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## The Maccabean Martyrs' Contribution to Holy War

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### 1. Introduction

Throughout Israel's history foreign oppression was always a problem. The solution however, was never in doubt, the oppression was the result of sin therefore divine deliverance will follow genuine repentance. There was always the righteous minority (e.g. Jeremiah) who often suffered at the hands of a foreign oppressor but this never caused a theological problem because the innocent were merely suffering in solidarity with the sinful nation.

By 165 BC, with the advent of the persecution of Antiochus Euphianes IV the situation had changed. Though the Antiochan oppression was, to be sure, the result of sin, the wicked within Israel who had forsaken the Torah and had collaborated with the Syrian officials in their programme of Hellenization and who had precipitated the judgement of God were paradoxically the ones who were prospering. The righteous, however, who refused to compromise the Law and resisted the Hellenizers, endured a persecution that can only be described as holocaustic. As a result of the breakdown of traditional theological structures an alternative tradition was born.

This tradition is best represented in apocalyptic literature, especially that which was connected with the Antiochan persecution, and the books of 2 and 4 Maccabees. As will become clear, this tradition has a strong dualistic element. The battle was not really an earthly encounter with King Antiochus rather it was a celestial struggle in which those being persecuted participated with God's heavenly forces against the real enemy: Satan, sin and evil. Secondly this tradition stressed the role of divine vengeance; the battle would only be won when God arose and struck Israel's enemies. Thirdly, innocent suffering has a key role in the determination of the war's outcome. God has allowed suffering because of the nation's sin but soon he will respond to the cries of

the innocent and, as Israel's kinsman redeemer, He personally will strike down Israel's enemies in one final battle. In the meantime, the role of the righteous is not to take up arms but rather to teach and to suffer awaiting the eschatological vengeance of God. Finally, the fourth element in this tradition is the humiliation/exaltation motif. Those suffering now will be exalted and those in power now will then be humbled.

These themes appear clearly in 2 and 4 Maccabees which will be examined first. Then as these themes are traced backward through several apocalypses produced as a result of the Antiochan persecution it will be demonstrated that ultimately the genesis of this 'Martyr Theology' is in the canonical apocalypse of Daniel. Finally, a few suggestions concerning the possible use of this tradition by New Testament writers will be given very brief mention.

## 2. Holy War in the Maccabean Literature

### 2.1. Holy War in 1 Maccabees

The account in 1 Maccabees of the defeat of Antiochus relies heavily on Old Testament traditions of Holy War. The battles of Judas Maccabeus have been modelled upon the wars of the conquest and the liberation battles in Judges. An obvious example is found in 1 Maccabees 3:17-22, the encounter of Beth-horon. There, immediately preceding a strategic battle Judas' soldiers ask:

How shall we be able, being a small company, to fight against so great and strong a multitude? And we, for our part, are faint, having tasted no food this day.

Judas then responds unhesitatingly:

It is an easy thing for many to be shut up in the hands of a few, and there is no difference in the sight of Heaven to save by many or by few; for victory in battle standeth not in the multitude of an host, but strength is from heaven . . . (God) Himself will discomfit them before our face.

One cannot but hear the echo of the OT pericope about Gideon whose army Yahweh reduced from 32,000 to 300 'in order that Israel may not boast against Me that her own strength has saved her' (Judges 7:2). Furthermore the familiar Yahweh deliverance leit-motif from OT Holy War appears in 1 Maccabees 3:25: 'fear fell upon the nations round about them'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See also Ex. 15:15-16; 23:27-28; Deut. 2:25; 11:25; Josh. 2:9. Cf. P. D. Miller, *The Divine Warrior In Early Israel* (Cambridge, 1973) and M. C. Lind, *Yahweh is a Warrior. The Ideology of Warfare in Ancient Israel* (Scotdale, 1980).

1 Maccabees unmistakably represents a traditional Hebrew view of war where Yahweh fights synergistically with the armies of Israel. Military might and strategy are derived from heaven and God only can accomplish victory, but the role of human agency is vitally important. The armies of the Maccabees are energized by Yahweh, but the warrior must also give his all. The crucial nature of human participation in the war effort is transparent in Mattathias' exhortation following an abhorrent massacre of Jews who refused to fight on the Sabbath. He declared:

If we all do as our brethren have done, and do *not* fight against the Gentiles for our lives and our ordinances, they will soon destroy us from off the earth (1 Mac. 2:40).

In 1 Maccabees personal participation in the military encounter was crucial. Their exemplar was Phinehas whose zeal is epitomized when it manifested itself in the transfixion of a decadent Israelite and his Midianite concubine (Num. 25:6–15). Similarly 1 Maccabees 2:26 notes that Mattathias, after a violent act of aggression, 'showed forth his zeal for the law just as Phinehas had done'. This is the wellspring from which the zealot movement emerged.<sup>2</sup>

The heroes of the Maccabean revolution in 1 Maccabees are without question the warriors. Special adulation is awarded Judas Maccabeus who

. . . put on a breastplate as a giant and girt on his weapons of war he protected the army with a sword . . . and destroyed the ungodly and turned away wrath from Israel (1 Mac. 3:3,8).

As a result of Israel's army fighting heroically in synergism with Yahweh on the side of justice, national restoration is accomplished. This amalgamation of nationalism and religion was not uncommon in the near Eastern milieu. However, it was not the sole Jewish perspective during the Maccabean struggle. There was an alternative tradition.

## 2.2. Holy War in 2 Maccabees

The perspective on Holy War presented in 1 Maccabees was not the only political stance adopted in the revolt. 2 Maccabees

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<sup>2</sup> W. R. Farmer, *Maccabees, Zealots and Josephus* (New York, 1956), 125–158. Cf. M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten* (Leiden, 1961) especially 176–178 and the review of M. Avi-Yonah, *IEJ*, 8 (1958), 202–204. While both Hengel and Avi-Yonah note dissimilarities between the Maccabees and the Zealots (primarily the nationalism of the zealots vs. the Maccabees being a response to persecution) nevertheless they do not weaken Farmer's argument that the Maccabees were the precursors of the zealots.

presents the same historical events from a dissimilar viewpoint.<sup>3</sup> A number of differences could be noted between 1 and 2 Maccabees,<sup>4</sup> but most interestingly is the way Judas' victory is described.

While in 1 Maccabees the successes of the army were dependent upon military strategy, weapons and the courage of the soldier, 2 Maccabees de-emphasises these factors and stresses the role of the martyrs. The writer of 2 Maccabees admits that the victories of Judas did bring salvation to Israel, but he prefaces the account of the military triumph with two martyrological pericopae to demonstrate that it was *the martyrdoms* that effected the turning point in the historical drama. Judas' successes were directly dependent upon the sacrifice of the martyrs. Exactly how the martyrdoms functioned to bring victory warrants closer investigation.

### 2.2.1. Perspective on Suffering

One does not have to read far in 2 Maccabees before finding explicit reason for Israel's present plight. Often in the OT a familiar sequence is narrated. Prosperity or blessing leads to complacency and sin. God responds by sending punishment usually in the form of oppression at the hands of a foreign power. Then comes a turning point when Israel repents and returns to Yahweh who responds by delivering Israel and destroying her enemies either directly from heaven or through human agency. This 'deuteronomic' sequence is outlined in the last book of Judges.

Israel's sin is clearly the reason the author of 2 Maccabees proffers to explain the nation's suffering.

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<sup>3</sup> The date of 2 Mac. is problematic. 2 Mac. is an abridgement of an earlier work by Jason of Cyrene. The *terminus a quo* for Jason's work is 161 BC, the date of Nicanor's defeat by Judas (2 Mac. 15:1-36). The *terminus ad quem* is around the turn of the era because the work was known to Philo (Quod omnis probus liber ii. 459). Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament* (Oxford, 1965), 581 therefore dates Jason's work about 100 BC and Jason's work a generation later. C. C. Torrey, *The Apocryphal Literature*, 76-79; Downing, 'Martyrdom', 280; Oesterly, *Apocrypha*, 320-322; Goldstein, *I Maccabees*, 62ff.; J. R. Bartlett, *First and Second Book of Maccabees*, 25; Charles, *Apocrypha*, I, 128-129; Nickelsburg, *Jewish literature*, 121; all roughly agree with Eissfeldt. But cf. Lohse, *Martyr und Gottesknecht*, 66; Kautsch, *Apokryphen*, I, 84 who argue for the birth of Christ and Zeitlin, *The Second Book of Maccabees*, 27-39 who suggests 40 AD.

<sup>4</sup> The legitimacy of the Hasmonean dynasty, the role of divine intervention, the validity of bodily resurrection, the role of martyrs in Holy War, the view of Greek Institutions and culture, the value of military alliances are all presented negatively in 1 Mac. and positively in 2 Mac. Cf. J. A. Goldstein, *I Maccabees* (New York, 1976), 3ff.

The pride of Antiochus passed all bounds. He did not understand that the sins of the people of Jerusalem had angered the Lord for a short time, and that this is why he left the temple to its fate. If they (the people of Israel) had not already been guilty of many sinful acts, Antiochus would have fared like Heliodorus . . . like him he would have been scourged and his insolent plan foiled at once. (2 Mac. 5:17-19)

This theological perspective is reflected throughout 2 Maccabees. The sixth brother in his dying breath attempts to enlighten the king:

Do not delude yourself, it is our own fault that we suffer these things; we have sinned against our God and brought these appalling disasters upon ourselves. (2. Mac 7:18)

His younger brother similarly addresses his regal persecutor:

And you, King Antiochus, who have devised all kinds of harm for the Hebrews, you will not escape God's hand. We are suffering for our own sins, and though to correct and discipline us our living Lord is angry for a short time, yet he will be reconciled to his servants. (2 Mac. 7:31-34)<sup>5</sup>

God has therefore responded to the nation's apostasy by allowing the Antiochan persecution. Human sin and divine wrath are the theological reasons given by the author to explain the persecution in general and the martyrdoms in particular.

This deuteronomic perspective pervades even the structure of 2 Maccabees. With the excision of the prefixed letters<sup>6</sup> and the epitomizer's prologue and epilogue<sup>7</sup> we are left with the Maccabean portion of the nation's history neatly couched in a deuteronomic outline:

- A. BLESSING: The Period of Onias' Priesthood (3:1-40)
- B. SIN: Hellenization under Jason and Menelaus (4:1-5:10)
- C. PUNISHMENT: Antiochus' Reprisals (5:11-6:17)
- D. TURNING POINT: Martyrdom and Prayer (6:18-8:4)
- E. JUDGEMENT AND SALVATION: Judas' victory (8:5-15:36)<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The 'we' of these verses can only refer to the entire nation. The innocent martyrs like the OT prophets are suffering in solidarity with apostate Israel. Clearly there is no personal culpability because, as the youngest brother explains 'My brothers have now fallen because of loyalty to God's covenant . . . I, like my brother surrender my body and my life for the laws of our fathers' (2 Mac. 7:36-37).

<sup>6</sup> The prologue is 2 Mac. 2:19-32 and the epilogue is 15:37-39.

<sup>7</sup> The 2 letters are 2 Mac. 1:1-9 and 1:10-2:18. For a detailed study of these appended letters see Goldstein, *I Maccabees*, 62-64 and especially Appendices III and IV.

<sup>8</sup> See G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah* (Philadelphia, 1981), 118.

Thus 2 Maccabees has a fully developed deuteronomic explanation for the nation's suffering. There is a causal link between Israel's sin and their persecution by Antiochus Euphianes.

A further point needs to be made concerning the suffering of these martyrs. The writer, in developing the martyr's speech, appeals to God for mercy and revenge, and has presented the Antiochan persecution in terms of the death of nine individuals. These nine individuals represent all steadfast Jews who suffered for their faith during Antiochus' reign. Williams has remarked in this regard:

... the martyrs represent numerous other loyal and suffering Jews, their story clearly marks the crucial turning point from disaster to deliverance, from sin and divine wrath to mercy and reconciliation.<sup>9</sup>

Thus divine wrath in the form of persecution in the early chapters has turned, via the martyrdoms, to mercy and vindication in the latter chapters. It is interesting that these martyrdoms have replaced 'repentance' in the deuteronomic cycle. The exact dynamics of this process needs to be more closely examined.

### 2.2.2. Divine Vengeance

Besides a Deuteronomic explanation for suffering the divine vengeance sequence also underlies 2 Maccabees. This sequence is initiated with innocent suffering and climaxes with divine judgement as vengeance. This teaching encouraged the righteous to persevere in the face of their hardship because it would precipitate divine judgement, just as in ancient times the cries of the antediluvian victims, the cries of the oppressed in Sodom and Gommorah, and the cries of Israel in Egypt had similarly caused God to respond with vengeance.<sup>10</sup>

Immediately subsequent to the martyr narratives is the progressive victory of Judas. It certainly is justified from the deuteronomic structure of the book to perceive the above idea of divine vengeance as operative in the mind of the writer, but what renders it conclusive is the preface inserted (before describing Judas' victories) in the form of a prayer:

They invoked the Lord to look down and help his people, who all were trampled under foot, to take pity on the temple profaned by impious men, and to have mercy on Jerusalem, which was being destroyed and levelled to the ground. They prayed him also to give ear to *the blood that cried to him for vengeance*, to remember the

<sup>9</sup> Williams, *Jesus' Death*, 90.

<sup>10</sup> I Enoch 8-10; TM 9-10; Gen. 18:29ff.; Ex. 22:22ff.; cf. Amos 2:6ff.; 4:1ff.

infamous massacre of innocent children and the deeds of blasphemy against His name, and to show His hatred of wickedness (2 Mac. 8:2-4)

The theology of this prayer is transparent, especially since it has been juxtaposed between the pericope of innocent martyrdoms and the narratives of Israel's victories over its enemies: God had heard the cry of innocent blood, his wrath had turned to mercy and deliverance for the nation was at hand. Downing explains the theology behind this prayer further:

2 Maccabees viii.3 . . . is a clear allusion to the story of Cain and Abel (cp. Genesis iv.10). The necessity of the vengeance for bloodshed is a theme running right through the OT. Job asks that the earth may not cover his blood (xvi.18) because he feels he has been condemned unjustly and that it will cry for vengeance. Ezekiel tells the people of Jerusalem that their blood will soak into the earth and be forgotten; whereas the blood they have shed will be on the rock so that will have to be avenged (xxiv.7). The thought of this part of 2 Maccabees is completely grounded in the thought of the OT.<sup>11</sup>

God is acting as Israel's kinsman redeemer, hearing the cry of the blood of the innocent victims and avenging their deaths. Although primarily seen in Judas' victories, the vengeance of God, as we will document later, has clear eschatological dimensions as seen in the speeches of the martyrs who appeal to final judgement and resurrection as proof that their beliefs are not in vain and God will finally vindicate them and exalt their nation.<sup>12</sup>

### 2.2.3. Dualism

As we have noted, in 1 Maccabees the battles of Judas reflect the wars of the conquest and of the Judges. However 2 Maccabees presents virtually the same events from a very different perspective. The outcome of the war is wholly dependent upon what is happening in the heavenlies, not upon the courage and valour of the Israelite army. Thus Judas exhorts his followers in the face of greater numbers:

They rely on their weapons and their audacity, he said, but we rely on God Almighty, who is able to overthrow with a nod our present assailants and, if need be, the whole world. (2 Mac. 8:18)

The angelic host take an active part in the battle:

For the Jews' success and victory were guaranteed *not because of their bravery* but because the Lord was their refuge . . . As the

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<sup>11</sup> Downing, 'Jesus and Martyrdom', JTS, 14 (1963), 283.

<sup>12</sup> 2 Mac. 7:9, 11, 12, 14, 17, 23, 29, 33-37. Cf. Downing, 'Jesus and Martyrdom', 283: 'A further characteristic of the theology of this passage is that it is expressed in eschatological terms'.

fighting became fierce, the enemy saw in the sky five magnificent figures riding horses with golden bridles, and they were leading the Jews. They formed a circle around Maccabeus and kept him invulnerable under the protection of their armour. They launched arrows and thunderbolts at the enemy, who, confused and blinded, were thrown into disorder and cut into pieces.<sup>13</sup>

And if need be they defeat the foe without any human agency:

The king selected Heliodorus, his chief minister, and sent him with orders to remove the temple treasures . . . But at the very moment he arrived with his bodyguard at the treasury, the ruler of spirits and of all powers produced a mighty apparition so that all who had the audacity to accompany Heliodorus were . . . stricken with panic at the power of God . . . There also appeared to Heliodorus two young men of surpassing strength, glorious beauty and splendidly dressed. They stood on either side of him and scourged him . . . He suddenly fell to the ground . . . quite helpless, publicly compelled to acknowledge the sovereignty of God.

The battle upon the earth therefore is the result of the cosmic battle which manifested itself in Israel's persecution. Originally Antiochus was to be God's instrument of punishment upon the rebellious nation, but he overstepped his authority and the punishment meted out by him was so severe that even the innocent (the martyrs) suffered.

Furthermore, 2 Maccabees 7:6 quotes Deuteronomy 32:36: 'And He shall have compassion upon His servants', which in the context of Moses' song is highly significant, because it is God who directly avenges the death of the innocent. Even more noteworthy however is that after His victory the angelic host are presented as sharing in the cosmic celebration.<sup>14</sup>

Downing appropriately remarks:

The application of this OT passage to the martyrdom of the seven is a very clear witness to the meaning of the event in Jewish eyes. The conflict between the seven and the Seleucid power is regarded as a battle between God and His adversaries.<sup>15</sup>

We can conclude then that in 2 Maccabees the author is operating with a cosmic and spatial dualism through which the events of the Antiochan persecution are being filtered.<sup>16</sup> The punishment

<sup>13</sup> 2 Mac. 10:28–31. Cf. 2 Mac. 3:22–28; 5:1–4; 11:6–12; 12:13–16, 36–45; 13:13–17.

<sup>14</sup> Deut. 32:43 LXX.

<sup>15</sup> Downing, 'Martyrdom', 282.

<sup>16</sup> This dualism should be expected because as Goldstein, *I Maccabees*, 37–54 has demonstrated I Enoch 85–90, the Testament of Moses and Daniel 7–12

was deserved initially because Israel had apostasized, however, Antiochus has clearly exceeded the divinely ordained boundaries especially in his persecution of the righteous as exemplified in the martyrdoms of 2 Maccabees 6 and 7. As a result of these transgressions the heavenly host have been armed, sent into battle and through their earthly counterparts (Judas and company) have miraculously and decisively routed the Seleucid army and by implication their cosmic counterparts.

#### 2.2.4. Humiliation/Exaltation Motif

It can hardly be questioned that a humiliation/exaltation motif influenced the author's use of traditional materials. The writer has put amazing speeches upon the lips of the second, third and fourth brothers after excruciating tortures and just preceding their gruesome deaths. In their addresses the brothers each affirm their hope for exaltation:

(The second brother) said, 'You accursed wretch, you dismiss us from this present life, but the King of the universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life because we have died for his laws.'

After him the third . . . said nobly, 'I got these from heaven, and because of His laws I disdain them, and from Him I hope to get them back again.'

. . . The fourth . . . near death said, 'One cannot but choose to die at the hands of men and to cherish the hope that God gives of being raised again by him' (2 Maccabees 7:7ff.)

However, the humiliation/exaltation motif is observable not only in the direct statements of sufferers but also in the way the writer has reused the Isaianic exaltation scene. Nickelsburg has conclusively demonstrated the dependence of 2 Maccabees 6 and 7 upon the Servant Songs or a tradition intimately related to it.

The stories in 2 Maccabees 6 and 7 have been informed by the same Isaianic exaltation tradition witnessed to in Wisdom and Enoch. There is no evidence of literary interdependence. We have three separate witnesses to common (oral) tradition, each, no doubt, adding details (perhaps from Isaiah itself) not found in their common *vorlage*. In 2 Maccabees 6 and 7 the servant material colours the description of the suffering of the heroes . . . Perhaps the combined evidence from 2 Maccabees and Wisdom of Solomon indicates that

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are sources behind 2 Mac. Since these are apocalyptic writings permeated with cosmic and spatial dualism it is not surprising to find these 'apocalyptic echoes' throughout 2 Mac.

there was an earlier form of the tradition that did include not only an exaltation scene, but also a description of the persecution.<sup>17</sup>

Upon investigation then the use of the humiliation/exaltation motif becomes quite apparent. It permeates the speeches of the martyrs. They hope to be resurrected and thereby vindicated and exalted. But not only can the humiliation/exaltation motif be espied in the speeches it is also recognizable in the writers reuse of the Isaianic exaltation scene. As the Servant was poorly esteemed and later vindicated and exalted, so will be the mother and her seven sons.

### 2.2.5. Summary

Thus the perspective on Holy War in 1 Maccabees was not the only political stance one could take toward the revolt. Clearly the nation's sin is the cause of the Antiochan oppression. Antiochus is a divine agent chosen to discipline Israel. But he precipitates a persecution that far exceeds the divine intent thus causing severe righteous suffering. Antiochus, however, is in league with evil cosmic forces and therefore cannot be defeated by human agency alone. Rather Yahweh must fight against him. Judas therefore encourages his troops in the face of greater numbers and more advanced military technology not to trust in arms and acts of daring but in God who with his angelic armies will avenge the innocent suffering of the martyrs and ultimately determine the outcome.

## 2.3. Holy War in 4 Maccabees

The book of 4 Maccabees, written in the early decades of the first century<sup>18</sup> focusses its attention wholly upon the martyrs and their

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<sup>17</sup> Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 104. There are 5 major details in 2 Mac. 7 that parallel the servant poems: 1) the brothers and the Servant are scourged (2 Mac. 7:1; Isa. 50:6). 2) In both pericope hair is pulled out (2 Mac. 7:7; Isa. 50:6). 3) The Servant and the 2nd brother acknowledge the divine origin of their tongue (2 Mac. 7:10, 11; Isa. 50:4). 4) The brothers, in like manner as the Servant, are disfigured (2 Mac. 7:4, 7; Isa. 52:14; 53:2). 5) Astonishment is the reaction of both audiences to the martyr's suffering (2 Mac. 7:12; Isa. 52:14; 52:15 LXX). Additionally, two parallels between 2 Mac. 6 and the fourth Servant poem may be added: 1) the mention of the deceitfulness of both Eleazar and the Servant (2 Mac. 6:21-25; Isa. 53:9). 2) Eleazar is appraised as foolish for his willingness to suffer (2 Mac. 6:29) and the Servant is so maligned as well (Isa. 53, see Wisdom 5:4 which directly corresponds to and elaborates Isa. 53).

<sup>18</sup> Townshend, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*, II, 654 leaves the question open but somewhere between 63 BC and 38 AD. Jeremias, *Heiligengräber in*

heroics. Consistent with 2 Maccabees the deuteronomic explanation for suffering is the reason cited for the Antiochan persecution (4 Mac. 4:19–21). The dualism of Maccabees is also echoed in 4 Maccabees. This is seen in a body-spirit dualism (4 Mac. 7:4; 11:8; cf 3:15ff.; 9:23ff.; 10:4, 7, 19–20; etc.) as well as in a cosmic dualism (4 Mac. 4:10–13; 9:15; 17:3, 4, 11, etc.). The divine vengeance motif is more pronounced in 4 Maccabees. Speaking to King Antiochus one of the martyrs says:

Gladly do we give our bodily members to be mutilated for the cause of God. For God will speedily pursue after thee.<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, the humiliation/exaltation motif occurs regularly throughout 4 Maccabees. One of the martyrs utters 'After this our passion, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob shall receive us and all our fathers shall praise us.'<sup>20</sup>

4 Maccabees, however, makes more explicit the role that the martyrs played in defeating Antiochus. The martyrs fought and conquered the king by suffering and dying. They defeated his army and the powers of darkness lying behind them. The author's eulogy makes this unmistakable:

And indeed it was fitting to inscribe these words over their resting place, speaking for a memorial to future generations of our people: 'Here lies an aged priest and a woman full of years and her seven sons through the violence of a tyrant desiring to destroy the Hebrew nation. They vindicated the rights of our people looking unto God and enduring the torments even unto death.' For it was truly a holy war which was fought by them. (4 Mac. 17:8–11)

The mother of the seven sons has earned the complete respect of the author as an assailant in the battle against Antiochus. He

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*Jesu Umwelt* (Göttingen, 1958), 19 prefers a date around 35 AD. Lohse, *Märtyrer*, 69 argues for a date in the first half of the first century as does Freund, *Martyrdom*, 72 note 70. Hadas, *III and IV Maccabees*, 95–96 dates the work to the middle or end of Caligula's reign (37–41 AD). Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 226 says 'around the year 40'. Bickerman, 'Fourth Maccabees', 112, note 27a asserts 'the absence of any allusion to the persecution of Caligula suggests the date before 38 AD, that is in the twenties or thirties'. Hill, *Greek Words*, 43 also favours a date in the 20s or 30s. Downing, 'Martyrdom', 280 choses this same period. J. Obermann, 'The Sepulchre of the Maccabean Martyrs', *JBL*, 50 (1931), 263 opines 'about 35 AD'. Williams, *Jesus Death*, 202 concludes 'a time antedating Paul's literary activity by at least a decade'. But against this view compare Dupont-Sommer, *Machabees*, 75ff., and more recently U. Breitenstein, *Beobachtungen zu Sprache, Stil und Gedanke des vierten Makkabäerbuches* (Stuttgart, 1976) who argue for an early second century date.

<sup>19</sup> 4 Mac. 10:20–21. Cf. 4 Mac. 11:3, 22–23; 18:5; 9:9; 10:10; 12:12; etc.

<sup>20</sup> 4 Mac. 13:17; 17:17,18; 18:2,2., Cf. also 7:19; 13:17; 14:4, 5; 16:25; 17:11–15.

gives her the title 'Warrior', and remarks in amazement at her spirited combat. He goes so far as to credit her with the victory in the national struggle against the despot:

O mother, *warrior of God* in the cause of religion, old and a woman thou didst defeat the tyrant . . . thou sayest to thy sons in the Hebrew tongue: 'my sons, noble is the fight; and do ye being called thereto to bear witness for our nation, fight therein zealously on behalf of the Law of our fathers.' (4 Mac. 16:14-17)

In the battle against Antiochus the martyr's role is to endure suffering and die. They are not to compromise nor to take up arms. They are merely to acquiesce to the tyrant's torture and sword. In performing this function they provide the key element in the battle which will defeat the Syrian forces and deliver the nation from their oppressors. This is a consistent theme throughout the book.

. . . (the martyrs) are the authors of the downfall of the tyranny under which our nation lay, *they defeated the tyrant* . . . (4 Mac. 17:2)

As Williams has concluded: 'in most of the passages commenting on the effect of the martyrs' deaths the martyrs themselves are definitely the agents of victory.'<sup>21</sup> Additionally, it must be noted that for the author of 4 Maccabees this is an unseen war; a battle against evil on behalf of righteousness; a fight against the forces of darkness; an encounter against Satan himself.<sup>22</sup>

As is consistent in 2 Maccabees, the deuteronomic explanation for suffering emerges. Though the martyrs are innocent they suffer in solidarity with Israel who is experiencing intense persecution because of its apostasy. However, the dualistic explanation for suffering is also introduced under the rubric of Holy War. In the struggle against Antiochus they participate in a cosmic battle. According to the eulogist the martyrs single handedly defeat Antiochus and his evil accomplices. They accomplish this by submitting to the tyrant's tortures and ultimately by dying. By clinging to their testimony and to the Torah the victory over evil is wrought.

## 2.4. Conclusion

It is now apparent that Holy War in the Joshua/Judges tradition is not the only political perspective in the Maccabean literature, the

<sup>21</sup> Williams, *Jesus Death*, 178.

<sup>22</sup> For dualistic elements see 4 Mac. 17:3, 4; 3:15ff.; 4:10-12; 7:4; 9:15; 10:4-7; 15:11; 17:3, 4. Cf. also Charles, *Apocrypha*, II, 662-664 for the author's interest in angelology and demonology.

human role in the Holy War is not confined to military action. 4 Maccabees dwells *exclusively* on the martyrdoms and 2 Maccabees presents them as *the turning point*. When Judas begins his campaign he calls upon God to 'harken to the blood that cries out to him' (2 Maccabees 8:3). The success of Judas then is not due to his valour but to God who is wreaking vengeance through Judas on behalf of those who suffered innocently. It is clear therefore that the zealot warriors are not the only ones who contribute to the victory. In fact, in 2 and 4 Maccabees they are of only secondary importance. The key agents in the victory over Antiochus and cosmic evil are those who stand faithfully for the Torah and suffer. Moreover, there is evidence that this perspective on Holy War predates this Maccabean literature. It is ubiquitous in the apocalyptic literature produced during and immediately subsequent to the Antiochan persecution. These documents deserve brief investigation.<sup>23</sup>

### 3. Holy War in the Earlier Apocalyptic Literature

#### 3.1. Holy War in the Testament of Moses

##### 3.1.1. *Perspective on suffering*

Given its early date,<sup>24</sup> it is not surprising to find the author relying heavily upon the deuteronomic explanation for suffering. The nation has sinned, its suffering was the consequence. In fact, D. J. Harrington has identified the Testament of Moses as a rewriting of Deuteronomy 31–34.<sup>25</sup> As Deuteronomy 31–34 represents a Mosaic testament delivered to Joshua predicting Israel's apostasy, punishment and salvation so the author of the Testament of Moses, writing in the law-giver's name, predicts the apostasy and

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<sup>23</sup> This study is limited to the Testament of Moses and Daniel. Parts of I Enoch, The Animal Apocalypse, The martyrdom of Isaiah and others could be included but would exceed the limits of the present inquiry.

<sup>24</sup> Second century BC with a few post-Herodian interpolations (eg. TM 6:2). See J. J. Collins, 'The Date and Provenance of Moses', *Studies on the Testament of Moses*, ed. Nickelsburg, (Cambridge, 1973), 15–32; J. A. Goldstein, 'The Testament of Moses: Its Content, Its Origin and Its Attestation in Josephus', *Studies*, 44–52; Nickelsburg, 'An Antiochan Date for the Testament of Moses', *Studies*, 33–43; J. C. Licht, 'Taxo or the Apocalyptic Doctrine of Vengeance', *JJS*, 12 (1961), 95–103. But cf. R. H. Charles, *The Assumption of Moses* (London, 1897), lxii and more recently Eissfeldt, *The OT*, 624 for a date just after the turn of the era. Cf. also S. Zeitlin, 'The Assumption of Moses and the Revolt of Bar Kokba', *JQR* 38 (1947/48), 10ff. and K. Haacker, 'Assumptio-Mosis—eine samaritanische Schrift?', *TZ*, 25 (1969), 385ff. who argue for a second century AD century date.

<sup>25</sup> D. J. Harrington, 'Interpreting Israel's History: The Testament of Moses as a rewriting of Deuteronomy 31–34', *Studies*, 58–68.

punishment preceding the eschaton. Therefore it is not unexpected to discover numerous quotes and allusions to Deuteronomy 31–34 distributed through the Testament of Moses.<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, TM offers several suggestions as to the cause of righteous suffering. The most obvious is the corporate nature of the nation. This is expressed clearly as the author discusses the exile. The ten tribes 'work impiety . . . and grave abomination' while the two tribes are designated 'holy'.<sup>27</sup>

When Antiochus as God's instrument of judgement strikes, the act affects both the righteous and the wicked:

... he shall cast forth all the people . . . yea he shall take the two tribes with him. Then the two tribes . . . shall cry aloud, 'Righteous and holy is the Lord, for, inasmuch as ye have sinned we too, in like manner, have been carried away with you . . .' Then the ten tribes . . . shall say 'what have we done unto you brethren? Has not this tribulation come on *all* the house of Israel?' (TM 3:3–8)

This narrative functions paradigmatically for the author of the Testament of Moses so that later when Taxo and his sons are martyred they too suffer innocently yet in solidarity with their nation (e.g. TM 9:4–6). Thus, the righteous suffer because they exist in solidarity with a sinful nation that has provoked God to judgement manifested in a foreign king's oppression.

### 3.1.2. *Divine Vengeance*

However, there is another reason given by the Testament of Moses explaining why the righteous suffer. It is stated explicitly:

If we . . . die, our blood will be avenged before the Lord and then His kingdom shall appear throughout all His creation . . . He shall . . . avenge them of their enemies . . . He will go forth from His holy habitation with indignation and wrath on account of His sons.

(TM 9:7–10:3)

Underlying Taxo's speech to his sons is the belief that God is the *go'el* of the righteous. This doctrine of divine vengeance taught that God protects and avenges the innocent and the vulnerable when they are victimised by social injustice<sup>28</sup> or the spilling of blood.<sup>29</sup> God is portrayed as not responding to the crime itself but

<sup>26</sup> For example, compare TM 1:6, 8, 10 and Deut. 31:7; TM 1:15 and Deut. 31:16; TM 1:16 and Deut. 31:9ff.; TM 2:1 and Deut. 31:7; TM 3:12 and Deut. 31:28; TM 10:8 and Deut. 33:29; TM 10:14–15 and Deut. 31:7.

<sup>27</sup> TM 2:9 and 2:4.

<sup>28</sup> Ps. 9:21; Isa. 5:4–5, 15ff.; 16:1ff.; Jer. 11:20; 15:15; 20:12.

<sup>29</sup> Gen. 4:9; Deut. 32:43; II Kings 9:7ff.; Ps. 9:11, 12; 79:10; Ez. 24:7ff.; Joel 3:19–20; II Chron 24:22.

to the prayers of the oppressed and the cry emanating from slain victims' blood.

You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. If you afflict him at all, and if he does cry out to me, I will surely hear his cry . . . and I will kill you with the sword (Ex. 22:22-23).

The author of the Testament of Moses clearly believes that he was living in an age in which evil was reaching its climax. Furthermore this climax of evil was directed at Israel.

And there shall come upon them a second visitation and wrath, such as has not befallen them from the beginning until this time, in which he will stir up against them the king of kings of the earth and one that ruleth with great power, who shall crucify all who confess to the circumcision. (TM 8:1-2)

This persecution has other heinous dimensions. Those pious Jews who uphold the law are tortured, imprisoned, have their wives violated and their children's circumcision reversed. They are also forced to repudiate their God and desecrate His sanctuary (TM 8:3-5). These atrocities are part of the eschatological persecution that is typically portrayed in apocalyptic literature.<sup>30</sup>

The catalyst which moves God to action to punish the reprobate is the death of Taxo and his sons. They prepare themselves for their sacrificial martyrdom by fasting for three days then face their immolation (TM 9:6). This was to insure their internal purity. As Licht observes:

The fasting and going into the cave are acts of penitence, or teshuvah; their purpose is to ensure that those who are prepared to die shall be truly innocent of sin. Thus their death will not be a just or even an over severe punishment for their sins, but wholly undeserved and so a sure means of provoking divine vengeance.<sup>31</sup>

The innocent slaughter of Taxo and his sons would be so reprehensible that it would force the finger of God. Taxo does not envision his death merely as further proof of Antiochus' hubris or as the exhaustion of God's wrath, but rather believes that this one solitary act would force God to act almost in a reflex manner. Collins has similarly remarked:

The role is no longer merely to draw the Lord's attention to the fact that things have gone far enough. It can actually do something which will get an automatic response from God. This means that Taxo and his sons emerge as the cause of salvation . . .<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Baumeister, *Die Anfänge der Theologie des Martyriums* (Munster, 1980), 33.

<sup>31</sup> J. C. Licht, 'Taxo', *JJS*, 12 (1961), 98.

<sup>32</sup> J. J. Collins, 'Some Remaining Tradition Historical Problems in the Testament of Moses', *Studies*, 42.

It is clear, therefore, that the martyrdom of the innocent Taxo and his sons was portrayed by the author of the Testament of Moses to provoke God to action because of the cry of innocent blood. God's subsequent response would be no less than the complete annihilation of Israel's enemies and the appearance of the eschaton.

It is interesting to note the stark contrast between the pericope of Mattathias and his sons in 1 Maccabees and of Taxo's family in the TM. Though they both develop from the same tradition<sup>33</sup> they reflect diametrically-opposed biases.

The similarities demonstrating that they come from the same tradition are: both are priests, both have sons, both perform ritual ascetic rites, both exhort their sons to die for the Law, both appeal to the example of the patriarchs, both find their strength in the law, both flee and both cry out for vengeance. But notice the significant differences: Mattathias is of obscure priestly lineage, Taxo is a man of the tribe of Levi; Mattathias has five sons, Taxo has the perfect number seven; Mattathias promotes military resistance, Taxo advocates non-military resistance; Mattathias looks to Judas to take revenge on Israel's enemies, Taxo appeals to God. As Collins remarks:

Amid the extensive parallels we find a number of pointed contrasts: the priestly credentials, the number of sons, the manner of resistance, the source of vengeance. In each case Taxo appears to be the more pious and perfect Jew.<sup>34</sup>

TM therefore, consonant with 2 Maccabees, obviously represents an alternative tradition to the militant perspective of 1 Maccabees. Both use the same material but present differing solutions to the present conflict; both advocate active resistance but TM suggests a more effective non-military option.

### 3.1.3. *Dualism*

Dualism is to be expected in the TM because it is generally listed as part of the apocalyptic corpus.<sup>35</sup> The interesting feature to note however is the absence of dualism throughout the TM except in the martyrological pericope of Taxo (TM 9-10). As a rewriting of

<sup>33</sup> Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 93-111.

<sup>34</sup> Collins, 'The Date and Provenance of the Testament of Moses', *Studies*, 15-32.

<sup>35</sup> H. H. Rowley, *The Relevance of Apocalyptic* (New York, 1964), 106-110; D. S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia, 1964), 58-59 both include it in their lists of apocalypses but cf. Nickelsburg, 'Introduction', *Studies*, 11-14 who concludes 'the whole matter obviously needs more discussion and study'.

Deuteronomy 31–34 it claims to be a Mosaic prophecy of Israel's future. Chapter ten climaxes with a theophany drawing heavily on the language and imagery of Deuteronomy 33.<sup>36</sup>

However, innovations in this rewriting that are foreign to Deuteronomy reveal dualistic influences. The day of salvation arrives in 10:1 not with an earthly triumph but with the appearance of the now hidden transcendental kingdom. Along with the kingdom comes the obliteration of evil. The agent accomplishing this victory 'the angel who is in the highest appointed place' almost certainly is to be identified as Israel's patron angel, Michael.<sup>37</sup> In TM 10 Israel's celestial archetype not only wages war in heaven to defeat the devil and cosmic evil (10:1) but also Satan's earthly counterparts viz. the nations (10:7) who are explicitly indicated as Israel's enemies (10:2). The victory is of course ultimately the work of God thus a theophany completes the eschatological drama. Final judgement remains: Israel is 'exalted to the stars' from where they can view the punishment of their enemies 'in Gehenna'.<sup>38</sup> The final state is therefore completely extramundane. All of these dualistic elements are totally foreign to Deuteronomy. All of this suggests a reworking of traditional materials.

The above analysis indicates that the author of the TM in his rewriting of Deuteronomy functioned without dualistic themes until integrating the Maccabean martyr tale into his composition. As he weaved the martyr tale into his testament he necessarily included part of the martyr tale. This explains the exclusive concentration of cosmic and spatial dualism to the martyrological pericope in TM 9, 10.

Thus the TM also shares an interest in martyrdom as the human contribution to Holy War. Martyrdom inaugurates the kingdom directly. Taxo and his sons are determined activists who attain their ends by non-violent submission to martyrdom. Israel's enemies will subsequently be supernaturally destroyed apart from human instrumentality. The human role is to purify oneself and undergo suffering and martyrdom. In this way one can hasten the transcendent kingdom of God.

### 3.1.4. *Humiliation/Exaltation Motif*

It is important to note that the exaltation of Israel in the TM is

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<sup>36</sup> Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 29.

<sup>37</sup> See Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1; I Enoch 20:5; 1QM 9.15–16; 17. 6–7; T. H. Gaster, 'Michael', *IDB*, III, 373.

<sup>38</sup> *Lat, in terram*. According to Charles, *AP*, II, 422 (and widely accepted by scholars) this is an abbreviation of Ge(henna).

strikingly similar to Daniel 12. The kingdom of God is not conceived in temporal terms. There is no mention of a Maccabean kingdom or even a restoration of the temple. Instead Israel is exalted to the stars while its enemies descend to Gehenna (TM 10:1, 8–10; cf. Daniel 12:1–3). This eschatological scenario is wrought through the martyrdoms of Taxo and his sons. It is therefore probable that Israel's exaltation to the stars involves the resurrection of the martyrs, as it does in Daniel 12.<sup>39</sup>

### 3.1.5 Summary

The Testament of Moses shares the same motifs found earlier in 2 and 4 Maccabees. Moreover, they all share an interest in suffering and martyrdom as the human contribution to Holy War. It is interesting to note that in 2 and 4 Maccabees martyrdom is portrayed as the cardinal (though not only) human contribution to Holy War and the result is Judas' victory. However, in the TM, martyrdom is the only human contribution and it directly precipitates the eschatological kingdom. Evidently the transcendental kingdom in 2 and 4 Maccabees has been historicized to fit the facts of Judas' victory and he is now the divine agent of vengeance.<sup>40</sup> In the TM Israel's enemies are destroyed directly by an angel without any military intervention. Taxo and his sons are non-military activists who attain their ends by an enthusiastic submission to martyrdom.

## 3.2. Holy War in Daniel

With due respect to the minority view, critical scholars are almost unanimously agreed that the book of Daniel, although incorporating much older traditional lore, was written in the early years of the Maccabean struggle.<sup>41</sup> Pfeiffer has rightly termed this work 'the manifesto of the Hasidim', and as such it represents a particular and pointed political stance.<sup>42</sup>

Daniel, like TM and 2 and 4 Maccabees, works within the framework of Holy War. In Daniel 2, 7, 8 and 10–12 the visions

<sup>39</sup> Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality and Eternal Life*, (Cambridge, 1972), 11–31.

<sup>40</sup> For full discussion on the historicization of the apocalyptic expectations of the TM see Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 93–111; for a summary see *idem*, 'An Antiochan Date for the Testament of Moses', *Studies*, 35–37 and Goldstein, *I Maccabees*, 40.

<sup>41</sup> Circa 165 BC. R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Oxford, 1929), lxx ff. For the minority position see D. J. Wiseman, *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel* (London, 1965).

<sup>42</sup> R. H. Pfeiffer, *Religion in the Old Testament* (London, 1961), 218.

are specific interpretations of historical events. This interest in history reflects an interest in politics. The interest in politics is represented in Daniel's use of kings and kingdoms. In Daniel 2, 7 and 8 the four-kingdom schema followed by supernatural intervention points unquestionably to the way in which deliverance from righteous suffering would come.

### 3.2.1. *Perspective on Suffering*

Daniel, like other literature studied above, sees the cause of Israel's suffering largely as deuteronomic. Daniel's prayer in chapter 9 is demonstrative:

Indeed all Israel has transgressed Thy law and turned aside, not obeying Thy voice; so the curse has been poured on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him. (9:11 cf. 9:5, 6)

Moreover, Ginsberg's identification of Antiochus as an instrument of punishment and the result of persecution fulfilling the divine intent of purification (11:35; 12:10) further highlights the deuteronomic explanation for Israel's suffering.<sup>43</sup>

### 3.2.2. *Divine Vengeance*

The divine vengeance motif seen in the Maccabean literature and the Testament of Moses is also in Daniel most notably in the dream visions in Daniel 7–12. In Daniel 7, a vision involving four beasts is narrated. All of the beasts represent political kingdoms (7:17) but the fourth beast attracts particular attention. This king 'speaks against the Most High and oppresses His saints.' (7:25) Relief from persecution does not come through weapons and valour but when the Ancient of Days acts (7:9–11). Then Israel's enemies are destroyed (7:26) and the transcendent kingdom is ushered in. (7:27).<sup>44</sup>

This exact pattern is found again in Daniel 8. Here a two-horned ram rises but is replaced by a goat which in turn is replaced by a great horn. These we are told later represent Medo-Persia, Greece and undoubtedly Antiochus IV. Antiochus destroys both Israel's armies and the nation's pious (8:24) and is defeated

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<sup>43</sup> Ginsberg, 'The Oldest Interpretation of the Suffering Servant', VT, 3 (1953), 400–404.

<sup>44</sup> A transcendent rather than Messianic Kingdom is almost certainly in view here. See E. Stauffer, 'Das theologische Weltbild der Apokalypitik', ZST, 8 (1931), 203–215; R. Bultmann, *History and Eschatology* (New York, 1957); but cf. Russell, *Method and Message*, 286–287.

only when the Prince of princes takes vengeance 'without the aid of human agency' (8:25–26). A similar sequence is narrated in much more detail in Daniel 10–12 but the result is the same; Antiochus rolls over all of Israel's military resistance and persecutes the saints of the most High (1:21–22, 31) but ultimately is destroyed by direct divine judgement (11:45).

But in Daniel 9 we probably see the clearest connection between the righteous enduring suffering and God's judgement. Daniel 9 begins with Daniel confessing his sin on behalf of the nation (9:8ff.). Then, after drawing attention to the extreme suffering of his people and the devastation of Jerusalem—especially the temple (9:11ff). Daniel implores God to 'hear and act . . . without delay for the sake of His people and His city' (9:19). In the midst of this prayer the angel Gabriel interrupts Daniel and with a strong note of determinism intimates that human force will not avail against Antiochus (9:24ff). Nevertheless the angel assures him that the Almighty has heard his prayer and has seen the innocent suffering and that at the appointed hour 'the end that is decreed' will be 'poured out' upon the wicked monarch (9:27).

Thus in very clear terms Daniel (as does TM and 2 and 4 Maccabees) links the suffering righteous with divine judgement and vengeance. Though sin had initiated punishment upon Israel soon atonement would be complete (9:24) and God would therefore judge Antiochus and exalt Israel.

### 3.2.3. *Dualism*

For the author of Daniel the real conflict lay not on the human level but rather in the heavenlies. This is the clearest in Daniel 10–12 though certainly not lacking in the four schema in Daniel 2, 7 and 8. The relationship between the heavenly battle involving Michael and the 'princes' of Persia and Greece with whom he struggles is clearly analogous to the relationship between the beasts which arise out of the sea and the kings which arise out of the earth in Daniel 7. It is exegetically impossible to dismiss the 'princes' of Persia and Greece as poetic metaphors for their countries and Michael as simply a metaphor for Israel. These angelic figures are intrinsic to the visionary's *Weltanschauung*. The author firmly believes that each nation has a significance which transcends its manifest earthly reality. Celestial archetypes have been chosen to represent transcendent reality. This imagery is crucial for the understanding of the author's *Weltanschauung* because it reveals that the visionary is operating with a two-storey universe in which the angelic world represents a metaphysical

level where *the real battle* is being fought and in which those upon earth may participate.

This is clearest in Daniel 10–12. An angel was dispatched (Gabriel? cf. 8:16 and 9:21) in response to Daniel's prayer (10:12) but the angel was 'resisted' by 'the prince of the kingdom of Persia' for 21 days (10:13). After revealing the divine mysteries to Daniel this angelic warrior was off again to fight against the 'princes' of Persia and Greece. In these battles Michael (Israel's 'prince') is an ally (10:20–21).

What follows is an account of the Hellenistic war between nations and kings on the earth. The introductory verses have served to inform the reader that the earthly battles are but one level of reality in a two-storey universe where the earthly and heavenly confrontations were merely two dimensions of the same battle. The pre-eminence of the celestial struggle is transparent because the earthly king does as he pleases and sets himself against the heavenly host and even against the 'God of gods' (11:36) and is only defeated when Israel's archangel, Michael, intervenes (12:1). Thus the battle in the heavenlies is clearly the decisive one.<sup>45</sup>

### 3.2.4. *Humiliation and Exaltation Motif*

Note must also be made of the humiliation/exaltation motif in these chapters. As we have seen the maskilim suffer terribly at the hands of the wicked Antiochus and are even martyred, but that is of no consequence because they will be resurrected and have a prominent place in the eschatological kingdom. As Nickelsburg comments:

'the wise' and 'those who bring many to righteousness' will shine for ever and ever . . . special honour will be accorded to the Hasidic leaders who helped others of the righteous to maintain the faith. They will shine like the firmament and like the stars forever and ever. . . . These teachers will be vindicated. Although they were condemned before men God will acquit them . . . There in the glorious light of the eschatological community, the wise teachers will shine with particular brilliance.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>45</sup> This accords with other OT battles. Judges 5:19–20 is a typical example. When Deborah and Barak encounter Sisera on the battlefield they were accompanied by their celestial counterparts. The Song of Deborah in chapter 5 recalls: 'Kings came, they fought, the Kings of Canaan fought . . . and from heaven the stars fought, from their courses they fought against Sisera' (5:19–20). Similarly Elisha prayed that God would open the eyes of his servant to see the other dimension of the battle and the Lord opened his eyes to see the heavenly host ready to engage in battle (2 Kings 6:15–23). In Zech. 6:1–7 we find another narrative with the same leitmotif (cf. also Ps. 68:17).

<sup>46</sup> Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 25–26.

The close linguistic parallel of Daniel 12:3, 'make many righteous' to Isaiah 53:11, 'the righteous one, my Servant will justify many' as well as other linguistic data and functional similarities have led not a few scholars to conclude that the description of the maskilim was heavily influenced by the fourth Servant Song.<sup>47</sup> The Suffering Servant functioned as a model of suffering, and the teachers of the Hasidim saw themselves as corporately fulfilling the portrait of the 'Ebed Yahweh'. As Nickelsburg concludes: 'The Hasidim saw in the Deutero-Isaianic servant of Yahweh the wise teachers in their own community'.<sup>48</sup>

### 3.2.5. *Human Participation in Holy War*

As has been demonstrated Daniel 10–12 makes explicit the conceptual framework within which the apocalypticist viewed the course of history (Daniel 2, 7, 8) and in particular the events of his day especially the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. The framework is essentially a two-storey universe where the primary battle exists between angelic princes and the hosts they lead. That humans do participate in the struggle is clear because Antiochus is said to do battle with the angels and with God and even be successful for a time (11:36). But if the struggle is primarily against God the alternative question must be answered: How does an earthly personage participate in God's struggle against the forces of evil?

Obviously, Israel in Antiochan times had its faithful and unfaithful citizens. This is explicit in 11:32:

And by smooth words he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will display strength and take action.

The ones who 'know their God', 'display strength' and 'take action' are further described in verse 33 as those who are the 'wise instructors of the people', the maskilim. They are to 'give understanding to the many'. The rabbim or 'the many' are a third group in the nation who belong to neither the faithful nor the unfaithful but need instruction to become initiates into the maskilim. But we must note carefully that the maskilim do not guide the rabbim by simply exhorting them to loyalty, rather they give understanding to the rabbim.

The content of the maskilim's teaching is twofold. First, the

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<sup>47</sup> F. F. Bruce, 'The Book of Daniel and the Qumran Community', *Neotestamentica et Semitica*, ed. E. E. Ellis and M. Wilcox (Edinburgh, 1969), 221–225. W. H. Brownlee, 'The Servant of the Lord in the Qumran Scrolls I', *BASOR*, 132 (1953), 8–15.

<sup>48</sup> Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 25.

linguistic evidence suggests that Daniel is alluding to Nehemiah 8:7 (cf also Neh. 8:13) where the Levites were 'making the people understand the Torah' which is consistent with other evidence we have concerning the Antiochan persecution (2 and 4 Maccabees, *passim*). But further, Daniel and his companions are described as maskilim and function as models for those experiencing persecution (Daniel 1–6). Plöger has rightly concluded that the wisdom they possess is true visionary insight into the spiritual reality, which makes sense out of the Antiochan persecution in general and in particular the role of suffering in the predetermined plan of God.<sup>49</sup> The maskilim therefore teach the Torah and give insight into the eschatological mysteries.

In addition to teaching, the maskilim were also given the role of suffering:

And those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many; yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder, for many days. (11:33)

The purpose of this suffering is explicitly stated in 11:35 and 12:10: 'many will be purged, purified and refined', and in 11:35 this refinement is given an eschatological setting. Refinement is common in the OT and refers to the process of smelting metals to remove the dross. Figuratively, it signifies the divine testing of the righteous or God's method of dealing with an apostate Israel. Additionally, it was regarded as an eschatological indicator that the eschaton was imminent because the refinement of God's people had begun. The clearest exposition of this is in Malachi 3:1–5:

Behold I will send my messenger who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly Yahweh . . . will come to His temple . . . But who can endure His coming? . . . He will be like a refiner's fire, or a launderer's soap . . . He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, He will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver . . . so I will come near to you for judgement. (cf. Isaiah 1:21–26; Zech. 13:7–9)

Thus suffering was intended to cleanse as a reparation for the approaching kingdom.

However, we must note that though obviously related there are important nuances distinguishing 12:10 and 11:35. In 12:10 we find two hithpaels followed by a niphal. Driver is balanced when he observes:

. . . the two reflexives are not to be pressed unduly, but they imply

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<sup>49</sup> O. Plöger, *Das Buch Daniel* (Gutersloh, 1965), 165.

that the martyrs, by their deliberate acceptance of suffering, are, to a certain degree, the agents in the purification of their characters.<sup>50</sup>

In contrast, in 11:35, the verbs reflect the effect of suffering on the outward community. Some scholars have been tempted to reconcile the two verses but this seems unnecessary because they are merely reflecting two related aspects of innocent suffering. On the one hand suffering purges that sin which remains in the victim (12:10) and on the other it purges the community of those who are apostate (11:35).

That which Daniel 10–12 teaches concerning suffering and martyrdom has now become manifest. The persecution of Antiochus will be severe and many of the maskilim will be martyred. But this innocent suffering has at least two functions. First, since the suffering is voluntary (in that they could deny their faith, their law, their religion and their God, and avert death) it will help purge the sufferers *themselves* of any remaining sin. Secondly, the threat of martyrdom will drive the insincere from the righteousness remnant, thereby purifying the *community*. Thirdly, when the suffering is complete it will provoke the vengeance of God. All this is a sign of the approaching eschatological kingdom.

### 3.2.6. *Summary*

Daniel, like TM and 2 and 4 Maccabees, works within the framework of Holy War. The visions in Daniel are neither reflections of timeless truths nor enigmatic discourses on human history, rather they are specific interpretations of political events. The political concern permeates Daniel's use of kings and kingdoms. His utilization of the 4 kingdom schema followed by supernatural intervention likewise makes a political statement. Note that the 'wise do not abandon the political statement arena but "understand" and therefore "resist" and "take action"'. Because Daniel expresses a judgement upon all political kingdoms, especially that of Antiochus, and because Daniel commends the political stance of the maskilim, the book of Daniel correctly understood is a political manifesto.<sup>51</sup>

But Daniel's visions make manifest the true nature of political conflict. Although Israel had sinned and Antiochus was the divine disciplinary agent, the king had far exceeded his bound-

<sup>50</sup> S. R. Driver, *Daniel* (Cambridge, 1900), 205.

<sup>51</sup> Friend, *Persecution in the Early Church* (Oxford, 1965), 47; M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* (London, 1974), 175.

daries in his torture of the righteous. Furthermore, the political conflagration has a heavenly counterpart, a celestial war likewise is raging.

But there is meaning in life for the maskil even in this dark hour. Though there is an appreciation for deuteronomic suffering, God is still sovereign and if the righteous suffer it is merely because He has determined it thus. In fact, the maskil understood this as part of the predetermined evil necessary before the eschaton which would arrive only when God takes vengeance upon Israel's enemies (Dan 9:24-27). Moreover exaltation and resurrection awaited the maskil. The future hope therefore allowed the maskil to transcend suffering because there are transcendent values death cannot destroy.

The resistance of the maskilim is not based only upon the future expectation but also upon the present experience of wisdom. This wisdom communicated via the eschatological mysteries gives them immediate, if only partial, access to a higher dimension whose manifestation must wait until the time of the end. This does not mean exclusion from the political sphere, rather their wisdom enables them to withstand the bestial kingdoms in the name of Heaven which will ultimately be victorious.

The nature of the resistance is twofold; suffering and teaching. Through their efforts the maskilim 'makes many understand' thus initiating them into the eschatological mysteries thereby turning them to righteousness and emboldening them to stand for the Law. The maskilim impart wisdom and this wisdom enables the maskil to make prudent decisions in the time of crisis. He can discern the true nature of the conflict and thereby remain true to God and His word. This wisdom also imparts strength to undergo suffering because he is assured glory in the inbreaking eschatological kingdom. The emphasis of this wisdom is always soteriological and eschatological.

In the political context then, Daniel inspires resistance not by the desire for a national kingship but by allegiance to a heavenly kingdom. Daniel's visions are no less than political oracles with an eschatological conclusion. Allegiance to the coming kingdom does not require swords and shields but purity and wisdom. It requires a resistance composed of the *active* but the *non-violent* assertion of their religious loyalty and submission to martyrdom if necessary. The righteous co-operate with the angelic host, not by the sword, but by obedience, wisdom and purification. This prepares them for a final transformation. The maskilim do not wield weapons because the military victory is the work of

Michael. The conflict is resolved by the judgement of the Ancient of Days.

The author of Daniel was a learned wise man. His vision of the character and ways of God determined his reaction to the present crisis of persecution. Consequently his vision of Holy War was quite different from that of 1 Maccabees but consistent with other literature of this period, most notably 2 and 4 Maccabees and the Testament of Moses. However, in 2 and 4 Maccabees the imminent eschatological kingdom has been historicized to fit the facts of Judas' victory. Nonetheless, it is accomplished by God and the immediate catalysts were the martyrs whose innocent suffering moved the hand of God to action.

### **3.3. Conclusion**

The tradition of Holy War represented in 1 Maccabees clearly reflects the tradition of Holy War in the OT. However there was another tradition whose genesis is found in the Maccabean era and the fountainhead of this teaching flows from the book of Daniel. In this tradition foreign oppression is the result of the nation's sin and the righteous suffer in solidarity with the wicked. The righteous during these times of oppression have two functions: suffering and teaching. They suffer which serves to refine, and they also teach in order that the nation might understand the true nature of their persecution and suffering.

The visible enemy is Antiochus but he has a heavenly counterpart who is the real enemy. Unfortunately, weapons made of iron have no effect upon the forces of darkness. The role of the wise man is to teach, initiating others to understand the true nature of the struggle and the effective way to 'stand firm' and 'take action'. Also the righteous must voluntarily suffer. As they undergo unjust suffering their innocent blood will cry out to God to be avenged. God Himself, is the only one with authority to avenge their blood and judge their enemies and defeat the forces of darkness. The eschaton will accompany God's vengeance when the predetermined amount of suffering is complete. Then in this eschatological kingdom justice will be accomplished and the persecuted righteous now will be vindicated and exalted and the wicked will be judged and humiliated. The wise man will understand these mysteries and will teach them and voluntarily suffer entrusting himself to God who judges justly and who is working out His purpose in history.

### **4. Implications for New Testament Study**

These concepts (dualism, righteous suffering, humiliation/

exaltation motif and divine vengeance) seems to be consistent with parts of the New Testament. Paul's concept of the principalities and powers is particularly suggestive:

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Eph 6:12)

In Daniel the wise display their strength and stand firm by suffering and sharing their eschatological insight; here in Ephesians the 'armour' of God (truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, salvation, the word of God) enables the believer to 'stand firm' and 'be strong'.

Furthermore, suffering seems to be an effective weapon against evil. In point of fact Satan's ultimate defeat occurred at the point of Christ's deepest agony. Jesus again and again warned that to follow Him meant suffering. Participating with Christ in His suffering means among other things participation with Christ in His battle against evil. This insight is pregnant with implications for that enigmatic verse in Colossians 1:24:

Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions . . .

Submission to suffering to await divine vengeance is another NT theme. Paul, echoing the Sermon on the Mount, writes:

Do not take revenge, my friends but leave room for the wrath of God for it is written, 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay' says the Lord. (Rom. 12:19)

This counsel from Paul is of course what the Maccabean martyrs declared and practiced.

Eschatological suffering crying out to God for redress thus inaugurating the eschaton is also found in the pages of the NT. The martyrs in Revelation 6:10 cry out 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt Thou refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?' The answer which returns is 'until the full number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been should be completed also' (6:11). That is, until the period of predetermined suffering to appear before the eschaton is completed. Again this seems congruent with Danielic themes.

The humiliation/exaltation motif is likewise one that finds consistent expression in the NT. Humbling ourselves now will gain exaltation in the inbreaking eschatological kingdom. Christ again is the supreme example, as is evidenced in the Phillipian Christ-hymn (Phil. 2:6-11).

One final comment may be offered. It was the maskilim, the wise, who understood the spiritual realities at work in Daniel's day when their nation was attacked by a foreign power. They attempted to 'make the many understand' by giving them insight into eschatological mysteries which not only gave them a future hope but also purpose and meaning to their present existence in spite of their suffering. This also may have a parallel in Jesus, another radical visionary, who came giving further insight and indeed inaugurated the final period of eschatological suffering, judgement and salvation. He also claimed that following his teaching would give meaning to the universe and to life especially during times of crisis.

A straight line can be drawn from the tradition of Holy War contained in 1 Maccabees to the zealot movement. As we have demonstrated, there was another tradition, one that embraced *non-military resistance*. This tradition had its roots in Daniel and is reflected in much of the other literature from this period. Despite the work of Brandon the zealot tradition is not reflected in the teaching of Jesus or anywhere else in the NT.<sup>52</sup> It may be possible that this alternative tradition, one of non-military resistance, is one that Jesus and other writers of the New Testament drew upon, modified or expanded. At the very least it deserves closer scrutiny.

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<sup>52</sup> S. G. F. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots* (New York, 1967).