



University
of Glasgow

Moody, John L. (2023) *Destroying the wisdom of the wise: an analysis of wisdom in first Corinthians 1-4 in light of Hebrew Bible wisdom narratives*. MTh(R) thesis.

<https://theses.gla.ac.uk/83790/>

Copyright and moral rights for this work are retained by the author

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge

This work cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission from the author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Enlighten: Theses

<https://theses.gla.ac.uk/>
research-enlighten@glasgow.ac.uk

Destroying The Wisdom of the Wise:

An Analysis of Wisdom in First Corinthians 1-4

in Light of Hebrew Bible Wisdom Narratives

John L. Moody

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the

Degree of Master of Theology



Edinburgh Theological Seminary

May 5, 2023

Abstract

This study seeks to discern if there is a link between Paul's discussion of wisdom in 1 Corinthians 1-4 and the wisdom narratives of the Hebrew Bible - narratives where God imparts wisdom to a person or persons in a significant way. To narrow the investigation, I have selected the wisdom narratives surrounding the biblical figures of Joseph, Solomon, Isaiah and Daniel. I then delineate the criteria I use for discerning the Pauline allusions to these passages, adapting the methodology outlined by Dale Allison.

Various options for the source of conflict in the Corinthian church are proposed and assessed, with the conclusion that the influence of Stoic teachers was the likely culprit. I then outline the argument of the four chapters.

Three categories of motifs are examined using Allison's criteria: source motifs (motifs that speak of God as the source of wisdom), reversal motifs (motifs where God reverses the established social order) and covenant motifs (motifs where wisdom is given for the preservation or flourishing of God's people).

I conclude that there are discernable allusions between the Solomon, Isaiah and Daniel narratives and 1 Corinthians 1-4, but there is insufficient evidence to establish a link with the Joseph story. I further argue that Paul's intention in including these allusions is an act of out-narrating - he seeks to undermine Stoic influence by enfolding the Corinthians into the narrative structures of Israel's redemptive history.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Abstract | 2 |
| Table of Contents | 3 |
| List of Tables | 5 |
| Acknowledgements | 6 |
| Author's Declaration | 7 |
| Introduction | 8 |
| <i>Methodology</i> | 9 |
| <i>Scope</i> | 18 |
| <i>Wisdom Themes for Further Study</i> | 19 |
| Chapter 1: Wisdom In 1 Corinthians 1-4 | 21 |
| <i>The Nature of the Conflict in Corinth</i> | 22 |
| Jew/Gentile Conflict | 24 |
| Gnosticism | 25 |
| Hellenistic Jewish Wisdom Teachings | 27 |
| Socioeconomic Discrepancies in the Church | 28 |
| Rhetoric | 30 |
| Stoic Philosophy | 34 |
| Summary | 39 |
| <i>Outline of 1 Corinthians 1-4</i> | 40 |
| <i>Summary of Paul's Argument in 1 Corinthians 1-4</i> | 41 |
| Statement of the Problem (1:10-17) | 42 |
| The First Argument (1:18-2:5) | 43 |
| The Second Argument (2:6-3:4) | 46 |
| The Third Argument (3:5-4:21) | 49 |
| Paul's Concluding Appeal | 54 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| | 4 |
| <i>Conclusion</i> | 55 |
| Chapter 2: The Source of Wisdom | 57 |
| <i>Hebrew Bible Wisdom Narratives</i> | 58 |
| Joseph | 58 |
| Solomon | 62 |
| Isaiah | 65 |
| Daniel | 68 |
| <i>Thematic Analysis</i> | 71 |
| Chapter 3: Wisdom and Divine Reversal | 73 |
| <i>Hebrew Bible Wisdom Narratives</i> | 74 |
| Joseph | 74 |
| Solomon | 75 |
| Isaiah | 77 |
| Daniel | 80 |
| <i>Thematic Analysis</i> | 84 |
| Chapter 4: Wisdom and the Flourishing of God’s People | 88 |
| <i>Hebrew Bible Wisdom Narratives</i> | 88 |
| Joseph | 88 |
| Solomon | 91 |
| Isaiah | 93 |
| Daniel | 96 |
| <i>Thematic Analysis</i> | 97 |
| Chapter 5: Conclusion | 100 |
| <i>Analyzing the Evidence</i> | 100 |
| <i>Out-Narrating the Stoics: Paul’s Reason for Employing Wisdom Narratives</i> | 102 |

List of Tables

| | |
|--|-----|
| Table 1-1: Parallels Between First Corinthians and Stoic Writings..... | 35 |
| Table 2-1: Potential Allusions of Source Motifs | 72 |
| Table 3-1: Potential Allusions of Reversal Motifs | 87 |
| Table 4-1: Comparison of 1 Chronicles 29:2 and 1 Corinthians 3:12..... | 98 |
| Table 4-2: Potential Allusions of Covenant Motifs..... | 99 |
| Table 5-1: Potential Allusions in 1 Corinthians 1-4 | 100 |

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not exist were it not for the support and encouragement of two former teachers, Dr. Ralph J Brabban and Dr. James F. Sennett. Several friends have encouraged me to “keep at it,” particularly Dr. Matthew Perry, Pete Williamson, Carey Hughes, Dr. Kent Hughes, and Jae Choi. I am grateful for their friendship.

The faculty and staff of Edinburgh Theological Seminary have been helpful throughout this process. Special thanks are due to Alistair Wilson, the Director of Postgraduate Studies. I would also like to thank John Angus MacLeod, who advised me during the early days of this project, and to wish him a happy retirement.

The counsel and advice of Dr. Benjamin Castaneda, who inherited this thesis (and this student) as a work in progress, cannot be overstated. Dr. Castaneda’s suggestions, comments, and help procuring sources have made this thesis better than it would have been.

I am grateful for the proofreading help of my eldest daughter, River.

To my children: River, Abby, Nate and Maggie: Thanks for supporting me in this crazy dream. I owe each of you an infinite number of coffee dates.

And to my beloved wife, Naomi: You have sacrificed so much to free me up to pursue this goal. I am eternally grateful. Thank you for everything. I love you forever.

Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

John L. Moody

Introduction

Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. (1 Cor. 2:6-7)¹

The first four chapters of Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians record perhaps the most comprehensive teaching in the entire New Testament on the subject of wisdom. In these chapters, the Apostle Paul confronts a church that is enamored with what he calls the “wisdom of the world.”² He counters this so-called wisdom with a different sort of wisdom – “a secret and hidden wisdom of God.”³

Many studies have attempted to discover the precise nature of the “wisdom” that was prevalent in the church at Corinth and why Paul viewed it as such a danger to the church. Roman rhetoric, various Jewish and Hellenistic teachings and forms of proto-gnostic spirituality have all been proposed as options.⁴

While those investigations certainly bring valuable context to understanding Paul’s argument (and we will address this in chapter 1), this study seeks to answer a different question. Rather than examine the sources of the Corinthians’ conception of

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all English Scripture references are from the English Standard Version.

² 1 Cor. 12:20; 3:19. Similar is “the wisdom of this age” (1 Cor. 2:6) and “the wisdom of men” (1 Cor. 2:5).

³ 1 Cor. 2:7.

⁴ Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 13-16. Most commentaries on First Corinthians evaluate the likely options for the identity of the “worldly wisdom” Paul opposes in Corinth. See, for example, Fee’s discussion of this in his introduction. Chapter 1 of this thesis will also survey the various options.

wisdom, I want to look at that of the apostle himself. From what sources did Paul's idea of wisdom arise?

As a result of his training as a Pharisee, and as is apparent throughout his writings, Paul was intimately familiar with the writings of the Old Testament. It makes sense therefore to look to the Jewish scriptures as a key source of Paul's mental model in general and his model of wisdom in particular. More specifically, I will demonstrate that a likely background source for the wisdom discussion in First Corinthians 1-4 are the Hebrew Bible stories in which God imparts wisdom to a person or persons in a significant way. (I will use the term "wisdom narratives" to refer to these stories.)

Methodology

Richard Hays notes, "It must be affirmed that Paul was a hermeneutical theologian whose reflection on God's action in the world was shaped in decisive ways by his reading of Israel's sacred texts."⁵ This is doubtless so, but how does one discern when a particular Old Testament text is in view? Apart from quoting it directly, it is impossible to prove with certainty that a New Testament author had a particular Old Testament text in mind while writing.⁶

⁵ Richard B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 28.

⁶ Susan Docherty, "New Testament Scriptural Interpretation in its Early Jewish Context", *NovT* 57, 1 (2015): 4. Even a direct quotation may not be the certain connection that it appears. As Docherty notes, "It is now beyond dispute, then, that the scriptures were circulating in several different forms, in both Hebrew and Greek, in the first century CE." The multiplicity of versions of both the Hebrew Tanakh and the Septuagint complicates the task of ascertaining whether the New Testament author is quoting the Old Testament at all.

Various inductive methods have been put forward to identify possible connections between Old Testament and New Testament texts. These methods typically fall into one of three broad classes, which I shall call *textual* methods, *metanarrative* methods, and *thematic* methods. A brief exploration of these classes is in order.

Textual methods focus on fine-grained details in the texts in question. Words, phrases, and sentences in the New Testament are examined using various rubrics to determine whether a quotation, echo or allusion to an Old Testament text may be present. By far the most influential of the textual methods is that of Richard Hays in his seminal work, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*. Hays identifies seven criteria to help in determining whether a given text is echoing an earlier text.⁷ Those seven tests are:

1. *Availability*. Was the source text available to the author of the later text or to its original audience?
2. *Volume*. How explicit is the supposed echo between the two texts?
3. *Recurrence*. How often does the author elsewhere refer to the source text?
4. *Thematic Coherence*. How well does the echo fit into the argument the later text is making?
5. *Historical Plausibility*. Does the meaning of the echo make sense in the thought world of the author or audience of the later text?

⁷ Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 29-32.

6. *History of Interpretation*. Has the alleged echo been heard by other readers of the later text?
7. *Satisfaction*. Does the echo add value to the understanding of the later text in an aesthetic sense? Put another way, does it *fit*?

Hays takes pains to note that the allusion or echo may not be a conscious action on Paul's part: "Some of these allusions and echoes may have been deliberately crafted by the apostle, presupposing recognition from Christian readers in the Pauline communities whom Paul himself had explicitly trained to understand certain scriptural motifs. Others may be less deliberate, simply bubbling up out of Paul's mind in the same way allusions to Shakespeare or Milton might arise unbidden for any English writer educated in the English literary tradition...."⁸

Hays additionally argues that when an echo or allusion to an Old Testament passage is found, what is referenced by the echo is not merely the recounted words or phrases. Rather, the larger story or discourse of the source text is evoked - a literary device that Hays (following literary theorist John Hollander) calls *metalepsis*.⁹

Hays's scheme has gained wide acceptance, but also has its fair share of detractors. Perhaps the most vocal critic has been Stanley Porter, who sharply criticizes Hays's seven criteria on multiple points, concluding: "Hays has actually offered only three criteria for determining echoes, all in and of themselves highly

⁸ Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination*, 29.

⁹ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 20. Das defines *metalepsis* as "the citation, allusion, or echo of an older text in a newer one thereby drawing a connection between the two texts, a connection that is not merely explicit (in the citation, allusion, or echo itself) but also implicit in creating unstated resonances between the two texts." See A. Andrew Das, *Paul and the Stories of Israel: Grand Thematic Narratives in Galatians* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2016), 4.

problematic.”¹⁰ Porter also notes significant fuzziness in Hays’s distinction between allusions and echoes.¹¹

Regardless of whether Porter’s criticisms have merit, for purposes of this investigation, it suffices to note that textual approaches like Hays’s are focused very narrowly at analyzing particular quotations, allusions, and echoes – all of which are done at the phrase or sentence level. This approach is simply too fine-grained to answer the type of question under consideration in this thesis.

If textual methods focus on minute details in phrases and sentences, metanarrative methods go to the other extreme. The focus in these methods is on the grand stories (or Story) that underlie the text. The echoes of the text are not pointers to an Old Testament passage here and there, but the entire sweep of the Biblical *Heilsgeschichte*. It is metalepsis in the extreme.

A key proponent of the metanarrative approach is N. T. Wright. He unexpectedly begins his magisterial work on Paul (*Paul and the Faithfulness of God*) not with Romans, but with Philemon, the smallest of his letters. Why? Joel White notes, “Philemon’s importance, according to Wright, is not to be found in what it explicitly teaches, but what it attempts to accomplish... a radical realignment of Philemon’s worldview.”¹² Wright asserts, “Paul is teaching Philemon...to think within the biblical narrative, to see themselves as actors within the ongoing scriptural

¹⁰ Stanley E. Porter, *Sacred Tradition in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), Kindle edition, ch. 1, “Defining Categories for Describing Use of the Old Testament in the New.”

¹¹ Porter, *Sacred Tradition*, Kindle edition, ch. 1, “Defining Categories for Describing Use of the Old Testament in the New.”

¹² Joel White, “N. T. Wright’s Narrative Approach,” in *God and the Faithfulness of Paul: A Critical Examination of the Pauline Theology of N. T. Wright*, ed. Christoph Heilig, J. Thomas Hewitt, and Michael F. Bird (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2017), 181.

drama....”¹³ Wright’s analysis of Philemon is typical of the metanarrative method. Underlying the New Testament is a grand narrative (or a cluster of narratives) that not only act as supporting material for the surface text, but invite the reader to be swept up in the story.

James Dunn’s assessment is similar to Wright’s: “Paul’s theology can be said to emerge from the interplay between several stories, his theologizing to consist in his own participation in that interplay.”¹⁴ Among the stories Dunn has in mind are the story of God and creation, the history of Israel, the story of Jesus, and Paul’s own story, each of which are echoed and alluded in the apostle’s writings.¹⁵

Metanarrative approaches are useful when studying the broad sweep of the Bible’s story. However, they are less useful in tracing one particular theme across the Scriptures – they are simply too big for the job. A middle ground between textual approaches and metanarrative ones is needed for this examination.

Thematic methods may be able to provide such a middle ground. These methods look at larger portions of Scripture, seeking to find connections between New Testament texts and Old Testament ones. These methods can diverge significantly from each other in methodology - it is the scope of their investigation that unites them. We will examine three such approaches.

In his *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, G. K. Beale notes, “Sometimes a NT author takes over a large OT context as a model after which

¹³ N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 2 vols., COQG 4, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 15. Emphasis in original.

¹⁴ James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 18.

¹⁵ Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 18.

to creatively pattern a segment in his own writing.”¹⁶ He argues that this will be made plain either by a number of themes in the same sequence between the two texts or by a number of quotations and allusions to the source text in the target text.¹⁷ Beale’s approach is very restrictive: if the sequence of themes is not identical between the two texts, then there is no demonstrated connection between them.

Another thematic method is the “grand thematic narrative,” first proposed by Stanley Porter and further developed by A. Andrew Das.¹⁸ Das describes grand thematic narratives as “certain foundational stories or overarching traditions within the Jewish Scriptures that Paul draws upon, stories that remain *implicit* in his letters but come to the surface in allusions and/or echoes.”¹⁹ This sounds superficially like a metanarrative approach (like Wright’s), but, Porter and Das both assert that allusions, echoes, and/or quotations must be present between the target text and the source text if a grand thematic narrative is in play.²⁰

A third thematic approach takes a different tack. In *Echoes of Exodus*, Alastair Roberts and Andrew Wilson propose a musical metaphor for finding connections between the testaments.²¹ It is common in motion picture soundtracks for a composer

¹⁶ G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 80.

¹⁷ Beale, *Handbook*, 80.

¹⁸ Das, *Paul and the Stories of Israel*, 13.

¹⁹ Das, *Paul and the Stories of Israel*, 14.

²⁰ Das, *Paul and the Stories of Israel*, 16. Das notes: “If Porter is right, these narratives are anchored to concrete quotations, allusions, and even echoes in the Pauline letters.” In Das’s analysis of potential grand thematic narratives in Galatians, he uses Hays’s seven criteria to assess the potential connections.

²¹ Alastair J. Roberts and Andrew Wilson, *Echoes of Exodus: Tracing Themes of Redemption Through Scripture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 21-26.

to write motifs that correspond to particular characters or story elements, then weave those motifs into the score at key points in the narrative. So it is with scriptural themes and motifs.

But how can we know whether two texts are connected? Again, the concept of musical motifs is helpful here. If I play my soundtrack collection on “shuffle” and it begins playing a track entitled “Scherzo for Motorcycle and Orchestra”, I may not immediately recognize the movie. But once the Indiana Jones fanfare plays in the middle of the track, I am in the dark no longer – the theme has made clear the connection of this tune to the *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* soundtrack. Images of Harrison Ford and Sean Connery are likely to pop into my mind, quickly followed by other scenes from the movie. That is metalepsis at work.

In Roberts and Wilson’s proposal, that is how connections between source text and target text can be divined – if motifs from the source text show up in the target text, there is a possible connection. If there are many motifs from the source text in the target text, the likelihood of a connection increases. But Roberts and Wilson give no concrete means to determine what constitutes a motif, and by what criteria motifs can to be recognized between works. If the approaches of Beale or Hays are too restrictive, that of Roberts and Wilson is too loose. We need a rigorous yet flexible approach.

Dale Allison rightly notes that “we must begin by asking in what ways one text may be linked to another.”²² Allison identifies 6 possible markers: (1) explicit statement; (2) implicit citation or borrowing; (3) similar circumstances; (4) key words

²² Dale C. Allison, Jr., *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 19.

or phrases; (5) similar narrative structure; and (6) word order, syllabic sequence and poetic resonance.²³

With such a broad range of possible connections, Allison is correct in echoing that judgment of M. H. Abrams that “[o]nly a delicate and mature judgment bred of familiarity with a tradition will be able to feel whether a suggested allusion or typology is solid or insubstantial: the truth must be divined, groped for by ‘taste, tact, and intuition rather than a controlling method.’”²⁴ Yet Allison does list several “broad guidelines” for the task of discerning a connection between texts:²⁵

1. The source text must be older than the target text for a connection to be possible.
2. If the source text had special significance for the author of the target text, a connection is more likely.
3. If there is no clear citation or borrowing from the source text present in the target text, then more than one of the other markers must be present for a connection to be substantiated.
4. The supposed connection must be prominent (that is, not too obscure).
5. If the supposed connection is commonly found between the source text and other target texts, it is more likely to be genuine.
6. The connection is more likely to be genuine if it connects unusual imagery and motifs between the source and target texts.

²³ Allison, *The New Moses*, 19-20.

²⁴ M.H. Abrams, “Rationality and Imagination in Cultural History: A Reply to Wayne Booth,” *Critical Inquiry*, 2 (1976), 447.

²⁵ Allison, *The New Moses*, 21-23.

My methodological approach for this study is based on Allison's markers and guidelines above, but with one emendation.²⁶ To Allison's six markers, I add a seventh: thematic overlap. If themes or motifs are shared by a source text and target text, I regard that as a legitimate marker of a connection between texts.²⁷

If wisdom-related language, motifs and themes can be identified in common between the selected Old Testament wisdom narratives and 1 Corinthians 1-4, and those connections pass Allison's guidelines listed above, then there is a strong basis for asserting a source-target relationship between Paul's conception of wisdom and that of the Old Testament wisdom narratives.

But as Allison notes, not all shared motifs are equally indicative of a connection. For purposes of this study, I will use the following rubric to evaluate potential allusions²⁸:

- *Quotation* – reserved for explicit or highly probable direct quotations of the source text in the target text (marker #1).
- *Probable Allusion* – either the clear borrowing of the source text in the target text (marker #2), or the clear presence of more than one of markers #3-7.
- *Possible Allusion* – the presence of only one of markers #3-7.

²⁶ Of course, the first two of Allison's guidelines are not particularly illuminating in this examination. First Corinthians is clearly written centuries after the Hebrew Bible narratives under examination, and Paul clearly knew and loved the holy writings of his Jewish ancestors.

²⁷ I am here using *theme* as a larger idea that pervades a literary work, and a *motif* as a smaller, recurring element within the work.

²⁸ I am using *allusion* in the sense given by Earl Miner, as the "deliberate incorporation of identifiable elements from other sources, preceding or contemporaneous, textual or extra-textual." See Earl Miner, "Allusion," in *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. A. Preminger and T. Brogan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 39.

Scope

As mentioned above, I seek to demonstrate that Old Testament wisdom narratives comprise a key thematic source for 1 Corinthians 1-4. But which narratives? An examination of every Old Testament wisdom narrative is beyond the scope of this study. To narrow the focus, I will examine the wisdom narratives of four prominent Old Testament figures – Joseph, Solomon, Isaiah, and Daniel – and how their conceptions of wisdom overlap with and influence that of the apostle. Limiting the scope to four figures was necessary to narrow the focus of the investigation. This is not to imply that these four figures are the only Hebrew Bible figures that would benefit from the type of analysis I am proposing.

Why these four figures in particular? In 1 Corinthians 2:6, Paul indicates that the Corinthian believers are gifted with “a secret and hidden wisdom of God” that results in great benefit to the people of God – “what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him” (2:9).

Similarly, each of the selected figures’ stories were significant instances where God’s wisdom was given to a representative figure to serve the good of God’s people. Joseph’s God-given ability to interpret dreams (as well as his managerial prowess) paved the way for the children of Israel to survive the region-wide famine in safety. Solomon’s wisdom was renowned throughout the world, and under his reign Israel reached its economic zenith. Isaiah’s counsel to the kings of Judah was instrumental in preserving the nation from the Assyrian onslaught. And Daniel’s combination of practical wisdom and interpretive skills made the might of Yahweh known to the rulers of the Babylonian and Medo-Persian empires.

A second reason is that these four biblical figures represent a broad range of history. Joseph represents the pre-Mosaic era, when the children of Israel were literally that – the patriarch Jacob, his twelve sons, and their immediate families. Solomon represents the height of the Davidic dynasty, with Jerusalem standing tall among the surrounding nations. Isaiah’s prophetic ministry, by contrast, is situated at the near-collapse of that dynasty, with the kingdom long-since divided, the northern kingdom conquered and scattered, and the Assyrians on Judah’s doorstep. Last of all, Daniel’s story unfolds amidst the catastrophe of the Babylonian captivity.

Wisdom Themes for Further Study

The burden of this investigation is to examine potential connections between Paul’s discussion of wisdom in 1 Corinthians 1-4 and wisdom narratives surrounding the Hebrew Bible figures Joseph, Solomon, Isaiah, and Daniel. While there are multiple potential themes that could be probed, I have selected these themes for detailed analysis.

- *Wisdom as the product of divine revelation.* Paul speaks of “a secret and hidden wisdom of God” (2:7) that stands in contrast to and in opposition to human teachings. We will look at how this idea is reflected in Hebrew Bible wisdom narratives. Related motifs include God as revealer of mysteries, the role of the Spirit, and the messenger as spirit-enabled emissary of wisdom.
- *Wisdom and the inversion of social categories.* Paul upends the normal social distinctions between wise and foolish, insiders and outsiders, weak and strong. Do the wisdom narratives under consideration do the same thing in their contexts? How does God’s revealed wisdom undo established power structures?

And what does this have to do with the Apostle's frequent prohibitions against boasting?

- *Wisdom and the welfare of the people of God.* Paul writes to the church at Corinth with words of correction, but he is clearly seeking their welfare. How did God's gifts of wisdom to the children of Abraham work to their good? Motifs related to this theme include the use of Tabernacle/Temple imagery and God's sovereignty over earthly rulers and events.

Chapter 1 will investigate 1 Corinthians 1-4, the target text for this study. In this chapter, I will review the potential sources of strife in Corinth and outline Paul's argument in that section of his epistle. Chapters 2 through 4 will each deal with one of the themes listed above, looking at that theme in the four Hebrew Bible narratives and in 1 Corinthians, using Allison's guidelines to assess possible connections. Finally, chapter 5 will summarize my findings and make a final assessment as to what extent (if any) 1 Corinthians 1-4 is influenced by the wisdom narratives of Joseph, Solomon, Isaiah, and Daniel. I will also examine the question of Paul's motivation for including the allusions (if any) to these Hebrew Bible narratives in his address to the church at Corinth.

Chapter 1: Wisdom In 1 Corinthians 1-4

The Greek word σοφία (“wisdom”) appears 28 times in the thirteen canonical letters of Paul. However, that usage is far from uniformly distributed. Eight of the letters never use the word. Romans and 2 Corinthians each use σοφία a single time, while Ephesians uses it three times and Colossians six times. The remaining 17 usages of σοφία are in 1 Corinthians, and of those, 16 of them occur in the first four chapters.

This distribution leads to the conclusion that wisdom was not normally a major theme in the Pauline corpus. Why, then, does σοφία get promoted to a lead role in the opening chapters of 1 Corinthians? The most likely explanation is that Paul adopts the language of wisdom in response to the situation at Corinth.

There were two precipitating causes for Paul’s writing of 1 Corinthians. The first (in terms of when Paul received it) was a letter from the Corinthian church, likely delivered to Paul by Stephanus, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (1 Cor. 16:17).²⁹ The second, and the one that seems to have pressed Paul into a quick response, was a report from members of Chloe’s household: “For it has been reported to me by Chloe’s people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers” (1 Cor. 1:11).³⁰ It is this report of dissension in the church that forms the proximate backdrop to the first

²⁹ Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 7. Fee posits that this letter from Corinth was in response to an earlier letter sent from Paul, raising objections to his earlier correspondence.

³⁰ Richard Hays, *First Corinthians*, Interpretation (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011), 6. Hays believes the report from Chloe’s people to have been alarming enough to spur Paul into action, and that the epistle is a “stopgap measure until Paul himself can get there to deal with the issues in greater depth.”

four chapters of the epistle, and is the likely reason for Paul's use of σοφία in those chapters.

The key to understanding the prominence of σοφία in 1 Corinthians is in 1:17: “For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.” Yet this raises still another question: to what does the phrase “words of eloquent wisdom” (οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου) refer? More specifically, should we understand the genitive λόγου to refer to form or to content? Put another way, is Paul saying he did not use a certain manner of speaking or that he did not bring a particular message? The answer to that question hinges on the nature of the schisms at play in the Corinthian church.

The burden of this chapter is threefold. First, I will examine the nature of the discord in the church in Corinth that occasioned the writing of 1 Corinthians. Second, I will provide an outline of the first four chapters of the epistle. Finally, I will examine the structure of Paul's argument in those chapters.

The Nature of the Conflict in Corinth

Paul elaborates on the nature of the divisions in Corinth in 1:12: “What I mean is that each one of you says, ‘I follow Paul’, or ‘I follow Apollos’, or ‘I follow Cephas’, or ‘I follow Christ’.” The nature of the schism does not appear to be doctrinal in nature but relational. Never in the letter does Paul speak of Apollos or Cephas (or Christ!) in

a less-than-positive light.³¹ Yet devotion to these teachers were the rallying point for the believers in Corinth, at the expense of the church's unity.

It is not clear whether the slogans that Paul references in 1:12 are the actual words of the various parties or an exaggeration for effect by the apostle, but they give insight regardless into the situation at Corinth. The majority view among scholars is that the dissensions in Corinth did not rise to the level of organized factions within the church. Margaret Mitchell observes that the language of the slogans is more akin to descriptions of personal or familial relationship than slogans found in political parties of the time.³² Similarly, Hays asserts that “the emergent factions may be created more by personal allegiance to particular leaders than by clearly defined theological differences.”³³ Munck describes the conditions at Corinth “not as factions but as bickerings, arising because the individual church members profess as their teacher Paul, Apollos, Cephas, or Christ, and exclude the others.”³⁴

What was it about these various teachers - or their teachings - that fostered such “bickerings” at Corinth? Many explanations have been proffered to explain the divisions described in 1:12. A quick survey of these explanations is in order.

³¹ Thomas R. Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC 7 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2018), 63. Schreiner correctly points out that Paul's request for Apollos to visit Corinth in 16:12 would be unthinkable if Paul has suspected something defective in Apollos's teachings.

³² Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians*, 1st American ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 84-85. Mitchell argues that the construction of the slogans (personal pronoun + εἰμι + genitive proper name) finds its closest parallel not in ancient statements of party affiliation, but the self-identification of slaves and children. She remarks that Paul's characterization in these terms is “designed to be particularly nettlesome to the Corinthians who prize freedom....”

³³ Hays, *First Corinthians*, 22.

³⁴ Johannes Munck, “The Church without Factions,” in *Christianity at Corinth: The Quest for the Pauline Church*, ed. Edward Adams and David G. Horrell (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 66.

Jew/Gentile Conflict

In the middle of the nineteenth century, F. C. Baur proposed that rather than four parties in Corinth (Paul/Apollos/Cephas/Christ), there were really only two. In his treatise on 1 and 2 Corinthians, Baur wrote, “There were really but two parties, one that of Paul and Apollos, and the other,...that of Peter and of Christ....[T]here can be no doubt that the chief difference lay between the two sects which called themselves after Paul and Cephas.”³⁵

Baur believed the history of early Christianity should be understood in terms of a Hegelian dialectic, with the tension between a Jewish form of Christianity led by Peter and a Gentile form led by Paul, ultimately reaching a synthesis in early Catholicism.³⁶ Thus, it is unsurprising that the “Cephas party” is identified by Baur as the source of conflict in Corinth. However, noting that Peter is never known to have been in Corinth, Baur demurs, “it may well be supposed that the false Apostles who went about calling themselves by the name of Peter, eventually extended their travels to Corinth.”³⁷

Yet Conzelmann is surely right when he remarks, “this thesis breaks down in face of the text.”³⁸ There simply is no textual evidence of a Judaizing influence at work in Corinth. Inkelaar concurs: “The influence of Jewish Christianity in Corinth

³⁵ F. C. Baur, “The Two Epistles to the Corinthians,” in Adams and Horrell, *Christianity at Corinth*, 55.

³⁶ D. M. Lake, “Baur, Ferdinand Christian,” In *Who’s Who in Christian History*, ed. J.D. Douglas and Philip W. Comfort (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 1992), 68.

³⁷ Baur, “The Two Epistles to the Corinthians”, p. 57.

³⁸ Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 14.

cannot be substantiated from 1 Corinthians....”³⁹ Baur’s hypothesis has been largely rejected by later scholarship, though a few scholars like Michael Goulder continue to argue for discord between followers of Peter and Paul as the source of conflict in Corinth.⁴⁰

Gnosticism

The discovery of a trove of Gnostic documents at Nag Hammadi in 1945 stirred an interest in Gnostic teaching and their potential relationship to the New Testament. It was therefore not surprising that multiple attempts were made by scholars in the 1950s to identify Gnostic ideas as the “worldly wisdom” dividing the church at Corinth.⁴¹

There are some *prima facie* similarities between the teachings of Gnostic movements and what is described in Corinth. First, many Gnostic terms are used in 1 Corinthians 1-4, particularly in 2:6-16. Σοφία (wisdom), πνευματικοῖς (spiritual ones), μυστήριον (mystery), and γνῶσις (knowledge) are all terms with special significance in Gnostic terminology.⁴² Second, Paul’s distinction between the natural person and the spiritual person sounds similar to a common Gnostic theme, namely that “only the

³⁹ Harm-Jan Inkelaar, *Conflict Over Wisdom: The Theme of 1 Corinthians 1-4 Rooted in Scripture* (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 9.

⁴⁰ Michael D. Goulder, “Σοφία in 1 Corinthians,” in Adams and Horrell, *Christianity at Corinth*, 173-181.

⁴¹ The two most significant of these attempts were those of Ulrich Wilckens (*Weisheit Und Torheit: Eine Exegetisch-religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu 1. Kor. 1 Und 2*. BHT 26. Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 1959) and Walter Schmithals (*Die Gnosis in Korinth*. Göttingen: Vandenhoech & Ruprecht, 1956.). See Corin Mihăilă, “The Gnostic and Hellenistic Backgrounds of Sophia in 1 Corinthians 1-4,” *Perichoresis* 17.2 (2019), 4.

⁴² Mihăilă, “Gnostic and Hellenistic Backgrounds,” 5.

upper echelons...have the capacity to apprehend deeper and more mysterious teaching....”⁴³

However, neither of these similarities hold up under close scrutiny. The fact that two sets of documents share terminology does not imply that they mean the same things by that terminology. As Mihăilă notes, “Terms do not have meaning in isolation but in relation to each other, their semantic context being dependent on their context and frame of reference.”⁴⁴ It is a mistake to assume *a priori* that what Paul means by “wisdom” is colored in any way by how the Gnostic writers used the term.

With respect to Paul’s discussion of the natural person and the spiritual person in 2:14-15, Paul is contrasting a Christian and an unbeliever. Yet for this to be a Gnostic sentiment, both of the persons described would have to be in the Christian faith.⁴⁵ The contrast is of a completely different kind.

The biggest obstacle, however, to a Gnostic understanding of the situation at Corinth is historical. Most scholars date the rise of Gnosticism to the second century, well after the writing of 1 Corinthians.⁴⁶ Furthermore, appeals to proto-Gnostic

⁴³ Mihăilă, “Gnostic and Hellenistic Backgrounds,” 5.

⁴⁴ Mihăilă, “Gnostic and Hellenistic Backgrounds,” 5.

⁴⁵ So Mihăilă: “Since from the beginning of his argument Paul has been working with contrasts between the world and Christians, it is hard to see Paul switching to distinctions between Christians in this passage, as the advocates of a Gnostic background argue. Mihăilă, “Gnostic and Hellenistic Backgrounds”, p. 6.

⁴⁶ Zachary G. Smith, “Gnosticism,” in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2016).

sentiments in Corinth are better explained by other schools of thought known to the Corinthians at the time.⁴⁷ Wilson sums up the failure of this position well:

Those who begin with the developed Gnosticism of the second century and go back to Paul's letters have no difficulty in identifying 'gnostic motifs' - terms, concepts and ideas which may legitimately be described as Gnostic because they are used as technical terms in the context of Gnostic systems. This usage however may be question-begging, since there is no way of showing that these terms and concepts are *already* Gnostic in an earlier context.⁴⁸

Hellenistic Jewish Wisdom Teachings

A third option for the source of the strife in Corinth is the influence of Hellenistic Jewish wisdom speculation infiltrating the community. One typical example is Richard Horsley's attempt to show a connection between 1 Corinthians on the one hand and Philo and the Wisdom of Solomon on the other.⁴⁹ According to Horsley, "the close relation between *gnosis* and *sophia* in Philo and Wisdom enables us to determine, by analogy, how the Corinthians' *gnosis* may have been related to the *sophia* rejected by Paul in I Cor. 1-4."⁵⁰

Horsley argues that Paul, trained as a Pharisee, thinks apocalyptically, whereas the Corinthian Jewish believers in Christ are more influenced by Hellenistic Jewish sources centered on wisdom (or Sophia), and it is this difference in thinking that gives rise to the conflict in Corinth.⁵¹ How does Paul counter this, in Horsley's view? "In his

⁴⁷ Schreiner, *1 Corinthians*, 13-14.

⁴⁸ Robert McLaughlin Wilson, "Gnosis at Corinth," In *Paul and Paulinism: Essays in Honor of C. K. Barrett* (London: SPCK, 1982), 103.

⁴⁹ Richard A. Horsley, "Gnosis in Corinth: I Corinthians 8. 1-6," *NTS* 27, no. 1 (1980): 32-51.

⁵⁰ Horsley, "Gnosis in Corinth," 35.

⁵¹ Horsley, "Gnosis in Corinth", 51. Horsley concludes: "Yet in his attempt to counter the Corinthians' *gnosis* – for example, by applying to Christ predications which originally belonged to Sophia in Hellenistic Judaism - we can see the syncretistic process by which the religious movement eventually known as Christianity developed."

attempt to counter the Corinthians' obsession with Sophia in I Cor. 1-2, Paul emphasizes that the true *sophia* of God is the crucified Christ."⁵²

Gordon Fee identifies two major problems with approaches such as Horsley's. First, the supposed parallels between the Corinthians and Philo (or other such sources) may owe more to their shared Hellenization than to anything distinctly Jewish.⁵³ Second, the nature of Paul's responses seem to exclude a Jewish source of the "wisdom of the world". Two examples suffice: first, Paul's pronouncement that "the Jews demand signs, and the Greeks seek wisdom" (1:22) makes no sense if Philo is behind the Corinthian "wisdom." Second, it is highly unlikely that any Jew, whether Hellenistic or Palestinian, would identify with Paul's statement in 8:7 about "former association with idols."⁵⁴ As Fee notes: "Even Philo would be horrified here."⁵⁵ Such a statement would only make sense to a Gentile convert.

Socioeconomic Discrepancies in the Church

Many scholars have rejected the notion that the conflict in Corinth was based on the teachings of any group of people at all, but rather insist it was centered on the socioeconomic status of various individuals in the Corinthian church. John Chow, Frederick Danker, and L. L. Welborn have all asserted that Roman patron-client relations inside of the church were the source of the schisms.⁵⁶ As Welborn put it

⁵² Horsley, "Gnosis in Corinth", 50.

⁵³ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 14.

⁵⁴ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 14-15.

⁵⁵ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 15.

⁵⁶ John K. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth* (Edinburgh: Black, 1992); Frederick W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Greco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (Saint Louis: Clayton, 1982); L. L. Welborn, *Politics and Rhetoric in the Corinthian Epistles* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997).

succinctly: “[T]he bondage of the poor to the rich is the breeding ground of faction.”⁵⁷

More recently, Joshua Rice identified three patronage models (or “lenses,” to use Rice’s term) at work in the first century. The *personal lens* represents the most simple patronage relationship, with a one-to-one relation between a single benefactor and a single client of lower station.⁵⁸ The *community lens* is an extension of the personal lens, covering networks of elite patrons and the communities they supported.⁵⁹ Finally, the *imperial lens* reflects the Roman co-option of the community network of patrons, increasing their political power to ensure social cohesion in the Roman colonies.⁶⁰ Rice sees evidence that all three patronage “lenses” shed light on Paul’s interactions with the church in 1 Corinthians.⁶¹

The contributions of Chow, Danker, Welborn, and Rice helpfully spotlight the relevance of the social, economic, and power disparities at work in first-century Corinth, and this emphasis certainly adds needed context to the discussion of the “wisdom” at work in the church. Yet patronage models and social classes alone are not sufficient to make sense of the biblical data.

Two examples make this clear. First, if Paul views himself as the true patron of the Corinthian church, it seems odd that he would constantly refer to God, not Paul,

⁵⁷ Welborn, *Politics and Rhetoric*, 24.

⁵⁸ Joshua Rice, *Paul and Patronage: The Dynamics of Power in 1 Corinthians* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 31-34.

⁵⁹ Rice, *Paul and Patronage*, 40-41.

⁶⁰ Rice, *Paul and Patronage*, 41.

⁶¹ Rice sees the personal lens in play in 1:10-3:23 and in chapter 9, the community lens in 10:14-14:39, and the imperial lens in 4:1-5:5. See David E. Briones, Review of *Paul and Patronage: The Dynamics of Power in 1 Corinthians*, by Joshua Rice, *JETS* 57:4 (2014): 830.

as the source of the gifts the church has received (1:4-7).⁶² Second, there is a tendency to view patronage relationships at work where other explanations are more likely. For example, when discussing Paul's construction metaphor in 3:10, Rice remarks: "What commentators have wholly missed, however, is that *patrons constructed buildings*, whether religious, civic, honorific, or domestic."⁶³ But Paul's use of the expression "master builder" (ἀρχιτέκτων) is more plausibly explained as an allusion to the Tabernacle's master craftsman, Bezazel (who is also called an ἀρχιτέκτων in Exodus 31:4) and not as a marker that viewed himself as a patron of the church.⁶⁴

Rhetoric

Joseph Fitzmyer describes the influence upon the Corinthian believers of "wandering teachers of rhetoric who had come of Corinth and vied with each other to attract followers who would be loyal to them in their competitive rivalry."⁶⁵ These teachers of rhetoric, known as Sophists, are known to have been operating in Corinth during Dio Chrysostom's visit there somewhere between AD 89-96, and it is extremely likely they would have been in Corinth in Paul's day.⁶⁶ The most commonly held view among

⁶² See Briones: "Paul never claims to be their patron. Rather, he attempts to revive a preexisting loyalty to the gospel - and therefore to God - by acknowledging and accepting his mediatorial role as an apostle." Briones, "Review of *Paul and Patronage*", 831.

⁶³ Rice, *Paul and Patronage*, 114 (emphasis in original).

⁶⁴ Raymond B. Dillard, "The Chronicler's Solomon," *WTJ* 43:2 (1981): 298-299. The connection with Bezalel will be examined in chapter 4.

⁶⁵ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AYBRL 32 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 139.

⁶⁶ Bruce W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 33.

scholars is that the influence of these Sophists is the source of the discord in the Corinthian church.

In the Sophistic teacher/disciple relationship, the student was expected to model his life after that of his teacher.⁶⁷ Witherington notes: “The Corinthians were apparently taking their cues from what they knew of the educational process as modeled by the rhetors teaching in their city and taking part in debates, quarrels, boasting, arrogance, and the like.”⁶⁸

With such models the norm in Corinthian society, it is certainly plausible that individual teachers in the church would be idolized. So Fitzmyer: “Having lived in such an environment before their conversion to Christianity, Corinthian Christians would still be influenced by such practices and so came to express their allegiance to either Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas.”⁶⁹ This would be particularly true of those who were well-spoken, which may have explained Apollos’s popularity: “The Corinthians evaluated Paul and Apollos on the basis of their rhetorical abilities and estimated the wisdom of Paul and Apollos accordingly.”⁷⁰

Welborn concurs: “The σοφία that Paul fears will undermine the community is nothing other than rhetoric.”⁷¹ Welborn bases his conclusion on the use of the word συζητητής (“debater”) in 1:20. This New Testament *hapax legomenon* is related to other words used for discussion and debate in the ancient world, but συζητητής itself

⁶⁷ Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 33.

⁶⁸ Ben Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 75.

⁶⁹ Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 159.

⁷⁰ Schreiner, *1 Corinthians*, 15.

⁷¹ Welborn, *Politics and Rhetoric*, 30.

is rare in the extant literature, and the semantic range of the term is uncertain.⁷²

Thus, the exact referent of συζητητής remains elusive, despite Welborn's confident assertion.

The description of Paul's appearance before the Corinthians as "in weakness and in fear and much trembling" (2:3) is seen as evidence of a rhetoric-based judgment. Witherington speculates, "[T]he real complaint against Paul may have been that he was not arrogant in his presentation or did not engage in boasting, unlike the Sophists."⁷³ If Witherington is correct, the factious atmosphere that later developed in Corinth would have meant that many, (if not most) of the Christians in Corinth were not eager to listen to Paul.

Some scholars go further, arguing that not only was Paul dealing with issues caused by rhetoric, but that 1 Corinthians itself is an example of Paul responding by using what is known as deliberative rhetoric. Deliberative rhetoric was one of the three major forms of rhetorical genre defined by Aristotle in his *Rhetoric*.⁷⁴ According to Margaret Mitchell, deliberative rhetoric is "argumentation which urges an audience, whether public or private, to pursue a particular course of action in the future."⁷⁵

⁷² Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 64-65. Garland notes that both the neutral term "philosopher" and the more perjorative "debater" are possible translations for συζητητής, and that the term is difficult to precisely translate because it is "extremely rare."

⁷³ Witherington, *Conflict & Community*, 123-124.

⁷⁴ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Rhetorical Situation and Historical Reconstruction in 1 Corinthians," in Adams and Horrell, *Christianity at Corinth*, 149-150. The other two forms are *forensic* (or *judicial*) rhetoric, which took the form of arguments in court about past actions, and *epideictic* rhetoric, which praises or criticizes someone in the present.

⁷⁵ Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 24.

But if the root of the discord in Corinth was the influence of rhetoric, does it seem plausible that Paul would have employed a well-known rhetorical form for his letter? Witherington argues that Paul chooses this rhetorical form as the best way to make his case, but this seems implausible given the risk of undermining his argument.⁷⁶ I find it highly unlikely that the apostle would have employed, even in an ironic sense, a style affirming the usefulness of the very thing he believes is splitting the Corinthian assembly.⁷⁷

The identification of rhetoric as the cause of the divisions in Corinth is not without its problems. If rhetoric were the cause, then Paul's response would be mostly focused on the form, not the content, of their positions. While 1 Corinthians does address some issues of form, he addresses the purported content of those teachings at length as well.⁷⁸

Second, by the first century CE, σοφία (and its Latin counterpart, *sapientia*) had become associated not with rhetoric, but philosophy. Cicero and Quintilian both make a distinction between *eloquentia* (which was used to translate the Greek word for rhetoric, ῥητορικὴ) and *sapientia*.⁷⁹ Similarly, σοφός (“wise man” or “wise one”) was generally recognized as a technical term for a philosopher or one who followed a

⁷⁶ Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, p. 77.

⁷⁷ If, however, the practice of rhetoric was not the source of the divisions in Corinth, then my primary objection against identifying 1 Corinthians as deliberative rhetoric vanishes.

⁷⁸ Paul addresses the form of their teaching in 1:17-20 and 2:1-5, but the bulk of chapters 3-4 are devoted to discussions, not of mere form or style, but of the content of their teachings - and Paul's response to it.

⁷⁹ Timothy A. Brookins, *Corinthian Wisdom, Stoic Philosophy, and the Ancient Economy*, SNTSMS 159 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 34.

particular moral philosopher - but was rarely used for the practitioner of rhetoric.⁸⁰ Thus, when Paul writes that “Greeks seek wisdom”(1:22), he is referring not merely to rhetorical form, but actual content - and philosophical content at that.

Stoic Philosophy

The twentieth-century New Testament scholar Rudolf Bultmann strongly argued that the apostle Paul had drawn from the teachings of Stoicism both rhetorical style and ethical teachings.⁸¹ This was not a new idea: parallels between Paul's writings and Stoic thinking have long been recognized, being commented on by such early church stalwarts as Jerome.⁸² While many of Bultmann's students attempted to further this idea, the question remains far from settled. But might Stoicism have influenced Paul's *audience*?

There is significant evidence connecting the “wisdom of the world” in Corinth with a Christianized version of Stoic philosophy. For example, Deming identified a Stoic influence in the description of the Corinthian church's behavior in chapters 5-6.⁸³ Garcilazo argued that the misguided views of the Corinthians regarding the resurrection of the body (described by Paul in chapter 15) arose from Stoic dualism.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Brookins, *Corinthian Wisdom*, 34. See also Timothy A. Brookins, “The Wise Corinthians: Their Stoic Education and Outlook,” *JTS* 62:1 (2011): 60.

⁸¹ Specifically, Bultmann argued in his doctoral dissertation, *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe*, that Paul drew on Epictetus for his rhetorical style and some of his ideas. See Albert V. Garcilazo, *The Corinthian Dissenters and the Stoics*, SBL 106 (New York: Lang, 2007), 4-6.

⁸² Jerome discusses the apocryphal dialogue between Seneca and Paul in his *de viris illustribus XII*. See Michelle V. Lee, *Paul, the Stoics, and the Body of Christ*, SNTSMS 137 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 11.

⁸³ Will Deming, “The Unity of 1 Corinthians 5-6,” *JBL* 115:2 (1996): 312.

⁸⁴ Garcilazo, *The Corinthian Dissenters and the Stoics*, 9.

There are several lines of reasoning in support of the Stoics-in-Corinth hypothesis. First, Stoic teachings were likely to be popular in Corinth in the mid-first century. Stoicism was the predominate philosophy in Rome in the first century BCE (and well into the first century CE), so it would not be at all surprising that it was part of the “export” when Corinth was rebuilt as a Roman colony in the early first century BCE.⁸⁵ By the first century CE, Stoicism was the most popular of the various Hellenistic philosophies in circulation.⁸⁶

There is solid (though not conclusive) evidence that a Roman gymnasium existed in Corinth at the time of the writing of Paul’s letter.⁸⁷ If this is indeed the case, then it is likely that many members of the Corinthian upper classes would have been educated there, and that education would have included a good deal of Stoic philosophical teachings.⁸⁸

Second, much of the terminology found in 1 Corinthians 1-4 can also be found in Stoic literature. Consider the following parallels:

Table 1-1: Parallels Between First Corinthians and Stoic Writings

| <i>First Corinthians</i> | <i>Stoics</i> |
|---|--|
| “Already you have become rich [ἐπλουτήσατε]! Already you have become kings! [ἐβασιλεύσατε]” (4:8) | “[T]he wise man is termed ... an orator, a poet, a general, a rich man |

⁸⁵ Terence Paige, “Stoicism, ἐλευθερία and Community at Corinth,” in Adams and Horrell, *Christianity at Corinth*, 210. Paige remarks: “[W]hat better ground could there be to for a Greek philosophy popular with Romans than a major city of Greece refounded by Rome?”

⁸⁶ Brookins, “The Wise Corinthians,” 57.

⁸⁷ Brookins, “The Wise Corinthians”, 58.

⁸⁸ Brookins, “The Wise Corinthians,” 58-59.

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>[πλούσιον], and a king [βασιλέα]...” (Plutarch)⁸⁹</p> <p>“[Virtue] brings wealth[πλοῦτον], it comprises kingship[βασιλείαν]...” (Plutarch)⁹⁰</p> <p>“For [the wise man] will have a better claim to the title of King than Tarquin.... a better right to be called rich than Croesus...” (Cicero)⁹¹</p> |
| <p>“We are fools for Christ’s sake, but you are wise [φρόνιμοι] in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong [ἰσχυροί].” (4:10)</p> | <p>“But some think that the Stoics are jesting when they hear that in their sect the wise man is termed not only prudent [φρόνιμον] and just and brave...” (Plutarch)⁹²</p> <p>“and the wise one is great and grand and lofty and strong [ἰσχυρόν].” (Zeno of Citium)⁹³</p> |
| <p>“For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours.” (3:21-22)</p> | <p>“For, if one has got virtue from the Stoa, it is possible to say, ‘Ask, if there’s aught you wish, all will be yours.’” (Plutarch)⁹⁴</p> <p>“He [the wise man] will most rightly be called king ... master ... rich. Rightly will he be said to own all things...” (Cicero)⁹⁵</p> |

It is highly unlikely that such deep parallels are coincidental. Paul is clearly echoing the Stoic writers – and doing it in such a way to show the absurdity of their position.

⁸⁹ Plutarch, *Tranq. an.* 472A (Helmbold, LCL).

⁹⁰ Plutarch, *Stoic. abs.* 1058C (Cherniss, LCL).

⁹¹ Cicero, *de Finibus* 3.75 (Rackham, LCL).

⁹² Plutarch, *Tranq. an.* 472A (Helmbold, LCL).

⁹³ SVF 1.216 (author’s translation).

⁹⁴ Plutarch, *Stoic. abs.* 1058C (Cherniss, LCL).

⁹⁵ Cicero, *de Finibus* 3.75 (Rackham, LCL).

As mentioned above, σοφός had become by the first century a commonly used term for a philosopher, but this was particular true of Stoic practitioners. In fact, Brookins notes that “the Stoics in fact boasted that they had exclusive right to the title.”⁹⁶ The frequent use of σοφός in chapters 1-4 in such close proximity to so many words and phrases of Stoic provenance is strong evidence in favor of the thesis that Stoic philosophical ideas constituted the “wisdom of the world” Paul opposed in his letter.

Paige notes that Stoic teachings explain the individualistic behavior on display in Corinth well:

Just such a callousness of individuals toward others as we find at Corinth, such a disregard for the community dimension of their new existence, would likely be fostered by a Stoicizing influence, which would in fact exalt the individual σοφός at the expense of the community. And a Stoic could behave in this individualistic, community-destroying fashion at the same time that he believes he is pursuing a virtuous life....⁹⁷

It should be noted, however, that the version of Stoicism on display in Corinth is somewhat diluted from its pure form as found in the classical Stoic authors. To the Stoic writers, the true “wise man” is more of an unreachable ideal (“as rare as the Phoenix,” according to one author) than a commonly attained status.⁹⁸ Based on Paul’s words in 1 Cor. 4:10 (“We are fools for Christ’s sake, but you are wise in Christ”), the troublemakers in Corinth thought they had already attained to that status.

⁹⁶ Brookins, *Corinthian Wisdom*, 160.

⁹⁷ Paige, “Stoicism,” 215.

⁹⁸ Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 62.

Critics of the Stoic hypothesis point to the depiction of the church in chapters 12-14 as evidence against a Stoic influence. Rice puts it this way: “[T]he centrality of the pneumatic gifts in Corinth calls [this] thesis into question, since such displays would hardly have a place in the Stoic lifestyle.”⁹⁹ But this objection misses the mark for three reasons. First, as noted above, the form of Stoicism practiced in Corinth was a watered-down version, and could well have accommodated the excesses described in those chapters.

Second, it is not necessary to assume that the teachers (or teachings) causing the division in chapters 1-4 are also responsible for the charismatic excesses described in chapters 12-14. Paul addresses multiple issues in 1 Corinthians, and we need not assume that all of those issues sprang from the same source.

Third, it is telling that when Paul begins to address the issue of spiritual gifts in chapter 12, he borrows an analogy from the Stoic philosopher Hierocles:

[O]ne’s brothers are parts of oneself, just as my eyes are parts of me and so too my legs and hands and the rest.... Just as eyes and hands, accordingly, if each should obtain its own soul and mind, would respect the other parts in every possible way for the sake of their declared communality, since they are not even able to perform their own function well without the presence of the other parts, so too we, who are human beings and confess to having a soul, should not omit any effort in behaving toward our brothers as one ought.¹⁰⁰

Clearly, Paul adapts Hierocles in his own discussion of the body and its parts in chapter 12. Even if those responsible for the excesses of chapters 12-14 were not Stoics, Paul assumes that enough members of the congregation are familiar with Stoic teaching to take his point. Lee concurs: “In speaking to his first-century Greco-Roman

⁹⁹ Rice, *Paul and Patronage*, p. 17.

¹⁰⁰ Quoted in Brookins, *Corinthian Wisdom*, 184-185.

audience, Paul would've needed to use terms and ideas that would have been readily understandable to them. But at the same time he may have adopted them in order to proclaim his unique message."¹⁰¹

Summary

Based on the aggregate evidence, I conclude that rhetoric alone is insufficient to explain the textual evidence of chapters 1-4. Given the striking parallels between Paul's statements in 3:21-4:10 and the writings of Stoic authors, I conclude that Paul is deliberately alluding to Stoic teachings - and doing so in a way that would not have been missed by an audience familiar with those teachings. The root cause of divisions in the church at Corinth was the infiltration of Stoic teachings (or a Christianized form of them) into the church. This identification helps shed light on several aspects of Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 1-4.

However, I do not believe that those who identify rhetoric or socioeconomic factors as causes of discord in Corinth are completely off target. It is well established that rhetors were operating in Corinth in the mid-first century CE, and it is plausible that rhetorically polished presentations of Stoic philosophies (and other schools of thought as well) were a contributing factor. Similarly, while I do not believe Paul was attempting to consciously cast himself as a patron or paterfamilias to the Corinthian church, it is known that both Stoic teachings and rhetorical training were

¹⁰¹ Lee, *Paul, the Stoics, and the Body of Christ*, 12-13.

concentrated among the upper classes, and this may have contributed to the conflict as well.¹⁰²

In the remainder of this chapter, I examine the structure and argument of 1 Corinthians 1-4, to show how Paul attempts to show that a church divided by the so-called “wisdom” of the word is nonsensical in light of the cross.

Outline of 1 Corinthians 1-4

- I. Epistolary Greeting (1:1-3)
- II. Thanksgiving (1:4-9)
- III. Statement of the Problem (1:10-17)
- IV. First Argument: A church divided by worldly wisdom is nonsensical because the cross has completely upended the world and its assessments (1:18-2:5).
 - A. The cross upends former conceptions of what counts as “wisdom”. (1:18-25)
 - B. The cross upends former conceptions of who is chosen and valued in society. (1:26-31)
 - C. The cross upends former conceptions of what counts as successful speech acts. (2:1-5)
- V. Second Argument: A church divided by worldly wisdom is nonsensical because the Spirit has provided a better, truer wisdom (2:6-3:4).
 - A. True wisdom is revealed by the Spirit. (2:6-13)
 - B. True wisdom can only be understood by those who are spiritual. (2:14-16)

¹⁰² See Brookins, *Corinthian Wisdom*, 14, 146, 157.

- C. The discord in the church demonstrates that the Corinthian believers are not yet ready for the Spirit's wisdom. (3:1-4)

VI. Third Argument: A church divided by worldly attachment to teachers is nonsensical because our attachment should be to God himself, not his servants (3:5-4:21).

- A. Two metaphors about the church and its teachers (3:5-17)
 - 1. The church as field; the teachers as laborers (3:5-9)
 - 2. The church as building/temple; teachers as builders on the foundation Paul laid (3:10-17)
- B. An appeal: Put your faith in God, not in the wisdom of men (3:18:23)
- C. Paul defends his apostolic ministry against the so-called "wise men" (4:1-14)
 - 1. The Lord will judge Paul's ministry (4:1-5)
 - 2. The boasts of the "wise men" contrasted with the sufferings of Paul and Apollos (4:6-13)

VII. Paul's concluding appeal to the church - and warning to the arrogant (4:14-21)

Summary of Paul's Argument in 1 Corinthians 1-4

As is customary in all his epistles, Paul begins the letter by naming himself and his coauthors (in this case, Sosthenes). He identifies himself as "called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus" (1:1), which acts as a "shot across the bow" of those who would challenge his authority. He then names his intended audience, and in

place of the usual Greco-Roman epistolary χαρεῖν (“greetings”), he inserts the blessing χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη (“grace be unto you, and peace”).¹⁰³

As is common (but not ubiquitous) in Paul’s letters to churches, he opens the letter with a prayer of thanksgiving to God for his recipients. Of particular note here is the expression “you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge” (1:5), which anticipates some of the themes found later in chapters 1-4.

Statement of the Problem (1:10-17)

Beginning in 1:10, Paul lays out the issue that prompts his discussion in chapters 1-4. He has received a report of “quarreling” within the church at Corinth (1:11), centered around affinity for or allegiance to various personalities.¹⁰⁴ He expresses a desire that the church be unified, that “there be no divisions among you, and that you be united in the same mind.”

The key expression that unlocks Paul’s larger argument is found in 1:13: “Is Christ divided?” (Or, to use N.T. Wright’s evocative rendering: “Has the Messiah been cut up into pieces?”¹⁰⁵) To Paul, a divided church is just as nonsensical as a divided Christ.

Judging from Paul’s remarks in 1:13-17, it seems that undue attachment was made by the Corinthian believers to the person performing a baptism rather than the name of Christ into which they were all baptized. Paul minimizes his role in baptizing

¹⁰³ This greeting appears unmodified in eleven of the thirteen canonical letters attributed to Paul. Only 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy diverge from this pattern, instead employing the blessing “grace, mercy, and peace.” For the use of χάρις as opposed to χαρεῖν, see Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 29-30.

¹⁰⁴ There is a question as to whether Paul has used the names listed in 1:12 (Paul, Apollos, Cephas and Christ) to identify the actual parties, or if he is using those names as mere examples to avoid shaming his opponents by name. See Brookins, *Corinthian Wisdom*, 202-204.

¹⁰⁵ N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1336.

any of the Corinthian converts, making it clear in 1:17 that his primary mission is one of proclamation: “For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel.”

But to Paul, it matters not only that he preaches the gospel but how he preaches. His preaching is “not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power” (1:17). Rhetorical cleverness robs the gospel of its saving power by obscuring its saving message beneath the manner of its proclamation. (The Scottish pastor James Denney captured this point well in a famous quote: “No man can give the impression that he himself is clever and that Christ is mighty to save.”¹⁰⁶)

This, then, is Paul’s thesis for the first four chapters: A church united by Christ yet divided by the influence of worldly wisdom and clever teachers is nonsensical. He demonstrates this by three lines of argument, outlined below.

The First Argument (1:18-2:5)

Paul’s references to *wisdom* and to *the cross* in 1:17 set up his first line of argument: A church divided by worldly wisdom is nonsensical because the cross has completely upended the world and its assessments. As opposed to the old division between Jew and Gentile, now the division is between “those who are perishing” and “us who are being saved” (1:18) - highlighting the contrast between the church (both Jew and Gentile¹⁰⁷) and the world - while also subtly reminding the Corinthian believers which group they truly belong to.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Quoted in John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 325.

¹⁰⁷ A point reinforced in 1:24: “but to those who are called, *both Jews and Gentiles...*”

¹⁰⁸ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 71-72.

The difference between the two groups (and presumably, the destinies of those groups, given Paul's appellations for them) comes down to how they receive the "word of the cross."¹⁰⁹ Those who are perishing (referring not merely to physical death, but to eschatological perdition¹¹⁰) view this message as folly. One would expect Paul to counter with the gospel as the *wisdom* of God to those who are being saved, but instead he described the word of the cross as the *power* of God.¹¹¹ By substituting *power* for the expected *wisdom*, Paul reminds his audience that salvation comes not through the acquisition of wisdom, but through the death of Jesus.¹¹² Preaching a crucified savior is folly, but God has decreed that message to be the very means of salvation, standing the categories of "wisdom" and "folly" on their head.

Just as the cross inverts the categories of wisdom and folly, it also inverts social categories such as "weak" and "strong," "things that are not" and "things that are," "low and despised" and "of noble birth" (1:26-28). God chooses to populate his church mainly with the low, the weak, and the outcast, "so that no human being might boast in the presence of God" (1:29).

Paul gives a second reason why boasting is inappropriate in 1:30: "And because of [God] you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption...." Paul is saying that seeking wisdom from the

¹⁰⁹ Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 153-154. Thiselton argues that "word" (λόγος) here is best translated as "proclamation", as it denotes not merely the content of the Gospel but the preaching of it.

¹¹⁰ Schreiner, *1 Corinthians*, 67.

¹¹¹ The juxtaposition of *cross/gospel*, *power*, and *salvation* appears elsewhere in the Pauline corpus, notably in Romans 1:16.

¹¹² Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 157; Schreiner, *1 Corinthians*, 66-67.

surrounding culture is to neglect the true wisdom that is the person of Christ himself. “Righteousness, sanctification, and redemption” seems to function in apposition to “wisdom”, indicating that the gospel itself - and thus Christ himself - is the content of this wisdom.¹¹³ Since this wisdom is not obtained through study, but by being “in him,” Paul can appropriately reference Jeremiah 9:23-24: “Thus says the LORD: ‘Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me...’” Being in Christ is utterly incompatible with boasting in any mere man.

Paul’s own style of preaching is directly influenced by this rejection of earthly wisdom. He deliberately eschews “lofty speech or wisdom” (2:1) in favor of the plain proclamation of the crucified Jesus. Thus, those who were transformed by the message Paul proclaimed would have no basis on which to attribute their salvation to the world’s wisdom, ensuring God gets the credit.

Paul remarks in 2:4 that his preaching was accompanied by a “demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” Fee and Thiselton both consider this to be an example of hendiadys, though Thiselton argues that “brought home powerfully by the Spirit” is a better interpretation.¹¹⁴ Whether this is the case or not, it seems likely that this is a

¹¹³ Schreiner, *1 Corinthians*, 74. Schreiner notes: “[S]ince *wisdom* is placed first and receive special emphasis in context, it is more probable that the following terms, *righteousness*, *holiness* and *redemption*, unpack the nature of true wisdom. Wisdom, according to Paul and contrary to the norms of the Greco-Roman world, does not center on rhetorical brilliance, but has a soteriological character, which reminds the readers of their greatest need.”

¹¹⁴ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 100; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 222.

reference to the powerful action of the Spirit in the conversion of the Corinthian believers.

The Second Argument (2:6-3:4)

Starting in 2:6, Paul shifts from using “wisdom” in a purely negative sense. Above the world’s wisdom is another wisdom, a “secret and hidden wisdom of God” (2:6). Paul’s second argument against a church divided by earthly wisdom is this: the Spirit has provided a better, truer wisdom than what the world can offer. This wisdom is “not of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away.” “This age” in Paul typically refers to the two-age model of Jewish apocalypticism, in which the present evil age gives way to the future age at the final judgment.¹¹⁵

Who, then, are the “rulers [ἄρχοντες] of this age?” There is some debate on this question. Some, like Conzelmann, hold that ἄρχοντες refers to supernatural forces of evil.¹¹⁶ Other identify them as earthly rulers, noting that ἄρχοντες never refers to supernatural beings elsewhere in Scripture.¹¹⁷ Fee in particular strongly rejects the supernatural view, saying that “this oft-repeated, but totally unwarranted, assertion has finally been laid to rest, since the linguistic evidence, the context, and Pauline theology all argue with it.”¹¹⁸

Yet Fee overstates his case. A hybrid position, understanding ἄρχοντες as both the earthly rulers and the supernatural forces of evil standing behind them, is well within the bounds of Pauline theology. First, it accords well with Paul’s understanding

¹¹⁵ Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 41.

¹¹⁶ Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 61.

¹¹⁷ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 111.

¹¹⁸ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 110-111.

as to who was responsible for the crucifixion of Christ (see 2:8). Thiselton highlights this theme: “Jesus Christ, for Paul, was not crucified simply by Pilate or Herod or individual leaders, but as a cosmic event on which God addressed *all* forces of evil from which liberation could subsequently come.”¹¹⁹ The ambiguity in 2:8 as to the identity of the culprits who executed Jesus is, I believe, intentional on Paul’s part.

Second, Paul’s description of Jesus as “the Lord of glory” [τον κύριον τῆς δόξης] in 2:8 is found nowhere else in the New Testament (though a similar construction occurs in James 2:1), but this exact phrase does appear multiple times in a throne vision context in 1 Enoch (22:14; 25:3-7; 27:3-4). Thus, Newman argues that τον κύριον τῆς δόξης “should be read against the horizon of early Jewish apocalypses.”¹²⁰ If Newman is right, then reading ἄρχοντες to include spiritual forces behind earthly ones is surely appropriate.

It is noteworthy that Paul shifts from “I” to “we” in 2:6 as well. This could merely be Paul’s generous attempt to include the church in what he is doing, encouraging them to emulate his example of eschewing worldly wisdom.¹²¹ But it seems more likely that he is making the point that the whole church - “those who love him” (2:9, quoting Isaiah 64:4) - is the proper recipient of this hidden wisdom.

Paul stresses that the wisdom that he imparts does not come from this age or the rulers of this age.¹²² Rather, it is a “secret and hidden wisdom from God, revealed

¹¹⁹ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 238.

¹²⁰ Carey C. Newman, *Paul’s Glory-Christology: Tradition and Rhetoric*, LEC (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2017), 237.

¹²¹ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 108.

¹²² I regard οὐ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου οὐδὲ τῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος in 2:6 as genitives of source.

before the ages for our glory.” (2:7) And this God-given wisdom, this hidden mystery is revealed to the church by God’s Spirit (2:10).

In 2:11-13, Paul uses an analogy to explain the Spirit’s role. Schreiner’s summary of this analogy is helpful:

Our thoughts as human beings are discernible to our own spirits, for we can reflect on and recognize our own thoughts. Other people, however, do not know for certain what we are thinking, unless we disclose our thoughts to them. Similarly, the things of God, God’s thoughts, are completely inaccessible to us, unless God reveals to us what he is thinking. Only the Spirit of God knows the thoughts of God; hence he is able to reveal to us “the deep things of God.”¹²³

Paul remarks that the wisdom he speaks is using words “not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit” (2:13).

In 2:13-16, Paul distinguishes between two types of person: the natural (ψυχικὸς) and the spiritual (πνευματικὸς). These terms were likely already in use in Corinth, but Paul repurposes them to make his point.¹²⁴ In Paul’s usage, the spiritual person possesses God’s Spirit and is taught by Him, but the natural person is unable to understand spiritual truths, regarding them as folly.

Paul’s quotation of Isaiah 40:13 in 2:16 continues the line of reasoning from 2:11-13, indicating through a rhetorical question that only God can know the mind of God. Yet Paul’s statement that “we have the mind of Christ” is very intriguing. Both πνεῦμα and νοῦς are common terms in Stoic writings, and it may be that Paul uses these terms here to reclaim them for his own use.¹²⁵ What is more certain, however,

¹²³ Schreiner, *1 Corinthians*, 83.

¹²⁴ Brookins, *Corinthian Wisdom*, 96-97.

¹²⁵ Lee, *Paul, the Stoics, and the Body of Christ*, 158-159.

is that the use of “Christ” here links the Spirit-delivered wisdom of the preceding verses to the crucified Messiah.¹²⁶

Although the Corinthian believers possess the Spirit of God, 3:1-4 shows that Paul is unable to share the “solid food” of spiritual truth, as their jealousy and strife render them incapable of receiving it. Paul is forced to resort to more basic “milk” – a stern rebuke to a congregation who prided itself on wisdom. Their allegiance to particular teachers in the church has ironically rendered them unteachable.

The Third Argument (3:5-4:21)

In his third argument, Paul seeks to correct the church’s misconceptions about the role of teachers. Paul sees a church divided by worldly attachment to teachers as nonsensical because our attachment should be to God himself, not his servants.

In the first of two metaphors describing the church, Paul imagines the Corinthian church as a cultivated field (3:5-9). Paul and Apollos are described as farmhands, where Paul planted a crop and Apollos watered it, “but God gave the growth.” Paul’s point is that he and Apollos are merely servants, and God both owns the field and is ultimately responsible for its growth. Thus, attaching one’s loyalty to a mere servant is to miss the reality of what God is doing in the church.

Yet “as the Lord assigned to each” (3:5) indicates that the workers are not unimportant. As Thiselton puts it, “Apollos and Paul are not merely optional extras for the church’s convenience, but those whom God-in-Christ has called to a necessary

¹²⁶ Robert Jewett, *Paul’s Anthropological Terms: A Study of Their Use in Conflict Settings* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 377.

task or role.”¹²⁷ Paul is advocating for a balanced view of teachers - not exalted, but necessary tools in the hands of the Lord.¹²⁸

Paul’s second metaphor recasts the apostle from the planter of a field to the “wise master-builder” (3:1) of a building (most likely the Temple).¹²⁹ Paul has laid a foundation (which he identifies as Christ), and others are now building on top of that foundation. To a church plagued by bickerings and potential schism, the image of the church as a solitary structure serves as a rebuke to their individualistic tendencies.¹³⁰ This is reinforced by “for no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” in 3:11 - a single structure can only have a single foundation. Paul wants to make clear that Christ is the sole foundation, and that Paul was the one God trusted to lay that foundation in Corinth, and thus he has the right to judge the quality of what is built upon that foundation. “The quality of the superstructure must be appropriate to the foundation.”¹³¹

The list of building materials in 3:12 has an illustrative purpose. Gold, silver, and precious stones are all materials that cannot be destroyed by fire, whereas wood, hay and straw easily succumb to the flame. So it is with teaching: that which accords with the gospel will stand on the fire of the Last Day, “what will perish is *sophia* in all

¹²⁷ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 299.

¹²⁸ The use of the neuter τί [“what”] in 3:5 may reinforce the idea of the workers as inanimate objects – what Dale Martin refers to as the “low-status vocabulary of things, tools, or instruments, the status of which is entirely to serve the interests of the user.” See Dale Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 192.

¹²⁹ The identification of the building as the Temple is supported not only by the mention of the church as “God’s temple” in 3:16-17, but also by Paul’s self-description as a “master builder” (ἀρχιτέκτων), the same term used to describe the Tabernacle’s master craftsman Belazel in Exodus 31:4 LXX. See Dillard, “The Chronicler’s Solomon,” 298-299.

¹³⁰ Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 307.

¹³¹ Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 151.

of its human forms.”¹³² Paul warns the Corinthian teachers - those who would attempt to build on the foundation he has laid - that they will be held to account for “what sort of work each one has done” (3:13).

Paul escalates this warning in verses 16-17: “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.” *You* in both verses is in the plural, making it clear that the temple is being equated with the church collectively, not individual believers. Because God’s Spirit dwells in the temple/church, it is considered holy, and thus to destroy it is to bring destruction upon oneself.¹³³ The stakes could not be higher.

In 3:18-23, Paul reintroduces the inversion of wisdom and folly from chapter 1, appealing to the self-styled “wise men” - and the church as a whole - to embrace the folly of Paul’s message, which leads to true wisdom. He supports this appeal with two quotations – one from Job 5:13 and one from Psalm 94:11, both underscoring God’s low assessment of those who rely on human wisdom. Garland’s description of such people is apt: “They are too clever for their own eternal good and always get trapped in their own schemes and ambitions.”¹³⁴

In light of the nullification of human wisdom, Paul makes his conclusion: “So let no one boast in men” (3:21). Rather than boasting in their preferred teachers, they

¹³² Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 151.

¹³³ Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 120. Garland notes that this warning is for those who “destroy” (φθείρει) the church/Temple. Those who merely build shoddily face loss, “though he himself will be saved” (3:15).

¹³⁴ Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 123.

are to remember that “all things are yours” in Christ. Here, Paul seems to be deliberately echoing the Stoic teaching that the wise man would be said to own all things.¹³⁵ But for Paul, this is true not of the worldly wise, but of believers: “whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future” (3:22). But where the Stoic “wise man” would be at the apex of the pecking order, Paul reminds the believers that they are not their own: “all are yours, and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s” (3:23).¹³⁶

It is significant that among the things belonging to the believers are listed Paul, Apollos and Cephas - the very teachers who are listed in chapter 1 as the foci of the divisions in the church. Paul reinforces this in 4:1, calling himself and his fellow teachers “servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.”

Paul’s statement “I do not even judge myself” was famously interpreted by Krister Stendahl as depicting the apostle as being free from the pangs of consciousness (an idea Stendahl attributes not to Paul, but to Martin Luther’s interpretation of him).¹³⁷ Whether Stendahl’s understanding of Paul’s psychology is correct, his article “serves to demonstrate the pivotal importance of 4:3b and 4:4 for Paul’s theology. He leaves his successes and failures with God.”¹³⁸

As a servant and steward, the true judgment of the value of Paul’s ministry will not come at the hands of the “wise men” of Corinth, nor of the believers there, but

¹³⁵ See Cicero’s description of the Stoic “wise man” in *de Finibus* 3.75.

¹³⁶ Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 327.

¹³⁷ Krister Stendahl, “The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West,” *HTR* 56, no. 3 (1963): 199-215.

¹³⁸ Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 339.

the Lord. Therefore, he instructs his audience: “do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart” (4:5).

Paul notes that he has “applied [μετεσχημάτισα] all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit” (4:6). There is some debate as to exactly how μετεσχημάτισα should be understood in this verse.¹³⁹ The view first put forward by the Church Father Chrysostom seems the most likely, namely that Paul is using himself and Apollos as stand-ins for the actual teachers at the center of the controversy.¹⁴⁰ Garland summarizes this position: “[Paul] uses the example of himself and Apollos to help them learn how properly to evaluate the stature of leaders in the church.”¹⁴¹

By using himself and Apollos as examples and not calling out the teachers in Corinth by name, Paul can make his point generally applicable, “that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another” (6:8). His aim is to make boasting in man utterly unthinkable. If all they have is the gift of God, then the grounds for boasting are completely removed. As Garland puts it, “One cannot boast about being a worthy recipient of grace.”¹⁴²

Paul then contrasts the sufferings of his (and his co-laborers’) ministry with those of the self-proclaimed “wise men” of Corinth, using a healthy dose of sarcasm: “Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Without us you have become kings!” (4:8) As shown above, Paul’s use of “rich” and “kings” parallels Stoic

¹³⁹ See Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 348-351 for a summary of the various options.

¹⁴⁰ Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 339; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 132-133.

¹⁴¹ Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 133.

¹⁴² Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 137.

terminology. James Moffatt notes: “‘Rich’ and ‘reigning’ were catchwords of the Stoics ever since Diogenes, whose tomb was shown at Corinth, had taught a Stoic to maintain, ‘I alone am rich, I alone reign as king’ in the world.”¹⁴³ Paul openly derides the triumphalist spirit of the Stoic-influenced “wise men.”

Paul then describes his plight (and that of the other apostles) in contrast to the seemingly exalted status of these wise men. If the Corinthian wise men are “kings” and “rich”, the apostles are spectacles to the world, as men condemned to die in the arena.¹⁴⁴ If the Corinthians are rich, the apostles “hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless” (4:11). The subtext is not eschatological, but ethical: If the Corinthians have achieved a state of bliss, why they have done nothing to alleviate the sufferings of others, including that of the apostles?¹⁴⁵

Paul’s Concluding Appeal

Paul concludes this section of the letter by appealing to them as their spiritual father (as the one who brought the gospel to Corinth and founded the church there). As a father figure to the church, he is in turns gentle (admonishing them to follow his example of fidelity to the gospel) and stern (warning of his upcoming visit and a direct confrontation with his opponents). He lets the church know that he is sending Timothy to them (although Timothy is likely not carrying this letter himself) and will come himself when he can to set things right.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ James Moffatt, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938), 49.

¹⁴⁴ Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 359-360.

¹⁴⁵ Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 139. Garland notes: “Paul is not defending his idiosyncratic way of living out his Christian calling but presenting the way of the cross as modeled by the apostles.”

¹⁴⁶ Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 374-375.

The closing verse of chapter 4 is striking in its rhetoric: “What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?” (4:21) Fitzmyer interprets Paul’s question as this: “Should he come with force, or with fatherly affection?”¹⁴⁷ But Garland persuasively argues that Paul’s tone is more that of a long-absent father returning home to restore order to the household and discipline the unruly children.¹⁴⁸ The choice of how Paul will deal with them will be determined by their response to his admonitions.

Conclusion

Paul is obviously agitated by the threat of the Stoic teachings to the unity of the Corinthian church. He wants them to remember that true and better wisdom is a gift from God, not the result of Stoic education or disciplines. He wants them to understand that as a result of the cross, boasting is utterly out of place. And he wants them to realize that wisdom is given to the church not to build up the individual but the entire body, which Paul likens to the Temple, being built into a structure fit for the worship of God by the Spirit.

Having laid out Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians 1-4, our attention turns to various themes found in Paul’s line of reasoning and the potential sources of those themes in Hebrew Bible wisdom narratives. Those themes will be the focus of the next three chapters. Chapter 2 will focus on themes surrounding God as the giver and source of wisdom. Chapter 3 will investigate motifs surrounding wisdom and the

¹⁴⁷ Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 226.

¹⁴⁸ Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 148.

inversion of social categories. And Chapter 4 will evaluate motifs surrounding wisdom and the welfare of the people of God.

Chapter 2: The Source of Wisdom

In 1 Corinthians 2:6-7, Paul confidently asserts that “we impart a hidden and secret wisdom of God” which stands in opposition to the “wisdom of this age.” This hidden wisdom both belongs to and comes from God. The contrast between the two wisdoms ultimately is a difference of origin. The wisdom Paul champions is superior because it is a wisdom that finds its source in God himself.

Popular conceptions tend to think of wisdom as something acquired incrementally over a lengthy period of time. Even in the Hebrew Scriptures, sages are rarely thought of as young men. Wisdom literature such as Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are presented as the advice from an old man to a young man.

Yet when we turn from texts identified as “wisdom literature” to the narratives of the Hebrew Bible, a different conception of wisdom emerges. In these stories, wisdom is something that is not so much accrued as it is received - a view of wisdom that aligns well with 1 Corinthians.

Multiple Biblical motifs surround the theme of God as the source of wisdom. (I shall refer to this set of motifs as *source motifs*.) This chapter will focus on five source motifs:

- 1) God, not man, as the source of true wisdom
- 2) Wisdom portrayed as divine revelation
- 3) Wisdom as the unveiling of mystery
- 4) The Spirit as the dispenser of wisdom
- 5) The messenger as the Spirit-enabled emissary of wisdom

Hebrew Bible Wisdom Narratives

Joseph

The life of Joseph (found in Genesis 37-50) is replete with examples of divine wisdom as revelation. Central to his story are three pairs of dreams which serve to advance the narrative in various ways.¹⁴⁹ In the first pair of dreams (Genesis 37:5-11), the text does not record the interpretation of the dreams themselves, but only the reactions of Joseph's family to the dreams and their assumed meaning. Grossman argues that this is meant to cast doubt on the legitimacy of that assumed interpretation.¹⁵⁰ However, the specific reference to eleven stars in the second dream – the number of Jacob's brothers – makes Jacob's interpretation of Joseph's dream seem the most plausible one.¹⁵¹

The second pair of dreams – those of Pharaoh's disgraced cupbearer and baker – occur "some time after this" (Gen. 40:1), but it is not clear exactly how long Joseph was in prison before this point in the story.¹⁵² Here Joseph is no longer

¹⁴⁹ Jonathan Grossman, "Different Dreams: Two Models of Interpretation for Three Pairs of Dream:(Genesis 37-50)", *JBL* 135:4 (2016), 717-718.

¹⁵⁰ Grossman, "Different Dreams," 720.

¹⁵¹ Jacob's identification of the sun, moon and stars with himself, Joseph's mother and brothers (Gen. 37:10) raises the question: To whom does Jacob refer as Joseph's mother? Rachel, Joseph's birth mother, is almost certainly dead at this point in the narrative: the specific reference to eleven stars (=brothers) indicates that Benjamin has been born by this point. Hamilton's proposal that Leah, as the sole remaining wife to Jacob, would be the "mother" in view here is likely correct. Victor Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18-50*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 411.

¹⁵² Gordan J. Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, WBC 2 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1994), 381.

dreamer, but interpreter: since the imprisoned officials do not have access to Pharaoh's professional oneiromancers, Joseph steps into the role.¹⁵³

It is significant that although he acts as interpreter, Joseph makes no claim to any personal capacity to interpret dreams. "Do not interpretations belong to God?" is his response to the despondency of the cupbearer and baker (Gen 40:8). Joseph's successful interpretation of the two dreams is presented not as an exercise of skill, but the receipt of divine revelation. Von Rad notes, "Joseph means to say that the interpretation of dreams is not a human art but a charisma which God can grant."¹⁵⁴ Fox concurs: "There is no hint that Joseph uses his intellectual powers to figure out the meaning of the dreams. He does not even say that *hokmah* [wisdom], the faculty that might be used in interpretation, comes from God. The pitronim [meanings] themselves do."¹⁵⁵

The narrative leads the reader to assume at first that the two dreams are essentially the same, then springs the surprise that the dreams actually have opposite meanings: the cupbearer will be restored, but the baker will be hanged. This is likely meant to show Joseph's ability to accurately interpret two dreams that seem very similar on the surface.¹⁵⁶

By contrast, the third pair of dreams – those of Pharaoh – are interpreted as essentially the same dream told twice. We see this not just from Joseph's declaration

¹⁵³ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*, 476.

¹⁵⁴ Gerhard Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, trans. John H. Marks. OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 371.

¹⁵⁵ Michael V. Fox, "Wisdom in the Joseph Story," *VT* 51:1 (2001), 32-33.

¹⁵⁶ Grossman, "Different Dreams," 723-725.

("Pharaoh's dreams are one and the same"), but from many clues in the text. Pharaoh refers not to his "dreams", but to a singular dream.¹⁵⁷ Grossman observes that Joseph's interpretation (Genesis 41:25-28) has a chiasmic structure, interweaving the two dreams.¹⁵⁸ The doubling of the dream here indicates both the certainty and the nearness of the predicted events.¹⁵⁹

As he did in prison, so now he does before Pharaoh: Joseph makes no claim to skills in oneiromancy. Instead, he demurs: "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer. (Gen 41:16)" Once again, the interpretation is characterized as divine revelation. Indeed, Joseph repeats this for emphasis: "It is as I told Pharaoh; God has shown to Pharaoh what he is about to do. (Gen 41:28)" The interpretation is couched in the language of prophetic utterance.¹⁶⁰

When Joseph is brought before Pharaoh, he does not stop at interpreting the dream's meaning. He gives Pharaoh instructions on how to meet the threat of the upcoming crisis - something that Pharaoh did not ask for.¹⁶¹ It is not clear whether Joseph's instructions are his own shrewd recommendations based on the revealed interpretations or part of the revelation itself. What is clear is that Pharaoh accepts both the instructions and Joseph himself: "Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are (Gen 41:39)"

¹⁵⁷ Gen. 41:15. See Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 392.

¹⁵⁸ Grossman, "Different Dreams," 726.

¹⁵⁹ Gen. 41:32.

¹⁶⁰ Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 393.

¹⁶¹ Mathews, *Genesis 11:27-50:26*, NAC 1B (Nashville: Broadman, 2005), 760.

It is one thing to come up with a great plan, but quite another to execute that plan well. Yet as Genesis 41:46-49 attests, Joseph was an adept administrator. Under his leadership, the storehouses of Egypt were filled during the seven years of plenty, such that there was grain to sell not only to the Egyptians, but to “all the earth”.¹⁶²

Although Joseph’s wise actions are not the direct revelation from God that his dream interpretations were, it does not follow that God had no hand in them.

Pharaoh himself remarks that Joseph possesses “the Spirit of God,” as evidenced by both his interpretation and his good advice.¹⁶³ Fox notes:

The narrator regards the spirit of God as a divine endowment that gives a human a surplus of power, whether physical, spiritual, or intellectual, to do whatever the situation demands. Pharaoh (expressing the narrator’s design) interprets Joseph’s brilliant explication as evidence that the spirit of God is *already* resident in him.¹⁶⁴

Clearly, the wisdom - both revelatory and practical - that Joseph displays throughout the narrative is meant to be seen as deriving not from his own abilities, but from the Spirit of God.

It is clear that many of the source motifs are evident in the Joseph narratives. The interpretation of the dreams is portrayed as divine revelation, not the exercise of skill. Pharaoh notes that only the Spirit of God could enable such wisdom as Joseph’s wise counsel to Pharaoh. Clearly, Pharaoh sees Joseph as a conduit of divine wisdom.

¹⁶² Gen. 41:57.

¹⁶³ Gen. 41:37.

¹⁶⁴ Fox, “Wisdom in the Joseph Story,” 36 (emphasis in original).

Solomon

Any consideration of Biblical wisdom figures must necessarily include Solomon, son of David, the third king of Israel. He is renowned across cultures as one of the wisest men who ever lived, and much of the so-called “wisdom literature” in the Hebrew scriptures is attributed to him.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, he was responsible for the construction of the first Temple in Jerusalem, a major focal point for nearly half a millennium of Jewish history and worship. Under his rule, Israel became a major economic power in the Near East. And yet, the story of Solomon is marked by failure and folly, making him more of a cautionary tale than an exemplar of wisdom and virtue.

The narrative of Solomon’s life is found in First Kings 1-11 and Second Chronicles 1-9.¹⁶⁶ While covering the same historical events, the tone of the two sources are very different. First Kings concludes Solomon’s story with his descent into idolatry under the influence of his foreign wives, and God’s judgment of Solomon’s sin. Further, many scholars assert that the entirety of the First Kings narrative should be read as critical of Solomon.¹⁶⁷ In contrast, Second Chronicles has no critical word

¹⁶⁵ Porten notes, “[I]t seems that Wisdom literature was attracted to the name of Solomon for the same reason that *Psalms* was attracted to David. David was a psalmist and Solomon was a ‘wise man.’” Bezael Porten, “The Structure and Theme of the Solomon Narrative (I Kings 3-11),” *HUCA* 38 (1967): 117.

¹⁶⁶ As the wisdom literature attributed to Solomon (several of the Psalms and the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs) are not narrative in nature, they fall outside the scope of this examination.

¹⁶⁷ Examples include J. Daniel Hays, “Has the Narrator Come to Praise Solomon or to Bury Him? Narrative Subtlety in 1 Kings 1-11,” *JSOT* 28:2 (2003): 149-174; Edward G. Newing, “Rhetorical Art of the Deuteronomist: Lampooning Solomon in First Kings,” *OTE* 7:2 (1994): 247-260; Marvin Sweeney, “The Critique of Solomon in the Josianic Edition of the Deuteronomistic History,” *JBL* 114:4 (1995): 607-622; Yosef Green, “The Reign of King Solomon: Diplomatic and Economic Perspectives,” *JBQ* 42:3 (2014):151-158; and Sehoon Jeon, “The Retroactive Re-Evaluation Technique With Pharaoh’s Daughter And The Nature Of Solomon’s Corruption In 1 Kings 1-12,” *JSOT* 42:1 (2017): 117-135.

for Solomon or his reign; it is uniformly positive. By comparison with Kings, “the Solomon of the Chronicler is scarcely recognizable.”¹⁶⁸

The first wisdom narrative of Solomon’s story - God’s grant of wisdom to Solomon - is essentially the same in Kings and Chronicles. While at Gibeon to worship YHWH, God appears to Solomon - “in a dream” according to 1 Kings, but merely “at night” in 1 Chronicles.¹⁶⁹ According to 1 Kings, when God instructs Solomon to “ask what I shall give you”, the young king asks for “an understanding mind to govern your people.”¹⁷⁰ Chronicles records Solomon’s request thus: “Give me now wisdom and knowledge to go out and come in before this people, for who can govern this people of yours, which is so great?”¹⁷¹ Both narratives emphasize Solomon’s felt inadequacy to govern God’s people and his dependence on divine wisdom to accomplish such a challenging task.¹⁷²

True to form, God grants Solomon request for wisdom, “so that none like you has ever been before you and none like you shall arise after you.”¹⁷³ So pleased was God with Solomon’s request that he also promises the young king riches and honor. Finally, and somewhat ominously, God gives a final promise: “And if you will walk in

¹⁶⁸ Dillard, “The Chronicler’s Solomon,” 290.

¹⁶⁹ 1 Kings 3:5; 2 Chronicles 1:7.

¹⁷⁰ 1 Kings 3:9.

¹⁷¹ 2 Chronicles 1:10.

¹⁷² House: “In contrast to his own personal and experiential lack of stature, Solomon must lead a people whose greatness is first measured by the fact that they were chosen by God. Solomon now becomes the head of the nation once led by Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and David.” Paul House, *1, 2 Kings*, NAC 8 (Nashville: Broadman, 1995), 110.

¹⁷³ 1 Kings 3:12.

my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.”¹⁷⁴

In the Kings account, this episode is immediately followed by a public indication that Solomon has indeed received wisdom from God to rule justly. Presented with two prostitutes both claiming to be the mother of an infant, Solomon displays extraordinary judicial insight by correctly discerning which of the women was the child’s true mother.¹⁷⁵ House notes regarding this incident, “He has the insight to see the difference between just and unjust persons even when he has no corroborating evidence.”¹⁷⁶

Another evidence of Solomon’s God-endowed wisdom is the description in 1 Kings 4:1-19 of Solomon’s political administration - his chief officers and regional rulers. The latter were each responsible for supplying the royal household for one month of the year.¹⁷⁷ Apparently, this system worked so well that Solomon quickly achieved regional hegemony: “Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt. They brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.”¹⁷⁸ Green comments on this rapid expansion of influence: “Displaying political and administrative wisdom, Solomon

¹⁷⁴ 1 Kings 3:14.

¹⁷⁵ 1 Kings 3:16-38.

¹⁷⁶ House, *1, 2 Kings*, 113.

¹⁷⁷ 1 Kings 4:7.

¹⁷⁸ 1 Kings 4:21.

proved equal to taking full advantage of the unparalleled opportunity for economic growth and development.”¹⁷⁹

Chapter 4 ends with an encomium praising Solomon’s wisdom:

God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure, and breadth of mind like the sand on the seashore, so that Solomon’s wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt....And people of all nations came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and from all the kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom.¹⁸⁰

Solomon’s narrative is clearly meant to show that God is the source of Solomon’s wisdom. The other source motifs do not appear in the Solomon narratives.

Isaiah

Although Isaiah is rightly regarded as a prophet, the book’s beginning identifies its contents as a “vision” (1:1), not a prophecy, thus making Isaiah sound not all that dissimilar to Joseph the dream interpreter or Daniel the receiver of visions.¹⁸¹ The book contains several historical narratives that serve as useful objects for this study. Isaiah 7 recounts one of these narratives: The threat against Judah from Syria and Israel under the reign of King Ahaz. The opening verses set the scene:

In the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, son of Uzziah, king of Judah, Rezin the king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah the king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to wage war against it, but could not yet mount an attack

¹⁷⁹ Green, “The Reign of King Solomon,” 151.

¹⁸⁰ 1 Kings 4:28-30, 34.

¹⁸¹ Why treat visions and dreams in the same category? As seen in the Joseph narrative, a dream functions as divine communication, much as a vision does. Isaiah’s “vision” acts in the same way.

against it. When the house of David was told, ‘Syria is in league with Ephraim,’ the heart of Ahaz and the heart of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind (Isaiah 7:1-2).

Isaiah is dispatched by God with instructions to the king not to fear the threat of the alliance, as it will come to nothing.¹⁸² Yet I Kings 16:7 makes it clear that Ahaz did not heed Isaiah’s warning, instead sending messages to Tiglath-Pilezar of Assyria requesting aid, along with a bribe taken in part from the Temple. Ahaz rejects not just the words of the prophet of God, but the words of God himself.

Thus God has Isaiah deliver a new message to Ahaz: although Tiglath-Pilezar will destroy Ahaz’s current enemies, he will be no friend to Judah: “Therefore, behold, the Lord is bringing up against them the waters of the River, mighty and many, the king of Assyria and all his glory. And it will rise over all its channels and go over all its banks, and it will sweep on into Judah, it will overflow and pass on, reaching even to the neck...” (Isaiah 8:7-8).

That promise comes to fruition in chapter 36, with the forces of Sennacherib waging war against Judah. But if Ahaz served as an example of the folly of ignoring God’s revealed wisdom and instruction, his son Hezekiah demonstrates what happens when a king seeks and obeys the wisdom of God.¹⁸³

Several aspects of the Hezekiah/Sennacherib story deserve mention. As soon as Hezekiah hears the message from Sennacherib’s emissary, he does two things: he goes

¹⁸² So Watts: “The specific message of encouragement is simply: *it will not happen*. The kings will not succeed.” John Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*. WBC 24 (Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 1985), 92.

¹⁸³ In the parallel account of Sennacherib’s campaign against Judah found in 2 Kings 18-19, Hezekiah is introduced thus: “He trusted in the God of Israel, so that there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, nor among those who were before him” (2 Kings 18:5). Olley notes, “In all Old Testament narrative, only of Hezekiah is it said explicitly that he ‘trusted in Yhwh.’” John Olley, “‘Trust in the Lord’: Hezekiah, Kings and Isaiah,” *TynBul* 50:1 (1999): 63.

in mourning to the house of the Lord and he sends his advisors to seek a word from God through Isaiah.¹⁸⁴ This pious reliance upon God stands in stark contrast to the refusal of his father to seek a sign from God.¹⁸⁵

What is clear in both stories is that the prophetic utterances of Isaiah to both kings are regarded (by the narrator of the story, if not necessarily the kings themselves) as the very utterances of YHWH himself. The prophecies act as divine revelation given to the kings to decide wisely in matters of war and peace.

Chapter 39 records a third narrative, in which Hezekiah, healed from an illness, receives a delegation from Merodach-Baladan, the king of Babylon. Hezekiah's welcome of the foreign dignitaries is stunning: "he showed them his treasure house, the silver, the gold, the spices, the precious oil, his whole armory, all that was found in his storehouses."¹⁸⁶ As Watts notes, "[Hezekiah] wanted to impress his potential ally with his readiness to go to war."¹⁸⁷

It is important to note that while Hezekiah sought out Isaiah during the crisis with Sennacherib, here there is no such inquiry. Hezekiah acts as though he is not in

¹⁸⁴ Isaiah 37:1-2.

¹⁸⁵ Isaiah 7:12. Motyer notes: "[T]o refuse a proffered sign is proof that one does not want to believe. Pious though his words sound, Ahaz by using them demonstrated himself to be the willfully unbelieving man - and since he would not believe, he could not continue." Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), 83.

¹⁸⁶ Isaiah 39:2. The vastness of Hezekiah's treasury likely indicates that this visit takes place prior to the tribute paid to Sennacherib described in 2 Kings 18:15. See H.D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *Isaiah*, The Pulpit Commentary 2, (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1910), 57.

¹⁸⁷ Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 66.

need of the Lord's counsel in this matter, making what appears to be an implicit alliance with Babylon.¹⁸⁸

It is no accident that Isaiah's response to Hezekiah's actions begins with "Hear the word of the LORD of Hosts" (Isaiah 39:5). In his zeal to impress an earthly king who could be a potential ally, Hezekiah had forgotten YHWH of Hosts, who had time and again shown covenantal faithfulness toward the house of David. Here there can be no doubt: Isaiah's words are to be considered the very words of YHWH himself. Isaiah's proclamations are understood as conveying the words of God, continuing the theme of wisdom as divine revelation.

Daniel

The narrative of Daniel 2 – Nebuchadnezzar's troubling dream, the inability of the professional interpreters to help, and Daniel's success in resolving the crisis - closely parallels Joseph's encounter with Pharaoh in Genesis 41.¹⁸⁹ Yet, as Collins notes, "the story must be seen in its wider Near Eastern context."¹⁹⁰ It seems likely that the author of Daniel 2 consciously framed the structure of his tale with Joseph in mind, but this is its own distinctive story.

One clear difference between Daniel 2 and Genesis 41 is Nebuchadnezzar's refusal to tell his interpreters the content of the dream. Fox argues that "it is not

¹⁸⁸ Motyer detects a note of pride in Hezekiah's explanation to Isaiah: "'Imagine them coming all that way to see me! Imagine Merodach-Baladan wanting me as an ally!'" Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC 20, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999), 270-271.

¹⁸⁹ Rindge, for example, identifies no fewer than eighteen similarities between Genesis 41 and Daniel 2. Matthew Rindge, "Jewish Identity under Foreign Rule: Daniel 2 as a Reconfiguration of Genesis 41," *JBL* 129:1 (2010): 88.

¹⁹⁰ John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1993), 155.

clear whether the king has forgotten the content of the dream or just withholding it. If the latter, then he is proving the inspiration of the interpreters, as if he too recognizes that interpretations come from God.”¹⁹¹

Although Daniel, like the king’s other advisors, has been trained in what is commonly called *mantic wisdom* (i.e., the skills of divination and dream interpretation), nothing in their training prepared them for the king’s demand to recount the dream’s contents. As Fox notes, “For certain challenges, however, another kind of wisdom is required, one more directly divine in origin.”¹⁹² In the book of Daniel, human wisdom and divine wisdom are frequently contrasted; Daniel’s advantage at court is that he possesses both and is therefore able to both recount and interpret the king’s dream.¹⁹³

Significantly, Daniel consistently refuses to take any credit for himself. As Duguid notes, “Daniel could easily have answered ‘Yes’ to [Nebuchadnezzar’s] question and claimed the credit for himself.”¹⁹⁴ Rather, he gives the credit to the “God in heaven who reveals mysteries.”¹⁹⁵ But merely mentioning God is not enough for Daniel:

But as for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, *not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living*, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹¹ Fox, “Wisdom in the Joseph Story,” 39.

¹⁹² Fox, “Wisdom in the Joseph Story,” 38.

¹⁹³ Fox, “Wisdom in the Joseph Story,” 38.

¹⁹⁴ Iain Duguid, *Daniel*, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2008), 33.

¹⁹⁵ Daniel 2:28.

¹⁹⁶ Daniel 2:30. This is consistent with Daniel’s hymn earlier in the chapter: “he gives wisdom to the wise / and knowledge to those who have understanding” (2:21).

In the last six chapters of the book of Daniel, the tables are turned: Daniel is no longer the interpreter of wisdom, but the one requiring interpretation.¹⁹⁷ These pieces of revelation take different forms, but each require angelic assistance for Daniel to understand. The first (chapter seven) is a vision of four beasts, followed by the Ancient of Days's gift of an eternal kingdom to "one like a son of man."¹⁹⁸ The second (chapter eight) is a vision of a ram and a goat. In chapter nine, Daniel prays for the return of his people from exile, and is visited by Gabriel, who tells him of the timetable for the return. The final three chapters are an extended vision of the future.

What unites each of these incidents is Daniel's desire to understand what he has received.¹⁹⁹ Even as one who has interpreted dreams and visions for others, he is unable to interpret what he has seen. Gladd agrees: "It is not until the interpretation has been given that the initial, hidden revelation is sensible."²⁰⁰ This reinforces a recurring theme in Daniel: Wisdom is not the result of human skill, but of divine disclosure.

There is ample recurrence of source motifs in the Daniel narratives. Wisdom is given as divine revelation in chapter 2, and is described as the unveiling of mystery in

¹⁹⁷ So Gladd: "As in chs. 1-6, the disclosing of wisdom in chs. 7-12 is couched in the typical two-part structure. This time, however, Daniel is on the 'hot seat,' while an *angelus interpres* emerges." Gladd, *Revealing the Mysterion: The Use of Mystery in Daniel and Second Temple Judaism with Its Bearing on First Corinthians*. BZBW 160 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 36.

¹⁹⁸ Daniel 7:1-14.

¹⁹⁹ Daniel 7:15-16, 19; 8:15-17; 9:22-23; 12:6.

²⁰⁰ Gladd, *Revealing the Mysterion*, 38.

the same chapter. Daniel is said to possess the “spirit of the holy gods” (Dan 4:8, 5:11; 5:14).

Thematic Analysis

In 1 Corinthians 1-4, Paul repeatedly makes it clear that human “wisdom” is inferior to the wisdom he brings, “a secret and hidden wisdom of God” [θεοῦ σοφίαν ἐν μυστηρίῳ τὴν ἀποκεκρυμμένην]. This phrase is difficult to render precisely, though Fee’s “God’s wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden” comes close.²⁰¹ In 2:10-11, we are told that this mystery - the things God has prepared for those who love him - “these things God has revealed [ἀπεκάλυψεν] to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths [βάθη] of God.”

We see many of these same terms in Daniel 2:19-22: “Then the mystery [μυστήριον] was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night.... Daniel answered and said: “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might....he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; he reveals deep [βαθέα] and hidden things...” The overlap of terms (“mystery,” “wisdom,” “deep/depths”) indicates a possible connection between these two texts.

But shared vocabulary alone does not indicate a likely connection. Indeed, Beale and Carson conclude that “the similarities, though noteworthy, are insufficient to regard this as more than a possible echo.”²⁰² Yet there is more than common

²⁰¹ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 102.

²⁰² G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson. eds., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 702.

terminology at work between Daniel 2 and 1 Corinthians 2. There is also commonality in circumstances.

Daniel asks for wisdom to unveil the mystery of the king's dream, for he knows that human wisdom is insufficient to the task. Similarly, Paul encourages the Corinthian believers to shun the world's wisdom and seek wisdom from God, a mystery similarly hidden from the world. Furthermore, the similarity between Daniel 2 and Joseph's encounter with Pharaoh in Genesis 41 marks the Daniel passage as rich in typological possibilities. Therefore, I conclude that Paul is likely drawing from Daniel 2 (and behind it, Genesis 41) when he asserts in 1 Corinthians 2:6-13 that God is the giver of wisdom and the revealer of mysteries, and categorize this as a Probable Allusion.

As shown above, there are many times where the source motifs appear in the wisdom narratives. However, none of them (with the exception identified above) meet the other criteria outlined in the methodology to be classified as anything other than a Possible Allusion.

Table 2-1: Potential Allusions of Source Motifs

| <i>Source Text</i> | <i>Target Text</i> | <i>Classification</i> |
|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Daniel 2:19-22 | 1 Cor. 2:6-13 | Probable Allusion |

Chapter 3: Wisdom and Divine Reversal

In 1 Corinthians 1, Paul describes the inversion of societal structures brought about by the “folly of what we preach” (1:21):

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. (1 Cor. 1:26-29)

Two things are worth mentioning here. First, God’s method of choosing is different from the world’s, and his choice is motivated by a different rationale. He chooses the weak, the low and despised, the things that are not, to shame the wise, the strong, all to negate human boasting.

Second, it must be asked, what does Paul mean by shame [καταισχύνη] in this passage? Kee notes that καταισχύνη in verse 27 is parallel to καταργήση (“bring to nothing”) in verse 28, and thus “the import is clearly that the prideful powers are rendered inoperative.”²⁰³ It is an eschatological judgment.

We see this eschatological inversion at play in 2:6-8 as well. The repeated use of αἰών indicates that Paul is highlighting a Jewish understanding of history as a progression of ages (common in Paul but highlighted here against the Stoic view of time as everlasting recurrence.)²⁰⁴ The text at hand shows that Paul conceived of the

²⁰³ Howard Kee, “The Linguistic Background of “Shame” in the New Testament,” in *On Language, Culture and Religion: In honor of Eugene A. Nida*, ed. Matthew Black and William Allen Smalley (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1974), 134.

²⁰⁴ Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 41.

age to come as overlapping with the present evil age.²⁰⁵ Human wisdom belongs to this age and the rulers of this age, who “are doomed to pass away (2:6).” The rulers did not understand that the cross was the means of victory (2:8), and now the word of the cross is the very power of God to those who are being saved (1:18, i.e. those who belong to the new creation).²⁰⁶

There are multiple motifs in 1 Corinthians surrounding this theme of divine inversion that warrant further examination. (We shall refer to these motifs as *reversal motifs*.) They are:

- Inversion of social categories
- Speaking wisdom to the powerful
- God denigrating human wisdom
- God sovereignly acting in world events for His glory
- God opposing boasting

Hebrew Bible Wisdom Narratives

Joseph

Joseph’s story is the definition of a social inversion — from prisoner to a position of power and honor in Egypt. It is important to note that his rise in power is due to the sovereignty of God over his situation, which the narrative is keen to point out: “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today” (Gen. 50:20).

²⁰⁵ Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 464.

²⁰⁶ Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 464-465.

It is also significant that it was the delivery of *wisdom* from Joseph to Pharaoh that brought about Joseph's change in status, as Pharaoh says, "Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are" (Genesis 43:39). As Hamilton puts it, "For Pharaoh, Joseph is one who has been divinely equipped and gifted."²⁰⁷

Solomon

Solomon's story is an inversion as well, but from wisdom to folly, from favor to judgment. In 1 Kings 3, in response to Solomon's request, YHWH promises him, "I give you a wise and discerning mind" (1 Kings 3:12). Yet the text makes clear that Solomon acts neither according to wisdom or discernment, ignoring the rules set down for Israel's kings in Deuteronomy 17. The narrator of 1 Kings seems to be pointing these transgressions out in the text, as Hays notes: "'Look how great Solomon was', the narrator says on the surface. 'He was great in violating Yahweh's law', the narrator is really saying, right below the surface."²⁰⁸

One example is found in 1 Kings 10:28-29:

Solomon's import of horses was from Egypt and Kue, and the king's traders received them from Kue at a price. A chariot could be imported from Egypt for 600 shekels of silver and a horse for 150, and so through the king's traders they were exported to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria (1 Kings 10:28-29).

We see this also in 1 Kings 4:26: "Solomon also had 40,000 stalls of horses for his chariots, and 12,000 horsemen." This is in direct violation of Deut. 17:16: "Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses."

²⁰⁷ Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*, 503.

²⁰⁸ Hays, "Narrative Subtlety in 1 Kings 1-11," 157.

The Deuteronomic code also enjoins the king from marrying many wives: “And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away” (Deut. 17:17). It seems this warning was tailor-made with Solomon, who becomes an object lesson in its veracity:

King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the people of Israel, “You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods.” Solomon clung to these in love. He had 700 wives, who were princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart. For when Solomon was old *his wives turned away his heart* after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and did not wholly follow the LORD, as David his father had done. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Molech the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem. And so he did for all his foreign wives, who made offerings and sacrificed to their gods (1 Kings 11:1-8, emphasis added).

It is hard not to notice the echo of Deuteronomy 17:17 in verse 4. Solomon abandons the wisdom of YHWH for the worship of idols.

Even the incident that purports to show Solomon’s wisdom – the baby and the two prostitutes (1 Kings 3:16-28) – has an undercurrent of disregard for God’s law in it. Hays comments “This story is almost universally taken as one that simply demonstrates Solomon’s great wisdom and discernment. However, let us back up a minute and ask, ‘What is wrong with this picture?’ Prostitution was strictly outlawed both in Deuteronomy and in Leviticus.”²⁰⁹ The people perceived his pronouncement as evidence that “the wisdom of God was in him to do justice” (1 Kings 3:28), but can this be true if “justice” ignores the law of God?

²⁰⁹ Hays, “Narrative Subtlety in 1 Kings 1-11,” 164.

Recall the warning God gave to Solomon: “And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days” (1 Kings 3:14). After the Temple is build, YHWH repeats the warning:

As for you, if you will walk before me, as David your father walked, with integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you, and keeping my statutes and my rules, then I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, ‘You shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.’ But if you turn aside from following me, you or your children, and do not keep my commandments and my statutes that I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land that I have given them, and the house that I have consecrated for my name I will cast out of my sight, and Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all peoples. And this house will become a heap of ruins. Everyone passing by it will be astonished and will hiss, and they will say, ‘Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?’ Then they will say, ‘Because they abandoned the LORD their God who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt and laid hold on other gods and worshiped them and served them. Therefore the LORD has brought all this disaster on them.’ (1 Kings 4:9)

Eventually God brings all of the warnings as judgment upon Solomon and upon Israel: The nation is taken away from the house of David – except one tribe, and that is “for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen” (1 Kings 11:13). Solomon’s epitaph is an abandonment of wisdom: “But he did not keep what the Lord commanded” (1 Kings 11:10). His abandonment of wisdom resulted in a consequent reversal of fortunes for the nation as a whole.

Isaiah

Running throughout the three narratives (Ahaz facing the forces of Syria and Israel [chapter 7]; Hezekiah against the forces of Assyria [chapters 36-37]; and Hezekiah’s alliance with Babylon [chapter 39]) is a strong affirmation of the sovereignty of God

over the affairs of man. God tells Ahaz that the offensive by Rezin and Pekah will be unsuccessful, that Ephraim will be destroyed as a people within sixty-five years - both of which came to pass not because of Ahaz's doing, but because of the actions of Assyria. Yet those actions, and the upcoming Assyrian assault upon Judah, are the Lord's doing: "The LORD will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father's house such days as have come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah – the king of Assyria!"²¹⁰ Jang notes: "[T]he reference to Assyria in this section highlights the way God utilizes a neighboring nation when Zion turns away from him."²¹¹

We see this same control over the rulers of men in the Sennacherib story: "He shall not come into this city or shoot an arrow there or come before it with a shield or cast up a siege mound against it. By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come into the city, declares the LORD."²¹²

In both the Ahaz and Hezekiah narratives, the link between God's revealed word through the prophet and the sovereign will of God is clear. God is in control over the foreign powers, so that the people of God should trust in YHWH, the protector of his people. Ahaz shows what happens when his people trust in foreign alliances – the wisdom of man – rather than his revealed message and promises. Hezekiah shows the inverse – those who trust in God will find his word to be true and his deliverance sure.

²¹⁰ Isaiah 7:17.

²¹¹ Sehoon Jang, "Is Hezekiah a Success or a Failure? The Literary Function of Isaiah's Prediction at the End of the Royal Narratives in the Book of Isaiah," *JSOT* 42:1 (2017): 130.

²¹² Isaiah 37:33-34.

It is clear that Isaiah does not have a high regard for the wisdom of man, and he says as much repeatedly. Consider Isa. 44:24-25: “I am the LORD, who made all things...who turns wise men back and makes their knowledge foolish.” This theme of God confounding the wisdom of men also appears in 29:14: “[A]nd the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden.” This distrust of human wisdom is seen in the way Isaiah refers to the advisors to Ahaz and Hezekiah. Oropeza notes that “the message presents the wise advisers of Jerusalem as bumbling drunkards who can only teach children extremely elementary points (28:5-11).”²¹³ Repeatedly, the guides of Israel are described as blind and deaf.²¹⁴

Yet all is not lost. If Robinson is correct that “[t]he motif of blindness and deafness is a metaphor for a spiritual condition...”, it stands to reason that the solution would be spiritual in nature.²¹⁵ And so the Septuagint rendering of Isaiah 61 declares:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me;
 he has sent me to preach glad tidings to the poor,
 to heal the broken in heart,
 to proclaim liberty to the captives,
 and recovery of sight to the blind. (Isaiah 61:1 LXX)

²¹³ Brisio J. Oropeza, “Echoes of Isaiah in the Rhetoric of Paul: New Exodus, Wisdom, and the Humility of the Criss in Utopian-Apocalyptic Expectations,” in *The Intertexture of Apocalyptic Discourse in the New Testament*, ed. Duane F. Watson (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 97-98.

²¹⁴ See Geoffrey D. Robinson, “The Motif of Deafness and Blindness in Isaiah 6:9-10: A Contextual, Literary, and Theological Analysis,” *BBR* 8:1 (1998): 177-179; and Oropeza, “Echoes of Isaiah in the Rhetoric of Paul,” 98.

²¹⁵ Robinson, “The Motif of Deafness and Blindness”, 174.

Oropeza sums it up well: “whereas the people are blind to true wisdom, the Spirit of God anoints the servant to give sight to the blind.”²¹⁶ When does this happen? It happens at “...the eschatological coming of the glorious kingdom of God...”²¹⁷

In summary, Isaiah stresses reliance on the wisdom of God over the so-called wisdom of man. Isaiah 5:21 sums up this position well: “Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!”

Daniel

The first chapter of Daniel introduces the reader to Daniel and his situation: a teenager from a noble household from the tribe of Judah, Daniel was chosen to be taken to Babylon and trained to serve in Nebuchadnezzar’s court.²¹⁸ After a three-year training education, Daniel would “stand before the king.”²¹⁹

Daniel’s piety and bravery immediately come to the fore, as the trainees are expected to eat the food and wine sent from the king’s table. It is not entirely clear what exactly about the food and wine formed the basis of Daniel’s aversion, except that the meat would certainly not have been prepared according to the Torah’s kosher laws.²²⁰ Whatever the reason, Daniel resolves not to partake of it, which puts him at odds with Nebuchadnezzar’s command.

²¹⁶ Oropeza, “Echoes of Isaiah in the Rhetoric of Paul,” 98.

²¹⁷ Gary Smith, “Spiritual Blindness, Deafness, And Fatness In Isaiah,” *BSac* 170 (2013):175.

²¹⁸ Miller estimates that Daniel and his companions would have been fourteen or fifteen at the time of their captivity. Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, NAC 18 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 60.

²¹⁹ Daniel 1:5.

²²⁰ Goldingay believes Daniel’s aversion to the king’s food stemmed in part from an attempt to avoid full assimilation, that “a line needed to be drawn somewhere....Food, in particular, is determinative of identity; it is part of being ‘embodied.’” John Goldingay, *Daniel*, WBC 30 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989), 25. But the use of “defile” in 1:8 seems too strong to describe a mere desire to preserve cultural identity. Rather, I think Miller is right to posit that the meat and wine from the king’s table

Two details of this story deserve special mention. First, Daniel and his companions were selected to be sent to Babylon in part because they were “skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning...”²²¹ During the training, as the four Hebrew youths subsisted on vegetables and water, “God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.”²²² And at the conclusion of the training period, “in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom.”²²³ It is clear that God has marked these four young men as exceptionally endowed with wisdom, and this wisdom is meant to be shared with the powerful, as the rest of the book demonstrates.

Second, God granted Daniel and his friends favor with both Ashpenaz, the chief eunuch, and with the steward assigned to the four.²²⁴ And ultimately, when they entered into Nebuchadnezzar’s service, they were found to be superior to his other servants - a testament to God’s gift of wisdom to the young men, to their considerable bravery in dealing with the officials, and to the favor they found from those officials during their training.

would have often been part of sacrifices to the Babylonian gods, and this formed the basis of Daniel’s resolve not to defile himself. Miller, *Daniel*, 66-67.

²²¹ Daniel 1:4.

²²² Daniel 1:17.

²²³ Daniel 1:20.

²²⁴ Daniel 1:9-16. It is true that Ashpenaz initially rebuffs Daniel’s original request, but it seems probable that he learned at some point of his steward’s arrangement with Daniel - he could have easily put a stop to the alternate diet when he learned of it, but did not do so. As for the steward, Baldwin surmises that he simply swapped his meager rations for Daniel’s richer fare. See Joyce Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC 23 (Downers Grove, InterVarsity, 1978), 92. But it seems unlikely that one steward’s rations would have been sufficient to feed four teenage boys!

In Daniel 3, Daniel's friends take center stage. Their refusal to give the king what is reserved for YHWH alone enrages the king, who orders Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego executed. This attempt fails in miraculous fashion, and results in the king issuing a decree forbidding anyone speaking against YHWH (3:29). By saving the lives of his servants, the worship which would have gone to Nebuchadnezzar goes to YHWH.

Daniel is called upon to interpret another of Nebuchadnezzar's dreams in chapter four. Even as he asks Daniel to interpret the dream, the king seems aware that the message portends ill for him. Daniel is thus placed in that most delicate of positions: giving bad news to someone who has the power to have you killed. Furthermore, it seems that Daniel had a genuine affection for Nebuchadnezzar.²²⁵

Sensing Daniel's dismay, the king tells Daniel "let not the dream or the interpretation alarm you."²²⁶ Thus Daniel gives Nebuchadnezzar the interpretation: The king will lose his reason and become like an animal "till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will" (Daniel 4:25). Yet there is mercy in this act of judgment: after seven years, both Nebuchadnezzar's reason and his realm will be returned to him "from the time that you know that Heaven rules."²²⁷ Nebuchadnezzar's offense is a lack of recognition of God's sovereignty even over the great king – that "he removes kings and sets up kings."²²⁸

²²⁵ Miller, *Daniel*, 136. Miller also notes that Daniel may have been concerned about how Nebuchadnezzar's foretold madness would impact the status of the Jewish people.

²²⁶ Daniel 4:19.

²²⁷ Daniel 4:25-26.

²²⁸ Daniel 2:21.

To this grim news Daniel offers wise counsel: practice righteousness and cease oppression, and perhaps God will spare you.²²⁹ Yet a year later, it is clear that Nebuchadnezzar did not repent, and thus the judgment falls – tellingly, immediately after the king boasts of what he has done by his own hand.²³⁰ And so it is fitting that his words at the end of his seven-year judgment are among the most glorifying of God’s sovereignty in all Scripture:

for his dominion is an everlasting dominion,
and his kingdom endures from generation to generation;
all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,
and he does according to his will among the host of heaven
and among the inhabitants of the earth;
and none can stay his hand
or say to him, “What have you done?” (Daniel 4:34b-35)

Chapter five shifts the focus to a later Babylonian king, Belshazzar.²³¹ It is difficult to miss the shift in tone; it seems obvious that the new king is seen as a poor substitute for the great Nebuchadnezzar. Whereas the end of chapter four has Nebuchadnezzar extolling the God of heaven, chapter five shows Belshazzar drunkenly defiling the vessels taken from that same God’s temple.²³² This tone can be further seen in Daniel’s insolent refusal to accept Belshazzar’s gifts.²³³ As Daniel has done for

²²⁹ Daniel 4:27.

²³⁰ Daniel 4:30.

²³¹ Daniel 5:1 presents two historical problems: It calls Nebuchadnezzar Belshazzar’s “father” as well as calling him “king”, where the historical record shows that Belshazzar’s father was Nabonidus, who was the true ruler of Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar’s successor. However, there is good evidence that Belshazzar acted as vice-regent in Babylon while Nabonidus was away fighting against the Medo-Persian forces (see Goldingay, *Daniel*, 107). Josephus notes that Nabonidus was in Borsippus, not Babylon, when the capital was taken, which would have meant that Belshazzar acted with the powers of kingship within the city (Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1.150-153). As to the title “father”, Miller notes that in Semitic languages like Aramaic, “‘Father’ may refer to one’s immediate father, grandfather, ancestor, or as in the case of kings, a predecessor” (Miller, *Daniel*, 149).

²³² Daniel 5:1-4.

²³³ Daniel 5:17.

Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel is called upon to interpret a supernatural message. But this time, there is no dream, but a visible hand that etched out a message in the wall plaster for all to see.²³⁴ But before Daniel delivers the meaning of the four inscribed words, he reminds Belshazzar how Nebuchadnezzar refused to give glory to God, was humbled for it, and eventually came to honor God.²³⁵ Daniel then rebukes the king for not following in his predecessor's footsteps:

And you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this, but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven....And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored. (Daniel 5:22-23)

Daniel then gives the interpretation of the writing: Belshazzar's kingdom is at an end and will fall to the Medes and Persians that very night – which is exactly what happened.²³⁶ This raises a question: why did Belshazzar not get the second chance that Nebuchadnezzar got? The text's answer to that question is that Belshazzar had full knowledge of what happened to Nebuchadnezzar but failed to learn the lessons therein.²³⁷ Ignoring wisdom is a perilous path.

Thematic Analysis

It is clear that Paul has Isaiah in mind as he is writing the first four chapters of 1 Corinthians, given the number of direct and indirect quotations and allusions present. Perhaps the most obvious is found in 1:19. The discourse marker γέγραπται γάρ makes

²³⁴ Or, more accurately, the outline of a message. The four words were more like bullet points in a memorandum, the details of which Daniel would be called on to provide.

²³⁵ Daniel 5:18-21.

²³⁶ Daniel 5:26-28, 30.

²³⁷ See Daniel 5:22: “you have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this.”

it clear that Paul is quoting the Jewish Scriptures, in this case Isaiah 29:14. It is interesting that Paul exactly quotes the Septuagint, except he swaps out κρύψω for the more emphatic ἀθετήσω. C.D. Stanley notes that ἀθετήσω pairs with ἀπολῶ to form a chiasm to drive home the point that the old, human wisdom has been made of no account.²³⁸ Given the lexical overlap and the use of a quotation formula, we can classify this literary connection with confidence as a Quotation.

1 Cor. 1:20 has two potential connections to Isaiah. “Where is the wise man?” seems to echo Isaiah 19:12: “Where then are your wise men? Let them tell you that they might know what the Lord of hosts has purposed against Egypt.” “Has God not made foolish (ἐμώρηνεν) the wisdom of the world?” echoes Isaiah 44:25: “who frustrates the signs of liars / and make fools of diviners / who turns wise men back / and make their knowledge foolish (μωρεύων).” These connections demonstrate significant correspondence according to Allison's markers, so I classify both of these as Probable Allusions.

A link between 1 Cor. 2:9 and Isaiah 64:4 “has much to commend it,” according to Beale and Carson.²³⁹

From of old no one has heard
or perceived by the ear,
no eye has seen a God besides you,
who acts for those who wait for him (Isa. 64:4)

But, as it is written,
“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man imagined,
what God has prepared for those who love him (1 Cor. 2:9)

²³⁸ C. D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature*, SNTSMS 69 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 186.

²³⁹ Beale and Carson, *Commentary*, 701.

Beale and Carson state, “Both texts assert that no human being is able to understand the divine revelation without God’s enabling. The fact that the references to the ear and eye in Isa. 64:4 are in the reverse order compared to 1 Cor. 2:9 does not rule out a link between the texts; such alterations were an accepted aspect of citation technique in antiquity.”²⁴⁰ While the linkage here is quite strong, the absence of a quotation formula and the reversal of elements of Isa 64:4 make this a Probable Allusion.

Another direct quotation is found in 1 Cor. 2:16: τίς γὰρ ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου, ὃς συμβιβάσει αὐτόν. Compare the LXX of Isa. 40:13: τίς ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου, καὶ τίς αὐτοῦ σύμβουλος ἐγένετο, ὃς συμβιβᾷ αὐτόν. Other than some contraction of the second half of the Isaiah quotation, it is obvious that this is a direct quotation by Paul of Isaiah 40. Thus, the classification is a Quotation.

Boasting is a key theme in 1 Corinthians 1-4. There are many references to boasting in the source materials in question – Nebuchadnezzar’s humiliation in Daniel 4 in one example, as are Isaiah’s invectives against boasting²⁴¹ – but there are not sufficient parallels between those passages and 1 Corinthians 1:29, 1:31, and 3:21, where boasting is mentioned in the target text. Thus, these must be classified as Possible Allusions.

To summarize, the following table shows the allusions and their classifications:

²⁴⁰ Beale and Carson, *Commentary*, 701.

²⁴¹ See Isa. 10:6, 16:6 and 20:5.

Table 3-1: Potential Allusions of Reversal Motifs

| <i>Source Text</i> | <i>Target Text</i> | <i>Classification</i> |
|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Isaiah 29:14 | 1 Cor. 1:19 | Quotation |
| Isaiah 19:12 | 1 Cor. 1:20a | Probable Allusion |
| Isaiah 44:25 | 1 Cor. 1:20c | Probable Allusion |
| Isaiah 64:4 | 1 Cor. 2:9 | Probable Allusion |
| Daniel 4 | 1 Cor. 1:29; 1:31; 3:2 | Possible Allusion |
| Isaiah 10:6,16:6; 20:5 | 1 Cor. 1:29; 1:31; 3:2 | Possible Allusion |
| Isaiah 40:13 | 1 Cor. 2:16 | Quotation |

Chapter 4: Wisdom and the Flourishing of God’s People

Paul begins his letter to the church at Corinth by reminding them of God’s grace toward them:

[T]hat in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge – even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you – so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 1:5-8, emphasis added)

It is obvious that Paul views Jesus as deeply invested in the flourishing of the church at Corinth. He has given them gifts of speech and knowledge – sufficient that he can say that they “are not lacking in any gift.” And he promises to sustain them to the end.

In our source texts, we see this theme repeated time and again. God repeatedly acts toward his chosen people to preserve them in history and to bless them with his presence. The motifs we will investigate (which we shall call *covenant motifs*) are:

- Wisdom and the preservation of God’s people
- Wisdom and Temple-building

Hebrew Bible Wisdom Narratives

Joseph

The story of Joseph is found in Genesis 37-50. However, strictly speaking, those chapters do not tell the story of Joseph but of “the generations of Jacob (Gen. 37:2).” As Wenham notes, the author of Genesis “is interested in all the sons of

Jacob, not simply Joseph.”²⁴² Even so, these chapters spend more time with Joseph than with any other figure, and the fortunes of Jacob’s sons are largely tied to the fortunes (and misfortunes) of Joseph.

Joseph’s story is full of seeming coincidences that put him in the right place at the right time to advance the story. He just happens to be given free rein in the prison where Pharaoh’s cupbearer and baker are incarcerated. The cupbearer forgets about Joseph until he is needed to bring wisdom to Pharaoh. Of course, the narrator makes it clear that these are not coincidences at all, but God’s hand guiding events to put Joseph in a position to be able to save the Egyptians – and his own family.

It is one thing to come up with a great plan, but quite another to execute that plan well. Yet as Genesis 41:46-49 attests, Joseph was an adept administrator. Under his leadership, the storehouses of Egypt were filled during the seven years of plenty, such that there was grain to sell not only to the Egyptians, but to “all the earth.”²⁴³ Joseph’s famine management plan not only saved the people of Egypt (and his own family!), but it enriched Pharaoh as well. We see his shrewdness later in the story, where Joseph procures most of the livestock and land of the starving people of Egypt for the crown, essentially making the populace of Egypt into serfs.²⁴⁴ Joseph’s transfer of the land from the needy people to Pharaoh, while mollifying the priesthood by leaving their land untouched, showed considerable shrewdness, and also shows Joseph’s dedication to seek the welfare of his foreign master.²⁴⁵

²⁴² Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 345.

²⁴³ Gen. 41:57.

²⁴⁴ Gen. 47:13-22.

²⁴⁵ Fox, “Wisdom in the Joseph Story,” 35.

Wildavsky denounces this later move by Joseph as morally repugnant: “That the people asked to be serfs does not excuse Joseph for giving in to them, since he (and the Pharaoh whom he served) had means to make it otherwise.”²⁴⁶ Yet the text itself does not cast any aspersions on Joseph’s actions, as Mathews notes: “The passage portrays Joseph as a compliant partner in assisting the destitute, not an oppressive schemer.”²⁴⁷ The grateful response of the people (Gen. 47:25) affirms this: “You [Joseph] have saved our lives; may it please my lord, we will be servants to Pharaoh.”²⁴⁸

Furthermore, Joseph’s success in enriching Pharaoh surely made Pharaoh more favorably disposed to Joseph’s family, as Genesis 45:17-20 illustrates:

And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Say to your brothers, ‘Do this: load your beasts and go back to the land of Canaan, and take your father and your households, and come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you shall eat the fat of the land.’ And you, Joseph, are commanded to say, ‘Do this: take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. Have no concern for your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.’”

It is thus no surprise that the Spirit-guided Joseph is able to bring about the salvation of not only Egypt, but his own family. After the death of Jacob, Joseph’s brothers fear that he might at last retaliate against them for their past treachery.²⁴⁹

Joseph’s response is significant:

But Joseph said to them, “Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that

²⁴⁶ Aaron Wildavsky, “What is Permissible So That This People May Survive? Joseph as Administrator”, *Political Science & Politics* 22:4 (1989): 785-786.

²⁴⁷ Mathews, *Genesis 11:27-50:26*, 859.

²⁴⁸ Wenham notes: “Memories of the African slave trade color our view of slavery, so that we cannot understand this expression of gratitude. But in ancient society slavery was the accepted way of bailing out the destitute....” Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 449.

²⁴⁹ Gen. 50:15.

many people should be kept alive, as they are today. So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones.” Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them. (Gen. 50:19-21)

It is impossible to miss the appeal to God’s foreordination in this passage.

Joseph realizes that everything that has happened to his point, including the evil deeds of his brothers that sent Joseph to Egypt in the first place, was part of God’s plan to preserve the family of Jacob.²⁵⁰ The wisdom - both revelatory and practical - that Joseph displays throughout the narrative was itself a Spirit-delivered means to that end.

Solomon

It is notable that while in 1 Kings’s portrayal of Solomon’s gift of wisdom, the gift is portrayed as wisdom in administration and judicial matters.²⁵¹ But in 2 Chronicles, YHWH’s gift of wisdom is immediately followed by Solomon’s preparations to build the Temple – and seems to be given to that end.²⁵²

Dillard suggests that Solomon and Hiram-abi are cast by the Chronicler in the roles of Bezalel and Oholiab from the Exodus account of the construction of the Tabernacle.²⁵³ This seems plausible, especially since Bezalel is mentioned in the First Chronicles account:

Moreover, the bronze altar that Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, had made, was there before the tabernacle of the LORD. And Solomon and the assembly sought it out. ⁶ And Solomon went up there to the bronze altar before the LORD,

²⁵⁰ So von Rad: “Joseph’s meaning here is that, in the remarkable conduct of the whole story, God himself has already spoken. He has included the guilt, the brothers’ evil, in his saving activity; he has preserved for them the ‘great remnant’ (45:7) and has thus justified them.” Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 432.

²⁵¹ See 1 Kings 4.

²⁵² Dillard, “The Chronicler’s Solomon,” 296.

²⁵³ Dillard, “The Chronicler’s Solomon,” 296.

which was at the tent of meeting, and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it. (2 Chr. 1:5-6)

Thompson agrees with this assessment: “The mention of Bezalel in the present context enabled the Chronicler to associate Solomon’s gift of wisdom for building the temple with the earlier model of the man who was associated with the construction of the tabernacle.”²⁵⁴

The parallels between Solomon and Bezalel are reinforced by the Chronicler’s habit of describing Solomon as the actual craftsman doing the work. One example:

So Solomon made all the vessels that were in the house of God: the golden altar, tables for the bread of the Presence, the lampstands and their lamps of pure gold to burn before the inner sanctuary, as prescribed; the flowers, the lamps, and the tongs, of purest gold; the snuffers, basins, dishes for incense, and fire pans, of pure gold, and the sockets of the temple, for the inner doors to the Most Holy Place and for the doors of the nave of the temple were of gold. Thus **all the work that Solomon did** for the house of the LORD was finished. (2 Chr. 4:19-5:1, emphasis added)

In the first century CE, Solomon’s place in Israel’s history was due more to his role in the construction of the Temple than to his wisdom. Kreitzer notes that Stephen’s death speech in Acts 7:47 gives Solomon’s Temple building a prominent role: “Here Stephen uses the construction of the Temple as the culminating event in his potted summary of the history of Israel, commencing with Abraham and running down through the rule of Kings David and Solomon.”²⁵⁵

Even after Solomon’s temple was destroyed and rebuilt in Ezra’s day (and greatly enlarged by Herod), the temple still maintained a popular association with

²⁵⁴ John A. Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, NAC 9 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 203.

²⁵⁵ Larry Kreitzer, “The Messianic Man of Peace as Temple Builder: Solomonic Imagery in Ephesians 2.13-22,” in *Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel*, ed. John Day, LHBOTS 422 (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 484-485.

Solomon: “The fact that the portico of the east side of the Court of the Gentiles in Herod’s Temple was commonly called ‘Solomon’s steps’ preserves his association with the construction of the Temple.”²⁵⁶

Isaiah

We see an example of God’s deliverance of his people in the showdown between Hezekiah and the Rabshakeh²⁵⁷, the personal representative and messenger of Sennacherib, king of Assyria.

And the Rabshakeh said to them, “Say to Hezekiah, ‘Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: On what do you rest this trust of yours? Do you think that mere words are strategy and power for war? In whom do you now trust, that you have rebelled against me? Behold, you are trusting in Egypt, that broken reed of a staff, which will pierce the hand of any man who leans on it. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him. But if you say to me, “We trust in the Lord our God,” is it not he whose high places and altars Hezekiah has removed, saying to Judah and to Jerusalem, “You shall worship before this altar”? Come now, make a wager with my master the king of Assyria: I will give you two thousand horses, if you are able on your part to set riders on them. How then can you repulse a single captain among the least of my master’s servants, when you trust in Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? Moreover, is it without the Lord that I have come up against this land to destroy it? The Lord said to me, “Go up against this land and destroy it.”’” (Isa.36:4-10)

The Rabshakeh’s message itself is interesting in several ways. First, he attempts a number of tactics: open mockery of the might of the Judean army; claiming to represent YHWH; promising a better life under Assyrian rule; and finally belittling the might of YHWH.²⁵⁸ Second, by speaking in Hebrew, the Rabshakeh

²⁵⁶ Kreitzer, “The Messianic Man of Peace as Temple Builder,” 484.

²⁵⁷ *Rabshakeh* is an Akkadian title that probably means “cupbearer”, probably signifying a chief advisor to the King (cf. Nehemiah’s role in Neh. 1:11). See John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1-39*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 632.

²⁵⁸ Isaiah 36:4-20.

adroitly seeks to turn the populace of Jerusalem against Hezekiah.²⁵⁹ Finally, by comparing YHWH to the gods of other conquered peoples, he provides the basis for Hezekiah's plea to God: "It may be that the LORD your God will hear the words of the Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to mock the living God, and will rebuke the words that the LORD your God has heard...."²⁶⁰

The text does not explicitly say what response Hezekiah gave to Sennacherib's man. We do know that the Rabshakeh returned to his master, who was engaged in battle to the north. We may surmise that Hezekiah rebuffed Sennacherib's offer based on the Assyrian's king's message in Isaiah 7:10-13.²⁶¹

Hezekiah's response to the second message is akin to his prior response: He goes to the house of the Lord and prays. And as before, the theme of his prayer is asking the Lord to act to defend the dignity of His reputation:²⁶²

"Truly, O Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their lands, and have cast their gods into the fire. For they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. Therefore they were destroyed. So now, O Lord our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone are the Lord."²⁶³

²⁵⁹ Isaiah 36:11-20.

²⁶⁰ Isaiah 37:4.

²⁶¹ Motyer sees in this reaction a more faith-driven Hezekiah: "In 36:14 Hezekiah was branded as a would-be deceiver of his people, using faith as a pawn in political survival; now there is no reference to deception on Hezekiah's part. It is the Lord who will let them down! Hezekiah has come to a straight-forward, personal and unequivocal faith." Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 280.

²⁶² Watts disagrees: "The heart of the plea, *deliver us*, lays bare Hezekiah's personal concern. It was not finally the protection of Yahweh's honor that motivated his plea, but the threat to his people and his kingdom." Yet I think the two motivations can (and do) easily coexist here, especially given the Lord's response in 37:35: "For I will defend the city to save it, *for my own sake* and for the sake of my servant David." Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 36.

²⁶³ Isaiah 37:18-20.

The Lord's response (via Isaiah) promises deliverance from the Assyrian threat, and those promises become swift reality: God kills 185,000 Assyrian soldiers and Sennacherib retires to Nineveh, where he is murdered by two of his sons.²⁶⁴ Assyria is utterly neutralized as a threat to Judah.²⁶⁵

A prominent theme in Isaiah is the idea of the remnant, but surprisingly Isaiah uses this concept to denote judgment as well as preservation. King observes, "the remnant motif in Isaiah embodies two distinct literary functions in the book, both as a *threat* in contexts of judgment, as well as a *guarantee of hope* in contexts of salvation."²⁶⁶ The threat of judgment is used against Israel's foes, who will be utterly destroyed, as in Isaiah 14:22: "I will rise up against them," declares the LORD of hosts, "and will cut off from Babylon name and remnant, descendants and posterity," declares the LORD." We see this again in Isaiah 14:29-30:

Rejoice not, O Philistia, all of you,
that the rod that struck you is broken,
for from the serpent's root will come forth an adder,
and its fruit will be a flying fiery serpent.
the firstborn of the poor will graze,
and the needy lie down in safety;
but I will kill your root with famine,
and your remnant it will slay.

By contrast, God promises to preserve a remnant to Israel:

In that day the remnant of Israel and the survivors of the house of Jacob will no more lean on him who struck them, but will lean on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God. For though your people Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of

²⁶⁴ Isaiah 37:36-38.

²⁶⁵ Watts states: "[Sennacherib] lived some twenty years but no further campaigns in Palestine are reported." Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 47.

²⁶⁶ Andrew M. King, "A Remnant Will Return: An Analysis of the Literary Function of the Remnant Motif in Isaiah," *JESOT* 4.2 (2015), 146 (emphasis in original).

them will return. Destruction is decreed, overflowing with righteousness. For the Lord GOD of hosts will make a full end, as decreed, in the midst of all the earth. (Isa. 10:20-23)

King notes that the promise of a remnant is mixed with judgment: “What is emphasized by the motif in these texts is not a future community that is plentiful and holy but rather a meager population left in the wake of YHWH’s justice.”²⁶⁷

A more positive outlook for the remnant is given in response to Hezekiah’s prayer for deliverance from the siege of the Assyrians:

And this shall be the sign for you: this year you shall eat what grows of itself, and in the second year what springs from that. Then in the third year sow and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat their fruit. And the surviving remnant of the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. (Isa. 37:30-32)

Unlike his judgment on the nations, God preserves a remnant out of his covenant people.

Daniel

The narratives in Daniel 1-6 are interesting in that while Daniel and his companions face peril, it is a personal peril. Israel is not saved from the fiery furnace or the lions’ den. We see no sign in these narratives that the protagonists are advocating for the people of God; indeed, the people of God are almost an afterthought. Perhaps God’s care for Daniel and his friends is meant to serve as representative of his care for the nation in exile.

Indeed, we see indications in the later chapters of Daniel that he has not forgotten his people and their plight. In Daniel 9, which takes place in the first year of the reign of Darius the Mede, Daniel recounts: “I, Daniel, perceived in the books

²⁶⁷ King, “A Remnant Will Return,” 155.

the number of years that, according to the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years” (Dan. 1:2). This realization, coupled with the promised judgment on Babylon less than a year passed, spurs Daniel to prayer.

“[T]he point of Daniel’s prayer is that the Jews might return to their land and continue as a nation,” asserts Stephen Miller.²⁶⁸ This is borne out by the references to the covenant in verse 4 and “your sanctuary, which is desolate” in verse 17. Daniel appeals to YHWH’s reputation: “Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name” (Daniel 9:19).

YHWH’s response is to send the angel Gabriel with an answer to his pleas. It is relevant to note that among the things promised to occur during the seventy “weeks” is the anointing of “a most holy place”, indicating that the Temple would be restored to its proper function. A common view is that this prophecy was fulfilled by the rededication of the Temple under Judas Maccabeus in 164 BCE.²⁶⁹

Thematic Analysis

In 1 Corinthians 3:10-17, Paul uses the analogy of a building to describe the church. Beale notes, “That Paul compares God’s people to a temple in verses 10-15 is apparent from the specific description of the structure.”²⁷⁰ Consider 1 Chronicles 29:2 in the LXX and 1 Cor 3:12:

²⁶⁸ Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, 244.

²⁶⁹ Collins, *Daniel*, 354.

²⁷⁰ G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 246.

Table 4-1: Comparison of 1 Chronicles 29:2 and 1 Corinthians 3:12

| 1 Chronicles 29:2 | 1 Corinthians 3:12 |
|---|--|
| κατὰ πᾶσαν τὴν δύναμιν ἠτοίμακα εἰς οἶκον θεοῦ μου χρυσίον, ἄργύριον, χαλκόν, σίδηρον, ξύλα, λίθους σοομ καὶ πληρώσεως καὶ λίθους πολυτελεῖς καὶ ποικίλους καὶ πάντα λίθον τίμιον καὶ πάριον πολύν. | εἰ δέ τις ἐποικοδομεῖ ἐπὶ τὸν θεμέλιον χρυσόν, ἄργυρον, λίθους τιμίους, ξύλα, χόρτον, καλάμην, |

Notice the repetition of χρυσόν (gold), ἄργυρον (silver), λίθους τιμίους (precious stones), and ξύλα (wood). Paul is clearly evoking the language of temple building in this verse. Beale notes that “the only other place in Scripture where a ‘foundation’ of a building is laid and ‘gold’, ‘silver’, and ‘precious stones’ are ‘built’ upon the foundation is Solomon’s temple.”²⁷¹ This must be classified as a Probable Allusion.

Another allusion that Paul makes is via the use of σοφὸς ἀρχιτέκτων (wise master builder) in 1 Cor. 3:10. This label ἀρχιτέκτων is applied to Bezalel in Exodus 35:32 and in Exodus 31:4 in connection with the building of the Tabernacle. We have already examined the link between Bezalel and Solomon. Though the term ἀρχιτέκτων is not applied to Solomon, the role certainly is. Bezalel is gifted with wisdom to accomplish his task (Exodus 35:31 LXX), as was Solomon. While there is a Probable Allusion with the Exodus passage, is there one with the Solomon narratives, particularly 1 Chronicles?

There are two of Allison’s six markers present here: Similar circumstances, and key words and phrases. Both texts are in a temple-building context (although a

²⁷¹ Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 247.

metaphorical one for Paul). And the adjacent metaphor between 1 Chronicles 29:2 and 1 Corinthians 3:12 detailed above indicates that Paul already had Solomon in mind when writing this passage. Thus, I regard this as a Probable Allusion.

The following table shows the allusions and their classifications:

Table 4-2: Potential Allusions of Covenant Motifs

| <i>Source Text</i> | <i>Target Text</i> | <i>Classification</i> |
|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Chr. 29:2 | 1 Cor. 3:12 | Probable Allusion |
| 2 Chr. 4:19-5:1 | 1 Cor. 3:10 | Probable Allusion |

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In the preceding chapters, we have identified and classified multiple allusions between the source text in view—the wisdom narratives surrounding the Biblical figures Joseph, Solomon, Isaiah, and Daniel—and the target text of 1 Corinthians 1-4. The following table lists the findings of chapters 2-4, employing the methodology described in the Introduction.

Table 5-1: Potential Allusions in 1 Corinthians 1-4

| <i>Source Text</i> | <i>Target Text</i> | <i>Classification</i> |
|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Daniel 2:19-22 | 1 Cor. 2:6-13 | Probable Allusion |
| Isaiah 29:14 | 1 Cor. 1:19 | Quotation |
| Isaiah 19:12 | 1 Cor. 1:20a | Probable Allusion |
| Isaiah 44:25 | 1 Cor. 1:20c | Probable Allusion |
| Isaiah 64:4 | 1 Cor. 2:9 | Probable Allusion |
| Daniel 4 | 1 Cor. 1:29; 1:31; 3:2 | Possible Allusion |
| Isaiah 10:6,16:6; 20:5 | 1 Cor. 1:29; 1:31; 3:2 | Possible Allusion |
| Isaiah 40:13 | 1 Cor. 2:16 | Quotation |
| 1 Chr. 29:2 | 1 Cor. 3:12 | Probable Allusion |
| 2 Chr. 4:19-5:1 | 1 Cor. 3:10 | Probable Allusion |

Analyzing the Evidence

With this data in hand, we are able to answer the question that is the focus of this study: Did Paul deliberately have these Hebrew Bible wisdom narratives in view in 1 Corinthians 1-4?

There were no identified allusions between 1 Corinthians 1-4 and the Joseph story. But given the well-established ties between Daniel 2 and Genesis 41²⁷², does an allusion to Daniel 2 do double-duty and point to Genesis as well? Paul would have certainly been aware of the similarities between the Daniel and Joseph stories. Nonetheless, in the absence of allusions between 1 Corinthians and the Joseph narrative, I do not think that Paul explicitly drew from that narrative.

Paul's description of the church as the Temple of God (with himself as wise master builder) in 1 Corinthians 3 evokes the Solomonic narratives in Chronicles. It is interesting that Paul does not reference any of the wisdom literature (Proverbs and Ecclesiastes) attributed to Solomon in a section of his epistle devoted to wisdom. Perhaps like the Chronicler, Paul values Solomon's wisdom as a temple-builder than for its own sake.²⁷³ It may be that Solomon's wisdom and folly are alluded to metaleptically here. But what is clear is that the Solomonic narratives are a source material for Paul in 1 Corinthians 3.

The number of direct quotations and indirect allusions to Isaiah in 1 Corinthians 1-4 make it obvious that Paul is using Isaiah as a source of his thinking. Specifically, Isaiah's denigration of human wisdom is taken by Paul as a cornerstone of his assertion that the word of the cross is not folly, but true wisdom: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart" (1 Cor. 1:19).

²⁷² See Rindge, "Jewish Identity under Foreign Rule: Daniel 2 as a Reconfiguration of Genesis 41," 85; Collins, *Daniel*, 39-40.

²⁷³ For the Chronicler's use of wisdom, see Dillard, "The Chronicler's Solomon," 296.

Paul’s assertion in 1 Cor 2:7 that he is imparting “a secret and hidden wisdom of God” echoes back to Daniel 2:22: “he reveals deep and hidden things.” While not as strong of a link as Isaiah, the characterization of wisdom as the unveiling of mysteries seems to link Daniel and 1 Corinthians.

Therefore, I conclude that while there is insufficient evidence to posit a link between the Joseph narratives and the target text, there is enough evidence to show the influence of the Solomon, Isaiah, and Daniel narratives on Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians 1-4.

Out-Narrating the Stoics: Paul’s Reason for Employing Wisdom Narratives

Paul has a monumental task in 1 Corinthians: to convince the church that the message of the cross is “the power of God.” The power on display in crucifixion is the imposition of the will of the state to inflict suffering—to call the cross the power of God exercised for their good was unthinkable outside of the story of the Gospel.

Glen Scrivener writes:

To us, the cross has become a sacred symbol and, as such, embodies the very opposite of its ancient meaning. Even if we’re not religious ourselves, we might understand the cross to be a symbol of redemption, salvation, God’s presence even among the lowly, and God’s peace even amid our pain. In the ancient world it meant the reverse. It symbolized degradation, worthlessness, unremitting torture and unredeemed love....Those crucified were garbage.²⁷⁴

It is no wonder that the Corinthian believers were tempted by the Stoic teachers in their midst. “You can be rich! You can be kings! You can be strong and wise!” It appears from description in chapter 1 of the schisms in Corinth that the

²⁷⁴ Glen Scrivener, *The Air We Breathe: How We All Came to Believe in Freedom, Kindness, Progress, and Equality* (Charlotte, NC: The Good Book Company, 2022), 26.

church had undergone a form of “liturgical capture,” where the church’s culture has been influenced by the surrounding culture rather than the reverse.²⁷⁵ The individualistic message was dividing the congregation, and Paul wanted them to see themselves as a unit. Hence the field and Temple analogies in chapter 3.

By evoking the wisdom narratives of the past, Paul is situating the Corinthians believers as part of a bigger story, one bigger than the individualism of Stoicism. This strategy has been called “out-narrating” by John Milbank.²⁷⁶ Christopher Watkin elaborates:

Out-narrating is not about telling the better story in the sense being the most gripping or necessarily satisfying: it is about telling the bigger story, the story within which all stories find their place, like Augustine’s *City of God* that “attempts to situate all of human history within a Christian reading of the Bible” and “includes...and explains” the earthly city.²⁷⁷

Paul is doing what Augustine did 400 years later in *The City of God* - reframe the ideas of the day within a larger narrative that makes sense of it. We can see this in 1 Cor. 1:28-31:

God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

²⁷⁵ James K. A. Smith, *Awaiting the King: Reforming Public Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 179.

²⁷⁶ John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 330.

²⁷⁷ Christopher Watkin, *Biblical Critical Theory: How the Bible’s Unfolding Story Makes Sense of Modern Life and Culture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2022), 22. The quotations are from, respectively, James Wetzel, *Augustine’s City of God: A Critical Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 5; and Etienne Gilson, *The Metamorphoses of the City of God* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2020), 31.

Paul's message to the church is not that the wisdom of the world is unattractive. Rather, it pales in comparison to Christ, with whom they are united. He is their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. That is the larger narrative in which they need to see themselves.

Paul wanted the Corinthian believers to hear the language of temple-building and think of Solomon and how he skillfully built a house for God to dwell in, and now they are being built together into a Temple to house God's Spirit. He wanted them to hear they have received a secret and hidden wisdom of God and remember Daniel, who in exile spoke boldly before kings in the name of the "God of heaven who reveals mysteries" (Daniel 2:28). And when tempted by what the world calls wisdom, he wanted them to remember Isaiah, who reminded Israel that the "Lord of Hosts ...is wonderful in counsel and excellent in wisdom" (Isa. 28:29).

A quote attributed to St. Columba of Iona reads: "Since all the world is but a story, it were well for thee to buy the more enduring story, rather than the story that is less enduring."²⁷⁸ This is what Paul is counseling the Corinthians to do. Stoic promises of self-actualization, of becoming "kings" and "rich," cannot compare with the promises of union with Christ, with the communion of the saints, with the presence and wisdom given by the Spirit. Paul's counsel was for them to "buy" the word of the cross, despite the seeming folly. It is enduring wisdom. It is the better story.

²⁷⁸ St. Columba (Colum Cille), *The Judgement of Saint Colum Cille*, quoted in Robin Gwyndaf, "A Welsh Lake Legend and the Famous Physicians of Myddfai," *Béaloides* 60/61 (1992): 245.

Bibliography

- Abrams, M.H. "Rationality and Imagination in Cultural History: A Reply To Wayne Booth." *Critical Inquiry* 2 (1976), 447-464.
- Allison Jr., Dale C. *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993.
- Arnim, Hans von. *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*. 4 vols. Leipzig: Teubner, 1903.
- Baldwin, Joyce G. *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*. TOTC 23. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1978.
- Baur, Ferdinand Christian. "The Two Epistles to the Corinthians." Pages 51-59 in *Christianity at Corinth: The Quest for the Pauline Church*, edited by Edward Adams and David Horrell. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004.
- Beale, G. K. *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012.
- Beale, G. K., *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*. NSBT 17. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004.
- Beale, G. K. and Carson, D.A., eds. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007.
- Briones, David E. Review of *Paul and Patronage: The Dynamics of Power in 1 Corinthians*, by Joshua Rice. *JETS* 57, no. 4 (2014): 830-832.
- Brookins, Timothy A. *Corinthian Wisdom, Stoic Philosophy, and the Ancient Economy*. SNTSMS 159. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Brookins, Timothy A. "The Wise Corinthians: Their Stoic Education and Outlook." *JTS* 62:1 (2011): 51-76.

Bultmann, Rudolf. *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe*. Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984.

Chow, John K. *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth*. Edinburgh: Black, 1992.

Cicero. *De finibus*. Translated by H. Rackham. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914.

Collins, John Joseph. *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993.

Conzelmann, Hans. *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Hermeneia, Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1975.

Danker, Frederick W. *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field*. Saint Louis: Clayton, 1982.

Das, Andrew A. *Paul and the Stories of Israel: Grand Thematic Narratives in Galatians*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 2016.

Deming, Will. "The Unity of 1 Corinthians 5-6." *JBL* 115, no. 2 (1996): 289-312.

Dillard, Raymond B. "The Chronicler's Solomon," *WTJ* 43:2 (Spring 1981): 289-300.

Docherty, Susan. "New Testament Scriptural Interpretation in its Early Jewish Context", *Novum Testamentum* 57, 1 (2015): 1-19.

Duguid, Iain M. *Daniel*. Reformed Expository Commentary. Phillipsburg, N.J: P&R Publishing, 2008.

Dunn, James D. G. *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.

- Engberg-Pedersen, Troels. *Paul and the Stoics*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000.
- Fee, Gordon D. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Revised Edition. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014.
- Fiorenza, Elisabeth Schüssler. "Rhetorical Situation and Historical Reconstruction in 1 Corinthians." Pages 145-160 in *Christianity at Corinth: The Quest for the Pauline Church*, edited by Edward Adams and David G. Horrell. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004.
- Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AYBRL 32. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Fox, Michael V. "Wisdom in the Joseph Story." *VT* 51:1 (2001): 26-41.
- Garcilazo, Albert V. *The Corinthian Dissenters and the Stoics*. SBL 106. New York: Lang, 2007.
- Garland, David E. *First Corinthians*. BECNT. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003.
- Gilson, Etienne, *The Metamorphoses of the City of God*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2020.
- Gladd, Benjamin L. *Revealing the Mysterion: The Use of Mystery in Daniel and Second Temple Judaism with Its Bearing on First Corinthians*. BZNTW 160. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009.
- Green, Yosef. "The Reign of King Solomon: Diplomatic and Economic Perspectives." *JBQ* 42:3 (2014): 151-158.

- Goulder, Michael D. "Σοφία in 1 Corinthians." Pages 173-181 in *Christianity at Corinth: The Quest for the Pauline Church*, edited by Edward Adams and David G. Horrell. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004.
- Goldingay, John E. *Daniel*: WBC 30. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989.
- Grossman, Jonathan. "Different Dreams: Two Models of Interpretation for Three Pairs of Dreams (Genesis 37-50)." *JBL* 135:4 (2016), 717-732.
- Gwyndaf, Robin. "A Welsh Lake Legend and the Famous Physicians of Myddfai." *Béaloideas* 60/61 (1992): 241-66.
- Hamilton, Victor P. *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 18-50*. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.
- Hays, J. Daniel. "Has the Narrator Come to Praise Solomon or to Bury Him? Narrative Subtlety in 1 Kings 1-11." *JOTS* 28:2 (2003): 149-174.
- Hays, Richard B. *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.
- Hays, Richard B. *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.
- Hays, Richard B. *First Corinthians*. IBC. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011.
- Horsley, Richard A. "Gnosis in Corinth: I Corinthians 8. 1-6." *NTS* 27, no. 1 (1980): 32-51. doi:10.1017/S0028688500010249.
- House, Paul R. *1,2 Kings*. NAC 8. Nashville: Broadman, 1995.
- Inkelaar, Harm-Jan. *Conflict Over Wisdom: The Theme of 1 Corinthians 1-4 Rooted in Scripture*. Leuven: Peeters, 2011.

- Jang, Sehoon. "Is Hezekiah a Success or a Failure? The Literary Function of Isaiah's Prediction at the End of the Royal Narratives in the Book of Isaiah." *JSOT* 42:1 (2017): 117-135.
- Jewett, Robert. *Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of Their Use in Conflict Settings*. Leiden: Brill, 1971.
- Jeon, Yong Ho. "The Retroactive Re-Evaluation Technique with Pharaoh's Daughter And The Nature Of Solomon's Corruption In 1 Kings 1-121." *TynBul* 62:1 (2011): 15-40.
- Kee, Howard C. "The Linguistic Background of "Shame" in the New Testament." Pages 133-148 in *On Language, Culture and Religion: In honor of Eugene A. Nida*. Edited by Matthew Black and William Allen Smalley, Berlin: De Gruyter, 1974.
- King, Andrew M. "A Remnant Will Return: An Analysis of the Literary Function of the Remnant Motif in Isaiah." *JESOT* 4.2 (2015): 144-169.
- Kreitzer, Larry. "The Messianic Man of Peace as Temple Builder: Solomonic Imagery in Ephesians 2.13-22" Pages 484-511 in *Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel*. Edited by John Day, LHBOTS 422. London: T&T Clark, 2005.
- Lake, D.M. "Baur, Ferdinand Christian." Pages 67-68 in *Who's Who in Christian History*, edited by J.D. Douglas and Philip W. Comfort. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 1992.
- Lee, Michelle V. *Paul, the Stoics, and the Body of Christ*. SNTSMS 137. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Mathews, Kenneth A. *Genesis 11:27-50:26*. NAC 1B. Nashville: Broadman, 2005.

- Martin, Dale. *The Corinthian Body*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.
- Mihăilă, Corin. "The Gnostic and Hellenistic Backgrounds of Sophia in 1 Corinthians 1-4." *Perichoresis* 17, no. s2 (2019): 3-14.
- Milbank, John. *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1990.
- Miller, Stephen R. *Daniel*. NAC 18. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994.
- Miner, Earl. "Allusion." Pages 38-39 in *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. A. Preminger and T. Brogan, eds. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Mitchell, Margaret M. *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians*. 1st American ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993.
- Moffatt, James. *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*. Moffatt New Testament Commentary. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938.
- Motyer, J. Alec. *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998.
- Motyer, J. Alec. *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary*. TOTC 20. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999.
- Munck, Johannes. "The Church without Factions." Pages 61-70 in *Christianity at Corinth: The Quest for the Pauline Church*, edited by Edward Adams and David G. Horrell. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004.

- Newing, Edward G. "Rhetorical Art of the Deuteronomist: Lampooning Solomon in First Kings." *OTE* 7:2 (1994): 247-60.
- Newman, Carey C. *Paul's Glory-Christology: Tradition and Rhetoric*. Library of Early Christology Series. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2017.
- Olley, John W. "'Trust in the Lord': Hezekiah, Kings and Isaiah." *TynBul* 50:1 (1999): 59-77.
- Oropeza, Brisio J. "Echoes of Isaiah in the Rhetoric of Paul: New Exodus, Wisdom, and the Humility of the Cross in Utopian-Apocalyptic Expectations." Pages 87-112 in *The Intertexture of Apocalyptic Discourse in the New Testament*. ed. Duane F. Watson (Leiden, Brill, 2002).
- Oswalt, John N. *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1-39*. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986.
- Paige, Terence. "Stoicism, ἐλευθερία and Community at Corinth." Pages 207-218 in *Christianity at Corinth: The Quest for the Pauline Church*, edited by Edward Adams and David G. Horrell. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004.
- Plutarch. *De tranquillitate animi*. Translated by W. C. Helmbold. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939.
- Plutarch. *Stoicos absurdiora poetis dicere*. Translated by Harold Cherniss. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976.
- Porten, Bezalel. "The Structure and Theme of the Solomon Narrative (I Kings 3-11)", *HUCA* 38 (1967): 93-128.
- Porter, Stanley E. *Sacred Tradition in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016). Kindle edition.

- Rice, Joshua. *Paul and Patronage: The Dynamics of Power in 1 Corinthians*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2013.
- Rindge, Matthew S. "Jewish Identity under Foreign Rule: Daniel 2 as a Reconfiguration of Genesis 41." *JBL* 129: 1 (2010): 85-104.
- Roberts, Alastair J. and Wilson, Andrew. *Echoes of Exodus: Tracing Themes of Redemption Through Scripture*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018.
- Robinson, Geoffrey D. "The Motif of Deafness and Blindness in Isaiah 6:9-10: A Contextual, Literary, and Theological Analysis." *BBR* 8:1 (1998): 167-186.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*. TNTC 7. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018.
- Schmithals, Walter. *Die Gnosis in Korinth*. Göttingen: Vandenhoech & Ruprecht, 1956.
- Scrivener, Glen. *The Air We Breathe: How We All Came to Believe in Freedom, Kindness, Progress, and Equality*. Charlotte, NC: The Good Book Company, 2022.
- Septuaginta: With Morphology*. Electronic ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979.
- Smith, Gary. "Spiritual Blindness, Deafness, And Fatness in Isaiah." *BSac* 170:678 (2013): 167-178.
- Smith, James K. A. *Awaiting the King: Reforming Public Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017.
- Smith, Zachary G. "Gnosticism." In *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, edited by John D. Barry, David Bomar, Derek R. Brown, Rachel Klippenstein, Douglas Mangum,

- Carrie Sinclair Wolcott, Lazarus Wentz, Elliot Ritzema, and Wendy Widder. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016.
- Spence-Jones, H. D. M., ed., *Isaiah*. The Pulpit Commentary 2. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1910.
- Stanley, C. D. *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature*. SNTSMS 69. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Stendahl, Krister. "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West." *HTR* 56, no. 3 (1963): 199-215.
- Stott, John. *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982.
- Sweeney, Marvin A. "The Critique of Solomon in the Josianic Edition of the Deuteronomistic History." *JBL* 114:4 (1995): 607-22.
- Thompson, J. A. *1, 2 Chronicles*. NAC 9. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994.
- Thiselton, Anthony C. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.
- Von Rad, Gerhard. *Genesis: A Commentary*. Translated by John H. Marks. Revised Edition. OTL. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972.
- Watkin, Christopher. *Biblical Critical Theory: How the Bible's Unfolding Story Makes Sense of Modern Life and Culture*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2022.
- Watts, John D. W. *Isaiah 34-66*. WBC 25. Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 1987.
- Welborn, L. L. *Politics and Rhetoric in the Corinthian Epistles*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997.

- Wenham, Gordon J., *Genesis 16-50*, WBC 2. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1994.
- Wetzel, James. *Augustine's City of God: A Critical Guide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- White, Joel R. "NT Wright's Narrative Approach." Pages 181-204 in *God and the Faithfulness of Paul: A Critical Examination of the Pauline Theology of NT Wright*, edited by Christoph Heilig, J. Thomas Hewitt, and Michael F. Bird (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2017), 181-204.
- Wilckens, Ulrich. *Weisheit Und Torheit: Eine Exegetisch-religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu 1. Kor. 1 Und 2*. BHT 26. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1959.
- Wildavsky, Aaron. "What Is Permissible So That This People May Survive? Joseph the Administrator." *Political Science & Politics* 22:4 (1989): 779-788.
- Wilson, Robert McLaughlin. "Gnosis at Corinth." Pages 102-13 in *Paul and Paulinism: Essays in Honor of C. K. Barrett*. London: SPCK, 1982.
- Winter, Bruce W. *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.
- Witherington, Ben. *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.
- Wright, N. T. *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*. Christian Origins and the Question of God 4. 2 vols. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013.