

## **Connections Between Wisdom Motifs in Proverbs 1-9 and the Three Angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12**

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### **Abstract**

*Many thematic explorations use inter-textual approaches and attempt to expound on the links between the book of Proverbs and other Old and New Testament writings. Considering the need for further explorations of motifs in wisdom literature, this paper focuses on motifs related to wisdom theme in Proverbs 1-9 in connection with the Three Angels' Messages of Revelation 14:6-17. Thus, this paper attempts to answers the following questions: What are the connections between motifs related to the wisdom theme in Proverbs 1-9 and the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12? The study employs an inter-textual approach and identifies thematic connections between Proverbs 1-9 and Revelation 14:6-12 in the shared motifs such as the messenger(s), the universal scope and the loud nature of their call, the fear of the LORD, creation and Worship, Seductive Woman / Mystic Babylon, and Judgment.*

**Keywords:** wisdom, proverbs, fear of God, judgment, creation, worship, seductive woman

## INTRODUCTION

Various studies on Proverbs 1-9 focus mainly on the wisdom figure's identifications<sup>1</sup>, particularly the interpretation and representation of personification of wisdom.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, studies have also been done on some motifs concerning wisdom. Some of these topics include the prophetic wisdom motif, compared with the prophetic calls of Isaiah and Jeremiah, wisdom and theodicy, wisdom and the presence of YHWH,<sup>3</sup> wisdom with the gospel,<sup>4</sup> and themes in some New Testament epistles as found in the book of Proverbs<sup>5</sup>. However, this paper considers the need to consider the motifs of wisdom in Proverbs with New Testament apocalyptic message in the book of Revelation. This possibility is explored in the context of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12. Thus, this paper looks at connections between wisdom themes in Proverbs 1-9 and the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12

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<sup>1</sup> Christian Schneider, "Divine Wisdom: The Christological Sapientia in Johannes von Tepl's *der Ackerman*," *The German Quarterly* 87, no 3, Summer (2014): 284, 285. In the medieval period wisdom was identified with Eve and later with the Virgin Mary. However, the view shifted to Christ, based on late medieval exegetical tradition. This Christological reading dates back to the Church Fathers.

<sup>2</sup> Richard M. Davidson, "Proverbs 8 and the Place of Christ in the Trinity," *Journal of Adventist Theological Society* 17, no.1, Spring (2006): 34-37, <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu>. Early Jewish interpretations of wisdom in Proverbs 8 moved from poetic personification to include apparent hypostatization. It is evident that the NT writers viewed the wisdom of Proverbs 8 as more than a personification. It is seen as hypostatization fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. Following the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, recent interpretations view the description of wisdom in Proverbs 8 as borrowed from Ancient Near Eastern Wisdom Goddesses.

<sup>3</sup> Alice Mary Sinnott, "The Personification of Wisdom in the Old Testament" (PhD Dissertation, Oriel College, Oxford, 2000), 117-132.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Barrett, "The Gospel According to Wisdom," *Puritan Reformed Journal* 9 (2017): 5-12.

<sup>5</sup> Tadashi Ino, "Paul's Use of Canonical and Noncanonical Wisdom Literature in Romans and the Corinthian Letters" (PhD Dissertation, Andrews University, 2003), 103-126.

## THE MEANING AND THEOLOGY OF WISDOM IN PROVERBS 1-9

### **The Meaning of Wisdom**

The root word for wisdom in the book of Proverbs is used in the specific sense of social skill, mastering the understanding of the proper social relationship. It involves having the skill to relate with God and all kinds of people to have abundant life and avoid death.<sup>6</sup> In the *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, the Hebrew word *hokhma* for wisdom is described in the ethical and religious context as of God and as of man. As of God, it is described as a divine attribute or energy. It is His wisdom seen in the skies (Job 38:36), by which He numbers the clouds (Job 38:37), by which He founded the earth (Prov. 3:19), and by which He made all things. As for man, it is the principal thing to get (Prov. 4:7), and “its fundamental principle is to fear God” and to know the Holy One (Prov. 9:10; 15:33).<sup>7</sup>

Bartholomew notes that each definition of wisdom is significant but cannot present a wholesome image. He states that the book of Proverbs, read as a literary whole, presents wisdom in the following ways:

an attribute of Yahweh (Prov. 8:22–31);

the means by which Yahweh created the world (Prov. 3:19–20);

and thus built into the fabric of creation and crying out to be heard by humans in all areas of life (Prov. 1:20–21);

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<sup>6</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, “Fundamentals for Preaching the Book of Proverbs, Part 3,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 165, (July-September 2008): 260, <http://koha.aua.ac.ke:2055/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=28&sid=4c43973a-0435-4e81-8ac8ebe92956812e%40sessionmgr4008>.

<sup>7</sup> *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (2014).

needed by humans in every area of life if they are to flourish (Prov. 3:13–18);

rooted and grounded in the fear of Yahweh (Prov. 1:7, 9:10);

antithetically opposed to folly, an ever-present possibility in the world (cf. Prov. 9 on Lady Wisdom and Lady Folly's houses and invitations);

developed into a tradition through the experience of living in God's world.<sup>8</sup>

Bartholomew also adds that Old Testament wisdom deals with how to navigate life with success.<sup>9</sup> One can observe the statements above are descriptive of the source and activities of wisdom. Wisdom is an attribute of God that He used in the creation and uses in sustaining creation. Man needs this wisdom through reverent experience and relationship with God

### **Theology of Wisdom**

In the Old Testament, it is impossible to talk about wisdom without talking about God. As an attribute of God by which He created the world (Prov 3:19-20), including man, wisdom cries to be heard by man in every area of life (Prov 1:20-21; 3:13-18). As wisdom in the book of Proverbs and in the Old Testament deals with how to navigate life with success, man needs it as a social skill and a spiritual skill to relate with God and fellow man.

Theologically, man cannot have wisdom without the fear of God. (Prov. 4:7; 9:10). Hess asserts that “the most distinctive element in the Biblical wisdom ... is the emphasis on the fear of Yahweh”

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<sup>8</sup> Craig G. Bartholomew, “Old Testament Wisdom Today,” in *Exploring Old Testament Wisdom Literature and Themes*, ed. David G. Firth and Lindsay Wilson (Causton, London: Inter Varsity Press, 2016), 30, 31, <https://www.pdfdrive.com/search?q=Exploring+Old>

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<sup>9</sup> Bartholomew, “Old Testament Wisdom Today,” 2016, 31.

(Prov. 1:7; 9:10).<sup>10</sup> He reports that the expression “the fear of the LORD” appears fourteen times in the book of proverbs and stands as a key theme for the entire book. In agreement with this, Michael V. Fox affirms that the book of Proverbs presents wisdom as the main topic among its numerous rules of life and observations. He asserts the fear of the LORD not only as the beginning of wisdom but also as the starting point for the quest for it.<sup>11</sup>

Interestingly, wisdom in the book of Revelation is linked to God. In Revelation 5:12; 7:12, among the attributes that belong to the Lamb and God is wisdom. The Greek word for wisdom is *sophia*. It means wisdom and skill, which can be higher or lower, worldly or spiritual.<sup>12</sup> In the context of the word's appearance in the book of Revelation, higher and spiritual wisdom is from God. In Revelation 13:8, wisdom from God is needed to count the beast's number, whose mark is warned against in the third of the three angels' messages in Revelation 14:9. In Revelation 17:9, wisdom is also needed to understand the description and characteristics of Babylon, which is mentioned in the second angel's message for the first time. Indeed, as wisdom from God is significant in Proverbs 1-9, it is also essential in understanding the symbols in Revelation 14:6-12.

In summary, the fear of the LORD gives a hint concerning Him and links to Him personified by wisdom. The LORD gives man wisdom to navigate everyday life, being connected with Him as revealed in the New Testament and the book of Revelation. This can help explain the possible connection between wisdom motifs

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<sup>10</sup> R. S. Hess, “Wisdom Sources,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament Wisdom, Poetry and Writings*, ed. Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2008), 74, <https://www.pdfdrive.com/search?q=R.+S.+Hess%2C+%E2%80%9C%9CWisdom+Sources%2C%E2%80%9D+in+Dictionary+of+the+Old+Testament+Wisdom%2C+Poetry+and+Writings%2C&pagecount=&pubyear=&searchin=&em=&more=true>

<sup>11</sup> Michael V. Fox, “Ideas of Wisdom in Proverbs 1-9,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* vol. 116, no. 4 (1997): 614, 620.

<sup>12</sup> James Strong, *New Strong's Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament with Their Renderings in the King James Version* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 82.

in the book of Proverbs and Revelation 14:6-12. The imperative to fear God is the first and foundational message of the three angels, as can be seen later.

## MOTIFS SHARED BY WISDOM THEME IN PROVERBS 1-9 AND THE THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES OF REVELATION 14:6-12

Thematic coherence is expressed in wisdom literature, such as the dangers of adultery, the perils of the tongue, the dangers of strong drink, the personification of the female figure.<sup>13</sup> Lucas notes other themes like the nature of wisdom, the problem of wisdom theology, creation theology, the fear of the LORD, the two-way (wisdom and folly), the act consequence nexus, God, and human.<sup>14</sup> In the same vein, this paper explores some motifs related to the wisdom theme in Proverbs 1-9 in connection with the three angels' messages of Rev 14:6-12. The study now takes on an inter-textual and thematic approach, to explore the following motifs in Proverbs 1-9 and Revelation 14:6-12.

### **The Messenger(s) Motif**

In Revelation 14:6-12, angels are the bearers of the messages. The Greek word used and translated as "angel" in Revelation 14:6, 8, and 9 is *angelos*, and it means an angel, a messenger, and a pastor by implication.<sup>15</sup> Stefanovic views the angels as a symbolic portrayal of the sending of God's warning message to the world.<sup>16</sup> C. Mervyn Maxwell also interprets the angels as symbolic.<sup>17</sup> They symbolize God's messengers upon the earth at

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<sup>13</sup> James L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction*, Third edition (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 27.

<sup>14</sup> E. C. Lucas, "Theological Themes," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament Wisdom, Poetry and Writings*, ed. Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1977).

<sup>15</sup> Strong, *New Strong's Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament with Their Renderings in the King James Version*, 1.

<sup>16</sup> Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Second edition (Berrien Springs: Michigan: Andrews University Press, 2009), 450.

<sup>17</sup> C. Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares: The Message of Revelation for Your Family* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1985), 351.

the given time. They are correctly viewed as representing God's saints who are involved in the mission of proclaiming the everlasting gospel.<sup>18</sup>

Interestingly, the wisdom figure in the book of Proverbs is also symbolic. Sinnott asserts that the personification of wisdom in Proverbs 1:20-33 shows the qualities of a teacher and a prophet. Lady Wisdom comes as a special messenger claiming personal authority (Proverbs 1:24; 8:5, 32) to proclaim wisdom, advice, and the fear of God with the authority of God.<sup>19</sup> The words "message" or "messenger" do not occur with the lexemes for wisdom in the book of Proverbs. However, the calls, invitations, proclamations, promises, and warnings of wisdom (1:20-33; 8; 9:1-12) resemble those of didactic and prophetic messengers. In this sense, personified wisdom can be viewed as a messenger. In the words of Sinnott, "wisdom is depicted as a new kind of messenger who does not have an exact predecessor. She appears as a combination of a prophet and wisdom teacher, and incorporates aspects not found in either teacher or prophet."<sup>20</sup> Therefore personified wisdom in Proverbs 1-9 and the angels in Revelation 14:6-12 can be connected in their roles as special and symbolic messengers.

### **The Universal Call**

The scope of the calls of the three angels of Revelation 14:6-12 and the personified wisdom of Proverbs 1-9 is another point of connectedness. In Revelation 14:6, the first angel is seen as flying amid heaven with a message to all who dwell on earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people. This presents the worldwide or universal scope of the Angel's message. It also echoes Jesus' statement that the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations (Mat 24:14).<sup>21</sup> The

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<sup>18</sup> Francis D. Nichol, Raymond F. Cottrell, and Don F. Neufeld, eds., *The Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1980), 827.

<sup>19</sup> Alice Mary Sinnott, "The Personification of Wisdom in the Old Testament" (PhD dissertation. Oriel College, Oxford, 2000), 127.

<sup>20</sup> Sinnott, 129.

<sup>21</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 453.

universal scope of the message depicts the sense of preaching the gospel to everyone in the world.<sup>22</sup> This worldwide nature of the angels' work and the message is significant.<sup>23</sup>

Similarly, the call of personified wisdom in Proverbs 1-9 appears universal in its scope. Waltke comments on wisdom as doing her mission both in the home and public (Proverbs 1:20-21; cf. 5:16; 7:12). She is seen in the most prominent place at the center of the town as this denotes a broad area targeted in the scope of her calling. In Proverbs 1:21, wisdom is portrayed speaking in the chief concourses or on the highest walls and the entrance of the gates to be seen and heard by all.<sup>24</sup> In chapter 8, wisdom is heard soaring in heaven above time and space. She makes her proclamation heard far and wide. She speaks on the highest points, besides the ways, at the crossroads, beside the gates, at the city's entries (Proverbs 8:2-3). Waltke states that she addresses humanity in general as her audience.<sup>25</sup> She is not localized nor bounded by space. When the LORD established the sky, she was there (8:27).<sup>26</sup> Indeed, she has a worldwide dimension.

One can take the scope of the messages of personified wisdom in Proverbs 1-9 as universal as that of the angels in Revelation 14:6-12. The highest walls (Proverbs 1:21) and the highest points (Proverbs 8:2) correspond with the midst of heaven from which the first angel is seen flying and proclaiming his message in Revelation 14:6.

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<sup>22</sup> Maxwell, *God Cares: The Message of Revelation for Your Family*, 351.

<sup>23</sup> Nichol, Cottrell, and Neufeld, *The Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 7:827. This commentary here opines that the work will grow until it is brought to the sight and hearing of all humankind.

<sup>24</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs Chapters 1-15*, ed. R. K. Harrison and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), 201, 202.

<sup>25</sup> Waltke, 395; cf. pp. 392-394 where he discusses the far reaching intended audience of her speech.

<sup>26</sup> Fox, "Ideas of Wisdom in Proverbs 1-9," 629-630.



Another subject in the universal call motif is the qualification of the worldwide targeted audience. Stefanovic argues that those who dwell on the earth, who are the recipients of the angels' messages, are the disobedient or the unbelievers. He sees the messages as the end-time gospel with particular relevance to those living in the closing period of the earth's history.<sup>27</sup> It can still be argued that the message is also meant for God's obedient people in the last days of earth's history because there is the message of hope for those who keep the commandment of God and have the faith of Jesus Christ at the end of the messages (Rev. 14:12). They are also messages for the saints to remain faithful.

In the case of personified wisdom in the book of Proverbs, her universal message is targeted to the fools or the gullible. These are called to stop rejecting wisdom in contrast to the side mockers who have chosen folly and destruction (Proverbs 1:29-31). There is hope for unresponsive youth if they turn while there is time (Proverbs 1:22-23; cf. 9). The hope for whoever repents is clearly stated in Proverbs 1:33. This sounds like the Gospel message in the New Testament, and especially in Revelation 14:6-12. While there is a rebuke for the disobedient, there is a call to fear and worship God, and there is a promise of reward, rest, and life for those who remain faithful to God (Rev 14:12, 13).

### **The Loudness of the Call**

In Revelation 14, the first angel is viewed as "saying with a loud voice" (verse 6), the third angel is also heard "saying with a loud voice, (verse 9). This can also be the case of the second angel by contextual implication though not mentioned in the text. This loudness conveys how the messages will be proclaimed in such a way that everyone will hear and that this emphasizes the importance of the messages.<sup>28</sup> Stefanovic views the use of loud in

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<sup>27</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 452–453.

<sup>28</sup> *The Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 7:827.

the sense that it is a wake-up warning call to those who live on the earth.<sup>29</sup>

In the same vein, personified wisdom calls aloud outside, raises her voice, and cries out in Proverbs 1:20, 21. In chapter 8:1, she cries out, and understanding lifts up her voice. In chapter 9:3, wisdom cries out from the highest places of the city. Waltke views this as a display of passion, “an onomatopoeic word, to get a hearing.”<sup>30</sup> Accordingly, to be heard by one and all, she raises her voice in fervent and emotional impetus, shouting and pleading to be heard. Commenting on 8:2, he refers to understanding as another name for wisdom, and raising her voice is to increase the fervency of the call. “Wisdom makes her proclamation heard far and wide and does not wait for an audience to come to her.”<sup>31</sup> In addition to her outcry in chapter 9:3, she sends her maidens out to all, even in the city's streets, in order for all to hear. All these emphasize the passion and fervency characteristic of the loudness of her calls.

Interestingly, the messengers in Revelation 14:6-12, and wisdom as a messenger in Proverbs 1-9, cry out with loud voices to be heard. This feature of a prophetic and gospel message with loud persuasive voices is to aid the recipients in listening and respond. The loudness means that the messages borne by the personified wisdom in the book of Proverbs and the three angels of Revelation 14:6-12 should not be ignored in the light of the warnings they carry.

### **The Fear of the LORD**

The fear of the LORD is the most distinctive element of Biblical wisdom literature. The Hebrew noun *yir'h* appears in the feminine gender grammatically. Its contextual meaning can denote fear, terror, great fear (see Isa 7:25; Eze 30:13). However, in the context where it stands in construct relationship with Yahweh, as in “*yir'h at 'adōnay*,” that is, the fear of the LORD, it

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<sup>29</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 453.

<sup>30</sup> Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs Chapters 1-15*, 201-202.

<sup>31</sup> Waltke, 394.

means reverence, piety. The book of Proverbs is connected to God's knowledge (Prov 1:29; 2:5) and depicted as the beginning of wisdom and knowledge (Prov 9:10; 1:7 cf. 15:33). It is to hate evil (Prov. 8:13), and it involves departing from evil (Prov 16:6).<sup>32</sup> Having a fear of God means to relate with Him in an intimate knowledge with reverence for Him. It consists of relating to Him in holiness by hating evil and departing from evil.

In Revelation 14:7, the Greek words for “fear God” (*phobēthēte tòn Theòn*) refer to standing in awe of God, revering God.<sup>33</sup> This means having reverence and respect for God. In the context of the first angel's message, its demand and implication are brought out by another imperative “give Him glory.” This also requires a holy and intimate relationship with God. Stefanovic comments that fearing God and giving Him glory have special meaning in the book of Revelation (cf. 11:13; 15:13). Fearing God involves relating rightly with God. It consists of living a life of repentance. Giving Him glory requires obedience to His commandments. A life of obedience to God is a life that glorifies God.<sup>34</sup> In line with this commentary, the requirements of fearing God and giving Him glory in Revelation 14:7 correspond with a life lived with the fear of God in the book of Proverbs. In both places, a person who fears God has the knowledge of God in an intimate relationship with Him, who reveres God, and who obeys God and departs from evil. This is the beginning of wisdom and the footsteps that Christ, who is personified and foreshadowed by the woman wisdom figure in the book of Proverbs, left for His followers.

## **Judgment**

Another prominent wisdom motif in Proverbs 1-9 and the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12 is the judgment motif. The judgment motif appears prominently in connection with wisdom in the book of Proverbs, for instance, in chapters 1:3, 2:7-9, and 8:20. In Proverbs 1:3, wisdom relates to what is right

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<sup>32</sup> *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicons.*

<sup>33</sup> Strong, *New Strong's Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament with Their Renderings in the King James Version*, 96.

<sup>34</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 453–454.

or righteous, just, and what stands for justice for serving and healing a community.<sup>35</sup> Wisdom seeks to be heard, and she speaks at the opening of the gates in the city (1:21), beside the gates (8:3), she tells what is right (8:6), she walks in righteousness and justice (8:20). In the socio-cultural and economic life of the Israelites, the gates had side chambers and benches where people would gather to buy and sell, settle disputes, and do political interactions.<sup>36</sup> The elders would sit on stone benches to judge and deliberate on local issues.<sup>37</sup> Thus wisdom seeks justice, righteousness, equity, and fairness in the judgments carried out by the elders and local administrators at the gates. This can only be done in the fear of the LORD, who is the ultimate Judge. This links the wisdom motif to the message of the first angel of Revelation 14:6-12, which says, “Fear God, and give Him glory because the hour of His judgment has come.”

Commenting on the judgment message of the angel, Maxwell states that judgment is part of the good news of the gospel.<sup>38</sup> The saints are called to give God glory, to praise Him, because the arrival of God’s judgment is good news for those abused, maltreated, mocked, fined unjustly, and downtrodden. As wisdom speaks, as she moves about and at the gates, she advocates justice for all, and her judgment is expected to bring relief and joy to the oppressed.

It is clear from the first angel’s message that everyone living in the last days of the world’s history will be accountable to God on account of their acceptance or rejection of the Gospel.<sup>39</sup> In line with this, accountability and reward are part of the judgment in Proverbs 1-9 and Revelation 14:6-12. There are promises and warnings in the wisdom lectures.<sup>40</sup> There are promises for obedience, such as long life, health, prosperity, honor, happiness,

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<sup>35</sup> Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs Chapters 1-15*, 177.

<sup>36</sup> Waltke, 394-395.

<sup>37</sup> Waltke, 202.

<sup>38</sup> Maxwell, *God Cares: The Message of Revelation for Your Family*, 352.

<sup>39</sup> Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 454.

<sup>40</sup> Fox, “Ideas of Wisdom in Proverbs 1-9,” 622.

and protection, that can be found in Proverbs 1:33; 8:17-21, 34-35; 9:11. On the contrary, there are punishments for defiance and disobedience, such as death, disaster, humiliation (Proverbs 8:36; 1: 24-32). This is also observed in Revelation 14:6-12. The first angel calls people to fear God and give Him glory for the hour of His judgment has come. The second angel announces the fall of Babylon because of her disobedience (fornication). The third angel pronounces explicit punishment for anyone who worships the beast and his image. At the end of the third angel's message, the saints, those obedient to God, are mentioned in a positive light. Their characteristics include keeping the commandments of God and having the faith of Jesus Christ.

### **Creation and Worship**

Another motif that is seen in both Proverbs 1-9 and Revelation 14:6-12 is the creation motif. Personified wisdom is portrayed as an attribute of the LORD present when He created the world (Prov. 8:22-31). The earth, the waters, and the heaven and all their inhabitants manifest interest and delight in the wisdom with which the LORD created all. Commenting on these, Waltke states that wisdom's presence before and during the world's creation gives her the highest rank, dignity, and authority above anything in the world, and the competency to counsel all. Furthermore, she celebrates God's creative order, which keeps the cosmos in place.<sup>41</sup> Wisdom is not presented as an agent of God's creation. Fox opines that wisdom was not an active agent in creation, not an assistant, counselor, or adviser. Instead, she is shown as an object of divine contemplation during creation, intellectually and aesthetically.<sup>42</sup> Inter-textually, the LORD is to be worshiped as the creator of heaven, earth, the seas, and the fountains of waters in Revelation 14:7.

A related, yet hidden or implied motif which appears in Proverbs 1-9, but is clearly stated in Revelation 14:7, is the theme of

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<sup>41</sup> Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs Chapters 1-15*, 407.

<sup>42</sup> Fox, "Ideas of Wisdom in Proverbs 1-9," 628.

worship. No other being should be worshipped. God has the prerogative to be worshipped because He created heaven and earth, the seas, and the fountains of water. This knowledge would be a guard against the worship of the false deities of the Israelite neighbors.<sup>43</sup> Stefanovic asserts that the issue here is not the denial or practice of worship. Concerning the warning against worshipping the beast and his image in the third angel's message, the issue mainly concerns two groups of worshippers: - those who worship God and those who worship the beast. Most prominently, it involves who should be worshipped. Only one being in the context qualifies for this: the Creator of heaven and earth, the seas, and the fountains of waters.

### **The Seductive Woman**

The imagery of the strange and seductive or adulterous woman spoken against by wisdom in Proverbs 1-9 is also seen in the second angel's message of Revelation 14:8 as Babylon. In Proverbs, it appears as literal, while in Revelation, it appears as symbolic. Among the ten lectures into which Michael Fox divides Proverbs 1-7 are two sections titled the Seductive Gang (1:8-19) and the Promiscuous Woman (5:1-23; 6:20-35; 7:1-27). He sees seduction as the main peril warned against in the wisdom lectures.<sup>44</sup> Ginny Brewer-Boydston reports that the seductive woman, a personification of folly, appears primarily in the Dead Sea Scrolls. She leads people astray, against the mission of the personified wisdom. She leads to perversity, sin, and death. Those who follow her are in the way of wickedness and transgression. She lies in ambush against the simple. She veils herself in disguise at the village squares and the city gates (cf. Prov. 5:3-6, 14; 6:25, 26; 7:5-27).<sup>45</sup> The warning against

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<sup>43</sup> Nichol, Cottrell, and Neufeld, eds., *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 7:828.

<sup>44</sup> Fox, "Ideas of Wisdom in Proverbs 1-9," 614.

<sup>45</sup> Ginny Brewer-Boydston, "'They Walk in Wisdom or Folly': The Intensification of Wisdom and Folly from the Book of Proverbs to the Dead Sea Scrolls," *American Theological Library Association*, 322-323, <http://koha.aua.ac.ke:2055/ehost>

</pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=9&sid=4c43973a-0435-4e81-8ac8-be92956812e%40sessionmgr4008>.

association with the seductive woman is a clear warning against adultery and fornication. Wisdom lectures set forth the folly of adultery and its deadliness and extol the honor and delight experienced in sexuality only in marriage.<sup>46</sup>

In Revelation 14:8, the cause of the fall of Babylon is that she made all nations drink the wine of the madness of her fornication. This is in a spiritual sense what the seductive woman does literally in the book of Proverbs. Since fornication is the sinful act here and the term Babylon is used in the feminine form, the culprit is a spiritual woman figure. The Greek word for fornication in Revelation 14:8 is *Porneias*. It is the genitive feminine singular of *porneia*. Only three forms of the word appear in Revelation: *pornēe* (nominative - appears once in Rev 17:15), *porneia* (dative - appears once in Rev 19:2) and *porneias* (genitive - appears six times in Rev 2:21; 9:21; 14:8; 17:2; 17:4; 18:3). *Pornēe* means prostitute or whore while *porneias*, as it appears in Rev 14:8, means unchastity, prostitution, fornication, various kinds of unlawful sexual intercourse. Figuratively, it signifies idolatry, immorality,<sup>47</sup> unfaithfulness toward God,<sup>48</sup> apostasy from God, syncretistic intercourse with other gods,<sup>49</sup> and a reference to the Church's wooing for political and economic favors.<sup>50</sup> Generally, *porneia* stands figuratively for unfaithfulness towards God, apostasy from Him, syncretism with other gods, or the church's alliance with political powers.

Interestingly, the figure of the seductive or adulterous woman in the book of Proverbs, who is an adulteress and poetically a personification of folly, can be seen with an apocalyptic and

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<sup>46</sup> Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs Chapters 1-15*, 305–306.

<sup>47</sup> *Bible Works* 9, 2011, [c:\program files (x86)\bibleworks9\init\bw900.swc.

<sup>48</sup> Stefanovic, 457

<sup>49</sup> Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. G. W. Bromiley, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans, 1965), 595.

<sup>50</sup> Verlyn Verbrugge, ed., *The New International Version Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 1079.

symbolic eye to correspond with Babylon of Revelation 14:8. Generally, all that the seductive woman does in the book of Proverbs (seducing the gullible with the charm of her adulterous appearance and enticing words, see Proverbs 7:6-23), Babylon in the apocalypse does with the wine of her fornication. A hint on the meaning of her wine shows it to be falsehood or false doctrine.

*Oinos* appears once in the accusative form in Revelation (Rev 18:13), six times in the genitive (Rev 14:8; 14:10; 16:19; 17:2; 18:3; 19:15), where it is used figuratively.<sup>51</sup> *Oinos* is translated as wine, literally or figuratively.<sup>52</sup> According to William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *oinos* as wine is normally the grape's fermented juice, while *trugs* are the word for "must" or unfermented grape juice.<sup>53</sup> Colin Brown states that in Revelation, the debauching effects of wine are seen as descriptive of worldly passion.<sup>54</sup>

*Oinos* is translated as wine, and in all the forms it appears in Revelation, it is used in the figurative sense mainly as a tool for fornication or allurement into fornication. On the other hand, an unfermented or nonintoxicating drink symbolizes words of wisdom, words of truth, and salvation. This is evident in the invitation of wisdom in Proverbs 9:2, 5. She prepares wine for all who come to her. The drinking of her wine is symbolic of receiving and heeding her words. Thus, the wine of Babylon, with which she lures all men to spiritual fornication, corresponds to the terms of the falsehood of the seductive woman in the book of Proverbs, with which she lures men to folly.

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<sup>51</sup> *Bible Works 9*. c:\programmes files\bibleworks9\init\bw900.sws, © 2011.

<sup>52</sup> Strong, *New Strong's Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament with Their Renderings in the King James Version*, 62.

<sup>53</sup> W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek – English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 564, 565.

<sup>54</sup> Colin Brown, ed., *Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), 922.



## **Conclusion**

This paper set out to study the connections between the wisdom motifs in proverbs 1- 9 and the three angels' messages in Revelation 14:6-12.

The thematic connections were explored and motifs such as the messenger(s), the universal scope and the loud nature of their call, the fear of the LORD, creation and Worship, Seductive Woman / Mystic Babylon, and Judgment. Thematically and inter-textually, it can be asserted that personified wisdom in Proverbs 1-9 and the angels in Revelation 14:6-12 can be connected in their roles as special and symbolic messengers. They are making universal calls to everyone to fear God and worship Him as the Creator of all. They warn everyone to beware of the seductive woman, both literally and symbolically, because of certain divine judgment.

Furthermore, the divine messages in the wisdom motifs in Proverbs 1-9 can be heard today in connection with the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12. The Christ, literarily and theologically, personified in the wisdom figure in the book of Proverbs, is the same central figure revealed in the book of Revelation, whose faith is confessed by the saints of God.

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