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**THE WOMAN AND HER CHILDREN
IN 4 MACCABEES 16-18 AND REVELATION 12:
AN EXPERIMENT IN THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION
UPON THE WITNESS OF THE BIBLE IN GREEK¹**

The purpose of this article is to provide a unique, contrapuntal (i.e., dialectical) canon-hermeneutical approach to the interpretation of two passages previously unrelated in such a manner. For the first time, the conduct of biblical theology employs the Scriptures exclusively in Greek: the language of the earliest Christians, of their Bibles, sermons, liturgies, commentaries, and creeds. Both Testaments are attested by two of the earliest available comprehensive manuscripts: Codex Sinaiticus (mid-4th c.) and Codex Alexandrinus (mid-5th c). Another innovation of this essay lies in its using their deuterocanonical literature, whose books stand integrated by genre among the “Protocanonical” writings to this day in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox “lungs” of the historic Christian Church. Even some Protestants are cautiously engaging this material in an ecumenical spirit.

Keywords: Apocalyptic, Biblical Theology, Bible in Greek, Codex Alexandrinus, Codex Sinaiticus, Deuterocanonical, Maccabees, Martyr, Revelation.

Introduction

Much has been written separately about these passages in 4 Maccabees and Revelation with some attention given to the influence of one over the other. But, as yet, nothing has been done to relate them theologically in a canon-hermeneutical

¹ An earlier version of this thesis was delivered orally to the graduate students' seminar of the J. W. Wevers Institute for Septuagint Studies at Trinity Western University in Langley, B. C. on December 9, 2015. Thanks go to Professor Rob Hiebert, the Director, for arranging the occasion. They and several colleagues from the Department of Religious Studies provided stimulating exchanges throughout.

fashion, in a manner that exploits their similarities and differences. Regarding them as “canonical” – that is, as in some sense normative and authoritative – is based upon a number of factors. 4 Maccabees [4M] appears in two of the three earliest manuscripts of the comprehensive Bible in Greek: Codex Sinaiticus (mid-4th c. CE) and Codex Alexandrinus (mid-5th c. CE)². In these documents, the Maccabean literature is fully integrated by genre with the other “Historical Books”³. Such is the case with deuterocanonical writings in general. They have not been dis-integrated from the “protocanonical” books, isolated between them and the New Testament [NT], and labeled with the pejorative and dogmatically-driven “Apocrypha”. This disruption is an historical innovation begun with the Reformation as late as the 16th century. Also new during this era was the almost exclusive use of the Hebrew Bible [HB] for theological reflection. Beforehand, the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith had been hammered out on the basis of Greek and Latin texts⁴. It was from them that the earliest translations of the Bible were made. Even today, the Orthodox Church regards the LXX as inspired Scripture⁵, scholars not ignoring the “original” Hebrew and Aramaic⁶. It is also instructive to recall that, because “canonicity” in the Eastern Church has enjoyed a wider definition, the occurrences of sentences and sentiments from 4M in Greek Orthodox liturgies (though only three instances,

² Both are accessible on line: <http://www.codexsinaiticus.org/en/>, <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/sacredtexts/codexalex.html>. These two and C. Vaticanus (mid-4th c. CE) have laid the foundation for reconstructing the critical texts of the Septuagint [LXX] and the Greek New Testament [GNT]. However, C. Vaticanus contains none of the Maccabean books. See *Septuaginta* / ed. Alfred Rahlfs, 7th ed. Stuttgart 1962 and *Septuaginta* / ed. Josef Ziegler and O. Munnich, 2nd ed. Göttingen 1999. The author has used *Novum Testamentum Graece* / eds. E. and E. Nestle, K. and B. Aland, 27th ed. Stuttgart 1993; the New Revised Standard Version [NRSV] and the New English Translation of the Septuagint [NETS], except where his own translations of them differ.

³ In C. Sinaiticus, 1 and 4 Maccabees conclude the historical books: immediately following Judith and immediately preceding Isaiah. All four books appear between 2 Esdras and the Psalter in C. Alexandrinus.

⁴ There never was a time when a codex contained the Old Testament [OT] in Hebrew followed by the NT in Greek. Timothy Michael Law recounts the profound impact that the Scriptures in Greek had upon the early Church: *When God Spoke Greek. The Septuagint and the Making of the Christian Bible*. Oxford: University Press 2013. It is not just the Hebrew and Aramaic Scriptures that were the Jewish Scriptures. The LXX (as witnessed to by these three manuscripts and their descendants) was also *Jewish* Scripture: Greek-speaking/*Hellenistic Jewish* Scripture. And it could be argued – because it fully integrated deuterocanonical literature according to genre – that the latter were more extensively and profoundly Jewish than the former.

⁵ *The Orthodox Study Bible* / prepared under the auspices of the academic community of St. Athanasius Academy of Orthodox Theology, Elk Grove, California. Nashville: Thomas Nelson 2008, p. xv.

⁶ *Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia* / ed. W. Rudolf and H. P. Rüger, 2nd ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft 1984.

by the author's count) sometimes outnumber those from the protocanonical literature of the Old Testament (OT) and writings of the NT⁷.

However, increasing numbers of Protestants are being exposed to this literature as well. Serving them in a constructive manner is needed also. Currently, they can find all 4 Maccabean books in critical editions of the LXX, the NETS, the NRSV, and the New English Bible [NEB]. In both of the latter volumes, they are isolated and sandwiched between the OT and NT with the rest of the so-called "Apocrypha". A typical Protestant attitude towards them is to be found in the sixth of the Anglican Church's Thirty-nine Articles, which states, "the Church [following the opinion of St. Jerome] doth read [them] for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine"⁸. Some would find such distinction theologically schizophrenic. Should not ethics and prudence be based upon sound doctrinal thinking?⁹

Characteristics: Similarities and Differences (see Figure 1)

Briefly, both accounts use 1) celestial imagery in their narratives about a 2) woman associated with Israel. 3) She and her sons are persecuted – the latter, even to death – by an 4) egregious enemy. 5) Though victims, they are victorious over him by their death by bloodshed and by obedience, 6) individually and collectively. These appeared all the more striking by occurring in two very diverse genres. The content differs, too, as does the point of view. In 4M, 1) the author employed metaphors in an "historical" philosophical narrative, whereas St. John recorded an apocalyptic vision in a mythic genre. 2) An Israelite mother in the former is the Mother of Israel in the latter. 3) The perfected virtues of her seven sons are embodied in those of a single son and her other children. 4) In 4M, the quintessential evil one appears as the "historical" Antiochus Epiphanes. In R12, he is "imaged" as the primordial Serpent and (an eschatological?) Dragon, Satan, and the Devil. 5) The children's mother

⁷ Demetrios J. Constantelos. *The Holy Scriptures in Greek Orthodox Worship (a Comparative and Statistical Study)* // *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 12 (1966), pp. 78-80. Harold P. Scanlin opines that "use in the liturgy actually helps to define what is canonical". See: *The Old Testament Canon in the Orthodox Churches* // *New Perspectives on Historical Theology. Essays in Memory of John Meyendorff* / ed. Bradley Nassif. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1996, p. 310.

⁸ *The Book of Common Prayer*. Kingsport, TN: Kingsport Press 1977, p. 868. Although St. Jerome used the Hebrew and Aramaic Scriptures in his translation of the Bible into Latin (the Vulgate), it is with the Reformation (a thousand years later) that this became the regular practice among Protestants.

⁹ The author of this essay (though himself an Episcopalian and therefore a member of the worldwide Anglican Communion) does not subscribe to the view. One reason for his flexibility is that passages from the deuterocanonical documents occur from time to time in the OT readings of the liturgy.

(or piety itself) conquers the tyrant by her death (cleansing and forgiveness being achieved by the shed blood of her seven children). Victory over the four-named enemy comes by the “brothers” own witness-to-death, though derived from the Lamb’s blood. 6) An ethnic and national demography stands alongside an international, universal one. 7) A local site parallels a global venue. 8) An earthly horizon intersects a vertical, heavenly dimension. 8) A principally human drama contrasts a largely supernatural one. 9) In many instances, this variety reflects the interplay between a “scandalous” particular and a more inclusive universal.

Of course, one can treat the commonalities in vocabulary and theme historically so far as dating, provenance, and the direction of influence from one upon the other are concerned. The consensus of opinion is that both writers had adopted, adapted, and arranged traditions circulating during the first century CE between Asia Minor and Syrian Antioch¹⁰. Furthermore, it is impossible to tell (at this stage of scholarly investigation, anyway) which had influenced the other, particularly regarding the nature of efficacious death¹¹. However, perhaps the following version of Biblical Theology [BT] will bear more fruit, but of another kind – both for the Academy and the Church.

Biblical Theology: Documented by Verses and Lines in Figure 1

From one perspective, some might think that this enterprise is an example of fools rushing in where angels fear to tread. Why is this so – apart from a Protestant author’s breaking with his tradition? In a massive and provocative tome, no less a scholar than James Barr has argued that BT is both impossible and illegitimate¹². Scholars have been unable to determine whether it should be a descriptive, historical, or normative (i.e., theological) endeavor. Furthermore, there has been little if any consensus about the unifying theme or center of BT –

¹⁰ David de Silva makes a case for the middle half of the first century, in “the eastern Diaspora, probably somewhere between Asia Minor (where the florid style was most at home) and Syria (the traditional site of the martyrs’ graves).” See *Introducing the Apocrypha*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2002, pp. 355-56. Steven Cummins narrows the provenance to Syrian Antioch in *Paul and the Crucified Christ in Antioch. Maccabean Martyrdom and Galatians 1 and 2*. Cambridge: University Press 2001. At the opposite end of this range is “one of the cities of Asia Minor,” suggested by Jan W. van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours. A Study of 2 and 4 Maccabees*. New York: Brill 1997, p. 81.

¹¹ Moses Hadas. *The Third and Fourth Books of Maccabees*. New York: Harper 1953, p. 122. Studies continue to appear suggesting the influence of this literature upon the NT. A recent example is Christian Grappe. De l’intérêt de 4 Maccabées 17.18–22 (et 16.20-1) pour la christologie du NT // *New Testament Studies* 46/3 (2000) 342-357.

¹² James Barr. *The Concept of Biblical Theology: an Old Testament Perspective*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress 1999.

whichever of these tacks one takes¹³. Moreover, what should be the materials of the enterprise: tradition (oral or written)? redaction? canon? some combination of all three? What method ought one to adopt? The question of HOW suddenly emerges as a practical matter. Where or by whom should it be done: by Academy? Church? Synagogue? Is the practice essentially a scholarly or confessional endeavor? A range of opinion in each instance complicates the matter further.

While acknowledging the historical and descriptive dimensions of the task, this essay attempts to do justice to these documents as conceived and as received: as arising from and continuing within the life of the Church universal. Resisting harmonization or synthesis, preferential treatment, and reduction to an essence or principle (or timeless truth) is the goal. Each of these denies the profound diversity preserved (and implicitly approved) by the canon of Scripture. Positive use of its plurality and variety should be the objective.

Having called attention to the shared vocabulary, themes, and drama of 4M – R12 in Figure 1, the challenge for the interpreter is to moderate a dialog between the two passages according to the character, dynamics, and personae of the narratives themselves. The model for doing so is the musical technique of point-counterpoint. Themes will be exploited for ways by which they can be made to interact with counter-themes and alternate rhythms. More specifically, the following “performance” demonstrates how each of the two texts provides material that enables the interpreter to prevent its opposite from going to extremes. This approach acknowledges the full engagement of the moderator or instructor. Ink on paper cannot itself teach.

The place to begin is with 4M since it appears first in the sequence. However, canonical order will be less of a factor as one oscillates between the two Testaments. The aim throughout has not been to determine the religio-historical influence of one text over another. Rather, it has been the goal to imagine how they might influence each other theologically. A dialectical process values them both. If successful here, the method might subsequently be applied to other “contrarian” biblical texts¹⁴.

Genres: Philosophical Narrative and Apocalyptic Myth (line 12)

For the most part, genre has to do with rhetorical strategy: making the case most convincingly to one’s target audience. “Apocalypse” in Greek refers to an

¹³ Gerhard Hasel’s two volumes are still instructive in this regard: *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*. 4th ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1991 and *New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1978.

¹⁴ For examples conducted by Eugene E. Lemcio since 1981, see the collected articles in Robert W. Wall and Eugene E. Lemcio. *The New Testament as Canon: a Reader in Canonical Criticism*. Sheffield: Academic Press 1991, pp. 28-108, 335-60.

“unveiling”, or “uncovering”, or “revelation”. This fundamental meaning is obscured when popular usage limits its significance to disaster on a global or even cosmic scale¹⁵. The tragic explosion at the Chornobyl nuclear reactor in 1986 north of Kyiv, Ukraine was deemed an “apocalyptic event”. Rarely did one ask, “What was revealed to the world about Soviet nuclear policy with regard to safety and protecting human life and the environment?” “Myth” has come to mean “falsehood” in common parlance. However, it is an ancient and widespread means of conveying profound truths that are primordial in origin and eschatological in consequence. Its narrative consists of highly-complex metaphors and images, some of them appearing across cultures¹⁶. At times, the Seer envisions monstrosities: grotesque ideas and behaviors requiring equally-grotesque images. Disorientation is the prelude to re-orientation – and salvation.

As seen in Figure 1 (at the end of the article), the author of 4M uses the language of ζωγραφῆσαι . . . ἱστορίαν [NETS: “to paint the story”] (17:7, line 12) to describe what he is doing. The implication is a realistic portrait, a one-to-one correspondence between people and events and his reporting of them: a narrative that took place in a linear, chronological sequence. (Acknowledging this approach does not require a defense of its historical accuracy.)

In contrast, the author of R12 (vv. 1, 3, line 12) twice recounts seeing a sign – the first one being “great” [μέγαν]. Signs point away from themselves towards the person or thing Signified. Though distinct, they nevertheless overlap. Although the noun is confined to chapter 12, its verb form appears in 1:1. At the very outset, the author signals that the revelatory message from God that follows will be conveyed via sign language [ἑσημαίνεν], a detail obscured in translation. In other words, Revelation, from start to finish is, as it were, a “signed” document – the rich mythic symbolism going back millennia and still current in the first century CE.

Consequently, the truth that signs and symbols (both verbal and visual) convey will come across “slant”¹⁷. It needs to be approached indirectly by those

¹⁵ Occasionally, natural disasters – especially if they appear to be happening more frequently – are assigned apocalyptic dimensions. However, one need only recall that, in the case of North America, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions (both standard occurrences in apocalyptic texts) usually happen on the West Coast, hurricanes on the East Coast, and tornadoes in the middle of the Continent. A 24/7 news cycle adds to the impression of increased frequency.

¹⁶ See Edmund Fuller *et al.* *Myth, Allegory, and Gospel. An Interpretation of J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, G. K. Chesterton, and Charles Williams*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship 1974 and George Caird. *The Language and Imagery of the Bible*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster 1980, especially the author’s seven connotations of “myth,” pp. 219-242.

¹⁷ I appropriate “slant” from the poem by Emily Dickinson, “Tell all the truth, but tell it slant...” <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/56824/tell-all-the-truth-but-tell-it-slant-1263>.

aware of and appreciative of the images – perhaps even schooled in their interpretation. The reader is encouraged to go for the deeper meaning, not to be content with superficial renderings, nor to be seduced by the comfort of linear thinking – of which R12 is not wholly devoid (the chapter containing three mini-narratives). Sometimes, the same truth must be approached from more than one angle of vision or perspective. Furthermore, a subjective, heartfelt response is called for, not merely a cerebral, intellectual one.

4M could mitigate or reduce (if not eliminate) the dangers of appealing solely or primarily to such an ecstatic genre by extolling the virtues of objectivity, rationality, linearity, and accessibility by all – even by the outsider – not just an elite class schooled in the obscure. And one should be encouraged to read carefully what is on the line before attempting to read between or behind the lines. Of course, such an approach does not exclude the affective. The narrative explicitly reports the physical, emotional, and spiritual pain endured by the Maccabean mother and her children.

Egyptian, Greek, and Babylonian myths (in whole or in part) contain a similar cast of characters, combined for the first time by St. John into a single text. The Woman-Child-Dragon struggle, the War-in-Heaven for supremacy, and Pursuit-on-Earth of the vulnerable recount a power play among the principal individuals or their allies. So, one is dealing with the fundamental questions, “Who rules, how, and on whose behalf?” Using such imagery enables the fisherman to cast his net as widely as possible in the Greco-Roman world while answering those questions in Christological terms¹⁸.

4M could raise a red flag against the risks of conceding too much, of suggesting a kind of syncretism that would fall into the hands of opponents bent on blurring the lines between general revelation granted to the entire world and true, revealed religion to a particular people.

Orientation: Horizontal and Vertical

So far as orientation is concerned, the narrative of 4M is horizontal, below, on the ground, terrestrial, and this worldly. That of R12 is vertical, above, celestial, and otherworldly. Indeed, the Greek word οὐρανός can mean either “heaven” or “sky” (line 9). So, one could claim that the sky functions mainly as the screen onto which the apocalyptic images are projected – rather like in a cinema, where the viewers face the action (except in an IMAX theater, which tends to draw the eyes and head upwards).

¹⁸ Eugene E. Lemcio. *Navigating Revelation. Charts for the Voyage: A Pedagogical Aid*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock 2010, pp. 47-48, 50-54. See also Daniel Ogden. *Dragons, Serpents, and Slayers in the Classical and Early Christian Worlds. A Sourcebook*. Oxford: University Press 2013.

In this connection, the analogy that George Caird has offered is useful. He refers to the setting of a war room with a large vertical surface upon which appear tiny models of airplanes, ships, tanks, and troops. As information comes in from commanders on the battlefield, those models are re-arranged. Thus, they symbolize – in a building far removed from the conflict – the realities on the ground¹⁹. Now, as in the case of all analogies, there are points at which the parallels do not hold. The problem here is that Caird’s model presupposes an almost one-to-one correspondence between image and reality – and a fluid one, at that. And, of course, he is dealing with only a single text, that of R12 – there being no tension with another kind of text at all.

With regard to the texts at hand, tension is created between the “heavenly-minded, no earthly good” disposition, about which the author of 4M could express concern. “Are these characters bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh? Have they ever been acquainted with our grief? Do their feet ever touch the soil? How can the generals in their lofty and safe positions know the hazards experienced by foot soldiers ‘on ground level’: in rat-infested trenches and charging across pock-marked no-man’s land?”

Yet, the author of R12 could reply: “Yes, but our generals have risen through the ranks to arrive at their high positions. Their boots did get muddied, their clothes and bodies bloodied. This gives them a unique vantage point, a sense of perspective. From it, they can survey the war on all of its fronts as well as zero in on particular battles. What the infantryman might see as a disastrous retreat, the officer can view as a stratagem leading to eventual victory”. Furthermore, these spatial categories can be understood as profound realities projected onto the heavenly sky-screen in a metaphorical sense, so far as the heights and depths of significance are concerned: elevation and subversion, exaltation and undermining.

Finally, any tendency towards a limited “pie-in-the-sky, by-and-by” outlook (which a mis-reading of R12 might feed) is challenged by the this-worldly vision of 4M (of which Revelation as a whole, especially chapter 21, is not entirely lacking). But an equally-constricted, mundane orientation could forget the derivative nature of lived reality that originates beyond, behind, and within the cosmos.

Scope: the Particular and the Universal

However, when the advocacy of such universals ironically exceeds certain boundaries (through an unqualified reading of Revelation in general and R12 especially), one can invoke 4M to provide a corrective – as an expression of

¹⁹ George B. Caird. *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine*. New York: Harpers 1966, pp. 60-61.

the “scandal of particularity”. One can imagine the author saying, “The God who is everywhere, chose to visit somewhere. The work of God and the people’s responses to God have always (and most recently) taken place on our land, in our time, among us Jews, and on behalf of our nation. Only thus, could we resist the ruthless program of systematic and Hellenistic paganization conducted by the Seleucid dynasty, especially by Antiochus IV”.

Conversely, when too narrow a scope risks becoming parochial in its territoriality; chauvinistic in its nationality; and tribal in its demography, then R12 can be drawn upon to make the case that the local be viewed in terms of the global, the homeland in the context of every land, the ethnic in the framework of multi-ethnicity, and the national among the family of nations – the ordered world of the οἰκουμένη. Might the entire earth as well as a particular soil be regarded as “Holy Land” because of divine visitation?

Protagonists

Women: the Ideal Israelite and Israel that Gives Birth to the Messiah (lines 1, 3-6)

The reader of 4M could be tempted to regard the woman of R12 as largely passive and as requiring divine aid in the form of rest and refreshment – advantages not available to the mother of seven young men. She has been proactive, drawing upon resources stored up by virtue of a lifetime’s fidelity to the Mosaic covenant and to strict obedience of its stipulations. She is a model for all Jewish women, the ideal Israelite, outshining even men in her piety (16:14), having put reason above her natural impulses as a female and mother (v. 4). By such virtue, she conquered the Antagonist himself. This legacy has been bequeathed to her children.

While the woman of 4M is an ideal Israelite individual, she of R12 is a collective, figurative one (an image found, of course in the OT): Israel as the people from among whom the messiah originated; and she serves as the mother of the messianic community. Furthermore, a closer reading of R12 reveals special aspects of this feminine imagery. The glorious woman is not so much passive as she is supremely vulnerable: 1) a *woman* versus a great red dragon, 2) a *pregnant* woman up against a great red dragon, 3) a pregnant woman *in the final stages of labor* under threat of a great red dragon, 4) a woman *recently delivered of her child* facing a great red dragon! Who is likely to win this uneven contest between awesome, hostile power and total vulnerability? That she should require divinely prescribed rest and nourishment after such an ordeal – and then to be subsequently pursued – should not be surprising (vv. 4, 6, 13-17). Although an ideal Israelite mother might

die (4M), Israel itself cannot. The Mother of Israel (R12) cannot die, either – by virtue of God’s commitment to God’s people²⁰.

**Her Children: Seven Ideal (Perfect!) Israelite Sons,
the Son to Rule the World, and the Other Siblings (lines 5-7, 23)**

That the woman of 4M succeeded in raising seven sons after her likeness in piety is astonishing, indeed. This collective perfection (to a one!) sets the standard for all of Israel. They, too, model how the people of God should maintain loyalty to Mosaic teaching and ancestral traditions²¹. Each illustrates the manly discipline required of all who put reason above the primitive instinct for self-preservation, the avoidance of horrible torture, and escape from a pointless death.

Of course, the woman of R12 has children, too – although their ethnicity is not spelled out, an indication of a wider demographic. They also are pursued by the common enemy (treated below). Her offspring’s fidelity is here expressed in terms of keeping the commands of God and holding to the testimony to Jesus – even to the point of death (vv. 11, 17). But it is this single son who receives most of the attention. Now, at one level, the compressed narrative leaves little room for much detail about his own actions. Basically, what we are told is that newly-born child was immediately snatched to God’s throne, from which he is to rule all nations with a rod of iron (v. 5).

Nothing in R12 details his or their unyielding faithfulness – whatever the cost. Nevertheless, there are suggestions: his siblings are said to have borne the witness-unto-death of Jesus – which (if a subjective genitive in Greek) may mean “the witness that Jesus himself bore” (v. 11). The same verse opens with reference to the Lamb, by whose death the *brethren* had conquered the dragon-serpent-Satan-Devil. And it was by the Lord’s Christ that the kingdom of God and salvation had now come (v. 10). So, R12 provides the divine initiative of the tension, 4M largely supplying the anthropological response to the dual dynamic. Here, in the most graphic detail, is what witness-bearing (line 19), fidelity, and loyalty mean when push comes to shove²².

²⁰ Roman Catholic and Orthodox scholars have traditionally interpreted the woman of R12 as Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

²¹ Mark S. Whitters asserts that “all seven are described as priests”. While this might be inferred from certain “cultic features” and their fitting “the earlier traditions of self-sacrifice” (117), there is no vocabulary identifying them as such. See: Mark S. Whitters. *Martyrdom as Cultic Death in the Books of Maccabees: Antecedents and Later Developments // Studies in the Greek Bible: Essays in Honor of Francis T. Gignac* / ed. Jeremy Corley and Vincent Skemp. Washington: Catholic Biblical Association of America 2008, pp. 99 and 106.

²² Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski. *Christian Memories of the Maccabean Martyrs*. New York: Macmillan-Palgrave 2009, pp. 1-27, especially pp. 18-22.

***Antagonists: Dragon, Serpent, Satan, Devil (R12)
and Antiochus “Epiphanes” (4M)***

Revelation 12

St. John draws upon a rich tapestry of resources (both cultural and Scriptural) to portray the nature and role of his four-dimensional Antagonist.

Pagan myths

From the first through the fourth centuries, mythic accounts of a reptilian figure’s (Python and Set) attacking a woman (Leda and Isis) and her child (Apollo and Horus, respectively) would have been known to the readers or listeners of R12 in the eastern Mediterranean and beyond. In each instance, there is a political dimension: a struggle over who will rule²³. But the images are individualistic – although a collective implication cannot be ruled out entirely. The female characters and the children are human, the antagonists suprahuman. The point is not that St. John borrowed these images. Rather, the motifs were “in the air”: shared across cultures as part of an educated person’s world awareness²⁴.

OT Metaphor: Dragon Imagery

It is otherwise in the OT (also part of the author’s and readers’ fund of imagery), where the language is metaphorical. So far as dragon imagery is concerned, examples of assault against Israel *qua* the collective people of God are extremely rare. Both the Babylonian Nabouchodonosor explicitly (LXX Jer 28:34, MT [Masoretic Text] 51:34-35) and the Roman general Pompey implicitly (Ps Sol 2:19-24, esp. v. 25) are regarded as dragons in attacking Jerusalem – in the former texts spoken of in female terms as the widowed or forsaken Israel and Judah (LXX 28:5, MT 51:5). But that is the extent of it. Neither antagonist is more than a military-political figure. But the eschatological reference in Isa 27:1 reflects a more mythic, sinister dimension to the draconian [and serpentine] figure. The Greek reads, “On that day God will bring his holy and great and strong sword against the dragon, a fleeing snake – against the dragon, a crooked snake – and he will kill the dragon”²⁵.

²³ E. Lemcio. *Navigating Revelation*, pp. 50-54.

²⁴ N. B. the standard study by Adela Yarbro Collins. *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Theological Review 1976; Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock 2001.

²⁵ The LXX supplies δράκων for the MT’s לִיָּתָן (“Leviathan”) twice and once for הַתַּנִּין (“the monster”). The translator renders נָחָה (serpent) with ὄφιν. Following the Hebrew, C. Sinaiticus adds ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ: “in the sea.” Such language would call to mind Mesopotamian myths of origin,

Only in the case of the Egyptian pharaoh, does Ezekiel at least hint at a superhuman dimension to the king: when the prophet excoriates him for claiming that he, a dragon sitting in the Nile River's muddy streams, had made it (29:1-3, 32:2) – from which God will summarily extract and dispatch him. Extra-biblical sources attest to Egyptian kings asserting dual parentage: a human mother and a divine father²⁶. “Historically,” those rulers had enslaved Israel.

OT: Serpentine Imagery

There is but a single instance in which a serpent acts in a detrimental way towards an individual. This reptilian figure, described as the shrewdest of all creatures, tempts Eve, although he is not identified as Satan or the Devil. His punishment was to crawl and ingest the dust of the earth. He and she (and her offspring) are to become lasting enemies (Gen 3:14-15). The encounter is said to have occurred in the remote past. However, as was noted above in Isa 27:1, there is to be a future reckoning with a serpent – this time in the water, according to the MT and C. Sinaiticus.

OT: Diabolical and Satanic Imagery

Furthermore, there is but a single instance where a satanic or diabolical figure clearly bears the features of a more-than-human personage; but he attacks an individual, a male: Job (chapters 1 and 2 in the eponymous book). There is nothing in the full canonical literature recounting Satan or the Devil as acting alone or as leading an army of rebellious angelic forces arrayed against God and against God's people as one finds in R12.

Although one might be tempted to cite 1 Chr 21:1 as evidence for Satan's or the Devil's incitement of David to conduct a census (as a result of which the people suffer), nothing in the language of either Hebrew or Greek text explicitly states that he is anything other than a human provocateur. In 2 Sam (= 2 Kgdms) 24:1-2, God is “credited” with doing so. A satan or devil lodges a complaint against Joshua, the post-Exilic high priest, only to be dismissed summarily (Zech 3:12). Once more, nothing in the passage clearly points to a more-than-human agent.

4 Maccabees (also OT)

The situation in 4M could not be more different. The author employs neither extra-biblical myth nor biblical metaphors in his account of the Evil One's

as well as biblical texts adapting those accounts to creation and salvation motifs. See E. Lemcio, *Navigating Revelation*, pp. 41-44.

²⁶ David Cartlidge and David Dungan quote the primary text in *Documents for the Study of the Gospels*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress 1980, p. 14.

attacking God's people. His recital belongs to a vast, continuous stretch of Historical Books, beginning with Joshua, in which there are no instances of a dragon's assaulting Israel. So far as this book is concerned, the pursuit of the mother by a reptilian figure is entirely individualized and, by implication, likened to the temptation of Eve by the original serpent. Here, the context is not political – unlike the thrust of the larger context. Rather, it focuses on personal morality. The mother had preserved her maidenly virtue by avoiding circumstances [in the desert, beyond the borders of her parental home] where she might come into contact with the snake (18:6-8, lines 26-27).

Supernatural Agency and Human Agency

One would have thought that, if anyone would qualify for any of those four designations, it would be Antiochus. His being the only character named in the narrative (apart from the righteous Eleazar) is a way of ensuring that the infamy of his policies would be engraved upon the memories of future generations (roughly parallel to the Creed's citation of Pontius Pilate under whom Jesus was crucified) – lest they forget. This Tyrant was not simply the latest in a long line of Gentile rulers who had subdued, exiled, and mistreated God's people. No. None had ever before been so egregiously cruel in the systematic effort to promote idolatrous worship and the extinction of Jewish ancestral religion. No one would arise afterwards to match or exceed him. Nevertheless, although Antiochus epitomizes the anti-God Hellenism of the Gentile world, he is not demonized. But he himself did claim divine status, as his coins testify: "Antiochus [the God] Manifest" [Ἀντίοχος ὁ Ἐπιφανής] (1M 1:10, 4:15). But the emphasis throughout the narrative lies at the human level, the political agents who do the gods' bidding.

The author of R12 stresses the opposite. Nothing direct is said here about the human puppets doing the Dragon's – Serpent's – Satan's – Devil's will. While 4M keeps the reader of R12 grounded in the political dimension of the context, R12 focuses on the spirit of it all behind (or above) the scenes, pulling strings as Master Puppeteer. In this regard, R12 insists with the author of Ephesians upon the need to "stand against the wiles of the devil," that one is not struggling "against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Eph 6:11-12).

On the other hand, 4M stresses that the cosmic needs to be rooted in historical events. Both those principalities and powers are waging war over the same issues through their earthly protégés: the nature and exercise of sovereignty in individual humans, in the communities that they form, and on the earthly soil of a particular territory. The multi-named antagonist of R12

adopts two strategies: one narrow, the other broad. He launches frontal attacks: attempting to drown the woman (v. 15) and making war against the rest of her offspring (v. 17, lines 23-24). However, his larger, subtler plan (according to v. 9) is to lead the world astray (causing its inhabitants to wander [πλανοῦν]).

Eschatology and History: Inklings of the Future, Echoes of the Past

Although the entire book of Revelation is regarded as an eschatological one, the author announces its frame of reference as being about both the now and the hereafter (1:19), with perhaps the accent falling on the latter. However, temporality is not its only characteristic. The reader is not to ask primarily about the *time* of the world's temporal end but about its ultimate goal: as in "to what end?"

With this in mind, one can employ R12 to encourage an apocalyptic and eschatological reading of the "historical" narrative of 4M. In other words, the Maccabean struggle against the Seleucids reveals ultimate issues at stake. It is a sign, a lens, from the recent past by which to view the conclusion of this age and the beginnings of the age to come. The author makes this plain (lines 8-11), "What sun could outshine the woman, what moon her sons? Who are their heirs, both now and in the future?"

Likewise, 4M insists that R12 be interpreted historically as well. "What events and personages in the readers' present and near past are to be identified in these mythic categories?" Discernment flows in both directions. "Who is the current Antiochus, the one who claims to be the manifestation of god? What is the character of his regime?" The author of 4M encourages future generations to identify the embodiment of the Devil, Satan, Dragon, and Serpent in their own day.

Divine Inevitability and Human Responsibility

One might be tempted – on a deterministic reading of Revelation (interpreting its designation by the author as "prophecy" of the solely predictive kind) – to lay the blame or give credit for events happening in the various worlds that one inhabits upon divine sovereignty or upon a largely dualistic understanding of supernatural realities. But the classic role of the prophet was "to speak on behalf [πρό + φημί] of God. Neither Elijah nor Elisha made mid- or long-range forecasts. Of course, other prophets did; but the future was in most instances to be affected by human choices made in the present.

Responsibility for the evils that Antiochus and his kind commit in such an outrageous manner lies squarely on their shoulders. The author of 4M shares this conviction with the vast stretch of literature from Joshua through Maccabees, the books having been regrouped by genre in the LXX under the rubric "Historical Books." They do not permit playing the blame game (as one might be tempted to do with a superficial reading of Revelation 12). The fault does not lie in our

stars²⁷. One cannot account for others' or one's own sins with the familiar excuse popularized by the American comedian, Flip Wilson: "The Devil made me do it", or "I was just a cog in the machine," or "I was just obeying orders".

***Efficacious Death: Victory*²⁸ (lines 14, 16)**

However the antagonist is identified (by personal name; metaphor; or myth), by whatever means he resists God and God's people, the arch-villain is overcome by the obedience of his victims, who undergo great suffering, even to the point of death by bloodshed. In so doing, they become the victors. This conquest by spiritual character or piety [εὐσέβεια] should not be obscured by associated images of cult²⁹ and courtroom³⁰ that one can find in 4M 16-17 and R12. More specifically: when the author of 4M states that "Antiochus . . . conquered [ἐνίκησεν] all of his foes" (17:24), he refers to the use of conventional power – in this case, military force – to achieve desired results. However, true victory lies elsewhere and is achieved by an unlikely agent: "O mother, divine soldier in defense of piety [εὐσέβεια], elder, woman! By perseverance, you have conquered [ἐνίκησας] even a tyrant and proved stronger in deeds and words than a man" (16:14; cf. 15:30). No account of the Tyrant's demise is related, though his eventual doom is thereby secured³¹. She both overcomes the male enemy and excels in piety above her country-men. But it was the ideal itself that won the day: "Godliness won the victory [ἐνίκηα] and crowned its own athletes" (17:15). Finally, the reward of such fortitude and commitment transcends the spoils

²⁷ William Shakespeare. *Julius Caesar* I, 2: "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, / But in ourselves, that we are underlings".

²⁸ The instances of forms containing the stem νικ- are extensive throughout both 4 Maccabees and Revelation: sixteen times in each book. In the case of Revelation, Christians are more likely to be referred to as "victors", "overcomers", and "conquerors" (various ways of translating the same Greek word) than they are as "believers". Perhaps the author felt that his audience might regard faith or belief as more of a passive, mental state rather than a struggle during which one engages the enemy. An analogous phenomenon occurs in the Synoptic Gospels: never does Jesus invite people to "believe in him" (a typical expression in St. John's Gospel). Instead, they are called to follow him – wherever he goes.

²⁹ The next unit develops the cultic aspect further.

³⁰ The immediate context (v. 10) suggests that his role of accuser [κατήγωρ, κατηγοροῦν] in God's court has been terminated. So, there is a forensic dimension: the Divine Judge having found the prosecuting attorney and his staff in contempt of court and ejected by the bailiff, Michael the Archangel, as G. Caird suggested in *A Commentary on the Revelation*, pp. 154-57. And the heavenly chorus (jury?) also charged him with leading the world astray (v. 9) – perhaps by engaging in disinformation (sometimes attempted by attorneys). But neither of these would necessarily involve victory by bloodshed and death.

³¹ Although vanquishing Antiochus does not specifically occur because of her death (recounted in 17:1 as self-sacrifice), it might legitimately be inferred.

of ordinary warfare: “Victory [τὸ νίκος] meant incorruptibility in long-lasting life” (17:12). For 4M, death is the crowning achievement of a life of victory over unlawful passions (this goal permeating the entire book). Without such thoroughgoing obedience, the “mere” shedding of red corpuscles at the end would not have accomplished anything. Otherwise, the mother’s death at childbirth or the bloody death of seven infants could have achieved the same result.

No such claims are made for the woman of R12. Rather, it is as the vulnerable mother of the Son-Messiah and her children that she functions. And, as central as the Lamb’s agency is, the emphasis (as in the case of 4M) lies in their associated – though derived – victory. (Their pronominal pronouns outnumber his, three-to-one.) Together, they vanquish a more-than-human adversary: “They (the ‘comrades’ [lit. ‘brothers’] of v. 10) have conquered [ἐνίκησαν] him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony [μαρτυρίαν], for they did not cling to their life [lit. ‘did not love their lives’] even in the face of death” (v. 11, line 2). Thus, Christology becomes prominent in a way that 4M does not express (nor need). That which the woman and her sons had modeled and achieved for God’s ancient people, the lamb had secured with the rest of her children³². Between the two texts, there is an oscillation between the one in the many and the many in the one.

So far as the nature of that bloody victory is concerned, a more helpful source for the imagery and role can be found in noting carefully the function of the Passover Lamb (Exodus 12). The blood from its sacrifice did not bring about cleansing or forgiveness (or atonement, as in the case of the live, sin-bearing goat of Leviticus 16). Rather, it functioned as a barrier (or, to put it in modern technical terms, as a “firewall”). Israelites received protection from the angel who ranged throughout Egypt slaying first-born sons, liberated Israel (guiding them safely through the divided waters), and led pharaoh’s army to defeat³³.

Efficacious Death: Purification, Ransom, and Atonement (lines 20–22)

Although the death of the mother and her sons achieved victory of this kind, other benefits resulted from their sacrifice as well: “... the tyrant was punished and the *homeland* was purified [καθαρισθῆναι], since they became, as it were, a ransom [ἀντίψυχον] for the sin of the *nation*. And through the blood of those pious people and through the propitiatory efficacy [τοῦ ἰλαστηρίου] of their

³² One cannot help but think about the much-discussed claim of St. Paul: “I am now rejoicing in my sufferings, for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church” (Col 1:24).

³³ See E. Lemcio. *Navigating Revelation*, pp. 45-46, for a display of the many “parallels” between R12 and the Exodus event. Recall that Ezekiel later portrayed the pharaoh as a great dragon sitting in the Nile, boasting that he (like a god) had created it.

death (or “atonement wrought by their death”), divine Providence preserved [διέσωσεν] (or “saved”) *Israel*” (4M 17:21-22, italics mine).

Such high-powered, technical terminology is indeed impressive. And it is matched, though in different categories and farther afield, in Revelation. Earlier in the book (1:6), the death of Jesus [his or the Lamb’s blood] was said to have brought about loosing [λύειν] or washing [λούειν]³⁴ from sins and purchasing [ἀγοράζειν] (5:9) – from the slave market? – and whitening of robes (7:14). The purpose (or result) of the transaction was to create “a kingdom and priests” serving God and ruling upon the earth (5:10). These “bought” saints [the same root αγ- as in 4M 17:20] were taken “from every tribe and language and people and nation” (5:9)³⁵.

The role of Israel as a kingdom of priests, upon which the author of Revelation draws, was first announced as early as Exodus 19:6. God’s people as a whole were to act as religio-political mediators between God and all nations, an extension of the commission assigned to Abraham and his descendants (Gen 12:1-3). But before they (and it) could bless all people and all lands, both Jews and their territory (as 4M puts it) needed to be sanctified and purified.

Furthermore, the greater scope of the Jews’ ministry is suggested throughout 4M regarding persons, place, and time. The seven sons were not authorized to function as priests in mediating atonement. Nor did their liturgical practice take place in the Temple’s inner sanctum. Instead, they performed their sacred duty in the Unholiest Place of All: in the pagan Gentiles’ precincts. Were this not enough, the liturgical calendar was not observed. How much farther could ignoring these Mosaic particularities go? Would such relativizing set a precedent? If the ultimate, costly fidelity of a few Jews, whether in exile or in the homeland under pagan control, could atone for the entire nation, then it was but a short leap towards the notion that the death of one could do the same, both for the few (as in one reading of Isaiah 53) and everyone else³⁶. 4M and R12 maintain this tension.

³⁴ Bruce M. Metzger discusses the textual variants in *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*. London – New York: United Bible Societies 1971, p. 731.

³⁵ Yet again, the multiple and diverse cultic vocabulary cautions rigid appropriation of a single term or concept. The variety should also warn against harmonization and reductionism. Such pluralism should make interpreters pause about selecting one above the others in dogmatic treatments of the atonement. In a classic work, Gustav Aulén – after surveying three main “theories” of the atonement – argues for the overcoming of Satan as the earliest (and central) one. See his *Christus Victor. An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement* / transl. A. Herbert. London: SPCK 1931; Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock 2003. C. Stephen Layman updates the discussion in *Philosophical Approaches to Atonement, Incarnation, and The Trinity*. New York: Palgrave-Macmillan 2016.

³⁶ The vocabulary of atonement found in 4M bears a striking resemblance to the prayer offered by Azarias on behalf of the Three Jewish Youths according to LXX Dan 3:38-40. Exiled in Babylon,

“Philosophy”: Piety and Christian Kerygma

A post-Reformation reader might be tempted to regard 4M’s zeal for the Law to be excessive – and even dangerous. Yet, in R12, the brothers and sisters are described as those who are “holding [both] the commands of God (See line 31) and are keeping the testimony of [“by”?] Jesus” (v. 17). Both verbs in Greek are in the continuous mode.

4M belongs to the larger category of what could be labeled “elective-redemptive *nomism*” (an expression more broad [and accurate] than the narrow “ethnic nomism” suggested by de Silva³⁷). Regarding this as a concept of salvation by works is a profound category mistake imposed upon the literature by dogmatic concerns. If anything, there is a difference in emphasis: stressing human responsibility by the previously-elected people of God in the wake of Israel’s divine deliverance from Egypt. This Jewish outlook has been expressed in Greek, the international language, and in Greek intellectual categories.

The divine initiative in R12 is, on the other hand, more of an “elective-redemptive nomism” in stressing the previous, saving work of God³⁸ but, on the other hand, less specific about how the woman’s children are to behave: they love not their lives, even if it means death (v. 11, line 2). They are to observe both the Mosaic tradition (line 31) and maintain the dominical witness (v. 17). The texts of 4M can inform the reader, with a high degree of specification, as to how this might be done.

they offer themselves in Nabuchodonosor’s furnace as atoning sacrifices for Israel. Their experience (though not the terminology) is cited in 4M 16:21 and 18:12. An earlier influence comes from Leviticus 16, which provides the cultic vocabulary for sacrifice offered on the Day of Atonement (a live goat’s bearing away the nation’s sins): not for *initiation* into the company of the saved but for *maintenance* of their salvation.

³⁷ D. de Silva. *Introducing the Apocrypha*, pp. 355-56.

³⁸ Eugene E. Lemcio. *The Unifying Kerygma of the New Testament* // E. Lemcio. *The Past of Jesus in the Gospels*. Cambridge: University Press 1991, pp. 115-31, 158-62. My thesis, illustrated in R12 and in eighteen of the twenty-seven remaining books of the NT has been faulted for not including in the proposed “form” any reference to community ethics. However, it should be noted that proclamation of this kind is similar to creedal statements – especially of the pre-conciliar kind – which contain no reference to behavior required (apart from the responses listed) by individuals or by the Church.

Figure 1. The Woman and Her Children in 4 Maccabees 16-18 and Revelation 12¹

4 Maccabees 16	4 Maccabees 17	4 Maccabees 18	Revelation 12
1. woman (1-2, 5, 10-11, 14) γυνή	woman (9) γυνή		woman (1, 4-6, 14-17) γυν-
2. unto death (1) μέχρι θανάτου on to death (13) ἐπὶ τ. θάνατον	(even) unto death (7, 10) (καὶ) μέχρι θανάτου		even in the face of death (11) ἀχρι θανάτου
3. torture/s (1-3, 15, 17) βασαν-	torture/s (3, 7, 10, 23) βασαν-	torture/s (20-21) βασαν-	in the agony [tormented] (2) βασανιζομένη
4. many birth pangs (8) πολλὰς...ὠδύνας			in birth pangs (2) ὠδίνουσα
5. bear/children/sons (1, 6, 10, 13) τεκ-	seven children (7) ἑπτὰ τέκνων	the children (6) τ. τέκνοις	bear/child/ren (2, 4 [3x], 5, 13) τεκ-
6. the sons (3, 11, 13, 24) τ. υἱούς			a son, a male (5, 13) υἱὸν ἄρσεν
7.	of the brothers (13) τ. ἀδελφῶν		comrades [the brothers] (10) οἱ ἀδελφοί
8.	moon (5) σελήνη		the moon (2) ἡ σελήνη
9.	in heaven/sky (5) κατ' οὐρανόν		in heaven [sky] (1, 3, 8, 10, 12) ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ
10.	the seven star-like boys (5) τ. ἰσαστέρους ἑπτὰ παῖδας		a crown of twelve stars (1) στεφάνος ἀστέρων δώδεκα
11.	with stars (5) σὺν ἀστροῖς		of the stars (4) ἀστέρων
12.	to write down/paint the life story (7) ζωγραφῆσαι...ἱστορίαν to inscribe on their tomb (8) τ. ἐπιταφίου ἀναγράψαι		A great portent [sign] appeared (1, 3) σημείον μέγα ὠφθη

¹ I have used the NETS for 4M and the NRSV for R12 - brackets enclosing my translation. Of the two, the NETS maintains distinctions among son [υἱός], boy [πῶς], and child [τέκνον] - the NRSV rendering all three by "child" (apparently?) to avoid gender specificity.

4 Maccabees 16	4 Maccabees 17	4 Maccabees 18	Revelation 12
13, our / the nation (16) τ. ἔθνους	our / the nation (8, 20-21) ἐθν-	the nation (4-5) τ. ἔθνους	all the nations (5) πάντα τὰ ἔθνη
14.	Victory, win the victory νικ- (12,15)		they have conquered (11) ἐνίκησαν
15.	in long-lasting life (12) πολυχρονίῳ		his time is short (12) ὀλίγον καιρῶν
16, you have conquered (14) ἐνίκησας	godliness won the victory (15) θεοσέβεια ἐνίκη		they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb (11) ἐνίκησαν αὐτὸν διὰ τ. αἵμα τ. ἀρνίου
17.	and crowned (15) στεφανούσα		a crown of twelve stars (1) στεφάνος ἑστέρας δώδεκα
18.	they now stand before the divine throne (18) τῷ θείῳ νῦν παρεστήκασιν θρόνῳ		her child was snatched away and taken to God and [to] his throne (5) ἠρπάθη τ. τέκνον αὐτῆς πρὸς τ. θεὸν κ. πρὸς τ. θρόνον αὐτοῦ
19, the testimony (16) τ. διαμαρτυρίας			their testimony (11), the testimony of Jesus (17) τ. μαρτυρίας, τ. μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ
20.	the homeland was purified, since they became, as it were, a ransom for the sin of the nation (21) τ. πατρίδα καθαρισθῆναι, ὥσπερ ἀντιψυχὸν γεγονότας τ. τοῦ ἔθνους ἁμαρτίας		
21. [unto death (1)] [μέχρι θανάτου]	through the blood of those pious people and through the atonement of their death (22) διὰ τ. αἵματος τ. εὐσεβῶν ἐκείνων κ. τ. ἰλαστηρίου τ. θανάτου τ. αὐτῶν [unto death (7, 10)] [μέχρι θανάτου]		they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony for they did not [love] cling to their life even in the face of death (11) ἐνίκησαν αὐτὸν διὰ τ. αἵμα τ. ἀρνίου κ. διὰ τ. λόγον τ. μαρτυρίας αὐτῶν κ. οὐκ ἠγάπησαν τ. ψυχὴν αὐτῶν ἀχρι θανάτου

22.	divine Providence preserved [saved] Israel (22) ἡ θεία...τ. Ισραηλ...διέσωσεν		Now [have] come the salvation ... of our God (10) ἄρτι ἐγένετο ἡ σωτηρία τ. θεοῦ αὐτῶν
23.		of the seed of Abraham (1) τ. Αβρααμιαίων σπερμάτων	with the rest of her children [seed] (17) μετὰ τ. λοιπῶν τ. σπέρματος αὐτῶν
24.	the [warring ones] (20, 24) τ. πολεμίουσ	the enemies [warring ones] (4) τ. πολεμίουσ	to make war (7, [3x]), 17) πολ-, ποιῆσαι πόλημον
25.		he was [completely unable] (5) οὐδὲν σὺδαμιῶσ ἴσχυσεν	[he was not able] (8) οὐκ ἴσχυσεν
26.		desert (8) ἐρημίασ	wilderness [desert] (6, 14) ἐρημον
27.		the snake of deceit ἀπάτης ὄφιδ	the ancient serpent ... who deceives (9, 14-15) ὁ ὄφιδ ὁ ἀρχαίωσ ... ὁ πλανῶν
28.		time (9) καιρον	time (12, 14 [3x]) καιρον
29.		in rage (20) θυμοίσ	wrath (12) θυμόν
30.		souls (23) ψυχάσ	[their] life (11) τ. ψυχῆν
31. the command of God (24) τ. ἐντολήν τ. θεοῦ			the commandments of God (17) τ. ἐντολάσ τ. θεοῦ

IV. Summation

Although lacking precedents for doing so, the proposed method and results have sought to take with utmost seriousness the authorized (canonized) plurality and diversity of Sacred Scripture in general and to apply this conviction and procedure to two unlikely passages in particular – they themselves being found in two of the three most ancient copies of the comprehensive, indivisible Christian Bible: Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Alexandrinus. Without an interpreter to conduct and moderate the dialog between them (and others), these passages, especially 4M, would lie mute or their joint witness be liable to confusion or outright rejection. However, with him or her, these texts – though dead in themselves – may speak anew.

Євген Е. Лемцьо

**ЖІНКА ТА ЇЇ ДІТИ У 4 КНИЗИ МАКАВЕЇВ 16-18 ТА ОДКРОВЕННІ 12:
ЕКСПЕРИМЕНТ У БОГОСЛОВСЬКІЙ РЕФЛЕКСІЇ
НАД СВДІЧЕННЯМ ГРЕЦЬКОЇ БІБЛІЇ**

Стаття має на меті застосувати унікальний, діалектичний, канонічно-герменевтичний підхід до інтерпретації двох уривків, які раніше не співставлялися в такий спосіб. Вперше у біблійному богослов'ї використано Святе Письмо виключно грецькою мовою, якою ранні християни розмовляли, писали свої Біблії, виголошували проповіді, служили Літургії, писали коментарі та визнавали свою віру. Обидва Завіти представлені у двох найраніших повних рукописах, що дійшли до нас, – Синайському (сер. IV ст.) та Александрійському (сер. V ст.) кодексам. Іншою новизною цієї статті є використання второканонічної літератури цих кодексів, чий книги до сьогодні жанрово входять до числа протоканонічних творів у римо-католицькій та православній “легенях” історичної християнської Церкви. Навіть деякі протестанти обережно використовують цей матеріал в екуменічному дусі.

Ключові слова: апокаліптичний, біблійне богослов'я, грецька Біблія, Александрійський кодекс, Синайський кодекс, второканонічний, Макавеї, мученик, об'явлення.