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Paul's Caricature of Elders
Titus 1.5-9 as a Rhetorical Depiction of the Ideal Wise Person

By
Nick Soyars

A Project Submitted to
the Faculty of Covenant Theological Seminary
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Exegetical Theology.

Saint Louis, Missouri

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Abstract

Titus 1.5-9 is often read intuitively as a description of a morally ideal person. A case for this interpretation, however, is not fleshed out as much as it could be. Competing views have arisen in recent generations that purport Titus 1.5-9 to be either an accommodation to bourgeoise Hellenistic ethics by Christians in the late first or early second century, or a literalistic list of qualifications with the litmus test limited to a man's marriage and children per v. 6. Thus, there is a need for a detailed argument to be made for the ethical ideal view and its rhetorical implications within the context of the biblical canon.

I begin by establishing a proper reading of Proverbs in its rhetorical, canonical and ANE cultural context. Proverbs, addressed to the wise (1.5), uses rhetorical devices that Titus 1.5-9 shares (*e.g*., caricatures, concreteness) to shape Israelite hearts to aspire toward its ethical ideals. This rhetorical method requires adherents to practice the principle of *mutatis mutandis* in their own actual responses. By establishing the canonical context for Proverbs it becomes clear that the God of Titus is the same God who operates in the same ways.

In order to see Titus 1.5-9's shared aspects with Proverbs, I detail how 2TJ Wisdom Literature made the worldview of the Jewish scriptures palatable to Hellenized Jews. The ethical ideals shared by Jews and Hellenists were lauded as pursuable only in fellowship with Yahweh, who is the source of wise, moral living. 2TJ co-opted Greek terms, often with nuanced meaning, and rhetorical devices, namely, lists and rhetorically ideal figures like what we find in Titus 1.5-9.

When Titus 1.5-9 is read in light of all this, the most likely interpretation is that it is a description of a rhetorically morally ideal person, expecting adherents to practice its implementation *mutatis mutandis*.

To my wife, Katie, the closest to the ideal that I know.

Proverbs 19.14b בַּ֣יִת וָ֭הוֹן נַחֲלַ֣ת אָב֑וֹת וּ֝מֵיְהוָ֗ה אִשָּׁ֥ה מַשְׂכָּֽלֶת

"There are, I know, those who prefer not to go beyond the impression, however accidental, which an old work makes on a mind that brings to it a purely modern sensibility and modern conceptions; just as there are travellers who carry their resolute Englishry with them all over the Continent, mix only with other English tourists, enjoy all they see for its 'quaintness,' and have no wish to realise what those ways of life, those churches, those vineyards, mean to the natives. They have their reward. I have no quarrel with people who approach the past in that spirit. I hope they will have none with me. But I was writing for the other sort."

— C. S. Lewis, Preface, *The Discarded Image*.

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Acknowledgements

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The LXX texts are from Alfred Rahlfs, ed., *Septuaginta: Id est Vetus Testamentum Graece Iuxta LXX Interpretes* (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1935).

Abbreviations

2TJ	Second Temple Judaism
ANE	Ancient Near East
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JM	Joüon-Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LXX	Septuagint, Alfred Rahlfs
MT	Masoretic Text
NETS	New English Translation of the Septuagint
NIDNTTE	New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis
NIDOTTE	New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
PE	Pastoral Epistles
P&FG	Paul and the Faithfulness of God
NPNF	*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentary
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentary
WBC	World Biblical Commentary

Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction to the Topic & Why This Study is Important (Thesis Proposal)

In *The Pilgrim's Regress*, C. S. Lewis puts his finger on the difficulty of living a consistently virtuous life. An unnamed Man tells the main character, John: "But what is it that dismays you? You heard from Wisdom how the rules were yours and not yours. Did you not mean to keep them? And if so, can it scare you to know that there is one who will make you able to keep them?"[1] People have always found it hard to believe that we have help beyond ourselves in a God who is covenanted himself to provide the necessities to cultivate the moral wisdom which he has implanted in each of us.

Titus is a much neglected letter in which this very truth is presented emphatically. Among the gifts God gives his people for the cultivation of ethical wisdom are men in whom their own moral character is such that they are equipped to guide fellow church members down the path of wise living. Such men are described in Titus 1.5-9. Recent generations have developed opposing hermeneutical frameworks that lead to quite different interpretations. In turn, the implementation of those interpretations has led to some local churches being blessed with the good leaders they need and others suffering for want of growth in wise living due to either the wrong kind of men filling the leadership void or worthwhile prevented from exercising much needed wise leadership. I attempt to clarify the complexities of Titus' context and how to hold it all together.

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[1] C. S. Lewis, "The Pilgrim's Regress" in *Christian Reflections* in *Collected Works of C. S. Lewis: The Pilgrim's Regress, Christian Reflections, God in the Dock* (New York, NY: Inspirational Press, 1996), 110.

Review of Major Positions on the Description of Elders

Ethical Ideal

The predominant view throughout most of church history has been that Titus 1.5-9 describes an elder in terms of an ethical or moral ideal. Concerning the phrase μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἀνήρ, Clement of Alexandria (2nd-3rd cent. C. E.) wrote that "Paul himself sets it down that leadership in the church should rest with 'a bishop who presides successfully over his household' and that 'marriage to one wife' constitutes a household with the Lord's blessing" (*Stromata* 3.108.2).[2] In other words, an overseer is not required to have children. Chrysostom (347-407 C. E.) indited on the same phrase: "Paul is not making a hard and fast rule that a bishop must have a wife, but that he must not have more than one."[3] Clement and Chrysostom understand how to cooperate with Paul's rhetorical intent, even though we may disagree over the number of overseers or with the meaning of "one-woman man."

John Calvin also read the portrayal of elders as an ideal. Critiquing imposed clerical celibacy, he describes Paul as "drawing the picture of a perfect bishop" and "enumerat[ing] marriage among the qualities of a bishop" (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 4.12.25). Contextually, his point is that bishops should be free to marry, but they are not obligated to.[4]

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[2] Thomas Hamilton, "The Familial Qualifications of Elders: Establishing a Biblical and Theological Context for the Appointment of Congregational Leadership," (DMin. diss., Knox Theological Seminary, 2015), 109. Clement's comment regards 1 Tim. 3.2; the identical phrase is also in Titus 1.6.

[3] Hamilton, 109; quoting NPNF 1 13.438.

[4] Hamilton, 111; quoting John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1949), 54. Martin Luther agreed (110-111).

David Lipscomb (late 1800's-early 1900's) was the most influential leader of his day in American Churches of Christ. Although not the only stance in this tradition (see below), he represented a commonly held intuitive reading of Titus 1.5-9 as an ideal:

> "I do not understand that a failure to have wife and children disqualified for the work; but as most men have wives and children, they were to be such as guided them well. …We believe an unmarried or childless man, if otherwise qualified, may be a bishop or a deacon. I think where the Scripture says 'the husband of one wife' it means that he must have but one wife and be true to her."[5]

More recently, the moral ideal interpretation is taken by a number of (primarily) evangelical scholars. John Stott intuits that no one lives up to the ideal: "This does not of course mean that candidates must be flawless or faultless, or we would all be disqualified."[6] Jerome Quinn, a Roman Catholic scholar, believed the syntactical emphasis on "one" in μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἀνήρ does not make marriage "a prerequisite" for elders, neither must he be required to have children.[7] I. Howard Marshall frequently describes the depiction of elders as an ideal. For example, bringing an oft overlooked aspect to the forefront, "[a]lthough 1 Tim 3.1-13 is about the kind of people to be appointed, it can be assumed that it is also presenting an ideal to those who already have

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[5] Hamilton, 117-118; quoting David Lipscomb and E. G. Sewell, *Questions Answered: Being a Compilation of Queries with Answers by D. Lipscomb and E. G. Sewell, Covering a Period of Forty Years of Their Joint Editorial Labors on the Gospel Advocate*, ed. M. C. Kurfees (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1921), 196, 204. Hamilton provides a thorough survey of views among 19th and 20th century leaders of Churches of Christ (114-121). J. W. McGarvey late in life converted to the "ideal" reading. It was not until the 1950's, accompanying the nationwide split over so-called "institutionalism," when that view fell into such disfavor that it was silenced.

[6] John R. W. Stott, *The Message of 1 Timothy & Titus*, BST (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 175.

[7] Jerome D. Quinn, *The Letter to Titus*, AYB (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 85.

these positions."[8] Marshall goes on to explicate that "the ideal elder is the head of a Christian family" and "it would be pedantic literalism to argue that childless men could not be appointed" as elders.[9]

Philip Towner also recognizes Titus 1.5-9 as an ethical ideal. "Collectively, then, the force of this kind of ideal profile of leadership, constructed of stereotypical faults to be avoided and positive virtues to be cultivated, is to project an image of public respectability and good reputation for which Paul co-opts the model of the Hellenistic ideals."[10] He frequently refers to ethics in Titus as ideals.[11] He clearly sees how Paul rhetorically exaggerates Cretans in Titus 1.12. He describes Paul's depiction of the Cretan troublemakers' behavior as a "caricature" by drawing off of "the wild stereotype of Cretan society."[12] If Paul can caricature the worst of Cretan reputations, then he can certainly find a way to utilize the caricatures of Proverbs which are reflected in Hellenistic writings.

Gerald Bray says of "faithful children" (Titus 1.6): "Here there is an ideal of virtue that Jews and Gentiles shared, and for Christians to be seen not to respect it would have done great harm to the cause of the gospel."[13] All people, whether Jew or Roman,

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[8] I. Howard Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, ICC (1999; repr., London, UK: T & T Clark, 2003), 53.

[9] Marshall, 146, 157, respectively. The former is a contrast which he notes from 1Tim3.4-5.

[10] Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), 690.

[11] Towner, *e.g*., 740-741, 744, 748, 690; and *passim*.

[12] Ibid., 683.

[13] Gerald L. Bray, *The Pastoral Epistles*, The International Theological Commentary (New York, NY: T & T Clark, 2019), 479. Discussion of Bray's view (*i.e*., "loyal to parents") is beyond my purpose in this paper.

put high priority on children (especially adult children) upholding their family's reputation; not bringing it into disrepute.

Bourgeoise Ethics

Dibelius and Conzelmann popularized among scholars the interpretation of the ethical standard for elders as bourgeoise.[14] They saw the ethics in the PE in general as conforming to the lower standard of Hellenistic culture compared to the heightened standard of first-generation Christianity, a reflection of second century Christians attempting to deal with Jesus' delayed return. This hermeneutical framework has dominated scholarship since. Thomas Long, representatively, alleges that Titus's morals are not a "gospel-inspired ethic … [the] writer seems to forget, or perhaps ignore, his own teaching about the transformative power of Christ."[15]

Even some evangelical scholars who hold to Pauline authorship believe the ethical expectations of an elder set a low bar. William Mounce thinks Paul's descriptions of church leaders are realistically achievable low standards.[16] To say church leaders "must be as good as the goals set by non-Christians" as opposed to merely being "as good as non-Christians" misunderstands the illocution.[17] Mounce rarely brings to the fore rhetorical intentions or the function of common literary devices.

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[14] Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Hermeneia, trans. Philip Buttolph and Adela Yarbro (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, Press, 1972). The claim that Titus 1.7-9 was from a church order (written or oral; 6-7) is anachronistic and unwarranted (cf. multi-source claim by Quinn, 85). Denial of Pauline authorship is a significant factor for their interpretive scheme.

[15] Thomas G. Long, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2016), 3.

[16] William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, WBC (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2000), 160, 393, 398. Follows J. N. D. Kelly and Donald Guthrie.

[17] Mounce, 160.

Literalistic Qualifications

A minority view, typically among Christian fundamentalists, reads Titus 1.6-9 literalistically. Actually, the focus is limited to the meaning of "husband of one wife" and "faithful children" in v. 6. Proponents rarely invite dialogue via scholarly publication. Thomas Hamilton, however, in a recent dissertation defended a liberal version of this interpretation, insisting that elders must have experience in marriage and parenting. His approach to the author's rhetoric is summed up thusly: "The only issue is what the biblical text says."[18] This begs the question for vv. 7-9; answers are rarely given.

Titus's Ethical Ideals among Hellenists and Jews

It has only been since the turn from the nineteenth century into the twentieth that improved editions of Greco-Roman philosophers have received heightened attention by NT scholars. As a result, familiarity with the historical-cultural context of the world of the earliest Christians has been quickly increasing, save for a stall in progress in the mid-1900's.[19] With Proverbs' emphasis on moral transformation, it is easy to see why nineteenth and early twentieth century scholars commonly read it through the lens of Greco-Roman philosophers. They were, after all, immersed in the burgeoning understanding of Hellenistic literature throughout their academic training.[20] So, I find it necessary to expound Proverbs properly in its own context.

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[18] Hamilton, 112.

[19] Abraham Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1989), 4-5.

[20] Rudolf Smend, "Wisdom in Nineteenth-Century Scholarship," in *Wisdom in Ancient Israel: Essays in Honour of J. A. Emerton*, ed. John Day, Robert P. Gordon, and H. G. M. Williamson, trans. Henrike Lähnemann (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 265-268. Cf. discussion in Johann Cook, "The Law of Moses in Septuagint Proverbs," *VT* 49, no.4 (1999): 448-461. The Law of Moses is referred to

Scholars have long since recognized that ethical words in Titus were drawn from the rich heritage of the Hellenistic world. Adolf Deissmann's *Light from the Ancient East* (1910) shed much needed light on how the ethics of NT were often shared by Hellenistic culture.[21] Dibelius-Conzelmann redirected the aim of Deissmann's work. As mentioned above, they perceived Titus's ethics as being lowered, not as aspired for ideals.

Quinn asserted that the vocabulary of the PE "is less biblical (i.e., Septuagintal) than Paul's" while admitting "notable contacts with sapiential and other ethical" 2TJ literature but neglecting Proverbs. He perceived the flavor of the PE's language as more akin to Hellenistic philosophy and plays.[22]

Recently attention has been given to the influence of the Jewish world as governed by their Scriptures and their engagement with Hellenistic ethics.[23] Stephen C. Mott seminally advanced our understanding of how Hellenic and Hellenistic authors

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explicitly in Proverbs. Divorcing Proverbs from the Law has resulted in many scholars seeing no connection with the Jewish Torah.

Will Kynes (*An Obituary for "Wisdom Literature": The Birth, Death, and Intertextual Reintegration of a Biblical Corpus* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2019)) argues persuasively that nineteenth century German scholarship coined the category of "Wisdom Literature," reading through a post-Enlightenment lens (4-5). They separated Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Job from the Mosaic Law seeing the former promoting "universalism, humanism, rationalism, empiricism, and secularism," rending asunder what had been joined together canonically for millennia. These assumptions still misdirect liberal critical scholars and theologically conservative pastors alike. See also, C. John Collins article "Proverbs and the Levitical System," *Presbyterion* 35, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 9–34.

[21] Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World*, trans. Lionel R. M. Strachan, rev. ed. (New York, NY: George H. Doran Company, 1927).

[22] Quinn, 4. I argue it is more Septuagintal than mere number of words and occurrences of those words thoroughly used in 2TJ literature.

[23] Adolf Deissmann (*Bible Studies: Contributions, Chiefly from Papyri and Inscriptions, to the History of the Language, the Literature, and the Religion of Hellenistic Judaism and Primitive Christianity*, trans. Alexander Grieve (Edinburgh, UK: T & T Clark, 1901)) does not deal directly with Titus.

employed the cardinal virtues of Greek ethics.[24] Standardized by Plato, the four-fold

cardinal virtues were expressed with increasing flexibility. By the first century B.C.E., a

triad of virtues became more common. It was never always the same three virtues,

varying from author to author. The illocution, however, was often the same: all virtues

are inseparable and subsumed under Virtue. Mott goes on to show how 2TJ co-opted

virtue-triad form. He argues unconvincingly, however, that Titus 2.12 is literarily

dependent on Philo for the triad of cardinal virtues. Someone as adept as Titus's author

would be able to employ a common expression without being literarily dependent on any

single author. He also fails to account for any potential background in the LXX or other

2TJ literature.

Abraham Malherbe[25] sees a mix of Jewish and Stoic meanings for ethical terms.

This is a shift from his articles which tended to argue that Paul drew primarily from Stoic

philosophy in his undisputed letters. Unfortunately, Malherbe limits Paul to interacting

with Stoicism instead of the Hellenistic culture more broadly.

The importance of Reggie M. Kidd's contribution cannot be overstated.[26] He

properly directs Mott's research to find its place in the context of Cretan culture. Ethics in

Titus in the context of 2.11-3.7 serves as an apologetic to Crete's particular Zeus myth.

For my thesis, it is vital to see that although there are direct verbal echoes of Crete's Zeus

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[24] Stephen C. Mott, "Greek Ethics and Christian Conversion: The Philonic Background of Titus 2:10-14 and 3:3-7," *Novum Testamentum* 20 (1978), 22-48.

[25] Abraham J. Malherbe, "Paraenesis in the Epistle to Titus," in *Light from the Gentiles: Hellenistic Philosophy and Early Christianity: Collected Essays, 1959-2012*, eds. Carl R. Holladay, et al. (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2014), 1:407-430; ibid., "'Christ Jesus Came into the World to Save Sinners': Soteriology in the Pastoral Epistles," 1:431-457.

[26] Reggie M. Kidd, "Titus as *Apologia:* Grace for Liars, Beasts, and Bellies." *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 21 (1999): 185-209.

legend, the ethics under discussion are upheld by Gentiles and Jews alike. The particularized Cretan context of Titus includes both (1.10-15).

Both Marshall and Towner convincingly explain that Titus's ethics are properly understood within the cross-section of Hellenistic and Jewish cultures. Marshall's summaries are helpful: the author "used language that was already at home in Hellenistic Judaism and the Hellenistic world generally to emphasize his point ... due to the specific needs of the situation." Again, "It is striking how far the language and ideas of the PE find parallels in the Graeco-Roman world and especially in the Greek-speaking Hellenistic Judaism which had taken over much from the surrounding world."[27]

Rhetorical Intent of Titus 1.5-9

Deissmann contributed indirectly to the rhetorical function of Titus 1.5-9's ethical list. Inscriptions commonly described women with the same terms in Titus 2.4-5, indicative of popular ideals.[28] Included is σώφρων ("soberminded/temperate"), which also describes elders in Titus 1.8. To be a person characterized by σώφρων was a moral ideal for which everyone strove. What these lists and Titus 2.4-5 have in common with 1.5-9 is that they are all ethical lists depicting ideals toward which to aspire.

Dibelius-Conzelmann contributed to the rhetorical intent of ethical lists in two ways. First, virtue lists found in honorary inscriptions helped to popularize these kinds of virtues and "inspire posterity to similar accomplishment."[29] Second, they recognized

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[27] Marshall, 190-191, 78, respectively. Towner elaborates upon Kidd and discusses ethical ideals *passim.*

[28] Deissmann, 314-315. Interaction with 2TJ was not the focus of this work.

[29] Dibelius-Conzelmann, 51. Here they draw off Deissmann's work.

contemporaneous descriptions of other vocations with ethical lists as opposed to duties.[30]

However, when they engage with ancient Judaism regarding "ancient popular morality,"

their discussion is left wanting. Their attention is given only to Rabbinic Judaism (*i.e.*,

post-2TJ period), ignoring 2TJ Wisdom literature. Dibelius-Conzelmann were concerned

only about lists, not about other possibly relevant contexts. Moreover, their reading of

these ethical lists leads them to see Titus 1.5-9 as downgrading moral expectations from

Paul's earlier letters instead of portraying an ideal.

Victor Paul Furnish's scholarship on Pauline ethics was a standard bearer that few

have been able to improve upon. He only discusses Paul's undisputed letters. I include his

work because no one has compared his observations to Titus. The most notable

clarifications are Paul's use of Proverbs in ethical teachings and concrete ethical credenda

to "avoid giving the impression that there are ever any limits either to the good that is

required or to the evil that is possible."[31] In his section on "virtue lists," Furnish argues

against William Barclay's view that Gal. 5.22-23 is a presentation of the ideal person.[32]

Unfortunately, he nowhere considers whether other passages could use such rhetoric.

The extent of Quinn's discussion of the rhetorical function of the ethical list in

Titus 1.5-9 is limited. He notes that the ethical qualities should not "be applied

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[30] Dibelius-Conzelmann, 50-51, 158-160. Onosander's *Strategikos* shares the most affinity with Titus 1.5-9.

[31] Victor Paul Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1968), 50, 71-75, respectively; quote from 75. Furnish shows Paul's intimacy with Diaspora Judaism (11), and familiarity with Hellenistic sources and ethics (30-33, 68).

[32] Furnish, 86-89; discussion of Barclay is on 87.

legalistically," concrete terms are chosen for paraenesis, and asserts that vv. 6 and 7-9 are adapted from two different liturgical lists.[33] Evidence for the latter is lacking.

Frances Young acknowledges ethical genres were familiar to author and audience and flexible to "adapt them to spelling out the Christian way of life, working through the typical roles within the household of God."[34] However, Young focuses on character quality, not addressing the rhetorical function of ethical lists.

Marshall has offered up a great service with his research on ethical terms like εὐσέβεια and its cognates in the LXX and how Hellenistic Jewish literature sought to appropriate biblical concepts by co-opting terms from their contemporaneous Hellenistic world.[35] But he stops short of demonstrating how the rhetoric of Proverbs overlaps with Paul's rhetorical description of elders.

Towner thoroughly demonstrates how Titus draws together ethical ideals from Hellenistic and Jewish cultures, especially the LXX, ethical literature, and particularly how Titus subverts Crete's Zeus myth. He emphasizes the ethical ideals of 1.5-9, but he does not elaborate on that paragraph's rhetorical intent.[36]

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[33] Quinn, 89-90.

[34] Frances Young, *The Theology of the Pastoral Letters* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 30-34; quote from 34. She denies bourgeoise ethics (following Reggie Kidd).

[35] Marshall, 138-140ff.

[36] See Towner, 676-694 for discussion of Titus 1.5-9; moral ideals are discussed *passim*.

Hamilton thinks the list in Titus 1.6 is either about status or character.[37] He is right that it is about character, but he shows no awareness of the rhetorical function of such a character list anywhere in his dissertation.

Gerald Bray, as recently as 2019, does not acknowledge even the possibility of the rhetorical method of the elder's character list. The closest he comes is his comment about "believing/faithful children": "Here is an ideal virtue that Jews and Gentiles share." He is right to recognize "the wealth of the Greek language" that Paul chooses and that "many of them are difficult to capture in translation."[38]

Why This Thesis?

There are three reasons I see a need for my thesis. 1) There is a need for the intuitive reading to be made explicit. 2) There is a need to validate this reading with exegetical support from similar discussions of ethics among Hellenistic and Second Temple Jewish writings. 3) There is also a need to show how to trace the (canonical) roots of the kind of description given in Titus 1.5-9 back to Proverbs.

First, many scholars intuitively read Titus 1.5-9 as a description of an Ideal Person, yet most scholars overlook rhetorical intention.[39] Proponents of a morally low standard as well as rigid fundamentalists do not cooperate with the rhetorical intent of

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[37] Hamilton, 105. He demonstrates that there was widespread disagreement among Churches of Christ before the mid-1900's. He graciously appeals for dialogue among those holding differing views.

[38] Bray, 479-486; quotes are from 479 and 481, respectively.

[39] *E.g.*, James D. G. Dunn, "The First and Second Letters to Timothy and the Letter to Titus," NIB (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000), 11:773-880; Robert W. Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, PNTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2018), 479; Bray, 479-486. Quinn discusses syntax and style (3-6), but not rhetorical intentions of any passage contextually. Mounce discusses form and structure of 1.5-9, but nothing about the rhetorical function of such an ethical list (384-385).

Titus's author. Even Marshall, who holds the "ideal" view, is inconsistent. He thinks ὅσιος ("holy") and ἐγκρατής ("disciplined") are "basic qualities." Their presence in Titus 1.8 is due to the immaturity of the Cretan churches who are coming out of Crete's notoriously deeply depraved society.[40] His overall intuition is right, but his cooperation with the rhetorical intent of the paragraph as a whole is inconsistent.

The rhetorical intent of Titus 1.5-9 is that of a morally ideal person. Scholars rarely discuss how this reading is correct from a rhetorical perspective. Furnish's observations of Paul's ethics in the undisputed letters are also true of Titus 1.6-9. The use of concrete aspects of morals and relationships points to a high ceiling,[41] quite unlike the interpretation that thinks the "requirements [of] church leaders (vv. 5-9) are so basic."[42] Mounce claims Paul lowered the standards because he is realistic of a new church in a hostile environment.[43] The evidence of how ethical lists were used suggest otherwise. Elders must be people who help other Christians mature and who are able to shepherd others toward the Ideal.

Secondly, there is a need to validate this reading with exegetical support from similar discussions of ethics among Hellenistic and 2TJ writings and Titus' Cretan context. If ethical lists and ideals are well known, that would explain how anyone, not only teachers like Paul or church leaders, could be expected to read/hear this description as a model.

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[40] Marshall, 165.

[41] Furnish, 72-75.

[42] Mounce, 398.

[43] Ibid., 393.

The shortest complete thought is a sentence.[44] A complete sentence can range from one word to long and complex. Context is always determinative. Most of my personal experience with church leaders who have taught Titus 1.5-9 have treated vv. 7-8 as a series of one-word sentences, ignoring the rhetorical intent of the paragraph. This is also the impression given in some commentaries. The meanings of the words are discussed, often insightfully with citations of usage in biblical and extra-biblical literature. However, the goal of Paul's rhetoric is missed.

Titus 1.7-9 is one sentence in Greek. English verse divisions have broken up the one Greek sentence. The analysis of any word in the sentence is a worthwhile endeavor, yet any proper analysis of what Paul actually means must treat the sentence as a whole. That sentence, then, must be properly interpreted within the paragraph it is in. And that paragraph, in turn, must be understood rightly within the pericope; and that pericope within the larger literary unit of which it is a part; and all of that within the book as a whole. Titus is a rather short letter. I suggest that the rhetorical illocution of 1.5-9 is not isolated from the rest of the letter.

Thirdly, there is also a need to show how to trace the (canonical) roots of the kind of description given in Titus 1.5-9 back to Proverbs. Reading it as an Ideal Person is essentially the same as how to properly read Proverbs. I will attempt to continue this discussion by demonstrating that some of the Greek terms Paul chose provide links to the thought-world of the Hebrew Scriptures. Proverbs' ideal wise person is portrayed through the lens of 2TJ and its crossroads with Hellenism.

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[44] I am forever indebted to Dr. Greg Perry who taught this in the New Testament Greek in the summer of 2015 at Covenant Theological Seminary, deeply enhancing my understanding of communication.

Arthur Keefer wrote an abundantly helpful article on the need for biblical

exegetes and systematic theologians to communicate with each other. Keefer's quote

from Kevin Vanhoozer is apropos:

> "Doctrine is faithful to biblical discourse not when it simply repeats the same terms in different contexts but when it renders the same judgments by using different terms . . . this is precisely what makes systematic theology biblical: that it renders the same underlying apostolic judgments in different conceptual terms."[45]

This thesis is my attempt to shed light on the bridge between OT Wisdom

Literature and Titus's description of elders. The need for this kind of dialogue is

exemplified in simplistic treatments still found in significant theological works. For

instance, the NIDNTTE's entry for the δικ-word group in the Pastoral Epistles says

simply that the uses are "thought by some scholars to reflect Hel. discussions of virtue."[46]

The choice of these words in Titus' context is much more involved than a mere

reflection. The NIDNTTE article for ἐγκράτεια family makes a broad stroke summary

about the rare use of these terms (the root occurs 10 times in the NT) without

consideration of synonyms' shared semantic domain or the myriad ways "self-control"

can be taught without using the words themselves: "Considering the great importance

given to the theme of self-control in Greco-Roman ethics, one is surprised by the

relatively little attention paid to it in the NT."[47]

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[45] Arthur J. Keefer, "The Use of the Book of Proverbs in Systematic Theology," *BTB* 46, no. 1 (2016): 41; quoting Kevin Vanhoozer, "Is the Theology of the New Testament One or Many?" in *Reconsidering the Relationship Between Biblical and Systematic Theology in the New Testament: Essays by Theologians and New Testament Scholars*, eds. B. Reynolds and B. Lugioyo. (Tubingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck., 2014), 27-28.

[46] NIDNTTE, s.v., "δικαιοσύνη," 1:736.

[47] NIDNTTE, s.v., "ἐγκράτεια," 2:84.

Methodology and Organizational Structure

The question I am seeking to answer is, "Is Paul co-opting Hellenistic language and rhetoric in Titus 1.1, 5-9 which conveys ethics as taught in Hebrew Proverbs?" To answer this question, I start with the deduction that there is one basically agreed upon universal moral law that all people generally across all times and cultures hold up as the one to follow. C. S. Lewis's observation of this shared ethical ideal is most adequate.

> "It is far from my intention, to deny that we find in Christian ethics a deepening, an internalization, a few changes of emphasis, moral code. But only serious ignorance of Jewish and Pagan culture would lead anyone to the conclusion that it is a radically new thing. Essentially, Christianity is not the promulgation of a moral discovery. It is addressed only to penitents, only to those who admit their disobedience to the known moral law. It offers forgiveness for having broken, and supernatural help towards keeping, that law, and by so doing re-affirms it."[48]

He goes on to add that most of Christian ethics find parallels not only among Jewish writings, but "in classical, ancient Egyptian, Ninevite, Babylonian, or Chinese texts." The ethics in Titus 1.5-9 are the same as Proverbs and, with the exceptions of idolatry and sexual behaviors, are the same as Hellenism's ideals. The uniqueness Lewis identifies in Christianity is explicitly addressed in Titus. Christians confess their failures and are given access by God to receive his help in maturing toward the standard in a "training" process (Titus 2.11-3.7).

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[48] C. S. Lewis, "On Ethics" in *Christian Reflections* in *Collected Works of C. S. Lewis: The Pilgrim's Regress, Christian Reflections, God in the Dock* (New York, NY: Inspirational Press, 1996), 205. See also his "Illustrations of the *Tao* (= The Way, the Natural Law)" in *The Abolition of Man* (Oxford, UK: 1943).

This observation is not lost on Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, originally published 1879-1880, trans. Constance Garnett (New York, NY: Signet Classics, 1958, reprinted 2007), 193). The eccentric Father Paissy, attentive to the socio-politico-ethical-humanist atheists of his day, correctly observed, "For even those who have renounced Christianity and attack it still follow the Christian ideal. And neither their subtlety nor the ardor of their hearts has been able to create a higher ideal of man and of virtue than the ideal given by Christ of old. When it has been attempted, the result has been only grotesque."

Secondly, I utilize C. John Collins' work in a number of ways. I aim to build on his articles which evidence that Paul used language common among Greco-Roman philosophical writings that were co-opted by 2TJ authors who were in Hellenistic settings.[49] I will show that Paul is drawing off of terms and concepts 'in the cultural air' in order to convey biblical teaching, namely that of Proverbs. Paul co-opts these terms to communicate biblical ethical wisdom to his Gentile and Jewish Christian audience who are immersed in Hellenistic culture. Paul is contextualizing the Gospel in similar ways that Hellenistic Jews contextualized their monotheism for their Hellenistic neighbors.

I also rely on Collins' explanation of sociolinguistics. "Rhetoric" is an accommodative catch-all for "employing rhetoric, linguistic pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and literary criticism," all of which seeks to mold "the likes and dislikes of the members of a community."[50] Speech act theory is likewise applied to Titus 1.5-9. This theory distinguishes the following in every form of communication:

> "**Locution**: the actual form of the words spoken;
> **Illocution**: the intended effect of those words (on beliefs, actions, attitudes);
> **Perlocution**: the actual effect of the words."[51]

This leads to how we identify that Titus 1.5-9 is properly understood by most intuitively. We all have access to language because we all use it. Thus, we know intuitively how ordinary language works. Titus 1.5-9 is ordinary language (as opposed to

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[49] C. John Collins, "1 Corinthians 8:6 and Romans 11:36: A Pauline Confession with a Hellenistic Setting." *Presbyterion* 43, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 55-68; ibid., "Colossians 1.17 'Hold Together': A Co-opted Term." *Biblica* 95, no. 1 (2014): 64-87; ibid., "Echoes of Aristotle in Romans 2:14-15: Or, Maybe Abimelech Was Not So Bad After All," *Journal of Markets and Morality* 13, no. 1 (Spring, 2010): 123-173; ibid., "Noah, Deucalion, and the New Testament," *Biblica* 93, no. 3 (2012): 403-426.

[50] C. John Collins, *Reading Genesis Well: Navigating History, Poetry, Science and Truth in Genesis 1-11* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 41-50, quote from 50.

[51] Collins, *Reading Genesis Well*, 51. See discussion that follows (51-88).

scientific or poetic). Ordinary language always requires what is left unspecified by the

speaker to be filled in by the hearer.[52] We are more easily able to do this with our passage

when we are familiar with the shared world of the author and audience.[53] For our

purposes, this necessarily includes bringing to bear both the cross-cultural intersection of

2TJ with Hellenism and OT teachings on the description of elders as part of its context.[54]

Thirdly, to understand their shared world I looked for clusters of terms or texts.[55] I

began with a search for ethical lists in both Hellenistic and 2TJ literature that bear

similarities to Titus 1.5-9. More broadly, I attempted to discern how Paul's terms in these

lists are used by Hellenistic philosophers and 2TJ writers. Allowing for contextual

nuances for each term's occurrence,[56] I aim to answer the following questions: 1) What,

if any, is the overlap in usage and meaning? 2) How is Paul contextualizing these terms

for his audience? 3) To cooperate with authorial intention, is it better to view these words

individually or as a composite whole, akin to Hellenistic descriptions of a virtuous

person?

Fourthly, I place Proverbs in its rhetorical, canonical and ANE contexts, heavily

dependent upon Arthur Keefer's work. Lastly, I follow the trail in 2TJ Wisdom literature

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[52] Ibid., 68, following C. S. Lewis's discussion. See Chapter 4 below.

[53] Ibid., 90-91.

[54] This is what Collins (*Reading Genesis Well*) describes as "critically intuitive" (59) and using a "disciplined imagination" (71).

[55] Here I follow John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*. The Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1995). This falls in the category of register (C. John Collins, *Reading Genesis Well*, 49).

[56] Takamitsu Muraoka's *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (2009) was immensely helpful for this endeavor. At the end of each entry, Muraoka provides a list of words whose semantic range overlaps with that particular word. He demonstrates beyond doubt that groups of words tended to run in the same circles, with nuances of meaning still utilized depending on the context.

modeled after canonical Proverbs (both Hebrew and LXX) and interacting with contemporaneous prevailing beliefs of wise moral living. Titus 1.5-9 in its own context must take all the preceding into account.

My argument is organized as follows. Chapter 2 examines Proverbs in its rhetorical, canonical and ANE contexts, focusing on eight aspects: the rhetorical caricature of the ideal wise person; the concrete use of people, relationships, scenarios and other aspects of life; co-opting of ANE rhetorical literary devices; the goal of moral transformation; Yahweh's covenantal relationship with Israel (biblical worldview); democratization of wisdom; wisdom cultivated in community; how Proverbs is the ceiling to the Law as a floor.

Chapter 3 addresses how 2TJ contextualized Proverbs for their Jewish Hellenistic neighbors. I attend to the crossroads between 2TJ and Hellenistic moral philosophy. I discuss how both Jews and Hellenists utilized moral ideals in the form of caricatures of historical people or how the grouping of ethical terms holds up what people should aspire to. Next, I elaborate on the overlap of semantic domains of various ethical terms, noting how 2TJ nuanced certain terms or concepts within the worldview of the OT. Finally, I show how ethical terms often were grouped together to express the virtuous life as a whole or the interconnectedness of all morals. Undoubtedly, one of the most challenging obstacles to a proper reading of the New Testament is lack of familiarity with the cultural context (*e.g.*, the socio-religious milieu) of the first century Mediterranean world. Now nearly 2,000 years removed, we interpret the Scriptures through the lens of a myriad of assumptions and presuppositions, some of which those in the Roman empire did not share. We do this unawares. How did the moral teachings and the worldview of Proverbs

translate from Hebrew into the Hellenistic world of 2TJ and the NT? In order to explore

this, we must examine how Hellenistic authors and 2TJ authors wrote about morality and

ethics. This endeavor is the focus of chapter 3.

I refer frequently to Greco-Roman philosophers and inscriptions to represent

relevant aspects of Hellenistic morals. Whether or not 2TJ or Titus is directly dependent

upon those authors is not my concern. Whatever consistency we find among them reflects

what was in the cultural air for Titus. Perhaps we could liken it to Platonism's influence

from the Enlightenment down to today. Most people do not read Plato, but nevertheless

hold Platonic beliefs (*e.g*., escape from our bodies and creation as the culmination of our

existence).

In chapter 4, I present how to read Titus 1.5-9 contextually, pulling together all I

lay out in chapters 2 and 3. For my outline, I use the same eight aspects for my Proverbs

discussion: the covenantal worldview in the Hebrew scriptures is fulfilled by Jesus (Titus

is in the same unfolding story governed by the same God); co-opting of words and

rhetorical devices; concrete moral qualities; overlap of Hebrew terms and values with

those of Greek; the goal of moral transformation; the floor-ceiling concept;

democratization of the wise, moral ideal; ethical growth in community.

Chapter 2

The Illocutionary Context of Proverbs

Titus 1.5-9 focuses on ethical qualities. Proverbs is the primary book of the OT that deals directly with ethics, a fundamental aspect of the wise life. Thus, it is worthwhile to place Proverbs squarely in its context if we are to see how Proverbs enlightens our reading of Titus' description of elders. For Proverbs' context, I attend to eight aspects: the rhetoric of the morally ideal person, namely, the use of caricatures, concreteness and co-opted literary devices; the goal as moral transformation; Yahweh's covenant with Israel (biblical worldview); democratization of wisdom; wisdom cultivated in community; Proverbs' relationship to the Law as a ceiling is to a floor.

Rhetorical Reading of Proverbs Established in 1.1-7: Exegetical Basis for Proverbs' Intended Audience

A rule of thumb in exegesis is to find the subject and main verb(s) of the sentence. These grammatical components generally act as a governor for the whole sentence, including dependent clauses. The longer the sentence, the more difficult the challenge may be. This is complicated enough for long sentences in prose. In poetry, the level of difficulty can increase significantly. This is precisely what we encounter with the opening verses of Proverbs.

There are two ways to read the syntax of Proverbs 1.1-6, either the infinitives of vv. 2-4 are dependent on the title (v.1) or dependent on the finite verbs of v.5. Most commentators assume that the four *lamed*-infinitives in Prov. 1.2-4 are tied

grammatically to the title in v. 1. They, therefore, function independently from the three jussives in v. 5.[57]

However, as Derek Kidner tersely remarked, "the verbs of this paragraph" would "repay study."[58] Arthur Keefer has provided us with the necessary reparations.[59] Keefer demonstrates exegetically that the finite verbs of v. 5 function as the control for all of vv. 2-6. First, v. 1 stands alone as the title and is not grammatically connected to vv. 2-6. All titles or subtitles in the canonical Wisdom Literature are consistent in this way (Prov. 10.1-2; 24.23; 25.1-2; 30.1; 31.1-3; Eccl. 1.1-2; Song 1.1-2).[60] Secondly, the infinitives are better understood as dependent on the finite verbs in v. 5. Most agree that these *lamed*-infinitives express purpose. Such infinitives of purpose commonly occur at the

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[57] *E.g*., Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, AB (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2000), 53, 58, 60, 62; Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, NAC (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 2002), 67-68; Derek Kidner, *Proverbs*, TOTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1964), 22; Tremper Longman, III, *Proverbs*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 95-98; Roland E. Murphy, *Proverbs*, WBC (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 3-4; Bruce Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1-15*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 174-179. Longman seems to avoid expressing an opinion on how the infinitives are grammatically dependent on the title (94-95).

[58] Kidner, 58.

[59] Arthur Keefer, "A Shift in Perspective: The Intended Audience and a Coherent Reading of Proverbs 1:1-7," *JBL* 136, no. 1 (2017): 103-116. Contrary to Franz Delitzsch (*Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon*, Commentary on the Old Testament (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1966), 6:40) the change in verb forms from infinitives "into independent sentences" is not merely stylistic.

[60] Keefer, "A Shift in Perspective," 106.

beginning of the sentence or before the main verb, as they do here.[61] Proverbs 1.7 is best understood as completing the opening thought of 1.2-6.[62]

Rhetorical Moral Ideal Wise Person

Proverbs' Audience: The Rhetorical Moral Ideal Wise Person

The preface to Proverbs (1.1-7) invites the reader/hearer to assume the position of the ideal wise person. Here I will also rely on Keefer's explanation of how Proverbs' intended audience is specified in v. 5.[63] Most commentators assume that Proverbs has a dual intended audience: "the simple"/"the youth" (v. 4) and "the wise" (v. 5).[64] An assumption governing this view is that young people are inexperienced, and thus, easily led astray by folly. While that is generally true in actuality, to read Proverbs this way would neglect the rhetorical function of the characters in Proverbs, a matter I will address below. Another reason given for thinking that Proverbs is addressed to the "simple"/"youth" is because the father frequently addresses his son (*e.g.*, 1.8; 2.1, etc.). However, the "simple" is always described in negative terms and is co-referential with

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[61] JM 155r. Admittedly, the number of infinitives that occur in vv. 2-4 and then again in v. 6 presents a unique difficulty in the MT. One must also admit that the whole structure of 1.2-6 is unique. Even so, uniqueness does not upend rules of grammar without warrant. Keefer aptly reveals how following well known grammatical rules results in an Occam's razor for Proverbs' prologue. Cf. 1 Jn. 1.1-4 for a rough comparison albeit in Greek prose.

[62] Most notably, the three words "know," "wisdom," and "instruction" occur in the same order in vv. 2 and 7 (Keefer, "A Shift in Perspective," 106). Why v. 7 begins the next section in the LXX translations deserves investigation.

[63] Keefer, "A Shift in Perspective," 108-113.

[64] *E.g.*, Mordechai Zer-Kavod and Yehudah Kil, *The Bible: Proverbs with the Jerusalem Commentary*, trans. Albert Milton Kanter and Yocheved Engelberg Cohen (Jerusalem, Israel: Mosad Harav Kook, 2014), lxxvii; 4-5; Dave Bland, *Proverbs and the Formation of Character*, (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2015), *passim* (*e.g.*, 45: to youth and opened-minded old). Also, all those in note 1.

"fool" (cf. 1.7 and 8.4). On a literary level, the reader is discouraged from identifying with the simple.

The wise, on the other hand, functions as the rhetorical ideal. Keefer astutely points out that "the wise" in v. 5 is to be distinguished from historical wise persons in v. 6. The historically wise person is consistently the referent in the "words of the wise" that occurs in "titles, superscripts, and postscripts" throughout the Wisdom Literature (see 22.17; 30.1; 31.1;[65] Job 31.40; Eccl. 1.1). Proverbs uses "the wise" as a rhetorical caricature who always displays traits that are good (*i.e.*, reflective of God's character). The reader is invited to pattern himself after this literary depiction of the ideal wise.[66]

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[65] James L. Crenshaw reveals Keefer's observation on an intuitive level. "The rich rhetoric in this brief unit [Prov. 31.1-9] may derive from an acknowledged discrepancy between the ideal [king] and the actual" ("The Sage in Proverbs," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns,1990), 208 [205-216]). He misses that this is the function of the rhetoric throughout the whole book of Proverbs. There is a discrepancy between the ideal wise and the actual in every person. This is a rather significant reason why Israel was given this very book. Crenshaw is, thus, mistaken to see "the wise" as "a privileged class" and to think that "the sage stands apart from ordinary citizens regardless of their intellectual achievement" (212). Each Israelite is invited to walk the path of wisdom.

Bland (see especially his chapter 4) conspicuously neglects the function of rhetoric in Proverbs, despite him revealing a couple of intuitive readings of texts. For example, he correctly identifies the "wise" with the "righteous" and the "fool" with the "wicked" and "lazy" (48; see also 39-40). He takes no notice of the rhetorical stance of the "wise" as the intended audience.

[66] Keefer, "A Shift in Perspective," 109. This means G. I. Davies is incorrect to see teachers as a particular subset of "wise" (*hkm*) in Prov. 13.14 and 15.7 ("Were There Schools in Ancient Israel?" in *Wisdom in Ancient Israel: Essays in Honour of J. A. Emerton*, eds. John Day, Robert P. Gordon, and H. G. M. Williamson (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 200). The "wise" involves not only teachers, but farmers and carpenters, friends and neighbors, etc., and covers all manners of the lives of all people.

Such a rhetorical device is not unique to Israel. Sumerian royal hymns (note: poetry like Proverbs) exalted and celebrated kings as ideals "in hyperbolic diction and extravagant imagery." These hymns "were no doubt instrumental to a large extent in shaping the king's thoughts, molding his ideas, inspiring his psyche, and imbuing him with the conviction that all his act and deeds—conducting wars, building and rebuilding temples, maintaining the cult, digging and clearing canals, constructing and repairing highways, promulgating law code—all had one supreme goal: to make his people happy, prosperous, and secure." (Samuel Noah Kramer, "The Sage in Sumerian Literature: A Composite Portrait," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East* eds. John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns,1990), 41-42). The poetic portrayal of the ideal king does not mean that Sumerian kings matched the ideal in actuality. Even Kramer's example of Sulgi, "the second ruler of the Third Dynasty of Ur," fails to convince that he was the ideal in actuality. It is highly unrealistic that the actual Sulgi would have been as successful in all the endeavors to the extent to which he is portrayed in his "autobiography" (42-43). Kramer admits as

Caricatures in Proverbs

As a rhetorical tool for instruction, Proverbs utilizes characters that are co-referential. The wise, the righteous, and diligent are ways of referring to various aspects of the same literary character; likewise, the fool, the wicked, and the lazy.[67] However, commentators do not always make it clear that these characters are literary caricatures.[68] Kidner darts down this road, but does not make it all the way: "The fool meets us under various names."[69] Waltke's summary gets us further: Proverbs' characters are "exemplars by which to judge one's life in many situations."[70] The way that Proverbs uses hyperbolic language and scenarios and depicts its characters in exaggerated behaviors (e.g., the wicked in 1.10-19) indicate that its character types are to be understood as caricatures.[71]

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much in a footnote: "at least some of its contents are authentic and trustworthy (42 n19; the description of Sulgi's accomplishments and abilities far exceed that of Solomon's in 1 Kings 1-11). According to Ronald Sweet, Mesopotamian kings were extolled as "the wise man *par excellence*. Yet only three kings claim to have been literate in two thousand years of Mesopotamian history" (Ronald F. G. Sweet, "The Sage in Akkadian Literature: A Philological Study," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, eds. John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns,1990), 65).

See also John Eaton (*The Psalms: A Historical and Spiritual Commentary with an Introduction and New Translation* (New York, NY: T & T Clark, 2003), 488)) regarding "blessed" in Psalm 1 (a wisdom psalm): "The root of *asherey* points to the sense 'steps' or 'walking', and so to the idea of a happy way or life. The expression is an exclamation, holding up a kind of person or people as an enviable model. It was thus useful in teaching devout conduct."

[67] Arthur Keefer, "The Didactic Function of Proverbs 1-9 for the Interpretation of Proverbs 10-31," (PhD. diss., University of Cambridge, 2018), 92. A helpful illustration of how Proverbs does this is Knut M. Heim, "Coreferentiality, Structure and Context in Proverbs 10:1-5." *JOTT* 6, no. 3 (1993): 183-209.

[68] *E.g.*, James L. Crenshaw (*Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 73-74) recognizes the wise and the foolish as oppositical, but does not recognize the various terms for the fool as co-referential.

[69] Kidner, 39-42, here 39. Also, Garrett: the description of a just and righteous king in Prov. 16.10-15 "should be understood as ideal rather than actual" (156); 31.10-31 is a depiction of the 'ideal' wife (while discussing 18.22; 19.13-14; 170); the triumph of the righteous leads a city "closer to the creation ideal" (224); Lady Wisdom described as the 'ideal' (252).

[70] Waltke, 125. Perhaps he makes explicit what he has been stopping short of elsewhere in his introduction (93-100, 109-116). See also "extremes and their opposites" (Zer-Kavod and Kil, lxx-lxxi).

[71] Keefer, "Proverbs 1-9," 63-67.

Proverbs 1-9 presents character types in a simpler form which prepares the rest of book to further variegate those characters in concrete circumstances, even if hyperbolic or idealistic.[72] The rhetorical purpose of these caricatures is affective. I am to be motivated to emulate the wise and evaluate myself in light of what I see in both the fool and the wise.[73]

Concreteness

The principles Proverbs teaches are often communicated "in terms of a specific circumstance or a specific person, rather than in terms of a generalization about people (plural)."[74] Proverbs opens windows to the world of wisdom through the use of concrete aspects and situations of life. Udo Skladny sees "the wise and fools"/"the righteous and the wicked" spoken of "in concrete terms so that one can list their specific actions," but limits this to Prov. 16.1-22.16.[75] Waltke corrects this limitation, demonstrating that Proverbs uses concrete terms and specific actions elsewhere in his introduction and

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[72] Ibid., 93-94. Cf. the "concrete issue of hoarding" in Prov. 11.24-26 (Garrett, 128; see also 156, 164, 185).

[73] Keefer, "Proverbs 1-9," 92. Gerhard Von Rad (*Wisdom in Israel* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1972) 64) comes close (the wise man is the righteous man; the fool is in contrast with the wise man), but does not follow through with his observations. He rightly stresses the intellectual side of ethics in Proverbs (critical thinking, more or less). Unfortunately, he does not see how Proverbs appeals to a person's affections (*e.g.*, 93). Collins (*Reading Genesis Well*, 65-66) helpfully draws out (cf. Prov. 20.5) how we cooperate with Proverbs' rhetorical illocution when we are affected. Proverbs 5.15-20, for instance, guides a husband to what it would feel like if his wife was promiscuous, which has a Matt. 7.12 kind of affect.

[74] Duane A. Garrett and Kenneth Laing Harris, "Introduction to Proverbs," in *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 1133; cf. Raymond C. van Leeuwen ("The Book of Proverbs," NIB (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), who mentions some examples as concrete scenarios (*e.g.*, 5:55).

[75] Quoted in Waltke, 14.

throughout his commentary.[76] However, they both miss clarifying what many of these specific actions are: concrete snippets of what wisdom or folly looks like in daily Israelite life.

The reader/hearer's response to Proverbs is essential to its rhetorical illocution. "Proverbs tends toward the *concrete instantiation*," as John Collins teaches, "leaving the reader to discern applications, *mutatis mutandis*."[77]

Of course, those in the royal courts would benefit by properly appropriating Proverbs' instruction.[78] Many Proverbs depict wisdom and folly for rulers, but the kind of concrete situations often utilized would be primarily for the common Israelite.[79] For example, it is necessary for adult children to pull their weight doing agricultural work (*e.g.*, 10.1-5). Aristocratic families are less likely to resonate with this kind of concrete

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[76] Waltke, 43, 120, 194, 225, etc.

[77] C. John Collins, *Study Guide for Psalms, Wisdom and Worship*, unpublished manuscript (2016), 33 (italics original); also 55 (referring to Prov. 7.6 as a concrete example).

[78] Bland uses the terms "flexible" and "situational" to effectively describe the rhetorical function of concrete statements. "the user should take responsibility for its creative appropriation," being able to wisely "adapt a proverb to different contexts" (79). Is his explanation of "the binary nature" of Proverbs simplistic (*i.e.*, one line is adaptable to different situations; sayings repeated in Proverbs with altered parallel lines "are to be memorized but not always repeated verbatim")? (ibid.)

[79] It is easy to assume Prov. 11.14 is only about the success of a king's military and political endeavors (as R. N. Whybray seems to ("The Sage in the Israelite Royal Court" in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 135 [133-139]). However, as a concrete expression, and with the aid of v. 15, one intuitively sees how 11.14 applies to a wide variety of real-life scenarios, including those of Israelite peasant farmers (see Garrett, *Proverbs*, 125-126). Just as "too many cooks spoil the broth" is not limited to cooks, so the image of military success is not limited to the royal court. This is an intuitive reading of the locution. (The same goes for 15.22 and 24.6). Likewise, 14.4 is not limited to farming. Cf. Knut Heim, *Like Grapes of Gold Set in Silver: An Interpretation of Proverbial Clusters in Proverbs 10:1-22:16* (New York, NY : Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 71-74. Arthur Keefer,(*The Book of Proverbs and Virtue Ethics* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 146) observes how the Hebrew term for war is never used metaphorically. Yet concrete scenarios allow those outside of royal administration to appropriate these proverbs to their own needs (see 143-144).

example. The common Israelite family would more readily know deeply what's at stake if adult children fail to serve the needs of their family within their local village.

Co-Opting Literary Devices from ANE Neighbors

Israel appropriates rhetorical devices from other nations.[80] The similarities of Israelite Wisdom Literature with their ANE neighbors have been well documented.[81] Like some other ANE wisdom texts, Proverbs 1-9 serves as a prologue to 10-31.[82] Parallelism was a common device.[83] Proverbs 10-31 includes many paragraphs, like some ANE texts.[84] Poetic forms framed by the use of numbers like those in Prov 6.16-19; 30.7-9, 18-19, 21-23, 24-28, 29-31 are found in Ugaritic texts. Concerning the Baal-cycle:

> "Two sacrifices Baal hates,
>> three, the Rider on the Clouds:
>> a sacrifice of shame,
>> a sacrifice of meanness,
>> and a sacrifice of the lewdness of handmaids."[85]

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[80] von Rad, 58. For different ways to formulate proverbial statements found among Israel and her neighbors, see R. B. Y. Scott, "Folk Proverbs of the Ancient Near East," in *Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom*, ed. James L. Crenshaw (New York, NY: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1976), 417-426.

[81] W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996); James B. Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011); William W. Hallo, *The Context of Scripture* (New York, NY: Brill, 1997-2017); ongoing discussions of Egypt's 30 sayings of Amenemope with Prov. 22.17-24.22 (John A. Wilson, "The Instruction of Amen-em-Opet," in *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*, ed. James B. Pritchard (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 346-351).

[82] Keefer, "Proverbs 1-9," 10. Keefer is more convincing than Garrett's treatment of 1.8-9.18 as one of several "main texts" (43-46).

[83] Wilson, 343-351. Cf. `Onchsheshonqy`'s use of "single form proverbs" and "synthetic parallelism" much more commonly than "antithetic" and "synonymous parallelism" (Gemser, 142-145).

[84] Knut Heim, *passim*; cf. Garrett, 46-48, and *passim* 59-252; contra Bland, 8-9.

[85] Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Wisdom and law in the Old Testament: The Ordering of Life in Israel and Early Judaism* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1995), 37.

The borrowing of preexisting literary devices was a common feature of Proverbs, albeit nuancing them to suit the purposes for an Israelite covenantal context.

Goal of Proverbs is Moral Transformation

The pedagogical telos of Proverbs is expressed through its rhetoric, both explicitly and implicitly. Prov. 1.2-7 explicitly state the book's aim is character formation as the result of wisdom's cultivation.[86] The constellation of "wisdom, the father's instruction, God or the fear of the Lord, and character formation"[87] are held together in the flow from Prov. 1.7 to 1.8. These elements resurface variously throughout the book. "According to Prov. 1.2," summates Keefer, "acquiring knowledge, wisdom and understanding constitutes the aim of Proverbs, an aim … established as consistent with Proverbs 2, namely, through the text's teachings and with the fear of the Lord, love and pursue wisdom in order to grow in wise character."[88] Such character interweaves emotional intelligence[89] with critical thinking and moral maturity, all cultivated in community.[90]

Furthermore, Prov. 8 implicitly expresses the indissolubility of wisdom and character formation through its overall message. Its personification of Wisdom "clarifies the goals of Prov. 1-9 and the structure of its values, forwarding instruction as a means to

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[86] Keefer, "Proverbs 1-9," 123, et al. This section is a summary of pages 95-140.

[87] Ibid., 103.

[88] Ibid., 123; see also 108, 111-112.

[89] Longman, *The Fear of the Lord: A Theological Introduction to Wisdom in Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 8-10, citing the seminal work of D. Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1995).

[90] Rightly Garrett, 252: "In Proverbs wisdom is not merely or even primarily intellectual; it is first of all relational." Primary relationships in Proverbs are with Yahweh, parents, children, spouse and close friends.

grow in wisdom, that is, to become wise, which seems to be the ultimate outcome of fellowship with her."[91]

The framework of Prov. 1-9 provides the assumptions necessary for a proper perlocution of implicit teachings throughout 10-31. For instance, a "good name" and "favor" according to Prov. 22.1 in light of Prov. 1-9, is wise character "acquired through a religious and human-mediated education"[92] Here, "religious" means restored fellowship with Yahweh, which only Yahweh can accomplish. Yahweh loves those who trust him and blesses them with wisdom (2.1-11; 3.1-12; 16.3). This is a foundational motivation for his people to engage in cultivating wisdom.[93] Yet, wise people must confess their finitude (30.1-9).[94] The wise know the limits of their wisdom and the depth of their ignorance. They are "not wise in their own eyes" (3.5-7). Agur models how to confess one's inability to fully perfect wisdom while upholding the worthiness of its pursuit.[95] This is the confession of a "sage"! Any Israelite, including village elders or priests, could make the same confession.[96] Yahweh, however, in his sovereignty and wisdom is not

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[91] Keefer, "Proverbs 1-9," 108. 8.32-36 is a rhetorical invitation to comply with God's wisdom infused throughout creation.

[92] Ibid., 117. I address the "human-mediated" element below under the subheading "Community."

[93]Ibid., 147.

[94] Ibid., 118-124.

[95] Ibid., 125.

[96] This has strong implications when we get to Titus appointing elders in Crete (and their acceptance).

bound by the same limitations.[97] This is all the more reason those on wisdom's path can trust him.[98]

Before turning attention to Proverbs' covenantal berth, we must note that such is inseparable from its stated goals. Prov. 1.7 grounds wisdom in "the fear of the Yahweh." Since חכמה conveys "skill" (*e.g.*, Exo. 28.3), wisdom is best understood, as Collins has captured pithily, "the skill in the art of godly living."[99] We find further support in the roots of דעת, חכמה, בינה occurring together only in Prov. 1.1-7, 2.6, 3.19-20, 30.2-3 and Isa. 11.2. All these texts stress the goal of Proverbs as moral transformation, something gifted by Yahweh and cultivated by recipients.[100]

Covenant (Fear of Yahweh, Worldview and Mission)

Proverbs is to be understood in the context of the Mosaic Covenant. There are verbal, conceptual and thematic links between the Law and Proverbs. Proverbs develops Israel's role as renewed humanity within the framework of the Torah. Like the Law, Proverbs both affirms shared moral ideals and corrects the flaws of Israel's neighbors.

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[97] Keefer, "Proverbs 1-9," 151, 198; *e.g.*, Prov. 10.3, 22; 15.3; 16.1, 4, 9, 11, 33; 19.14, 21.

[98] Thus, the leaders of the Lord's people have more reason to lead wisely. Someone ought not to use their finitude as an excuse to avoid the responsibility of leading. Relevancy to Titus 1.5-9 is posited in chapter 4.

[99] Collins, *Study Guide*, 26.

[100] Keefer, "Proverbs 1-9," 123. Isa. 11.2 describes the wisdom of the Davidic Messiah. See Chapter 3's discussion.

For centuries, scholars have misread Proverbs.[101] Many scholars have supposed

Proverbs to be "secular," unconnected with the Sinaitic Covenant.[102] However, to speak

of "the fear of YHWH" to an Israelite audience is clearly a claim for exclusive devotion

to that one particular god over against any others. The teaching of chapters 1-9 bears this

out. The connections to the Law are many. The first fruits offering in 3.9-10 is that of

Deut. 18.3-4. The sacrifice and prayer of 15.8 is obviously offered to YHWH. Proverbs'

concern is with the heart of the worshiper. The sacrifices as prescribed by the Law are to

be assumed by the reader (Prov. 3.9-10 providing the basis within Proverbs itself).[103]

The parents' "commandment" and "teaching" in Prov. 6.20, 23 may refer to the

Pentateuch.[104] Even if it is not, their teaching is certainly to include YHWH's

commandments (Deut. 6.6-7), which should guide their instruction in wise living.[105] One

clear reference to the Mosaic Law is the meaning of "torah" in 29.18.[106] The following is

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[101] Delitzsch contended with the view that Proverbs does not condemn idolatry (6:30). Present scholarship is still influenced by that of the 19th century which rent asunder Proverbs from its covenantal and canonical roots (see Will Kynes, *An Obituary for "Wisdom Literature"*).

[102] See Longman, *The Fear of the Lord*, 129, citing Gerhard von Rad (57-58) and Walter Brueggeman (*In Man We Trust: The Neglected Side of Biblical Faith* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1973), 81-82) as examples; Walther Zimmerli ("Concerning the Structure of Old Testament Wisdom" in *Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom*, ed. James L. Crenshaw, trans. Brian W. Kovacs (New York, NY: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1976), 177) was mistaken about Proverbs and Ecclesiastes having no "reference to man as a member of the covenant people."

[103] See Collins, "Proverbs and the Levitical System," 16-20.

[104] Zer-Kavod and Kil (XVIII; XXXVIII-LII) assert that the two Hebrew terms when paired always refer to the Law.

[105] Gluttony is equally as bad as drunkenness; both are examples of disregarding parents' voice who instruct their children in the Law (Deut. 21.18-20). Gluttony shames one's parents (Prov. 28.7; Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 102 n16). This also illustrates that learning and growing in wisdom is to be done in a community governed by Yahweh's wisdom.

[106] Collins, "Proverbs and the Levitical System," 14. Of course, "torah" can mean something other than the Law in Proverbs; context is always determinative.

a sampling of connections from Proverbs to the Law: the fear of YHWH (*e.g.* Prov. 1.7;

Deut. 6.13; 10.11-12; 31.12); do not murder and do not steal (Exo. 20.13, 15; Deut. 5.17,

19; Prov. 1.10-19); do not commit adultery (Exo. 20.14; Deut. 5.18; Prov. 6.24-35); do

not rob the poor or oppress the needy, do not move boundary lines to steal property, look

out for the orphans and widows (Prov. 22.22-23, 28; Exo. 22.21; 23.6; 23.10-11; Deut.

19.14; 27.17, 19); "abomination before the Lord" (Deut. 12.31; 16.22) is equivalent to

"the Lord hates" (Prov. 6.16);[107] just weights and balances (Deut. 25.13-16 has clear

verbal connections to Prov. 11.1);[108] a community's elders are to be honored, ideally for

their righteousness (Prov. 23.22; 16.31; Lev. 19.32).[109]

These connections reveal the essentiality of the Law to Proverbs' context.

Concurrently, YHWH's mission for Israel as a renewed humanity and channel for

YHWH's blessings through Abraham to reach all nations must also shape the reader's

interpretation.[110]

Yahweh is the constant supplier of wisdom and morality. Prov. 1-3 establishes a

foundational principle: "no virtue itself is had without the help of the Lord."[111] This is a

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[107] Ibid.; Zer-Kavod and Kil, XVIII. They also note that all seven vices in 6.16-19 are prohibited in the Pentateuch.

[108] Collins, "Proverbs and the Levitical System," 13.

[109] Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 108-109.

[110] See discussion in Collins, "Proverbs and the Levitical System," 11-12 and literature cited therein. Delitzsch, (6:30) confessed that Proverbs' aim in the context of Yahweh's covenant with Israel is toward an ideal. Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 215: "in Proverbs virtue most securely resides with God, who administers virtuosity and promises to straighten out the kink in human morality. He teaches, governs, disciplines, and makes one virtuous" (commenting on Prov 30.1ff, words from a Gentile).

[111] Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 212; see also, *e.g.*, 156; 188; 215; 220.

stark contrast from neighboring ANE wisdom contexts.[112] Yahweh is directly involved in judicial procedures providing the necessary wisdom (Prov. 17.15; 22.23 and Exo. 17.2; Deut. 17.8-13; Ps. 43; Num. 35.30, 34).[113] The relevancy for Titus is that Hellenistic philosophies also believed the gods were morally uninvolved.

The covenant literature is the governor of interpretation for Proverbs. Even if, as John Day has argued, "Proverbs appropriated the idea of the fear of the deity from Semitic wisdom," that idea is infused with new meaning in the context of the Mosaic covenant. Day admits that "the fear of Yahweh" is central to the wisdom of Proverbs whereas it is not in Babylonian wisdom literature, but he does not explain why.[114] The reason "the fear of Yahweh" is central to Proverbs is because of its centrality in the Law (see, *e.g.*, Deut. 10.11-12; 31.12), the covenantal context.

Sumerian literature taught that kingship was given by the gods before and after the Flood. Divine laws to be promoted by the king accompanied kingship from the gods, for the king was "the vicar of the gods."[115] The wisdom of Mesopotamian kings (esp. Akkadian) was not intellectual. "It was largely a matter of recognizing the supremacy of the gods and performing deeds pleasing to them. Reverence for the gods was the

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[112] Ibid., 188 n69.

[113] Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 142-143. For Yahweh's immanence and interest in morality of the judicial activity, see Prov 3.32-35; 6.16-19; 12.22; 20.10; 28.5.

[114] John Day, "Foreign Semitic Influence on the Wisdom of Israel and Its Appropriation in the Book of Proverbs," in *Wisdom in Ancient Israel: Essays in Honour of J. A. Emerton*, eds. John Day, Robert P. Gordon, and H. G. M. Williamson (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 67. Day starts with a post-exilic date for Proverbs 1-9, with assumptions given more weight than the literary evidence itself. (The wisdom of Ahiqar is the source for most of his comparisons.) It is beyond the confines of this study, but one would need to research the relationship between "the fear of Yahweh" in the Torah and similar phraseology in Israel's Semitic neighbors during the second millennium B.C.E. It very well could be that concept of "the fear of [the god(s)]" was in the cultural air for quite some time.

[115] Kramer, 40.

beginning of wisdom."[116] Reverence was primarily manifested in maintaining temples, proper worship rituals and overseeing the administration of justice.[117] With this cultural backdrop, the contrast between Proverbs and its ANE neighbors becomes stark. The need to emphasize that Israel must "fear Yahweh" and that wisdom comes from him as opposed to any other god is all the more understandable.

For example, Proverbs does sense a kind of moral order for individuals and societal life. The basis is not simply creation. Rather, a moral order exists because of the Creator's character. Chapters 1-9, per Keefer's dissertation, establish this for Proverbs directly. This accords with Yahweh's character revealed throughout the Torah. Justice should be pursued because Yahweh is just, and his co-regents (per Gen. 1-2) must rule with justice. Here, Proverbs differs with Egyptian Ma'at ("truth, justice, right(ness), basic order, world order"). It is not deified.[118] It is not the controlling power of the cosmos and social world. For Proverbs, that prerogative belongs solely to Yahweh. All that is good and just emanates out of his personal character.

Notably, certain ANE views of women are corrected. Proverbs and the Law agree with neither "A house without an owner is a woman without a husband"[119] nor `Onchesheshonqy`'s depiction of women as "dependent, unselfreliant, unsteady, fickle

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[116] Sweet, 65.

[117] Kramer, 41.

[118] von Rad, 72. Von Rad fails to see the point I make in the rest of this paragraph.

[119] Lambert, 232.

(Col. 20, l. 19; Col. 22, l. 8; Col. 15, l. 11f), and untrustworthy with property and wealth (Col. 12, l. 13f; Col. 25, l. 9).[120] Nothing like Prov. 31.10-31 is found outside Israel.[121]

Democratization of Wisdom

Ronald Sweet deduces that terms for wisdom were applied to "professions that required an obvious and special skill, ranging from carpentry through the leadership of armies to vocations requiring mastery of writing [scribes]." Words for wisdom were "not applied to agricultural workers, shepherds, or boatmen, for example. Such people certainly required professional skills, but they were the widely shared skills of daily life." Furthermore, he concludes concerning BDB's sixth definition for חכם ("wise, ethically and religiously," including the "wise teacher, sage"): "Akkadian literature knows of such person, but it does not single them out as especially deserving of the vocabulary of wisdom."[122] Proverbs diverges from its ANE neighbors at these points. Wisdom is the most important daily life skill that people share.[123] Wisdom is not oligarchical for an elite class of people but is available to everyone.

The predominant view in scholarship is that Proverbs was written by and for an elite professional class of scribal schools of the royal courts. The variety of concrete situations, however, is evidence that the purpose of Proverbs is for every Israelite.

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[120] Gemser, 152.

[121] Carole R. Fontaine, "The Sage in Family and Tribe" in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, eds. John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns,1990), 160-163.

[122] Sweet, 65.

[123] Wisdom being a skill one must intentionally cultivate finds agreement in Greco-Roman circles (see Aristotle, *NE* 6.13.1-2: cleverness can be used for evil purposes or to practice vices; Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 23).

Crenshaw sees Prov. 4.7 as evidence of the existence of scribal schools. He argues persuasively to translate the Hebrew קְנֵה as "buy" instead of "get."[124] However, he misses the figurative meaning. This is not evidence for a school that trains young men as sages. It is evidence that wisdom is of the utmost importance for all people to cultivate, in keeping with the immediate context of 4.1-9 and with Keefer's interpretation of 1.1-7. If Proverbs is intended for all Israelites, then this easily follows. Such a view is the intuitive reading of the text. However, if one brings to the text the assumption that schools must have existed (Crenshaw is fair and cautious here), then that needs to be argued from the context of the book as it is, not as it may have been prior to the (only) form we have known.[125] Davies is likewise unconvincing in his references to Prov. 17.16 and 23.23 regarding critical thinking of aristocratic administrators.[126] Proverbs does teach us to develop critical thinking, but not of this sort. Those three verses do not speak of schools any more than 1.9 and 3.22 speak of actual adornments one must wear.[127]

Based on texts such as Prov. 1.8, 20-22; 8.4, 32-36; 9.4-6 and the diverse groups of Israelites (e.g., farmers and kings; husbands and wives; parents and children), each Israelite is invited to walk the path of wisdom. "Wisdom literature represents some widely spread and fundamental human concerns," Collins observes, "namely that of

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[124] James L. Crenshaw, "Education in Ancient Israel," *JBL* 104 (1985): 602. Cf. his tempered treatment in *Education in Ancient Israel: Across the Deadening Silence* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1998), 96-99.

[125] There is no obvious evidence of such, which those like Crenshaw, Whybray, and Longman admit.

[126] Davies, 200.

[127] Cf. Kidner, 67. Davies' conclusion is cautious (against the work of Lemaire): there may have been schools "in the capital cities and the administrative centres" of Israel, but Proverbs consists mostly of "traditional popular wisdom, which was disseminated in ways that remain unclear." He further speculates that there may have been some sort of "school" in Israelite villages over which local elders presided, but he admits there is no evidence for this (210-211).

making sense of our world and of our efforts to live well in it."[128] Of course, if Proverbs

is for all Israelites, then leaders of all sorts are included. The council of elders was

essential to the well-being of every village, clan, tribe and the whole nation (Deut. 1.13-

17; 29.10; Josh. 23.2; 24.1; 2 Sam. 5.3; 17.4, 15; 1 Kgs. 8.1).[129] Elders were a mainstay

throughout Israel's life (*e.g.*, Exo. 3.16-18; Num. 11.16-30; Deut. 19.12; 21.2-6, 19-20;

22.15-18; Josh. 8.33; Jdg. 11.5-11; 1 Sam. 16.4; 2 Sam. 5.3; Jer. 29.1; Ezra 5.5). Village

and city elders were to model ethical ideals for everyone else in the community.[130] Elders

in Jdg. 21.16 failed to lead wisely with long lasting repercussions.

The relationship between Israel's leaders and those they lead is evident when

Deut. 1.13 is compared with 4.6.

1.13 Choose for your tribes wise, understanding, and experienced [חֲכָמִ֧ים וּנְבֹנִ֛ים וִידֻעִ֖ים] men, and I will appoint them as your heads.	4.6 Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding [חָכְמַתְכֶם֙ וּבִ֣ינַתְכֶ֔ם] in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding [חָכָ֥ם וְנָב֖וֹן] people.'

The people of Israel are described with the same terms as their leaders (these

include elders; the various terms for leaders are interchangeable). These same terms are

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[128] Collins, *Study Guide*, 27; preceding list of texts is from the same page.

[129] Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 60-61. Gentile peoples were also led by elders (Num. 22.4, 7; Josh. 9.11; Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 139). There was no such thing as a leaderless group of people. Churches without elders today are an historical anomaly.

[130] Crenshaw (*Old Testament Wisdom*, 83-85): 1) family wisdom (taught and cultivated in the context of the family with emphasis on character via understanding "nature and human relationships") 2) royal court (the fewest number of proverbs; high degree of uncertainty wisdom sayings originated here) 3) theological wisdom: "Its [theological wisdom] goal is to provide education for everyone, regardless of social standing or vocational intention" (84). However, Crenshaw's understanding that "even God is caught up in" the system of "exact reward and retribution" (84-85) is an uncooperative reading of Proverbs' illocution.

among those used to set the context for Proverbs (1.2-7) and used repeatedly throughout. God's intention for his people is for all of them to be "wise and understanding," not only their leaders. If the Law was read regularly as prescribed (Deut. 31.9-13), everyone would know what was in it. Leaders, then, were to serve as models for the people they shepherded in their villages and cities (cf. Gen. 41.33, 39). Thus, the necessity for elders is to learn wisdom (cf. Deut. 32.7; Ps. 105.22).

The rhetorical function of Deut. 1.13 must be underscored here. The list of three descriptors, "wise, understanding, and experienced," encompasses moral life holistically. It is clearly an ideal for which all leaders are to aspire and model. It is equally clear that every level of leadership was expected to be filled (from 1000's down to tens; 1.15; Exo. 18.13-27). There is nothing to make us think childless or unmarried men were *a priori* ruled out as if want of moral character was due to uncontrollable circumstances.

Community (relational)

The goal of wise living is to be pursued within a community: "whoever walks with the wise will become wise, but the companion of fools will be harmed" (Prov. 13.20).[131] The core of the community is implied from the outset: one's relationship with Yahweh (1.7) and one's immediate family (1.8, et al.). The mark of Proverbs' community is a shared ambition to "fear Yahweh" (*e.g*., 1.7, 29; 9.10; 15.33; 24.21-22; 31.30).[132]

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[131] Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 149-150. (Proverbs contrasted with Aristotle's friendship, 148-151). See also 1.5, 10-19; 14.7; 18.24; 20.19; 22.24-25; 24.1-2; 27.6.

[132] Ibid. See note 130 above.

More attention is given to speech in Prov. 10-31 than any other topic.[133] Multi-generational families lived in homes with small rooms, often multiple homes sharing a courtyard, spending most days together working for daily sustenance, and encountering neighbors of a village (usually farming adjacent land plots).[134] Communication provides constant opportunities for maturation in wisdom (*e.g.*, 15.1, 28; 31.26). The home is the training ground for the wise. Moreover, the wider community's well-being is promoted by the elders' exercise of wise speech. A main function of elders was the settling of disputes. This accounts for why so much attention is given to speech within court settings (*e.g.*, Prov. 14.5, 25; 17.15; 24.23-25; 25.7-10; cf. Exo. 18.18-26; Deut. 16.18).[135]

The Law as Floor – Proverbs as Ceiling

Gordon Wenham insightfully analogized the Law as the floor in a house whose intention is to provide a foundation for which to aspire toward the ceiling. Guiderails are set by the Law. Later biblical authors do not stray beyond its parameters but call Israelites back from transgression and uphold what flourishing looks like.[136] Proverbs builds on the Law's ostensible boundaries for theocratic life by directing the faithful to Torah's extensive depiction of life for those circumcised in heart (cf. Deut. 10.16; 30.6).

Wenham convincingly argued,

"we cannot appeal just to the law to establish the ethical expectations of the biblical writers. We need to consider the rhetorical purpose of each book and to recognise that the writers do not just evaluate their characters against the basic level of

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[133] Ibid., 138 n38.

[134] Ibid., 138; King and Stager, 9-19, 28-43, 64-68, 86-107.

[135] Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 138-141. Keefer provides exegetical basis for Fontaine, 164.

[136] Collins, *Study Guide*, 108.

behavior enshrined in the law, but against the ideal of the imitation of God and the characteristic virtues that the godly should embody."[137]

The rhetorical purpose of Proverbs is to instill the Ideal, God's character and virtues, in the hearts of his people. Through its rhetoric, Proverbs shows what ethical life is like toward the ceiling. The folly depicted in Proverbs is not the floor; it has no place in the house at all. The Law is the floor, the point of reference for Proverbs' Israelite recipients.

Some moral ideals are readily found in non-Israelite wisdom texts and ideals because they are made in God's image. What differentiates Proverbs from Israel's ANE neighbors is that Yahweh's affection for his image bearers and his likes and dislikes "are meant to facilitate imitation in his people who consequently feel and perceive of right and wrong in the way that God does."[138]

For Proverbs, "social and moral life" is defined by Yahweh's character as revealed in his covenantal relationship with Israel, which itself is recorded in his gift of the Law. The purpose of the Law was to propel his people upward from the floor (i.e., the Law) toward the ceiling (Yahweh's own character).[139] Proverbs is given for this very purpose, as discussed above regarding moral transformation.

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[137] Gordon J. Wenham, *Story as Torah: Reading Old Testament Narrative Ethically* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 117.

[138] Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 198. The function of Prov. 1-9 is to align our affections and moral discernment with Yahweh's (a chief concern of Keefer, "Proverbs 1-9"). Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 156: "Without question, the book's theology governs its morality." The phrases "abomination to the Lord" (*e.g.*, 6.16; 12.22) and "fear of the Lord" (1.7; 15.33) are thusly employed. The latter is the necessity for wisdom to begin and continue developing, while the former is how one evaluates a moral character or activity.

[139] Wenham, 104-107, using Alasdaire MacIntyre's definition of social virtue and his terminology.

Two examples will suffice. Firstly, the Law does not ostensibly proscribe quarreling and contentiousness, yet Prov. 21.9, 19 do. Proverbs confirms Wenham's illocution of the Law: "I may have kept every law of the land to the letter yet be an obnoxious person to live with. To put it another way, ethics is much more than keeping the Law."[140]

Secondly, abominations in Proverbs are elevated above those in the Law. "Abomination to the Lord" in Proverbs (*e.g.*, 15.9) was a way to describe wicked behavior for which the Law specified no punishment.[141] "A haughty heart" (16.5) cannot be regulated merely by penalties specified in the Law of Moses, unless, of course, it expresses itself through some type of punishable offense (*e.g.*, murder, stealing, false witness in a court setting, adultery, idolatry). These behaviors are not the only way for someone to have a haughty heart. Clements rightly sees some actions, attitudes and desires are wrong or right in themselves.[142] This would have been a way of urging the heart to aspire toward the ceiling. The Law does not, and realistically could not, address every conceivable scenario for sin to express itself. The "abomination of the Lord" in 3.31-35 and 5.21-23 guides the wise reader's affections to aspire and conform to the

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[140] Wenham, 80.

[141] Ronald E. Clements, "The Concept of Abomination in the Book of Proverbs" in *Texts, Temples, and Traditions: A Tribute to Menham Haran*, eds. Michael V. Fox, et al. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 211-225; cf. Wenham, 117-120. Clements draws too sharp a distinction in saying "abominations" in the Law are nearly exclusively cultic focused, whereas Proverbs is concerned with social order and expectations. Proverbs is concerned about morality that reflects God's character (Prov. 8, etc.), and the Law is deeply concerned with ethics and social relationships.

[142] Clements, 220. Keefer ("Proverbs 1-9," 173) agrees but explains that Prov. 1-9 provides the basis for such a view within the book itself.

Lord's.[143] Deut. 7.25-26 is similar to Proverbs in this way.[144] Deut. 7.25-26 provides a direct link to Prov. 5.31-32, which provides the interpretive framework for 16.2.[145] The interpretive key to 3.31-35 is that one's desires and affections need to conform to the Lord's desires and affections. The implication is intuitive: our affections, due to a lack of wisdom, do not always align with Yahweh's against wickedness.[146]

The fear of the Lord in Proverbs is wisdom that guides our hearts' gaze toward the ceiling. Proverbs is a needed complement to the Law's ethical exhortations (*e.g*., Exo. 22.21-27; Lev. 19.14-18; Deut. 15.10-15), "which indicate that the legislators' ethical ideals are higher than the letter of their laws."[147] The relevancy to Titus will be elaborated in chapter 4. For now, let us duly note that the virtues we find in the Law and Proverbs are not banal. These are either the very same virtues mentioned in Titus 1.6-9 or are of the same kind.

Summary

The context of Proverbs is multifaceted. Each aspect also reveals the parameters for Titus' context. To get from here to there we must turn our attention to how Proverbs is filtered through 2TJ in its Hellenistic context. The differences between Jews and their Gentile neighbors best standout when we appreciate what they share in common.

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[143] Keefer, "Proverbs 1-9," 169.

[144] Ibid., 170-171.

[145] Ibid., 174 n17.

[146] Ibid., 171. Intuitive cooperation with an author's illocution is important to Titus 1.5-9.

[147] Wenham, 80 n25.s

Chapter 3

Intersection of 2TJ and Hellenistic Morals

To begin to understand any New Testament book or passage properly, we must try to see how Jewish teaching of the Hebrew Scriptures developed using the channel of the Greek language. Out of necessity, Second Temple Jews interacted with the pervasive Hellenistic culture in which they all lived. More than likely, this was not so much a stubbornly reluctant attitude (i.e., "Since this is the direction everyone's going and we cannot stop it, we better find out how to defend our faith") as it was thoughtfully organic (i.e., "We seem to have a deep need for our people to know and learn their Scriptures in the language they have spoken all their lives, and we need to carefully engage with opposing worldviews by using words and concepts we have all been familiar with our whole lives").

Concern for ethics had been increasing among philosophical schools during Roman times.[148] Among Gentiles, it was commonly assumed that ethics had no bearing on worship of the gods.[149] Jews of the Second Temple period did not share this assumption, often arguing quite strenuously against it. Idolatry was itself a moral issue (*e.g.*, *Wisd.* 13-15). NT authors shared this view with their fellow Jews (*e.g.*, Gal. 5.19-22; 1 Cor. 10.14; Rom. 1.18-32; Col. 3.5; 1 Pet. 4.3). Idolatry notwithstanding, there was a good deal of agreement on the subject of ethics between Gentiles and Jews.

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[148] Craig Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 3: 2593; citing Wayne Meeks, *Moral World*, 41.

[149] Ibid., 3: 2593.

Rhetorical Morally Wise Ideal

The ideal wise person was a common feature in Hellenistic philosophical literature.[150] The ideal sage was sometimes designated ὁ σοφός ("the wise")[151] while ὁ φρόνιμος ("the prudent") was the sage in practical matters.[152] A common view among Hellenists was that a city's leaders were to model the ideal ethic. The ideal philosopher-king in political discourse sought to inculcate emulation of his ethics as a civic magistrate to citizens of the city-state which has an attachment to the homeland. The city magistrates lead their citizens to live virtuous lives. Isocrates (ca. 436-338 B.C.E.), Plutarch (ca. 46-125 C.E.) and Dio Chrysostom (ca. 40-120 C.E.) are especially concerned with this in their writings.[153] In his *Ad principem ineruditum* ("To an Uneducated Ruler,*" Mor.* 781.A, C), Plutarch contends for philosophy as help and protection (779.F) when it

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[150] See, *e.g*., George B. Kerferd, "The Sage in Hellenistic Philosophical Literature (399 B.C.E.—199 C.E.)," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, ed. John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns 1990), 325-327: Pythagoreans' ideal philosopher differed from others in that ethics did not receive much attention; "the hero" was often a way to teach what an ideal person was (*e.g*., Socrates as the wise person; Heracles as an ideal for Cynics, Alexander the Great and the Roman emperor Commodus) (here, 327). See also Benjamin Fiore, "The Sage in Select Hellenistic and Roman Literary Genres (Philosophic Epistles, Political Discourses, History, Comedy, and Romances)," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, eds. John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns 1990), [329-341]: for example, Alexander the Great is depicted in various works as judicious, modest in victory, wise in action, shrewd and decisive, and in "language redolent of the ideal sage" (340); Polybius evinces that "the philosophical ideal of the sage" is displayed when great people succeed in actuality as a result of their reason (336). The ideal was often lampooned in the comedies (336-337).

[151] Cf. LXX Deut. 1.13, 15; 1 Sam. 16.18: "wise, skilled" leaders; LXX Ps. 104.22 [MT 105.22] parallels σοφίζω with παιδεύω ('train, teach') in which Joseph serves as the model for Egyptian "elders" (τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους); LXX 106.43 [MT 107.43] σοφός are to 'understand [συνίημι] the mercy/covenantal love of the Lord." σοφός occurs 60 times in LXX Proverbs. Cf. antonymous use with ἀσεβής in Prov. 21.22. See, *e.g*., Prov. 23.15,19, 24 in which the father upholds ὁ σοφός as the model for his son's aspirations.

[152] Kerferd, 326; Fiore, 329; cf. 1 Kgs. 3.12, using both to describe Solomon in idealistic terms. These terms could be synonymous, depending on the context. *Wisd.* 7.7 - φρόνησις ("prudence, understanding") has semantic overlap with πνεῦμα σοφίας [cf. חָכְמָה in Exo. 31.3; 35.31; Isa. 11.2]. Aristotle "associates his definition of virtue with the prudent man himself" in *NE* 2.6.15 (Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 23 n16), although the Prudent Man is not used as a rhetorical caricature literarily like Proverbs' characters (ibid., 152-153).

[153] Fiore, 332-335.

comes to cultivating virtues (781.A-D) and curbing vices (782.A-F).[154] The success of

political city leaders is measured by "the degree to which they incorporate and exemplify

the long-standing communal values. The ideal of the sage is presented as accessible and

necessary for a fully satisfactory career as a public official."[155]

What reason do we have to think that most commoners shared the philosophers'

view on virtues and vices? Deissmann has long since provided the following evidence

that many vices and virtues were held in common among philosophers and the populace:

1) vice lists in Latin are found in a popular checkers-like game which corresponds to 1

Cor. 6.9-10; 2) the vice list in 1 Tim. 1.9-10 is paralleled in Plautus's (c. 254-184 B.C.E.)

Latin comedy *Pseudolus*; 3) the virtue list in 2 Pet. 1.5-6 finds a parallel in a first century

B.C.E. inscription honoring one Herostratus, the son of Dorcalion as a "good man"

(ἄνδρα ἀγαθὸν) characterized by "faith, virtue, righteousness, godliness, and diligence"

(πίστει καὶ ἀρετῇ καὶ δ[ικ]αιοσύνη καὶ εὐσεβείαι καὶ … τὴν πλείστην … σπουδήν).[156]

The direct relevance to the list of Titus 1.6-9 and 2.12 is also apparent. Hellenistic

philosophers of the Roman variety had well developed ideals of what character traits

were desirable and undesirable for leaders, commoners and society as a whole.

Deissmann has sufficiently demonstrated that the writers of the NT documents

were well adept at transforming the meaning of commonly used Greek words, instead of

coining new words.[157] This is also true of 2TJ authors who had been co-opting Greek

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[154] Ibid., 334.

[155] Ibid., 335. The long-standing values are the virtues extolled for centuries in Greco-Roman culture.

[156] Deissmann, 316-318 with footnotes. In addition, it is important to note that Hellenistic vice lists agree with those in Latin. (316-317). For the latter one, see also NIDNTTE, s.v., "σπεύδω," 4:347.

[157] Deissmann, 78, 107; cf. 342.

words in common usage, especially among the philosophers, for the benefit of nuancing their meanings to fit the teachings of the Jewish Scriptures. The writer of Titus is squarely within this practice. The new meanings are more consistent with Jewish usage than that of the Greco-Roman philosophers, but there is also simultaneously a good bit of sharing with the latter.
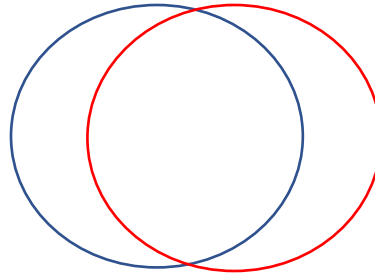
Figure 1. Wide overlap in Jewish and Hellenistic ethics

Overlap of Semantic Domain: 2TJ Infused Nuanced Meanings into Common Ethical Terms

Peter Williams says that the Greek translation of the Hebrew Pentateuch in the early third century B.C.E. "was by far the largest translation project in world history up to that point."[158] In order to translate the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, the Jews would have to draw from the lexical pool already in common usage. Word families like δικ-, σώφρον-, (ευ)σεβ-, etc., were frequently used by Hellenistic philosophers and historians. The Jewish translators, however, had to infuse them with new meanings to convey the sense of the Hebrew texts appropriately. Consider two examples, the δίκ- and the εὐσεβ- word families, both significant to Titus's illocution.

As for the δίκ- word family, interestingly, the first occurrence in Titus is the adjective, δίκαιος, used of would be elders in 1.8. It dates to the sixth century B.C.E.,

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[158] Peter J. Williams, "What Was Happening Between the Testaments?" *TH Ink* no. 6 (Summer 2020): 8

found in Homer's *Odyssey* (8.575). In that passage it had the meaning of someone who carefully followed accepted social customs and was "'moral' with respect to divine laws."[159] Just as interestingly in that text, Homer (perhaps reflecting cultural usage and understanding) connected δίκαιος with φιλόξενος ("hospitable"), which heads the positive adjectives in 1.8. This is not evidence of literary dependence, but rather of how the cohesion of ethical behaviors had long been understood to be intertwined in Hellenistic culture. The dominant meaning of δίκαιος among Hellenistic authors came to describe someone who diligently observed a city's laws for the betterment of the city (and perhaps, extending to one's family). This is not what it means in the LXX, although it is related.

Throughout the LXX, the δίκ- word family is defined by Yahweh's character.[160] The adjective δίκαιος occurs over 430 times in the LXX, 104 of them in Proverbs.[161] Like the Hebrew counterpart it usually translates (צַדִּיק)[162] it has a broader range of meaning. Generally, it carries the idea of reflecting Yahweh's justice, righteousness and fairness. The context can focus on a narrowed nuance, which makes it possible for multiple Greek terms to be suitable translation options. We then notice how that kind of word usage reveals shared meaning among different locutions. Delitzsch, for instance, saw a bit of overlap in Greek terms to represent one Hebrew word. Both δικαιοσύνη and

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[159] NIDNTTE, s.v., "δικαιοσύνη," 1:723.

[160] See entries in BDB, 842-843.

[161] NIDNTTE, s.v. "δικαιοσύνη," 1:724; 53 in Psalms and 36 in Job.

[162] "The Heb. for 'justice' is a word with several shades of meaning" (Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73-150*, TOTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 400 n1). He comments on Psalm 112, highly relevant since that psalm focuses on the life of the worshiper of Yahweh using terminology from Wisdom Literature. Such a life describes how one "fears Yahweh" in terms of his character depicted in Psalm 111.

ἐλεημοσύνη ("mercy/compassion, charity, alms giving") are used in the LXX to represent צְדָקָה.[163] The concept of the δίκ- family is broadened in passages like 1 Kgs. 8.31-32., Solomon's dedicatory prayer for the Temple. In this context, "righteousness designates not sinless behaviour, but loyalty to the covenant; God declares innocent those who conform to the standards expressed in the covenant."[164] Ps. 143.2, on the other hand, speaks of δίκαιος in an absolute sense. Because even the most righteous covenant keeper is not sinless, no man is truly righteous before the absolute Righteous One. Thus, the righteous depend not on their merited righteousness, but on Yahweh's grace, which he gladly gifts (Exo. 34.6-7; Ps. 103). If God's character is the measuring rod, the depiction in ideal pictures is a necessity.

Much of the 2TJ literature follows the LXX's lead (which overall faithfully represents the Hebrew text, with some books and pericopes or verses doing so better than others). The Lord's righteous character is the actual ideal, along with the Messiah's, while "δίκαιος can denote the upright person who trusts in God and keeps the law, as distinct from sinners (*Pss. Sol.* 2.34; 3.4–8; 15.6)."[165]

Now let us examine how the εὐσεβ- family is utilized. Obviously, no word from this family is among the descriptors of Titus 1.6-9. What does this word group have to do with the description of elders? Though I will address this further in the next chapter, suffice it now to say that two of the three long, complex sentences, which frame how to read Titus, include this tribe of terms. The use of εὐσέβεια (1.1) and εὐσεβῶς (2.12)

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[163] Delitzsch, 6:31.

[164] Douglas J. Moo, *James: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015), 114.

[165] NIDNTTE, s.v., "δικαιοσύνη," 1:729.

serves as a window into the ethical ideals of the Greco-Roman world. Since εὐσεβῶς

does not occur in the LXX, I will briefly consider the usage of εὐσέβεια. The reason I

examine εὐσέβεια, which occurs in 1.1 and not in the description of elders, is because of

its close association with the virtues in 1.7-9, the overlap in semantic range with some of

those words, and because it is one of the four cardinal virtues, along with δίκαιος and

σώφρων, both of which occur in 1.8. The cardinal virtues, σωφρόνως, δικαίως,

εὐσεβῶς,[166] and ἀνδρείας represented "the ideal of Greek ethics,."[167] which goes hand-in-

hand with ethical exemplars above.

The noun εὐσέβεια is rare in LXX canonical books, occurring only in Prov. 1.7;

13.11; Isa. 11.2 and 33.6.[168] A weighty occurrence is in Prov. 1.7, which is the theme for

the book. The "fear of the Lord" is a key concept and rhetorical feature in the MT,

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[166] These three are used together in Titus 2.12. By the first century C.E., the cardinal virtues were commonly expressed in a triad, with the four virtues being interchangeable (Kidd, 185-209).

[167] Dibelius-Conzelmann, 142, quoting this phrase from Eduard Meyer, *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums* (Stuttgart, Germany: 1924-25), 3:396. ὁσιότητος, like εὐσεβῶς, can mean "piety toward the gods" (*Diog. Laert*. 10.1.10; Keener, 3:2586). Cf. Plato, *Laches* 199d-e: Socrates asks Nicias about the truly courageous man, could there "be anything wanting to the virtue of a man who knew all good things, and all about their production in the present, the future, and the past, and all about evil things likewise? Do you suppose that such a man could be lacking in temperance, or justice, and holiness [σωφροσύνης ἢ δικαιοσύνης τε καὶ ὁσιότητος], when he alone has the gift of taking due precaution, in his dealings with gods and men, as regards what is to be dreaded and what is not, and of procuring good things, owing to his knowledge of the right behaviour towards them?" (Plato, *Laches*, trans. W.R.M. Lamb, LCL [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962], 76-77)

Socrates was trying to draw Nicias' attention to the preeminence of wisdom over courage by intentionally substituting "holiness" (ὁσιότητος) in its place. The idea being that "wisdom" is missing from Socrates' argument (Eva Brann, "Courage Nailed Down: Plato's 'Laches'," The Imaginative Conservative, July 4, 2021, https://theimaginativeconservative.org/2021/07/courage-nailed-down-platos-laches-eva-brann.html (republished from *Kronos* 8 [2019]: 57-71).

Paul supposedly does not employ the well-known "cardinal virtues" of Hellenists (Furnish, 82). Furnish does not include Titus in his assessment of Paul's theology and ethic because he denies Pauline authorship to the (so-called) Pastoral Epistles.

[168] Antonyms are frequent, especially in Proverbs, the significance of which is discussed below.

especially for Proverbs (see table below).[169] The MT and LXX of Prov. 1.7, 9.10 and Ps. 111.10 [LXX 110.10] contain a nearly identical stich: "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge/wisdom."

יִרְאַ֣ת יְ֭הוָה רֵאשִׁ֣ית דָּ֑עַת חָכְמָ֥ה וּ֝מוּסָ֗ר Prov. 1.7 אֱוִילִ֥ים בָּֽזוּ	LXX Prov. 1.7 Ἀρχὴ σοφίας φόβος θεοῦ,[170]
	  σύνεσις δὲ ἀγαθὴ πᾶσι τοῖς ποιοῦσιν
	 αὐτήν· εὐσέβεια δὲ εἰς θεὸν ἀρχὴ
	 αἰσθήσεως,
	  σοφίαν δὲ καὶ παιδείαν ἀσεβεῖς
	 ἐξουθενήσουσιν. [cf. Tit. 2.12; Prov. 15.33]

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge;
  fools despise wisdom and instruction. (ESV)
	Beginning of wisdom is fear of God,
	     and understanding is good for all those who practice it,
	     and piety unto God is the beginning of perception;
	     the impious, however, will despise wisdom and discipline. (NETS)

Prov. 9.10
 תְּחִלַּ֣ת חָ֭כְמָה יִרְאַ֣ת יְהוָ֑ה וְדַ֖עַת קְדֹשִׁ֣ים בִּינָֽה
	9.10 ἀρχὴ σοφίας φόβος κυρίου,
	     καὶ βουλὴ ἁγίων σύνεσις·
	     [10a] τὸ γὰρ γνῶναι νόμον διανοίας ἐστὶν ἀγαθῆς·

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,
     and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. (ESV)
	The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord,
	 and counsel of the saints is understanding,
	     [10a] for to know the law is the sign of a sound mind; (NETS)

רֵאשִׁ֤ית חָכְמָ֨ה ׀ יִרְאַ֬ת יְהוָ֗ה שֵׂ֣כֶל Ps. 111.10 טֹ֖וב לְכָל־עֹשֵׂיהֶ֑ם תְּ֝הִלָּתֹ֗ו עֹמֶ֥דֶת לָעַֽד	LXX Ps. 110.11 ἀρχὴ σοφίας φόβος κυρίου,
	     σύνεσις ἀγαθὴ πᾶσι τοῖς ποιοῦσιν
	 αὐτήν.
	     ἡ αἴνεσις αὐτοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
     all those who practice it have a good understanding.
	Fear of the Lord is wisdom's beginning;
	     a good understanding belongs to all who practice it.
	     His praise endures forever. (NETS)

[169] "the fear of the Lord" (יִרְאַת יְהוָה) occurs 21 times in the MT, 14 of which are in Proverbs (1.7, 29; 2.5; 8.13; 9.10; 10.27; 14.26, 27; 15.16, 33; 16.6; 19.23; 22.4; 23.17). In the LXX, φόβος θεοῦ ("fear of God") occurs 15 times, only Prov. 1.7; 15.33; Isa. 11.3 translate יִרְאַת יְהוָה. The phrase φόβος κυρίου ("fear of the Lord") occurs 39 times. Psa. 3x (18.10; 33.12; 110.10 [111.10]); Prov. 11 times (2.5; 8.13; 9.10; 10.27, 29; 14.26; 15.16, 27[27a]; 19.23; 22.4; 23.17); *Sir.* 19 times (1.11, 12, 18, 27, 28, 30; 9.16; 10.22; 16.2; 19.20; 21.11; 23.27; 25.6, 11; 27.3; 40.26/2x, 27; 45.23. [Isa. 3x: 2.10, 19, 21; 2 Chron.3x: 19.7, 9; 26.5]

[170] Codex Alexandrinus has φόβος κυρίου (Alfred Rahlfs, ed. *Septuaginta: Id est Vetus Testamentum Graece Iuxta LXX Interpretes* (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1935), 2:183).

His praise endures forever! (ESV)	

Each translator (or set of translators) faithfully rendered the Hebrew into Greek.[171] This signifies the importance of the proverbial phrase as a succinct summary of the truly wise life.[172] Prov. 9.10 is parallel in thought to the two additional lines of 1.7. Consideration of each of the four occurrences of εὐσέβεια leads to the conclusion that it means both covenant fidelity and the proper inward stance of one's heart, in keeping with how Keefer defines "the fear of the Lord" in its Hebrew context.[173]

Notice the poetic structure of Prov. 1.7. It clusters together common terms associated with wisdom's goals and ideals. The LXX used the following terms in 1.7: σοφία (2x), σύνεσις, εὐσέβεια, αἰσθήσεως,, παιδείαν, and ἀσεβεῖς.[174]

LXX Prov. 1.7 expands the MT while remaining true to the original's intent. Obviously, the LXX's first and fourth lines are straightforward translations of the MT.

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[171] Argued by Lorenzo Cuppi, "Concerning the Origin of the Addition Found in Prov^LXX 1:7," in *XIV Congress of the IOSCS* ed. Melvin K. H. Peters, SBLSCS 59 (Atlanta, GA: SBL 2013), 93-103. Cuppi gives a detailed lexical analysis of the terms in LXX Prov. 1.7 in relation to the Hebrew terms and phrases. The translation technique, although consistent with both the LXX Proverbs and LXX Psalms, is more consistent with LXX Proverbs than the LXX Psalms.

[172] Cuppi, 102-103. In his article, Cuppi does on a smaller scale what Takamitsu Muraoka calls for in his article in the same volume ("What After the Lexicon?", 365-366): Septuagintal scholars need to explore how a LXX "translator understood the Hebrew original and how and what of his understanding is reflected in the translation" (quote from 365; Muraoka calls for a "comprehensive syntax" for the whole LXX (368)). The "real issue," according to Muraoka, is tracing the meaning of a text from "the source language" to "the target language" (366). The translator(s) of LXX Proverbs, with their additional material, are unpacking what "the fear of Yahweh" means for their Greek readers/hearers. They are fully engaged with their cultural milieu. The same is true for the author of Titus. For LXX Proverbs, 2TJ Wisdom Literature and Titus (indeed, each NT author, for that matter), their chief concern is to relate the teaching of the LXX to their contemporary audiences. A practical response for Christians today is the same: relate biblical teaching to our contemporaries in terms that resonate with them.

[173] I am grateful for Jack Collins clarifying that the inward person is of chief concern as well as one's behavior.

[174] Many of these words are also clustered to a lesser extent in 9.10; 13.11; Ps. 111.10 (110.11); Isa 11.2-6; 33.6. The Hebrew counterparts in the MT are likewise clustered in each of these texts.

Using typical Hebrew poetic parallelism as guide, we can see how the LXX explicates certain implications of the MT.[175] The first and second lines are in dynamic parallelism logically. Wisdom is to be practiced; the result is "good understanding."[176] The second line also specifies how one cultivates wisdom: by practicing it.[177]

The third line is statically parallel to the first: "the beginning of perception" parallels "the beginning of wisdom"; "the fear of the Lord" is paralleled by "piety." If the phrase "the fear of the Lord" emphasizes the intellectual component (without dismissing its behavioral element), then "piety" is stressing the behavioral/faithfulness component. What does it look like to "fear the Lord"? The LXX's answer is by keeping the Law, this necessarily includes who you worship and how.

Prov. 9.10a is a line added by LXX translator(s) to explicitly connect "the fear of the Lord" and "the counsel of the saints" to knowing the Law. Knowing the Law is the way holy ones gain knowledge of the Holy One (MT). The entanglement of "the fear of the Lord" and keeping the Law is likewise expressed in the connection of Ps. 111.10/110.11 with 112.1/111.1. Those who "fear the Lord" delight in his commandments.

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[175] I follow R.G. Bratcher and W.D. Reyburn, *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Psalms* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 3-9; used by permission from the United Bible Societies in Collins, *Study Guide*, 19-25.

[176] The antecedent to αὐτή ("it") is σοφία ("wisdom"), not σύνεσις ("understanding"), as in LXX Ps. 110.11. σύνεσις ἀγαθὴ is probably better translated "a good understanding" as it is in its Psalm counterpart. The result of practicing wisdom is "a good understanding." The alternative, "understanding is good," requires knowledge in order to practice wisdom. Of course, both ideas are true in Proverbs. However, the focus in Proverbs is cultivation and growth. "Wisdom," "the fear of the Lord" and "piety/godliness," indeed Proverbs as a whole, presuppose familiarity with the Law and ongoing teachability.

[177] Aristotle's insistence that moral virtue is resultant of habit (*NE*. 2.1.1, 4-8) finds affirmation within a biblical worldview (Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 23-25).

Prov 13.11 also sees εὐσέβεια as an expression of covenant fidelity. εὐσέβεια is

used in 13.11 with no equivalent in MT.[178]

Prov 13.11 הֹ֭ון מֵהֶ֣בֶל יִמְעָ֑ט וְקֹבֵ֖ץ עַל־יָ֣ד יַרְבֶּֽה	LXX Prov 13.11 ὕπαρξις ἐπισπουδαζομένη μετὰ ἀνομίας ἐλάσσων γίνεται, ὁ δὲ συνάγων ἑαυτῷ μετ᾽ εὐσεβείας πληθυνθήσεται· δίκαιος οἰκτίρει καὶ κιχρᾷ.
Wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it. (ESV)	Property gotten hastily with lawlessness is diminished, but he who gathers for himself with piety will be increased. A just person is compassionate and lends. (NETS)

Proverbs defines εὐσέβεια in reference to the parameters of the Law. Again, the

line added by the LXX with no MT counterpart is drawing from the teaching of the Law

concerning helping the needy. This is another way of expressing how to delight in the

Lord's commandments, how to practice wisdom, and what fearing the Lord looks like

practically.

2TJ wisdom literature, taking cues from Proverbs, often uses the εὐσεβ- word

family to convey fealty to the Mosaic covenant. This is most clearly stated in *Sir.* 37.12:

> But rather persevere with a pious man [εὐσεβοῦς]
>> whom you know to be one who keeps commandments,
> who in his soul is like your soul,
>> and if you stumble, he will suffer with you.

These two texts make explicit what is to be assumed when reading Titus as a

whole, including 1.6-9. In the latter text above, "stumble" means "to sin."[179] Terms like

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[178] For justification see Cuppi, 97 n17; Ronald Giese, "Qualifying Wealth in the Septuagint of Proverbs," *JBL* 111 (1992): 417-18 [409-425].

[179] NIDNTTE, 1:73; 6: 636; cf. Gal. 6.1; Rom. 11.11-12; Acts 13.10; 18.14; 3x in James; Jude 24.

εὐσεβής are often used for the ideal (*Sir*. 33.14, see below), but the most faithful worshipers of God are not sinless in actuality (37.12). We have here a clear statement for how to cooperate with rhetorical ideals.

"Fear of the Lord" and "wisdom" are the two themes that drive *Sirach* (1.11-20; 10.22; 25.10-11; 50.29; "fear of the Lord" occurs over 50 times in *Sirach*).[180] These twin themes are inextricably interwoven throughout the treatise. Determining if one predominates the other has proven a difficult task.[181] No one doubts that *Sirach* clearly teaches that you cannot have one without the other. Such a view is clearly drawn out of Proverbs and texts like Ps. 111.10/110.11 LXX. It is more likely than not that *Wisdom* and *Sirach* intend the same meanings for "the fear of the Lord" and the εὐσεβ- terms as the canonical wisdom texts from which they rely.

Rhetorical caricatures were employed for affect: the impious/ungodly (Prov. 1.7), saints/holy ones (9.10), and 'all who practice it [wisdom]' (Ps. 111.10/110.11). The same is true for Prov. 13.11.[182] For our purposes, it is noteworthy that εὐσέβεια is used in parallel with δίκαιος in 13.11. Rhetorically, the ideal just person is the illocution.

Covenant faithfulness is often demonstrated by the use of exemplars from Israel's history in idealistic rhetoric. *Wisd*. 10.12 depicts Jacob as an exemplary righteous

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[180] Keefer, "Proverbs 1-9," 10; citing Crenshaw, "Sirach," 5:650, also 642, 647; see also Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom*, 159-162; contra von Rad, 242-246, who argues "the fear of the Lord" is subordinate to wisdom. For shared themes between Proverbs and Sirach, see Gammie, 357.

[181] Crenshaw, "Sirach," 5: 626 and footnotes.

[182] While I agree with Giese that Hellenistic philosophy has not crept into the LXX translation of Proverbs, it is inaccurate to say that the translator(s) were trying to "improve" the Hebrew text (Giese, 424-425). More likely, the LXX is attempting to make the Hebrew Proverbs accessible and readily applicable to a Hellenistic audience. Giese's observations that the LXX Prov. aims to exhort Jews to be faithful to the Jewish tradition and not be deceived by promises of wealth fits well with the problem of Alexandrian Jews (as well as in other places) defecting from Judaism to Hellenism because of the allurement of socio-economic advancement.

(δίκαιος, 10.10) Israelite who benefited from wisdom (σοφία) "that he might learn that

piety (εὐσέβεια) is more powerful than everything." Likewise, Gammie says, "the ideal

wise person of Sirach conforms to that of the indisputably older portion of Proverbs."[183]

Sir. 49.3 depicts Josiah as an ideal wise man:

> "He directed his heart toward the Lord;
>> in days of lawless [ἄνομος] people he strengthened piety [εὐσέβεια[184]]."

Sir. 49.4 holds up David, Hezekiah and Josiah as exemplars among Israel's kings

who kept "the law of the Most High." *Sirach* praises good wives (26.1-4, 13-18) and

paints evil wives with obscene comments (26.5-12). The latter is appropriated to "*some*

wives."[185] This is precisely the point. The language is hyperbolic to depict evil or

shameless behavior in a graphically idealized or caricatured way. Crenshaw seems to

miss this point of *Sirach*'s illocution.[186] The daughters in 26.10-12 are described from the

outset as "imprudent, shameless" (ἀναίδεια; v.10).

Prov. 1.2-7 simultaneously provides verbal links to the Law and its intended

democratization of wisdom. Deut. 1.13 emphasized that Israel's leaders were to be "wise

and discerning and prudent (σοφός καὶ ἐπιστήμων καὶ συνετός)."[187] The first and third of

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[183] Gammie, "The Sage in Sirach," 359; also 372. The "indisputably older portion" deserves disputing, but such is beside my concern here.

[184] The translation is the NETS. Ben Sirach's grandson uses εὐσέβεια to translate חֶסֶד (Cuppi, 96-97; Quinn, 285-286). Deut. 6.4-5 is clearly echoed in this text (cf. 2 Kgs. 23.25). Josiah's εὐσέβεια is in contrast to "lawless people" (ἄνομος; NETS; cf. Titus 1.1; 2.12, 14).

[185] James L. Crenshaw, "Sirach," NIB ,5: 765a (emphasis original). The imagery makes his point effective: this kind of behavior is evil. This is no more insulting to women than Prov. 11.22 is or 5.15 is to men. This is not to say that *Sir*. 25.24-26 is not misogynistic.

[186] Crenshaw, 5: 630, 764a.

[187] MT also uses the same words (חכמים ונבנים) in Prov. 1.7, Deut. 1.13 and 4.6. The LXX is reliable and consistent here.

these adjectives are cognates of the nouns in Prov. 1.7; 9.10; Ps. 110.11.[188] The ἐπιστή-stem is another standard set of moral lexemes. Israel's leaders throughout all levels were to serve as (imperfect) exemplars.

That the leaders are expected to embody the moral character that all of Israel was to emulate is implied by connecting Deut. 1.13 to 4.6. Concerning the Lord's statutes, Israel is commanded: "Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom [MT: חָכְמָה; LXX: ἡ σοφία] and your understanding [MT: בִּינָה; LXX: ἡ σύνεσις] in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding [MT: חָכָם וְנָבוֹן; LXX: σοφὸς καὶ ἐπιστήμων] people.'"[189] Verses 7-8 elaborate that the Lord is near his people and answers their prayers (including help to live out the Law) unlike the Gentiles' gods. The Lord gives the Law to his people, which is full of "righteous judgments" (MT: צַדִּיקֵם; LXX: κρίματα δίκαια). εὐσέβεια's link to the Law comes from within this canonical context.[190]

Isa. 11.2-3 and 33.5-6 is where the Ideal meets actuality. The Isaiah texts are crucial for clearly seeing the background to Titus.

| Isa. 11.2-3a And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding [חָכְמָה וּבִינָה], the Spirit of counsel [עֵצָה] and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD [דַּעַת וְיִרְאַת יְהוָה]. | Isa. 33.5-6 The LORD is exalted, for he dwells on high; he will fill Zion with justice and righteousness [וּצְדָקָה], [6] and he will be the stability of your times, abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge [חָכְמַת וָדַעַת]; the fear of the LORD [יִרְאַת יְהוָה] is Zion's treasure. |

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[188] Leaders as models for the people they shepherd was foundational throughout the ANE and essential to the well-being of the community (cf. Gen. 41.33, 39; Ps. 105.22 [LXX 104.22]).

[189] cf. *4 Macc*. 11.21: εὐσεβὴς ἐπιστήμη ("devout knowledge").

[190] See Collins, *Study Guide*, 108; cf. Johann Cook, "The Law of Moses in Septuagint Proverbs."

³ And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD [בְּיִרְאַת יְהוָה]. (ESV)	
LXX Isa. 11.2-3a And the spirit of God shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding [σοφίας καὶ συνέσεως], the spirit of counsel [βουλῆς] and might, the spirit of knowledge and godliness [γνώσεως καὶ εὐσεβείας]. ³ The spirit of the fear of God [φόβου θεοῦ] will fill him. (NETS)	LXX Isa. 33.5-6 God who dwells in lofty places is holy [ἅγιος]; Sion is filled with judgment and righteousness [δικαιοσύνης]. ⁶ By law they will be handed over. Our salvation [σωτηρία] is in treasures: wisdom and knowledge and piety [σοφία καὶ ἐπιστήμη καὶ εὐσέβεια] toward the Lord are there; these are the treasures of righteousness [δικαιοσύνης].[191]

Why is "the fear of the Lord" translated as εὐσέβεια in Isa. 11.2 and 33.6 but not anywhere else in the Hebrew canon? Isa. 33.5-6 parallels 11.1-9 thematically, theologically, eschatologically, and stylistically.[192] A key element is "fear." Given that the semantic range of "fear" in both Hebrew and Greek includes reverential awe and terror, the LXX translators sought to avoid associating the latter with "the fear of Yahweh." Both texts contrast the Davidic Messiah (11.1-9) and his righteous people (33.5-6) with their enemies who will be overwhelmed by the terror of Yahweh's future judgment. The Messiah and his people would be characterized by εὐσέβεια (i.e., covenant fidelity), not by fear of God's judgment, unlike the impious.[193] The lexeme εὐσέβεια, unique to these two texts in Isaiah, stresses the parallels.

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[191] Verse 7 takes the "fear of the Lord" in a different direction than v. 6 of the MT (and of Proverbs). The nations who are in rebellion against the Lord will fear his judgment because they reject his offer of peace. However, "piety/godliness" (εὐσέβεια) in v. 6 is consistent with Proverbs and the phrase "fear of the Lord" in the MT. The point is that God's people will be faithful in their covenantal relationship with the Lord during the Messianic age.

[192] This paragraph summarizes Rony Kozman, "There is No 'Fear' in 'the Fear of the Lord': Translating יראה as ευσέβεια in Old Greek Isaiah," *ZAW* 2019, 131 no. 2: 244-256.

[193] Isa. 11.4 refers to the "impious" (ἀσεβῆ) and v. 5 to the Messiah's "justice/righteousness" (δικαιοσύνη).

The translators were sensitive to the needs of their Hellenistic Jewish audience.[194] The virtues associated with wisdom are obvious in both MT and LXX. The terminology in the context of Isa. 11 and 33 puts us squarely in the realm of Proverb's subject matter. The moral character goals of Proverbs will become a reality for God's people under the reign of the Davidic Messiah because he will actualize the ideal in himself. The moral goal the Gentiles aspire to is only made accessible through this coming Messianic king.[195] Isaiah's depiction of the Messiah as the Ideal Wise person fits precisely with Proverbs' rhetorical depiction of the ideal wise person (which also agrees with the likes of Deut. 1.13; 1 Sam. 16.13). If we keep in mind the covenantal context in which the king serves as the model Israelite and that Israel is God's treasured possession chosen to become renewed humanity, the Messiah as the ultimate Davidic King being the Ideal Wise person is quite expected.[196]

In summary, "the fear of the Lord," especially in connection with "wisdom," and εὐσέβεια are comprehensive terms that convey covenant fidelity with a focus on practicing the Law. Keefer has demonstrated exegetically that "the fear of Yahweh" in Hebrew connotes faith in "God as the source of truth."[197] "Fear of Yahweh" as faith is an

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[194] Johann Cook, "The Ideology of Septuagint Proverbs," in *X Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Oslo 1998*, ed. Bernard A. Taylor (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), 463-479.

[195] All of this will become essential for properly understanding the message of Titus.

[196] H. G. M. Williamson ("'Isaiah and the Wise,' in *Wisdom in Ancient Israel: Essays in Honour of J. A. Emerton*, eds. John Day, Robert P. Gordon, and H. G. M. Williamson (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 133-141) argues that Isaiah's wisdom is based on "natural" or "creational" wisdom (140-141), pitting it against the Mosaic Law in the same way scholars of Proverbs often do (138). This is unnecessary. As discussed in chapter 2, creational and covenantal wisdom are complimentary, not oppositional or alternatives to each other.

[197] Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 168-172, quote from 171.

intertwining of intellectuality and moral behavior.[198] The LXX Prov. 1.7 uses εὐσέβεια to emphasize the essentiality of Torah fealty for wisdom's fecundity.

It is safe to assume that 2TJ emphasized the centrality of "the fear of the Lord." The verbatim occurrences in Prov. 1.7, 9.10 and Ps. 111.11 in both Hebrew and Greek points to a pithy summary of one's relationship to Yahweh in an easily carried rhetorical case packed full of meaning. Two different Old Testament books repeating the same text verbatim indicates the importance of what those texts teach.[199] Proverbs as a whole and the wisdom literature in the Hebrew Scriptures in general is obviously important. It all undergirds 2TJ wisdom literature.

Ethical Terms Ran in the Same Circles

Overlap of Semantic Domains

The ethical terms in Titus are used together at a high rate of frequency throughout the literature of both 2TJ and Hellenists. Takamitsu Muraoka recently published a lexicon of synonyms for the LXX. He has found that the semantic range of the εὐσεβ- word group overlaps with those of σώφρο-, δίκ-, and ὅσιο-.[200] His entry for ὅσιος is a case in

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[198] Ibid., 173, argues that "fear of Yahweh" is primarily intellectual, but with moral aspects. His comments regard Prov. 3.7. Prov. 16.6: "fear of Yahweh" is necessarily inclusive of faith(fulness) (see 162-163; Collins, "Proverbs and the Levitical System," 24, 30).

[199] Other examples: Exo. 34.6-7 repeated throughout the OT, especially the Psalms and the Prophets; Isa. 2.1-5 and Micah 4.1-5; Deut. 6.5 in 2 Kgs. 23.25 (of Josiah). Singing Ps. 111 adda emphasis in that it was intended to inculcate a desire for and conformity to Yahweh's wisdom as his image bearers.

[200] Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2009), *passim*. See also Mott, 27-28. The use of εὐσεβ- words in *4 Maccabees*, roughly contemporaneous with Titus, attests to the importance of the concept in discussions of wisdom among Jews and Gentile neighbors.

Likewise in Hebrew, Mary Douglas has "argued that wholeness, holiness and uncleanness were closely related ideas in biblical thinking" (*Purity and Danger* (1966) cited by Wenham, 139).

point. Its semantic domain overlaps with "ὁσιότης, ὁσίως, ἅγιος, δίκαιος, ἄμωμος, ἀνόσιος, ὁσιόω, εὐσεβής."[201] The cognates of ὅσιος are obvious enough. What's more, other terms lead us to see how whole families of words overlap without certain nuances of meaning becoming totally lost. δίκαιος parallels ὅσιος in Deut. 32.4; Ps. 144.17; Prov. 22.11; *Pss. Sol.* 15.3; *CIG* 3830[202] and εὐσεβής (*2 Macc.* 12.45). Their cognates, δικαιοσύνη and ὁσιότης are parallel in Deut. 9.5 and *Wisd.* 9.3.[203] Muraoka observes how ὅσιο- words describe how the faithful conduct themselves toward the Lord (*e.g.*, LXX Ps. 17.26). Similarly, δικαιοσύνη often means "*conformity to the dictates of the religion of Israel* as should characterize man's conduct."[204] Muraoka recognizes that the LXX had to employ Hellenistic terms that had been infused with new meaning. Non-canonical 2TJ literature used the above meaning of δικαιοσύνη also, following the lead of the LXX translators. It is not a stretch to assume this meaning was already well in use orally before the LXX was begun.[205]

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[201] "ὅσιος," Muraoka, 508b. See LXX Pss. 110-111 for a piling up of these and like terms (including, interestingly, ἐπιθυμία which occurs in Titus 2.12). Likewise, ἅγιος shares semantics with ὅσιος, καθαρος and σεμνός (6a). Note: σεμνός is a part of the same root family as εὐσεβ-. These words occur in some form in Titus 1.7-8, 15 (cf. LXX Ps. 17 which uses καθαρος along with ὅσιος).

[202] Ibid., 169b.

[203] Ibid., 508b-509a; δικαιοσύνη and ὅσιος are the two words listed (509a).

[204] Ibid., 169b, italics original. Xenophon (*Memorabilia*, 4.3.1-2), for instance, argued for the importance of being "of sound mind, sober/moderate thinking, prudent" toward people and the gods. "Skill in speaking and efficiency in affairs and ingenuity" without a grounding in σωφροσύνη leads to "injustice [ἀδικωτέρους] and power for mischief [κακουργεῖν: to do evil/wickedness]." Xenophon upholds Socrates as a paragon who did nothing "contrary to sound religion [περὶ θεοὺς μὴ σωφρονεῖν]" nor anything sacrilegious [ἀσεβὲς] concerning the gods, but he was "truly religious [εὐσεβέστατος]" (1.1.20; cf. 4.3.16).

[205] In agreement is Kozman, 245.

These words already enjoyed a long history of Hellenistic authors using them together, often as synonyms whose semantic domains overlapped. Words like these had been used for centuries before the LXX was written.[206]

The use of antonyms is also revealing. δικαιοσύνη is used opposite of ἀσεβεια (Deut. 9.4) and ἀνομία (Isa. 5.7).[207] ἀσεβής is antonymous with δίκαιος/δικαιοσύνη and ὅσιος (Prov. 12.5; Gen. 18.23; Exo. 9.27; Deut. 25.1; Hos. 14.10; Hab. 1.4, 13).[208] ἄδικος is contrasted with σεμνός, which proceeds out of ἁγνός.

> *Sir*. 33:14   Good is opposite evil,
> and life is opposite death;
> so a sinner [ἁμαρτωλός] is opposite a pious person [εὐσεβής].

Letter of Aristeas 166 further illustrates the flexibility of semantic range: "they are guilty of gross uncleanness [ἀκαθαρσία] and are themselves utterly tainted with the pollution of their impiety [ἀσέβεια]."[209] ἀσέβεια can mean ritual impiety, much like it would in a pagan context; and it can mean moral impiety (as in, *e.g*., Prov. 28.3-4). This also further illuminates how these words tended to be clustered together.

Clearly, Jewish usage necessarily infused new nuanced meanings in the context of their Scriptures. Holiness or piety for Jews, for example, was not merely about keeping religious customs handed down through the generations, and certainly not piety toward pagan gods (as it meant in Hellenistic literature). Holiness was defined by Yahweh as revealed in the Law and the Prophets. The same is true for righteousness/justice,

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[206] s. v., ὅσιος, NIDNTTE, 3:556-557.

[207] Syntactically, ἀνομία is parallel to κρίσις , but δικαιοσύνη is conceptually oppositical to ἀνομία.

[208] A cognate of ἀσεβής occurs in Tit. 2.12, as an antonym of the cardinal virtues, two of which describe the elder in 1.8.

[209] Thackeray; quoted in Moulton and Milligan, s.v., μολυομός, 416.

godliness, self-control, and the like.[210] Jewish authors necessarily had to coopt existing vocabulary from the language which everyone now spoke, infusing those coopted words with meaning that conveyed the teaching of the Jewish Scriptures.[211]

2TJ Wisdom literature, following the LXX's lead, for centuries had been co-opting Greek terms from Hellenistic ethics to infuse with modified meanings within the context of the covenant with the Lord. Two contrasts between Jewish and Hellenistic ethics are noteworthy. Firstly, wisdom and its concomitant virtues are gifted by Yahweh.[212] Hellenists did not share this belief. Thus, they did not seek wisdom from God or the gods.[213] Secondly, the Hebrew scriptures sought to democratize wisdom.[214] Solomon's prayer in 1 Kgs. 3.4-15/2 Chron. 1.2-12 is used as a model for all people to seek wisdom.[215] Because wisdom comes from Yahweh and provisions were made for the ongoing teaching of the Hebrew scriptures, wisdom was available to rich and poor, ruler

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[210] Muraoka's second definition for δικαιοσύνη is "*uprightness and righteousness* as an attribute of God's," citing Mal. 2.17; Mic. 6.5; Bar. 1.15; Gen. 24.27; 32.10; Zech. 8.8 (169b).

[211] Deissmann observed how *αρετη* was chosen by the LXX translators to render Hebrew term(s) because it was an "already-existent linguistic usage" and often used synonymously with δόξα (*Bible Studies*, 95).

[212] See 1 Kgs. 3.12 [LXX 3 Kgdms. 3.12]; 5.9 [3 Kgdms 5.9]; Prov. 2.6; 3.13; 8.1; 22.23; Ps. 119:34 [118:34]; Dan. 2:21. *Wisd.* 7.7b: Wisdom is a direct gift from God and simultaneously internal to people (using synonymous parallelism). Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 143, 170-171, 183-188, 212.

[213] Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 25-28; nor justice (142-143). *Wisd.* 8.21 nuances φρόνησις (prudence), a vital virtue in Philo and Stoics, yet "the 'spirit' has become a cosmic reality, albeit stripped of Stoic pantheism" (Mazzinghi, 192). *Wisd.* 1.4-7 establishes this difference (ibid., 52-61, 192).

[214] Collins, *Study Guide*, 27: "Wisdom literature represents some widely spread and fundamental human concerns, namely that of making sense of our world and of our efforts to live well in it."

Furthermore, "The *applicability* of Biblical Wisdom: is it a manual for instructing officials (as elsewhere in similar material in the Ancient Near East), or is it aimed at a general audience? It seems to be pretty general, e.g. Prov. 1:8, 20-22; 8:4, 32-36; 9:4-6, i.e. it's offered to everyone (we might call this the "democratization of wisdom")."

[215] Mazzinghi, 192

and peasant alike. Hellenistic authors excluded certain groups like slaves and manual

laborers.

Inseparable Ethics

Likewise, the cardinal virtues of Hellenistic philosophy are inseparable.[216] To talk

of how one is manifested in daily life is to talk of the others.[217] Plato standardized the

four cardinal virtues. He argued for virtue as a unity. All virtues are subsumed under

Virtue. Stephen C. Mott observed how "special virtues are compared with each other to

demonstrate their unity" (see, *e.g.*, *Gorg*. 507a-c). Likewise, Socrates in *Protagoras*

"shows that an attempt to define any one of the special virtues inevitably ends in tracing

it and all the others back to virtue itself, from which alone it can be understood. Thus, any

of these good qualities—courage, moderation, etc.—can become a hindrance to

philosophic thought if it is isolated from the others and developed disproportionately

(*Rep*. 491b)."[218] Xenophon (c. 430-c. 350 B.C.E.), *Memorabilia*, 4.8.11 held up Socrates

as an ideal of the cardinal virtues εὐσεβὴς, δίκαιος, ἐγκρατὴς, φρόνιμος.[219] *Wisdom*,

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[216] These four cardinal virtues are frequently found together from Plato until after the first century. Ditt. *Or.* I, 339.47f: "Those who have kept the faith piously and righteously" (τοὺς τὴν πίστιν εὐσεβῶς τε καὶ δικαίως τηρήσοντας). *Inscr. Magn.* 162.6: "Living prudently and in modesty" (ζήσαντα σωφρόνως καὶ κοσμίως) (translation taken from Dibelius-Conzelmann, 142).

[217] See a helpful discussion of this from Plato's *Republic* in William de Witt Hyde, *From Epicurus to Christ: A Study in the Principles of Personality*, Haverford Library Lectures (1904; repr., New York, NY: Hodder & Stoughton/George H. Doran Company, 1911), 126-131, 138-142.

[218] Mott, 26-27.

[219] Towner, 661.

Philo, Dio Chrysostom, and Lucian exemplify how this understanding was still

commonplace in the first century Roman world:[220]

Wisd. 8.7   And if anyone loves righteousness (δικαιοσύνη),
        the fruits of her labors are virtues (ἀρετή),
        for she teaches self–control and understanding (σωφροσύνη καὶ φρόνησις),
        righteousness and courage (δικαιοσύνη καὶ ἀνδρεία);
        nothing is more useful in life than these for human beings. (NETS)[221]

Philo (b. 25 B.C.E.), *Prot*. 329c: "Virtue (ἡ ἀρετή) is something that is one (ἓν); and its parts are justice (δικαιοσύνη) and sensibility (σωφροσύνη) and holiness (ὁσιότης)."

Dio Chrysostom (c.40-c.115 C.E.), *Orationes*. 23.7: Fortune gives a spirit for someone "… to live justly and wisely and sensibly" (δικαίως ζῆν καὶ φρονίμως καὶ σωφρόνως) in pursuit of the moral ideal.[222]

Lucian of Samosata (c.120-c.180 C.E.), *Somnium sive Vita Luciani* 10: Eloquence (the study of literature for training in oratory/rhetoric and writing) promised Lucian "if you follow me, I will shew you all the wonderful works of antiquity, illustrate and explain to you the maxims of the sages, and adorn your mind, that best and noblest part of you, with

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[220] The latter three quotations are taken from Kidd, 187 n8.

[221] Compare *Wisd.* 8.7 with Cicero's (106-43 B.C.E.) affirmation of "virtue" in *Tusculan Disputations* 5.1.1 "For among all the topics of philosophy, there is not one of more dignity or importance."[221] In 5.2.5, Cicero personifies philosophy ("O Philosophy, thou guide of life!") as the woman who has enabled people to progress socially and morally, even removing one's fear of death [After the death of his daughter as a young child, Cicero found a way to see death as good (see Book 1).] This is not a matter of literary dependence. It is a matter of a shared view of virtue and ethics.

Cicero also said about Epicurus, "He denies that anyone can live pleasantly unless he lives honestly, wisely, and justly" (*'honeste sapienter iuste'*) (5.9.26).

5.23: "The enjoyment, therefore, of that good which proceeds from that sagacious mind can alone make us happy; but virtue is the good of the mind: it follows, therefore, that a happy life depends on virtue. [67] Hence proceed all things that are beautiful, honorable, and excellent [*pulchra honesta praeclara*], as I said above (but this point must, I think, be treated of more at large), and they are well stored with joys. For, as it is clear that a happy life consists in perpetual and unexhausted pleasures, it follows, too, that a happy life must arise from honesty." Cicero disagrees with this line of reasoning. The Latin text is from http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/cicero/tusc5.shtml#67, accessed March 15, 2021.

The lists of 5.9.26 and 5.23.67 are different yet make the same point: these concrete virtues as a set describe the moral ideal worth pursuing.

[222] Dio Chrysostom also couples σωφρόνως with ἐγκρατως (D. C. i.56; cited in G. Mussies, *Dio Chyrsostom and the New Testament* (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1972), 218).

modesty, justice, piety, [σωφροσύνη, δικαιοσύνη, εὐσεβείᾳ] gentleness,[223] prudence, fortitude, the love of virtue, and a thirst after everything that is praise-worthy; these are the imperishable embellishments of the human foul (*sic* [Greek text is τῆς ψυχῆς ('soul')]).”[224]

These excerpts inform how the cardinal virtues were expressed by Jews and Hellenists alike with interchangeable synonyms, viewed as inseparable. The use of lists is a way of describing morals comprehensively, not exhaustively. The moral portrait must be considered as a whole, not in piece-meal fashion. Arius Didymus (Stoic philosopher, late 1st cent. B.C.E.) in *Epitome of Stoic Ethics* 5.b5[225] makes my point explicitly:

“All the virtues which are types of knowledge and expertises have rules of behavior in common and the same goal, as has been stated. Because of this they are also inseparable. For he who has one has them all and he who acts in accordance with one acts in accordance with them all.[226] They differ from one another in their main

[223] The Greek here is πραότητι, showing that this was a character trait prized by the Hellenistic world. This was important to conveying what one believed to be the truth. Cf. 1 Pet. 3.15; and *passim* throughout the NT.

[224] Lucian, *Somnium sive Vita Luciani*, trans. Thomas Franklin, The Lucian of Samosata Project, last modified July 10, 2019, http://lucianofsamosata.info/wiki/doku.php?id=home:texts_and_library:essays:the-vision.

Greek text found at
https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0448%3Asection%3D10, accessed March 15, 2021.

[225] Arius Didymus, *Epitome of Stoic Ethics*, Stoic Therapy, accessed July 17, 2020, https://www.stoictherapy.com/resources-epitome. Arius Didymus is a significant witness due to his influence as Octavian's counselor.

[226] See also Aristotle, *NE*, VII.ii.5, in the context of discussing ἐγκράτεια (“self-restraint”), “… Prudence [φρόνιμος] displays itself in action (for it is concerned with ultimate particulars), and implies the possession of the other Virtues [ἀρετάς] as well” (LCL, 380-381). One common view was “that the temperate man is always self-restrained and enduring; but that the converse is invariably the case some deny, although others affirm it: the latter identify the unrestrained with the profligate and the profligate with the unrestrained promiscuously, the former distinguish between them” (*NE*, VII.i.6d). Aristotle illustrates that each virtue and vice could be thought of as (at least partial) synonyms while simultaneously each word kept its nuance in meaning. Of course, context is determinative. [Also, *NE*., VI.xiii.1: “Prudence [φρόνησις] and Cleverness [δεινότης] are not the same, but they are similar; … All are agreed that the various moral qualities are in a sense bestowed by nature: we are just [δίκαιοι], and capable of temperance [σωφρονικοί], and brave [ἀνδρεῖοι], and possessed of the other virtues from the moment of our birth.” Whether biblical teaching agrees or disagrees with Aristotle's claim that we have all virtues from birth is better left addressed in another venue. The observation I want to stress is that Aristotle rightly perceived that all virtues are inseparable from each other. The cardinal virtues serve as signposts for the others in this statement.

functions. … For all the virtues consider what belongs to them all and those things subordinate to each of the other virtues."

Throughout the ellipsis, Arius gives four examples of how the four cardinal virtues interact: intelligence/prudence (φρόνησις), self-restraint (σωφροσύνη), courage (ἀνδρεία) and justice (δικαιοσύνη). These particular virtues are treated throughout section 5 of *Epitome*, with attention also given to virtues subordinate to the cardinal ones (*e.g*, 5.b2).[227] Thus, all the virtues, whether primary or subordinate, are inextricably related.

Cf. also *NE* VI.xiii.1 1144b 2-3: "Prudence and Cleverness are not the same, but they are similar; …" *NE* VI.xiii.7-8: Wisdom (σοφία) cannot be achieved without Prudence (φρόνησις).

Further evidence of the inseparable interaction of virtues is found in Plutarch's discussion of Zeno of Citium (*Virt. Mor*. 2 *[Mor*. 441A]): "he defines prudence (φρόνησις) as justice when it is concerned with what must be rendered to others as their due, as temperance when concerned with what must be chosen or avoided, as fortitude when concerned with what must be endured." (quoted in David A. DeSilva, *4 Maccabees : Introduction and Commentary on the Greek Text in Codex Sinaiticus* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2006), 71-72). Plutarch agrees that φρόνησις is the chief virtue. Properly exercising φρόνησις leads to the cultivation of all other virtues (*Virt. Mor*. 4 [*Mor*. 443D]; DeSilva, 72).

The author of *4 Macc*. wrote his book to defend this view within the context of faithfully keeping Torah as a Jew (1.2). φρόνησις leads to self–control (σωφροσύνη), justice (δικαιοσύνη) and courage (ἀνδρεία) (1.3-4, which he develops throughout the rest of the book), all under the umbrella of εὐσέβεια (1.1). Pertinent to my concern, both Graeco-Roman and Jewish authors shared the perception that these virtues and others like them are inherently intertwined.

In Aristotle, the φρόνιμος man does not serve as a caricature, but it does in Proverbs (*e.g*., 11.12, 29; 14.6, 17; 15.1, 21; 17.10, 21; 18.14-15; 19.7, 25; 20.5) and *Sirach* (20.27; 21.17, 21, 24-25; 22.4; 38.4).

In contrast to the eschatology or cosmological goal of 4 Macc. and Hellenistic philosophers, Dan. 12.3 insists that Yahweh's eschatological goal is for the wise to rule over creation like kings in resurrected bodies (N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003), 109-113). With echoes of Isa. 53.11, the resurrected Messiah would "lead many to righteousness/justify many" through his resurrected people (ibid., 110, 115-116). The Hebrew for "the wise ones" in Dan. 12.3 is a hiphil participle of שָׂכַל. The feminine hiphil participle is glossed for "a prudent wife" in Prov. 19.14, a gift from Yahweh. The semantic domain of overlaps שָׂכַל with חָכְמָה. LXX Dan 12.3 chose συνίημι to translate שָׂכַל (also in Deut. 29.8 [MT & LXX; EVV v.9]: keeping and doing the Law cultivates wisdom/understanding). The cognate noun σύνεσις is used in parallel with σοφίας in Prov. 1.7, the latter of which translates חָכְמָה (see also LXX Prov. 16.21).

   Col. 1.9 σύνεσις is associated with σοφία. Wisdom/understanding is a gift from God (2Tim 2.7).

[227] Arius Didymus includes among the subordinate virtues "Piety" (εὐσέβεια) which "is a knowledge of the service of the gods." Significant difference between Arius Didymus, a fair representative of Stoicism, and the theology of Titus is "The goal of all these virtues is to live consistently with nature" (5.b3; expounded in 6.a). Whereas in Titus, it is by God's grace appearing in the person of Jesus Christ and through the Spirit poured out to regenerate people "enslaved to various passions and desires" that a person is able to mature in

This seems to find widespread agreement among Hellenistic authors and popular inscriptions.[228]

Summary

Ethical ideals were shared, by and large, by Jews and Hellenists. This is evident by how they both used historical people as caricatures of the ideals they wish to instill in their audiences. Ethical terms' semantic domains overlapped. Context drew out distinctions in meanings at the author's discretion. Ethical terms were often piled together to express the moral life as a whole and/or the interconnectedness of all ethics. Jews modeled their ethical writings after Proverbs, nuancing certain terms or concepts through the lens of the Lord's covenant with Israel and their Scriptures. Jews sought to persuade their neighbors that the ethical ideals they hold in common are only possible to attain within the covenantal relationship with the Lord. In the next chapter, we will see how all this plus the full context of Hebrew Proverbs forms part of the contextual background to Titus 1.5-9.

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conformity with God's character. In Arius Didymus, one's success in wholly dependent on one's effort. But in Titus, God's grace teaches us how to live "godly and just and self-controlled lives." (Aristotle had no objective standard by which to evaluate why a teacher's ethics should be emulated or how to discern the best virtuous education among all the options to pursue because no god concerned himself with such in human affairs (Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 24-27).

[228] For instance, see *Priene* 46.12 (i/B.C.) εὐσ[ε] β ω ͅς μὲν πρὸς τοὺς πατρίους] θεούς, ὁσίως δὲ καὶ δικαίως π [ρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους. (Moulton and Milligan, s.v., "ὁσίως," 460-61).

Chapter 4

Titus 1.6-9 in Context

Introduction and Summary

C. S. Lewis categorized language into three types: ordinary, scientific, poetic.

Paul's description of elders is ordinary language. It is vital to understand what this means

for rhetorical illocution. As John Collins helpfully explains,

> "All three of Lewis's types of language [ordinary, scientific, poetic] have a further
> similarity: their speakers expect the audience to fill things in, that is, to bring to
> bear knowledge of the world and values they share in common. For example,
> ordinary language is rarely (if ever) unqualified. If I say that I *never* take a sick day
> from work, a reasonable person will realize that I mean *ordinarily* and that there
> may be exceptions. If I instruct my children, "*Always* tell the truth," I do not mean
> that they should give up any Jews they are hiding when tormentors come to the
> door—and I expect them to appreciate that. That is, we normally speak with respect
> to something. In terms used in conventional logic, failure to recognize the unstated
> qualifications of statements made *simpliciter* (without qualification) is the
> *secundum quid* fallacy. The linguist might say that perceiving these qualifications
> and knowing how to apply them is part of the illocution."[229]

I will demonstrate in this chapter how what is unspoken in Titus 1.5-9 must be

understood in light of what is specified throughout the rest of the letter, which places us

squarely within the biblical story. Relevant teaching therein must be accounted for. Given

that all that has been covered in chapters 2-3 are in play, we will consider how the same

eight contextual aspects of Proverbs are also aspects of Titus' context: 1) worldview of

the Hebrew Scriptures, 2) co-opting cultural rhetoric, 3) use of concreteness, 4) overlap

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[229] Collins, *Reading Genesis Well*, 68. Lewis elucidates how we intuitively cooperate with rhetorical intent.
His communicative insights explain why one rightly allow for widowers, divorcees, remarried men or
never married men to serve as elders. Lewis corrects Hamilton's criticisms of "the tyranny of the majority,"
whose views of "pastoral marriage" have "preceded exegetical justification. "The only issue" is not "what
the biblical text says," but how it would have been understood from original author and recipients. (See
Hamilton, 112; cf. Quinn, 6: Christians did not expect letters to be "a technical, scientific treatise.")

of terms and ethical values, 5) the goal of moral education, 6) the floor-ceiling analogy, 7) democratization of wisdom, 8) ethics in community. Discussion of rhetorical intent occurs throughout. The context of the letter to Titus is best understood as intending to be read in a congregational setting for the benefit of all.[230]

Worldview of Hebrew Scriptures: Jesus Fulfills the Covenant

The teaching of Titus is undoubtedly steeped in the worldview of Jewish Scriptures. This is most clearly seen in the letter's three long, complex framework sentences (1.1-4; 2.11-14; 3.3-7). Therein we find the letter's rich theology and Christology. The rest of the sentences are paraenetically short and simple.[231] Relying on Towner's thorough treatment of the OT throughout the framework sentences,[232] I will examine the importance of εὐσέβεια and then the use of ethical terms in common with Proverbs.

The use of εὐσέβεια (Titus 1.1) and εὐσεβῶς (2.12) serves as a window into the ethical ideal within a Christian worldview and how it is appropriated. This word-group finds its significance by its inclusion in two of Titus's three framework sentences (1.1-3;

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[230] Jack Collins reminded me of this essentiality. Being read aloud for each Cretan congregation makes the most sense of the extended greeting and Paul's elaborate defense of his apostolic authority therein (1.1-3), the second person plural in the closing salutary prayer (3.15), the rhetorical intention of everything in between and the inclusion of Titus among Paul's letters addressed to churches that the early church used for just such a purpose.

[231] Abraham Malherbe, "Paraenesis in the Epistle to Titus," in *Light from the Gentiles: Hellenistic philosophy and -early Christianity: collected essays, 1959-2012*, eds. Carl R. Holladay, et al., (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2014), 1:426; ibid., "'Christ Jesus Came into the World to Save Sinners': Soteriology in the Pastoral Epistles," in *Light from the Gentiles*, 1:431-457; Mounce, cxxxiii; Towner, *passim*; Randy Leedy, *GNT Sentence Diagrams*, 1587, 1594, 1597.

[232] Towner, 665-674, 677, 743-766, 768-789.

2.11-14). The first sentence is summative of themes developed throughout the letter.[233]

How the phrase τῆς κατ' εὐσέβειαν (1.1) relates to Paul's moral teaching in Titus needs

unpacking.[234] The phrase is best understood as "to further the faith of God's elect and

[their] knowledge of the truth which is in accordance with godliness."[235] A parallel

expression occurs in 2.12: "to live self-controlled, upright and godly (σωφρόνως καὶ

δικαίως καὶ εὐσεβῶς) in the present age."[236] εὐσέβεια is Paul's shorthand to refer to the

totality of the Christian life manifesting one's "faith in/knowledge of God."[237]

εὐσέβεια in Hellenic and Hellenistic cultures had long developed as a way to refer

to reverence shown to various laws and authority figures (human and divine), especially

in the context of the worship of the gods.[238] In contrast, the εὐσεβ- word group in Titus

"is a dominant feature of the theological-ethical portrait of authentic Christianity."[239] The

kind of godly living Paul has in mind is described in 1.5-2.10 (preferring the σωφρον-

word family throughout 2.1-10); 2.14; 3.1-2, 8, 13-14. Paul affirms ethical ideals already

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[233] Yarbrough, 466-467; Johnson, 217; Quinn, 63; Towner, 662-663, 741.

[234] τῆς κατ' εὐσέβειαν is syntactically subordinate to the extended prepositional phrase: κατὰ πίστιν ἐκλεκτῶν θεοῦ καὶ ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας, a bi-partite purpose clause (see Towner, 664; Fee, 168; Dibelius-Conzelmann, 131).

[235] As opposed to "leads to/produces godliness," although the gospel does that also (2.11-12). See discussions in Towner, 667-668; Fee, 168; Yarbrough, 468-469.

[236] Johnson, 217; see also Towner, 663.

[237] Towner, 668, 170-174; cf. Fee, 168.

[238] Towner, 172; Marshall, 138-139; (see the discussion in Towner, 171-174; Marshall, 135-144). Cf. Arius Didymus (1st c. B.C.E.; Augustus's teacher), *Epitome* 5.b2-3 (among the subordinate virtues): "Piety (εὐσέβεια) is a knowledge of the service of the gods." Paul knows how the difference between what εὐσέβ- means to Jews in contrast with the Gentiles. He uses the verb in Acts 17.23 with the philosophical schools in Athens. In that context, he is talking about worship rituals, not ethics.

[239] Towner, 174. Cf. extensive discussion of εὐσέβ- cognates in Quinn, 282-291.

held in common by Jews and Gentiles,[240] but emphasizes εὐσεβ- ethics as part of

honoring "our Great God and Savior," resultant of his beneficence. In other words, the

moral life everyone aspires to is only successfully pursuable as God's elect;[241]

advancement in moral maturity is subsumed in this way of life.

The εὐσεβ- word group reveals the integrated nature of the inward and outward

aspects of life.[242] Notice how God's grace training us "to live self-controlled, upright and

godly lives" is juxtaposed to grace also disciplining us "to renounce ungodliness and

worldly passions" (2.11-12). Being "zealous for good deeds" stems out of the ethical

discipline of the inward person. Towner rightly observes how "Paul lifts the entire web of

OT reflections into the contemporary situation."[243] This is another way of saying "[t]he

appropriate response to grace was to be devotion to Torah," which itself is internalizing

the Law, the very thing Proverbs expounds upon and sets as its goal for its

readers/hearers. The pouring out of the Spirit is what is necessary for one's heart to be

reshaped for obedience (3.5-6).[244] Paul's Spirit induced insight clarified what was

congruent in Hellenistic ethics with that of the Hebrew Scriptures.[245] All of this places

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[240] See Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, on 2.3-5.

[241] Towner, 174.

[242] Towner, 174. Cf. Sira 49.3: εὐσέβεια translates חֶסֶד (Cuppi, 96-97; Quinn, 285-286). Josiah's εὐσέβεια is in contrast to "lawless people" (ἄνομος; NETS; cf. Titus 2.12, 14). Cf. also *Wisd*. 10.12.

[243] Towner, 764.

[244] Towner, 764. In support of Pauline authorship: Titus 3.4-7 is a shortened form of Roman 8.1ff and Gal. 5.17-24. Occam's razor leads to the conclusion of authentic Pauline authorship. For extensive discussion and compelling exposition of the links of Titus 2.14-3.7 with undisputed Pauline letters and other NT texts, see Towner, 760-789.

[245] N .T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 2: 1359.

Titus firmly within the story of Yahweh's covenantal relationship and purposes for his people in the Jewish Scriptures.

One could summarize the description of elders in Titus 1.5-9 as describing the εὐσέβεια life in a few concrete terms. Many of the words in Titus 1.6-8, 2.12-14, and 3.3-7 occur in Prov. 21.1-22.4. There are five words in Titus 1.7-8 that have verbal, conceptual and rhetorical links to Prov. 21. Furthermore, there are 17 word families for ethics that are common to Prov. 21.1-22.4 and Titus (plus the use of πόλις).[246] The chart below helps us see what characterizes a εὐσέβεια kind of life.[247]

	Proverbs 21.1-22.4	Titus
δίκαιος	21.2,3,7,12,15,18,27	**1.8**; 2.12
ἀδικία	21.9	
δικαιοσύνη	21.16,21	cf. 3.5; verb 3.7
ὀργή	21.14	
ὀργίλος	21.19	**1.7**
ὅσιος	21.15	**1.8**
φιλέω οἶνος	21.17 [πάροινος]	**1.7**; 2.3
αὐθάδης	21.24	**1.7**
πόλις	21.22	1.5
ἐπιθυμία	21.25,26/2x (verb, noun)	2.12; 3.3
παιδεύω	22.3	2.12
ἀσεβής	21.4,7,10, 12/2x, 22, 26, 27, 28, 30	2.12
ἄνομος	21.18	2.14
παράνομος	21.24, 27/adverb	
ἁμαρτία	21.4	2.13-14
ἀληθεύω	21.3	1.1, 14
[α]ψευδής[248]	21.6, 28	1.2, 12
ἁγνός	21.8	2.5
ἀκάθαρτος	21.15	

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[246] See "Ethical Terms Ran in the Same Circles" above in chapter 3. Also, cf. Keefer, "Proverbs in Systematic Theology." Different words express or develop concepts from the OT. Note: 1) the word for "courage" (ἀνδρεία), one of the four standard cardinal virtues (of which a tripartite form is used in Titus 2.12), also occurs in Prov. 21.30; 2) "fear of the Lord" (22.4) parallels εὐσέβεια in 1.7.

[247] The word order is arbitrary. Bold verses highlight words in the description of elders.

[248] Three words in Titus find cognates in *Wisd.* 7, an extended poem lauding the wisdom that all men seek, but which only comes from Israel's God: ἀψευδὴς (*Wisd* 7.17; Titus 1.2); φιλάγαθος (7.22; 1.8); φιλάνθρωπος (7.23)/φιλανθρωπία (3.4). *Wisdom*, molded after Proverbs, elaborates on true wisdom.

καθαρός			1.15/3x; 2.14/verb
ἐλεημοσύνη ἐλεάω ἔλεος	21.21 21.26		3.5
ζωὴ	21.21; 22.4		2.12
κακός	21.12, 26		3.3 (noun)

We are not to think that Paul is literally dependent on Proverbs. Rather, we see strong flavors from Proverbs in Titus's ethical focus. Paul was an indelibly biblical thinker:[249] The ethics of the Hebrew Bible in the context of the worldview presented therein finding its fulfillment in Jesus the Messiah is the filter through which Greek virtue ethics must be properly understood and lived out. This is, after all, the thrust of Titus 2.11-14, further enhanced by 3.1-8.

Furnish's research deduces that "only about twenty percent" of Paul's direct use of the OT "for ethical material comes from the book of Proverbs."[250] What about indirect use? A helpful comparison is *Wisd.* 6.17's elucidation of wisdom (v. 12) as beginning with the desire of discipline/education (παιδεία ἐπιθυμία), echoing LXX Prov. 1.7. Muraoka's conclusion is equally apropos for Paul: "We may then conclude that translators may have been influenced to some extent by the source language, … they were not all enslaved to the source text …"[251]

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[249] Wright, *P&FG*, 2: 1099-1100, 1360, 1368-69.

[250] Furnish, 33. He counts only the undisputed Pauline letters (11). Thus, Paul clearly employs enough direct quotations and paraphrases from Proverbs that reveal a deep familiarity. Examples from paraenetic sections: Prov. 3.7 in Rom. 12.16; Prov. 25.21-22 in Rom. 12.20. Non-paraenetic: Prov. 24.12 in Rom. 2.6; Prov. 3.4 in 2 Cor. 8.21; Prov. 22.8 in 2 Cor. 9.7; Ps. 111.9 in 2 Cor. 9.9 (30-31). It is not a stretch to assume Paul and his companions would also be familiar with LXX Ps. 112.10 = Prov. 1.7.

[251] Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Syntax of Septuagint Greek* (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2016), §37 bbc/455.

Concerning Hellenistic ethics, Paul has "taken the classical tradition of 'virtue,' all the way from Plato and Aristotle to Cicero and beyond, and has reworked it into a Christian key." Furthermore, "because for Paul the new creation is the renewal of the existing world, not its abandonment and replacement, there is a good deal of overlap between" Paul's ethics for Jesus' followers and that of pagan ethicists.[252] Just as we find much overlap in Proverbs with their ANE neighbors, we should not be surprised to find much continuity with Christian ethics and their Hellenistic neighbors. The key to "all your aspirations after wisdom and right living" is Jesus.[253]

Likewise, the difference from the 2TJ wisdom literature (*e.g.*, *Wisd.*) is that their longed-for Messiah has come.[254] Admittedly, there is great difficulty in Paul's language. One must wade through the converging waters of Greek philosophy, the LXX and Hellenistic Judaism, and the Hebrew Old Testament. Paul is flexible. Just as Second Temple era Jews sought to contextualize their Scriptures for their particular communities, the earliest Christian writers did the same. As Lidija Novakovic rightly summarizes, "Israel's Scripture provided the language and key theological concepts for understanding the career of Jesus and the experience of the early church." She goes on to say that the most significant difference between Christians and their contemporaneous Jewish

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[252] Wright, *P&FG*, 2: 1374-1375; quote from 1374.

[253] Ibid., 2: 1382. Scholars who argue for how much Paul borrowed from Stoicism miss the mark. (cf. Abraham Malherbe, "Determinism and Free Will in Paul: The Argument of 1 Corinthians 8 and 9" in *Light from the Gentiles: Hellenistic Philosophy and Early Christianity: Collected Essays, 1959-2012 by Abraham Malherbe*, eds. Carl R Holladay, et al. (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2014), 1:300. Malherbe does not "think Paul saw himself as a Stoic philosopher, particularly with respect to his place in the cosmic order of things" (299). He is rightly reticent of labeling Paul unfairly, suggesting "eclectic" as a viability (300). Malherbe eventually admits to the false dichotomy of pigeonholing Paul as a Hellenistic philosopher or as a Diaspora Jew. For Paul's worldview thoroughly shaped by the Hebrew scriptures, see, *e.g.*, Wright, *P&FG*, 2: 1365-1367.

[254] Wright, *P&FG*, 2: 1382.

interpreters was theological, or better, Christological perspective. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus must be understood within the context of "the overall scheme of God's relationship to Israel and to the world."[255]

N. T. Wright sees Paul's worldview as predominantly Jewish, but "radically reshaped around the crucified Messiah," which also presents a challenge to the worldview(s) "of ancient paganism with the concrete signs of the faithfulness of God."[256] It may be more accurate to say, given Paul's Pharisaic background, that the crucified Messiah reshaped Paul's (Second Temple) Jewish worldview to fit the biblical worldview properly.[257]

Though Hellenistic philosophies and philosophers had long been trending toward monotheism, they still rejected the God of the Jews as that one God, partly due to misunderstanding of Jewish beliefs and a complete ignorance of the Jewish Scriptures, even after the LXX.[258] Titus clearly diverges from Hellenism here. There was much

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[255] Lidija Novakovic, "The Scriptures and Scriptural Interpretation," 99

[256] Wright, *P&FG*, 1:21. He also says Paul's story is an "implicit Jewish story" (by which he means the story of Israel's exodus from Egypt is central to Paul's theology/worldview; 22). It seems that Wright may tend to see the Old Testament worldview as more identical to the world of second Temple Judaism than I.

[257] Wright is doing what Josef Pieper says must be done to properly understand any ancient text, and which he himself applies helpfully to Thomas Aquinas: "In the interpretation of a text, especially one from a civilization or epoch remote from our own, what is plainly decisive and yet by no means easy is this: to grasp those basic assumptions which, remaining unexpressed, nevertheless permeate all that is actually stated; to discover, so to speak, the hidden keynote that dominates whatever has been explicitly said" ("Perceiving the Unexpressed," *The Silence of St. Thomas: Three Essays*, trans. John Murray and Daniel O'Connor (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 1999), quote from 45, but the point is made *passim*.) Just as Wright takes explicit statements from elsewhere in Paul's writings to fill out more accurately what is either truncated or implicit in other contexts, so Pieper does with Aquinas. "It could be positively maintained that the doctrine of a thinker is precisely "*das im Sagen Ungesagte*, the unexpressed in what is expressed. … it is clear that an interpretation which does not reach the unspoken assumptions underlying the actual text must remain, in essence, a misinterpretation, even if in other respects the letter of the text be commented upon with considerable learning; this latter fact may, indeed, make matters worse" (46).

[258] Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine During the Early Hellenistic Period*, trans. John Bowden, (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1974), 1:261.

agreement between Jews and Hellenists about many ethical issues.[259] But Jews were saying that these ethics which are agreed upon as good and ideal and worthy of pursuit by all people (even Christians later on, as in Titus) come from Yahweh, who revealed these things in their Torah. This is how all people are to live their lives. Where there was disagreement, the ethics revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures are a corrective for where Hellenists have gone wayward.[260]

Paul is persuading his Cretan audience of both Jewish and Gentile Christians who have already responded in faith to the gospel he proclaims as God's spokesman (1.1-3) to respond appropriately to the issues he addresses by either assuming they have adopted or are further adopting "the shared picture of the world"[261] as governed by the Hebrew Scriptures which finds its fulfillment in Christ and his gospel.

By employing the εὐσεβ- word family along with familiar terminology of ethical ideals, Paul is subverting Crete's cultural story by conforming the practices of Second Temple Judaism(s) to the Gospel Story.[262] Paul is persuading Cretan Christian communities "to *think within the biblical narrative*, to see themselves as actors within the

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[259] Towner (740-741): Paul "claims for the gospel the aspirations of the best of Hellenistic and early Imperial ethics," but explains these ethics characterize the Christian life because of God's salvific activity.

[260] *e.g.*, what passions and desires are good, which are evil; this is especially seen in the difference in sexual ethics between Jews and Hellenists. Young, 27. Also E. P. Sanders, "Common Judaism and the Synagogue in the First Century," in *Jews, Christians, and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue: Cultural Interaction During the Greco-Roman Period*, ed. Steven Fine (New York, NY: Routledge, 1999), 5. Sanders highlights "monotheism and Jewish sexual ethics" as the aspects of Judaism that Paul sought to lead Gentiles to accept. N. T. Wright agrees (*P&FG*, *e.g.*, 1:201, 277, 444-447). Indeed, monotheism and sexual ethics were the most difficult obstacles between most Jews and their Gentile neighbors.

[261] Quote from C. John Collins, *Genesis 1-4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2006), 53.

[262] As Towner says Paul does with Artemis worship's centrality to Ephesian culture (174).

ongoing scriptural drama: to allow their erstwhile pagan [or Jewish or mixture of both, cf. 1.10-16] thought-forms to be transformed by a biblically based renewal of the mind."[263]

Co-opt Preexistent Rhetorical Form

Paul coopts the rhetorical form of ethical lists as part of his apologetic for Christ's gospel in which he coopts language from Crete's Zeus myth. The ethical-list form depicting the Ideal elder must be understood within this context.

Firstly, for 1.6-9, Paul co-opts the list format (like his Jewish predecessors and contemporaries) using the lexical pool universally available to holistically stress moral ideals.[264] The rhetorical function is like Deut. 1.13. From 2TJ literature, *Wisd.* 7.22-23 uses a list to describe the wisdom Yahweh gifted Solomon. Included is the rare compound φιλάγαθος (v. 22). Structurally, φιλάγαθος simultaneously serves as the center of the list of Wisdom's attributes while it also begins "a new series of attributes culminating in φιλάνθρωπία." Notably Philo employs φιλαγαθία as a virtue essential for legislators and political officials (also with φιλάνθρωπία,[265] cf. *Mos.* 2.9; cf. *Let. Aris.*

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[263] Wright, *P&FG*, 1:15; alluding to Romans 12.1-2. He also references Richard B. Hays (*The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scriptures* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005)), 1-24, esp. 23; *First Corinthians*, Interpretation Commentary (Louisville, TN: John Knox Press, 1997), *passim*), who said the same thing about Paul's teaching to the Corinthian church.

[264] Marshall, 189-191. This list is commensurate with virtue lists in 2 Cor. 6.6, Gal. 5.22-23, Phil. 4.8 and vice lists in Gal. 5.19-22, most of which were typically promoted and condemned by Hellenistic moralists. Paul's readers generally already grant these as good and bad traits of one's character, of what to shun and what to pursue (Furnish, 71-72).

[265] φιλανθρωπία ("love for people") and χρηστότης ("kindness") (Titus 3.4) and are virtues expected of rulers in relation to their subjects "and belonged to the vocabulary current in the Imperial cult and its worship" (Towner, 778). Both words have this meaning in the LXX (φιλανθρωπία for human rulers, Esth. 16.11; 2 Macc. 6.22; 14.9; 3 Macc. 3.15, 18; χρηστότης for God's rule, *e.g.*, Pss. 100.5; 106.1; 107.1; Jer. 33.11).

124, in connection with the king). Titus 1.8 uses φιλάγαθος to describe the character of the ἐπίσκοπος.[266]

Virtue lists like Titus 1.7-9 were well known throughout the Roman empire. A first century B.C.E. inscription honors a man named Herostratus, the son of Dorcalion. He is described as a "good man" (ἀνήρ ἀγαθὸς) characterized by "faith, virtue, righteousness, godliness, and diligence" (πίστει καὶ ἀρετῇ καὶ δ[ικ]αιοσύνη καὶ εὐσεβείαι καὶ … τὴν πλείστην … σπουδήν). While this list's closest parallel is 2 Peter 1.5-6,[267] many cognates occur also in Titus 1.1, 7-9; 2.12. Hellenistic philosophers of the Roman variety had well developed ideals of what character traits were desirable and undesirable for leaders, who were to model them for commoners and society as a whole.

The adjective ἀνέγκλητος heads both sentences in vv. 6 and 7-9. It serves as a summary of all that follows in each sentence. It being a rare word,[268] examining synonyms will be beneficial. ἀμέμπτως/ἀμώμητος can be helpful as they have such a large degree of overlap in semantic domain.[269] The epitaph of Otacilia Polla reads: "Julius Bassus to Otacilia Polla, his sweetest wife. Loving to her husband (φιλάνδρ[ω]), and loving to her children [φιλοτέκνω], she lived with him unblamably [ἀμέμπτως] for 30

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[266] Mazzinghi, 209.

[267] Deissmann, 317-318 with footnotes; NIDNTTE, s.v. "σπεύδω," 4:347.

[268] "The only occurrence of ἀνέγκλητος in the LXX is in 3 Macc 5:31, with the sense "no ground for complaint" (so NRSV). The word occurs only twice in Jos., both times without special moral connotations (*A.J.* 10.281; 17.289), and not at all in Philo or other Jewish lit" (NIDNTTE, s.v., "ἀνέγκλητος," 1:294).

[269] NIDNTTE, s.v., "ἄμωμος," 1:273. "When applied to moral character," semantic distinctions among adjectives for "blameless" "appear to be neutralized" (ibid.). Cf. Eph. 1.4 and Col. 1.22.

years." Otacilia Polla is depicted in ideal terms, what Deissmann describes as the "ideal of womanhood."[270]

ἄμωμος, another synonym for "blameless," is used in the LXX Wisdom Literature. Ps. 14:2: One who walks spotless [ἄμωμος] and practices righteousness [δικαιοσύνη], who speaks truth [ἀλήθεια] in his heart" (also Prov. 11:20; cf. 20:7; *Wisd.* 2:22; *Sir.* 31:8; et al.).[271]

In chapter 3, we saw how the moral terms in Titus 1.6-9 and cardinal virtues in 2.11-12 are coopted from Hellenism.[272] Such virtues must be intentionally developed. Thus, the "educative framework," παιδεία (2.12), is likewise coopted and reshaped.[273] The Christian nuance differentiates it from its Hellenistic and Jewish counterparts. For Hellenists, παιδεία was shorthand for Greek culture's aim to mold human civilization through the process of education in virtues.[274] Although Jews and Hellenists alike would agree with the necessity of denying ungodly and worldly desires, there would have been disagreement over certain particulars, among which were sexual fidelity in marriage

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[270] Deissmann, 314-315. The descriptors of Otacilia Polla are identical to what Cretan women are to aspire to in Titus 2.4-5, further evidence of shared moral ideals among Hellenists, Jews and Christians.

[271] Cf. 1 Thess. 2.10 "holy and just and blameless" (ὁσίως καὶ δικαίως καὶ ἀμέμπτως). MT Ps. 15:2 "The LORD detests those whose hearts are perverse, / but he delights in those whose ways are blameless." As in the MT, in the DSS, תָּמִים occurs with great freq. in the moral sense, esp. in combination with הָלַךְ, "to walk" (*e.g.*, CD II, 15; 1QS I, 8). [NIDNTTE, s.v. "ἄμωμος," 1:272]

[272] See discussion in Towner, 684-685. Calvin Roetzel also sees cooping and Christian nuancing in 1 Thessalonians (*e.g*., 326). For generations terms from Hellenistic philosophy "would already have been modified to accommodate Jewish religion and Paul would have modified them even further in light of his eschatological preoccupation" (327). Calvin J. Roetzel, "Theodidaktoi and Handwork in Philo and 1 Thessalonians" in *L'Apôtre Paul: Personnalité, Style et Conception du Ministère*, ed. Albert Vanhoye (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1986), 324-331.

[273] Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 744, 747-750.

[274] Ibid., 747.

(1.6), use of the Jewish scriptures that did not bind Jewish ritual practices on Gentile Christians (1.10-16), and destructive attitudes toward fellow humans (3.1-2).

The unique emphasis of Christianity was its insistence on the necessary work of Jesus to effect moral transformation. The παιδεία individuals and communities need to successfully cultivate what the cardinal virtues epitomize depends on the appearing of God's grace in Jesus (2.11) and "a future epiphany-event for its fulfillment," the hope of 2.13.[275] Growth in moral wisdom is a process which occurs between Jesus' redemptive and purifying self-offering his re-appearing at an undefined future time. Teaching that comes from God's grace is identical to the purpose of Jesus' redemptive and purifying self-offering, namely, ethical revitalization. Outside of Jesus' redemptive appearing, "the ideal" remains an elusive goal.[276] Because Jesus is the actualization of the Ideal, he provides assurance for his devotees to share in his actualization when he appears again.

Paul does what Palestinian Jews had been doing since the Maccabean revolt. Hengel surmises, based on the extant Jewish writings in Greek from Palestine post-Maccabean revolt, that the "knowledge of Greek language and literature, indeed training in rhetoric, were put completely at the service of the defence of the Jewish tradition

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[275] All virtues are acquired at any level with the Lord's help. "Faith and hope in God make wisdom and virtue possible, benefits which themselves can be called a 'communication' of God's love" (Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 212, summarizing Prov. 2.9-10). God's gracious provision even opens the eyes of our hearts to know what is truly good and virtuous versus what is not. Perhaps the most significant difference between Christianity and secular worldviews is recognizing whence comes one's ability to understand morality, live up to it and pursue "higher goods in general" (ibid., citing Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 91-98).

Hellenistic philosophers did not adequately address the source and supplier of virtue/morality. Christianity (continuing what was already revealed in the Hebrew scriptures) provides the answer their pagan neighbors lacked (Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 220).

[276] Towner, 744, 748.

against the dangers of Hellenistic civilization."[277] Their chief concern was an emphasis on Jewish history.[278] It should not be surprising that Paul, who trained with leading Palestinian Jewish leaders, would be well versed in such argumentation. Paul's chief concern, however, is Christ's gospel as the fulfillment of the OT story.

Secondly, Paul's rhetoric is in service to his theology (including his Christology).[279] Paul uses rhetorical practices of his day critically. That is, he employs them to infuse new meaning as an educational corrective of standard philosophical meanings.[280] Paul uses the language of Hellenistic ethical ideal to communicate to the Cretan Christians that the moral ideal is only attainable because of the benefaction of Israel's God who has brought grace to his people in the appearing of Jesus,[281] the Davidic King promised to Israel and Lord of all. The first appearing of Jesus is inextricably linked to his subsequent appearing (Titus 1.1, 4; 2.11-14).[282] The inference we can safely draw from this is that the eschaton has begun with Jesus Incarnation, and thus, maturing toward the ethical ideal begins now in the life of God's people.

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[277] Hengel, 1:102.

[278] Ibid., 1:102, 104.

[279] Wright, *P&FG*, 21; discussing Paul's rhetorical play on Onesimus's name in his letter to Philemon.

[280] Wilhelm Wuellner, "Paul as Pastor: The Function of Rhetorical Questions in First Corinthians," in *L'Apôtre Paul: Personnalité, Style et Conception du Ministère*, ed. Albert Vanhoye (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1986), 76: "Paul is occupying the territory that belonged to higher education."

[281] φανερόω ("manifested," 1.3) was used of pagan gods, heroes of Hellenistic myths, and Roman emperors. Paul co-opted this language from common usage by both 2TJ and Greco-Roman culture (Towner, 417-418). ἐπιφαίνω/ἐπιφάνεια ("to appear/appearance," Titus 2.11, 13; 3.4) used of pagan gods, heroes of Hellenistic myths, Roman emperors and in the LXX for Yahweh's activities (Gen. 35.7; Deut. 33.2; Ps. 30.17 [cf. Num. 6.25]; 66.2; 79.4, 8, 20; 117.27; 118.135 [cf. Num. 6.25]; Jer. 36.13; Zeph. 2.11; Ezek. 39.28; *2 Macc.* 3.30; noun: *2 Macc.* 2.21; 3.24; 12.22; 14.15; 15.27; *3 Macc.* 2.9; 5.8, 51). Comparing Num 6.25; *3 Macc.* 2.19; 6.4, 9, 18, 39; Ode 9.79 with Titus 2.11-3.8 may prove enlightening.

[282] Towner, 744.

Ethics in Titus must also be understood as part of the Gospel's subversion of the Cretan Zeus myth and imperial story. The Cretan story was bottom-up: Zeus was born a man and then became a god through his benefactions. The terms for grace, salvation, savior and epiphany (2.10-14) echo aspects of Crete's Zeus myth and of the story associated with the emperor. Zeus (and the emperor) appeared bringing beneficent gifts like grace and salvation to Cretans, "all of which demonstrated his virtue to the people."[283] Cretans, thereby, made the man Zeus into a god.

In contrast, the Jesus story is top-down: in conformity with the story the Hebrew scriptures tell, it moves from God down to people.[284] God has appeared "in Jesus himself, a human of recent memory."[285] The whole of Jesus' saving event centers around him.[286] In the person of Jesus (he is God first, who then becomes a man), God brings grace and benefactions so that people can mature into the Ideal they all long to be and which God the Creator has intended for humans to be. Thus, he restores them to their proper image bearing. This is what is meant in the imagery of the redemption "from all lawlessness" (2.14) and "the washing of regeneration" by pouring out his Spirit (3.5-7).[287]

Thirdly, like Proverbs utilized ANE rhetorical conventions, so Titus does with Hellenistic rhetorical uses of ethical terms and lists to depict the rhetorical ideal. Rhetoric

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[283] Ibid., 746; Kidd, 195-199.

[284] Towner, 746-747.

[285] Wright, *P&FG*, 1369; said about Paul's general engagement with Hellenistic philosophy.

[286] Towner, 745-746, 786; NIDNTTE, s.v. "φαίνω," 3:586-587.

[287] Towner, 746-747; Kidd, 208.

is just as important as the content of one's philosophy.[288] This is much of the reason why Second Temple Jewish authors utilized Hellenistic rhetoric (including terminology and certain concepts). It was part of the cultural air. This, in turn, sheds light on the rhetorical function of Paul's description of elders in Titus 1.6-9.

How, then, are we to understand Paul's illocution of Titus 1.6-9? Towner's summary is astute:

> "Collectively, then, the force of this ideal profile of leadership, constructed of stereotypical faults to be avoided and positive virtues to be cultivated, is to project an image of public respectability and good reputation for which Paul co-opts the model of the Hellenistic ideals."[289]

The two sentences of Titus 1.5-6 and 7-9 must be read together and interpreted as a whole. When done so, especially within the cross-cultural context of the Greco-Roman and 2TJ world, the rhetorical force is clear. The use of common Hellenistic cardinal virtues (v.8: self-control/*swphrhwn*, just/*dikaios*) and terms which occur regularly with them (discipline/self-restraint/*enkrates*; and 'holiness'/*osios*) in such a list are clues for how to read this paragraph. Furthermore, the description of elders is to be understood in light of 2.11-3.7. Because the Spirit is poured out in their hearts and has regenerated them they are able to successfully mature towards the ideal.[290]

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[288] Meeks, *Moral World*, 40-41.

[289] Towner, 690.

[290] Wright, *P&FG*, 1370. Note the contrast with Stoicism: God's Spirit does not indwell everyone regardless of their beliefs or lifestyle.

Concrete Moral Qualities and Rhetorical Framework

As argued above, one could summarize the description of elders in Titus 1.5-9 as describing the εὐσέβεια life in a few concrete terms.[291] Just as well, Titus 1.5-9 is a kind of elaboration of the cardinal virtues of Titus 2.11-12. Paul's ethical teaching was not original with him. He intended to be "concrete, relevant, inclusive, and persuasive." Titus's moral teachings fit with Furnish's observation of Paul's undisputed letters: he "usually assimilates traditional ethical material so thoroughly into the total context of his letters that its function, if not always its form and content, may be said to be significantly transformed."[292] Likewise, Wuellner discerns in 1 Cor.: "Concrete values, whether Jewish, or Hellenistic, or Christian, get affirmed as means to the end of stabilizing universal values, the values of Paul's gospel."[293]

If Titus's author is operating within a worldview defined by the Jewish Scriptures and if the God of the letter (12x: 1.1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 16; 2.5, 10, 11, 13; 3.4, 8) is the same God revealed in those Scriptures, then we must assume that whatever is taught about his unchanging nature is still true. This is of the utmost relevance to our perlocution with the text's illocution. The principle of *mutatis mutandis* must be implemented, just as it is with Proverbs. Paul does not have to spell out everything about God that has already been

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[291] Towner, 681 ("concrete framework"), 682 ("concrete qualities"); see 250, for 1 Tim. 3.1-7.

[292] Furnish, 68. This is precisely what Kidd demonstrates Paul does with Titus 2.12 in (185-209). Furnish unfortunately criticizes the "moralizing" of the concept of righteousness in this verse as unPauline, as if the δικ-word family can only convey forensic justification (146). Titus's author is well aware of the difference (see 3.5, 7).

[293] Wuellner, 64. He discusses Paul's use of concrete values and abstract or universal values (64-65). Concrete: affirms what societal standards accord with Paul's gospel. Abstract: critique so as to change what does not accord with Paul's gospel. Both are used together to establish proper boundaries, so the revolution does not swing too far in one direction or another.

spelled out throughout the papyri of the Hebrew canon. The description of the ethical ideal in Titus 1.6-9 is ordinary language, which means we are expected to fill in what is left unspecified.

Marshall, representing the majority view of scholarship, shows how one cooperates intuitively with the idealistic description in both of the following statements: "the ideal elder is the head of a Christian family" and "it would be pedantic literalism to argue that childless men could not be appointed" as elders.[294] In a recent dissertation, Thomas Hamilton, representing a minority view, decries, "unless truth prevails over the tyranny of the majority, no change of perspective or belief would ever be possible. The only issue is what the biblical text says."[295] To the contrary, there are other questions, namely, "How would a list of ethics like Titus 1.6-9 have been understood in its cultural context?" and "How would an author with a worldview governed by God's word have expected us to fill in what is left unsaid?" We will consider these questions in turn.[296]

In the first place, how can we cooperate with the rhetorical intent of ethical lists? Let us consider the well-known comparable list from Onasander's *Strategikos* (C. E. 49). The benefit of Onasander's list is at least three-fold: 1) It was contemporaneous with Titus.[297] 2) He uses similar terminology as Titus 1.6-9. Σώφρονα is in Titus 1.8 (and 1 Tim. 3.2), ἐγκρατῆ is also in Titus 1.8; ἀφιλάργυρον (identical to 1 Tim. 3.3) is a

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[294] Marshall, 146, 157, respectively. The former is a contrast which he notes from 1Tim. 3.4-5.

[295] Hamilton, 112. Hamilton is directly responding to Marshall and others. This is one of a number of arguments and assertions made that deserve thorough discussion in another format.

[296] This section elaborates on the shared world of Titus' Paul and Cretan Christians (cf. Collins, *Reading Genesis Well*, 90-91).

[297] Even a late date does not remove Titus far enough from *Strategikos* to make it irrelevant.

synonym for μὴ αἰσχροκερδῆ ("not greedy")[298] in Titus 1.7. ἂν τύχῃ καὶ πατέρα παίδων

("if possible, also a father of children") explicates a shared assumption with Titus 1.6

(and 1 Tim. 3.4-5) (addressed more fully below). 3) It is obvious that Onasander is

speaking in idealistic terms. Although Paul does not elaborate on each item like

Onasander does, the latter's list helps us cooperate with the rhetorical intentions of these

lists. Dibelius's remarks are on the mark:

> "In this introduction the catalogue of virtues contributes little that is especially appropriate for the 'general' (στρατηγὸς). For this very reason (as Wettstein has remarked), it resembles the list of duties for the bishop in 1 Tim 3 and Tit 1; After the introduction, there follows a commentary which treats the individual qualities as they relate to the specific theme of the treatise. It would not be difficult to write an analogous commentary to 1Tim 3, except of course it would be quite different."[299]

Not all of the examples listed in this document match exactly the list of

descriptors in Titus 1.6-9. Furthermore, one could say that the author does not expound

upon his list like Onasander or even like *Sirach* or *Wisdom*. There is a threefold response:

Firstly, none of the lists match exactly; neither do their expositions or literary type

(some are poetry; some are prose; not to mention inscriptions). But the piling up of

descriptive terms like what we have in Titus 1.6-9 indicates to the reader/hearer that an

ideal is being described.

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[298] Polybius (second century B.C.E.), *Histories* 6.46.1-5 describes Cretan culture especially greedy (Yarbrough, 485). Avarice is warned against in Titus 1.7, 1 Tim. 3.3 and 1 Pet. 5.2 because it is a common desire among humans. There may be an acute problem with Cretan culture, but that is not why it is in the list of descriptors for elders (cf. Plato, *Republic* 347a-d). It is unfortunately ironic that in the most affluent society in history (ours), one looks in vain for serious discussion of how greed manifests itself, whether in scholarly or popular literature. Many men are overlooked because they are not married or are childless, yet no man is disqualified or disciplined for greed.

[299] Dibelius-Conzelmann, 158-159, n 2.

Secondly, the occasion for the epistle to Titus and the author's purpose in writing such a short document is not to expound in many details about his list. Notice how the likes of Aristotle, Onasander, and second Temple Jewish wisdom books (and most of the others given above and those not mentioned in this thesis), are rather long works. The purpose, use, and audience are all different; Titus is probably the most unique out of all of them. The expounding would have been left up to the elders (1.9-16) in addition to apostolic delegates like Titus (1.4-5), Artemis, Tychicus, and Apollos (3.12-13; perhaps even Zenas), to be done verbally in person as part of their pastoral roles.

Thirdly, the author spells out what growing towards the goal of the ethical ideal looks like in daily living in 2.1-3.11. If we remember that a word such as σώφρων serves as a window that opens up to other aspects of one's moral-relational life (as it does in Proverbs, STJ literature, Philo, Hellenistic ethical writings; σώφρων is inseparable from other ethical virtues as discussed above), then the reader/hearer easily sees how the author is expounding, albeit to a limited degree, on the ethical ideal he has painted with words.

In the second place, whatever the Hebrew scriptures teach about God's involvement in the affairs of his people governs how we apply those descriptors to candidates for the eldership. We must place the character traits of being a "one woman man" and the father of "believing children" in their biblical context. Frankly, this is what we must do with all biblical analects. Moreover, if there is good reason to see that the description of elders is rooted in similar descriptions of Israel's leaders (*e.g*., Deut. 1.13) and moral ideals (*e.g*. Prov.), as we have demonstrated above, then we have all the more

reason to consider previous revelation when examining a person's ability to oversee God's people. The following questions are in fair territory:

Who blesses a man with a wife? Yahweh does according to texts such as Gen. 2.18-25 (Eve is a gift and blessing God gave Adam); 24.7, 40, 48, 50-51, 56, 62-67 (The Lord blesses Isaac with Rebekah);[300] Prov. 18.22 [cf. 8.11, 35; 31.10]; 19.14.[301]

Who opens and closes the womb, blessing a husband and wife with children? Yahweh does (Gen. 20.18; 25.21; 29.31; Deut. 30.9; Ruth 4.13; 1 Sam. 1.5-6, 19-20; 2.20; Pss. 17.14; 127; 128; 139; Job 1.21: "the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away" [said by a local elder, 31.1ff]).

Can an unmarried, childless man know what it is like to be a father? Yes, if we can trust that Paul and John knew that metaphors convey something real in 1 Thess. 2.11 (cf. v.7); 1 Cor. 4.14-17; 1 Tim. 1.2, 18; Titus 1.4; Phil. 2.22; 2 Tim. 1.2; 2.1; 1 John 2.1, 12-13, 18, 28; 3.7, 18; 4.4; 5.21; 3 John 1, 4 (cf. 2 John 1).[302]

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[300] Abraham and his servant had to make a plan and carry it out; Rebekah's father and her brother, Laban, had to cooperate. God never promises that it will always work out like this. Paul would have been fully aware that this has not changed when he wrote Titus. One's lack of a wife does not inhibit his character development.

[301] In Prov. 19.14, "from the Lord" is in an emphatic position.

[302] If a single man has been developing his skill at sexual fidelity (not an insignificant attribute of wisdom according to Proverbs (*e.g*., 7.1ff; et al.)), then he is able to shepherd men in their sexual fidelity, even if they are married. See *e.g*., Karol Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Grzegorz Ignatik (1960; repr., Boston, MA: Pauline Books & Media, 2013). Wojtyla's book was a result of his interactions with his students at the Roman Catholic University of Lublin. Wojtyla was a priest and professor who would become Pope John Paul II. As a single, celibate man, he presents some of the most profound wisdom about sexual ethics for all people. We all know that some married men struggle to practice sexual fidelity to their wives, whether with actual adultery or adultery in their hearts. Without disregarding our uniqueness as individuals, often what works for a married man also works for an unmarried man. *Mutatis mutandis*, as with Proverbs, is essential to appropriating Proverbs and other wisdom teaching. So must Cretan Christians do with the description of elders. Today we must do this with NT texts. Our situations are not exactly the same. We must make the necessary adjustments. Churches in Crete would have been no different.

The same God governs Titus's worldview. The view that claims, "But what does the text say?" is asserting the irrelevancy of the teaching of such passages.[303] Using a "disciplined imagination," we can faithfully cooperate with authorial intent by not stepping in the trap of the "zero-sum game" fallacy. The illocution of Titus 1.6 is not mutually exclusive to never-married men who have learned sexual fidelity in singlehood or childless men who disciple others.[304]

What if a man's children are not believing? Every parent knows the complexities of the raising children into adulthood. Many factors demand that we approach each candidate for eldership on a case-by-case basis. If a man is morally immature when his kids are young (whether he is a Christian or not in those days), the relational damage may be such that his children do not embrace Christ, or it may be that they do so despite his failures (biblically, saving faith is a work of God anyway). If a man's character is mature enough to be considered for eldership, then one would expect that he has demonstrated moral growth throughout his life, no matter where he started. If Jesus can train a man from the depths of depravity to be a model of morality, that is precisely the kind of man we would want overseeing our own growth in the Lord.[305]

If a man cannot be an elder because none, most or some of his children are not Christians, as those who hold the minority view contend, why do we not hold him

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[303] Incidentally, to rigidly apply the elder's ability to teach God's word (Titus 1.9), this discussion requires us to take all this into account.

[304] Cf. Collins, *Reading Genesis Well*, 71.

[305] For further discussion, see Robert S. Rayburn and Steven A. Nicoletti, "An Elder Must Have Believing Children: Titus 1:6 and a Neglected Case of Conscience," *Presbyterion* 43, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 69-80.

accountable for the members who fall away?[306] Or not converting everyone he attempts

to? Or the parents under his oversight who fail to disciple their children?

Finally, do any of the character traits in Titus 1.6-9 go beyond what is required of

any Christian? Hamilton is confident that the teaching on marriage and parenting (Titus

1.6) indeed goes "beyond what is required of any Christian." [307] Given that familial

relationships are depicted in concrete terms, the answer is not necessarily. Of course, a

man without kids (whether married or not) cannot be judged based on his parenting. He

can, however, be judged on his sexual fidelity and discipling others (*e.g*., Paul).

Does the emphasis on an elder's ability to teach in Titus 1.9 go beyond what is

required of any Christian? This is, perhaps, the lone difference. So, yes, one's ability and

growth in teaching is a significant factor; but we must apply this carefully to our own

context. My church does not have to deal with Judaizing false teachers. The question we

must ask is "Is this man addressing our needs in his teaching? And able to address our

needs as part of a team of elders (not as if he is the only overseer)? And in what format

(there are many avenues for teaching)?"

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[306] Hamilton astutely asks such questions knowing the answers are difficult and lamenting that pedantically literalistic interpretations of Titus 1.6 ignore such complexities (146).

[307] Ibid., 61.

Overlap of Hebrew Terms and Greek Terms and Values

This is what I covered at length in chapter 3. Most good dictionary articles

summarize well which Greek terms typically correspond to Hebrew terms, as well as

exceptions. We would be amiss not to bring this information to bear in NT studies. When

we do this for Titus 1.6-9, the OT background and its intersection with Hellenistic culture
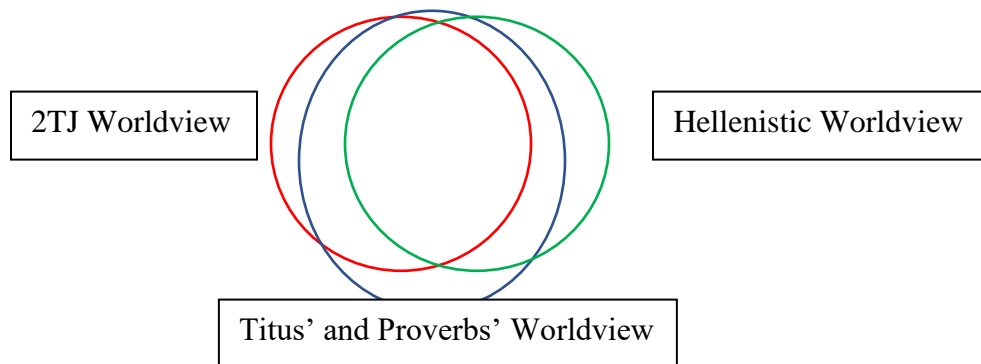
is illuminating.[308]

Figure 2. Overlap in Jewish, Christian and Hellenistic ethics

Paul is not doing something completely brand new with no continuity with the

OT. There is precedent for his rhetoric and ethical description of elders (*e.g*., Deut. 1.13,

15; 4.6-8). The same term for "appoint" (καθίστημι) in Deut 1.13, 15[309] is chosen for

Titus 1.5. The ethical standard (*i.e*., ideal) and how to cooperate with the rhetorical intent

is basically the same. Cretan Christians would have to enact the governing principal of

mutatis mutandis with the same kind of messy real-life scenarios just as the Israelites did.

Just as the Hebrew terms for leaders' character traits share semantic domains and

are piled together to hold up the aspired for ideal, so do the Greek terms. These Greek

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[308] This is where the relevancy of Keefer, "Proverbs in Systematic Theology" comes into play. See chapter 1, page 15.

[309] καθίστημι is frequently used for the appointment of various kinds of leaders.

terms and their families occur frequently throughout LXX Proverbs, 2TJ Wisdom

literature (cf. *4 Macc*. 1.18), Hellenistic ethical literature and inscriptions, and Titus 1.5-9

(and the rest of Titus, for that matter). The use of the rare ἀνέγκλητος (1.6, 7) as a

summary of what follows in each sentence clues us in to the rhetorical intent. Chrysostom

said of the synonym ἀνεπίλημπτος (1 Tim. 3.2), "every virtue is implied in this word."[310]

Most scholars stress the differences in the meanings of synonyms in this list.

ἐγκρατής ("discipline"), for instance, is closely related conceptually to σώφρων ("self-

control").[311] The latter is a cardinal virtue among Hellenistic philosophers.[312] Both can

mean control of one's passions and appetites (cf. Gal. 5.23).[313] Stressing that Paul meant

outward behavior for one and matters of the heart for the other seems to be beside the

point when looking at the paragraph as a whole.

In Titus 1.8, notice how the positive character traits are all broad and overlap in

semantic range. They use concrete virtues to describe a person's general character. A

man who is not just cannot then be expected to be holy or self-controlled at the same

time. This prohibits a checklist approach to this list. What must be done is to take the

ethical ideals and ask, "Is his life characterized in this way?" Compare the man to the

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[310] "Homily 10," NPNF 13.438; quoted in Hamilton, 66 n208. ἀνέγκλητος is used of deacons (1 Tim. 3.10).

[311] *E.g*., Marshall, 185-186.

[312] Cf. Xenophon, *Mem*. I.5.4; Aristotle, *EN* VII.1-10; *M. M*. II.4-6; Marshall, 185.

[313] Philo held "ἐγκράτεια as 'the greatest good and the most perfect benefit . . . a pure and unblemished virtue' (*Spec*. 149–50)." Plato substituted ἐγκράτεια, "the control of the sensual drives," for the popular σωφροσύνη ("prudence"; cf. *Resp*. 430e). Socrates perceived ἐγκράτεια as the "foundation of virtue" (ἀρετῆς. . . κρηπῖδα; Xenophon, *Mem*. I.5.4). *Magna moralia* 1203b13, in which Aristotle distinguishes ἐγκρατής and σώφρων, is disputed. (NIDNTTE, s.v., "ἐγκράτεια," 2:83-84).

whole verbal-moral mosaic. "Looking at the man's character and ability as a whole, is he the kind of person we need to shepherd us?"

Differences in meanings are to be brought out in teaching.[314] This requires the cultivation of wisdom on the part of the teacher (*i.e.*, elder). Here we find another point of contact with Proverbs. The teaching function of the wise interpreter and practitioner of Proverbs (1.2-6, note v.4) is similar to that of elders (Titus 1.9). In the context of the biblical story, elders' role as teachers is part of their role as players in God's mission to restore and spread his beneficent royal rule throughout the world.[315]

Goal is Moral Education (Titus 2.11-12)

Just as moral training of Israelites is the goal of Proverbs,[316] 2TJ Wisdom Literature and much of Greco-Roman philosophy, so the goal of Titus is the moral maturity of Cretan Christians (2.11-12), including the purpose of the idealistic description of elders. Lists of virtues and vices like that of 1.6-9 are routinely found in paraenetic writings. Comparing 1.6-9 to 2 Tim. 3.2-7, Malherbe correctly observes that "the paraenetic intent is implicit in the text itself."[317]

The difference between Titus's teaching and that of Hellenistic philosophic wisdom is the source of one's ability to grow morally. Using Aristotle as a representative

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[314] Quinn, 90; also 6: letters were not substitutes for "personal, face-to-face communication (see 1 Tim. 3.14; 4.13)."

[315] This is how Titus 1.5-9 connects to 3.1-2. See also Towner, "*The Structure of the Theology and Ethics in the Pastoral Epistles,*" 448-471.

[316] Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 25-27.

[317] Malherbe ("Paraenesis in the Epistle to Titus," 416) contrasts this implicitness with the rhetorical effect of 1 Tim. 3.1.

foil, fellowship with God seems to play a negligible role if any. Prudence leads one to contemplate and serve god (*EE* 8.3.16).[318] Paul says it works the other way round: God's grace must be given to us to lead into prudent living. Paul, channeling Proverbs' wisdom, offers a corrective to philosophical schools and any popular-level morality among the masses:[319] Ability to grow in wisdom is possible because the Lord renews human hearts.[320] Moral transformation within Christianity is holistic.[321] If God himself is to whom people made in his image must conform, then by necessity we need him to provide all the necessities for the goal to be achieved.[322] The role of elders must be able to faithfully pass along the Christian tradition, and through their teaching and example (1.6-9), shepherd their flocks away from the vices of 3.1-2 and toward the virtues upheld throughout the letter.

If the ethics of Titus are thought to be merely "Bourgeois," one must honestly self-assess his consistency in justness/righteousness or justice,[323] self-control, holiness, refraining from ever uttering a surly word (including to one's spouse and children), etc. If "not a drunkard" is Bourgeois, then which concrete ethical behaviors are permissible?

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[318] Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 27.

[319] Malherbe, "Soteriology," 256. "The qualities of the genuine philosophers are ascribed to God" in 3.3-9.

[320] See discussion of εὐσέβεια above (pp. ??).

[321] Per Thomas Aquinas, *Suma Theologica* I-II 19.4, 9-10 (Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 35).

[322] Whether δικαιόω in Titus 3.7 is forensic or moral, the source of the change is God, not self. This agrees with Proverbs' worldview and values. For the view that δικαιόω has "a moral sense, a just life by virtue of Christ's grace," not on "being brought into a right relationship with God," see Abraham Malherbe, "Soteriology in the Pastoral Epistles," 454-56. A discussion is needed in another venue. For Pauline usage of forensic justification by grace, see NIDNTTE, "δικαιοσύνη," *ktl*., 1:736.

[323] Justice is lauded by Jesus as a weightier matter of the Law (Matt. 23.23).

Proverbs is certainly not Bourgeois, and it does not shy away from warning the wise against drunkenness (*e.g.*, Prov. 23.19-25, 29-35).[324]

Paul's rhetoric is in service to his theology (including his Christology).[325] Paul employs rhetorical practices of his day critically, infusing new meaning as an educational corrective of standard philosophical meanings and Judaisms lacking a proper view of their Messiah. Paul's pastoral concern is to educate members of the Christian communities to which he writes with the goal of eliciting a response. Common and readily recognizable rhetorical conventions (such as the description of elders in terms of the ideal) are to be understood in light of God's faithfulness to his purposes now fulfilled in the appearance of Jesus (1.1-3; 2.11-3.7). This is the paradigm through which reality must be known and lived out. If the goal is moral education, then this necessarily assumes and expects room for maturing, even for elders.

Floor and Ceiling

Victor Furnish's observations anticipated Wenham's floor-ceiling analogy for the Mosaic Law. Paul uses concrete exhortations, like both Proverbs and Hellenistic moralists.[326] He does not use them as if he intends to present

> "an exhaustive catalog of moral responsibilities. Quite the contrary, one effect of his use of a wide variety of traditional ethical materials is to underscore the virtually unlimited extent and breadth of those responsibilities. He is concerned that no good work or noble deed should be excluded from the Christian's life. *Inclusiveness*,

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[324] For discussion of how "bourgeois" is often used as a dismissive term for a different social class, see C. S. Lewis, *Studies in Words* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 22-23. Much thanks to Jack Collins for this tip.

[325] Like we see Paul quite capable of doing in Philemon (Wright, *P&FG*, 21 (discussing Paul's rhetorical play on Onesimus's name)) and 1 Corinthians (Wuellner, 76).

[326] Furnish, 72-75.

then, is one of the objectives of the apostle's concrete ethical teaching. He tries to avoid giving the impression that there are ever any limits either to the good that is required or to the evil that is possible."[327]

Much ink has been spilt arguing that the description of elders in Titus is a low bar, indistinguishable from Greco-Roman cultural standards. What scholars have missed is that each of these ethical qualities and certainly seeing them all together (and more besides the ones left off this short list) have degrees of mastery. The rhetorical effect of the list as a whole points upward. This is the kind of thing Aristotle, for instance, wrote at length about. One may be self-controlled. But the question Christian teaching forces us to ask is: In every aspect of my life? And to what degree? How consistently? In other words, these ethical qualities in the context of Christ's gospel invites and enables constant growth (2.11-14).[328] Paul would not want Cretan Christians to measure themselves by their pagan neighbors' lived morals, but by the godliness that accords with Christ's gospel (1.1, 9-2.10). As they mature in degree and consistency of the ethical qualities their pagan neighbors hold up as ideal (and which agrees with God's revealed character in the Scriptures), they glorify God and make Christ more attractive. This is how the rhetorical function of Titus 1.5-9 works "to see churches where the gospel and Christian living were taken seriously."[329] They will not be taken seriously if they are

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[327] Ibid., 75, italics original. Cites Philippians 4.8 as an example.

[328] For a discussion of ἐγκράτεια's relationship to σωφροσύνη, see Aristotle, *NE* III.x; VII.i-x. Note VII.iv.6: Someone may be generally characterized by "Self-restraint" (ἐγκράτεια), but weak in practicing self-restraint in a particular area (e.g., anger, pursuit of honor or gain, gluttony). The inclusion of self-control (twice, no less, Titus!) is just as important as "the husband of one wife." Yet the silence from those insisting an elder must have marriage and parenting experience regarding an overweight man's penchant for sugar sounds a warning that such interpretations are at odds with Paul's rhetorical intention.

[329] Marshall, 190.

ethically indistinguishable from their non-Christian neighbors.[330] Paul aims higher than

the actual practice of Gentiles as well as many/most Jews.[331] Yahweh's covenant with

Israel has found its fulfillment and goal in the Davidic Messiah Jesus. In this way, the

ethical teaching of Titus is a continuation of the wise life in the context of Yahweh's

covenant with his people. The floor and ceiling metaphor still works. Elders are to be the

members of a local community of Jesus' disciples who exhibit their pursuit of the ceiling.

Pursuing the ceiling entails shepherding in such a way that helps (by modeling, teaching,

interpersonal relationships, how and what they teach) others in the flock to rise further

from the floor and closer to the ceiling. They are able to shepherd in this way because

they are taught by God's grace (Titus 2.11-12) and regenerated by the Spirit (Titus 3.5).

If Paul is operating within the canonical worldview of the Hebrew Scriptures,

then Proverbs' insistence on the teachability of the wise is in play. Room for maturation

is inherent in teachability. Agur's contribution in Proverbs is pertinent here. The Gentile

Agur confesses that his failures in pursuit of wisdom means that the wise must trust God

as the source of virtue,[332] the very thing Paul teaches in Titus (1.1, 5.-9; 2.11-14; 3.3-7).

This is another way of talking about the ceiling-floor analogy for moral growth.

Elders are imperfect. They will never have enough experience for their role as

overseers. Not every elder is equally gifted; there will be on the job training. Thus, an

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[330] A problem the church in United States is sadly plagued with (*e.g*., pursuit of and misuse of money; sexual immorality; lack of self-control of the tongue and anger; abuse of power; continuing to hate and be hated (3.1-2)).

[331] For example, the debate over grounds for divorce between the schools of Hillel and Shammai focus on the floor and miss the ceiling. Jesus aims upward (Matthew 19.1-12; Mark 10.1-12). Likewise, Paul aims for the ceiling with "the husband of one wife (lit. one woman man)."

[332] Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 215. See Chapter 2, "Goal of Proverbs is Moral Transformation."

elder must continue to be teachable. It is the wise who "hear" and "increase in learning" (Prov. 1.5). The emphasis on Titus 1.5-9 is his character. The wise will practice the principle of *mutatis mutandis* for his life's circumstances.[333]

Democratization of the Wisdom Ideal

Interestingly, Titus 2.11-12 emphasizes that followers of Jesus, the direct beneficiaries of God fulfilling his long ago promises in Jesus Christ, are taught by God's grace (2.11-12). Given that Proverbs was intended for all Israelites, and thus, democratizing wisdom, we see another connection through the channels of second Temple Judaism to wisdom of the Hebrew Scriptures. Paul does something that Graeco-Roman philosophers were not doing. Most schools of philosophy were the concern of societal elites who had the time to leisurely contemplate the deep, hard questions of life. Paul, in contrast, elevates "the life of the mind … to a primary socio-cultural activity for all the Messiah's people." In essence, he democratizes the pursuit of true wisdom.[334] Wisdom is not only for philosophers to discern in a given context. Every Spirit regenerated person is involved in developing "the skills in the art of godly living."

There is good reason to think Paul was capable of such a program. The Pharisees took up Proverbs' democratization of wisdom by seeking to educate all Jews in Palestine

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[333] This is further reason why men without children and never-married bachelors (and a man whose wife died before they had children but never remarried or a man who divorced before he had children …) ought not to be disqualified out of hand from shepherding.

[334] Wright, *P&FG*, 1:27. See discussion on pages 36-39 and 56-57 above. The inculcation of ethics and the teaching of revered texts to conglomerates such as Cretan churches draws together aspects of philosophical and Jewish schools. We could probably add metaphysics (i.e., theology) to Paul's democratizations (see, *e.g*., Young, 24; Wright, *P&FG*, 23; John T. Fitzgerald, "Greco-Roman Philosophical Schools," in *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social and Historical Contexts*, eds. Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 141).

in the Torah.[335] Hengel suggests this attempt was "probably unique in the ancient

world."[336] It has been well established that the Second Temple Jewish Wisdom Literature

(*e.g.*, *Sira* and *Wisdom* written in Alexandria, Egypt) was attempting to present

instruction from the Hebrew Scriptures in a palatable way to Jews immersed in and

attracted to Greek culture. Paul's education in Tarsus and Jerusalem and his ability to

contextualize Christ's gospel to his varied audiences makes it plausible that he can draw

together these intersecting ethical strands like what we see in Titus.

Paul sees the local church as a school (of a sort) for Christian maturation and

elders as stewards of the members of God's house. The Lord works through his

household for the redemption of their neighbors, their city and their cultures.[337]

Community – Relational

The vices mentioned, starting in the elders' description (1.5, 10-16; 3.1-2, 9-11),

detail attitudes and behaviors that disrupt and destroy the church's community life.[338] The

list of "social virtues"[339] in 2.2-10 exhibits the premium Paul places on relationships. The

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[335] Hengel, 1:79-83.

[336] Ibid., 1:175. Even if conservative Jewish sects early on prohibited studying wisdom among Hellenistic writings (1:170), Hengel is correct that they would certainly be influenced by Hellenistic thought, perhaps unawares (1:174), due to the cultural air.

[337] Collins, *Genesis 1-4*, 131-132, 275-276: Based upon his thorough exegesis, he concludes that "the fully Christian stance toward culture is not one of *retreat* but of *capture*" (275). Cf. Aristotle, *Politics* 1252a-b, 1259-60b, 1263b, 1269b, 1334b-35b, 1337a ff; Verner, 71-72. For Aristotle, politics, morality, the wellbeing of the family and the wellbeing of the city were inseparable (*Pol.* 1253a). Such a holistic view of life is yet further overlap between Christianity and Hellenistic philosophical ideals. Christianity is distinct in that the implementation is not for aristocratic elites, but for every member of God's household regardless of social class under the leadership of elders (who can be from any social class).

[338] Unlike the emphasis on vices as merely "personal" among Hellenists (Furnish, 84).

[339] Malherbe, "Paraenesis in the Epistle to Titus," 417. This list consists of what is appropriate to sound doctrine and is "quite conventional" content for paraenesis.

purposes clauses introduced by ἵνα (2.5,8,10)[340] have an apologetic and missional aim.[341] Thus, Titus carries forward Proverbs' mission, commensurate with Israel's purpose throughout the Hebrew scriptures, to make God attractive to others.

Titus, like *Wisdom*, also faces challenges from non-Christian teaching that tempts Cretan believers to turn away from the Gospel. Philip H. Towner and Reggie M. Kidd have ably demonstrated the apologetic nature of Titus. One of the ways Christians are to persuade their neighbors is by living in accord with the moral ideals of Proverbs, many of which are also the ideals of Hellenistic peoples.[342]

Yet, Paul's rhetoric has loftier goals. Paul sees the Gospel as the means to unite disparate individuals together into a renewed family belonging to Christ (1.1-3; 2.14; 3.7), over which elders are stewards (1.7).[343] Titus is told to appoint elders not in every church, but every city (1.5).[344] Paul's vision for churches is for each to be like a commonwealth of Christians within the city (2.1-10; 3.1-2, 13). His sights were set on cultural redemption and transformation. Subjection to the state, for instance, is part of the

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[340] Ibid.

[341] Respectively, Kidd, *passim*; N. T. Wright, *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters* (New York, NY: Harper One, 2010), 206.

[342] Kidd, 185-209; Philip H. Towner, "The Structure of the Theology and Ethics in the Pastoral Epistles" (PhD. diss., University of Aberdeen, 1984).

[343] Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, (1983), 161-162. For similar explanation of Paul's rhetoric in 1 Corinthians, see Wuellner, 73.

[344] Presumably there would have been only one church in each city. The major cities of Crete during the early Roman empire included Gortyn, Eleutherna, Knossos, Hierapytna, and Kydonia (Gill, "Roman Background to Titus," 224).

Christian community's role in God's redemption of creation.[345] This makes the ethics of

1.5-9 far less likely to be a bourgeois conformation to a low bar.[346] Rather, elders model

the morals all should live by.

Aspiring toward an ideal city is not new to Paul. *4 Macc.* 3.19ff engaged with this

idea by holding up Jerusalem as an ideal, peaceful city before it was Hellenized.[347]

Likewise, Hellenists often exalted their ideal to motivate the aspirations of actual city

leaders. Ever since Aristotle, the ideal was to be pursued by each member of the *polis*. A

city could progress toward the ideal if all citizens matured toward the ideal by cultivating

moral habits.[348] Aristotle was aware of life's "less-than-ideal contexts" in which people

must pursue moral ideals.[349] Aristotle uses "the character of the ideal statesman

(πολιτικός), or lawgiver" in his *Ethics* and *Politics* so that a city's actual leaders may

genuinely look out for the citizens' well-being. A city's ability to carry out its mission, as

Aristotle envisaged it, needs leaders well practiced in living the virtuous life and able to

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[345] Towner, 771-772; see also Fee, 184, 200. Cf. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 42.11: he likens the body of Christ to a commonwealth. [cf. Heb. 11.16; 13.14: the heavenly city is one of quality, not location.] How God's people live in anticipation of the ideal city makes all the difference in the world.

*Religion and politics were not separated in the ancient world. Iin relation to Hellenism and later Roman rule, Jews concerned with Torah fidelity had both religious and political interests aroused, increasingly so since the Maccabean rebellion (see Hengel, 1:307). For Jews and Christians, to be faithful to the one God of Israel had political ramifications.

[346] In 3.2, "to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people" is synonymous with the list in 1.7-8. Knowing that leaders do not live up to the actual ideal, yet nevertheless serve as models due to their overall maturity was not new (cf. Elena Irrera, "Can a Good Citizen Be a Good Ruler? An Answer from Aristotle's *Politics*," *Acta Philosophica* 21, no. 1 (2012): 145-146).

[347] DeSilva, 112-117.

[348] see, *e.g*., Aristotle, *NE* II.i.1-8 1103a 14-1103b 25; note II.i.1, 3, 5 1103a 17-18, 25-26, 1103b 2-7.

[349] Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 128. Here Keefer is discussing the role of work and labor within Aristotle's philosophy which epitomized contemplation. Aristotle discusses courage similarly (123).

guide those under their charge toward pursuit of goals that are to be shared with succeeding generations.[350] This is precisely what we find in Titus 1.5-2.8.[351]

Despite the context of the *polis*, for Aristotle and most after him, attainment of virtue was assumed to be individualistic, cut off from divine resources. For Paul, however, virtues were to be cultivated in community. Each member must faithfully play his role which helps others do the same. As N. T. Wright argues, morality is part of mission,[352] which is also the context of Proverbs. Like Proverbs, Titus's vision for its community shares Aristotle's teleological function for the community: growth in wisdom and the well-being of others. Moreover, also like Proverbs, Titus's community differs from Aristotle's *polis* context in that a life centered upon God is the tether which holds everyone together.[353] Repentance is required, unlike Hellenists, "to have a true vision of God as the ultimate end"[354] (2.13).

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[350] Ibid., 133; quoting Harold H. Joachim, *The Nicomachean Ethics: A Commentary*, ed. D. A. Rees (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1951), 17-18. Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is for equipping statesmen in the art of public speaking (cf. Titus 1.9; 1 Tim. 3.2-3). Statesmen are not to be youthful, either in age or character, or prone to follow their feelings over reason (*NE* 1.3.6-7). The flip side can also be true: a younger person or a person who has been a Christian for only a couple years can exhibit mature character, and thus, not be "a novice" (1 Tim. 3.6-7).

[351] Cf. C. John Collins, "The Theology of the Old Testament," in *ESV Study Bible*, 30: "each member of the people was to see himself or herself as an *heir* of this story, with all its glory and shame; as a *steward* of the story, responsible to pass it on to the next generation; and as a *participant*, whose faithfulness could play a role, in God's mysterious wisdom, in the story's progress." Elders lead in modeling and instilling Christian life in those they oversee.

[352] Wright, 206. The public disgrace brought upon the Church by failed church leaders is testimony to this. Christianity is community oriented (Wright, 144-145. See also Calvin's Commentary on Titus 1.7-9).

[353] Cf. Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 150-151. Contrasting friendship in Proverbs with Aristotle's *polis* ("which is guided by interest in the good of its virtuous members"), Keefer concludes, "In Proverbs, friendship occurs within the context of the religious community, rightly guided by an interest in those who fear the Lord for the sake of growing in wisdom" (151). "a community [of friends] that resides within the confines of the *polis*" is necessary for the cultivation of virtue (*NE* 9.9.1-7; 23 n16).

[354] "virtuosity requires membership not in the political state but among the people of God, and it demands that one turn toward him in an act of repentance." Repentance goes hand in hand with baptism, opening

one's eyes "to have a true vision of God as the ultimate end" (Thomas Aquinas, *ST* III 69.4; Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 35).

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Summary of Thesis Argument

The purpose of my thesis is to provide a detailed explanation for reading Titus 1.5-9 intuitively as a description of an ideal wise, moral person. Although Proverbs is not a source of direct literary dependence, it nevertheless provides the canonical background for Paul's description of elders. It shares all the major aspects of Proverbs' rhetoric, cultural and covenantal context. Furthermore, Titus 1.5-9 follows the well tread path of 2TJ Wisdom Literature's engagement with Hellenistic moral ideals. Given the weight of evidence for how clusters of ethical terms and the list format were so often rhetorically intended to be understood as an ideal, we are wise to cooperate with Titus 1.5-9 as such. Titus affirms that if God is the same as Yahweh in the Hebrew scriptures, we must conclude that he still operates the same way. In other words, if the Lord gives and takes away, and also is the source of moral maturity, then we are rightly cooperating with the list's rhetorical intentions by not ruling out never-married or childless men *a priori*. Furthermore, far from some ethical descension, the rhetorical intention of the ideal is to lift our hearts' aspirations heavenward to the character of the Lord himself. By the appearing of God's grace, we are mobilized in that very direction.

There is something different going on in Titus than what we find in either the Greco-Roman world or 2TJ generally. When one compares the theology and Christology in Titus against Hellenistic ethical writings and 2TJ wisdom literature, one gets the sense that they all "breathe a different air." Other religio-ethical writers are not saying *exactly* the same thing. Though there are areas of continuity with the predominant worlds of

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Greeks, Romans and Jews, Titus is calling for the churches in Crete to aim for "a new way of life."[355]

I tried to refrain from any statement that may sound like we can achieve the ideal in this life. Reading Titus the way I suggest coheres with living the good life according to Proverbs. The *imitatio Dei* has begun to be lived out in this age, albeit imperfectly. Although Christians hope ultimately in the consummation (resurrection life with God unencumbered by sin), we move toward that hope throughout our temporal lives. Prov. 3.5-12, for instance, lauds knowledge and love for God and his ways as worthy of pursuit without explicit reference to an eschatological consummation. Life in such "an earthly horizon nevertheless accommodates *imitatio Dei*."[356] This falls into the category of Aquinas's theological virtue of "the good": "A certain participation in Happiness can be had in this life; but perfect and true Happiness cannot be had in this life" (*ST* I-II 5.3).[357] The church's mission, in part, is to make the most of what God's grace offers in this age, making Him more attractive to our neighbors than what competes for their hearts' affections (Titus 2.1-3.2).

Recommendations for Practice

The findings of my research lead us to keep a watchful eye for morally mature candidates for eldership, regardless of marriage or parental experience. Furthermore, the

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[355] Wright, *P&FG*, 1:6. What Wright observes with Paul's other letters (he leaves Titus out of his discussion and even scripture references for some undisclosed reason) we see just as much in Titus (the same goes for his questions on page 23). For agreement and further elaboration, see Kidd, 208-209.

[356] Keefer, *Proverbs and Virtue Ethics*, 178.

[357] Ibid., 177.

church must thoughtfully engage in discipling men for church leadership. Many local churches need to soberly reconsider how they are preparing the current generation and younger ones to walk the path of discipleship, i.e., wisdom. This requires the difficult work of addressing emotional awareness and health, deepening moral maturity, relationships and accountability.

Recommendations for Further Research

Several recommendations come to mind. The same approach I have taken with Titus 1.5-9 can, of course, be taken with 1 Tim. 3.1-13 and 1 Pet. 5.1-5. Likewise ripe for investigation is the depiction of the Messiah as the Ideal throughout the Psalms and the Prophets and how that may enlighten NT exegesis.

The illocution of ὁ ἐπίσκοπος in Titus 1.7-9 deserves further discussion. Paul may have given us a clue that he intends for "the elder" to serve as a caricature. Most EVV translate ὁ ἐπίσκοπος with the indefinite article, "an elder/a bishop." A few bring out the presence of the definite article, "the elder/bishop" (ASV, NASB, JUB, AMP, AMPC, DARBY, DLNT, LEB, NET, WEB, TLV, Young's). The debate has long raged over whether Paul meant for a single bishop to have authority over a church and its elders or if he used bishop and elders interchangeably, intending for a plurality of elders. Many have read the singular reference to specify a class of people.[358] Perhaps another argument in support of the latter is the rhetorical use of the definite article in the confines of the

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[358] "The two singular instances of ἐπίσκοπος (1 Tim 3.2; Titus 1.7) catalog the character of the overseer, which is understandably presented as a class (not a specific individual)." (Hamilton, 42, referencing Knight, 176-77; and Kelly, 74). The choice of the singular ἐπίσκοπος is not sufficient to ascertain how many overseers a congregation should have (Marshall, 477).

sentence. To speak of "the bishop/overseer" would draw attention to the rhetorical caricature that Paul wants people to picture in their minds. In effect, he is saying, "here is the ideal. Who among you can guide you in your path toward the ideal?" It should go without saying (notice that Paul did not have to) that no elder will actually be the ideal himself. He is to embody biblical moral maturity, but the best he can do will still be imperfect. After all, elders also need God's grace, forgiveness and the regeneration of the Spirit because of their own failure to sinlessly conform to the ideal.

Comparing Titus with the undisputed Pauline letters would repay further study, namely focusing on the virtue and vice lists,[359] terms used throughout this short epistle (*e.g*., appearing (1.1; 2.11, 13; 3.4) and hope (1.2; 2.13; 3.7)), and the use of 2TJ wisdom literature (especially *Wisdom*). To enhance our understanding of NT use of Proverbs, comparing the LXX translation with its Hebrew counterpart needs a great deal of research, especially utilizing insights from text-linguistics, etc.

For many generations now, Paul has been relegated to being studied only in the religious or theological departments of Western educational institutions. This is highly unfortunate for a number of reasons. For one, students of philosophy are being deprived of undoubtedly one of the most public and influential thinkers of the first century Graeco-Roman and Jewish worlds. They are missing some of the most – from a Christian perspective, the most – significant contributions to the discussion of worldviews, ethics and religion. This leads to what is perhaps the more important negative consequences: the continual perpetuation of preventing the progress of integrating the advancement in

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[359] Furnish, 71-72.

scholarship of the fields of Old Testament studies, New Testament studies, Second

Temple Judaism and Graeco-Roman philosophy and historical studies.

It has only been since the turn from the nineteenth century into the twentieth that

improved editions of Greco-Roman philosophers have received heightened attention by

New Testament scholars. As a result, familiarity with the historical-cultural context of the

world of the earliest Christians has been quickly increasing, save for a stall in progress in

the mid-1900's.[360] According to Malherbe, Johannes Weis well over a century ago

"insisted that students of the New Testament should know Seneca, Epictetus, Plutarch,

Lucian, Musonius, Marcus Aurelius, and Cicero intimately, and pursue the study of the

New Testament with Hans von Arnim's collection of Stoic texts at their elbows."[361] N. T.

Wright has said that since Paul could match the intellectual likes of Aristotle, Socrates

and Seneca, his writings should also be studied in departments like Philosophy,

Psychology and even Politics and Economics. As someone whose educational foundation

was in Hellenistic philosophy, Wright's assessment is worth serious consideration.[362]

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[360] Abraham Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1989), 4-5.

[361] Ibid., 3, references Johannes Weis, *Die Aufgaben der newtestamentlichen Wissenschaft in der Gegenwart* (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1908), 4, 11, 55.

[362] N. T. Wright, "Paul's Background," June 29, 2018, video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wpreSe8BKP8. His comments come at 1:45-2:23.

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