The Heavenly Sanctuary in the Old Testament

Richard M. Davidson, Andrews University

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Orientation to the Old Testament Perspective.

In connection with our analysis of Exod 25:40 (in the last chapter) we have already had occasion to examine various facets of the Sanctuary motif in relation to vertical typology. The prevalent concept of the earthly-heavenly sanctuary correspondence in ancient Near Eastern thought has been surveyed. We have seen how the linguistic and contextual evidence strongly suggests this same vertical correspondence to be implicit in Exod 25:9, 40. The record of events antedating the Exodus event (such as Genesis 28:10-22) have been seen to express the idea of heavenly and earthly counterpart. We have also briefly alluded to other OT passages affirming the existence of a heavenly Sanctuary to which the earthly one corresponds.

In this case-study on vertical, sanctuary typology, we will build upon the analysis set forth in the previous chapter. In regard to Exod 25:9, 40, it should be noted that there is no explicit eschatological thrust in the immediate context. But we agree with Caird in his analysis of OT interpretation of the book of Hebrews, that the *auctor ad Hebraeos* has engaged in sound exegesis of the sanctuary ritual texts in order to arrive at his eschatological conclusions. Because of the self-confessed ineffectuality and impermanence of the OT ritual, it implicitly points beyond itself to the time when an effectual, permanent solution to
the sin problem will occur. At the same time, the earth-heavenly correspondence in Exod 25:9, 40, means that the earthly sanctuary precincts and ritual points above itself to the cosmic reality—the heavenly sanctuary—of which the earthly is only a shadow. Furthermore, inasmuch as the Hebrew religion has replaced the cyclical re-enactment of past cosmic events with an historical remembrance of past-redemptive activities combined with an anticipation of a teleological cosmic climax, it seems likely that the yearly round of festivals which are explicitly commemorative of redemptive-historical (Exodus) events, can also be viewed as foreshadowing of an eschatological fulfillment. Finally, already in the Pentateuch, the theme of the cultus seems to be linked with the (Messianic) Promise theme as examined by Walter Kaiser and others. For instance, in Gen 22, there is the linkage of Isaac, the Promised Seed of Abraham, with the sacrificial offering, and the concept of substitution. This same link between Israel, the Promised Seed of Abraham, and the sacrificial substitute, may be traced throughout the cultic material of the Pentateuch.

Much work remains to be done on these Pentateuch allusions to the vertical and eschatological typology of the Sanctuary. But our present case study is directed to the more explicit OT typological references. In studying these passages, we will first examine specific references using the term "sanctuary," beginning with the concentration of texts in the Psalms. Then certain sanctuary sub-themes with allusions to vertical sanctuary typology will be noted. Various OT references/allusions to the heavenly sanctuary will be examined, even where there is no explicit reference
to the earthly sanctuary in the immediate context, inasmuch as the
typological correspondence may often become apparent by comparison
with earthly sanctuary liturgy and divine action in parallel passages.

Explicit "Sanctuary" Passages

We note first

\begin{quote}
Psalm 11:1-4
\end{quote}

The Lord is in his holy temple\footnote{\footnotesize{כְּבָרָא דֶּרֶךְ הַיָּשָׁר}}
the Lord's throne is in heaven;
his yese behold, his eyelids test, the children of men.

This passage has been very widely cited as referring to the heavenly
sanctuary.\footnote{\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{4}}} Some see a direct reference;\footnote{\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{5}}} others see the temple as
possibly earthly, but the earthly and heavenly "share a mysterious
identity";\footnote{\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{6}}} or the earthly represents the heavenly sanctuary.\footnote{\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{7}}} Still
other commentators view the situation in terms of a contrast--God
present simultaneously in both heavenly and earthly sanctuary;\footnote{\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{8}}} and, finally the position is held of a vision in the earthly temple,
where the earthly passes into the heavenly, and cosmic realities are
made known.\footnote{\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{9}}} In the minds of the vast majority of commentators,
there is ultimately, in some way, reference here to the heavenly
sanctuary.

Such unanimous consent accrues to this interpretation be-
cause the poetic \textit{parallelismus membrorum}, considered one of the
main features of biblical poetry,\footnote{\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{10}}} is plainly evident here. There
is "explicit parallelism between 'in the temple' and 'in the
heavens'"\footnote{\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{11}}} and it is \textit{obviously} of the synonymous type. Thus
the word "heaven" provides a heavenly context for the word "temple."

We are dealing here with the heavenly temple of God.

But is it legitimate to equate the "temple" with the
heavenly sanctuary? Do the two expressions coincide? To answer these questions, we must understand the significance of the word for temple used in this context:

This Hebrew word derives from Sumer-Akkadian. In Akkadian, ekallu denotes a palace or temple. The Sumerian form e-gal is a compound word meaning "great house," and also signifies a kingly palace, or the equivalent of Israel's temple. The Assyrian form, i-kal-luv, almost always describes a ruler's palace. But in Ugaritic, hkl is often used for a heavenly palace or temple as well as an earthly, since the mythology of an earthly/heavenly palace building for the god plays a vital role. Thus the Semitic context allows for either meaning: palace (dwelling place of a king or god), or temple (a sanctuary where a god is worshipped).

In Old Testament usage, a few times ūgûn applies to an earthly palace of rulers: Isa 39:7; Nah 2:7; II Ki 20:18; II Chron 36:7; Dan 1:4. But it more often refers to a cultic center of worship, i.e., a temple for God. Twice the pre-Solomonic Tabernacle is denoted: 1 Sam 1:9; 3:3. Numerous passages describe Solomon's temple (2 Ki 18:16; 23:4, etc.), Ezekiel's temple (Eze 41, 42), and the Second Temple (Ezra 3, 4; Neh 6:10, 11; and throughout the post-exilic prophets).

Then we encounter the passages that refer to the heavenly ūgûn. How can we know whether these references have in mind a palace (dwelling-place) merely, or whether they signify a temple (sanctuary) and thus affirm the existence of a heavenly sanctuary? A. G. Cody points out a helpful indication: "If, in the texts under scrutiny at the moment, there were some reference
to cult, we might say that in them יִרְאָה does indicate a heavenly sanctuary." References to worship or cultic allusions would seem to provide a sure conclusion in favor of a sanctuary.

But this is not the only test. Since God is naturally the object of worship in the temple it would seem to follow that when God is mentioned in the (heavenly) temple context, then the heavenly sanctuary is in view. This means that even there may be no explicit cultic allusions present, the very fact that the יִרְאָה is for God makes it a sanctuary. This becomes more understandable when one considers the earthly tabernacle that was a pattern of the heavenly. It was constructed for the dwelling-place of God (Exod 25:8), and at the same time it served as a sanctuary for the service of the cult. By analogy, God's dwelling-place in heaven is a temple, a sanctuary. Never in Scripture is there a hint of a separate dwelling-place of God in heaven apart from his temple. They are one and the same. The God of Israel never slumbers nor sleeps (Ps 121:4). The heavenly host around his throne (notice, only one throne implied, never a palace-throne and a separate sanctuary-throne) are ever praising Him (Isa 6:4; cf. Rev 4:8). God is always in His (one) temple. Thus von Rad can say, "His [Yahweh's] palace, established over the heavenly ocean (Ps 104:3), is the heavenly sanctuary." He further correctly remarks, however, that the heavenly sanctuary "is sometimes more the seat of world government, sometimes more a cultic center." But the point is, that no matter which aspect of activity is emphasized at the moment, it is still the heavenly sanctuary that is in view. It appears safe to conclude, therefore, that if, in any given text speaking
of a heavenly temple, with God or cultic setting involved, we may confidently state that that text affirms the heavenly sanctuary.

We may now return to Ps 11. Verse 4, with its synonomous parallelism of "temple" and "heaven" without doubt indicates the heavenly sanctuary. There are further implications of this heavenly sanctuary in the context.

Vv. 1-3 (the first strophe) present David's counsellors encouraging David to flee for his life, and describe the threat of the wicked and what they are doing. V. 4 (beginning with the second strophe, which is an anti-strophe to the first) shows what the Lord is doing. The feverish scenes of vv. 1-3, are dwarfed by the Lord, not in flight, but in residence in His heavenly temple. So there is no need of despair. Vv. 5-7 introduce a judgment context. The Lord is testing both righteous and wicked, and bringing his judgments upon the wicked. And the "upright shall behold his face." Testing (investigating?) and punishment (executive judgment?) and rewards (beholding His face) are all included in the context.

We now turn our attention to Psalm 18:6 (7, MT)=II Samuel 22:7: In my distress I called upon the Lord; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears.

Most commentators take this verse as God's palace/temple in heaven. A close examination of the context clearly reveals a heavenly location for God's temple. Note especially the synonomous parallelism
God heard from the temple, and the cry of the psalmist "reached to his ears," implying some distance between suppliant and Supplier. This is confirmed by v. 9. In answer to the psalmist's prayer for help, God "bowed the heavens, and came down;" in v. 13, "The Lord also thundered in the heavens." This is an event of "cosmic scale" described here. It graphically portrays a progression from the depths of Sheol (v. 4) to the heavenly sanctuary (v. 6) to the Lord's theophany in answer to the psalmist's distressed plea (vv. 7ff.).

The aspect of the heavenly sanctuary emphasized in the psalm is royal help given from God's dwelling-place; but cultic indications are also present. The answering of prayer implies cultic aspects: prayer, even in the form of a cry for help, is a form of worship. V. 10 alludes to the cherub-chariot, which in 1 Chron 28:18 is tied to the Holy of Holies in the temple (the earthly counterpart of the heavenly). The Lord apparently comes from the Most Holy Place in the description of the psalmist (cf. also Ezekiel 1:4-28; 9:3).

With a heavenly context, the reference to God, and cultic allusions, this text without doubt refers to the heavenly sanctuary. And in comparison to the portrayal of cultic objects in the earthly sanctuary, there is a definite earth-heaven correspondence.

We now turn to Psalm 60:6 (8)=Psalm 108:7 (8): "With exultation I will divide up Shechem and portion out the Vale of Succoth."
Dahood understands this text to refer to the heavenly sanctuary, and the RSV along with the NEB so translate \( \Psi T H \) here as "sanctuary." It is sometimes difficult to know whether the Hebrew term \( \Psi T H \) is to be translated "holiness" or "sanctuary," since it can mean either. [The KJV translates it 29 times as "holiness," 68 times as "sanctuary," 29 times as "holy thing," 219 times as "holy," and a few times with other similar expressions.]

Dahood argues forcefully from a parallel in Ps 99:7--"He spoke to them in a pillar or cloud." This verse is very similar in syntax and vocabulary to our passage in question, and points to a location as the best meaning of \( \Psi T H \) in Ps 60:6=108:7. Furthermore, argues Dahood, in the light of Ps 99:7, the prefixed \( \text{a} \) can be best understood as "from": God spoke "from a pillar of cloud;" "from his sanctuary." The NEB utilizes this translation. Finally, Dahood supports his contention with with Ugaritic parallels using qds as Baal's heavenly sanctuary.

Franz Delitzsch believes the meaning is "by his holiness" and cites parallels in Amos 4:2 and Ps 89:35 (36), where God swears by his holiness (\( \text{dWTPa} \)), and thus would see in Ps 60:6(8)=108:7(8) an oath of sure fulfillment. But the difference between the passages is that our text in question uses \( \text{a} \) and not specific words for swearing, as in Delitzsch's examples. Thus, this writer would find greater evidence for accepting Ps 99:7 as the enlightening parallel passage, where \( \text{a} \) is also used.

Contextual considerations also point in this direction.

In 60:5 there is a plea for God to answer, as we saw in Ps 11:4. V. 6 then provides God's answer, "from his sanctuary," also as in
the Ps 11 model. When we turn to Ps 108:7(8), a definite heavenly context becomes evident.

Note v. 4: "For thy steadfast love is great above the heavens, thy faithfulness reaches to the clouds." V. 5: "Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let thy glory be over all the earth." The psalmist longs for God to be exalted in a heavenly context, that he may answer his cry (v. 6). And in this progression, God does answer, "from his sanctuary," indicating that he is indeed exalted, and the psalmist can be confident of deliverance. At the same time, the references (in v. 10) to God not going forth with the armies of Israel, seems to imply an earthly context in which the ark from the (earthly) sanctuary accompanies Israel to battle. We conclude from the above considerations that the parallel texts under scrutiny most probably refer to the heavenly sanctuary and that this heavenly sanctuary is in close relation to its earthly counterpart.

We now turn our attention to Psalm 63:2(3): "So I have looked upon thee in the sanctuary beholding thy power and glory."

A great number of exegetes take this passage as referring to the psalmist's desire to worship God again at the earthly Zion sanctuary. Thus, this conforms to the model of Ps 42:2, 3: "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God?" Ps 42 continues with a description of the psalmist's remembering previous worshipping at the sanctuary, and this sense the KJV attempts to bring out in Ps 63. By inverting the two Hebrew clauses and supplying "as" in the translation, the following rendering is produced: (quoting vv. 1, 2)
"O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is. To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary."

In this way, a meaning is given that David in the wilderness of Judea thirsts for God, to worship Him as he has in the past in the sanctuary.

But the meanings discussed so far do not seem to be possible if one takes the text as it reads. Without any inversion of clauses, or supplying of words, verse 1 (2) speaks of David longing for God. Then comes verse 2(3), with the adverb which in its 370 times of usage in the OT consistently means "so, thus, therefore," expressing a result of what has gone before. If we accept the title of the psalm as accurate, we are faced with only one conclusion: David saw God in the sanctuary while he was still in the wilderness of Judea, after thirsting for God. David, apparently by the prophetic eye or eye of faith, saw the Lord in the heavenly sanctuary, "beholding" his "power and glory."

This text must therefore be added to our list of passages affirming the reality of the heavenly sanctuary in the Old Testament. It furthermore gives us insights into David's relation to the heavenly sanctuary. David could have seen the heavenly sanctuary in vision here, but in the absence of a visionary setting, it was probably by faith. Though he would present himself to God at the prescribed feast and services of the earthly sanctuary, apparently he knew all the time that the spiritual reality lay in his entering by faith into the heavenly sanctuary, of which the
earthly symbolized. If this knowledge was available to David, and recorded in a psalm used by Israel (probably for the purposes of Israel's worship, then this concept of entering by faith into the heavenly sanctuary could have been known by the average OT worshipper.

Psalm 68:35(36) NASB

O God, Thou art awesome from Thy sanctuary. The God of Israel Himself gives strength and power to the people. Blessed be God!

The LXX here reads "in His sanctuary" rather than "from Thy sanctuary," but this textual problem does not concern us in establishing a heavenly or earthly context. In either case, it is the sanctuary that is mentioned. The word here for "sanctuary" in the best Hebrew texts is which specifically denotes "sanctuary" or "holy place" and not "holiness." The word in this context is in the plural, but Dahood explains that it is to be taken as singular in meaning, on the grounds that names for fortifications, buildings, and habitations are often plural in form though singular in meaning. Possibly also what is in view here is the plurality of the heavenly sanctuary (Holy Place and Most Holy Place) as in the earthly type.

We have just spoken of the heavenly sanctuary. Let us see the evidence for the heavenly context in this passage. Again the phenomenon of parallelismus membrorum becomes exceedingly helpful. Verses 33(34) and 34(35) provide clear indications of a synonymous parallelism with v. 35(36). Verse 33(34) ascribes praise "to him who rides in the heavens, the ancient heavens." Verse 34(35):
"Ascribe power to God, whose majesty is over Israel, and his power is in the skies." Then, as a synonym for "in the skies," comes the phrase "in thy sanctuary" in the next verse. We tentatively concur with Dahood, Metzger, and others that the parallelism is clear and indicates a heavenly context, a heavenly sanctuary.

It is true that earlier in the chapter mention is made of the earthly procession to the temple at Jerusalem (v. 24ff.). However, the immediate context is here the determiner. The juxtaposition with an earlier allusion of the earthly sanctuary simply underscores the probability that even in cases of mentioning the heavenly sanctuary, "the Israelite worshipper is, no doubt, located in the earthly sanctuary where the glorious manifestation of Yahweh is also seen in faith, so that the fluctuation of perspective between the heavenly and the earthly presence of Yahweh is understandable."

Thus we have in Ps 68:35(36) another affirmation of the heavenly sanctuary, and in the psalm as a whole an evidence of the close tie of earthly and heavenly sanctuaries in the Israelite author and worshippers' minds.

We next turn our attention to

Psalm 96:6: Honor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Compare the parallel verse in

1 Chronicles 16:27: Honor and majesty are before him; strength and joy are in his place. "Place" and "sanctuary" are here used as synonyms. Furthermore, this "place/sanctuary" is in synonymous parallelism with "heaven" in the preceding verse: "For all the gods of the peoples are idols; but the Lord made the heavens." From this fact, this writer con-
clude that the sanctuary in question is the heavenly one. Leupold speculates that the four abstract qualities here point out what manner of beings are before him in attendance upon Him. 29

There are commentators who would see here the earthly sanctuary, on account of a later mention in the psalm of bringing of offerings to the obviously earthly sanctuary. 30 Yet the view as propounded by Kidner accounts for all the evidence of the psalm: verse 6 is the heavenly sanctuary because of immediate context; verse 8 is the earthly sanctuary. Here we find another instance in which the mind of the author can move easily from the earthly to the heavenly, since the two are inextricably bound up with each other.

Psalm 102:19(20) NEB: "The Lord looks down from his sanctuary on high [יָדַעְתָּ] from heaven he surveys the earth."

Scholars such as Metzger, Staerk, Habel and Oosterly, have seen here a reference to the heavenly sanctuary. 32 The synonymous parallelism of יָדַעְתָּ with "heaven" in the same verse makes an obvious heavenly setting. The only question is whether יָדַעְתָּ should be taken as a noun "sanctuary" (KJV, NEB, MLB) or as an adjective "holy" modifying "height;" i.e., "holy height" (RSV, NASB). Both are possible within Hebrew grammar and syntax. Some have argued for "holy height" on the grounds that "height" would better fit in parallelism with "heaven." But in the view of this writer, "sanctuary on high" is the preferable translation. Several of the psalms already referred to have given us the model of the poetic paral-
lelism not being exact (as "heaven" and "height"), but one line enlarging the other. Note especially Ps 11:4: "temple" is in parallelism with "heaven." "Sanctuary" in parallelism with "heaven" would more closely correspond to this usage. "Height" is also more of an abstract variable, and if there is a noun in construct with it, to indicate what heights are being referred to, it would seem more appropriate to translate that noun in its concrete meaning, i.e. in this case as "sanctuary" rather than adjectivally ("holy"). We have a number of examples of this construction with "height," giving a concrete noun following to indicate what height: Jud 5:18; 2 Ki 19:23; Prov 9:3; Isa 37:24, 24; Jer 31:12; 49:16.

Furthermore, when the noun is used after verbs of action involving God, and with a prefixed , it is often to be translated adverbially; i.e. "from... on high." For examples, cf. 2 Sam 22:17; Job 31:2; Ps 18:16(17); Ps 144:7; Isa 32:15; Jer 25:30. So this writer would decide on syntactical and contextual grounds that the translation "from his sanctuary on high" gives the nearest meaning in this verse. Thus with the scholars mentioned above and the NEB, this writer finds a reference to the heavenly sanctuary. At the same time, vv. 12-15 point to an earthly sanctuary setting along with the heavenly. The Lord is enthroned forever (v. 12), will build up Zion and there appear in his glory (v. 16). This appears to be an allusion to the Shekinah glory emanating from the Most Holy Place. God's presence and redemptive acts, therefore are associated with both the heavenly original and earthly counterpart.
Psalm 150:1

Praise God in his sanctuary
Praise him in his mighty firmament.

With Dahood this writer affirms that the sanctuary in this passage is "scarcely his temple on earth" but rather "God's celestial dwelling." As Dahood and many other scholars have pointed out, the parallelism of with "firmament" substantiates two points: (1) should be translated concretely as "sanctuary" (and not "holiness") to match the concrete noun "firmament;" and (2) there is a definite heavenly setting from the word "firmament" (the same word used in Gen 1:8 where the "firmament" is specifically called "Heaven") that makes the sanctuary in question the heavenly sanctuary. The ones in the heavenly sanctuary to praise the Lord are angels (Ps 103:20), and the ones in the firmament are the stars (Job 38:7), suggests Leupold.

When we come to the second strophe in the psalm (vv. 3ff.), the scene is apparently transferred to the earth. The musical instruments of the (earthly) sanctuary musicians are called upon. V. 8 unites them both together: both heavenly and earthly beings—everything that breathes—is to "Praise the Lord!" Again the close connection between the worship in the heavenly sanctuary and the worship in the earthly is manifested, and the reality of the heavenly sanctuary is accentuated.

Vertical (Sanctuary) Typology in the Prophets

Isaiah 6

In the estimation of this researcher, Isa 6 is one of the most forceful supporting passages for the existence of the heavenly sanctuary in the Old Testament, and also presents the
close vertical correspondence between the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries.

There is far from unanimity within biblical scholarship on the question of whether the passage points to the earthly or heavenly sanctuaries, or both. There are a phalanx of exegetes who favor an earthly setting for this passage, and another phalanx who argue for a heavenly setting. 37 There also exist numerous exegetes in the "heavenly-setting" camp who view the experience described in Isa 6 as beginning at the earthly Jerusalem and then "widening out" into a heavenly context. 38 And then there are those who believe it is not possible to decide which setting is involved. 39

This researcher believes the evidence points in the direction of an original Jerusalem setting for the call of Isaiah. The statement "in the year that King Uzziah died" seems to give an historical setting, and may imply an initial context of Isaiah going up to the Temple at Jerusalem to worship. Here Isaiah receives the vision of the Lord on His throne, as the verb יד יד יד "I saw" seems to imply. This verb in its nominal form יד יד is the word for seer (vision receiver). 40 Isaiah's response in v. 6--"I am dwelling in the midst of a people of unclean lips"--also points to an earthly setting for the vision.

As J. Bright pictures the setting of Isaiah's call, Isaiah goes up to worship, and while the service progressed, he "saw the visible scene replaced by a vision of Yahweh the king." The incense is transformed into the Lord's train, and the earthly choirs fade into the heavenly view of the seraphim. Isaiah "had penetrated the heavenly court." 41 Or in the conception of G. W. Wade,
the earthly temple interior is "transformed from its ordinary aspect into that of the Almighty's heavenly palace." 

Note the following: E. G. White gives a similar description: Isaiah "stood under the portico of the temple. Suddenly the gate and the inner veil of the temple seemed to be uplifted or withdrawn, and he was permitted to gaze within, upon the holy of holies, where even the prophet's feet might not enter. There rose up before him a vision of Jehovah sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, while the train of His glory filled the temple." The same author also states that he saw the Lord in the heavenly sanctuary: "Isaiah was permitted in vision to look into the Holy Place, and into the Holy of Holies in the heavenly sanctuary." Thus this latter writer's understanding, there were three stages in the experience: worshipping at the Jerusalem Temple; seeing in vision into the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place of the earthly Temple; and the widening out of the vision to the Holy of Holies of the heavenly sanctuary.

We have already noted aspects of the narrative that point to an original earthly Jerusalem Temple setting for Isaiah's experience. Let us now examine the aspects of the description that seem to clearly refer to the heavenly sanctuary.

The throne (v. 1) is "high and lifted up;" the Lord is sitting on this throne. This picture does not seem to connote the ark in Jerusalem, but rather points to the upper, heavenly sanctuary.

"And His train filled the temple." Metzger argues for an earthly setting on the grounds that it wouldn't be possible in a
heavenly temple for only the feet and borders of God's garments to fit inside. He thinks it rather confining indeed to have a heavenly sanctuary with such small measurements. But Metzger's argument is based on a model of God's throne as "high and lifted up" in the sense of jutting up and beyond the earthly into the heavenly, lifting the two together. Thus God can dwell both in heaven and earth at the same time.

Metzger's model need not be adopted at all. No Scripture corroborates his theory of a throne "jutting up" from earth to heaven. According to Ps 11:4, the Lord's throne is in heaven, not jutting up toward heaven. If we take the model of God's throne in his heavenly sanctuary, Scripture is harmonized. The train may be said to "fill" the temple in a much better way than Metzger's literalistic attempt. Delitzsch views it in terms of satin folds all over the floor as far as the eye can see. The seraphim are then "standing" and "flying" (v. 2); they are hovering over the glorious train. Even more appropriately, E. G. White pictures the train as a train of glory--of light--pervading all the temple. The seraphim (literally "burning ones") are then hovering about the throne, reflecting the glory of the Lord.

The seraphim, in any case, introduce an element that seems to catapult us up to the very throne of God in the heavenly sanctuary. The picture presented before Isaiah is nothing like that in the Jerusalem Temple with its cherubim. We are here getting a glimpse into the throne room of the universe, with the Lord's heavenly attendants.

One of the strongest evidences of the heavenly context of
Isaiah's vision is the parallel passage in 1 Ki 22:19-21, describing the heavenly hosts surrounding the throne of the heavenly sanctuary. Micaiah, son of Imlah, in his description of his vision and audition, uses parallel language with Isa 6. This becomes strikingly evident when the Hebrew texts are placed side by side. The most important parallel occurs in that whereas Isaiah mentions seraphim, Micaiah sees "all the hosts of heaven." Since so much of the two visions are identical, this picture of the "hosts of heaven" on either side of the Lord's throne corresponds to the antiphonal singing of the seraphim in Isa 6, and seems to point unmistakably to a heavenly context.

Wildberger points to other parallels with Isa 6 that give a heavenly context. In Ezekiel's vision (1:1), Ezekiel says the "heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God." Also Gen 28:11-17, and Ps 29 give support to a heavenly context for Isa 6.

Is Is 6 refers to the heavenly sanctuary, as we believe the evidence supports, then much can be learned from this passage about the function of the heavenly sanctuary in Old Testament times. It is not within the scope of the paper to engage in extended exegesis of the cultic expressions used. Our major purpose is to establish a heavenly sanctuary setting and see a vertical (typological) correspondence. But let us note briefly some of the insights this chapter provides, in order to see the close (typological, vertical) correspondence between earthly and heavenly sanctuaries.

The Lord is already at work in the ministry of atonement in the heavenly sanctuary in Isaiah's time! An altar appears to be present in heaven, with live coals on it (v. 6). The Lord is...
active in revealing Himself and Isaiah's sinfulness by contrast (v. 5); with the seraphim He is engaged in a ministry of atoning for Isaiah's sins. A divine commission and empowering for service comes from that heavenly temple. The whole solution to the sin problem seems therefore outlined: recognition and confession of sinfulness on the part of man by beholding the Lord/the glory of Christ (John 12:41); removal of guilt, of sin, by the coal of purification, by the atonement (ąאָבָא).

We now turn our attention to Jonah 2:7(8): "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord; and my prayer came to thee, into thy holy temple."

We encounter the same word for "temple" that we have already observed previously: שְׂדוּת. This time it is preceded by a preposition שֶׁאֶל. The phrase "holy temple" is similar to Micah 1:2, 3, and Hab 2:20 (to which we turn next), and Ps 11:4.

In Jonah 1:2, when God addresses Jonah for the first time, He describes the wickedness of Nineveh that "has come up before me." The verb here employed is from the root הָעַל and means "to go up," "to come up," "to ascend." The vertical direction is definitely included, and would therefore point to the heavenly dwelling-place of God. When we turn to Jonah 2:7(8), it is not the wickedness of Nineveh, but Jonah's prayer that comes to God, and it would seem logical that the prayer would reach God the same place as the wickedness, i.e., His heavenly temple.

The context of Jonah chapter 2 also seems to indicate this fact. There appears to be a definite vertical crescendo
building up, from the deepest parts of Sheol (v. 2), to Jonah's longing to look again toward the earthly temple (v. 4), to God's hearing Jonah's voice in His heavenly temple.

V. 4 probably refers to the earthly temple, since it speaks of "yet" (גַּם, no emending to הָעִיר necessary), looking "again" toward God's temple, recalling former obedience and worship. Note the parallel structure in Ps 5:7(8): "In fear will I worship toward thy temple," where there is a definite earthly context. Also, Jonah 2:9 speaks of sacrifices and vows.

Though there is a definite earthly sanctuary context present in chapter 2, when one compares v. 7(8) with chapter 1:2, and with Micah 1:2-3, Heb 2:20 and Ps 11:4, one concludes that we most probably have reference in Jonah 2:(8) to the heavenly temple-sanctuary of God. This then is another of several examples we have already noted in which the Hebrew mind can pass easily within a few short verses from the heavenly to the earthly and vice versa. The earth-heaven sanctuary correspondence seems thereby clearly implied.

We now focus our attention upon

Micah 1:2: "Hear, you peoples, all of you; hearken, O earth, and all that is in it; and let the Lord God be a witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple (נְפָשְׁתָּן)."

The context of this passage definitely points toward a heavenly setting for the holy temple of Yahweh. Verse 2a refers to the whole earth, as if the speaking is coming from outside (beyond) the earth, from the Lord over the earth. V. 3 describes the Lord coming "forth" from His place, and that He "will come down (הָלַךְ) --"to come down, descend") and tred upon the high places of the
earth." God is obviously far above the earth, in order to come down to its high places.

Furthermore, v. 4 brings out a cosmic significance to the scene, the mountains being melted, the valleys cleft like wax. The whole setting is not a local Jerusalem one, but a cosmic scope is in view. Thus the context seems to clearly point out that the temple in v. 2 is "not an earthly building, but the heavenly temple of God."  

Mic 1:2 becomes vitally significant for the understanding of the function of the heavenly sanctuary in the OT, when one realizes that it appears within the context of a "covenant lawsuit." He presents his case against those who failed to abide by his will.

Mic 6:1-8 makes the covenant lawsuit motif even more evident in this book. Yahweh is the plaintiff and Israel the defendant: Yahweh pleads His case before the mountains and hills. These are probably acting as a jury or witnesses in the case. Present in this passage are both components that especially indicate a "covenant lawsuit;" "the appeal to natural elements as the covenant witnesses, and a historical prologue (here it is an indictment of Israel for breach of covenant)."

Compare Micah's covenant lawsuit with other OT examples: Jer 2:4ff; Isa 1:2, 3; 3:12-15; Ps 50.

With the existence of a "covenant lawsuit" setting for Mic 1:2, we find that one of the significant functions of the heavenly sanctuary is that of judgment. The passage in Micah ties the heavenly sanctuary closely to the work of judgment as described in Dan 7, and provides a context that helps elucidate that difficult prophecy.
We now turn our attention to Habakkuk 2:20: "But the Lord is in His holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him."

In this text we have another apparent presentation of a heavenly temple. The contrast is explicit: The Lord is in his (heavenly) temple: the earth, is to keep silence before Him. The whole earth is put over against the temple, which then in primary intention would be outside the earth, not also a part of it.

There is also a contrast with the verses just preceding. The Chaldean dumb idols are placed over against the Lord abiding in His heavenly temple. Furthermore, the prayer of Habakkuk that follows these verses describes a theophany of cosmic proportions. Therefore, as widely recognized by scholars, this writer concluded that here we have a reference to the heavenly sanctuary. At the same time, the book of Habakkuk concludes with instructions for liturgical use of the preceding lyrics, probably in connection with the earthly sanctuary service. Thus there is a link between cosmic judgment and (earthly) sanctuary liturgy.

Other (Possible) Allusions to Vertical Sanctuary Typology.

There are some OT texts employing the term "temple" that are ambiguous as to which temple is intended. Ps 29:9 is favored by a majority of commentators consulted, as referring to a heavenly sanctuary, assuming that the "sons of the gods" in v. 1 refers to heavenly beings. But the argument for earthly beings in v. 1 is just as convincing to this writer, and the same is true for v. 9. Ps 29 must remain an indefinite but a very possible reference to the heavenly sanctuary in close relation to the earthly sanctuary.
Zech. 6:12, 13 seems primarily in an earthly setting, but has messianic and eschatological overtones, that in a typological sense can be seen to refer to the heavenly sanctuary. The same applies to Malachi 3:1, where the term "temple" is employed.

A number of texts in the Old Testament speak of a heavenly "habitation"(יָבָא) of the Lord: Deut 26:51; Jer 25:30; Zech 2:17 (13); Ps 68:6; 2 Chron 30:27. Since God's heavenly habitation is shown to be his heavenly sanctuary in passages we have already analyzed, these passages just listed would contain an allusion to the OT heavenly sanctuary, but must not be pressed to present more than they actually contain.

Another word for habitation (אֶזְרָא, "height, lofty abode") is used in Isa 63:15 in a heavenly setting; this Hebrew noun can mean "temple" in the Old Testament (cf. 1 Ki 8:13) and thus here in Isaiah it may be an allusion to the heavenly temple.

We encounter still further references to Yahweh as "enthroned" and "sitting" יָבָא in the heavens: Ps 123:1; 33:13; Isa 40:22; Ps 103:18; 2:4(5); 47:8. Ambiguous references to God's "enthronement" are those of Ps 99:1; 80:1. The term יָבָא ("to tabernacle") is used to refer to God in a heavenly context in Isa 33:5; 57:15. The earthly counterparts of this "enthronement" and "tabernacle" appear, e.g., in Exod 25:8ff.

Dahood has argued forcefully that certain references to man's dwelling in the "Lord's house" have a heavenly "house/temple" in view. In this researcher's opinion the following texts could refer to a heavenly sanctuary, but the context is ambiguous: Ps 15:1; 23:6; 24:3, 7, 9; 27:4; 36:8; 65:4; 84:4. References to a heavenly house/sanctuary would correspond particularly with the numerous references to the Lord's earthly house. The word יָבָא have already engaged our attention in this

(c.e.g., Ps 5:7; 26:8; 66:13; 116:19; 122:19; 135:2).
section. We noted the possibility of translating it nominally as "holiness" or "sanctuary," or adjectivally as "holy." In at least five more instances than we previously cited, the meaning can be "sanctuary" and the heavenly context has been suggested (but again this is far from certain): Ps 20:2(3); 73:17; 77:13; 108:7,8; 134:2. The term מֵעַלְפַּיִּים, a noun always meaning "sanctuary" or "holy place," is employed with a possible heavenly setting in Ps 78:69 and Jer 17:12. Most of these references also have in their immediate contexts allusions to an earthly setting, and may thus reveal a vertical correspondence between earthly and heavenly sanctu- The theme of the "heavenly council" in Scripture, though really a separate topic from the one at hand, nonetheless should be mentioned here since the relevant passages give us a glimpse into the heavenly sanctuary/temple at work, though not calling it by that name. Actually Isa 6 could be viewed as belonging to the theme of the "heavenly council": in v. 8 we have the Lord asking advice of those standing by. Additional passages that seem to indicate this concept include: 1 Ki 22:19-22; Jer 23:18,22; Zech 2:13(17); 3:1ff; Job 1 and 2. Other possible references are Amos 3:7; Ps 89:6,7; 82:1; Isa 48:20-21; 57:14b; 35:3-4; 52:7-10; 62:10-12; 44:26. It should be emphasized that the deliberations of the heavenly counsel are inextricably bound up with the affairs of earth, notably, the people of Israel at the earthly sanctuary.

Then we must mention passages that apparently refer to a heavenly "throne" and by inference put us in the heavenly-sanctuary "throne room": Ps 93:2; 103:19; Isa 14:12-15; 66:1,2; and Eze 1, 10; 28:11-19. Isa 14 (with its parallel Ezekiel 28), and Eze 1, 10, call for special note because of terminology corresponding to aspects of the earthly sanctuary.


Clements, p. 68, etc.


Habel, p. 84.


Cody, p. 15.

Gerhard von Rad, 5:505.

Briggs, 90.

This is the assessment of the literature on the subject by Anderson, I, 156; a survey of sources available to this research revealed the same. There are those (e.g. Kraus) who see allusions to the Jerusalem temple.

Eaton, p. 63.


21. Ibid., 2:79,97.

22. Delitzsch, Psalms, 2:198.


27. Habel, p. 85.

28. Cf. Micah 1:3 and Isa 26:21, where "place" is also in a cosmic setting as heavenly dwelling of God.

29. Leupold, p. 682.

30. For example, Weiser, p. 628; Delitzsch, 3:90.


32. Metzger, p. 140; Staerk, p. 17; Habel, p. 91; Oosterley, 2:589.


35. Leupold, p. 1006.

36. See the more detailed study of (typological) correspondence between earthly and heavenly liturgy in
See especially, Wildberger, 144; J. Bright, "Isaiah," Peake's Commentary on the Bible (New York: Nelson and Sons, 1919), p. 494; G. W. Wage, The Book of the Prophet Isaiah (London: Metheun, 1911); Rolf Knierim, "The Vocation of Isaiah," VT 18 (1968) 51; and many others in the two lists above who see both aspects involved but place more emphasis on one or the other.


Isa 28:7; 1 Sam 9:9ff, etc; cf. also 1 Ki 22:19; Amos 7:8; 9:1; Jer 1:11,13. These texts describe the kind of seeing in the manner of vision.

Bright, Isaiah, p. 494.

Wade, p. 38.
It could be argued, however, that at this point in the narrative, the earthly dimension returns, and the seraphim is taking the coal from the earthly sanctuary.
