

# Resurrection and Reward in Proverbs

6/14/2021

## Introduction

OT saints believed in the physical resurrection (Job 19:25-27; Ps 16:10-11; 49:7-9; 15; 73:24; 103:4; Prov 15:24; 24:16; Is 25:8; 26:19; Jon 2:6; Dan 12:2,13; cp. Eze 37:10).<sup>1</sup> In fact, from Jn 11:24-27, we can affirm that “Martha knew from the Old Testament that there would be a resurrection from the dead” (McGee, TTB). “Martha knew, as all OT saints did, that someday in the future God will raise the believing dead so that they will physically be present to take part in the Messiah’s eternal kingdom on earth” (Wilkin, GNTC). Although the resurrection in Dan 12:1-3 is mistholic (see *Redeemed Bodies Versus Glorified Bodies*—RBVGB), the concept of a physical resurrection in the OT laid a soteric foundation for mistholic implications. Indeed, the writer of Hebrews, in a chapter-long list (cp. Heb 11:8-10,26,35), affirms that Abraham and other OT worthies were looking forward to a better resurrection that entailed participation in the Reward City. Given this NT affirmation, the anticipation of resurrection and reward in the OT is more pronounced than many acknowledge.

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<sup>1</sup> For my defense of the standard texts in this list from Psalms, see my book LTPW (*Like a Tree Planted by the Water*). I have expanded this list to include two focal verses from the present article (Prov 15:24; 24:16). Also, once it is accepted that the Psalms affirm the resurrection of the dead, additional texts rejected by the skeptics should also be included, such as Ps 103:4, as Kidner (TOTC, 1975) affirms:

At one level, to be redeemed from *the Pit* could be an expression simply for rescue from a premature decease (see on 6:5; 28:1). But the larger question of man’s ransom from death, ‘that he should continue to live on for ever’, is seriously explored in the Psalter (see, e.g., 49:7–9, 13–15), and makes it possible, even probable, that we should take 4a in its strongest sense, as resurrection to eternal life. (Emphasis his.)

Dahood (AYBC) concurs regarding Ps 103:4: “When the psalmist dies and goes down to Sheol, Yahweh will ransom him from the hand of Death and bring him to Paradise.” Kidner’s above inclusion of Ps 49:9 with the standard text of Ps 49:15 is reasonable. The redeemed live eternally. Concerning Ps 49:9, Gaebelein (ABV) surmises:

The ungodly will pass away no matter how great their riches are, nor can they redeem themselves; their way is folly; like sheep they are laid in the grave and death feeds on them. But different is the lot of the righteous. They shall have dominion over them in the morning, when the night of suffering and trouble is ended. They will be redeemed from the power of the grave and He shall receive them, “for He will swallow up death in Victory.”

In light of v. 15, the inverse lot of the righteous should be accepted as implied for v. 9. Radmacher (NIBC) interprets v. 9 to mean “Only God has the power to deliver us from death and hell.” True. And in the context the Psalmist is affirming that God has that power. Dahood (AYBC) drives this point home: “Immortality is offered to all men who are willing to put their confidence in Yahweh and not in riches.” Futato (CBC) agrees: “Death is the great leveler, and wealth cannot redeem from death. But what wealth cannot do, God will do.” The Palmists intends for the reader to make this inference.

Accordingly, one can side with those interpreters who believe the Jonah describes his own death and resurrection when he says that God “brought up my life from the pit” (Jon 2:6), concerning which Wiseman comments:

Jonah, however, also envisages his descent to the bottom of the sea as a descent towards the world of the dead: *the earth beneath barred me in for ever*. The Hebrew noun *’eres*, ‘land’, ‘earth’, has here the special sense of ‘underworld’. Like a Palestinian city, Jonah views the underworld as having a gate which was locked secure by bolts and bars: there could be no escaping from it. Once in Sheol, Jonah would be imprisoned there for ever.

Having charted his descent towards the land of the dead, Jonah now introduces an all-important contrast: *But you brought my life up from the pit*. Since the noun *šahat*, ‘pit’ or ‘grave’, often parallels in Hebrew poetry the term Sheol, there is good reason to understanding it as referring here to the abode of the dead. (Emphasis his.)

Though I am inclined to think that God may have taken Jonah to the Paradise section of Sheol, Phillips (JPCS) says that “God gave Jonah a taste of the horrors of Hell,” which is a popular assessment. See “Chapter 9 — Jonah went to Hell. Available at <https://epignosisministries.wordpress.com/2012/06/09/chapter-9-jonah-went-to-hell>. Accessed 6/10/2021.

*Inquiry*

A friend, Keith Call, sent me the following inquiry, which sparked my interest sufficiently to investigate and produce this article:

For several years I've wondered if the proper way to read Proverbs is to look ahead rather than simply at the immediate moment.

For example, Proverbs 14:18, "The simple inherit folly; but the prudent are crowned with knowledge."

When does this crowning happen? We could say that it is the consequence of prudence now, but why can't this crown be misthological?

Another is Proverbs 14:32, "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness; but the righteous hath hope in his death."

Isn't this hope misthological (or millennial), a result of righteous action during mortal life?

Though these verses, and others like them, might imply an immediate principle for good living in this life, don't they find their fullest fulfillment for the resurrected believer in the millennial kingdom? That makes so much more sense to me. Such a reading lends a strong misthological subtext to the entire book.<sup>2</sup>

The latter text posed by Keith caught my attention. The hope of the righteous despite death surely suggests a misthological hope that transcends death. I started my inquiry by consulting some of the standard commentaries regarding this verse.

*Misthological Proverbs*

In the introductory part of his commentary devoted to the theology of Proverbs, Waltke (NICOT) has an extended discussion spanning two sections that are most applicable to the misthological sense being considered by Keith for Proverbs:

## (5) The Wise and Their Rewards: Life

The flipside of the doctrine of retribution for the wicked discussed above is the doctrine of rewards for the righteous (10:2; 11:5–6, 23, 27). Prov. 3:1–10, entitled "covenant obligations," presents the human partner's obligations in the odd verses (1, 3, 5, 7, 9) and the LORD's obligations, namely, life and peace (v. 2), favor with God and people (v. 4), a straight path (v. 6), health (v. 8), and prosperity (v. 10) in the even verses. **These rewards are fairly self-evident apart from "life," whose meaning in Proverbs is commonly misrepresented and/or misunderstood. At issue is whether "life" (*hayyîm*) 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 noun *hayyîm* occurs 33 times and the verb *hāyâ* four times. Sometimes it refers to clinical life. In 27:27 it refers to clinical sustenance for female servants (27:27), and in 31:12 "all the days of her life" refers to the noble woman's "lifetime." In 4:23 "the sources of life" refers to bodily activities, but in 14:30 *hayyîm* is qualified as "life to the body." In 4:22 *hayyîm* is parallel to physical well-being. In 3:2 "length of days and years of life" (see also 4:10; 9:11; 15:24) seems to refer to a "lifetime" until one realizes that Isaiah used the same expression for the Suffering Servant to speak of his life after his clinical death (Isa. 53:10).

Most often, however, *hayyîm* is unqualified and refers to "life" that is added to clinical life, apparently an abundant life of health, prosperity, and social esteem (3:21–22; 4:13; 8:35; 16:15; 21:21; 22:4). **Apart from 16:15, these passages and others hold out life as wisdom's reward, a reward never said to be tarnished by death (4:22; 6:23; 10:17; 11:19; 12:28; 13:14; 15:31; 19:23; 22:4).** This is true also of all four uses of the verb (4:4; 7:2; 9:6; 15:27). "Tree of life" figuratively represents perpetual healing insuring eternal life (3:18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4; cf. Gen. 2:9; 3:24). The same is probably true of the other source, "wellspring of life" (16:22).

By contrast, the wicked enjoy their plunder during their clinical lives, but death is their certain destiny (1:10–19). **"The wage of the righteous person is surely life; the earnings of the wicked person are surely sin and death" (10:16).** Here "life," by its opposition to "sin," implies spiritual life. Kidner comments, **"In several places it is not too much to say that 'life' means fellowship with God.... Some of the major Old Testament expressions for godliness are interchangeable with 'life' or to 'live.'"** In biblical theology abundant life, which is qualitatively and quantitatively different from the breath of life and symbolized by the tree of life (see Gen. 2:7, 9; 3:22), is essentially a relationship with God. According to Gen. 2:17,

<sup>2</sup> Personal correspondence, 6/8/2021.

disruption of the proper relationship with the One who is the source of life means death. Wisdom is concerned with this proper relationship (Prov. 2:5–8) and thus with experiencing life in his favor. 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 wicked’s eternal death (see 2:22–23). As Jesus said, “He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is the God of the living, not the dead” (Matt. 22:32).

Solomon never describes the clinically alive wicked as in the realm of light and life; rather, they are in the realm of darkness and death, a state of being already dead because they have no relationship with the living God. The texts predicting death represent that present state terminating with a tragic, final end, not necessarily a premature death. The lascivious regrets his incorrigibility “when his flesh and body are spent” (5:11). The pursuit of Wisdom and the practice of righteousness save the wise from the realm and destiny of death, but nothing can deliver the wicked (1:4, 19; 10:2; 13:14; 14:27; 15:24). Their clinical death is a land of no return, without a second chance (1:20–33; 2:19, 22; cf. Ps. 49:8[9], 15[16]; Isa. 26:19). If death is the final end of the wicked, we should assume that life is the final end of the righteous (cf. Matt. 25:46).

Other texts teach more explicitly that this abundant life outlasts clinical death. In Prov. 12:28 the righteous are rewarded with “immortality” (*al-māwet*). Prov. 14:32 says, “Even in death the righteous seek a refuge in God,” and 23:17 asserts that their future hope will not be disappointed; in contrast, the wicked have no future hope (11:7a; 12:28; 24:19–20). Proverbs teaches immortality, not resurrection, unlike Job 19:25–27; Pss. 49:15[16]; cf. 49:8; 73:23–24; Isa. 14:13–15; and Dan. 12:2 (cf. Gen 5:24; 2 K. 2:1). But Prov. 15:24 implies an ascending from the grave below. Taken at face value, the movement from “below,” which is used in connection with the grave (*šē’ôl*), to “upwards” fits the biblical teaching that the godly terminate their journey in the presence of God himself (Pss. 16:9–11; 73:23–26; John 14:1–4; 2 Tim. 4:18; Heb. 12:2). Salvation from the grave is more than being spared an untimely death, for otherwise “the path of life” is finally swallowed up by death. Death is not god and does not have the last word in this book any more than in any other book of the Bible (cf. Gen. 5:24; 2 K. 2:1; Pss. 49:15[16]; 73:23–24; Isa. 14:13–15).

The hope of an afterlife is entirely in keeping with the well-known Egyptian belief in an afterlife. The hymns and prayers of the Egyptians to Amenhotep IV Akhenaten, carved in the courtier’s tombs at Amarna, record their hopes for a blessed future. Lichtheim comments: “In recording their hopes for a blessed afterlife, the courtiers could no longer turn to Osiris and other comforting beliefs. Only the king, the son of the Aten, remained as guarantor of their survival.” The schools where wisdom was taught in Egypt were called “Schools of Life.” Since Proverbs shows a heavy dependence on Egyptian instructions, it would be surprising if “life” meant less with the living God than the Egyptian hope of life with a “no-god” (Deut. 32:21) and whose *Book of the Dead* mixes magic with morals. Humanity’s intuitive notion of justice demands the doctrine (see p. 108-109).

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that Proverbs and the Egyptian instructions focus on health, prosperity, and social honor in this life, in contrast to the Christian’s focus on resurrection. Perhaps this is due to the opaqueness of the hope before the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

#### (6) Does Proverbs Promise Too Much?

These heavenly promises of life, health, prosperity, and honor seem detached from earth’s harsh realities. The promises seem false to human experience under the sun, as Job (9:22–23) and Qoheleth (Eccl. 9:2–3) complained, and contrary to sound doctrine. Eliphaz resolved the conflict through the doctrine of original sin (Job 4:17), but the narrator of Job disallows the argument (1:8), and so does the LORD (42:7). Solomon, however, adds to the covenant obligations in Prov. 3:1–10 that the LORD disciplines those he loves (3:11–12), probably to motivate a person to keep his covenant obligations to make him fit to experience covenant blessings.

Should anyone think that Solomon and other sages are dullards who cannot see or think straight, let him recall that keen observation and cogent reflection mark the sage. Aitken takes an exceptional misstep when he suggests that the sages were too optimistic in their promises: “There is a strong suspicion here that Israel’s sages have confused their belief about what ought to be the case with what actually is the case.” Von Rad goes further, suggesting that Qoheleth accuses the sages of the so-called “old wisdom” of becoming “entangled in a single false doctrine.”<sup>141</sup> James G. Williams agrees with von Rad: “His [Qoheleth’s] primary mode of presentation of contrasting proverbs ... is in order to contradict traditional wisdom.” These solutions deconstruct Proverbs and the canon, and so undermine Christ’s and his apostles’ claim that all Scripture is inspired of God, who does not author confusion, and that Scripture cannot be broken (John 10:35; 1 Cor. 14:33; 2 Tim. 3:16).

The popular evangelical solution that these are not promises but probabilities, though containing an

element of truth, raises theological, practical, and psychological problems by stating the matter badly. According to this wording, the human partner is expected to keep his obligations perfectly (3:1, 3, 5, 7, and 9), but to serve God imperfectly (3:2, 4, 6, 8, 10). In truth, however, “though we are faithless, he will remain faithful” (2 Tim. 2:13). Moreover, a sober person would like to know the probabilities, and a psychologically well person could scarcely trust God with all his heart (3:5) knowing that he usually, but not always, keeps his obligations.

Other steps, however, can be taken toward a resolution. First, the promises are partially validated by experience. The sober, not the drunkard (cf. 23:29–35), the cool-tempered, not the hothead (15:18; 19:19; 22:24; 29:22), and the diligent, not the sluggard (see pp. 114–115), usually experience health and wealth.

Second, as noted above, the epigrammatic nature of the proverbs often causes the audience to overlook the counterproverbs that qualify these promises. “There are many proverbs,” says van Leeuwen, “that assert or imply that the wicked prosper . . . while the innocent suffer.” We discussed the need to read the first proverb pair (10:2–3) as a unity above (see p. 47). 10:2a asserts that the wicked have treasures gained by wickedness for a season, but 10:2b says that it will not deliver them from death. To this 10:3 adds that (afterwards) the cravings of the wicked will be frustrated, while the righteous, who may now be afflicted, will be fed afterward. The several “better than” proverbs assume that at present the wicked have material presents and the righteous do not: “Better a little with righteousness than much gain with injustice” (cf. 16:8, 19; 17:1; 19:1, 22; 21:9, 19; 22:1; 25:24; 28:6; Ps. 37:16; Eccl. 4:6). Without these qualifying sayings, one could legitimately accuse Solomon of being guilty of half-truths.

Third, the genre effect of being a primer on morality for youth causes Proverbs to focus on a future when the righteous rise, not on a present when they fall: “For if a righteous person falls seven times, then he rises; but the wicked stumble in calamity” (24:16). “Seven” symbolizes completeness, like “the count of ten” in boxing and the proverbial “nine lives” of a cat. In a word, “The righteous are regarded as knocked out for good.” Yet the saying throws away this harsh reality in a concessive clause. By contrast, the genre effect of empiricism causes Job and Ecclesiastes to focus on the sufferings of the righteous before they rise.

Finally, as argued in the preceding section on “the reward of the righteous,” the righteous rises in a blessed future that outlasts death. In addition to those exegetical arguments, the book’s concept of justice demands such a hope. Instructively, the opening situation depicted in the father’s first lecture resembles the first situation of humanity outside the garden. Even as Cain murdered the righteous Abel, sending him to a premature death, after which Cain lived out a normal life span, so the father represents a traveler’s “innocent blood” (1:12) as being dispatched to a premature death by venal sinners who walk on top of his grave. These initial situations discredit the popular interpretation that life and death in Proverbs refer respectively to living to an old age and to a premature death. For justice to be done, as Proverbs assures it will be (e.g., 3:31–35; 16:4–5), Abel and the innocent traveler must be vindicated and delivered from death in a future that lies beyond their clinical deaths. If their clinical death is the last word for the waylaid innocent, then the first lecture, along with other biblical stories about the deaths of martyrs, deconstruct the Bible’s claim that God upholds justice. Farmer rightly comments: “One either has to give up the idea of justice or one has to push its execution into some realm beyond the evidence of human experience.” Obviously that future is not accessible to verification, as Gladson notes critically,<sup>146</sup> but without that kind of faith one cannot please God. If these promises could be validated by experience, why does the father command the son to trust in the LORD (3:5)?

If God rewarded virtue immediately, the son would confound pleasure with piety, using piety and ethics to satisfy his prurient interests. He would substitute eudaemonism (i.e., the system of thought that bases ethics on personal pleasure) for the true virtues of faith, hope, and love. God develops the character of his saints by calling them to suffer for the sake of righteousness while living in the hope of eternal life. In this way he teaches them virtue while upholding justice (Rom. 5:3–4; 2 Pet. 2:3–11).

In sum, Proverbs characterizes the wise as living by faith entirely (“with all your heart,” 3:5), exclusively (“do not lean on your own understanding”), and exhaustively (“in all your ways desire his presence,” 3:5–6a).<sup>3</sup>

### *Misthological Hope and Resurrection*

Of course, other commentators object to this eschatological and misthological understanding of Proverbs in general and Pro 14:32 in particular. For example, the MT reading of the verse could be translated as *the righteous seeks refuge in his death*, which Duane (NAC) claims does “not speak simply of a consolation offered by the hope of afterlife.”

<sup>3</sup> B. K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 104–109.



Duane rejects the MT reading since “the notion of seeking refuge in death, however, is incompatible with the rest of Proverbs and indeed with biblical theology.” So he follows the LXX and renders the verse as saying that *a righteous man seeks refuge in integrity*. In commenting on 14:32, however, Waltke counters at length by pointing back to his discussion from pp. 97-99 that *the righteous is one who takes refuge in the Lord*. Therefore, the verse would be understood as saying that *the one who takes refuge in the Lord* (i.e., the righteous) *seeks refuge when he dies*.

Various commentators affirm that the righteous have/seek refuge in the Lord/God when they die, which is true insofar as it goes. Granted, the righteous seeks refuge when he dies because he takes refuge in the Lord. However, the righteous seeks refuge in the Lord for a misthological place of residence and reward. Waltke thus concludes his discussion of the verse by pointing out the concession from other commentators: “Rashi comments, ‘When he will die, he is confident that he will come to the Garden of Eden.’ Meinhold reluctantly concedes that this proverb sees a refuge for the righteous that lies beyond the limits of death. He thinks that it is exceptional, but in truth the proverb is entirely consistent with the rest of the book.” A variety of other commentators take compatible points of view. For instance, Wilson (TOTC, 2017) affirms: “Death...gives the stamp of approval on those who have persisted in righteousness.” Lange rejects the LXX and contends that the righteous man has hope/confidence even in his death: “a hope in the continuance of the individual life after death, and a just retribution in the future world.” This hope is not merely eschatological but also misthological since retribution and reward are believed to follow death.

Ross (EBC, 2008), although skeptical about this hope elsewhere in Proverbs, concedes the point in 14:32: “So the idea is that the righteous have hope for just retribution. A problem often raised is that nowhere in Proverbs is hope for immortality found; rather, death is seen as a misfortune. Nevertheless, this verse may be a shadowy forerunner of that truth.” But this problem posed by Ross is not insurmountable. If the point is conceded regarding 14:32, then the argument by Waltke for other misthological indicators in Proverbs is probable. Fox (AYBC) acknowledges that the MT reading might possibly be “intended to promote hope in a compensatory afterlife.” Contrariwise, this misthological intention is not merely *possible* but *probable* if misthological indications are found elsewhere in the OT. Toy (ICC) acknowledges that a misthological understanding is feasible and

is simply the general teaching of Prov. as to the reward of the righteous.—As the text stands, it must be rendered:

The wicked is overthrown by his calamity,  
But the righteous has hope (even) in his death,

in which the contrast is between the absoluteness of the fall of a wicked man, and the confidence or trust which the good man has even in the greatest of calamities. One objection to this rendering is that the term *hope* (or, *trust, confidence*) is nowhere else used absolutely, but always with the addition of the object or ground of hope (30:5; Isa. 30:2; ψ 118:8 *al.*). But the chief difficulty lies in the necessity of defining *hope* in accordance with the usage of Proverbs. The book does not recognize a joyful immortality, but everywhere retains the old idea of Sheol, and regards death as a misfortune. What hope could the righteous have for the hereafter? Delitzsch suggests that, though there was then no revelation of true immortality, yet the pious trusted God, and fell asleep, believing that they were going home to him; this, however, is but another way of saying that they had the hope of immortal life. We must either suppose that Prov. here announces a doctrine which is ignored in the rest of the book, or we must recognize an erroneous reading in the Hebrew text. (Emphasis his.)

Toy poses a false dichotomy. Such commentators have difficulty accepting a misthological view in this text because they fail to perceive eschatological expectations, much less misthological anticipations, elsewhere in Proverbs and the OT. For instance, Reyburn (UBSH) questions the MT reading since he claims: “The Hebrew form of the text may be taken as an expression of belief in personal immortality, but the expression is not seen elsewhere in Proverbs.” On the other hand, since I have argued for an OT expectation of eschatological reward in MMP5 (*Misthological Models Part 5*) and LTPW (*Like a Tree Planted by the Water*), I do not share their misgivings about a physical resurrection or a misthological hope in Pro 14:32. If Solomon’s father, David, for example, had a misthological hope of a heavenly reward, particularly regarding the Heavenly City (as I have argued in LTPW and MMP5), then Solomon may reasonably be supposed to pose such a hope for the righteous. Not only would this paternal relation lead to this conclusion, but the literary connection would as well. As to the latter, we can consult Schipper (HERM): “Using the verb *הסה* (‘to find refuge’), v. 32b states that the righteous person (*קִדְּוָה*) finds refuge ‘in his death’ (*בְּמוֹתוֹ*). The verb *הסה* comes from the language of the Psalms and refers to ‘finding refuge’ in God (Pss 5:12; 7:2; 11:1; 16:1; 17:7; 18:3, 31).” Therefore, Schwab (CBC) is wise to side with Waltke: “This is another verse promising that the rewards of righteousness do not terminate in death. The RSV (with LXX) emends this to ‘finds refuge through his integrity.’ But Proverbs consistently

encourages faith in the Lord ... never faith in one's own piety' (Waltke 2004:583)." The generic misthological affirmation by Henry (MHCWB) is thus well taken: "He has hope in his death of a happiness on the other side death, of better things in another world than ever he had in this."

Misthological hope is a common NT theme: Acts 26:6-8; Rom 5:2,4; 8:24-25; 15:4; Eph 4:4(?); Phil 1:20; Gal 5:5; Col 1:5,15(?),23; 1Thess 2:19; 5:8; 1Tim 4:10; 5:5; 6:17; Tit 1:2; 2:13; 3:7; Heb 6:11,18-19; 1Pet 1:3,13. Some of these NT texts anchor this hope in OT affirmations. In Acts 26:6-8, Paul affirms a misthological post-mortem "hope of the promise made by God to our fathers," which includes the OT hope of the resurrection of the dead (Acts 26:6-8). In Tit 1:2, Paul likewise speaks of "the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago." Lea (NAC) comments: "Paul affirmed that the God 'who does not lie promised before the beginning of time' this eternal life for which the Christian believer now hopes. A promise is a personal declaration made to another person (or perhaps to oneself) that certain conditions will be met. The promise of God is a central element in the history of redemption." God did not simply make this promise to Himself before time began. He also made it from the conception of human history to the human race regarding the Promised Redeemer. Moreover, the Lord did not limit this promise to rudimentary soteriology but also encompassed misthology. Similarly, the Jewish forefathers were promised, from the conception of the Jewish race with the call of Father Abraham, a Promised Land and Reward City. Paul is talking about a misthological affirmation made by God to the Jewish forefathers from the very beginning, not a secret hidden until NT or even Danielic revelation. The NT hope is built upon the OT hope. Either Paul is wrong to trace this misthological hope back to the earliest ages of the OT, or commentators who reject this misthological hope in the OT are wrong to deny the antiquity of this misthological hope. To agree with Paul practically necessitates agreeing with Waltke.

Proverbial life is not limited to clinical life but extends, by implication, to include abundant life as a temporal and even post-mortem reward. Solomon asserts, "In the way of righteousness is life, and in its pathway there is no death" (Prov 12:28). Has Solomon forgotten that even righteous people die? No. Simply, the life he envisions does not terminate at death. The righteous may undergo physical death, but they will not undergo misthological death, much less soteriological death. The promise of the termination of death in Rev 21:4 is the fruition of the OT promises (such as Prov 12:28; Is 25:8.; Hos 13:14). Concluding with a quote Delitzsch regarding Prov 12:28, Waltke comments:

The whole chapter expresses in the most creative and intensive way that the righteous retain a relationship with God forever; clinical death does not separate them from a relationship with the LORD. "If we compare with this, 14:32, it is obvious that 'wisdom' begins to break through the limits of this present life, and to announce a life beyond the reach of death."

Even a verse like Prov 19:23 has tremendous implications when considered as having misthological dimensions: "The fear of the Lord leads to life, and he who has it will abide in satisfaction; he will not be visited with evil" (NKJ). Does evil visit the righteous in this life? Of course, it does. So do we chalk this verse up to be nothing more than a proverbial rule of thumb, a probability rather than a promise? Not necessary. For those who find residency in the Heavenly City, this verse is a promise.

The misthological nature of proverbial life is reasonably inferred: "The reward of humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honor and life" (Prov 22:4). Wilson (TOTC, 2017) justifiably affirms: "In verse 4 the consequence of, or reward for, humility/the fear of the Lord is described as riches, honour and life." Even Ross (EBC0 acknowledges: "God will reward reverential piety. This verse simply lists two spiritual qualifications (humility and fear) and three rewards (wealth, honor, and life)." Such rewards need not, indeed must not, be limited solely to this present life. The Tree of Life is an eschatological and misthological reward in the NT (Rev 2:7; 22:2,14,19). One would be unwise to deny that some of the proverbial affirmations made about the Tree of Life extend to include this range of meaning as well (Prov 3:18; 11:30). The path of life for the righteous must eventually lead upward from the grave and Sheol via resurrection (Prov 15:24; 24:16), for one day they will dwell in resurrected bodies in the Heavenly City. Eventually, as David assures, they will dwell misthologically in the House of the Lord eternally (Ps 23:6). This path of life leads to eternal pleasures in God's presence: "Thou wilt make known to me the path of life; in Thy presence is fulness of joy; in Thy right hand there are pleasures forever" (Ps 16:11). The Psalms confirm Waltke's contention for the eschatological and misthological nature of Prov 15:24: "This synthetic proverb escalates the rewards of righteousness from present joy to everlasting life in relationship with the Lord." A suitable translation and understanding for the verse would be something like: "The path of life leads upward for the wise, that he may depart [be resurrected] from the underworld" (TM). Waltke leaves the misthological nature of the resurrection in Prov 24:16 implicit: "Since the righteous rise after a violent and final fall, his recovering points to his resurrection from death." A suitable translation and understanding of the text would be: "For though a righteous man may fall seven times, he will rise again [from the dead], but the wicked stumble in time of calamity" (TM). Further, since this resurrection is juxtaposed with the calamity of the wicked and is limited to those who are experientially righteous, it should be understood as misthological.

*Misthological Crown*

As to Keith's thought that the crown in Prov 14:18 might have a misthological implication, perhaps this is not Solomon's intention. Then again, Keith's overall premise is certainly prudent: "The proper way to read Proverbs is to look ahead, rather than simply at the immediate moment." This overall outlook is conceded in the sections above. Let us consider the imprudence of ignoring Keith's premise in chapter 14. Does Solomon intend to limit Prov 14:14 to the present life? "The backslider in heart will have his fill of his own ways, but a good man will be satisfied with his." Is the satisfaction that Solomon envisions limited to the present life? No! Such a conclusion is falsified by the arguments above. How about Pro 14:21? "He who despises his neighbor sins, but happy is he who is gracious to the poor." Is this happiness merely temporal? No. Solomon has repeatedly indicated that the righteous will obtain eternal results. How about Pro 14:24? "The crown of the wise is their riches, but the folly of fools is foolishness." Is this crown of riches for the wise limited to their temporal riches? Surely not, for Solomon speaks negatively of the temporality of riches and crowns elsewhere: "For riches are not forever, nor does a crown endure to all generations" (Prov 27:24). Not all crowns endure beyond the grave in Proverbs. For example, we need not suppose that the righteous will have gray heads in Heaven: "A gray head is a crown of glory; it is found in the way of righteousness" (Prov 16:31). Nonetheless, the wise would surely have enduring riches as their crown since their temporal abundance has been shown to carry over into an eternal abundance. Assuredly, the crown of beauty bestowed by wisdom on those who acquire wisdom will have misthological overtones: "She will place on your head a garland of grace; She will present you with a crown of beauty" (Prov 4:9). How about Prov 14:27? "The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, that one may avoid the snares of death." The misthological nature of life seen above in a variety of proverbs would argue against limiting this fountain of life to the present. This fountain of life may indeed enable one to avoid the snare of misthological death. So, with this background and context in mind, a misthological dimension to Prov 14:18 is within reason: "The naive inherit folly, but the prudent are crowned with knowledge." The inheritance of the naive need not be limited to this life, and the knowledge obtained by the prudent certainly cannot be limited to this life. Daniel assures us: "Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven" (Dan 12:3). Those crowned with knowledge/insight will shine brightly misthologically. The thought of being crowned with knowledge is certainly not incompatible with misthology. To him who has more will be given. The prudent have knowledge and understanding and will be given additional knowledge and understanding as their reward.

*Conclusion*

Perceiving a misthological dimension to many of the proverbs is prudent since a variety of the proverbs strongly suggest misthological overtones. The depth of the proverbs transcends their obvious temporal wisdom on numerous occasions. The wisdom of Proverbs extends beyond the grave. This conclusion is solidified by the misthological affirmations made elsewhere in the OT and confirmed as being present in the OT by the NT. This article works synergistically with my treatments in LTPW and MMP5 to affirm the doctrine of rewards and the doctrine of the resurrection in the Book of Proverbs. Others, as noted, have come to similar conclusions. Though I believe the situation is more positive than what Young indicates, his comments will suffice for present purposes:

(4) *Death not the finale.*—This is seen to be so from the fact that "the righteous hath hope (confidence or refuge) in his death" (Prov. 14:32). This is not the hope of Sheol, nor of any good that the Israelite looked for in the death-state. All this was dark and abhorrent to him. Yet death, dark as it was, did not extinguish the torch of hope. Death was not the end-all. Somehow, somewhere, there was something beyond. As Stuart, pertinently asks, "If there was nothing beyond the grave, in their view, on what is their hope or confidence fixed?" But hope there was....

(5) *An expected reward.*—The definite doctrine of coming reward points the same way. Moreover, the word "reward" is employed of both the recompense of the just and the retribution of the unjust. "The wicked earneth deceitful wages; but he that soweth righteousness hath a sure reward" (Prov. 11:18).

Can it be that in all cases this reward is confined within the narrow boundaries of the present existence? The ready and complete answer would seem to be that such reward did not always so come. The reverse was more often the case. The good things of life were by no means always distributed with strict impartiality as to one's merits. That the word reward is used of recompense coming in this life is certain in many cases. But this fact does not militate against the idea or assurance of future recompense.<sup>4</sup> (Emphasis his.)

<sup>4</sup> G. L. Young, "The Old Testament and Immortality," *BibSac* 87:347 (1930): 270-271.