

Some questions to be addressed by visions of ultimate hope

WHERE

-] Eden: new/restored creation
-] Jerusalem: urban renewal/replacement
-] An island across the sea: a new place on earth, accessible only after death
-] In the sky: accessible only after death

WHEN

-] The “new age” (*zōē aiōnion*) triggered by a specific event/occurrence
-] When people die
-] After a fixed period
-] After destruction of the old

HOW DOES IT COME TO BE OR HOW DOES ONE TAKE PART?

-] Death
-] Moral effort of individuals/nations
-] Messianic effort on behalf of others
-] A final battle between good/evil
-] Gift of the god(s)

WHO

-] People of Israel/Judah
-] People of YHWH who keep the torah/covenant
-] Anyone who keeps the torah/covenant
-] Anyone who worships YHWH

HUMAN EMBODINESS

-] No, only “souls”
-] Yes, restored to original form; healed from limitations
-] Yes, transformed into new form

SOURCE/GENRE

-] Philosophers/intellectual elite: rational argument
-] Official elite: political propaganda
-] The cries of the poor victimized by empire: impassioned pleading
-] Mystic poets: visionary revelation
-] Indigenous peoples: dance, ritual, “sacred stories” tradition

A GREEK’S POET’S PERSPECTIVE:

The good receive a life free from toil, not scraping with the strength of their arms the earth, nor the water of the sea, for the sake of a poor sustenance. But in the presence of the honored gods, those who gladly kept their oaths enjoy a life without tears, while the others undergo a toil that is unbearable to look at. Those who have persevered three times, on either side, to keep their souls free from all wrongdoing, follow Zeus’ road to the end, to the tower of Cronus, where ocean breezes blow around the island of the blessed, and flowers of gold are blazing, some from splendid trees on land, while water nurtures others.