



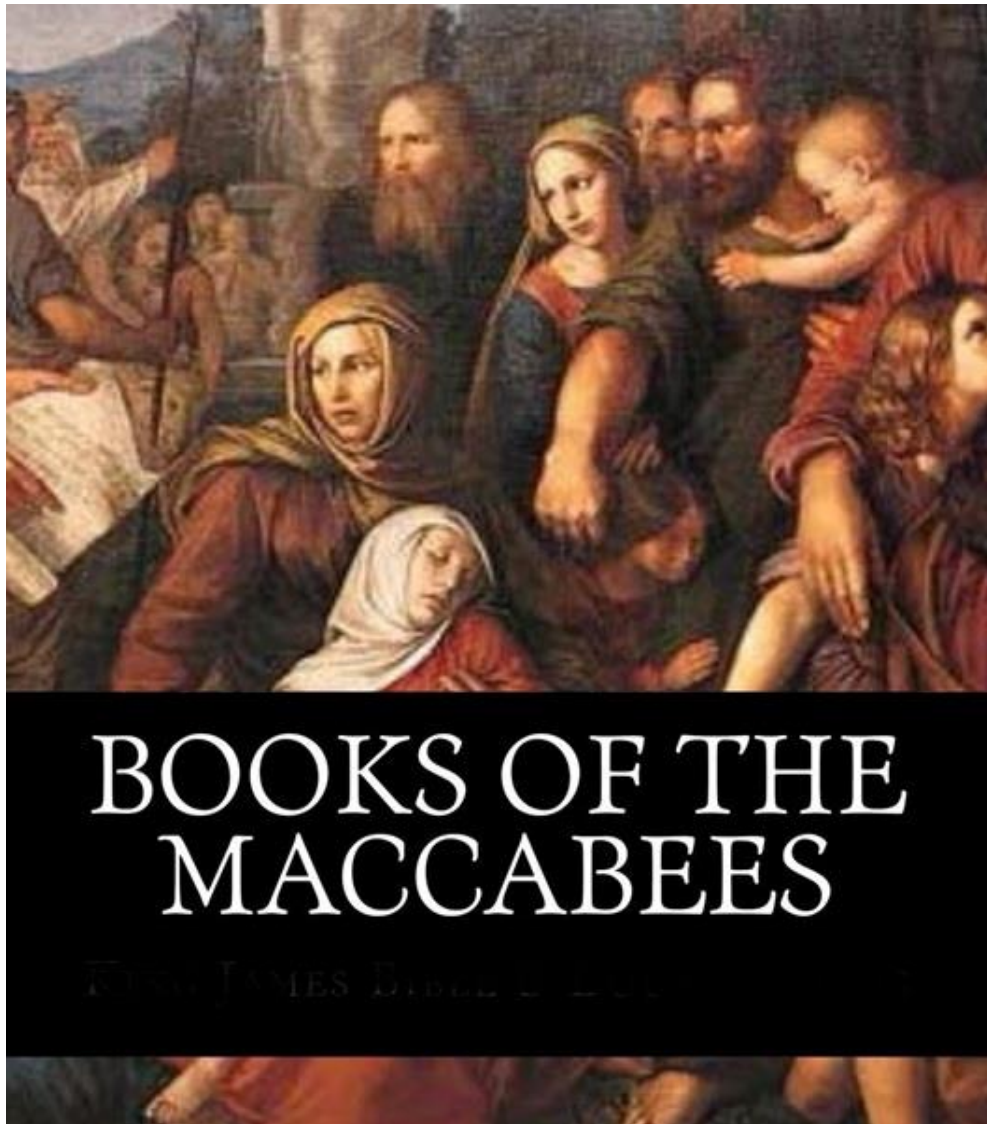
My Drift

Title: Bible – The Maccabees

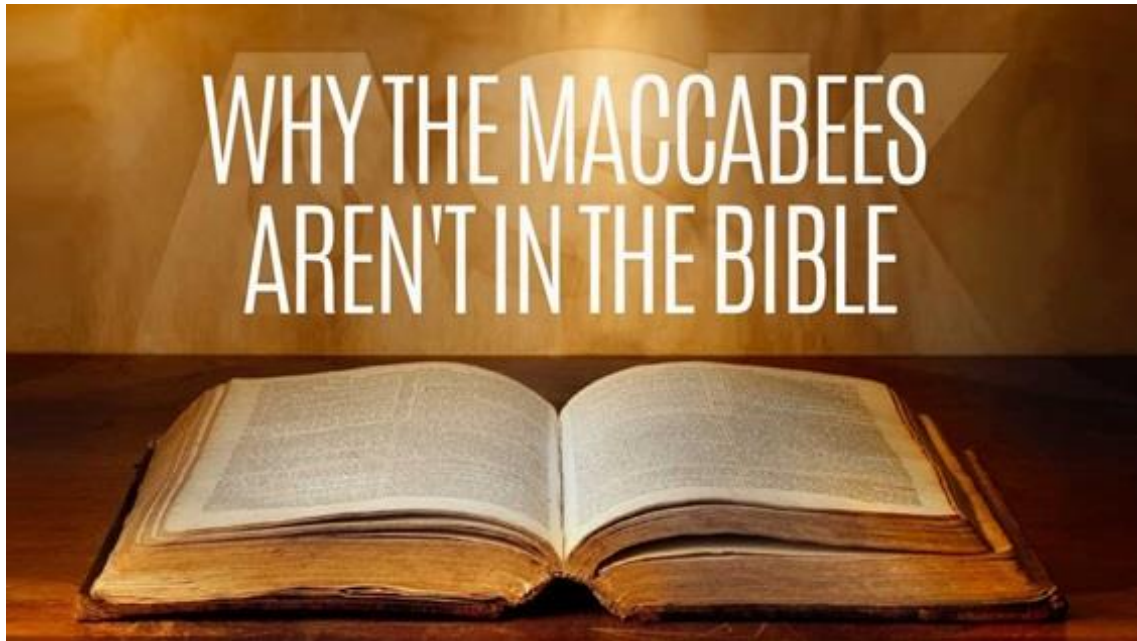
Written By: Jerry D. Petersen

Date: 15 Nov 2023

Article Number: (437-2023-27)



Maccabees is a history of the rebellion of the Jews against their Syrian rulers in the 160s BCE. The rebellion's leader was Judas Maccabee, and from his family and its success sprang a dynasty that ruled Judah for the century before the arrival of Herod the Great.



The Books of Maccabees – Summary

The first two books are considered canonical by the Catholic Church and the first three books are considered canonical by the Eastern Orthodox Church. The Georgian Orthodox Church is the only church which also considers 4 Maccabees canonical. All of the other books are considered biblical apocrypha.

The First Book

I Maccabees presents a historical account of political, military, and diplomatic events from the time of Judaea's relationship with Antiochus IV Epiphanes of Syria (reigned 175–164/163 BCE) to the death (135/134 BCE) of Simon Maccabeus, high priest in Jerusalem. It describes the refusal of Mattathias to perform pagan religious rites, the ensuing Jewish revolt against Syrian hegemony, the political machinations whereby Demetrius II of Syria granted Judaea its independence, and the election of Simon as both high priest and secular ruler of the Judaeans.

I Maccabees is the only contemporary source for the civil wars in Judaea, and the only surviving one for Judaeans-Syrian relations after the reign of Antiochus IV. The historical integrity of the book, which was compiled from official written sources, oral tradition, and eyewitness reporting, is attested to by the absence of almost all of the conventions of the Hellenistic rhetorical school of historiography and by its uncritical use by the later Jewish historian Flavius Josephus.



The author of I Maccabees, likely the Hasmonean court historian, wrote his history during the high priesthood (135/134–104 BCE) of John Hyrcanus I, son and successor of Simon.

The Second Book of the Maccabees



II Maccabees focuses on the Jews' revolt against Antiochus and concludes with the defeat of the Syrian general Nicanor in 161 BCE by Judas Maccabeus, the hero of the work. In general, its chronology coheres with that of I Maccabees. An unknown editor, the “Epitomist,” used the factual notes of a historian, Jason of Cyrene, to write this historical polemic. Its vocabulary and style indicate a Greek original.

The Third Book of the Maccabees

III Maccabees has no relation to the other three books of Maccabees, all of which deal with the revolt of Judaea against Antiochus IV Epiphanes. It purports to be a historical account of the repression and miraculous salvation of Egyptian Jewry during the reign (221–205 BCE) of Ptolemy IV Philopator. Ptolemy supposedly threatened the Jews with loss of citizenship after Palestinian Jews refused to permit him to enter the sanctuary of the Temple of Jerusalem. He relented after angels intervened on behalf of the Jews.



The Fourth Book of the Maccabees

IV Maccabees has scanty historical information and belongs to the Maccabees series only because it deals with the beginning of the persecution of Jews by Antiochus IV Epiphanes. It possibly was written during the reign of the Roman emperor Caligula (37–41 CE). Throughout the early Christian period, **IV Maccabees** was wrongly attributed to Josephus.

The work's main religious theme is that the martyr's sufferings vicariously expiated the sins of the entire Jewish people.

The Maccabees books were preserved only by the Christian church. St. Augustine wrote in *The City of God* that they were preserved for their accounts of the martyrs. This suggests that in antiquity, **IV Maccabees**, dealing almost exclusively with martyrdom, may have been the most highly regarded.



The Fifth Book of the Maccabees

V Maccabees, an Arabic text which offers an account of the history of the Maccabees from 186 BC to 6 BC. The same title is occasionally ascribed to a Syriac version of the 6th book of Josephus' *The Jewish War*.

The Sixth Book of the Maccabees

VI Maccabees, a Syriac poem that possibly shared a lost source with 4 Maccabees.

The Seventh Book of the Maccabees

VII Maccabees, a Syriac text which contains transcripts of speeches which were made by the Maccabean Martyrs and their mother.

The Eighth Book of the Maccabees

VIII Maccabees, in Greek, a brief account of the revolt which draws on Seleucid sources, preserved in the *Chronicle of John Malalas*.

Sacred Scripture Readings

2 Maccabees 12:43-46

43 And making a gathering, he sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection,

44 (For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead,)

45 And because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them.



Pray for the Poor Souls in Purgatory

46 It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins.

Bigdrifter44@gmail.com

Bigdrifter.com