Title: Daniel 8 and its sanctuary background

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Abstract:

The sanctuary, together with the services performed is one of the key concepts for a proper understanding of the message of the book of Daniel. From the very beginning the book of Daniel deals with the temple, which is seen in the context of the great controversy between God and his people and Satan and his followers. The sanctuary is a battlefield and God’s people are the “heroes”. The people linked to God are “restored, or vindicated” (see, Dan 8:14) from the temple where the plans, strategies, and decisions for the solving of the sin problem are made. The sanctuary is also the place from which the final judgment will be issued. The sin problem will be solved forever when the sanctuary is restored to its rightful state.

The problem of this study was to determine the correct interpretation of the sanctuary terms and symbols employed in Daniel 8, to define the background for the sanctuary references in Daniel, and to determine what sanctuary was referred to in Daniel 8, an earthly or the heavenly.

The main purpose of the study was to explore the significance of the sanctuary in Daniel 8 in relationship to the temple motif in selected prophetic and eschatological Bible passage. An additional purpose was to examine the implications of the vertical heaven-earth dimensions in the whole book of Daniel.
The sanctuary motif has been found to have a twofold meaning: First, as God’s dwelling place, and second, as the place from which judgment issues. The temple is the center of God’s divine activities. Daniel 8 and it’s the sanctuary motif is closely linked to the other chapters of Daniel, since it portrays the process of the judgment scene in the heavenly temple. Selected biblical prophetic and eschatological texts in other parts of the bible support the heavenly temple scene depicted in Daniel.

The sanctuary expressions used in Daniel 8 contain animal symbols, terms about the temple, terms related to its service, and some auxiliary terms. For example, ‘ereb bōger could be considered as a sanctuary day, tāmīd as a whole temple service, and nisdaq could be understood as the activities of a righteous judge who vindicated and justified his righteous people through the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement.

The book of Daniel comprises certain components of the vertical heaven-earth dimensions. For example, in Daniel 8 the little horn, exalts himself against the heavenly Prince, casts down and tramples the Prince’s sanctuary, and takes and controls the Prince’s ministry. Likewise the little horn on the horizontal level is in opposition to the heavenly temple and its High Priest. In this process the heavenly sanctuary is the main object of the little horn’s attack. Also the ministry of the High Priest, our Lord Christ, in the heavenly temple is a key to the proper understanding of sanctuary background in Daniel 8.