

BUILDING WITH WISDOM: CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS FOR HOUSE BUILDING IN
PROVERBS 3

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	III
INTRODUCTION	1
CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR THEORY	3
ROYAL HOUSE BUILDING	6
DIVINE HOUSE BUILDING	10
BOTH USE WISDOM	19
HUMAN BUILDING OF SACRED SPACE.....	23
BUILDING A RIGHTEOUS LIFE BY WISDOM.....	25
CONCLUSION.....	29
APPENDIX.....	32
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	36

ABSTRACT

How does Proverbs 3:19–20 function in the context of chapter 3? To answer this question, I utilize cognitive linguistics and conceptual metaphor theory to analyze both ANE sources and the Hebrew Bible. I conclude that in Prov 3, the conceptual frame of Royal House Building is mapped onto Divine House Building, then Divine House Building becomes the source frame that is mapped back onto Righteous Living. Through the presence of wisdom, the Building of a Righteous Life is reconceptualized as building sacred space. This series of metaphoric mappings produces the metaphor that BUILDING A RIGHTEOUS LIFE IS DIVINE HOUSE BUILDING. The mapping brings with it the whole conceptual world of sacred space as the fountainhead of favor, protection, prosperity, enduring life, access to the divine, etc.

sensitivity to the conceptual world of the text may add a level of coherence and depth to the instruction that has not received adequate appreciation.

Proverbs would have us view the creation this way: just as there are kings who build great houses, so God as the chief architect established the creation as a builder building a house with great skill. The chief function of this metaphor is then to describe how Proverbs would have us view a God-fearing and wise life. The father urges his son that, just as God has established his house (his creation) with expertise,¹ so too the son must establish his life as a builder building a house with expertise. The father's instruction is the "apprenticeship." The expertise in life shared by father and mother is the means for gaining the son's own expertise in living, or, in terms of the metaphor, in building his own house.

Every goal and purpose of his life must be to seek that which is in line with God's design for a well-built house, i.e., that which is in line with wisdom. When this is done, God shows his favor in the form of fructifying waters. Here in Prov 3:19–20 they are described as the waters of creation; in the picture of kings building temples, they are described as waters granted by the god and going out in blessing; and in the individual life, they manifest themselves as the fountainhead of favor, protection, prosperity, enduring life, access to the divine, etc.

To explore these questions, this paper will begin with a discussion of conceptual metaphor theory, especially focusing on the basics of a metaphor by defining such terms as "frame," "metaphor," "source," "target," and "mapping." Then we will apply this study to Prov 3:19–20 in six steps:

1. This is the gloss for *הַמְצִיחַ* suggested by Michael V. Fox. Initially, this may strike some as odd, but it is semantically sound and continues to receive considerable support in the scholarly community. We will address this at some length later in this paper. Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 18A of *The Anchor Bible* (Doubleday, 2000), 32–3.

- 1) Source: kings build stuff.
- 2) Target: God builds the cosmos.
- 3) Both use wisdom.
- 4) So do humans when they build sacred space.
- 5) So do humans when they “build” a righteous life.
- 6) When they do this, their lives receive favor, protection, access to the divine, etc.—all

the things you get from a temple.

Finally, we will conclude that for Proverbs, the conceptual frame of the wise king who builds enduring structures with expertise is mapped onto God’s building of the cosmos, then God’s building of the cosmos becomes the source frame that is mapped back onto human moral/ethical action and reconceptualized as building sacred space. This leads ultimately to the metaphor that BUILDING A RIGHTEOUS LIFE IS DIVINE HOUSE² BUILDING. This metaphoric mapping brings with it the whole conceptual world of sacred space as the fountainhead of favor, protection, prosperity, enduring life, access to the divine, etc.

CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR THEORY

Conceptual metaphor theory is a discipline within the field of cognitive linguistics. To understand conceptual metaphor theory, it is important to understand some basic principles of cognitive linguistics. The most important of these is the cognitive linguistic proposal that all cognition is embodied cognition, i.e., it comes from our interaction with the world in our physical bodies. From our bodily interaction with the world, our brain connects pieces of

2. Understand “house” as “sacred space.”

information into conceptual networks based on the experiences that cooccur. These networks or groups of things are called domains in cognitive linguistic terms, and they comprise all the things you experience in one context. That context can be huge and can cover a broad expanse of experience, or it can be tiny and encompass a very narrow cognitive field.

A nearly synonymous term to *domain* that conceptual metaphor theory employs and which we will use throughout this paper is *frame*. Frame, like domain, refers to all the things you experience in one context. Contained within a frame can also be multiple sub-frames. For example, when I say the word *marriage*, the frame within your mind might include a husband and wife and a wedding venue and marriage certificate, etc. Within this frame there can be multiple frames: for example, within Wedding Venue there can be multiple sub-frames such as DJ, Caterer, etc. But within a different culture, one could have an entirely different conceptual network within the same frame of Marriage, and then a vastly different set of sub-frames too.

Another example, more relevant to our current study, is the frame of House Building. Our frame for house building could include items such as site preparation, digging a basement (depending on your geographic location this can be absent from the frame), pouring concrete foundations, rough timber construction, utilities (water, electricity), drywall, insulation, the employment of contractors for each portion or stage of construction, etc. As in our example of Marriage, however, it is important to remember that a biblical conceptual network for the frame of House Building will be different from ours.

Now having understood the frame, we will explore how conceptual metaphors map one frame onto another. Conceptual metaphor theory uses the term “mapping,” which indicates the mental process whereby one frame (called the source frame; e.g., Combat) is connected or overlaid onto another frame (called the target frame; e.g., Argument) with the result being called

the “mapping” (e.g., ARGUMENT IS COMBAT).³ To put it another way, metaphoric mapping is “a unidirectional mapping projecting conceptual material from one structured domain, called the source domain, to another one, called the target domain.”⁴ The fact that this is unidirectional is important. Using the metaphor ARGUMENT IS COMBAT, it makes sense to project concepts from the source frame (Combat) onto the target frame (Argument), yielding such sayings as, “I defended my argument,” or “I shot down his points.” However, this process cannot be reversed. We represent an entirely different mapping when we move from the target frame to the source frame, and in this case, an entirely unintelligible one, as this would yield metaphoric sayings such as “I spoke my bullets into him,” or “He moved his troops into a debate with the enemy.”

This discussion then sets the framework for the rest of this paper. Since cognitive linguistics holds that all cognition is embodied cognition—that it is based on human experience—we start with the human experience/event of kings building grand buildings. This source frame of Royal House Building⁵ forms the basis for the target frame that Prov 3 utilizes, namely, Divine House Building (e.g., God building the cosmos). In the instance of Proverbs, Divine House Building is mapped back onto Human House Building. The frame element common to each of these, forming a link between all three, is wisdom.

The semantic range of *wisdom* in the Hebrew Bible differs significantly from the English word, as we will see below. A better rendering, used throughout this paper, would be “expertise.” It is this element of wisdom as expertise that underlies the metaphor expressed by Proverbs and

3. Within conceptual metaphor theory and within this paper, we will follow the conventions of reflecting mappings (TARGET IS SOURCE) in all capital letters, and capitalizing names of frames (e.g., Combat, Argument).

4. Barbara Dancygier and Eve Sweetster, *Figurative Language*, Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2014), 14.

5. In Israelite and ANE texts this includes both the palace and the temple, i.e., the house of the king and the house of the god.

which yields the ultimate message: that just as kings build royal structures, just as God builds the cosmos, and just as humans in turn build houses, so a man builds a righteous life for himself with wisdom, and with that he reaps the blessings inherent to all of these. We will now explore and support each of these steps in turn.

ROYAL HOUSE BUILDING

The frame of Royal House Building is supported both by internal biblical evidence and ANE texts. First, let us view this frame from the broader ANE. The manifestation of wisdom in buildings and abundance is embodied in the person of the king. Hammurabi, Esarhaddon, Tiglath-Pileser I, Solomon, Ashurbanipal, and Ashurnasirpal II are prime examples of wisdom demonstrated by monumental buildings and superabundance that testify to the persistence of the schema.⁶ Van Leeuwen says,

This ancient pattern of wise building and filling first appears in Mesopotamian royal inscriptions, which, in spite of generic differences, exhibit a great deal of continuity from their Sumerian beginnings to their later Babylonian and Assyrian manifestations and, however indirectly, their biblical adaptations. One of the earliest hymnic exemplars of the pattern, Gudea's famous cylinders, is also one of the most elaborate and rich. Much later, Neo-Assyrian royalty contemporary with the biblical monarchy could distill the complex process of building into lapidary, proverb like terms that embodied the twofold *process* outlined above. Such summary statements occur in the context of larger *res gestae* inscriptions. One such statement from Esarhaddon's mother Naqî'a-Zakûtu declares simply, "That house *I built*, I completed. With splendor *I filled it*." Another text gives a variant summary statement, accompanied by a basic declaration of the purpose of temple building. After recounting the rich building materials used, Esarhaddon boasts, "I built and completed it a temple in Assur. For life (lt. my life), for length of days, for the stability of my reign, for the welfare of my posterity, for the safety of my priestly throne,

6. Cf. Raymond C Van Leeuwen, "Cosmos, Temple, House: Building and Wisdom in Mesopotamia and Israel," in *From the Foundations to the Crenellations: Essays on Temple Building in the Ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible*, ed. Mark J. Boda and Jamie Novotny, *Alter Orient Und Altes Testament* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2010), 405–7.

for the overthrow of my enemies, for the success of the harvests of Assyria, for the welfare of Assyria, I built it.⁷

The Royal House Building frame in the ANE is a shorthand way of evoking the larger conceptual network of where the nation fits in the larger narrative of history. For example, a nation that experiences prosperity and prominence would attribute that very prosperity to the fact that their king must be chosen by the gods, that what he puts his hand to is blessed and blesses them because of his service to the god. At times in their history when this nation is poor and oppressed, then this is evidence of a king who has not received the god's favor because he has not properly built the god's house; therefore, his own "house" is not firmly established.

Because this conceptual world in the ANE remained largely consistent, so too the frame of Royal House Building remained largely consistent. In Mesopotamia, the frame of Royal House Building is at least as old as the nineteenth century BCE. The father of Rim-Sin king of Larsa says that he searched out and chose a location and built a baked-brick temple with the understanding given to him by the god.⁸ Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 BCE) rebuilt a temple of Ishtar with the clever mind decreed for him by Ea. Tiglath Pileser III (744–727 BCE) says, "with the clever wisdom and wide understanding which the wisest of the gods, the noble Nudimud, has given me, I built a palace of cedar wood in Calah."⁹

Other Mesopotamian kings including Sargon II (721–705 BCE), Merodach-baladan II (721–710, 703 BCE), Sennacherib (704–681 BCE), Esarhaddon (680–669 BCE), Ashurbanipal

7. Van Leeuwen, "Cosmos, Temple, House," 402–3.

8. Sweet, "The Sage in Akkadian Literature," 51. There are several other examples listed by Sweet that bridge the vast gap of time between the nineteenth and tenth centuries but they are in the broader frame of Royal Building, so I have omitted them. Included in these instances of Royal building are cities, military constructions, and images of deity. From the variety of instances of Royal Building it is also clear that wisdom and piety were closely related in the ANE mind.

9. Sweet, "The Sage in Akkadian Literature," 52.

(668–627 BCE), Nabopolassar (625–605 BCE), Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562 BCE), and Nabonidus (555–539 BCE) all undertake building projects as part of their divinely appointed kingly activities. See the section of this paper below entitled “Both Use Wisdom” for more on this.

Next, for the biblical evidence of Royal House Building. The primary example of this is found in the Solomonic narratives. This begins with the backdrop to these narratives from 2 Sam 7, where David is the king and wants to build a house for God.¹⁰ The Solomonic narratives after this then are prototypical instances of Royal House Building, especially those involving the queen of Sheba who declares the wisdom of Solomon when she sees his great building and other accomplishments:

When the queen of Sheba saw all the *wisdom of Solomon and the palace he had built, the food on his table, the seating of his officials, the attending servants in their robes, his cupbearers, and the burnt offerings he made at the temple of the Lord, she was overwhelmed*. She said to the king, “The report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom is true. But I did not believe these things until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half was told me; in wisdom and wealth you have far exceeded the report I heard. How happy your people must be! How happy your officials, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom!”¹¹

Auxiliary evidence of this can be found in the closing notices of kings throughout the books of Kings and Chronicles which recount the building they did during their reigns. One

10. This is evidence of the notion of theomachy in the biblical text, e.g., why David doesn’t get to build the temple and Solomon does, etc. Even in this narrative, God flips the narrative by saying to David, in effect, “I’m going to build a house for you.” The desire to build a house for God does find fulfillment in David’s son Solomon. Challenges pertaining to the biblical evidence in these instances include the fact that, in the case of David’s potential building in 2 Sam 7, not once is a royal term used, but only generic and often lower hierarchical terms for governance. The data seems to support maintaining God in the highest position. In the case of Solomon’s building, not once does the text directly claim him to be building with wisdom. Instead, attribution of wisdom only comes in one instance from the Queen of Sheba’s mouth and in other instances are applied not to Solomon but to Hiram of Tyre.

11. 1 Kgs 10:4–8 NIV. Similar are Eccl 2:4, “I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards.” And Job 3:14–15, “...with kings and rulers of the earth, who built for themselves places now lying in ruins, with princes who had gold, who filled their houses with silver.”

example of this is 1 Kgs 22:39: “As for the other events of Ahab’s reign, including all he did, the palace he built and adorned with ivory, and the cities he fortified, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel?” One caveat is that these passages are not always strong support for biblical Royal *House* Building, as the building projects do not necessarily include houses. But they do support the larger conceptual frame of Royal Building (of which Royal House Building is a subset) and that, within this frame, the kings themselves are conceptualized as the builders.

The final piece of biblical evidence of the Royal House Building frame comes from Solomon’s speech at the dedication of the temple (1 Kings 8–9). This is perhaps the strongest and most direct connection between the Bible and ANE evidence for this frame. It consists of Solomon (the king and the builder) and the house he has built (the temple for God). Throughout 1 Kings 5–9, an incredible amount of space is devoted to Solomon’s building of the temple and palace, which explicitly connects the king with his house-building projects. Now repeatedly throughout his speech in chapters 8–9, Solomon reiterates how it is he who has built this temple in the name of the Lord. When the Lord responds, too, even he acclaims Solomon for building this house in his holy name. Again, though, the one caveat which separates the biblical model of Royal House Building from that of the ANE, in general, is this not being unequivocally a model of Solomon’s greatness. He praises the Lord saying, “The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!” (1 Kgs 8:27).

In terms of the biblical evidence for Royal House Building, the divine is always in focus. The divine instructs and informs this metaphor, and it is the divine which receives the highest acclamation and honor, not the king or any other human. This brings us now to a study of the

Divine House Building frame in the light of the scholarly review of the house-building metaphor, as well as how it relates to the rest of the conceptual framework under discussion in Prov 3.

DIVINE HOUSE BUILDING

In Prov 3:19–20, Royal House Building is mapped onto Divine House Building. Royal House Building served as the source frame for this metaphor. Now Divine House Building, as the target frame of the metaphor DIVINE HOUSE BUILDING IS ROYAL HOUSE BUILDING, finds explicit mention as the conceptual framework in which Prov 3:19–20 is situated. Thus, we now take time to explore this frame in light of what other authors have to say on the matter.

Little time is required to realize the challenge of expounding Prov 3:19–20. There is a consensus that the inclusion of these verses serves to highlight wisdom’s grandeur thereby making her even more attractive. Those who leave the specifics of the figurative language unaddressed tend to wonder why a creation text occupies the center of chapter 3 and gloss over these verses in deference to the fuller Wisdom-creation reference in chapter 8.

Fox posits a shift in the discourse in verse 19 and summarizes the passage’s significance thus: “The crowning proof of wisdom’s glory is that God himself uses it.”¹² He acknowledges that the presentation of creation in verse 19 conceptualizes the physical world as a building. He also notes that verse 20 details the provisioning of the created world/house. But he does not pair both verses in a unified conception of house building that includes provisioning, nor does he find an essential connection with the immediate or wider context.

Murphy senses a stronger dissonance:

12. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 159.

The appearance of a cosmological role for Wisdom is sudden. She is now associated with the creative acts of the Lord, who imitates human building...[verse 20] picks up the theme of water, above and below, but goes no further with it or any other aspect of creation; it has the appearance of a misplaced verse from a creation poem. Vv. 19–20 are unexpected here and give the appearance of an addition.¹³

Longman agrees that the transition to creation is abrupt but not that it is misplaced. He perceives wisdom's role in creation as a "profound theme of the book."¹⁴ He does note the possibility of viewing the cosmos as a house but he does not address the metaphor directly. For Longman, the order of creation is what makes meaningful experience possible and the acquisition of wisdom desirable. He understands the motive for creation's inclusion in Proverbs to be predominantly epistemological, that is, the fact that creation has a divinely created, inherent order allows man to reason and make sense of his experience. Because of the created order, man can deduce from past outcomes what is likely to happen in the future and even, from this, deduce what is ethical by those outcomes, i.e., natural law.

Waltke's treatment is more extensive; he expounds the text rhetorically, structurally, thematically, contextually, and theologically. But what is of greatest import for the current study finds succinct expression in his closing sentence: "God's implied building of the tripartite components of the world's earth, heavens, and seas as a house with a firm foundation through 'wisdom, understanding, and knowledge' models the disciple's building his house through the same virtues."¹⁵ Waltke allows the unique presentation of creation in these verses to interact with the context in a way that fosters an interpretation reflecting the depth and color of the couplet.

13. Roland E. Murphy, *Proverbs*, vol. 22 of *Word Biblical Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 22–23.

14. Tremper Longman III, *Proverbs*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 138.

15. Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1–15*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 263.

Steinmann also supports interpreting Prov 3:19–20 as a metaphor for the building and provisioning of a house, but his preoccupation with Wisdom as hypostasis prohibits him from exploring the figurative language and ultimately deprives his hypostasis of potential complexity. He says, “Wisdom is valuable because Wisdom is God, who offers his gracious blessings to the son listening to the father’s word.”¹⁶ Essentially, Steinmann voices the consensus view that the presence of creation and wisdom in chapter 3 is a means of expressing the supreme value of wisdom.

Longman, Steinmann, and Waltke each base a portion of their discussions on a work entitled “Cosmos, Temple, House: Building and Wisdom in Ancient Mesopotamia and Israel”¹⁷ by Raymond C. Van Leeuwen. This is one illustration of the influence Van Leeuwen’s article has exerted on the interpretation of Prov 3:19–20.¹⁸ “Cosmos, Temple, House” is particularly relevant for this thesis on account of its influence and because Van Leeuwen’s article operates within a cognitive linguistic framework that is sensitive to metaphor and the cognitive environment that texts embody.

The title of the work is aptly chosen. One of Van Leeuwen’s fundamental premises states that for both Ancient Mesopotamia and Israel, house building was a fundamental domain for expressing their belief that the human exercise of wisdom was patterned on the wisdom employed to construct the cosmos. The wise building of the cosmos is not merely a conceptual extension of human building but rather the cosmic house served as a pattern for all human enterprise; human wisdom is a form of *imitatio dei*. Van Leeuwen says,

16. Andrew E. Steinmann, *Proverbs*, Concordia Commentary (Saint Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2009), 119–20.

17. Van Leeuwen, “Cosmos, Temple, House,” 399.

18. Fox and Murphy wrote prior to the publishing of “Cosmos, Temple, House”.

Both societies portrayed the world as a macrocosmic “house”—with its fields, waters, and variegated activities—to which temples and ordinary houses with their lands corresponded as microcosms: “At home the more important gods were simply manorial lords administering their great temple estates, seeing to it that plowing, sowing, and reaping were done at the right times, and keeping order in the towns and villages that belonged to the manor.”¹⁹

Later in his study, he utilizes the Russian babushka doll to illustrate the concept. The metaphoric domain of house building gives expression to a world that is conceptualized as a series of larger and larger houses, wider and wider concentric dwelling places, from the individual dwelling of the body to the home, to the house of the father, to the temple, to the city, to the nation, to the kingdom, and to the cosmos. Each one of these realms is a “house” so the same metaphoric language can be utilized to describe its creation, endurance, and abundance.

Within this broad cosmo-social order, Van Leeuwen focuses particularly on what he calls the “widespread pattern of ‘house building’ and ‘house filling,’ or provision, as it combines with the topos of the builder’s wisdom.”²⁰ He describes the topos of wise building as a process encompassing both the building and the filling which results in a well-established and abundant ecosystem. This is important groundwork for interpreting the metaphors of house building because just as a window or door requires and activates the concept of a house, so also a house presupposes and triggers an entire conceptual world. Correct interpretation demands specific contextualization. This understanding commends the use of ANE texts and artifacts to populate the conceptual world within which the Hebrew Scriptures are situated.

Van Leeuwen cites lines 88–99 of the late third-millennium Sumerian text, “Enki and the World Order,” as evidence of the building-filling schema:

19. Van Leeuwen, “Cosmos, Temple, House,” 399.

20. Van Leeuwen, “Cosmos, Temple, House,” 399.

At my command, sheepfolds have been built, cow-pens have been fenced off. When I approach heaven, a rain of abundance rains from heaven. When I approach earth, there is a high carp-flood. When I approach the green meadows, at my word stockpiles and stacks are accumulated. I have built my house, a shrine, in a pure place, and named it with a good name. I have built my Abzu, a shrine, in, and decreed a good fate for it. The shade of my house extends over the pool. By my house the suhur carp dart among the honey plants, and the ectub carp wave their tails among the small gizi reeds. The small birds chirp in their nests.²¹

This portion of the text does contain themes of wisdom, house building, and abundance in proximity, but Van Leeuwen could be more explicit. In the broader setting, Enlil gives the arts and crafts—as tools for building and organizing a successful society—to Enki the god of wisdom. He takes them to the place where his house is to be built and at his command sheepfolds and cow pens are constructed. Then the text shifts its focus to his life-giving presence. When he approaches heaven rain falls. When he approaches earth water swells up. When he approaches the fields the harvests abound. Then comes the notice that Enki has built his house and guaranteed its good fortune. Van Leeuwen draws attention to the overt similarities of house building, wisdom, and waters above and below, the combination of which results in life and prosperity. To understand the significance of these observations Van Leeuwen provides the necessary context from the Sumerian tradition:

Most locally, the “house” is Enki’s literal temple in Eridu, which he “builds” with the agency of human workers. Next in scope, the “house” is the chthonic sweet waters, or Abzu, the source of all wisdom, the cosmic domain of Enki, whose waters fructify the earth. Finally, Enki’s “house” is the entire cosmos, which is made prosperous from out of the local temple/Abzu with its gifts of life-giving waters. Enki/Ea is generally identified in the ancient Near Eastern iconography by the waters flowing from his shoulders or about his temple.²²

21. J. A. Black, G. Cunningham, E. Fluckiger-Hawker, E. Robson, and G. Zólyomi, *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1998–2023): <http://www-etcsl.orient.ox.ac.uk/>.

22. Van Leeuwen, “Cosmos, Temple, House,” 401–2.

This summary reinforces the microcosm-macrocosm conception of the world which at each scale places wisdom—in this case Enki, the lord of wisdom—at the heart of house building and life-giving waters. The presence of the same wisdom that built the house calls forth waters from the earth and heavens, ensuring prosperity and filling the “house.”

Closely related is the Genesis 1 creation account that implies the cosmos is God’s house, detailing the building on days 1–3 and the filling on days 4–6.²³ The most common language employed to communicate cosmic creation—throughout Israel’s history—employs the metaphoric domain of architecture or building. Van Leeuwen does not offer an in-depth analysis of any instances of the composite topos, but his treatment of the subject begins to elucidate one aspect of the connection between wisdom and creation, i.e., wisdom builds and fills, and creation is a house firmly built and well-provisioned.

A vital piece in the frame of Divine House Building in the Hebrew Scriptures is the presence of **בָּנָה**. Verb usage plays a key role in signaling the frame of House Building in general—divine, royal, or human. In Prov 3:19–20, **בָּנָה** is the trigger that engages the frame of Divine House Building. The metaphoric uses of **בָּנָה**—all of which refer to God’s building activities—outnumber those referring to human building projects. In fourteen instances God is the agent. Twelve of these instances are building texts with the earth as the patient.²⁴ There are

23. Genesis 1 is not devoid of the royal connotations associated with building and filling on a monumental scale. Interestingly, Brent Strawn has suggested wisdom may not be totally absent either: “...the vocalization of the very first word of Gen 1:1 in the Masoretic Text, **בְּרֵאשִׁית**, which is often thought to be an error in some way, may instead be the result of exegetical activity. Specifically, in light of the well-attested tradition that links wisdom with creation both within the Bible and without, it is possible that **בְּרֵאשִׁית** in MT Gen 1:1 participates in the line of interpretation that ciphers wisdom as ‘beginning’ in light of proverbs 8:22. If so, the MT of Gen 1:1 is not a grammatical error to be corrected, but an exegetical cross-reference referring readers to Wisdom’s role in creation as known, inter alia, in **proverbs 8**.” Brent A. Strawn. “*bē-rē’sīt*, With ‘Wisdom,’ in Genesis 1.1 (MT),” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 46 (2022): 358–387.

24. The two remaining instances have the city Zion as the patient; Isa 14:32, Isa 54:11.

twelve instances of human building projects that employ **בָּנָה**. Ten of them are the Israelite Temple and the remaining two occurrences are the nation/kingdom of Egypt and the city of Jericho. This may suggest that the prototypical frame for **בָּנָה** is House Building.²⁵ The evidence and the presentation of Van Leeuwen are consistent with this logic.

What follows is a selection of biblical instances of **בָּנָה** in Divine House Building. The first instance we will look at is Amos 9:6, a bicolon that details the act of building followed by the waters of the sea:

He builds his lofty palace in the heavens and *sets its foundation* [בָּנָה] on the earth; he calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out over the face of the land—the LORD is his name. (Amos 9:6; emphasis mine)

Here **בָּנָה** engages the Divine House Building frame. Most often, the divine building is the cosmos itself, but this example also shows that Divine House Building is not restricted to the cosmos. Divine House Building can be concerned with the cosmos as a whole, with a portion of the cosmos, or with even the smallest details within the cosmos. God, the builder of all things, is concerned with the macrocosm as well as the smallest microcosm. For example, Psalm 127 says: “Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain” (Ps 127:1).

Job 38:4–11 confirms that **בָּנָה** evokes the Divine House Building frame and is one of those rare instances in Scripture which fills in more of the slots of what is connoted in a biblical frame for House Building. The particular elements of House Building this passage mentions

25. When deity—conceptualized as a king—builds his house it is both palace and temple, and since it is the dwelling place of deity, it is sacred.

include the footings or bases and a cornerstone, stretching out the measuring line, and marking out dimensions:

“Where were you *when I laid the earth’s foundation* [בִּיסְדֵי־אָרֶץ]?
Tell me, if you understand.
Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know!
Who stretched a measuring line across it?
On what were its footings set,
or who laid its cornerstone—
while the morning stars sang together
and all the angels shouted for joy?
Who shut up the sea behind doors
when it burst forth from the womb,
when I made the clouds its garment
and wrapped it in thick darkness,
when I fixed limits for it
and set its doors and bars in place,
when I said, ‘This far you may come and no farther;
here is where your proud waves halt?’” (Job 38:4–11; emphasis mine)

Ps 24 places the building of the cosmos into the wider metaphoric domain of Kingship.²⁶

The psalm may give evidence that Israel shared the “babushka doll” conception of the cosmos.

Speaking generally, the text moves from the cosmos to Zion, to the temple. Then the call for the

שְׁעָרִים to “lift their heads” and the פִּתְחֵי עוֹלָם “to be lifted up” leaves the theophany to

presumably occur in all of them; the earth is לִיהוָה and Zion is הֵר יְהוָה on which stands קִדְשׁוֹ;

when he comes to one, he effectively comes to all. Also, each of them (the earth, Zion, and the

temple), in at least one instance in the Hebrew Bible, is connected with יָסַד where God is the

agent and they are the patient.²⁷ Evidence of the earth as the patient of יָסַד is found in Ps 24:2:

26. Van Leeuwen might suggest, based on the ANE, that the hierarchy of metaphor is rather GOD IS KING→KING IS WISE→KING IS BUILDER. However, based on a survey of creation texts outside the scope of this paper, wisdom lexemes do not frequently cooccur with creation. And while an auxiliary concern of this study is determining wisdom’s place in creation across the spectrum, another dedicated study would be required to ascertain whether wisdom is a part of the frame *required* to understand the metaphor KING IS BUILDER.

27. Cf. Ps 24:1–2 (the earth); 78:69 (the temple); Isa 14:32 (Zion).

The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he *founded it* [יָסַדָּהָר] on the seas and established it on the waters.²⁸ (Ps 24:1–2; emphasis mine)

Finally, Ps 102 and Ps 104 both contain uses of יָסַד that evoke the Divine House Building frame. In both cases, יָסַד connotes something as being firmly fixed, enduring, and long-lasting. Ps 102:25 evokes this enduring quality of things that have been firmly founded in the past. The psalmist notes the age of the earth, implying that the fact that it still stands shows how firmly God has fixed it. On the other hand, Ps 104:5 projects into the future, proclaiming that because the LORD is the one who established the earth on its foundations, it will stand forever. This quality is characteristic of “houses” built by the divine Builder; what God builds will necessarily endure.

In the beginning, *you laid the foundations of the earth* [הָאָרֶץ יִסְדַּת],
and the heavens are the work of your hands. (Ps 102:25; emphasis mine)

He set the earth on its foundations [יָסַד אֶרֶץ];
it can never be moved. (Ps 104:5; emphasis mine)

The reference in Ps 102 to the work of the Lord's hands is interesting. None of the other above examples include a means or instrument which have any part in the process of building; the Lord alone builds. Only in Ps 102 are his “hands” mentioned as the means for founding the earth, while at the same time his “hands” are an essential part of who he is. In much the same way, two identical passages from Jeremiah (10:12; 51:15) introduce another means by which God builds, a means which is essential to him and essential to the frames of both Royal and

28. Ps 89:26 is strikingly similar and occurs also in the context of the royal Davidic lineage. Ps 24:2 and 89:26 may relate to the mytho-poetic theomachy conception of creation as I suggest in the treatment of Ps 89 in the Appendix.

Divine House Building: “[God] founded the world by his wisdom.” We now turn to the presence of wisdom in both Royal and Divine House Building.

BOTH USE WISDOM

Wisdom underlies both the king building a house to God and God creating the cosmos. We will often use the word *expertise* as a sharper translation than the oft-used *wisdom* for the Hebrew חכמה. When first confronted with the word *wisdom* in House Building contexts, the English reader is often confused or misses out on the nuance of the Hebrew חכמה. Simply put, *wisdom* and חכמה are not near semantic equivalents. Fox says:

Hokmah is essentially a high degree of knowledge and skill in any domain. It combines a broad faculty (including the powers of reason, discernment, cleverness) and knowledge (communicable information, that which is known and can be learned). Both facets are always implied by the word *hokmah*; one cannot have *hokmah* purely as a potential or as mere inert information. This duality makes it difficult to find a single English gloss for *hokmah* because English as well as a set of modern assumptions about the nature of intelligence tends to distinguish, perhaps too sharply, between knowledge and intelligence. In the Bible, there is an assumption that gaining the former enhances the latter. The nearest English equivalent that encompasses its semantic range is “expertise”. *Hakam* is the possessor of *hokmah*, an expert. “Expertise” has different connotations from *hokmah* insofar as the former tends to be confined to a narrow range of functions, whereas *hokmah* can extend to knowledge in a broad domain. However, with the proviso that one may be an “expert” in right living and good character, the two terms are comparable.²⁹

This accords well with the presence of wisdom in both Royal and Divine House Building. In Mesopotamia, the wise man *par excellence* was the king. Mesopotamian kings frequently and passionately declare their wisdom, and yet, in two thousand years of history, only three even

29. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 32–3.

claim to have been literate.³⁰ This further supports Fox and illustrates that—in both Israel and Mesopotamia—wisdom was conceptualized quite differently from our English *wisdom*. Wisdom was eminently practical, a skill that successfully employed special know-how and that revealed itself through outcomes that could be perceived by all.

Ronald Sweet in *The Sage in Akkadian Literature* has an entire section on the king as a wise man in which building figures prominently.³¹ The explicit connection of wisdom with Royal House Building has accompanied the frame since its literary inception—as mentioned above, dating back to at least the nineteenth century BCE.³² The father of Rim-Sin king of Larsa says that he *skillfully* searched out and chose a location and built a baked-brick temple with the *wise understanding* given to him by the god.³³ Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 BCE) emphasizes the *clever mind* with which he rebuilt the temple of Ishtar. Tiglath Pileser III (744–727 BCE) says, “with the *clever wisdom* and *wide understanding* which the wisest of the gods, the noble Nudimud, has given me, I built a palace of cedar wood in Calah.”³⁴

With the wisdom and breadth of understanding granted him by Ea, Sargon II (721–705 BCE) undertakes his building projects, and Merodach-baladan II (721–710, 703 BCE), Sennacherib (704–681 BCE), Esarhaddon (680–669 BCE), Ashurbanipal (668–627 BCE),

30. Ronald F. G. Sweet, “The Sage in Akkadian Literature: A Philological Study,” in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, ed. John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 65.

31. Interesting to note also, is the fact that among the limited classes of commoners labeled “wise” are craftsmen, architects and builders. Others in Akkadian literature deemed wise are soldiers, cult officials, diviners, scribes, counselors, and teachers. The *royal wisdom* seems to encompass all the other classes of wisdom. The wisdom they possess is *singular* but its breadth extends through all these areas of expertise.

32. The connection with Divine House Building, as we will see below, is even older.

33. Sweet, “The Sage in Akkadian Literature,” 51.

34. Sweet, “The Sage in Akkadian Literature,” 52.

Nabopolassar (625–605 BCE), Nebuchadrezzar II (604–562 BCE), and Nabonidus (555–539 BCE) all assert the same divine skill as the means for their kingly activities and the seal of their right as rulers. Sweet concludes, “In Mesopotamian society, the king was regarded as possessing an unusually large measure of god-given wisdom and was thought to manifest that wisdom by performing deeds pleasing to the gods, in particular the building of temples....[The wisdom of kings] was largely a matter of recognizing the supremacy of the gods and performing deeds pleasing to them. Reverence for the gods was the beginning of wisdom.”³⁵

Just as expertise is inherent to a House Building frame in the greater ANE, so too the Hebrew Bible conceptualizes all House Building, both royal and divine, as containing expertise as an intrinsic element. First, let us take Solomon again as a prime example of wisdom and expertise in building. The best example of the place of expertise in Royal House Building is contained in 1 Kings 10. We noted this briefly above, and we return to it here to note the details more pertinent to wisdom/expertise.

The queen of Sheba was no stranger to lavish displays and breathtaking riches. As a respected queen she came to other kingdoms to view the best their society had to offer, and she brought many lavish gifts in tow herself. Though she certainly would have been no stranger to this, something about her visit to the kingdom of Israel affected her deeply. “When the queen of Sheba saw *all the wisdom of Solomon* and the palace he had built, the food on his table, the seating of his officials, the attending servants in their robes, his cupbearers, and the burnt offerings he made at the temple of the LORD, she was overwhelmed” (1 Kgs 10:4–5).

35. Sweet, “The Sage in Akkadian Literature,” 57.

Most closely connected with the displays of wisdom the queen of Sheba could see was, literally, a *house* (הבית אשר בנה). It was an instance of Royal House Building. The queen could not see Solomon's wisdom, but she could see the evidence of his expertise in the house(s) he had built and in their fullness. An interpretive choice must be made as to which *house* the queen is viewing. Certain elements of this house seem to indicate the palace, including the servants, etc. However, the last item, namely the burnt offerings, seems to indicate the temple, especially as it names the house more explicitly here as the "house of the Lord" (בית יהוה). The text may leave some ambiguity here: the *house* which Solomon has built could legitimately refer to both his palace and the temple of the Lord.

This reflects on the entire Solomonic narrative from the first ten chapters of 1 Kings. Solomon builds everything in his kingdom with the wisdom/expertise God has granted him. Everything becomes an expression of Solomon's wisdom, with his building projects featuring prominently as one of those.

While God granted Solomon the expertise by which he carried out his building projects, at the same time it is surprising to note that there are very few instances in the Hebrew Bible where God himself is said to build with wisdom. The only clear examples are in two identical verses from Jeremiah, noted at the end of the previous section, and of course in Prov 3:19–20, the main passage under consideration in this paper. Rather than undermining the legitimacy of wisdom within the frame of Divine House Building, however, these few instances verify it and spotlight the significance of wisdom in the contexts where they find mention.

By *wisdom* the LORD laid the earth's foundations,
by *understanding* he set the heavens in place;
by his *knowledge* the watery depths were divided,
and the clouds let drop the dew. (Prov 3:19–20)

This trio of wisdom words, italicized above, not only underscores the role of expertise in Divine House Building but also provides an interpretive key that begins a metaphoric movement back from Divine House Building to Human Building of Sacred Space.

HUMAN BUILDING OF SACRED SPACE³⁶

After God defeated his enemies at the Red Sea and brought his people out of the land of slavery, then God commanded Moses to build him a house and gave his own Spirit to those builders who would build his dwelling place. This all fits within the frame Human Building of Sacred Space.

As it so happens, moreover, a connection between this frame and the other House Building frames is plainly evident and is beyond coincidence. The three wisdom words *wisdom*, *understanding*, and *knowledge* (חכמה, תבונה, דעת), which occurred in Prov 3, also all occur in the account of the building of the tabernacle. These are all given by God to the builders to undertake the building of the tabernacle. It is the same wisdom as in Prov 3: the wisdom with which God built the cosmos is the wisdom with which he endows people to build sacred space.

This endowment of wisdom for the building of the tabernacle occurs in two separate contexts which are parallel. The reason that there are two separate instances is that the episode of the Golden Calf intervenes. In chapter 32, the building of the Golden Calf ceases, and God once

³⁶ It would be more consistent and proper to call this Human House Building, but for the sake of clarity I have chosen to use the designation Human Building of Sacred Space. Note that this should not be conceived of as a frame other than Human House Building.

again restarts the process of the building of the tabernacle, and the notice of his gracious endowment to the builders is emphasized a second time.

The trio of wisdom words occurs both before and following the Golden Calf incident. Before the Golden Calf, God says “and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with *wisdom*, with *understanding*, with *knowledge*, and with all kinds of skills” (Exod 31:3). Afterward, Moses now says “and he [God] has filled him with the Spirit of God, with *wisdom*, with *understanding*, with *knowledge*, and with all kinds of skills” (Exod 35:31).

The source of this wisdom hits upon another important point. Even though Royal House Building provides the base frame for Divine House Building, Divine House Building itself provides the base frame for Human Building of Sacred Space, this being evident most clearly in the macrocosmic imagery present in the microcosm of the tabernacle. In further support of this is that it is the Spirit of God (רוח אלהים, Exod 31:3) which is the very Spirit of wisdom (רוח חכמה, Exod 28:3) and imparts wisdom to his appointed builders, indicating that the conceptual material of this metaphor flows in a direction from the divine to the human. All of this conceptual material is evoked once more in shorthand in the Solomonic narrative.

Through the invocation of the same three wisdom words as already established by the tabernacle building context, this pattern is once more intentionally joined to the frame of Human Building of Sacred Space in the Solomonic narrative. The intended relationship between the building of the tabernacle and the building of the temple is immediately obvious. “Hiram was filled with *wisdom*, with *understanding*, and with *knowledge* to do all kinds of bronze work. He came to King Solomon and did all the work assigned to him” (1 Kgs 7:14b). The passages in Proverbs and these narratives of humans building sacred space are the only times in the whole of

the Hebrew Bible that these three wisdom words occur together, and always in identical order. The inclusion of wisdom in these instances of building is made possible by the fact that wisdom is an element in the frame of House Building.

Like in the frame of Divine House Building, the occurrence of words for wisdom/experience within the frame of Human Building of Sacred Space is considerably sparse. Rather than diminishing the impact, however, it marks these instances of House Building through the explicit focus on wisdom's role in house building. The sacred overtones of the trio of wisdom words carry over from their initial narrative context into Proverbs by Proverbs's inclusion of wisdom in the frame of House Building and through its explicit repetition of the trio in identical order.

BUILDING A RIGHTEOUS LIFE THROUGH WISDOM

Expertise underlies the king building a house to God, it underlies God creating the cosmos, and it underlies how a man is to build sacred space. This conceptual framework now leads us to the intended message of Prov 3: a righteous life is one built by wisdom. This yields blessings from God, much in the same way the ANE mind conceives of blessings received from carrying out divinely appointed building projects with skill. It is wisdom that yields these benefits.

Proverbs 3:19–20 is Van Leeuwen's primary interest, and he also acknowledges this mapping of Divine House Building onto Human Building of Sacred Space. He devotes the entire first half of his stimulating article to laying the foundation for Prov 3:19–20 and he spends the latter half building upon it. He starts by noting that the connection of Prov 3:19–20 to House Building remains curiously unexplored. As I mentioned above, those commentators who

acknowledge the connection have only Van Leeuwen to cite. So, while his study clears a lot of ground, there is a great deal of work remaining.

The crux of Van Leeuwen's proposal is the meeting point of wisdom and building internally in Proverbs and externally in the tabernacle and temple building projects. Internally, the most compelling evidence for reading Prov 3:19–20 as an instance of the ANE composite topos of wisdom-building-filling is its parallel with Prov 24:3–4.

By wisdom the Lord laid the earth's foundations,
by understanding he set the heavens in place;
by his knowledge the watery depths were divided,
and the clouds let drop the dew. (Prov 3:19–20)

By wisdom a house is built,
and through understanding it is established;
through knowledge its rooms are filled
with rare and beautiful treasures. (Prov 24:3–4)

The correlation between these passages is persuasive. What links the passages is the repetition of wisdom (בְּחִכְמָה), understanding (בְּתִבּוּנָה), knowledge (בְּדַעַת), and the use of set in place/established (כִּוֵּן). The lexical correspondence is noteworthy and Van Leeuwen provides a wealth of further internal support for the parallels between Prov 3:19–20 and 24:3–4. He is sensitive to the distance between these sections and the tension created by the structural divide between Proverbs 1–9 and 10–29. So, lest the vast amount of intervening material encourage the skeptic, he provides a host of other instances that develop the motif of house building by wisdom:

Wisdom has built her house;
she has set up its seven pillars. (Prov 9:1)

The wise woman builds her house,
but with her own hands
the foolish one tears hers down (Prov 14:1).

The wicked are overthrown and are no more,

but the house of the righteous stands firm (Prov 12:7).

The house of the wicked will be destroyed,
but the tent of the upright will flourish (Prov 14:11).

The Lord tears down the house of the proud,
but he sets the widow's boundary stones in place (Prov 15:25).

Put your outdoor work in order and get your fields ready;
after that, build your house (Prov 24:27).

...hyraxes are creatures of little power,
yet they make their home in the crags (Prov 30:26).

He then offers another list in support of house filling by wisdom:

She [Wisdom] has prepared her meat and mixed her wine;
she has also set her table.
She has sent out her servants, and she calls
from the highest point of the city,
“Let all who are simple come to my house!”
To those who have no sense she says,
“Come, eat my food
and drink the wine I have mixed.
Leave your simple ways and you will live;
walk in the way of insight” (Prov 9:2–6).

The Lord's curse is on the house of the wicked,
but he blesses the home of the righteous (Prov 3:33).

Yet if he is caught, he must pay sevenfold,
though it costs him all the wealth of his house (Prov 6:31).

Whoever brings ruin on their family will inherit only wind,
and the fool will be servant to the wise (Prov 11:29).

The house of the righteous contains great treasure,
but the income of the wicked brings ruin (Prov 15:6).

The greedy bring ruin to their households,
but the one who hates bribes will live (Prov 15:27).

Better a dry crust with peace and quiet
than a house full of feasting, with strife (Prov 17:1).

Evil will never leave the house
of one who pays back evil for good (Prov 17:13).

Houses and wealth are inherited from parents,
but a prudent wife is from the Lord (Prov 19:14).

Four things on earth are small,
yet they are extremely wise:
Ants are creatures of little strength,
yet they store up their food in the summer... (Prov 30:24–25).

And finally, the אִשֶׁת חַיִּל (Prov 31:10–31) is the embodiment of Lady Wisdom within one's own house. She too is busy “building” and “filling” the house with her expansive expertise.

This wealth of internal evidence provides additional support for the metaphor BUILDING A RIGHTEOUS LIFE IS DIVINE HOUSE BUILDING. So, returning once more to Prov 3, the blessings of Building a Righteous Life can be seen to include favor, protection, prosperity, enduring life, access to the divine, etc. These blessings stem from the metaphoric mappings previously established. The mapping from the source of Royal House Building to Divine House Building includes an extension that serves as the basis for the benefits of wisdom. When wisdom is attributed to God in his building and provisioning of the cosmos, divine outcomes can then, reasonably, be predicated on wisdom. For the building is divine building, and the wisdom is divine wisdom. As Divine House Building is then mapped back onto the righteous life, the very wisdom that God employed in his work is the same that the father and mother of Proverbs utilize as they teach their son.³⁷ For this reason, they can make claims for the benefits of their instruction that exceed the bounds of mere human instruction.

37. The mapping of Divine House Building onto Royal House Building or mere Human House Building may already be suggested in Genesis. Genesis conceptualizes man as the vice regent of God who represents him and cooperates in the creation. Every man and woman is royalty created and appointed by God. This truth facilitates the metaphoric mapping from Divine Kingship to Human Kingship that underlies the mappings extant in the ANE data and the Hebrew Bible. This perhaps intersects with the ambiguity of Proverbs where a royal father and mother instruct their son but the discourse is by no means restricted to royalty. In effect, the royal family is a microcosm of humanity and the families that populate the earth. The wisdom that fears the Lord and turns from evil is that which the father and mother in Eden rejected and that which undergirds Proverbs.

CONCLUSION

At last, we have concluded that for Proverbs, the conceptual frame of Royal House Building is mapped onto Divine House Building, then Divine House Building serves as the source frame that is mapped back onto Human Building of Sacred Space and Building a Righteous Life. This leads ultimately to the metaphor that BUILDING A RIGHTEOUS LIFE IS DIVINE HOUSE BUILDING. This metaphoric mapping serves as the basis for all of the blessings promised to the one who possesses wisdom and embraces her in all he does.

The first step in this metaphoric progression begins at Royal House Building. Evidence for Royal House Building as a frame can be found throughout the ANE over a broad expanse of time. The examples within the Hebrew Bible are concentrated primarily within the Solomonic narratives. These instances of Royal House Building include palaces but primarily focus on kings building temples, the houses of the god. This frame of Royal House Building is ubiquitous at least in Mesopotamia, but it finds only limited expression in the Hebrew Scriptures. This scarcity then opens the door for heightened significance in those instances where it occurs. In the Hebrew Bible, this is limited solely to Solomonic contexts, including Proverbs.

Proverbs 3:19–20 also provides the primary exemplar for Divine House Building. Nevertheless, Divine House Building finds rich and varied expression throughout the Hebrew Bible. This next step in our metaphoric progression yields the mapping DIVINE HOUSE BUILDING IS ROYAL HOUSE BUILDING. That is to say, the language employed for Divine House Building comes from the frame of Royal House Building. Even though figurative language has been developed from the human realm to describe the divine realm, conceptually the content flows in

the other direction—from the divine to the human. This is evidenced by the fact of the various macrocosmic/microcosmic metaphoric movements. For example, the king only rules in the stead of the true King. The house which the king builds is only a miniature house or pattern based on the macrocosmic reality.

In the same way that the microcosmic house can only exist on the basis of the macrocosmic reality, so also the wisdom which kings employ in the building of their house(s) is made possible only by the divine wisdom which first built the macrocosmic house and is now granted to them for the purpose of their building. Both use the same wisdom. While wisdom is present in more than just sacred building contexts, it always carries with it divine overtones when it enters the frame, both in the ANE and especially within the Hebrew Bible.

These theological overtones already present within Royal and Divine House Building continue to be evident as Divine House Building is mapped back onto the Human Building of Sacred Space. Once again wisdom comes to the fore, and once again in the Exodus accounts of the tabernacle building the divine nature of the wisdom necessary for the building of sacred space is stated explicitly. God himself grants his own Spirit, the Spirit of wisdom, to fill the builders with the expertise necessary to construct a worthy dwelling for him. This conceptual world is called forth also in the building of Solomon's temple through the trio of wisdom words: *wisdom, understanding, and knowledge*.

Through Prov 3's application of this same trio of wisdom words in the frame of Divine House Building, Solomon signals to the son and the reader that there should be a mapping of Divine House Building to the Building of a Righteous Life, for which the father and mother advocate. The mapping of Divine House Building to the Human Building of Sacred Space in the narrative accounts finds in Proverbs an equally sacred parallel. When Divine House Building is

mapped back onto human activity, whether Building of Sacred Space or Building a Righteous Life, it carries with it its entire conceptual world.

So then, when the frame of Divine House Building is engaged in Proverbs (including as it is mapped back onto Building a Righteous Life), wisdom will always produce a sturdy sanctuary that provides refuge, foster enduring life, and fill that sanctuary with everything necessary for the preservation and promotion of abundant life. If she did not the very cosmos would have to fall apart. For she guarantees and upholds them both. As long as the heavens and earth endure, so long as the deep wells up and the clouds drop dew, wisdom will found and establish her house for man and fill it with life. This life-filled house is then truly a creation of God and not man (just as the cosmos). The house that wisdom builds is a place God himself is pleased to dwell and his presence brings every blessing.

APPENDIX

An example of the two-stage mapping that I propose for Prov 3:19–20 can be found in Ps 89. Ps 89 is especially useful because it also intersects with the frames of Divine and Royal building through the broader domain of Kingship. For these reasons, Ps 89 is one composition that proves especially illuminating for various topics relating to this thesis.³⁸

The cooccurrence of בנה and כון throughout the psalm reveals a series of rich associations that may illustrate several metaphorical mappings of the Israelite conception of macrocosm-microcosm: house of the cosmos, house of David. Within the same metaphoric domain, this mapping is utilized to proclaim that the one who built the ancient cosmos has built the house of David to endure forever; that the king of the universe has chosen a king to sit on his throne for all generations; that as the angels in heaven rejoice at the building of God’s cosmic house, so his people on earth rejoice at the building of the house of David; that just as God dominated the raging sea, crushed Rahab and scattered his enemies, so God will do to the enemies of his servant David and will give him control of the sea and the rivers.

This multi-faceted metaphoric mapping³⁹ from the domain of Kingship—perhaps encapsulated in 2 Sam 7—likely suggests the dwelling/presence of God is in the house of David.

38. Van Leeuwen does not address Ps 89 in his article. Nevertheless, he deserves credit for developing key insights that open the door to the riches of such a text.

39. The pattern of representing metaphor, TARGET IS SOURCE, here is extended one step further: TARGET IS SOURCE IS TARGET. The human domain of King along with the whole conceptual world of war, wisdom, law/governance, power, building, abundance, wealth, progeny is mapped onto the domain of INVISIBLE GOD. The mapping produces conceptual extensions from the human domain, such as earthly kings are mortal, their reign is temporal, but God is immortal, his reign is eternal. This metaphoric extension is then mapped back onto the original

Therefore, Ethan strings together the elaborate conceptual web as a form of supplication; the house of David is in ruins, so how then can the cosmos still stand? How can the enemies of David prevail while the sun and moon are shining, and the seas remain locked up? Verses 2–5 (MT) initiate or establish the pattern and are themselves a sort of microcosm of the whole psalm:

Ps 89:2–5	<p>חסדי יהוה <u>עולם</u> אשירה לדר ודר אודיע אמונתך בפי כי־אמרתי עולם חסד יבנה שמים תכן אמונתך בהם כרתי ברית לבחירי נשבעתי לדוד עבדי עד־עולם אכין זרעך ובניתי לדר־ודור כסאך סלה</p>	<p>I will sing of the Lord’s great love <u>forever</u>; with my mouth I will make <u>your faithfulness</u> known <u>through all generations</u>. I will declare that your love <u>stands firm</u> forever, that <u>you</u> <u>have established your faithfulness</u> in heaven itself. You said, “I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, ‘<u>I will establish your line</u> <u>forever and make your throne firm through</u> <u>all generations.</u>’”</p>
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That which exists as a bare frame⁴⁰ in verses 2–5 serves as the blueprint for constructing the rest of the psalm. God built and fixed firm the heavens as an enduring monument to his faithful love. Through his covenant with David God joined the heavens and the earth so that the house of David is now a conceptual parallel. Because of this union between heaven and earth, Ethan declares that his individual praise will embody the unity and mimic the characteristics of the divine house mediated through the creation of the Davidic house; he will sing of the Lord’s great love forever and make known God’s faithfulness through all generations. The psalm begins and

source. This is one way of attempting to unpack the cognitive process observed in the data. However, some of this may be an instance where mental spaces and blending theory are a better tool.

40. An interesting side note, we may think of the architectural and biological domains as worlds that never meet in English as they do in Hebrew, but I could alter the conceptual frame of *frame* in either direction. *Frame* can operate in its native domain of Building or metaphorically for the skeletal structure, *structure* itself betraying the metaphor. So I could say, “That which exists as a bare frame is fleshed out...” or I could say “That which exists as bare frame is built up...”

ends with the TARGET remapped through the primary TARGET and SOURCE. This movement becomes clear in the main body of the psalm and solidified in the closing address.

As verse 6 opens with a note of praise paralleling verse 2, the target is primed by the source; the שמים and the קדושים are conceptualized as the subjects of the Divine King who, like the psalmist, praise the King. Verses 7–9 sustain the metaphor; none of his subjects, not one from his council or his armies, can compare with the Mighty One whose surroundings witness to his faithfulness. Verses 10–14 are the annals of his deeds and contain the material most germane to the current study.

Ps 89:10–14	<p>אתה מושל בגאות הים בשוא גליו אתה תשבחם אתה דכאת כחלל רהב בזרוע עזך פזרת אויביך לך שמים אף-לך ארץ תבל ומלאה אתה יסדתם צפון וימין אתה בראתם תבור וחרמון בשמך ירננו לך זרוע עם-גבורה תעז ידך תרום ימינך</p>	<p>You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them. You crushed Rahab like one of the slain; with your strong arm you scattered your enemies. The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth; you founded the world and all that is in it. You created the north and the south; Tabor and Hermon sing for joy at your name. Your arm is endowed with power; your hand is strong, your right hand exalted.</p>
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The macarism that intervenes takes up the praise of verses 2 and 6 and once more blends heaven and earth, anchoring the conceptual overlay of divine kingship upon the terrestrial king. The potential consequence of this analysis of Ps 89 is that the interaction of Prov 3:19–20 with its context may function similarly but in a highly compressed environment. The introduction of a conceptual frame that is itself a blend of source and target—primed by preceding context—can initiate a reconceptualization of both the preceding and subsequent content. The result is an

emergent concept that can serve as the basis for further metaphoric extensions. The emergent element may be novel, but it is built upon the pre-existent conceptual framework in the mind.⁴¹

41. Exodus 15 provides an exemplar that illustrates the salience of this conceptual domain for communicating massive historical and theological truths: the activity of gods on earth and their interrelations with gods and men. Van Leeuwen notes, “In terms of macrogenre, the final form of Exodus is akin to many accounts of the new king who vanquishes his enemies, creates or recreates the world (splitting of the Reed Sea), is pronounced king (15:18), institutes law and a new social order (Exodus 19–24), and then proceeds to have his own house built (Exodus 25–40), an act that proclaims his kingship. We see this mythic pattern most famously on the divine level in the *Enûma elis*, which celebrates Marduk’s victory over *Tiâmat* and her henchmen, his creation of the world, his acclamation as divine king, his decreeing law, and finally the building of his microcosmic house in Babylon. Crucial here is that the cosmic creation is mirrored in the artificial cosmic mountain, or *ziqqurrat*, which is Marduk’s house in Babylon. Not without reason is Marduk the son of Enki/Ea, the god of wisdom, and not without reason is he called the *apkal ilî*, the ‘primal sage of the gods’” (“Cosmos, Temple, House”, 421).

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