

ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE PEOPLE:

AN EXEGETICAL ARGUMENT FROM ISAIAH 56:1-8 FOR THE AUDIENCE OF ISAIAH  
BEING REVEALED IN THE ESCHATOLOGICAL ESSENCE OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

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by

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The book of Isaiah has been the object of intense debate concerning its origins, production, and meaning. The recent critical-academic approach has assumed a literary fragmentary view of a tripartite Isaiah reflecting a diachronic production of the book. This paper methodologically assumes a synchronic approach, however not viewing it merely as received canonically still under a diachronic fragmentary development of the text held as a whole contingently but retaining the historical affirmation concerning the origins of the vision of Isaiah setting its theology in history and grounding it in the original intent of the single author to a particular audience. Thus, this paper argues for a single authorship for the vision of Isaiah writing to one particular audience who, from the exegesis of Isaiah 56:1-8, is revealed to be the people of God in its eschatological essence: whose identity is defined by Yahweh Himself in His redemptive-historical action of gathering the outcasts of Israel.

## 2. THE AUTHORSHIP OF ISAIAH

The current critical-academic consensus about the book of Isaiah is the multiple authorship view that extended the timeline for its production over centuries. This position results from 19th-century rationalism that cannot accept the possibility of predictive prophecy.<sup>1</sup> Approaches like John Watts' assuming a date of completion only possible after the facts in Isaiah (ca 435BC) and different audiences in the process of production results directly from the work of J.C Doderlein which affirmed that the latest portion of Isaiah (Isa 44-66) must have been a later addition from

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<sup>1</sup> The post-modernist turn led to an emphasis on scholarship that has contributed even more to this view because it favors fragmentation rather than holism which methodologically begs the question when observes internal evidences in contrast and opposition rather than juxtaposition and unity to a point in which multiple authorship is not argued but assumed. See: J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction Commentary*, 9/15/93 edition. (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1993), 25; Oswald T. Allis, *Unity of Isaiah* (Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2001); Guido Benzi, "Synchronic and Diachronic Dynamics of the Entire Book of Isaiah: For a New Commentary on Isaiah 1-66," *Salesianum* 79.3 (2017): 411–21.

the Exile and restoration periods.<sup>2</sup> This idea was refined by Bernhard Duhm in *Das Buch Jesaia* suggesting that Isaiah was actually made of three volumes because Isa 56-66 must have been produced by the returning community in Palestine after Cyrus' decree. Henceforth, the variety of critical scholarship theories' concerning different sources of Isaiah provided kaleidoscopic amalgamations for its organization. There is no agreement on how long the production process took or who was responsible for the final form.<sup>3</sup>

This form-criticism requires a measure of subjectivism.<sup>4</sup> It traditionally assumes three distinguished "books" (Isa 1-39, 40-55, and 56-66) functioning as independent sections. Three major theories have been proposed concerning how they were patched together:<sup>5</sup> (i) coincidence

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<sup>2</sup> John Watts affirms that the book moves chronologically and accurately explicitly pointing to datable events: Isa 7 to 734 BC, Isa 20 to 714-712 BC, Isa 45-46 to 540 BC, Isa 63 to 435 BC. However, he assumes a date of completion only possible after the last facts referred - ca. 435 BC – with a scope broader than Isaiah's timeline and, therefore, with a necessary multiple authorship and audiences. The first audience is placed in Jerusalem during this period given the historical references to Cyrus and the possible pointing to the destruction of Edom as a current or recently past event, which by the time of Ezra and Nehemiah is not mentioned anymore. This leads to an approach to the book disregarding the issue of authorship as relevant for its revelatory value since it is accepted as inspired in its canonical shape following Brevard Childs. See: John D. W. Watts, *Word Biblical Commentary: Isaiah 1-33*, Revised edition. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc, 2005); John D. W. Watts, *Obadiah: A Critical Exegetical Commentary* (Alpha Publications, 1981); J.R Bartlett, "Moabites and Edomites" in *Peoples of Old Testament Times*, First Edition. (Oxford: Titles Distributed by Oxford U, 1973); Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah: A Commentary*, First Edition. (Louisville, Ky. u.a.: Westminster John Knox Press: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000); Brevard S. Childs, *The Struggle to Understand Isaiah as Christian Scripture* (Eerdmans, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> The result is that there are almost as many proposals for the composition of the book as there are scholars in the field. The prophet Isaiah of Jerusalem is considered to have probably written great portion of Isa 6-12 and perhaps some of Isa 15-33. Then, an anonymous prophet of the exile had probably written Isa 40-55 (although there is still doubt about the Servant Songs); and Isa 56-66 are a collection of postexilic writings. See: Johann Christoph Doederlein, *Esaias Ex Recensione Textus Hebraei..* (Nabu Press, 2011); Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaia* (Forgotten Books, 2018); William L. Holladay, *Isaiah: Scroll of a Prophetic Heritage* (Wipf and Stock, 2012); J H (John Herbert) Eaton, "Origin of the Book of Isaiah," *Vetus Testamentum* 9.2 (1959): 138–57; Douglas Jones, "Tradition of the Oracles of Isaiah of Jerusalem," *Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 67.3–4 (1955): 226–46; Jacques VERMEYLEN JACQUES, *LE LIVRE D'ISAÏE* (Paris: CERF, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> This is why Schultz says that once one abandons the traditional view that Isaiah of Jerusalem was the sole or primary source of the prophecies in the canonical book, there is virtually no limit to the number of potential contributors that scholars can posit. In any case, to speak of just three Isaiahs is anachronistic for current scholarship; even Bernhard Duhm, who is credited with establishing the existence of Trito-Isaiah, identified five or more contributors to the book. See: Richard L. Schultz, "Isaiah, Isaiahs, and Current Scholarship," in *Do Historical Matters Matter to Faith? A Critical Appraisal of Modern and Postmodern Approaches to Scripture* eds James K. Hoffmeier and Dennis R. Magary, (Crossway, 2012), 243–261

<sup>5</sup> John N. Oswalt "Righteousness in Isaiah: A Study of the Function of Chapters 56-66 in the Present Structure of the Book", in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* (eds Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans, Leiden: Brill Academic Pub, 1997), 177-191.

theory: Isaiah's text is found arbitrarily in one collection; (ii) chronology theory: Isa 1-5 occurs in the time of King Uzziah, Isa 6-14 during King Ahaz, and Isa 15-39 in the time of King Hezekiah. Then Isa 40-66 is situated in the time of the Persian King Kores and his successors, Isa 40-55 is considered as exilic and 56-66 post-exilic;<sup>6</sup> (iii) dissonance theory: the failure of the prophecies of the historical prophet Isaiah caused the following generations to transform his words inserting new interpretations leading to the so-called Isaiah-school.<sup>7</sup>

The latest argumentation favoring a post-exilic Palestinian Trito-Isaiah assumes a dissonance theory based on considerations of structure, style, and background ideas commonly associated with this geography and audience.<sup>8</sup> However, its proponents have not been able to articulate enough

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<sup>6</sup> Conrad, E.W, "Reading Isaiah and the Twelve as Prophetic Books" in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah*, 3-17.

<sup>7</sup> This was a close group around Isaiah considered to be his pupils or disciples who, after his death, continued to exist, even after the Babylonian exile. Three texts in the book Isaiah are brought forward to prove this opinion, namely 8:16; 50:4; 54:13, in which the characters are identified with historical persons, *in casu* Isaiah's pupils, outside of the text in a one-to-one-relation. See: Walter Brueggemann, "Unity and Dynamic in the Isaiah Tradition," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 9.29 (1984): 89-107; Robert P. Carroll, *When Prophecy Failed: Reactions and Responses to Failure in the Old Testament Prophetic Traditions*, Revised ed. edition. (SCM Press, 1996). Currently, the discussion concerning the Isaianic School can be summarized by presenting two specific positions: W. Beuken, in several studies, in his four-volume commentary published in Dutch (W.M.A. Beuken, Jesaja, deel ILA; IIB; IIIA; IIIB, Callenbach, Nijkerk 1979-1989) and particularly in Wim Beuken, "Isa 56:9-57:13 - an Example of the Isaianic Legacy of Trito-Isaiah," in *Tradition and Re-Interpretation in Jewish and Early Christian Literature: Essays in Honour of Jürgen C H Lebram* (Leiden, Netherlands, 1986), 48-64, where he views the figure of "Trito-Isaiah" as a literary and theological personality who develops the prophecies of the first and second Isaiah to convey a specific message, however in a decidedly different historical, social and literary situation. The second position is that of O.H. Steck. In an article exegeting Isaiah ("Tritojesaja im Jesajabuch", in J. Vermeylen (ed.), *The Book of Isaiah. Les oracles et leurs relectures unité et complexité de l'ouvrage = Le Livre d'Isaïe* (BETHL 81) Univ. Press, Leuven 1989, 361-406) he denies the existence of a prophet or author that can be identified with the Trito Isaiah and defends that Isa 56-66 never existed as a composition in its own right, but were gradually added to Isa 40-55 in a composition that he named "Great Isaiah". The same idea, but starting from totally different observations on the literary origin and development of Isa 40-55, is also defended by the editor of the work and organizer of the conference in which these theses were presented for the first time: J. Vermeylen, "L'unité du livre d'Isaïe", in J. Vermeylen, *The Book of Isaiah*, 11-53

<sup>8</sup> We could summarize that today there are essentially three main groups in this debate: (i) According to a typical contemporary historical-critical reconstruction, there were not merely two or three Isaiahs (the pre-exilic First Isaiah, the exilic Second Isaiah and the postexilic Third Isaiah). Rather, as many as a dozen or more individuals might have had a part in producing the present canonical book. (ii) according to the Babylonian Talmud, tractate Baba Batra, which states that "Hezekiah and his colleagues wrote Isaiah, Proverbs, the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes," there might be no prophet Isaiah who functioned as author of the book of Isaiah; and (iii) according to the traditional interpretation of 2 Peter 1:20-21, which states that "no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" presumably only one person stood in the divine council and then proclaimed to eighth-century Judah, "Thus says the Lord." See: Richard L. Schultz, "How Many Isaiahs Were There and What Does It

evidence for their arguments and reaching widely different conclusions when analyzing the same literature.<sup>9</sup> The continuation of features of style from Isa 40-55 into 56-66, for instance, has always been noted but disregarded under the assumption of an exilic portion with a post-exilic addendum.<sup>10</sup> The mere absence of Cyrus or Babylon in the later portion is considered evidence that both were already past by then (argument from silence). Nonetheless, the multiple signs of a Palestinian milieu are still completely compatible and better explained with an original audience situated in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>11</sup>

The limitations of such a rationalistic approach were shown by Brevard Childs. Assuming a lexical and thematical theory from a synchronic perspective,<sup>12</sup> Childs emphasized the final

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Matter?: Prophetic Inspiration in Recent Evangelical Scholarship,” in Vincent Bacote, Laura C. Miguélez, and Dennis L. Okholm, eds., *Evangelicals & Scripture: Tradition, Authority, and Hermeneutics* (InterVarsity Press, 2004), 150–170; Raymond Samuel Foster, *The Restoration of Israel: A Study in Exile and Return* (Darton Longman & Todd, 1970).

<sup>9</sup> Between 1945 and 1975 a great deal of attention was given attempting to determine the authenticity of Isaiah based on whether certain sentences or words were part of the original form or not. See: John N. Oswalt, “The Implications of an Evangelical View of Scripture for the Authorship of the Book of Isaiah,” in Daniel I. Block and Richard L. Schultz, eds., *Bind Up the Testimony: Explorations in the Genesis of the Book of Isaiah* (Hendrickson, 2015), 273–291.

<sup>10</sup> The alleged authors of each portion remained completely anonymous and the best efforts to support the position admit a necessary reciprocal influence between each one of them. At least, the vision of Isaiah is divided in Isa 1-39 and 40-66, in which the first part is received, inherited and organized by pre-existing collections that drew historically and ideologically on the preaching of the 8th-century prophet and its reception and rewriting in the context of subsequent historical events. This reception, which took place necessarily in the past, tended to explain, in terms of consolation, the reason behind the crisis (the punishment of the exile) and the salvific action of Yahweh towards his people. The latter part was most probably created and developed not as a consequence or continuation of the first part, but as a reflection on the renewed action of God in history in the sight of all peoples, and, therefore, its characteristic trait is one of openness to the future. See: Benzi, “Synchronic and Diachronic Dynamics of the Entire Book of Isaiah: For a New Commentary on Isaiah 1-66.”; Christopher R Seitz, “On the Question of Divisions Internal to the Book of Isaiah,” *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* 32 (1993): 260–66.

<sup>11</sup> Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 26.

<sup>12</sup> Both the lexical theory and the theme theory are semantic theories, which represent two extremes. On the one hand, the lexical theory focuses on *lemmata* and separate expressions, not taking into account the context in which the concrete words occur. On the other hand, the theme theory is based on a high abstraction of the text, due to which the concrete context also tends to recede into the background. Notwithstanding the fact that both these theories are searching for text-internal reasons in uniting the text, the main problem is that they separate semantics from text-syntax and text pragmatics. Without the connection with text-syntax, the framework to discover the textual position of words and themes is missing, while, without connection to text-pragmatics, the participation of words and themes in the communication-process cannot be achieved. See: A L H M van (Archibald L H M) Wieringen, “Isaiah’s Roles: The Unity of a Bible Book from the Perspective of the Sender-Role,” in *One Text, a Thousand Methods: Studies in Memory of Sjef van Tilborg* (Boston, 2005), 115–24; Archibald L. H. M. Van Wieringen, *The Implied Reader in Isaiah 6-12* (Leiden Boston: Brill Academic Pub, 1998).

canonical form of the text as foundational to reconsider the whole book as one literary unit, meaning: what does its final shape intend to communicate?<sup>13</sup> Not surprisingly, he concluded that the latter parts of the book were written with full knowledge of the earlier parts.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, tracing the development of Isaiah throughout, the materials of early chapters presuppose the existence of the conclusions of later chapters.

Hence, the debate of Isaiah's authorship can be transformed by a presuppositional approach committed to a systematic view of Scriptures as the coherent, infallible, and inerrant Word of God in the original manuscripts.<sup>15</sup> This commitment receives the claims of the book as accurate and

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<sup>13</sup> Arguments from conservatives for unity of authorship based on common themes and vocabulary have now in large part been taken over and pressed into service as arguments for a redactional unity in the book. See: Edward J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, Revised edition. (Wm. B. Eerdmans-Lightning Source, 1989), 210; Tremper Longman III and Raymond B. Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament: Second Edition*, Second edition. (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan Academic, 2006), 309.

<sup>14</sup> A number of works exploring ways in which the book might be interpreted as a whole have been written by Carroll Stuhlmueller, Ronald Clements, Walter Brueggemann, Rolf Rendtorff, and others. For instance, Rendtorff himself argues that it is impossible not to see the vision of Isaiah as one literary unit and also stated in a paper on the composition of Isaiah read at the 1991 annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature that it was no longer possible to approach the study of the book as was done fifteen years earlier (i.e., as a collection of essentially unrelated pericopes). See: R. Rendtorff, "The book of Isaiah: A Complex unity. Synchronic and diachronic reading", in *New visions of Isaiah* ed R.F. Melugin (JSOT SS 214 JSOT-Press, Sheffield, 1996), 32-49. A similar assertion is also present in Williamson. See: H. G. M. Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah: Deutero-Isaiah's Role in Composition and Redaction*, 1st edition. (Oxford: Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, 1994), 1-18; : John N. Oswalt, "The Implications of an Evangelical View of Scripture for the Authorship of the Book of Isaiah,". Additionally, John Hayes and Stuart Irvine have recently offered a historical commentary on Isaiah 1-39 in which they claim that, except for chapters 34 and 35, nearly all of Isa 1-39 derives from the eighth-century B.C. prophet, since all of these speeches, which are generally arranged in chronological order, can be related to eighth-century B.C. events and conditions. Furthermore, Christopher Seitz has argued the following three points: first, that the historical narrative of Isaiah 36-39 was originally at home among the Isaiah traditions and not in 1-2 Kings, as is frequently asserted; second, that there never was an exilic prophet in Babylon (Second Isaiah having composed his oracles in Palestine); and third, that one can dispense with the postulate of a postexilic Third Isaiah because it lacks an adequate textual basis. Deutero-Isaiah, in his opinion, represents a deliberate extension of First Isaiah's promises regarding Zion into the period of the exile. George W. Anderson has argued persuasively that there is no compelling evidence in support of the common claim that Isa 24-27 is apocalyptic and, hence, among the latest material in the book. Although none of the scholars would attribute the entire book to Isaiah of Jerusalem, support for the basic unity of the canonical book has been growing steadily within non-evangelical scholarship. See: Richard L. Schultz, "How Many Isaiahs Were There and What Does It Matter?: Prophetic Inspiration in Recent Evangelical Scholarship," in Vincent Bacote, Laura C. Miguélez, and Dennis L. Okholm, eds., *Evangelicals & Scripture: Tradition, Authority, and Hermeneutics* (InterVarsity Press, 2004), 150-170; John H. Hayes and Stuart A. Irvine, *Isaiah The Eighth Century Prophet*, First Edition. (Nashville, Tenn: Abingdon Press, 1987).

<sup>15</sup> This was the view of B.B Warfield. See: Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, 2nd ed. edition. (Louisville, KY: P & R Publishing, 1980); H van den (Hendrik) Belt, "Herman Bavinck and Benjamin B. Warfield on Apologetics and the Autopistia of Scripture," *Calvin Theological Journal* 45.1 (2010): 32-43.

trustworthy, entailing that Isaiah is a book that describes the vision of Isaiah, son of Amoz, who was a prophet that lived and worked in Jerusalem ca750-700BC under four Judean kings: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah.<sup>16</sup> The vision is objective, historical and unified: it represents Isaiah's human agency, in time and space, seeing by revelation what God is actively doing in history.<sup>17</sup>

The diversity of material is consolidated under one vision of one author structured in two blocks (Isa 1-35 and 44-66) reflecting a prophetic-preaching style. At the center, there is a hinge of narrative material (Isa 36-39) that provides the historical linchpin and glue for the prophetic message.<sup>18</sup> Isa 36-37 describe Sennacherib's invasion and the outcome of the Assyrian conflict, referencing the first half, while Isa 38-39 projects the continuity of the message in time referring to Hezekiah's illness and the Babylonians envoys of Merodach-Baladan, anticipating the

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<sup>16</sup> Maybe stretching even to the kingship of Manasseh since Heb 11:37 may be an allusion to the Apocryphal *The Ascension of Isaiah* that records the tradition that Isaiah suffered martyrdom under king Manasseh by being "sawed in two". See: R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament: Apocrypha* (Apocryphile Press, 2024), 155-162.

<sup>17</sup> The vision is comprehensive and detailed, concerning the whole heaven and earth being summoned to listen (Isa 1:2) culminating in the transformation of new heavens and new earth (66:22). Lately, critical scholarship has developed to accommodate this unity by trying to argue for a type of Isaianic presence in the latter portion of the book: "The question to be raised is the degree to which chaps. 40-66 take up within their own presentation the matter before us, namely, the voice of Isaiah and the possibility of new voices appearing. It may well be the case that "Isaiah" is a spirit that inhabits all sections of the book and that indeed one might call him its "author" in a very basic sense. But that need not preclude, as Delitzsch himself recognized, other prophets appearing in these latter chapters, who reckoned themselves as "second selves" of Isaiah as well as proclaimers of a new thing, never before heard (42:9; 44:19; 48:6-8). Under such conditions, the "persona" of Isaiah would have to be very differently conceived: not as a "voice" unifying the entire collection but as the one whose original vision was intended for contemporaries, but also for generations beyond his own (so 8:16-22; 29:11-12; 30:8). These generations include new prophetic voices that appear in the course of the book's own unfolding, so that the former things might at last be attached to their intended referent and that new things might also be proclaimed, filling to fullness and overflowing the legacy of Isaiah." See: Christopher R Seitz, "How Is the Prophet Isaiah Present in the Latter Half of the Book? The Logic of Chapters 40-66 within the Book of Isaiah," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115.2 (1996): 219-40.

<sup>18</sup> Isaiah is presented primarily in the form characteristic of Hebrew poetry with only a few center chapters (6-9; 20; 36-39) presented with a narrative framework. Hebrew poetry is characterized by parallelism and the Greek translation LXX retains this formal feature. The poetry most commonly conveys messages from the Lord God Sabaoth, the Holy One of Israel. The messages are primarily directed to the people of Judah, but the nature of the true Israel is being developed in the book, including by the direct addressing to the nations surrounding Judah. The book of Isaiah in Greek does not differ in structure from its Hebrew version. It contains the same sections in the same order: the visions against nations (chapters 1-23), first against Judah and Jerusalem (1-12), then against surrounding nations (13-23), with two intervening narrative sections (6-9 and 20); the eschatological speech (24-25); the warnings against military alliance with Egypt (26-35), the narratives about Isaiah and Hezekiah (36-39), the Oracles of Comfort (40-55), and the final section promoting purity (56-66). See: Ken Penner, *Isaiah*, Septuagint Commentary Series (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 340.

Babylonian exile in the second half.<sup>19</sup> Isa 36-39 is the structural pivot of the whole book because it connects the whole theological message to history in one flow.<sup>20</sup> The history and theology of Isaiah are inseparable.<sup>21</sup> Isa 36-39 represents a bridge composed substantively of the same material of 2 Kings 18:13-20:19. Since there is no explanation of context in Isaiah, it is likely that the text in Isaiah is primary in relation to 2 Kings. Therefore, there is a strong argument that not only Isa

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<sup>19</sup> Merodach-Baladan was a rebellious leader against Assyria in the east and was taken out of the Babylonian throne in 703 BC, two years before the Sennacherib's invasion of Judah. Thus, it indicates that the events of Isa 38-39 occurred previously of those of chapters 36-37 and were intentionally reserved to reflect the arrangement of the book and to emphasize the message, the literary purpose of the vision and the sequence of events taking place in the history of Israel as a whole – first the Assyrians then the Babylonians. See: Barry G. Webb, *The Message of Isaiah* (Illinois: IVP Academic, 1997), 30-36.

<sup>20</sup> According to Kenton Sparks, if one holds to the traditional view of Isaiah, chapters 40-55 contain "astonishingly detailed predictions about the end of the Jewish exile two centuries later," rounding up from the more accurate figure of 150, which he gives elsewhere. Although those critical scholars who "do not believe in miraculous prophecies" date these to the sixth century, they do not all view these as "pseudoprophecies" (or *ex eventu* = "after the fact"). For Sparks, these "constitute genuine prophecies written to the exiles that predicted their deliverance." Most notable is the announcement of the Persian king Cyrus as God's designated agent of deliverance-his messiah- in Isaiah 45, a chapter that, in his interpretation, reflects Jewish resistance to this divine plan (although the reason for this alleged resistance remains unclear). Sparks contends that this declaration could not have been directed to an eighth-century audience, "who could not have made heads or tails [sic] out of Isaiah's rhetoric. See: Kenton L. Sparks, *God's Word in Human Words: An Evangelical Appropriation of Critical Biblical Scholarship*, Illustrated edition. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008). Sparks's claim that the Cyrus prophecy would have made no sense to an eighth-century audience is a common one. See: Sparks, *God's Word in Human Words*; R. N. Whybray, *Second Isaiah* (Sheffield: UNKNO, 1983); John Goldingay, Robert L. Jr Hubbard, and Robert Johnston, *Isaiah* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995); John Goldingay et al., *Isaiah 40-55 Vol 1*, 1st edition. (T&T Clark, 2014); John Goldingay, "What Are the Characteristics of Evangelical Study of the Old Testament?," *The Evangelical Quarterly* 73.2 (2001): 99–117. There is also no evidence for a continuing Isaianic school of disciples building on the perpetuation of the kerygma of his master and adapting it to the situations that the people of Israel faced in the decades and century after Isaiah. The validation of the work of a "school" as the message of the Prophet Isaiah is a theory that lacks evidence in support, from inside the book or from outside sources. See: William J. Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel: A Theological Survey of the Old Testament*, 2nd edition. (Baker Academic, 2002), 99.

<sup>21</sup> Oswalt, when presenting an extensive critic of the different views of the modern scholarship assumptions over Isaiah, identified that one of the key problems is the immediate disregard from the content of the message of the text itself. If the Bible's theology is true, then the historical basis for that theology must be true as well. William F. Albright similarly said that the only way we can explain Israel's distinctive ideas is if they had some distinctive experiences. A systematic approach to the Bible from with an inerrant hermeneutic will assume that: "(i) no biblical writer knowingly falsified any statement of fact; (ii) claims of authorship are to be taken at face value; (iii) statements are completely reliable when understood in the light of genre and current usage; and (iv) apparent discrepancies would disappear if all the data were known." If the book makes no explicit or implicit claims about authorship or date (like Joel), a proper approach does not impose any demands. On the other hand, if such claims are made, then we must shape our interpretations according to those claims. See: John N. Oswalt, "The Implications of an Evangelical View of Scripture for the Authorship of the Book of Isaiah," in *Bind up the Testimony: Explorations in the Genesis of the Book of Isaiah* (Peabody, 2015), 273–91; William F. Albright, *History, Archaeology and Christian Humanism* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 83-100; James I. Packer, "Infallible Scripture and the Role of Hermeneutics," in *Scripture and Truth*, ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 353-54; John N. Oswalt, "The Implications of an Evangelical View of Scripture for the Authorship of the Book of Isaiah," in Daniel I. Block and Richard L. Schultz, eds., *Bind Up the Testimony: Explorations in the Genesis of the Book of Isaiah* (Hendrickson, 2015), 273–291.

36-39 but the whole vision, in its substantial present form, is pre-exilic.<sup>22</sup>

Isa. 1:1 claims that the entire vision was given to one man: Isaiah ben Amoz and occurred in Jerusalem during Isaiah's public ministry.<sup>23</sup> Thus, the textual simple claim is incompatible with any view of multiple "Isaiahs."<sup>24</sup> Since the vision is not broken at any point, there is no reason to doubt that the superscription is intended to qualify the entire document.<sup>25</sup> According to a multiple-

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<sup>22</sup> C. Boutflower, *The Book of Isaiah I-XXXIX* (London, SPCK, 1930), 134-147; Peter R Ackroyd, "Interpretation of the Babylonian Exile: A Study of 2 Kings 20, Isaiah 38-39," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 27.3 (1974): 329-52; Peter R Ackroyd, "Isaiah 36-39: Structure and Function," in *"The Place Is Too Small for Us": The Israelite Prophets in Recent Scholarship* (Winona Lake, Ind, 1995), 478-94.

<sup>23</sup> According to Kenton Sparks, the entire "Isaianic" corpus could not be rooted in the ministry of the prophet Isaiah in Jerusalem because, although Isaiah 1-39 generally presupposes an eighth-century Judahite audience (Assyrian era), 40-55 presupposes that the Babylonian exile is ending. Sparks does not consider the claim of *ex eventu* prophecies within the Hebrew Bible to be problematic for an evangelical. It is unclear from a reading of Sparks whether he believes in "miraculous prophecies". See: Sparks, *God's Word in Human Words*. With regard to the provenance of Isa 40-66, Brevard Childs makes a vital observation: assuming multiple authorship, he looks for the identification of these other authors as well as for the specific historical events that, on the pattern of the other Hebrew prophets, should form a framework for their messages. Strangely to him, he finds none of the former, and, with the single exception of references to the historic personage Cyrus, only the most general forms of the latter. This leads Childs to conclude that the "final editors" have consciously deleted any material that would point away from Isaianic authorship. They have removed any references to authors and events that would give the reader any context for the interpretation of the book other than that of Jerusalem in 700 BC. See: Childs' 1972 James Sprunt Lectures at Union Theological Seminary, "Canon and Criticism: The Old Testament as Scripture of the Church." See also Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 325-27.

<sup>24</sup> Kenton Sparks also argues that the existence of the unknown author Deutero-Isaiah is supported by the nonmention of the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 40-66, after mention of him sixteen times in 1-39. He adds to his argument the claim that Isaiah 40 contains Deutero-Isaiah's "call narrative," paralleling Isaiah 6. The identification of Isa 40:1-11 as a "call narrative" is commonplace in critical scholarship but reflects an effort to compensate for the absence of a named prophet or title at the beginning of chaps. 40-66. The claim that there is some "editorial unity" does not satisfy the canonical form of the book (as one could argue for 1-2 Samuel or 1-2 Kings, for example) because the claim of the book itself does not support the possibility. Recognizing "editorial unity" in some vague sense hardly represents a move toward the traditional viewpoint since some scholars even locate the final editor as late as the third century BC. Some even argue that Second and Third Isaiah's reuse of their prophetic "master's" favorite designation for God or as an editor's conscious imitation of proto-Isaianic style in order to attempt a theological continuity over the centuries. See: Richard L. Schultz, "Isaiah, Isaiahs, and Current Scholarship," in James K. Hoffmeier and Dennis R. Magary, eds., *Do Historical Matters Matter to Faith? A Critical Appraisal of Modern and Postmodern Approaches to Scripture* (Crossway, 2012), 243-261; A L H M van (Archibald L H M) Wieringen, "Isaiah's Roles: The Unity of a Bible Book from the Perspective of the Sender-Role," in *One Text, a Thousand Methods: Studies in Memory of Sjef van Tilborg* (Boston, 2005), 115-24.

<sup>25</sup> The historical-critical redactional analysis intends to disqualify this argument based on a number of presuppositions about OT prophets and prophecy itself that cannot be proved: (1) that a prophet/editor would not use the same concept or theme in more than one way (both literally and figuratively); (2) that a prophet would not reuse, allude to, or elaborate upon his own (earlier) oracles (that any such action must be the work of another); and (3) that a prophet would not proclaim anything that was not clearly relevant and perspicuous for his immediate contemporaries (that any such texts must be dated to a later date when they would be pertinent and clear). Furthermore, since the prophets are uniformly presented in the Bible as divine spokespersons, one is, in effect, presupposing what God could or would only communicate to a particular prophet in a particular era. See: Richard L. Schultz, "Isaiah, Isaiahs, and Current

author view, unity is broken because the supposed authors/editors of the latter portion (Isa 40-66) erased their names or location.<sup>26</sup> The lack of explicit historical or geographical settings implies that the audience of this portion was a later one, in a different historical context of Isaiah in the 8<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>27</sup>

However, this assumes a false dichotomy because it is part of the content of the book to reveal the essence of God's people. If God's people are the ultimate recipient of the vision, then the audience targeted was not only the 8<sup>th</sup> century Judahites, but the true Israel of God that was to be

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Scholarship," in *Do Historical Matters Matter to Faith? A Critical Appraisal of Modern and Postmodern Approaches to Scripture* eds James K. Hoffmeier and Dennis R. Magary, (Crossway, 2012), 243–261

<sup>26</sup> Here again, Sparks overstates the situation with regard to Isaiah 40-55. As Brevard Childs has noted, "only scattered vestiges" of the original historical context remain in these chapters and "no concrete historical situations are addressed." An instructive contrast is found in the book of Ezekiel, where the author, the setting, and, frequently, the audience are defined for every address and often reiterated within the address. But this is not only the case for Ezekiel; this kind of identification is characteristic of all the prophets. Even in the case of Cyrus, such references are "minimal". Cyrus has become such a theological projection, an instrument in the hand of God, that his role blurs into the description of Abraham". This is evidence for Cyrus being mentioned unclearly pointing to a unknown future figure as it would be expected in a true predictive prophecy. See: Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, First American edition. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 325-326.

<sup>27</sup> The prophecies of "Second" and "Third Isaiah" go beyond their specific settings, and this is essential to the content of the book. No persons are named (except for Cyrus, which is made more striking by this uniqueness) and no locations are given. There are few references in Isaiah 56-66 to the restoration of the physical temple. Seitz describes Third Isaiah as "bereft of concrete historical indicators". Thus, according to Seitz, the fall of the temple and its restoration in Isaiah are not meaningful literary, historical, or theologically, but the revelation of the true nature of the temple, the people and the final cosmic renewal are actually in sight. This led Seitz to join a significant and growing group of scholars who question the purported Babylonian provenance of Second Isaiah, the sharp break between chapters 55 and 56, and the very existence of Third Isaiah. See: C. R. Seitz, "Isaiah, Book of (Third Isaiah)," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:502-3.

proleptically revealed.<sup>28</sup> The audience ought not to be taken synchronically but diachronically.<sup>29</sup>

This eschatological projection is part of the structure of the vision. A unique expression is present in Isa 2:2: הַיָּמִים בְּאַחֲרֵיתָא (“in the latter days”) and its position within the vision reveals an intentional hermeneutic qualifying its audience.<sup>30</sup> This implies that the audience is being informed about the meaning of these events considering days that are beyond the days mentioned in the subscription of Isa 1:1. However, the audience is not given any detailed information as to when these new days will arrive. The last word of Isa 39:8 (“in my days” meaning in Hezekiah’s) in juxtaposition of what is to come in the latter portion of the book reveals a schema displaying a transition between Isa 39 and 40 towards a proleptic consideration of time in relation to the theological content developing Isa 2:2. In Isa 40:1, the audience is informed that the days of Isa

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<sup>28</sup> The historical-critical claim of the Second Isaiah theory presupposes their conclusions concerning the evidence available here. It is without dispute that Isaiah 40-55, at least in part, addresses an exilic audience, but it is unclear that one can date all of the content contained in these chapters to the final years of the exile. The chronological progression within Isaiah 1-39 clearly suggests that Isa 40 and the following address those in exile. The book’s initial verse ties the prophet’s ministry to “the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah,” during which the northern kingdom was conquered and its leading citizens exiled by the Assyrians, and, under Sennacherib, much of the southern kingdom suffered the same fate. In other words, the majority of Isaiah’s fellow countrymen were already in exile in his day and could appropriately be addressed as such in his oracles. Moreover, Gary Smith has argued recently that Isaiah 40:12-44:23 is better understood as describing the progress of the Assyrian army under Sennacherib in Isaiah’s day modeling what would take place later with the Persian army invasion under Cyrus. One should not expect Smith’s “new” interpretation (in part, already suggested by Calvin) to persuade many proponents of the Second Isaiah theory who are convinced that the mention of Cyrus in Isaiah 44:28-45:1 compels one to hold to an exilic setting for all of chapters 40-55. And finally, some of the individual verses in this section of Isaiah do not easily fit into the late exilic period. See: Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 40-66: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* (B&H Academic, 2009), 175-188; Richard L. Schultz, “Isaiah, Isaiahs, and Current Scholarship,” in James K. Hoffmeier and Dennis R. Magary, eds., *Do Historical Matters Matter to Faith? A Critical Appraisal of Modern and Postmodern Approaches to Scripture* (Crossway, 2012), 243–261.

<sup>29</sup> This assertion does not imply a dialectic approach oscillating between a synchronic understanding of meaning/text canonically versus a diachronically process production of the written material, over an extended period of time being re-signified according to *ex eventu* statements. The prophetic vividness in 40-66 confuses the historical and chronological sequence of the passages, hence confusing most scholars regarding the date(s) of the prophecies in 40-66. The tenses of the Hebrew verbs offer no solution.” See: Elijah Baloyi, “The Unity of the Book Isaiah: Neglected Evidence (Re-) Considered,” *Old Testament Essays (New Series)* 20.1 (2007): 105–27; Andreas Schuele, “Who Is the True Israel?: Community, Identity, and Religious Commitment in Third Isaiah (Isaiah 56-66),” *Interpretation* 73.2 (2019): 174–84; Edgar W. Conrad, *Reading Isaiah*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 117–68.

<sup>30</sup> After Isa 2:2 the word אַחֲרֵיתָא occurs only three times in the Book of Isaiah: in 47:7, although not as an indication of time; in 41:22, although here it regards the past; and in Isa 46:10, where the Lord states that he proclaims the end from the very beginning, where end is used parallel to what is not done yet. After the deliverance of Jerusalem in Isa 36-37, the text creates an open ending regarding “time” in Isa 38-39. Isaiah reacts furiously towards Hezekiah when the latter shows everything to a delegation from Babel. Isaiah foresees, in these events, the decline of Hezekiah’s house.

2:6-39 are just a prelude to the implementation of the future indication Isa 2:2. Thus, Isa 40-66 present themselves as the revelation and implementation of the superior redemptive-historical plan of Yahweh. Isaiah's days connected to Israel's kings are reserved to Isa 1-39, but the following chapters are connected to the Servant. Therefore, the indication of time in Isa 2:2 lays ahead pointing to the days of the seed of the Servant that will also reveal the true essence of His servants in the House of the Lord. Time in Isaiah has two movements: the now and not yet. This distinct eschatological movement is also referenced in a twofold picture: the mountain and the house of Yahweh. The movement is centripetal, executed by all the nations towards the house of the Lord, and centrifugal, executed by the Torah away from the mountain of Zion. Isa 40-66 then continues the line of thought of Isa 1-39, but on a different level: a new effort aimed at the eschatological implementation of Isa 2:2-5.<sup>31</sup>

The expression of Isa 2:2 is used to indicate a future occurring beyond the speaker: whether being a character within the text or its audience. Indeed, the future indicated is not yet visible, but it nevertheless is tangible. The main constituent of the future indicated is that it is beyond the author, but comprehensible to his audience.<sup>32</sup> This structural argument is for a once and for all delivered book written by a single author for God's people as a whole, those already gathered and those whom God would later bring (56:8).<sup>33</sup> Isaiah is then speaking directly to people in the future

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<sup>31</sup> A L H M van (Archibald L H M) Wieringen, "Reading towards the Future in the Book of Isaiah: The beyond the Days (Isa 2,2) and the Days of the Kings," *Gregorianum* 98.2 (2017): 223–36; Simon J. (Simon John) De Vries, *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: Time and History in the Old Testament* (Eerdmans, 1975).

<sup>32</sup> The expression הַיָּמִים הַהֵלָּקִים, therefore, does not deal with an absolute end, but with a relative end, indicating a period beyond the end of certain days. This also implies that the expression itself does not say anything about the distance to the future: it can be used for a future nearby as well as for a future far away. The vision of Isaiah intentionally opens to future historical realization that is beyond the text but written to an audience that receives both. See: Wieringen, "Reading towards the Future in the Book of Isaiah: The beyond the Days (Isa 2,2) and the Days of the Kings"; Conrad, *Reading Isaiah*; Peter R Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration: A Study of Hebrew Thought of the 6th Century BC*, Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster Pr, 1968); De Vries, *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: Time and History in the Old Testament*.

<sup>33</sup> It is unclear to Childs if the sparse historical references associated with Cyrus are an intentional removal of data for theological reasons or if it is a result of a peculiar transmission process we cannot comprehend with the information

and not merely about them.<sup>34</sup>

From the beginning, one essential argument of Isaiah is the reality of predictive prophecy flowing from the sovereignty of God.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, the book's own claim is clear from the introduction: Isaiah saw the contours of Israel's future, and His vision describes it.<sup>36</sup> The book argues that God can communicate to His prophets both general and specific information about the future. The reader ought to believe that Yahweh is the Lord of the Nations who can be trusted

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available now. However, the book itself, in chapters 40-66, is addressing a future situation which is clear to him in outline only. The naming of Cyrus, in this aspect, is a particular detail that insists that only God could raise Him and that, declared in advance, it creates a fulfilment so specific that it would create no mistake concerning the fact that God rules over history (Isa 41:21-29 and 45:3-7). The argument of that portion depends on a predictive prophecy concerning Cyrus specifically previous to his rise. This is a problem with those advocating for a Second Isaiah because this prophecy could not be found anywhere outside of Isa 40-55, but the own testimony of the book diverges since these chapters are a continuation of the same vision dated to the 8th century under the argument of theological correspondence of Isaiah's message in history due to God's sovereignty over heaven and earth. See: Webb, *The Message of Isaiah*, 36; Wieringen, "Reading towards the Future in the Book of Isaiah: The beyond the Days (Isa 2,2) and the Days of the Kings"; Yosef Freund, "Isaiah and His Audience," *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 20.1 (1991): 10-16; Gary V Smith, "Isaiah 40-55: Which Audience Was Addressed?," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 54.4 (2011): 701-13; Conrad, *Reading Isaiah*.

<sup>34</sup> Oswalt suggests that this is necessary for the book of Isaiah because: "(i) the exile of the northern tribes in 721 BC and following demanded theological address, particularly in view of Isaiah's sweeping statements about Yahweh's absolute trust - worthiness and his realization that Judah's exile was only deferred; (ii) the theology of chapters 6-39 demanded a rounding out and completion that could only be seen in the light of what the coming generations would endure". See: John N Oswalt, "Who Were the Addressees of Isaiah 40-66?," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 169.673 (2012): 33-47.

<sup>35</sup> This is gist of the theological unity of chapters 1-5 as the introduction of the book. There the person of Yahweh, in all His majesty, holiness and power, announce what was to take place in obedience to His decree: the imminent destruction of His rebellious people. However, the Holy One of Israel is also promised together with the Gentile motif: the extension of the redemption and renewal to the whole world (4:2-6 and 2:1-5). These motifs go through the entire book which then is to be taken as a whole: the prediction of near judgment in chapters 1-39 is intrinsically and inseparably connected with the prediction of hope in chapters 40-66. See: John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1986). Thus, 41:1-25 is presented by Isaiah and is required to be taken as a prediction, which, although partially veiled for Isaiah's contemporaries, it is at the center of the passage the possibility of the future true Israel of God (his audience) to declare that something spoken beforehand has now come about. "To make a loose comparison with Daniel, this is a little like both producing the dream and interpreting it (Daniel 2), since not only is the prediction made, but its future force in establishing God's authority vis-à-vis the nations is also foreseen, a force that demands the prophecy's prior utterance". See: Seitz, "How Is the Prophet Isaiah Present in the Latter Half of the Book? The Logic of Chapters 40-66 within the Book of Isaiah."

<sup>36</sup> A frequent charge is that Isaiah addressed part of his message primarily to people living 150 years in the future, then he was speaking about things that were meaningless to his own day. That is hardly the case, since, just as we receive as meaningful for our own day revelation from scriptures addressed to people thousands of years ago, so people in Isaiah's own day could receive revelation from scriptures addressed to people in the future. At the same time, the reference to the sealing up of the testimony (Isa 8:16-17) suggests that words can be given at one time that are intended for a future time. See: Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah*; Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39*; Oswalt, "Who Were the Addressees of Isaiah 40-66?"; Oswalt T. Allis, *Unity of Isaiah* (Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2001).

because He knows both the immediate and distant future and nothing happens beyond His direct control.<sup>37</sup>

### 3. EXEGESIS OF ISAIAH 56:1-8

Isa 56:1-8 structurally introduces the last part of Isaiah's vision revealing the essence of the restored community post-exile.<sup>38</sup> It organically develops theological themes of Isaiah, particularly the characteristics of the "waiting people" – a worldwide people that were brought by Yahweh to serve Him and live obedient lives (56:1-8; 58:1-14; 65:1; 66:18).<sup>39</sup> This last movement of the vision centers on the Anointed One who merges the figures of the King from 1-37 and the Servant from 38-55 with the double task of salvation and vengeance/judgement (59:21; 61:1-10; 63:1-6).<sup>40</sup> The

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<sup>37</sup> This is further supported by the prediction of the fall of Babylon in chapters 13-14, 21, and 39, but is strengthened by God predicting Judah's future far in advance in chapters 40-48. Repeatedly, Yahweh's superiority over the idols of Babylon is demonstrated by the fact that He alone can determine and proclaim the future, He alone can bring the prediction to pass in history (41:21-24; 43:8-12; 44:6-8, 24-28; 45:21; 46:8-11; 48:4-8). This passage explains the significance of the Cyrus prophecies. Cyrus had been predicted long in advance, so that during the exile the Judeans would see the evidence coming forward in all its force. Note in particular the linkages between predictive prophecy and the calling of Cyrus in the so-called Cyrus Oracle (44:24-27). Here all the themes of Yahweh's unique divinity that appear in the "first" and "last" theme noted above occur in the specific context of the prediction of Cyrus. See: John N. Oswalt, "The Implications of an Evangelical View of Scripture for the Authorship of the Book of Isaiah," in Daniel I. Block and Richard L. Schultz, eds., *Bind Up the Testimony: Explorations in the Genesis of the Book of Isaiah* (Hendrickson, 2015), 273–291. See also: John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, Volume 3*, trans. William Pringle (Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2024), 544–564.

<sup>38</sup> Some scholars advocate for a break here and the start of a new literary composition due to the divine oracle announcing the coming of justice and salvation as the break of a new aeon. See: Andreas Schuele, "Isaiah 56:1-8," *Interpretation* 65.3 (2011): 286–88.

<sup>39</sup> Critical scholarship tend to assume that Isa 56:1-8 and 56:9-57:13 are not (or hardly) related to each other and that their present juxtaposition is attributable only to a redactor/writer since Isa 56:9-57:13 is classified as a "prophetic announcement of impending judgment" or a "prophetic liturgy with threats" with "a chain of accusations" in opposition to an inclusivist mindset in Isa 56. See: Raymond de Hoop, "The Interpretation of Isaiah 56:1-9: Comfort or Criticism?," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127.4 (2008): 671–95.

<sup>40</sup> Oswalt points out that the Isa 56 is an interesting case study concerning the question of the historical setting of the book in terms of the discussions concerning authorship and historical setting/context. For the topic presented, whether a new historical situation existed or not, or whether a "school" existed or not, is irrelevant to the question. The issue in this chapter is theological. Something about the theology of 1–55 of Isaiah is not complete and requires complementation from the author himself to his targeted audience – which is the object of Isa 56. He affirms that: "if the work is a work of multiple authors living in several different settings, they have done their best to obliterate themselves and their settings, and to make it appear that this is the unitary work of one person. Why would they feel it necessary to do that? It is an easier supposition to imagine one author who receives a theological vision so large that it must be extended out beyond his own time and place to encompass other times and places whose details he can only dimly perceive and that are significant only insofar as they provide backdrops for the theological issues being addressed". See: John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998); Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 461.

latter part reveals the glorious lordship of Yahweh in three dimensions: as a warrior, international, and compassionate King.<sup>41</sup>

Yahweh's lordship is highlighted in Isa 56 with His direct speech unfolding a central idea of latter Isaiah: the nature of His redeemed community as one universal people fruit of the Servant's work. Yahweh reveals the true nature of the Church under one faith, one Lord, and as one people. This "Thus says the Lord" is the revelation of the coming day of righteousness of the Lord (56:1) so that the continuity of the old economy into the new (56:2) concerns no personal, ethnic or national distinctions (56:3), the nature of true Israel is not a matter of hereditary rights (56:4-5) but the church will be co-extensive with the nations meaning that the belonging to God's people is by loving His name and holding fast to His covenant (56:6-7) which ultimately relies on God's initiative of gathering His own (Isa 56:8).<sup>42</sup>

The essence of true Israel is total dependence upon the Servant because of the necessity of living out God's righteousness and their inability/failure to do so in themselves.<sup>43</sup> This movement

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<sup>41</sup> Andrew Abernathy proposes an interesting chiasm organizing the later portion of Isaiah that reflects a some themes and the flow of Isa 56:1-8 revealing the introduction of this latter portion as an anticipation of its main themes. The chiasm proposed is divided as follows: A. Faithful outsiders to be in God's service upon salvation (Isa 56:1-8); B. Confronting the faithless insiders with judgment and assuring the faithful with salvation (56:9-59:8); C. Prayer for forgiveness and restoration (59:9-15a); D. The warrior king judges the wicked and redeems the repentant (59:15b-21); E. Zion's international renown amid King Yahweh's glory and his messenger (Isa 60-62); D'. The warrior king judges and saves the nations (63:1-6); C'. Prayer for forgiveness and restoration (63:7-64:12); B'. Confronting the faithless insiders with judgment and assuring the faithful with salvation (65:1-66:7); A'. Faithful outsiders to be in God's service upon salvation and judgment (66:18-24). See: Andrew Abernathy, *The Book of Isaiah and God's Kingdom: A Thematic-Theological Approach*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016).

<sup>42</sup> Joseph A. Alexander, *The Prophecies Of Isaiah* (Kessinger Publishing, 2010), 333. Another possible organization of this passage could be the blessing yet to come in relation to the task of the waiting people and the conditions for the enjoyment of this blessing (56:1-2). 56:3-7 reaffirms the certainty of the non-exclusionary aspect of the blessing because there is no divine reason for exclusion, no human reason for neglecting, the abundance of the blessing and the true joy of being welcomed in the family of Yahweh – one that is carried out by Yahweh Himself. See: Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 464.

<sup>43</sup> Oswalt argues for a theological literary unity in the following terms "the whole book is an outworking of Isa 6. It is as the "man of unclean lips" sees something of the holy glory of God, receives the fiery cleansing of God, and moves out in trusting obedience to God that the people of Israel hear the message of "the Holy One of Israel." In the same way when the "people of unclean lips" get a vision of God (Isa. 7–39), receive the gracious forgiveness and deliverance of God (Isa. 40–55) and are enabled to live as God lives (Isa. 56–66), that the nations will come to know the Holy One of Israel. In other words, Isa. 56–66 is about the marks of the servants of the Lord, the divine character replicated in

is not new but unfolding from the Deuteronomistic message continuing after the exile. The two imperatives (עשה and שמר) in Isa 56:1-2 are related to the active observance of the law and are attached to justice (מִשְׁפָּט) and righteousness (צְדָקָה) summarizing the second table of the Law in connection to the person of Yahweh.<sup>44</sup> The audience ought to keep justice and do righteousness because God's own righteousness is about to be revealed. The life of this community ought to be a sign of the nature of the kingdom of God.<sup>45</sup>

There is no thematic discontinuity concerning doing righteousness and keeping justice in 56-66 in relation to 1-55. The concern for religious devotion marked by ethical conduct considering a covenantal relationship with Yahweh is consistent in the whole vision.<sup>46</sup> Isa 56:1 presents a very Isaianic ABCB pattern in which the same word צְדָקָה is used referring to the imperative to do “justice” and the “righteousness” that is to be revealed by Yahweh (a deliverance/exodus motif). Polan observes that this pair occurs frequently throughout Isaiah 1-39 (1:21;1:27;5:7;5:16;9:6;16:5;26:9;28:17;32:16;33:5). A similar pairing is present in Isa 40-55 between שָׁמַע and צְדָקָה

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them by means of the same grace that delivered them from the effects of their sin. These chapters are about the internalization of the law by means of an intimate relationship with the God who alone can enable people to live holy lives. Thus Isa. 56–66 is a synthesis of what seem to be conflicting points of view in Isa. 7–39 and 40–55. Isa. 7–39 call people to live righteous lives in obedience to the covenant, with the threat of destruction if they fail. Isa. 40–55 seem to speak of grace that is available to the chosen people and depends on nothing but receiving it. These two ideas seem irreconcilable. This final division of the book shows that is not the case. It is as people, any people, choose to live the life of God as he graciously empowers them that they come to know the true meaning of being the servants of God”. Therefore, it is the essence of the last portion of Isaiah the revelation of the identity of the people of God in light of the work of the Servant which is intimately connected with the activity of Yahweh Himself. See: Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*.

<sup>44</sup> This is why the Prophetic message resumes the Law under these two headings, as it is done in Ex 19:5; Deut 6:5 and Mic 6:8. See: John D. W. Watts, *Word Biblical Commentary: Isaiah 34-66*, Revised edition. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc, 2006), 248.

<sup>45</sup> John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, Volume Fourth*, First Edition. (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1948), 176.

<sup>46</sup> This combination of justice and righteousness is found more in Isaiah than in any other book comprising a third of its total occurrences (12 in 1-33 and 4 in 56-66). The appeals to justice and righteousness present an exact parallel with Isa 1:27 using the same two nouns in bicolon. See: Shalom Paul, *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary*, First Edition. (Grand Rapids (Mich.) Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012), 2.

(45:8;45:21;46:13;51:5;51:6;51:8).<sup>47</sup> The book's latter portion synthesizes two movements into one reality of justice, righteousness and salvation carried on by Yahweh.

Isaiah is not inviting the faithful to seek salvation by their own efforts, but he is urging God's people towards a biblical ethics of devotional obedience to Yahweh who acted in history to rescue and deliver.<sup>48</sup> From Ex 15:18;Deut 33:5;Ps 24;Ps 29 and 44, the OT connects "salvation and righteousness" not as an abstract concept, but concretely correlated with the person/office that ties both ideas together: a King.<sup>49</sup> Yahweh is self-declaring His Lordship: He is the King bringing salvation and justice.<sup>50</sup> In 51:1, doing righteousness is paralleled to seeking the Lord so that the meaning of the coming day of righteousness is the future revelation of His righteous character in history, which is connected to His work of deliverance: His exodus.<sup>51</sup> *My salvation* and *my righteousness* in 56-66 are not anthropocentric as if related to the rebuilding of the physical temple,

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<sup>47</sup> Gregory J Polan, "Still More Signs of Unity in the Book of Isaiah: The Significance of Third Isaiah," *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* 36 (1997): 224–33.

<sup>48</sup> Isa 56–59 is filled with an Exodus motif because it focuses heavily on the need for righteousness in the lives of God's servants and, at the same time, their inability to produce that righteousness. This theme is juxtaposed with the promise of God to come rescue and deliver His people. When we then see that 56:1–8 stresses covenant keeping as represented by keeping the Sabbath (on the part of foreigners and eunuchs), and 58:1–14 speaks of the necessity for fasting from oppression, we find a subdivision: 56:1–57:21 and 58:1–59:21. Each comprises three parts: a specific example of realized righteousness (56:1–8; 58:1–14), a reflection on the general situation (56:9–57:13; 59:1–15a), and an announcement of the Lord's intention to deliver (57:14–21; 59:15b–21). This idea of Oswalt could be applied to our passage of 56:1-8 as a call to righteousness and justice (56:1-2); the inclusion and revelation of the true people of God (56:3-7) and the announcement of Yahweh's saving activity (56:8). See: Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*.

<sup>49</sup> Abernethy affirms that "the notions of God's "salvation" and "righteousness" are kingly notions. Just prior to this, in Isa 51-52, hopes for God's righteousness and salvation (51:6-8) through God's mighty arm (51:9) culminate with the announcement that "Your God reigns" in 52:7, as the entire world will see the "salvation" (same word) of God (52:10). This language corresponds with Exodus 15, where Israel praises Yahweh for acting as a warrior to "save" them (15:2) and declares him king (15:18) in the light of his strong arm (15:16). It is likely, then, that Isaiah 56:1 opens the final phase of the book with the anticipation that the king will soon manifest this "salvation" with righteousness". See: Andrew Abernethy, *The Book of Isaiah and God's Kingdom : A Thematic-Theological Approach*.

<sup>50</sup> The theme of Yahweh as the King in Isaiah is extremely rich. Yahweh is described as the holy king (6:1–3; 57:15), a warrior king (59:15b–20; 63:1–6), a shepherd king (40:11), the unseeable king (6:2), the king we will see (33:17; 40:5; 52:10), the royal judge (33:22), the savior and redeemer king (33:22; 44:6; 52:7; 59:20), the king of glory (6:3; 24:23; 40:5; 60:1–2), the king of Israel (44:6) and Jacob (41:21), the king of the nations (2:2–4; 25:6–8; 60:1–3; 66:18–24), the king of heavenly forces (24:21–23), the wise king (2:2–4), the king who inhabits the cosmos (57:15; 66:1), the king of the downtrodden (57:15; 66:1–2), the king in history (6; 36 – 37), the king at the eschaton (24:21–24; 52:7; 60), and more. See: Andrew Abernethy, *The Book of Isaiah and God's Kingdom : A Thematic-Theological Approach*.

<sup>51</sup> Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah* (Eerdmans, 1992).

the restoration of the city of Jerusalem, or the land restitution to the Judahites, but are theocentric.<sup>52</sup>

The presence of the כִּי conjunction in 56:1 emphasizes a causal construction: the imperatives are connected with the predictions of the coming salvation in which Yahweh's righteousness will be revealed in the constitution of His people, not in a nationalistic sense, but in a redemptive-historical one.<sup>53</sup>

Hence, the Isaianic audience is called to repentance and to live in accordance with their eschatological identity. The call to be righteous occurs because of an essential transformation brought forth by Yahweh revealing their true nature: to reflect who Yahweh is.<sup>54</sup> This call uses the word אֲשֶׁר paralleling Ps 1:1 and Jesus' Beatitudes in Mt 5:2-12 showing a standard formulaic use declaring the features of any person who experiences true blessing in life.<sup>55</sup> Such blessing is associated with humans broadly: anyone who practices "this" (cataphoric pronoun demonstrating the nature of the blessing). The choice of the word אָנוּשׁ in 56:2 describes the ordinary mankind in

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<sup>52</sup> This statement, occurring in a passage and a division that seem to presuppose the return from exile, makes evident that "salvation" in 40–55 was not restricted to the return from exile. See: Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*. Additionally, Isaiah 56 – 66 offers the most fully developed portrayal of Yahweh as a warrior king who will save his people and judge his enemies. It is particularly striking how the anticipations of God's coming 'righteousness' and 'salvation' from Isaiah 40 to 55 (cf. 45:8; 46:13; 51:6–8; 52:7–10) find graphic and vivid expression in God's coming as a warrior in Isaiah 56 – 66. See: Andrew Abernethy, *The Book of Isaiah and God's Kingdom: A Thematic-Theological Approach*.

<sup>53</sup> Thus, obedience is required as a response to the salvation that will soon to be revealed. By fusing the socially concerned use of "righteousness" from Isaiah 1 – 39 with the hopes for salvific "righteousness" from Isaiah 40 – 55, Isaiah 56:1 draws the entire book together. Isa 56:1-8 and 56:9-57:13 are closely related to the so called Deutero-Isaiah and especially to Isa 55. The theme of the "Servant of Yahweh," for example, is continued and developed in the latter portion of Isaiah as the "servants of Yahweh" (56:6; 63:17; 65:8-9,13-15; 66:14). Similarly, the concept of the "mountain of Yahweh" is elaborated (56:7; 57:13; 65:11, 25; 66:20). See: Wim Beuken, "The Main Theme of Trito-Isaiah, 'the Servants of YHWH,'" *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 15.47 (1990): 67–87; Beuken, "Isa 56:9-57:13 - an Example of the Isaianic Legacy of Trito-Isaiah"; Rikki E Watts, "Messianic Servant or the End of Israel's Exilic Curses?: Isaiah 53.4 in Matthew 8.17," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 38.1 (2015): 81–95; and Contra Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 248.

<sup>54</sup> There is then a distinct development from 46:13 because there the people are far from righteousness, but God is now the one bringing salvation to Zion. See: Goldingay, Hubbard, and Johnston, *Isaiah*; Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*.

<sup>55</sup> The term is used usually in combination with a noun or pronominal suffix that indicates the recipient of the blessing. See: Joshua G. Mathews, "Blessing," in *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, ed. Douglas Mangum et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

weakness (“mortal”) and the **יְהוֹנָדָה** emphasizes the common humanity (“human”).<sup>56</sup> This emphasis is not compatible with a privileged nationalistic-heritage idea but with the gentile motif. The work of the Servant produces blessing for anyone who comes to Him by pouring Himself to be the salvation of the ends of the earth (49:5-6).<sup>57</sup>

Therefore, 56:1-8 conflates the synchronic and the diachronic: from a single historical moment, the author intends to reveal the perennial essence of the historic people of God by projecting it eschatologically with a series of images: the Sabbath, the eunuch, the foreigner, the covenant, the temple, and the house – all connected by the unfolding of Yahweh’s historical-redemptive acts.<sup>58</sup> 56:1-8 is answering eschatological questions: who are the true servants of Yahweh? Who is the true Israel?<sup>59</sup>

#### **a. The Sabbath**

The content of true blessing is divided in two: keeping from profaning the Sabbath and not doing evil. The pair is not random, but moves from specific to broad application: related as form

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<sup>56</sup> In terms of the literary unity of Isaiah, the book has eight occurrences of **אָדָם** “man” (8:1; 13:7, 12; 24:6; 33:8; 51:7, 12), which occurs only once in any other prophetic writing (Jer. 20:10). Furthermore, the pairing of **אָדָם** and **יְהוֹנָדָה** occurs in the entire OT only in 13:12; 51:12; and here. See: Rachel Margalioth, *The Indivisible Isaiah: Evidence for the Single Authorship of the Prophetic Book*, 1st edition. (Sura Institute for Research, Yeshiva University, 1964), 170-171.

<sup>57</sup> The imperfect continuous verbs refer to a living perseverance that is connected to a kind of life, a feature of the people of God being obedient to Him and His word. The structure of the phrase of 56:2 closely parallels 33:15, where the same grammatical construction occurs three times (participle, body part plus 3rd masc. sg. pronoun, min plus infinitive construct). The infinitive construct as such occurs only in these two texts. See: Margalioth, *The Indivisible Isaiah*, 202.

<sup>58</sup> From the perspective of the position of history in both diachronic and synchronic text-reading, and based upon the linguistic law, the operational order of diachronic and synchronic textual approach logically follows: the synchronic question methodologically and operationally comes first, followed by the diachronic question based upon the exegetical results of the synchrony. See: Benzi, “Synchronic and Diachronic Dynamics of the Entire Book of Isaiah: For a New Commentary on Isaiah 1-66.”

<sup>59</sup> Beuken, “The Main Theme of Trito-Isaiah, ‘the Servants of YHWH’”; Joseph Blenkinsopp, “The ‘servants of the Lord’ in Third Isaiah: Profile of a Pietistic Group in the Persian Epoch,” *Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association* 7 (1983): 1–23; Schuele, “Who Is the True Israel?: Community, Identity, and Religious Commitment in Third Isaiah (Isaiah 56-66)”; Freund, “Isaiah and His Audience”; Schuele, “Isaiah 56:1-8,” 56; Hoop, “The Interpretation of Isaiah 56:1-9: Comfort or Criticism?”

and content, ritual and life.<sup>60</sup> Gesenius explained the pair by being the only part of the Mosaic institutions that could be perpetuated through exile since they were not restricted to the temple.<sup>61</sup> This reading emphasizing the ritualistic Sabbath observance is used by critical-scholarship, in association with Neh 10:31 and 13:15, to argue for the necessity of the Sabbath marker to identify the Yehud community in the Trito-Isaiah post-exilic context.<sup>62</sup> However, this association is arbitrary because the emphasis on Sabbath-keeping is also pre-exilic (Amos 8:5; Jer 17:19-27) and Ezekiel presents the profanation of the Sabbath as a pre-exilic sin (Ezek 20:12-20; 22:8-26).<sup>63</sup>

Nonetheless, the Sabbath ordinance differentiated God's people from other nations because it was a life-reorienting practice connecting the entire social-strata of Israel towards a God-centered

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<sup>60</sup> Recent studies of Hebrew poetic style indicate that it is the content of the second colon that modifies and builds on that of the first. See: Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, Revised ed. edition. (New York: Basic Books, 2011); Francis Landy, "Poetics and Parallelism: Some Comments on James Kugel's The Idea of Biblical Poetry," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 9.28 (1984): 61–87; Jeffrey G Audirsch, "Interpreting Hebrew Poetry," *Journal for Baptist Theology & Ministry* 13.2 (2016): 32–58; Burke O Long, "The 'New' Biblical Poetics of Alter and Sternberg," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 16.51 (1991): 71–84; Alviero Niccacci, "Analysing Biblical Hebrew Poetry," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 22.74 (1997): 77–93.

<sup>61</sup> Gesenius refers Isa 56:2 to Isa 1:13 in an attempt to produce an incompatibility between these two Sabbaths which culminates in him advocating for a genuine and spurious Isaiah. Thus, his conclusion for multiple authorship rest considerably in his misinterpretation of the proper exegesis of this passage and the referent of this Sabbath. See: Gesenius, W. *Der Prophet Jesaja, neu übersetzt von Wilhelm Gesenius. Zweyte verbesserte Auflage* (Leipzig: Fried. Christ. Wilh. Vogel, 1829).

<sup>62</sup> "In the Babylonian Exile it was the Sabbath that attracted non-Israelites to cast their lot with the returning exiles and that by the end of the second Temple period many Hellenistic communities had adopted the Sabbath as a day of rest". See: Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, First Edition. (New Haven London: Yale University Press, 2000). "The Yehud community maintained their common identity, when their families worship together on the Sabbath day. Before they restored their new temple in 515 BCE, the Yehud community worshiped in different places. The most favorable place would be their house. The family unit in the Yehud community prohibits any ethnic differences and all of the members worked together in the common task of survival, in keeping with their strengths and abilities". See: Erhard Gerstenberger, *Israel in the Persian Period: The Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C.E.*, trans. Siegfried S. Schatzmann, Illustrated edition. (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 104; Inchol Yang, "Understanding Isa 56:1-8 in Light of the Sabbath Text in Neh 13:15-22," *한국기독교신학논총* 117 (2020): 47–71. "During the exile, the Sabbath became a new and important form of the subsidiary family cult and from there developed into the decisive cultic confessional sign with which each week Judahite families could demonstrate their adherence to Yahweh religion. The post-exilic Sabbath is no longer a full moon festival but a weekly festival (Ezek 46:1), which the families can celebrate not only by resting from work but- to the degree that they live in Jerusalem and its environs-also by taking part in a festal assembly in the temple (Lev 23:3; Ezek 46:9)". See: Rainer Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period: Volume I: From the Beginnings to the End of the Monarchy* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 408–409; Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology Volume One* (SCM Press, 2012), 79.

<sup>63</sup> Persians, Babylonians, Canaanites, Egyptians and Greeks: none ever practiced stopping work one day in seven to complete rest. See: Bernard Gosse, "Sabbath, Identity and Universalism Go Together after the Return from Exile," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 29.3 (2005): 359–70.

theology of time.<sup>64</sup> The direct correspondence between doing justice and Sabbath-keeping was related to the completeness and perfection of God's creational work.<sup>65</sup> True Sabbath-keeping, being informed by the second colon in the parallelism, is to refrain from evil and not just from work. Sabbath-keeping is an act of faith because eschatologically awaits Yahweh's work of re-creation.<sup>66</sup> Its observance hopes for the final rest - not as an end in itself, but as a sign of a life submitted to God.<sup>67</sup>

The participle of שָׁמַר with two verbs in the infinitive construct (עֲשֵׂה and חַלֵּל) presents covenantal implications from the Deuteronomistic theology. Isaiah is intertextually applying the Torah to the identification of Yahweh's people. The verbs refer to the Abrahamic covenant in Gen 17:9 when Abraham is called to keep the covenant and his offspring after him and Isaiah now defines the true Abrahamic offspring. The verb is also prevalent in Ps 119 concerning the relationship between God's people and God's Word. Exodus 31:14-16 relates the ideas of Sabbath-keeping as a generational covenant forever with the deliverance motif brought by Yahweh Himself - in a striking parallel with Isa 56. The same idea is present in Lev 19 connecting the statutes, Sabbath, covenant and the generational promise with the addendum that is Yahweh who sanctifies His own people. The same motif is found in Deut 26-29 as the prominent characteristic of God's

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<sup>64</sup> Concerning the uniqueness of the Israelite practice of Sabbath keeping, see: Gerhard F. Hasel, "Sabbath," ABD 5: 849-51; Andreas Schuele, "Sabbath," NIBD: 3-10; Milgrom, *Leviticus* 17-22.

<sup>65</sup> "The Exodus form of the Sabbath Commandment grounds it in God's work of creation, drawing on the conclusion of the first creation account in Genesis 1. If the Deuteronomic rationale connects the Sabbath to Israel's particular experience, the Exodus rationale connects it to the larger human experience. In other words, Sabbath is a custom to order the religious life (...). It also serves a basic human need, indeed a fundamental need extending beyond the human sphere and encompassing nature in various forms: time for rest". See: Patrick D. Miller, *The Ten Commandments: Interpretation: Resources for the Use of Scripture in the Church* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 124.

<sup>66</sup> From Ex 20:10, the Sabbath is connected to rest not only for the masters, but also for the servants and foreign residents. See: George A. F. Knight, *Isaiah 56-66: The New Israel* (Chicago: Wm. B. Eerdmans-Lightning Source, 1985), 4-5.

<sup>67</sup> Webb, *The Message of Isaiah*, 221.

people.<sup>68</sup>

The concept of Sabbath-keeping in Isa 56 is not disconnected from the OT and not contradictory with Neh 13 or Deut 23, as if Sabbath-keeping was used as an *a priori* criteria of one's membership to the community.<sup>69</sup> Sabbath-keeping is a sign connected to the first table of the Law, a summary of the faith in Yahweh as the omnipotent Creator (Ex 31:17) and as the Redeemer of His people. Yahweh is the one who sets them apart as a holy people, a nation of His own possession with full authority and sovereignty over their identity (Ex 31:13; Ezek 20:12).<sup>70</sup> Sabbath-keeping was not merely a ceremonial institution identifying Israel nationalistically but was soteriologically attached to faith that Yahweh rescues His chosen people from the bondage of Egypt (Deut 5:15). It is a perpetual weekly reminder and profession of faith concerning the identity of God's people.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Similar ideas can be found extensively in the uses of the verb by Ezekiel, Qoholeth, Nehemiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah and Daniel. The vocabulary of Ezek. 20:20, for instance, is a bridge between the vocabulary of the Sabbath and the vocabulary of the covenant, an association that is also prevalent in Isa 56: "You must keep my Sabbaths holy, and they will become a sign between us, so you will know that I am the Lord your God". The vocabulary of the covenant is expanded in Ezek. 20:37: "I will pass you under the rod and bring you within the bond of the covenant. I will rid you of those who revolt and rebel against me". See: Bernard Gosse, "Sabbath, Identity and Universalism Go Together after the Return from Exile," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 29.3 (2005): 359–70.

<sup>69</sup> Contra Schramm who affirmed that "The particular role played by Sabbath observance in this oracle is unique in the Hebrew Bible, for in this passage Sabbath observance appears to be the primary criterion by which membership in the community is defined, and in that sense, it functions in a manner similar to that of circumcision in Genesis 17" See: Brooks Schramm, *The Opponents of Third Isaiah: Reconstructing the Cultic History of the Restoration*, 1st edition. (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2009), 117-118. Also contra Hammock who argued that Isa 56:1-8 reoriented the boundaries of the Yehud community based on Sabbath observance and ethical behavior in response to the exclusionist view of Ezra-Nehemiah. See: Clinton E Hammock, "Isaiah 56:1-8 and the Redefining of the Restoration Judean Community," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 30.2 (2000): 46–57. Also contra J Richard Middleton, "The Inclusive Vision of Isaiah 56 and Contested Ethical Practices in Scripture and the Church: Toward a Canonical Hermeneutic of Discernment," *Canadian-American Theological Review* 6.1 (2017): 40–70.

<sup>70</sup> The latter portion of Isaiah address "the issue of proper observance of the covenant. They argue that a eunuch or a foreigner who keeps the covenant by observing the Sabbath and refraining from evil shall be accepted in Yahweh's temple. On the other hand, the Ezra-Nehemiah traditions do not exclude the eunuch or the foreigner who adopts the covenant of Judaism. They speak only about the prohibition against intermarriage as a means to avoid pollutions and abominations of the gentiles and thereby to protect the covenant (Ezra 9)." See: Marvin A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39: An Introduction to Prophetic Literature*, First Edition, First Printing. (Chicago: Wm. B. Eerdmans-Lightning Source, 1996). Similarly, Yang, "Understanding Isa 56:1-8 in Light of the Sabbath Text in Neh 13:15-22."

<sup>71</sup> Isa 56 reveals a Sabbatarian principle that reveals those who are truly "chosen" and "servants" of Yahweh in Isa 65. See: Alexander, *The Prophecies Of Isaiah*, 335; Bernard Gosse, "Sabbath, Identity and Universalism Go Together after the Return from Exile," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 29.3 (2005): 359–70.

## **b. Eunuchs and Foreigners within the Covenant**

Isa 56:1-2 is not an introduction placed as mere formality but is essential for the reasoning of 56:3-8 because the *waw* starting 56:3 establishes a consecutive relation between the verses.<sup>72</sup> Justice and righteousness are applied now to identifying the servants of Yahweh in connection to the images of the eunuch and the foreigner. Isaiah's mention is directly associated with the activity of purification and redemption that Yahweh is performing in the edification of His people (Isa 56:8).<sup>73</sup> This idea, however, would evoke polemical responses due to their relation to the Mosaic law (Dt 23:1-6; Lv 22:24-25). Thus, the purpose of choosing these two groups is synecdochical, it is to present the idea of a blessing excluding none, an all-embrace inclusivity to those who come to the Lord in faith and obedience.<sup>74</sup>

Any external disabilities or ethnical markers ought not to be the pre-conditions to the identification of God's people. The category of the eunuch in relation to ceremonial purity in Deut 23 was not to exclude the participation of such groups in the community,<sup>75</sup> but was related to soteriological matters concerned with the visual representation of the holiness demanded in God's presence.<sup>76</sup> The OT was never exclusivist on a nationalistic basis, since Ex 12:48-49 expresses the foreigner as welcomed. Accordingly, Ezra and Nehemiah's reforms were not about nationalistic

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<sup>72</sup> Contra Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66-OTL: A Commentary* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1969).

<sup>73</sup> Webb, *The Message of Isaiah*, 222.

<sup>74</sup> Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 465.

<sup>75</sup> Already in Deut 23, the eunuch stands first being mentioned in the beginning of the list of prohibitions and functioning as a synecdoche also in the original context. See: John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, Volume Fourth*, First Edition. (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1948), 179.

<sup>76</sup> As a matter of fact, the correlation is thematic not linguistic because the exact word for eunuch in Isa 56 (סריס) does not occur in Deut 23:2. The eunuchs' cry in Isa 56:3 uses an arboreal metaphor to express their inability to have children and produce a named offspring (Jer 11:19; Ps 1:3; Jer 17:7-8). In ancient Near Eastern literature, the tree is used widely as an image of procreativity and survival. The image is used also when survival or procreativity are under threat. In the Bible, agricultural growth is often used to speak of offspring: see, e.g., פרה in Gen 1:22,28; 26:22; Exod 23:30; Jer 3:16; and פרי in Gen 30:2; Deut 7:13; 28:4; 30:9; Ps 21:11; Lam 2:20. Similarly, words associated with the root זרע also describe offspring (e.g., Gen 3:15; Num 5:28; 1 Sam 1:11; 2:20; Nah 1:14). See: TDOT 4:143-62; Jacob L Wright and Michael J Chan, "King and Eunuch: Isaiah 56:1-8 in Light of Honorific Royal Burial Practices," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 131.1 (2012): 99-119.

efforts but carried the same Deuteronomistic motif concerned with obedience to the law so that the people would preserve their distinctiveness to paganism.<sup>77</sup>

It is not clear what type of eunuch Isaiah is precisely referring to.<sup>78</sup> It may be focused particularly on compassion for the members of the royal family who were made Eunuchs in Babylon (Isa 39:7).<sup>79</sup> However, the concept may be extended to those who are barren for different reasons.<sup>80</sup> Both were part of God's people and were not to be cursed.<sup>81</sup> Concerning the foreigners,

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<sup>77</sup> According to recent critical scholarship, this inclusive idea towards the eunuch and the foreigner is considered to have been originated by a minority opinion expressed by the disciples of "Second Isaiah" in response to the exclusivism of Ezekiel's disciples. This theory presents Isa 56–66 completely apart from the remain of the book and reorganized it to support the theory of disenfranchised visionary disciples of "Second Isaiah" in conflict with the "establishment". Beyond the lack of any historical evidence for this opposition, the theory does not explain how the material got into the book's canonical form and assumes a false dichotomy between the teachings of Ezekiel and Ezra (Ez 44:46-9; Ezra 4:1-3) in opposition to Isaiah. However, Isaiah also rebukes the same things that were referring to in Isa 57:3-13: syncretism, idolatry, people with uncircumcised hearth meaning unbelievers who claimed to be believers but did not trust nor obey Yahweh. See: Elizabeth Rice Achtemeier, *The Community and Message of Isaiah 56-66: A Theological Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1982); Paul D. Hanson, ed., *The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology*, Revised ed. edition. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984); Ulrich Berges, "TRITO-ISAIAH AND THE REFORMS OF EZRA/NEHEMIAH: CONSENT OR CONFLICT?," *Biblica* 98.2 (2017): 173–90; Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 2nd edition. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1976).

<sup>78</sup> Many Second Temple texts seem to draw on or respond to Deut 23 (critical scholars suggests that this is reflected even in the Bible itself through passages such as Neh 13:1-3; Lam 1:10; Ezek 44:7,9; 47:13-23, and the references to separation in Ezra 6:21; 9:1; 10:11; Neh 9:2; and 10:29). An argument is often made that Isa 56 and Deut 23 are addressing two completely different concerns. Thus, the eunuch in Isa 56:3 is not complaining that he has been prohibited from entering the temple meaning the legal Deuteronomic prohibition. Rather, he laments his physical condition of being "a dried-up tree," which relates to his incapacity to produce progeny and through them to participate with all other Israelites in the future salvation and deliverance of the nation (56:1; 55:1-13). However, this goes against the Yahweh's response in the latter verses in which the sacerdotal language is applied and both the eunuchs and foreigners are treated together in their insertion into the presence and people of God. Deut 23 and Isa 56 are not disconnected, but the latter interprets the former. See: Wright and Chan, "King and Eunuch: Isaiah 56:1-8 in Light of Honorific Royal Burial Practices"; Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, 56.

<sup>79</sup> They were forcibly emasculated for the service in foreign courts and related to an effort of the Babylonians to weaken the nationalistic expectations associated with a revival of the Davidic monarchy. See: Paul, *Isaiah 40-66*; C. F. Keil, *Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament Pentateuch* (Hendrickson Publishers, 2006).

<sup>80</sup> During the First Temple period, eunuchs are attested in the courts of both Israelian and Judahite kings, where their employment may have been influenced by Neo-Assyrian practices. The following references use the term סָרִיס Sam 8:15; 1 Kgs 22:9; 2 Kgs 8:6; 9:32; 23:11; 24:12, 15; 25:19; Jer 29:2; 34:19; 38:7. Some evidence exists, however, indicating that סָרִיס did not refer exclusively to eunuchs Gen 37:36, where Potiphar is described as a סָרִיס. Biblical literature also attests to the use of (young) men from Judah as eunuchs in Babylonian courts (see 2 Kgs 20:18; 24:12,15; Isa 39:7). The Judahite boys in Daniel 1, for example, are probably eunuchs. Their caretaker and teacher, who is identified by two titles (סָרִיס and שָׂרֵן), may be the chief eunuch, which suggests that the boys were being trained in a similar vocation. Both titles probably apply to the same person. See: Hayim Tadmor, "Was the Biblical sārîs a Eunuch?" in *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots: Biblical, Epigraphic, and Semitic Studies in Honor of Jonas C. Greenfield* (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 317-326; John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 140.

<sup>81</sup> Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*.

their separation has a verbal correspondence with previous covenantal curses threatening the separation of God from His people.<sup>82</sup>

Isa 56 rejects the idea of second-class citizens in God's people. No one is excluded from membership because of ancestry, nation, accident of birth, affiliation, physical limitations, or any personal defect: there are no middle walls. This is an application of 6:11-13 to their true nature. The remnant community described there is like the eunuch: a mutilated tree whose growth has been violently stopped. This arboreal imagery pervades Isaiah metaphorically representing Israel and its future (5:1-7; 11:1-12; 27:2-6; 41:17-20; 65:22). Isaiah has used, from the beginning, a consistent image that is recovered in a remarkable literary unity.<sup>83</sup>

Thus, references to the altar, burnt offerings, sacrifices, and the house of prayer ought not to be taken as connected with post-exilic rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, but refer to this revelatory activity concerning the true nature of God's people.<sup>84</sup> Since 56:4 starts with a new causal connection to justify the rebuke of 56:3 and 56:8 concludes by sealing the whole idea within an oracle from Yahweh, this revelation is a direct act of God. By His authority He declares the nature

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<sup>82</sup> The verb בָּדַל must be noted in 56:3 and 59:2: "it is your iniquities that raise a barrier (מִכְדָּלִים) between you and your God; because of your sins he has hidden his face so that he does not hear you". See: Gosse, "Sabbath, Identity and Universalism Go Together after the Return from Exile."

<sup>83</sup> Marvin A. Sweeney, "Prophetic Exegesis in Isaiah 65-66," in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* (eds. Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans, Leiden: Brill Academic Pub, 1997), 1:467-468. Other traces of literary unity can be seen in Isa 56 when connected with Isaiah 11, for instance, since both texts deal with Yahweh's holy mountain (11:9; 56:7), the gathering of the dispersed (11:10,12,16; 56:7-8), and 56:9, the feeding of animals (see Isa 11:7; 56:9). Even further, the eunuch resembles the figures of Abraham and Sarah in Isa 51:2 whom Yahweh blessed and multiplied. For the juxtaposition of the barren woman and the faithful eunuch, see Wis 3:13-15. All these texts relate to Israel's desire to multiply and flourish as a people. Thus, Isa 56, connecting the foreigners that were bounded to Yahweh who gathers the outcasts of Israel, emphatically affirms that both contribute to Israel's revivification and growth as a verdant tree. See: Raymond de Hoop, "The Interpretation of Isaiah 56:1-9: Comfort or Criticism?," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127.4 (2008): 671-95; Wim Beuken, "Isa 56:9-57:13 - an Example of the Isaianic Legacy of Trito-Isaiah," in *Tradition and Re-Interpretation in Jewish and Early Christian Literature: Essays in Honour of Jürgen C H Lebram* (Leiden, Netherlands, 1986), 48-64.

<sup>84</sup> Such references connect the holy mountain and all nations sharing the same references of Isa 2:1-4 demonstrating the nature of the kingdom in the end-time perspective: this is the revelation of the nature of God's realm in the latter days. See: Webb, *The Message of Isaiah*, 222.

of His people in terms of their covenantal relationship with Him.

Yahweh not only constitutes but keeps such a relationship. There is a continual aspect sustained by Him that is emphasized in this passage. The verbs “persevering”, “choosing”, and “keeping” reveal an ongoing commitment to obedience - all referred to by the repetition of first-person pronouns emphasizing a personal relationship with Yahweh. The choice for things that *הִפְצִיתִי* (pleases me) connects the will of God with the blessings flowing from it. The law reflects the person of God and His people are affectionally inclined to it (53:10;55:11). 56:4 is organized in a three-fold structure where the Sabbath-keeping and the choosing-what-pleases-God are summarized by the holding fast/persevering in the covenant. The covenant is initiated by Yahweh and sustained by Him, even more so in the exilic context, thus holding with a close grip to the covenant entails complete trust in Yahweh’s promises.<sup>85</sup>

His people are relationally bound/united to Yahweh in covenant so that their identity is attributed, individually and corporately, by Yahweh Himself.<sup>86</sup> This union requires an interpretation of the walls and house in relation to the covenant. It is the spiritual dimension of the house of God as the place of those who belong and are united to Him: a superior house not made with human hands.<sup>87</sup> This promise cannot refer to access to a physical sanctuary, but belonging to this household/family of God, corresponding to the imagery of the Davidic Psalms (Ps 15, 23, and 24).<sup>88</sup>

The memorial and name have their background found in 2Sam 18:18 where Absalom

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<sup>85</sup> Persevering/holding fast is a verb inherently connected with covenantal themes requiring complete reliance on the Word of Yahweh that he is going to accomplish in history what He is announcing.

<sup>86</sup> Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*.

<sup>87</sup> See Acts 7:49, where Stephen quotes Isa. 66:1 to claim that God does not dwell in houses made by human hands.

<sup>88</sup> Alexander, *The Prophecies Of Isaiah*, 336.

attempted to perpetuate his name through a memorial stone because he had no child.<sup>89</sup> The connection between the house in 56:5 and 56:7 communicates that the eunuch is welcomed in the house of God, inside the walls of His true temple. The everlasting name is in direct contrast with 56:3 and the fear of separation and dryness. The verb “to give” in 56:5 also emphasizes the personal aspect of God’s activity giving names to each one individually.<sup>90</sup> Yahweh guarantees that no one in His people will be forgotten. In 8<sup>th</sup> century context, remembrance was guaranteed by an offspring carrying on the family name, but Yahweh interposes guaranteeing it in a way better than having sons and daughters.<sup>91</sup> The idea of a name being given is connected to the saving work of Yahweh in 55:13 which could never be cut off. Those without posterity will have a name that will be remembered for all eternity because God is giving them their name: so that the eunuch who trusts God will live forever in Yahweh’s house (Ps 23:6; Acts 8:27-39).

Therefore, Isaiah’s original audience would receive Isa 56 as polemical both in relation to the Pentateuchal law and as a complete inversion of imperial ideology.<sup>92</sup> Since eunuchs were often associated as representatives of the imperial rule, Yahweh’s promise turned a major symbol of

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<sup>89</sup> Additionally to the clear idea of a name, the meaning of the word יָד commonly translated as hand is difficult to ascertain. Since the discovery of memorial stelae in what was probably a shrine at Hazor, the inclination has been to interpret “hand,” as “monument”. This translation would be compatible with other OT uses such as 1 Sam. 15:12; 2 Sam. 18:18. This would entail that the eunuch would be allowed to erect a memorial in the temple precincts, being remembered there with honor. But there are other possibilities: one is “place” in a figurative way, as indicating that the person has a “place” or “standing” in Israel. Closely related would be the idea of “share” (Gen. 43:34; 2 Sam. 19:44). See: G. Robinson, “The Meaning of yd in Isaiah 56:5,” *ZAW* 88 (1976) 282–84; Yigael Yadin, *Hazor, the Rediscovery of a Great Citadel of the Bible*, [1st American ed.] edition. (New York: Random House, 1975).

<sup>90</sup> Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 466-467.

<sup>91</sup> Claudia V Camp, “Daughters, Priests, and Patrilineage: A Feminist and Gender-Critical Interpretation of the End of the Book of Numbers,” in *Feminist Frameworks and the Bible: Power, Ambiguity, and Intersectionality* (London, 2017), 177–94; Dylan R Johnson, “The Allotment of Canaan in Joshua and Numbers,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 141.3 (2022): 427–47; Quonekuia Day, “Shall the Daughters of Zelophehad Inherit?: Allusions to Jubilee in Numbers 36:1-13,” *Africanus Journal* 15.1 (2023): 16–22; Zafira Ben-Barak, *Inheritance by Daughters in Israel and the Ancient Near East: A Social, Legal and Ideological Revolution*, First Edition. (Jaffa: Archaeological Center Publications, 2006).

<sup>92</sup> The relationship between eunuchs and imperial authority is comparable to the figure of the “court Jew,” whose biblical predecessors are found in the Joseph story, the Esther scroll, Daniel, 1 Esdras, and Ezra-Nehemiah. See: Wright and Chan, “King and Eunuch: Isaiah 56:1-8 in Light of Honorific Royal Burial Practices.”

royal power on its head by transferring absolute devotion to the empire, which eunuchs symbolize physically, to absolute fidelity to Yahweh – a movement accomplished by the Servant who would suffer bodily. Isa 56 replaces the imperial palace with the temple, as the place of their memorial. By establishing a monument for his eunuchs within the walls of His house, Yahweh declares that His is greater than any king and continues the prophetic motif of the combination of the city walls and the temple as part of the expansion of the sanctuary's holiness to the city of Jerusalem as a whole (Neh 3:1;11:1-2;12:27-43;Isa 48:2;52:1;Dan 9:24). Isaiah is then progressively revealing the essence of God's people, the temple and Yahweh's rule.<sup>93</sup>

Isaiah recovers the eunuch and foreigner in 56:6-7 in inverse order with a rhetorical beautiful parallelism displaying the perfectness and the beauty of God's promises for both. Those who were joined to Yahweh are repeated in 6a in an identical form of 3a.<sup>94</sup> It shows the essential nature of this diachronic community and not merely the social boundaries of the 8th century Israelite community, during exile or the Yehud community of the early second temple period. Isa 56 is not a *diaspora* redaction, an alternative viewpoint to the alleged nationalistic and exclusionist views

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<sup>93</sup> Isaiah preaches Zion and its temple as the seat of divine power to which the nations of the earth bring their service (Isa 2:1-4; 60; 61:1-9 in consonance with Psalms 46; 48; 76; Jer 3:14,16-18; Hag 2:6-9; Zech 2:14-17; 8:20-23; 14:16-21). See: Wright and Chan, "King and Eunuch: Isaiah 56:1-8 in Light of Honorific Royal Burial Practices."

<sup>94</sup> Again, the revelation of the true nature of the people of God is not random placed in 56:1-8: it stays in the transition from 40–55 and 56–66 because the earlier chapters spoke of the Servant's ministry to bring justice to the nations. Moreover, it is the Servant who has sealed a new covenant with his own people and in so doing has made that everlasting covenant available to all who love his name (49:8; 54:10; 55:3). Therefore, this is not a universalist defense of a blanket inclusion disregarding the demands for justice and righteousness (56:1-2) nor a nationalistic adhesion to the covenant in a federal vision way, but this is a covenant settled in a redemptive context in which people from all nations are bound to Yahweh in justice and righteousness, by the means set by Yahweh Himself and His promised salvation through the Anointed King-Suffering Servant. See: Marvin A Sweeney, "The Reconceptualization of the Davidic Covenant in Isaiah," in *Studies in the Book of Isaiah: Festschrift Willem A M Beuken* (Louvain, 1997), 41–61; Harry M. Orlinsky and Norman H. Snaith, *Studies on the Second Part of the Book of Isaiah: The So-Called Servant of the Lord and Suffering Servant in Second Isaiah; Isaiah 40-66. a Study Of...* (Leiden: Brill Academic Pub, 1977); Roy D Wells, "'Isaiah' as an Exponent of Torah: Isaiah 56:1-8," in *New Visions of Isaiah* (Sheffield, Eng, 1996), 140–55; Guy Prentiss Waters, *The Federal Vision and Covenant Theology: A Comparative Analysis*, annotated edition. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2006); Douglas Wilson, *Reformed Is Not Enough: Recovering the Objectivity of the Covenant* (Moscow, Idaho: Canon Press, 2002).

of Ezra and Nehemiah.<sup>95</sup> Rather, Isaiah is revealing the proper reading of the Torah addressing the audience of God's genuine people in terms of who is called to be in a covenantal relationship with God.<sup>96</sup> It is of the essence of this community to be "international" due to the cosmic nature of God's rule.<sup>97</sup> No matter where in the scroll of Isaiah one opens, from the beginning to the end, there is a recurring motif of anticipation that all nations will come to live before Yahweh as king.<sup>98</sup>

Although the assumed critical-approach to a tripartite Isaiah and Childs' canonical perspective still receives Isaiah under the diachronic development of the text, the question concerning its

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<sup>95</sup> This theory reads Trito-Isaiah as concerned with the issues of purification post exile and exclusion of outsiders without loyalty to the people and land seeking an ethnic purity of the post exilic community identified by social and ritualistic markers such as the Sabbath keeping. It is often argued that the images of the eunuch and the foreigner reveal a post-exilic conflict concerning the land possession and the perpetuation of a family name in the Judean community – which further assumes a multi-author view and an incipient prophet-priestly conflict. Hanson argue for an opposition between Trito Isaiah and Nehemiah towards an open policy for foreigners in the post-exilic community. The argument reflects on alleged social conflicts between the Zadokite priests and the Levites so that Isa 56:1-8 in connection with Zech 14:16 is a frontal attack on the narrow exclusiveness of the hierocratic tradition so that the Zadokite group returning from exile with the hierocratic program for restoration wrestled with the dissident Levitical-prophetic group resisting the official program. See: Hammock, "Isaiah 56:1-8 and the Redefining of the Restoration Judean Community."; J Severino (José Severino) Croatto, "La Inclusion Social En El Programa Del Tercer Isaías: Exégesis de Isaías 56:1-8 y 66:18-24," *Revista Bíblica* 60.2 (1998): 91–110; Berges, "TRITO-ISAIAH AND THE REFORMS OF EZRA/NEHEMIAH: CONSENT OR CONFLICT?"; Gary Harder, "Competing Visions: Can We Keep Isaiah and Ezra in the Same Bible, and You and Me in the Same Church?," *Vision (Winnipeg, Man.)* 3.1 (2002): 25–33; Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 389.

<sup>96</sup> This is why the idea of foreigners is not to be equated as merely referring to a proselyte – a member of the synagogue who was not a Jew from birth. Their position was controversial in Judaism, and they were considered a second-class worshipers that were not entitled to full covenantal rights. This is precisely the understanding this passage is arguing against. See: Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 248.

<sup>97</sup> This is a recurring theme throughout the book: Isa 6 displays Yahweh as the holy king who will judge Israel and Judah, but in Isaiah 13-27 Yahweh comes to judge all nations, which culminates with Yahweh reigning in Zion (24:23). This same cycle is recovered Isa 59:15–20 to 63:1–6 describing Yahweh as the warrior king who comes to judge Israel and the nations. However, the visitation of Yahweh comes in justice and righteousness under two perspectives: judgment and salvation. This cycle of "the coming One" to Israel and all the nations also points to a consistent hope that all nations will live under his rule. Although the context of Isa 56 may suggest the sharp exhortation to maintain justice and to do righteousness, instead of a harsh condemnation, the criticism is formulated in a positive tone: "happy is the mortal/blessed is the man...". "There is a whole new motivation for doing righteousness. It is not now so much the fear of impending doom which compels righteousness, as it is the recognition that God is going to mercifully and righteously keep his covenant promises. We should be righteous, the writer says, because of the righteousness of God. This point is followed throughout the section: Human obedience should be the natural result of divine faithfulness". See: John N. Oswalt "Righteousness in Isaiah: A Study of the Function of Chapters 56-66 in the Present Structure of the Book", in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* (eds Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans, Leiden: Brill Academic Pub, 1997), 177-191.

<sup>98</sup> In Isa 2:2–4 the nations will stream to the king for instruction, Isa 25:6–8 the nations will partake in a feast hosted by the king; Isa 60 and 66:18–24 all nations will come to worship Yahweh and offer tribute to their king. See: Andrew Abernethy, *The Book of Isaiah and God's Kingdom : A Thematic-Theological Approach*.

meaning stands: Is it synchronic or not?<sup>99</sup> A synchronic approach to meaning is still a historical question because sets theology in history and needs some grounding in the original intent of the author in relation to his audience.<sup>100</sup> Synchronic meaning does not hinder a diachronic audience, especially considering that the audience is being revealed in the author's original intent. Thus, it can be the intention of the real author to communicate with the real reader whether he is the first or the present reader.<sup>101</sup> A synchronic meaning in diachronic revelation implies a consistent communicative process that unfolds information not in tension but in organic unfolding.<sup>102</sup> There is no Isaianic abrogation of the Deuteronomic law, no authoritative abolition of any custom but actually correction regarding the wrong nationalistic interpretation of the false prophets concerning the place of the eunuch and the foreigner in the people of God.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> It is argued that synchrony and diachrony are complementary. One can tend to the diachronic side, where a text is only understandable through reference to its redaction history, or to the synchronic side, where the text-structure is described without any reference to its historical development. See: Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994); Johannes C. De Moor, *Synchronic or Diachronic: A Debate on Method in Old Testament Exegesis*, Illustrated edition. (Boston: Brill Academic Pub, 1995).

<sup>100</sup> According to Van Wieringen, diachronic research cannot be understood as a perspective in which, in contrast to synchronic research, textual irregularities are at the center. Diachronic research should not be based on possible creases in a text, but on shifts to be evaluated from the perspective of a communicative system. See: Wieringen, *The Implied Reader in Isaiah 6-12*.

<sup>101</sup> The real author is the composer of the text and the real reader is the historical reader of the produced text. The real author intentions attributes meaning to text while the real reader is able to give meaning to a text receiving it in a process of contextualization. See: Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 101-120. Against Van Wieringen, the doctrine of inspiration of Scripture can reveal a real author in both a synchronic and a diachronic approach to the text because there is a human author working under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit with compatible wills and an intentional meaning. Here the argument diverges from Iser and Van Wieringen in the sense that all contextualization is necessarily part of the real author's intention because of the doctrine of inspiration (Rm 15:4).

<sup>102</sup> Herman Bavinck and James P. Eglinton, *Philosophy of Revelation: A New Annotated Edition*, ed. Nathaniel Gray Sutanto and Cory Brock, Expanded edition. (Hendrickson Academic, 2018); Cameron D. Clausen, *Theology and History in the Methodology of Herman Bavinck: Revelation, Confession, and Christian Consciousness*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology Series (New York, NY, United States of America: Oxford University Press, 2024); Gordon Graham, "Bavinck's Philosophy of Revelation," *Calvin Theological Journal* 45.1 (2010): 44–50.

<sup>103</sup> Contra: Steven S. Tuell, "The Priesthood of the 'Foreigner': Evidence of Competing Politics in Ezekiel 44:1-14 and Isaiah 56:1-8," in *Constituting the Community: Studies on the Polity of Ancient Israel in Honor of S. Dean McBride Jr.* (ed. John T. Strong and Steven S. Tuell; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 193; Bernard Gosse, "Sabbath, Identity and Universalism Go Together after the Return from Exile," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 29.3 (2005): 359–70; Raymond de Hoop, "The Interpretation of Isaiah 56:1-9: Comfort or Criticism?," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127.4 (2008): 671–95; Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66-OTL: A Commentary* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1969), 312; Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, Reprint edition. (Oxford New York Auckland: Clarendon Press, 1989), 257.

The implicit polemic against the false prophets is seen in Isaiah's use of priestly language applicable to both figures. Loving the name of Yahweh and serving (שרת) Him by keeping His Sabbath immediately would point to the privilege of the priestly task. This sacerdotal language was typically applied to the Levites (66:21) and it was not missed by his original audience.<sup>104</sup> Additionally, there is some similar sound between this word הַנְּלִיִּים and "Levite" which leads to the possibility of a wordplay, especially considering the connotation of cultic service.<sup>105</sup> This language informs the identity of the whole eschatological community, one that is recovered in the NT in 1 Pt 2:5-9 and Rev 1:6. There is an implicit heart-language transformation of the Gentiles because to love the name of Yahweh entails not only awareness of Him, but personal knowledge of His person, attributes and words as He reveals Himself in His word and creation (Deut 11:22).<sup>106</sup>

This is furthered in the progression of 56:8: they are welcomed in Yahweh's holy mountain (a key Isaianic theme: 2:3; 11:9; 25:6; 57:13; 65:11; 65:25; 66:20), then into His household/family and

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<sup>104</sup> The sacerdotal background here in Isaiah is also observed in the variation of manuscript witnesses. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> omits לְשָׁרְתוֹ and replaces וְלִאֲהֶבֶה for וְלִבְרֹךְ producing a different word order. However, the MT is supported by 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> and LXX reads καὶ τοὺς φυλασσομένους in accordance. The alteration of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> may reveal a bias of the Qumran community, who were identified with the priestly house of Zadok, culminating in a reading that would forbid the participation of non-Levites (even more non-Israelites) in the cultic service in the temple. Thus, the variant of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> reveals the implications of the message of Isa 56 already being understood in the Qumran community. Moreover, curiously, the Eunuchs belonged to a special class of royal servants that was created for the express purpose of serving the king. They were crown dependents whose fortune was intimately linked to how well they performed the king's will. Exceptionally devoted servants could even receive rewards for their services. One way for kings to reward their servants was by endowing various aspects of their funerary cult: an honorific burial site, funerary monuments, and/or a royal commitment to maintain various aspects of the cult. Wright and Chan argue that similar practice is in light informing the oracle to the eunuchs in Isa 56:3-5. One of their examples is the stele for a eunuch (Bêl-Harrân-bêl-ušur) between the death of Tiglath-pileser III (744-727 BCE) and accession of Šalmaneser V (727-722 BCE). See: Wright and Chan, "King and Eunuch: Isaiah 56:1-8 in Light of Honorific Royal Burial Practices."; Shalom Paul, *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary*, First Edition. (Grand Rapids (Mich.) Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012), 449-450; Joseph R. Rosenbloom, *The Dead Sea Isaiah Scroll: A Literary Analysis: A Comparison with The Masoretic Text and The Biblia Hebraica*, (Eerdmans, 1970), 62-63.

<sup>105</sup> Rubinstein also suggested that 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> omission of לְשָׁרְתוֹ in 56:6 was paralleling 14:1-2 in which Israel would make foreigners as servants and handmaids. See: Arie Rubinstein, "The Theological Aspect of Some Variant Readings in the Isaiah Scroll," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 6.4 (1955): 187-200.

<sup>106</sup> God chose a people so that the world might know him, and it is only as his people replicate his unique character that the world will know him. As ch. 6 makes plain, the grace of God in delivering from uncleanness is not for the servant's enjoyment but in order for the word to get out that there is only one God, only one righteous Savior, and that the whole world needs to know him. In short, the grace of God is free, but those who receive it are called to live out all its implications. See: Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*.

then before His altar sealing with blood the promises announced. This guarantees their communion forever, sins atoned, and direct access to Yahweh's presence through prayer (Malachi saw it as inevitable: Mal 1:11). The summary is: Yahweh's house will be called a house of prayer for all the nations. This phrase connects various threads of promise into one image welcoming eunuchs and foreigners from every nation, not as a concession but as fulfillment. This image represents the essence of God's people whose identity is declared by Yahweh who conduces them into eschatological blessedness as His House.<sup>107</sup>

Yahweh's own words reveal His people, Himself as Creator (Sabbath-keeping), and Redeemer (His righteousness and justice). It is His decree that constitutes His own people and binds them to Himself through His covenantal promises carried out in history.<sup>108</sup> Isaiah is then not contrasting a house of sacrifice and a house of prayer, a prophetic message against a priestly one, a spiritual versus a cultic reality but he is pointing to God's own Word.<sup>109</sup> Isaiah is addressing the unified audience of God's people, from the 8<sup>th</sup> century to all generations afterward, what is the nature of their family.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, 388–389.

<sup>108</sup> Abernathy connects the main movements of the latter portion of Isaiah into Isa 56, at least in seminal form: "Here there is the anticipation of God's coming righteousness and salvation (56:1) that finds expression in YHWH's coming as the warrior king to set the unjust world right through the bloody judgment of the wicked and the redemption of the repentant in 59:15b–20 and 63:1–6. Second, in the aftermath of the coming of the warrior king, YHWH's royal glory shines so brightly in Zion that nations come from afar bearing tribute to display their allegiance to YHWH, the international king, in Isaiah 60. The sequence of the warrior king's coming, which results in the king's international glory in 59:15b to chapter 60, is recapitulated in Isaiah 66:15–24, where, after the sword is unleashed in bloody judgment (66:15–17, 24), news of YHWH's glory spreads, with the result being the nations coming to him in Zion. Third, there is the ironic assertion that, though YHWH reigns in the entire cosmos, he also dwells with the lowly who take refuge in him and tremble at his word (57:15; 66:1). YHWH is also the cosmic and compassionate king." See: Andrew Abernathy, *The Book of Isaiah and God's Kingdom: A Thematic-Theological Approach*.

<sup>109</sup> Jon L Berquist, "Reading Difference in Isaiah 56–66: The Interplay of Literary and Sociological Strategies," *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 7.1 (1995): 23–42.

<sup>110</sup> An interesting intertextual case could be made for this exact understanding from the leadership of the post-exilic community since a strong case can be made for Nehemiah himself being a eunuch given his position as a cupbearer, his close relationship with Artaxerxes I, his fidelity to the king and the lack of a clear offspring. Therefore, this possibility would add enormous weight to Neh 13:22 where Nehemiah defended the Sabbath-keeping through the Levites and cried out from within the walls to Yahweh saying: "This also, remember, for me, my God, and spare me according to the greatness of your faithfulness" in a possible direct allusion to Isa 56:5. The Hebrew noun *החומה* "wall"

Finally, Isaiah 56:8 is a **אֲנִי** formula (1:24;22:25;49:18) - the only other place in which a Yahweh-Adonai's oracle is given apart from 1:24. The participial construction identifying Yahweh gathering Israel's outcasts is the same used throughout Isa 40–55 when describing God as creator (40:23–26) and redeemer (46:9–11).<sup>111</sup> Isaiah's divine utterance is emphasized by adding **אֲנִי** to Yahweh's name highlighting God's covenantal sovereignty. He is bringing each one to His house – even the most remote and rejected. Yahweh comes down to find, call, and welcome. He is in action, by Word and might, because salvation belongs to Yahweh. He is able not only to save in Jerusalem, but in exile, in Assyria or Babylon: there are no geographical boundaries, no ceremonial obstacles, no hindrances for the exodus that Yahweh is revealing. Everyone he calls will come to delight in His house and they are not a few since there are others beyond (19:25;49:6-7;51:5;55:5). This is a revelation of Isaiah's audience: the people Yahweh gathers and perfects.

#### 4. THE USE OF ISAIAH 56 IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

##### a. Jesus and the Book of Isaiah

A parallel between the message of Isa 56:1-2 to keep justice and do righteousness because Yahweh's salvation is near and John The Baptist/Jesus' message "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Mt 4:17; 10:7) exists (even the same word of Isa 56:2 LXX (ἤγγισεν) is shared).<sup>112</sup>

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connotes the wall of Jerusalem in Neh 6:15 which might also be a reference to Isa 56:5: "within the walls **הַחוֹמָה** monument **וְ** and name **שֵׁם**". See: Yang, "Understanding Isa 56:1-8 in Light of the Sabbath Text in Neh 13:15-22"; Charles Fensham, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*, First Edition. (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1983), 157; Mark A. Throntveit, *Ezra-Nehemiah: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 66; Nili Sacher Fox, *In the Service of the King: Officialdom in Ancient Israel and Judah*, First Edition. (Cincinnati, OH: Hebrew Union College Press, 2000), 200.

<sup>111</sup> **אֲנִי** of Yahweh occurs frequently, but always at the end of the oracle. The two other occurrences at the beginning of an oracle are Ps. 110:1; Zech. 12:1, but both lack the title **אֲנִי**. It is an unusual construction that is often ignored by the defenders of multiple author view but reveals a unique consistent literary style and theological purpose between "First" and "Trito" Isaiah. See: Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*.

<sup>112</sup> Yahweh Himself then is the glorious king in Isaiah 56 – 66: He is the warrior who fights the battles for His people in 59:15b–20, 63:16 and 66:15–17, He is monergistically working to save the repentant and He is the one who brings justice in all nations. He is the King of glory in Isaiah 60 and 66:18–24, whose splendor shines so brightly that all nations will acknowledge his rule. When read as a whole Jesus is the only matching figure to the Servant, the Holy One of Israel, the Glorious King. He is certainly the Davidic king promised in Isaiah, but also the divine king, Jesus is the embodiment of God's glory, the one who receives international worship in Isaiah 60. He is the radiance of God's

Isaiah's vision centers, from beginning to end, on Yahweh, Creator, and King, moving towards His people to redeem. He gives them a new identity based on their covenantal relationship which is received by faith alone culminating in international worship to Yahweh as the cosmic compassionate King (2–4;25:6–8;9:15b–20;63:1–6;66:15–17).<sup>113</sup>

Isaiah's content is fundamental to comprehending Jesus' communication of His person and work fully. Jesus identifies the whole scroll of Isaiah as being the work of the prophet Isaiah in Jerusalem in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. In John 12:38-41, Jesus quotes in sequence Isa 6:10 together with Isa 53:10 and attributes both to the same author.<sup>114</sup> If Isaiah is not the single author of the whole book,

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glory (Heb. 1:3) and it is in the face of Jesus Christ that the very glory of God is made known (2 Cor. 4:6; cf. John 1:14). Isaiah develops the concept of Yahweh's transcendence inhabiting the heavens while also dwelling among the lowly (the despised and outcasts such as eunuchs and foreigners) in Isaiah 57:15 and 66:1. This motif is also shown in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. The incarnation is the glorious King emptying Himself in compassion by taking on flesh and dwelling with us (Phil 2:7; John 1). But even further, Christ had a particular interest in the lowly, assuring that the poor in spirit belonged in the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 5:3) and caring for the outcasts who would turn to him (Mark 14:6). See: Andrew Abernethy, *The Book of Isaiah and God's Kingdom : A Thematic-Theological Approach*.

<sup>113</sup> Abernethy demonstrates carefully how this is the case even when one considers the macro-structure of the book: "The structural prominence of God's kingship within each of the major sections of the book is undeniable. In Isaiah 1 – 39, the strategic placement of the vision of God as the holy king (Isa. 6) at the center of Isaiah 1 – 12, the crystallization of God's judgment and salvation of the entire cosmos in the light of his reign on Zion in chapters 24–25 as part of Isaiah 13 – 27, the way God's kingship in chapter 33 grants perspective upon chapters 28–33, and how the bridging chapters of Isaiah 34 – 39 convey God's kingship through eschatological (chapters 34–35) and historical (36–37) perspectives make it unmistakable that God's kingship manifesting itself in judgment and salvation within history to the end of times is a central aspect of the message of Isaiah 1 – 39. In Isaiah 40 – 55 there is the arc that Isaiah 40:1–11 creates with 52:7–10 around the 'gospel' of God's coming to reign as savior in Zion. Within the chiasmic structure of Isaiah 56 – 66 and the recapitulation of its core message in 66:15–24 the vision that God will reign in glory as the international king in Zion (60; 66:18–24) in the aftermath of his coming as the warrior king (59:15b–20; 63:1–6) serves to motivate the humble in the audience to take refuge in the cosmic king, for he cares for the downcast (57:15; 66:1–2). Thus, the structural design of each section of Isaiah utilizes different portrayals of God's kingship to offer points of orientation for comprehending the message of the various major sections within Isaiah". See: Andrew Abernethy, *The Book of Isaiah and God's Kingdom : A Thematic-Theological Approach*. Blenkinsop affirms that "The central message of the latter portion of Isaiah, therefore, is that there is to be a mission to the Gentiles as a necessary prelude to the parousia, the final decisive manifestation of God in human history." Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Second Isaiah - Prophet of Universalism," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 13.41 (1988): 83–103. See also: Mark T Long, "The Inclusion of the Nations in Isaiah 40-66," *The Theological Educator* 44 (1991): 85–92.

<sup>114</sup> The way the NT receives the scroll of Isaiah has significant repercussions concerning the doctrine of Bible's authority and inerrancy: if Isaiah did not write the book attributed to him, the NT's assertion that he did write the book is wrong. Mt 3:3 and Lk 3:4 are other instances referring to Isaiah as the sole author when quoting Isa 40:3, specially considering that both Matthew and Luke quote Isaiah 6:9-10 as being written by Isaiah in Mt 13:14-15 and Luke 8:10. The use by Luke can be extended in Acts 13 when Isaiah is quoted from 55:3 and 49:6. An important witness to the sole authorship of Isaiah is Paul that extensively quotes Isaiah in Romans from all portions of the book: Isa 1:9 (Rom 9:29); Isa 8:14 (Rom 9:33); Isa 10:22 (Rom 9:27); Isa 28:16 (Rom 9:33 and 10:11); Isa 29:16 and Isa 45:9: (Rom 9:19-21); Isa 52:5 (Rom 2:24); Isa 52:7 (Rom 10:15); Isa 53:1 (Rom 10:16); Isa 59:7-8 (Rom 3:15-17); Isa 65:1 (Rom 10:20); Isa 65:2 (Rom 10:21).

the NT presents a Christological problem because Jesus clearly affirms single authorship.<sup>115</sup> Moreover, Isaiah helped Christians comprehend Jesus' atonement/salvation/exodus including His role as the suffering servant, righteous judge, and His divine-human origin.<sup>116</sup> Isaiah was also crucial for the early church's self-understanding: their essence as one people in God's presence encompassing a soteriological and ecclesiological unity with Gentiles.<sup>117</sup>

### **b. The Temple, the House of Prayer, and the Gentilic motif**

Isa 56 is found in the NT when Jesus quotes it in Mt 21:13; Mk 11:17; and Lk 19:46 during the cleansing of the temple.<sup>118</sup> The expression בְּיִתִּי תִפְלְאוּ used by Isaiah and Jesus does not mean the house of my prayer, but my house of prayer. This reference to the temple is unique resembling 1 Kings 8:27-30 when prayer is presented as the Temple's purpose. However, this promise of Isa 56 refers not to the Temple's physical location, but to its true nature: God's people being the Holy Spirit's habitation. Jesus' quotation refers to God's people "in the latter days" when all nations would be ingrafted in one house, in Yahweh's holy mountain making a joyful noise because their offerings were accepted in the altar once and for all. Jesus' message requires the comprehension of Isaiah's language and ideas projected to his original hearers in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, but also to the generations to come. Jesus' application follows the pattern of a diachronic Isaianic audience and,

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<sup>115</sup> Gregory K. Beale, "A Specific Problem Confronting the Authority of the Bible: Should the New Testament's Claim That the Prophet Isaiah Wrote the Whole Book of Isaiah Be Taken at Face Value?" in *The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism: Responding to New Challenges to Biblical Authority* (Crossway, 2008), 123–159.

<sup>116</sup> Hyun Chul Paul Kim, "A Farewell to Trito-Isaiah?: An Inner-Biblical Exegesis of Isaiah 54-57 in Light of Isaiah 1-2 and Psalm 1," *Canon & Culture* 9.1 (2015): 35–70.

<sup>117</sup> This was not an accident, but a continuation of its importance flowing from the OT itself. Isaiah was one of the three most influential books in Early Judaism. The Dead Sea Scrolls and the NT both quote from and allude to the Psalms, Deuteronomy, and Isaiah more than any other literature. See: Kristin De Troyer and Barbara Schmitz, *The Early Reception of the Book of Isaiah*, Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019); Ken Penner, *Isaiah*, Septuagint Commentary Series (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 340.

<sup>118</sup> Being a direct quotation from Jesus, it is important to affirm the centrality of the OT in Jesus' preaching concerning the coming of the kingdom, His self-understanding of His person and work and the progressive historical revelation of the redemption purposes of Yahweh. Jesus is then fundamentally an interpreter of the OT. See: Steve Moyise, "Jesus and Isaiah," *Neotestamentica* 43.2 (2009): 249–70.

simultaneously, united in their identity.<sup>119</sup>

This is a necessary conclusion of the purpose of Jesus' controversial actions at the temple. Various critical explanations have been made attempting to connect Jesus' actions to the Essenes or to nationalistic expectations during the Second-Temple period, as a symbolic act of Temple "cleansing" in a prelude to a Messianic age.<sup>120</sup> However, all rely on speculation and often contradict the Gospels, for instance when assuming an opposition between prophetic vs priestly speech. There is no compelling reason to believe that Jesus was not purposefully pointing to the Temple's destruction and to Him as a better/superior Temple.

Telford suggests that this Temple event in Mark is related to its surrounding passages of the fig tree (Mk 11:12-14 and 11:20-25).<sup>121</sup> The fig tree prefigures the Temple's destruction which

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<sup>119</sup> The same is done in Hosea 14:3 and explained in Heb 13:13 and John 4:21-23. This general promise is consistent with Mal 1:11 in perfect continuity and redemptive unfolding of the principles of the old economy of the covenant carrying out its fuller meaning. See: Alexander, *The Prophecies Of Isaiah*, 337.

<sup>120</sup> Such actions have been object of debate because it has been suggested that naming it as a "cleaning" of the temple may be a misnomer that fails to convey the true importance of the event. It has been suggested that the actions of Jesus were connected to the expectations during the Second Temple period in which a messianic figure would purge Jerusalem from the corruption of officials, including priests, as an act of cleansing Israel for the messianic kingdom. See: E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia, Pa: Fortress Press, 1985), 81–87; Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Mark* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1970), 230–233. This may be behind some of the writings of the community of Qumran and the Essenes broadly who despised the temple establishment. In their commentary on Habakkuk, for instance, the High Priest is referred to as the "Wicked Priest" and accused of robbing the people, including the poor, of amassing wealth and of defiling the "Sanctuary of God". See: A. Dupont-Sommer, *Essene Writings from Qumran* (Peter Smith Pub Inc, 1973), 310–12; Millar Burrows, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, First Edition-States. (Viking Adult, 1955), 328–30; Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English: Seventh Edition*, 7th edition. (London: Penguin Classics, 2012), 246. This led Stegemann to argue that Jesus, in association with John the Baptist was in line with Qumran's eschatology and defending that the sacrificial services ought to cease with the arrival of the messianic era. See: Hartmut Stegemann, "Some Aspects of Eschatology in Texts from the Qumran Community and in the Teachings of Jesus," in *Biblical Archaeology Today* (Jerusalem, 1985), 408–26. Eppstein, on the other hand, attempted to show that Jesus' action in the temple was actually a protest against a new practice of the High Priest Caiaphas who, motivated by political and financial reasons, brought for the first time the business of selling sacrificial objects into the precincts of the temple. Eppstein argues that Caiaphas, for reasons unknown, expelled the Sanhedrin from the "Chamber of the Hewn Stone" in the temple. The Sanhedrin then relocated near the temple at a place called Hanuth where the sons of Hanan sold sacrificial objects. Eppstein believes that in 30 C.E. Caiaphas allowed merchants for the first time to sell their sacred offerings within the temple precincts themselves, in order to undermine the business of Hanuth and diminish the religious authority of the exiled Sanhedrin. See: Victor Eppstein, "Historicity of the Gospel Account of the Cleansing of the Temple," *Zeitschrift Für Die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft Und Die Kunde Der Älteren Kirche* 55.1–2 (1964): 42–58.

<sup>121</sup> This occurs due to Mark's use of intercalation interrupting one story with the other marking them both as related (a dialectical relationship in a structure A1-B-A2 pattern serving as the key that develops theological purpose: the

would be hinted by the introduction of the quotation in Mk 11:17 (καὶ ἐδίδασκεν καὶ ελεγεν) at the center of the narrative followed by the parable of the wicked tenants referring to the religious leaders.<sup>122</sup> This unusual introduction that does not occur anywhere else in the narrative may be a subtle indication to the reader that the larger original context of Isaiah should be apprehended for comprehending this event.<sup>123</sup> The reading of ἐδίδασκεν as an inceptive imperfect implies that the Scriptural quotation begins a continuous action that unfolds at the Temple.<sup>124</sup> The impracticality of Jesus' explaining while turning tables must lead us to conclude that His actions were the outcome of His reasoning, as a speech-act connecting content and events.

When Jesus quotes Isa 56:7, what is behind His holy wrath is the fact that the Gentiles were being denied access to the temple because of the trade in the courtyard. All passages narrating this

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middle narrative interpreting the borders). See: William Telford, *The Barren Temple and the Withered Tree: A Redaction-Critical Analysis of the Cursing of the Fig-Tree Pericope in Mark's Gospel and Its Relation To ...* (Sheffield, England: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015). It is normally believed that Mark uses the device in at least six places: 3.20–35; 5.21–43; 6.7–32; 11.12–25; 14.1–11; and 14.53–72. Edwards points out that this narrative device was known in the broader Greco-Roman world, as well as Jewish literature, with authors interpreting one story in concert with another story. See: George H Guthrie, "The Tree and the Temple: Echoes of a New Ingathering and Renewed Exile (Mark 11.12-21)," *New Testament Studies* 68.1 (2022): 26–37; James R Edwards, "Markan Sandwiches: The Significance of Interpolations in Markan Narratives," *Novum Testamentum* 31.3 (1989): 193–216; Tom Shepherd, "The Narrative Function of Markan Intercalation," *New Testament Studies* 41.4 (1995): 522–40.

<sup>122</sup> The imagery of the fig tree is a well-developed picture in the OT, particularly in Jer 8.13; Isa 28.3–4; Hos 9.10, 16; Mic 7.1; Joel 1.7, 12, as well as a number of supplementary passages. See: Telford, *The Barren Temple and the Withered Tree*, 142–63; Arthur de Quetteville Robin, "Cursing of the Fig Tree in Mark 11: A Hypothesis," *New Testament Studies* 8.3 (1962): 276–81.

<sup>123</sup> "Rather than slow down the pace of the episode by citing verbatim the relevant contexts of the conflated citation in 11:17, Mark stays true to form by citing only a portion of the text and then providing clues for the reader to interpret it in light of the unstated scriptural context. This practice was not exclusive to this author. The abbreviation of quotations from speeches in the writings of Greco-Roman historians such as Thucydides in the History of the Peloponnesian War, for instance, may form a Markan parallel." See: Holly J Carey, "Teachings and Tirades: Jesus' Temple Act and His Teachings in Mark 11:15-19," *Stone-Campbell Journal* 10.1 (2007): 93–105.

<sup>124</sup> Gundry, who argues that the presence of the three consecutive imperfects (οὐκ ἤφιεν, ἐδίδασκεν, and ελεγεν after the aorist ἤρξατο ἐκβάλλειν . . . κατέστρεψεν in 11:15-16 is an indication that Jesus' citation was meant to be understood as happening simultaneously with his actions against the merchants in the temple. The awkward notion of Jesus teaching while performing the other actions serves to emphasize the importance for Mark of Jesus' "didactic authority." See: Robert Horton Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans Pub Co, 2000), 640–41; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament with Scripture, Subject, and Greek Word Indexes*, Enlarged edition. (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan Academic, 1997), 544–45.

episode also reference Jer 7:11 by Jesus affirming that the temple became a “den of robbers”.<sup>125</sup> The apparent link between the two quotations may be linguistic by both referring to “my house...called” in the LXX, reflecting a common Jewish exegetical procedure used by Jesus.<sup>126</sup> Another possible reason for the connection may be from Mark’s inclusion of “for all the nations” in reference both to the context of Isaiah and Jeremiah being the backdrop of Jesus’ words and actions.<sup>127</sup>

Jesus’ use of Jer 7:11 then suggests that he is not accusing the buyers and sellers of “robbery”, but, according to Jeremiah and the prophets, Jesus accuses them of hypocrisy, namely, using their positions in the temple while continuing to live immoral lives (Jer 7:8-10).<sup>128</sup> Thus, the larger

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<sup>125</sup> This is evidence that Jesus used these two quotations with precision and in the same historical event. Jeremiah 7 charges the priests and rulers of Judah with various crimes, some of which are commercial (7:9-11). The context of that passage contains a threat of destruction of the temple: "I will do to the house which is called by my name, and in which you trust, and to the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to Shiloh" (7: 14; 26:6-9). "Shiloh" refers to one of the places where the tabernacle and the ark of the covenant had been located (Judg 18:31; Ps 78:60). Although it is not clear how or when, Shiloh had become a ruin. Jeremiah contains several critical references to the priesthood and to the temple (2:8; 14:18; 23:11 and 33-34; 32:31-32; 34:19). Regarding priestly greed, Jer 6:13 reads: "For from the least to the greatest of them, every one is greedy for unjust gain; and from prophet to priest, every one deals falsely" (also 8:10). See: Craig A Evans, “Jesus’ Action in the Temple: Cleansing or Portent of Destruction?,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 51.2 (1989): 237–70; Craig A Evans, “Jesus and the ‘Cave of Robbers’: Toward a Jewish Context for the Temple Action,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 3 (1993): 93–110.

<sup>126</sup> Mark’s citation follows the Greek text of Isa 56.7 exactly except for the omission of the conjunction γάρ. Also, the σπήλαιον ληστῶν of Mark 11.17 matches LXX Jer 7.11, which is a rendering of the Hebrew פרצים המערות. The parallels are:

Jer 7.11 ὁ οἶκός μου, οὗ ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά μου

Jer 7:11 הבית הזה אשר נקרא שמי

Isa 56.7 ὁ γὰρ οἶκός μου οἶκος προσευχῆς κληθήσεται πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν

Isa 56:7 ביתי בית תפלה יקרא לכל העמים

<sup>127</sup> This unity occurs despite the apparent opposite directions of the context of Jeremiah and Isaiah. Jeremiah prophecies concerning fruitlessness, destruction and the unrepentant being driven out of the land warning of imminent exile. Isaiah prophesizes concerning fruitfulness, the coming of salvation and former outsiders, both foreigners and Jews, being brought into the Lord’s house, where they will worship Yahweh – he refers to a vision of a house of prayer as the opposite of an exile. See: Rikk Watts, *Isaiah’s New Exodus in Mark*, Updated, Subsequent edition. (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2001), 319–22; Guthrie, “The Tree and the Temple: Echoes of a New Ingathering and Renewed Exile (Mark 11.12-21).”

<sup>128</sup> In Jer 7:8-26, God dictates to Jeremiah his message of accusation and judgment for the people concerning their treatment of the temple. By practicing sin freely and then fleeing to the temple and participating in sacrifices in order to avoid the consequences of their actions, the Judeans have been treating God's house as if it were a hideout for robbers (7:8-11). Thus, God will judge them for their actions, just as he judged the former house of worship in Shiloh (7:12-15, 20), a judgment that will result in destruction. See: Carey, “Teachings and Tirades: Jesus’ Temple Act and His Teachings in Mark 11:15-19.”

context of Jeremiah is in view considering the characterization of those who misuse the temple in Jer 7 being similar to the Jewish authorities in Mark's Gospel: both groups refuse to listen and obey God's Word (Jer 7:13; Mk 8:11-12; 11:18-33) while choosing to act on their own inclinations (Jer 7:24; Mk 3:6) and mistake cultic practice for genuine obedience to God (Jer 7:10; Mk 2:24; 3:2-4; 7:1-13).<sup>129</sup> The Temple became in Jesus' day as it was in Jeremiah's: the central *loci* of nationalist violence caused by a false prophetic message guaranteeing that Yahweh would unconditionally act on Israel's behalf against any enemies in a political-ethnic sense.<sup>130</sup>

Mark uses the same word ληστής found in Jer 7:11 to present a foil to Jesus' ministry (14:48). When Jer 7:11 is juxtaposed with Isa 56 in Mk 11:17, Mark points out that Jesus was teaching against political-nationalistic messages corresponding with the context of the pre-exilic/exilic Isaianic prophetic preaching against the false prophets in Israel. The actions of these ληστής ("insurrectionists") put their nationalistic agendas ahead of Yahweh's covenantal redemptive-historical acts to make His own house a place of prayer for all nations.<sup>131</sup>

Jesus' quotation presupposes the exegesis of the larger context of Isa 56 addressing the essence of God's people while demonstrating judgment and holy wrath against those who would oppose

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<sup>129</sup> The transformation of the courtyard into a market was denying their limited access that the gentiles were entitled to. However, Isaiah 56 makes clear that God had not chosen and revealed Himself to Israel so that they would turn against the nations and close them off the benefits of the covenant. All the principles of separation and holiness in the ceremonial law concerning Israel had the purpose to keep Israel from being absorbed into the world. Israel was to call the nations out of sinfulness and idolatry into a relationship with Yahweh of justice and righteousness, in faith and obedience to Him so that all the nations could come enjoy the blessings of God. Therefore, Jesus' indignation shows concern not only due to the commercialization of the temple, but essentially because of his compassion for the outsiders, to outcasts of Israel, the foreigners and eunuchs, the gentiles who were to come bound themselves to the Lord, meaning Jesus Himself. This concern is also shown in John 10:16 as a reference to Isa 56:8 showing that what Isaiah had in mind here was not merely the reencountering of a Jewish diaspora community their homeland, but the ingrafting of the whole world, people from every tongue, tribe and nation who would come to be bound, united to Christ in faith.

<sup>130</sup> Moyise, "Jesus and Isaiah."

<sup>131</sup> Josephus's use of the same term infer a connotation of "insurrectionist" when describing the Zealots. Mark recovers the term later when referencing the two criminals crucified next to Jesus (15:27). See: R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark*, Reprint edition. (Eerdmans, 2014), 446.

Yahweh's exodus.<sup>132</sup> Mark's context relating the fig tree with the temple also reflects Isa 56 with thematic coherence and historical plausibility: both contexts point to a picture of fruitlessness but waiting in redemptive hope.<sup>133</sup>

This reading of Mk 11 and Isa 56 portrays Jesus as a prophet after Isaiah,<sup>134</sup> who reveals the necessary inclusion of the nations into the worship of Yahweh. The language of eunuchs and foreigners in Sabbath-keeping and being God's servants in His house/temple anticipates the eschatological subversion of the distinction between gentiles and God's people conflating them in one people receiving salvation/deliverance: the outsiders/outcasts being brought in.<sup>135</sup> Jesus' actions are prophetic and proleptic identifying Jesus Himself with the covenantal-redemptive activity of Yahweh reversing the exile into deliverance. Jesus is revealing His own salvation and righteousness: His own Exodus. Yahweh and Christ are conflated as the God-man establishing the

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<sup>132</sup>This context of destruction and concern for genuine worship is consistent with the surrounding Markan narrative and the general attitude toward the temple and its religious authorities found throughout the Gospel. The Markan Jesus repeatedly condemns the Jewish religious leaders as antagonists who, through their scheming resistance to Jesus' ministry and despite their best efforts, will ultimately play a large part in bringing about his own vindication as God's Son (8:31; 10:33-34; 12:1-11). And Mark elsewhere refers to the imminent destruction of the temple (13:2; 14:58). Understanding Jesus' actions and teaching in light of the larger context of Jeremiah 7 and Isaiah 56, then, best explains why the religious authorities would get so angry with Jesus following his citation, since it invokes both a critique of their religious establishment as disingenuous and anticipates the destruction of their center of power and authority. See: Carey, "Teachings and Tirades: Jesus' Temple Act and His Teachings in Mark 11:15-19"; Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark*, 328-29.

<sup>133</sup> The verb used by Mark for "dry" (ξηραίνω) is a cognate with the adjective used by Isaiah in 56:3 (ξηρόν). From the 39 uses of the adjective in the LXX, only 4 refer to a dry tree and only 1 has the temple in context: Isa 56:3 in association with 56:7. All thirty-nine occurrences in the LXX: Gen 1.9-10; 7.22; Exod 4.9; 14.16, 21-2, 29; 15.19; Josh 3.17; 4.22; 9.5; Ps 65.6; 94.5; Job 24.19; Hos 9.14; Jon 1.9; 2.11; Hag 2.6, 21; Isa 9.17; 37.27; 56.3; Ezek 17.24; 21.3; 37.2, 4, 11; 1 Macc 8.23, 32; 4 Macc 18.17; Odes 1.19; Wis 19.7; Sir 6.3; 37.3; 39.22).

<sup>134</sup> Concerning Jesus' self-understanding as an eschatological prophet, see: Morna D. Hooker, *The Signs of a Prophet: The Prophetic Actions of Jesus* (Wipf and Stock, 2010); Dale C. Allison Jr, *Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination, and History*, Reprint edition. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 264-65.

<sup>135</sup> Jesus' action in the temple is messianic revelation of the true temple, the true nature of the people of God being demonstrated in His symbolic act of purification, with judgement and salvation (Jeremiah and Isaiah). "In contrast to Jeremiah's 'casting out', or 'exile', stands Isaiah's hope of 'ingathering'. In short, those who respond to Jesus' message, even those who are currently outsiders to the temple establishment, are offered hope; in Jesus' eschatological temple they will be considered insiders in the house of prayer (11.22-5). On the other hand, the current, corrupt insiders, especially the temple leadership, would find themselves 'cast out' as outsiders, shown to be spiritual 'withered trees' in the face of Jesus' eschatological programme (11.26-12.12). This reversal stands at the heart of Mark 11.11-12.12, with Jesus' praying community placed in stark relief over against the temple authorities." This same reversal idea is present in Ezek 17:24. See: Guthrie, "The Tree and the Temple: Echoes of a New Ingathering and Renewed Exile (Mark 11.12-21)."; Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark*, 318-22.

community promised by Yahweh in one eschatological temple/house of prayer: His church.<sup>136</sup>

Lukean theology consistently uses the temple as a place of prayer as part of his general apologetic strategy (Lk 1:5-2:52; 19:45-21:38; Acts 3:1-2; 22:17-21). Luke defines the early church involving both continuity and discontinuity with the old covenant economy and Jesus' understanding of the role of the temple in relation to the international call to worship is at the core. The revelation of the superior temple in Christ also reveals His body as the habitation of the Holy Spirit, in continuity with the theological impulse of Isa 56.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> “Thus, the cursing of the fig tree and the temple action ought to be viewed as twin prophetic acts. Both are elucidated by the broader contexts of Jesus’ scriptural saying, which is offered as a comment on the temple action particularly (11.17). It may be that, as well as drawing on broader Old Testament motifs, the two parts of the fig tree story take imagery from the respective contexts in Isaiah 56 and Jeremiah 7–8, with the first, ‘no figs on the tree’, deriving from Jer 8.13 and the second, ‘the withered tree’, from both Jer 8.13 and Isa 56.3. In both cases this imagery may be read as connoting fruitlessness, but the broader context of the Jeremiah passage also projects reverberations of destruction and exile”. See: Guthrie, “The Tree and the Temple: Echoes of a New Ingathering and Renewed Exile (Mark 11.12-21)”; Donald Juel, *Messiah and Temple: The Trial of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark* (Missoula, Mont: Society of Biblical Literature, 1977), 198; Telford, *The Barren Temple and the Withered Tree*, 61–71; Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, Reprint edition. (Baker Academic, 2009), 265; Carey, “Teachings and Tirades: Jesus’ Temple Act and His Teachings in Mark 11:15-19”; Timothy C. Gray, *Temple in the Gospel of Mark: A Study in Its Narrative Role* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2010), 29–30; J R Daniel (James Robert Daniel) Kirk, “Time for Figs, Temple Destruction, and Houses of Prayer in Mark 11:12-25,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 74.3 (2012): 509–27.

<sup>137</sup> The destruction of the temple in 70 AD makes concrete the narratively theological arch of Luke that stresses the significance of Jerusalem’s blindness and unbelief in response to God’s eschatological act of salvation (Lk. 19.44, cf. 21.5-6; 21.22-23), with a criticism connected with the fact that the imagery of the second temple was attached to a nationalistic exclusivism that is in conflict with the international attitude of worship present in Acts (Acts 7.46-50) following the theology of Isaiah and the gospels. Holmas interestingly draws a trajectory for the Lukan theology of prayer in the following way: “Luke’s treatment of the theme of prayer clearly reflects his schematization of salvation history into various phases. The infant narrative (Lk. 1-2) focuses on the continual life of prayer that characterizes the pious of Israel (1.10,13; 2.37). In the rest of Luke’s Gospel (Lk. 3-24) it is Jesus’ prayer life and his teaching to the disciples on prayer that is in view (Jesus’ prayer life: 3.21-22; 5.16; 6.12; 9.18; 9.28-29; 10.21-22; 11.1; 22.40-45; 23.34,46; Jesus’ teaching on prayer: 6.28; 10.2; 11.1-13; 18.1-8; 21.34-36; 22.39, 46). In Acts the apostles and the first Christians are depicted as a people of prayer (Acts 1.14, 24-25; 2.42; 4.24-31; 6.4, 6; 7.59-60; 8.15; 9.40; 10.2,4,30; 11.5; 12.5,12; 13.2-3; 14.23; 16.25; 20.36; 21.5; 22.17; 28.8), with clear points of contact back to Jesus’ practice of prayer and paraenesis concerning prayer, and also to the prayer scenes of the infant narrative. Luke’s presentation of prayer in the first two chapters of the Gospel strongly emphasizes its rootedness in a traditional Jewish temple piety. After this, the focus is narrowed onto Jesus and the first Christians’ prayer life. Apart from Lk. 1-2, none of the many prayer scenes in Luke-Acts shows Jews outside the Jesus movement in prayer. Traditional Jewish prayer piety is, rightly enough, also occasionally in view after this (in the context of personal statements and allusions—Lk. 5.33-35; 11.1; 18.9-14; 19.46; 20.46; Acts 3.1; 10.2,30; 26.6-7), but it seems clear that Luke is not concerned with the Jewish practice of prayer per se but only as a backdrop for, or contrast to, the believers’ prayer life.” See: Geir Otto Holmås, “‘My House Shall Be a House of Prayer’: Regarding the Temple as a Place of Prayer in Acts within the Context of Luke’s Apologetic Objective,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 27.4 (2005): 393–416.

Jesus is also actively revealing the nature of God's people by teaching about the essence of worship and the better temple. This passage directly connects with the ingrafting of the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8:26-40 who was reading Isaiah.<sup>138</sup> Christ, the better Temple, welcomes the nations who, by faith in Christ alone, can enjoy the presence of the living God. Although the temple assumes later the characteristic of being the focal point for Jerusalem's rejection of the Messiah, the theological image of the temple communicates the nature of the church in its essence being the place/people of prayer and teaching, since this was the two main features of the temple for the early Christians.<sup>139</sup>

Jesus' interpretation of Isaiah clarifies the use of the foreigner and eunuch as word pictures. There is no contradiction between Isaiah and Deuteronomy because Jesus' hermeneutical method focuses on establishing the purpose of the Law, including using Isaiah to clarify Deuteronomy in progressive revelation. Jesus is the complete revelation of Yahweh's deliverance and righteousness that were coming near! Therefore, God intends to "make a feast for all peoples" in which "the covering that is cast over the peoples" will be destroyed (25:6-7). And "all peoples" includes even Eunuchs, Ammonites and Moabites shall never be cut off.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> What an amazing thought to consider Philip later explaining to him the meaning of Isa 56 in light of the suffering servant he was inquiring about. See: Webb, *The Message of Isaiah*, 222.

<sup>139</sup> The temple is understood to be equally significant both as a place of prayer and as a place of teaching for the first Christians, 'As the climax of Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem was carried out in the environs of the temple (Lk. 20.1 ; 21.5, 37,38; 22.52-53), so is it the place where his followers congregate for prayer (Lk. 24.53; Acts 2.46; 3.1) and for teaching (5.20,25,42)'. However, later the fall of the temple is depicted as a direct consequence of Jerusalem's blindness when confronted with the offer of salvation and is connected to the fact that the temple did not manage to live up to its call as a 'house of prayer'. The expectation of salvation that was the temple's actual purpose (cf. Lk. 1-2) continues, however, in the Christian community that, in prayer, calls upon the name of Jesus and still waits for the final redemption at his return. See: Holmås, "'My House Shall Be a House of Prayer': Regarding the Temple as a Place of Prayer in Acts within the Context of Luke's Apologetic Objective"; Luke Timothy Johnson, *Sacra Pagina: The Acts Of The Apostles* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2006).

<sup>140</sup> The purpose of both passages was to make a theological point. With respect to the eunuch, the purpose of the prohibition is clearly to teach the goodness of nature as we find it in creation. Concerning the foreigners, God was ceremonially distinguishing Israel from other nations, while also establishing the pattern that God is the one who creates by His Word His people, He calls His people individually into His presence. God established the ceremonial law in order to display the necessity of perfectness, spotlessness and guiltlessness for acceptance in the presence of

Mark 11 use of Isa 56 focuses on what constitutes God's people: Yahweh is the one who lovingly and sovereignly establishes His people through a covenant (of grace) gathering them from the ends of the world. The use of the root קָבַץ in Isa 56:8 is translated in the LXX to the cognates συνάγων/συνάξω/συναγωγήν associated with the preposition ἐπί in συνάξω ἐπ' αὐτοὺς συναγωγήν. This is the same use found in Mark 5:21 where the crowd gathered "to" Jesus which may be a reference to Isaiah's use. The divinity of Jesus is associated with the theme of God's election so that His glory may be displayed over all the world because His people ought to walk and live mirroring His character. In accordance with Isa 6, God's grace delivers from uncleanness so that one word is proclaimed: there is only one God, one Savior, one faith, and one people of God over all the earth.<sup>141</sup>

## 5. CONCLUSION

Isa 56 then presents in seed-form the doctrines of the priesthood of all believers, perseverance of the saints, and union with Christ. What was promised in Isaiah is found in the Gospels: redemption is found in Christ who intercedes for all believers so that God's people can serve Him holding fast to His covenant.<sup>142</sup> This passage confirms the irresistible grace of God's calling His people and His complete sovereignty over salvation. Yahweh is the perfect gatherer who calls and provides to each one of them their true identity. Jesus is the one who came to call the outcasts, the

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God. This perfect justice and righteousness is required for anyone to serve Him and love Him. The actions of the suffering servant, the Holy One of Israel, God's Messiah as our representative was necessary to attribute such justice and righteousness to the people of God – being God Himself the one creating it by the power of His word. 1 Corinthians 1:30 then declare that the call to keep justice and practice righteousness are then filled by the active and passive obedience of Jesus Christ "who became for us wisdom from God: our righteousness, holiness and redemption". See: Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*.

<sup>141</sup> Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*.

<sup>142</sup> The passive κληθήσεται in Isa 56:7 has the nominative οἶκος as its subject so that Mark 11:17 renders it as Ὁ οἶκός μου οἶκος προσευχῆς κληθήσεται πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν; Matt 21:13 shortens it to Ὁ οἶκός μου οἶκος προσευχῆς all pointing to the context of Isaiah that states that the house of prayer is πᾶσι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν. The idea is expanded in Matthew and Luke to the broader idea of the true nature of the people of God.

lost sheep of the house of Israel, and everyone who He calls recognizes His voice and comes. Not a single one whom the Father gave to Him will be lost. He is the perfect architect and builder of this house of prayer: it is His house!

The people of God reflect the perfect image of God in Christ as living evidence/witnesses to the nations of the salvation of God. This is why all the nations will flow to Jerusalem to learn the Torah of God (51:4; 56:1, where תּוֹרָה is the functional equivalent of Torah), to lay hold of his covenant (49:8; 54:10; 55:5; 56:4-6), and to love his name (55:13; 56:6). Therefore, the covenant is not primarily performance but a relationship. God, the suzerain produces the terms of such relationship and reaffirms them in their true essence in 56:1–8 by making clear the nature of this relationship through the shocking examples of eunuchs and foreigners. Those who please Yahweh are His people, the ones who manifest a living relationship with him by living a life of obedience to His Word of the Covenant. Those who never knew Abraham and die childless, these who are truly the children of God: it is not genealogy but faith that marks the servants of God.<sup>143</sup>

Thus, the essential feature of the people of God is a life *Coram Deo*, an enjoyment of the presence and communion with Yahweh through a sacrifice that is accepted on the altar of Yahweh. They are accepted in the house because of the work of the Servant and what Yahweh is doing in gathering His people in it. Now, the nature of this gathering in the house is for prayer, teaching, communion, and joy – which was for all people bounded to Yahweh. Isaiah announces that the essence of God's people is to glorify Him and enjoy Yahweh forever in His house.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*.

<sup>144</sup> In the administration of the Old Covenant God promised to inhabit a temple on earth, but Yahweh, the cosmic king, is not confined to a human temple. At the dedication of the temple, Solomon recognizes that even the highest heaven cannot contain God, so when he prays towards the temple he hopes that God will hear from his heavenly dwelling place (1 Kgs 8:27, 30). There is a close dynamic between the heavens and the temple (city) as God's dwelling places in close connection to 1 Kgs 8 and Isa. 56 – 66. There is also a close linguistic similarity between Isa 66:1 and 1 Kgs 8:27. See: Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 1st edition.

## APPENDIX I – JUSTIFICATION OF TRANSLATION

<p>56: 1. Thus <sup>a</sup> says Yahweh:  <i>“Keep justice and practice righteousness <sup>b</sup>,  Because my salvation is close to  appearing <sup>c</sup>  And my righteousness to be revealed <sup>d</sup></i></p>	<p>כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה שְׁמְרוּ מִשְׁפָּט וַעֲשׂוּ  צְדָקָה כִּי־קְרוֹבָה יְשׁוּעָתִי לָבוֹא  וְצִדְקָתִי לְהִגָּלוֹת</p>	<p>Τάδε λέγει κύριος  Φυλάσσεσθε κρίσιν,  ποιήσατε δικαιοσύνην,  ἥγγισεν γὰρ τὸ σωτήριόν  μου παραγίνεσθαι καὶ τὸ  ἔλεός μου ἀποκαλυφθῆναι.</p>
<p>2. Happy is the one doing this: <sup>a</sup>  And the son of man persevering in it <sup>b</sup>  The one keeping the Sabbath from  profaning <sup>c</sup> it <sup>d</sup>  The one keeping his hand <sup>e</sup> from doing  any evil</p>	<p>אַשְׁרֵי אִישׁ יַעֲשֶׂה־זֹאת וְבִן־אָדָם  יִתְנִיחַ בְּהַשְׁמֵר שַׁבָּת מִחֻלְלֹו וְשֹׁמֵר  יָדוֹ מִמַּעֲשׂוֹת כָּל־רָע: ס</p>	<p>μακάριος ἀνὴρ ὁ ποιῶν  ταῦτα καὶ ἄνθρωπος ὁ  ἀντεχόμενος αὐτῶν καὶ  φυλάσσων τὰ σάββατα μὴ  βεβηλοῦν καὶ διατηρῶν τὰς  χεῖρας αὐτοῦ μὴ ποιεῖν  ἀδίκημα.</p>
<p>3. So do not let <sup>a</sup> the foreigner <sup>b</sup> who was joined <sup>c</sup> to  Yahweh <sup>d</sup> say:  <i>“Yahweh will surely cut me off <sup>e</sup> from His  people”</i>   And do not let the eunuch say:  <i>“Behold, I am a dry tree”</i></p>	<p>וְאֶל־יֵאמָר בֶּן־הַנָּכַר הַנִּלְוָה אֶל־יְהוָה  לֵאמֹר הַבְדֵּל יַבְדִּילֵנִי יְהוָה מֵעַל עַמּוֹ  וְאֶל־יֵאמַר הַסֵּרִים הֵן אֲנִי עֵץ יָבֵשׁ: ס</p>	<p>μὴ λεγέτω ὁ ἀλλογενὴς ὁ  προσκεείμενος πρὸς κύριον  Ἀφοριεῖ με ἄρα κύριος ἀπὸ  τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ, καὶ μὴ  λεγέτω ὁ εὐνοῦχος ὅτι Ἐγὼ  εἰμι ξύλον ξηρόν.</p>
<p>4 Because thus says Yahweh:  <i>“To the eunuchs  Keeping my Sabbaths, <sup>a</sup>  Choosing <sup>b</sup> what <sup>c</sup> I delight in  And persevering in my covenant <sup>d</sup></i></p>	<p>כִּי־כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה לְסִרְסִים אֲשֶׁר  יִשְׁמְרוּ אֶת־שַׁבָּתוֹתַי וְבָחֲרוּ בְּאֲשֶׁר  חִפְצָתִי וּמִחְזִיקִים בְּבְרִיתִי:</p>	<p>τάδε λέγει κύριος Τοῖς  εὐνούχοις, ὅσοι ἂν  φυλάσσωνται τὰ σάββατά μου  καὶ ἐκλέξωνται ἃ ἐγὼ θέλω  καὶ ἀντέχωνται τῆς διαθήκης  μου,</p>
<p>5 I will give <sup>a</sup> to them  in my house and within my walls <sup>b</sup>;  a memorial <sup>c</sup> and a name  better <sup>d</sup> than sons and  daughters  an everlasting name  I will give to them <sup>e</sup> one that shall never be cut  off</p>	<p>וְנָתַתִּי לָהֶם בְּבֵיתִי וּבְחֻמּוֹתַי יָד וְשֵׁם  טוֹב מִבָּנִים וּמִבָּנוֹת שֵׁם עוֹלָם אֲתֵּן  לֹו אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִכָּרֵת: ס</p>	<p>δώσω αὐτοῖς ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ μου  καὶ ἐν τῷ τείχει μου τόπον  ὀνομαστὸν κρείττω υἱῶν καὶ  θυγατέρων, ὄνομα αἰώνιον  δώσω αὐτοῖς καὶ οὐκ  ἐκλείψει.</p>
<p>6 and to the foreigners <sup>a</sup>  Who were joined to Yahweh  To minister to Him <sup>b</sup>  To love His name <sup>c</sup>  And to become His servants</p>	<p>וּבְנֵי הַנָּכַר הַנִּלְוִים עַל־יְהוָה לְשִׁרְתּוֹ  וְלִעֲבֹדָה אֶת־שֵׁם יְהוָה לְהִזְוֹת לוֹ  לְעֲבֹדִים כָּל־שֹׁמֵר שַׁבָּת מִחֻלְלֹו  וּמִחְזִיקִים בְּבְרִיתִי:</p>	<p>καὶ τοῖς ἀλλογενέσι τοῖς  προσκεείμενοις κυρίῳ  δουλεύειν αὐτῷ καὶ ἀγαπᾶν  τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου τοῦ εἶναι  αὐτῷ εἰς δούλους καὶ δούλας</p>

(New York: Anchor Bible, 2003), 294-295; Jacob Stromberg, *An Introduction to the Study of Isaiah*, (London, England: T&T Clark, 2011), 20.

<i>All who are keeping the Sabbath from profaning it<sup>d</sup> And persevering in my covenant</i>		καὶ πάντας τοὺς φυλασσομένους τὰ σάββατά μου μὴ βεβηλοῦν καὶ ἀντεχομένους τῆς διαθήκης μου,
<i>7 I will bring them<sup>a</sup> to my holy mountain I will make them rejoice in my house of prayer I will accept their whole burnt offerings and sacrifices<sup>b</sup> on my altar For my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations<sup>c</sup></i>	וְהֵבִיאֹתִים אֶל־הַר קְדֹשִׁי וְשִׁמְחָתִים בְּבֵית תְּפִלָּתִי עֹלֹתֵיהֶם וְזִבְחֵיהֶם לְרָצוֹן עַל־מִזְבְּחִי כִּי בֵיתִי בֵּית־תְּפִלָּה יִקְרָא לְכָל־הָעַמִּים:	εἰσάξω αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄρος τὸ ἅγιόν μου καὶ εὐφρανῶ αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ τῆς προσευχῆς μου, τὰ ὀλοκαυτώματα αὐτῶν καὶ αἱ θυσίαι αὐτῶν ἔσονται δεκταὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου μου, ὁ γὰρ οἶκός μου οἶκος προσευχῆς κληθήσεται πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν,
8. An oracle of Yahweh the Lord The one who gathers the outcasts of Israel: “I will gather yet others to it Ones beyond those already gathered” <sup>a</sup>	נֹאֵם אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה מְקַבֵּץ נִדְחֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עוֹד מְקַבֵּץ עָלָיו לְנִקְבְּצָיו:	εἶπεν κύριος ὁ συνάγων τοὺς διεσπαρμένους Ἰσραὴλ, ὅτι συναΐξω ἐπ’ αὐτὸν συναγωγὴν.

56:1a 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>’s presents a conjunction וַי appear apparently serving as a connecting particle, although three witness (MT, 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> and LXX) lack it.

1b Both verbs שמר and עשה are conjugated in the Qal imperative second masculine person paralleling the deuteronomistic pairing of the justice and righteousness of obeying the law. In the LXX, the imperative φυλάσσεσθε is present, although the parallel ποιήσατε is aorist. The Hebrew imperative does not distinguish aspects.<sup>145</sup>

1c. יְשׁוּעָתִי, “my salvation,” also appears in 12:2 and 49:6. This statement, occurring in a passage and a division that seem to presuppose the return from exile, makes evident that “salvation” in 40–55 was not restricted to the return from exile.<sup>146</sup> In the LXX, instead of the perfect ἤγγικεν (the reading of Swete 1887), Rahlfs and Ziegler both have the aorist ἤγγισεν from the root ἐγγίζω (to draw near, to approach, to come near) as it is used in Mt 3:2 as something that is imminent to come.

1d The LXX’s infinitive παραγίνεσθαι matches the Hebrew לָבוֹא and the infinitive ἀποκαλυφθῆναι is a literal rendering of the Hebrew infinitive לַהֲגִלּוֹת. A similar use is found in Revelation 22:11 when speaking of doing righteousness: ὁ ἀδικῶν ἀδικησάτω ἔτι καὶ ὁ ῥυπαρὸς ῥυπανθήτω ἔτι, καὶ ὁ δίκαιος δικαιοσύνην ποιησάτω ἔτι καὶ ὁ ἅγιος ἁγία- σθήτω ἔτι.<sup>147</sup>

2a. In the LXX, both μακάριος and ἀνὴρ are anarthrous, in contrast to ὁ ποιῶν, emphasizing the centrality of the action. The parallel noun ἄνθρωπος later is likewise without the article. The

<sup>145</sup> Ken Penner, *Isaiah*, 613.

<sup>146</sup> Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*.

<sup>147</sup> Ken Penner, *Isaiah*, 613.

verbs עשה in the Qal imperfect third masculine singular and קזק conjugated in the *Hiphil* imperfect third person masculine singular both carry the idea of continuity. The latter provides the image of perseverance through a causative idiomatic expression of seizing, keeping hold of, grasping or holding fast. The idea is maintenance in a certain course or state. This idea is repeated in the NT (Heb 4:4; 6:18; Rev 2:25; 3:11). The suffix in קזק refers to אִתָּךְ thus referring to the whole double description given afterwards concerning the Sabbath and avoidance of evil.<sup>148</sup> The pronoun *this* refers to what follows (as in Ps 7:4 and Deut 32:29).

2b. The verb קזק used here is repeated in 56:4 and 56:6, being the latter two in relation to the adherence to the covenant. All uses are on the *Hiphil* stem, being the first one an imperfect and the other participles. The first emphasizes the continuity of the practice, while the others refer to the substantival use of the participle in connection with the identification of the people of God as the ones who persevere in covenantal relationship. The primary meaning of the verb is related to physical strength, having a close grip, being strong in holding fast. However, the idea here is close adherence, not strength. The purpose of the verb used is being firm in the word of Yahweh and in the promises of his covenant.<sup>149</sup> LXX's verb ἀντέχω with the genitive means denotes holding a strong attachment.

2c. מִן הַקִּדְשׁ MT and 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> present a piel infinitive prep with a infinitive construct and a third masculine singular suffix “from profaning it”.<sup>150</sup> Ibn Ezra explains the suffix as referring to the implied יום in the expression Sabbath Day. 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> display a feminine suffix referring directly to Sabbath. This may be explained by the fact that שָׁבַט is viewed sometimes as masculine and sometimes as fem.<sup>151</sup> In the Mishna and other Dead Sea Scrolls it is always fem.<sup>152</sup> In the LXX, The participle φυλάσσων recalls the Φυλάσσεσθε of the preceding verse.

2d. There is a double structure of the participle of שָׁמַר (masculine singular absolute) with two verbs in the infinitive construct (עשה and חלל), thus bound to the nominal that follows it in a genitival construction. The verb in the participle is connected to the one who guards and keeps, with direct association with the keeping of the covenant in Gen 17, Ex 31:16 and Deut 6. The Piel of חלל focuses on the bringing about of the state of desecration as a direct opposite of the biblical imperative of שָׁמַר. In addition, Hebrew also allows a zero relativization strategy: instead of explicit marking by a relative element, a null (“zero”) relative complementizer is used, and the head and relative clause appear to be simply juxtaposed. There is the affirmation of the blessedness of this man and the juxtaposition of what is the content of this perseverance. Zero-relatives are typically referred to as “asyndetic” or “unmarked” in Hebrew studies.<sup>153</sup> The zero-relative clause modifies

<sup>148</sup> Alexander, *The Prophecies Of Isaiah*, 334.

<sup>149</sup> David J. A. Clines, ed., “קזק (I),” in *The Concise Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), 112.

<sup>150</sup> Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, Complete and Unabridged, fully searchable, with Strong Numbers and interactive Index edition. (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Academic, 1994), 320; Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament Vol. 2*, trans. M. E. J. Richardson, Revised ed. edition. (Leiden ; New York: Brill Academic Publishers, 2001), 319.

<sup>151</sup> BDB, 992

<sup>152</sup> Kutscher and Rosén, *The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 394.

<sup>153</sup> Paul Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, Second Edition, Second reprint of second edition with corrections. (Roma: Biblical Institute Press, 2006), 481-482; H. F. W. Gesenius, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, ed. Francis Brown, trans. Edward Robinson (Oxford

a head and contains an element resuming the head.<sup>154</sup>

2e. MT has his hands instead of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>'s יָדָיו. The theory for the divergence that the scroll is attempting to avoid an anthropomorphism cannot be maintained because “his hands” in this passage pertains to human hands, not the Lord's. Thus, the difference is due to orthography and the lack of distinction between the suffixes with or without the yod in the DSS Hebrew, which leads to a plural reading from the DSS and an important consistent deviation from the MT.<sup>155</sup>

3a. Isa 56:1-2 is not a general formulaic introduction that stands by itself but is the essential cause for the reasoning of 56:3-8 because the waw starting 56:3 establishes a consecutive relation between the verses. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, LXX, and Syriac. lack the conjunction. Targum J., Vulgate., and 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> support MT, which is the harder reading because the connection is not obvious. The verb אָמַר here is conjugated in the Qal imperfect, third person masculine singular jussive refers to a third person expression of volition marked by a shortening of the usual third person imperfect verb form. However, here the jussive is used to express a negative command in since it is coupled with the negative לֹא.<sup>156</sup>

3b This word literally means the son of a foreigner or stranger, but it is vocalized in the Masoretic Text as a ה-relative prefixed to a 3ms perfective, נִלְוֶה. But this form can vowel from *patah* to *qames*. There are a number of forms that the Masoretic Text presents as words with penultimate stress, but these forms can be read as participles by a simple shift of the word stress to the final syllable instead of the penultimate stress marked by the Masoretic.<sup>157</sup> Thus, the better reading is a participial idea for the son of the strangeness meaning a foreigner.

3c. Most reference grammars agree that there are some instances of the Biblical Hebrew definite article ה used as a relative word. Eighteen clear examples of this relative construction exist in the Hebrew Bible; 17 are in the form of ה followed by a perfective verb, and 1 exhibits ה followed by a verbless clause consisting of one member, a clitic preposition and its cliticized object pronoun.<sup>158</sup> Here the verb לָוָה is pointed with a *Qal* perfect but the article would then be incompatible. Thus, the better reading is for *Niphal* perfect third masculine singular in terms of morphology. However, with the article working as a relative pronoun, it ought to be understood as a participle – maybe even substantial. Since the verb also accepts the *Hiphal* form, the *Niphal* is emphasizing the passive aspect of being attached to the people of God – the one ingrafted.<sup>159</sup> This is also a possible reading of the LXX the usage of προσκειμενος.<sup>160</sup> The verb πρόσκειμαι normally takes a dative, which is used for close attachment and devotion, specifically to God so the dative Κυρίῳ is the expected form with πρόσκειμαι. However, this construction only appears here and in

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University Press, 1952), 486-489; Bruce K. Waltke and Michael Patrick O'Connor, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 338, §19:6.

<sup>154</sup> Robert D. Holmstedt, *The Relative Clause in Biblical Hebrew*, Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2016).

<sup>155</sup> Elisha Qimron, *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Winona Lake, Ind: Brill Academic Pub, 1986), 269-270.

<sup>156</sup> Christo H. van der Merwe and Jacobus A. Naudé, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar : Second Edition*, vol. Second edition of *Biblical Languages: Hebrew* (New York: T&T Clark, 2017), §19.4.4.

<sup>157</sup> Robert D. Holmstedt, *The Relative Clause in Biblical Hebrew*, Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2016), 71.

<sup>158</sup> Robert D. Holmstedt, *The Relative Clause in Biblical Hebrew*, 70.

<sup>159</sup> Gesenius, Driver, and Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, §138.

<sup>160</sup> John D. W. Watts, *Word Biblical Commentary: Isaiah 34-66*, Revised edition. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc, 2006), 244.

56:6 establishing a distinct aspect of the use and probably focusing on the passive aspect of being bounded by the action of Yahweh.<sup>161</sup>

3d. In the MT, the phrase on verse 3 and repeated in verse 6 has a deviation from  $\text{עַל־יְהוָה}$  to  $\text{עַל־יְהוָה}$ . In 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> both read  $\text{עַל־יְהוָה}$  and in 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> both read  $\text{עַל־יְהוָה}$ . All witnesses are grammatically possible. The verb  $\text{הִנָּלִים}$  can be accompanied by both prepositions:  $\text{עַל}$  (Gen 29:34; Jer 50:5; Zech 2:15) or  $\text{עַל}$  (Num 18:2; Isa 14:1; Esth 9:27; Dan 11:34).<sup>162</sup> In all passages, the verb is on the *Niphal* stem.<sup>163</sup> The preposition  $\pi\rho\omicron\varsigma$  of the LXX matches the Hebrew  $\text{עַל}$ .

3e. The saying refers to a certainty of separation due to the use of the emphatic *Hiphal* infinitive absolute of  $\text{בָּדַל}$  emphasizing Yahweh's action of causing separation which is the same verb used in Gen 1:4 when Yahweh caused separation between light and darkness. The root is used to express separation between groups in Lev. 20:24; Num. 16:9; Ezra 6:21. The LXX's form  $\text{Ἀφοριεῖ}$  is the future of  $\text{ἀφορίζω}$ , "separate." The use of the Greek verb here in connection to the use of Luke in Acts 8:27 may reveal an intentional NT recall of Isaiah 56:3–7.<sup>164</sup>

4a Both verbs  $\text{שָׁמַר}$  and  $\text{בָּחַר}$  are denoting habitual action. The first is conjugated as Qal imperfect third masculine singular, but the second, although qal perfect, is an occurrence of a weqatal as a consecutive perfect conveying the equivalent of the prefixed (imperfect) conjugation, which often conveys imperfective aspect.<sup>165</sup> LXX's  $\text{τοῖς ἐκκλῆσις}$  indicates the addressees of the speech. The recurrence of  $\text{φωλαῖς}$  recalls 56:1–2.<sup>166</sup>

4b. MT and 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> present a qal perfect verb while 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> shows a qal imperfect. It is possible that 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> had a dittogram (doubling of the yod/waw) or MT's reading is "the result of an error of eye ... waw and yod were often indistinguishable from each other".<sup>167</sup> Another possibility is the pattern of deviation of perfect and imperfect verbs in association with the uses of the waw consecutive.<sup>168</sup>

4c  $\text{בְּאֲשֶׁר}$  here there is a use of preposition or subordinating (clitic) conjunction attached directly to a relative element constituting the matrix clause leaving two options: either the preposition +  $\text{אֲשֶׁר}$  collocations are null-head relatives in which the null head is the complement of the preposition or the  $\text{אֲשֶׁר}$  functions not as a relative item but as a more general nominalizer, and the  $\text{אֲשֶׁר}$  clause is itself the complement of the preposition. The only relevant test for determining whether the relative or nominalized clause analysis is more likely is to examine the subordinate clause itself. If it is complete without assuming the role of a raised relative head, then the nominalized clause analysis is simpler. However, if the subordinate clause does not seem syntactically or semantically complete without the syntactic presence of a noun that has been raised as the (null) relative head, then the relative analysis is obligatory.<sup>169</sup> Here the clause precedes the verb  $\text{הִנָּחֵם}$  so that it is providing the specific content of the choice which could entail the use of the preposition in the

<sup>161</sup> Ken Penner, *Isaiah*, 613.

<sup>162</sup> HALOT, 522

<sup>163</sup> Donald W. Parry, *Exploring the Isaiah Scrolls and Their Textual Variants* (Leiden Boston (Mass.): BRILL, 2019), 386.

<sup>164</sup> Ken Penner, *Isaiah*, 613.

<sup>165</sup> Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, §43, §115, §119.

<sup>166</sup> Ken Penner, *Isaiah*, 613.

<sup>167</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998), 450.

<sup>168</sup> Parry, *Exploring the Isaiah Scrolls and Their Textual Variants*, 386.

<sup>169</sup> Robert D. Holmstedt, *The Relative Clause in Biblical Hebrew*, 121.

sense of specification or norm.<sup>170</sup>

4d. LXX's verb ἀντέχω refers back to 56:2 as well and builds on the idea of the blessed man persevering in the covenant as a strong attachment/relationship with Yahweh, but now applied to the figure of the eunuch.

5a The waw in the beginning introduces the apodosis after an implied conditional protasis and gives the verb future meaning since וַיִּהְיֶה is conjugated in the Qal perfect first person.<sup>171</sup>

5b The preposition בְּ is used here to delimitate boundaries highlighting the concrete aspect of the promise to be given within the boundaries of the true temple. The spatial idea established by the preposition is juxtaposed with the superior aspect of the promise.<sup>172</sup>

5c The use of the word יָד here is not clear. The literal translation is hand, which Symachus and Theodotion retain as the correspondent imagery for the instrument of seizure thus understood as a share or a portion. Gesenius understands this as an irregular plural and derives from it that idea of a handful, as a blessing. However, 2 Sam 18:18 clarifies that the uplifted hand and arm found in many sepulchral columns identify the word with a place of memory, a monument, a memorial sight. Particularly since the discovery of memorial stelae in what was probably a shrine at Hazor, the inclination has been to interpret “hand,” as “monument”. This translation would be compatible with other OT uses such as 1 Sam. 15:12; 2 Sam. 18:18. This would entail that the eunuch would be allowed to erect a memorial in the temple precincts, being remembered there with honor. The juxtaposition of a name better than sons and daughters then conveys the idea of a perpetuity of a name, a memorial offspring, a family name that stands the test of time.<sup>173</sup> The LXX's adjective ὀνομαστός indicates that the place is well-known indicating the idea of a monument or a memorial that is public knowledge. The Hebrew behind τόπον ὀνομαστόν is יָד וְשֵׁם implying that although eunuchs do not have an offspring or a name preserved to posterity, Yahweh will guarantee that they will be remembered forever which, in association to the very person of Yahweh carrying on this promise, may be associated with the idea that Yahweh Himself will remember them.<sup>174</sup>

5d Extraposition in relativization describes the placement of the relative clause at a distance from the relative head, furthering down the clause.<sup>175</sup>

5e אֵלָיו־לֹא MT and 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> read לֹא meaning “to him” and in probable harmonization with 56:6. However, 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> reads לְהֵם identical to the one in the beginning of the verse. Westermann<sup>176</sup> and Blenkinsopp<sup>177</sup> support this latter reading alongside the LXX instead of the MT. Oort proposed the

<sup>170</sup> Though the dominant sense of the preposition בְּ is spatial or temporal, Waltke and O'Connor note the significant diversity of derivative nuances, including accompaniment (‘with’), instrumental (‘with, by’), exchange (‘in exchange for’), specification (‘with regard to’), norm (‘in the manner of’), capacity (‘as’), and causal (‘because’). See: IBHS §11.2.5; GBH §133c.

<sup>171</sup> Gesenius, Driver, and Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, §112.

<sup>172</sup> H. H. Hardy II and Matthew McAfee, *Going Deeper with Biblical Hebrew: An Intermediate Study of the Grammar and Syntax of the Old Testament* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2024), 548.

<sup>173</sup> Yadin, *Hazor, the Rediscovery of a Great Citadel of the Bible.*; Robinson “The Meaning of yd in Isaiah 56:5”; TDOT, V:401-402

<sup>174</sup> Ken Penner, *Isaiah*, 614.

<sup>175</sup> Robert D. Holmstedt, *The Relative Clause in Biblical Hebrew*.

<sup>176</sup> Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66-OTL: A Commentary* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1969), 311.

<sup>177</sup> Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 1st edition. (New York: Anchor Bible, 2003), 130.

emendation to the MT before the discovery of the DSS.<sup>178</sup> Kimhi defends the MT reading because the promise is to “each of the eunuchs individually” and Barthelemy prefers the MT because it is the more difficult one.<sup>179</sup> Oswalt believes the MT contains an error.<sup>180</sup> Thus, LXX and 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> have the better reading.

6a The reading of LXX’s Swete 1887 (probably an earlier scribe) made no break here at the beginning of Isa 56:6, but the later witness who numbered the sections made a division. Either way, there is no new finite verb in this verse, so the dative continues the αὐτοῖς of 56:5. Ottley spells ἀλλογενέσι as ἀλλογενέσιν.<sup>181</sup>

6b יהוה יְהוָה אֱתֵנִי לְעֹבְדֵי בְּרִיתְךָ וְלַעֲבָדֶיךָ there are some textual variations in 56:6. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> omits וְלַעֲבָדֶיךָ and replaces וְלַעֲבָדֶיךָ for וְלַבְרִית. The word order is also different. However, the MT is supported by 1QIsa<sup>b</sup>. LXX reads καὶ πάντας τοὺς φυλασσομένους like MT and 1QIsa<sup>b</sup>. The alteration of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> may reveal a bias of the Qumran community, who were identified with the priestly house of Zadok, culminating in a reading that would forbid the participation of non-Levites (even more non-Israelites) in the cultic service in the temple. Thus, the sacerdotal language was not missed in the reading of the Isaianic message.<sup>182</sup> Rubinstein also suggested that 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> omission of וְלַעֲבָדֶיךָ in 56:6 was paralleling 14:1-2 in which Israel would make foreigners as servants and handmaids.<sup>183</sup> Thus, the variant of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> reveals the implications of the message of Isa 56 already being understood in the Qumran community.<sup>184</sup> The reading of the MT is the better one. The reading δουλεύειν in the LXX followed by Rahlfs and Ziegler is a change by the later scribe from δουλεύεις in Swete 1887.<sup>185</sup>

6c. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> has “to bless” instead of MT’s “to love.” The expression “to bless the name of the Lord” was important in Jewish liturgy so that the scroll also transposes the entire phrase after the following one. As a result of this change and the previous one, the verse reads there as follows: “...themselves to the Lord to become servants of him and to bless the name of the Lord, all who are...”<sup>186</sup>

6d. The recurrence of φυλασσομένους recalls 56:1-2, and 4. There are three accusatives governed by the same preposition εἰς: bondmen and bondwomen (δούλους καὶ δοῦλας) and sabbath-keepers. This idea is connected with the revelation of the nature of the people of God meaning that these three are what the God-fearing foreigners become.<sup>187</sup>

<sup>178</sup> Oort Henricus, *Textus Hebraici Emendationes Quibus In Vetere Testamento Neerlandice Vertendo* (Kessinger Publishing, 2009), 105.

<sup>179</sup> Dominique Barthelemy, *Critique Textuelle de l'Ancien Testament* (Fribourg/Suisse: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht GmbH & Co, 1992), 2:410.

<sup>180</sup> Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, 450.

<sup>181</sup> R. R. Ottley, ed., *The Book of Isaiah According to the Septuagint: Volume 2, Introduction and Translation with a Parallel Version from the Hebrew* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

<sup>182</sup> Shalom Paul, *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary*, First Edition. (Grand Rapids (Mich.) Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012), 449-450. Additionally, there is some similar sound between this word הַלְוִיִּם and “Levite” which leads to the possibility of a wordplay, especially considering the connotation of cultic service.

<sup>183</sup> Rubinstein, “The Theological Aspect of Some Variant Readings in the Isaiah Scroll.”

<sup>184</sup> Joseph R. Rosenbloom, *The Dead Sea Isaiah Scroll: A Literary Analysis: A Comparison with The Masoretic Text and The Biblia Hebraica*, (Eerdmans, 1970), 62-63.

<sup>185</sup> Ken Penner, *Isaiah*, 614.

<sup>186</sup> Kutscher and Rosén, *The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll*, 225-226.

<sup>187</sup> Ken Penner, *Isaiah*, 614.

7a. The future of εὐφραίνω is used here with the accusative indicating the person that is being referred in 6 meaning the whole category of foreigners.

7b. 𐤏𐤒𐤓𐤕𐤓𐤕 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> provides a reading in attempt to harmonize with 60:7. The MT construction seems to be lacking a verb, but has the support of other Qumran witnesses and multiple versions and, being the more difficult, likely retains the primary reading. Also, in the LXX's the neuter τὰ ὀλοκαυτώματα must be nominative, in parallel with αἱ θυσίαι. In Acts 10:35 there is a similar connection with salvation and δεκταί. Paul mentioned the acceptable sacrifice in Phil 4:18: ἀπέχω δὲ πάντα καὶ περισσεύω· πεπλήρωμαι δεξάμενος παρὰ Ἐπαφροδίτου τὰ παρ' ὑμῶν, ὁσμήν εὐωδίας, θυσίαν δεκτὴν, εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ.

7c. 𐤏𐤒𐤓𐤕𐤓𐤕? Most verbs in the DSS have a morphology identical to the MT, however there are some divergences, such as the one presented here. III-8 verbs are sometimes written with a ה.<sup>188</sup> The passive κληθήσεται has the nominative οἶκος as its subject. Mark 11:17 has the full quote Ὁ οἶκός μου οἶκος προσευχῆς κληθήσεται πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν; Matt 21:13 shortens it to Ὁ οἶκός μου οἶκος προσευ- χῆς κληθήσεται; Luke 19:46 has the even shorter ὁ οἶκός μου οἶκος προσευχῆς. The point made in the context of Isaiah, namely that the house of prayer is πᾶσι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, is expanded in Matthew and Luke to the broader idea of the true nature of the people of God. In Isaiah the examples of the eunuchs and foreigners being accepted is used by Luke 17:18 to refer to the leper that is the foreigner and in Acts 8:27 to the eunuch.

8a. The awkward-sounding phrase is technically a “permutation,” which is a species of apposition.<sup>189</sup> The cognates συνάγων/συνάξω/συναγωγὴν match the Hebrew being all from the root 𐤒𐤁𐤓. The use of the preposition ἐπὶ in συνάξω ἐπ' αὐτοὺς συναγωγὴν is similar to that in Mark 5:21, where the crowd gathered “to” Jesus. This preposition is the regular translation of לַ, which in the Hebrew clearly has a singular pronoun.<sup>190</sup>

<sup>188</sup> For further examples, see: Parry, *Exploring the Isaiah Scrolls and Their Textual Variants*, 388.

<sup>189</sup> Gesenius, Driver, and Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, §131.

<sup>190</sup> Ken Penner, *Isaiah*, 615

## APPENDIX II – COMPARISON OF TRANSLATIONS

ESV	NIV	KJV	LXX RALPHS	Vulg	BHQ
56:1 Thus says the LORD: “Keep justice, and do righteousness, for soon my salvation will come, and my righteousness be revealed.	This is what the LORD says: “Maintain justice and do what is right, for my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed.	Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.	Τάδε λέγει κύριος Φυλάσσεσθε κρίσιν, ποιήσατε δικαιοσύνην, ἥγγισεν γὰρ τὸ σωτήριόν μου παραγίνεσθαι καὶ τὸ ἔλεός μου ἀποκαλυφθῆναι.	Hæc dicit Dominus: Custodite iudicium, et facite justitiam, quia juxta est salus mea ut veniat, et justitia mea ut reveletur.	כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה שְׁמְרוּ מִשְׁפָּט וַעֲשׂוּ צְדָקָה כִּי-קְרוֹבָה יְשׁוּעָתִי לְבֹא וצְדִקְתִּי לְהִגָּלוֹת:
2 Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath, not profaning it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil.”	Blessed is the one who does this—the person who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it, and keeps their hands from doing any evil.”	Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.	μακάριος ἀνὴρ ὁ ποιῶν ταῦτα καὶ ἄνθρωπος ὁ ἀντεχόμενος αὐτῶν καὶ φυλάσσων τὰ σάββατα μὴ βεβηλοῦν καὶ διατηρῶν τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ μὴ ποιεῖν ἀδίκημα.	Beatus vir qui facit hoc, et filius hominis qui apprehendet istud, custodiens sabbatum ne polluat illud, custodiens manus suas ne faciat omne malum	אַשְׁרֵי אִישׁ וְשֹׁשֶׁל יַעֲשֶׂה-זֹּאת וּבֶן-אָדָם יִחַזֵּק בָּהּ שְׁמֹר שַׁבָּת מִחֻלּוֹ וְשֹׁמֵר יָדוֹ מִמַּעֲשׂוֹת כָּל-רָע: ס
3 Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD say, “The LORD will surely separate me from his people”; and let not the eunuch say, “Behold, I am a dry tree.”	Let no foreigner who is bound to the LORD say, “The LORD will surely exclude me from his people.” And let no eunuch complain, “I am only a dry tree.”	Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry	μὴ λεγέτω ὁ ἀλλογενὴς ὁ προσκείμενος πρὸς κύριον Ἀφοριεῖ με ἄρα κύριος ἀπὸ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ, καὶ μὴ λεγέτω ὁ εὐνοῦχος ὅτι Ἐγὼ εἰμι ξύλον ξηρόν.	Et non dicat filius advenæ qui adhæret Domino, dicens: Separatione dividet me Dominus a populo suo; et non dicat eunuchus: Ecce ego lignum aridum.	וְאֶל-יֵאמַר בֶּן-הַנָּכָר הַנִּלְוָה אֶל-יְהוָה לֹא-אֶמַר הַבָּדֵל יַבְדִּילֵנִי יְהוָה מֵעַל עַמּוֹ וְאֶל-יֵאמַר הַסָּרִיס הֵן אֲנִי עֵץ יָבֵשׁ: ס

		tree.			
4 For thus says the LORD: “To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant,	For this is what the LORD says: “To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant—	For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant;	τάδε λέγει κύριος τοῖς εὐνοούχοις, ὅσοι ἂν φυλάξωνται τὰ σάββατά μου καὶ ἐκλέξωνται ἃ ἐγὼ θέλω καὶ ἀντέχωνται τῆς διαθήκης μου,	Quia hæc dicit Dominus eunuchis: Qui custodierint sabbata mea, et elegerint quæ ego volui, et tenuerint fœdus meum,	כִּי־כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה לְסָרִיסִים אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁמְרוּ אֶת־שַׁבָּתוֹתַי וּבְחָרוּ בְּאֲשֶׁר חָפְצָתִי וּמִחֲזִיקִים בְּבְרִיתִי:
5 I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.	to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will endure forever.	Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.	δώσω αὐτοῖς ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ μου καὶ ἐν τῷ τείχει μου τόπον ὀνομαστὸν κρείττω υἱῶν καὶ θυγατέρων, ὄνομα αἰώνιον δώσω αὐτοῖς καὶ οὐκ ἐκλείψει.	dabo eis in domo mea et in muris meis locum, et nomen melius a filiis et filiabus: nomen sempiternum dabo eis, quod non peribit.	וְנָתַתִּי לָהֶם בְּרִיתִי וּבְחֻמּוֹתַי יָד וְשֵׁם טוֹב מִבָּנִים וּמִבָּנוֹת וְשֵׁם עוֹלָם אֶתֶּן־לָוּ אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִכָּרֵת: ס
6 “And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant—	And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant—	Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant;	καὶ τοῖς ἀλλογενέσι τοῖς προσκειμένοις κυρίῳ δουλεύειν αὐτῷ καὶ ἀγαπᾶν τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου τοῦ εἶναι αὐτῷ εἰς δούλους καὶ δούλας καὶ πάντας τοὺς φυλασσομένους τὰ σάββατά μου μὴ βεβηλοῦν καὶ	Et filios advenæ, qui adhærent Domino, ut colant eum, et diligant nomen ejus, ut sint ei in servos; omnem custodientem sabbatum ne polluat illud, et tenentem fœdus meum;	וּבְנֵי הַנָּכָר הַנִּלְוִים עָלַי יִהְיֶה לִּשְׁרָתוֹ וְלִצְהָבָה אֶת־שֵׁם יְהוָה לְהִזִּית לֹו לַעֲבָדִים כָּל־שֹׁמֵר שַׁבָּת מִחֲלָלוֹ וּמִחֲזִיקִים בְּבְרִיתִי:

			ἀντεχομένους τῆς διαθήκης μου,		
7 these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.”	these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.”	Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.	εἰσάξω αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄρος τὸ ἅγιόν μου καὶ εὐφρανῶ αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ τῆς προσευχῆς μου, τὰ ὀλοκαυτώματα αὐτῶν καὶ αἱ θυσίαι αὐτῶν ἔσονται δεκταὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου μου, ὁ γὰρ οἶκός μου οἶκος προσευχῆς κληθήσεται πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν,	adducam eos in montem sanctum meum, et lætificabo eos in domo orationis meæ; holocausta eorum et victimæ eorum placebunt mihi super altari meo, quia domus mea domus orationis vocabitur cunctis populis.	וְהֵבִיאֹתִים אֶל־הַר קְדְשִׁי וְשִׂמְחָתִים בְּבֵית תַּפְלְתִּי עוֹלֹתֵיהֶם וְזִבְחֵיהֶם לְרָצוֹן עַל־מִזְבְּחִי כִּי בֵיתִי בֵּית־תַּפְלָה יִקְרָא לְכָל־הָעַמִּים:
8 The Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, declares, “I will gather yet others to him besides those already gathered.”	The Sovereign LORD declares—he who gathers the exiles of Israel: “I will gather still others to them besides those already gathered.”	The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.	εἶπεν κύριος ὁ συνάγων τοὺς διεσπαρμένους Ἰσραηλ, ὅτι συνάξω ἐπ’ αὐτὸν συναγωγὴν.	Ait Dominus Deus, qui congregat dispersos Israël: Adhuc congregabo ad eum congregatos ejus.	נֹאֵם אֲדֹנָי יְהוֹה מְקַבֵּץ נִדְחֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עוֹד אֶקְבֹּץ עֲלָיו לְנִקְבְּצָיו:

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