that honest weights are pleasing to Yahweh the author tells the reader that wickedness is an abomination to the king. The reference of an abomination to Yahweh in 16:5 shows the connection between Yahweh and the king as his representative on earth.

⁵⁹Again, this is a "catchword" used of Yahweh (16:7) and the king (16:13).

⁶⁰Just as one needs to appease or atone (כִּפֶּר) before the wrath of Yahweh in Prov 16:5-6, so one needs to appease the wrath of the king in 16:14 (cf. Ps 2; Isa 11 and the punishing power of the Messiah).

⁶¹Perhaps this is why the spirit-anointed prince (cf. Prov 1:20-33) can "dwell secure at ease without fear of evil" (1:33), because all of his enemies have been put at his feet. This was true in the life of Solomon who enjoyed "peace" in his kingdom (1 Kgs 4:25).

“the evil will bow before the good, and the wicked at the gates of the righteous.” The terminology of the “gates” suggests the dispensing of justice which “relieves the oppressed and punishes the guilty.”⁶² This fits exactly the description of the king and his role.

The future hope that emerges from the writings is for a future David who delights in the Torah, defeats Israel’s enemies, brings Israel back to the land, and establishes an enduring kingdom. This is consistent with the hope of Proverbs for a son of David who is wise by keeping the Torah. He is a king who rules as Yahweh’s representative on earth. He upholds justice and ensures the stability of his kingdom in the land.

⁶²Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 597-98.

CHAPTER 4

FUTURE HOPE IN THE LAW AND PROVERBS

This dissertation has argued that Proverbs must be read in its canonical context, and that is especially true when it comes to the Law.¹ Nothing looms as large in the canon of the OT as the Law. Indeed, as Hamilton has noted about Deuteronomy specifically, “In many ways, Deuteronomy is the heart of the Old Testament. What comes before it leads up to this climactic moment of entering the land, and what comes after it is judged by the standards set in Deuteronomy.”² This chapter conducts a brief survey of future hope themes in the Law and then discusses what connections they might have with Proverbs.

Future Hope in the Law

The storyline of the Law continues to bring certain themes to the forefront. The story begins with God creating the world and then creating a man who rules (רדה) over and subdues (כבש) the creation as God’s vice-regent (Gen 1:26-28).³ However, when the

¹“Law” here means all of the Pentateuch or Torah, but much attention will be given to Deuteronomy.

²James Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 274.

³Merrill takes this as basically the starting point for the theme of his OT theology. See Eugene Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion: A Theology of the Old Testament* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 135-36.

man transgresses God's one rule concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, ruling authority is lost due to human sin (Gen 3). But, this brings the initial promise that stirs up expectation for something greater in the future, the "proto-gospel" of Genesis 3:15, where the promise of offspring and victory take center stage in the expectation of the OT.⁴ After humanity gives in to the temptation of the serpent and falls into sin, which brings the curse of death into human existence, God promises that a man will come from the woman who will eventually defeat the enemy and his offspring, and thereby rescue humanity from the curse. This concern about offspring and the war between the offspring of the woman and the offspring of the serpent becomes the central concern of Genesis. The offspring of the woman is Abel, not Cain, and then Seth (Gen 4). The war of the "seeds" continues until the line is narrowed to Noah (Gen 6).

Ultimately, the line is narrowed to Abram, and a three-fold promise is given to Abram and his offspring: land, seed, and blessing.⁵ Indeed, God promises that Abraham's offspring will be kings (Gen 17:6). Yet, offspring seems unlikely because Sarai is barren, but God continues to work miraculously to preserve the line, starting with Isaac and then Jacob.⁶ The son of Jacob who receives the promise is Judah, and the promise is a future hope for a kingdom. This son of Judah will be a king who in the "last days" (הַיָּמִים)

⁴This promise stirs up Messianic expectation in the OT from the beginning. See James Hamilton, "The Skull-Crushing Seed of the Woman: Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Genesis 3:15," *SBJT* 10, no. 2 (2006): 30-54. So also Keith A. Mathison, *From Age to Age: The Unfolding of Biblical Eschatology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2009), 47.

⁵Walter Kaiser argues that Gen 12:1-3 is one of the key passages for his proposed center to the OT, "promise." Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 39-40 and 86-87. See Mathew's discussion as well in Kenneth Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, NAC, vol. 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 54-60.

⁶Kaiser, *Toward an OT Theology*, 89.

בְּאַחֲרֵיֶת) will rule over the nations (Gen 49:1, 8-10).⁷ Thus, there are promises and expectations for a future king (offspring), dwelling in the land and being blessed by Yahweh.

This is all jeopardized by the famine that forces Jacob's family to go to Egypt where eventually they are subjected to slavery.⁸ With the killing of the Hebrew babies and their bondage in Egypt, both the promises of seed and the land seem to be in danger in the book of Exodus. God miraculously delivers them through Moses in the Exodus, and then gives them the law that is to govern them as his people at Sinai. Keeping the Mosaic covenant received at Sinai is connected to a kingdom promise. If the people will be faithful to Yahweh then they will be a kingdom of priests (Exod 19:6).

While they wander in the wilderness for forty years there are again kingly promises made. Balaam's oracles foretell of a king, a kingdom, and utter defeat of enemies (cf. Num 23-24). These are future hope promises that will occur in the "last days" (בְּאַחֲרֵיֶת הַיָּמִים).⁹

Deuteronomy becomes supremely concerned for preparedness to enter the land and keep it, and this is all tied to Israel's ability to keep the Torah. In fact, the future hope themes that arose previously in the Pentateuch arise here and are intimately connected with keeping the law. The nation's place in the land is based on keeping the Torah (Deut

⁷John H. Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch: Revelation, Composition and Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2009), 244.

⁸Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27-50:26*, NAC, vol. 1B (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2005), 72.

⁹This is a technical phrase used for the final period of history or the Messianic future. Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000), 31.

4:25-31), the duration of the king's dynasty is based on whether or not he is a man of the Torah (Deut 17:18-20), and the offspring of Israel will be jeopardized by unfaithfulness to the Torah (Deut 28:18). Indeed, Deuteronomy maps out the future history of Israel.¹⁰ The foreboding promise is made that they will fall into idolatry, break the covenant, and ultimately be exiled from the land (Deut 4:26-27). Once in exile the nation will seek Yahweh with all of their heart and will find him (4:29). All of these will happen in the "last days" (בְּאַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים) when they will return to Yahweh and finally obey him (4:30). One day they will keep the law and receive the promises. Deuteronomy 30 also predicts this future. Hamilton says that the punishment warned in Deuteronomy 29 is "treated as a prophecy" in Deuteronomy 30.¹¹ Moses tells Israel that all of the blessings and cursings will come upon them. They will go into exile, remember the Lord, turn back to him, obey his voice, and then the Lord will compassionately gather them from the corners of the earth and bring them back into the land. He will circumcise their hearts so they will love him and obey the Torah (30:6; cf. 10:16). The curses will then be poured out on their enemies. Moses concludes by warning them that the choice of whether or not to obey the law is a choice between life and death (cf. Deut 11), and their length of life in the land (30:20).

Three future hope themes emerge in this survey of the Law that the next section examines in further detail. These future hope themes are the ideas of king, Torah, and land.

¹⁰Hamilton, *God's Glory*, 130

¹¹Ibid.

King

The Law presents the hope for a future king who re-establishes the kingdom of God as his vice-regent on earth (cf. Gen 1:26).¹² Sailhamer actually argues for a wisdom composition of the Pentateuch that is eschatological and Messianic.

At the center of God's future plans for Israel is a king who will arise from the house of Judah and bring peace to the nations. The Pentateuch appears to have been written in part to give comfort and hope to those awaiting the coming king. It is both eschatological and messianic. . . . The author of the Pentateuch appears to be quite concerned about the religious and ethical behavior of those who are awaiting the coming king. His book, the Pentateuch, is intended as a sort of guide to the perplexed. The author of the Pentateuch is convinced that, in the present age, divine guidance can come only through the reading and study of the written Scripture. It and it alone, is the source of divine wisdom.¹³

Sailhamer argues that the Pentateuch is intended to be read from the perspective of this Messianic hope, and that this is made evident through the major poems at the seams of the Pentateuch: the conclusion of the patriarchal history (Gen 49), the exodus from Egypt (Exod 15), the wilderness wanderings (Num 23-24), and the conquest of the Transjordan (Deut 32-33). The poems focus on the coming of the Messianic king in the "last days" (בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים; Gen 49:1; Num 24:14; Deut 31:29) and connect with the promise of Genesis 3:15. The Pentateuch presents a future hope for a lion from the tribe of Judah who will rule.¹⁴ Indeed, the promised king will come from Judah and rule over the

¹²See similar in Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion*, 278-80.

¹³John Sailhamer, "A Wisdom Composition to the Pentateuch?" in *The Way of Wisdom: Essays in Honor of Bruce K. Waltke*, ed. J. I. Packer and Sven K. Soderlund (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 28-29.

¹⁴Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch*, 34-37.

nations (Gen 49:10).¹⁵ He is linked with Genesis 3:15 because he will crush the “forehead” of his enemies (Num 24:17).¹⁶

Deuteronomy 17:14-20 gives laws concerning future kings in the land. Moses gives instructions and warnings about how this might play out for them. He warns that the king is not to accumulate wives for himself because that would turn his heart away from the Lord (17:17). He is also not to accumulate horses or money. The king is to be a man of Torah. When the king is installed on his throne he is instructed to write a copy of the law, and read it every day of his life, so that he may learn to “fear” Yahweh by keeping all of the words of the law (17:18-19).¹⁷ If he does this then his dynasty will continue for a long time for him and his children after him in Israel (17:20).¹⁸ The length of his life and dynasty is tied to keeping the law.¹⁹ Therefore, the law presents a future hope for a king who obeys Torah and establishes a worldwide kingdom by subduing his enemies.

Torah

The previous section examined the Torah in relation to the king. Obedience to Yahweh’s statutes looms large in the Torah’s future hope. Moses instructs parents to

¹⁵So also Kaiser, *Toward an OT Theology*, 96-97.

¹⁶Hamilton, “The Skull-Crushing Seed,” 34.

¹⁷A similar charge is given to Joshua in Josh 1:6-10, and there it is connected to the land as well.

¹⁸Hamilton also argues that Proverbs is Solomon obeying Deut 6 and 17 by training his son in the law. This chapter will examine this in more detail. Hamilton, *God’s Glory*, 290.

¹⁹This is the same promise in Proverbs (see Chap. 5). Wisdom will determine the length of a king’s days and dynasty. Indeed, Prov 28:16 says that a king who hates the law-breaking sin of covetousness will prolong his days (אֲרִי־יָיִן יַגְמִיִם); cf. Deut 17:20; Prov 9:11).

teach their children in the Torah because their retention of the land is dependent upon it (Deut 6:1-9). The promise is made that Israel will disobey and forsake the Torah, and this will lead to the covenant curses and ultimately exile (cf. Deut 4:26-27; 28; 30).

The issue for Israel is that she is unable to obey the Torah because of a heart problem. The people do not have a “heart in them” that causes them to fear Yahweh and keep his commands (Deut 5:29). Their hearts are disposed to rejecting Yahweh’s commands. The words of the law must be internalized on the heart in order to be obeyed (Deut 6:6). There is an inner transformation that needs to take place that is described as a circumcised heart (Deut 10:16). The problem for Israel is that Yahweh has not given them such a heart yet (Deut 29:3). Hence, it is a foregone conclusion that they will disobey and receive the covenant curse of exile. But, once in exile Israel will remember and turn back to Yahweh, and they will obey him with all of their heart (Deut 30:2). Yahweh will return them to the land (30:4). How is this new reality of obedience to Torah possible?²⁰ Yahweh himself will circumcise their hearts so that they obey him (30:6). The future hope of Deuteronomy is that one day Yahweh will circumcise the hearts of his covenant people so that they can obey the Torah. Indeed, as will be seen in Chapter 5, this is the hope of the prophets as well, that Yahweh will put a new heart in his covenant people (Ezek 36:26), and that he will write his law on their hearts (Jer 31:33), so that they will obey him in the land. This is the eschatological picture of a future day when these things become reality.²¹ Israel is hoping for circumcised (new) hearts that

²⁰Mathison says that Deut 30:6 is the answer to how the return from exile will be different from before. Mathison, *From Age to Age*, 76.

²¹So also Hamilton, *God’s Glory*, 123-25.

have the Torah written on them so that they are able to follow and fear Yahweh with all of their hearts. This will take place after the return from exile to the land.²²

Land

There was significant overlap with the hope for retaining the land in both the King and Torah sections overviewed above. The land is a dominant concern of the Pentateuch.²³ The promise is made to Abram in Genesis 12, but he and his family's enjoyment of the land is short lived. Most of the Pentateuch's storyline is with Abraham's family outside of the land of Promise and striving to return. That is indeed where the Pentateuch ends, with Israel on the edge of the Promised Land hoping to inherit it soon. The future hope is based on the promise that they would inherit the land as an "everlasting possession" (Gen 17:1-8).²⁴

The future hope of the Torah is for a king of the Torah who establishes a kingdom in the Promise Land where the law of Yahweh is obeyed by the circumcised hearts of the covenant people after the curse of exile.

Proverbs Connections

Part of the thesis is that the wisdom of Proverbs is living under the covenant in obedience to Torah.²⁵ This section explores if this connection is tenable and what results it might yield for the future hope of Proverbs. It contends that there is indeed a special

²²Proverbs makes the same promises of an internalized law, written on the heart (see below).

²³Mathison, *From Age to Age*, 48.

²⁴Kaiser, *Toward an OT Theology*, 89.

²⁵See also Waltke's discussion on this. Bruce Waltke, "The Book of Proverbs and OT Theology" *BS* 136 (October-December 1979): 316-17.

connection between the Torah and the Proverbs along both lexical and thematic lines. The concepts of Torah and wisdom converge in the OT.²⁶ Both are didactic in function, present the same ethic, the same ability to live up to the ethic (a new heart), and the same future hope. Indeed, there are so many thematic connections between the Proverbs and Torah in terms of instruction in how to live that Childs maintains both paint a similar picture of the life that is pleasing to God even if they come at it from a different perspective.²⁷

Convergence of Wisdom and Torah

Wisdom and Torah become virtually synonymous in the OT, because wisdom is keeping the law.²⁸ Most scholars of wisdom literature in the OT see wisdom as isolated from ideas like covenant, and some even call wisdom a foreign body to the OT.²⁹ These scholars argue that wisdom does not come to be identified with Torah until post-Biblical literature. This viewpoint will be addressed first.

The late convergence of wisdom and Torah? Most scholars agree that in the development of Israelite religion wisdom and Torah converge. Blenkinsopp uses this

²⁶There is a strong connection between wisdom and Torah. Kalugila argues that they are synonymous. Leonidas Kalugila, *The Wise King: Studies in Royal Wisdom as Divine Revelation in the Old Testament and Its Environment* (Lund: Gleerup, 1980) 83-84.

²⁷Brevard Childs, *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 211-12. Childs sees the major thrust of wisdom in terms of instruction in the way to live rightly before God.

²⁸Wisdom is viewing life within the framework of the covenant. It is the daily application of the law.

²⁹Hartmut Gese, *Lehre und Wirklichkeit in der alten Weisheit* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1958), 2. Murphy argues that Proverbs does not deal with covenant. Roland Murphy, *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 1. See Michael Fox, *Proverbs 1-9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 18A (New Haven: Yale University, 2000), 142. He says that Torah in Proverbs does not refer to the law.

eventual convergence as the theme of his book. He writes, “At the end of the first chapter the reader was invited to think of wisdom and law as two great rivers which eventually flow together and find their outlet in rabbinic writings and early Christian theology.”³⁰ Thus, for Blenkinsopp the convergence does not take place till 180 BC. While many scholars see what Blenkinsopp calls a “mingling” between law and wisdom throughout the OT, most agree with Blenkinsopp that their convergence takes place in Ben Sirach who actually equates personified Wisdom with Torah (Sir 24:23-24).³¹ He argues that Ben Sirach does this in order to demonstrate the superiority of Judaistic wisdom to that of the Greeks of his day.

The convergence of wisdom and Torah in the OT. There is however evidence for an earlier convergence of wisdom and Torah in Deuteronomy 4:6, which says that keeping the laws within the Torah is Israel’s “wisdom and understanding” (חֵכְמָתְכֶם וּבִינְתְּכֶם; cf. Prov 1:2) before the nations. When the nations hear the statutes of the Torah they will say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.”

There is another connection in the “Wisdom” or “Torah” Psalms in the Psalter.³² Psalm 1 is considered a Wisdom Psalm, and it describes a blessed man who delights in Torah and meditates on it day and night (Ps 1:2). The wisdom theme of the “two paths” is present in Psalm 1.³³ The path of the righteous is one of delighting in

³⁰Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Wisdom and Law in the Old Testament: The Ordering of Life in Israel and Early Judaism* (Oxford: University Press, 1995), 151.

³¹*Ibid.*, 164-66. See also Murphy, *The Tree of Life*, 76.

³²Philip S. Johnston, “Index of Form-Critical Categorizations,” in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*, ed. David Firth and Philip S. Johnston (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2005). 295-300.

³³N. Habel, “The Symbolism of Wisdom in Proverbs 1-9,” *Int* 26 (1972): 131-57.

Torah (1:6). In Psalm 119 the Psalmist again mentions his love of and constant meditation on Torah (119:97), and then says that Yahweh's commandments make him wiser than his enemies, his teachers and the elders (119:98-100).³⁴ Also, Torah is sweeter than honey to the Psalmist (119:103), and wisdom is also compared to honey in Proverbs 24:13-14.

This leads to a connection in Proverbs itself. Solomon consistently calls his teachings תּוֹרָה in Proverbs: 1:8; 3:1; 4:2; 6:20, 23; 7:2. In fact Solomon calls it “my Torah” (3:1; 4:2), which may be an allusion to the kingship law in Deuteronomy 17 that the king copy the Torah. Hamilton points out that a key verse is Proverbs 29:18, “Where there is no vision (אִישׁוֹן) the people are let loose, but the one who keeps the law (תּוֹרָה) is blessed.” This word for vision (אִישׁוֹן) is used often to speak of the visions of the prophets (Isa 1:1; Jer 14:14; 23:16; Lam 2:9; Dan 8:1; Hos 12:11; Obad 1:1; Nah 1:1; Hab 2:3-3). Proverbs 29:18 is calling the reader to the “blessed restraining power of the Law and the Prophets.”³⁵ The wisdom of Proverbs is referred to as Torah in several places. Those who forsake the Torah are those who praise the wicked (28:4). The one who keeps the Torah is an understanding son (28:7). The prayer of one who turns his ear away from the Torah is called an “abomination” (28:9). Wisdom and Torah are linked in Proverbs.

There is another connection of wisdom and Torah in the Writings. King Artaxerxes addresses Ezra and mentions the “Law of your God, which is in your hand”

³⁴These verses are strikingly parallel to Luke 2-4 where Jesus is presented as one who astounds the “teachers” of Israel, grows in wisdom, and out-duels Satan with the Word of Yahweh.

³⁵Hamilton, *God's Glory*, 272-73. Fox is willing to concede that this might be the one place in Proverbs where *torah* refers to the codified Pentateuch. Michael Fox, *Proverbs 10-31: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 18B (New Haven: Yale University, 2009), 841.

(Ezra 7:14). Then, later in the address he says, “according to the wisdom of your God that is in your hand” (7:25). He instructs Ezra to appoint magistrates and judges who will judge the people based on the laws of “your” God. The Torah is referred to as the wisdom of God. Therefore, the OT connects wisdom with Torah much earlier than Ben Sirach.³⁶ This leads to one final scholarly viewpoint that must be addressed, the question of the relationship between Deuteronomy and Proverbs.

Critique of Weinfeld. One monumental study in this area is that of Moshe Weinfeld on Deuteronomy.³⁷ Weinfeld arrived at a similar conclusion that there is a special connection between wisdom and Deuteronomy. But, he believes that Deuteronomy is a late work, and it is influenced by wisdom, rather than wisdom being influenced by Deuteronomy. Weinfeld’s contention is not surprising given the affinity in recent scholarship to find a wisdom influence almost everywhere in the OT.³⁸ He pushes it a bit further though, arguing for a scribal or sage authorship of Deuteronomy.³⁹

Weinfeld believes there is a connection between wisdom and the Pentateuch in a similar way to what will be shown below: thematic, didactic, humanistic, and retributive. However, as stated, he believes Deuteronomy is a late work, not the foundation for wisdom. There are three key pieces to Weinfeld’s argument that underpin his exegesis which discards Deuteronomistic influence on wisdom. First, he cites the

³⁶This connection provides fruitful ground for contending against those who want to isolate the wisdom literature as different in nature from the rest of the OT. This connection places wisdom literature at home with the theology of the OT. See Waltke, “Book of Proverbs and Old Testament Theology,” 302-17.

³⁷Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

³⁸Childs, *OT Theology in a Canonical Context*, 210.

³⁹Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 177-78.

discovery of wisdom compositions that clearly demonstrate that Israelite wisdom is of ancient origin and antedates the book of Deuteronomy. Second, he argues that the parallels between Deuteronomy and Proverbs are also found in extra-biblical wisdom literature. Weinfeld asks if the scholar is to assume that Deuteronomy also influenced Egyptian and Babylonian wisdom. Third, going back to one of the major problems in OT theology, Weinfeld asks how the scholar is to account for the fact that the material Proverbs supposedly draws from Deuteronomy does not contain the slightest suggestion of the religio-national concept at the core of deuteronomic teaching.⁴⁰ Weinfeld does a wonderful job exegetically connecting Deuteronomy and Proverbs. If one could disprove these three presuppositions, then Weinfeld's exegesis that connects Deuteronomy and Proverbs could possibly argue in favor of deuteronomic priority instead of a wisdom priority.

First, it is not clearly demonstrable that wisdom as a body of literature pre-dates Deuteronomy. Weinfeld cites the archeological evidence of Albright and others as proof that a deuteronomic priority is groundless because he claims wisdom compositions have been found that antedate Deuteronomy.⁴¹ Yet, with all of Albright's proposed connections between early Canaanite-Phoenician sources and Hebrew wisdom, many of which are simply based on aphoristic forms, he still dates the Proverbs to the time of Solomon, which is exactly when the OT says the Proverbs were written.⁴² Hence,

⁴⁰Ibid., 260.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²W. F. Albright, "Canaanite-Phoenician Sources of Hebrew Wisdom," in *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East*, ed. M. Noth and D. Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 1955), 13. In fact it is striking that Albright admits, with all of the similarities that he finds between Israelite and ANE wisdom, that "One

Weinfeld's first contention is only tenable if one uncritically assumes the critical reconstruction of the Pentateuch that has been handed down, which is not a compelling position.⁴³ The Bible itself indicates that when the Israelites entered the land the people were already using something called "Torah" (Josh 8:30-34; cf. 1:7-8; 23:6; and 24:26). Torah appears to be present and authoritative from the beginning of the nation's history. It is a defensible position to take the storyline of the OT at face value.

Second, again referencing a problem in OT studies, what is one to do with the similarity of Israelite literature with other literature from the ANE? The parallels between Deuteronomy and Proverbs are also found in Egyptian and Babylonian literature. Therefore, Weinfeld concludes that it is not plausible to believe that Deuteronomy influenced both Israelite and non-Israelite wisdom. There are some problems with Weinfeld's assumption here. First, he does not provide evidence that Deuteronomy could not influence Egyptian or Babylonian wisdom. He simply dismisses it out-of-hand as absurd. Second, it is admittedly difficult for scholars to trace the influence of one ancient document on another and show how that influence came about historically, especially for documents that share a similar milieu.⁴⁴ One simply does not know the origin of the similarities. Consequently, *a priori* presuppositions here are not persuasive. Scholars might argue that the wisdom parallels are clear when one does individual exegesis, but

thing is certain: while Proverbs may contain a very high proportion of matter originating outside of Israel, it is saturated with Israelite theism and morality."

⁴³Kline and Kitchen place Deuteronomy in the second millennium BC. Meredith G. Kline, *Treaty of the Great King: The Covenant Structure of Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1963). Kenneth A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 309.

⁴⁴James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 3rd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 421.

many scholars question if one can even identify a genre of wisdom literature, or if it is something biblical scholarship has read into ANE texts.⁴⁵

Finally, Weinfeld argues that Proverbs fails to mention the religio-national concept that is found at the core of Deuteronomy, and this entails a wisdom influence on Deuteronomy, not vice versa. This is a major problem in wisdom studies.⁴⁶ No one seems to take seriously the fact that the idea of covenant is so central to the storyline of the OT that it does not have to be mentioned at every point. However, even here it appears that Weinfeld overstates his case. If it could be proved that Proverbs at least echoes the religio-national concept, then Weinfeld's contention would be undercut, and his exegesis might be useful in yielding a Deuteronomic priority. Such echoes do exist.

For instance, in the parallels of Deuteronomy 19:14 and Proverbs 22:28/23:10, concerning the moving of boundary markers, there seems to be at least an echo in Proverbs of the religio-national concept. Proverbs 23:10-11 says, "Do not move the ancient landmark, and do not enter the fields of the fatherless. For their Redeemer (גאל) is strong; he will plead their cause against you."⁴⁷ This harkens the reader back to Yahweh the גאל of Israel who took up the cause of his helpless children in the Exodus (Exod 6:6). He says he will redeem his children with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. The גאל is used throughout the OT of Yahweh who redeems his people in

⁴⁵Murphy, *Tree of Life*, 1.

⁴⁶See R. N. Whybray, *The Book of Proverbs: A Survey of Modern Study*, History of Biblical Interpretation Series, ed. Robert Morgan, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 112-32.

⁴⁷Longman speaks of the use of this word in pentateuchal laws when dealing with Proverbs 23:10-11. Tremper Longman III, *Proverbs*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 426.

the Exodus and new Exodus (Exod 15:13; Pss 19:15; 77:16; 78:35; Isa 41:14; 43:1, 14).⁴⁸

The Psalmist cries to him to “plead my cause and redeem me” (Ps 119:154). This is a similar phrase to Proverbs 23:10-11. The similar themes of oppressed children, the Redeemer God, and even the parallel of “judgments” and pleading of a case point to an echo.

In examining Deuteronomy 19:14 and Proverbs 22:28 Weinfeld argues for a sapiential priority, because Deuteronomy takes the wisdom phrase and develops it along a religio-national concept by adding the phrase, “in the inheritance which you will hold in the land that the Yahweh your God gives you” and the phrase, “a landmark set up by the previous generation,” referring to those who first settled the land. Again, it seems that Weinfeld overstates his case because when Proverbs 22:28 prohibits the moving of ancient landmarks it uses the phrase, “which your fathers set up.” This is an echo of the religio-national concept.⁴⁹ Also, this phrasing assumes the presented storyline of the OT. The Proverbs phrase is cast in more ancient terms which would be natural since it comes chronologically after Deuteronomy. Proverbs does not say that it was the “previous generation” who set up the landmarks, but rather the “fathers” (i.e., our ancestors).

There are grounds to reject Weinfeld’s three-fold argument for a wisdom priority in his exegesis of texts that are parallel in Deuteronomy and Proverbs. But his analysis is useful in showing connections between Torah and Proverbs. The only places that people are warned not to add to God’s words in the OT are in Deuteronomy and

⁴⁸Ruth presents Boaz as the Kinsman-Redeemer who mirrors the God of the Exodus, spreading his wings and sheltering his people (Ruth 2:20; 3:9; 4:14).

⁴⁹See Bruce Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs 15-31*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 234-35. See also discussion by William McKane, *Proverbs: A New Approach*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), 379.

Proverbs (Deut 4:2; 13:1; Prov 30:6; cf. Rev 22:18). Both Proverbs and the Torah are concerned with just scales (Lev 19:36; Prov 11:1; 16:11; 20:23). There are similar themes of making vows, partiality in judgment, the didactic roles of the books, and the retributive principle.⁵⁰ Torah and Proverbs paint a similar portrait of what constitutes a faithful life before Yahweh. Weinfeld helps to show that, and the critique of his presuppositions reveals that the presented storyline of the OT can be taken at face value. Deuteronomy precedes and influences Proverbs. The next section turns its attention to the connection of wisdom and Torah presented in the OT itself.

Didactic Nature of Torah and Proverbs

This dissertation has maintained that Proverbs is the result of King Solomon obeying the commands of Deuteronomy 6 and 17 to teach the Torah to the crown prince.⁵¹ The theme of instruction of children runs throughout the Pentateuch and Proverbs.⁵² This section examines this didactic theme.

Deuteronomy admonishes parents to instruct their children in the statutes of Yahweh (Deut 6 and 11). They are to observe Yahweh's commandments and fear Yahweh so that they will be secure in the land Yahweh has given to them and experience longevity of life. Moses instructs the Israelites to put the commandments on "your heart" (6:6) and "teach them diligently to your children" (6:7). This instruction is to take place "when you sit in your house, and when you walk in the way, and when you lie down, and

⁵⁰Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 260-319.

⁵¹So also Hamilton, *God's Glory*, 274.

⁵²Brevard Childs sees the Proverbs theologically as performing a didactic role directed toward right conduct where "father addresses son, the older generation instructs the younger, and the experienced

when you rise” (6:7). Next, Moses calls on the parents to bind these commands as a sign on their hands, as frontlets on their eyes (6:8). He commands them to write them on the doorposts and gates of their house (6:9). Moses then foretells the wonderful reward of the Promised Land where Yahweh will give the Israelites large cities they did not build, full houses that they did not fill, wells they did not dig, and vineyards they did not plant (6:10-11). By contrast, the curse for disobedience to Torah given later is the opposite. Yahweh will give the land, cities, houses, wells and vineyards to Israel’s enemies who will enjoy the fruit of Israel’s labors (cf. Deut 28:30-33). These promises and warnings are motivations to heed the Torah’s instruction.⁵³ Moses says forgetfulness is a reason for disobedience (6:12; cf. 4:23; 8:11).

In Proverbs, Solomon is carrying out Moses’ instruction to parents in Deuteronomy 6 and to the king in Deuteronomy 17. Proverbs is everywhere cast as instructions from a father (or a mother) to his son. Over twenty times in Proverbs the writer addresses the hearer as “my son” before he gives instruction on the way of wisdom that pleases God and leads to life or the way of folly that leads to death (cf. 2:1; 3:1; 4:10; 5:1). Teaching children is a major concern of the Torah and Proverbs.

There are some lexical and thematic connections as well. First, Proverbs 3 mentions many of the same concepts as Deuteronomy 6.⁵⁴ Both Deuteronomy 6 and Proverbs 3 are instructions to sons. Solomon urges his son not to “forget my Torah, but

sage advises the inexperienced novice,” though it cannot be limited to this role. Childs, *OT Theology in Canonical Context*, 211.

⁵³Hamilton, *God’s Glory*, 122.

⁵⁴As mentioned before, Waltke argues for a covenantal connection in Prov 3:1-12. Bruce Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs 1-15*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 238-50.

let your heart keep my commands” (cf. Deut 6:6 where the Torah is to be on their hearts).⁵⁵ The promise of long life accompanies such attention to his fatherly instruction (3:2; cf. Deut 6:2). Solomon exhorts his son to bind (קשר; cf. Deut 6:8) mercy and truth around his neck and write them on his heart (3:3; cf. Deut 6:6). He calls on his son to fear Yahweh (3:7; cf. Deut 6:2 and 13). This fear will bring health to the son’s flesh (3:8; cf. Deut 6:2 and the blessings of Deut 28). Solomon promises that honoring Yahweh with one’s firstfruits will bring plenty to one’s barns and vats (3:9-10). Although this is not in the Deuteronomy 6 context, Deuteronomy 26 and 28 promise the same thing in regard to Torah obedience (cf. Deut 28:8). Solomon tells his son that if he attends to this law then he will walk in the way safely and lie down without fear (cf. Deut 6:7). Finally, the “curse” of Yahweh will be on the house of the wicked, but he “blesses” the home of the upright (3:33; cf. the blessings and curses of Deut 28).⁵⁶

A second connection is in Proverbs 6. Proverbs 6:20-22 uses Torah instruction language in connection with adultery.

My son, keep your father’s command and do not forsake the law of your mother. Bind (cf. Deut 6:8) them on your heart continually; tie them around your neck. When you walk, they will lead you; When you lie down, they will keep you; and when you wake up, they will speak with you (Prov 6:20-22, cf. Deut 6:7).

Like Moses in Deuteronomy 6, Solomon encourages the continual instruction in God’s word when you sleep, wake and go about your day. The language is synonymous.⁵⁷

⁵⁵Again, “my” Torah may be an allusion to Deut 17:18 where the king copies the Torah.

⁵⁶I have been helped tremendously by James Hamilton’s conclusions on these connections though I arrived at them separately. See James Hamilton, “That the Coming Generation Might Praise the Lord,” *Journal of Family Ministry* 1, no.1 (2010): 10-17.

⁵⁷Hamilton, *God’s Glory*, 274.

There are similar didactic connections in Solomon's warning to his son concerning the strange woman.⁵⁸ In Proverbs 7:1-3 Solomon tells his son that keeping his commands will lead to longer life (7:2). He exhorts him to bind them on his fingers and "write them on the tablet of your heart" (see heart section below). These instructions will keep the son from "turning aside"⁵⁹ to the ways of the strange woman who leads to death (7:27). Though the same vocabulary is not used, the concept of departing from instruction is replete in Torah and Proverbs. Yahweh commands His people through Moses in multiple places not to "turn aside to the right hand or to the left," but to do the commands (cf. Deut 5:32; 11:16; 11:28; 17:20; 28:14; cf. also Josh 1:7; 23:6).

Then, Proverbs 5 offers similar warnings against falling for the strange woman's allure. What is interesting in that context is that part of the "curse" for this kind of disobedience is that strangers and foreigners will receive your "wealth" and "labors" (Prov 5:10). Deuteronomy 6 promised the opposite for obeying Torah. Israel will obtain the wealth of strangers, but the curse of Deuteronomy 28 is that unfaithfulness to Torah will lead to others receiving Israel's labors for themselves. Proverbs also warns of the adulterer's body being consumed (5:11; cf. similar warning in Lev 26:16).

Ethical Similarity

The didactic function of the Torah and the Proverbs is mainly in how to live in a pleasing way before Yahweh. This life is seen as the same in both the Torah and

⁵⁸For a good discussion of the didactic function of Prov 1-9 see Daniel J. Estes, *Hear, My Son: Teaching & Learning in Proverbs 1-9*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids: IVP, 2000).

⁵⁹See Num 5:12 where this word describes the unfaithfulness of the wife.

Proverbs.⁶⁰ Proverbs touches on the Decalogue at many points, as well as other legal codes.⁶¹ Proverbs 1:10-19 addresses three of the Ten Commandments when the writer calls those who covet, steal and plan to shed blood “sinners.” The author mentions covetousness (12:12; cf. Exod 20:17). Adultery and the allure of the “immoral woman” come up repeatedly (Prov 2:16-19; 5; 6:20-35; 7). Lying and false witness are mentioned often (4:24; 12:17-22; 14:5; 19:5; cf. Deut 19:16-19). Several of the commandments are brought together in Proverbs 6:16-19.

These six Yahweh hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brothers.

The duty to honor father and mother is put forth constantly in Proverbs (19:26; 20:20; 28:24; 30:11-12). Indeed, the son who mocks or disobeys his parents the ravens of the valley will peck it out and the young eagles will eat it (30:17). There are many such similarities in the ethical demands of Proverbs and the Torah.⁶²

Ability to Obey the Law

The Torah and Proverbs present the same key to unlocking the ability to obey the law of God. This starts with the concept of the “fear of Yahweh” that is rampant in both the Torah and Proverbs. Waltke asserts, “The phrase ‘the fear of the Lord’ presents a

⁶⁰Waltke argues similarly in regard to Proverbs and the rest of the OT. Waltke, “The Book of Proverbs and OT Theology,” 313-14.

⁶¹Steinmann states that Prov 1-9 is arranged in ten sections to mirror the ten sayings (commandments) at Sinai. He contends that the primary concern of the Torah to love Yahweh with all your heart, soul and might is also mirrored in the primary concern of Proverbs to “fear Yahweh” (cf. Deut 6:5; Prov 1:7). See his excursus “Proverbs 1-9, Christ, and the Ten Commandments.” Andrew E. Steinmann, *Proverbs*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia, 2009), 61-64.

⁶²The research here could go in many different directions that space does not permit. Sufficient to say that two similar pictures are painted by the Torah and the Proverbs in the life that pleases God.

paradox in both the prophetic and the sapiential literature: It is at one and the same time both the source and the substance, the cause and the effect.”⁶³ Thus, reverential awe for Yahweh is the source for obedience and the goal for obedience (cf. Deut 4:10; 13:4). Fearing and reverencing Yahweh will enable one to keep his statutes (Deut 6:2). This is the same thing said to the king concerning Torah. He must learn to fear Yahweh by keeping all of the words of this Torah (Deut 17:19). Indeed, this is how his dynasty will be prolonged in the land. The same is true in Proverbs. One must learn to have an awesome reverence for Yahweh in order to obey.⁶⁴ Fear of Yahweh is the key to unlocking wisdom (1:7; 2:5; 9:10; 15:33). This is the key to obedience because the fear of Yahweh is the opposite of being wise in one’s own eyes and leaning on one’s own understanding (Prov 3:5-7). The path of folly that leads to death is one that “seems right” to a man (14:12; 16:25). Solomon’s teaching on this matter harkens the son back to the beginning of the Torah where human sin was presented as folly from the beginning. Eve did not fear Yahweh’s command, but instead reached for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil apart from dependence on Yahweh because eating the forbidden fruit seemed wise in her eyes (Gen 3:2-7). Adam ate as well, and this brought death to humanity and cut off access to the tree of life. Interestingly, what was denied in the garden, the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, is now offered to humanity through wisdom if one will fear Yahweh (cf. 1 Kgs 3:9; Prov 3:18).

There is another factor that determines whether or not one has the ability to obey, and that is the heart. The connection between heart and commandments is found

⁶³Waltke, “The Book of Proverbs and OT Theology,” 313.

⁶⁴Hamilton, *God’s Glory*, 272.

often in Deuteronomy and Proverbs (Deut 4:9; 6:6; 11:18; Prov 4:4; 4:21; 6:20-21; 7:1-3; 7:25; 14:33; and 23:19). As discussed above, the teaching of Deuteronomy is that Israel is unable to obey the Torah because they lack the heart to do so (Deut 5:29). There must be an inner transformation of the law being internalized on a circumcised heart for this obedience to be possible (Deut 6:6; 10:16). If this is going to happen, it will be because Yahweh gives this kind of heart to them (Deut 29:3). Yahweh promises that after exile he will circumcise their hearts (Deut 30:6). This is also the promise of the prophets that Yahweh will give his covenant people new hearts (Ezek 36:26), and he will write his law on their hearts (Jer 31:33).

This future hope is taken up in Proverbs. In Proverbs, for the son to be wise, righteous and obedient to his father's instruction it will take internalizing his father's Torah (3:1) so that it is written on his heart (3:3). Wisdom is said to enter the heart (Prov 2:10) to protect the son from evil and help him to choose the good.

In the same way that Israel was to internalize the law on their hearts, the father in Proverbs instructs the son to internalize wisdom on his heart. Proverbs 3:3 and 7:3 bring together two key concepts from the Torah and the Prophets. Solomon, following the instruction to parents in Deuteronomy 6 and the kingship laws of Deuteronomy 17, tells his son to write "my" Torah on the tablet (לִּיָּה) of your heart (7:2-3).⁶⁵ According to Exodus 31:18, the old covenant was written on stone tablets (לְחֻתֹּת). According to Jeremiah 31:33, the new covenant will be written on the heart (לֵב). Proverbs 3:3 and 7:3

⁶⁵The LXX omits the phrase "write them on the tablet of your heart" in Prov 3:3. Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 236.

combine these concepts, so that Solomon's Torah is written on the tablet (לִּיָּדָה) of the heart (לֵב). The idea of Proverbs and Jeremiah 31 is that the law is so internalized that one will want to do them.⁶⁶ Internalizing the father's Torah leads to life and favor with God and man (3:2, 4).

There is one other possible thematic connection here. The covenant people's problem according to Deuteronomy 5:29 and 29:3 is that they lack the heart necessary to obey. In similar fashion, Proverbs indicates that the problem for those disobedient fools who reject the father's teaching is that they lack a heart. The phrase is translated in English as a "lack of understanding," but it is quite literally to "lack a heart" (חָסַר-לֵב). Proverbs 6:32 says that the person who violates the Decalogue by committing adultery "lacks a heart" (חָסַר-לֵב).⁶⁷ The man who violates the law by not loving his neighbor is one who lacks a heart (11:12). This phrase is used often to describe the fool in Proverbs (7:7; 9:4, 16; 10:13, 21; 11:12; 12:11; 15:21; 17:18; 24:30). The young man who needs a heart is the young man for whom Woman Folly and Woman Wisdom are competing (9:4; 9:16). The lazy man needs a heart (24:30). Curse language is used to show the result of this man who needs a heart. His laziness causes thorns to come up and his wall to be ruined (24:31; cf. Gen 3). Lacking a heart will lead ultimately to death (10:21).⁶⁸

⁶⁶So also Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, 146.

⁶⁷The word literally means lacking or needing, though when paired with heart it is often used as lacking understanding. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 341.

⁶⁸See discussion on the heart's function in Proverbs by Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 90-93.

The Torah and the Prophets speak of Israel's need for a new heart (Deut 29:3; Ezek 36:26). This is exactly what Proverbs promises through wisdom. Proverbs 15:32 says that the young man who rejects instruction is a fool but the one who listens to reproof "gains a heart" (קִוְיָה לֵב; so also 19:8). Proverbs, like the Torah and the Prophets, recognizes the need Israel has for a new heart that internalizes the law in order to live under the covenant before Yahweh and experience the blessings he promises to covenant-keepers.

Future Hope of Torah and Proverbs

Torah and Proverbs present the same ethic, and the same key for living up to that ethic. That leads to the same rewards and judgments for obedience and disobedience, indeed, the same future hope.⁶⁹

Another connection between the Torah and the Proverbs is the theme of life and death. The narrative of Genesis 1-3 is cast in terms of wisdom and knowledge.⁷⁰ Wisdom is presented in Proverbs as the discerning of good and evil, wisdom and folly, and life and death. Humanity is forbidden the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:17), indeed, death will enter the world if this command is transgressed. The "crafty" serpent enters the garden and makes a wisdom promise to Eve that eating the

⁶⁹Waltke argues that embracing the father's teachings will cause the son to receive the covenant blessings and avoid the curses. Waltke, *Proverbs 15-31*, 116.

⁷⁰For further discussion on the wisdom motif in Gen 3 see George Mendenhall, "The Shady Side of Wisdom: The Date and Purpose of Genesis 3," in *A Light unto My Path: Old Testament Studies in Honor of Jacob Myers*, ed. H. N. Bream (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1974), 319-34. See also Graeme Goldsworthy, *The Tree of Life* (Sydney: Aio, 1993), 7-13.

forbidden fruit will make her “like God, knowing good and evil” (Gen 3:5).⁷¹ Eve saw that the tree was “desirable to make one wise,” so she ate it (Gen 3:6). The transgression brings death into human existence and also cuts humanity off from the tree of life that promises eternal life (Gen 3:22-24).

The theme of life continues through the Pentateuch but there is debate as to what exactly it means. The narrative of Abraham brings promise of blessing from God in terms of land, reproduction (cf. Gen 1:28), and the nations. Genesis begins with life, but ends in the dust of Joseph’s death in Egypt (Gen 50). God rescues His people in the Exodus and gives them His statutes that they are to obey. There is a promise of life in the keeping of Yahweh’s laws in faith (cf. Deut 4:1), but there is death for disobedience. For example, the unbelieving, disobeying generation fell dead in the desert not able to enter the Promised Land. Interestingly, their children who have no “knowledge of good and evil” are able to possess the land (Deut 1:39).

Deuteronomy presents life and death to the nation of Israel.⁷² Life is in choosing to believe and obey the statutes of Yahweh. Death is in choosing to disbelieve and disobey the statutes of Yahweh (Deut 30:11-20). What do life and death mean? There seem to be many variations on the meaning of life: (1) secure life for the nation in the land (Deut 4:1; 4:26), (2) longevity of individual life (Deut 4:4; 6:2), and (3) Physical blessings such as a fruitful womb, fruitful land, lack of disease, and defeat of enemies (cf.

⁷¹This is what is granted to King Solomon when he asks for Wisdom, the ability to discern good and evil (1 Kgs 3:9). Leithart writes, “Solomon’s request can thus be described as a request for access to the tree forbidden to Adam. Like Adam, Solomon goes into ‘deep sleep’ in order to receive a bride, but Solomon awakes in the company of Lady Wisdom.” Peter Leithart, *1 & 2 Kings*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2006), 44-45.

⁷²See the new study on this topic in relation to the biblical canon. Kenneth J. Turner, *The Death of Deaths in the Death of Israel: Deuteronomy’s Theology of Exile* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011).

Deut 7:13-15; 28). Death means the opposite of these: (1) exile and loss of the land (Deut 9), (2) premature death or capital punishment (cf. Deut 21:18-21), and (3) Physical cursing such as a barren womb, barren land, defeat at the hands of enemies and disease (cf. Deut 28). Deuteronomy 30 sets this out as the choice between life and death.

As has been discussed, the book of Proverbs casts the choice between the wise life and the foolish life as the choice between life and death, and this can be understood in both qualitative and eternal senses. Hence, the symbol of the “tree of life” is seized as a fitting image for the sage (3:18; 11:30; 13:12; and 15:4).⁷³ In some way what was lost in the Garden, the trees of knowledge of good and evil and life, is offered to humanity through wisdom. Life in Proverbs is found in the way of wisdom, and this is described in terms similar to the Torah.

First, life is presented in a qualitative sense in Proverbs in the ideas of dwelling in the land and physical blessing. In the Torah, life is tied to keeping the land, so also the wise will retain the land in Proverbs (Prov 2:21-22). The upright will dwell safely, and the wicked will be cut off. In fact the text says the wicked will be “uprooted” from it (cf. Prov 10:30). The language is reminiscent of Deuteronomy 28:63 where the curse of being “torn up from the land” is given. Also, this passage in Proverbs 2 is strikingly similar to Leviticus 18 where sexual morality is tied with secure dwelling in the land. Also, Proverbs contains the conception of physical blessing found in the Torah (cf. Prov 3:9-10). Wisdom is the path to plenty.

⁷³Murphy sees this as the kerygma of Proverbs and its theological connection with the rest of the OT. It does not have to reference *Heilsgeschichte*. Roland Murphy, “The Kerygma of the Book of Proverbs,” *Interpretation* 20 (1966): 3-14.

Second, life in Proverbs means longer life and eternal life. Proverbs 4:1-4 gives a similar charge as in Deuteronomy 4 and other places. Solomon says to “keep my commands, and live.” He promises the “years of your life will be many” (4:10), in keeping with the second understanding of life in Deuteronomy. It appears that Proverbs also picks up on the Genesis idea of eternal life (12:28).⁷⁴ Proverbs promises the same in terms of death and cursing (cf. 2:18; 7:27; 9:17-18; 11:19; 14:12). Proverbs ties both concepts of life in the Pentateuch together: eternal life after this life and physical blessing/prolonged days in this life. This leads finally to the discussion of the future hope of life and death in regard to the king.

The hope of the Torah is for a future king who is a man of the Torah, and will thereby establish a perpetual dynasty. The longevity of his kingdom is determined by his faithfulness to Torah (Deut 17:20). By the fear of Yahweh and obedience to the Torah the king will “prolong his days” (יִאָרְיֶךָ יָמִים), and the days of his children after him.

Solomon understands that according to Deuteronomy 17 his kingdom and his children’s kingdom are inextricably tied to Torah observance. Accordingly, he obeys Deuteronomy 6 and 17 by teaching the Torah to his son in Proverbs, hoping to perpetuate the dynasty. The same phrasing and promise is issued in Proverbs as in Deuteronomy 17. The crown prince is told that, as the ruler, if he will hate covetousness then he will “prolong his days” (יִאָרְיֶךָ יָמִים; 28:16). Just as the fear of Yahweh prolongs the dynasty in Deuteronomy, it does the same in Proverbs 10:27 (cf. 9:11). Solomon’s intention in Proverbs is to train his son in wisdom, obedience to the Torah, so that an everlasting

⁷⁴Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 543-45.

dominion will be established in the land (cf. Prov 2:20-22). That is the future hope of the Torah and Proverbs.

In Proverbs Solomon trains the crown prince in wisdom, which is living under the covenant in obedience to Torah. He upholds the same standard, promises the same blessing and forewarns the same judgment as Moses does. If the son will receive the king's law (Deut 6; 17) then he will live long and have an enduring kingdom. If he disobeys, forgets the covenant, and falls for an adulteress then he will experience the death of exile.

CHAPTER 5

FUTURE HOPE IN THE PROPHETS AND PROVERBS

This dissertation has attempted to place Proverbs in its canonical context to ascertain whether or not it argues for a future hope similar to that of the OT. The last section to examine is the Prophets. This chapter surveys the future hope of the prophets, both the history presented in the former prophets and the hoped-for future portrayed in the latter prophets.

History of the Former Prophets

The book of Joshua fulfills the longings of the Torah because Joshua leads the nation into the land of Canaan and conquers the Canaanites, though Israel does not complete the conquest (cf. Judg 1:27-28). This leads to the utter chaos of the nation in the land, and an expectation that begins to grow for a future, warrior king who can lead the people to be faithful to Yahweh and rescue them from their enemies (cf. Judg 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25).¹ The books of Samuel present the fulfillment of that expectation ultimately in David, the man after God's own heart (cf. 1 Sam 13:14).

Yahweh's covenant with David sets the stage for much of the future hope of the entire Bible.² Yahweh promises to make David's name great (2 Sam 7:9) and to plant

¹So also James Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 142.

²See Eugene Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion: A Theology of the Old Testament* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 439-40.

Israel in their own land without being disturbed by enemies (2 Sam 7:10; cf. Prov 1:33).³ In fact, he promises rest from all enemies (cf. Prov 16:7). God promises to make David a royal house, an eternal dynasty, where the kingdom of David's offspring will be established forever (2 Sam 7:12-13, 16).⁴ This is an unconditional promise that Yahweh will perform for David, but there is also a conditional feature to it in that, if David's offspring commit iniquity, then Yahweh will chasten him with a rod, but he will never remove the promise, leading to the hope that one son will someday live up to this promise.⁵ The promise is for an eternal Davidic dynasty, and as has been seen throughout the OT, offspring is at center stage.

As David approaches death, Solomon is named the successor, and David gives instructions to the crown prince to keep the Law of Moses and “walk in the ways” of Yahweh (1 Kgs 2:3), so that he may prosper (cf. Josh 1; Ps 1). David tells Solomon that the dynasty and the Davidic promise of Yahweh depend on Solomon keeping the law (1 Kgs 2:4). If Solomon will be a man of the Torah then he will always have a son on the throne. David is fulfilling Deuteronomy 6 and 17 by instructing his son.⁶ After David's death Yahweh comes to Solomon in a dream and tells him to ask anything he wants (1

³The promise to make one's name great only occurs for Abraham and David (cf. Gen 12:1-3).

⁴For more on this theme in Proverbs see chap. 2 of this dissertation (see discussion on Prov 23:18; 24:14; 24:20).

⁵Chastening is mentioned often in Proverbs. Solomon tells his son not to despise Yahweh's chastening (3:11-12). The rod is also mentioned several times as Solomon explains to his son the value of discipline: 10:13; 13:24; 22:15; 23:13-14; 26:3; 29:15. See Waltke on chastening in Bruce Waltke, *The Book Proverbs 1-15*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 248-50.

⁶Could this exchange be what Solomon is referencing when teaching his son in Proverbs 4? Solomon says that when he was a son to his father and the only one in the sight of his mother, his father taught him to “keep my commandments and live” (cf. Deut 17). He exhorted his son to get wisdom because wisdom will place a crown on his head (Prov 4:1-9). Leithart connects this exhortation with wisdom. Peter Leithart, *1 & 2 Kings*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2006), 36-37.

Kgs 3:3-5), and Solomon says that he is a little child in the midst of a great people, so he asks for an understanding heart to be able to discern good and evil (1 Kgs 3:8-9; cf. see discussion on heart in chapter 4). Solomon recognizes that wisdom is necessary to rule, and this pleases Yahweh because Solomon could have asked for long life, riches, or the defeat of his enemies. Thus, Yahweh decides to give him wisdom along with all of these other things (1 Kgs 3:10-12).⁷ Yahweh closes the dream by admonishing Solomon that if he keeps the Torah then Yahweh will “lengthen” his days (1 Kgs 3:14). This is the same promise as the Torah and Proverbs that one’s length of life and dynasty is tied to obedience to Torah (Deut 17:20; Prov 28:16).

Solomon was given wisdom to uphold justice according to the Torah. After settling a maternity dispute between two prostitutes in 1 Kings 3:16-27, the text says that all of Israel heard the king’s judgment and was in awe of him because “they saw the wisdom of God was in him to do justice” (3:28). Solomon’s rule is established throughout the Promised Land, and nations bring tribute to him (4:21). Solomon’s wisdom surpasses the peoples of the east and Egypt (4:30-32). But, Solomon fails to live up to Deuteronomy 17 because he falls for “foreign women” (נְכַרִּים; 1 Kgs 11:1).⁸ Just as Deuteronomy foretold the wives turned Solomon’s heart from Yahweh to idols (1 Kgs 11:1-8).

⁷Proverbs says that wisdom is the key to all of those things. See Michael Fox, *Proverbs 10-31: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible, vol. 18B (New Haven: Yale University, 2009), 927.

⁸These foreign women are the precursor to the woman Solomon warns his son about in Proverbs: 2:16; 5:10, 20; 6:24; 7:5. See J. K. Wiles, “The ‘Enemy’ in Israelite Wisdom Literature” (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1982), 50.

This causes the crumbling of Solomon's kingdom. Because he disobeyed the Torah, God says he will tear the kingdom from Solomon's son and make it a shell of what it used to be (11:12-13). Rehoboam's splits the kingdom because he is a fool who listens to the counsel of his peers instead of the elders (1 Kgs 12:6-15; cf. רע" in Prov 11:14; 15:22; 24:6). The fall of the Davidic kingdom is due to the lack of wisdom.⁹ The promise of the kingdom is not over but the prestige is gone, and ultimately every son of David fails the Torah so that the nation goes into exile and must wait for a future fulfillment of 2 Samuel 7.

History and Proverbs

In order to understand the connection of Proverb's future hope with that of the former prophets one must first understand the setting for Proverbs. The first verse of Proverbs connects it with the Israelite monarchy and David (1:1). This is not surprising given the account of Solomon's life and rule. As overviewed above, Solomon was given wisdom by Yahweh in order to rule (1 Kgs 3:9), and as a result he speaks over 3,000 Proverbs (1 Kgs 4:29-34). This certainly is the milieu for Proverbs. The source for the Proverbs is the wisest king on record in Israel's history.¹⁰ According to the biblical witness Solomon is the greatest source for the wisdom of Proverbs (1 Kgs 4:29-34; Prov 1:1; 10:1; 25:1 and Matt 12:42), but other authors contributed (30:1; 31:1), and the final

⁹Leithart, *1 & 2 Kings*, 90-95.

¹⁰Waltke says that "Israel's anointed, charismatic king coined his expressions of God's immutable will in proverbs that bore the authority of divine speech." So, the Spirit-anointed king is writing scripture by telling the Proverbs. Bruce Waltke, "Lady Wisdom as Mediatrix: An Exposition of Proverbs 1:20-33," *Presbyterion* 14, no. 1 (1988): 1.

form of the book came to fruition around the time of another son of David, Hezekiah, and his court (Prov 25:1).

The Royal Setting of Proverbs

This royal authorship and setting for Proverbs has been contested by many scholars, and that has led to interpretations of Proverbs that do not see a royal future hope. In order to establish the royal nature of the book, one must first examine the authorship and setting of Proverbs to see if this contention holds up. There is much debate over the authorship of Proverbs and what role Solomon played in it.¹¹ A full analysis of this issue is outside of the focus of this chapter, so this section surveys major views quickly. There are those who argue for Solomonic authorship, like Steinmann who says that the same author who wrote Proverbs 1-9 also wrote 10:1-22:16 and 25-29. He contends that it is Solomon, and he bases his conclusion on the vocabulary, thought and mode of expression being similar in each section.¹² Others maintain that although Proverbs may not be strictly Solomonic, it and the other wisdom writings emerged during the time of Solomon. This is the so-called “Solomonic Enlightenment.”¹³ The basic consensus among scholars of Proverbs is that it is not Solomonic, and that the attribution to him is based on his becoming a legendary figure of wisdom. Crenshaw writes that

¹¹Walter Brueggemann, “The Social Significance of Solomon as a Patron of Wisdom,” in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, ed. John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 117-32. James Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981), 99. Duane Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, NAC, vol. 14 (Nashville: Broadman, 1993), 33-44. Andrew Steinmann, “Proverbs 1-9 as a Solomonic Composition,” *Jets* 43, no. 4 (2000): 659-74.

¹²Steinmann, “Proverbs 1-9,” 659-74. So also Garrett, *Proverbs*, 33-44.

¹³Brueggemann, “The Social Significance of Solomon,” 117-32.

there is “no shred of evidence” the Proverbs derive from the era of King Solomon.¹⁴ Most see it, specifically 1-9, as written in the early Persian period.¹⁵ Strikingly some of these scholars do take the editing ascription to Hezekiah seriously.¹⁶ It is interesting that scholars like Crenshaw, who say there is no shred of evidence to link Proverbs to Solomon, will say, “There is no reason for the tradition to arise associating Hezekiah with wisdom unless a historical basis for such thinking existed.”¹⁷ Why not make the same assertion concerning the authorship of Solomon? There is good reason to believe in a royal, even Solomonic authorship to Proverbs. Kitchen’s work on the Solomonic authorship of Proverbs is one of the most influential. He bases his argument for authorship of Solomon on the formal structures of ANE wisdom literature.

From the total evidence of all the data discussed, it should be clear that the views of conventional OT scholarship on the supposed history of the book of Proverbs receive no support whatsoever from the wider range of factual information now available, be it literary, linguistic, conceptual or other. In fact, rather the contrary obtains. In the literary realm, the theory of separate origins and dates for Prov. 1-9 and 10-24 is refuted by the direct comparative testimony of some 15 works of all periods, while the supposed 'late' linguistic and conceptual evidence on dating turns out to be fallacious — again, set aside by well-dated external reference-material. When one probes further into reasons offered by conventional scholarship in support of 'accepted' views, the results can be surprising to say the least: not only mistaken, but occasionally hilariously comic.¹⁸

¹⁴Crenshaw, *OT Wisdom*, 99.

¹⁵For a large listing of scholars who support a later date, see Steinmann, “Proverbs 1-9,” 660

¹⁶Contra Michael Carasik, “Who were the ‘Men of Hezekiah,’” *VT* 44, no. 3 (1994): 289-300.

¹⁷Crenshaw, *OT Wisdom*, 25 and 94.

¹⁸Kenneth Kitchen, “Proverbs and Wisdom Books of the Ancient Near East: the Factual History of a Literary Form,” *TB* 28 (1977): 69-114. Waltke also argues, “There is no evidence...that the book in its present form should be dated later than the time of the monarchy.” Bruce Waltke, “The Book of Proverbs and Ancient Wisdom Literature,” *BS* 136 (July-September 1979): 221.

While many have placed the final formation of Proverbs in the post-exilic period, there is still significant evidence that the Israelite wisdom literature could come from the time of the monarchy. Numerous ANE wisdom texts of similar kind predate by centuries the time of Solomon, and some of them are very similar to Proverbs.¹⁹ One could expand the argument, but this should at least give pause to those who so quickly dismiss Solomonic authorship. And, the consensus of Christian and Jewish opinions until the rise of modern critical scholarship was that Solomon was primarily responsible for Proverbs.²⁰

Not only has authorship been hotly debated, but so has the issue of the setting for Israelite wisdom.²¹ Two of the most popular options are “court wisdom” versus “family wisdom.” Did wisdom originate in the monarchical court with concern for courtly matters? Or, did wisdom originate in the homes with familial concerns? Perhaps “yes” might be the best answer to the question. The book has both royal and familial concerns.²² The book is attributed to the monarchy, but it is also a father instructing his son in wisdom, albeit a king to a crown prince.²³ Solomon is preparing his son to rule (cf.

¹⁹Waltke, “Book of Proverbs and Ancient Wisdom Literature,” 222-23.

²⁰“The one point upon which the ancients were agreed, Solomonic authorship, is the one assertion that the modern scholars are largely agreed in rejecting.” J. Robert Wright, ed., *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, vol. 9 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2005), xx.

²¹For a survey of the discussion see R. N. Whybray, *The Book of Proverbs: A Survey of Modern Study*, History of Biblical Interpretation Series, ed. Robert Morgan, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 1-34.

²²Skladny argues that Prov 28-29 is addressed to a prince. Udo Skladny, *Die ältesten Spruchsammlungen in Israel* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), 57-58. Crenshaw seems to be open to a royal/familial setting for Prov 31:1-9, at least when it was originally composed. However, when it was brought into Israelite wisdom literature he believes it may have been used in schools. James Crenshaw, “A Mother’s Instruction to Her Son (Proverbs 31:1-9),” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 15, no. 4 Winter (1988): 22.

²³Waltke believes the original setting was the “home of the courtier.” Waltke, “Book of Proverbs and Ancient Wisdom Literature,” 230. Fox argues that Prov 28-29 is not a royal instruction

1 Kgs 3:9). Again and again Solomon says “my son” when instructing the prince in wisdom (1:8, 10, 15; 2:1; 3:1).²⁴ He instructs him in wisdom because he knows the prince must abide by wisdom to establish and rule his kingdom well (cf. 1 Kgs 3:9; Prov 8:15). The Proverbs deal in large part with courtly, kingdom matters,²⁵ but they also deal with familial concerns.

This dissertation’s contention that wisdom is connected with Torah helps one understand the fact that Proverbs deals with both royal and familial concerns. When Yahweh made the covenant with Israel at Sinai, he told them that if they kept the covenant then they would be a “kingdom of priests” (Exod 19:5-6). However, not all of the covenant obligations were courtly. Many were centered on the home and everyday life. The teaching was about kingdom life for the entire nation. Proverbs is similar in nature. Solomon is training his son in wisdom so he can rightly order the kingdom, but the preamble (Prov 1:1-7) broadens the audience of Proverbs beyond the crown prince to include the youth of the nation as well. Solomon is also instructing the youth of the nation because this is the way the kingdom needs to be ordered in order to endure.²⁶

because it is not addressed to the king or prince. However, the tenor of the whole book has been one where a king addresses “my son.” See Fox’s excursus, “Chapters 28-29: A ‘Royal Instruction?’” in Michael Fox, *Proverbs 10-31: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible, vol. 18B (New Haven: Yale University, 2009), 817-18.

²⁴He instructs his “son” over twenty times in the book. Waltke writes, “There is no reason not to take the reference to ‘my son’ in any other way than in its normal significance. Elsewhere in the OT the father is held responsible for his child’s social, moral, and religious training (Deut 4:9-11)...But above all, the references to the mother in 1:8; 4:3; 6:20; 31:1, 26 clinch the argument.” Waltke, “Book of Proverbs and Ancient Wisdom Literature,” 232.

²⁵Waltke points this out when he talks about the subjects discussed like: the fate of the nation (11:14), the king (16:10), dining with royalty (23:1-3), and others. He also points out the similarity in Egyptian Instruction literature where courtly matters are discussed. *Ibid.*, 231.

²⁶It seems that the king may have been considered the father of the nation (cf. 1 Sam 24:11).

However, the king is the head of the nation and his behavior determines the nation's fate. If the crown prince does not abide by wisdom, then his kingdom will not as well. This reality bolsters the finding that Proverbs is cast as Solomon filtering the instructions of Deuteronomy 6 (familial) through Deuteronomy 17 (courtly) in order to establish the dynasty of his son.

This authorship and setting gives one a significant interpretive connection to the future hope cast in the former prophets. Solomon recognized that he needed wisdom in order to rule justly over the vast kingdom of Israel (1 Kgs 3:9-10). His wisdom exalted Israel, but his folly and violation of the Torah set in motion the events that led to Israel's demise. Proverbs must be read in this light. Solomon is training his son in wisdom and the Torah, so that his son will establish the kingdom, and perhaps be what Solomon failed to be.

The Ideal King

In Proverbs, Solomon is training his son to be the ideal king who establishes the eternal, righteous Davidic dynasty through wisdom. Chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation discussed Proverb's portrait of the ideal king, so this section summarizes what Proverbs teaches and shows its connection to the hope of the prophets. The ideal king presented throughout the Torah, Proverbs, and the prophets is one who rules in wisdom and in righteousness, executing justice, so that the kingdom is established.²⁷

²⁷Parker describes three aspects of the ideal king: (1) he renders justice (like David in 2 Sam 8:15) and this specifically to the underprivileged in order to preserve his throne and the land, (2) he keeps Torah (cf. Deut 17) so that the people will as well because his fate and the fate of the nation are tied together, and (3) he will be wise (Isa 11). Kim Ian Parker, *Wisdom and Law in the Reign of Solomon* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1992), 58-67. He maintains that the picture in Deuteronomic literature, Proverbs, and the prophets is the same.

The ideal king was to be a man of justice in order to ensure the stability of his kingdom in the land.²⁸ If a king eschewed justice, then the kingdom would collapse, possible exile would ensue, and invaders would rule the land. Leonidas Kalugila writes, “Royal wisdom helped him to be a righteous king, without wisdom a king would plunge his country into chaos.”²⁹ The key function of the king in Proverbs is to uphold justice. In some ways he is the legislative, executive and judicial branches. He can decree laws (16:10), execute justice (31:8-9), and pour out wrath on evildoers (16:14). He holds the very power of life and death (16:14-15). The king is called to uphold justice, and wisdom is required for this task. It is by Woman Wisdom that kings reign and rulers (מְשִׁיבִים)³⁰ “decree” justice (Prov 8:15). “Rulers” (מְשִׁיבִים) enact or decree rules and regulations. The father warns the son repeatedly of his duty because there are rulers who pervert this task. There are those who justify the wicked and condemn the righteous, and they are an abomination to Yahweh (Prov 17:15). Some show partiality to the wicked and bring down the righteous in judgment (Prov 18:5). Kings should not rule in this way, for he is to rule in righteousness and justice, and he is to care for the helpless. Proverbs 28:15 says, “As a growling lion or a rushing bear is a wicked ruler over lowly people.” Upholding justice and caring for the poor and helpless are the main admonitions that

²⁸A similar idea is found in Egyptian instruction literature. See Waltke, “Book of Proverbs and Ancient Wisdom Literature,” 231.

²⁹Leonidas Kalugila, *The Wise King: Studies in Royal Wisdom as Divine Revelation in the Old Testament and Its Environment* (Lund: Gleerup, 1980), 132.

³⁰Waltke asserts that early Hebrew poetry used this term as a “stock-in-trade parallel to ‘king.’” Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 403.

King Lemuel's mother gives to him.³¹ The Queen Mother cautions her son to avoid a harem of women because they destroy kings (31:3),³² and strong drink (31:4) because they might cause the king to forget what is decreed and pervert justice for the afflicted (31:5).³³ His task is to open his mouth and judge rightly for those who cannot stand up for themselves. He is to judge in righteousness for the poor and needy (31:8-9).³⁴ This was the role of Solomon in the kingdom (cf. 1 Kgs 3:16-28).

Not only does the king decree justice, but he also metes out the punishment.³⁵ Proverbs describes the "king's wrath" as "messengers of death" (Prov 16:14), whereas appeasing him and finding favor in his eyes is "life" (Prov 16:15). The king's wrath is like that of an angry lion (cf. Gen 49:9), but his favor is like the dew (Prov 19:12). A person who provokes the king's wrath sins against his own life (20:2). Proverbs 20:26 speaks of the king's judging as winnowing the wicked and rolling the threshing wheel over them. The king must punish evil in order to establish his kingdom and ensure its longevity, because the toleration of injustice will topple a dynasty (Prov 16:12; 25:5). Solomon is training his son in wisdom and Torah, because the king is tasked with upholding justice.

³¹Crenshaw points out that it was the social obligation of the king "to champion the cause of widows and orphans." He is to speak for those who are speechless. Crenshaw, "A Mother's Instruction," 17-18. Crenshaw's entire discussion of this passage is helpful (9-22).

³²This fits well Solomon's continual exhortations to avoid the "strange" woman.

³³The ideal king is to be a man of the Law. Grant makes this argument for the presentation of the king in the Psalter. Jamie A. Grant, *The King as Exemplar: The Function of Deuteronomy's Kingship Law in the Shaping of the Book of Psalms*, SBL 17 (Atlanta: SBL, 2004).

³⁴This is the description of the coming Messiah in Isa 11:4 (On Isa 11 see below).

³⁵Again, this is a similar description to Messiah in Isa 11:4 (On Isa 11 see below).

If the son obeys then the kingdom will endure. Solomon promises his son what David was promised by Yahweh (2 Sam 7). If the son obeys there will be peace, security, and safe dwelling (cf. Prov 1:33; 2 Sam 7). Wisdom will exalt the city, bring security, so that it will not fall (cf. Prov 11:10-11). He even promises wisdom as the means to peace with enemies (cf. Prov 16:7).

Dissatisfaction

The problem for Israel is that their kings do not live up to the ideal set forth in the Torah or Proverbs. David and Solomon fall because of their lust for women (cf. Deut 17; Prov 31:3). Solomon's heart "apostasizes" from God with foreign women (cf. Prov 1:32; chaps. 2, 5, 6, and 7).³⁶ The books of the Kings show the failure at some point of every descendent of David. The warnings of Proverbs concerning the collapse of the kingdom because of foolish, crooked kings are fulfilled in the collapse of the monarchy and the exile of the nation. Dissatisfaction brought on by the history of their kings leads to a hope for a wise descendent of David who meets the wisdom of Proverbs and is the ideal king. There is an expectation that develops in Israel for a wise David who establishes a throne that endures "forever."³⁷ It could be that in Proverbs Solomon, the wisest of Israel's kings, already recognizes the "chinks" in his armor and is exhorting his son to be wise where he was foolish.³⁸ Solomon failed to heed the prohibition against

³⁶Kalugila, *Wise King*, 122.

³⁷Grant argues similarly for the Psalms. He contends for reinterpretation of the Psalms by post-exilic readers. They would look at the heightened picture of the king for example in Ps 2 and see that it is far removed from the reality of their situation, so it led to the development of an eschatological hope for such a king. Jamie Grant, "The Psalms and the King," in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*, ed. David Firth and Philip S. Johnston (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2005), 112.

³⁸Parker asserts that Solomon is presented as both the ideal and the apostate king in the Kings narrative. Parker, *Wisdom and Law*, 57.

acquiring much money for himself, as well as the duty of Proverbs to plead the cause of the poor (cf. Deut 17:17; Prov 31:9). Crenshaw believes this failure led to a future hope.

The king's failure to live up to the ideal eventually stirred disillusioned subjects to envision the birth of a royal child in whom virtue and knowledge would reside. The anticipated ruler in Isa 9:5 is endowed with the essential elements of royal protocol. . . . Similarly, the ruler of Isa 11:2 has wisdom, understanding, counsel, might and fear of the Lord. These qualities enable him to establish justice and peace.³⁹

Solomon was commanded to follow Torah both by Deuteronomy 17 and his father David in order to lengthen his rule over the land (Deut 17:20; 1 Kgs 2:4). He was also instructed, as every Israelite father, to teach Torah to his son (Deut 6). As Israelite history continues the people recognize that none of their kings are demonstrating this wisdom (or obeying Torah), and there is a need for a son of David who succeeds where David, Solomon, and their successors failed. This hope is reflected in Isaiah 11; 32; Jeremiah 23; Ezekiel 34; and other prophetic texts. Some of these texts will be examined in the next section.

Latter Prophets

Much of the material in the writing prophets is concerned with a future hope so an exhaustive survey is not possible. This section summarizes the future hope presented in the Latter Prophets before examining representative texts that show connections with Proverbs.⁴⁰ Proverbs and the latter prophets share a common expectation for a new, wise

³⁹Crenshaw, "A Mother's Instruction," 20.

⁴⁰There is much literature written on the nature of connections between Proverbs/wisdom literature and the prophets. J. A. Soggin, "Amos and Wisdom," 119-23; A. A. Macintosh, "Hosea and the Wisdom Tradition: dependence and independence," 124-32; H. G. M. Williamson, "Isaiah and the Wise," 133-41; W. McKane, "Jeremiah and the Wise," 142-51; These works can all be found in *Wisdom in Ancient Israel: Essays in Honour of J. A. Emerton*, ed. John Day, Robert Gordon and H.G.M Williamson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995). See also William McKane, *Prophets and Wise Men* (London:

Son of David who reigns in justice obeying the Torah written on the heart, empowered by the Spirit, so that the people remain in the land in a glorious, stable kingdom free from fear of enemies. Again, this dissertation deals with storyline as it is presented in the OT,⁴¹ and one finds that the portrait of future hope painted by the latter prophets and Proverbs are similar. The picture is one of indwelling the land, the new Davidic King, and the law written on the heart.⁴²

The prophets speak of the “latter days” (בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים) or “coming days” (יָמִים בָּאִים) when Yahweh fulfills his promises to Israel (cf. Isa 2:2; Jer 23:5; Amos 9:13).⁴³ These expectations center around concepts like a new David (Isa 7 and 9; Ezek 34 and 37; Amos 9; Mic 5), the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Isa 44; Joel 2), the law written on a new heart (Jer 31; Ezek 36), the new covenant (Jer 31), and the new Exodus to possess the land (Isa 11).⁴⁴ This section will show that the prophets share a common hope with Proverbs. The expectation is that a new David will arise after the exile who establishes his kingdom in wisdom and justice empowered by the Spirit. He also will

SCM, 1965). Samuel Terrien, “Amos and Wisdom,” in *Israel’s Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg*, ed. Bernhard Anderson and Walter Harrelson (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), 108-15.

⁴¹This author agrees with the timeline and authorships given by the OT itself.

⁴²For a good overview of the motif of hope in the prophets see David Hubbard, “Hope in the Old Testament,” *TB* 34 (1983): 33-59. For a fuller picture of the eschatological themes of the writing prophets see Willem A. VanGemeren, *Interpreting the Prophetic Word: An Introduction to the Prophetic Literature of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990).

⁴³These are eschatological phrases. Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000), 31.

⁴⁴This dissertation has already demonstrated the connection between Proverbs, the Torah and the prophets regarding the hope for a new heart on which the law is written so this section will not take up that discussion.

ensure the inheritance of the land. Four key texts from the prophets will be examined in this section: Isaiah 11; 32; Jeremiah 23; and Ezekiel 37.

Isaiah 11

Isaiah prophesies of a branch that will come forth from the root of Jesse. The tree of the Davidic line is cut down in judgment but not uprooted, so that growth will come once again.⁴⁵ A twig will begin to grow out of the stump (cf. Isa 6). This resurrection of the Davidic line (cf. Amos 9:11) will mean a Son who receives the Spirit of Yahweh (11:2). This Messiah is the embodiment of Proverbs. The Spirit of Yahweh is called the Spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, and of the fear of Yahweh (11:2). Endowing these characteristics on the crown prince is the goal of Proverbs (cf. Proverb's prologue 1:1-7). This promise of the Spirit of Wisdom seems similar to the promise of Proverbs 1:23 that those who fear Yahweh (cf. Prov 1:29) will receive Wisdom's Spirit. This is one of the few places in the OT and NT that references the "Spirit of Wisdom." In some places the "Spirit of God in Wisdom" is given to those who build (i.e., the Tabernacle).⁴⁶ The Spirit of Wisdom is given to Joshua to empower him to lead the people (Deut 34:9). Joshua, Solomon, and ultimately Messiah follow in a

⁴⁵Isa 6 uses similar, not identical, language to talk of the chopping down of the tree of Israel, but the stump/the holy seed (עֲרֵב); cf. Gen 3:15; 12:7; 2 Sam 7:12) remains, so there is hope for future growth (Isa 6:13). Isa 6:13 and 11:1 use similar (identical in the case of Isa 11) language to Prov 12:3 where "a man is not established by wickedness, but the root (שֹׁרֶשׁ) of the righteous cannot be moved." Later the text says that this righteous root "bears fruit" (Prov 12:12). The righteous root of David's line will not ultimately be removed.

⁴⁶See Exod 31:3; 35:31. In Proverbs wisdom is connected with the building of the cosmos (3:19-20; 8:22-31), the palace/temple (9:1ff.), and the home (14:1). Here in Isa 11 the anointing of the Spirit of the Wisdom seems to enable the Messiah to rightly order the cosmos as it was in the beginning in the garden sanctuary of Eden (Isa 11:6-9). After all, it is the "Spirit" of Elohim that hovers over the primordial waters in Creation (Gen 1:2). See the article by Raymond Van Leeuwen, "Building God's House: An Exploration in Wisdom," in *The Way of Wisdom: Essays in Honor of Bruce K. Waltke*, ed. J. I. Packer and Sven K. Soderlund (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 204-11.

line as Spirit-anointed leaders who are enabled by the Spirit to lead the people and conquer their enemies.⁴⁷ Here in Isaiah 11 the giving of the Spirit will mean a righteous rule over the defenseless, the shattering of the wicked, and the right ordering of the cosmos, all as a catalyst for the New Exodus.

This new David receives the Spirit because his delight is in the fear of Yahweh (Isa 11:3; this is the motto of Proverbs; cf. Prov 1:7). This new king appears to be the fulfillment of the hopes of Proverbs because he actually fears Yahweh as Solomon pleaded with his son to do.⁴⁸ Because he fears Yahweh and is anointed with Spirit of wisdom he will judge rightly, not based on what his eyes see. This theme is prominent in Proverbs. Proverbs 3:7, “Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear Yahweh and depart from evil.” Proverbs 12:15, “The path of the foolish is right in his own eyes...” Proverbs 16:2, “All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but Yahweh weighs the spirits.” This David will not judge based on what his eyes see; rather he will judge righteously for the poor and lowly (Isa 11:4). Compare this statement with Proverbs 31:9 which says, “Open your mouth, judge righteously (שֹׁפֵט צְדָקָה),⁴⁹ and plead for the poor and needy.” As has been discussed, this is one of the primary tasks of the king in Proverbs.

⁴⁷There is a further connection between the Messiah and Joshua who is also tasked with keeping Torah (Josh 1:1-9) in order to lead the Conquest of the pagans. The connection is with the blessed man/anointed Son of Psalms 1 and 2 who delights in Torah and destroys the enemies. To see a discussion of the unity of Psalms 1 and 2 read Robert Cole, “An Integrated Reading of Psalms 1 and 2,” *JSOT* 26, no.4 (2002): 75-88.

⁴⁸Parker explains that the future ideal king upholds justice because he has wisdom that enables him to perform the task. He connects the picture of the wise king in Proverbs with the messianic figure of Isa 11. Parker, *Wisdom and Law*, 65.

⁴⁹These are the same words as used in Isa 11. The words for the needy are not the same in the two passages but are semantically similar (דְּלִים and עָנִי in Isa 11; and עָנִי and אֲבִיּוֹן in Prov 31:9).

Isaiah 11 says this new king will also pour out wrath on the wicked. This is the task of the king in Proverbs (see discussion above; cf. Prov 16; Ps 2). In judging righteously and punishing the wicked he will bring harmony to the creation. He will bring in the Gentiles to his glorious resting place, and he will be the catalyst for the Second Exodus from all the corners of the earth and the return to the land. As is found here in Isaiah 11, the giving of the Spirit and the keeping of the land is tied together in Proverbs 1:23-33 (see discussion below). Isaiah 11 paints the picture of the new David who is empowered by the Spirit of Yahweh/Wisdom. He fears Yahweh and judges righteously for the helpless while at the same time judging the wicked. This is the same description as the ideal king in Proverbs.⁵⁰ He will bring in the nations, but he will also return the exiles of Israel to their land in a Second Exodus.

Isaiah 32

Isaiah 32 paints a similar portrait of the hope of Israel when Messiah comes.⁵¹ It promises a king who will reign in righteousness and justice. This is the picture of the king in Proverbs. Oswalt argues that the mark of a good king is discovering what is right and points the reader to Proverbs for this description of the good king (Prov 16:10; 20:8,

⁵⁰Kalugila agrees and says “the picture of the ideal king (Isa 11) corresponds with that of the Wisdom literature,” and he references the king’s upholding of uprightness and justice in Prov 20:8 and 16:10. Kalugila, *The Wise King*, 127.

⁵¹Some oppose a messianic interpretation because they do not believe the language is idealistic enough and because the passage mentions “princes,” which is not common in messianic texts. However, Oswalt points out that there is still idealistic language in the passage and the princes are mentioned to show this future time will be the exact opposite of the present corruption. He goes on to write, “The coming of the Messiah became necessary because human beings could conceive of a kind of kingship which no human being could live up to.” This dissertation argues similarly that the messianic concept developed in part because no human had lived up to the ideal. John Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah 1-39*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 579-80.

26, 28; 29:4, 14; 31:4).⁵² Wisdom language is used to describe what this time will be like.⁵³ The ears of those who hear will listen (32:3). This is what the father in Proverbs asks his son to do over and over (Prov 1:4; 4:1; 5:7). In Isaiah 32:4 the “heart of the hasty” will understand and know. The passage mentions the fool who will no longer be called noble because he speaks foolishness. The wicked want to destroy the poor even though they “speak justice” (Isa 32:7). This is the opposite of the ideal king who upholds the rights of the lowly in contrast to the wicked and fools. The passage also describes complacent women who cause thorns and briars to come up (Isa 32:13).⁵⁴ There is exile because of their foolishness and wickedness. The palace is forsaken and the city is abandoned (32:14). But, at the time when the king begins to rule in righteousness (32:1), the Spirit from heaven will be poured out (32:15). The next section (32:16-18) then describes what might result from a good king’s leadership. The result is security.⁵⁵ Also, not only will the Spirit be poured out, but Yahweh says in Isaiah 32:18, “My people will dwell (וַיֵּשְׁבוּ) in a peaceful abode and in secure (מִבְּטָחִים; a similar root to בָּטַח in Prov 1:33) dwellings (מִשְׁכְּנֹת); the noun form of the verb in יִשְׁכֶּן Prov 1:33), and in quiet (שְׁאֵנִינֹת; the adjective form of the verb root שָׁן in Prov 1:33) resting places. This is the promise of Proverbs 1 (see below). The Spirit is poured out on the wise king, and this

⁵²Ibid., 580.

⁵³Oswalt says, “The first segment, 32:1-8, utilizes the language of the wisdom tradition to talk about sense and nonsense.” Ibid., 579.

⁵⁴See the similar imagery mentioned in Prov 24:30ff. describing the lazy man.

⁵⁵Oswalt says it is Yahweh ruling over a serene and quiet land delivered from all her enemies. Oswalt, *Isaiah 1-39*, 578-79, 584. See Prov 16:7, 10-15. See also E. J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 19-39*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 401-02.

situation will lead to safe dwelling and ease in the land (Prov 1:23, 33). In summary, Isaiah 32 speaks of a time when a new king will be raised up, and this time will lead to the transformation of folly and the upholding of the rights of the poor, so that exile is reversed when the Spirit is poured out. This will lead to safe and secure dwelling in the land.

Jeremiah 23

Jeremiah 23 shows that after exile, there are the connected promises of a new king and safe dwelling in the land. Jeremiah 23 is in the context of Yahweh's condemnation of Coniah son of Jehoiakim in Jeremiah 22, where Yahweh says in 22:26 that he will hurl him and his mother into another land where they will both die (again the theme of exile and death).⁵⁶ Yahweh in Jeremiah 23 pronounces judgment on the shepherds who destroy and scatter his sheep (23:1; presumably Coniah from Jer 22). There is a need for rulers who do not devour the sheep and cause their exile, because the kings are responsible for the fate of the nation, but Yahweh promises to gather the remnant out of all the countries where he has driven them (23:3). He will set up shepherds/rulers over them who will tend to them, and they will not be afraid anymore (23:4). When will this happen? These things will occur according to Jeremiah 23:5 in the "coming days" (יָמֵי בָּאִים), which is an eschatological formula. Yahweh will raise for David a Branch (cf. Isa 11) of righteousness (Jer 23:5).⁵⁷

⁵⁶See also Jer 22:3-5 and the connection of justice and righteousness to the throne of David and the house of Israel.

⁵⁷To read a discussion of the possible messianic interpretations of this passage see Hugo McCord, "The Meaning of YHWH *tsidhkenu* ("the Lord our righteousness") in Jeremiah 23:6 and 33:16," *RQ* 6, no. 3 (1962): 114-21.

This new king will reign and reestablish the throne of David that was lost due to wickedness, foolishness and injustice.⁵⁸ The promise is not only a reign, but that David “will have insight/be wise” (שכל; cf. Isa 52:13). This is a key term for wisdom and prudence in Proverbs,⁵⁹ and here “the context indicates that the point at issue is his judicial *hokmah*.”⁶⁰ Like the ideal king of Proverbs he will execute judgment and righteousness in the land (Jer 23:5).

According to Jeremiah 23:6, when a new David is raised up who is wise and rules in justice, Judah will be saved and Israel will dwell in safety (same phrase as Prov 1:33 with the exception of the ל preposition). Like Proverbs, the arrival of a wise king who upholds justice will lead to an established kingdom and safe dwelling in the land. Jeremiah 33:16 gives the same picture. The passage discusses the restoration of Israel after Yahweh, in his wrath, has torn down the city. Yahweh says, “Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great things.” Could this be similar to the call of Woman Wisdom (Prov 1:28) who says she will not answer the call of the unrepentant but will make her words known to those who repent (Prov 1:23)? Yahweh promises to restore the fortunes of Judah in the “coming days” (33:14). Jeremiah 33:15 promises the same things as 23:5. A righteous Branch of David will sprout, administer justice, and it will lead to secure dwelling in the land (cf. Prov 1:33, same phrase except the ל preposition).

⁵⁸Leithart connects this with wisdom because he describes the king as a “new Solomon.” Peter Leithart, *A House for my Name: A Survey of the Old Testament* (Moscow, ID: Canon, 2000), 205.

⁵⁹This root is used 19x in Proverbs.

⁶⁰Kalugila, *The Wise King*, 131.

Therefore, evil kings have destroyed the people and led to the exile, but Yahweh will bring them back to the land. The catalyst for this will be the resurrection of the line of David so that a new man sits on the throne and rules in wisdom and justice, causing the safe dwelling of the people in the land. This is the same portrait as Proverbs. The wise king leads to the stability of the land.

Ezekiel 37

The valley of dry bones vision of Ezekiel 37 is monumental for the future hope of Israel. Exile is presented as the death of the nation but there is hope for resurrection from the dead. Yahweh shows Ezekiel a valley of dead, dry bones and asks him if the bones can “live”? (37:3). Yahweh will cause רִיחַ (Spirit or Breath) to enter the bones of those who have been slain (37:9)⁶¹ so that they live (37:5). Then Yahweh tells Ezekiel that the bones are the whole house of Israel (37:11), both Israel and Judah (cf. 37:15-28). Though the text is uncertain, one of the apparent reasons for the death of Israel (37:23) is their “apostasy” (מְשׁוּבָה; same reason for the death and exile of Prov 1:32).⁶² This would be the only occurrence of this word in Ezekiel, and it would be in a similar context (death and exile) as the only occurrence in Proverbs. Even though death has come Yahweh will bring Israel out of their graves and will lead them into the land of Israel

⁶¹“Those who have been slain” is the *qal* passive participle of הָרַג. The apostates who refuse Wisdom are הָרַג (Prov 1:32). Also, those who embrace Wisdom’s antithesis, the זָרָה (Prov 7:26), are “those who have been הָרַג” (another *qal* passive participle).

⁶²The proposed emendation from (מְשׁוּבָתִיָּהִם) “dwelling places” to (מְשׁוּבָתִיָּהִם) “apostasies” comes from Symmachus, and the difference in the two words can be explained by metathesis. “Apostasies” is the translation given by the ESV, HCSB and NIV. Rosenau proposes another emendation from (מְשׁוּבָתִיָּהִם) “their dwellings” to (חֲוֵעֲבִתִיָּהִם) “their abominations.” William Rosenau, “Ezekiel 37:15-28: What Happened to the Ten Tribes,” *HUCA* (1925): 87.

(37:12-14). Indeed, Yahweh promises “I will put my spirit” (רוּחַי; cf. Prov 1:23 “my spirit”) in you (Ezek 37:14).⁶³ Ezekiel continues in the next oracle by promising to put one king over the re-unified nation in the land, a new David, who will be prince forever (37:25). Thus, when Yahweh pours out his Spirit, returns his people to their land, and heals their apostasies, there will be a new David ruling over them forever.

This survey of these prophetic texts has revealed a hopeful picture for Israel’s future. After the judgment of exile, Yahweh will raise up a new Spirit-anointed, wise David who will rescue Israel from their enemies and bring them back into their land. He will establish an eternal, righteous kingdom that is stable and secure. This new David is repeatedly described with the language of the Proverbs. Parker provides a helpful summation, “The description of a future ideal king as depicted by Isaiah and Jeremiah would seem to fulfill the requirements of the ideal as described in the Dtr and Wisdom Literature.”⁶⁴ Indeed, it would seem that Israel’s hoped-for king is the embodiment of Solomon’s wisdom in Proverbs, but he will live up to the righteous ideal unlike all the Davids before him.

Future Hope in the Prophets and Proverbs

The previous sections examined Proverbs’ portrait of the ideal king and the failure of David’s sons to live up to the ideal. This led to the picture of the prophets for one yet to come who will fulfill this wisdom. This next section briefly analyzes Proverbs’ connection with the future hope of the prophets. The prophets hope for a Spirit-endowed

⁶³Prov 1:23 and 33 also connect the giving of the רוּחַי with dwelling in the land.

⁶⁴Parker, *Wisdom and Law*, 65.

David who is the catalyst to stability in the land. This is the picture seen in Proverbs as well.

Spirit and Land

Proverbs 1. Solomon first introduces the crown prince to Woman Wisdom (1:20-33) after urging him to avoid the violent gang (1:8-19).⁶⁵ Wisdom speaks out in public urging the simple to repent at her rebuke. Murphy argues that 1:23 is not an invitation to repent, but rather it is “turn aside from my rebuke.” He gives the following reasons for his argument. First, the shift from third person (1:22) to second person (1:23) obscures the correlation between “how long” and “turn aside.” Second, there is the *inclusio* formed by “turn” (תִּשׁוּבוּ) in verse 23 and “apostasy” (מִשׁוּבַת) in verse 32. The “turning away” is attributed to the simple (1:22). Murphy, however, seems to contradict himself at the second point. According to him the simple ones have already turned away in 1:22. So, why would Wisdom need to tell simpletons to turn from her rebuke when they already have turned away from her? Also, the connection of turning and backsliding could be a pun instead of an *inclusio*. This same pun is used in Jeremiah 3:12 where Yahweh commands Jeremiah to say, “Repent (שׁוּבוּהָ), backsliding Israel (יִשְׂרָאֵל מִשׁוּבָהּ).” Murphy’s third reason is that Wisdom never invites the audience to conversion.

⁶⁵For discussions on the identity of Woman Wisdom peruse some of these works: Knut Heim, *The Personification of Wisdom in Proverbs 1-9* (Louisville: The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002), cassette. Christa Kayatz, *Studien Zu Proverbien 1-9* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1966), 94ff. Bernhard Lang, *Wisdom and the Book of Proverbs: An Israelite Goddess Redefined* (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1986), 57-70. Ralph Marcus, “On Biblical Hypostases of Wisdom,” *HUCA* 25 (1950-51): 157-71. Helmer Ringgren, *Word and Wisdom: Studies in the Hypostatization of Divine Qualities and Functions in the Ancient Near East* (Lund: Hakan Ohlssons Boktryckeri, 1947), 96. Robert Stallman, “Divine Hospitality and Wisdom’s Banquet in Proverbs 9:1-6,” in *The Way of Wisdom*, 124. Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 83-87 and 126-32.

Murphy acknowledges that there is a positive aspect to the passage where some do listen to the voice of Wisdom (1:33), but he says this is soft. According to Murphy all Wisdom does is simply proclaim the punishment of those who reject her.⁶⁶ The function of Woman Wisdom in Proverbs militates against this interpretation. The entire point of Proverbs 1-9 is an invitation to the young man (the crown prince) to embrace this wise Woman. There are competing invitations given by Wisdom and Folly in Proverbs 9, vying for the affections of the young man before the aphorisms that begin at 10:1. Finally, Murphy contends that the tenor of the piece militates against an invitation. An invitation to listen to her reproof (תוֹכַחַת) “does not make sense.” He writes, “One does not issue an invitation to heed a reproof by describing past infidelity.”⁶⁷ But, the translation Murphy is arguing for does not make the best sense of the grammar. If the command were to turn back from Wisdom’s reproof one would expect a נָזַח instead of a לָּ.⁶⁸ Also, שׁוּב is the main word used for repentance in the OT (cf. Amos 4:6, 8, 9, and others). Waltke agrees that Wisdom is giving an invitation to the simpletons to repent. He says of the root שׁוּב, which means to move in the opposite direction, “its original physical notion gives way metaphorically to the psychic-spiritual turning of the heart

⁶⁶Waltke, “Lady Wisdom,” 11. He says that the simple could have repented and found life but instead they turned away and found death.

⁶⁷Roland Murphy, “Wisdom’s Song: Proverbs 1:20-33,” *CBQ* 48 (1986): 456-60.

⁶⁸Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 996-97.

away from evil and death toward goodness and life. With this meaning the verb becomes the most important term in the Bible for repentance, especially in the prophets.”⁶⁹

If the young man will repent at Wisdom’s rebuke, then she promises to pour out (נבע) her spirit and make her words known to the repentant (1:23). נבע means to “gush forth.” It would seem that the picture of the outpouring of the Spirit is in view here (cf. Isa 44; Joel 2). The Spirit of Wisdom is elsewhere identified as the Spirit of Yahweh (Isa 11:2). Still, not everyone sees the giving of the Spirit as in view here. Emerton argues that ריחיי means “my breath” as a metonymy for the words of Wisdom. He argues for similar usage in Psalm 33:6 and Isaiah 11:4. Also, the *hiphil* of נבע usually deals with speech and this usage fits the parallel line of Proverbs 1:23 that refers to revealing Wisdom’s words, as well as other instances of this verb in Proverbs (cf. Prov 15:2, 28).⁷⁰

Longman sees this as referring to the giving of the Spirit of God and connects it with Isaiah 11 (see the discussion above).⁷¹ Isaiah 11 and Proverbs 1 refer to sons of David and talk about the outpouring or anointing of the Spirit. Once Messiah comes, he not only receives the Spirit but he also pours out the Spirit on his followers and connects this to revealing his words to them (cf. Isa 11; John 14-16; Acts 2). Hypothesizing a

⁶⁹Waltke, “Lady Wisdom,” 7, 13. Though this meaning of “turn” is found mainly in the prophets, it fits well with Prov 1 because of the prophetic overtones of the passage.

⁷⁰John Emerton, “A Note on the Hebrew Text of Proverbs i.22-3,” *JTS* 19 (1968): 612. Waltke agrees with Emerton. Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 204. He changed from an earlier view where he had connected this with the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. He also had connected it with the giving of the Spirit to Messiah. Waltke, “Lady Wisdom,” 7-8, 14.

⁷¹Tremper Longman III, *Proverbs*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 112. McKane connects it with the giving of the Spirit in Isa 44. William McKane, *Proverbs: A New Approach*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), 274.

metonymy is not necessary in this instance to conform the first part of the verse to its parallel in the latter half of the verse. The giving of the Spirit and the revelation of divine words are tightly connected in Scripture. The apostle Paul can say in one place “be filled with the Spirit” and in another “Let the word of Christ dwell in you,” and both in the same context of exhorting believers to admonish each other with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (cf. Eph 5:18; Col 3:16). Indeed, in Ephesians 1:17 Paul says that he prays for them “that...God...may give to you the *spirit of wisdom and revelation* in the knowledge of him” (italics mine). According to the editors of the Nestle-Aland Greek NT there is a verbal parallel between Wisdom in Proverbs 1 and the giving of the Spirit in the NT. Wisdom promises to pour out her spirit on her followers (Prov 1:23), and this parallels the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The giving of wisdom’s wind/breath (πνοή) in the LXX is seen as parallel to the rushing wind of the Spirit in Acts 2:2.⁷² Murphy also argued for the Spirit interpretation, and he connected the giving of the Spirit with the retention of the land (cf. Ezek 37:14; see discussion above):

Wisdom promises to pour out her ‘spirit’ upon those who will listen, just as the Lord promised to pour out his spirit on the redeemed Israel (Isa. 44:3)...The ‘self-will’ (מְשֻׁבֵּת) that kills the simple is also the term used by Hosea and Jeremiah for the infidelity of Israel. But the obedient ‘dwells in security’, just as Israel was so often promised, at the conquest (Deut. 12:10) and in Messianic times (Ezek. 34:25).⁷³

Hence, if Solomon’s son (cf. Isa 11:1; Jer 23:5) repents and chooses to fear Yahweh (Prov 1:29; cf. Isa 11:3), he will receive the Spirit (cf. Isa 11:2; 32:15), then Wisdom promises to lead him to dwell safely at ease and free from the fear of evil (Prov

⁷²The appendix in the back of the GNT lists in OT order the citations and allusions to OT passages that the editors have discerned in the NT texts. Eberhard Nestle, et al. *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993), 788.

⁷³Roland Murphy, “The Kerygma of the Book of Proverbs,” *Interpretation* 20 (1966): 8. This is an earlier work than that discussed above. Apparently he also changed his mind.

1:33; cf. Isa 32:18; Jer 23:6). The promise in Proverbs 1:33 to the young man who embraces Wisdom is three-fold: (1) dwell in safety (יִשְׁכֵּן בְּטָח), (2) be at ease (שְׁאֵנָה), and (3) be without fear of evil (מִפְּחַד רָעָה). These concepts are often used to refer to safe dwelling in the land. For example, יִשְׁכֵּן בְּטָח as a phrase is only used a handful of times in the OT. In Deuteronomy 33:12 Moses talks of how Yahweh will be the means by which Benjamin “dwells in safety” (יִשְׁכֵּן לְבְטָח).⁷⁴ The same phrase that Proverbs uses occurs in Deuteronomy 33:28 (וַיִּשְׁכְּנוּ ... בְּטָח) speaking of a future promise that Israel will dwell in safety after Yahweh drives their enemies out in a land of new wine.⁷⁵ The discussion of the future hope of the prophets revealed that this phrase is used in the prophets to speak of dwelling securely in the land after exile (Jer 23:6; 33:15). When this phrase is used, the themes that emerge are exile and possession.⁷⁶ The next part of the promise in Proverbs 1:33 is the word שָׁן, which is used only 5 times in the OT. It is used two times in Jeremiah to reference safe dwelling in the land after the second exodus. The promise is that they will return to the land from captivity and then have quiet or rest (שָׁן; Jer 30:10; 46:27). In both of these promises it is also said that they will not be

⁷⁴The only difference between this phrase and Prov 1:33 is the לְ preposition.

⁷⁵The slight difference between Deut 33:28 and Prov 1:33, besides the connecting *waw* that starts the sentence, is that the subject comes between the verb and object.

⁷⁶The similar phrase used in Ps 16 states David’s confidence in Yahweh and speaks of the wonderful inheritance that has fallen to him (16:6; most likely a reference to land). Then, David says “my flesh will dwell securely” (יִשְׁכֵּן לְבְטָח, v. 9). After expressing confidence in his dwelling, David expresses confidence in resurrection from the dead (16:10; cf. Acts 2:24-32). There is again a connection between resurrection life and safe dwelling in the land (see discussion of Ezek 37 above).

afraid (חָרַד; this is the third part of the promise of Prov 1:33). חָרַד is a different word from פָּחַד in Proverbs 1:33, but the semantic idea is the same, “fear.” If the crown prince will embrace Wisdom then it will lead to a safe, peaceful dwelling without fear of enemies. This is a part of the dynastic promise made to David, where Yahweh assures David that he will “plant” Israel in their own place and the “unrighteous sons will afflict them no more” (2 Sam 7:10). Again, the themes of land dwelling and no fear of enemies are connected to the king (cf. Prov 16:7).

In Proverbs 1:33 “whoever listens” (שִׁמְעֵ) is a singular participle. Waltke points out that in 1:33 the “shift from the plural invitation and rejection to the singular acceptance resembles Israel’s history in which only a remnant remains at the end.”⁷⁷ Also, it does highlight the connectedness the king and the nation have with one another. If the crown prince learns to follow Yahweh then the nation will be blessed and will remain safely in the land, but if the king turns away then the nation will face the whirlwind of Yahweh’s wrath, carrying them off into exile and death.

Proverbs 2. Chapter 2 examined this passage at length so there is no need to re-analyze it. Suffice it to say that the presentation of the contrasting Women who are competing for the crown prince’s affection shows the connectedness of these passages, and both of them offer the same hope or punishment, and that is life and death, dwelling and exile. If the son embraces Wisdom, the Torah of Solomon, then he will be anointed by the Spirit and remain in the land, as will the nation, but if he succumbs to the strange

⁷⁷Waltke, *Proverbs 1-15*, 212. This is interesting given the fact that Waltke does not want to see land in the Wisdom Literature.

woman then the death of exile awaits him. Historically Solomon faltered with the strange women and his descendents ultimately ended up in exile, but that strengthened Israel's hope that one day a Davidide would arise who would fulfill the wisdom of Proverbs and receive the promises (Isa 11).⁷⁸

King and Kingdom

The last connection to examine in regard to Proverbs and the prophets is the idea of the ideal king establishing a stable and enduring kingdom. In contrast to the picture of death and exile, there is a positive hope that emerges for a brighter future. Proverbs and the prophets picture the raising up of a wise king as the catalyst to safe dwelling in the land and stability in the kingdom. This king must uphold justice in order for the land to be safe.⁷⁹

The ideal king, as this dissertation has examined at length, must administer justice and punish evildoers in order to establish his kingdom. These functions of the king are connected with life in the land and the sustaining of the kingdom. Since righteousness is the means by which a king establishes his throne (16:12), unrighteousness will topple the throne, so the king must be vigilant in justice and punishing evildoers (16:14). Specifically, upholding justice for the helpless establishes the kingdom (cf. Isa 11:4). Chapter 2 of this dissertation examined Proverbs 29:14 that states judging the lowly in truth will establish the king's throne forever. Proverbs 20:28 says, "Lovingkindness and truth guard the king, and by lovingkindness he upholds his throne." This thesis has

⁷⁸Parker, *Wisdom and Law*, 64.

⁷⁹Upholding justice and being obedient to Torah would cause the kingdom to endure, but disobedience would "bring Yahweh's punishment down upon the king and the whole of his empire." Kalugila, *The Wise King*, 83-84.

argued that Wisdom is covenant keeping, and it would seem that Proverbs is here teaching that covenant loyalty and faithfulness preserve the king and his kingdom.⁸⁰ This is just a couple of verses after 20:26 which spoke of the king's role in punishing the wicked. The idea is that wisdom and faithfulness bring stability to the kingdom and the land, whereas the failure to punish evil leads to instability.⁸¹

Proverbs 28:2 bears the same theme out, "In the rebellion of the land many are its princes, but by an understanding man who possesses knowledge right will be lengthened." This appears to be exilic language. It is at least chaotic language. Whereas the wise king who maintains justice through punishing evil brings stability to the land and length to his dynasty, when rebellion is tolerated it leads to multiple rulers. Jerusalem's history looks a lot like this since many different rulers reigned over her because of the rebellion (פְּשָׁע) of Israel. Most scholars give a more general interpretation to this passage instead of a covenant specific one, but their thoughts confirm that instability is in view. Longman writes, "The offense of a land will lead to a proliferation of leaders....The many leaders may point to the fragmentation of a previously united land or perhaps to a succession of leaders as they violently jockey for power."⁸² A sustained dominion by one benevolent ruler provides the most security for a nation. Waltke thinks this refers to a bloated bureaucracy that is needed to keep an eye on the people. However, he does argue

⁸⁰Waltke says this is kindness and reliability from the king to "his helpless covenant partner." Bruce Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs 15-31*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 158.

⁸¹Crenshaw agrees, "The optimal assessment of a king's judicial acumen...does not say that the throne was founded on justice, only that a dynasty that promotes justice will endure." He also mentions the "stabilizing effect of royal justice on society (29:4)." Crenshaw, "A Mother's Instruction," 21.

⁸²Longman, *Proverbs*, 487.

that “to continue in office the son must uphold what is known to be right and not tolerate legal offenses.”⁸³

Proverbs 29:4 clearly connects this theme with the land, “The king by justice (בְּמִשְׁפָּט) causes the land to endure, but a man who receives bribes tears it down (סִרַס).” There are two different ideas about what corrupt behavior the king is engaging in (29:4b). Longman argues that it refers to unfair taxation, whereas Waltke takes a more typical view that bribery is involved.⁸⁴ Either way, a king’s greed and ill-gotten gain destroys a nation (cf. Deut 17:17), but a king who makes right judgments causes it to remain in the land.

Waltke points out the syntactical connection of 29:4 with 29:3 which says, “A man who loves wisdom causes his father to rejoice, but the companion of a prostitute (זֹנָה)⁸⁵ destroys his wealth.” This verse is almost paradigmatic for Proverbs. The father urges his son to love Wisdom (cf. 7:4) but to avoid liaisons with an immoral woman. If the son embraces Wisdom the father will be pleased, but ruin will be the result of embracing a harlot. This ruin is juxtaposed according to Waltke with the endurance of the land in 29:4.⁸⁶ The unwise prince who embraces the harlot and takes bribes both squanders his wealth and tears down the nation, whereas the wise prince loves wisdom and causes his land to endure.

⁸³Waltke, *Proverbs 15-31*, 408.

⁸⁴Longman, *Proverbs*, 502. Waltke, *Proverbs 15-31*, 399.

⁸⁵This is a different word from the ones used to describe the strange woman (chaps. 2, 5, 6, 7 and 9), but the idea of sexual sin is involved.

⁸⁶Waltke, *Proverbs 15-31*, 432.

This is exilic language. **הָרַס** is often used in exilic contexts. In Jeremiah 24:6 Yahweh tells Jeremiah that he will bring the exiles back to the land, and he promises to build them (and not pull them down (**הָרַס**), plant them and not pluck them up. Yahweh will reverse what was done in the Exile. Also, Yahweh promises to give them a heart to know him and to turn to him with their whole heart (24:7). This is reminiscent of wisdom language.⁸⁷ This same exilic idea is present in Jeremiah 31, which also connects new life to the heart (Jer 31:33). Again **הָרַס** is used to refer to exile. Yahweh had plucked them up, broken them down, thrown them down (**הָרַס**) and destroyed them, but now he will watch over them to build and plant them (31:28). This is new exodus language (see the same exilic idea in Jer 31:40; 42:10; 45:4; Lam 2:2, 17; and the collapse of Babylonian empire Jer 50:15). The exilic idea is connected once again with the need for a new heart in Ezekiel 36. Yahweh promises that after exile he will give them a new heart (36:36) and put his Spirit within them (36:27) so that they obey him and remain in the land. When this happens Yahweh will restore the land, so that the desolated land becomes like the Garden of Eden (36:34-35) and the “pulled down” (**הָרַס**) city will be fortified (36:35-36).⁸⁸ There is a need for a new heart and the Spirit in order to walk with Yahweh. Yahweh promises to give them, to rebuild what has been devastated, and to put them

⁸⁷As has been noted, the theme of the new heart as necessary to obedience is oft repeated in Proverbs, Torah and the prophets. It is connected to life in the land.

⁸⁸There is a strong connection to Proverbs with this language. Proverbs speaks of the need for mankind to acquire a heart (15:32). In fact, Proverbs connects the “lack of a heart” (**חֵסֶד לֵב**) with a man whose walls are pulled down (**הָרַס**) and whose vineyard is devastated and the opposite of Eden (cf. Ezek 36:35-36) in Prov 24:30ff.

back in the land. This language links with the language of Proverbs that speaks of the outpouring of the Spirit, the lack of a right heart, and remaining in the land. This is the picture here in Proverbs 29:4 which describes the collapse of the land because of an unjust king contrasted with the endurance of a land that has a just king. This collapse plays out in Israel's history, and there is great hope for a king who will reverse it.

Again this idea surfaces in Proverbs 28:16, “a ruler who lacks understanding multiplies oppression, but the one who hates covetousness will lengthen his days.” The MT is awkward because it is not usual for there to be a compound subject without a predicate. Some scholars emend the text from **וַרְבֵּה** to **וַרְבֵּהָ** which would be a common issue of *waw* and *yod* being confused.⁸⁹ Others find emendation unnecessary even though the verse might be uneven.⁹⁰ Either way the idea is similar that the ruler is foolish and oppressive. Is the thought that the good ruler in 28:16b, who hates covetousness, will live a long life or have a long reign (**יָאֲרִיךְ יָמָיו**)? Garrett thinks that long life for the ruler is in view.⁹¹ Admittedly the phrase can mean either. This exact phrase in this form is used 4 times. As discussed previously, Deuteronomy 17:20, which is a very similar context, shows that if a king is faithful to the Torah it will “lengthen the days” of the king “in his kingdom” (**עַל־מַמְלַכְתּוֹ**).⁹² Deuteronomy 17 links it to the king's reign because it is in

⁸⁹Garrett believes this is the simplest understanding. Garrett, *Proverbs*, 225.

⁹⁰Longman, *Proverbs*, 493. Roland Murphy, *Proverbs*, WBC, vol. 22 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 213.

⁹¹Garrett, *Proverbs*, 225.

⁹²Following Torah is wisdom according to Deut 4:6, and the king is commanded to be a man of Torah, so Prov 28:16 would follow right in line by teaching that the wise king will increase the days of his rule. The same phrase in a different form is used in 1 Kgs 3:14 to speak of Yahweh lengthening Solomon's days if he is faithful to Torah. This could mean life or rule. Both ideas are probably in view.

reference to his kingdom and his sons' tenure as well. In Ecclesiastes 8:13 this phrase speaks of the wicked's days not being prolonged, and in Isaiah 53:10 it speaks of the lengthening of the Servant of Yahweh's days. Physical life appears to be in view in those two instances. Waltke seems to sense the ambiguity. He says that the phrase may be "an intentional pun referring to the ruler's life...or his tenure as ruler." But, Waltke appears to lean toward tenure in office.⁹³ Similar themes are found in other ANE wisdom texts, and some connect the stability of the kingdom in justice with the length of the king's life.⁹⁴ Either way, the king's life and the fate of the kingdom are tied together. The picture of the ideal king in Proverbs is fairly clear. He is to uphold justice and defend the rights of the defenseless. He is to walk in wisdom in order to provide stability for the kingdom. A corrupt leader will lead to the downfall of the kingdom and exile. A wise king who is above the wickedness of corruption, bribery, or cheating the disadvantaged to advantage himself will ensure endurance in the land.

Conclusion

Proverbs and the prophets seem to share a similar eschatological expectation. Proverbs warns of death and exile for folly, wickedness, and covenant infidelity. The prophets preach that exile and death are sure to fall on the houses of Israel and Judah because of their unfaithfulness to Yahweh. But the prophets also promise a brighter future in which a new David will sit on the throne and establish an unrivaled kingdom in wisdom and justice. These days are characterized by the outpouring of the Spirit and

⁹³Waltke, *Proverbs 15-31*, 421.

⁹⁴Fox references a Babylonian wisdom text called "Advice to a Prince" that says, "If a king does not heed justice, his people will be thrown into chaos and his land will be devastated...If he does not heed his nobles, his life will be cut short." Fox, *Proverbs 10-31*, 818.

inheriting the land. The “promises” of Proverbs are far more general but they are similar. The ideal, Spirit-anointed, king is presented in Proverbs, alongside the foolish, corrupt king who will destroy the kingdom. This ideal king seems too good to be true, and indeed that is the case in Israel’s history. While a “golden” future is not specifically foretold in Proverbs, the potential prosperity and *shalom* that might accompany a wise and just ruler are proclaimed clearly. This prosperity would be a stable kingdom in a secure land without the fear of enemies. This is the same prosperity and *shalom* promised in the prophets. Solomon is training his son to avoid being the wicked king and to be the ideal king so that this future might be realized. Solomon’s son fails to live up to the ideals, but there is a Son down the Solomonic line who meets the wisdom of Proverbs and the expectations of the prophets, and his throne is established forever (cf. 2 Sam 7:13; Prov 29:14; Isa 9:7; Matt 12:42; 1 Cor 1:24).

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

OT scholarship is skeptical that Proverbs teaches a future hope.¹ This dissertation has endeavored to investigate if such skepticism is misplaced and to decipher if there is a future hope presented in Proverbs. It has argued that Proverbs must be analyzed in its immediate context, and then examined in its canonical context in order to rightly understand its message.² This investigation began by cataloguing potential future hope verses in Proverbs, analyzing the debated passages in Proverbs (2:1-22; 24:13-20; and 29:14), and then summarizing the findings. The conclusion was that there is a collective, royal future hope for retention of the land, royal posterity, and finally an eternal kingdom led by an ideal king. The dissertation then placed Proverbs in its canonical context to see if there were possible connections with the future hope of the Writings, the Law, and the Prophets. Indeed, similar themes emerged and links were ascertained. Wisdom was found to be living out the Law, and Proverbs was seen as Solomon obeying the commands of Deuteronomy 6 to parents, by instructing his son, and the commands of Deuteronomy 17 that the king should be faithful to the Torah. Indeed, Solomon is training the crown prince in the Torah.

¹Walter Brueggemann, *In Man We Trust: The Neglected Side of Biblical Faith* (Richmond: John Knox, 1972), 15-16.

²So also James Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 273.

The ultimate conclusion is that Proverbs does contribute to a future hope for a wise king who establishes an eternal kingdom. Proverbs functions to explain how King Solomon trains the Davidic Prince to be the ideal king who through wisdom – living life under the covenant – establishes an eternal, righteous kingdom in the land. The failure of Solomon’s sons (the Judahite monarchy) to fulfill the wisdom of Proverbs contributes to the future hope of Israel for a wise Son of David who fulfills this picture and ushers in this promised kingdom. This chapter summarizes the argument that has been made and offers some concluding observations.

Future Hope in Proverbs

Chapter 2 argued that Proverbs is inherently future-oriented, and that it promises rewards.³ Many of those rewards are received almost immediately when one walks in wisdom, but some are relegated to the future. Some of those rewards, like eternal life, are only experienced beyond the clinical death of the wise person, and there are still others that are not immediate or individual but rather collective and future. Chapter 2 then examined texts that presented a collective or royal future hope in Proverbs.

Proverbs 2:1-22 presents a future hope of retaining the land instead of being plucked out of it in exile.⁴ This fits very well with the life and death theme of Proverbs because life throughout the OT is presented as living in the land that Yahweh has

³Bruce Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs Chapter 1-15*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 107-09.

⁴So also Tremper Longman III, *Proverbs*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 125.

provided in communion with him, and death is presented often as exile from the land (cf. Gen 3; Ezek 37).

Proverbs 24:14-20 presents a future hope of posterity for the king. Solomon is training his son in wisdom because wisdom is the means to ensuring offspring and the succession of the dynasty. This is connected with the promise of the Davidic covenant that Yahweh will see to it that David always has a lamp, a life, before him in Jerusalem (Prov 14:20; cf. 2 Sam 21:17; 1 Kgs 11:36; 15:4).⁵ This collective interpretation makes sense in the Semitic mind, plus the central concern of the OT after Genesis 3:15 is one of “seed.” This line is narrowed to David in 2 Samuel 7, and there David is promised an eternal kingdom. At the outset this would seem to require an eternal succession of sons, so offspring is vital to the dynasty. Ultimately, the progress of revelation reveals that there is not an eternal succession but rather an eternal son, Jesus of Nazareth.

The examination of Proverbs 29:14 revealed a pervasive theme that runs throughout Proverbs. The theme is that an ideal, wise king who executes justice by upholding the cause of the weak and punishing evildoers will bring stability to his dynasty and nation.⁶ Indeed, Proverbs 29:14 promises an eternal dynasty to such a king. This led to the conclusion that Proverbs does paint a future hope picture of Solomon training the Davidic prince in how to be the wise, ideal king who through wisdom and justice establishes an eternal Davidic dynasty in the land. Proverbs is about the establishment of the Messianic kingdom.

⁵See William McKane, *Proverbs: A New Approach*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), 405.

⁶R. B. Y. Scott, *Proverbs Ecclesiastes: Introduction, Translation and Notes*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1965), 169.

Proverbs and the Writings

Chapter 3 examined the connections between the future hope of the writings and Proverbs. It first examined Proverbs in light of its immediate context in the wisdom literature of the OT. Like Proverbs, Ecclesiastes is royal because it is connected to David and has Solomon as its author. His final concern for his “son” (the crown prince) is that he obeys the Torah because he will be judged on this basis (Eccl 12:12-14). This links the wisdom literature with the kingship laws of Deuteronomy 17.⁷

By examining the Psalms, one sees that the Psalter is eschatological in its final composition, and its composition is driving the reader to long for the future Davidic Messiah who will reign as Yahweh’s vice-regent on the earth.⁸ Indeed, the five Books of the Psalter tell the story of Israel and David up through the exile, and then present the future hope of return from exile and the establishment of the Davidic kingdom over the entire world by the defeat of Israel’s enemies. For this to happen the future David must be a man who delights in the Torah (Pss 1-2).⁹

These themes intersect with Proverbs because the wisdom of Proverbs is observance of the Torah, so Solomon is training his son to be the king who delights in Torah and obeys it (Ps 1; Eccl 12).¹⁰ Also, Proverbs presents the picture of the ideal king who reigns as Yahweh’s vice-regent on earth in Proverbs 16:1-15.¹¹ This ideal king who

⁷So also Hamilton, *God’s Glory*, 320.

⁸D. C. Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter: An Eschatological Programme in the Book of Psalms*, JSOTSup 252 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

⁹See Robert Cole, “An Integrated Reading of Psalms 1 and 2,” *JSOT* 26, no. 4 (2002): 75-88.

¹⁰C. Hassell Bullock, “Wisdom, the ‘Amen’ of Torah.” *JETS* 52, no.1 (2009): 5-18.

¹¹See Bruce Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs 15-31*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 17-18.

obeys the Torah is presented in Proverbs as establishing an enduring and stable kingdom that is perpetual (Prov 29:14). He will even defeat his enemies (Prov 16:7), and he will ensure retention of the land (2:20-22).

Proverbs and the Law

Chapter 4 considered Proverbs' relationship to the Law. The Law presents a future hope for a king in the last days (cf. Gen 49; Num 24).¹² This king will be obedient to the Torah (Deut 17). Only unswerving observance of the Torah will ensure a long dynasty and succession for the king. The Law also presents the future hope of the covenant people who receive new hearts with the law internalized (similar hope given in the prophets). Israel is unable to obey the Law because they lack the heart capable to do so. Therefore, Yahweh promises to give them this new heart in the future. Israel will be exiled for unfaithfulness to their covenant with Yahweh, but ultimately they will be brought back to the land.

Proverbs connects with these future hope themes that emerge in the Law because the wisdom of Proverbs is keeping the Torah. Deuteronomy 4:6 says that Israel's wisdom is the observance of the Torah. Plus, in Ezra the Torah is called "the wisdom of God" (Ezra 7:14, 25). Throughout Proverbs Solomon continually exhorts his son to listen to "my law" (Prov 3:1; 4:2). The king was commanded to write a copy of the Torah in Deuteronomy 17, so that may be why Solomon calls it his own. Proverbs and the Torah have the same didactic function, the same ethic, and the same rewards. The Torah and the prophets hope for a day when Israel receives new hearts from Yahweh with his Torah

¹²John H. Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch: Revelation, Composition and Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2009), 244.

written on them. This will give them the ability to obey the law. Proverbs combines the concepts of new heart and the law written on them (cf. Prov 3:3; 6:32; 7:3). These connections lead one to believe that Proverbs is Solomon obeying the command to parents in Deuteronomy 6 and the command to kings in Deuteronomy 17.¹³ He is training his son in the Torah, so that he will obey it with a new heart and the kingdom will be established and endure in the land.

Proverbs and the Prophets

In chapter 5 the dissertation examined the connection of the future hope of the prophets with Proverbs. The examination began with the history of the former prophets that present a nation in need of a king and then tells the story of the emergence of David. Yahweh makes a promise to David that his son will establish an everlasting kingdom that is victorious over enemies and at peace in the land. David passes the kingdom to his son, Solomon, and tells him that obedience to Torah is the key to a long dynasty. Solomon recognizes that wisdom is necessary for this task and asks it of Yahweh. However, Solomon ultimately falters with women, as Deuteronomy 17 warned a king might, and the kingdom crumbled. This may be the basis for the continual command of Solomon to his son to avoid the strange woman.¹⁴ Eventually the failure of the Davidic kings leads to exile outside the land of Israel.

Proverbs must be read in this context because Proverbs connects itself with the reign of Solomon. Proverbs is attributed to Solomon, and it would seem that Proverbs is

¹³See Hamilton, *God's Glory*, 291.

¹⁴J. K. Wiles, "The 'Enemy' in Israelite Wisdom Literature" (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1982), 50.

Solomon's attempt to obey Deuteronomy 6 and 17 in order to establish the kingdom.

Solomon is training his son in wisdom so that his son will become the ideal king and be perhaps what Solomon failed to be. The ideal king is one who upholds justice, and thereby ensures the stability of his dynasty and kingdom.

The problem is that no Davidic king lives up to the ideal of Torah or the Proverbs. They falter at obeying Torah, so the warnings of Proverbs and the Torah that the kingdom will collapse come true. This historical picture leads to dissatisfaction in the people and hope for a future ideal Davidic king who establishes an eternal throne. This expectation develops because there is no Israelite king who lives up to the ideals of kingship set forth in the narratives or the Proverbs.

Unfortunately, however grand the expectations were of an ideal king, no one emerged to match the description of that ideal. It is possible that these thwarted expectations may have given rise to the idea of a future eschatological king, i.e., Messiah, who would fulfill the requirements of the ideal king at a future time...it becomes apparent that Solomon is *not* the ideal king (i.e., I Kgs. 9-11). Solomon's failure to live up to the ideal of kingship shows the inevitable relegation of the ideal to some future age.¹⁵

This hope is taken up in the writing prophets. The chapter examined the latter prophets and found they present a future hope for a new, wise, Spirit-empowered David who reigns in justice by obeying the Torah, because the law is now written on the heart, so that the people remain in the land in a glorious, peaceful kingdom. This new David is described with the language of Proverbs; indeed, he appears to be the embodiment of Solomon's wisdom (Isa 11).¹⁶ He is anointed with the Spirit, upholds the cause of the

¹⁵Kim Ian Parker, *Wisdom and Law in the Reign of Solomon* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1992), 64.

¹⁶John Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah 1-39*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 579-80.

poor, and casts out the enemies in order to return Israel to the land. In the last days the new David will be wise, will rule in justice, and will plant Israel in the land (Jer 23).

The chapter ended by examining Proverbs' connections with the future hope of the latter prophets. Proverbs 1 presents Solomon's son as being endowed with the Spirit of Wisdom if he embraces the wisdom of the book (cf. Isa 11). The reward for this is safe dwelling in the land, and the text uses the same language for this reward as the promises of Isaiah 32 and Jeremiah 23. Proverbs also indicates that an ideal king is necessary to establish Israel in the land as the prophets promised (cf. Prov 28:16; 29:14).

The Future Hope of Proverbs

This investigation seems to lead to the conclusion that there is indeed a future hope that emerges from Proverbs. Solomon is obeying the command to parents in Deuteronomy 6 and kings in Deuteronomy 17 by training his son in wisdom (Deut 4:6). If his son will embrace this wisdom, then it will lead to an eternal dynasty in the land. Wisdom will ensure the succession of the Davidic line (Prov 24:20). It will also ensure the durability of the kingdom in the land (Prov 2:20-22) and its perpetuity (Prov 29:14). Whether or not OT scholarship will accept this conclusion remains to be seen, but what is crystal clear is that, at least eventually, the expected Messiah began to be described as a figure that looks like the embodiment of Proverbs (Isa 11). Israel's future hope was, without a doubt, for a David who lived up to the wisdom of Proverbs and established the kind of wise, eternal reign described in the book. Therefore, this dissertation safely concludes that Proverbs in some way contributed to that picture, so it must be read in that light.

Wisdom Fulfilled

This dissertation has argued that Proverbs contributes to Israel's future hope for a wise, covenant-keeping king who establishes a righteous and eternal kingdom in the land. It seems that these are the things the NT authors are claiming for Jesus.¹⁷ This future hope of Proverbs is eventually fulfilled in David's Son, Jesus of Nazareth, who is the ideal, wise king over an eternal kingdom.

Jesus is presented as the Son of David for whom Israel has been hoping (Matt 1:1-17). He is the fulfillment of wisdom. He is the one who grew in wisdom and attained the favor of God and man (Luke 2:40, 52; cf. Prov 3:4). He is the one who amazed the Temple teachers with his understanding (Luke 2:47). He is the one who is greater than Solomon (Matt 12:42).¹⁸ Jesus is the embodiment of Proverbs; he is the wisdom of God for us (1 Cor 1:30; Col 2:3).¹⁹

The OT describes wisdom as keeping the law, and Jesus is portrayed as the king who fulfills the law and deepens it (Matt 5:17-20). He is the one who honors his parents (Luke 2:51; John 19:26-27; cf. Exod 20:12; Prov 13:1). He is the one who refuses the violence of murder for the forgiveness of his enemies (Luke 23:34; cf. Exod 20:13; Prov 1:11). He is the one who lays down his life in faithfulness to his bride (Eph 5:25-33; cf. Exod 20:14; Prov 5:15-23). He is the one who utters no deceit (1 Pet 2:22; cf. Exod 20:16; Prov 12:17). Indeed, he is the goal of the law (Rom 10:4).

¹⁷There is a need for future study on this topic. This conclusion will offer introductory lines for further investigation.

¹⁸See Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Wisdom*, in *The Goldsworthy Trilogy* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1987), 329-550.

¹⁹For a discussion of Wisdom Christology in the NT see Daniel J. Ebert IV, *Wisdom Christology: How Jesus Becomes God's Wisdom for Us* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2011).

Proverbs also develops the Abrahamic blessing of land through the wisdom of the Davidic king. Proverbs addresses the establishment of the kingdom in the land (2:20-22), and it says the wise son will live at peace with his enemies (16:7). Jesus is presented as the conquering king who establishes his kingdom in the land (on earth). He is the new Joshua who drives out the enemies and claims territory for his kingdom (cf. Pss 1-2). The Spirit-anointed, warrior-king drives out the demons, and this is a sign of the kingdom's arrival (Matt 12:28). Jesus continues his conquest and establishes his kingdom through his disciples proclaiming the gospel with the accompaniment of signs and wonders in Acts (Acts 5:16; 8:7; cf. Acts 1:1), and he is establishing it in the Promised Land (Judea, Galilee, and Samaria; Acts 9:31). But, as foretold in Psalm 72, the land claimed by the Messiah is not just the borders of ancient Israel, but rather the entire world (cf. Rom 4:13; 8:18-23).

2 Samuel 7 promised that the Davidic Dynasty would be eternal, and Proverbs 29:14 promised an eternal kingdom for the wise king. The apostles present the resurrection of Jesus and his ascension to the throne as king as the fulfillment of Yahweh's promise to David for an eternal son presiding over an eternal kingdom. Peter does this at Pentecost (Acts 2:22-36) and Paul does this at Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:17-41).

Finally, Jesus is presented as the king who orders his kingdom by wisdom. Jesus is presented as the king-sage who imparts wisdom to his "children" (John 13:33; 21:5). Indeed, Jesus teaches them with "proverbs" called "παροιμία" (John 10:6; 16:25, 29; cf. Prov 1:1) and "παράβολή" (Matthew 13:3, 10, 13, 18, 24, 31, 33-36, 53; 21:33, 45; 22:1; cf. Prov 1:6).

The Sermon on the Mount brings many of these themes together as Jesus speaks to his disciples about the ordering of kingdom life (Matt 5-7). The themes, didactic nature, and concluding appeal cast the Sermon on the Mount as wisdom teaching.²⁰ The kingdom citizen is the wise man who hears the words of the king-sage and does them, but the fool is the one who does not heed them and is destroyed by the storm (Matt 7:24-27; cf. Prov 1:26-27). The wise who heed the teachings of the sermon will “inherit the land” (Matt 5:5; cf. Prov 2:20-22). Jesus is presented as the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets (5:17-20). Finally, there is a king who adheres to the law and accomplishes it (Matt 5:18; cf. Deut 17). The king-sage dispenses his wisdom, as Solomon before him, by teaching the law (Matt 5:17-48). Jesus does not discard the law, but rather he radicalizes and internalizes it. Wise speech includes unpacking the law, and similar themes to the law and Proverbs are the focus. Two examples are murder (5:21-22; cf. Exod 20:13; Prov 1:11) and adultery that leads to destruction (5:27-30; cf. Exod 20:14; Prov 2:16-19; 5:1-23; 6:24-35). Also, the sermon commands love of enemies rather than retaliation (5:38-48; cf. Prov 25:21). The sage in Proverbs observes nature in order to draw out wisdom principles, and Jesus does similarly when he points his followers to the birds and the flowers as the reasons to trust in God’s provision (6:25-34; cf. Prov 30:18-33). The sermon, like Proverbs, presents two “ways” that lead to life or death (7:13-14; cf. Prov 2:1-15; 14:12). The king-sage who is greater than Solomon instructs his followers in what kingdom life should look like, and he does so with the

²⁰This section has been greatly helped by the insights of Tuttle. He gives several reasons for connecting the Sermon on the Mount to wisdom literature (didactic character, language, themes, antithetical parallelism, simile, “better-than” statements, focus on hearing and doing, and the outcome of life or destruction). Gary A. Tuttle, “The Sermon on the Mount: Its Wisdom Affinities and Their Relation to its Structure,” *Jets* 20, no. 3 (1997): 213-230.

themes, language, and function of the Proverbs. The gospel writers are presenting Jesus as the king-sage who is ordering the long-awaited, wise, righteous, eternal Davidic kingdom.

APPENDIX 1

THE REWARDS OF WISDOM

Table A1. The Rewards of Wisdom

Rewards/Consequences	Possible Verses
Life and Death (Possibly longer versus premature)	1:19; 3:2, 16, 22; 4:4, 10, 22; 5:5, 23; 6:23; 7:2, 23, 27; 8:35-36; 9:6, 11, 18; 10:2, 16-17, 21, 27; 11:19; 14:12, 27; 15:10, 27; 16:25, 31; 17:11; 19:16, 18, 23; 20:2; 20:29; 21:16, 21; 22:4, 22-23;
Eternal Life (subset of life/death)	3:18; 10:25; 11:4; 12:19, 28; 13:14; 14:27, 32; 15:24; 23:14
Wisdom	1:23; 2:5, 9-10; 15:31; 19:20, 25, 27; 21:11
Peace/Safety versus Calamity/Destruction	1:26, 32-33; 2:8, 11; 3:2, 23-26, 33; 4:6; 6:15, 22, 32; 10:8-10, 14-15, 29; 11:5, 8, 10-11, 14; 12:13, 21; 13:3, 15; 14:3; 16:4, 7, 17-18; 17:20; 18:7; 19:23; 21:28; 22:8; 23:29-30; 28:14; 29:25; 30:5
Land versus Exile (subset of safety)	2:21-22; 10:30; 12:3; 12:7; 14:11; 15:25
Straight paths (subset of safety)	3:6, 17; 4:12, 26; 11:5; 12:26; 15:19, 21
Healing	3:8; 4:22; 12:18; 14:30; 29:1
Blessings (Material & Social: honor, riches, etc.)	3:10, 16, 35; 4:8; 6:11, 33; 8:21; 10:4-5, 7, 22; 11:16, 24-25; 12:11, 27; 13:5, 18; 15:6, 33; 16:3; 18:3, 12; 19:7, 15, 26; 20:4, 13; 21:5, 17, 21; 22:4, 9, 16; 23:21; 24:4, 34; 25:10; 27:18; 28:19-20, 22, 25, 27; 29:23
Punishment and Recompense	6:29; 11:21, 31; 12:14; 16:5; 17:5; 19:5, 9, 17; 24:11-12; 28:20
Hope	10:28; 11:7, 23; 19:18; 23:17-18; 24:14, 19-20
Delivered	11:8-9, 21; 12:6; 18:10; 20:22; 28:18, 26
Ruling	11:29; 12:24; 17:2
Yahweh weighing	5:21; 15:3, 11; 16:2; 17:3; 20:8, 26; 21:2, 12
Posterity	13:9, 22; 14:26; 17:6; 20:7, 20
Enduring Kingdom/King	16:12; 20:28; 25:5; 27:24; 28:2, 12, 16; 29:4, 14

APPENDIX 2

THE FUTURE REWARDS OF WISDOM

Table A2. The Future Rewards of Wisdom

Table A2 catalogues rewards that seem to last beyond the clinical death of an individual or are corporate in nature.

Reward	Possible Verses
Memory/Reputation	10:7
Posterity	13:9, 11; 17:6; 20:7, 20
Eternal Life	3:18; 10:2, 25; 11:4; 12:19, 28; 13:14; 14:27, 32; 15:24; 23:14
Hope/Future	10:28; 11:7, 23; 19:18; 23:17-18; 24:14, 19-20
Enduring Kingdom/King	11:10-11, 14; 16:12; 20:28; 25:5; 27:24; 28:2, 12, 16; 29:4, 14
Land	2:21-22; 10:30; 12:3; 12:7; 14:11; 15:25

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ABSTRACT

A THEOLOGY OF FUTURE HOPE IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

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This dissertation investigates whether there is a theme of future hope in Proverbs. Chapter 1 surveys scholarship on this point. Most scholars who believe Proverbs is only concerned with this present world do not read Proverbs in its canonical context. This dissertation argues that in its canonical context the Book of Proverbs functions to explain how Solomon trains the Davidic prince to be the ideal king who through wisdom – living life under the covenant – establishes an eternal, righteous kingdom in the land. The failure of Solomon’s sons (the Judahite monarchy) contributes to the future hope for a Son of David who fulfills this picture.

Chapter 2 analyzes debated passages in Proverbs to see if a future hope arises. It argues that there is a future hope for retaining the land (2:1-22), posterity for the Davidic line (24:13-20), and an eternal Davidic Kingdom (29:14).

Chapters 3 through 5 place Proverbs in its canonical context to see if it is connected to the future hope of the Old Testament. Chapter 3 argues that Proverbs presents a similar future hope as that of the Writings, for a Davidic King who is faithful to Torah, defeats Israel’s enemies, establishes Israel in the land and sets up an eternal kingdom. Chapter 4 argues that Proverbs connects with the future hope of the Torah for a

king, obedience to the law with a new heart, dwelling in the land, and an eternal kingdom. Indeed, Proverbs argues that wisdom is obedience to the Torah. Chapter 5 argues that the failure of the Davidic kings to live up to the ideal of kingship in the Torah and Proverbs led to a future hope in the prophets for a king who embodied wisdom and set up an eternal dynasty.

Chapter 6 concludes that Proverbs does have a future hope for a wise David who will establish an eternal kingdom in the land. The New Testament presents this as ultimately fulfilled in Jesus.

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