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Judgment as Covenant Review¹

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Chapters seven and eight of the biblical book of Daniel chronicle what could be called the battle of the little big horn. The horn, which represents a human power, is described as “little” because it originates “from (being) a little one” (*mišš^e’irāh*; Dan 8:9). But it grows to become greater than the powers which precede it (Dan 7:20). After stunning expansion on the horizontal, earthly plane, the big “little horn” dares to thrust vertically against heaven itself (Dan 8:9-12).² But the upward-goring colossus of contumacy³ is no match for “the Most High,” who “is sovereign over the kingdom of mortals” (Dan 4:17; cf. vss. 25, 32; 5:21).⁴ The horn’s celestial aspirations are peremptorily perforated by a heavenly judgment (Dan 7:9-14, 22, 26) and a restoration of God’s sanctuary (Dan 8:14; cf. vs. 25), which condemn the horn and break its power.

The apocalyptic vision just described raises a number of important questions, such as the precise identification of the horn power and the relationship between Daniel 7, where the horn arises from the head of a monster resembling a Tyrannosaurus Rex (vss. 7-8), and Daniel 8, where the horn simply sprouts from one of the four winds of heaven (vss. 8-9), i.e. from one of the four directions of the compass.⁵ But the question which I would like to explore here is this: What is the nature of the event in which the little big horn unsuccessfully makes its last stand? It is clear that the eschatological judgment in Daniel 7:9-14 and restoration of the sanctuary in 8:14 solve the problem of the horn. But what, more precisely, is the relationship between the judgment and the sanctuary restoration?

Judgment and Sanctuary Restoration

The divine judgment in Daniel 7 and the restoration of the sanctuary in Daniel 8 are *functionally equivalent* in that they both result in the horn's condemnation and free God's true people from its oppression. Thus the cleansing of the sanctuary functions as a judgment.⁶

In Daniel 7, an awesome judgment results in the condemnation of the "little horn" (vss. 11, 22, 26). But this final conclave also results in justice for the "holy ones of the Most High," and they receive "the kingship and dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven" (vs. 27). Thus the judgment is cosmic in scope and settles a dispute between the predatory horn and its prey, the "holy ones" (see vs. 25) over the question of who should have the dominion. The judgment not only condemns the horn; it also delivers the true people of God from oppression.⁷

In Daniel 8, it is the restoration of the sanctuary in verse 14 which addresses the problems caused by the "little horn." These problems, described in verses 10-12 and summarized in verse 13, include the removal of regular worship (*hattāmîd*), the setting up of the desolating sacrilege, damage to the sanctuary, and the trampling of the "host of heaven," i.e. persecution of God's true people by the horn power (cf. vs. 24). Just as the judgment in Daniel 7 involves two parties—the horn and the "holy ones"—so the restoration of the sanctuary in Daniel 8 solves a problem involving the same two parties, resulting in similar justice: The horn is broken (vs. 25) and, by implication, God's people are then freed from its oppression.⁸

Sanctuary Restoration and the Day of Atonement

On the ancient Israelite Day of Atonement (Lev 16), as in Daniel 8:14, restoration of God's sanctuary was connected with the condemnation of those who were disloyal to God and the affirmation of those who were loyal. Thus it appears that *the restoration of the sanctuary in Daniel 8 is the cosmic, eschatological equivalent of the ancient Israelite Day of Atonement.*

Daniel 8:14 is cryptic: "Until two thousand three hundred days (lit. "evening-morning");⁹ then the sanctuary shall be justified" (trans. R. Gane). When the sanctuary is restored in the sense that it is "justified" (*nişdaq*), the "little horn" is "broken, and not by human hands" (Dan 8:25). As mentioned above, the demise of the horn benefits God's people. What kind of restoration of a sanctuary would have these kinds of effects?

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Most scholars interpret the restoration of the sanctuary in Daniel 8 as the purification and rededication (Hanukkah) of the Jerusalem temple in the time of the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.), who is described by 1 Maccabees 1-6 as desecrating the temple and persecuting the Jewish people.¹⁰ But this view does not do justice to the magnitude of the solution provided by the eschatological restoration of the sanctuary. In Daniel 8, this event not only benefits the sanctuary as a comprehensive remedy to the diabolical depredations of the “little horn”; it results in the downfall of the horn power itself. In the context of the Maccabean hypothesis, this would be roughly equivalent to the toppling of the Seleucid empire by means of the temple restoration which culminated with Hanukkah. The fact that this causal relation did not appear in the Maccabean era supports Jesus’ view that the “desolating sacrilege” of the “little horn” power was to be set up after his time (Matt 24:15; Mk 13:14; cf. Dan 8:11-13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11).¹¹

Psalm 79:1 suggests another kind of event which could necessitate the restoration of God’s sanctuary. This verse reads: “O God, the nations have come into your inheritance; they have defiled your holy temple; they have laid Jerusalem in ruins.” Thus the destruction of Solomon’s temple by the Babylonians, referred to by Ps 79:1, and the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans (A.D. 70) would have involved the defilement of these temples located in Jerusalem. In Daniel 8 the former event could not be in view because the “little horn” was still in the future when Daniel saw the vision, and he had the vision after the Babylonians had already destroyed Jerusalem. But the latter event occurred not only after the time of Daniel, but after Jesus’ life on earth (see above). However, in Daniel 8 the restoration of the sanctuary results in the demise of the power which defiled it. The Roman empire is now long gone, and the temple in Jerusalem has not been rebuilt. So it could hardly be said that the restoration of that temple resulted in the decline and fall of the Roman empire.

We have eliminated some potential ancient fulfillments, thereby raising the probability that Daniel 8:14 refers to God’s sanctuary in heaven (see Ps 11:4; Heb 7-10), because no temple of God remains on earth. At this point we can ask again: what kind of restoration of God’s sanctuary would condemn the wicked and affirm the righteous? A viable answer is: a restoration like that which occurred on the ancient Israelite Day of Atonement. The rituals, which were unique to this day (Lev 16), had three major effects:

1. The sanctuary was cleansed from the ritual impurities (pl. of *tum’āh*) and sins of the Israelites (Lev 16:16, 19, 33). The sins belonged to two categories: non-rebellious sins (pl. of *ḥaṭṭāt*) had been left at the

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sanctuary when they were removed from repentant Israelites who brought sacrifices during the year (cf. e.g. Lev 4:26,31,35).¹² Rebellious sins (pl. of *pešaʿ*) had reached the sanctuary automatically when the sins occurred (cf. Lev 20:3; Num 19:13, 20).

2. Faithful Israelites who had brought sacrifices for sin during the year and who obeyed God's commands to practice self-denial and to abstain from work on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:29) received final cleansing (Lev 16:30) from sins for which they had already gained forgiveness during the year (cf. Lev 4:26, 31, 35).¹³ The cleansing of the sanctuary cleansed them because their sins no longer defiled the sanctuary¹⁴ and their atonement, i.e. reconciliation to God, was now complete.

3. Unfaithful Israelites who showed their disloyalty by disobeying God's commands to practice self-denial and to abstain from work on the great Day were sentenced to divinely inflicted extirpation¹⁵ and destruction, respectively (Lev 23:29, 30). Persons who had failed to have the proper remedies for sins or ritual impurities applied to them during the year or who had committed rebellious, "high-handed" sins for which no sacrificial atonement was available were already condemned before the Day of Atonement (Lev 5:1; Lev 20:3; Num 15:30-31; 19:13, 20). Even though rebellious sins affected the sanctuary and had to be removed from it, those who committed them received no benefit from this cleansing. Leviticus 16:30 refers to Israelites receiving cleansing only from non-rebellious sins (pl. of *ḥaṭṭāṭ*).

The rituals of the Day of Atonement which cleansed the sanctuary benefited the loyal people of God and condemned those who rebelled against him. Thus it is clear that this was a judgment event, as recognized by rabbinic tradition.¹⁶ This event is paralleled by the eschatological restoration of the sanctuary predicted in Daniel 8:14.¹⁷ The fact that the ancient Day of Atonement cleansing was a judgment event correlates with the fact that the justification of the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14 functions as a judgment which parallels the judgment in Daniel 7.

The parallel between the ancient Day of Atonement and its end-time counterpart must be qualified. The yearly Day of Atonement brought reconciliation between the Israelites and their deity to an awesome high, but the restoration of the sanctuary in Daniel 8 is in another league. It is not simply a ceremonial day officiated by an Israelite high priest; it is a one-time eschatological climax to a cosmic struggle over lordship and worship.

Sanctuary Defilements as Metaphors

Defilements which must be removed from a sanctuary are *metaphors for responsibility* which God assumes when he forgives guilty people, purifies those who have been impure, and permits rebellious individuals to dwell among his true people until they are judged.

The parallel shown above between the Daniel 8:14 restoration of the sanctuary and the Day of Atonement cleansing raises some potentially productive questions which we will deal with in order:

1. Why does Daniel 8:14 refer to justifying (root *šdq*) the sanctuary rather than atoning (root *kpr*; Lev 16:16-18, 20, 27, 32-33) for it, i.e. purging it, or cleansing (root *ṭhr*; vs. 19; cf. vs. 30) it, as in Leviticus 16?

2. Why do sins of repentant people defile the sanctuary when they are forgiven?

3. Why do sins of rebellious individuals who belong to the nominal people of God defile the sanctuary in a manner which short-circuits the sacrificial process set up by God?

The semantic range of the root *šdq*, “justify,” which appears in the Niphal verb in Daniel 8:14, overlaps with that of the root *kpr*, “atone” (Lev 16), as shown by the synonymous parallelism in Daniel 9:24: “to make atonement (*kpr*) for iniquity, to bring everlasting righteousness (*šdq*).”¹⁸ A similar relationship exists between *šdq* and *ṭhr*, as shown by Job 4:17, where the words from these roots are functional equivalents in synonymous parallelism:

Can mortals be righteous (root *šdq*) before God?
Can human beings be pure (root *ṭhr*) before their Maker?

The question is: can a person be morally vindicated before God? Thus the concepts of justness/righteousness and purity overlap¹⁹ in the area of vindication, which is a legal concept.

Since the atonement/cleansing of the Israelite sanctuary removed abstract evils rather than mere physical dirtiness, and since this cleansing functioned as a kind of judgment (see above), “cleansing” in Leviticus 16 appears to be a metaphor for “vindication.” If so, Daniel 8:14 would simply refer to the same kind of vindication in a more overtly legal way, using the verb *šdq*, “justify.” This possibility is confirmed by the answer to our second question.

Confessed Sins Defiled. In Israel, sins of repentant people defiled the sanctuary when they were forgiven, and the sanctuary had to be cleansed from these defilements on the Day of Atonement. What are these defilements, and why did they have to be cleansed from the sanctuary? The key to unpacking the metaphors of defilement and

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cleansing is found by comparison with a narrative passage which employs another term for vindication: *nāqî*, which means “clean.”

In 2 Samuel 14, a wise woman of Tekoa appealed to David to save her son from the capital punishment which he deserved for murdering his brother. When David hesitated to overrule Israelite law administered by clan justice (2 Sam 14:7, 11; cf. Num 35:16-21), the woman offered: “The blame *‘āwōn*)²⁰ is on me, my lord the king, and on my father’s house, but the king and his throne are clean” (vs. 9; tran.. R. Gane). *The woman understood that if David as judge pardoned a murderer who was condemned by Israelite law to capital punishment* (Exod 21:12; Lev 24:17; cf. Gen 9:6), *he would take moral responsibility upon himself.*²¹ *A judge is morally responsible to society and to God for his judgments.*²² *But the woman offered to bear the blame so that the king and his throne could be legally “clean” (*nāqî*), i.e. vindicated, free from blame with regard to the case.*²³ The “throne” here refers to the authority and justice which the king represented, the integrity of which was essential for holding the nation together.²⁴

Although the woman’s story was a juridical parable designed to influence David’s treatment of Absalom (see 2 Sam 14:1-3), David thought he was judging a real case and his interaction with the woman reflects real-life dynamics of justice and mercy.²⁵ Now compare Daniel 8:14: “Unto two thousand three hundred days (lit. “evening-morning”), then shall the sanctuary be justified” (trans. R. Gane). Since God’s throne is at his sanctuary (Jer 17:12), the sanctuary here represents the equivalent of David’s “throne” in 2 Samuel 14:9: God’s authority and justice.²⁶ Just as David and his justice needed to be legally “clean” (*nāqî*; 2 Sam 14:9), so God’s justice, represented by his sanctuary, must be “justified” (*niṭdaq*; Dan 8:14). To reinforce the fact that the Hebrew roots used in 2 Samuel 14:9 and Daniel 8:14 are functionally synonymous in legal contexts, compare Exod 23:7: “Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent (*nāqî*) and those in the right (*ṣadîq*), for I will not acquit (*‘aṣdîq*) the guilty.”

So in Daniel 8:14, God’s justice must be justified. Justified from what? In 2 Samuel 14, forgiveness of a guilty person would have sullied David’s reputation as a just and righteous judge if the woman had not taken the blame herself. Similarly, God and his sanctuary would need justification not only as a result of the defaming depredations of the “little horn” (Dan 7-8),²⁷ but also because God forgives guilty people (cf. Exod 34:7), calls them “holy ones of the Most High,” and gives them the dominion of this world (Dan 7:22,27). God has no woman of Tekoa to take the blame. He must bear the blame for forgiveness himself.

Now we can begin to understand in what sense the sins of the Israelites defiled the ancient sanctuary when they were forgiven. It was

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a matter of theodicy. When a person sinned, he/she bore the blame himself/herself (Lev 5:1) until or unless he/she brought an offering to atone for that sin, at which time the blame (*ʿawōn*) was taken by God when he showed mercy by granting forgiveness (Exod 34:7). To reinforce the idea that God takes blame when he forgives, the Israelite priests as God's agents had blame (*ʿawōn*) transferred to them when they ate the meat of purification offerings which atoned for the people (Lev 10:17). Since God took blame when he extended mercy, his justice was called into question. This effect on God was represented as defilement.

Rebellious Sinners. In ancient Israel, there was another way in which God's justice could be called into question: If he allowed rebellious individuals to go unpunished and continue to enjoy the blessings that came with belonging to his chosen people.²⁸ Thus the Psalmist was distressed by the unchecked prosperity of the wicked (Ps 73:2-9), whose ease contrasted with the difficulty which he experienced even though he was innocent (vss. 12-14). The wicked, like the Danielic "little horn," "set their mouths against heaven, and their tongues range over the earth" (vs. 9; cf. Dan 7:8, 11, 20, 25), raising the question: "How can God know? Is there knowledge in the Most High?" (vs. 11). The Psalmist says he struggled to understand "until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I perceived their end" (vs. 17). The sanctuary is the locus of theodicy.

The Day of Atonement dealt with the problem of doubt regarding God's justice by accomplishing two things:

1. It ensured that those who had already been forgiven were sincere in their loyalty to God, as shown by their obedience in practicing self-denial and abstaining from work, thereby humbling themselves before God and putting aside all other activities.

2. It sentenced those who were disloyal to divine punishment by which they would be cut off from the Israelite community.

The Day of Atonement vindicated God's justice, as represented by the cleansing of the sanctuary, and ensured that the Israelite community would be pure in that it would consist entirely of loyal Israelites. God's character and the moral state of his people in relation to himself were interdependent.²⁹

Since Daniel 8:14 uses the term *šdq*, "justify," it keys in to the concept of theodicy more transparently than does Leviticus, which employs ritual metaphorical expressions of defilement and cleansing. However, once the connection between Daniel 8 and Leviticus is grasped, Leviticus provides rich detail regarding the function of divine mercy and justice within a covenant community.

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In Daniel 7-8 the “little horn” and the “holy ones” are judged on the basis of their relationship with God. The issues involved in this judgment are clarified by comparison with the Day of Atonement, during which the high priest approached the Shekinah enthroned over the ark of the covenant (Lev 16:12-16; cf. Exod 25:22; 2 Ki 19:15). The Day of Atonement rituals played a vital role in maintaining the covenant between God and the Israelites because it made possible God’s continued presence among them in his sanctuary despite their faultiness (see Lev 16:16). The importance of God’s presence for the covenant is indicated by Moses’ petition for restoration of that presence following the golden calf episode (Exod 33:12-16). For Moses, full restoration of the covenant necessarily included the divine presence.

Leviticus does not say what would happen to the Israelites if the Day of Atonement cleansing should be neglected. However, Ezekiel graphically depicts YHWH’s withdrawal from his temple when the accumulated sins of the people became too great (Ezek 9:3; 10:4, 18-19; 11:22-23).³⁰ When the temple was abandoned by God, it was soon destroyed, along with Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah. The nation could not survive without God’s presence, and God’s presence would not remain forever if the people failed to be separated from their sins.

In light of the evidence presented thus far, it is clear that the Day of Atonement functioned as a judgment which reviewed and renewed the covenant relationship between God and the Israelites. This yearly covenant review was necessary for the divine-human relationship to continue.³¹

Cleansing the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement involved review of human works which indicated loyalty or disloyalty to God and to his law, which governed covenant relationships with him. Similarly, human works are relevant in the awesome judgment convened before the “Ancient of Days,” in which books are opened (Dan 7:10). Since this investigation results in the horn’s condemnation (vss. 11, 22, 26), the scope of the investigation must include review of the evil works of the horn. But because the *result* of the judgment affects two parties—the horn and the holy ones—the possibility is raised that the *investigation* of the judgment could consider the works of the “holy ones” as well as the works of the horn.³² It is true, of course, that condemnation of the horn resulting from review of its works would benefit the oppressed “holy ones” even if their works are not investigated. But the fact that the “holy ones” can be identified as such and judged worthy to receive the dominion suggests that their works are relevant in the judgment.

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What kind of works pertaining to the “holy ones” would be relevant in the judgment? As we have seen, the Daniel 7 judgment parallels the Daniel 8 restoration of the sanctuary, which parallels the ancient Day of Atonement. On this day, two kinds of works of the faithful were relevant:

1. Works of repentance through sacrifices which they had brought during the year. Israelites who had not gained forgiveness through sacrifice during the year remained culpable (see Lev 5:1) and could not receive cleansing on the Day of Atonement.

2. Works of continuing loyalty by humbling themselves and keeping Sabbath on the Day of Atonement.

The question on the Day of Atonement was not whether the Israelites had ever sinned. All have sinned (cf. Rom 3:23), and distinctions between people cannot be made on this basis. The question was whether they had accepted the provision for forgiveness which God offered them through sacrifice and whether they continued to be rehabilitated in their loyalty to him.³³

Pardon is a valuable gift, but without transformation of attitude and ongoing reconciliation to God, as demonstrated by obedience to him, it is ultimately useless. This is illustrated by the tragic rebellion of Absalom after David freed him from the threat of punishment in response to the appeal of the woman of Tekoa.

Solomon seems to have learned from his father’s experience with Absalom. When Solomon became king after his brother Adonijah had attempted to take the throne, Adonijah begged for mercy (1 Ki 1:51). Solomon sent a message in reply: “If he proves to be a worthy man, not one of his hairs shall fall to the ground; but if wickedness is found in him, he shall die” (vs. 52). Thus, Solomon granted mercy, but in order to maintain his forgiven state, Adonijah had to continue the attitude of submission in which he was forgiven. When he failed in this regard, Solomon ordered his immediate execution (vss. 23-25). So Adonijah lost his pardon by breaking its condition. Shimei, who had cursed David (2 Sam 16:5-13), met a similar fate when he broke the condition which Solomon laid on him (1 Kgs 2:36-46; cf. vss. 8-9).

Forgiveness Involves Moral Change. The New Testament refers to the need for change following forgiveness. Jesus said to the woman taken in adultery: “Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again” (Jn 8:11). He also told a parable about an unjust steward who was forgiven but repudiated his pardon when he failed to extend forgiveness to his fellow servant (Matt 18:23-34). According to Jesus, forgiveness which involves no moral change and which cannot reproduce itself for the benefit of others is not true forgiveness of the kind which God gives.

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According to the New Testament, human beings are not left on their own to change themselves. Because Christ gives peace with God (Rom 5:1), his love, the basic attitude of his law, is poured into human hearts through his Spirit (Rom 5:5; cf. Matt 22:36-40). Thus on-going obedience is regarded as a gift of grace bought by the blood of Christ and received through faith. Salvation is by grace through faith (Eph 2:8). The relevance of works in judgment (cf. Eccl 12:14) does not contradict this, because true faith necessarily produces good works (James 2:26; Gal 5:6). Thus, works demonstrate the genuineness of faith.

For those who are forgiven and remain reconciled, judgment reaffirms assurance; it does not take it away. On the Day of Atonement the Israelite high priest did not cleanse the sanctuary by wiping off bloodstains from earlier sacrifices; rather, he placed more blood (Lev 16:14-19) in several of the same places (cf. Lev 4:6-7, 17-18, 25, 30, 34), reaffirming the forgiveness already granted through blood.

The “Little Horn.” The idea that the Day of Atonement judged the covenant community (see Lev 16:16, 19) raises a question: If the eschatological judgment portrayed in Daniel 7 and 8 functions like the Day of Atonement, how does the “little horn” come under the scope of such a covenant review?

It is possible that the “little horn” is an apostate power which would once have been faithful to God but subsequently fell away, just as individuals who belonged to the Israelite community but rebelled were judged and condemned (see above). Alternatively, the horn could come under the umbrella of the covenant simply because it makes a hypocritical profession of faith.³⁴ Such a conclusion could be reached through identification of the entity to which the horn symbol refers. But even without such identification there is enough evidence in Daniel 7-8 to show that the horn is involved in matters pertaining to God’s covenant.

The horn appears as an intruder who attempts a corporate takeover of the covenant and the blessings that go with it. In Daniel 7:26-27, judgment by the heavenly court results in the dominion of the horn being taken away from it and given to the “holy ones of the Most High.” It is clear that God gives them the dominion because they are his people. “The meek shall inherit the earth” (Matt 5:5; cf. Ps 37:11) for the same reason that Canaan was promised to Abraham: because they have a covenant relationship with him. The fact that the “little horn” tries to take the dominion of this earth indicates that it attempts to usurp the covenant blessings.

Although the horn uses coercive force against the “holy ones” (Dan 7:25; 8:24), it is not simply another wicked political/military power like

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the previous human powers depicted in Daniel 7 and 8. Its ambitions transcend the sphere of secular politics, as shown by Daniel 7:25, where the horn “shall attempt to change the sacred seasons and the law (*zimmîn wedāt*),” i.e. God’s covenant law and worship. In Daniel 8:11-13, the horn takes away “the regularity” (*hattāmîd*), i.e. regular worship of God by those who are in a covenant relationship with him, and sets up in its place a “desolating sacrilege.” Thus the horn attempts to replace God’s covenant system of worship with an alternative.

That the activity of the “little horn” would affect God’s sanctuary and thereby bring it within the scope of the eschatological judgment is indicated by comparison with Leviticus 20:1-3, in which the ancient Israelite sanctuary was defiled when an Israelite or a resident alien who came to dwell within the borders of the land of Israel participated in the foreign cult of Molech worship in place of legitimate worship of YHWH. Defilement of the sanctuary was more severe, of course, if foreign cult objects interfering with true worship were introduced into the sanctuary itself, as occurred in the times of King Manasseh (2 Ki 21:7) and Ezekiel (Ezek 8). Similarly, the divine sanctuary mentioned in Daniel 8:14 would be defiled when the “little horn” interfered with the covenant by causing people to participate in worship involving the “desolating sacrilege” instead of the regular worship of YHWH (vss. 11-13).

In Daniel 8:12, 13, the attack on God’s antitypical worship system by the “little horn” power is called *pešaʿ*, “transgression,” the same term for rebellious sin which appears in the context of the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:16, 21). The “little horn” is particularly guilty because it does not merely disregard part of God’s sacrificial system (cf. Num 19:13, 20) and participate in an alternate system (cf. Lev 20:3); it removes part of God’s system, i.e. the “regularity” (so-called “daily”), and sets up an alternate system (Dan 8:11-13; 11:31; 12:11). Thus the horn would come under the jurisdiction of a court which reviews covenant status.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the judgment of Daniel 7 and the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8 represent complementary aspects of the same event, in which God will make a final review of his covenant connection with human beings, reaffirming his true followers and rejecting an oppressive usurper. This event is the cosmic, eschatological equivalent of the ancient Day of Atonement, which not only condemned rebellious individuals, but reaffirmed the forgiveness of those who had shown their repentance through sacrifice. In the end-time judgment, as

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on the Day of Atonement, God is shown to be just even when he grants mercy to those whom he forgives.

Notes

¹Much of the research for this paper is part of a larger project moving toward publication in the form of a book tentatively entitled, *The Day of Atonement and Theodicy*

²See W Shea, "Spatial Dimensions in the Vision of Daniel 8," in F. Holbrook, ed., *Symposium on Daniel* (Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), 2:507-519.

³Cp the Hurrian myth of Ullikummi, in which the deity Kumarbi attempts to remove Tessub as king of the gods by impregnating a rock, which gives birth to a basalt stone called Ullikummi. This stone grows up like a colossal shaft into the sky in order to threaten Tessub. The gods contemplate the possibility of cutting off Ullikummi at his base with a copper cutting tool (cf. Dan 8:25—"But he shall be broken, and not by human hands"), but we do not know the conclusion of the titanic struggle because the end of the text is broken away. See H. Hoffner, Jr., transl. and G. Beckman, ed., *Hittite Myths* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 52-61.

⁴New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) is cited in Scripture references.

⁵See W Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*, rev. ed., Daniel and Revelation Committee Series (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 1:50-52.

⁶On the functional equivalence of these events within the structure of Daniel 7-8, see J Doukhan, *Daniel: The Vision of the End* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews Univ. Press, 1987), 29-30.

⁷Compare the book of Judges, in which God provided justice for his repentant people by defeating foreign oppressors See R. Gane, *God's Faulty Heroes* Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1996, 37.

⁸Cf Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*, 149.

⁹For the idea that evenings and mornings comprise days, see Gen 1 Cf. S. Schwantes, "Ereb Böqer of Daniel 8:14 Re-Examined," in F. Holbrook, ed., *Symposium on Daniel*, 462-474.

¹⁰See eg. L. Hartman and A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, Anchor Bible Series, (New York: Doubleday, 1978).

¹¹For other problems with the Maccabean hypothesis, see Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*, 31-66 Additional evidence against the Maccabean view is found by comparing Daniel 2 and 7 with the Akkadian "Dynastic Prophecy," published by A.K. Grayson (*Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts* [Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1975], pp. 24-37). This text shows the Babylonian perception of the empires which ruled that area: Assyria, Babylon, Persia and Macedonia. As I pointed out in a paper entitled "Akkadian *Ex Eventu* Prophecies and the Genre 'Apocalypse'" (Society of Biblical Literature, national meeting, Anaheim, 1989), if J. Montgomery is correct that Dan 1-6 are of Babylonian provenance (*The Book of Daniel* [International Critical Commentary series, New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1927; repr. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1979], p. 90), we would expect these chapters to share the same perception of the empires which ruled Babylonia. Thus, starting with Babylon, the four empires in Dan 2 would be: Babylon, Persia, Macedonia, and "X" (unnamed). The same would be true in Dan 7, where the four empires parallel those of Dan 2. Since the "little horn" in Dan 7 originates from the fourth empire (vss. 7-8), it must come from the unnamed empire which follows the Seleucid Macedonian empire. Therefore the "little horn" cannot be the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

¹²Detailed discussion of this dynamic and the terminology which indicates it will appear in my book on the Day of Atonement and theodicy

¹³On the two phases of atonement, see R Gane, "Ritual Dynamic Structure: Systems Theory and Ritual Syntax Applied to Selected Ancient Israelite, Babylonian and Hittite Festival Days," Ph.D. diss., Univ. of California, Berkeley (1992), 172-176; see also R. Gane, "Ritual Dynamic Structure in the Ancient Israelite 'Day of Purgations,'" paper presented at the Adventist Theological Society/Evangelical Theological Society national meeting, Washington, D.C., 1993, and subsequently published in microform by the Theological Research Exchange Network.

¹⁴See J Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, Anchor Bible series, (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 1056; R. Davidson, The Good News of Yom Kippur, *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 2 (1991), 6-7.

¹⁵On the divine penalty expressed by the verb *krt* as the extirpation of a person's line of descendants, see D Wold, "The Meaning of the Biblical Penalty *Kareth*," Ph.D. diss., Univ. of California at Berkeley, 1978.

¹⁶According to *Mishnah* Roš Haššanah 1:1-2 (cp *Babylonian Talmud* Ros° Has°s°anah 16b), the Day of Atonement on Tishri 10 was a day of judgment, but judgment also took place at other times,

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including especially the “new year” of the first day of Tishri (so-called “feast of trumpets”; Lev 23:23-25). But although the *šerū’ah*, “(trumpet) blast,” of Tishri 1 most likely acclaimed YHWH as king (cf. Num 23:21) and therefore announced the coming of his judgment, there is no biblical evidence that judgment actually began until the Day of Atonement.

¹⁷That Daniel 8:14 refers to an event like the Day of Atonement has been recognized since antiquity. The Septuagint translates *nišdaq*, “shall be justified,” in Daniel 8:14 as *katharisthēsetai*, “shall be cleansed,” thereby alluding to the cleansing of the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. For a discussion of this LXX rendering, see N.-E. Andreasen, “Translation of *Nišdaq/Katharisthēsetai* in Daniel 8:14,” in F. Holbrook, ed., *Symposium on Daniel*, 475-496. Rashi begins his comment on Daniel 8:14 by using Day of Atonement language: “The iniquity of Israel will be atoned for ...” Jacques Doukhan has discussed a number of factors in Daniel 8 which point to the Day of Atonement, including the fact that Daniel 8 uses the imagery of a ram and a goat (vss. 3-8), the same kinds of animals used for sacrifices on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:5-6; Doukhan, 25-30).

¹⁸Doukhan, 29

¹⁹On the overlapping semantic ranges in Jb 4:17, see Andreasen, 483-485

²⁰For the idea that *‘awōn* in this kind of context refers to culpability cp Gen 4:13; 19:15; Lev 5:1; Num 14:34; See F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1979), 731. Cf. B. Schwartz, “The Bearing of Sin in the Priestly Literature,” in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom*, ed. D. Wright, D. N. Freedman and A. Hurvitz (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 10-15.

²¹J Hoffjizer describes this as the usual interpretation (referring to Keil, Klostermann, Thenius-Löhr, Budde, Dhorme, Schulz, Hertzberg, de Groot, etc.) and then unconvincingly argues against it, concluding that the woman of Tekoa, like Abigail (1 Sam 25:24), acknowledged her inferior status by confessing guilt in order to plead for forgiveness for a guilty relative (“David and the Tekoite Woman,” *Vetus Testamentum* 20 [1970], 424-428). This idea may work in the case of Abigail, when she pleaded with David to refrain from seeking vengeance on Nabal. But the woman of Tekoa clearly contrasted her blame with David’s cleanness, i.e. lack of culpability (2 Sam 14:9). Because she would bear it, he would not. This implies that if she did not bear it, he would. As recognized by the usual interpretation, the potential for David to bear this blame could only arise from his involvement in the case as judge. Another unconvincing departure from the usual interpretation is that of McCarter, who finds vs. 9 to be “isolated and disruptive in its present location” and says that David simply ignored the words of the woman recorded in this verse (McCarter, 347). H. McKeating raises the possibility that the woman’s appeal to David may have been to ensure that the law should be applied normally in view of a threat by the clan to apply it over-rigorously (“The Development of the Law on Homicide in Ancient Israel,” *Vetus Testamentum* 25 [1975], 50-52). However, the evidence in 2 Sam 14 indicates that the woman was pleading for leniency instead of the normal legal consequences.

²²E Bellefontaine, “Customary Law and Chieftainship: Judicial Aspects of 2 Samuel 14.4-21,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 38 (1987), 62.

²³See Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 667

²⁴Contrast Judg 21:25

²⁵See U Simon, “The Poor Man’s Ewe-Lamb: An Example of a Juridical Parable,” *Biblica* 48 (1967), 220-221.

²⁶Compare the way we speak of “the White House,” referring to the US. presidency and its reputation.

²⁷Cp Lev 20:3 and Num 19:13,20, which warn that wanton sins of Israelites or resident aliens living in the land of Israel automatically defile the Israelite sanctuary.

²⁸There are two basic differences between this kind of case and that which involves forgiveness:

(1) Whereas forgiveness is a definite act, simply allowing the guilty to go unpunished would be a kind of negligence

(2) People who receive forgiveness admit their mistakes and desire reconciliation. They can be rehabilitated as loyal citizens. Rebellious individuals, on the other hand, try to get away with their faults without admitting them so that they can continue their disloyal course of action.

²⁹Cp J. Milgrom, “Israel’s Sanctuary: The Priestly ‘Picture of Dorian Gray,’” *Revue Biblique* 83 (1976), 390-399 (see now *Leviticus 1-16*, 254-261) in which Milgrom argues that in the priestly theodicy expressed by purification offerings, the state of the sanctuary (defiled or pure) reflected the state of the Israelites. I agree that we are dealing with theodicy here and that the state of the Israelites interacted with that of the sanctuary. However, unlike Milgrom, I do not apply the automatic dynamic of defilement (Lev 20:3; Num 19:13, 20) to expiable cases because this dynamic is only attested in those cases (same vss.) of wanton sin for which the penalty was extirpation and no sacrificial expiation was available.

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³⁰See G Hasel, "Studies in Biblical Atonement II: The Day of Atonement," in *The Sanctuary and the Atonement: Biblical, Historical, and Theological Studies*, ed. A. Wallenkampf (Washington, D.C: Review and Herald, 1981), 119; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 258; B. Schwartz "The Bearing of Sin in the Priestly Literature," in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom*, ed. D. Wright, D. N. Freedman and A. Hurvitz (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 21.

The idea that YHWH could abandon his people was paralleled outside Israel. For example, the Moabite stone refers to the god Chemosh becoming angry with the Moabites so that he allowed them to be dominated by the Israelites (J. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 3rd ed, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 320.

³¹Psalms 50 also connects the ideas of judgment and covenant. In this Psalm, God's judgment is depicted as a theophany (vss. 1-4). He promises to deliver his faithful people (vss. 15, 23), who have made a covenant with him by sacrifice (vs. 5). However, he rejects those who take his covenant on their lips (vs. 16) but cast his words behind them (vs. 17) by keeping company with thieves and adulterers, speaking evil and slandering (vss. 18-20). Here, as on the Day of Atonement, God differentiates between faithful and merely nominal members of the covenant community on the basis of faithfulness to him and to his commands.

³²Cf Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*, 149.

³³As a yearly review of divine-human relationships, the Day of Atonement was not unique in the ancient Near East. On the fifth day of the Babylonian new year festival of spring (Aki-tu festival), after the Esagila temple and the Ezida cella were purged of demonic impurities, the king approached (the image of) Marduk in the Esagila without his crown and royal insignia. The high priest humiliated the king before Marduk by striking his cheek, pulling him by the ears and making him kneel down to the ground. The king affirmed his righteousness by intoning the words:

I did [not] sin, lord of the countries. I was not neglectful (of the requirements) of your godship. [I did not] destroy Babylon; I did not command its overthrow [I did not . . .] the temple Esagil, I did not forget its rites. [I did not] rain blows on the cheek of a subordinate . . . I did [not] humiliate them. [I watched out] for Babylon; I did not smash its walls . . . (Pritchard, ed., 334).

After this speech, the high priest expressed the favor of Marduk toward him, following which the king received his crown and insignia and was struck again by the high priest to make tears flow as an omen of Marduk's favor. For similarities and differences between this ritual and the Israelite Day of Atonement, see Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 1068-1069; R. Gane, "Schedules for Deities: Macrostructure of Israelite, Babylonian, and Hittite Sancta Purification Days," *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, forthcoming. For analysis of all rituals of the fifth day of this Babylonian festival, see Gane, "Ritual Dynamic Structure . . .," 229-275. Another parallel which in some ways is even more striking is found in the earlier Sumerian Nanshe Hymn, dated from about 2000 B.C., which describes a New Year celebration in which contracts of persons employed by the temple of Nanshe were reviewed in terms of their ritual and ethical behavior during the previous year and their presence at the temple on the New Year (W. Heimpel, "The Nanshe Hymn," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 33 [1981], 65-119). As in Israel on the Day of Atonement, the status of persons within the divinely benefited community was judged on the basis of loyalty which they demonstrated toward a deity and his/her personal moral standards. While the Babylonian and Sumerian events were similar to the Day of Atonement in several respects, neither of them included consideration of forgiveness earlier received. This element seems to be unique to the Israelite Day of Atonement, which correlates with the fact that among ancient Near Eastern rituals, only in Israelite sacrifices was blood applied to the sanctuary/temple as part of an atonement process.

³⁴Cp Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*, 144-146.