

## VICE LISTS IN NON-PAULINE SOURCES

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### VICE LISTS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

**S**URPRISINGLY THE TECHNICAL USE OF VICE LISTS does not appear in the Old Testament. Easton admits, “Lists of the kind [found in the New Testament] are all but absent from the OT and are very scantily represented in the Talmud, while the (acrostic) catalogs of sins recited in the synagogue confessions can scarcely be traced back of the fifth Christian century.”<sup>1</sup> Aune notes, “That ethical lists are extremely rare in the OT (two examples are the short vice lists in Jer 7:9 and Hos 4:2) and relatively common in Greek ethical discourse from the 5th cent. BCE on, strongly suggests that such lists originated in Hellenism and were widely adapted throughout the syncretistic cultures of the eastern Mediterranean including early Judaism and early Christianity.”<sup>2</sup>

Although technical vice/virtue lists do not appear in the Old Testament as in the New Testament, several verses seem parallel (Exod. 20; 33:14–26; Lev. 17–19; Deut. 27:15–26; 30:15, 19; Ps. 15; Prov. 6:17–19; Ezek. 18:5–17; Hos. 4:1–2). The Torah identified

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<sup>1</sup> Burton Scott Easton, “New Testament Ethical Lists,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 51 (March 1932): 1. Hans Conzelmann also observes, “This is a form which has no model in the Old Testament” (*1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, trans. James W. Leitch, Hermeneia [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975], 100).

<sup>2</sup> David E. Aune, “Lists, Ethical,” in *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld (Nashville: Abingdon, 2008), 3:672.

numerous sins.<sup>3</sup> Particular sins to avoid were part of a holiness code for the Israelite community to remain pure.<sup>4</sup>

Evidence also demonstrates Wibbing's observation that not until the Prophets and in Proverbs did such a vice/virtue list develop "into a solid literary form."<sup>5</sup> Ezekiel 18:5–17 exhorts Israelites to behave ethically by avoiding vices in order to remain in the community. Jews are exhorted to "walk in [God's] judgments and persevere" because the "righteous man will certainly live" (v. 9).<sup>6</sup> Hosea 4:1–2 refers to a  $\text{נִיִּין}$  oracle, commonly known as a lawsuit, that Yahweh (the Suzerain) brought against His disobedient people Israel (the vassal), accusing them of breaching the covenant (by persisting in vices) that resulted in God's covenant curses.<sup>7</sup> "Hear the LORD'S word, you sons of Israel, since the LORD brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land: There is no truth or mercy or knowledge of God in the land. By swearing and lying, killing and stealing and committing adultery, they break all restraint, with bloodshed upon bloodshed."

Jeremiah asked, "Will you steal and murder and commit adultery and swear dishonestly, and sacrifice to Baal, and follow other gods whom you do not know?" (Jer. 7:9). Jeremiah 22:17 mentions

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<sup>3</sup> Neil J. McEleney, "Vice Lists of the Pastoral Epistles," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 36 (April 1974): 217; and B. J. Oropeza, "Situational Immorality: Paul's 'Vice Lists' at Corinth," *Expository Times* 110 (October 1998): 9. Paul, well versed in both the Torah and Hellenism, would have understood Old Testament vice enumerations and their use in this period, and as a result he may have employed them likewise. See Jennifer Wright Knust, "Paul and the Politics of Virtue and Vice," in *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity International, 2004), 159. These vices are also cataloged and collected in ancient Assyrian treaties as seen in *Shurpu's* Akkadian series of adjudication, which contains most of the commandments in the Decalogue of Exodus 20:2–17 and Deuteronomy 5:6–21. See Mesopotamian texts in Walter Beyerlin, ed., *Near Eastern Religious Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, trans. John Bowden, Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 131–32.

<sup>4</sup> For a covenant with a stipulation list between a king and its servant (suzerainty-vassal treaty) established from the ancient Near East, see René López, "Israelite Covenants in the Light of Ancient Near Eastern Covenants (Part 1 of 2)," *Conservative Theological Journal* 9 (fall 2003): 91–111; and idem, "Israelite Covenants in the Light of Ancient Near Eastern Covenants (Part 2 of 2)," *Conservative Theological Journal* 10 (spring 2004): 73–107.

<sup>5</sup> Siegfried Wibbing, *Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge im Neuen Testament und ihre Traditionsgeschichte unter besonderen Berücksichtigung der Qumran-Texte* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1959), 217.

<sup>6</sup> Unless indicated otherwise, all Scripture quotations are the author's translations.

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of treaty curses, see López, "Israelite Covenants in the Light of Ancient Near East Covenants (Part 2 of 2)," 78–87.

three vices, and Psalm 15 along with Proverbs 6:17–19 cites a number of vices. Five of the sins Jeremiah mentioned were noted by Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:9–10; Galatians 5:20–21; and Ephesians 5:3–5. These sins appear in vice lists commonly found in second-temple literature and in the New Testament period. Hatfield correctly concludes, “Though no formally structured list appears in the OT, its influence on the NT materials cannot be denied.”<sup>8</sup>

#### VICE LISTS IN EXTRABIBLICAL LITERATURE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT PERIOD

Vice lists appear in the early classical Greek period in the writings of Homer, Aristotle, Plato, and the works of Ariston, Chrysippus, Zenon, and others.<sup>9</sup>

##### CLASSICAL-GREEK PERIOD (BEFORE 336 B.C.)

Traits of virtue/vice lists appear in the classical Greek period, and commentators notice similarities between the classical writers’ use of these lists and Paul’s lists.<sup>10</sup>

Aristotle recorded a long list of virtues and contrasting vices.<sup>11</sup>

Irascibility	Spiritlessness	Gentleness
Rashness	Cowardice	Courage
Shamelessness	Diffidence	Modesty
Profligacy	Insensitiveness	Temperance
Envy	(nameless)	Righteous indignation
Profit	Loss	The just
Prodigality	Meanness	Liberality
Boastfulness	Self-depreciation	Sincerity
Flattery	Surliness	Friendliness
Subservience	Stubbornness	Dignity

<sup>8</sup> Stephen G. Hatfield, “The Rhetorical Function of Selected Vice/Virtue Lists in the Letters of Paul” (Th.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1987), 15. Such an example appears in Leviticus 18, along with an expanded list of blessings and curses in Proverbs 6:17–19; Jeremiah 7:9; Ezekiel 18:5–17; and Hosea 4:2.

<sup>9</sup> Later Plutarch mentioned these earlier works (*Mulierum virtutes* 441A). See Edward N. O’Neil, “De Cupiditate Divitiarum,” in *Plutarch’s Ethical Writings and Early Christian Literature*, ed. Hans Dieter Betz (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 4:309. See also Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 100.

<sup>10</sup> Hans Dieter Betz, *Plutarch’s Theological Writings and Early Christian Literature*, *Studia Corpus Hellenisticum Novi Testamenti*, ed. Hans Dieter Betz (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 3:309; and Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 100.

<sup>11</sup> Aristotle, *Ethica eudemia* 2.3.4.

Luxuriousness	Endurance	Hardiness
Vanity	Smallness of spirit	Greatness of spirit
Extravagance	Shabbiness	Magnificence
Rascality	Simpleness	Wisdom

Aristotle also juxtaposed a long and informal description of these character qualities, explaining in detail each of the virtues (e.g., “gentleness . . . courage . . . sobriety,” etc.) before describing in detail each of the vices.<sup>12</sup> When comparing the Pauline vice lists in 1 Corinthians 6:9–10; Ephesians 5:3–5; and especially the vice and virtue lists in Galatians 5:19–24 and Colossians 3:5–12, one cannot miss the resemblance. All these lists were employed to inform and motivate people to change their behavior.<sup>13</sup>

Plato described vices like falsehood, imposture, license, luxury, insolence, and incontinence, and he referred to others as “remediable offences” that will be rewarded accordingly “here and in the nether world.” Those doing “extreme wrong” will “as a result of their crime . . . become incurable.”<sup>14</sup> They are examples for others not to follow since they end in “the infernal dungeon [as] a spectacle and a lesson to such of the wrongdoers.” But those who live a “holy life in company with truth” are rewarded by ruling in judgment.<sup>15</sup> Elsewhere Plato furnished a much shorter comparison of evil characteristics with a brief description of the virtues of right-

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 4.5–6.10. This is also noted by Hatfield, “The Rhetorical Function of Selected Vice/Virtue Lists in the Letters of Paul,” 11.

<sup>13</sup> Aristotle recorded a set of virtues and vices to help people find happiness and motivate them toward this noble goal through “moral goodness” (*Ethica eudemian* 1–2). He wrote, “It is clear, therefore, that Moral Goodness has to do with pleasures and pains. And since moral character is, as even its name implies that it has its growth from habit, and by our often moving in a certain way a habit not innate in us is finally trained to be operative in that way (which we do not observe in inanimate objects, for not even if you throw a stone upwards ten thousand times will it ever rise upward unless under the operation of force)—let moral character then be defined as a quality of the spirit in accordance with governing reason. . . . Hence moral goodness must be concerned with certain means and must be a middle state. We must, therefore, ascertain what sort of middle state is goodness.” Aristotle then cited the list, defined each vice carefully, and commented on how to avoid each (ibid., 2.2.1; 2.3.4–18). Then he clarified how one can reach this goal. “For our state of character is related to and concerned with such things as have the property of making every person’s spirit worse and better. . . . Hence all men readily define the virtues as insensitiveness or tranquility in regard to pleasures and pains, and the vices by the opposite qualities” (ibid., 2.4.4).

<sup>14</sup> Plato, *Gorgias* 525.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 526.

eous character.<sup>16</sup> He included another list of virtues in *Phaedrus* 114A–115E that one should practice or else end in Tartarus as those who “have committed great sins.”

Plato declared that only virtuous men could be kings.<sup>17</sup> Dio Chrysostom attributed a similar view to Homer.<sup>18</sup> Thus Knust observes that “following Plato’s lead, Greek historians evaluated kings by their relative virtues.”<sup>19</sup>

These lists, by no means exhaustive, suffice to illustrate the similarities of these virtue/vice catalogs to those of the New Testament. Classical writers basically believed that anyone was capable of practicing either these vices or virtues. Moreover, certain vices were unforgivable while others were forgivable.<sup>20</sup> Condemnation in the afterlife awaited those who were involved in the unforgivable vices.<sup>21</sup> Greco-Roman writers (like their New Testament counterparts) used virtue/vice lists to exhort people to behave properly.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Plato, *Res publica* 6.490C–E.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 427C–434D, 543C–580a.

<sup>18</sup> Dio Chrysostom, *De regno* I, 1.14, and *De regno* IV, 83–96. See Abraham J. Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation: A Greco-Roman Sourcebook*, Library of Early Christianity (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 139–41.

<sup>19</sup> Jennifer W. Knust, “Paul and the Politics of Virtue and Vice,” in *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity International, 2004), 159.

<sup>20</sup> Plato, *Gorgias* 525–26.

<sup>21</sup> In the classical period Greeks believed the afterlife was a gloomy place where a person (soul/spirit) would remain and pay for his wrong. For example in *Iliad* 24.549–51, the last sentence states this concept emphatically: “You will not resurrect him [οὐδὲ μιν ἀνοτέσεις] before you suffer a further evil.” See also *Iliad* 24.756; Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 647–48; *idem*, *Agamemnon* 565–69, 1019–24, 1360–62; Sophocles, *Elektra* 137–39; Euripides, *Helena* 1285–87; Aristotle, *De anima* 1.406b.3–5; Aristophanes, *Ecclesiazusae* 1073–74; and Herodotus 3.62.3. N. T. Wright notes this in *The Resurrection of God* (London: SPCK, 2003), 32–33 nn 1–9. But in Plato’s writings the afterlife took a more positive turn in that when the soul was released to the afterlife the happiness one hoped to reap depended on what was cultivated while the person was alive.

<sup>22</sup> Apart from the works already cited, Pseudo-Crates, *Epistles* 15 also confirms this. “Shun not only the worst of evils, injustice, and self-indulgence, but also their causes, pleasures. For you will concentrate on these alone, both present and future, and on nothing else. And pursue not only the best of goods, self-control and perseverance, but also their causes, toils, and do not shun them on account of their harshness. For would you not exchange inferior things for something great? As you would receive gold in exchange for copper, so you would receive virtue in exchange for toils” (Abraham J. Malherbe, “Epistles,” in *The Cynic Epistles*, ed. Wayne A. Meeks [Atlanta: Scholars, 1977], 65). Malherbe sees a parallel to Galatians 5:19–23 in which Paul described vices and then virtues (*Moral Exhortation: A Greco-Roman Sourcebook* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986], 141; see also 138–43).

## PSEUDEPIGRAPHA

*First Enoch* 91:5–7 includes a list of vices that will result in God’s wrath and temporal destruction.

For I know that violence must increase on the earth, and a great chastisement be executed on the earth, and all unrighteousness come to an end: Yea, it shall be cut off from its roots, and its whole structure be destroyed. And unrighteousness shall again be consummated on the earth, and all the deeds of unrighteousness and of violence and transgression shall prevail in a twofold degree. And when sin and unrighteousness and blasphemy and violence in all kinds of deeds increase, and apostasy and transgression and uncleanness increase, a great chastisement shall come from heaven upon all these, and the holy Lord will come forth with wrath and chastisement to execute judgement on earth.<sup>23</sup>

*Jubilees* 21:21 and 23:14 record a similar temporal judgment falling on those who practice wicked vices that appear in a short list. “I see, my son, that all the works of the children of men are sin and wickedness, and all their deeds are uncleanness and an abomination and a pollution, and there is no righteousness with them. . . . And all these shall come on an evil generation, which transgresses on the earth: their works are uncleanness and fornication, and pollution and abominations.”

Using the term “spirit” metaphorically to represent behavioral characteristics of wicked individuals, the *Testament of Reuben* 3:2–8 cites a number of vices in a list that ultimately brings destruction on those partaking of them.<sup>24</sup> Shorter and informal lists of vices appear in the *Testament of Judah* 16:1–2 and 19:1–4. The latter passage is followed by an explanation in 20:1–4 of the dualistic components that still reside within people and that render them capable of doing good or evil (i.e., “the spirit of truth” or “the spirit of deceit”). In the *Testament of Gad* 5:1–3 another vice list appears—lying, false witness, bitterness, slander, conflict, violence, envy, injustice, and greed—in which the author encourages the reader to follow the virtues of loving the Lord, righteousness, and humility to eliminate evil. The *Testament of Asher* 2:5–6 has yet another vice list—stealing, injustice, robbing, cheating—that in-

<sup>23</sup> Elsewhere the present author has argued that God’s wrath occurs in time and should be distinguished from eternal judgment. These verses should thus be viewed as God’s displeasure displayed temporally against unrighteousness (René A. López, “Do Believers Experience the Wrath of God?” *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 15 (autumn 2002): 45–66).

<sup>24</sup> These vices include fornication, insatiableness, fighting, flattery, trickery, pride, boastfulness, arrogance, lying, jealousy, deceit, stealing, and injustice.

curs God’s wrath on those practicing them. *The Testament of Benjamin* 6:4 describes a set of virtues and cites their opposites by supplying a contrasting list of vices that the righteous should eliminate.<sup>25</sup>

Other extensive vice catalogs appear in the *Sibylline Oracles* 2:253–97, which designate those who will be cast into Gehenna for punishment. For example, “And then all will pass through the blazing river and the unquenchable flame. All the righteous will be saved, but the impious will then be destroyed for all ages, as many as formerly did evil or committed murders, and dread destroyers of houses, parasites, and adulterers, who pour out slander, terrible violent men, and lawless ones, and idol worshipers; as many as abandoned the great immortal God.”<sup>26</sup> Another extended vice list is included in *Sibylline Oracles* 3:36–45.

Second-temple Jewish eschatological works (with extensive Christian redaction) by the early Christian church period (when the *Sibylline Oracles* may have been written, i.e., 30 B.C.–A.D. 250), encourage readers to avoid these vices and adhere to virtues in order to attain immortality at the last judgment.<sup>27</sup>

A similar vice list appears in the *Assumption of Moses* 7:1–10. God’s temporal wrath, as noted in previous texts, will fall on the wicked who practice these vices.

*Third Baruch* 4:17 enumerates thirteen vices and 13:3–4 describes fourteen vices (many of which Paul listed in his epistles), which together total fifteen distinct vices.

murder	adultery	fornication
perjury	theft	greediness
slander	envy	drunkenness

<sup>25</sup> For an analysis of the virtue/vice genre in the Pseudepigrapha see John J. Collins, “Testaments,” in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus*, ed. Michael Edward Stone (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 334–39. A short list of three vices in the *Testament of Dan* 5:5–7 appears rhetorically to distinguish “the young Christian congregation from their environment” (Edward Schweizer, “Traditional Ethical Patterns in the Pauline and Post-Pauline Letters and Their Development (Lists of Vices and House-tables),” in *Text and Interpretation: Studies in the New Testament Presented to Matthew Black*, ed. Ernest Best and R. M. Wilson [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979], 195).

<sup>26</sup> *Sibylline Oracles* 2:253–60.

<sup>27</sup> James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Expansions of the “Old Testament” and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms, and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works* (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 2:330–31. The dating of the *Sibylline Oracles* is debatable.

strife	jealousy	grumbling
gossip	idol worship	divination

Contextually these vices characterize the “unrighteous” who await God’s eternal judgment.

Three things stand out from Pseudepigraphal texts. First, eternal punishment is not the main focus in numerous texts. Instead, temporal punishment will befall those who practice these vices. Second, some texts, however, do stress eternal punishment for those who exhibit the sinful characteristics enumerated in the vice lists. Third, these vices seem to be used in a parenthetic form to exhort those in the community to cease such behavior. Therefore in all cases the writers assumed two contrasting behaviors.<sup>28</sup>

#### APOCRYPHA

The Apocrypha also contains virtue/vice lists in various places. The writer of Wisdom of Solomon 14:23–31 gives an extensive vice list that describes the pursuits of the unrighteous.

For either they murder children in their initiation rituals, or either celebrate secret mysteries, or either hold frenzied ravings with strange rules leading to revelry, they no longer keep either their lives or their marriages pure, instead they either kill by ambushing one another, or either grieve one another by committing adultery, and all have confusedly blood and murder, theft and deceit, corruption, unfaithfulness, furor, perjury, confusion over defining good, forgetfulness of favors, defilement of souls, sexual perversion, disorder in offspring, disorderly marriages, adultery, and sensuality. For the worship of unnamed idols (not to be named) is the beginning and cause and end of every evil. For their worshipers either cheer furiously and prophesy lies, or live unrighteously, or willingly commit perjury; for since they trust in lifeless idols they swear evil oaths and do not expect to suffer harm. But just penalties will overtake them on both counts: because they thought evil of God and kept serving idols and swearing falsely to deceive, despising holiness. For it is not the power of the things that men swear, but the just punishment for those who sin, that always pursues the transgression of the unrighteous.

In contrast Wisdom of Solomon 8:7–9 describes the behavior of the righteous by personifying “wisdom” (as in Prov. 8) and showing her virtuous character. “And if any one loves righteousness, her labors are virtues; for she teaches self-control and prudence, justice and courage; nothing in life is more profitable for men than these. . . . Therefore I determined to take her to live with me, knowing that

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<sup>28</sup> See also the *Testament of Simeon* 5:1–5, which exhorts the readers through Joseph (in Genesis) to avoid “wickedness” and follow God and not Beliar.

she would give me good counsel and encouragement in cares and grief.” An informal list appears in Sirach 7:1–7 as a way to motivate readers to obedience.

The Apocrypha exhorts people to avoid vices and seek after virtue, since this is the way of comfort in the midst of turmoil.

#### VICE LISTS FROM 323 B.C. TO A.D. 500

In these centuries virtue and vice lists were commonly cited to encourage people to live righteously.

##### GRECO-ROMAN PERIOD

Vice lists appear in the Greco-Roman period in the writings of Plutarch and others.<sup>29</sup> In these writers one can see elements of virtue/vice lists as well as arguments similar to those Paul used.<sup>30</sup>

Cebes of Thebes, a disciple of Socrates and Philolaus (390 B.C.) who made a cameo appearance in Plato’s dialogue *Phaedorus*, seeks after virtue instead of giving in to vices. Of the three works attributed to him (by Suidas and Diogenes Laërtius—*Hebdome*, *Phrybichus*, and *Tabula of Cebes* (or *Pinax*)—only the latter remains. This is believed to be a first-century A.D. pseudonymous work, as evidenced by the content and verbal anachronisms,<sup>31</sup> in which the author discussed both the virtues that crown a person and a list of vices that bring grief and destruction.

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<sup>29</sup> Dieter Lührmann, “The Beginning of the Church in Thessalonica,” in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, ed. David L. Balch, Everett Ferguson, and Wayne A. Meeks (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 237–49. See Plutarch, *Moralia* 6.440–52. Noting the similarity to Paul, John T. Fitzgerald writes, “The functions of the NT lists are broadly analogous to their use outside of early Christian literature. For example, Greco-Roman philosophers frequently began their speeches with a list of vices in order to depict the wretched moral condition of the masses. Paul, similarly, uses a vice list at the beginning of Romans (1:29–31) to depict the condition of people who have not appropriated the knowledge of God” (“Vice/Virtue Lists,” in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman [New York: Doubleday, 1992], 6:858).

<sup>30</sup> Benjamin Fiore, “Passion in Paul and Plutarch 1 Corinthians 5–6 and Polemic against Epicureans,” in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, 135. After comparing Paul’s style with Greco-Roman rhetoricians, R. Dean Anderson concludes, “It is particularly important to set Paul’s writings off against the background of the Graeco-Roman culture in which he lived and worked” (*Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, rev. ed. [Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1996; reprint, Leuven: Peeters, 1999], 290).

<sup>31</sup> “Cebes,” in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed., 592. Regardless of who wrote it, if it was written in the New Testament period (or earlier), it helps clarify the usage of the virtue/vice list.

The Virtues take him in hand and lead him to that place from which he first came. They show him how those who spend their time there spend time wickedly and live wretchedly; how they are shipwrecked in life, wander aimlessly, and are led about in submission as if enemies, some by Incontinence, others by Pretentiousness, Avarice, Vanity, and the other Vices. From these terrors, to which they are bound, they cannot free themselves and so be saved and arrive here. Rather, they are troubled throughout their lives. They suffer this lot because they are unable to find a path here. For they have forgotten the command of the Daimon.<sup>32</sup>

Following Pythagoras and Plato's division of the soul, Cicero said virtues and vices stem from different sides of the soul.<sup>33</sup> Cicero defined "virtue" "as a habit of mind in harmony with reason and the order of nature. Therefore if we have become acquainted with all its parts we shall have considered the full scope of honour, pure and simple. It has four parts: wisdom, justice, courage, temperance."<sup>34</sup> He did not, however, see these virtues as practiced automatically. Instead he believed that teaching virtuous "customs" and perseverance are necessary requirements to behaving ethically.<sup>35</sup> This is similar to Paul's presentation of the virtue/vice lists in 1 Corinthians 6:9–11; Galatians 5:19–24; and Ephesians 5:3–8. All three passages address believers who are regenerated and endowed with the Spirit (hence the Spirit appears contextually in all three passages), but it is not automatic that believers will always behave in accord with their new position (Rom. 6:6–7, 11–13; 1 Cor. 6:11; Gal. 5:24; Eph. 4:22–24; 5:8). So Paul exhorted them to behave in harmony with their new position in Christ.

Lucian of Samosata made so close an association between the virtue/vice list and a person's nature that he personified the good or evil character traits by masculine and feminine genders.<sup>36</sup>

Plutarch described a number of virtues that people are capable of expressing, which originate in the reason and war against the part of the soul that cooperates with the body and results in behav-

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<sup>32</sup> John T. Fitzgerald and L. Michael White, *The Tabula of Cebe* (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1983), 99. B. J. Oropeza says, "Graeco-Roman lists, however, do not seem to derive from Jewish traditions, and since Paul in [1 Cor] 10:5–10 addresses vices committed by Israel in the wilderness, he is no doubt echoing traditions related to the latter source" ("Situational Immorality: Paul's 'Vice Lists' at Corinth," 9).

<sup>33</sup> Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes* 5.10–11.

<sup>34</sup> Cicero, *De inventione rhetorica* 2.53, 159.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.53–54.164.

<sup>36</sup> Lucian, *Piscator* 15–17.

iors that run contrary to reason (which he called “vices”).<sup>37</sup> Plutarch called the two elements of the soul, vice and virtue, “the appetitive” and “the spirited.”<sup>38</sup> He defined the virtues and cited a number of instructions for his readers to succeed in reaching the goal of being virtuous people. Plutarch mentioned Ariston of Chios, Zeno of Citium, and Chrysippus, as those who define and explain how virtues function over against vices.<sup>39</sup>

Greco-Roman writers believed that within every man exists the capacity to practice vices or virtues. These writers were not thinking in theological terms of believer or unbeliever. They employed these lists as a way of characterizing individuals and to exhort them to behave morally.<sup>40</sup> Although Greco-Roman writers did not think in Pauline terms,<sup>41</sup> these catalogs support the premise that these lists were common rhetorical stock lists of the day that were used to exhort people to behave ethically.<sup>42</sup>

#### QUMRAN

The Manual of Discipline 1QS 4:9–11 includes a list of twenty-one vices practiced by those who will face judgment, and a list of thirteen virtues (4:6–8) practiced by those who will receive eternal life.

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<sup>37</sup> Plutarch, *Moralia* 6.444–52.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.441.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 440. See Johannes Ab Arnim, ed., *Chrysippi Fragmenta Moralia* (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1964), 59, 99–100; and *idem*, *Zeno et Zenonis Discipuli* (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1964), 48–49, 86. See also Plato, *Moralia* 97e and 1034c.

<sup>40</sup> Seneca noted this point. “Posidonius holds that not only precept-giving . . . but even persuasion, consolation, and encouragement, are necessary. To these heads *the investigation of causes*. . . . He remarks that it will also be useful to illustrate each particular virtue; this science Posidonius calls *ethology*, while others call it *characterization*. It gives the signs and marks which belong to each virtue and vice, so that by them distinction may be drawn between like things. Its function is the same as that of precept. . . . Would you, for instance, deem it a useful thing to have evidence given you by which you recognize a thoroughbred horse, and not be cheated in your purchase or waste your time over a low-bred animal? But how much more useful it is to know the marks of a surpassingly fine soul—marks which one may appropriate from another for oneself” (*Epistulae morales* 95:65–67, italics his).

See also Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 138. Similar to Philo’s *Quot deterius patiori insidiari solet* 73, Lucian also cited a catalog of vices in accusing the sophists of not practicing what they preach (*Pseudologista* 25; *Rhetorum praecestar* 15.22; *Dialogi mortuorum* 369–70; *Fugitiri* 16; *Timon* 55; *Piscator* 29.34).

<sup>41</sup> Benjamin Fiore, “Passion in Paul and Plutarch 1 Corinthians 5–6 and Polemic against Epicureans,” 139. See also Plutarch, *Mulierum virtutes* 443B–444E.

<sup>42</sup> Fiore, “Passion in Paul and Plutarch, 1 Corinthians 5–6 and Polemic against Epicureans,” 135–43.

The Qumran community was celibate and ascetic. However, this does not mean that the Qumran community did not believe in marriage or never mentioned “fornication” in a vice list, or that they were not exhorted to monogamous marriage. In CD 4:13–21 three vices are mentioned that include avoiding “fornication” by not taking “two wives,” and readers are exhorted to avoid that sin by remaining in a monogamous marriage as God intended in creation. Klijn notes that “lists of this sort are popular in both Judaism and Christianity, cf. 1QS 4:9–10.”<sup>43</sup>

#### PHILO

Philo (13 B.C.–ca. A.D. 45) followed the common tradition of the day by contrasting the virtues of temperance, frugality, economy, sobriety, and moderation, against the vices of pernicious attacks, intemperance, and covetousness.<sup>44</sup> He mentioned homosexuality and lust, which can lead to “lascivious” behavior.<sup>45</sup> In another list he mentioned lust, bestiality, and adultery.<sup>46</sup>

Philo also recorded an extensive list of virtues followed by a list of contrasting vices.

<i>Virtues</i>	<i>Vices</i>
piety, holiness, truth, justice, orderliness, fidelity, kindness, courage, modesty	unjust, reckless, unholy, profane, murder-stained, rude, cowardly, insatiable, envious <sup>47</sup>

Like Paul, Philo exhorted readers to avoid these vices at all cost and to seek after virtues, since those characterized by such vices will not be present at the banquet (which he probably understood as the eschatological kingdom). Also Philo used the vices to exhort proselytes to abandon old behavior and to live virtuously. Like Paul, he juxtaposed virtues and vices, and pointed to the eschaton as a motivator to influence present behavior.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>43</sup> A. F. J. Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas: Introduction, Text, and Commentary*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 85.

<sup>44</sup> Philo, *De specialibus legibus* 1.172–74.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.7–8, 37–43.

<sup>46</sup> Philo, *De Abrahamo* 26. 135–36.

<sup>47</sup> Philo, *De sacrificis Abelis et Caini* 5.26–27, 32.

<sup>48</sup> Philo, *Virtues* 180–83.

## JOSEPHUS

Like Philo, Josephus listed a number of sins to be avoided.<sup>49</sup> In describing Cain, Josephus cited bodily pleasure, outraging his companions, increase of wealth by rapine and violence, inciting to luxury and pillage all whom he met, craftiness, and many others. Josephus wrote that avoiding these sins is the only course of wisdom and of virtue that originally comes from the Law.<sup>50</sup>

In another vice list Josephus described an ambitious man as unscrupulous, crafty, malicious, a ready liar, marked by deceit and knaveries, and a brigand.<sup>51</sup> Josephus accused the Jews of not obeying God's Law and of partaking of vices, in which even the Romans did not participate.

Secret sins—I mean thefts, treacheries, adulteries—are not beneath your disdain, while in rapine and murder you vie with each other in opening up new and unheard of paths of vice; aye and the temple has become the receptacle for all, and native hands have polluted those divine precincts, which even Romans revered from afar, forgoing many customs of their own in deference to your law. And after all this do you expect Him, thus outraged, to be your ally? Righteous supplicants are ye, forsooth, and pure the hands with which you appeal to your protector!<sup>52</sup>

Josephus seems to have listed these vices to show how wicked people outside the Law-abiding community behaved and to exhort the Jews to change.

## RABBINICAL WORKS

The Mishnah, Talmud, and Midrash all refer in some way to virtue/vice lists. Mishnah *ʿAbot* 2:7 records an informal list of vices that all who study the Law should avoid in order to inherit “the world to come” (i.e., the kingdom).<sup>53</sup> A similar concept, without mentioning an extended list, appears in *ʿAbot* 3:12. And *ʿAbot* 5:19

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<sup>49</sup> Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews* 1:2.2, 60–66; idem, *Against Apion* 2:19–28; and idem, *The Jewish War* 2:21.1; 5:9.4, 401–3.

<sup>50</sup> Josephus, *Against Apion* 2:19–28.

<sup>51</sup> Josephus, *The Jewish War* 2:21.1.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:9.4, 401–3.

<sup>53</sup> Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrash* (Munich: Beck, 1961), 1183–92. *Ecclesiastes Rabbah* 1.16 employs such a list in describing the state of one's heart in relation to God. Other lists appear in *b. Šabbat* 127a and *b. ʿAbot* 5.19. For a discussion of the ethical list in rabbinic literature and use of end-time language see John G. Gager Jr., “Functional Diversity in Paul's Use of End-Time Language,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 89 (September 1970): 333.

cites the virtues of “a good eye and a humble spirit and a lowly soul” in contrast to the three vices of “an evil eye, [a] haughty spirit, and a proud soul.”<sup>54</sup>

These three virtues are indicative of those who not only enjoy this life but who also will inherit the kingdom. Another extended list of virtues surfaces in *ʿAbot* 6:1, 6. These include “friend, beloved [of God], lover of God, lover of mankind,” “humility,” “reverence,” “righteous,” “saintly,” “upright,” “faithful; and it [the Law] keeps him far from sin and brings him near to virtue, and from him men enjoy counsel and sound knowledge, understanding and might.”

In *b. Šabbat* 127a six virtues are mentioned, showing that all who practice these will reap rewards both now and in the future kingdom: “hospitality to guests, visiting the sick, introspection in prayer, early rising to the schoolhouse, raising one’s children for study of the Torah, and giving one’s fellow the benefit of the doubt.”<sup>55</sup> Minor tractate *Derek Eres Zuta* 1:1 cites numerous virtues that characterize a scholar. “The characteristics of a scholar are that he is meek, humble, alert, filled [with a desire for learning], modest, beloved by all, humble to the members of his household and sin-fearing. He judges a man [fairly] according to his deeds, and says, ‘I have no desire for all the things of this world because this world is not for me.’”<sup>56</sup>

*Derek Eres Zuta* 7:1–2 refers to factors that characterize an “uncultured man” and a “wise man.”<sup>57</sup>

Midrashic commentary *Ecclesiastes Rabbah* 1.16 cites a list of virtues that follow the man whose heart seeks after God, and mentions vices to be avoided by the godly.<sup>58</sup>

Three concepts may be drawn from these works. First, to control the vices common to man, one must know and obey the Law.

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<sup>54</sup> This translation is from Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah: Translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1933), 458.

<sup>55</sup> This translation is from Jacob Neusner, *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005).

<sup>56</sup> This translation is from Abraham Cohen, *Minor Tractates* (London: Soncino, 1965).

<sup>57</sup> See also Gerard Mussies, “Catalogues of Sins and Virtues Personified,” in *Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l’empire romain*, ed. R. van den Broeck and M. J. Vermaseren (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 319; and Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrash*, 3:75, 577.

<sup>58</sup> See H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, *The Midrash Rabbah* (New York: Soncino, 1977), 4:46–49. Hatfield also notes some virtues and vices that are listed in rabbinical materials (“Rhetorical Function of Selected Vice/Virtue Lists,” 14).

Second, these rabbinical works used the virtue/vice lists in a manner similar to the way they function in the New Testament, namely, to compare the expected behavior of those who belong to the community of Torah (the Lord) with that of those who do not and to exhort the readers to behave ethically. Third, those who are characterized by the vices will not reap the benefits of this life and will not inherit (enter or inhabit) “the world to come” (i.e., the kingdom). While the New Testament makes it clear that faith alone in Jesus is the sole means of obtaining the righteousness necessary to enter the kingdom and that proper conduct is needed if believers are to reap rewards now and in the kingdom, both rabbinical and Pauline theology affirmed that those who practice the vices listed will not inherit the kingdom.

#### APOSTOLIC FATHERS

The apostolic fathers also employed virtue/vice lists. The *Didache* does this against the backdrop of “two ways,” avenues that end in life or death. The *Didache* stressed that “there is a great difference between the two ways.” *First Clement* 35:5–9 also uses a vice list as a rhetorical device to persuade readers to behave ethically, unlike the “unrighteous man.”

The *Epistle of Barnabas* 20:1–2, 39 mentions many vices that characterize the unsaved.

But the way of the dark person is crooked and completely cursed. For it is a way of eternal death and punishment, in which contains things that destroy men’s souls: idolatry, arrogance, increase of power, hypocrisy, doublemindedness, adultery, murder, robbery, pride, disobedience, deceit, malice, stubbornness, sorcery, magic, greedy lust, lack of fear of God. They are persecutors of all that is good, and are for those who hate truth, who love a lie, not knowing the reward of righteousness, not adhering to what is good, nor to righteous judgment, ignoring the widow and the orphan, nor are they alert to fear of God but for what is evil, from whom gentleness and patience are far away and distant, loving worthless things, pursuing reward, having no mercy for the poor, not working on behalf of the oppressed, reckless with slander, not knowing Him who made them, murderers of children, corrupters of God’s creation, turning away from the needy, oppressing the afflicted, advocates of the wealthy, lawless judges of the poor, entirely sinful.<sup>59</sup>

Before listing these sins, however, *The Epistle of Barnabas* 19:1 exhorted believers to walk righteously. “This, therefore, is the way of light; if any one desires to make his way to the designated

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<sup>59</sup> Author’s translation.

place, let him be diligent in his works. The knowledge, then, which is given to us that we may walk in it is as follows.”<sup>60</sup> A number of virtues are then cited in chapter 19 in an apodictic manner (“You shall not”), similar to the commandments in Exodus 20.

*The Shepherd of Hermas, Visions* 3:8.3–8 describes seven women around a tower that seems to symbolize the church. The seven women symbolize virtues (faith, self-control, sincerity, innocence, reverence, knowledge, and love). If believers practice these (or can be understood as characterized by these), then they will be saved, a possibility available only to those who belong to the Lord’s church.<sup>61</sup> In *The Shepherd of Hermas, Similitudes* 9:15.1–3 a virtue/vice list is used to exhort readers to behave according to the virtues or else they will not enter the kingdom of God. To enter the kingdom of God one must avoid all vices and apply all virtues.

Successors to the apostolic fathers seem to have noted that the vice lists describe what characterize unbelievers but which can also be practiced by believers. Hence they used the lists as a rhetorical device to exhort believers to behave ethically or else miss entering the kingdom of God.<sup>62</sup> The value of investigating the church fathers centers on their proximity to the apostles and the likelihood that they used the vice and virtue lists similarly to the way the first-century writers used them.

#### GNOSTICS

The Nag Hammadi tractate *On the Origin of the World* cites a list of seven vices personified as demons. “Then Death, being androgynous, mingled with his (own) nature and begot seven androgynous offspring. These are the names of the male ones: Jealousy, Wrath, Tears, Sighing, Suffering, Lamentation, Bitter Weeping. And these are the names of the female ones: Wrath, Pain, Lust, Sighing,

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<sup>60</sup> After also observing this, Gay L. Byron explains. “The virtues, in contrast to the vices, are indicated as ‘the way of the knight’ (*heca hodos tou phocetos*). Both lists are introduced in chapter 18 in the discussion about the ‘Two Ways’ [18:1–2]. These lists usually indicated certain behaviors that led to life and certain threats that led to death and destruction” (*Symbolic Blackness and Ethnic Difference in Early Christian Literature* [New York: Routledge, 2002], 62).

<sup>61</sup> *The Shepherd of Hermas, Visions* 3:8.7–8 says, “Their powers are controlled by one another, and they follow one another, in the order in which they were born. From Faith is born Self-control; from Self-control, Sincerity; from Sincerity, Innocence; from Innocence, Reverence; from Reverence, Knowledge; and from Knowledge, Love. Their works, therefore, are pure and reverent and divine. So whoever serves these and has the strength to master their works will have a dwelling in the tower with the saints of God.”

<sup>62</sup> Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 138.

Curse, Bitterness, Quarrelsomeness. They had intercourse with one another, and each one begot seven, so that they amount to forty-nine androgynous demons. Their names and their effects you will find in the Book of Solomon.”<sup>63</sup>

Then, immediately following this account, to combat these demons coming from Death (son of Ialdabaoth), another child from Ialdabaoth named Zoe created seven virtuous spirits. “And in the presence of these, Zoe, who was with Sabaoth, created seven good androgynous forces. These are the names of the male ones: the Unenvious, the Blessed, the Joyful, the True, the Unbegrudging, the Beloved, the Trustworthy. Also, as regards the female ones, these are their names: Peace, Gladness, Rejoicing, Blessedness, Truth, Love, Faith. And from these there are many good and innocent spirits. Their influences and their effects you will find in the *Configurations of the Fate of Heaven That Is Beneath the Twelve*.”<sup>64</sup>

*The Apocryphon of John* switched the scheme and personified the vices as demons.

The four chief demons are: Ephememphi who belongs to pleasure, Yoko who belongs to desire, Nenentophni who belongs to grief, Blamomen who belongs to fear. And the mother of them all is Aesthesis-Ouch-Epi-Ptoe. And from the four demons passions came forth. And from grief (came) envy, jealousy, distress, trouble, pain, callousness, anxiety, mourning, etc. And from pleasure much wickedness arises, and empty pride, and similar things. And from desire (comes) anger, wrath, and bitterness, and bitter passion, and unsatedness, and similar things. And from fear (comes) dread, fawning, agony, and shame. All of these are like useful things as well as evil things. But the insight into their true (character) is Anaro, who is the head of the material soul.<sup>65</sup>

In both of these accounts the contrasts in the virtue/vice lists are obvious. One can conclude from these Gnostic texts that people characterized by vices belonged to a different order from those characterized by the virtues. Though this evidence is much later than the Pauline passages in question, besides coming from groups on the fringes of Christianity, these lists show how the lists were viewed after Paul wrote.<sup>66</sup> Yet one must be careful in pressing this

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<sup>63</sup> *On the Origin of the World* II 5, 106:28–107:3. This translation is from James M. Robinson and Richard Smith, eds., *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, 4th rev. ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, II 5, 107:4–18.

<sup>65</sup> *The Apocryphon of John* II 1, 18:14–35.

<sup>66</sup> See Darrell L. Bock, *The Missing Gospels: Unearthing the Truth behind Alternative Christianities* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006).

point since terms used earlier may not be employed by Gnostics with the same meaning or theological concepts.<sup>67</sup> Two things seem clear. First, virtue/vice lists were a conventional way of juxtaposing two diametrically opposite groups, and second, the lists were a rhetorical device used by many rhetoricians, even in groups on the fringes of Christianity.<sup>68</sup>

### CONCLUSION

Formal virtue/vice lists are not found in the Old Testament, but informal parallels do exist in various passages in Torah. Such parallels became more fully developed in the prophets and wisdom literature.

Extrabiblical writers employed virtue/vice lists in divergent ways.<sup>69</sup> However, all seem to have two elements in common. First, individuals or groups belonging to communities are never viewed as being unable to practice vices. Lists are used to motivate ethical behavior appropriate to the new community in contrast to the group to which addressees once belonged.<sup>70</sup> Second, a strict dichotomy exists between those characterized by virtues (where theological affinities allow) as those who have a part in the “world to come” and those characterized by vices who do not. Universally, those who inherit the kingdom or the world to come are the righteous vis-à-vis the wicked who do not. No degrees exist in such comparisons.

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<sup>67</sup> The Gnostics understood that the vices in their writings were unbecoming of people belonging to their group. This is similar to the way Paul and others used vice lists. People characterized by these vices typify behavior that is unbecoming of Christians.

<sup>68</sup> For an excellent discussion on the use of the virtue/vice catalogs in the Gnostics and other groups see Gerard Mussies, “Catalogues of Sins and Virtues Personified,” in *Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l’empire romain*, 315.

<sup>69</sup> Though Gnostic literature is very ambiguous, for the purpose of this study two things may be drawn from it. First, though some passages present a spiritual form of the kingdom, the common meaning of an awaited kingdom remains in the future. Second, one enters this kingdom by knowledge and obedience.

<sup>70</sup> E. Schweizer knows that the traditional vice lists were used to motivate by contrasting inside/outside characteristics unbecoming of new converts; but he also acknowledges that becoming a new convert does not guarantee absolute success even if given power to overcome weakness (“Traditional Ethical Patterns in the Pauline and Post-Pauline Letters,” 195–96, see also 197–209).