

The Liar paradox in Titus 1:12

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Note on Terminology

These terms are used somewhat informally (interchangeably):

- Cycle (סִבְבּ or κύκλος in Ecclesiastes 1:6), cyclic process
- Self-Reference, Self-Witness, Self-Testimony
(Genesis 22:16; Isaiah 45:23; Hebrews 6:13; John 8:12-20)
- Idem per idem (Exodus 3:14; 33:19; 21:23–24; Matthew 5:38)
(S. R. Driver, 1911; recently Lundbom, 1978)
- Perichoresis (περιχώρησις Gregory Nazianzen; John 14:10)
 - Coindwelling, Coinherence, ... by Gregory of Nyssa
(Stramara Jr. 1996, 1998). Reciprocal Interiority in study of John and 1 John (Brown 1966; Malatesta 1978)
- Vicious Circle (Titus 1:12) by Russell (1903) & Kripke (1975)
- Coinduction, Coinductive Logic (in computational logic and by Gupta & Min), and Circular Rhetoric (or Cyclic Rhetoric)

Reference in Logic

- **Saul A. Kripke**, "Outline of a Theory of Truth," *Journal of Philosophy* 72, no. 19 (1975): 690–716.
- **Melvin Fitting**, "A Kripke-Kleene Semantics for Logic Programs," *Journal of Logic Programming* 2, no. 4 (December 1985): 295–312. Melvin Fitting and Richard L. Mendelsohn, *First-Order Modal Logic* (New York: Springer, 1998)
- **Vern S. Poythress**, *Logic: A God-Centered Approach to the Foundation of Western Thought* (Wheaton, IL; Crossway, 2013). Online.
- Jon Barwise and Lawrence S. Moss, *Vicious Circles: On the Mathematics of Non-Wellfounded Phenomena* (Stanford, CA: CSLI Lecture Notes, 2004).
- Gerhard Brewka, Jurgen Dix, and Kurt Konolige, *Nonmonotonic Reasoning: An Overview* (Stanford, CA: CSLI Lecture Notes, 1997). Grigoris Antoniou, *Nonmonotonic Reasoning* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997).

Part 1

- Introduction and Background

- A plural form of paradox (παράδοξα) in Luke 5:26, for the word and deed of Jesus.
- "paradox" (παράδοξος): "contrary to opinion or exceeding expectation," "unexpected," "strange," "wonderful," or "remarkable" in Classic Greek, Koine Greek of the Bible, Patristic Greek, and consistently used till 19c.

Frederick W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 763; James Hope Moulton, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), 483; Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 2:255;

Circular Rhetoric and Paradox: Background

- Russell's Discovery - Paradox (1910 & logical atomism)
A barber is "one who shaves all those, and those only, who do not shave themselves." (Barber's Paradox)
Does the barber shave himself? Yes? or No?
(Russell 1918 Lecture: *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism*)
cf. "Physician, Heal yourself!" (Luke 4:24)
- The Liar Paradox (Titus 1:12). cf. Romans 3:4, Psalm 116:11
Even one of their own prophet has said, "Cretans are always liars."
"Κρήτες, ἀεὶ ψευδεῖς, κακὰ θηρία, γαστέρες ἀργαί"
[by Epimenides (circa 600BC), identified by Clement of Alexandria]
– "Logical Role of the Liar paradox in Titus 1:12, 13: A Dissent from the Commentaries in the Light of Philosophical and Logical Analysis" by Anthony C. Thiselton (BI 1994)

Two Traditional Approaches

- Logical Atomism 1 (**Russell**, followed by Tarski)
 - Philosophy is to provide a sound epistemological foundation
 - Classical Logic: to avoid circularity (paradox), to treat circular logic as invalid, and to have a hierarchy of language (in linear order) to prevent the circularity
- Logical Atomism 2 (**Wittgenstein** [who is a student of Russell])
 - Same conclusion but with very “radical view” on language
 - Philosophy is to point out linguistic mistake:
 - “**metaphysics and ethics were literally nonsensical**”
 - Language incapable of communicating any (objective) truth
 - Deconstructionism (Postmodernism) (by Derrida): to treat the languages as incapable and helpless. (“Is Zombie alive or dead?”)
 - Reconstruct one’s own personal & subjective meaning of the text (for there is no such a thing as objective “truth” expressed in a text).
 - The rise of Post-Liberal (Narrative) Theology

A Breakthrough by Kripke (1975) and Emerging new development with Circular Logic

Kripke (1975): “Outline of a Theory of Truth”, and
“Kripke-Kleene 3-valued Semantics for Logic Programs” by Fitting (1985), and various computational approaches, applications & implementations, including:

Coinductive Logic Programming with Negation as Failure by Gupta and Min (2009), and its application to the study of Circular Rhetoric and Paradox in the Bible by Min (SBL IM 2010–2017; EABS 2014, 2017; ETS 2014).

Rediscovering Circular Rhetoric and Logic in Trinitarian formulation in Early Christianity: Recent noteworthy work on Gregory of Nyssa by Stramara Jr. (1996; 1998).

Two Familiar Examples outside of the Bible

- “Cogito ergo sum” by Descartes, René
 - “I think, therefore I am.” in *Specimina Philosophiae* (1644)
 - This proposition became a fundamental element of Western Philosophy, as it was perceived to form a foundation for all knowledge. (Wiki)
- “Scripturae ex Scripturae explicanda est.”
 - **Augustine**: When we wish to examine passages made obscure by metaphorical expressions, the result should be something which is beyond dispute or which, if not beyond dispute, can be settled by finding and deploying corroboratory evidence from within scripture itself”
(*On Christian Doctrine* III.86-86, p. 87).
 - **Luther**: In this manner Scripture is its own light. It is a fine thing when Scripture explains itself. (Franz August **Otto Pieper**, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 3:362)

Part 2

- Survey - Selected Examples in the Bible
Circular Rhetoric and Paradox
 1. Exodus 3:14
 2. John 14:10, 11
 3. Titus 1:12
 4. Matthew 22:15-46
 5. Luke 17:20-30

Example 1. Exodus 3:14 "I am who I am"

"I am who I am (אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה)" in Exodus 3:14.

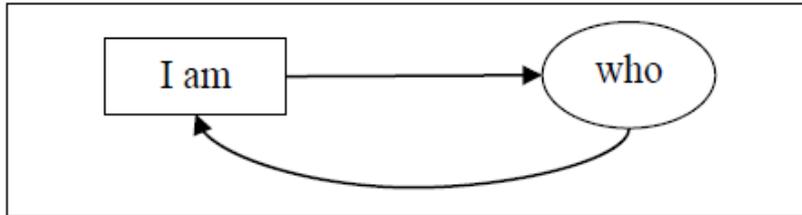


Figure 1. "I am who I am" in Exodus 3:14

idem per idem (OT) – S. R. Driver; Lundbom.

1 Cor 15:10 By the grace of God I am who I am. χάριτι δὲ θεοῦ εἰμι ὃ εἰμι

Example 2 - John 14:10, 11 "I am in the Father and the Father in me"

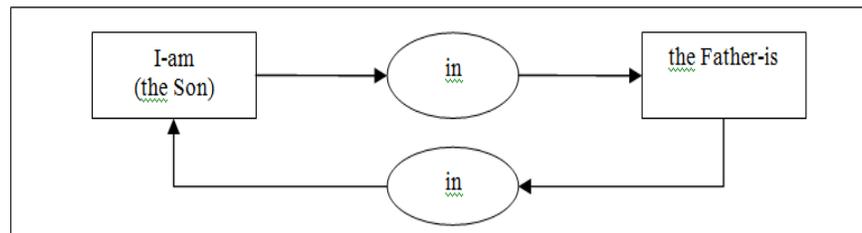


Figure 2. "I am in the Father and the Father is in me" in John 14:10

Perichoresis (περιχώρησις) and oneness by Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa; Trinitarian concept & term by Athanasius, and Cappadocian Fathers: coindwelling, coinherence, circumincession, cycle, periphoro, anacyclosis, etc.

Example 3 – Titus 1:12. The Liar Paradox “All the Cretans are liars!”

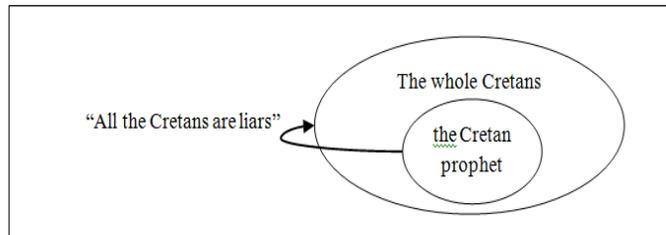


Figure 3. The Liar's Paradox in Titus 1:12

Romans 3:4; Psalm 116:11 - “All men are liars!”
cf. “Physician, Heal yourself!” (Luke 4:24)
Self-Reference with **Negation**
Bertrand Russell

Example 3 – Titus 1:12. The Liar Paradox “All the Cretans are liars!”

- Self-Reference with **Negation**
- Many paradoxes in the Bible use self-negation.
- Romans 3:4; Psalm 116:11 - “All men are liars.”
- Luke 4:24 – “Physician, Heal yourself!”
- A similar rhetoric and exegesis should be applied to all the prophetic assertions that all men are sinners.
 - Psalm 14:1–3; Romans 3:10–18; Ephesians 2:3
- A few more difficult examples (with self-negation) worthy of mention are the paradoxes of (1) self-denial discipleship (Mark 8:34), (2) saving by losing one's life (Mark 8:35), and (3) servant-leadership (Mark 9:35).

Example 4 – Matthew 22:15-46

Three Paradoxes in circular rhetoric

(1) Matthew 22:15-22

To Pay Tax to Caesar or not

(2) Matthew 22:23-33

Marriage vs Resurrection

(3) Matthew 22:41-46

David called Christ, “My Lord” in Psalm 110:1

Example 4 (1) Matthew 22:15-22

(1) Matthew 22:15-22. To Pay Tax to Caesar or not?

ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι
καὶ τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ τῷ θεῷ.

Options 1&2. “Yes for Yes” and “No for No” (Matthew 5:37)

2-valued logic (e.g., classical logic)

- The Son of God, Christ (King of Kings) to the people of God, expected to say: No! Your King is God (not Caesar). This answer is against **Herodians** saying “We are the servants of Caesar.”
- A man of a colony under the Roman imperial rule, expected to say: Yes! And this answer is against **Pharisees** to reject Jesus as Christ and the King of Kings.
- Political, Religious, Logical dilemma (deadlock, suicidal)

Example 4 (1) Matthew 22:15-22

To Pay Tax to Caesar or not?

Options 1&2. "Yes for Yes" and "No for No" (Matthew 5:37) and

Option 3. Right to remain in Silence (cf. Matthew 21:23-27)

3-valued logic

To reply: **I do not know**. No comment. I cannot answer. I will not answer. That's nonsense. I have a right to remain in silence. I am not going to play this stupid game. I will not say anything against my interest or in my own behalf.

²³ Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. "By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave you this authority?" ²⁴ Jesus replied, "I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. ²⁵ John's baptism— where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or of human origin?" They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' ²⁶ But if we say, 'Of human origin'— we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet." ²⁷ So they answered Jesus, "We don't know." Then he said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."

Example 4 (1) Matthew 22:15-22

To Pay Tax to Caesar or not?

(1) Matthew 22:15-22. To Pay Tax to Caesar or not?

ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι
καὶ τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ τῷ θεῷ.

4-valued logic (Belnap's relevance logic) – both "Yes" and "No"

1. The Solution is Circular. (What is God's to God).

cf. "A if A" and "B if B" (or "not A if not A")

2. The Solution is Modal: a model-set of two contradicting models.

"possible world semantics": a model-set of two solutions/models

(1) the first model ("Give Caesar's to Caesar") is true

(2) the second model ("Give God's to God") is true

Example 4 (1) Matthew 22:15-22

Pay Tax to Caesar or Not

- "Possible World Semantics" and 4-valued Logic
 a model-set of two solutions/models
- (1) the first model ("giving Caesar's to Caesar") is true
 - (2) the second model ("giving God's to God") is true
- A deeper analysis may reveal that this is not just a problem of "either-or" but it could be a problem of "both-and" if one consider the biblical mandate (e.g., Romans 13:6-7).
 - Similar examples in the Bible – A Model Set of "P and not P"
 - **Luke 17:20-30. "Already" and "Not Yet"** for 2-stage coming of the Kingdom of God, noted by Oscar Cullmann in *Christ and Time* (1946) and *Salvation in History* (1965)

Note on Modal Logic (and Bias)

Outside of the Bible

- Modal Logic and its Tradition (outside of the Bible) goes back
 - at least two millennia with Greeks (by **Aristotle**) and
 - a millennium for Ontological proof of the existence of God (One and Only one God) back to Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, Leibniz, Descartes, Pascal, Kant, and finally by **Kurt Gödel** (as his proof is proven to be flawless!).
 (cf. Romans 1:18-23)
- Scholarly tradition (bias) against Modal Logic could be traced back to Kant (1781), and the omission of modality by Frege (1879) in his pioneering groundwork of modern logic for propositional logic and higher-order logic.

Example 4: (2) Paradox in Matthew 22:23-33

Resurrection (with Marriage Law)
The Law of this age versus the Law of the age to come
(Paradox in Circular Rhetoric/Logic)

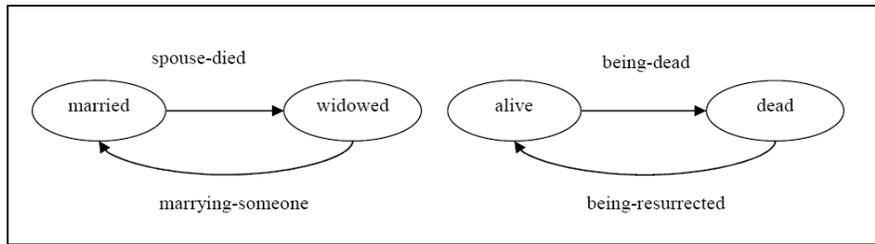


Figure 2.4 One's Marital Status (of being married or widowed) and Life-Status (of being alive or dead)

Example 4: (2) Paradox in Matthew 22:23-33

Resurrection (with Marriage Law)
The Law of this age versus the Law of the age to come

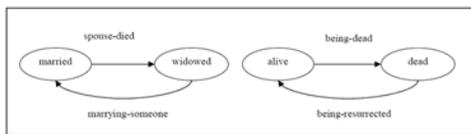
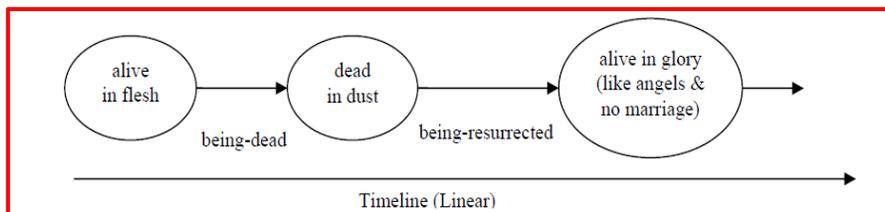


Figure 2.4 One's Marital Status (of being married or widowed) and Life-Status (of being alive or dead)

Note: Lived and then dead, and then to live again (being resurrected) is not circular but linear. This is a common mistake or misunderstanding



Example 4: (2) Paradox in Matthew 22:23-33 Monotonic vs. Nonmonotonic Reasoning

- **Circular, Modal, and Nonmonotonic** Reasoning used as one of the most common motifs, methods, and themes used in the Bible
 - seemingly contradictory to monotonic reasoning and principles.
 - cf. Ecclesiastes 3:1-10, 7:14
- **Ecclesiastes 7:14**
When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider: God has made the one (good times) as well as the other (bad times). Therefore, a man cannot discover anything about his future.
- **Consider Job 1-2 or Matthew 5:10-12.**
Paradox of being Cursed to be Blessed? That is, if the righteous are blessed and the evil are cursed, then how can a righteous man be cursed and persecuted in this world, to be blessed?

Example 4. (3) Paradox in Matthew 22:41-46

- **Christ - Whose son is he? Son of David.**
 - Paradox of Lord-Servant (Father-Son) Relationship
 - What is Human vs Divine relationships in crash!
“already” (divine) and “not yet” (humanly) in tension

The paradox in Matthew 22:41-46 extends the number of the constituents in a cycle.

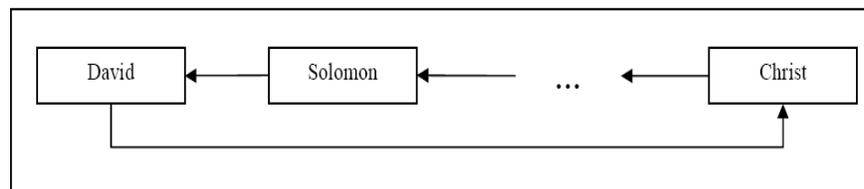


Figure 2.5 Lord-Servant relationship from David to Christ (who is a son of David) in Matthew 22:41- 46

A New Look at Matthew 22:15-46

- 4 Questions (& Answers) in Form-critical classification
- Midrash in Yelammedenu Midrash (Question-Answer)
 - W. G. Braude. *Pesikta Rabbati* 2 vols. (1968).
 - J. W. Bowker, 'Speeches in Acts: A Study in Proem and Yelammedenu Form' *NTS*14 (1967-1968) 96-111.
 - E. Earle Ellis, 'Midrashic Features in the Speeches of Acts' (1970) 303-312
- All dealing with non-conventional, non-classical logic
 - generating paradox, confusion, conflict, contradiction, dilemma
 - defying conventional logic or contemporary common-sense
 - dealing with circular, modal, or nonmonotonic logic, and in 4-valued logic
- All very difficult problems in *Sitz Im Leben*
 - at least "very easy" to verify once a solution is given
 - A problem of verification (cf. Luke 5:23; Daniel 2)

A New Look at Matthew 22:15-46

- All dealing with Biblical Law & Legal Reasoning
 - thus the problems of Biblical Legal Reasoning (Halakoth)
- Two Laws in Conflict
 - Matthew 22:15-22. Tax Law
 - the law of God vs the law of Caesar (this World)
 - Who is my Master (Matthew 6:24)? Whose servant am I?
 - Matthew 22:23-33. Marriage (Family) Law
 - the law of Marriage (Mosaic Law) in this age vs. in the age to come
 - the old law to be perished (time-expired) vs. the new law in resurrection
 - Old Law vs. New Law (over the old law)
 - Matthew 22:34-40. Linear Order in the Laws (legal precedence)
 - Hierarchy of the Laws, legal authority, highest law, legal precedence and superseding law, to avoid circular paradox but provide a linear order
 - Matthew 22:41-46. Law of Inheritance (for Title of Lordship)
 - the law governing the Son of God in flesh vs. divine (Psalm 110:1)

Example 5. "Already" and "Not Yet" in Tension Classical Examples in Contemporary NT Studies

Two-Stage Coming of the Kingdom of God
"Already" and "Not Yet" in Tension (Luke 17:20-30)
Salvation History (Heilsgeschichte) by Oscar Cullmann

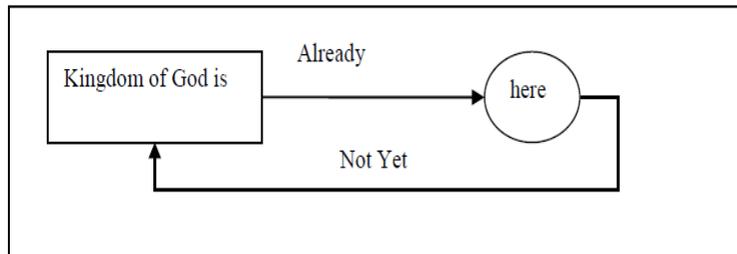


Figure 7. Two-stage coming of the Kingdom of God "already" and "Not Yet" in circular rhetoric

Example 5. "Already" and "Not Yet" in Tension The Testimony of John the Baptist (John 1:15, 30)

- The similar circular rhetoric of "already" & "not yet" in the testimony of John the Baptist (John 1:15,30)
- The passage is composed of three simple and distinctive prepositional phrases, in either temporal or spatial (in rank or order) meaning, to generate an interesting enigma and paradox in exegesis.

- (1) ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος
- (2) ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν
- (3) ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν

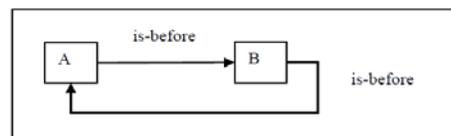


Figure 8. "A is before B" and "B is before A" (or "A is after B")

Example 5. "Already" and "Not Yet" in Tension Melchizedek and the Son of God in Hebrews 7

- Melchizedek and the Son of God

¹ Οὗτος γὰρ ὁ Μελχισέδεκ, βασιλεὺς Σαλήμ, ἱερεὺς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου, ... ³ ἀπάτωρ ἀμήτωρ ἀγενεαλόγητος, μήτε ἀρχὴν ἡμερῶν μήτε ζωῆς τέλος ἔχων, ἀφωμοιωμένος δὲ τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ θεοῦ, μένει ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸ διηνεκές. ...

Melchizedek is (made) alike the Son of God

¹⁵ καὶ περισσότερον ἔτι κατάδηλόν ἐστιν, εἰ κατὰ τὴν ὁμοιότητα Μελχισέδεκ ἀνίσταται ἱερεὺς ἕτερος,

¹⁵ And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest.

Example 5. "Already" and "Not Yet" in Tension A Difficult Problem in 1 John 3:9 & 5:18 vs 1:8-10

1. Sin-state of Christian in need of Confession for the forgiveness of God (1 John 1:8-10) versus
2. Sinless-state (impeccable state) of Christian (1 John 3:9, 5:18)

- How to Harmonize these conflicting passages?

Or is it even possible?

- 1 John 3:9 one "born of God" in circular logic

Πᾶς ὁ γεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἁμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ, ὅτι σπέρμα αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει, καὶ οὐ δύναται ἁμαρτάνειν, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γενένηται.

- Does sin have a different meaning (aspect) to one "before" and "after" being born of God?

- What sin can "one born of God" never commit?

Sin of not believing in Jesus Christ the Son of God our Propitiation

Part 3

- Titus 1:12 – The Liar Paradox
- Anthony C. Thiselton, "The Logical Role of the Liar Paradox in Titus 1:12, 13: A Dissent from the Commentaries in Light of Philosophical and Logical Analysis," *Biblical Interpretation* 2 (1994): 207–223.

Anthony C. Thiselton, "The Logical Role of the Liar Paradox in Titus 1:12, 13: A Dissent from the Commentaries in Light of Philosophical and Logical Analysis," *Biblical Interpretation* 2 (1994): 207–223.

Thiselton states:

- I shall argue that the writer of Titus 1:12, 13 is well aware that placing the proposition "Cretans are always liars" in the mouth of a Cretan transforms the status of the proposition into one which does *not assert a contingent state of affairs about Cretans*.
- **Comment.** Paul against all human race (Romans 3:4; Psalm 116:11 - "All men are liars.")
- A similar rhetoric and exegesis should be applied to all the prophetic assertions that all men are sinners. (Psalm 14:1–3; Romans 3:10–18; Ephesians 2:3)
- A few more difficult examples (with self-negation) worthy of mention are the paradoxes of (1) self-denial discipleship (Mark 8:34), (2) saving by losing one's life (Mark 8:35), and (3) servant-leadership (Mark 9:35).

Anthony C. Thiselton, "The Logical Role of the Liar Paradox in Titus 1:12, 13: A Dissent from the Commentaries in Light of Philosophical and Logical Analysis," *Biblical Interpretation* 2 (1994): 207–223.

Thiselton states:

- It functions, in effect, as *meta-language*, asserting a proposition which *prima facie* entails its own denial by *logical necessity*.
- The additional comment "This testimony is true" is not a sign that the writer (or an editor) is oblivious to the nature of paradox; it is more likely to have been intended as a light touch underlining **the absurdity of a regress *ad infinitum*.**"

Comment

1. That is, this is to point the stupidity of this statement (all Cretans are always liars) - a joke or a nonsense (as an example) that we should not say or repeat the same mistake.

Anthony C. Thiselton, "The Logical Role of the Liar Paradox in Titus 1:12, 13: A Dissent from the Commentaries in Light of Philosophical and Logical Analysis," *Biblical Interpretation* 2 (1994): 207–223.

Thiselton states:

- The more that commentators seek to excuse the writer from the tactlessness or thoughtlessness of making what appears to be **a prejudicial stereotypification about a minority community**, namely Cretans within the Graeco-Roman world, the more conspicuously they fall into the trap of misconstruing the purpose and logical status of the proposition in question.

Comment. Paul is against all human race (Romans 3:4; Psalm 116:11). "All men are liars."

- A similar rhetoric and exegesis should be applied to all the prophetic assertions that all men are sinners. (Psalm 14:1–3; Romans 3:10–18; Ephesians 2:3)
- A few more difficult examples (with self-negation) worthy of mention are the paradoxes of (1) self-denial discipleship (Mark 8:34), (2) saving by losing one's life (Mark 8:35), and (3) servant-leadership (Mark 9:35).

Anthony C. Thiselton, "The Logical Role of the Liar Paradox in Titus 1:12, 13: A Dissent from the Commentaries in Light of Philosophical and Logical Analysis," *Biblical Interpretation 2* (1994): 207–223.

Thiselton states:

- **First-person utterances** often presuppose a *personal backing in life* which **third-person utterances** may not presuppose, and the writer is concerned with this "life" dimension.
- To paraphrase Wittgenstein and Strawson, the logical status of the proposition "I am a liar," is quite different from that of the proposition "He/she/they are liars."
- **Comment.**
- First-person utterance (for Wittgenstein) is subjective and personal (and it should not be considered as an objective or verifiable truth).

Anthony C. Thiselton, "The Logical Role of the Liar Paradox in Titus 1:12, 13: A Dissent from the Commentaries in Light of Philosophical and Logical Analysis," *Biblical Interpretation 2* (1994): 207–223.

Thiselton states:

- In practice, it may well be that the phrase "**this testimony is true**", is intended to bring out the **ironic humour** which might be suggested by the unstoppable infinite regress of meta-language set in motion by trying to accord truth-value to a self-defeating logical paradox.
- **Every commentary** which I have consulted up to the present assumes that the propositions of Titus 1:12 serve, in the end, **to describe a state of affairs about the character of Cretans.**
- **Comment.** Paul against all human race (Romans 3:4; Psalm 116:11). "All men are liars." is not a ironic humor nor a joke.

Anthony C. Thiselton, "The Logical Role of the Liar Paradox in Titus 1:12, 13: A Dissent from the Commentaries in Light of Philosophical and Logical Analysis," *Biblical Interpretation 2* (1994): 207–223.

Thiselton states:

- To avoid making a merely generalizing and unsupported claim about commentators and commentaries, following an initial glance at Calvin as the generally acknowledged first modern commentator, I shall cite twenty-four specific examples of writers from 1900 to the present who unanimously interpret Titus 1:12,13a as embodying **contingent or empirical propositional truth-claims about Cretans** rather than
- **logically necessary propositional truth-claims about language.**

Comment. Thiselton following Wittgenstein in a radical view on language.

Anthony C. Thiselton, "The Logical Role of the Liar Paradox in Titus 1:12, 13: A Dissent from the Commentaries in Light of Philosophical and Logical Analysis," *Biblical Interpretation 2* (1994): 207–223.

Thiselton states:

- This gives a perspective that nothing else could.
- **Paul** affirms the truthfulness of the evaluation in v. 13a with **'this testimony is true.'** "
- In logical terms this is tantamount to interpreting him as saying

"the proposition ' p implies $not-p$ ' implies $not-p$ and $not-p$ implies p ."
- It is perhaps not surprising that some commentators, notably J. L. Houlden, content themselves with a masterly silence over this issue.

Anthony C. Thiselton, "The Logical Role of the Liar Paradox in Titus 1:12, 13: A Dissent from the Commentaries in Light of Philosophical and Logical Analysis," *Biblical Interpretation 2* (1994): 207–223.

Thiselton states:

- If a Cretan has warned his audience that whatever he says is likely to be false, to deduce that Cretans are always liars is to suggest a *false claim*, or more strictly, a *self-defeating truth-claim*.
- Again, as in the case of Hanson's interpretation, the liar paradox leaves egg on the face of the *writer*, not the reader. If such an interpretation were valid, *the writer has simply made a fool of himself* (as some do not hesitate to deny) and the reader would be likely to perceive this.
- Comment. The Sadducees made a similar assertion about those believing resurrection.

Anthony C. Thiselton, "The Logical Role of the Liar Paradox in Titus 1:12, 13: A Dissent from the Commentaries in Light of Philosophical and Logical Analysis," *Biblical Interpretation 2* (1994): 207–223.

Thiselton states:

- Third, and finally, the only commentator who seems to see that *the use of paradox here is light*, rather than heavy, is E.K. Simpson (1954). Like Hanson, he argues that the writer placed the reader on the horns of a dilemma, but, he rightly adds, "with a twinkle in his eye."
- Yet even Simpson fails to appreciate what this suggests.
- *He spoils* his own initial insight by discussing how the truth of the empirical assertion *that Cretans are liars* could be *verified*.
- Comment. Paul against all human race (Romans 3:4; Psalm 116:11) "All men are liars." And I think so as it is claimed and verified throughout the Bible.

Anthony C. Thiselton, "The Logical Role of the Liar Paradox in Titus 1:12, 13: A Dissent from the Commentaries in Light of Philosophical and Logical Analysis," *Biblical Interpretation* 2 (1994): 207–223.

To skip from here to the end of the paper.

Part 4

- Summary of critique

Titus 1:12 – The Liar Paradox

- The text in Titus 1:12 presents a prophet who is a Cretan and thus a member of the larger group of Cretans to whom he is referring in his prophecy of self-negation.
- That is, the Cretan prophet is referring to himself, creating a circular reference by referring to the Cretan community of which he is a member.
- The paradoxical question and problem in Titus 1:12 is whether the prophet himself is also a liar as he declares that every Cretan is always a liar.

Titus 1:12 – The Liar Paradox

- A similar passage is found in Romans 3:4 where Paul declares that all men are liars (πᾶς δὲ ἄνθρωπος ψεύστης), citing Psalm 116:11 (יְיָ אֱמַרְתָּ לְלִבִּי) [LXX Psalm 115:2 πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ψεύστης]
- This is a truth-claim in the Bible, which is truthful and verified throughout the Bible.
- Further the difficulty in the Liar paradox is the presence of a self-negation in the circular relationship. In this paradox, even though not explicitly stated, a negative implication is clearly present.

Titus 1:12 – The Liar Paradox

- Negation in circular reasoning not only presents a challenge, but also complicates the matter with respect to its meaning and validity.
- Circular rhetoric (e.g., idem per idem) has been one of the most misunderstood or controversial areas in contemporary biblical scholarship for the latter half of the 20th century.
- Negation in circular reasoning not only presents a challenge, but also complicates the matter with respect to its meaning and validity.

Titus 1:12 – The Liar Paradox

- Since the Cretan prophet in Titus 1:12 asserts that all Cretans are liars, this Cretan prophet is then also a liar, and thus his own statement (as cited by Paul in Titus 1:12) is a lie.
- In other words, the Cretan prophet's prophecy (which is true and is even affirmed by Paul) negates the validity of any truth-statement made by any Cretan (including himself).

Titus 1:12 – The Liar Paradox

- If granted and extended, this line of reasoning further shakes the credibility of Paul's assertion in Titus 1:13.
- [Another accusation or an embarrassment is that Paul is a racist against Cretans.]
- However, one should also note that a liar need not tell lies all the time. That is, a liar may tell a lie with respect to all the statements in a unit of his or her discourse, mixed with some true statements, possibly to gain some credibility.

Titus 1:12 – The Liar Paradox

- Furthermore, a chosen prophet, whether he is a liar or not, may speak a true prophecy given by God as is the case clearly stated for the case of **Caiaphas** in John 11:49–52.
 - In various higher order logic, this is no problem.
 - Logic with exception (circumscription logic) etc.
- Moreover, in **Romans 3:4** (Psalm 116:11), Paul made an even stronger assertion saying that all human beings are liars. This assertion includes Paul himself as he is the person writing this very statement.

Titus 1:12 – The Liar Paradox

- Many paradoxes in the Bible use self-negation.
- A similar rhetoric and exegesis should be applied to all the prophetic assertions that all men are sinners (e.g., Psalm 14:1–3; Romans 3:10–18; Ephesians 2:3).
- A few more difficult examples worthy of mention are the paradoxes of
 - (1) self-denial discipleship (Mark 8:34),
 - (2) saving by losing one's life (Mark 8:35), and
 - (3) servant-leadership (Mark 9:35).

Anthony C. Thiselton, "The Logical Role of the Liar Paradox in Titus 1:12, 13: A Dissent from the Commentaries in Light of Philosophical and Logical Analysis," *Biblical Interpretation* 2 (1994): 207–223.

"the proposition ' p implies $not-p$ ' implies $not-p$ and $not-p$ implies p ."

" p if ($not p$)."
=> there is no model to satisfies this proposition.

Suppose: " p if ($not p$) and s ."

(1) Can p be true? No.

(p is true) if ($not p$ is false) and s . (either s true or false)

(2) Can p be false? Yes

(p is false) if ($not p$ is true) and (s is false)!

So there is a model to satisfy this proposition

Part 6

- A New Critical Method in Exegesis and Biblical Studies

A New Critical Method

- Circular Rhetoric and Logic of Paradoxes
To make sense and do a valid and sound exegesis.
Otherwise, to treat it meaningless or invalid, or to treat as if it is not there
- There are so many and so predominant in the Bible
And each case/its presence simply cannot to be ignored or silenced.
- Once understood and applied correctly, it truly makes sense objectively and logical
Matthew 22:15-46, John 8:12-20 with Exodus 3:14-15
- To construct a coherent, consistent, and unifying framework in exegesis and its application (and no need of "post-liberal theology or narrative theology", deconstructionism or "story-telling" [as one may argue that these biblical passages have no valid logic or an objective truth, and thus treat them metaphorically, subjectively, ...])

A Semantic Difference with Circular Logic

- Induction and its Semantics
 - Here we say “infinite” or “eternal”
 - but it has no meaning (nonsense) in the frame of Induction or Inductive Logic (in this conventional “finite” worldview).
- Coinduction and its Semantics (extending induction)

Example: The “chicken or egg” problem

(1) a chicken comes out of an egg, (2) an egg comes out of a chicken, and (3) the reproductive cycle between chicken and egg goes on forever.

Inductive Logic: No answer

Coinductive Logic: 4 possible answers (4-valued logic)

{ No answer, Chicken, Egg, Chicken and Egg }

e.g., Matthew 22:15-22 – to pay tax to Caesar or not

Note. Is there a semantic difference between "Christ in You" in Romans 8:10 & "In Christ"

- Bousset provides an insightful difference between Paul's Christ mysticism and the Hellenistic religion with similar rhetoric, but pantheistic implication. That is,
- The lexical pattern ("X in the Christ" or "the Christ in X" where X is, for example, a Christian or Christians) does not grant a pantheistic or panentheistic implication (to say that "X is the Christ" or "the Christ is X") whether the expression is provided reciprocally or not.
- Wilhelm Bousset, *KYRIOS CHRISTOS: A History of the Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus*, trans. John E. Steely (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2013 [1913]), 164–69. Bousset notes the expressions in Hermetic prayers for being completely pantheistic (for example, "Come to me, Hermes, as children come into the body of women. . . . I know you, Hermas, and you know me. I am you and you are I," and "For you are I and I am you. Your name is mine and mine is yours. I am your image.")

Afterword by Solomon

¹³ Now all has been heard;
here is the conclusion of the matter:

Fear God and keep his commandments,
for this is the duty of all mankind.

¹⁴ For God will bring every deed into judgment,
including every hidden thing,
whether it is good or evil.

(Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 NIV)