“For Our Good Always”: How the Intertextual Links between Deuteronomy And Ecclesiastes Reinforce Qohelet’s Positive Message

by
Kyle C. Dunham
Associate Professor of Old Testament
Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary
Email: kdunham@dbts.edu

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With a key literary relationship that only recently has begun to be explored, the book of Deuteronomy provides an important source for Ecclesiastes. Deuteronomy is the only biblical writing that Qohelet[1] evokes by all three categories of allusive mode—citation, allusion, and literary echo.[2] This correspondence in terminology and themes secures a place for Deuteronomy as the most significant backdrop for Ecclesiastes after the book of Genesis. Such a link should come as no surprise, as scholars of biblical wisdom have long recognized significant correlations between Deuteronomy and the biblical wisdom corpus.[3] Deuteronomy's wisdom emphasis comes to the fore in its introduction, where conformity to its legal code is lauded as a means of obtaining superior wisdom: "And you must observe [these rules and regulations] diligently, for that is your wisdom and your insight before the eyes of the people, who will hear all of these rules, and they will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people'" (Deut 4:6, LEB). Deuteronomy elsewhere commends its wisdom, grounded here as in the biblical wisdom tradition in the fear of the Lord, as a fountain of life and wellbeing for the people of Israel: "The LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as we are this day" (Deut 6:24, ESV). As a vital source, then, of authoritative wisdom affirming life and goodness for the nation, Qohelet evokes Deuteronomy through several verbal links as well as a number of shared semantic fields and discourse concepts. Schultz concludes in his study of these connections that Deuteronomy is highly influential on Qohelet as "the authors of both Deuteronomy and Ecclesiastes strongly urge their listeners to rejoice before God as they enjoy his everyday blessings of food and drink, spouse, and life itself."[4] These connections reinforce the positive aspects of Qohelet's message. As Deuteronomy, Qohelet commends obedience and joy, but not merely as a means of obtaining superior wisdom. He commends obedience and joy as an antidote to the pain and suffering endemic to a fallen world. These clear verbal links establish a similar trajectory of theme and message to which we now turn.

Literary Citations, Allusions, and Echoes of Deuteronomy in Ecclesiastes. The clearest literary link between Deuteronomy and Ecclesiastes occurs in Qohelet's discussion of proper oath-taking in Eccl 5:4–5 [HT 3–4]. In the context of the appropriate handling of vows and dreams, Qohelet invokes the legal stipulations of Deut 23:21–22 [HT 22–23] to bolster his

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[1] Although I assume, as suggested convincingly by historical tradition and the canonical storyline, that Solomon is the author of Ecclesiastes, I will refer to him throughout this paper as Qohelet, in keeping with his identification in the book.

[2] On the nature of these allusive modes, see John Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981), 64; Katharine Dell, "Exploring Intertextual Links between Ecclesiastes and Genesis 1–11," in *Reading Ecclesiastes Intertextually*, ed. Katharine Dell and Will Kynes (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 5; Fernando Milán, "Biblia e intertextualidad: una aproximación," *ScrTh* 48 (2016): 367–68. More generally on the literary relationship between Ecclesiastes and Deuteronomy, see Richard Schultz, "'Fear God and Keep His Commandments' (Eccl 12:13): An Examination of Some Intertextual Relationships between Deuteronomy and Ecclesiastes," in *For Our Good Always: Studies on the Message and Influence of Deuteronomy in Honor of Daniel I. Block*, ed. Jason S. DeRouchie, Jason Gile, and Kenneth Turner, 327–43 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013); Bernard M. Levinson, "'Better That You Should Not Vow Than That You Vow and Not Fulfill': Qoheleth's Use of Textual Allusion and the Transformation of Deuteronomy's Law of Vows," in *Reading Ecclesiastes Intertextually*, ed. Katharine Dell and Will Kynes, 28–41 (New York: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2014); Craig G. Bartholomew, *Ecclesiastes*, BCOTWP (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 368n45.

[3] Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1972), 244–319; R. N. Whybray, *The Intellectual Tradition of the Old Testament*, BZAW 135 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1974), 87–89, 150–51; Gerald Wilson, "'The Words of the Wise': The Intent and Significance of Qohelet 12:9–14," *JBL*103 (1984): 175–92.

[4] Schultz, "Fear God and Keep His Commandments," 342–43.

admonitions about correct worship practices. In a more general sense, the pericope of Eccl 5:1–7 [HT 4:17–5:6], with its successive instructions on a circumspect approach to the cult, is the most unique rhetorical unit of the book and provides the most fruitful source for drawing intertextual comparisons.[5] Although not all intertextual suggestions have proved equally persuasive,[6] Qohelet adapts here a near-verbatim excerpt from Deut 23:21.

Verbal Correspondences to the "Law of Vows"			
Deut 23:21–22 [22–23]	Translation	Eccl 5:4–5 [3–4]	Translation
כִּי־תִדֹּר נֶדֶר לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא תְאַחֵר לְשַׁלְּמוֹ כִּי־דָרֹשׁ יִדְרְשֶׁנּוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מֵעִמָּךְ וְהָיָה בְךָ חֵטְא: וְכִי תֶחְדַּל לִנְדֹּר לֹא־יִהְיֶה בְךָ חֵטְא:	If **you make a vow to** Yahweh your **God**, you **shall not delay in fulfilling it**, **for** certainly Yahweh your God shall require it from you and it will be sin for you. And if you refrain from vowing, it will not be sin for you.	כַּאֲשֶׁר תִּדֹּר נֶדֶר לֵאלֹהִים אַל־תְּאַחֵר לְשַׁלְּמוֹ כִּי אֵין חֵפֶץ בַּכְּסִילִים אֵת אֲשֶׁר־ תִּדֹּר שַׁלֵּם: טוֹב אֲשֶׁר לֹא־ תִדֹּר מִשֶּׁתִּדּוֹר וְלֹא תְשַׁלֵּם	When **you make a vow to God**, **do not delay in fulfilling it**, **for** he takes no pleasure in fools. Fulfill what you vow! It is better that you not vow than that you vow and not fulfill it.

The Hebrew texts of the passages share six words in nearly identical sequence. Hence the best classification for this textual link is literary quotation with an informal citation marker (introduced by the discourse marker כַּאֲשֶׁר ["just as, when"]).[7] Qohelet modifies the apodictic legal prohibition against frivolous vows to a more practical and didactic caution about proper oath-taking in worship, adapting four elements of the Deuteronomy text: (1) Deuteronomy's clause-initial protasis particle כִּי ("if" or possibly "when") Qohelet alters to his key discourse marker כַּאֲשֶׁר ("just as, when"). This alteration serves at least two purposes. First, it underscores the reality and immediacy of the depicted vow. The vow is envisioned not merely as to its potentiality but as to its likelihood in the worshipper's observance of the cult ("when you make a vow. . . ."). Second, the discourse marker כַּאֲשֶׁר, as suggested earlier, hints to Qohelet's use of source material in the formulation of this injunction. The particle כַּאֲשֶׁר functions uniquely in Ecclesiastes as a discourse marker introducing adapted literary material. (2) The divine covenant name יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ ("YHWH your God") Qohelet abbreviates, in keeping with his universal omission of the tetragrammaton, to the more general and transcendent divine title אֱלֹהִים ("God").

[5] Hubert Tita, "Ist die thematische Einheit Koh 4,17–5,6 eine Anspielung auf die Salomoerzählung?" *BN* 84 (1996): 87–102; Antoon Schoors, "(Mis)Use of Intertextuality in Qoheleth Exegesis," in *Congress Volume Oslo 1998*, ed. A. Lemaire and M. Sæbø, 45–59 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 48–57; Jean-Jacques Lavoie, "Critique cultuelle et doute existential: étude de Qo 4,17–5,6," *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 26 (1997): 147–67.

[6] For example, the intertextual comparison to the Jacob narrative in Genesis 28 and 35 that Ruth Fidler proposes is not compelling, as she overloads the semantic concept of "dream" with too much weight from the Jacob narrative and imposes it upon Qohelet's admonition. Her conclusions appear strained and foreign to the context of Ecclesiastes. She also fails to address adequately how a purported allusion to the Jacob narrative advances Qohelet's agenda in this particular text ("Qoheleth in the 'House of God': Text and Intertext in Qoh 4:17–5:6 (Eng. 5:1–7)," *HS* 47 [2006]: 7–21).

[7] Schultz identifies this as an explicit quotation (*NDBT*, s.v. "Ecclesiastes," by R. Schultz, 214).

This again turns the covenantal legal stipulation into more generic wisdom instruction. (3) The more enduring status of Deuteronomy's legal prohibition, marked by the negative particle לֹא, Qohelet shifts to a more specific and immediate prohibition marked by the vetitive אַל. Dallaire, in her study of Hebrew and Canaanite volitives, has demonstrated that the negative particle לֹא marks prohibitions related to a lasting future lifestyle in which a person of greater rank addresses someone of lower rank, while the vetitive אַל marks a one-time, specific prohibition in which social and class dynamics have no bearing.[8] Hence Qohelet's modification is again consistent with his instructional genre. (4) Deuteronomy's motive clause asserting that Yahweh will recompense the sin and charge the offender with guilt Qohelet refashions to the more common rhetorical wisdom form of the "better-than" proverb. Ogden has observed, in his study of Qohelet's use of the *Tob-Spruch*, that Qohelet utilizes this literary device "to express conclusions drawn from the observations recorded in the pericope."[9] Often these conclusions are pivotal in accentuating the most significant affirmations or warnings that Qohelet develops within the unit.[10] Here Qohelet concludes with a vital warning that disobedience to Torah is a breach of wisdom norms, leading to divine disapproval and the possible frustration of the violator's ability to enjoy God's good gifts. Qohelet modifies Deuteronomy's identification of the oath breaking as sin (חֵטְא) to classifying it first as folly (כְּסִיל, "the fool") (v. 4) and then as "sin" (חָטָא) (v. 6). He transforms the legal notion of divine recompense (דרשׁ) to a more wisdom-oriented outcome of divine displeasure (אֵין חֵפֶץ) (alternatively, the term חֵפֶץ may be picked up from 1 Sam 15:22). He concludes with an imperative stressing the need to fulfill the vow and reiterates the harm that overtakes the fool who approaches vows flippantly.

These changes are in keeping with the suggestion that Qohelet consistently connects the concept of folly with sin in his wisdom instruction. Conversely, he often designates wisdom as a highly desirable attribute that God bestows to the person who pleases him (cf. Eccl 2:26; 7:11, 25; 8:1; 9:18). If, as suggested elsewhere, Qohelet harks back to the fall in Genesis 3 as an act of supreme folly with universally destructive consequences, it is thus incorrect to postulate, as Levinson does, that Qohelet has here "detheologized" and "relativized" the Pentateuchal formula from a stark prohibition to "a lesser transgression of wisdom and good sense."[11] Rather, in keeping with his concerns elsewhere, Qohelet simply diagnoses the violation of Torah as a rash and devastating replication of the folly of original sin. The fool who cavalierly disregards Torah repeats the conceit of the original fools, Adam and Eve, and sins audaciously as they did. The consequences in both cases are ruinous. Qohelet is not minimizing the legal prescription of Deuteronomy but merely pointing out the madness of flouting it.

In addition to this citation, Ecclesiastes includes at least one literary allusion to Deuteronomy. The epilogue concludes with its well-known directive to "fear God and keep his commandments" (Eccl 12:13). This language resonates closely with a frequent injunction in Deuteronomy to fear and obey Yahweh.[12] In eight passages Deuteronomy combines the concepts

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[8] Hélène Dallaire, *The Syntax of Volitives in Biblical Hebrew and Amarna Canaanite Prose*, LSAWS 9 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2014), 105.

[9] G. Ogden, "The 'Better'-Proverb (Tôb-Spruch), Rhetorical Criticism, and Qoheleth," *JBL* 96 (1977): 497.

[10] Ibid., 504–5.

[11] Levinson, "Better That You Should Not Vow," 32, 38.

[12] Only ten texts in the OT collocate the key terms ירא ("fear"), שׁמר ("keep"), and מִצְוָה ("commandment") in the same verse (Deut 5:29; 6:2; 8:6; 13:4; 2 Kgs 17:37; Neh 1:5; Eccl 12:13; Dan 9:4). Of these texts, four come

of revering God with keeping his decrees, revolving around the verbs ירא (“fear”) and שׁמר (“keep”) (Deut 5:29; 6:2; 8:6; 10:12–13; 13:4; 17:19; 28:58; 31:12). Four of these passages include the additional keyword מִצְוָה (“commandment”): Deut 5:29; 6:2; 8:6; 13:4. Of these four possible literary precursors, the texts that share most extensively the vocabulary and sequence of the epilogue are Deut 5:29 and 13:4.[13] In Deut 5:29 Yahweh expresses his desire that the people of Israel would always have the inner disposition “to fear me and to keep all my commandments” (לְיִרְאָה אֹתִי וְלִשְׁמֹר אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתַי). Although the terms ירא (“fear”), שׁמר (“keep”), and מִצְוֹת (“commandments”) occur in close proximity here as in Eccl 12:13, there are a few key differences. In Deut 5:29 Yahweh speaks to Moses, and only indirectly to his people, in expressing his desire that Israel would always be motivated to obey his laws. The rhetorical mode is hence more relaxed, and the conjugation of the verbs is non-finite (Qal infinitive construct) rather than volitional (Qal imperative). Yahweh urges the solicited fear and obedience toward himself by use of the first-person singular pronominal suffixes. In Eccl 12:13 God is more distant rhetorically as indicated by the third-person pronominal suffix. In addition, Deut 5:29 characterizes the desired obedience as comprehensive in entailing “all” God’s commands (כֹּל), while Eccl 12:13 omits this term.

In light of these differences, Deut 13:4 offers stronger clues to its potential literary connection to Eccl 12:13 for several reasons. First, similarity in linguistic structure suggests that Deuteronomy has influenced Ecclesiastes. Both texts front their accusatives in the preverbal field to highlight God as the object of fear and obedience by making him the focus of the utterance.[14] The larger context of Deuteronomy 13 includes instructions on how to ferret out false dreamers and false prophets. Moses charges his audience, as an antidote to prophetic deception, that they fear the Lord and obey his commands: “You shall fear *him* and keep *his commandments*” (וְאֹתוֹ תִירָאוּ וְאֶת־מִצְוֹתָיו תִּשְׁמֹרוּ). The accusatives אֹתוֹ (“him”) and אֶת־מִצְוֹתָיו (“his commandments”) precede their respective governing verbs to stress Yahweh’s personal and exclusive prerogative as the sovereign recipient of Israel’s reverence and obedience. Likewise, the author of Eccl 12:13 fronts the accusatives הָאֱלֹהִים and מִצְוָה to stress the exclusivity of God and his authority: “Fear *God* and keep *his commandments*” (אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים יְרָא וְאֶת־מִצְוֹתָיו שְׁמוֹר). Second, Deut 13:4 carries the closest resemblance of any OT text to Eccl 12:13 in its verbal mood, syntax, and sequence. Although Qohelet adapts the Deuteronomy text in marginal ways by shifting from the *yiqtol* to the imperative mood and by adding the proper noun הָאֱלֹהִים (“God”) in place of the pronoun אֹתוֹ (“him”), on the whole these are minor changes. The *yiqtol* conjugation in Deut 13:4 is likely the so-called injunctive imperfect, constituting a command that carries a meaning close to the imperatival conjugation.[15] Moreover, in syntactical arrangement Deut 13:4 and Eccl 12:13 align

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from Deuteronomy, one is a clear allusion to Deuteronomy (2 Kgs 17:37), and two appear in postexilic prayers of confession that likely reflect Deuteronomy (Dan 9:4; Neh 1:5). This correspondence strengthens the likelihood that Deuteronomy functions as a literary precursor to Eccl 12:13. Cf. also Wilson, “The Words of the Wise,” 189.

[13] Deut 6:2 and 8:6 differ from Eccl 12:13 by interposing several additional terms and phrases or by altering the sequence of the directive.

[14] On the terminology and significance of “fronting” as identifying the focus of the utterance, see Christo H. J. van der Merwe, Jackie A. Naudé, and Jan H. Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 337–38, 346–47.

[15] Williams, *Williams’ Hebrew Syntax*, 72; Merwe, Naudé, and Kroeze, *Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar*, 148–49; Waltke and O’Connor, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 509.

more closely than any other biblical texts, carrying the following linguistic structure: accusative particle with suffix/accusative + verb (ירא) + *waw* conjunctive with accusative particle and מִצְוָה + verb (שמר).[16] Third, the larger context of Ecclesiastes favors Deut 13:4 as a source text. Elsewhere within the book Qohelet appears to echo another text within Deuteronomy 13 to censure rash speakers and dreamers who needlessly multiply empty words and impose *hebel* on those around them (Eccl 5:3, 7) (here evoking Deut 13:3, 5). Deut 13:1–5 and Eccl 5:1–7 are, in fact, the only passages in their respective books to use the term חֲלוֹם ("dream"), and both texts use the term in a negative fashion to condemn dreamers who seek to mislead others. The fact that Qohelet evokes this same Deuteronomy context elsewhere in his writing to express his disapproval of futile dreams and profuse speech heightens the likelihood that he adapts a text from Deuteronomy 13 here as well. A prominent tenet of intertextuality is that the interpreter should correlate his potential source text and the transmissive text in a more systematic fashion to find other latent resonances beyond the immediate allusion or echo of the transmissive text.[17] Discerning another literary connection to Deuteronomy 13 within the larger context of Ecclesiastes thus strengthens the likelihood that Eccl 12:13 evokes Deut 13:4 as a source text.

In addition to providing the backdrop for a literary citation and allusion, Deuteronomy provides a few other source texts that Qohelet echoes in Ecclesiastes. In Eccl 5:2 [HT 5:1] Qohelet warns against speaking rashly to God because of the divine authority inherent in the Creator/creature distinction: "Do not be rash with your mouth, and do not let your heart be quick to utter a word before God. For God is in heaven, and you are on earth; therefore, let your words be few" (Eccl 5:2, LEB). The language of the transcendent "God in heaven" (הָאֱלֹהִים בַּשָּׁמַיִם) in distinction from the sphere of finite humans on "the earth below" (עַל־הָאָרֶץ) is surprisingly rare in the OT. The constellation of the terms הָאֱלֹהִים ("God") with בְּ ("in, with") and הַשָּׁמַיִם ("the heavens") contrasted with the creaturely realm depicted by the preposition עַל ("upon") governing הָאָרֶץ ("the earth") occurs only five times in the OT: Gen 1:17; Deut 4:39; Josh 2:11; 1 Kgs 8:23 (=2 Chron 6:14); and Eccl 5:2. In assessing these five texts, Gen 1:17 occurs in the opening creation discourse in which God places the greater lights in the expanse of the heavens to illuminate the earth below, a different theme and emphasis from Eccl 5:2. In addition, the term רָקִיעַ ("expanse") interposes there between "God" and "the heavens," lessening its likelihood as a literary source. Another possible literary antecedent, Josh 2:11, is itself an allusion or citation of Deut 4:39, with six identical lexemes occurring in succession in both texts. There Rahab extols Yahweh as the true God of heaven and earth, demonstrating his power to vanquish the Canaanites by the miraculous exodus of his people from Egypt. These unlikely correspondences leave us with two texts as the possible backdrop for Eccl 5:2: Deut 4:39 and 1 Kgs 8:23. The chronologically later text, 1 Kgs 8:23, offers interesting possibilities in that there Solomon prays to dedicate the newly-constructed temple during his celebration of the Festival of Tabernacles. Several commentators have noted pervasive links to Deuteronomy in Solomon's dedicatory

[16] None of the other Deut texts listed above carries this same structure, terminology, and semantic collocation. The closest is Deut 6:2, but there the text does not front the accusatives and has חֹק ("statute") in place of מִצְוָה ("commandment").

[17] On the importance of this step in the methodology of intertextuality, see Will Kynes, *My Psalm Has Turned into Weeping: Job's Dialogue with the Psalms*, BZAW 437 (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 37–60.

prayer, suggesting his personal knowledge of the Mosaic Covenant.[18] Solomon picks up on the theme of God's sovereign transcendence elsewhere in his dedicatory prayer, using the earth/heaven distinction as indicative of God's supremacy and immensity (1 Kgs 8:27). Given the oblique yet compelling links between Qohelet and Solomon in Ecclesiastes, Solomon's nexus with relatively rare phraseology from Deuteronomy in both 1 Kgs 8:23 and Eccl 5:2 proves fascinating. Although this similar phrasing falls short of demonstrating conclusively that Qohelet is Solomon, the latent literary ties between these texts offer intriguing prospects for the originating context of Ecclesiastes. In the end, it appears most plausible that both 1 Kgs 8:23 and Eccl 5:2 depend literarily on Deut 4:39. In Deuteronomy 4 Moses addresses the Israelites in his first speech to underscore the uniqueness and authority of Yahweh, evidenced historically from several key creative and redemptive acts: the creation of the world, the exodus from Egypt, the destruction of Israel's enemies, and the provision of the Law on Sinai. God's singular authority is evident both in his transcendence from the created realm and in his imminence among his people: "So you shall acknowledge today and you must call to mind that Yahweh is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath. There is no other God" (Deut 4:39, LEB). The pairing of "heaven" and earth" is likely a merism denoting God's unique sovereignty over the totality of the created order.[19] Qohelet has adapted the pairing of "heaven above" and "earth beneath" not only to highlight God's sovereignty but to accentuate mankind's finitude. Rather than emphasizing that *God* is operative and authoritative in both spheres, Qohelet shifts the terminology to point to God's transcendence and man's limitation: God is in heaven but finite, foolish humans remain on earth. More than a hint of Qohelet's frustration over the lot of fallen man lies behind the exhortation. The singular divine authority underscored in the Deuteronomy text is intended to serve here as a check on fallen man's tendency toward rash outspokenness. Since man cannot sufficiently or exhaustively "mind the gap" between himself and God, he must learn to hold his tongue and let God be God.

The final literary echo of Deuteronomy in Ecclesiastes occurs in the same chapter. In Eccl 5:1–7 Qohelet exhorts his audience concerning the need to restrain one's words before God in light of human transitoriness, finitude, and evil (5:1–17). Qohelet, in Eccl 5:3, 7, contrasts the danger posed by elusive dreams and foolish diatribes with the value of personal piety as evidenced in the fear of God. The wise person, exhorts Qohelet, demonstrates his unswerving commitment to God largely through his silence. It is likely that Qohelet draws here again from Deuteronomy, this time from a passage dealing with the identification and eradication of false prophets and dreamers. Deut 13:1–18 underscores the necessity of personal and exclusive covenantal devotion to Yahweh in light of the threat of future defectors and apostates.[20] A class of notable defectors is that of false prophets. In Deut 13:3–4 [HT 4–5] this group of religious apostates offers the blandishment of false revelation to entice away God's covenant people. Israel must repudiate these seductive seers and their spurious claims to divine revelation: "You must not listen to the words of that prophet or to that dreamer, for Yahweh your God is testing you to know whether you love Yahweh your God with all of your heart and with all of your inner self. You shall go after Yahweh your God, and him you shall revere, and his commandment you

[18] Simon J. DeVries, *1 Kings*, WBC (Waco, TX: Word, 1985), 126; Peter Leithart, *1 & 2 Kings*, Brazos Theological Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 68; Lissa M. Wray Beal, *1 & 2 Kings*, AOTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014), Paul R. House, *1, 2 Kings*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 143–45.

[19] Rabbinical authorities identified this statement as the most overt assertion of monotheism in the Hebrew Bible (Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, JPS Torah Commentary [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996], 57).

[20] See J. Gordon McConville, *Deuteronomy*, AOTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 234–35.

shall keep, and to his voice you shall listen, and him you shall serve, and to him you shall hold fast" (Deut 13:3–4, LEB). An interesting facet of these verses is the constellation of the prominent terms דְּבָרִים ("words"), חֲלוֹם ("dreams"), and ירא ("fear"). The collocation of "words" and "dreams" in the same text is relatively rare in the OT, occurring in seven instances: Gen 37:8; 41:32; Num 12:6; Deut 13:3; Eccl 5:3, 7; and Jer 23:28. When combined with the imperative conjugation of ירא, however, this sequence occurs only in Deut 13:3–4 and Eccl 5:7. Qohelet appears to pull again from the wellspring of Deuteronomy in formulating his wisdom exhortation. In the context of foolish dreams and profuse words, Qohelet identifies a subtle spiritual threat to proper worship. Heeding futile dreams and empty words serves no lasting purpose but only to spiritual detriment and folly; the wise person instead fears God.

Shared Semantic Fields and Discourse Concepts in Deuteronomy and Ecclesiastes. Having surveyed a number of literary ties linking Deuteronomy and Ecclesiastes, we turn now to the more oblique yet significant commonality of shared semantic fields and discourse concepts. In a cursory fashion Bartholomew identifies several potential conceptual links between Deuteronomy and Ecclesiastes beyond those already noted: (1) the theme of eating and drinking, (2) the prohibition of adding to or subtracting from God's work (Deut 4:2; 12:32; Eccl 3:14; 12:12), (3) the motif of remembrance, and (4) the "one shepherd" of Eccl 12:11 as reflecting the "one God" of the Shema in Deut 6:4.[21] In light of the instances already explored in which Qohelet cites, alludes to, or echoes Deuteronomy, these other conceptual connections revolving eating and drinking, remembrance, adding and subtracting, and divine oneness verify further that Deuteronomy furnishes an important source for Qohelet.

First, eating and drinking is a motif common to Deuteronomy and Ecclesiastes. The customary term for "eat," אכל, occurs 95 times in the two books (80x in Deut; 15x in Eccl), while its usual paired term שָׁתָה ("drink") occurs 14 times (9x in Deut; 5x in Eccl). Given the relatively rarer occurrences of "drinking" in the two books, the collocation of eating and drinking in the same context would seem at first glance to hold exegetical significance as a possible thematic link. The verbs for "eating" and "drinking" occur together in the same verse or in adjoining verses eight times in Deuteronomy (Deut 2:6, 28; 9:9, 18, 28:39; 29:6; 32:13–14, 38) and five times in Ecclesiastes (Eccl 2:24; 3:13; 5:17; 8:15; 9:7). Only once in Deuteronomy is the concept of "drinking" *not* paired with eating, and this appears in a context in which the land is drinking water from heaven (Deut 11:11). In Ecclesiastes drinking is *always* paired with eating. Does Deuteronomy serve then as a thematic backdrop for Ecclesiastes in the matter of eating and drinking when these concepts are combined? I would suggest a qualified *yes* with a few key nuances.

To answer this question more fully, we must ascertain a deeper commonality between the books in their presentation of the purpose and goal of eating and drinking. Earlier I have suggested that Qohelet casts eating often in Ecclesiastes as a positive activity in distinction from what is largely a negative function in Genesis 1–3, revolving as it does there around its role in the fall. For Qohelet, the joint activities of eating and drinking are everywhere commended as an

[21] Bartholomew, *Ecclesiastes*, 368–69n45. Bartholomew adds a few other links, several of which we treated earlier, including the law of vows (Eccl 5:4–5; Deut 23:22–24), the exhortation to fear God and keep his commandments (Eccl 12:13; Deut 5:29; 13:4), and the so-called Name theology of Deuteronomy and Eccl 5:1–7 (Bartholomew does not elaborate as to what he means by "Name theology" so this cannot be pursued further). Unfortunately Bartholomew relegates these insights to a footnote without further development, so we intend to fill out this lacuna.

undertaking by which humanity reprises in small measure the good lost by the fall (Eccl 2:24; 3:13; 5:17; 8:15; 9:7). Eating and drinking when taken together in Deuteronomy, however, carry almost none of the positive, commendable features of Ecclesiastes. Twice the notion of eating and drinking occurs in the context of Israel's difficulties in obtaining provisions from foreign peoples on the way to Canaan, a request which the Edomites apparently grant (Deut 2:6) but the Amorites refuse (Deut 2:28). Twice eating and drinking occur in the context of Moses' abstention from food and water during his forty-day fast on Sinai (Deut 9:9, 18). Twice eating and drinking occur in the context of the *absence* of available food, once in the Deuteronomic curses where the future Israelites will not eat and drink their produce because of their disobedience (Deut 28:39) and once where the wilderness generation does not eat bread or take strong drink since the Lord furnishes manna and water (Deut 29:6). Finally, eating and drinking appear in the context of idolatry, where foreign gods supply illicit food and wine to their worshippers (Deut 32:38). This leaves us with one possible context where eating and drinking are together acclaimed as a desirable and profitable activity. In Deut 32:13–14 Moses rehearses in his concluding song the Lord's provision for the Israelites, including his bestowal of lavish foods and abundant wine: "He [Israel] *ate* the produce of the field, and he suckled him with honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock. Curds from the herd, and milk from the flock, with fat of lambs, rams of Bashan and goats, with the very finest of the wheat—and you *drank* foaming wine made from the blood of the grape" (ESV). These images pertain likely to God's historical provision of food and drink during the wilderness sojourning, including Israel's longer tarriance in the fertile Transjordanian region.[22] Alternatively, the references perhaps anticipate the future bounty accessible in Canaan.[23] In either case, Moses commends eating and drinking here as God's provision for the enjoyment of his people in a way resonant with the theme of Ecclesiastes. This passage provides a clue that Deuteronomy, beyond the largely negative function of eating and drinking when paired, may adopt in other instances a positive outlook on food, especially on food as God's provision in blessing his people. This view is corroborated in a number of texts that mention eating by itself as a beneficial and desirous activity. In these texts eating often stands as a cipher for the fertility and productivity of the land to which they are going, a land that holds the potential for divine blessing: "It is a good land that the LORD our God is giving us" (Deut 1:25, ESV). Moses extols the periodic and seasonable eating to one's fill as an activity consistent with the expected gratitude and humility that should form Israel's response to the Lord's providential bestowal (Deut 6:11; 8:10, 12; 11:15; 12:7, 15, 18, 20; 14:23, 26, 29; 15:20; 26:12; 27:7; 31:20). Significant in these latter passages are texts which laud eating as a reverential reflection on the goodness and provision of God: "When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you" (Deut 8:10, NIV; cf. 14:29). Other texts link eating specifically to joy or blessing: "There, in the presence of the LORD your God, you and your families shall eat and shall rejoice in everything you have put your hand to, because the LORD your God has blessed you" (Deut 12:7, NIV; cf. 12:18; 14:26; 27:7). Likewise, the thematic emphasis of Ecclesiastes commends eating and drinking as consistently linked to joy and "seeing good" (Eccl 2:24; 3:13; 5:17, 19; 8:15; 9:7). So then while it is difficult to posit a single text in Deuteronomy where eating and drinking clearly function as a literary source for Qohelet, the discourse concept of eating as the appropriate and grateful response to divine goodness and favor resonates in both books. While Deuteronomy and Ecclesiastes may be drawing from the common stock of ANE cultural norms in their positive

[22] Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 415.
[23] Peter C. Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 381; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 305.

view of eating and drinking,[24] it is likely, given the other textual links discussed so far, that Deuteronomy has influenced Ecclesiastes toward a positive view of eating and drinking as a means of applying divinely-granted joy and blessing.

Second, another theme present in both books is remembrance. The verb "remember," זכר, occurs nineteen times in the two books (15x in Deut; 4x in Eccl), while the noun "remembrance," זִכָּרוֹן, occurs three times in Ecclesiastes. "Remembering" functions mainly in a positive and hortatory sense in Deuteronomy, where the Israelites are enjoined to bear in mind the continuing significance of God's deliverance from Egypt and his provision in the wilderness (Deut 5:15; 7:18; 8:2; 9:7; 15:15; 16:3, 12; 24:18, 22; 25:17). In keeping with this function, to remember in Deuteronomy is never cast simply in a historical framework whereby Israel recalls an element of her past but always in an obligatory sense whereby Israel must keep foremost in her mind key truths concerning the character of God, expressed through the volitional imperative (Deut 9:7, 27; 32:7), imperatival infinitive absolute (Deut 24:9; 25:17), or the *weqatal* stipulating commanded future behavior (Deut 5:15; 8:2, 18; 5:15; 16:12; 24:18, 22).[25] Remembering in Ecclesiastes, however, functions mostly throughout the book in a negative sense. Here the all-too-common lack of remembrance whereby evil days are soon forgotten (Eccl 5:19; 11:8) or the memory of the deceased quickly fades (1:11; 2:16; 9:5, 15) underscores Qohelet's frustration over the brevity and enigma of human life. In one text, however, there is a closer correspondence between the books. In Eccl 12:1 Qohelet casts remembrance with a positive and imperatival focus redolent of Deuteronomy as he charges his readers to remember their Creator while they possess ample time and ability: "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, 'I find no pleasure in them'" (NIV). Although Deuteronomy never juxtaposes remembering with the idea of divine creation (rather, it almost always links it to divine redemption in the exodus), its frequent exhortations to remember carry a conceptual correspondence to this final appearance of זכר in Ecclesiastes. In both writings the command to "remember" bears significant present implications. The call to remembrance is a call to alter one's mental disposition by adjusting it to a proper view of God's continued sovereignty and goodness. To remember is to meditate upon God and his character as exemplified powerfully in the past as the antidote to one's present sinful tendencies toward pride (Deut 8:2), fear (7:18), greed (8:18), and general laxity toward obedience (5:15; 16:3, 12; 24:18). Similarly in Eccl 12:1 the imperative to remember God's powerful and personal act of creation in the past fortifies the reader in the present against the follies of youth and makes the most of the fleeting brevity of life. To remember in Deuteronomy and in Eccl 12:1 is to bear in mind definitive and decisive elements of God's character as a dynamic shaper of one's behavior and as an inducement toward godly and reverent piety.

Third, the theme of adding and subtracting may carry ties between the books. In this connection, however, the links are not as clear as in the previous motifs. The notion of adding

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[24] On eating and drinking in ancient Israel and its environs, see Oded Borowski, "Eat, Drink and Be Merry: The Mediterranean Diet," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 67 (Jun 2004): 96–107; E. W. Heaton, *Everyday Life in Old Testament Times* (New York: Scribner, 1956), 81–87; Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 64–68.

[25] Dallaire shows that when the *weqatal* is governed by an imperative expressing a command, it occurs almost exclusively in discourse situations where a person of greater rank is addressing someone of lower rank, a scenario that fits the rhetorical context of Deuteronomy (*The Syntax of Volitives in Biblical Hebrew and Amarna Canaanite Prose*, 222).

occurs in these books primarily through the verb יסף (“to increase”) and the noun יוֹתֵר (“what remains, excess, left over”), while the idea of subtracting occurs with the verb גרע (“to diminish, lessen”). The concept of adding and subtracting is significant to the programmatic framework of Ecclesiastes, as Qohelet ruminates frequently on the relative advantages and detriments of life under the sun. In most cases there is little or nothing of value that can be added to one’s life in view of human mortality (Eccl 2:15; 6:8), finitude (3:14; 7:16), and nescience (Eccl 12:12). Still, Qohelet adds key elements to his overall base of knowledge as part of his wisdom enterprise. He adds wisdom to his repository of learning in his quest for more comprehensive understanding (1:16), he adds one item to another in his pursuit of ultimate solutions (7:27), and he adds together a litany of aphorisms to form an arrangement of pleasing proverbs (12:9–10). Subtraction, on the other hand, appears only in the negative sense of what cannot be removed from God’s work (3:14). The concepts of adding and subtracting are not as prevalent in Deuteronomy and connect only to the prohibition against adding to or excising the commandments of God (Deut 4:2; 12:32). The latter text occurs in the larger context of warning against potential seduction from dangerous false prophets (Deut 12:32–13:18), a passage which we already suggested has influenced Qohelet particularly in Ecclesiastes 5. Given this ligature, there is a remote possibility that this text has colored Qohelet’s view of addition and subtraction, although it seems unclear that this potential relation bears any exegetical dividends.

Finally, the concept of divine singularity carries an intriguing possible link between books. As noted earlier, Bartholomew suggests that in formulating the “one Shepherd” in Eccl 12:11 Qohelet may be drawing from the oneness of God as expressed in the Shema of Deut 6:4: “Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!” (NASB).[26] Michael Fox addresses this interpretive question of identifying God as the one shepherd and promptly dismisses the reading.[27] His arguments are as follows: (1) God is called a shepherd in his protective capacity but this is unrelated to the context of Ecclesiastes 12. (2) God is never called a shepherd in isolation but always in tandem with his other characteristics. (3) The words of the wise and the teachings of the sages are never attributed to God. (4) What is “given” in this context is not “the words” but “the goads” that any shepherd might employ. (5) The verse, if read as “one shepherd,” would place too much emphasis on the term “one” to the exclusion of the other similes and would amount to an assertion of monotheism at odds with the context. He concludes that the term אֶחָד (“one”) conveys the sense of an indefinite article and that the one shepherd here denotes simply “a shepherd” or any shepherd, functioning as the nameless character in an analogy depicting the stinging danger of the sages’ poignant sayings: “the [words of] masters of collections are like implanted nails set by a shepherd.”[28] On reflection, Fox’s arguments appear misguided for several reasons.

First, the divine shepherd metaphor is more robust in the OT than Fox allows and is not entirely as disconnected from the milieu of biblical wisdom as he suggests. Focusing on the divine shepherd imagery of Psalm 23, Beth Tanner has argued persuasively that the term “shepherd” constitutes a frequent and pervasive royal title for God that appears throughout the OT and transcends merely the role of divine preservation (Gen 48:15; 49:24; Isa 40:11; Jer 31:10; Ezek 34:15; Ps 23:1; 28:9; 80:2): “God does provide protection and care, but as a function

[26] Bartholomew, *Ecclesiastes*, 369n45.

[27] Fox, *A Time To Tear Down*, 355–56; idem, *Qohelet and His Contradictions*, 325–26. Cf. Seow, *Ecclesiastes*, 388; Longman, *Ecclesiastes*, 279; Krüger, *Qoheleth*, 211.

[28] Ibid., 349.

of God serving as king."[29] She points to two key OT passages in which God indicts Israel's wicked leaders by using the metaphor of evil shepherds and contrasts their malevolent leadership with his own; he is the great shepherd who will restore the sheep and judge her rapacious rulers (Ezek 34:1–24; Zech 11:4–17). Tanner calls attention also to a canonical correlation within the Psalter that underscores the royal connotations of the shepherd title. Besides Ps 23, only three other psalms open with a verbless nominal clause, and in each case the opening clause identifies Yahweh as king (Pss 93, 97, 99). She suggests, based on this correlation, that attentive readers of the Psalter would connect the shepherd metaphor of Ps 23:1 to its underlying royal imagery made more explicit in these other three psalms. Moreover, the divine shepherd-as-king metaphor was common stock throughout the ANE, in writings as diverse as the Akkadian "Ritual of the *Kalū*-Priest," the Egyptian "'Sea Peoples' Record of Ramesses III," and the Akkadian Creation Epic.[30] Given that the royal court and the person of the king were the originating context and principal medium of wisdom not only in the Bible but in all of the ANE, the possible connection in Eccl 12:11 to divine shepherd imagery simply accentuates God as the ultimate king and supreme sage, the source of true wisdom (cf. Job 28:12–28).[31]

Second, the words of the wise should not be divorced from their source in divine wisdom, the same source underlying the entirety of canonical wisdom literature. The phrase "the words of the wise" (דִּבְרֵי חֲכָמִים) as found here in Eccl 12:11 occurs only four times in the OT, twice in Proverbs (Prov 1:6; 22:17 [cf. 24:23]) and twice in Ecclesiastes (Eccl 9:7; 12:11). As Gerald Wilson points out, "In all instances the reference is to a knowable body of knowledge (Prov 22:17–18), which is to be the subject of meditation (Prov 22:17; Qoh 9:17) and understanding (Prov 1:6) and which is commended to the reader for personal benefit."[32] In other words, the phrase designates a quantifiable and carefully collated corpus of sapiential sayings presumably coextensive with the canonical wisdom writings.[33] To claim, as Fox does, that the wise never trace their wisdom to God ignores the foundation of all biblical wisdom as predicated upon the fear of the Lord as to its origin and controlling principle (Prov 1:7; Eccl 12:13; Job 28:28). Indeed, the final exhortation of the "the wise" in their first compendium in Proverbs (Prov 22:17–24:22) centers around an admonition, placed last for emphasis, to fear the Lord: "Fear the LORD and the king, my son, and do not join with rebellious officials, for those two will send sudden destruction on them, and who knows what calamities they can bring?" (Prov 24:21–22, NIV). This directive provides an important link back to the preamble of Proverbs (1:7) and subtly points up a canonical correlation to the divine source and governing norm of wisdom as generated in and granted by Yahweh (cf. Prov 2:6; Eccl 2:26; Job 28:23). Moreover, "the wise"

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[29] Beth Tanner, "King Yahweh as the Good Shepherd: Taking Another Look at the Image of God in Psalm 23," in *David and Zion: Biblical Studies in Honor of J. J. M. Roberts*, ed. B. F. Batto and Kathryn L. Roberts, 267–84 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 271. Dennis Pardee concurs that the divine shepherd imagery "is only comprehensible in the context of royal ideology," ("Structure and Meaning in Hebrew Poetry: The Example of Psalm 23," *Maarav* 5–6 [Spr 1990]: 272).

[30] See *ANET*, 69, 71, 72, 337; *COS*, 4:12. Cf. also *TDOT*, s.v. "רָעָה," by G. Wallis, 13:547–49.

[31] On the royal court setting of ancient wisdom, see Christopher Ansberry, *Be Wise, My Son, and Make My Heart Glad: An Exploration of the Courtly Nature of the Book of Proverbs*, BZAW 422 (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 184–90; Bruce V. Malchow, "A Manual for Future Monarchs," *CBQ* 47 (Apr 1985): 238–45; Udo Skladny, *Die ältesten Spruchsammlungen in Israel* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), 58–62.

[32] Gerald Wilson, "'The Words of the Wise': The Intent and Significance of Qohelet 12:9–14," *JBL*103 (1984): 176.

[33] Richard L. Schultz, "Unity or Diversity in Wisdom Theology? A Canonical and Covenantal Perspective," *TynB* 48 (Nov 1997): 280.

appear elsewhere in Proverbs as a vaunted cadre of sages, most notably in the elementary aphorisms of Prov 10:1–15:33. The wise here are typically engaged in prudent speech or receptive listening, functioning as the gatekeepers and disseminators of wisdom and knowledge, the sort of companions the young person is to seek. As the intermediaries of wisdom, they store up (10:14), commend (15:2), and spread knowledge (15:7) as well as confer wisdom (13:20) and accommodate those who seek wisdom (15:12, 31). It seems unlikely, then, to detach the assembly of the wise from their important function as the mediators of divine wisdom as the canonical wisdom corpus implicitly presents them.

Third, the indefinite meaning of אֶחָד that Fox suggests is neither the best understanding of the term nor the best nuance for this context. It is unclear exactly what Fox means to say in arguing that a gloss of "one" for אֶחָד would emphatically overwhelm the other similes of the passage; the similes stand whether or not the interpreter reads אֶחָד as a numeral. An analysis of the usage of the term אֶחָד, in fact, points in the opposite direction. The term אֶחָד occurs nineteen times in Ecclesiastes, nearly always meaning "one," possibly to be glossed as "the same" a few times (e.g., Eccl 2:14; 3:19–20; 9:2–3 in the NIV and NET).[34] In the canonical wisdom corpus of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, אֶחָד occurs thirty-five times and never carries the sense of an indefinite article. When אֶחָד does represent an indefinite article in the other, predominantly narrative, portions of the OT it most often denotes, as Waltke and O'Connor suggest, a "specific indefinite."[35] Given such a connotation, the indefinite sense of אֶחָד, assuming that this were the meaning here, would convey the sense of "a *certain* (specific) shepherd" or perhaps "a *single* shepherd." Therefore, it is doubtful in either case that one should render the phrase, as Fox does, simply as "a shepherd" or "any shepherd." Rather, nouns with אֶחָד possess a higher degree of specificity. On the whole, these counter arguments suggest that the "one shepherd" of Eccl 12:11 points to what is likely more than a random, illustrative shepherd adapted for the purposes of the analogy. The shepherd terminology suggests a specific, unique shepherd. Furthermore, to identify God as the royal shepherd who disseminates wisdom is not foreign to the context of biblical wisdom or of the OT as a whole. But is the shepherd here to be identified specifically with the one God of Deut 6:4?

Jason DeRouchie suggests that this may be the case, as he offers a canonical reading of the one-shepherd allusion linking it to Messianic and divine references made elsewhere in the OT, predominantly in Ezekiel.[36] He argues that the shepherd terminology should be tied back as a thematic thread to Qohelet's earlier expressions concerning humanity's inability to control reality. In these summary statements Qohelet frequently uses the metaphor of striving after or, in DeRouchie's rendering, shepherding the wind (רְעוּת רוּחַ) (Eccl 1:14; 2:11, 17, 26; 4:4, 6; 6:9).[37]

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[34] Eccl 2:14; 3:19, 20; 4:8, 9, 10, 11, 12; 6:6; 7:27, 28; 9:2, 3, 18; 11:16; 12:11. On the meaning of "the same" for אֶחָד, see Arnold and Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 34.

[35] Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 273.

[36] Jason S. DeRouchie, "Shepherding Wind and One Wise Shepherd: Grasping for Breath in Ecclesiastes," *SBJT* 15 (Fall 2011): 4–16.

[37] Koehler and Baumgartner designate רְעוּת as an Aramaic loanword deriving from רעה under the rubric of a third homonym meaning "to desire," "strive after," in addition to the more common homonyms meaning "to shepherd" and "to associate with" (*HALOT*, 1265). Lauha follows this track and glosses the term as "intent" (Wille)

DeRouchie interprets רְעוּת and its corollary רַעְיוֹן as cognates of the first homonym of רעה, meaning "to shepherd" rather than "to strive after" and thus understands them to connote a person's futile attempts to steer, herd, or corral the wind. He suggests that a reference to divine monotheism in the one-shepherd terminology is not foreign to the context. Rather, it is in keeping with the epilogue's concluding exhortations not to exceed the established wisdom directives, to fear God and keep his commandments as the whole duty of man, and to live with a view toward God's future judgment. The final chapter has in this regard a distinctly divine orientation, where God is referenced as the creator (12:1), as the provider and sustainer of life (12:7), as the authoritative law-giver (12:13), and as the sovereign judge (12:14). The pairing of vivid images depicting God as creator and shepherd in fact forms an inclusio at the beginning and close of chapter 12. Elsewhere in the OT the concepts of God as creator and shepherd are juxtaposed as powerful metaphors depicting God's relationship to his people (Ps 95:6–7; 100:3; Jer 23:3). Moreover, the phrasing of "one shepherd" (רֹעֶה אֶחָד) occurs only two other times in the OT: Ezek 34:23 and 37:24. In both texts the one-shepherd terminology carries divine, and more precisely Messianic, overtures as describing the future king of the millennial kingdom who will reign absolutely yet graciously over God's people. Hence, to view the shepherd in 12:11 as referring ultimately to the God who supplies wisdom is not contradictory to the context. Instead, it points vividly to the source of Qohelet's wisdom and provides an oblique allusion to the divine inspiration that authenticates and animates the writer's canonical wisdom text. In conclusion, a connection here to the one God of Deut 6:4 is quite possible, although demonstrating a more concrete literary link or influence beyond simply a shared discourse concept is difficult to substantiate. Nonetheless, the divine oneness that shapes the theology of Deuteronomy shapes also the theology of Qohelet. Qohelet seeks to explore wisdom as an enterprise balancing obedience to the Torah with the realities of life in a fallen world. Deuteronomy provides key elements of Qohelet's agenda and constitutes a significant source in formulating Qohelet's theological outlook.

Conclusion. With the numerous literary connections between Deuteronomy and Ecclesiastes, it is apparent that the final book of Torah exerts a significant influence upon Qohelet. The importance of this influence may be contextualized when the interpreter recognizes that Deuteronomy, as several scholars of the book have demonstrated, carries an ultimately positive message concerning the blessings of life that God's people enjoy as the grateful and obedient recipients of divine grace.[38] This positive message shapes the theology of Ecclesiastes in fundamental ways. It suggests that Qohelet, like Moses, balances properly the tensions between divine blessing and divine curse, between salvation and judgment, so as to accentuate the positive aspects of life over its negative aspects. Although Qohelet is often viewed as a skeptic whose outlook on life is entirely bleak, the positive perspective of Deuteronomy, when

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or "decision" (Entscheid) (*Kohelet*, 46). These suggestions are not persuasive, however, as the Aramaic term they allege as borrowed connotes "good pleasure" or "desire" elsewhere in the OT (cf. Ezra 5:17; 7:18), which is difficult to align with the term's use in Ecclesiastes. This would turn the objective genitive ("striving after" or "chasing wind") into a subjective genitive ("the good pleasure" or "desire of the wind"), which makes comparatively little sense in the context of Qohelet's frustrations over *human* finitude in the face of the enigmas of life.

[38] Daniel I. Block, "The Grace of Torah: The Mosaic Prescription for Life (Deut. 4:1–8; 6:20–25)," *BSac* 162 (Jan–Mar 2005): 3–22; idem, "The Joy of Worship: The Mosaic Invitation to the Presence of God (Deut. 12:1–14)," *BSac* 162 (Apr–Jun 2005): 131–49; Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 52–56; J. Gordon McConville, *Grace in the End: A Study in Deuteronomic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 132–39; E. R. Clendenen, "Life in God's Land: An Outline of the Theology of Deuteronomy," in *The Church at the Dawn of the 21st Century: Essays in Honor of W. A. Criswell*, ed. Paige Patterson, John Pretlove, and Luis Pantoja, 159–78 (Dallas: Criswell Publications, 1989).

silhouetted with Ecclesiastes, would suggest otherwise. Moses promises future happiness in the land: "There, in the presence of the LORD your God, you and your families shall eat and shall rejoice in everything you have put your hand to, because the LORD your God has blessed you" (Deut 12:7, NIV). This envisioned happiness and blessing in the land sounds a clarion call to Qohelet. The Hebrew verb for "rejoice," שׂמח, appearing eleven times in Deuteronomy often in the context of the joyful celebration of festivals,[39] appears nine times in Ecclesiastes.[40] In Ecclesiastes, the term underscores Qohelet's frequent summons to celebratory joy as a means of appropriating God's blessing and mitigating the sorrows of the curse. The frequency with which Qohelet commends joy has been noted often (Eccl 2:24–26; 3:12–13, 22; 5:17–19; 8:15; 9:7–10; 11:7–12:1). Eunny Lee summarizes the prominence of the joy motif in Ecclesiastes: "Joy appears in virtually every literary unit of the book—with other sobering elements, to be sure, but nonetheless present everywhere. It is notable also that this repetition does not occur at random, but in strategic places in the movement of the book, often marking the climactic moment of a literary unit where Qohelet engages in explicit and sustained theological reflections."[41] These recurrent summons to joy surpass the שִׂמְחָה/שׂמח word group to include the notions of "seeing good" (2:1, 24; 3:13; 5:17), "doing good" (3:12), "satisfied by the good" (6:3), "being in (the) good" (7:14), and "seeing life" (9:9). Moreover, Qohelet's invitations to enjoyment "increase steadily in emphasis as the book proceeds" constituting a *Leitmotiv* for the book.[42] This common theme of joy underlying both books suggests that Qohelet may be relieved from the wholly negative strains in which he is so frequently cast. Instead, Qohelet is applying Deuteronomy's theology of grace in fresh, albeit realistic, ways. Joy is a mechanism for Qohelet and by extension for his readers to alleviate the pain and disappointments of fallen life by appropriating God's good gifts with a posture of gratitude and reverence. Such joyful appropriation is, for Qohelet, a vital aspect of the whole duty of man (Eccl 12:13).

[39] Deut 12:7, 12, 18; 14:26; 16:11, 14, 15; 24:5; 26:11; 27:7; 33:18.
[40] Eccl 2:10; 3:12, 22; 4:16; 5:18; 8:15; 10:19; 11:8, 9.
[41] Eunny Lee, *The Vitality of Enjoyment in Qohelet's Theological Rhetoric* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 3.
[42] R. N. Whybray, "Qoheleth, Preacher of Joy," 88.