

**THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY/TEMPLE MOTIF IN THE  
HEBREW BIBLE: FUNCTION AND RELATIONSHIP  
TO THE EARTHLY COUNTERPARTS**

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The present dissertation seeks to ascertain the function of the heavenly sanctuary/temple and its relationship to the earthly counterpart, as reflected in forty-five passages of the Hebrew Bible. Close attention is given to the function of the heavenly sanctuary/temple and, wherever appropriate, the relationship between the heavenly sanctuary/temple and its earthly counterpart. Following an introductory chapter, the second chapter of this dissertation is devoted to a survey of the heavenly sanctuary/temple motif in the ANE literature as represented by Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite, Ugaritic, and Egyptian texts. The investigation of these texts reveals that the heavenly sanctuary/temple motif was part of the worldview of the ANE, where the heavenly sanctuary was not only assumed as existing in heaven, but also as functioning in close relationship to the earthly counterparts. Chapters 3–5 are devoted to the exegesis of heavenly sanctuary/temple passages in the Hebrew Bible, according to the canonical divisions of the Hebrew Bible (namely, Torah, Prophets, and Writings). This investigation has demonstrated that the heavenly sanctuary/temple is understood to function as a place of divine activities, where YHWH supervises the cosmos, performs acts of judgment (sometimes conceived as a two-stage activity in which the execution of the sentence was preceded by an investigative phase), hears the prayers of the needy, and bestows atonement and forgiveness upon the sinners. Perceptions also emerged of the heavenly sanctuary/temple as a place of worship, a meeting place for the heavenly council, and an object of attack by anti-YHWH forces.

In terms of its relationship to the earthly counterpart, it has been found that the heavenly sanctuary/temple functioned in close structural and functional relationship to the earthly counterpart in such a way that the activities of the heavenly/temple sanctuary could affect its earthly counterpart, and conversely the ministrations of the earthly temple/sanctuary were able to reverberate in the heavenly sanctuary/temple.

Chapter 6 is devoted to a theological synthesis of the heavenly sanctuary/temple motif, as uncovered by the investigation undertaken in the previous chapters. Thus some consideration was given to the similarities and differences between the heavenly sanctuary/temple motif as found in the Hebrew Bible and in its ANE background. Next, attention was devoted to some theological implications of the heavenly sanctuary/temple motif for the notions of judgment, the great controversy between good and evil, and the experience of the individual. To conclude, it is pointed out that the Hebrew Bible conceives of the heavenly sanctuary/temple as existing in dynamic relationship with its earthly counterpart, made effective by a functional and structural correspondence.