

4QBeatitudes (and 4QWiles of the Wicked Woman)

Eibert Tigchelaar

I. Title

The fragmentary Dead Sea Scrolls manuscript 4Q525 was originally referred to as *Wisdom Work with Beatitudes*, but has now officially received the title *4QBeatitudes* or *Beatitudes*, even though only a small section of the preserved text has those beatitudes. Some of the parts of 4Q525 (especially fragment 15) are closely related, with respect to theme, style, and phraseology, to the so-called *Wiles of the Wicked Woman*, the unfortunate name given to 4Q184, and it is possible that *Beatitudes* and the *Wiles of the Wicked Woman* belonged to one or more works attributed to Solomon, for which reason the title *Words of Solomon* or *Admonition of King Solomon* has been proposed for those texts.

II. Introduction

a. Contents

Only fragments, no running text, remain from 4Q525 (*Beatitudes*). Therefore we cannot describe the contents from beginning (which is preserved in fragment 1) to end, or even in order. The portions of texts presented here contain in fragment 2 ii a series of beatitudes, declaring blessed the person who searches and acquires wisdom, which search also seems to be the topic of fragment 5. 4Q525 fragment 14 ii describes the well-being and remembrance after death of the wise man, which section is followed on the same fragment by a new one which cautions the understanding one to be careful in his speech. Fragment 15 is of an entirely different nature since it describes in all detail the house of the strange or loose woman of Proverbs 2:16-19. The style of this latter fragment is very similar to that of the description of the strange woman in 4Q184 1. Also fragment 24 ii (+ 35) may refer to that house, or rather, since the beginning reminds one of Proverbs 9:1-5, to the house of Wisdom. In short, all of the larger fragments deal with wisdom and folly, and some seem to be elaborations on parts of Proverbs 1-9.

b. Sectarian or not?

The traditional criteria for determining whether a composition is “sectarian” or not (as defined by the supposedly core “sectarian” texts *Rule of the Community*, *Damascus Document*, *War Rule*, *Hodayot*, and the *Pesharim*), indicate that there is little or nothing sectarian in *Beatitudes* or the *Wiles of the Wicked Woman*. This judgment is based on the lack of specific community terminology, the use of divine name *elohim* rather than *el*, the absence of “sectarian” dualism, eschatology, or special revelation, or on the supposed setting of the text in an upper-class scribal milieu. However, several close correspondences between *Beatitudes* and the *Two Spirits Treatise* (1QS 3-4) as well as some of the *Hodayot* can be pointed out, which

shows that the relationship between these texts is more complex. One hypothesis is that the texts are multi-layered, with older and younger sections. See also below III.d. Community.

c. Setting

The only fragment that explicitly mentions a specific setting is 4Q525 14 ii, which describes the addressee as a future teacher, whose teachings will be remembered, and which envisages the possibility that the addressee will speak to princes. Hence, Goff argues for an upper-class scribal milieu, similar to that of Ben Sira. In fact, some of the major motifs and forms of *Beatitudes* are reminiscent of Ben Sira: the use of beatitudes, the admonition to pursue wisdom, an ethics of caution, and the importance of being remembered after one's death. Implicitly, the repeated admonition to listen and pay attention, as well as the use of *sons* in 2 ii + 3 12 ("And now, sons, l[isten]"), indicates a pedagogical setting. But then, this might be only the setting of the literary genre, and need not indicate that this specific composition had that particular setting.

d. Purpose of the Text

On a surface reading, *Beatitudes* would seem to be a wisdom text designed for the instruction of students, urging one to acquire wisdom, and promoting ideals such as humility. However, the many intentional literary connections with Psalms and Proverbs, and the poetical elaborations on the house of the Wicked Woman in *Beatitudes*, or on that figure herself in *Wiles of the Wicked Woman*, suggest that the work had a literary and interpretive purpose, rather than a pedagogical or didactic one.

III. Literary Aspects

a. Authorship

We have a remnant of the first line of *Beatitudes*, "which he spo]ke through the wisdom which God had given him" (4Q525 1 1), and the subsequent phrases seem to echo Proverbs 1:2-6. The many expansions of Proverbs suggest that the text was attributed to Solomon, even though some of the sapiential terms in the work better fit David. As in Proverbs, wisdom is sometimes described, and sometimes speaks in first person. Because of the sapiential character of the work, it should not be contributed to Moses, even though the law is mentioned once in the preserved text.

The actual author or authors of the text are unknown.

b. Date

Generally, *Beatitudes* is dated in between Ben Sira and the early "sectarian" literature, resulting in a date of 160-140 B.C.E. However, the assumption that some early "sectarian" works used *Beatitudes*, does not take account of a possible growth or fluidity of the text, and the possibility that an older version was reworked by the

circles which knew the *Two Spirits Treatise* and the *Hodayot*. The hand of the manuscript 4Q525 is described as early Herodian, which means that the composition we know is at the latest from the first century B.C.E.

c. Genre

Both *Beatitudes* and *Wiles of the Wicked Woman* participate in the genre of wisdom literature. *Beatitudes* abounds with wisdom terminology, and shares typical wisdom forms such as admonitions and beatitudes with other wisdom writings such as Proverbs and Ben Sira. And then, *Beatitudes* and *Wiles of the Wicked Woman* are involved in interpreting, rewriting and expanding motifs from Proverbs 1-9. From that perspective, they also are examples of extensions or reworkings of scripture.

Both works are poetical. The well-preserved sections show that the text consists of stichs of generally two parallel clauses, and 5Q16 has even written the text stichographically. A typical poetical feature is the non-use of the article *ha* and the accusative particle *et* in the poetical sections (with a few exceptions in 4Q525).

d. Community

Beatitudes has no clear mention of any community, and it is unlikely that the expressions “those who fear God,” or “those who love God” in fragment 5 are references to a specific community. Noteworthy is the use of *yahad* in *Beatitudes* (6x) and *Wiles of the Wicked Woman* (1x), always without article, which could be connected to the non-use of articles. In 4Q184 1 2 a substantive interpretation “she scoffs the community,” is easier than an adjectival “she scoffs altogether.” Possible references to another group in 4Q184, suggested by older scholars, but dismissed by later scholarship, could support the idea that *yahad* in 4Q184 means community, perhaps a precursor of, or identical with, the *yahad* of the “sectarian” texts.

e. Text

i. Language

Beatitudes and *Wiles of the Wicked Woman* are written in Hebrew, as is usual for the Dead Sea Scrolls sapiential works. The style imitates that of Biblical Hebrew, up to the point of using consecutive perfects.

ii. Extant manuscripts

Beatitudes is the name given to the composition found in 4Q525. A Qumran Cave 5 manuscript (5Q16) attests to the text of 4Q525 fragment 15, and therefore may be another copy of *Beatitudes*, or of one of the sections of *Beatitudes*. The remnants of 4Q184 (*Wiles of the Wicked Woman*) do not textually overlap with the fragments of either 4Q525 or 5Q16, so that it remains uncertain whether these related works were ever actually part of one composition.

iii. Sources

The available fragmentary evidence is too limited to serve as a basis for source- or redaction criticism. Like many sapiential works, *Beatitudes* may have joined different materials, or it may have developed over time. A possible indication of the latter are the different perspectives on afterlife found in *Beatitudes*. In *Wiles of the Wicked Woman*, it is plausible that the fragment 1 contained a poem that fitted exactly on one column, which suggests that the scribe considered it to be a discrete literary unit. It is imaginable that some of the poems in 4Q525 were composed as separate works (and 5Q16 could have contained only one such poem).

iv. Transmission of the text

Hitherto, we have no evidence of transmission of either *Beatitudes* or the *Wiles of the Wicked Woman* outside of Qumran.

f. Reception of the Text in 2TP

Neither *Beatitudes* nor the *Wiles of the Wicked Woman* are known in works outside the Qumran collection. Puech has argued that some of the “sectarian” texts, especially different sections of the *Rule of the Community*, employed parts of *Beatitudes*. For example, 1QS 4:7-8 is thought to have taken up and revised the wording of 4Q525 11-12, but the relationship between the texts probably cannot be explained through models of linear development.

IV. Theological Perspective of the Text

a. Theological motifs

The juxtaposition of wisdom and the law (*torah*) of the Most High in 4Q525 2 ii+3 3-4 raises the question of the relationship between wisdom and law, and what they refer to. The text combines the language and metaphors of Proverbs 1-9 and Psalms 1 or 119, and—in the preserved parts—does not explicitly identify “law” with the Torah given at Sinai, or which Moses commanded us (Sirach 24:23). Rather, both law and wisdom are related to terms as humility, patience, and perfection. Because of the imperfect state of the text, it is impossible to determine whether wisdom and law are blended into one concept, or whether one of them requires the other.

The issue of eschatology or life after death in *Beatitudes* is unclear. 4Q525 fragment 14 ii 12-16 seems to promise a good, peaceful, and honorable life to the one who has found wisdom, and describes as rewards after his death that students will walk according to his teaching and keep him in memory. This is not unlike Ben Sira, who sees a good name and a good memory after one’s death as the objectives of life. However, fragments 11-12 describe rewards that in 1QS 4:7-8 refer to one’s eternal position in the afterlife. Also, the descriptions of the houses of Folly and of Wisdom, taking up the imagery of Proverbs 2:16-19 and 9:1-5, may suggest some kind of afterlife distinction. If there are really two perspectives, one might assume the joining of different materials, or a development of the work.

A third characteristic theological or anthropological perspective appears in some small fragments (4Q525 6, 7, 9, 13, 23—of which only fragment 13 is presented here) which associate spirits and vices, which apparently take hold of one's bodily members. This idea, as well as the unique term *tekamim* for bodily members or entrails, is found in many of the "sectarian" texts (see, e.g., 1QS 4:20-21; 1QH^a 4; 4Q511 48-49+41). Perhaps 4Q525 14 ii 19 presents the opposite idea.

Fourthly, statistically the concept of humility or submission (*enwa*) is important in *Beatitudes*, a term that within the Scrolls corpus is mainly found in the *Rule of the Community* manuscripts, but which also connects *Beatitudes* with Matthew.

b. *Beatitudes* and the Old Testament

Intertextually, the *Beatitudes* are largely dependent on Proverbs. This goes for the beginning of the work, for individual phrases ("and now, sons, listen"), for the use of beatitudes ("Blessed is the man who finds/reaches wisdom"), and for the poetic elaboration of the houses of Folly and Wisdom found in Proverbs 2 and 9. Likewise, *Wiles of the Wicked Woman* extends the description of the figure of Folly in Proverbs 1-9. In that sense, both *Beatitudes* and the *Wiles of the Wicked Woman* may be understood as rewritings of Proverbs 1-9. At the same time, *Beatitudes*, and especially the beatitudes, also has connections with the Psalms, for example Psalm 24:4 and 6. Other connections or verbal correspondences can be found between *Beatitudes* and Ben Sira, for example with regard to caution when one speaks.

Reading Proverbs 1-9 as a subtext also enables one to see the theological position of the Scrolls texts vis-à-vis Proverbs. For example, in Proverbs 2 understanding and wisdom will save one from the strange woman, whereas the *Wiles of the Wicked Woman* describes even the righteous and upright as helpless victims of her schemes. 4Q184 3, which prescribes purification and prayer, may indicate how one can be saved.

c. *Beatitudes* and the New Testament

The most important connection between *Beatitudes* and the New Testament is between the list of beatitudes in 4Q525 2 ii and in Matthew 5. From a formal perspective, 4Q525 2 ii presents the first pre-Matthean example of a long sequence of beatitudes, and the preserved 4+1 structure in *Beatitudes* may be related to the 8+1 structure in Matthew 5. In those respects the beatitudes of Matthew 5 may go back to a Semitic model. With regard to content, the beatitudes of both compositions share several common phrases (for example "pure heart" vs. "pure of heart"; or "humble"/"meek"). There is probably no case for a direct connection, since both texts echo the same set of Psalms, such as Psalm 37. One may go one step further and determine to what extent the remainder of *Beatitudes* shows other correspondences with Matthew 5, for example with regard to affliction or eschatological reward.

- V. Possible Inclusion of “Text Boxes”
 - a. Should other smaller texts be included in your work they may be presented in “Text Boxes”
 - b. Each box will highlight the content of the text – the English translation of the additional text will be left to the discretion of the contributor.

VI. Discussion Questions

1. Can the close connection between *Beatitudes* and the Matthean series of beatitudes shed any light on the relationship between Matthew’s and Luke’s beatitudes?
2. Can we read *Beatitudes* and the *Wiles of the Wicked Woman* as interpretive rewritings or as expansions of Proverbs 1-9?
3. How can we see the relationship between *Beatitudes* and the *Rule of the Community*?
4. How can we compare the eschatology of *Beatitudes* with that of Matthew’s beatitudes?

VII. Bibliography

a. Introductory Reading

- Goff, Matthew, *Discerning Wisdom: The Sapiential Literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 198–229
- , “Recent Trends in the Study of Early Jewish Wisdom Literature: The Contribution of 4QInstruction and Other Qumran Texts,” *Currents in Biblical Research* 7 (2009): 376–416
- Lange, Armin, “Wisdom Literature and Thought in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. Timothy H. Lim and John J. Collins; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 455–78
- Donald W. Parry and Emanuel Tov, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader 4: Calendrical and Sapiential Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 246–65 (contains the Hebrew text and often inaccurate English translation of all fragments).

b. Intermediate / Advanced Reading (5-10 sources)

- Brooke, George, “The Wisdom of Matthew’s Beatitudes,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 217–34.
- Puech, Émile, “The Collection of Beatitudes in Hebrew and in Greek (4Q525 1–4 and Mt 5, 3–12),” in *Early Christianity in Context. Monuments and Documents* (ed. F. Manns and E. Alliata; Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1993), 353–68.
- , “525. 4QBéatitudes,” in *Qumrân Grotte 4 XVII Textes Hébreux (4Q521-4Q528, 4Q576-4Q579)* (Discoveries in the Judaean Desert 25; Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 115–78.
- Tigchelaar, Eibert, “Lady Folly and her House in Three Qumran Manuscripts: On the Relation between 4Q525 15, 5Q16, and 4Q184 1,” *Revue de Qumran* 23/91 (2008): 271–81.

White Crawford, "Lady Wisdom and Dame Folly at Qumran," *DSD* 5 (1998): 355–66.

VIII. English Translation of the Text (or relevant portions for large texts)

4Q525 1

1 [... which he spok]e through the wisdom that God had given hem [...] 2 [... to kno]w knowledge and inst[ruction], to understand [...] 3 [...] to increase [...]

4Q525 2 ii + 3

[Blessed is he who speaks] 1 with a pure heart, / and does not slander with his tongue.
Blessed are those who hold fast to her statutes, / and do not hold fast 2 to ways of injustice.
Blessed are those who rejoice in her, / and do not blather on the ways of folly.
Blessed are those who seek her 3 with clean hands, / and do not search her with a deceitful heart.
Blessed is the man who has reached wisdom;
He walks 4 in the law of the Most High, / and sets his heart to her ways.
He controls himself by her instructions, / and always takes pleasure in her reprimands.
5 He does not forsake her in the distress [when he] is tes[ted], / and at the time of anguish he does not abandon her.
He does not forget her [in days of] dread, / 6 and, in submitting himself, he does not despise her.
Rather, he meditates on her continually, / and in his distress he contemplates [her].
With all 7 his being he [pays attention to her, / and he places her] before his eyes, in order not to walk on the ways of [...]
8 [...] her together, / and he devotes his heart entirely to her [

4Q525 5

6 [...] in tr[uth, and] do n[ot] seek her with an ev[il] heart [...] 7 her ways [...] do not [see]k her with a deceitful heart, and [her] sta[tutes ... do not] abandon your [inher]itance to s[trangers], or your lot to foreigners. For wise [...] 9 [they] instruct in sweetness. Those who fear God keep her ways and walk in [...] 10 her statutes, and no not reject her reproofs. The ones who have understanding will acquire [...] 11 Those who walk in perfection will thwart injustice, and her discipline they will not despise [...] 12 they will carry (?); the prudent will dig her ways, and in its depths they will [...] 13 they will look. Those who love God will be modest in it, and in the wa[ys of ...]

4Q525 11-12

1 [...] and abundant peace, together with all [eternal] blessings [...] 2 [... with] a robe of majesty for all who hold fast to me [...] 3 [... for all who walk] perfectly in all my ways, and for a[ll ...] 4 [...] and with every spirit [...]

4Q525 13

2 [... you will inher]it amongst those who are evil-eyed, you shall give [...] 3 [...] they will remain angry, so as to shed blood [...] 4 [...] you will inherit pride, and in your (!) bodily members [...] 5 [...] all who inherit her [...] 6 [...] listen to me all [...]

4Q525 14 ii

1 [...] your [in]heritance [...] 2 on an unjust throne, and on the high places where [they] gather [...] 3 in their heart, and they will raise your head [...] 4 you will praise, and because of your word they will become arrog[ant ...] 5 in all majesty, and desirable in [...] 6 attack on your ways, you will not be shaken [...] 7 you will bless yourself. And when you slip, you will find s[upport ...] 8 and the scorn of your enemy will not get to you [...] 9 together, and your enemies will lie on the threshold [...] 10 your heart, and you will take delight in G[od] when [they] pollute?[...] 11 your feet to a broad place, and

you will tread on the backs of your enemies [...] 12 your soul, and he will deliver you from all evil, and dread will not get to you [...] 13 he gives you. He will fill your days with good, and you will [walk] in abundant peace [...] 14 you will inherit honor. And when you are swept away to the eternal rest, they will inherit [...] 15 and all who have known you will walk together according to your teaching [...] 16 together they will mourn, and in your ways they will remember you, and you will be [...] 17
Blank line.

18 And now, understanding one, listen to me, and set your heart to the w[ords of my mouth ...] 19 Acquire knowledge for your belly, and with [your] bo[dy] meditate [...] 20 with true humility utter [your] words [and do no]t give [...] do not] 21 respond to the words of your companions, lest he [prepa]re for you [...] 22 and in accordance to the one who listens to you, respond to him as is fitting for him (?). Take ca[re ... Do not] 23 pour out a discourse, before you have heard their words. [...] 24 much. First listen to their speech, and then answer with [...] 25 patiently express them, and respond wisely in the midst of princes, and in [...] 26 with your lips, and take much care not to be flippant in [...] 27 lest you get caught by your lips, and [get] ensnared together with your ton[gue ...] 28 insolent words [...] from me and are twisted [...]

4Q525 15 + 5Q16

1 dar]k darkness. [...] gathers poison (?), and in [...] 2 [...]] adders [...] walk(s). To it comes [...] 3 [In] its [...] the fiery serpent walks, and in its windows the adder crawls; In [its] roof chambers [...] 4 [...] In it stand eternal curses, and venom of serpents [...] 5 [...] viper, and in it fly Flame[s] of Death; At its entrance treads Sheol, and at its ends 6 lies [...] darkness; Its foundation are flames of sulfur, and its base is fire [...] Its thresholds 7 are ... of plague, and its lintels are shameful reproaches; Its locks are snares of destruction, and its doorposts are [...] 8 All who enter it will not ret]urn, and they will not attain the paths of life. [...] 9 of arrogance; Its couches are beds of perdition, and its beds are [...] 10 Its tables are full (of) ...

4Q525 24 ii + 35

1 [to the one who has un]derstanding she utters her speech: [...you who are sim]ple, 2 pay attention to me, and co[me to my house. *Eat the meal which*] 3 I have prepared, and drink from the wi[ne which] I have mixed [...] 4 my house is a house of [...] 5 my house, in it dwells [...] 6 for ever they tread [...] 7 its thresholds ... [...] 8 snake/burning (?); and all who drink [...] 9 a well of waters of the so[urce of ...]

4Q184 1

[...] brings forth vanity / and with [her mouth she utters futi]lity
She seeks errors continuously / [And she] sharpens the words of [her mouth]
[(with) mock] and derision she flatters / And scoffs the community with unjust l[ips.]
Her heart prepares insolence / And her kidneys (are) sn[ares.]
[Her palms] are defiled by perversity / And her hands hold on to the pit
Her feet descend to do evil / And to walk in [sinful] transgressions.
[Her cloaks] are foundations of darkness / And many sins are in her skirts
Her [garments] are the blackest night / Her attire [is cloudy gloom]
Her coverings are the darkness of twilight / Her jewelry are plagues of the pit.
Her couches are beds of the Pit / [And her benches] are the depths of the Hell
Her night-dwellings are beds of darkness / And at the dead of night is when she holds sway.
She pitches camp on the foundations of darkness / And resides in the tents of Doom.
In the midst of eternal flames is her inheritance / And not in the midst of all the bright luminaries.
She namely is the beginning of all ways of injustice.
Woe, disaster to all who inherit her / And destruction to all who hold on to her
Because her ways are ways of death / And her roads are paths of sin
Her tracks lead astray to injustice / And her streets are sinful guilt
Her gates are gates of death / In the door of her house Sheol treads.
All who go into her will not return / And all who inherit her will descend into the pit
She lies in ambush in hidden places / And she [...] all [...]

In the squares of the city she veils herself / And at the town gates she stands
One cannot stop her from always whoring around
Her eyes glance here and there / And her eyelids she raises wantonly
To spot a righteous man, so she can overtake him / A strong man, so she can let him stumble
To pervert the way of upright men / And to prevent the righteous elect from keeping the law
To make foolish the steadfast ones by lewdness / To cause the straight ones to change the custom.
To cause the meek ones to sin against God / And to turn away their steps from the righteous paths
To bring arrogance in their hearts / So that they do not tread on the right paths
To lead man(kind) astray on the paths of the Pit / And to entice with smooth talk [all] the sons of
men.

4Q184 3

1 [...] you will draw off (e.g. your sandals) [...] 2 [...] always purify for him [your] h[ands ...] 3 [...
st]retch out towards him your hands in pra[yer ...] 4 [... *rem*]ove from you iniquity [...] 5 [...] with the
foundation (?) of recklessness and ... [...]

