Reflective Essay #2

When we compare the Prophetic and Wisdom literatures of the Old Testament, it is important to first consider the audience of both genres. Generally, the Prophetic books were written while the whole of Israel was in captivity during the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles and were “spoken in quite specific situations”. (Collins, 198) For instance, the book of Isaiah deals with Israel’s standing in the world as it relates to other nations. Typically, the prophetic books were not only God’s revelation of upcoming events but also Israel and Judah trying to make sense of why they were in captivity. Israel and Judah were individual nations who were overrun and taken into captivity and they were trying to make sense of it all.

The Wisdom books were written for the everyday reader and addressed right living, theology, thought or attitude. Although some of the writers are unknown or speculated, the books are a collection of different writers who expressed sayings of wisdom based on their experiences. It is believed that Solomon wrote most of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes however, Proverbs was more than likely written by a collection of authors. In Ecclesiastes, Solomon expresses his discontent with life and Job wrestles with the theological dilemma of why bad things happen to good people but more importantly he wrestles with the meaning of faith.

Both Prophetic and Wisdom literatures are also similar in that they address specific issues and they all deal with faith in one way or another. The writers of the prophetic books confronted how to deal with the loss of their temple and home while being exiled in a foreign land and how those events affect their faith. In wisdom literature, the writers confront how their individual actions and attitudes affect their personal standing in the world and how that relates to their own individual faith in God.