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## THE NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH: THE INTERPRETIVE DEVELOPMENT OF ISAIAH 65:17

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THE NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH: THE INTERPRETIVE DEVELOPMENT  
OF ISAIAH 65:17

A Guided Research Presented to the Faculty of  
Harding School of Theology  
Memphis, Tennessee

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the  
Master of Arts in Old Testament

By  
Baron Vander Maas

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## **Introduction**

### **Purpose and Goal**

The purpose of the paper is to assess the context and meaning of Trito-Isaiah's (TI) vision of the New Heavens and New Earth (NHNE) in Isa. 65:17–25 and to trace the usage of the term from the time of TI's composition to the New Testament. There are three major goals that shape this thesis. The first goal is to exegete Isa. 65:17–25 with the purpose of searching Isaiah's prophetic message in its original context. TI is the only author in the Old Testament to use the phrase NHNE (65:17; 66:22) and therefore establishes the origin of its meaning and the foundation for later interpretations.

The second goal is to assess the nature and use of eschatology in Isaiah. Isaiah 65:17–25 is clearly envisioning a new way of life for the Jerusalem community (vv. 18–19), seeing a better society in which God is present (v. 24), and creating a safe environment for humans to flourish (vv. 20–22). Although the passage is clear that God is creating something new, will it be apparent in the present or will it strictly be a future reality? In later interpretations of the NHNE, there are texts that envision a new world such as the apocalyptic texts of Rev. 21:1–2 and 1 En. 91:17. If later authors use the passage to envision their future, are they following the tradition of Isaiah or reimagining the vision of Isaiah with a different purpose? Therefore, understanding eschatology is imperative to determining what TI is envisioning for God's people and in what way the NHNE is molding the Israelites.

The final goal is to trace the reception history of the phrase NHNE from TI to the New Testament. Languages, styles of speaking, and semantics change over periods of

time. As people read the Old Testament in their own contexts, the meaning of words that mean one thing can have a new meaning when measured against its counterparts.

### Significance of the Problem

Humans shape and build their understanding of God through the lens of history. From eschatology, pneumatology, salvation, and other topics, the church relies on its history to fuel its current understanding of the Christian faith. A single interpreter can change the historical understanding of a text for future audiences.

However, for many modern readers, while their interpretation may seem benevolent or respectable to the text, it can be void of any historical significance. When modern readers are ignorant of the history of their interpretation or how it came to be, there is an extraordinary risk that their interpretation will lose value. The lost value is that of a deeper value of our ancestors' interaction with sacred texts. Another loss is the further knowledge of God's intended purpose and meaning through history. Without knowing the historical context, readers lose the starting point of the many variations of meaning that a phrase takes place afterwards. While Isaiah had one particular meaning and John had another meaning, the connection became lost between the two. The goal of this project is to see Isa. 65:17–25 in its historical context but also to learn about different historical interpretive aspects of the text, TI's message used in different social contexts, and the varying theological messages one can interpret from the text. Without the input of the interpreters from centuries before today, modern readers will seize phrases of scripture for their own use and possibly for improper reasons.

The problem of ignoring the interpretive history of a text affects a person's understanding of their own doctrinal beliefs. Currently, there is a resurgence of interest in NHNE within biblical scholarship and popular Christianity that claims an originality to God's will to renew the world from its impurities. The NHNE theory is in opposition to the "neoplatonic" view within Christianity that when people die, those who have been faithful will go up to Heaven to be with the Lord for eternity and those who are sinful will go to Hell.<sup>1</sup> Generally, churches of Christ still believe in the "neoplatonic" view because of historical readings of Jesus's words (Matthew 7:21; John 14:1-6).<sup>2</sup> The NHNE theory finds basis in texts such as Rev. 21:1-4 and 2 Pet. 3:11-13 which speaks not of an eschatological end where God will destroy everything but a renewal of all things.<sup>3</sup> While the paper being proposed will focus on the phrase "a new heavens and a new earth," the paper will not focus on the modern discussions of the theory for eschatological hope that modern readers expect. However, modern Christian interpreters insert their own meanings on Isaiah that are void of the historical context in hopes of understanding New Testament passages. In short, the interpreters often work backwards to understand the meaning of an Old Testament text. This paper is essential to the modern discussion because it seeks to understand the originality of the phrase NHNE. Without knowledge of Isa. 65:17-25, the original meaning will be lost, and subsequently other readings of NHNE like Revelation 21 and 2 Peter 3 will also fail to be fully grasped.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Richard Middleton, *New Heaven and New Earth* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 21-34, 283-312.

<sup>2</sup> This can be widely seen in such hymns as "When the Roll is Called Up Yonder," "This World is Not My Home," "Mansion over the Hilltop," and "Just over in the Gloryland." This is a point brought up by John Mark Hicks, Bobby Valentine, and Mark Wilson, *Embracing Creation* (Abilene: Leafwood, 2016), 17-19.

<sup>3</sup> Other texts are Gen. 12:1-3; Psalm 37; Matt. 5:5 in which God's promise is the inheritance of a new land for his people.

While this problem has significance for interpretive practice and preaching in the church, it is also important for the purpose and goal of eschatology. Isaiah's prophetic message is an image of a reality that has not been experienced. That vision insinuates it soon will be, but when? This question aims at understanding God's ordering of time and space. Modern interpretation of the NHNE is that God will renew the world around humanity, where he will live with humans and bless them at the time of his coming. This paper questions that assumption and desires to understand God's presence not only for the future but for the present.

### Methodology

There are three limitations that I impose on my research in writing the thesis. The first limitation is the scope of the project from the writing of the proposed text until the New Testament. The second limitation assumes that Isaiah is a composite writing brought together by a redactor. It is not clear who is the author or compiler of TI. Although this paper will not deal with the question of authorship, it will assume that TI is a collection of oracles made by an anonymous prophet within Isaiah 56–66.

The final limitation is the focus of the historical analysis within Isa. 65:17–25. Although Isaiah 65 is a single unit in TI, this paper's focus is the historical interpretations of Isa. 65:17 and allusions in particular to "new heavens and a new earth." The point of the exegesis of Isa. 65:17–25 is to provide further context of TI's NHNE and the world God brings for the people. While the first section of the paper will focus on TI's vision, the focus is on the interpretation of the theme phrase in the last two sections.

It is my thesis that the NHNE in Isa. 65:17 is a metonymic phrase that represents the reconstruction of the Second Temple after the exile, explaining poetically the new reality that can be experienced by the returning community. The point of this eschatological vision is meant to determine who will live in this new land of peace and prosperity. However, the eschatological vision is meant to encourage proper ethics as the new world is ushered in through the building of the Temple. In later usages of the NHNE, there is an apparent link with all of the texts that the phrase is used of an eschatological future where God is present but that new reality is to exhort proper behavior amongst believers.

I will first prove this thesis through an exegesis of Isa. 65:17–25. As already stated above, exegesis is a major goal of the thesis and will take a substantial role within the research. The exegesis will focus on critical matters of the Hebrew language including a translation of the text, uses of metaphor, and the meaning of the text. The Hebrew text will be the source for the translation while comments will be made about important words and phrases within the text. The exegesis will also consist of secondary literature such as commentaries, articles, and dictionaries written by scholars in the field of Isaiah and the Old Testament.

Chapter 2 will be a tracing of the uses of NHNE through the intertestamental sources of 1 Enoch, Jubilees, and Pseudo Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum (LAB)*. The order of the materials will be presented chronologically. For each instance that an author uses the phrase NHNE, I will track the author's meaning in the context of the book and whether the phrase is quoting Isaiah or not. Then I will show that some of the



intertestamental texts link the NHNE with a temple and hope for a different present through the expectation of the Lord's presence amongst the chosen servants.

The final chapter will consist of an analysis of the two uses of NHNE found in the New Testament: 2 Pet. 3:13 and Rev. 21:1. In this chapter, I will point to the specific development of the NHNE and point out that there are still themes and theological expectations of the NHNE but the image is used differently.

To conclude the entire work, I will examine how to preach the NHNE practically for the church. This conclusion aims to do what the biblical authors did in their for their audience, make the future important in the present. Within this paper, the goal is to fully understand the earliest ways God's people interpreted the NHNE and how current ministers can use that wisdom for their own church contexts today.

### Translation of Isaiah 65:17–25

כִּי־הִנְנִי בּוֹרֵא שָׁמַיִם חֲדָשִׁים וְאָרֶץ חֲדָשָׁה וְלֹא תִזְכְּרֶנָּה הַרְאֵשׁוֹת וְלֹא תִעֲלֶינָה עַל־לֵב	Look! I am creating new heavens and a new earth! No more will they remember nor will they bring to mind the former things
כִּי־אִם־שִׂישׁוּ וְגִילוּ עַד־יְעוֹד אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי בּוֹרֵא כִּי הִנְנִי בּוֹרֵא אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַם גִּילָה וְעַמָּה מְשׁוּשׁ	Instead they will rejoice and be glad forever at that which I am creating. Look! I am creating Jerusalem a gladness, and its people, a joy
וְגִלְתִּי בִירוּשָׁלַם וְשִׁשְׁתִּי בְעַמִּי וְלֹא־יִשְׁמַע בָּהּ עוֹד קוֹל בְּכִי וְקוֹל זַעֲקָה	I rejoice over Jerusalem and exclaim for my people. The sound of crying and the sound of distress will no longer be heard in her.
לֹא־יִהְיֶה מִשָּׁם עוֹד עוֹל יָמִים וְזָקֵן אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִמְלֵא אֶת־יָמָיו כִּי הַזֶּעֶר בְּיָמָהּ שָׁנָה יָמוּת וְהַחוֹטֵא בְיָמָהּ שָׁנָה יִקְלָל	This new place will no longer have a nursing baby of a few days, or an elder who doesn't fulfill his days. For the boy will die at a hundred and the one who misses a hundred years will be accursed
וּבְנֵי בָתַיִם וַיִּשְׁבּוּ וַיִּנְטְעוּ כְרָמִים וַאֲכָלוּ פְרִיָם	They will build buildings and they will dwell. They will plant vineyards and they will eat their fruit.
לֹא יִבְנוּ וְאֲחֵר יֵשֵׁב לֹא יִטְעוּ וְאֲחֵר יֵאָכֵל כִּי־כִימֵי הָעֵץ יָמֵי עַמִּי וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם יִבְלוּ <sup>4</sup> בְּחִירָי	No longer will they build and another dwell, nor will they plant and another eat. For like days of the tree will my people's days be, The work of my chosen's hands will be enjoyed.

<sup>4</sup> Possibly יִבְלוּ “to complete” (cf. Job 21:13)

לֹא יִיגְעוּ לְרֵיק  
וְלֹא יִלְדוּ לְכַהֲלָה  
כִּי זֶרַע בְּרוּכֵי יְהוָה הֵמָּה

וְצִאצְאֵיהֶם אִתָּם

וְהִינֵה טְרָם יִקְרָאוּ  
וְאֲנִי אֶעֱנֶה  
עוֹד תִּם מְדַבְּרִים  
וְאֲנִי אֶשְׁמַע

זֶאֱב וְטֹלֵה יִרְעוּ כְּאַחַד  
וְאַרְיֵה כִּבְקָר יֹאכַל-תֶּבֶן  
וְנָחָשׁ עֵפֶר לֶחֶמוֹ  
לֹא יַרְעוּ וְלֹא יִשְׁתִּיתוּ

בְּכָל-הַר קֹדֶשׁ  
אָמַר יְהוָה

They will not toil for vanity  
nor will they bring forth calamity.  
For they are the seed of the ones blessed of  
the LORD.  
And their offspring with them.

It will be before they call,  
I will answer them.  
As they are speaking,  
I will hear.

Wolf and lamb will pasture together,  
the lion will eat straw like the ox.  
The serpent, his food is dust.  
They will not do evil and they will not  
destroy  
on all my holy mountain  
Thus YHWH says.

## Chapter 1: The NHNE as the Temple in the Second Period

### Exegesis of Isaiah 65:17–25

Isaiah 65:17–25 comes on the heels of judgment oracles aimed at the wicked people in 65:1–16. Broken up into three separate sections (v. 1-7, 8-16, 17-25), the oracle is meant to disassociate the wicked from the righteous servants.<sup>5</sup> In verse 16, the image of the past is leaving the eyes of the Lord and beckoning something new to replace the former. This new thing is a brand new world.

Isaiah 65:17 opens with a call for the audience to behold or “Look!” (הִנְנִי) at what God is doing. God’s particular action is creation (בָּרָא), the same type of creation that he did in the beginning of the book of Genesis.<sup>6</sup> בָּרָא is a verb only used in the Hebrew Bible to speak of God, which means this is a divinely attributed action for him alone. In the Qal participle form, the word is best translated as a present participle: God is creating. A semantic reason for the present form is in the ambiguity of time in the participle form. בָּרָא can be used as a title (Isa. 43:15 “Creator of Israel”); it can also describe God’s actions in the past of creating the first heavens and earth (Isa. 42:5). God’s creative work is ongoing, spanning from the very beginning to the present, happening before the eyes of the readers. If the work that God is doing is not currently happening, it is at least imminent and close at hand to be fulfilled.<sup>7</sup> The English “creating” does insinuate that the

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<sup>5</sup> John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, Word Biblical Commentary 25 (Waco: Word Books, 2006), 342.

<sup>6</sup> For other references of בָּרָא see: Isa 40:28; 42:5; 43:1, 15; 45:7, 18; 57:19; Amos 4:13; Eccles. 12:1.

<sup>7</sup> John Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 40-66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 656 n. 83. “In all three of its occurrences in vv. 17–18, ‘create’ is probably the participle of imminent action. As is typical throughout Scripture, God’s moment of blessing is always imminent.”

project is not done but being worked upon. The imminent coming or already being experienced creation will suffice for the reading of 65:17.<sup>8</sup>

What is YHWH creating but “a new heavens and a new earth.” This small phrase, which is the focus of this paper, is only used in the Old Testament twice (cf. Isa. 66:22). Heaven and earth as a word pair is not unusual for the Hebrew Bible which uses the word pair as a merism to describe everything.<sup>9</sup> The merism is to describe that everything is going to be changed and different from the “former things.” “New” (שׁוּדָה) has both a temporal function and a conditional function in this context. Temporally, this heaven and earth will begin a new time for the servants. “The sound of crying and the sound of distress will no longer (*from this point forward*) be heard in her” (Isa. 65:19). The term can also be conditional because what is being created will not look like the “former things” but have a new nature about them. Both functions of שׁוּדָה are implied, therefore this is a radical vision for what is happening in Isa. 65:17; the newness is the beginning of a brand new reality.

The difference of this NHNE that Isaiah envisions is that it contrasts “the former things” (רֵאשׁוֹן). The former, when followed by the “new,” is a thematic concept describing YHWH’s divine assistance in starting over for a community.<sup>10</sup> YHWH’s everlasting sovereignty is described in his presence at the beginning and the promise of

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<sup>8</sup> For other present interpretations of בָּרָא see Shalom M. Paul, *Isaiah 40-66: Translation and Commentary*, The Eerdmans Critical Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 603; Jan Leunis Koole, *Isaiah III*, Historical Commentary on the Old Testament (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1997), 446–52. For a future reading, see NIV, NRSV, Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible, 19B (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 283; Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah. Chapters 40-66, 652-57*; Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, The New American Commentary, 15B (Nashville: B & H, 2009), 718.

<sup>9</sup> Gen. 14:19; Exod. 31:17; 2 Kings 19:15.

<sup>10</sup> Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 120. See also Isa.41:4, 22; 42:9; 43:9, 18-19; 48:3, 6.

his presence in the end (Isa. 41:4). There is a question of what “former things” specifically Isaiah is commanding the readers to remember or forget.<sup>11</sup> The “former things” in the instance of Isaiah 65 is meant to contrast the previous world of the wicked that were bad, needing to be removed and subsequently replaced. Isaiah 65:1–16 points to the problems of idolatrous and illegal worship amongst the community, ignoring YHWH’s attentiveness (v. 1), worshiping on other high mountains (v. 3, 7), and eating unclean meat (v. 4). The sins of the past are the former things that will be swept away by the power of YHWH’s construction. Like Genesis 1, the world before creation was “without form and void,” YHWH designed the heavens and earth to replace the chaotic world. In Isa.65:17, he creates a NHNE, this time to replace the chaotic life of sin. This replacement is the clue that the NHNE are a metonymic and poetic means to talk about a reality for the readers. YHWH is creating a new world, but it is the reader’s perception and understanding of the world they live in.

While v. 17 seems cosmic in scope, covering everything within heaven and earth, v. 18–19 focuses on Jerusalem. For a second time, v. 18 uses ברא, meaning that YHWH’s divine creation centers on the formation of Jerusalem. The text implies that YHWH’s creative action for the entire world at least begins with Jerusalem. Ambiguously, the text does not specify whether the creative work is only for Jerusalem, but only that Jerusalem is a key recipient. If only given the recreation of the NHNE, then clearly God’s work is universal. However, the additional line of Jerusalem creates questions of scope: how much is God going to recreate? This leads to two interpretations of what the goal is: one

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<sup>11</sup> Frederick Gaiser, “Remember the Former Things of Old: A New Look at Isaiah 46:3–13” *Word & World* 1 (1992): 57–58. Gaiser puts the “former things” into three camps: the first is the work of Cyrus in comparison to what God is doing, the second is the saving act of God in the Exodus, and the third is the previous oracles of PI which are now being brought to mind by DI and TI.

interpretation is that God's creative activity is for the entire world and Jerusalem is an example.<sup>12</sup> This first interpretation makes sense with a literal understanding of the entire text; meaning God will replace the physical world with something new. The second interpretation is that God's recreation is confined to Jerusalem only, and God's creative work over heavens and earth is a metaphor intended to mean the socio-political reality of Jerusalem rather than literally the physical world. It should be noted that in the text, God's creation of the NHNE is realized first (or only) in Jerusalem, and therefore the focus of this entire text is what is happening in Jerusalem.<sup>13</sup> The differences of the realities will be stark, mainly because of the sounds. For the cries of weeping and distress will be drowned by the victory cries of joyous shouting and happiness. The NHNE is made manifest by the response of the inhabitants rather than a difference in physicality of the world. Plants still grow, people still live in houses, and animals still exist. The new world is a perception of the physical world and the things that take place within it.

In Isa. 65:20–25, the vision details what Jerusalem will look like in the NHNE. There are three key features of newness; the first is longevity of life. Though there is little real data of life expectancy, Blenkinsopp makes an argument that we can glean some understanding of the difficulty of life by the evidence that exists from medieval to preindustrial societies in Europe. That evidence shows most children did not live past 6, and if people did survive, their life expectancy was around 33 years old.<sup>14</sup> In the NHNE,

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<sup>12</sup> Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, 719–20: “God’s new work will not be limited to the narrow sphere of Israelite interest in one small location (the Temple)... His grand creative work will be worldwide, including all of the heavens and every part of the earth, all peoples, all nations, all aspects of nature, all places, and all relationships that God has with the things that he creates.”

<sup>13</sup> Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah*, The Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 538.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 288.

Jerusalem's life expectancy goes to a hundred and those who "miss that mark" (חטא) will be seen as accursed. Life will thrive in the community and continue without duress. People will be able to eat, build, and live without fear of enemies or attacks. The second effect is peace; the NHNE will be a place of order where others will not need to attack and take from what belongs to another (65:22a). The people will thrive and stay on God's holy mountain. On that mountain, peace will extend into the animal kingdom, where prey and predator eat the same food and live next to each other without trouble (65:25). Lastly, the third feature is God's divine presence. God's attentive ear, which was ignored (65:1), will be given to those who will surely utilize God's gracious attention. In fact, the difference is that God will answer while they are still calling and listen when they are speaking. Isaiah 65:25 closes the unit with YHWH's declarative word ("thus says YHWH" אמר יהוה). This declarative statement gives credence to what has been prophesied.

#### Literary Clues to the NHNE

TI is a defined collection set apart from its first two counterparts, PI (chs. 1–39) and DI (chs. 40–55). TI sets itself apart from its predecessors in that it concludes the book as a whole. Its literary function is that the previous written prophecies are fulfilled in the passages contained within Isaiah 56–66. TI and DI share in the feature of fulfilling prophecy from PI. The three sections can be separated and unique in themselves, but the collection of Isaiah as a whole is meant to be read as unified work.<sup>15</sup> TI, as a conclusion,

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<sup>15</sup> This redactional theory about the origin of Isaiah's compositions is the collective understanding of most scholars and finds its origins with Bernhard Duhm. For a full length history of the study of Third Isaiah with a comparative study of Isaiah scholars and their redactional formulations, see Brooks Schramm, *The Opponents of Third Isaiah: Reconstructing the Cultic History of the Restoration*, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 193 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 1–52.



fulfills prophecies and reminds readers of God’s ultimate hopes for Jerusalem first brought to mind in PI and continued in DI. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that TI’s concluding format and intertextual links are an indication that the NHNE found in Isa. 65:17 is the restored Temple in Jerusalem.

TI is a conclusion to Isaiah and demonstrates the NHNE is a restored Temple through etymological, structural, and conceptual links with PI and DI. Stromberg points out through the application of words such as “righteousness” (צדק) and “justice” (משפט) found in Isa. 56:1 that all of Isaiah is unified literarily.<sup>16</sup> PI pairs the term righteousness with “judgment” (Isa. 1:27; 5:7; 26:9) while DI pairs the term with “salvation” (Is. 45:8). These two pairs are brought together in conjunction with each other in 56:1 showing a unity of PI and DI. TI’s redactors seek to unite the book with similar themes and words relaying back to previous concepts in PI and DI.

TI as a conclusion echoes previous sections to fulfill and complete previous statements made by PI. For example, Isaiah 1 and 65-66 create bookends that link the book together. The subject of both bookends are the call for Jerusalem to properly worship YHWH and God’s distinction between the righteous and the wicked. Marvin Sweeney’s work reveals this unity of the beginning and conclusion.<sup>17</sup> The similarities between Isaiah 1 and 65–66 are as follows: the rebellious nature of the people who reject YHWH (1:2–9; 65:1-2), the abuse of the cultic sacrifice (1:10–17; 65:6-7), the need to purify Jerusalem (1:21–26; 65:17-18), the distinction between the righteous who will be

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<sup>16</sup> Jacob Stromberg, *An Introduction to the Study of Isaiah*, (New York: T & T Clark, 2011). See also Rolf Rendtorff, and Margaret Kohl, *Canon and Theology: Overtures to an Old Testament Theology*, Overtures to Biblical Theology (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 181–89.

<sup>17</sup> Marvin A Sweeney, *Isaiah 40-66*, The Forms of the Old Testament Literature 19 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016); Marvin A Sweeney, “Prophetic Exegesis in Isaiah 65–66,” in *Form and Intertextuality in Prophetic and Apocalyptic Literature* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2005), 46–62.

redeemed and the wicked who will be destroyed (1:27–28; 65:8–12; 66:1–4), and the use of imagery pertaining to the withered trees and gardens to portray the destruction and shame of the wicked (1:29–31; 65:8–25).<sup>18</sup> While TI may be a separate text from both PI and DI, its redaction is not done within a vacuum meant only for itself. TI’s purpose is to converse with Isaiah’s previous prophecies and to be read with them rather than against them. The conversation to be had is in fulfillments of God’s will on Jerusalem, the continuation of old themes in new ways, and reminding the audience of previous theological ideas already brought up by past generations.

TI, within itself, contains a structure that demonstrates a purposeful design. The prophet as a redactor organizes the prophecies in a way that 56:1–8 and 65–66 form bookends to each other just the same as the bookends of Isaiah 1 and 65–66.<sup>19</sup> These bookends both envision an eschatological movement toward “my holy mountain” (cf. Isa. 56:7; 65:11, 25), both passages promise an ingathering of the nations (Isa. 56:8; 66:18), and both employ identical language of obedience (Isa. 56:4; 65:12; 66:4).<sup>20</sup> With the bookends on either side, the redactor organizes the material in a chiasmic structure around Isaiah 60–62, the oldest collection within TI.<sup>21</sup> A chiasmic structure unifies the material to

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<sup>18</sup>Sweeney, *Isaiah 40–66*, 380.

<sup>19</sup> Jacob Stromberg, *Isaiah after Exile: The Author of Third Isaiah as Reader and Redactor of the Book*, Oxford Theological Monographs (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 13.

<sup>20</sup> For the full list of examples see Stromberg, *Isaiah after Exile*, 14–15.

<sup>21</sup> Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66: A Commentary*, The Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1969), 296; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 207–10; P. A. Smith, *Rhetoric and Redaction in Trito-Isaiah: The Structure, Growth, and Authorship of Isaiah 56–66*, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 62 (New York: E.J. Brill, 1995), 22–49; Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah*, The Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 493–95. The term “oldest” is in regard to the composition of DI. Both DI and TI share historical clues that date the text to the mid 6th century rather than to the late 6th and early 5th century. However, Childs (*Isaiah*, 493–96) has problems with Smith’s approaches to his findings on the redactional nature of poetry. Dating continues to be difficult, what is clear is that TI shares theological themes with DI found in Isaiah 60–62.

make it a distinct literary corpus meant for a specific audience and setting.<sup>22</sup> The point of unifying features such as bookends, shared concepts, and word usages is meant to realize that TI, even if it is a later text than the rest of the collection, still speaks to the same concerns found in earlier locations of the book. Therefore, if PI envisions a Temple standing, it is not out of the question that TI also envisions a Temple in the post-exilic community.

However, some find the separation of a TI as a literary unit to be inaccurate or not as well defined, rather the theory is Isaiah 56-66 is a continuation of DI.<sup>23</sup> The point of a separated section known as TI may seem arbitrary to the average reader of Isaiah, but for the purposes of this paper it establishes a different community of believers. TI is concerned with some of the same topics of DI such as the former things and new things, the fate of the Servant(s), and Jerusalem as the central spot of God's renewal, but it deals with these concerns in a different way and with different outcomes. The literary clues show that while TI may share common themes with DI, the chiastic structure puts boundaries around these texts, setting them apart from the rest of the book.

To demonstrate that Isa. 65:17 is a reference to the Temple, it is essential to point to both PI and DI references to the Temple. TI's technique of linking its language with older prophecies by using similar words, markers, or metaphors is the key in making these connections. Childs shows that there is an importance found in intertextuality

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<sup>22</sup> Sommer points out that "minimally... it seems clear that chapters 40–66 display enough elements of unity that one is justified in treating them as a literary corpus." Benjamin Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusions in Isaiah 40–66* (Stanford University Press: Stanford, 1998), 192.

<sup>23</sup> William L. Holladay, "Was Trito-Isaiah Deutero-Isaiah After All?" In *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition*, edited by Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans, vol. 1, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 70 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 193–217. Holladay saw the prophet speaking in Babylon and in Jerusalem but the distinction is not great enough to call for a complete TI separated from DI (195).

which is to link all of Isaianic texts together and bring them into better unity.<sup>24</sup> Contrary to Childs, Sommer sees prophecies being used within the text of Isaiah are better referred to as “inner biblical allusions.” Intertextuality focuses on readers and the text itself, while allusions focus on the author and source of the material.<sup>25</sup> For the purpose of this paper, the reference of the NHNE representing the Temple of YHWH is a look to the author's intent on the prophecies of Isaiah. It is not unusual that TI references or imagines the Temple in this way because Isaiah has already communicated an expectation of his hopes for the Temple. Therefore, these allusions in Isa. 65:17 will verify the presence of the Temple because audiences can see the influence of the source material. Two examples are Isa. 2:2-4 and Isa. 11:6-9.

The first allusion is Isa. 2:2–4, where all the nations will flood to YHWH's highest of mountains, Jerusalem.<sup>26</sup> Both Isa. 65:17 and Isa. 2:2 focus on the centrality of the holy mountain of YHWH. For both instances, the mountain is the center of God's redemptive work and creative activity. At the mountain, YHWH will recreate the weapons meant for war to be tools for farming. Second, YHWH's mountain will be elevated to the greatest spot of worship, above any other mountain where offerings take place. PI expects this new status of the mountain as an ultimate goal meant to be seen in full at a later time (Isa. 2:4). This elevation of Jerusalem is not only for its own benefit,

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<sup>24</sup> Childs, *Isaiah*, 445.

<sup>25</sup>For an in depth discussion of allusion and influence, see Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 6–31.

<sup>26</sup> Sweeney, “Prophetic Exegesis in Isaiah 65-66,” 53. Sweeney shows that a number of passages in TI reference PI and DI. They focus on several major issues such as the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion, and the new growth of the “seed.” “Overall, the citations indicate a major interest in reading the book of Isaiah in order to point to the rebirth of the ‘seed’ of Israel in a new creation centered at Zion” (53).

but for the benefit of all the earth (“all of the nations shall flow to it” (וּבָהָרוּ אֵלָיו כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם)).

Lastly, both passages see a turning from violence to a time of peace through a new individualized farming structure. The former warriors begin to beat their swords and spears into farming equipment, meaning there will be peace in the community (Isa. 2:4).

In Isa. 65:21-22, this new land will allow people to prosper with their own land, live in houses they build, and eat crops they grow themselves. Isaiah 65 looks at the vision of the hope expressed through Isaiah 2 as a reality now being experienced, located at God’s holy mountain, the highest of all the mountains (Isa. 2:2; 65:25).

The vision set by PI is clearly eschatological in nature. The picture painted by PI and TI have not come to fruition in the lives of the Jerusaelmites. The nations have not come to YHWH at Jerusalem, they have not stopped to learn the law of YHWH, nor has fighting ceased to be taken over by an agricultural boom. In fact, both passages imagine the world that could be but is never historically realized. Isaiah 2 realizes this inherent problem, the vision is followed by an exhortation to “let us walk in the light of YHWH” (Isa. 2:5). The future is bright for those who walk in the light of YHWH, the future can take on the glorious bond between the nations; but only if Jerusalem walks in the path of YHWH. Isaiah 65 shares the same concept, the NHNE can be realized by the servants; God will bless as he punishes the wicked. The servants can thrive in a place free from fear or anxiety that the wicked try to induce. This hope is only if the servants follow YHWH’s command. If the community turns to YHWH, obeys his will, worships him properly, the world then becomes attainable. The text not only is eschatological but hortatory for those who wish for a new life.

Both texts project an eschatological hope of Jerusalem, but Isa. 65:17-18, even though it contains universal images (heaven and earth in its entirety), is solely focused on the effect on Jerusalem. The world of the returnees is focused on Jerusalem and its rebuilding rather than the world as a whole. Still, a restored Jerusalem benefits the world as a catalyst of God's overwhelming love for holiness. Isaiah 2 and 65 are more of a call to evangelism rather than a tale of what will happen to the world at the end of time. In conclusion, Isa. 65:17-18 is not on a universal scale but focuses on Jerusalem and her Temple. Though Isaiah 2 and 65 both speak on a certain level of universalism, the nations will become disciples when Jerusalem becomes true disciples of YHWH. Therefore, both texts are concentrated on shaping Jerusalem rather than shaping the world.

The second example is Isa. 11:6-9 and the hope for a peaceful animal kingdom. It is abundantly clear that the source for Isa. 65:25 is that of Isaiah 11. Isaiah 65:25 mentions three lines from Isaiah 11: "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb" (Isa. 11:6), "the lion shall eat straw like the ox" (Isa. 11:7), and "they shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain" (Isa. 11:9).<sup>27</sup> There are clear differences between the texts; more specifically, it does not appear to be a direct quote. Blenkinsopp interprets the text as being a memorized version of the verses rather than a word for word recitation.<sup>28</sup> Isaiah 65:25 is a later text using Isa. 11:6-9 as a reference to see the community as a peaceful new place for the servants of YHWH.<sup>29</sup> The second key difference is that the peaceful

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<sup>27</sup> For more information and detailed analysis on the similarities and differences between Isa. 11:6-9 and Isa. 65:25, see J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten, "The Intertextual Relationship Between Isaiah 65,25 and Isaiah 11,6-9," in *The Scriptures and the Scrolls: Studies in Honour of A.S. Van Der Woude on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, edited by F. Garcia Martinez, A. Hilhorst, and C.J. Labuschagne (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 31-42.

<sup>28</sup>Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66*, 290; Childs, *Isaiah*, 445.

<sup>29</sup>Ruiten, "The Intertextual Relationship between Isaiah 65,25 and Isaiah 11, 6-9," 31-42; Stromberg, *Isaiah After Exile*, 101-9; S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*

kingdom comes through a messianic figure endowed by the power of the Spirit to lead (Isa. 11:1-5). The messianic figure is completely absent from Isa. 65:25.<sup>30</sup> The absence of a messianic figure could be a reflection of the new Persian rule; it would be senseless to imply or assert that a new ruler will come to fight against Cyrus.<sup>31</sup> Another reason is because of the lack of a Davidic dynasty within this new post-exilic community. With only one reference to David with DI (Isa. 55:3), there seems to be no hope or excitement for the native dynasty to return.<sup>32</sup> Whatever the reasons for the absence of the messianic figure, the hope for the new world still entails peace in the new land and on the Lord's holy mountain.

The conclusion of the matter is that TI is a literary corpus that must be read in context with its preceding prophecies. TI is a conclusion of the book of Isaiah and therefore refers to common themes found within PI and DI. Isaiah 65:17–25 contains references to passages like Isaiah 2 and 11 to link the entire work together while seeing their fulfillment in God's NHNE. Isaiah 2 and 11 see the centrality of the holy mountain (Jerusalem) as the starting point of God's redemptive work of the world, Isa. 65:17 continues that theme but as a realization for the current community. A post exilic

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(New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), 204. While there are those who believe that Isa. 65:25 is an interpolation, and there may be reasons to believe so, it does not change the fact that the final redactor interpreted Isaiah ben Amoz's words as being the goal of his own prophetic word. Isaiah 65:25 is later than Isaiah 11 for three reasons: first 65:25 finds itself in TI which was composed later than PI (Stromberg, 102; Driver, 240). Second, while Isa. 11:7 ambiguously uses the term יחדו (Heb. together), Isa. 65:25 uses the term succinctly without ambiguity (Stromberg, 103). Lastly, pre-exilic communities rarely used divine speech as aggressively as post-exilic works to prove their own words (Stromberg, 104).

<sup>30</sup>Childs, *Isaiah*, 538.

<sup>31</sup> Schramm, *Opponents of Third Isaiah*, 76.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 76-77: "These chapters are occupied with the topic of the restoration of the people of Israel, the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple, and the fulfillment of ancient prophecy, but all of this is spoken of apart from any discussion of the restoration of native kingship."

community, now at home, can finally fulfill God's work in proper worship. God will recreate for the people something spectacular, a new life in their new home, centralized around their new Temple.

### The Date and Social Setting of the NHNE

The second question is about the social setting and date of TI. Dating TI is a difficult task since there are rare historical data points.<sup>33</sup> The purpose of this thesis is not to nail down a specific date of composition, but it is still necessary to approximate a time period in which TI was brought together. The time period for this composition is the restoration of Jehud during the time of Ezra–Nehemiah in the late 6th to early 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>34</sup>

Isaiah's major three sections span in history from the Assyrian empire's takeover of the northern Kingdom in 722 to the restoration of Jerusalemites in their return from Babylon in 538. While DI mentions Cyrus (Isa. 45:1), putting the oracles within a time and place of the Babylonian fall (ca. 539 BCE), the lack of references to any figures, political or prophetic, and the dearth of reference to historical events make it difficult to determine the date of TI.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Christopher R. Seitz, "Isaiah, Book of (Third Isaiah)," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:502–3; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 42–44: "We simply do not have the information to locate the composition of these chapters within an absolute chronology with any degree of precision" (42).

<sup>34</sup> When interpreting a date, it should be noted that the key to this date is found when the final editor gathers the material we find in Isaiah 56–66 rather than the author who writes the material. While few found Isaiah 56–66 as a unified work composed by one author; the consensus of most scholars is that Isaiah 56–66 is a compilation of prophecies gathered together by a redactor or group of redactors.

<sup>35</sup> Seitz, "Isaiah," 3:502. "Partly because TI is so bereft of concrete historical indicators, it has given rise to wide-ranging and speculative proposals as to historical and social location from the pre-exilic period (for 56:9–57:13) to the late Hellenistic period (for 65; 66:3–24\*), as being representative of theocratic ideals, to their opponent in the name of inclusivity and apocalyptic fervor."



The lack of historical references does not mean that the passages are meaningless or without purpose. The meaning within the texts gives the appearance of being timeless when not found in a proper dated setting.<sup>36</sup> Schramm comments that texts like Haggai and Zechariah 1–8 have drawbacks in their usefulness for worship because they are so specific for an audience in the post-exilic community.<sup>37</sup> Childs adds that the lack of historical data found in the texts is the redactor linking the passages back to Isaiah ben Amoz.<sup>38</sup> The texts, without historical data, become purely theological texts meant to be understood not only for the original audience of Isaiah ben Amoz, but also for future audiences.<sup>39</sup> The redactors want the text to be read with the original prophet's words and subsequently understood as a timeless truth about God who works within the world in the past, present, and forevermore.

While there are few clues to link TI with a specific date, there are indications that TI deals with Jerusalem and its Temple. The Temple is mentioned in places like Isa. 56:7, *והביאותים אליהר קדשי* (“I will bring them to my holy hill”). If the editor had a holy mountain in mind, it would be hard to imagine any other mountain but Zion. Especially when the Psalms focus on temple worship and reference Mount Zion as a “holy hill” (see Pss. 2:6; 48:1). A holy hill is also mentioned in Isa. 65:25 where God's work is realized

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<sup>36</sup> Schramm, *Opponents of Third Isaiah*, 79.

<sup>37</sup> This is seen especially in Christian preaching. The Old Testament as a whole is becoming less common in use, but minor prophets like Zechariah and Haggai are sorely neglected completely. For a more in depth look on this phenomena, see Brent Strawn, *The Old Testament is Dying* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017).

<sup>38</sup> Brevard Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 77–79. The redactors of the text want to be anonymous and therefore make their passages applicable to the whole book rather than just their own setting. Childs says, “Basic to the canonical process is that those responsible for the actual editing of the text did their best to obscure their own identity” (78).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 326.

as a new peaceful kingdom. Isaiah 56:7 does not definitively speak of the Temple; it is possible that the prophet speaks of the mountain rather than the Temple. In Isa. 60:13, the prophet identifies “my sanctuary” (מִקְדָּשִׁי) which comes from “the glory of Lebanon.” The cypress and the pine from Lebanon are the same material used for the Temple (1 Kings 5:4–6). In Isa. 63:18, TI remembers the destruction of the sanctuary and the embarrassment that came with captivity and leaving the homeland. In Isa. 64:10–12, the prophet envisions the past world of Zion and Jerusalem as destroyed, becoming a wilderness and desolation.<sup>40</sup>

For the NHNE to be referencing a rebuilt Temple, see also Isaiah 66, where the redactor twice mentions heavens and earth with temple language. The first reference found in 66:1 repeats the same sentiment in 1 Kings 8:27. God’s presence is more than any house can contain; whether in the tabernacle of Moses, the Temple of Solomon, or the second Temple, the house is not meant to contain God. In Isa. 66:22–23, the NHNE is equated with standing as long as the descendants of the Servants; this is a possible reference back to DI, on the conditional promise addressed to those who are faithful and keep the commandments.<sup>41</sup> If the people are to last forever in faithfulness, they will need the Temple to last just as long. The place of worship for Israelite worship is the Temple! Therefore the date of the text must fall in line with a time where the Temple is in effect a part of the community’s cultic identity.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>While Isa. 64:10–12 seems to have been composed during the exile, it stands that TI does have some reference to a temple in Jerusalem and these texts find themselves either exilic or post-exilic in dating.

<sup>41</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 315–16. Cf. Isa. 48:19.

<sup>42</sup> Sommer goes as far as to say, “The last part of Isaiah shares with priestly literature a love of the Temple and an abhorrence of improper forms of worship.” Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scriptures*, 150.

The time that fits with this cultic identity is best seen as a standing Temple during the times of Ezra-Nehemiah around 520–515 BCE. Two reasons for this date: the first is the move to sectarianism within the community, and second, the use of the term *חרד* to describe “the ones who tremble” in Isa. 66:2, 5. Sectarianism, as a desire to create an exclusive group of a Jewish obedient cultic group, most likely began during the Babylonian exile.<sup>43</sup> Ezra-Nehemiah illustrates the returnees forbidding marriage with the indigenous peoples, from disobeying leadership (Ezra 10:8), and focusing on racial purity of the community (Ezra 9:2 “the holy seed”).<sup>44</sup> Isaiah 56–66 differentiates between those who are in proper worship and those who are not. Isaiah 65:1–16 is an example of this separation. The wicked worshipers “make smoke rise on the mountains, and on the hills [they] insult me” (אֲשֶׁר קָטְרוּ עַל-הַהָרִים וְעַל-הַגְּבוּעוֹת חָרְפוּנִי). The wicked worship on other hills, which assumes there is a proper hill worthy of YHWH worship. In Isa. 56:1–7, foreigners are welcomed to join in the worship of the almighty God because they “keep my Sabbaths from being profaned, and keep his hand from doing all evil” (שָׁמַר שַׁבְּתִי מִחֻלְלֶיהָ).<sup>45</sup> The true community of the servants are those who are for YHWH-alone and keep the Law. The separation of two distinct groups is to establish a sanctified group of obedient servants. YHWH neglects the wicked and blesses the righteous, “These therefore are the words of the Sovereign Lord YHWH: ‘my servants

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<sup>43</sup> William F. Albright and C.S. Mann, “Qumran and the Essenes: Geography, Chronology, and the Identification of the Sect” in *The Scrolls and Christianity*, ed. Matthew Black (London: SPCK, 1969), 16. For the introduction to sectarianism within the post-exilic community, see Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Opening the Sealed Book: Interpretations of the Book of Isaiah in Late Antiquity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 64–72. Albright: “The Babylonian exile, often described as the great watershed of Israel’s history, may well have seen the first stirrings of classical Jewish sectarianism, and of this we get hints in the memoirs of Ezra and Nehemiah.”

<sup>44</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Opening the Sealed Book*, 66.

<sup>45</sup> Ulrich Berges, “Trito-Isaiah and the Reforms of Ezra/Nehemiah: Consent or Conflict?” *Biblica* 98 (2017): 178–184.

will eat, while you [the wicked] go hungry; my servants will drink, while you go thirsty; my servants will rejoice, while you are put to shame; my servants will rejoice with heartfelt joy, while you cry out with heartache and wail with anguish of spirit (Is. 65:13–14).<sup>46</sup> TI defines the good group from the bad group in the cultic community. These societal definitions are found in texts such as Ezra-Nehemiah. The point is to clearly tell YHWH’s servants (a theme found especially in Isaiah 65 as a vindication after the preceding prayer)<sup>47</sup> that they are blessed by YHWH while the wicked will suffer. The conclusion of the blessing then is a new community of hope found in the NHNE. The servants who correctly honor God, seek him within their lives, they do not stray from his commands but seek after peace through obedience to YHWH. The hope doesn’t need to be futuristic but can be experienced now. If people wish to be a part of the community, to participate in agriculture, to live amongst their neighbors, they must choose to listen to YHWH.<sup>48</sup> Sectarianism becomes the means by which people can find the YHWH’s community and its security; granted by YHWH’s blessing for those who do right.

Isaiah 56–66 is set at the same time of Ezra-Nehemiah because TI uses the term *הרד* (“the ones who tremble”). The participle form of *הרד* occurs four times: Isa. 66:2, 5 and Ezra 9:4; 10:3. Isaiah 66:2 may not specifically allude to a group of people but the heart of people that YHWH wants; Isa. 66:5 clearly sets up a group that has enemies who

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<sup>46</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Opening the Sealed Book*, 69.

<sup>47</sup> W.A.M. Beuken, “The Main Theme of Trito-Isaiah, ‘the Servants of YHWH,’” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 15 (1990): 76.

<sup>48</sup> P.A. Smith makes the point concerning the date of the texts that the difference between Isa. 62:8–9 and Isa. 65:21–23 that Isaiah 62 focuses on the “enemies and foreigners” as the aggressors toward YHWH’s people. In Isaiah 65, there is no setting of Israel over any other nation, in fact the hope is for individualism and peace to live how you see fit. This point concludes that the conflict turned from outward (against nations) to inward (within the community). With no infighting amongst the Israelites, there can be peace amongst the people in the restored community of Israel. Smith, *Rhetoric and Redaction in Trito-Isaiah: The Structure, Growth, and Authorship of Isaiah 56-66*, 145.

will be put to shame. Isaiah 66:5 sets up two groups: “you who tremble at his word” and “your brothers who hate you.” In Ezra, both times **הרר** occurs it is in reference to those who have not committed exogamy with the neighboring communities. Ezra fits into the category of **הרר** because of his reaction to the faithless leaders who marry foreigners (“I tore my garment and my cloak and pulled hair from my head and beard and sat appalled” Ezra 9:3).<sup>49</sup> **הרר** becomes the clue to the social setting of the redactor: their community is in need of the word of God and the right path toward worship and life in comparison to the loose community of the wicked. The specific use of **הרר** and its verbal form also gives clues to the setting of the text’s authorship.

In conclusion, TI is a group of texts compiled and edited together during the years of either the Temple’s completion or immediately after (approximately 520–400 BCE).<sup>50</sup> The people have returned home, the Temple is rebuilt, and the community is in need of guidance on the correct cultic practice as they restart in the homeland. For those who participate, they will enjoy peace in NHNE forevermore.

### Theology of the NHNE

What does it mean that YHWH is “creating new heavens and a new earth”?

Where would TI get this image and what does that image tell the reader about God? In

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<sup>49</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Opening the Sealed Book*, 67. “But the title by which Ezra’s support group was known... suggests that a rigorist legalism was combined with an intensity of religious emotion characteristic of some forms of prophecy in Israel and elsewhere. This being so, ‘the word of the God of Israel’ which occasioned the trembling could have insinuated the prophetic, revealed word as well as the legal word.” While the rules of Ezra may be unpopular, their backing was by prophetic and legalist desire to follow God.

<sup>50</sup> While 520–515 are normal dates found by most commentators for the construction of the Temple, 400 BC is an arbitrary date meaning the late 5th century BCE. Sweeney, Smith, Elliger, and Hanson see these texts as a post-exilic work. This date is broad enough to keep editorial and final redaction in mind while also specifically dealing with a community who are returning to Jerusalem and see or live in the beginning of the Second Temple period.

this section, I will argue that TI uses the term NHNE to describe the Temple and the effect that a rebuilt Temple has on the cosmic order of the world and as a declaration of God's sovereignty.

The theology of Isaiah 65 begins with the ultimate genesis of the world. Genesis 1 is the story of God's creative order of the heavens and the earth. In this priestly story, God separates everything and puts all of the cosmos and the earthly elements in their rightful place. Genesis 1 is a foundational story for the world in which the Israelites live. It is the way they describe God and his work as it relates to humans. It provides meaning for the lives of the community. Creation is a foundational theological structure by which Israel describes politics, life, and spirituality. Creation is also a key theological theme for understanding the Temple and its function within the community. Isaiah 65 exemplifies creation theology by its numerous references to the space and reality of the world and to the ecological hope that the new world possesses. The first creation reference is in the very merism of the new heavens and the new earth. In the beginning God creates (ברא) the heavens and the earth out of chaos and emptiness. Both of the times ברא is used it speaks to God's divine activity; God is creating something that only he can provide. The shared terms of creation and the summarizing merism of heaven and earth link Genesis 1 and Isaiah 65 together, expecting something radically new that has never been seen before.

Other than the larger reference of the creation of heaven and earth, Isa. 65:17–25 as a textual unit references a pre-diluvian world. In Isa. 65:22, people shall have long life and abundance. In the Targums as a clarification they saw the "days of the tree of life" to be a reference here looking back on the narrative of Genesis 1–3 (Tg. Isa. 65:22). While

65:21 could be a reversal of the curses in Deut. 28:30 (“You will build a house, but you will not dwell in it, you will plant a vineyard but you will not defile it”), it also could be the freedom of eating and living in the garden *carte blanche* (Gen. 1:29–30).<sup>51</sup> And finally the restoration of a peaceful, paradisiacal location where the animals live in harmony. One of the features that contrasts the intertextual use of Isa. 11:6–9 is instead of the asp (פֶּתֶן) refraining from attacking the child, the serpent (נָחָשׁ) will eat dust. This serpent reference doesn’t relate back to Isaiah 11 but to the curse bestowed upon the serpent in the garden (Gen. 3:14 “and you will eat dust all the days of your life” וְעָפָר תֹּאכַל וְעָפָר תֹּאכַל). TI’s vision of newness is not made up by the prophet but a gathering of already understood theological themes such as creation to inspire the servants of YHWH’s active creation. The hope for the servants, according to Watts, is that they would experience what God intended in the Garden of Eden, “a totally nonviolent and innocent creation.”<sup>52</sup>

The Temple is a place like the garden of Eden. In its initial building during the time of Solomon, the Temple contained creation references and was intended to be a place where God dwells amongst the people like the garden. The walls are carved with cherubims, flowers, and palm trees signifying nature within the Temple (1 Kings. 6:29, 32, 35). The Temple also contains the remnants of “the sea” (יָם) referring to God’s control and defeat of chaos at the beginning. Having “the sea” in the Temple was a reminder of YHWH’s victory during worship.<sup>53</sup> The theological foundation of creation is

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<sup>51</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 289.

<sup>52</sup> Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 357.

<sup>53</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *1 & 2 Kings*, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2000), 100.

not a mere reference but the rudiments of the Temple's foundation. The Temple represents God's creative sovereignty, he orders the world by means of his power and provides order through his presence in his holy space at Jerusalem.

Jon Levenson explores in detail YHWH's order of the world and his creative sovereignty through the Temple as it benefits the world in *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence*. According to Levenson, the Temple is a microcosm of the entire cosmos, and the two are a homology of each other. The Temple's importance is not only explored through the lens of history, but cosmology.<sup>54</sup> The Temple gives a vision of the greater cosmos but is experienced on the earth. YHWH makes the world for his people, and the world is put into a manageable perspective for the people by means of the Temple. In Levenson's terms:

Collectively, the function of these correspondences is to underscore the depiction of the sanctuary as a world, that is, an ordered, supportive, and obedient environment, and the depiction of the world as a sanctuary, that is, a place in which the reign of God is visible and unchallenged, and his holiness is palpable, unthreatened and pervasive. Our examination of the two sets of Priestly texts, one at the beginning of Genesis and the other at the end of Exodus, has developed powerful evidence that, as in many cultures, *the Temple was conceived as a microcosm, a miniature world*. But it is equally the case that in Israel (and probably also in the other cultures), the world... was conceived, at least in Priestly circles, as a *macro-temple*, the palace of God in which all are obedient to his commands.<sup>55</sup>

Levenson proves his point in four ways: through the comparison to ANE texts which show the Temple as a homology to the world as a cultural norm. Second, he compares biblical texts such as Isa. 65:17; 66:1–4; Ps. 78:69 with other ANE documents. Third, he

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<sup>54</sup>Jon Douglas Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 78–99. “The two could coexist nicely, for they reinforce each other: history concretizes cosmology, and cosmology lifts history above the level of the mundane” (82).

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 86. Italics added for emphasis



analyzes archeological evidence through the work of William Foxwell Albright describing the furnishing of the Jerusalem Temple. Lastly he analyzes rabbinic literature which envisioned creation and the Temple as synonymous. The world is YHWH's and his building of the Temple is proof of his ownership of the heavens and the earth. Levenson's goal in this chapter is to establish that the motif of creation is interwoven with the life of the Israelites and not a separate theological idea only in theory.<sup>56</sup> The story of creation also depicts key expectations in the cultural and religious life of the Israelites: order, sovereignty over the world, and the hope of peace like the garden. All of these hopes find their place in the reality of the Temple, and the building provides answers to deeper cosmological questions that Israelites need answered. One of those questions for Isa. 65:17–25 is: can God provide a future for those who worship him correctly and who are YHWH's only followers? The answer is yes, at the recreation of the Temple, the Lord's sovereignty extends to the servants to provide them a peaceful and holy space upon "the holy mountain." YHWH's solace and peace is not just for religious life but expands into daily life; they will eat, build, and be joyful at their new life.

With the promise of the NHNE, does the Temple provide this change to physical reality (YHWH will change the sky and ground to make something new like he did in the creation of Genesis 1) or is it a metaphor (YHWH's transformation serves as an explanation of something else)? God is transforming Jerusalem through the rebuilding of a temple; therefore the vision of a NHNE is metaphorical, meant to explain the impact of this drastic new change and the scope of its effect on the world. The literal interpretation assumes that because of the extension of life expectancy and the peace amongst the animals that readers ought to expect a radically new oddity to occur within their world. A

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 91.

literal interpretation of the text seems exaggerated and extreme for what the Lord is doing. A total literal interpretation can lead down an apocalyptic path of interpretation, that the fulfillment of the NHNE will be in the second coming of Jesus the Messiah or the coming kingdom of God. This takes the passage out of the historical context of its setting and expects something that the people would never experience in their lifetime.

A metaphorical interpretation of NHNE insinuates that TI is saying something about the world that the people currently live in and will soon see. The recreation of the heavens and earth is a metaphor for stability and political change and that the true focus is the societal change in Jerusalem.<sup>57</sup> Isaiah 65:17 poetically illustrates the change in the world of the returnees from Babylon. The former world that they once knew, that is the reality of the past, will be forgotten and a new experience in a different, yet familiar, environment will take place. This is in opposition to an eschatological new world envisioned by other prophets such as Ezekiel 40-48. The desire to exit the current world for another world is not present. Therefore, the people will not travel to another dimension or an otherworldly place but will find their lives to be brand new. The language is to be read in a creative fashion, meant to express deeper meanings of life and spiritual experiences. Instead of fear, worry, and anxiety filling the lives of the returnees, they are promised a long life, flourishing, and peace in their new living space. The final living space of NHNE will be a new experience in the land rather than a new physical world that they will live in.

When it comes to the theology of Isa. 65:17, it is important to note what TI does not envision as it relates to the NHNE. For this paper currently, I have discussed the

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<sup>57</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66*, 286; Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 354; Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66*, WBC (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 246; Koole, *Isaiah III*, 451.

NHNE as the representative phrase for the renewed Temple in Jerusalem. As the remnant returns to Jerusalem during the period of Ezra-Nehemiah around 520-515, TI envisions a new Temple as a restoration of the order of the universe. Life, prosperity, and joy are found in God's presence in the Temple courts. What is not intended by the NHNE is an overly apocalyptic view of the text that removes the text from the historical era of Ezra-Nehemiah and pushes it to an otherworldly or futuristic hope which is distant from the post-exilic community.

An interpretation common amongst some scholars is that TI prophecies the Kingdom of God that Jesus inaugurates during his ministry upon the earth.<sup>58</sup> In this view, the only way this passage finds fulfillment is in Jesus's ministry, or the coming of Christ. Childs interprets this passage as an eschatological prediction of the future kingdom of God's enthronement, with no mention of an earthly kingdom but of a "heavenly" one. Childs argues by way of intertextuality that the hope of a recreation is through the new messiah promised in Isa. 11:1-9 because both passages share "on my holy mountain" (Isa. 11:9; 65:25).<sup>59</sup> In response to Childs and Oswalt, Sweeney notes that eschatologically, the whole book of Isaiah points more toward the realization of God's sovereignty and by Isaiah 65, the Davidic kingship is dissolved making way for God's universal sovereignty over Jerusalem and the rest of the world.<sup>60</sup> By the time Isaiah 65 comes into play, the new community does not see a NHNE with a messiah on the throne

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<sup>58</sup> Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, 656.

<sup>59</sup> Childs, *Isaiah*, 539.

<sup>60</sup> Marvin Sweeney, "Eschatology in the Book of Isaiah," in *The Book Of Isaiah: Enduring Questions Answered Anew*, edited by Richard J. Bauckham and J. Todd Hibbard (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 179-95. "In the end, the restoration of Zion entails the creation of a new heaven and earth, i.e, the restoration of Zion fundamentally changes creation as YHWH's sovereignty is recognized" (194).

but in the hands of God's recreation of their world. This world, just like in the beginning of creation, is just as YHWH intended it with YHWH as its only true King.

Gary Smith also criticizes this historical interpretation of NHNE as the rebuilt Temple. Smith leans towards an interpretation that emphasizes a transformed community's heart, referencing the same hope Ezekiel and Jeremiah envision for the people of Israel.<sup>61</sup> Smith rejects the notion that Jerusalem is the sole focus of this reformation but only the beginning to a larger work God is doing in the world.<sup>62</sup> While Smith sees Ezekiel and Jeremiah agreeing with Isaiah, he fails to include the redactional nature of Isaiah and the Jerusalem-centric nature of the texts at hand in his interpretation. Isaiah 65:17-18 only speaks of Jerusalem by name. The NHNE and Jerusalem are mentioned as receiving God's creative activity, which implies a parallelism of the target of God's work. While the world in prophetic literature may be affected positively, these texts are meant for Israelite readers and focus on an exclusive Israelite audience. Gentiles may benefit from reading these texts, as the audience today does, but their intended audience is for the servants who predominantly are returning Israelites.

One concession to the eschatological reading is the extreme hyperbolic, almost mythological, hope in which TI sees this world. In this new world, people live to be a hundred years old and an unlikely harmony between prey and predator. These exaggerated images of peace and longevity seem to be so distant from the norm that they seem spiritual or otherworldly. The inner peace that is amongst animals, where some change their diet and others live fearlessly amongst their peers, is odd if not fantastical to

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<sup>61</sup> Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, 718.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, 719–20.

say the least. This otherworldliness and change in the nature of certain species supports the interpretation of Westermann toward an apocalyptic view. The text contains fantastic images of grandeur as a hyperbolic exaggeration of the future. The point of these fantastic images is meant to poetically tell of God's wonderful transformation for the servants and how great the world will be for them. Koole interprets these passages hyperbolically, believing the text is not purely a cosmological text nor a purely physical text but in the middle where the world will change before the eyes of the people and speaks to the greater truth of God's work on a cosmological scale.<sup>63</sup> Watts does well putting Isaiah 65 in its proper historical context, knowing that this text is not of the distant future but of Jerusalem's rebuilding and the pilgrims that are affected for the generations to follow.<sup>64</sup>

The biggest danger for a text like Isa. 65:17, as well as its greatest strength, is its generality and vagueness towards the renewed world. The world will be brand new and TI describes the benefits of the new world. The vagueness of the scene leads some interpreters towards a messianic reading of the text. One reason for this reading is the feeling of a lack of fulfillment within history. When did the Israelites experience anything like what TI promises? Only in the life of Christ do people experience both life and peace, and the promise of life and peace are going to be fully realized at the second coming of Christ. This Christian interpretation can be perceived as self centered and lacking in understanding of Jewish history. Moskala makes the point that Christians tend

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<sup>63</sup> Koole, *Isaiah III*, 450.

<sup>64</sup> Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 354.

to project onto Isaiah 65 what they interpret Revelation 21 to mean.<sup>65</sup> What a messianic reading of the text puts at stake is a historical interpretation of Isaiah the prophet. With this in mind the conclusion of this section is that Isa. 65:17 is a metaphorical picture of the rebuilt Temple in which God's sovereignty is fully realized during the life of the post-exilic community. The result of the rebuilt Temple has both cosmological and physical effects on the community described through hyperbole like longevity, the decrease in infant mortality, and peace between prey and predator. The community will find blessing when God arrives amongst his people. He will be there when they call, and listen before they speak.

The theological principle of creation gives cosmological meaning to the ancient reader's historical moment. Their Temple is a structure that contains both cosmological, theological, and historical significance for the community, and is the lens by which God's creative activity flourishes in their midst. The Temple is a microcosm of something greater, something the Israelites can now see and touch. In the mindset of the returnees from Babylonian captivity, God's creative act is happening before their very eyes at the construction of the Second Temple. The heavens and earth become brand new. It's not an eschatological destruction of the current world but a rebuilding of a new world for the exiles, a fresh start for an old people.

The conclusion of the matter is that Isa. 65:17–25 uses the theme of God's redemption of creation to illustrate and explain the rebuilding of the Temple. The purpose of this theme is two fold: the first purpose is for the servants to know that YHWH is

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<sup>65</sup>Jiri Moskala, "Does Isaiah 65:17–25 Describe the Eschatological New Heavens and the New Earth?" in *Meeting with God on the Mountains: Essays in Honor of Richard M. Davidson*, edited by Jiri Moskala (Berrien Springs: Andrews University, 2016), 191.

intentionally and actively participating in their renewal. God's recreation of the Temple is God finally present with his servants. Isaiah 65:24 says YHWH will answer before they call, and before they are even speaking he will hear them. This verse describes the closeness and proximity of YHWH who now is with them. The second purpose for the creation theme is for the return of an Eden lifestyle first intended by God. Isaiah 65:25, sees the primordial world in this new community. For the writer, their hope is to be like Adam and Eve without the fall. God intends for Jerusalem to live, plant, and live in peace.

## Chapter 2: Early Interpretations of the NHNE in the Second Temple Period

As discussed in the first chapter of this research project, the Temple is the focus of NHNE theology in Isaiah. Trito-Isaiah's vision of the world is a reconstituted Temple which ushers a new reality of productivity, longevity, and blessing. A positive new beginning is strictly for the servants who will forget the evil of the past and joyously move into a new era of time and space. Isaiah 65:17 is not an eschatological Temple or a heavenly space that the servants will soon inhabit; the NHNE is a hopeful expectation of the world during the Second Temple period. Moving into the second chapter, the expectation is to see a transformation of the phrase NHNE. While Isaiah has his particular usage of the image, later interpreters use his image to paint their own pictures for their own time. This second chapter will be a comparison of Isa. 65:17 with the visions of Second Temple period literature: 1 Enoch, Jubilees, and Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum (LAB)*.

1 Enoch 91:12–17<sup>66</sup>

“After this there will arise an eighth week of righteousness, in which a sword will be given to all the righteous, to execute righteous judgment on all the wicked, and they will be delivered in their hands. And at its conclusion, they will acquire possessions in righteousness; and the temple of the kingdom of the Great One will be built in the greatness of its glory for all the generations of eternity. After this there will arise a ninth week, in which righteous law will be revealed to all the sons of the whole earth; and all the deeds of wickedness will vanish from the whole earth and descend to the eternal pit, and all humankind will look to the path of eternal righteousness.

After this, in the tenth week, the seventh part, (will be) the eternal judgment; and it will be executed on the watchers of the eternal heaven, and a fixed time of the great judgment will be rendered in the mindset of the holy ones. And the first

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<sup>66</sup> Translation found in George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, eds. *1 Enoch: A New Translation: Based on the Hermeneia Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 434–435.



heaven will pass away in it, and a new heaven will appear; and all the powers of the heavens will shine forever with sevenfold (brightness). After this there will be many weeks without number forever, in which they will do piety and righteousness, and from then on sin will never again be mentioned.”

The first example of NHNE is found in 1 En. 91:15-17. 1 Enoch is a collection of apocalyptic visions formed together in the 2nd century BCE. The sections are the Introduction (chs 1-5), the Narratives (chs. 6–36), the Parables (chs. 37–71), the Book of Astrology (chs. 72–82), the Book of Dreams (chs. 83–90), the Epistle of Enoch (chs. 91–104), and an appendix with an editorial conclusion (chs. 105–108).<sup>67</sup> The allusion to the NHNE is in a section of the Epistle of Enoch known as the “Apocalypse of Weeks” (ApocW). In the ApocW, Enoch describes the history of the world in the span of ten weeks.<sup>68</sup> The literary structure of the text begins with the history of creation at week one and ends with the renewal of the heavens at week ten.<sup>69</sup> A goal of the apocalypse is to declare God’s sovereignty over history; what will happen in history is already declared by the Lord from beginning to end.<sup>70</sup> Enoch’s view of history, as a linear timeline, demonstrates God’s ultimate control over history thereby encouraging faithfulness no

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<sup>67</sup> This organization of the material and chapter numbers comes from the introductory material found in J.H. Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983), 1:5.

<sup>68</sup> An important note is the extreme redactional nature of the Apocalypse of Weeks, which is a unit from 93:1–10 and then 91:11–17 found in the Epistle of Enoch (chs. 91–107). While this thesis is not an examination of the text itself, this paper will assume these two sections were originally one section of texts meant to be read together. For more on the redactional nature and studies of the Apocalypse of Weeks see James C. VanderKam, “Studies in the Apocalypse of Weeks (1 Enoch 93:1–10; 91:11–17),” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 46 (1984): 511–23; Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *1 Enoch 91-108*, Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2007), 2–28.

<sup>69</sup> James C. VanderKam, *From Revelation to Canon: Studies in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature* (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2002), 374.

<sup>70</sup> Lars Hartman, “The Function of Some So-Called Apocalyptic Timetables,” *New Testament Studies* 22 (1975): 1–14.

matter the circumstances.<sup>71</sup> For the purposes of this paper, I am focusing on 1 Enoch's reuse of Isaiah to illustrate the hope for the future of the people in the second century during the period of the Maccabees.<sup>72</sup> By indicating the usage of Isaiah's themes and messages, the image becomes clearer amongst multiple generations and becomes an encouraging message of hope for future generations to come.

There are several points of comparison in both texts that illustrate a dependence of 1 Enoch on Isaiah. The first comparison is that both Isaiah and Enoch envision a renewal of the world with the Temple at its center. The crux of the argument in this paper is the NHNE is a poetic descriptor of the Temple in Jerusalem as a homology of the cosmos. As Levenson argues, Isa. 65:17 imagines the Temple as a microcosm of the universe as a whole. Isaiah utilizes the creation metaphor to explain that what God is doing is something he has already exemplified in Genesis 1–2. The ApocW contains the same hope for recreation and renewal and that a “second Genesis” is coming soon.<sup>73</sup> In 1 Enoch the expectation of a Temple is stated more directly than found in TI. In the fifth week “the Temple of the glorious kingdom” is constructed and expected to stand forever (1 En. 93:7–8). However, in the sixth week, the Temple is destroyed by fire and the people within it perish, losing their sight and their wisdom (1 En. 93:8). The Temple in

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<sup>71</sup> John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 83.

<sup>72</sup> For dating of the ApoW, see Andrea Bedenbender, “Reflection on Ideology and Date of the Apocalypse of Weeks,” in *Enoch and Qumran Origins: New Light on a Forgotten Connection*, edited by Gabriele Boccaccini (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 200–3; Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, 440–41; VanderKam “Studies in the Apocalypse of Weeks,” 511–23; James VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition*, Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 16 (Washington DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1984), 142–49.

<sup>73</sup> “In all other passages where the New Creation is mentioned or implied in 1 Enoch the apocalypticist is always thinking... in terms of a second Genesis, a new creation which embraces the Universe and mankind.” Matthew Black, “The New Creation in 1 Enoch,” in *Creation, Christ, and Culture: Studies in Honour of T. F. Torrance*, edited by Richard Mckinney (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 14.

weeks 5–6 is the Solomonic temple, which was destroyed in 586 BCE.<sup>74</sup> The author’s own place and setting are found during the seventh week, after the destruction which is described as a dark time of a perverse generation.<sup>75</sup> At the conclusion of the eighth week another Temple is created, this time centered as a “temple of the Great One” (1 En. 91:13). This Second Temple is the Temple Isaiah expects and the author of Enoch lives. It is the Temple where the righteous law is made manifest (91:14) and judgment is pronounced on the Watchers (91:15). Then time will continue after many weeks without end where piety and righteousness will thrive.

ApocW has two temples, and the new heavens are instituted by God after the second Temple is erected. Unlike Isaiah, the physical Temple that will be erected in Jerusalem is an eschatological Temple, one in the heavens. With the date of TI in mind, it is assumed that Isaiah’s expectation of what the Temple can do is being explained. The Temple, according to TI, will bring hope and at its full construction brings prosperity and life. 1 Enoch is in the second century, two hundred years later; the Temple has been established and is already a function of Israelite cultic practice. Enoch has seen the temple collapse, fall, and be rebuilt. Something is different about the expectation of the Second Temple between Isaiah and Enoch. Possibly Enoch’s understanding of the Temple has been assaulted by Antiochus IV. Antiochus Epiphanes decimates and defiles the Temple by sacrificing unclean animals and persecution of Jews. Although these images portray what seems to be a physical Temple, Enoch’s hope is for more of a spiritualized Temple in the heavens.

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<sup>74</sup> Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, 446.

<sup>75</sup> Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 81.

The first example of this expectation is the fact that 1 Enoch is an apocalyptic work meant to enlighten another world, a world which is unfamiliar and the reader must be guided through. In 1 Enoch 14, Enoch experiences a divine transcendence into the throne room of God and enlightens about a similar type of Temple as described in the ApocW.<sup>76</sup> This throne room is one inaccessible to humans except through angelic guidance. Another reason to believe Enoch is referring to a more spiritualized temple is that this temple will stand for the rest of history where sin will be realized no more. The heavens are the focus of the renewal rather than the heavens and the earth. At the time of the renewal of the cosmos, the heavenly Watchers will be judged, therefore a great judgment will not likely be on earth or in a brick and mortar temple (1 En. 91:15).<sup>77</sup>

The second comparison to Isaiah is the overt sectarian theme focusing on the destruction of the wicked and the salvation of the righteous. Isaiah has a clear delineation between the righteous servants and the wicked. The wicked are those who practice apostasy and idol worship (Isa. 65:1-7). While the wicked perish, the servants will thrive and be given all that they need (Isa. 65:13-16). Isaiah's vision is that the new world would be home for those who want to forget the former things and live a new life with YHWH (Isa. 65:16-17). Isaiah's eschatological point is to give hope that righteousness would not be overlooked by God but justice and peace prevails in the end (Isa. 65:23–25). Enoch's eschatological history follows the same dynamic: a righteous select few follow YHWH's divine commandments and the wicked follow their own divisive

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<sup>76</sup> Stefan Beyerle, "The Imagined World of the Apocalypses," in *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, edited by John J. Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 383–84.

<sup>77</sup> J. Vermeylen, *The Book of Isaiah =: Le Livre d'Isaïe: Les Oracles et Leurs Relectures Unité et Complexité de l'ouvrage*, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 81 (Leuven University Press: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1989), 165; Black, "The New Creation in 1 Enoch," 18.

ways. 1 Enoch, in the same manner as Isaiah, retells history with the mindset of what will happen to the “sons of righteousness” (1 En. 93:2), the select group that has faithfully obeyed God’s laws. Righteousness is a key concept within the ApocW as a whole and the Sons of Righteousness are central within the vision.<sup>78</sup> Righteousness and other variations of the word are employed 13 times within ApocW. Righteousness is expected to be restored. Just as week one is wonderful and good the way God intends, week seven and beyond will move back toward righteousness. In the seventh week there will be a certain group of the “chosen” that will survive the perverse generation (1 En. 93:9-10). Week 10 will see the entire cosmos flourishing in righteousness with sin out of existence. In Isaiah and 1 Enoch, the goal is to solidify that the righteous and the wicked have very different outcomes and that God’s purposes will win in the end.

The third comparison is that both Isaiah and Enoch share a similar structure of the timetable by which renewal will happen. TI is used as a conclusion to the prophecy of Isaiah, referencing previous passages and alluding to earlier prophecies. Isaiah 65-66 is a bookend to Isaiah 1, covering similar themes of YHWH’s disappointment over the Temple worship and the judgment on the wicked worshippers. As Sweeney points out, these literary clues are meant to give the entire book structure and link all the passages together. Though the Epistle of Enoch is not a bookend or a conclusion, like TI, the ApocW has a chiastic structure. The retelling of history begins with the good of the first week, gets really bad up to the seventh week, then again becomes good between weeks eight and ten. The chiasm is found in that the first and tenth weeks are parallel in nature

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 441. “Sons of righteousness” is only used here in the Apocalypse of Weeks (1 En. 93:2)

(both speak of God's brand new work).<sup>79</sup> As already noted, 1 Enoch's possible date falls in line with that of the seventh week. Enoch sees himself at the threshold of the eschaton, waiting for the renewal that he knows is possible.<sup>80</sup>

The timeline of 1 Enoch and Isaiah are also intended for the same purpose: that is the encouragement and the reassurance of God's sovereignty over history. TI's timeline is that he is presently discouraged by the apostates that surround him. Isaiah's hope is that God is recreating (present tense) the world through the construction of the Temple. In 1 Enoch, Enoch sees himself at the point of the eschaton with expectation of the renewal of righteousness in front of him. Both texts ought to be read as texts for their own audiences, and the timeline of both Isaiah 65 and the ApocW sets their audience at the current time and place rather than a distant future hope for another audience.<sup>81</sup>

There is one major difference between the text of 1 Enoch and Isaiah, that is the actual phrase shared between the texts. The full phrase of "a new heavens and a new earth" is missing from the Enochic text, only mentioning a "new heavens" (1 En. 91:17). This is an inconsequential problem when measured against the other points already made. Some assume the earth is already renewed,<sup>82</sup> but the idea of a new earth is also explicitly mentioned in 1 En. 91:14: "the righteous law will be revealed to all the sons of the whole

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<sup>79</sup> Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, 438: "Complementarity of the two sets of weeks is also evident in weeks 8-10 in the progressive obliteration of wickedness and the progression toward a state of complete righteousness that parallels week 1. At the end, the newly created cosmos returns to God's original intention."

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 439.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 440: "That the eschaton might be far into the future is also problematic, because it would seem to provide scarce comfort for the troubled people to whom it is directed."

<sup>82</sup> Russell, *New Heavens and New Earth*, 102.

earth.” Nicklesburg sees a complementary renewal of both heaven and earth together which is reminiscent of the replacement of the luminaries (1 En. 72:1; Isa. 30:26).<sup>83</sup> ApocW is a renewal of the entire cosmos just as Isa. 65:17 is, but the focus of Enoch is on the heavens rather than Isaiah which focuses on the earth.<sup>84</sup> The essential connection between both texts is the hope for renewal. Enoch is still seen as a developer of Isaiah’s visions because he hopes for the same renewal yet does not directly quote from Isa. 65:17. Enoch, instead of directly reminding his readers of Isaiah’s hope, is influenced to the point of using the image in his own context. This revelation of God’s law to the people inherently envisions a new time on the earth when humanity will see God’s hope carried out. This is reminiscent of Isaiah’s hope for all the nations to be under God’s law (Isa. 2:2-4; 56:1-6).

In this section, the goal is to illuminate Isaiah as source material for 1 Enoch’s vision of the future. 1 Enoch is an interpreter of Isaiah and therefore uses Isaiah as an impetus for his own vision and explanation of the ancient audience's situation. 1 Enoch connects the NHNE, even though he does not use that exact phrase, to illustrate a rebuilt Temple, hope for the righteousness of the kingdom, and God’s sovereignty over time and creation.

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<sup>83</sup> Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, 450.

<sup>84</sup>By focusing on the earth, I am alluding to Isa. 65:21–22 in which the hope is for freedom in agriculture and architecture in the people’s own community. This hope, I would imagine, would be very important to exiled people returning home after taxation and forced labor.

Jubilees 1:26–29<sup>85</sup>

“Now you write all these words that I tell you on this mountain: what is first and what is last and what is to come during all the divisions of the time that for the law and for the testimony and for the weeks of their jubilees until eternity – until the time when I descend and live with them throughout all the ages of eternity.” Then he told the Angel of the Presence to dictate to Moses (starting) from the beginning of the creation until the time when “my temple is built among them throughout the ages of eternity. The Lord will appear in the sight of all, and all will know that I am the God of Israel, the Father of all Jacob’s children, and King on Mount Zion for the ages of eternity. Then Zion and Jerusalem will be holy. The Angel of the Presence, who was going along in front of the Israelite camp, took the tablets (that told) of the divisions of the years from the time the law and the testimony were created—for the weeks of their jubilees, year by year in their full number, and their jubilees from [the time of the first creation until] the time of the new creation when the heavens, the earth, and all their creatures will be renewed like the powers of the sky and life all the creatures of the earth until the time when the temple of the Lord will be created in Jerusalem on Mount Zion. All the luminaries will be renewed for the purpose of healing, health, and blessing for all the elect ones of Israel and so that it may remain this way from that time throughout all the days of the earth.”

Another example of the NHNE image is the book of Jubilees. Jubilees is a second century BCE document used as a commentary covering Genesis through Exodus. While this document has similarities to 1 Enoch and may have used it as source material, it still uniquely utilizes a NHNE theology to describe an eschatological hope for Israel.<sup>86</sup>

Before delving into the similarities between Jubilees and Isaiah, an important feature of Jubilees is the limited eschatological reflections.<sup>87</sup> The genre of the book by itself is hard to clarify, it does not carry the characteristics of apocalyptic (e.g. avoidance

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<sup>85</sup> Translation found in James C. VanderKam and Sidnie White Crawford, *Jubilees: A Commentary on the Book of Jubilees*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018): 132.

<sup>86</sup> For similarities between 1 Enoch and Jubilees see numerous articles in Gabriele Boccaccini, Giovanni Ibba, Jason von Ehrenkrook, James Alan Waddell, and Jason Zurawski, eds. *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).

<sup>87</sup> G. L. Davenport, *The Eschatology of the Book of Jubilees* (Boston: Brill, 1971); VanderKam, *Jubilees*, 132.



of symbolic dreaming).<sup>88</sup> Jubilees is not necessarily an eschatological text because it barely speaks of the end times or what to expect in the future. The only three texts recognized as explicitly eschatological are Jubilees 1, 23, and 50. The focus of renewal for this paper is on Jub. 1:27–29, a text considered both eschatological and apocryphal.<sup>89</sup> Though the book is not inherently an eschatological text, it is a text that uses eschatology to put the laws and stories into perspective. The book’s intent is as a defense of the law for Jews in the occupied territory of Jerusalem. Jubilees uses the early history of Israel, found in Genesis and Exodus, to prove that the Abrahamic fathers were faithful to the covenant of YHWH even before the Sinai covenant at creation (Jub. 2:19-22).<sup>90</sup> The stories of Israel’s history, covenant, and law are in effect to combat sin as the Israelites await the renewal of the creation.

The first similarity between Jubilees and Isaiah is that the NHNE is used in conjunction with the Temple of YHWH. Just like Isaiah and 1 Enoch, Jubilees envisions that the renewal of the world centers around God’s Temple and puts the world back into proper order under God’s sovereignty. The first clue of this connection is the recognition of God’s “holy mountain,” Mount Zion (Jub. 1:27; Isa. 65:25). In Isaiah, the “the holy mountain” is the place of peace for all of God’s creation; specifically in the imagery of animals, both prey and predator, living together in harmony. Isaiah pictures Jerusalem as the center of God’s universe and the hope for a renewed world at the Day of the Lord

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<sup>88</sup> Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 103–4; Armin Lange, “Divinatorische Träume und Apokalyptik im Jubiläenbuch,” in *Studies in the Book of Jubilees*, edited by M. Alban, J. Frey, and A. Lange (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 25–38.

<sup>89</sup> Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 104.

<sup>90</sup> James Scott, “The Chronologies of the Apocalypse of Weeks and the Book of Jubilees,” in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees*, edited by Gabriele Boccaccini and Giovanni Ibba (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 70.

(Isa. 2:2–4). The NHNE is a promise of long life for all (Isa. 65:20), peace in the animal kingdom (Isa. 65:25), and the blessing of prosperity and freedom to live as people desire for themselves (Isa. 65:21–22). Mount Zion in Jub. 1:29 is the central location of God’s healing, peace, and blessing.<sup>91</sup> Isaiah and Jubilees see the future restoration of Jerusalem as a hope for life because of the Lord’s presence amongst the people. The renewal of the Temple in Jerusalem is to wish for God’s presence amongst his chosen people. Isaiah knows Jerusalem will be a joy and delight because God is manifesting himself amongst his servants (Isa. 65:24). Jubilees prophecies that on Mount Zion, God will appear before the people’s eyes (Jub. 1:27).

If Jubilees and 1 Enoch are written around the 2nd century BCE, it would be hard to see why they expect the building of a new temple while the Second Temple is already standing in Jerusalem. Jubilees’s Temple is another eschatological dwelling place rather than one built with brick and mortar where human priests offer sacrifices. It is a temple that has not even been built yet and marks the other side of history, opposite the beginning of creation (Jub. 1:27). Like 1 Enoch, the Temple becomes an everlasting dwelling place where time does not limit its existence (Jub. 1:25). This Temple will be complete when the Lord descends to dwell with Israel forevermore (Jub. 1:26). I do not want to neglect the importance of the Second Temple as a place of worship or sacrifice to achieve God’s presence. But the overwhelming hope is that the Temple will be like the heavenly temple.<sup>92</sup> Isaiah and these other authors use the metaphor to describe temple

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<sup>91</sup> Endres, “Eschatological Impulses in Jubilees,” 335: “Eschatological signs of salvation include longer lifetimes, lived in peace and joy, without satans or evil destroyers; in short, people in the eschaton will enjoy lives of ‘blessing and healing’”

<sup>92</sup> Scott, “The Chronologies of the Apocalypse of Weeks and the Book of Jubilees,” 70-71.

imagery. However, while Isaiah specifically speaks to the Temple within Jerusalem after exile, Jubilees and Enoch (who have the Temple Isaiah spoke of) see a spiritualized Temple as a fix of the sinfulness and transgressions still being committed by all Israel.

The second comparison to Isaiah is that Jubilees is a sectarian work meant to determine the righteous and wicked.<sup>93</sup> Jubilees is not interested in covenanting or blending with Gentiles in the land of Israel.<sup>94</sup> Jubilees is a defense of the Jewish faith and an inclusive text meant to exhort Israelites to deeper faithfulness. Some ways that the book builds this defense is by comparing Israelites with angels.<sup>95</sup> Both Israelites and angels keep Sabbath (Jub. 2:23), angels are the priests of the heavenly temple as Israelites are of the earthly Temple (Jub. 31:14), and Jews are circumcised so that they might be like angels (Jub. 15:25-27). Unlike 1 Maccabees, where there is a hope that Jews and Gentiles can work together, Jubilees is staunchly against fraternization. The renewal of the heavens and earth are limited, and only prepared for Israel without considering other nations.<sup>96</sup>

Though this book is aimed only at Israelites, it does not mean that every Israelite is righteous. The goal of Jubilees is to encourage proper lifestyle. Meaning that there is a proper way of life and God's chosen people will benefit only if they live as God demands

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<sup>93</sup> Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 105: "Jubilees lacks any indication of organization in a separate community and is concerned with the full nation of Israel, although the 'children' who study the laws are a distinct group within it. In view of these considerations, Jubilees has been thought to come from the general milieu in which the sectarian movement developed, probably in the second half of the second century BCE."

<sup>94</sup> VanderKam, *Jubilees*, 140.

<sup>95</sup> Himmelfarb, "Jubilees and Sectarianism," 129.

<sup>96</sup> VanderKam, *Jubilees*, 166: "The benefits of the new creation which will last as long as the earth endures are not for others but for Israel."

in his law. Just like Isa. 65:1-16, there is a complaint that the wicked will perish because of their transgressions (Jub. 1:9; Isa. 65:11-12, 15), they will make themselves high places to worship other gods (Jub. 1:10; Isa. 65:7), and turn to the Gentile way of life instead of staying faithful to YHWH (Jub. 1:8; Isa. 65:4). Jubilees does not hope for Israel's destruction because of their transgressions, but for their salvation.<sup>97</sup> God will stay faithful to them, and their requirement is to repent and be faithful to the Law of God, so that he will save them.

God's salvific work (i.e., sin, punishment, returning of God, and salvation of God) leads to a deterministic view of Jubilees in which the Lord is in control of history and time. The nature of the NHNE hope for the world is an example of a deterministic view; God is the holy one who will bring justice and righteousness his way, at the location he chooses, at the time that he determines. NHNE pictures God as having predetermined that there will be something new and having total control of that new world in every way without human interference, especially the wicked.<sup>98</sup> Relating to sectarianism, this gives hope for the chosen of Israel: God is in control and will escort his people to the final day on top of Mount Zion with the Temple as their home. All Israel must do is wait and be faithful. By the second century, Jubilees is still hoping for what Isaiah believed was coming soon.

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<sup>97</sup> Endres, "Eschatological Impulses in Jubilees," 327: "So the covenant they are making this very day on Mount Sinai (v. 5) will not be the vehicle for their destruction but will help them to see that the Lord is more faithful to them than they are to him; indeed, the Lord has remained present to them (v.6). The message follows a typical pattern, known from Deuteronomic writings: sin, punishment, returning to God, saving acts of God."

<sup>98</sup> Scott, "The Chronologies of the Apocalypse of Weeks and the Book of Jubilees," 70-71; Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 102. Collins sees the deterministic vision of Jubilees as a hortatory device.

The biggest difference between Isaiah and Jubilees is the means by which the vision comes to Jerusalem. Isaiah does not receive the vision of a NHNE by an angelic being like in Jubilees but by YHWH himself (Isa. 6:8-13). Another major difference is that Jubilees is more concerned with God's enthronement than Isa. 65:17-25. As stated earlier, TI uses passages like Isa. 2:2-4 as a source for his own work, but not entirely. Isaiah 65 is absent of messianic language. In Jubilees, the text's excitement is God's enthronement and reign at the center of Mount Zion (Jub. 1:28).

As already stated, Jubilees is an example of the development of the source material found in Isa. 65:17. In these past two texts, Isaiah's words have become a source for the future hope of Jews in the Second Temple period. Jubilees especially captures the placement of where this creation will take place: Jerusalem. Jubilees also determines who will enjoy God's enthronement between the good group of servants (Jews) and the wicked (the Gentiles). While there are differences, the eschatological temple and the emphasis on kingship, Jubilees demonstrates that Isa. 65:17 is still important for his own audience and encourages the reader to righteousness.

Pseudo-Philo (*Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*) 3:9-10<sup>99</sup>

And God said "I will never again curse the earth on man's account, for the tendency of man's heart is foolish from his youth; and so I will never destroy all living creatures at one time as I have done. But when those inhabiting the earth sin, I will judge them by famine or by sword or by fire or by death; and there will be earthquakes, and they will be scattered to uninhabited places. But no more will I destroy the earth by the water of the flood. And in all the days of the earth, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, spring and fall will not cease day and night

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<sup>99</sup> Translation found in Charlesworth, *OTP*, 2:306-7.

until I remember those who inhabit the earth, until the appointed times are fulfilled.

But when the years appointed for the world have been fulfilled, then the light will cease and the darkness will fade away. And I will bring the dead to life and raise up those who are sleeping from the earth. And hell will pay back its debt and the place of perdition will return its deposit so that I may render to each according to his works and according to the fruits of his own devices, until I judge between soul and flesh. And the world will cease, and death will be abolished, and hell will shut its mouth. And the earth will not be without progeny or sterile for those inhabiting it; and no one who has been pardoned by me will be tainted. And there will be another earth and another heaven, an everlasting dwelling place.”

The last example of the use and development of the image of a NHNE is Pseudo-Philo’s *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* (LAB) or *Biblical Antiquities*. This is a Palestinian text dated to the time of Jesus (30-100 AD).<sup>100</sup> The text, as we have it today, is a Latin work that is believed to be copied from both Greek and possibly Hebrew origins.<sup>101</sup> The work belongs to the category of “rewritten Bible,” in which Pseudo-Philo rewrites the story of the Bible between Genesis to 2 Kings, choosing specific moments to focus or omit.<sup>102</sup> Within the text, Pseudo-Philo implants his own commentary of the story wherein he will supplant teaching or answers to audience’s questions in the text. In *LAB* 3:9–10, God tells Noah, after the flood, that he will “never again curse the earth on men’s account.” But when they sin he will judge them with other means of death such as famine, sword,

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<sup>100</sup> For more info on the date and location see, Charlesworth, *OTP* 2:297–303; James Charlesworth, *LXX The Pseudepigrapha and Modern Research with a Supplement*, Septuagint and Cognate Studies 7 (Arbor: Scholars Press, 1981), 170–73.

<sup>101</sup> For notes on the source of *LAB*’s text, see Daniel J. Harrington, “The Biblical Text of Pseudo-Philo’s *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 33 (1971): 1–17.

<sup>102</sup> “*LAB* reclaims and reinterprets Israel’s sacred story through expansion, embellishment, omission, explanation and reversal. On closer inspection, however, these allegedly similar works (*I Esdras*, *Jubilees*, Josephus’s *Antiquities*, *Genesis Apocryphon*, etc.) prove to be remarkably diverse; they all share a narrative framework and depend heavily upon antecedent Scripture, but they differ widely in apparent purpose, modes of embellishment, and in the demands they place on readers.” See Bruce Norman Fisk, *Do You Not Remember? Scripture, Story and Exegesis in the Rewritten Bible of Pseudo-Philo*, *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 37 (Sheffield: Sheffield, 2001), 13–14.

earthquakes, and fire leading to their scattering (*LAB* 3:9). There will be an appointed time that is in need of fulfillment which will cause darkness and light to go away, the world to cease, and for judgment to come. This time of judgment will then follow with “another earth and another heaven” to take place and will be “an everlasting dwelling place.” In this section, I will show that *LAB* does in fact reference Isa. 65:17 and describe the similarities and differences between the texts.

First, it is important to note that this text does reference Isa. 65:17 in their text. While it is noted by many that the amount of resources for *LAB* is less than desired,<sup>103</sup> Howard Jacobson who has put in the effort to make a commentary on *LAB* notes that Pseudo-Philo does reference Isa. 65:17; 66:22.<sup>104</sup> He believes that *alia* (“another”) more readily reflects Isaiah’s חדש (“new”) rather than אחרת (“another”).<sup>105</sup> Jacobson also sees the reference to an eternal dwelling place as a reflection of Isa. 66:22 in which the NHNE will last forever.<sup>106</sup> In agreement with Jacobson, the reference to another heaven and earth still gives off the notion of something different than what was experienced. Though it is not a direct quote, it still follows the trend of renewal, recreation, and the sovereignty of God found in Isaiah, 1 Enoch, and Jubilees.

The most important similarity between *LAB* and Isaiah is the creation of another heaven and earth at the heels of sin and wrongdoing. *LAB* includes the phrase of another

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<sup>103</sup> Charlesworth, *LXX*, 171. “Pseudo-Philo clearly belongs among the pseudepigrapha. It is ignored unfortunately in numerous studies.”

<sup>104</sup> Howard Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum: With Latin text and English translation* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 326.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*, 326. Jacobson believes there is a possible connection to Deut. 29:27 in which some patristic writers interpreted the “next world.” (אֶרֶץ אַחֵרָה; another land).

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*, 326.

heaven and earth at the end of the flood story, a story found in Genesis 6–9 in which God punishes the wicked and allows a small remnant (Noah and his family) to live. Isaiah 65:17–25 is on the heels of the wicked being judged accordingly and final reward for the righteous. *LAB* sees a new time in which God will eradicate sin and promote goodness in the form of a covenant. God promises that he will not destroy the earth and that the people will be able to acquire food, they will increase and multiply upon the earth, and God will establish a covenant with humans again (*LAB* 3:11–12). God declares that sin will be punished and that there will be life amongst the community of those who do what the Lord commands them. For *LAB*, the image of replacing heaven and earth is an acknowledgement that God is able to destroy the earth again and save those with whom he wishes to partner.<sup>107</sup>

The first difference between Isaiah and *LAB* is the seemingly absent commentary on the Temple. It is possible that *LAB* is making reference to a temple through the language of clean and unclean animals (*LAB* 3:4–7) and the earth and heaven being an “everlasting dwelling place.” But there is no reference to a holy hill or Mt. Zion as in Isaiah or Jubilees. There is not any conversation about a temple like in 1 Enoch. While life continues and a relationship can still be had with the Lord, it is without a temple present. The second difference is the eschatological outcome in *LAB* compared to Isaiah.

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<sup>107</sup> A common feature in *LAB* is the use of quotations and references. *LAB* seems to blend many verses and biblical texts into one story. For instance here, Isa. 65:17 finds its place in the flood narrative in which God truly does create another earth for Noah and his family. Jacobson even says that the knowledge of Pseudo-Philo to the biblical text is so great that he may have unconsciously made these references. Pseudo-Philo even uses key themes such as found in Gen. 8:22 “they will not cease” as a proof text that there must be something else coming to take its place. *LAB* knows Isaiah, therefore he inserts prophecies as explanations and eschatological views for his own reconstruction. For more on *LAB*’s biblical quotations see Howard Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 327; Howard Jacobson, “Biblical Interpretation in Pseudo-Philo’s *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*,” in *A Companion to Biblical Interpretation in Early Judaism*, edited by Matthias Henze (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012) 184; Fisk, *Do you Not Remember?*, 16–19.



Isaiah expects for life to continue but that there still will be death (Isa. 65:20). According to *LAB*, the end will consist of the dead coming to life, hell paying back its debt, and justice bearing its own fruit (*LAB* 3:10). As already stated, *LAB* knows Isaiah and uses Isaiah's image (albeit in a different way) to describe his own vision of the end times. *LAB* is an example of how interpreters may know a phrase but use it in their own context while only keeping some of the original meaning. That original image is from old to new, from broken to fixed, and from sin to righteousness.

### Conclusion

All three of the reviewed documents are early interpreters of the prophet Isaiah during the Second Temple period. All three use the image of the NHNE in their own way to describe the future that is soon going to be in front of them. Not only are they experiencing hardship in the present world like 1 Enoch and Jubilees, but there is a hope that the future will be radically new and different. However, though the image is of a grand future, the purpose of describing the future is to exhort righteous behavior in the present. Within all three of these texts, the theology, teaching, and allusions are a pedagogical means to enforce good ethics within the audience. Therefore some concluding remarks are needed to highlight the importance of good ethical behavior within the audience.

The first remark is that the picture of the NHNE as described in these documents proves God's sovereignty over time and history. In these later works, the reassurance of the NHNE is that the present world is not going to last. Jubilees realizes the sins of the

people and the danger it has on their lives, but God will radically change the world with a reestablished Temple at the center. 1 Enoch knows that time and history are already sorted out and he describes this in the span of ten weeks. God's determination of the future will transpire despite what the righteous servants are facing at their present moment. The NHNE facilitates the assurance of life and a future no matter the hardship or what the wicked do. These texts are meant for the community at their own time and social location.<sup>108</sup> While Isaiah hopes for goodness and peace in his text, Enoch hopes for righteousness, Jubilees hopes for God's enthronement, and *LAB* hopes for judgment; no matter which author is read, God is planning radical change. The hope, though spanning into all eternity, carries a hortatory reminder that God has power over history.

The second conclusion is that the NHNE is helpful to acknowledge that sin will soon be eradicated from the world. Not only is the new cosmos new, but it is better, and made holy by YHWH. All three documents envision the world continuing beyond the restoration of the heavens and earth. The understanding is that it is a world where sin is no longer welcome nor experienced. In Isaiah, long life, prosperity, and peace are at the forefront of the vision. Renewal is not just for renewal's sake. Renewal is for the elimination of what makes the old world dangerous and awful. Sin has rampaged against the world, and God promises that the world can become Eden yet again (Jub 2:4-3:23). But that Garden of Eden is seen when the Temple is finally free from the impurities of sin.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Russell, *The New Heavens and New Earth*, 131-32. See also 1 En. 71:15.

<sup>109</sup> J.T.A.G.M van Ruiten, "Eden and the Temple: Rewriting of Genesis 2:4–3:23 in the Book of the Jubilees," in *Paradise Interpreted: Representations of Biblical Paradise in Judaism and Christianity*, edited by Gerard P. Luttikhuisen (Leiden: Brill 1999), 76. Ruiten believes that the Temple and the Garden of Eden are not identical but they do share properties. Both the Temple and the Garden of Eden have a priest (Adam is the priest of the Garden), and there is a requirement for purification to enter the land just as

The impact of Isaiah is also apparent in other books in Jewish literature that are not covered in this research paper.<sup>110</sup> The extraordinary creation of NHNE is the power of what God can do and the hope he gives his people. Isaiah's vision becomes a springboard for future authors. Isaiah is the one who originated the idea that appears in these later works for the benefit of communities far into the future.

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in the Temple.

<sup>110</sup> 2 Baruch 32:6; Sibylline Oracles 5.212; Apocalypse of Elijah 5:38.

### Chapter 3: The New Testament Use of the NHNE

Moving into the last major section of this paper, I turn to the New Testament usage of the NHNE. The Christian movement's use of the OT is seen throughout every page of the New. The OT was not meant to be a thesaurus for Christian wordsmiths but a source of inspiration and imagination for Christians in the first century. The mission of God in the OT found its fulfillment in Jesus's death and the church's existence. It is a dependence on the OT that we find in the reference to Isaiah's renewal of the cosmos. In this chapter, I will illustrate that 2 Peter 3 and Revelation 21 are both directly influenced by Isaiah's NHNE. To show a correlation I will point to multiple themes that have been shared in Isaiah and the Intertestamental period texts with those that appear in the NT. I will also show how 2 Peter and Revelation develop the NHNE for their own audience in their own time. It is my thesis that while in this section the NHNE does not refer to the Temple as Isaiah intended it, the NHNE is transformed to speak of God's presence and the eschatological hope for God's people in the church through their proper ethical behavior.

#### 2 Peter 3:8–13

But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed. Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

2 Peter is a short paraenetic letter written either late in the first century or very beginning of the second. Dating and authorship are difficult to determine with many variations of arguments.<sup>111</sup> For this research paper those topics are not essential to understanding the book as a whole, but the main focus of 2 Peter is the protection and encouragement of the early Christian's towards faithfulness. This book, like others in the research paper, sees the audience as a righteous group of God's chosen who must live righteously despite the world's foolish teaching. The opponents of the church Peter warns about are most likely Epicurus and his disciples, who misconstrue the Lord as a transcendent deity who is absent from the present world.<sup>112</sup> Scoffers and competitors come to challenge the gospel, causing the church to question which teaching is true. To the scoffers, sin is readily available. God distances himself and slowly forgets about the earth and therefore has no bearing on the life of the church. The scoffer's proof of God's apathy is his disregard for his own promise of the parousia. Peter proclaims the Lord has not forgotten about justice but is patient; he is biding his time till the right moment when sinners repent. It is my interpretation that Peter intends the NHNE image to be a literal new world coming, but the purpose is to exhort proper behavior for the church in the face of the adversaries. First, I will give reasons for a literal interpretation of the text and then I will speak to the connection between 2 Pet. 3:11–13 and Isa. 65:17–25. The connection

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<sup>111</sup> For the basic arguments for date and authorship, see Richard Bauckham and Bruce Manning Metzger, *Jude, 2 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary 50 (Waco: Word Books, 2005), 157–62; Gene L. Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 139–70; Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 121–32.

<sup>112</sup> Jerome H. Neyrey, *2 Peter; Jude: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible 37C (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 122–28. An important justification for the topic of this paper is “maintaining the transcendence of the Deity [which] Epicurus and his followers became the enemies of the prevailing doctrine of a provident Deity” (123).

between the two texts will prove there is similarity in eschatological hope portrayed by both authors as well as a development that Peter insinuates that Isaiah does not.

The NHNE in 2 Peter ought to be read literally: God is producing a new world in which he destroys the first to create the NHNE.<sup>113</sup> The first reason for a literal reading is that 2 Peter does not allude to the Temple at all. Noted in the other texts of this study, the NHNE image is a reference to the Temple found in Jerusalem. In the intertestamental texts (1 Enoch and Jubilees), the NHNE is linked with the language of a divine holy space. In the New Testament, the presence of Jesus moves God's holy space away from a physical temple to a personal presence of the divine within the bodies of believers. It appears that 2 Peter is absent from any distinguishable temple language. One reason for the absence of the temple is the late date of the letter, the destruction of the temple means that it was not in focus for Christians in the first century.<sup>114</sup> Peter argues against false teachers who claim that the parousia will not happen, he advocates that Jesus will return and that the world will be subject to fire and judgment. However, in the wake of the ashes, a NHNE will arise in which righteousness dwells. There is no evidence that this is a reinstatement of the Temple or that righteousness will flow outside of the Temple into the world. The passage turns instead to God's patience and his revealing of the world's sin through destruction and fire.

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<sup>113</sup> For a metaphorical reading, see Douglas Karel Harink, *1 & 2 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2009); David W. Jones, "The Fate of Creation in the Eschaton," *Southeastern Theological Review* 9 (2018): 77–91. Whether the text is literal or metaphorical depicting utter destruction by the Lord is still up for debate. However, in both views, the key point is Peter's expectation of new behavior with the warning of punishment for believing false teaching.

<sup>114</sup> The only reference to a "holy mountain" is 2 Pet. 1:17–18. This "holy mountain" is the Mount of Transfiguration which was not the Temple Mount in Jerusalem (Matt. 17:1–8; Mark 9:2–8; Luke 9:28–36).

The second but closely related point of the literal interpretation is the absence of any renewal for Jerusalem. Jerusalem is not mentioned explicitly in the text of 2 Peter at all. The scope of the apocalyptic vision is that of the cosmos. The heavens, earth, and elements will all be destroyed and renewed. Jerusalem seems to be a subject unrelated to the topic.

The third reason for a literal reading is the extreme focus on destruction. The question that the false teachers have is “whether God truly is coming back, because everything is still the same” (2 Pet. 3:4). Peter, being a staunch believer that he will, relays the message that not only will the Lord come back but it will be a final and climactic “day of the Lord.” Normally the day of the Lord is a destructive day where God turns the world upside down in destruction and punishment for wrong.<sup>115</sup> This coming day will be unlike the constant cyclical process of destruction and regeneration but a final and climactic moment.<sup>116</sup> The day is for the “destruction of the godless” (v. 7). Peter believes that Noah is proof of God’s willingness to destroy the wicked and he will destroy the wicked like he did before. Peter interprets the past as an example of God’s ability to punish the unrighteous and replace them with the righteous. This future destruction then calls for the audience (and their opponents) to turn toward God, because the only reason he has not yet destroyed the world is because too many would be destroyed (v. 9). If this was a figurative statement, intending to mean something else, what cataclysmic event could Peter be referring to? It seems that Peter believes the Noah event was real and that God meant it to save the righteous and destroy the wicked. God

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<sup>115</sup> For example, Isa. 13:6–9; Joel 2:11; Zeph. 1:7–9.

<sup>116</sup> Jonathan Moo, “Continuity, Discontinuity, and Hope,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 61 (2010): 32.

can still renew and rebuild a new world despite the destruction of the first. The focus on destruction comes from a belief that God will destroy but he has not yet because of his patience and forbearance.<sup>117</sup> The view of this paper is that God is destroying the world and the unrighteous, but then he will construct in its place a NHNE where righteousness dwells (v. 13).

While Peter uses the term NHNE as a literal expectation of a new world, it is still understood that he chooses this particular image from Isaiah for a reason. Peter alludes to the same image of NHNE that Isaiah imagines by three key points: the sudden destruction of sin, righteousness taking the place of sin in the new world, and the encouragement toward good ethical behavior. First, sin will be utterly destroyed by God just as the wicked perish in Isaiah 65. Isaiah speaks of a new world in the midst of improper worship committed by the wicked. The wicked surround the servants with immorality and foolishness at the altars (Isa. 65:1–16). In 2 Peter, the author is worried about Christians in the midst of false teachers challenging the traditional teachings of Paul and the other apostles. However, their teaching, as already stated, has led to improper behavior, sin, and faithlessness amongst the church. The NHNE in Isaiah becomes a proper and worthy expectation for Peter who wants to remove immorality in his community. Peter sees a discontinuity in their reality at some pending time. Peter reveals God's scheme while the audience wonders about what to do next. God is still at work, more importantly, when you cannot see him. God's timing is unlike human timing (v. 8–9). God will evict the sinner and move the righteous to a new world where they can call home.

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<sup>117</sup> Donald Senior, and Daniel J. Harrington, *1 Peter*, Sacra Pagina 15 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003), 291–92.



Peter is quoting Isaiah because he hopes for righteousness and peace just as much as Isaiah does. The NHNE will be a world of peace, life, and longevity in the mind of Isaiah. Isaiah describes the aging process, the ability to grow and plant their own crops, and the image of what the holy mountain will look like at the time of the recreation. Peter is just as worried about peace because he hopes that the Christians will have it while they wait for the day of the Lord. The difference between 2 Peter and Isaiah is that Peter predicts a future that centers around righteousness rather than peace. It seems more likely that 2 Peter takes his hopes from 1 Enoch who uses the term righteousness 17 times in the ApocW. In fact, unlike the other texts in which God's presence is the ultimate hope, Peter envisions righteousness dwelling in the NHNE. Though the question of the scoffers is whether the Lord will return, it is odd that Peter does not say, "the new heavens and new earth, where the Lord will dwell." However, it is common for righteousness to be included in the hopes of recreation.<sup>118</sup> Righteousness and peace are not mutually exclusive; people treating others justly brings peace in all sorts of communities (religious or not). But to the original point, his goal in alluding to Isaiah is that he is expecting a new world of holiness to take part, in which righteousness and peace are byproducts.

The last relationship 2 Peter has with Isaiah is the recognition of present ethical change within the community. This change in behavior is evident in v. 11, "Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, *what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness?*" Peter describes the process of the disclosing of the heavens, earth, and elements, then offers a challenge for the hearer to question their status

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<sup>118</sup> "Proper behavior is to be motivated eschatologically both by the prospect of cosmic annihilation and by the promise of a new paradise-like creation, a new age characterized by righteousness (Isa. 11:4–5; 1 En. 10:20–21; 91:17; 4 Ezra 7:112–15; Rom. 14:17)." Earl Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, Reading the New Testament Series (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2000), 385.

before the Day. The sentence may not even be used interrogatively but rather imperatively (“act in holiness and godliness”).<sup>119</sup> The new world is one in which sin and destructive behavior cannot live. The eschatological implications are the motivation for ethical change in the community. According to Bauckman, Peter bases his exhortation on both the negative and positive side of eschatology. First, you ought to live righteously because the Lord will judge those who are wicked, a negative outlook on the future. Secondly, God is recreating a world where righteousness is truly at home, and you will want to be there, the positive hope.<sup>120</sup> Like 1 Enoch, Jubilees, and *LAB*, the development of the NHNE image is that of hoping for a new world in which sin is no more, evil is finally destroyed, and life finally flourishes. Peter encourages the listener “to hasten the day” as it is approaching, because righteousness and newness are what people want. Russell makes a good point about the reason the description of the new world is lacking in detail. Russell believes that the anticipation for the day is to encourage the righteous to live faithfully, and that it is common to focus on who is coming into the new world rather than what is coming.<sup>121</sup> While the text lacks description of the new world, it is focused on the character of those who will inhabit the world: holy, godly, and righteous.

These three key points: discontinuity between old and new worlds, righteousness dwelling in the world, and change in ethical behavior show that Peter knew Isaiah and wished to transmit the same image to his own audience. What is the key change here is that Peter does not rip the image and identically use it the way Isaiah does. There are key interlocking themes: both wish for the righteous to succeed over the wicked, and both

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<sup>119</sup> Green, *Jude & 2 Peter*, 333

<sup>120</sup> Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 326.

<sup>121</sup> Russell, *New Heavens and New Earth*, 195.

passages see this as a sovereign work of God Most High. However, Peter means the NHNE will be a literal changing of worlds while Isaiah does not. Peter focuses on righteousness dwelling in contrast to Isaiah who pictures YHWH being so close that he will answer before someone calls. Peter proves that he can appropriate scripture accurately and profitably to speak to Jesus's return and the recreation that the church needs during turbulent times.

#### Revelation 21:1-8

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home of God is among mortals.  
He will dwell with them as their God;  
they will be his peoples,  
and God himself will be with them;  
he will wipe every tear from their eyes.  
Death will be no more;  
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,  
for the first things have passed away.”

And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, the murderers, the fornicators, the sorcerers, the idolaters, and all liars, their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

Like the book of 1 Enoch, Revelation's genre is that of apocalyptic; the apostle John “reveals” the true nature of the world and the heavenly spaces through an angelic guide using vivid images and symbolic numerals. John manifests the truth behind Rome (Rev. 14:8), its leadership (Rev. 13:1–8), and its gods (Rev. 17:1–6) to the seven

churches. In determining the final picture of the NHNE in Revelation, first I will examine the uniqueness of Revelation's intertextual relationship with the OT, then the features that link John's NHNE with Isaiah's. Then I will illustrate the importance of the NHNE for the book as a whole. The NHNE in Revelation is a development of Isaiah's vision of the temple, but rather than speaking of a physical structure, John speaks of the NHNE as the manifestation of God's presence in the world through his church.

There is no doubt that Revelation's source material is that of the OT. Out of the 39 books in the Hebrew Bible, John contains citations from 28 of them.<sup>122</sup> His favorite books are the Pentateuch, the Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.<sup>123</sup> In the words of Paulien, when one reads Revelation, "they are plunged into the atmosphere of the OT."<sup>124</sup> Contentions rise amongst scholars on John's relation to the OT and how he uses it to bolster his argument. Beale, Fekkes, and Moyise have undertaken the task of mapping John's use of the OT and determining the allusions, the usage, and John's exegetical style.<sup>125</sup> However, due to the copious number of interpretations of John's Revelation, a lot is undecided regarding what texts that John alludes to or quotes. While some count

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<sup>122</sup> Opeyemi T. Oladosu and Caleb O Alu, "The Use of the Old Testament in the Revelation of John," *Journal of Biblical Theology* 3 (2020): 221.

<sup>123</sup> Steve Moyise, *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament 115 (Sheffield: Sheffield, 1995), 16.

<sup>124</sup> Jon Paulien, "Dreading the Whirlwind: Intertextuality and the Use of the Old Testament in Revelation," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 39 (2001): 5.

<sup>125</sup> David Edward Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, Word Biblical Commentary 52A (Nashville: Word Books, 2008), cx–cxvii; G. K. Beale, *John's Use of the Old Testament in Revelation*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament 166 (Sheffield: Sheffield, 1998), 13–59; Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Use of Scripture in the Book of Revelation," in *New Perspectives on the Book of Revelation*, edited by Adela Yarbro Collins, 11–32, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium (Leuven: Peeters, 2017); Paulien, "Dreading the Whirlwind," 10–22; Steve Moyise, "Intertextuality and the Use of Scripture in the Book of Revelation?" *Scriptura* 84 (2003): 394–98; Jan Fekkes, *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation: Visionary Antecedents and Their Development*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament 93 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 59–103.

quotations and allusions, others add echoes and parallels. This means there is a degree of uncertainty about how often Revelation uses the OT. Unlike the Gospels, Revelation does not carry helpful hints that alert readers to a quote or reference from the OT. Matthews alerts readers to a quote of an OT scripture by prefacing, “so it is written in the prophets...” (Matt. 2:5–6).<sup>126</sup> But John takes images from the OT, blends them together and creates a concoction of Spirit filled insights.<sup>127</sup> Therefore, the number of references to the OT span from 250 to 700 individual references.<sup>128</sup> Though this paper is about one particular reference to Isaiah; shedding light on the difficulty of determining John’s use of the OT recognizes that he may imply numerous references to the OT that the reader may not realize on a preliminary reading.

While there is uncertainty about John’s full and complete use of the OT, we can be certain that John’s source material for Rev. 21:1 is that of Isa. 65:17 because of the matching grammar and the similar theological concerns. First, both Revelation and Isaiah share in their grammatical structure, they see the NHNE as a new thing of quality rather than of time. There are two Greek words for “new” in the NT, *καινος* and *νεος*. *καινος*, which appears in Rev. 21:1, is the renewal of quality or nature. *νεος* represents the renewing of time.<sup>129</sup> John and Isaiah are speaking of a renewal of the quality of the world

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<sup>126</sup> J. van Ruiten, “The Intertextual Relationship Between Isaiah 65, 17–20 and Revelation 21, 1–5b,” *Estudios Biblicos* 51 (1993): 474.

<sup>127</sup> Moyise, “Does the Author Misappropriate Scripture,” 12; Beale, *John’s Use of the Old Testament*, 65; Beale references Albert Vanhoye, “L’utilisation du livre d’Ezéchiel dans L’Apocalypse,” *Biblica* 43 (1962): 467.

<sup>128</sup> Fekkes, *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions*, 61–62. This is based off Fekkes’ assessment where he recounts the work of Charles (200), Swete (278), Tenney (348), Marty (453), Gelin (518), the UBSGNT (634), and Staehelin (700).

<sup>129</sup> Pilchan Lee, *The New Jerusalem in the Book of Revelation: A Study of Revelation 21-22 in the Light of Its Background in Jewish Tradition*, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament* 129 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 268; J. Behm, “*καινος*” *TDNT* 3:447–50.

rather than a new generation. Second, John and Isaiah have the same relationship in their use of tenses in their words. In Isaiah 65, there are 37 verbs in the Hebrew, including five participles, two imperatives, eight perfects, and the remaining 22 verbs being imperfects. While the imperfects speak of things that will happen, the participles are not as clear. Therefore, when it says God is creating (participle of ברא), it is unclear whether this is a future action or a present action. In Revelation, John is watching the new Jerusalem coming down (καταβαίνουσιν, Rev. 21:2) which is a *present* and active participle.<sup>130</sup> This means what John is witnessing is happening in front of him at that time from heaven before him. Then all of the verbs that the voice from the throne speaks are in the future (six verbs). The use of these verbs shows a pattern of the author's time he is experiencing being at the cusp of real change within the world. Both pictures paint a recreation in the present that has future repercussions for the inhabitants of the new world.

The texts themselves are also linked because of their interwoven theological views. Fekkes believes that Revelation follows the same thematic structure of that of Isaiah and subsequently carries similar theological principles.<sup>131</sup> These similar theological principles are changing from the old to new (former things/new things) and God's presence within the community. The first is that of the change from old to new. John's Revelation is his witness of God ushering in the NHNE as the sea is done away with, and

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<sup>130</sup> There are those that translate this verb as a future instead of the present that it is. See Brian K. Blount, *Revelation: A Commentary*, The New Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 380–81. “This general promise, though given in the present tense, is surely about the future; the specific promises that follow occur in the future tense.”

<sup>131</sup> Fekkes, *Isaiah and the Prophetic Tradition*, 282. The four categories of the thematic comparisons are (1) visionary experience and language (Isa. 6:1–4), (2) Christological titles and descriptions (Isa. 11:4, 10; 22:22; 44:6; 65:15), (3) Eschatological judgement, both (a) Holy war and Day of the Lord imagery (Isa. 2:19, 10; 34:4; 63:1–3) and (b) Oracles against the nations (Isa. 13:21; 21:9; 23:8, 17; 34:9–14; 47:7–9), and (4) Eschatological salvation showing itself in (a) Salvation oracles in anticipation (Isa. 65:15/62:2; 61:10; 60:14/49:23; 43:4; 49:10; 25:8b), Oracles of renewal (Isa. 65:15–20a; 25:8ab; 43:18–19; 55:1) and New Jerusalem oracles (Isa. 52:1; 54:11–12; 60:1–3, 5, 11, 19).

the first heaven and earth pass away to make room (Rev. 21:1). In the same vision, the new Jerusalem city comes from heaven like a bride walking down the aisle (Rev. 21:2). Running through John's vision of the new world is throwing out the old so that the new can take its place. DI and TI exercise the image of the old to the new in multiple ways. Isaiah 43:19 is an example of God doing a new thing through the motif of the exodus. God leads his people through wilderness, danger, and through nations to be in Israel's presence (Isa. 43:1–7).<sup>132</sup> Isaiah 65 shows God leading them back to the time of creation in Genesis 1 by throwing out the “former things” (Isa. 65:16–17). God is renewing the past world for the present world that can be. John uses the same theme to show that God is willing to do the same thing for the church he did for the returning Jerusalemites. For the community to thrive with God in the new Jerusalem, the new must replace the old.<sup>133</sup>

The second theological theme that Revelation and Isaiah share is that the NHNE is God's new dwelling place. John describes the vanquishing of the beasts and his supporters, the conquering of the lamb on the white horse, and the imprisonment of Satan in order that God can finally put this new world into place.<sup>134</sup> The people expect that there will be no more tears, no pain, and no more death in this new world. As the first earth and heaven pass away, so will all of the things that bring mourning and sadness. A new world is the only answer towards a new way of life. Isaiah and Revelation want to thrive in a

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<sup>132</sup> Craig R. Koester, *Revelation*, Anchor Yale Bible 38A (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 799.

<sup>133</sup> Mathewson, *A New Heaven and a New Earth*, 34. “Reading 21.1 within its broader visionary context, where John reiterates notions of removal, suggests that at a literary level John envisions nothing less than the complete removal of the old order to make room for a qualitatively new creative act of God.”

<sup>134</sup> Buist M. Fanning, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2020), 529. “A radical change has come, and the old evil world seen at its worst in the preceding chapters has come to an end. Death, darkness, deprivation, threat, conflict, and rebelling against God are replaced by life, light, provision, security, community, and intimacy with God.”

new world where God blesses his people with life and joy. For Isaiah, the exiles are weary as they are returning home; for Revelation, the community is tired of persecution and death that surrounds them.<sup>135</sup>

These themes are not new to this particular study of the use of NHNE. These theological themes are also evident in 1 Enoch, Jubilees, and 2 Peter. God's presence and newness are what the disenfranchised people of God need. The seven churches, first mentioned in the book, experience persecution and trouble for their beliefs, suffering because of their identity. With persecution comes the rise of apostasy, faithlessness, and strife amongst the church. John reveals the true meaning of all of their troubles, where they stem from, and what a powerful God on high will do for them. With that in mind, I transition from proving John's dependence on Isaiah to the importance of the NHNE. Just as the NHNE represents a rebuilt temple in Isaiah, the NHNE in Revelation represents the church of the New Testament.

The interpretation that the NHNE represents the saints of Jesus Christ is not a new idea.<sup>136</sup> Many times in the identification of John's NHNE the interpretations are futuristic and literal, which misses John's key feature of Revelation: John is writing for an audience in his current time (Rev. 1:1–2). The first reason the NHNE is the church is because of the interrelationship between the presence of God amongst the people and the people being in the presence of God. In Rev. 21:22, John declares, "I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb." The new experience of the church is that of growing within the body of Christ. To turn to him is now to enjoy his

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<sup>135</sup> Carol J Dempsey, "Revelation 21:1-8," *Interpretation* 65 (2011): 400.

<sup>136</sup> Robert Horton Gundry, *The Old Is Better: New Testament Essays in Support of Traditional Interpretations* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2010), 399–411; M. Robert Mulholland, *Revelation: Holy Living in an Unholy World* (Grand Rapids: F. Asbury Press, 1990), 314–16.



new presence in his life. Throughout the NT, the church is learning of their new dwelling in the participation and life of Jesus. In John 2:18–22, Jesus declares that if you tore down the temple in Jerusalem he would erect a new one in its place in three days. John then makes a note that it was not until after his death that the disciples realized he was talking about his own body as a temple (John 2:21).<sup>137</sup> The reverse is also true insofar as the NHNE is separate from God and sent by him to the earth (Rev. 21:1-2). The new holy space described as the New Jerusalem is a separate community unlike God by which he is blessing the world. But it is only when the NHNE comes from the heavens that God’s presence becomes a reality. Therefore, the NHNE is the catalyst of the realization of God’s presence. This appearance of God is seen throughout the pages of the new Testament in the local church. The church in Corinth is referred to as God’s temple and the Spirit indwells in the church community (1 Cor. 3:16–17). In both Isaiah and Revelation the focus of the themed texts are of God’s presence. God’s presence normally is understood in a divine space on earth where God is separate and kept holy. Now, John exclaims God’s dwelling is “amongst men” and he will “dwell with them as their God, they will be his peoples and God himself will be with them” (Rev. 21:3). This covenantal formula is found in many places in the OT (Jer. 30:22; 31:1; Ezek. 37:23).<sup>138</sup> The church is the temple of God in which he dwells with the people on earth and they dwell within him.

The depiction of the NHNE is the church because it is “prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev. 21:2). This closing vision of John is the antecedent of the

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<sup>137</sup> Gundry, *The Old is Better*, 408.

<sup>138</sup> Koester, *Revelation*, 805.

Whore of Babylon and Beast (Rev. 17). The Beast and Satan have been put under control by God (Rev. 20:1–10), and Jesus rules over death and Hades (Rev. 20:11–15). John’s purpose is to parallel the Whore of Babylon with the Bride of Christ in hopes that they will know God’s power over the world.<sup>139</sup> The Whore, who represents the Roman deity Dea Roma, is meant to be a parody of her. She is everything that is wrong with the world of Rome.<sup>140</sup> She is adorned with jewels and gold but really is sinful and destructive, luring many nations and kings to her with the promise of wealth and drunkenness (Rev. 17:1–5). In her, all that people find is death as she drinks the blood of the saints and the witnesses of Jesus (Rev. 17:6). However, with the Bride of the Lamb, there is life and joy. Like in Isaiah 65, sadness and mourning have been traded for the cries of joy as every tear is wiped. Specifically “death will be no more” in the NHNE. The Whore and the Bride become contrasting institutions in which people can choose to take part in. Rome is a city in which Satan reigns and death occurs. The opposite is the church, in which God reigns and dwells with his people in joy and life.<sup>141</sup> Also in the New Testament, Paul himself looks to the metaphor of a marriage to describe the relationship between Jesus Christ and his church (Eph. 5:22–33). More specifically, Jesus is the husband in the metaphor while the bride is the church: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Eph. 5:25). John’s vision is of the church coming down from heaven to be the indwelling place of God’s presence amongst

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<sup>139</sup> For a full list of the parallels, see Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, New Testament Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 131–32.

<sup>140</sup> David Edward Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, Word Biblical Commentary 52C (Nashville: Nelson, 2008), 919–28.

<sup>141</sup> Markus Locker, “A Semiotic Analysis of the ‘New Jerusalem’ in the Book of Revelation,” *Journal of Biblical Theology* 3 (2018): 194. “One can see John’s elaborate attempt to describe the New Jerusalem as a place that at one and the same time contrasts the cities of Babylon and Rome and alludes to paradise, the holy city and the temple.”

humans. The metaphor of a bride helps in that the dwelling is not God himself but of his covenant partner in which the two cannot be separated.

The third reason the NHNE is envisioning the church of Jesus is the call for present ethical change for those who will inhabit the new space. The church is a transformed community, molded in the image of God. Paul's letters are filled with ethical changes that are motivated by the eschatological outlook that the Lord will soon return to bring his people home. 2 Corinthians 5:17 also seemingly references Isa. 65:17: "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" Here Paul is in tune with a desire for newness from the old. With this newness comes a transformation of the Christian towards faithfulness and righteousness. As has been seen already through this study, whenever NHNE is mentioned, ethical paraenesis is not far. Whether it is a call to righteousness, faithfulness, or good behavior, the new world will be a solace of God's presence. Revelation 21 encourages proper behavior by illuminating what behaviors will not survive the new world. With an eschatological outlook comes the dangers for the wicked. In Rev. 21:8, John declares, "for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, the murderers, the fornicators, the sorcerers, the idolaters, and all liars, their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." Here, the paraenesis warns against the sin humans act upon each other. While the reward for the new city is peace, there will be only chaos for those who deliver unrighteousness. Locker sees this ethical demand as signifying to the Christian community of which city they will truly belong.<sup>142</sup> While John's NHNE is a future world that can be inhabited, John calls the church to throw away

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<sup>142</sup> Locker, "A Semiotic Analysis," 195.

the temptations of Roman culture for the culture of Christ that produces life. Koester believes the best way to read John's vision is as "an invitation, a vision of the future to which God calls all human beings... The vision of redemption includes all humanity because this is the future to which all humanity is called."<sup>143</sup> An important component in Koester's quote is that this vision is an enticing invitation for all of God's creatures. While there is a promise of redemption, there is a risk for those who do not heed John's warning that there will be judgment.

To sum up, this grandiose picture of the church makes sense for the overall scheme of apocalyptic literature. From the throne room to the great city of New Jerusalem, every chapter is filled with visions of majesty and might. But also the fear of impending torment of the second death. Not every image represents something, but John is revealing to his audience truths about the cosmos.

The cosmos includes the institutions of power, like Rome, illustrated as a beast or a whore. Rome is not literally a beast, but the image amplifies the understanding of government as propaganda for Christians. In light of the power of sin, John reveals how Christ's victory over death combats Satan. The way John explains these deep theological truths is through picturesque images of giant monsters and hordes of people. He is illuminating truths that impact his audience in the first century. The NHNE is a part of the magnificent picture of the church in which God has brought down to humanity renewal and newness.<sup>144</sup> It is through the new city of Jerusalem (the people of God) that change

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<sup>143</sup> Koester, *Revelation*, 806; See also Bauckham, *Theology*, 103; Eugene M. Boring, *Revelation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 226–31.

<sup>144</sup> G. B. Caird, *The Revelation of Saint John*, Black's New Testament Commentary (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1966), 263: "This is a future which interpenetrates and informs the present. The holy city is described as coming down out of heaven from God because this is the essential quality it already has in the anticipatory experience of the church."

can occur.<sup>145</sup> Isaiah pictures God's grand renewal through the prophetic picture of animals living together, and John pictures a bride coming from heaven to be amongst men.

One disagreement that surrounds the NHNE signifying the church are those who see the NHNE describing the true eschatological future, so that God is replacing the heavens and earth as we know them. This counter interpretation believes there will be a true renewal of the heavens and earth. This is a hyper-literalistic reading which normally does not consider the nature of apocalyptic literature. A good example is Russell who believes that God's focus is on the renewal of the earth and the new creation of the world. Even though Russell is unsure what the new world will look like, it proves God's ultimate care.<sup>146</sup> Russell wants to stay away from a spiritual and material dualism that occurs when we talk about heaven and earth and reject God as the creator, which is commendable, but his conclusion misses the deeper theological concern of God's presence and sovereignty over time and history.<sup>147</sup> The literal interpretation ignores the function and practice of the Revelation as a whole.<sup>148</sup> If an interpreter takes the NHNE literally then interprets other passages metaphorically or symbolically then the book is not interpreted consistently. In

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<sup>145</sup> See, for example, Gal. 6:16 where Paul speaks of the "Israel of God."

<sup>146</sup> Russell, *The New Heaven and New Earth*, 209: "In brief, the new creation, whatever it may entail specifically, will surely retain the constituent elements of the original creation. Soil, trees, oceans, mountain ranges, the world of insects and beasts; all of these components of creation are a part of God's original and ultimate plan." Another example is to interpret this passage as a revitalization of Jerusalem. This is seen in the work of Joseph Trafton and Paige Patterson who interpret the work of God very literally to be that of a reinstated holy land of Jerusalem at the cosmos's center. Joseph L. Trafton, *Reading Revelation: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2005), 189–214; Paige Patterson, *Revelation*, *The New American Commentary* 39 (Nashville: B & H, 2012), 361–66.

<sup>147</sup> Russell, *The New Heaven and New Earth*, 208–9.

<sup>148</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *Revelation: A New Covenant Commentary*, (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade, 2011), 292 n. 2: "Here especially [Rev. 21:1] one must avoid the temptation of trying to make the present imagery any more literal than what has preceded. A careful reading makes it plain that John is still dealing with imagery – imagery pointing to a much greater reality than what is presently known, or knowable."

fact, both Peter and John speak of a NHNE, but fail to truly describe the world through the lens of physicality, geography, or topology.<sup>149</sup> Both authors, instead, claim a style of people that will inhabit the NHNE.

Another disagreement is that the declaration of the one who sits on the throne has not truly happened in the church age. This view is held by Grudem in his systematic theology.<sup>150</sup> This is a common reading for those who hold to a premillennial view, which is that Jesus's millennial kingdom is a future earthly kingdom yet to be seen.<sup>151</sup> Beale argues convincingly, "The vision does not describe features of the church age prior to the end, since the conditions portrayed emphasizes the absence of every form of visible and invisible threat to the entire redeemed community, in both its spiritual and its physical aspects (e.g. 21:1, 4, 8, 27; 22:3, 5)." This argument is convincing to some because those within the church still experience persecution and strife in the world. This hope is a perfect experience in God's closeness and life with the people. Something so wonderful

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<sup>149</sup> For an opposing view of my thesis, see N. T. Wright, *History and Eschatology: Jesus and the Promise of Natural Theology* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2019), 251–277; N. T. Wright, *Revelation for Everyone*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 186–90. Wright, who is a proponent of Natural Theology and a renewing of the heavens and earth as originally intended in Genesis 1, intends to use passages like Revelation 21 as a means to bolster an argument for a new creation in the physical world. God's ultimate goal is to dwell with humanity on earth; the earth fulfills the purpose of the Temple as God as the Garden of Eden was a Temple for God to be with humans. A positive outlook on Wright's interpretation is the desire for a truly biblical interpretation of the passages as he argues against Platonic views of the human perception of space and reality. In the Platonic view, according to Wright, it is enticing for Christians to misinterpret the beauty of the creation as something else worth going to (262). What Wright misses is that he is so concerned with the future that he fails to see the purpose of the text in the present. Hope and eschatology are great motivators, but they are motivators in the here and now. While Wright worries about God's future indwelling on the earth, and vaguely describes what that reality will truly look like for Christians, he forgets that Revelation has a current impact and message for the seven churches of Asia.

<sup>150</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1127: "Several OT passages seem to fit neither in the present age nor in the Eternal State. These passages indicate some future stage in the history of redemption which is far greater than the present church age but which still does not see the removal of all sin and rebellion and death from the earth."

<sup>151</sup> Michael J. Vlach, "Premillennialism and the Kingdom: A Rationale for a Future Earthly Kingdom," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 29 (2018): 207–32.

cannot yet truly exist in its fullness. The counter argument for Beale and Grudem's view is a higher ecclesiastical view of the church. Christ's death is a victory for Christians and a reframing of the pain and torment that comes from living in righteousness.<sup>152</sup> James 1:2–3 says, "Whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance." A normally awful experience is now a pedagogical tool for faithfulness. Persecution is to be interpreted in light of Christ's conquering death rather than something that one day will no longer happen. The comforting fact during persecution is God's continual presence despite hardship for the believer (Matt. 28:18-20 "I am with you always"). Knowing that Christ has conquered death, Christians now can withhold their tears with the hopeful expectation that they will experience the same fate as Jesus.

Understandably this is a high view of the church and a tall order to ask of everyday members. However, the biblical text aims for a higher calling and lifestyle that is always more difficult. Jesus's desire to pick up your cross daily and follow him (Mark 8:34) is not an easy command to follow. Referring back to Koester, the NHNE in Revelation is meant to be an invitation to the vision of the future.<sup>153</sup> Eschatology, as the passages in this research have proven, points to the future with the goal of changing the present. The true goal of the image is to institute in believers a new level of faithfulness, compassion, and righteousness in which they need to uphold or finally meet. Revelation, as a whole, is meant for churches of Jesus Christ. Subsequently, John answers the

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<sup>152</sup> Mitchell G. Reddish, *Revelation* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2001), 413: "The hope expressed in this text is not simply an 'otherworldly' hope, a yearning for future bliss that is meaningless in the present. Rather this eschatological hope can help sustain us during the painful and agonizing experiences of suffering, mourning, and death. The experience of countless sufferers who have been overcome by the tragedies of life is that eschatological hope does sustain and support the believer when life seems to come crashing down."

<sup>153</sup>Koester, *Revelation*, 806.

question of who we are and what we are to do right now. John's answer is that you are God's masterful recreation of the cosmos and he asks you to live like Jesus in holiness and purity.

The Revelation of John is a passionate and vibrant experience of a world in which the Lord wants all readers to be included. Though John uses the OT in profound ways, they are profitable and ingenious for the modern reader. John uses Isaiah's image of the NHNE as a description of the church because of familiar key themes such as the temple. The point of the image for the church is to explore God's overwhelming presence which has been a constant theme from Isaiah to 1 Enoch and to 2 Peter. John concludes his vision with not only a grand hope of what the church can be but an invitation to become what the world needs. The end goal is God's kingdom to spread to the ends of the earth and for all people to glorify the Lord. That goal is exemplified through the life of God's people and their proper ethical behavior.



## Conclusion

The popular television series *The Walking Dead* was a decade long story of Rick Grimes surviving the post-apocalyptic world of “the Walkers.” Rick Grimes and his son, Carl Grimes, go from Georgia to Virginia as they survive not only the dead but also the living that wish to take everything they have. In season 8, Rick is fighting an enemy named Negan, where both men’s groups are at war for the most power over the resources, the land, and their own survival. Sadly, in the midst of the season, Carl is bitten by a walker and inevitably perishes because of the bite. Carl in his final episode says goodbye to his friends and family, trying to make everything right before he takes his final breath.

When Rick finds Carl laying on the floor of a dilapidated church house, Rick learns of the bite and sees that this is his last moments with his son. Carl wishes to relieve his father of any pain, so he tells him of a dream for their home, Alexandria. Carl tells him that his father’s beard is longer, much grayer than it was currently. They were happier, healthy, and they were living the best life they could hope for. As they exit their own home, Carl describes that Alexandria has new houses, crops which are able to feed everyone, and everyone feels secure behind large walls. At the end of Carl’s dream, he describes and sees Negan, living not only amongst Rick but as a male figure living with Rick’s daughter and Carl’s little sister, Judith.

While it would be interesting to see if the creators and writers had Isa. 65:17 in mind, it seems unlikely. However, Carl’s aspiration of the world he dreams for his family is quintessentially the same theme as Isaiah. As time carries on, Isaiah continues to be a source for theologians and dreamers of grandeur visionaries. The grand visions of peace prophesied by Isaiah go even to the twentieth century to Martin Luther King Jr. who

dreamed that “one day little black boys and girls will be holding hands with little white boys and girls.” All of the ancient authors in this paper dreamed of something better than the pits of darkness and despair that their readers inhabited. They preached of God’s sovereignty, his compassion, and more importantly his ultimate plan for the world. The eschatological reflections by authors of Isaiah, 1 Enoch, Jubilees, *LAB*, 2 Peter, and Revelation were meant to push their audience to the next steps of life. The push was towards a life of peace, with chaos behind them, a life that is attainable, if only they obey the commands of God.

As we draw this work to a conclusion, there are three homiletical points that make the NHNE image beneficial for modern churches today. The first point is to link the future hope with the present circumstances. All of the observed texts illuminate the need to imagine the future with the present. Like Enoch, we find ourselves at a moment of change in our history. This could be the history and the future of the church, the future of the country, or the future of an individual’s life. In a sermon it is important to highlight that right now is the moment for change in the person’s life. Isaiah showed a focus on the present through his use of the participles in Isa. 65:17-18. Revelation recognizes that now is when the NHNE is coming down from heaven. These authors are excited about the change that is about to occur in front of their very eyes. God is powerful to work in the lives of his followers; he showed it in the past, we know he can do it in the future, and it is clear he is willing to do it in the present. The preacher ought to build the excitement of a new beginning. The preacher should point to the sins and struggles of the local congregation, encouraging members to change for a new world they can create through the power of the Spirit. While most people envision the NHNE as a far and distant goal

when Jesus returns, the NHNE in these passages paints a picture for today. The search for righteousness and peace begins today in the lives of those in the community.

The second tool that makes the NHNE image beneficial for modern churches is to be specific in what will bring the new world that the church desires. Vagueness and hazy images of the future will not lead to fundamental changes that a church needs. In a sermon, it is powerful to be specific and descriptive when it comes to a new program, a goal, or a community that the church wants to build. A preacher can inspire change by being specific on what the church needs and how to get there. Isaiah's vision describes the world through longevity, peace, and what life will look like in the NHNE. Revelation goes the opposite direction by describing what will not inhabit the NHNE by pointing to different sins that will perish from this world (Rev. 21:8). Peter speaks specifically of the righteousness that will dwell in the NHNE (2 Pet. 3:13). The prophets envisioned a specific outcome in God's creative work. In preaching, there may be a desire to be vague, or to allow the audience to create in their mind an image of their own NHNE. However, what should be understood by all parties is the Bible's desire for a chosen people set apart from the world and established in God's righteousness. The church needs exhortation towards proper behavior and to be made aware of any participation with sin. The preacher should never be vague on right and wrong. The vision of the NHNE that the preacher is manifesting could be a moment of clarity of what is right and wrong within God's community.

The third, and most important tool, is to always understand God's overwhelming presence in this new world. The sermon's ultimate goal is to usher in the presence of God for the church. The Spirit's indwelling and God's wonderful presence beckons the church

to righteousness. The preacher has a responsibility to encourage righteousness, purity, holiness, and peace. All of these themes are the pursuit of the church in the hopes of cherishing God's presence. The final image of a sermon on the NHNE is not a distant future of heaven or a brand new created world unknown to the audience. The final image ought to be the same mountain of peace in Isa. 65:25. While the wolf and the lamb graze together, the people on God's holy mountain shout for joy and praise him. These are not distant events but characteristics that can be found in any church house. The preacher exhorts the church to yearn for this lifestyle of joy and peace. Then and only then, there is a possibility of a new world being brought before all the people in the presence of God and his Son Jesus.

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