



Peter's Motive for Quoting Proverbs 11:31 as an Encouragement to Be Righteous

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ABSTRACT

Proverbs 11:31 is an Old Testament passage of wisdom quoted by Peter in 1 Peter 4:18. Based on the literature search, there are two interpretations related to this intertextual use of Scripture, namely talking about retribution or divine justice and moral responsibility. But it was found that previous studies did not mention anything about Peter's motive in quoting this wisdom literature narrative. Therefore, this study aims to specifically examine Peter's motives in quoting this Old Testament passage. There are strong implications of the Wisdom literature exhortations quoted by Peter as an encouragement to the early church to choose to live as righteous people. Therefore, this research used qualitative methods with a sub-interpretive design, specifically wisdom literature hermeneutics and literature study. This article finds that Peter's motivation for encouraging the believers was that they should never envy the oppressors and persecutors because those who reject the gospel will suffer more than anything Christians have to face in this life. God is just, and His judgment will apply to everyone, including the wicked. Peter's motive for quoting the Old Testament also serves as a theological and practical guide for believers, enabling them to live in a way that reflects their faith and trust in God's final judgment and deliverance.

Keywords: life choices, the righteous, the wicked, intertextuality.

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INTRODUCTION

Proverbs is one of the books of wisdom literature in the Old Testament that is often quoted by New Testament writers. This book has become a reference for New Testament writers in confirming their writings, as evidence of prophetic fulfillment or based on specific life contexts (*Sitze im Leben*). Dell and Kynes (2020) write that the interaction of wisdom literature with New Testament texts by the developing context provides a lot of input in the development of text interpretation. Mapara (2018) also writes that the allusion to Proverbs with texts in the New Testament is an important input for character building, ethics, and morals. The nature of Proverbs to utilize metaphors is the main reason for citation as part of the power of didactic patterns to the congregation (W. P. Brown, 2018, p. 133-135). Some of the opinions above are the motivation for why the intertextual study of wisdom literature allusions with the New Testament is very important to engage in.

There are eight recorded citations of the book of Proverbs by New Testament writers: by Paul (Rom 2:6 & Prov 24:12; Rom 12:20 & Prov 25:21-22); Hebrews (Heb 12:5-6 & Prov 3:11-12); James (Jas 4:6 & Prov 3:34); and Peter (1 Pet. 4:8 & Prov. 10:12; 1 Pet. 4:18 & Prov. 11:31; 1 Pet. 5:5 & Prov. 3:34; 2 Pet. 2:22 & Prov. 26:11) (Rudd, 2017). This intertextual study focuses on the parallels of ethical decision-making and its consequences as depicted in Proverbs 11:31 and 1 Peter 4:18. Proverbs 11:31 presents a narrative statement that emphasizes the principle of divine retribution and justice that ensures the righteous are rewarded for their good deeds, while the wicked and sinners face inevitable consequences for their wickedness (Haug, 2012; Hayes, 2015). This narrative reflects the wisdom tradition of ancient Israel, which emphasizes the importance of living ethically and fearing God as foundational principles for a flourishing life. Longman writes that this verse discusses the context of retribution. However, one might misunderstand this verse to say that the righteous are rewarded with blessings and the wicked with punishment. This verse shows that even the righteous receive retribution for their transgressions (cf. Ecc 7:20), in recognition that the righteous also experience the consequences of their mistakes. This seems to be the understanding of 1 Peter 4:18, quoting the Greek version: "If it is difficult for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the wicked and sinners?" (Longman III, 2017b). Waltke and De Silva (2023) also explain the same concept of divine retribution against the righteous and the wicked. They emphasize that if the righteous receive retribution for living unrighteously, the retribution for the wicked and sinners will be much more severe. Hayes, Haug, Longman, and Waltke's explanation and interpretation of the context concern divine retribution, justice, and moral accountability for every individual.

In contrast, 1 Peter 4:18 emphasizes the challenges the righteous face on their way to salvation and shows that those who seek to live faithfully can still experience hardships and trials. Napuku writes that Peter deliberately encouraged Christians who were

undergoing persecution under Greco-Roman rule to rejoice in their sufferings. In their suffering, the believers shared deeply in the sufferings of Christ and looked forward to the promised share of glory that would be revealed (cf. 1 Pet 4:13-14). Given the coming judgment on all mankind, believers should trust in God and continue to do good amidst their suffering (1 Pet 4:19). Peter's message of suffering is especially important for the church today as it faces attacks from within and without (Napuku, 2022). Thus, the context given by Peter indicates that divine retribution is the reward for the righteous who persist in their suffering. The verse poses a rhetorical question that highlights the terrible fate that awaits the wicked and sinners at the final judgment, which emphasizes the importance of repentance. According to Owens (2006), though, it is difficult to know whether the quote reproduces the text of Proverbs 11:31 or 1 Peter 4:18, as both verses focus on the narrative of divine retribution. Both passages reflect the importance of maintaining a righteous standard of living because of the consequences that will be received. The righteous who do not live well will be punished, and the punishment of the wicked and sinners will be far more dire (Owens, 2006). Owens' opinion is also in line with that of Hayes, Haug, Longman, and Waltke, regarding the emphasis on divine retribution to each person based on what is done: blessings to the righteous, and punishment to the wicked.

In particular, Chia's (2020) and McLay's (2016b) argument shows that wisdom texts play an important role in the development of the New Testament canon, explaining how the values of wisdom are needed in every age of life as a medium for the formation of human character, morals, and ethics. According to Heim (2020), the quotation from Proverbs is specifically a direct quotation because the same statement is made in the context of the quotation to strengthen the church amidst suffering. Interestingly, Peels (1994) discusses how this Proverbs quotation in Peter's letter relates to God's vengeance on the wicked. Abrahams and Babcock (2020) also wrote that the literacy used in Proverbs lifted Peter's quotation but only generally associated it with strengthening and encouraging the congregation to persevere. Meanwhile, Schwáb's (2011) dissertation explains the theological interpretation of Proverbs used by New Testament writers, including Peter, was to strengthen the congregation. Based on Chia, McLay, Heim, Peels, Abraham, Babcock, and Schwáb, the only explanation for the implementation of Peter's quotation of Proverbs 11:31 is as an encouragement to strengthen the church while suffering persecution. Although several scholars have researched them, none of these studies have specifically discussed Peter's motive for quoting Proverbs 11:31 in his letter in 1 Peter 4:18. This lack of research raises the question, why exactly did Peter need to quote Proverbs? What was his purpose in terms of encouraging the believers of his day? Was Peter trying to warn of judgment? This research has been carried out to answer these questions and strengthen the churches and believers facing persecution today.

Based on some of the research arguments presented, which only emphasize the reason Peter quotes Proverbs, it is to strengthen the congregation by reminding them of God's vengeance on the wicked and encourage them to live righteously. This study finds a gap in specifically addressing Peter's motive in quoting Proverbs 11:31 in his letter. This study offers new insight and finds that Peter's motives in quoting Proverbs was to encourage the believers never to envy the oppressed and persecuted, to persevere in suffering, and to remind the believers that God is just. His judgment will apply to everyone, including the wicked. The implication of Peter's quote is to encourage the congregation to choose to be righteous people who remain faithful in suffering. Using an intertextual approach, this study seeks to discover how these verses encouraged the early church to live righteously amid hardship and suffering and identify the implications for the church today.

METHOD

This article uses a qualitative method, with a wisdom literature hermeneutics approach that is *interpretative design* (Zaluchu, 2021). The Proverbs 11:31 passage included in chapters 10-29 collection is a stand-alone proverb of Solomon. Thus, each proverb is individual and does not have continuity between close contexts; rather, it is based on the context between topics (Sualang, 2019). The book of Proverbs, as a work of wisdom, needs to be analyzed with a method of interpretation that is suitable for its literary nature (Klein et al., 2017). The research method of using the Old Testament in the New Testament, often called intertextual analysis, involves examining how New Testament writers refer to, interpret, and apply Old Testament texts. This method includes identifying direct quotations, allusions, and thematic parallels between the two testaments. The use of Old Testament texts in the New Testament involves two types of contexts, often called canonical versus exegetical. Thus, biblical exegesis is used to explain the deeper meaning intended by God but not by the human authors. This meaning is obtained in the words of the biblical text when studied in one's understanding of the revelation, which is called *sensus plenior*. This approach assumes that God inspired the New Testament authors with a deeper meaning to explain the Old Testament text (Chia, 2020). This approach reveals deeper theological insights, continuity of themes, and fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies in the New Testament, which provides a comprehensive understanding of the biblical narrative and doctrinal development in both testaments.

Some of the things done in this research are: first, Translation Analysis. Translation analysis is conducted to find the true translation according to the actual meaning of the context of the verse in question (Stuart, 2017); second, Lexical Analysis. This analysis was conducted to understand the meaning of the text in Proverbs 11:31 and 1 Peter 4:18 (Stuart & Fee, 2021); third, Context Analysis. This analysis is used to see the context related to the discussion in Proverbs 11:31 and its correlation with 1 Peter

4:18 (Adiatma & Pattinaja, 2024); fourth, to explain Peter's motives for quoting the Old Testament in his letter; and fifth, to explain the implications of the choice to live as a righteous person. The results of this analysis provide a reference base for the development of biblical theology and input for scholars, teachers, and preachers to understand intertextual studies between the Old Testament and New Testament.

RESULTS

Translation Analysis

Translation analysis in intertextual studies involves examining how different translations of a text affect its interpretation and understanding, especially in the context of relationships between texts. This type of analysis is crucial to understanding the nuances and meanings that can be derived from different translations and how they interact with each other within a broader literary and cultural framework (Stuart, 2017). The translation analysis of Proverbs 11:31 and 1 Peter 4:18 is seen in the table below:

Proverbs 11:31		1 Peter 4:18	
Hebrew	Transliteration	Greece	Transliteration
יְהוֹן צַדִּיק בְּאֶרֶץ שְׁלֵמָה אֲשֶׁר-כִּי-רָשָׁע :אֲחִיזָה	If the righteous on earth receive recompense, so do the wicked and sinners.	καὶ εἰ ὁ δίκαιος μόλις σῴζεται, ὁ ἀσεβὴς καὶ ἁμαρτωλὸς ποῦ φανεῖται;	And if the righteous are so hard to save, then what of the unbelievers and sinners?

Table 1. Transliteration of Proverbs 11:31 and 1 Peter 4:18

Some important points related to the translation analysis of Proverbs 11:31, which can be explained, are: First, based on the literal analysis, it is proven that Heim (2020) said that Peter's citation of Proverbs 11:31 in his letter was a direct quotation because of the similarity of the text citation. Kim (2022) supports G. K. Beale's (2012) argument that Peter developed the meaning of the quoted text to fit the situation to strengthen the faith and hope of the church. Intertextuality and the use of proverbs in the New Testament, where in the case of 1 Peter 4:18, Peter's reference to the principle of divine retribution reflects the same biblical theme found in Proverbs 11:31. The language used in 1 Peter 4:18 closely matches the essence of the proverb from the Septuagint (LXX) of Proverbs 11:31. The similarity in theme and wording suggests a deliberate allusion to this verse, albeit without an explicit formula.

Second, there are two types of people that appear in this verse: namely, the righteous and the wicked. The category of the righteous are those who live obediently and faithfully according to the truth of God's Word. Meanwhile, the wicked and sinners are

those who live following the desires of the flesh and do what is contrary to God's will; *third*, there is a reward or recompense for all deeds done by every human being. The righteous will receive retribution as well as the wicked and sinners. No one escapes retribution. Even though this theme of retribution is still a polemic to this day.

According to Fox (2009) this insistence on retribution in life was a response to the belief, which grew during the Hellenistic period, that the rectification of wrongs might have to wait until when humans died. Ben Sira believed that retribution in life was a certainty, even if it had to wait until the day of death (Band. Prov.11:26) (Fox, 2009). Despite the polemics in the interpretation of retribution according to Fox's explanation, based on the text of Proverbs 11:31, it has been explained that for the righteous, retribution takes place on earth $\text{בְּרֵשׁ} (bā-'ā-reš)$. Fox (2009) also asserts that this retribution, both reward and punishment, will occur in this life, although everything awaits its proper time (*Hame'iri*). This argument assumes that the punishment of the wicked is more urgent, and therefore more certain than the reward of the righteous. Waltke (2014) sees here an affirmation of postmortem retribution. On earth, the righteous will receive "penal reparation," whereas the wicked, in contrast, will be punished after death. But if we look at the phrase in the text of Proverbs 11:31, $\text{יָשׁוּל לָאֵם} (yā-šul-lām)$ translated as getting vengeance, then we can see that the righteous will receive vengeance. (Holladay, 2019). This is explained in detail, that the events that will take place between the righteous and the wicked and sinful, will have vengeance on earth. The LXX Septuagint translation explains concretely that the righteous alone is very difficult to save $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu \delta\acute{\iota}\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\varsigma \mu\acute{o}\lambda\iota\varsigma \sigma\acute{o}\zeta\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota (men dikaios molis sozetai)$, (Brenton, 2016). There are two important words in this LXX translation, $\mu\acute{o}\lambda\iota\varsigma (molis)$ which means very difficult or with struggle (Liddell & Scott, 2016). The next word $\sigma\acute{o}\zeta\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota (sozetai)$ from the root $\sigma\acute{o}\zeta\omega (sozo)$ means to be saved (Bauer et al., 2021). So, this phrase is translated as very difficult to save. The purpose of this phrase is to emphasize that God's justice continues and the conditions for salvation are strict, where all the righteous are required to continue living righteously despite various pressures.

Furthermore, the explanation of the translation analysis of 1 Peter 4:18 is as follows: First, understanding the context in which Peter wrote this letter is important. The letter of 1 Peter is traditionally attributed to the Apostle Peter and is believed to have been written in the early AD 60s AD, possibly around AD 64. The letter is addressed to the Christian communities in the Roman provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, regions located in modern Turkey (Tenney, 2000). The following are the main historical factors that provide context for this letter, namely: 1) The persecution of believers by Emperor Nero 64 A.D. It is known that this epistle was written during or shortly before the persecution of Christians under Emperor Nero. After the great fire in Rome in AD 64, Nero sought to blame the Christians, which led to widespread persecution. Even outside of Rome, Christians faced suspicion and hostility. Their refusal

to participate in the imperial cult and local religious practices set them apart, leading to social and economic marginalization and violence (Packer et al., 2014); 2) Suffering is a central theme of Peter's letter and Peter's encouragement to the early church to maintain righteous living because glory will be their reward. The letter deals with the theme of suffering for righteousness' sake, encouraging believers to stand firm in their faith amid trials (Carson & Moo, 2005); 3) The call to remain a witness under any circumstances is one of the important themes emphasized. Peter emphasized living a holy and blameless life as a testimony of their faith. Christians are encouraged to live exemplary lives, exhibiting good behavior among unbelievers (cf. 1 Pet. 2:12), (Hillyer, 2013). From the various themes described, the reader has a great picture of the condition of the early church as the recipients of Peter's first letter. The encouragement in verse 18 is aimed at the early church to keep living righteously because there is retribution that the righteous will receive. The warning that the righteous will hardly be saved is the main encouragement to every believer to strive to live righteously through practical living even while suffering.

Secondly, the quotation of Proverbs 11:31 serves as the basis for encouraging and reminding the believers. By quoting Proverbs 11:31 in 1 Peter 4:18, Peter connects the Christian experience with the wisdom literature in the Hebrew Scriptures. This reference serves to underscore the continuity of God's relationship with His people and the principle of divine justice. It has already been explained that Proverbs 11:31 speaks of the recompense of the righteous and the wicked. Peter uses this to emphasize that if the righteous experience hardship, then the fate of the wicked and sinners will be even more severe (Egan, 2011). Cailing (2013) explains that the quote from Proverbs 11:31 has two purposes, namely: 1) Encouragement to believers to persevere. It assures believers that their decision to live righteously even in suffering is not in vain and that God's justice will prevail, with blessings and glory as rewards to those who are faithful to live righteously, and punishment and destruction to the wicked; 2) This sobering warning to everyone, of the severity of the judgment that awaits those who reject God, underscores the importance of steadfast faith and righteous living. This confirms Peter's narrative that the righteous are hardly saved if their lives do not conform to the gospel (Cailing, 2013). The narrative in this verse is corroborated by the previous verse where Peter says judgment will begin at God's own house, which symbolizes the righteous (1 Pet 4:17). Thus, the context of 1 Peter 4:18 reveals a time of significant trials and tests for the early Christians. Peter's letter aims to fortify their faith, encourage them to live righteously and remind them of God's ultimate justice, using the rich Hebrew wisdom tradition to underscore his points. The theological similarities in 1 Peter 4:18 reveal a theological theme that is consistent with the teaching of Proverbs 11:31, which emphasises that divine justice will ensure that the righteous will be saved regardless of their trials, but the wicked will face harsher judgement. This theme is found in the wisdom literature of Proverbs and the apostolic

teachings of the New Testament. Peter often discusses the themes of suffering, judgement and retribution for the righteous, which is in line with the moral teachings of Proverbs. The absence of a formal citation formula in 1 Peter 4:18 does not negate the possibility that Peter was consciously quoting Proverbs 11:31, as he was often known for using biblical principles in his writings.

Lexical Analysis

The exegetical study is an important part of comprehensively examining the meaning of the text and exposing it so that the reader understands exactly what the author's intention was in writing Proverbs 11:31 and Peter's motive in quoting this text in his letter to encourage the early church in 1 Peter 4:18. There are some important words to note in Proverbs 11:31 as well as 1 Peter 4:18 to understand its meaning better.

Proverbs 11:31

From Proverbs 11:31, the important words to note are the word שָׁדִיִּק (śad-dîq). This word is an absolute masculine singular adjective that translates 1) something that is examined and found to be good and right (Isa. 41:26); 2) (legally: someone whose behavior is examined and found to be incontrovertible): innocent, sinless, (2 Co. 10:9); 3) (morally righteous): not ungodly, not sinful (2 Sam. 4:11); 4) therefore: just, righteous (character or behavior) (2 Sam 2:33); 5) (morally righteous): innocent, sinless (2 Sam. 4:11) (Holladay, 2019). According to Harris et al. (2019), this root basically connotes conformity to an ethical or moral standard. It is claimed by Snaith that "the original meaning of the root *sdq* was "to be upright." But he adds that this word means "norm." Perhaps the origin of the word is not so clear or even significant (Snaith, 2016). So, the word refers to ethical, and moral standards and of course in the Old Testament, those standards are based on the nature and will of God.

Next is the word שָׁלַם (yā-šul-lām). This word is a third person singular imperfective passive verb, which is translated as 1) to be paid, vengeance (Jer 18:20); 2) rewarded, recompensed (Prov 11:31; 13:31); 3) (vows) paid, fulfilled Ps 65:2) (F. Brown et al., 2015). According to Harris et al. (2019) the general meaning behind the root *sh-l-m* is completion and fulfillment - entry into a state of wholeness and unity, restored relationship. Of this group of meanings, some take on the meaning of the relatively rare simple root, while others, *shillēm*, *shillûm*, and possibly *shalmœn*, reflect an intensive Piel meaning. The apparent diversity of meaning between these two words may be explained in terms of the concept of peace restored through payment (tribute to the conqueror, Josh. 10:1), redress (to the wronged, Exod. 21:36), or simple payment and settlement (of a business transaction, 2 Kgs. 4:7), (Harris et al., 2019). So, it can be explained that in the context of this verse, this word refers to complete retribution for what has been done. Vengeance here is not just

about punishment but also means receiving the portion that is a blessing for the righteous as a reward for all their labor to live in righteousness (Wilson, 2017).

Furthermore, there is a conjunction particle that has a very important meaning, וְ ('*ap̄*'), which is also translated, 1) Explanation of addition, (Gen 40:16); 2) Explanation of emphasis, (Ps 89:28); 3) Increase of importance, (Deut. 33:20); 4) Explanation of contrast, (Ps 44:10). Thus, it introduces a conditional clause or introduces in an ellipsis whose content follows the conjunction *kî*: '*ap̄*, *kî* emphasizes the fact that God has spoken. Explanation, the context of this conjunction refers to two things: *first*, this conjunction states that it is God who said it; and *second*, it states an emphasizing explanation of the existing context, namely that the wicked will also receive a reward.

The last phrase is $\text{בְּיִרְצָעוֹ וְחַטָּאֵי} \text{ } (kî-rā-šā'wə-hō-w-tê)$ which translates as "especially the wicked and the sinner," where the conjunction particle *kî* functions as a particle that emphasizes the context of the word that is temporarily connected to it i.e. the vengeance will also happen to the wicked and the sinner (F. Brown et al., 2015). This reinforces the context of this verse, which refers to God's justice, which is carried out as retribution for the decisions and life choices of each human being. If you choose to be righteous, there will be a reward, as will the wicked and sinners.

1 Peter 4:18

Based on the translation of 1 Peter 4:18, there are some important words to note, namely: the word *δίκαιος* (*dikaios*). This word is a singular masculine nominative adjective. The nominative case, describing a word's function in each sentence is often called the naming case, because of its function and role in the sentence as the subject or as the actor (main role) (Maryono, 2016; Merkle & Plummer, 2020). The meaning of the word *dikaios* is 1) Morally and ethically, one who is righteous, honest, just (Mt 5.45), the opposite of *ἄδικος* (unrighteous); 2) From a religious point of view, one who deals with God righteously, justly (Lk 1:6); 3) Placing rightly (Rom. 2:13); 4) Substantially οἱ *δίκαιοι* righteous, one who relates rightly to God (Mt 13:43), (Bauer et al., 2021). So, the reference meaning of this word, speaks of the person who lives righteously and does all the ordinances and will of God and also emphasizes the person who has a good relationship with God.

The next word is *μόλις* (*molis*), which is an adverb. Functioning as an adverb, it explains the context of the word that follows it. The meaning of this word is 1) With difficulty, hardly possible (Acts 14:18); 2) Almost impossible (Acts 14:18 and Romans 5:7); 3) Rarely (Rom. 5:7). These word explanations have shown the impossibility or difficulty for the righteous to be saved. Why is this so? This verse temporarily emphasizes a broader point where Peter speaks of Christian suffering and judgment beginning with the household of God (1 Pet. 4:17-19). As explained then the context of "The Righteous Are Hardly Saved" does not mean that salvation is uncertain for the righteous, but it does

recognize the challenging process of living a faithful life in a world that has fallen into sin. All righteous people are required to live in earnest faith and absolute obedience to God despite the many challenges and struggles.

Furthermore, the word *σώζεται* (*sozetai*) which is a third person singular passive indicative present tense verb from the root *σώζω* (*sozo*) means to save or keep from harm: 1) natural suffering about acute physical danger deliver, save, rescue (Acts 27:20); about stressful and threatening situations rescue, bring out safely (Jn 12:27); about sickness and disease heal, treat, restore health (Mt 9); 2) in a religious sense, about spiritual danger and the threat of eternal death; (a) rescue, save from sin, bring to salvation (Rom 5:9; Eph 2:8), (Bauer et al., 2021). The passive diathesis emphasizes the danger of divine punishment and retribution that can happen and the righteous can hardly be saved from it. This requires a decision to live righteously in faithfulness and obedience to God. In 1 Peter, the word *sozo* is used in the context of suffering, indicating that the term can have the meaning of being saved from suffering, but in specific cases it also includes the broader theological sense of salvation. For example, in 1 Peter 1:5, Peter speaks of "the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time", which clearly refers to the future salvation of souls. However, throughout the letter there is also a strong emphasis on how believers should endure suffering for the sake of righteousness (1 Pet. 3:14; 4:12-19), with the understanding that these trials will purify their faith. However, according to some of Marshall's views, in 1 Peter 4:18 the word *sozo* can refer to both 'temporary deliverance from suffering and eternal salvation of the soul, and the focus of the letter is to reassure believers that their present suffering has a purpose in God's redemptive plan (Marshall, 1991). Jobes also notes that Peter uses the word *sozo* in a way that connects the trials experienced by believers with their ultimate salvation, emphasizing in particular the perseverance of faith in the midst of trials (Jobes, 2011). Similarly, Longman III (Longman III, 2017a) stresses that although *sozo* often refers to the ultimate salvation of the soul, the trials and sufferings described in 1 Peter are presented as refining the believer's faith, with the ultimate goal being eternal salvation. So, the word *sozo* in 1 Peter 4:18 refers to the temporary relief from suffering that believers experience in the present (when they experience trials of their faith) and to the ultimate salvation of the soul (the eternal salvation that will be revealed at the end of time). But Peter emphasizes the perseverance of believers through suffering, knowing that these trials will purify their faith and lead them to final salvation.

Next are two words that have the same emphasis and purpose of showing the nature of a person, namely *ἀσεβής* (*asebes*), which is a masculine nominative adjective meaning the wicked person (Liddell & Scott, 2016); and the next word is *ἀμαρτωλός* (*amartolos*), which is a masculine nominative adjective meaning sinner (Liddell & Scott, 2016). Both words use the nominative case, describing naming or emphasizing the subject

as the doer. Thus, the purpose of these two words is to show the antithesis of the righteous, the group of people who choose to live in sin and become wicked.

Another important phrase is *ποῦ φανεῖται* (*pou phaneitai*), which consists of *pou* as an interrogative adverb of place meaning 1) where? in what place? (Matt 2:2); 2) in rhetorical questions that expect a negative answer, where? (Lk 8:25); 3) used as a conjunction to introduce a direct question followed by the pointer where? (Bauer et al., 2021). Then the word *phaneitai* is a third-person singular medial indicative future verb translated as How did he appear? (Bauer et al., 2021). So, *ποῦ φανεῖται* (*pou phaneitai*) means where will he appear, i.e. what will happen to him? The future tense explains that this word refers to an event that will happen in the future. It is a rhetorical question that makes the reader ponder and find out what will happen. Interestingly, the diathesis used in this word is medial. According to Merkle and Plummer (2020), diathesis is an element of the verb that describes the relationship between the action and the actor of the action. Medial diathesis means that the subject acts as both the doer and the sufferer of the action, or it can be explained that the subject performs and experiences the impact of his/her action. This diathesis emphasis explains that every wicked and sinful person will experience the impact of their actions when they choose the wrong life. Their decisions have great implications for what they will receive as divine retribution and justice.

Context Analysis

Bridges writes Proverbs 11:31, which explains the inspired application of this narrative perfectly outlining the mind of God. This proverb is introduced to every believer with a special call to heed it! The righteous must be under the discipline and chastening of God so that their lives will improve day by day. Otherwise, God's judgment will be directed at them. Divine rebuke and chastisement are so that the righteous can live well and not become wicked. If the righteous must be punished if they make mistakes, how much more the wicked and sinful (Bridges, 2015). According to Alter (2017), in translating Proverbs 11:31, one must also look at Peter's quote where Peter's narrative has shown the true purpose of Proverbs, to warn every righteous person to live in the fear of the Lord because retribution for wrongdoing remains both for the righteous and for the wicked. (Alter, 2017). Clifford (1999) explains the Hebrew syntax, "if ... how much more ... " (*hên... 'ap kî ...*) is found in Deut. 31:27, 1 Sam. 23:3, Job. 15:15-16 and 25:5-6. In Proverbs 19:7, this word appears without the opening word "if." The word translated as "getting its due" connotes the full correlation between deeds and their consequences, as in Jer. 18:20 and Prov. 13:13. Judgments made on human actions, even the best ones, should be a warning for everyone to be careful in living. Peter tried to cite this as a warning to the early church (Clifford, 1999). Waltke himself emphasizes that this verse implies a distinction between the punishment of the righteous "on earth" and the future punishment of the wicked, which is the theme of this section. The previous proverbs leave

no doubt that their eternal death is imminent. If divine justice is done, it will be in favor of the righteous. It will not favor the wicked much less the sinner (v. 31b). History is full of illustrations of this principle: Moses and Aaron (cf. Num. 20:12 with Deut. 3:23-26; Num. 27:14 with Ps. 99:6-8), Eli (1 Sam. 2:27-36), David (2 Sam. 12:9-12; Ps. 32:3, 4; 38:1-5[2-6]), Solomon (1 King. 11:9-13), the disobedient prophets (1 King. 13:2-24), and Hezekiah (Isa. 39:1-7). The righteous are chastened by the LORD so that they will not be condemned with the world (Prov. 3:11-12; 1 Cor 11:32), (Waltke, 2014). Waltke's argumentation explains the scriptural perspective of divine justice and retribution for every human life.

From the opinions of Bridge, Alter, Clifford, and Waltke, two basic things can be concluded from their interpretation of Proverbs 11:31 about Peter's quote in 1 Peter 4:18, namely: first, the context of this verse emphasizes the judgment that will apply to the righteous in the form of chastisement on earth, so that they will not be destroyed together with the wicked in eternity. God intends this warning and chastisement for the righteous to remain vigilant and live righteously; secondly, the context specifically explains how the lives of the wicked and sinners will end up being destroyed. However, it reminds the reader always to be vigilant and motivated to live a righteous life. If Christians don't live a righteous life, God can rebuke and chasten them.

Meanwhile, the context of 1 Peter 4:18 speaks of a broader passage in which Peter speaks of Christian suffering and judgment beginning with the household of God (1 Peter 4:17-19), (Hendarwoto et al., 2024). In 1 Peter 4:12-19, Peter writes to Christians experiencing persecution and suffering. He encourages them to see their trials as part of the sufferings of Christ and rejoice in the revelation of His glory. He assures them that suffering in the name of Christ is a sign of blessing and God's favor (verses 13-14). Peter quoted Proverbs 11:31: "If the righteous receive his portion on earth, how much more the wicked and sinners!" This wisdom advice emphasizes the principle that if the righteous, who are pleasing to God, face hardship and are judged, then the fate of the wicked and sinners will be much more severe (Vinson et al., 2014). Cailing (2013) writes that understanding the context of "the difficulty of the righteous being saved" does not mean that salvation is uncertain for the righteous. Still, it recognizes the challenging process of living a faithful life in a world that has fallen into sin. Salvation involves enduring trials, persevering in faith, and often suffering for the sake of righteousness (cf. Phil. 1:29) (Cailing, 2013). Stevenson (2010) adds that the "judgment" mentioned can be seen as a refining process that purifies believers. When judgment begins with God's household, it tests and strengthens their faith. The LXX replaces the word "redeemed" with "saved." Still, it retains the form of *a fortiori* argument (a conjecture used to state a conclusion for which there is stronger evidence than previously accepted) (Stevenson, 2010). The LXX replaces "on earth" with *molis*, which is usually translated as "with difficulty" or "barely," a word taken up by 1 Peter: "If the righteous are barely [*mollis*] saved, what will become

of the wicked and sinners?" It serves as a reminder that there will come a time when God's justice will apply to every human being, including the righteous. That is why the righteous must live well based on God's righteousness (Carson, 2017).

Peter's motive in quoting the Old Testament in his letter

Carson explains the words that are largely borrowed from Ezek. 9:5-6; Zech. 13:9; Mal. 3:1-3, 1 Peter 4:17 asserts that it is time for judgment to begin in the household of God. However, the context of 1 Peter 4 shows that it refers to what its Christian readers are going through who are suffering at the hands of pagan oppressors. Their suffering was unjust. So how can this be considered a sign of God's judgment? The coming judgment has appeared in the narratives of Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Malachi, which emphasize that the judgment is completely just, and if the judgment brings punishment, then the punishment is deserved (Carson, 2017). Thus, although some narratives from Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Malachi have been incorporated into 1 Peter 4:17, the context of "fiery trials" that take place by God's will, are allowed to "test" believers (cf. 1 Peter 4:12).

To say that "salvation is difficult for the righteous" is not to say that "God finds it difficult to save them" (although believers should not underestimate the cost of redemption). For God's people, by Jesus' instructions, entering the narrow gate (Luke 13:23-24) and facing opposition from the world will greatly expose the believer to many challenges and struggles to maintain the salvation that has been obtained. Many tempting offers of the world occur as a test for believers to maintain faith (cf. Mt. 10; Mark 13:20). Implicitly, this challenges the readers of Peter's letter, the early church, to persevere to the end. Previously, the motive Peter offered to his readers was their opportunity to glorify God through their suffering, their pleasure to be associated with the name of Christ (cf. 1 Pet. 4:16). But in the context of 1 Peter 4:18, Peter has given a different motive: that they never envy the oppressors and persecutors, because those who reject the gospel will suffer more than anything Christians have to face in this life. God is just, and His judgment will apply to everyone, including the wicked.

The above has clarified Peter's main motive for quoting the New Testament, especially Proverbs 11:31, and applying it to the early church's life context. This strengthened the believers' understanding of God's justice and judgment that will take place against all people.

Implications of Life Choices to Become Righteous

The wisdom literature in Proverbs 11:31, quoted by Peter in 1 Peter 4:18 functions become a warning and a challenge for everyone to choose to live as a righteous person. God's justice through the vengeance carried out on earth has become a strong urge to change and maintain a good character. Therefore, from the results of the analysis that has

been conducted, this study found that to be a righteous person, one must make conscious and deliberate choices that align one's life with moral and spiritual principles.

The implication of the context of 1 Peter 4:18 for the wicked and sinners is that it speaks of the severe impact that will be experienced. If the righteous experience such trials and tribulations, the consequences for those who reject God (the wicked and sinners) will be much more severe. This verse underscores divine judgment's serious and inevitable nature against those who disobey the gospel. When Peter quotes Proverbs 11:31, it serves as a sobering reminder of the reality of divine judgment and the cost of discipleship. For the righteous, salvation is a journey characterized by trials and perseverance. According to Longman III, these trials serve to purify and strengthen their faith. In contrast, the wicked and sinners will face a much harsher judgment, underscoring the urgency to respond to the gospel. Peter's message encourages believers to remain fearless of God and steadfast in their faith despite suffering, with the assurance that their trials are temporary and purposeful (Longman III, 2017b). The message also serves as a warning to those who reject God's call, highlighting their choices' inevitable and severe consequences.

Here are three life choices that are essential to becoming a righteous person: First, persevere in suffering. Proverbs 11:31 and 1 Peter 4:18 address the fact that the righteous will face difficulties and challenges in life. Perseverance in suffering means remaining steadfast and faithful to God despite difficulties. It involves trusting in God's ultimate justice and maintaining integrity despite difficult circumstances (A. Pattinaja et al., 2023). A key component in making this commitment is developing the ability to endure trials and difficulties without losing faith, continuing to trust and obey God, knowing that He is ultimately in control and will reward righteousness, and holding on to the hope that God will deliver and justify the righteous, as it says in Proverbs 11:31 that the righteous will receive their due on earth. Camp (2020) writes that it is precisely when the righteous are in a state of distress and struggle that the principles of righteousness will become the main solid foundation that serves as a fence to maintain a solid moral ethic for the righteous. Pressure develops the desire and choice to surrender to God and live righteously.

Second, live a life of integrity. Proverbs 11:31 emphasizes that the righteous will receive their reward, implying that living a life of integrity is essential. Integrity involves honesty, moral uprightness, and consistency in one's actions and character (Clifford, 2019). It means doing what is right by God's standards, even when difficult or unpopular. Key components of making this commitment are being honest in all transactions and interactions, obeying ethical principles and God's commandments, and demonstrating the same righteous behavior in private and public. Living with integrity and loyalty to God will lead the righteous to be vigilant against the pitfalls of the sin of convenience and always base decisions and choices on the Word of God. (A. A. Pattinaja & Sualang, 2023). Living with consistency means doing the truth wherever the righteous live. This is

in line with Peter's warning, that God sets a standard of judgment for the righteous so that they strive for a better life in doing God's will.

Third, doing good. 1 Peter 4:18 highlights the seriousness of living a godly life, noting that even the righteous are saved with difficulty. This underscores the importance of actively pursuing good deeds and living in a way that reflects God's love and justice. This involves being proactive in doing good and helping others, embodying God's righteousness. Goldingay (2018) notes that the decision to do good deeds will have a profound and far-reaching impact on everyone around the believer because good deeds are evidence of love in action rather than mere rhetoric (cf. 1 John 3:18). A key component of this commitment is seeking to share with those in need, showing kindness and empathy to others, especially to those who are suffering, engaging in networks of service, and contributing positively to be an example and blessing to others.

Based on Proverbs 11:31 and 1 Peter 4:18, the three life choices for being righteous are persevering in suffering, living a life of integrity, and actively doing good deeds. These choices reflect a commitment to follow God's will, believe in His ultimate justice, and positively impact others through righteous living. By adhering to these principles, everyone can grow in the truth and fulfill God's call to live faithfully and justly (A. A. Pattinaja & Suhun, 2024). When God entrusts a leadership role to a righteous person, he or she will be a leader who is formed and fenced by righteous values and has integrity.

DISCUSSION

Intertextuality is not a method but a theory (or set of theories) about producing meaning (Moyise, 2005). No text stands alone, and contrary to structuralist theory, texts cannot be understood in isolation. It can only be understood as part of a network or matrix of other texts. Intertextuality suggests that the meaning of a text is not fixed but open to revision as new texts come along and reposition it (Moyise, 2005). Porter reveals that intertextual studies are a bridge to open more understanding of the Old Testament texts used in the New Testament. The use of the Old Testament in the New Testament raises a wide range of exegetical and practical questions, from text types to intertextuality, from allusions to possible illusions, from questions of ancient understanding to meaning (Porter, 2016). Stamps point out that intertextual research should examine how the Old Testament is used in the New Testament as a rhetorical device. The implication of seeing these usages as rhetorical devices is that assessing the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament is not primarily about determining historicity as an interpretive control or a theological issue that challenges our concept of God's Word. Rather, it gives the interpreter the freedom to explore the question from the perspective of its "impact" on both ancient and modern readers (Stamps, 2016). Similarly, McLay (2016a) investigates the nature of biblical texts and biblical concepts during the period when the New Testament was written. He also defines important terms, such as "Scripture," "canon,"

and "biblical text," before he examines the nature of biblical texts in the first and second centuries. To illustrate textual diversity, McLay (2016a) uses the example of Hebrews 1:6. He shows that Proverbs 2:43 and Hebrews 1:6 both correspond to a longer reading of Deuteronomy 32:43 preserved in Ancient Greek (Septuagint) but not in the Masoretic Text or the Qumran Text. He also points out that Ancient Greek, 4QDeutq, the Masoretic Text, Odes 2:43, and Hebrews 1:6 describe a way of transmitting the biblical text, which addresses the ongoing search for the original biblical text. Someone interested in the issue of the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament would be well advised to consider the rhetoric of the text and even the basis of the quotations used. Both reappear in individual treatments of biblical material (McLay, 2016a). From the explanations of Moyise, Potter, Stamp, and McLay, it can be concluded that intertextual research is very important to understand better the meaning and context of the corresponding or quoted texts in both the Old Testament and New Testament. The rationale of this study is to look at the quoted text rhetorically and have a free interpretation while paying attention to the historical context in which the verse was written and quoted.

The intertextual study of Peter's motive for quoting Proverbs 11:31 in 1 Peter 4:18 opens up several avenues for future theological and biblical research, especially in understanding the relationship between the Old and New Testament Scriptures. The implications of this study for future research are as follows: First, it provides an opportunity to explore Peter's use of Old Testament wisdom literature through his writings. For example, a comparative study of 1 Peter 5:5, which cites Proverbs 3:34, and 2 Peter 2:22, which refers to Proverbs 26:11, could reveal a broader pattern of how Peter used wisdom literature to address his readers' spiritual and moral challenges. These connections highlight Peter's reliance on the Old Testament as a theological foundation for his teaching and pastoral ministry. Second, the emphasis on right living in the face of suffering provides a rich framework for developing contemporary pastoral strategies. Future research could explore how these biblical principles can be contextualized for modern audiences, particularly in addressing issues of perseverance, moral integrity, and shared responsibility in adversity. This could include practical applications to guide Christian communities in making life choices that reflect their faith in divine justice and hope for ultimate salvation. Third, this research could provide the basis for further study of how other New Testament writers incorporated Old Testament wisdom literature into their writings. A comparative analysis with Paul's use of Proverbs in Romans 12:20 or James' reference to Proverbs in James 4:6 could provide a broader understanding of the role of wisdom literature in shaping early Christian ethics and theology.

CONCLUSION

Peter's motive for quoting Proverbs 11:31 in 1 Peter 4:18 underscores his pastoral concern to strengthen the early Christian community's resolve to live righteously amid

trial and persecution, to encourage believers to trust in divine justice, to encourage believers to persevere in suffering and to encourage believers always to do good. Peter's motive for quoting the Old Testament also serves as a theological and practical guide for believers, enabling them to live in a way that reflects their faith and trust in God's final judgment and deliverance. As believers, it requires a commitment to make intentional life choices that reflect a deep commitment to faith, moral integrity, and service to others. These choices are not always easy, but they will lead us to a fulfilling and meaningful life consistent with divine principles and positively contribute to others.

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The authors have no competing interests in writing this article.

Author contributions

A.A.P conceptualised and designed the study, acquired data, performed the statistical analysis and drafted the manuscript. A.K and F.Y.S participated in the data analysis and article writing.

Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

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Data availability

This research is intertextual analysis (hermeneutic), so the references listed are theories and reinforcements of ideas. There is no data collection in the field.

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