

Genesis, Deuteronomy, and the Hope of an Eschatological Mediator

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Abstract: This study examines the implications of the eschatological nature of Genesis upon the three mediatory roles described in Deuteronomy 17:14–18:22. It is demonstrated that, beginning in Genesis 3:15, there is an expectation that a future individual will come and succeed in the areas where Adam failed. In view of this hope, an anticipatory expectation emerges in Deuteronomy in relation to the offices of king (17:14–20), priest (18:1–8), and prophet (18:9–22). As such, it appears that these three mediatory roles are best viewed as provisional, pointing to the eventual coming of the eschatological Mediator—the Second Adam—first promised in Genesis.

Key Words: Genesis, Deuteronomy, Adam, mediator, prophet, priest, king

As one of the most cited books in both the Old Testament as well as the New Testament, the book of Deuteronomy is frequently examined for its influence upon subsequent Scripture.² Yet although the citations and allusions to Deuteronomy by later biblical authors are often discussed, little has been written regarding the use of antecedent revelation in

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² According to T. Desmond Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), the NT quotes Deuteronomy “some eighty–three times” (295). Alexander notes this that is “hardly surprising” because it sets out the “essential requirements for a harmonious relationship with God” perhaps more clearly than any other OT book (295).

Deuteronomy.³ That is, despite Deuteronomy's frequent allusions to the promises of Genesis given "to our fathers," there has been little consideration of the implications of Genesis upon the interpretation of Deuteronomy.⁴ Central to the relationship between these two books is the connection between the eschatological expectation of Genesis 1–3 and the three mediatory roles of Deuteronomy 17:14–18:22 (king, priest, and prophet).⁵ In light of this expectation, the mediatory roles of king, priest, and prophet in Deuteronomy are best viewed as

³ For this study, the final form and unified composition of Genesis and Deuteronomy is assumed as the basis for discussion. There has been much debate about this topic, a summary of which can be found in almost every commentary on Deuteronomy. Perhaps the primary reason for adopting the unified view relates to the Near Eastern vassal treaty background. See, among numerous resources, Dennis J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in the Form of the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament* (Rome: Biblical Institute P, 1978). McCarthy surveys the various ancient treaties (27–153) and develops the implications for the treaties of the OT, including Deuteronomy (157–87; 188–205). See also Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 88–93.

⁴ This is especially evident in comparison with the numerous publications pertaining to the use of Deuteronomy in other biblical books such as Jeremiah. For example, see George Ricker Berry, "The Code Found in the Temple," *JBL* 39 (1920): 44–51; Henri Cazelles, "Jeremiah and Deuteronomy," trans. G. Perdue, in *A Prophet to the Nations: Essays in Jeremiah Studies*. Leo G. Perdue and Brian W. Kovacs, eds. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1984), 89–111; R. Davidson, "Orthodoxy and the Prophetic Word," *VT* 14 (1964): 407–16; J. Philip Hyatt, "Jeremiah and Deuteronomy," in *A Prophet to the Nations: Essays in Jeremiah Studies*, ed. Leo G. Perdue and Brian W. Kovacs (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1984), 113–27; Jack R. Lundbom, "The Lawbook of the Josianic Reform," *CBQ* 38 (1976): 293–302.

⁵ Various scholars and commentators mention this anticipatory expectation. For example, Bruce K. Waltke and Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), state, "The book of Genesis is in want of a proper ending" (62). Additionally, K. A. Matthews, "Genesis," in T. Desmond Alexander, Brian S. Rosner, et al, *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology: Exploring the Unity & Diversity of Scripture* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2000) states, "Genesis is oriented toward the future" (141).

provisional, pointing to the eventual coming of the promised eschatological Mediator.

I. Allusions to Promises of Genesis in Deuteronomy

It is evident in the numerous allusions to the promises of Genesis in Deuteronomy that Genesis stands as the basis for the hope of Deuteronomy. In Deuteronomy 1:8, Moses commands the Israelites to enter the land promised to their fathers: “the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.” Furthermore, the threefold mention of “Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” found in this passage occurs six other times in Deuteronomy (1:8; 6:10; 9:5, 27; 29:13; 30:20; 34:4). In all but one (9:27) of these instances, the text states that God had “sworn” (שָׁבַע) a promise to the patriarchs. In 1:8, 6:10, 9:5, 30:20, and 34:4, the Lord “swore” the land. And in 29:13, the Lord “swore” a special relationship with his people. The term “to swear” (שָׁבַע) denotes a solemn and irrevocable promise to undertake or do something.⁶ In each of these cases, the text refers to antecedent revelation (Genesis) to confirm that the Lord had indeed remained steadfastly faithful and loyal to his people. By referencing prior revelation, Deuteronomy demonstrates that the Israelites’ history up to the entrance to the promised land fulfills much of what was promised in Genesis.

In addition to the allusions to the patriarchs by name, reference to the Israelites’ “fathers” (אָבֹת)—as in ancestor or forefather—occurs 49 times.⁷ Each of these instances alludes to the reality that the Lord is the God of Israel’s ancestors. In context, this term appears to be an abbreviated reference to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.⁸ This term occurs in a variety of

⁶ L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, eds., *HALOT* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), electronic ed. 1397.

⁷ There are 71 uses of אָבֹת in Deuteronomy, of which 48 refer to “ancestor,” 21 refer to “father,” and 1 refers to “forefather” and 1 refers to God as “Father.”

⁸ There certainly is some ambiguity here, and this term may also allude to the twelve brothers of whom the twelve tribes trace their ancestry (as in 10:22). However, the similarity in construction and use between references to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob do not seem to be accidental.

sentence constructions, including “the Lord, the God of your *fathers*” (1:11, 21; 4:1; 26:7), in reference to the land which was given “to your *fathers*” (1:35; 6:23; 26:15), and in reference to the “covenant/word which the Lord swore to your *fathers*” (8:18; 9:5). Through these references to the patriarchs, the events of Deuteronomy are linked with the promises originally given in the book of Genesis.

Perhaps one of the clearest examples is 26:5, in which Deuteronomy recounts the past actions of the Lord’s leading. In this passage, the text states, “A wandering Aramean was my *father*. And he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in number, and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous” (26:5b).⁹ Although there is uncertainty as to whether the individual described is Abraham (Gen 12:10–20), Israel/Jacob (Gen 47:1–12), or the collective nation Israel (as in Deut 10:22), this is a clear allusion to the Lord’s leading the nation in Genesis.¹⁰ As such, this event is recounted to draw the Israelites’ attention to the Lord’s past faithfulness concerning the promises made to the patriarchs. As this passage continues, it expands to include all Israel (“... the Egyptians treated *us* harshly and humiliated *us* ...” 26:6). As a result of Egypt’s harsh slavery (26:6), the Israelites cried to the Lord (26:7) and the Lord delivered them (26:8) and brought them to the promised land (26:9). Again, the expectation of Genesis appears to stand as the basis for the events recorded in Deuteronomy.

Overall, the Pentateuch is unified in both plot and theme.¹¹ That is, a single plot unifies the Pentateuch, with Genesis as the

⁹ Unless otherwise noted, Scripture references are taken from the *English Standard Version*.

¹⁰ See the discussion in Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, The JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2003), 240.

¹¹ Alexander states, “The Pentateuch consists of five books that have been composed in the light of one another to form a single unit” (*From Paradise*, 113). He continues, “Primary among these is the plot, which begins in Genesis and flows logically through to the end of Deuteronomy” (113). Elsewhere, Alexander, “Genesis to Kings,” in T. Desmond Alexander, Brian S. Rosner, et al., *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology: Exploring the Unity & Diversity of Scripture* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2000), asserts that the narrative from Genesis to Kings “is bound together

beginning and Deuteronomy as the conclusion. In light of the numerous connections made in Deuteronomy to the promises and expectation of Genesis, it is necessary to interpret the message of the latter book in view of the former. That is, to fully appreciate Deuteronomy, the overarching expectation of Genesis must first be considered.

II. Summary of King, Priest, and Prophet in Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy 17:14–18:22 presents three distinct, yet noticeably similar, roles: king (17:14–20), priest (18:1–8), and prophet (18:9–22).¹² Each of these three passages describes different divinely ordained positions for the nation Israel with implications for social, political, religious, and spiritual life.

The office of *king* relates to those who governed the nation on behalf of the Lord (17:14–20).¹³ The king was to be an individual chosen by the Lord (17:15), committed to trusting the

by two interrelated plots which centre around the divine promises of nationhood and a royal deliverer” (119).

¹² The role of “judges and officers” (16:18) is also developed in 16:18–20 (cf. 17:8–13). However, contextually, it appears that the judges served a more localized role in individual towns (16:18), and even then, they worked under the supervision of the Levitical priests (17:8–9).

¹³ The office of king is permissively regulated; or as Craigie states, “It takes the form of permissive legislation” (*Deuteronomy*, 2nd ed., NICOT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976], 253). Since the nation could survive without a king, Christopher Wright states, “Kingship in Israel is immediately set in an ambivalent light” (*Deuteronomy*, NIBCOT [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson], 208). This assessment stands in contrast to the statement by Daniel Block: “The emphatic opening clause of verse 15 reflects Moses’s fundamentally positive disposition toward the monarchical system in principle” (*Deuteronomy*, NIV Application Commentary [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2012], 417). Block’s conclusion is best, given the construction **תָּשִׂיָם שָׂרָם** (“setting you may set” or “you may surely set”), which consists of an infinitive absolute and an imperfect verb. This intensification of the verb “to set” (**שָׂרָם**) seems to indicate affirmation or certainty. See Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), §35.3.1. Waltke and O’Connor state, “Affirmation is the most straightforward role for an infinitive absolute” (585).

Lord in battle (17:16), devoted to putting the Lord's will above his own (17:17), and dedicated to humbly recognizing his dependence upon the Lord's word (17:18–20). The king was to be a model Israelite, on behalf of the Israelites.¹⁴ As king, he was to lead the nation (17:15), yet since the Lord reigned as King over all (33:5), the Israelite office of king was to be a mediator between God and man.

The office of *priest* relates to those who offered sacrifices on behalf of the nation for the Lord (18:1–8).¹⁵ This passage regulates the provisions and treatment of the Levitical priests by the other tribes of Israel. The priestly office and the Levites were mentioned previously in Deuteronomy 10:8–9, and this role is significantly discussed throughout Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. The Levites served as priestly mediators between God and man. Through their service to the sacrificial system, the rest of the Israelites were able to maintain a relationship with the Lord. The Levites were given no territorial allotment as the other tribes were subsequent to the conquest (18:1a). Rather, the Lord was to be their inheritance (18:2) as they served him faithfully.

¹⁴ Patrick D. Miller, *Deuteronomy*, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville: John Knox, 1990), articulates this aptly when he writes, “The fundamental task of the leader of the people, therefore, is to exemplify and demonstrate true obedience to the Lord for the sake of the well-being of both dynasty and the kingdom” (149).

¹⁵ In relation to the role and distinctions between the priests and Levites, there are numerous views. For an excellent summary of the views, see D. A. Hubbard, “Priests and Levites,” in *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed., ed. I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, et al., (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1996), 956–62. Hubbard provides an overview of the standard critical views advocated by Julius Wellhausen, and then offers a more conservative approach. Perhaps the view adopted by Craigie offers the most promise: “vv. 1–2 will be interpreted as referring to *all* Levites, vv. 3–5 as referring to Levitical priests, and vv. 6–8 as referring to Levites who would not normally function as priests” (*Deuteronomy*, 258). For similar views, see also Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 213–16; Woods, *Deuteronomy*, 220–22; for the standard critical view, see Von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, OTL [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966] 122. Ultimately, it seems that only some Levites were actively serving as priests or assisting in relation to the sacrificial system.

The office of *prophet* relates to those who spoke to the nation on behalf of the Lord (18:9–22).¹⁶ There is debate as to whether Deuteronomy 18:15 and 18:18 anticipate a single individual eschatological prophet, or whether they anticipate the general prophetic office. It is clear that by the time of Jesus, these verses were taken as anticipating an eschatological prophet (John 1:21; 6:14; 7:40; Acts 3:22–26). For the purpose of this study, it is sufficient to note that this description appears immediately subsequent to the previous two mediatory offices of king (17:14–20) and priest (18:1–8).¹⁷ Given this context, it seems that this passage as a whole (18:9–22) describes the general prophetic

¹⁶ Some commentators separate 18:9–14 from 18:15–22. For example, Craigie divides 18:9–14 under the heading “Prohibition of Foreign Religious Practices,” (*Deuteronomy*, 259–61), and 18:15–22 under the heading “The Prophet” (261–64). Edward J. Woods breaks them under the headings “Detestable practices” (*Deuteronomy*, TOTC 5 [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011], 222–23) and “The Prophet” (223–24), respectively. However, this division seems artificial. Commentators who group these passages together include Miller who places 18:9–22 under the heading “The True Prophet” (*Deuteronomy*, 151); Von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, likewise groups them together, as does Wright, *Deuteronomy*, and Block, *Deuteronomy*. Given the content of these two passages and their juxtaposition, it is best to view them as one unit, with 18:9–14 as the antithesis to the divinely appointed prophetic office of 18:15–22. In his chapter on 18:9–22, Block aptly entitles the section in his commentary on 18:9–14, “The Foil for the Promise of a Prophet Like Moses” (*Deuteronomy*, 434). The stark contrast between the abominable practices of 18:9–14 and the righteous “prophet like Moses” promised in 18:15–22 could not be more emphatic.

¹⁷ This being recognized, one must not quickly discount the proposal of Miller, *Deuteronomy*, in which he contrasts the proclamation of 18:15 (“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me”) with the statement of 34:10 (“There has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses”). He summarizes his view, “The only way to resolve the tension between chapters 18 and 34 is to project *into the future* the announcement that God will raise up a prophet, which is what eventually happened in Judaism and Christianity (John 1:21, 25; 6:14; 7:40)” (155–56). Robin Gallaher Branch (“The Messianic Dimensions of Kingship in Deuteronomy 17:14–20 as fulfilled by Jesus in Matthew,” *Verbum et Ecclesia* 25, no. 2 [2004]) closely follows the argumentation of Miller.

office: the office in which individuals such as Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel eventually served.¹⁸

In each case, the individuals holding these three offices were to serve as mediators between God and man. They were each appointed by the Lord: the Lord would *choose* (בָּחַר) the future king (17:15), the Lord had *chosen* (בָּחַר) the tribe of Levi to minister in his name (18:5), and the Lord promised to *raise up* (יָקִים) a prophet like Moses to speak on his behalf (18:15). In each of these three cases, the Lord divinely appointed and ordained those whom he desired.¹⁹ Furthermore, in each case, the Lord was the one who enabled the individual to minister to the people on his behalf.

Prior to considering the eschatological expectation of Genesis, it is evident that in Deuteronomy, Moses prescribed these three mediatory offices to govern and serve the nation of Israel on the Lord's behalf. As such, the offices of king, priest, and prophet appear to have been designed to point the people to the Lord and cause them to recognize his sufficiency. However, once the eschatological background of Genesis is considered, it

¹⁸ As is demonstrated below, this does not preclude the possibility that Deuteronomy 18:9–22 serves as a provisional passage, pointing to the eventual eschatological Prophet. However, it is best to view the passage as immediately relevant to the Israelites current situation and eventually eschatological in its prediction. This view is similar to Cairns who proposes that it immediately refers to the prophets of Israel, yet “also points beyond its eighth–seventh century fulfillment toward the eschaton.” *Word and Presence: A Commentary of the Book of Deuteronomy*, ITC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 173. Also see Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 263.

¹⁹ Undoubtedly, this statement would have caused the Israelites to recall how the Lord God had *chosen* (בָּחַר) Israel as his people (4:37; 7:6, 7; 10:15; 14:2). Just as the Lord had divinely appointed Israel as a people for his own possession (7:6, 7), in due time, the Lord was expected to similarly appoint mediatory leaders over his people. This concept of God's “choosing” is woven through the book of Deuteronomy. The word “to choose” (בָּחַר) is used 31 times, and in 29 of these uses, God is the one who has chosen/will choose. It often occurs in reference to the “place that the Lord your God will choose” (12:5, 11, 14; 14:23; 31:11) for his dwelling place. It is clear that the Lord's choice of king would not be arbitrary.

becomes evident that these mediatory descriptions in Deuteronomy served dual roles. On the one hand, they regulated the leadership of the nation, yet on the other hand, they reminded the Israelites of the eventual coming of the final Mediator: the true King, Priest, and Prophet.

III. The Eschatological Mediator of Genesis

The book of Genesis describes the creation of the world and the fall of Adam and Eve. Into the seemingly hopeless situation of Genesis 3, a promise of hope and restoration is given, in which the Lord declares to the serpent in the presence of Adam and Eve, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel” (3:15). This verse anticipates the victory of God’s promised Restorer over his enemies, and therefore is rightly referred to as the *protoevangelium*.²⁰ Given the larger context of Genesis, the promise of 3:15 articulates a time in the future when God would: (1) *Destroy evil* (defeat the serpent, its offspring, and thereby destroy the influence of evil); (2) *Restore creation* (to the state it was previously, void of all evil, i.e., the Genesis 1–2 state—cf. 1:31); and (3) *Allow God to dwell with his people* (just as he previously dwelt with Adam and Eve in Eden—cf. 3:8).²¹ These three themes are developed both in the book of Genesis, as well as throughout the rest of Scripture.²²

²⁰ Jared M. August, “The Messianic Hope of Genesis: The *Protoevangelium* and Patriarchal Promises” *Themelios* 42, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 46–62. The singular pronoun/pronominal suffix is used in reference to עֲרִיב (“offspring”) in 3:15, 21:13, 22:17b, and 24:60. The plural pronoun/pronominal suffix is also used in reference to עַרְבִים in 15:13, 17:7, and 17:8. This distinction allows the reader to determine when the author of Genesis referred to a singular individual and when he referred to a corporate group of individuals (53–56). The LXX reflects this usage in the Greek. See R. A. Martin, “The Earliest Messianic Interpretation of Genesis 3:15,” *JBL* 84 (1965): 425.

²¹ This is threefold hope developed further in August, “Messianic Hope,” 56.

²² For example, Abraham is promised that one of his descendants will: (1) *Destroy evil* (be victorious over his enemies—22:17b), (2) *Restore*

This threefold hope is intrinsically woven into the *toledot* structure of the book of Genesis.²³ It has been demonstrated that each *toledot* fulfills the central promise(s) made in the prior *toledot*.²⁴ Therefore, the *toledot* structure provides an identifiable framework that is intrinsically anticipatory in nature.²⁵ As such, the entire book of Genesis is eschatologically focused on God's future restoration. The first promise, Genesis 3:15, serves as the prophetic fountainhead from which the rest of this eschatological expectation emerges. This expectation that God would eventually restore the world to the intended Genesis 1–2 "very good" state stands as the basis for the Pentateuch, and in relation to this study, for Deuteronomy.²⁶

creation (bring blessing to all nations—12:3; 22:18), and (3) *Allow God to dwell with his people* (dwelling with them forever—17:8).

²³ Matthew A. Thomas, *These Are the Generations: Identity, Covenant, and the toledot Formula in LHBS* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2011); and Jason S. Derouchie, "The Blessing—Commission, the Promised Offspring, and the *Toledot* structure of Genesis," *JETS* 56, no. 2 (2013): 219–47, have advanced the thesis that the ten *toledot* headings (Gen 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1[9]; 37:2) can be divided into two groups of five primary and five secondary headings. According to this thesis, the main headings are grammatically unconnected to the preceding material and the secondary headings are each connected with *waw*. The main headings are Genesis 2:4 (Heaven and Earth); 5:1 (Adam); 6:9 (Noah); 11:10 (Shem); and 37:2 (Jacob), and the subheadings are 10:1 (Shem, Ham, and Japheth); 11:27 (Terah); 25:12 (Ishmael), 19 (Isaac); and 36:1(9) (Esau).

²⁴ Jared M. August, "The *Toledot* Structure of Genesis: Hope of Promise," *BibSac* 174, no. 695 (July–September 2017): 267–82. In the primary *toledot*, a promise is always given concerning a specific individual(s), and the promise given in the previous *toledot* is realized. The secondary *toledot* develop the realization of a promise given, but do not offer an additional promise. This further emphasizes the focus that the five primary *toledot* headings provide the "backbone" for the structure of Genesis.

²⁵ August, *ibid.*, 281.

²⁶ Matthews states, "As part of the Pentateuch, the theology of Genesis must be understood in the context of the theology of the five books. . . . Genesis functions as the introduction to the Sinai revelation by recounting how the ancestors of Israel received the promises of God intended also for their descendants" ("Genesis," 141). Additionally, Matthews states, "The

1. Adam as Mediator King, Priest, and Prophet

Related to the eschatological hope of Genesis, the mediatory roles of king, priest, and prophet are presented as the means by which this hope would be realized. Perhaps the most important individual to consider is the first man, Adam. Much has been written in recent years pertaining to the concept of the garden of Eden as God's temple.²⁷ That is, the garden served as the first temple wherein God and man dwelt together (cf. 3:8–9).²⁸ Beale summarizes the key reasons for this view:

Israel's temple was the place where the priest experienced God's unique presence, and Eden was the place where Adam walked and talked with God. The same Hebrew verbal form (stem) *mithallēk* (hithpael) used for God's 'walking back and forth' in the Garden (Gen. 3:8), also describes God's presence in the tabernacle (Lev 26:12; Deut 23:14 [15]; 2 Sam 7:6–7).²⁹

Beale's point is that the biblical authors viewed the garden as the first temple, and that all subsequent locations (tabernacle,

theology of Genesis is the prelude to God's election of Israel and her monarchy, whose purpose was to channel the divine blessing for all nations" (Ibid., 146).

²⁷ Of particular interest, see G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2004); G. K. Beale, "Eden, the Temple, and the Church's Mission in the New Creation" *JETS* 48, no. 1 (March 2005): 5–31; Walton, *Genesis*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2001), 167–68; Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 85–87, 101.

²⁸ T. Desmond Alexander, *The City of God and the Goal of Creation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), makes the distinction (contra Beale) that Eden is not necessarily a "protosanctuary," but rather, that each later sanctuary is "a restored garden of Eden" (19). Alexander's point is that later sanctuaries "replicate something of this experience as people come to the place where God dwells on earth" and that "the sanctuary enables God to live in close proximity to his people" (19).

²⁹ Beale, *Temple and Church*, 66.

temple, etc.) were reminiscent of this first dwelling place.³⁰ He concludes, “Eden was the archetypal temple, upon which all of Israel’s temples were based.”³¹ Furthermore, Beale argues that not only did the garden serve as the first temple, but that Adam served as the first mediator; he served as priest–king over the newly created world.

At creation, Adam was commissioned by the Lord to serve as mediator between God and man. In Genesis 1:28–29, Adam and Eve were given a five–part commission: “[1] And God blessed them. And God said to them, [2] Be fruitful and multiply and [3] fill the earth and [4] subdue it and [5] have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (1:28). In context, the text records that Adam and Eve had been created in the image of God to rule over the created earth on behalf of their Creator (1:26, 27). Beale asserts that this call for rulership demonstrates Adam’s kingship and was likely a part of the functional image of God in which Adam was made.³² Related to this, the Lord’s command to “have dominion” or “rule” is the imperative רָדָה (from הָרָדָה), a term which was often used of a king’s ruling over his subjects (2 Chr 8:10; Ps 72:8; 110:2; Isa 14:2, 6; Ezek

³⁰ Beale, *ibid.*, 70–80, argues that this is evident in numerous ways such as the guarding cherubim (Gen 3:24; Ezek 28:14, 16), the garden as the place of the first arboreal lampstand (the tree of life [Gen 2:9]; Exod 25:31–36), the consistent use of garden imagery in Israel’s temple (1 Kgs 6–7), Eden as the first source of water (Gen 2:10; Ezek 47:1–12), the Garden as the place of precious stones (Gen 2:12; 1 Kgs 6:20–22; Exod 25:11–39), and early Judaism’s view of the garden as the first sanctuary. Beale develops numerous other connections; some appear to be quite clear, though others appear rather tenuous.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 79–80. Beale notes, “We are not left, however, with a collection of similarities that show how comparable Eden is to a temple. Indeed, Ezekiel 28 explicitly calls Eden the first sanctuary, which substantiates that Eden is described as a temple because it is the first temple, albeit a ‘garden–temple’” (80).

³² G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 30.

29:15).³³ That is, when Adam's rulership is described, he is pictured as a king, ruling over creation on God's behalf. As such, it appears that in Genesis 1:28, Adam was commissioned to rule as God's mediatory king over creation.³⁴

Furthermore, it appears that Adam was also priest over Eden.³⁵ This conclusion is based on two aspects: (1) Eden was the first temple (as above), and (2) Adam's command to "work and keep" the garden (2:15) denoted priestly activity. Given the above discussion of Eden as the dwelling place of God and man, the command of 2:15 assumes Adam's priestly role. The text states, "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to *work* it and *keep* it" (2:15). The terms *work* (עָבַד) and *keep* (שָׁמַר) are often found in reference to religious and priestly service to the Lord.³⁶ For example, in Numbers 3:7–8, the priests were to *work* (עָבַד) and *keep/guard* (שָׁמַר) the tabernacle. Walton asserts that the first term (עָבַד) was frequently used to refer to "priestly functionaries serving in the sanctuary precinct (e.g., Num 3:7–10),"³⁷ and that the second term (שָׁמַר) was used

³³ The term רֹדֵף often referred to a shepherd travelling with and protecting his flock (Koehler and Baumgartner, *HALOT*, 1190), yet it was often used in reference to kings ruling those entrusted to their authority. Beale develops this concept from Near Eastern literature and states, "When ancient Near Eastern kings were conceived to be images of a god, the idea of the god's subduing and ruling through him are in mind, and this appears to be the best background against which to understand Adam as a king and in the image of God in Gen 1:26–28" (*New Testament Biblical Theology*, 30–31).

³⁴ It did not take long for Adam to fail in this role, as he listened to a creature (the serpent) and to the woman, rather than to the Lord (cf. Gen 3:17).

³⁵ This is argued rather extensively in Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, 66–70.

³⁶ The term *work* (עָבַד) has a broad semantic range and can occur in a number of contexts, yet is often used specifically of service to the Lord (Exod 3:12; 8:1; Num 3:7; 18:7). Similarly, the term *keep* (שָׁמַר) has a broad semantic range, yet is frequently used in reference to the priestly role of guarding the temple (Num 3:8, 10, 38).

³⁷ Walton, *Genesis*, 172.

“in the contexts of the Levitical responsibility of guarding sacred space as well as for observing religious commands and responsibilities.”³⁸ That is, both these terms were used in reference to the priestly activity of the Levites. Walton concludes, “It is likely that the tasks given to Adam are of a priestly nature—that is, caring for sacred space.”³⁹ Ultimately, although Adam failed to accomplish this task, it appears that the Lord had commissioned him to serve as priest over Eden.

Finally, related to his role as king and priest of Eden, Adam was also given a prophetic role by the Lord.⁴⁰ In Genesis 2:16–17, the text states, “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’” About these verses, several observations are necessary. First, this command was given to Adam, and never explicitly given to the woman. Second, it was not until after this command was given that the woman was created (2:18–22). However, both the man and the woman were expected to know and obey this command (3:11).⁴¹ This leads one to conclude that Adam—the one entrusted with God’s word—failed to accurately communicate the importance of this command to his wife, who was unable to repeat the

³⁸ Ibid., 173.

³⁹ Ibid., 173. Likewise, Allen P. Ross in *Creation & Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996) states, “Whatever activity the man was to engage in the garden ... it was described in terms of spiritual service of the Lord” (124).

⁴⁰ Although Adam’s role as priest-king over Eden has been developed previously—most specifically by Beale, *Temple and Church*, 66–70—little has previously been written in regard to Adam’s role as prophet.

⁴¹ Another instance of Adam’s prophetic role is found in relation to the sacrifices of Cain and Abel (Gen 4:1–16). Cain and Abel brought sacrifices to the Lord (4:3–5), yet at no point is it recorded that the Lord commanded them to do so. Although the text does not specify how they came to sacrifice, it appears that Adam learned of sacrifice from the Lord (cf. 3:20). Although the text is not explicit, it does appear that Adam had some role in communicating the Lord’s desire to his children.

command when tempted by the serpent (3:1–7).⁴² This is not to say that the woman was not responsible in succumbing to temptation; she surely was. Yet Adam evidently failed both in communicating the importance of this command, as well as in his own decision to disobey this command himself. As such, the entire narrative of Genesis 1–3 rests upon the fact that Adam, as the communicatory mediator between God and the woman, failed in his task. Therefore, although the term *prophet* is not used in this passage, the idea of one who receives direct communication from the Lord and speaks on his behalf is certainly present. Overall, the Lord had commissioned Adam to serve as the prophetic mediator between God and the woman.

To summarize, Adam was commissioned by the Lord to serve in three mediatory roles: (1) Adam was to be God’s mediatory king by *ruling* (הִרְדִּי) over the world (1:28); (2) he was to be God’s mediatory priest by *working* (עָבַד) and *keeping* (שָׁמַר) the garden–temple (2:15); and (3) he was to be God’s prophetic mediator by communicating the command to the woman (2:16–17). Given the text of Genesis 1–3, it is clear that Adam served in an archetypal position as God’s divinely chosen mediator—the first king, priest, and prophet.

2. The Hope of a Future King, Priest, and Prophet

Although Adam was appointed as God’s chosen mediator, it was not long until he failed in all three roles—king, priest, and prophet. As prophet, Adam was both unable to effectively communicate the importance of the Lord’s message to the woman (2:16–17; 3:1–7, 11), or even obey the Lord’s command himself (3:6–7). As priest, Adam did not prevent the deceiving serpent from spreading his lie in the garden–sanctuary (2:15; 3:11, 17–

⁴² This is not to remove blame from the woman. However, Adam is punished extensively for the fall, as it was his responsibly to prevent such an occurrence from happening (2:15–17; 3:9–12). Ross aptly states, “In the woman’s response to the serpent’s question, it became clear that the precision of the Word of the Lord had not been retained” (Creation & Blessing, 134). Ross notes that the woman is inaccurate in three ways: “First, she minimized the provision of the Lord. . . . Second, she added to the prohibition. . . . Third, she weakened the penalty for sin” (134–35).

19). And as king, Adam failed to rule over creation and expand God's influence (1:26–28; 3:17–19). In regard to all three aspects of his mediatory role, Adam was unsuccessful. However, as discussed above, the Lord did not leave this first couple without hope. In Genesis 3:15, the eschatological Restorer was promised to defeat the serpent and restore the world to God's intended design. Given Adam's failure to serve God as mediatory prophet, priest, and king, this promised individual is presented as the one who would successfully minister as God's Mediator in place of Adam. This individual is pictured as the Second Adam, undoing that which the first Adam did, and reversing the curse that was brought upon creation. That is, by serving as the Second Adam, this individual would succeed as God's divinely appointed Prophet, Priest, and King. As Prophet, he would communicate God's Word accurately. As Priest, he would intercede between a holy God and sinful man. And as King, he would rule with justice over creation, expanding God's influence to the far reaches of the earth.⁴³ Below, the mediatory offices of king, priest, and prophet are briefly examined from the remainder of the book of Genesis.

⁴³ It is vital to recognize that the commission given to Adam in 1:28 is repeatedly given to God's chosen people throughout the book of Genesis, as well as throughout the OT. As above, this commission involved five elements: “[1] And God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘[2] Be fruitful and multiply and [3] fill the earth and [4] subdue it and [5] have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth’” (1:28). These five elements are evident in the commissions given to Noah (9:1, 7), Abraham (12:2–3; 17:2, 6, 8; 22:17–18), Isaac (26:3–4, 24), and Jacob (28:3–4, 13–14; 35:11–12). This promise receives some form of initial fulfillment in the book of Genesis and in the Pentateuch. For example, the people “were fruitful and became very numerous” (Gen 47:27); they “were fruitful and increased greatly” (Exod 1:7); they were too many to count (Num 23:10–11); and they became “as numerous as the stars of heaven” (Deut 1:9).

The commission first given to Adam (as God's mediatory king) in 1:28 is progressively traced to the nation in Genesis and in the rest of the Pentateuch. Beale develops this concept by examining the verbal and grammatical links from the first commission (1:28) to various statements in Deuteronomy. Beale, *New Testament Biblical Theology*, traces this commission throughout the entirety of the OT (46–51). He states, “The same commission repeatedly given to the patriarchs is restated numerous

a. The Office of King in Genesis

The concept of a future mediatory king who will rule on God's behalf over all the earth is first given in Genesis 1–3. As a result of Adam's failure as king over Eden, the Lord promised that a future eschatological individual would be victorious over his enemies (3:15). Numerous glimpses of this expectation are developed throughout Genesis. In addition to the general repetition of the Lord's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, several specific promises are given concerning a future king. For example, the Lord declares to Abraham, "I will make you into nations, and *kings* shall come from you" (17:6); he also announces that through Sarah, "*kings* of peoples shall come from her" (17:16).⁴⁴ To Jacob, the Lord promises, "A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and *kings* shall come from your own body" (35:11). Additionally, Abraham (as well as Isaac and Jacob) served in somewhat of a kingly capacity. This is evident both in Abraham's personal militia (318 armed soldiers—14:14), as well as his interactions with foreign kings and leaders (Pharaoh, king of Egypt—12:10–20; the various kings mentioned in 14:1–24; and Abimelech, king of Gerar—20:1–18). Abraham's family held the unique expectation that the promised eschatological king would come through their genealogical line.

times in subsequent OT books to Israel" (47). Obviously, Deuteronomy is of special focus for this present study. Beale cites Deuteronomy 7:13; 15:4, 6; 28:11–12, and 30:16 as passages which develop this expectation of the nation fulfilling the commission originally given to Adam. The point is that the Lord promised to bless the nation so that through the nation, the Promised One might come to mediate and expand God's glory to "all the nations" (Gen 22:18) and "all the families of the earth" (Gen 28:14).

⁴⁴ Interestingly, both these promises of future *kings* from Abraham's line come in the context of the Lord's changing Abram and Sarai's names to Abraham (17:5) and Sarah (17:15). As Walton notes, "The names themselves indicate an expansion of the covenant" (*Genesis*, 449). That is, they develop the eschatological hope of the covenant repeatedly given throughout Genesis. See August, "Hope of Genesis," 58–62.

Related to this coming mediatory king, Genesis 49:8–12 is perhaps the clearest reference.⁴⁵ The central verse (49:10) states, “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.” Most commentators see an expectation of Judah’s leadership over the nation and the world in this passage.⁴⁶ This is a key point—Judah was blessed with the expectation that through him, future kings would come. Given the overarching eschatological hope of Genesis, this promise would have included both the hope of future kings (plural), as well as the hope of the final Mediatory King (singular) first promised in 3:15.

Additionally, there has been much discussion regarding the Hebrew word *shiloh* (שִׁילֹה), and how it should be translated.⁴⁷ When the details are considered, it appears that a messianic understanding of this verse is the most textually viable option.⁴⁸ Kaiser agrees that this verse should be interpreted messianically. He offers the following interpretive translation of 49:10: “The

⁴⁵ There is certainly not consensus concerning this verse. For example, the standard critical view, as espoused by Vawter is that “The tribe of Judah came into pre-eminence with the coming of the monarchy under David, and this fragment of poetry doubtless dates from that time” (Bruce Vawter, *On Genesis: A New Reading* (New York: Doubleday, 1977), 461). Obviously this stands strongly against an evangelical view, yet even here, it is important to note that Vawter recognizes the “messianic” nature of this passage. For an overview of the interpretive options, see the discussion in Walter C. Kaiser Jr, *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 1995), 50–53.

⁴⁶ Walton summarizes the most basic assumption about this passage when he states, “Judah assumes the role of the younger son, who is emerging to a place of leadership. The indication that his father’s sons will bow down to him (49:8) puts him on par with Joseph” (*Genesis*, 714).

⁴⁷ Historically, Jewish exegesis interpreted this verse messianically. *Targum Onkelos* reads, “Until the time King Messiah comes, to whom belongs the kingdom.” The LXX reads, “until that comes which belongs to him.”

⁴⁸ Walton, *Genesis*, 715. Walton states that the messianic view “coincides with both the Davidic and messianic interpretive directions that have a firm foundation in the early history of interpretation both in Jewish and Christian exegesis” (716).

scepter [an insignia of dominion] shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet [i.e., 'from him'], until he [i.e., the Messiah] comes to whom it [i.e., the rule, reign, and/or dominion] belongs."⁴⁹ Ultimately, it appears that Genesis 49:10 teaches that rulership and kingship belong to the tribe of Judah. In light of this expectation, the promised eschatological Mediator must be understood as coming through Judah's genealogical line. That is, due to the promises given by the Lord in Genesis, the Israelites would have expected a future final King to be born into the line of Judah.⁵⁰

b. The Office of Priest in Genesis

Adam first served in the role of priest, and upon his failure, the Lord promised a future individual who would intercede as the faithful mediatory priest, in place of Adam (3:15). Throughout Genesis, there are several brief glimpses of priestly activity in Genesis which warrant attention. These consist of (1) the proclamation that Levi's tribe would be scattered in Israel, (2) the patriarchal ability to offer sacrifice, and (3) Abraham's interaction with Melchizedek.

The first of these concepts—the proclamation that Levi's tribe would be scattered in Israel—has little bearing on the eschatological individual of Genesis 3:15. It is sufficient to note that what appeared to be a curse in Genesis 49:5–7 was later revealed to be a blessing to the nation of Israel as a whole, as the tribe of Levi was scattered around the nation and enabled to serve the priestly role.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Kaiser, *Messiah*, 53.

⁵⁰ Kaiser aptly summarizes this hope: "Thus, we are more than justified in concluding that this verse is a messianic text that adds to the Messiah's credentials the fact that he will govern, not only the nation Israel, but all the nations of the world" (*Ibid.*, 53).

⁵¹ It is important to mention this concept, given its connection to Deuteronomy 18:1–8. In Jacob's blessings to his sons, he groups Simeon and Levi together (49:5–7). In many ways, this passage reads more like a curse than a blessing—as 49:7a even reads, "Cursed [אָרָר] be their anger ..." This passage alludes back to Genesis 34:25–29, where Simeon and Levi killed Hamor, his son Shechem, and the rest of the city. Jacob was not pleased with this action (34:30), and it appears that he references this event

The second concept—the ability of the patriarchs to offer sacrifice—demonstrates the more universal scope of the priestly office. Several passages involving priestly activity include the accounts of Cain and Abel (4:1–5), Noah’s sacrifice after the flood (8:20–22), and Abraham’s almost-sacrifice of Isaac (22:1–14). Much could be developed about these passages, yet for this study, it is sufficient to note that the Lord expected his chosen people to serve in some sort of priestly role. Though not referred to as “priests,” by offering sacrifice and approaching God’s presence, they functionally acted as priests.

Related to this is the third concept—Abraham’s interaction with Melchizedek (14:17–24). Although the patriarchs who served in priestly roles may not have been explicitly called “priests,” Melchizedek was referred to with this title. The text reads, “He was *priest* [כֹּהֵן] of God Most High” (14:18b).⁵² For the purpose of this study, it is sufficient to note that Melchizedek is an example of a priest of the Lord who preceded Abraham and was obviously thus not a Levitical priest.⁵³ Not only was Melchizedek “priest of God Most High,” but he was also “king

when he states, “In their anger they killed men.” (49:6b). Ultimately, the key statement is found in 49:7b, “I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel.” Historically, this happened to both the tribes, and Levi is dispersed among the rest of the tribes (Deut 18:1–8; Num 35:1–5; Josh 14:4; 21:41). What appeared to be a curse in Genesis is later revealed to be a blessing by the Lord.

⁵² In contrast to the view assumed in this study (that Melchizedek worshiped the True God; Yahweh), Walton argues, “Since El Elyon could represent the designation of a Canaanite god, we have no reason to think of Melchizedek as a worshiper of Yahweh or even as monotheistic” (*Genesis*, 419). Both Waltke and Fredricks, as well as Ross, disagree. Ross states, “Abram had here found a true spiritual brother, one who believed in the Spirit God who created matter, the sovereign God who had given Abram the victory, the true God who had promised Abram the blessing” (*Genesis*, 300).

⁵³ See the discussion of Melchizedek in Ross, *Genesis*, 299–302; Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2001), 234–35.

of Salem” (14:18).⁵⁴ Although this is not the first time the offices of priest and king had been connected (i.e., Adam was priest-king over Eden, as above), it is the first time after the fall that the two offices are *explicitly* connected in one individual.

Given the expectation of an eschatological mediator who would serve as the final priest (3:15), each of these instances pointed to this individual’s future victory. Therefore, each of the examples of priests in Genesis must be viewed as provisional and temporary.⁵⁵ That is, once the eschatological priest of Genesis 3:15 accomplishes the threefold task of destroying evil, restoring creation, and allowing God to dwell with his people, there would no longer be a need for individuals such as the patriarchs—or Melchizedek—to offer sacrifices to approach God’s presence. The Genesis 3:15 mediator will have accomplished this once and for all.

c. The Office of Prophet in Genesis

Adam first served as the communicatory mediator between God and the woman (2:16–17; 3:1–7, 11). Upon Adam’s failure, the Lord promised a future individual who would succeed in the role first assigned to Adam (3:15). In contrast to Adam, this individual would both truthfully communicate God’s word to the world, and faithfully live by it. Throughout the rest of the book of Genesis, there are several allusions to the prophetic role by the patriarchs. All of these examples center around the communication of God’s covenant to the patriarchs.

In Genesis 20, Abraham journeyed to Gerar (20:1) and began referring to his wife Sarah as his sister (20:2a). Upon seeing her, Abimelech, king of Gerar took her to be his wife (20:2b). However, the Lord appeared in a dream to Abimelech and commanded him to release Sarah (20:3–7). The text reports the Lord’s instruction to Abimelech in 20:7a, “Now then, return the

⁵⁴ The location of Salem—and whether or not it refers to Jerusalem—is outside the scope of this study. Additionally, Walton, *Genesis*, states, “His joint role as king and priest is common in the ancient Near East” (419).

⁵⁵ The concept of the Levitical priesthood as provisional and temporary is developed below in connection with Deuteronomy 18:1–8.

man's wife, for he is a *prophet* [נְבִיא], so that he will pray for you, and you shall live." Interestingly, this is the only use of the term *prophet* (נְבִיא) in the book of Genesis. It evidently implies that Abraham had the ability to receive God's word and intercede on behalf of others—as he would “pray” for Abimelech.⁵⁶ Waltke and Fredricks aptly summarize this concept, “Abraham is a man who, having received revelation, mediates God's word (Exod 4:15; 7:1) and makes intercession (Gen 12:7; 15:1; 18:18 ...).”⁵⁷

Ultimately, one must consider what Abraham's role as *prophet* involved, and if the same title can be applied to the other patriarchs. Briefly stated, Abraham's role as prophet seems to have referred to his relationship with the Lord more so than it did to a specific event. That is, given the context this passage in the life of Abraham, it seems to describe Abraham's relationship with the Lord and his unique ability to communicate the very words of God. This communication between Abraham and the Lord is quite frequent in Genesis (12:1–3, 7; 13:14–17; 15:1–21; 17:1–21; 18:22–33; 21:12–13; 22:1–2; 11–18). Additionally, various other patriarchs (including Noah—7:1–4; 8:21–9:17; Isaac—26:2–5; and Jacob—28:13–15; 35:10–12) received significant revelation from the Lord. Although these individuals are not referred to explicitly as *prophets*, their roles as communicatory mediators aligns quite closely with Abraham's, and it appears that they served in some sort of prophetic role.

As the book of Genesis is examined as a whole, the concept of a prophetic role is certainly developed. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all served in varying degrees in this capacity. Again, in light of the first prophet Adam's role and the promise of Genesis 3:15, it is quite evident that the Israelites would have expected a future eschatological Mediator who would speak the Words of God with absolute clarity.

⁵⁶ Surprisingly, Abimelech appeals to God on the basis that Abraham had not been truthful to him (Gen 20:4–6). Additionally, he rebukes Abraham for not being completely truthful in his communication, which ultimately caused Abimelech to “sin” (Gen 20:9).

⁵⁷ Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 286.

IV. Implications of Genesis Upon Deuteronomy

This expectation of a future mediatory King, Priest, and Prophet, stands as the basis for the hope of the Israelites as they stood on the plains of Moab, about to enter into the promised land (Deut 1:1–8). Therefore, when Deuteronomy references “Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” by their names seven times (Deut 1:8; 6:10; 9:5, 27; 29:13; 30:20; 34:4), and as “our fathers” 49 times, it appears that it alludes to the eschatological expectation given in Genesis. Since very specific promises had been given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in Genesis, these promises must stand as the foundation for a proper understanding of Deuteronomy. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the specific implications of the Genesis account with the establishment of the Israelite offices of prophet, priest, and king in Deuteronomy 17:14–18:22.

1. Specific Implications for King, Priest, and Prophet

Office of King (Deut 17:14–20)—The book of Genesis clearly expects an eschatological Individual to eventually destroy evil, restore creation, and allow God to dwell with his people. This was first promised in Genesis 3:15, and subsequently woven into the structure of Genesis. Furthermore, this *king* was promised to be a descendant of Abraham (17:5), a descendent of Sarah (17:15), and a descendent of Jacob (35:11) to come through the genealogical line of Judah (49:10). Therefore, the Israelites in Deuteronomy *would have expected* their eventual king to come through the line of Judah. Although this tribal heritage is not mentioned in Deuteronomy, the text is quite clear that the future king will be “whom the Lord your God will choose” (Deut 17:15), and since the Lord had already declared that a future king would come through Judah’s tribe, this would have come as no surprise to the Israelites.

The book of Deuteronomy teaches that the king would be chosen by the Lord (17:15), committed to trusting the Lord for victory (17:16), dedicated to putting the Lord’s will above his own (17:17), and devoted to recognizing his dependence upon the Lord and his word (17:18–20). That is, the king described in Deuteronomy was to be a model Israelite, on behalf of the Israelites. Although Deuteronomy 17:20 indicated the

multiplicity of kings (“he and his children”), it seems best to understand this as the line through which the promised King of Genesis would eventually come.⁵⁸ Ultimately, given the Genesis background for Deuteronomy 17:14–20, the Israelites would have viewed the office of king as provisional and temporary as they waited for the final king who would accomplish all which was foretold of him in Genesis.

Office of Priest (Deut 18:1–8)—In light of the promises made concerning the eschatological priest who would succeed in the areas in which Adam failed (Gen 3:15), Genesis teaches that eventually there will be no need for individuals to offer sacrifices to approach God’s presence. Therefore, the Israelites in Deuteronomy *would have expected* a future mediatory priest who would come and be the final mediator between God and man. Just as the first priest, Adam, was to guard God’s sacred garden–temple (Gen 2:15), this last priest would not only protect God’s dwelling place, but would make the way for God to dwell among his people, as he had first dwelt among them in Eden. Again, he would undo what Adam had done, and succeed where Adam had failed.

Ultimately, this indicates the provisional and temporary nature of the Levitical priesthood of Deuteronomy 18:1–8. Although the text is clear that in some fashion, the Levites will “stand and minister in the name of the Lord, him and his sons for all time” (18:5), once Genesis is understood as the background of Deuteronomy, it becomes clear that eventually an eschatological priest would serve as the final mediator between God and man. The Israelites would have longed for the day when God would eventually send his Promised One to achieve all that was foretold of him. Overall, the Levitical priesthood would have

⁵⁸ About this passage, Miller states, “Much has been written about the way that messianic passages of the royal psalms and Isaiah point us to and find their actuality in Jesus of Nazareth. It is possible we have overlooked the text that may resonate most with the kingship he manifested; he was one who sought and received none of the perquisites of kingship, who gave his full and undivided allegiance to God, and who lived his whole life by the instruction, the torah, of the Lord” (*Deuteronomy*, 149).

served as a daily reminder that something greater was yet to come.

Office of Prophet (Deut 18:9–22)—Subsequent to the first prophet, Adam’s failure to communicate God’s word to the woman or obey the command himself, the Lord promised to send an eschatological mediator to undo all that Adam had done (Gen 3:15). Given the context of Genesis, this future prophet is expected to communicate God’s word with absolute clarity and unconditionally obey the Lord’s commands. In Deuteronomy, the office of prophet is established for the Israelites (Deut 18:9–22). The two verses which have received much debate are 18:15 and 18:18, both of which refer to the future prophet whom “the Lord your God will raise up for you” (18:15). Since the Israelites *would have expected* an eschatological prophet in light of Genesis, this passage appears to refer both to the immediate prophetic office and ultimately to the eschatological prophet. That is, although Deuteronomy seems to refer to the office which individuals such as Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel held, given the future-oriented nature of Genesis, this passage in Deuteronomy is forward-focused and anticipatory. The eschatological expectation of Genesis reveals that the Israelite office of prophet was provisional and temporary.

2. Summary of Implications

Each of the divinely appointed offices of king, priest, and prophet had numerous immediate implications for Israel’s social, political, religious, and spiritual life. The office of *king* (Deut 17:14–20) related to those who governed the nation on behalf of the Lord. The office of *priest* (18:1–8) related to those who offered sacrifices on behalf of the nation for the Lord. And the office of *prophet* (18:9–22) related to those who spoke to the nation on behalf of the Lord. In each of these three cases, the individual who held the office was to serve as a mediator between God and man. The Lord announced that he would *choose* (יִבְחַר) the future king (17:15), that he had *chosen* (בָּחַר) the tribe of Levi minister in his name (18:5), and that he had promised to *raise up* (יִקְרֶימ) a prophet like Moses to speak on his behalf (18:15). In light of the eschatological background of Genesis, it

is evident that these mediatory offices served as temporary and provisional roles, pointing the nation to the eventual day when the Lord would send the final Mediator—the Second Adam—to serve as King, Priest, and Prophet.

V. Conclusion

Overall, the books of Genesis and Deuteronomy are intrinsically related. Genesis consistently sets the stage for Deuteronomy, and Deuteronomy repeatedly alludes back to Genesis. In view of the eschatological expectation of Genesis and the hope of a future mediator, the Israelite offices of king, priest, and prophet (17:14–18:22) must be viewed as forward pointing and anticipatory in nature. Even though these passages were not necessarily “prophetic,” they served as reminders for the Israelites regarding their future hope. That is, they served to remind the Israelites of the expectation that the Second Adam would come and succeed in all areas where the first Adam had failed. Perhaps the words of Alexander summarize best the message of the Pentateuch:

The divine promises of blessing and nationhood, which are so important to the development of the plot, remain unfulfilled by the end of Deuteronomy. As a result, the Pentateuch is oriented toward the future. What will become of these promises? To answer this we must look beyond the concluding chapters of Deuteronomy. As it stands, the Pentateuch is an unfinished story.⁵⁹

“What will become of these promises?” In relation to this study, as the book of Deuteronomy ends, a similar question may be posed: “When the will final King, Priest, and Prophet come?” Those who trust in Christ may rejoice that in the fullness of time, the final eschatological Mediator, the Second Adam, indeed did come in the person of Jesus Christ.

⁵⁹ Alexander, *From Paradise*, 118.