

The Mother of the Lord and Apocalyptic Earthquakes

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The Book of Revelation mentions various punishments that humanity will experience in the end times. They include apocalyptic earthquakes. The concept of the “earthquake” (σεισμός) appears in the Book of Revelation seven times (Flis, 2004; *Pismo Święte Starego i Nowego Testamentu w przekładzie z języków oryginalnych*, 2014):

6 : 12: Then I watched while he broke open the sixth seal, and there was a great *earthquake*; the sun turned as black as dark sackcloth and the whole moon became like blood.

8 : 5: Then the angel took the censer, filled it with burning coals from the altar, and hurled it down to the earth. There were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an *earthquake*.

11 : 13: At that moment there was a great *earthquake*, and a tenth of the city fell in ruins. Seven thousand people were killed during the *earthquake*; the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

11 : 19: Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant could be seen in the temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder, an *earthquake*, and a violent hailstorm.

16 : 18: Then there were lightning flashes, rumblings, and peals of thunder, and a great *earthquake*. It was such a violent *earthquake*, that there has never been one like it since the human race began on earth.

The Greek text of the New Testament confirms this number (Bachmann & Slaby, 1987; Kohlenberger, Goodrick, & Swanson, 1995; Moulton, Geden, & Marshall, 2002). The sevenfold use of the concept of the “earthquake” by the author of the last book of the New Covenant may have been intentional, because the number seven has particular meaning in the Bible (cf. Flis, 2004). However, this number could have only been the effect of the use of Johannine models by the author of the Book of Revelation. St. John’s main aim may have been to establish a link between the apocalyptic earthquakes and the Mother

of the Lord. The presence of Johannine models in the Book of Revelation should not be surprising, because according to Tradition Revelation and the Gospel of John are written by the same author (Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 81, 4: PG 6, 669; Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, 4, 20, 11: PG 7, 1940–1941; *Muratorian Fragment*; Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, 3, 14; 4, 5: PL 2, 340, CSEL 47, 339; The “Anti-Marcionite” prologue to the Gospel according to Luke).

Articles proposing a new interpretation of the number 153 in John 21 : 11 have appeared in the *Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny* (Mucha, 2009, 2013). This mysterious number is the numerical value of the Biblical expression μήτηρ κυρίου (“Mother of the Lord”) from Luke 1 : 43. A solution can be easily found using the Johannine keys that on the basis of the analogy between John 21 : 2 and Luke 1 : 43 allow for the proper interpretation of the number 153 (Mucha, 2013, pp. 101–103):

The second Johannine model 5 + 2:

In John 21 : 2 there are *five* disciples whose identity is clear as well as *two* disciples who cannot in any way be identified.

In Luke 1 : 43 there is an expression consisting of *five* words (ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ κυρίου μου) of which *two* keywords have a numerical value of 153.

The first model 3 + 2:

In John 21 : 2 there are *three* disciples mentioned by name as well as *two* others who are not but their identity can be easily established as they are referred to as sons of Zebedee.

After omitting *three* insignificant words from the Greek expression ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ κυρίου μου, in Luke 1 : 43 there remain *two* keywords (μήτηρ κυρίου) whose numerical value is exactly 153.

The above models have been used by Matthew, Luke, and John when writing the Gospels (Mucha, 2013, pp. 103–116). The apocalyptic earthquakes also appear to be arranged and composed according to these models. A mere cursory analysis of the term “earthquake” in the last book of the New Testament reveals knowledge of these keys and their use. The concept σεισμός appears in five verses of Revelation (Nestle & Nestle, 2012)¹:

1 Although the division of the books of the New Testament into chapters and verses happened much later than the mere editing of these books, the concept of σεισμός appears in units of the text that are so distinct that for the purposes of this article one can limit oneself to using verses.

6 : 12: Καὶ εἶδον ὅτε ἤνοιξεν τὴν σφραγίδα τὴν ἕκτην, καὶ **σεισμός** μέγας ἐγένετο καὶ ὁ ἥλιος ἐγένετο μέλας ὡς σάκκος τρίχινος καὶ ἡ σελήνη ὅλη ἐγένετο ὡς αἷμα

8 : 5: καὶ εἴληφεν ὁ ἄγγελος τὸν λιβανωτὸν καὶ ἐγέμισεν αὐτὸν ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου καὶ ἔβαλεν εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐγένοντο βρονταὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ ἀστραπαὶ καὶ **σεισμός**.

11 : 13: Καὶ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἐγένετο **σεισμός** μέγας καὶ τὸ δέκατον τῆς πόλεως ἔπεσαν καὶ ἀπεκτάνθησαν ἐν **τῷ σεισμῷ** ὀνόματα ἀνθρώπων χιλιάδες ἑπτὰ καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἔμφοβοι ἐγένοντο καὶ ἔδωκαν δόξαν τῷ θεῷ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ.

11 : 19: Καὶ ἠνοιγῆ ὁ ναὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ ὠφθη ἡ κιβωτὸς τῆς διαθήκης αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ ναῷ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐγένοντο ἀστραπαὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ βρονταὶ καὶ **σεισμός** καὶ χάλαζα μεγάλη.

16 : 18: καὶ ἐγένοντο ἀστραπαὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ βρονταὶ καὶ **σεισμός** ἐγένετο μέγας, οἷος οὐκ ἐγένετο ἀφ' οὗ ἄνθρωπος ἐγένετο ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς τηλικούτος **σεισμός** οὕτως μέγας.

In two of them, it appears twice:

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Here, the clear use of the Johannine model 5 + 2 is evident. Apart from it, we can also easily notice the first Johannine model 3 + 2. There are three verses in which the concept of the “earthquake” appears singularly and two verses in which it is used twice:

6 : 12: Καὶ εἶδον ὅτε ἤνοιξεν τὴν σφραγίδα τὴν ἕκτην, καὶ **σεισμός** μέγας ἐγένετο καὶ ὁ ἥλιος ἐγένετο μέλας ὡς σάκκος τρίχινος καὶ ἡ σελήνη ὅλη ἐγένετο ὡς αἷμα

8 : 5: καὶ εἴληφεν ὁ ἄγγελος τὸν λιβανωτὸν καὶ ἐγέμισεν αὐτὸν ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου καὶ ἔβαλεν εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐγένοντο βρονταὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ ἀστραπαὶ καὶ **σεισμός**.

11 : 19: Καὶ ἠνοιγῆ ὁ ναὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ ὠφθη ἡ κιβωτὸς τῆς διαθήκης αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ ναῷ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐγένοντο ἀστραπαὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ βρονταὶ καὶ **σεισμός** καὶ χάλαζα μεγάλη.

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16 : 18: καὶ ἐγένοντο ἀστραπαὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ βρονταὶ καὶ **σεισμός** ἐγένετο μέγας, οἷος οὐκ ἐγένετο ἀφ' οὗ ἄνθρωπος ἐγένετο ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς τηλικούτος **σεισμός** οὕτως μέγας.

The presence of the first Johannine model 3 + 2 is certain. We can also notice:
 – the threefold use of the word σεισμός (8 : 5; 11 : 13; 11 : 19) and the twofold use of the construction σεισμός μέγας (6 : 12; 11 : 13);

– the threefold use of the word σεισμός (8 : 5; 11 : 13; 11 : 19) and the twofold use of the construction σεισμός (ἐγένετο or οὕτως) μέγας (16 : 18)².

Furthermore, the magnitude of the earthquakes confirms the above observations. We can see that it is adjusted to the Greek expression ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ κυρίου μου in Luke 1 : 43: the first, third, and fifth time there is mention of a great earthquake, while in the second and fourth there is simply mention of an earthquake without a reference to its magnitude:

ἡ – σεισμός μέγας (Revelation 6 : 12)

μήτηρ – σεισμός (Revelation 8 : 5)

τοῦ – σεισμός μέγας (Revelation 11 : 13)

κυρίου – σεισμός (Revelation 11 : 19)

μου – σεισμός μέγας (Revelation 16 : 18)

As we can see, where there is no μήτηρ κυρίου there is σεισμός μέγας, and where there is μήτηρ κυρίου, there is only σεισμός. The author of the Book of Revelation appears to suggest that the presence (intercession) of the Mother of God reduces this divine punishment.

The discovery of the Johannine models, which emphasize Mary's dignity as the Mother of God, sheds new light on the apocalyptic earthquakes.³ The author of the Book of Revelation not only links this punishment with the Mother of God; in fact, he even suggests that Mary has an impact on the reduction of this punishment. This sheds new light on the great sign that was to appear in the sky (Revelation 12 : 1) and on the Fatima apparitions in which the Mother of God plays an important role (Mucha, 2009, p. 299) and that concern the end times.

2 Such a double use of the Johannine model 3 + 2 is analogously similar to John 21; ἰχθύς appears three times (John 21: 6, 8: 11). ἄρτος appears twice (John 21: 9, 13), while ὀψάριον appears three times (John 21: 9, 10, 13) and ἄρτος appears twice (John 21: 9, 13) (cf. Mucha, 2013, p. 115, footnote 36).

3 The use of Johannine models in the Book of Revelation also means that Revelation must have been written later than the Gospel of John. This article is an indirect response to the text by Leszek Jańczuk that has been published in this journal and has presented the dating of Revelation in light of the voices of tradition (cf. Jańczuk, 2018).

Abstract

The Mother of the Lord and Apocalyptic Earthquakes

The term “earthquake” appears in the Book of Revelation seven times. The number “seven” has great significance in the Bible. However, the sevenfold occurrence of the concept of “earthquake” in the Book of Revelation is a result of the use of John’s patterns, which reveal Mary’s dignity as “the Mother of the Lord.” Furthermore, the magnitude of these earthquakes corresponds to the Greek expression ἡ μίτηρ τοῦ κυρίου μου (Luke 1 : 43). Thus apocalyptic earthquakes are evidently linked to the Mother of the Lord.

Keywords: Apocalypse; earthquake; John’s pattern; Mother of the Lord

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