

The Apocrypha

*The
Deuterocanonical Books
of the Old Testament*

GOD'S WORD Translation



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Introduction

The Old Testament Scriptures were written in the Hebrew language (except for a few sections, which were written in Aramaic). As the Greek language and culture spread due to the conquests of Alexander the Great, the need arose for a Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures. So the Hebrew Bible was translated into the Greek language resulting in an authoritative Greek version of the Old Testament. This Greek version of the Old Testament is commonly called the Septuagint. The Septuagint contained some writings which were not found in the Hebrew Bible. These additional writings were interspersed among the Old Testament books. They are generally referred to as “the Apocrypha.”

In this translation, the word *apocrypha* is used to designate the following writings: Tobit, Judith, Esther (the Greek version), Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch, the Letter of Jeremiah, The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men, Susanna, Bel and the Snake, First Maccabees, and Second Maccabees.

The term *apocrypha* comes from the Greek language and means “things that are hidden.” Over the centuries, the term *apocrypha* has been used in two distinct ways. Those who viewed these writings as Holy Scripture considered these writings to have been “hidden” in the sense that the writings were reserved for highly educated believers. However, others believed these writings deserved to be hidden because of secondary, questionable, or heretical content. So the term came to be used in both an honorable and a derogatory sense.

During the time of the reformation, Martin Luther’s German translation of the Bible contained these writings in an appendix located at

the end of the Old Testament. Luther gave them the title “Apocrypha” and wrote that these writings are “books which are not held equal to the Holy Scriptures but yet are profitable and good to read.” Afterward, most Protestant Bible translations (including the King James version) followed Luther by separating these books from the rest of Holy Scripture and giving them the designation “Apocrypha.” Even today Protestants do not consider these books to be part of the canon of Holy Scripture.

On April 8, 1546 at the Council of Trent, the Roman Catholic Church officially declared the Apocrypha to be inspired, authoritative, and equal with the books of the Old Testament. At this council, the books of the Apocrypha were given the designation “Deuterocanonical.” This designation indicates that these books are part of the canon of Holy Scripture and that their canonical status was decided at a later date than the other Old Testament books, which are called *protocanonical*.

Despite the two different opinions on the degree of authority that should be given to these books, most Christians agree that these books are valuable. Because these books were written in the intertestamental period, they provide helpful information regarding the life and thought of the Jewish people during an important period of Jewish history. These books offer insight into Jewish history, beliefs, and religious practices immediately prior to the birth of Jesus. People who read them will be better able to understand the political, cultural, ethical, and religious background of Jesus’ contemporaries. Also, these books are valuable because they emphasize the fact that God protects and guides his chosen people, and they encourage God’s people to follow his teachings and trust his promises.

Tobit

Tobit's Background

1 ¹This book tells the story of Tobit. Tobit was the son of Tobiel, the grandson of Hananiel, and a descendant of Aduel, Gabael, Raphael, and Raguel. Raguel belonged to the family of Asiel, who was from the tribe of Naphtali. ²When Shalmaneser was king of Assyria, Tobit was taken as a prisoner from the city of Thisbe. Thisbe is located north of the city of Asser, south of the city of Kedesh in the territory of Naphtali in northern Galilee, and northwest of the city of Phogor.

Tobit Tells About His Life

³I, Tobit, have always been faithful to God's teachings and have lived my life in a way that God approves of. I've given many gifts to poor people from my nation, people who were brought as prisoners with me to the city of Nineveh in the country of Assyria. ⁴When I was a young man, I lived in the country of Israel. The entire tribe of my ancestor Naphtali rebelled against the dynasty of my ancestor David and against the city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the city that had been chosen from among all the tribes of Israel as the only place people could offer sacrifices. The temple, where God is present, was dedicated in Jerusalem and was built to last throughout every generation.

⁵All my family, including all the relatives of my ancestor Naphtali, began sacrificing on every mountain in Galilee. They sacrificed to the statue of a calf that Israel's King Jeroboam had set up in the city of Dan. ⁶I was the only one from my family who regularly went to Jerusalem for the religious festivals that everyone in Israel is required to attend because of God's enduring command. I would take the first produce from my harvest, the firstborn animals from my flock, one-tenth of my cattle, and the first wool sheared from my sheep, and I would hurry to Jerusalem. ⁷I would give these things to the priests, the descendants of Aaron, at the altar.

Then I would give one-tenth of my grain, wine, olive oil, pomegranates, figs, and other fruit to Levi's descendants who serve in Jerusalem. Every year, except the seventh year, I would also take a tenth of my money

and spend it in Jerusalem. ⁸In fact, in the third year I would bring the money and give it to orphans, widows, and converts to Israel's religion. We would use the money for a meal, exactly as Moses' Teachings command and exactly as my great-grandmother Deborah^a taught me. She taught me because I became an orphan after my father died.

⁹When I grew up, I married ḲAnna,Ḳ a woman from my father's side of the family. We became the parents of a son, whom I named Tobias.

¹⁰After I was captured and brought to Assyria, I was taken to the city of Nineveh. The whole tribe of Naphtali, including all my family, began eating food that non-Jewish people eat. ¹¹But I was careful not to eat that food. ¹²Since I have always kept God foremost in my thoughts, ¹³the Most High allowed me to make a good impression on Shalmaneser and become Shalmaneser's purchasing agent. ¹⁴So until Shalmaneser's death, I used to make purchasing trips for him to the country of Media. Once, while I was in Media, I deposited a large sum of money with my friend Gabael, the son of Gabri. ¹⁵But when Shalmaneser died and his son Sennacherib succeeded him as king, the roads in Media became unsafe, and I couldn't travel there anymore.

¹⁶During the time that Shalmaneser was king, I gave many gifts to those who were poor among my people. ¹⁷I gave my food to those who were hungry and my clothes to those who didn't have enough to wear. If I saw that the dead body of one of my people had been thrown outside the wall of Nineveh, I would bury it.

¹⁸I also buried those who were killed by King Sennacherib. Because Sennacherib insulted the king of heaven, the king of heaven punished him when he quickly retreated from Judea. So Sennacherib killed many Israelites because he was angry. I secretly removed these bodies and buried them. When Sennacherib looked for these bodies, he couldn't find them.

¹⁹Then someone from Nineveh informed the king that I was the one burying these people. When I found out that the king knew about me and wanted to kill me, I had to go into hiding. I was afraid and ran away. ²⁰After that, all my possessions were taken away. I had nothing left. Everything that belonged to me was taken to the royal treasury. All I had left was my wife Anna and my son Tobias.

²¹But less than 40 days later, Sennacherib was assassinated by two of his sons. They escaped to the mountains of Ararat, and another son, Esarhaddon, succeeded Sennacherib as king. Esarhaddon appointed Ahikar, my brother Hanael's son, as the chief financial officer of his kingdom. Ahikar eventually took control of the entire administration. ²²In fact, Ahikar had been the chief of security, the keeper of the king's seal, an

^a 1:8 Some manuscripts read "my grandmother Deborah."

accountant, and the chief financial officer for King Sennacherib of Assyria. So Esarhaddon kept Ahikar in office. Ahikar was a close relative, my nephew. He interceded for me, and as a result, I was allowed to return to Nineveh.

2¹After Esarhaddon became king, I returned home. I was reunited with my wife Anna and my son Tobias. At the Festival of Pentecost (the Festival of Weeks) a wonderful dinner was prepared for me, and I sat down to eat. ²A lot of food was set on the table. So I said to my son Tobias, “Son, find some poor person from our people to share this dinner with me. Make sure he is one of the prisoners taken to Nineveh and a person who always keeps God foremost in his thoughts. I’ll wait for you to return, Son.”

³So Tobias left to look for a poor person among our people. But he came back, shouting, “Father!”

I asked, “What is it, Son?”

He answered, “Father, one of our people has been murdered! His body is still lying in the marketplace where he was strangled.”

⁴I jumped up and left the dinner table before I had even tasted my food. I removed the body from the street and laid it in one of my guest rooms. I left it there until sunset, when I could bury it. ⁵When I returned, I washed myself and ate my food in sorrow. ⁶I remembered what the prophet Amos had spoken against Bethel:

“Your festivals will be turned into funerals
and all your songs into funeral songs.”

⁷Then I began to cry.

After the sun had set, I went outside, dug a grave, and buried the man. ⁸My neighbors laughed at me. They said to each other, “He’s still not afraid! People have already tried to kill him for burying the dead, and he ran away. Now he’s back at it again, doing the same thing.”

Tobit Loses His Sight

⁹That same night I washed, went into my yard, and slept by the wall. Because it was hot outside, I didn’t cover my face. ¹⁰I didn’t realize that, above me, sparrows were perched on the wall. Their warm droppings fell into my eyes and caused a white film to develop on them. I went to doctors for treatment. But the more medication they gave me, the worse my eyesight became until I lost my sight entirely. For four years I couldn’t see. All my relatives felt sorry for me, and Ahikar supported me for two years until he went to the province of Elam.

¹¹At that time my wife Anna earned money by making arts and crafts like some women do. ¹²She would take what she made to her customers, and they would pay her for it. On the seventh day of the month of Dys-

trus, she cut off from the loom a piece of cloth she had woven and took it to her customers. They paid her in full for it, and gave her a young goat from their flocks to take home.

¹³When my wife came home, the goat began to cry. So I called my wife and asked her, “Where did you get this little goat? You didn’t steal it, did you? Give it back to its owners. We have no right to eat anything that’s stolen.”

¹⁴But my wife said to me, “The little goat was given to me as a gift.” But I didn’t believe her and told her to give it back to its owners. I became very angry with her over this. Then she replied, “Where have your gifts to the poor gotten you? You’ve done many things to gain God’s approval. Where have they gotten you? Certainly, people can see that you have nothing to show for them!”

Tobit Prays in His Distress

3 I was very sad, so I groaned and started to cry. Then I began to pray:

²“Lord, you are right.

Everything you do is right.

You are merciful and faithful in everything you do.

You judge the world.

³Lord, remember me, and treat me kindly.

Don’t punish me because of my sins

or because of the sins that my ancestors and I are unaware of.

⁴“We have certainly disobeyed your commands.

So you allowed us to be looted, captured, and killed

and to be ridiculed, slandered, and insulted

among every nation where we have been scattered.

⁵Your many judgments are true.

Treat us as our sins deserve,

because we haven’t done what you commanded

or been faithful to you.

⁶“Do whatever you like with me.

Let me die.

Free me from life on earth

so that my body can become dust.

I’d rather be dead than alive,

because I’ve had to listen to insults that aren’t true,

and I’m very sad.

Lord, free me from this distress.

Free me to go to my eternal home.

Don’t ignore me, Lord.

I'd rather die than have to see so much distress in my life
and listen to insults."

Sarah Prays in Her Distress

⁷On the same day in the city of Ecbatana in Media, Sarah, the daughter of Raguel, also happened to hear insults that were made about her by one of her father's female servants. ⁸Sarah had been married seven times. But a wicked demon named Asmodeus killed each of her husbands before she could sleep with them. The servant said to Sarah, "You're the woman who kills her husbands! You've already been married seven times, and you still don't have a new last name.^a ⁹You have no right to punish us just because your husbands have died. Why don't you go and join them? I hope that I never have to see a son or daughter of yours!"

¹⁰Sarah was so sad that day that she began to cry. She went upstairs and intended to hang herself. But she had second thoughts. She thought, "I don't want anyone to insult my father and say to him, 'You had only one daughter. You loved her, but she hung herself because of the wicked things she did.' Then, because of me, my elderly father would go to his grave full of grief. I'd better not hang myself. Instead, I'll pray to the Lord and ask him to let me die so that I won't have to listen to insults for the rest of my life."

¹¹At that time, she stretched out her hands toward the window and prayed:

"God, we praise you because you are merciful.

People will praise your name forever.

Everything you've made will praise you forever.

¹²Lord, I'm looking to you for help.

¹³Free me from this earth

so that I won't have to listen to insults any longer.

¹⁴Master, you know that I'm pure

and that I haven't had sex with any man.

¹⁵I haven't disgraced my name or my father's name

in this country where I've been taken as a prisoner.

I'm my father's only child.

He has no other child to be his heir.

He doesn't have any relatives that I can marry.

I've already suffered the loss of seven husbands.

Why should I go on living?

Lord, if you don't want to take my life,

at least listen to how I'm being insulted."

^a 3:8 Some manuscripts read "and you haven't satisfied the sexual desires of any of your husbands."

God Answers Tobit's and Sarah's Prayers

¹⁶At that very moment, God, in his glory, heard the prayers of Tobit and Sarah. ¹⁷So God sent the angel Raphael to heal both of them. Raphael would heal Tobit by removing the white film from his eyes so that he could see again. Raphael would heal Sarah, Raguel's daughter, by arranging for her to marry Tobias, Tobit's son. (Tobias had the right to marry her before anyone else did.) Also, Raphael would free Sarah from the wicked demon Asmodeus.

At the same time that Tobit went back into his house from the yard, Sarah, Raguel's daughter, went downstairs.

Tobit Gives His Son Instructions

4¹That same day Tobit remembered the money that he had deposited with Gabael in the city of Rages in the country of Media. ²He thought, "Now that I've asked the Lord to let me die, I should let my son Tobias know about the money." ³So he sent for his son Tobias. When Tobias arrived, Tobit said to him, "When I die, make sure that I have a proper burial. Honor your mother, and don't leave her as long as she lives. Do whatever she wants, and don't do anything to upset her. ⁴Son, remember that she faced many dangers for you while she was pregnant. When she dies, bury her next to me.

⁵"Son, keep the Lord foremost in your thoughts every day. Never be willing to sin or disobey his commands. Do what God approves of every day of your life. Don't get involved in anything wicked, ⁶because those who are faithful to God's teachings will be successful in everything they do.

⁷"Give gifts from your possessions to all those poor people who do what God approves of.^a Never refuse to give gifts to poor people. Never ignore anyone who is poor, and God will never ignore you. ⁸Your gifts to the poor should be based on how much you have. But even if you don't have very much, don't be afraid to give something to the poor. ⁹When you do this, you will be saving up for any future crisis that you may have. ¹⁰In fact, giving gifts to the poor will save you from death and keep you from going into the darkness. ¹¹The Most High considers gifts given to the poor as the best kind of offering.

¹²"Son, keep away from every kind of sexual sin. Most importantly, marry a woman who is a descendant of one of your own ancestors. Never marry a woman who doesn't come from our people, because we are the descendants of the prophets. Son, remember that all our earliest ancestors—Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—married women from their own people. They were blessed with children, and their descendants will inherit the land of Israel. ¹³So, Son, love your own people. Don't be so

^a 4:7 Tobit 4:7b-19a is not found in some manuscripts and translations.

arrogant that you refuse to marry a woman from your own people. This kind of arrogance causes problems and a lot of disorder. In the same way, laziness leads to loss and severe poverty, because laziness causes famine.

¹⁴“Never keep overnight the pay you owe your hired workers. Instead, pay them every day. If you serve God by doing this, he will reward you. Son, be careful in everything you do, and always show self control. ¹⁵Don’t do to people anything that you would hate them to do to you.

“Never drink so much wine that you become drunk. Drunkenness must not be a part of your life.

¹⁶“Give some of your food to people who are hungry, and give some of your clothes to people who don’t have enough to wear. Give whatever you have left over to the poor. Never refuse to give gifts to poor people.

¹⁷Place food on the graves of people who have God’s approval, but don’t give any food to sinners.

¹⁸“Seek advice from every wise person, and don’t take any useful advice lightly.

¹⁹“Take every opportunity to praise the Lord God. Ask him to help you lead a decent life and to make you successful in everything you do and plan. None of the nations have God’s plan. The Lord is the only one who can give a good plan to a nation. The Lord can bring anyone he wants to the deepest part of hell. Son, remember these instructions. Never forget them.

²⁰“Finally, Son, I need to tell you that I once deposited a large sum of money with Gabael, the son of Gabri, in the city of Rages in Media.

²¹Son, don’t be afraid now that we have become poor. If you fear God, avoid every kind of sin, and do what the Lord your God considers good, you will be very rich.”

Tobias Plans a Trip to Media

5¹Tobias said to his father Tobit, “I’ll do everything that you’ve told me. ²But how can I get the money from Gabael? He doesn’t know me, and I don’t know him. What kind of identification can I give him to prove who I am so that he’ll believe me and give me the money? Besides, I don’t even know what roads to take to get to Media.”

³Tobit answered, “Twenty years ago, when I deposited the money, Gabael and I divided the receipt between the two of us. Each of us has one half of the receipt, and I left his half with the money. Son, find a man you can trust to go with you. We’ll pay him when you return. Just get the money back from Gabael.”

Tobias Meets the Angel Raphael

⁴So Tobias left to find someone who knew the way to Media and who would go with him. Soon after he left the house, he met the angel

Raphael, who was standing in front of him. But Tobias didn't realize that Raphael was one of God's angels. ⁵So Tobias asked him, "Where are you from, young man?"

Raphael answered, "I'm an Israelite and a relative of yours. I've come here to find work."

Tobias asked him, "Do you know the way to Media?"

⁶Raphael replied, "Yes. I've been there many times. I know the way there and all the roads. I've often traveled to Media. I used to stay with one of our relatives, Gabael. He lives in the city of Rages in Media. The trip from the city of Ecbatana to Rages takes two days, because Rages is located in the mountains and Ecbatana is in the middle of the plain."

⁷Then Tobias said to Raphael, "Wait for me while I go into the house and tell my father. I want you to go to Media with me, and I'll pay you."

⁸Raphael replied, "Alright, I'll wait for you. But don't take too long."

⁹So Tobias went into the house and told his father, "I've just met a man who is an Israelite and a relative of ours."

His father replied, "Invite the man in! I want to find out about his family, what tribe he's from, and if I can trust him to go with you."

¹⁰Then Tobias went outside and invited Raphael to come into the house. He said, "My father has invited you to come in." So Raphael went into the house to meet Tobias' father. Tobit greeted him first.

Then Raphael replied, "A very good day to you, sir!"

But Tobit responded, "How can I have a good day? I've lost my eyesight. I can't see anymore. Instead, I lie in darkness like those who are dead and can no longer see. Although I'm still alive, I'm as good as dead. I can hear people talking, but I can't see them."

But the young man said, "Cheer up! God is going to heal you soon. So cheer up!"

Then Tobit said to him, "My son Tobias wants to go to Media. Can you go with him as his guide? I'll pay you, my friend."

The young man answered, "I can go with him, and I know how to get there. I've often gone to Media and have crossed all its plains. I'm familiar with its mountains and all of its roads."

¹¹Then Tobit asked him, "My friend, tell me what family and tribe you come from."

¹²The young man replied, "Why do you want to know my tribe?"

Tobit answered, "My friend, I want to make sure whose son you are and what your name is."

¹³The young man said, "My name is Azariah. I'm the son of the older Hananiah, one of your relatives."

¹⁴Then Tobit said to him, “Welcome! May God keep you safe and protect you, my friend. Don’t be upset with me for wanting to be sure about your family background. You are a relative who is from a good and honorable family. I knew Hananiah and Nathan, the two sons of the older Shemeliah. They used to go with me to Jerusalem and worship with me there. Nothing could ever make them unfaithful to God. Your relatives are good people, and you come from a good background. You’re certainly welcome here!”

¹⁵Then Tobit added, “I’ll pay both of you a regular day’s wage plus expenses. So go with my son. ¹⁶I’ll even give you a bonus in addition to your wages.”

Raphael replied, “I’ll go with him. Don’t worry. The roads are safe, so we’ll have no problem getting there and back.”

¹⁷Tobit responded, “May God bless you, my friend.”

Then Tobit said to his son, “Pack what you need for the trip, and leave with your friend. May God in heaven bring you there and back safely. May one of God’s angels go with both of you to keep you safe.”

Before Tobias left the house to go to Media, he kissed his father and mother goodbye. Tobit wished him a safe trip, ¹⁸but Anna began to cry.

She said to Tobit, “How can you send my son away? Hasn’t he always taken care of us? ¹⁹Money isn’t everything! For our son’s sake, forget about the money. ²⁰We should be content with the life the Lord has given us.”

²¹But Tobit said to her, “Don’t talk like that! Our son will get there and back with no problem. You’ll see! He’ll come back safe and sound. ²²So don’t talk like that! Don’t worry, my dear. One of God’s angels will go with him. He’ll have a successful trip and return safe and sound.” ¹Then Anna stopped crying.

Tobias Begins His Trip

6²Tobias left, and the angel went with him. Tobias’s dog also went with them. The three of them traveled that first day. When night came, they camped by the Tigris River. ³Tobias went to wash his feet in the river. Suddenly, a huge fish jumped out of the water and tried to bite off one of his feet. Tobias yelled, ⁴and the angel said to him, “Grab the fish, and hold it tightly!”

So Tobias grabbed the fish and pulled it up on the riverbank. ⁵Then the angel said, “Cut the fish open, and take out its gall bladder, heart, and liver. Keep them, but throw the intestines away. The gall bladder, heart, and liver can be used as medicines.”

⁶So Tobias cut the fish open and kept the gall bladder, heart, and liver. Then he roasted some of the fish and ate it. He preserved the rest of the fish with salt so that he could take it with them.

The three of them continued to travel together. When they were near Media, ⁷Tobias asked the angel, “Azariah, my friend, how can the fish’s heart, liver, and especially its gall bladder be used as medicines?”

⁸Azariah replied, “The fish’s heart and liver can be used to get rid of demons or evil spirits that are tormenting someone. If the heart and liver are burned in that person’s presence, the smoke will chase the demons away forever. ⁹The fish’s gall bladder can be used on a person’s eyes. If a person’s eyes are covered with layers of white film, rub the fish’s gall bladder on that person’s eyes and blow on them. Then that person will be able to see again.”

¹⁰When they arrived in Media and were close to the city of Ecbatana, ¹¹Raphael said, “Tobias, my friend.”

“What?” Tobias replied.

Raphael continued, “We’re going to stay at Raguel’s house tonight. He’s your relative, and he has a daughter named Sarah. ¹²He doesn’t have any other children. You are her closest relative. So you have the right to marry her before anyone else does. You also have the right to inherit her father’s possessions. In addition, the girl is sensible, brave, and very beautiful, and her father is an honorable man. ¹³You have every right to marry her. So listen to me, my friend. Tonight I’ll talk with her father, and we can make arrangements so that she can become your wife. When we return from the city of Rages, we’ll celebrate the marriage. I know that Raguel cannot keep her from marrying you or promise her in marriage to another man. If he does, he deserves the death penalty according to the laws in the Book of Moses. He knows that you have the right to marry his daughter before anyone else does. Listen to me. Tonight we’ll talk about the girl and arrange her engagement to you. Then, when we return from Rages, we’ll bring her back with us to your house.”

¹⁴But Tobias objected, “Azariah, my friend. I’ve heard that she has already been married seven times and that each of her husbands died in the bedroom. I’ve heard that on the very night of the wedding, when they went into her bedroom, they died. People say that a demon killed these men. ¹⁵The demon doesn’t hurt her, but it kills every husband who tries to sleep with her. I’m an only child. I’m afraid that if I die, my father and mother would die of grief. They don’t have another son to bury them.”

¹⁶Then Raphael said to Tobias, “Don’t you remember your father’s instructions? Don’t you remember that he told you to marry a woman from his side of the family? Now listen to me, my friend. Don’t even think about this demon! Marry Sarah. I know that she will become your wife tonight. ¹⁷When you enter the bedroom, take along the fish’s heart and some of its liver. Put them on some burning incense. An odor will spread in the bedroom. ¹⁸As soon as the demon smells it, he will quickly

leave and never come back again. When you're ready to sleep with her, both of you must first stand and pray. Ask the Lord of heaven to show you mercy and keep you safe. Don't be afraid. God set Sarah apart for you before the world was created. You will save her from the demon, and she will go home with you. I'm sure that you and Sarah will have children, and they will be precious to you. So don't talk like that!"

When Tobias heard everything that Raphael said, especially that Sarah was related to him through his father's side of the family, he fell in love with her and was determined to marry her.

Tobias Marries Sarah

7¹When they arrived in the city of Ecbatana, Tobias said, "Azariah, my friend, take me to Raguel our relative right away." So Azariah took Tobias to Raguel's house.

They found Raguel sitting beside the entrance to his yard. They greeted Raguel first, and he replied, "Welcome, friends! I'm glad to see you! How are you?"

Then he took them into his house ²and said to his wife Edna, "This young man looks a lot like my relative Tobit."

³Edna asked them, "Where are you from?"

They answered, "We're descendants of Naphtali. We were taken to Nineveh as prisoners."

⁴She said to them, "Do you know our relative Tobit?"

"Yes! We do," they replied.

Then she asked them, "How is he?"

⁵"He's alive and well," they responded.

Then Tobias stated, "He's my father!" ⁶At that, Raguel jumped up, kissed Tobias, and began to cry.

⁷He said to Tobias, "May God bless you, my son. Your father is a good and honorable man. What a shame that such an honest man who gives to the poor should become blind." Raguel hugged his relative Tobias and began to cry again. ⁸Then Edna also began to cry about Tobit, and so did their daughter Sarah. ⁹After that, Raguel slaughtered a ram from his flock and gave his guests a warm welcome.

After Tobias and Raphael had washed up and had taken their place to eat, Tobias said to Raphael, "Azariah, my friend, ask Raguel to let me marry Sarah."

¹⁰Raguel overheard what Tobias said and replied, "Have something to eat and drink, and have a good time tonight. You're the only person who has the right to marry my daughter Sarah. I don't have the right to let her marry anyone else because you are my closest relative. However, let me be very truthful with you, my son. ¹¹I've already allowed her to marry seven men who were related to us. Each of them died on his wedding

night when he went into her bedroom. Don't worry. The Lord will work everything out. So have something to eat and drink."

But Tobias said, "I won't eat or drink anything until you settle this with me."

So Raguel said, "Alright! That's what I'll do. I will allow her to marry you according to the laws in the Book of Moses. This marriage has been arranged in heaven. Take her as your wife. From now on you belong to her, and she belongs to you. Starting today, she is yours forever. My son, may the Lord bless you tonight and give you his mercy and peace."

¹²Then Raguel called his daughter Sarah. When she came to him, he took her hand, gave it to Tobias, and said, "Take Sarah to be your wife according to Moses' Teachings, according to the laws written in his book. She is yours. Take her safely to your father's home. May the God of heaven bless you with his peace."

¹³Raguel called his wife and told her to bring him some paper. On the paper he wrote out the marriage contract, stating that Sarah became Tobias' wife according to the laws in Moses' Teachings. ¹⁴After this, they began to eat and drink.

¹⁵Raguel said to Edna, "My dear, get the other bedroom ready, and take Sarah there."

¹⁶So Edna got the bedroom ready as Raguel had told her and brought Sarah there. Sarah began to cry.^a But then Edna wiped the tears away and said to Sarah, ¹⁷"Cheer up, my daughter! The Lord of heaven will make you happy since you've had so much sorrow. Cheer up, my daughter!" Then Edna left the room.

The Demon Leaves

8¹When they had finished eating and drinking, they were ready for bed. Raguel and Edna led Tobias from the dining room into the bedroom. ²Tobias remembered what Raphael had told him. So he took the fish's liver and heart out of the bag where he had been keeping them, and he put them on some burning incense. ³The smell from the fish kept the demon away. In fact, it made the demon run off to southern Egypt. Raphael followed the demon there and immediately tied up his hands and feet.

The Wedding Prayer of Tobias

⁴After Sarah's parents had left the room and had closed the door, Tobias got out of bed and said to Sarah, "Get up, my dear! We have to

^a 7:16 Some Greek manuscripts; other Greek manuscripts read "Edna cried about her daughter."

pray. We must ask our Lord to show us mercy and keep us safe.”⁵ So Sarah got up, and together they began to pray, asking God to keep them safe. Tobias prayed:

“God of our ancestors, we praise you.

Your people will praise your name forever.

Heaven and all creation will praise you forever.

⁶You made Adam, and you made his wife Eve to help and support him.

From these two people, the human race began.

You said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone.

We must make a helper who is like him.’

⁷I’m not marrying my dear wife because I want a physical relationship.

I’m marrying her because I want a true marriage relationship.

Show us your mercy so that we can grow old together.”

⁸Then together they both said, “Amen! Amen!”⁹ and slept through the night.

Raguel Digs a Grave for Tobias

Meanwhile, Raguel got up and called his servants. Together they went outside to dig a grave¹⁰ because Raguel thought, “More than likely, Tobias will die, and people will laugh at us and insult us.”¹¹ After they finished digging the grave, Raguel went back inside the house.¹² He told his wife, “Send one of the female servants into the bedroom to see if Tobias is still alive. If he’s dead, we’ve got to bury him before anyone finds out.”¹³ So they lit a lamp, opened the door, and sent a servant into the bedroom. She found Tobias and Sarah sound asleep together.¹⁴ Then the servant left and told Raguel and Edna that Tobias was still alive and that everything was fine.¹⁵ So Raguel and Edna praised the God of heaven. They said,

“God, we praise you because all your blessings are pure.

People will praise you forever.

¹⁶We praise you because you have made us happy.

Things turned out better than we expected.

You have shown us how merciful you can be.

¹⁷We praise you because you have shown mercy to these two children. Each is an only child.

Master, show them your mercy, and keep them safe.

Fill their lives with happiness and kindness.”

¹⁸Then Raguel ordered his servants to fill in the grave before sunrise.

Preparations for the Wedding Reception

¹⁹After this, Raguel told his wife to bake a lot of bread. Then he went out to his herd, brought back two oxen and four rams, and ordered his servants to slaughter them. So the servants began to prepare for the wedding reception. ²⁰Then he told Tobias, ^a “You can’t leave for two weeks. Stay here, and have something to eat and drink with me. It will make my daughter happy. After all, she has been very depressed. ²¹Then you may take half of everything that I own and return safely to your father. The other half of my possessions will be yours when my wife and I die. You can count on that, my son. I’m your father now, and Edna is your mother. From now on, we’ll be one, big, happy family. You can count on that too, my son!”

Raphael Gets the Money From Gabael

9¹Then Tobias said to Raphael, ²“Azariah, my friend, take four servants and two camels, and go to the city of Rages. Go to Gabael’s house. Give him the receipt for the deposit, and get the money. Then bring him back with you for the wedding reception. ³You know that my father will be counting the days until I get back. If I’m even one day late, he’ll become very worried. ⁴You saw how Raguel made me take an oath. I can’t break my promise.”

⁵So Raphael took four servants and two camels, went to Rages in Media, and stayed with Gabael. Raphael gave him the receipt. He also told him that Tobit’s son Tobias had gotten married and that Tobias had invited him to the wedding reception. Gabael quickly checked the money bags to make sure they were still sealed and counted them.^b

⁶They both got up early in the morning and left for the wedding reception. When they went inside Raguel’s house, they found Tobias sitting at the dinner table. Tobias jumped up, greeted Gabael, and cried. Gabael praised Tobias, saying, “You’re an honorable and good person. You’re just like your father, who is honorable, good, honest, and generous. May the Lord give blessings from heaven to you, your wife, and your in-laws. Praise God! I’ve seen Tobias, who looks like my cousin Tobit.”

Tobit and Anna Become Worried

10¹Meanwhile, day after day, Tobit was keeping track of the days that were needed for Tobias to get to Rages and back. When the expected time had passed and his son hadn’t come back, ²he thought,

^a 8:20 Or “Then he made Tobias take this oath.” See 9:4.

^b 9:5 Some manuscripts read “. . . sealed and loaded them on the camels.”

“Maybe he’s been detained there. Or maybe Gabael has died, and no one is there to give him the money.” ³Then he began to worry.

⁴Tobit’s wife Anna said, “My son’s dead. He’s never coming back.” Then she began to cry and mourn for her son. She said, ⁵“My son, my pride and joy! This is terrible. I never should have let you take that trip.”

⁶But Tobit replied, “Dear, be quiet, and don’t talk like that. Tobias is alright. I’m sure there’s a good reason why he’s late. Besides, the man who went with him is one of our relatives. He can be trusted. So don’t worry about Tobias, dear. He’ll be home any minute.”

⁷Then Anna responded, “Don’t tell me to be quiet! And stop lying to me! My son is dead.”

Every day Anna would rush outside to the road that Tobias had taken, and she would watch for her son. No one could talk her out of doing this. When the sun would set, she would go back home, cry and mourn all night long, and not get any sleep.

Tobias Begins His Trip Home

The two-week wedding reception that Raguel had promised to have for his daughter ended. So Tobias approached Raguel and said, “Let me go back home. I’m sure that my father and mother think that they’ll never see me again. I’m begging you, Raguel. Let me go so that I can return to my father. I’ve already told you how worried he was when I left him.”

⁸But Raguel said to Tobias, “Don’t go, my son. Stay with me. I’ll send messengers to your father to tell him everything that’s happened to you.”

⁹But Tobias insisted, “No! I’m begging you. Let me go back to my father.”

¹⁰So Raguel gave Tobias his daughter Sarah, half of all his possessions, male and female slaves, oxen and sheep, donkeys and camels, clothes, money, and household items. ¹¹Then Raguel sent them on their way. He hugged Tobias and said, “Goodbye, my son. Have a safe trip. May the Lord of heaven make you and your wife Sarah successful, and may I live long enough to see your children.” ¹²Then Raguel said to his daughter Sarah, “Live with your in-laws, because from now on they are your parents as much as your mother and I. May the Lord go with you, my daughter. I hope to hear nothing but good news about you while I’m still alive.” When he had finished saying goodbye, he sent them on their way.

Before they left, Edna said to Tobias, “My dear son, may the Lord bring you safely home. I hope I’ll live long enough to see the children that you and my daughter Sarah will have. With the Lord as my witness, I now give my daughter to you. Don’t ever upset her as long as you live. May the Lord go with you, my son. From now on, I’m your mother, and

Sarah is your dear wife. May all of us be successful as long as we live.” Then she kissed both of them and sent them on their way.

¹³So Tobias left Raguel’s home. He was healthy and happy, and he praised the Lord of heaven and earth. He praised the Lord, the king who rules everything, because the Lord had made his trip successful. Then Raphael said to Tobias, “If you honor Raguel and Edna as long as they live, you will be successful.”

Tobias Arrives Home

11 ¹When they were close to the city of Kaserin, which was near Nineveh, ²Raphael said, “You know what condition your father was in when we left him. ³Let’s run ahead of your wife and get the house ready before everyone gets there.” ⁴As the two went on together, Raphael said to Tobias, “Have the fish’s gall bladder ready.” The dog followed them.

⁵As usual, Anna was sitting along the road and watching for her son. ⁶When she saw Tobias coming, she shouted to his father, “Your son is coming, and so is the man who went with him!”

⁷Before Tobias approached his father, Raphael said to him, “I know that your father will get his sight back. ⁸Spread the fish’s gall bladder on your father’s eyes. This medicine will make the white film on his eyes shrink and peel off. Then your father will be able to see again.”

⁹Anna ran up to her son, hugged him, and said, “Now that I’ve seen you again, my child, I don’t care anymore if I die.” And she began to cry.

Tobit Regains His Sight

¹⁰Tobit got up and stumbled through the entrance to his yard toward Tobias. Tobias went up to him ¹¹and had the fish’s gall bladder ready. He held his father firmly, blew into his eyes, and said, “Cheer up, Father.” Then Tobias spread the medicine on his father’s eyes. ¹²Next, using both hands, Tobias peeled the white film from his father’s eyes.

¹³Tobit hugged Tobias ¹⁴and began to cry. He shouted, “My son, my pride and joy! I can see you again!” Then Tobit said,

“Praise God!

Praise his mighty name!

Praise all his holy angels!

May his mighty name be praised among us.

May all his angels be praised forever.

¹⁵ He punished me with blindness,
but now I can see my son Tobias!”

Tobias was happy as he went inside the house, and he praised God loudly. He told his father that his trip had been successful and that he

had brought the money back. He also told him that he had married Raguel's daughter Sarah and that she was on her way and was very close to Nineveh.

¹⁶So Tobit left the house to meet his daughter-in-law at the entrance to Nineveh. He was happy, and he praised God. When the citizens of Nineveh saw him walking briskly without anyone leading him, they were amazed. ¹⁷In front of everyone, Tobit acknowledged that God had shown him mercy and had restored his sight.

Tobit walked up to Sarah, the wife of his son Tobias, and greeted her: "Welcome to Nineveh, my daughter! Praise God because he has brought you to us. God has blessed your father Raguel, my son Tobias, and you, my daughter. What a joy and blessing it is to welcome you into your new family!"

So that day all the Jewish people in Nineveh were joyful. ¹⁸Also, Ahikar and Nadab, Tobit's nephews, were there to share in his happiness.^a

Raphael Reveals Who He Is

12¹When the wedding reception in Nineveh was over, Tobit called for his son Tobias. He said to him, "Son, make sure you pay the man who went with you, and give him a bonus."

²Tobias asked, "Father, how much should I pay him? I wouldn't mind giving him half of everything he helped me bring back. ³After all, he brought me back safely, cured my wife, and helped me get the money. He also cured you. What kind of a bonus should I give him?"

⁴Tobit answered, "Son, he deserves half of everything he brought back."

⁵So Tobias called for Raphael and said, "Take half of everything you brought back, and have a safe trip home."

⁶Then Raphael took both of them aside and spoke to them privately. He said to them, "Praise God! Tell everyone you see about the good things that God has done for you. Then they, too, will sing hymns to praise his name. Honor him by letting everyone know what he has done. Don't hesitate to tell people about him. ⁷Keeping a king's secret is good, but honoring God by making known what he has done is even better. If you do good, nothing bad will happen to you. ⁸Praying sincerely is good. Giving away money that was made honestly is better than getting money that was made dishonestly. Giving gifts is better than storing up gold. ⁹Giving to the poor will save you from death and cleanse you from every sin. Life will be satisfying for those who give to the poor. ¹⁰But those who sin and do wrong are their own worst enemies.

^a 11:18 Some manuscripts add verse 19: "People joyously celebrated Tobias' wedding for one week."

¹¹“I’ll tell you the whole truth. I won’t keep anything from you. I’ve already told you that keeping a king’s secret is good, but that honoring God by making known what he has done is even better. ¹²Tobit, when you and Sarah prayed, I brought your prayers to the Lord, in his glory, so that he would remember them. I did the same thing whenever you would bury the dead. ¹³When you immediately got up and left the dinner table to bury that dead man, I was sent to test you. ¹⁴At the same time, God sent me to heal you and your daughter-in-law Sarah. ¹⁵I am Raphael! I’m one of the seven angels who stands in front of the Lord, in his glory, and serves him.”

¹⁶Both Tobit and Tobias were terrified and fell facedown on the ground. ¹⁷But Raphael said to them, “Don’t be afraid! God’s peace is yours. Praise God forever. ¹⁸I didn’t come to you because I wanted to, but because God wanted me to. So praise God as long as you live. Sing praises to him. ¹⁹You thought you saw me eat. But I didn’t really eat anything. It only looked as though I were eating. ²⁰Get up, praise the Lord, and acknowledge him. Now I’m going to the one who sent me. Write down everything that has happened to you.” Then Raphael disappeared.

²¹Tobit and Tobias got up, but they couldn’t see Raphael anymore. ²²Then they began to sing hymns of praise to God and to acknowledge him for the spectacular things he had done, especially for sending his angel Raphael to appear to them.

Tobit’s Psalm of Praise

13 ¹Then Tobit said,

“Praise the God who lives forever
and whose kingdom never ends.

²He punishes and shows mercy.
He can bring people down to hell, the lowest part of the earth,
and he can bring people back from that place of total ruin.
Nothing can escape his power.

³You people of Israel,
acknowledge him among the nations
where he has scattered you.

⁴He has shown you his greatness even among the nations.
Honor him in the presence of every living creature
because he is our Lord.

He is our God.
He is our Father.
He is God forever.

⁵He will punish you for every wicked thing you do
but will show mercy to all of you
wherever you’ve been scattered among all the nations.

- ⁶If you turn your every thought and your entire life over to him
and do what he considers right,
then he will turn to you
and always pay attention to you.
Look at everything he has done for you.
Thank him loudly.
Praise the Lord, who does what's right.
Honor the king who rules forever.^a
I'll acknowledge him in the country where I'm a prisoner.
I'll tell about his power and greatness to a sinful nation.
You sinners, turn your lives around, and do what God approves of.
Who knows? Maybe he will be kind to you and show you mercy.
- ⁷I will honor my God.
The king of heaven and his greatness will fill me with joy.
- ⁸"May all people acknowledge him in Jerusalem.
- ⁹"Jerusalem, you are the holy city.
God will punish you for the things your people have done,
but he will again show mercy to the people
who do what he approves of.
- ¹⁰Acknowledge the Lord as he deserves.
Praise the king who rules forever.
His tent will be rebuilt for you as you rejoice.
May he cheer up your prisoners
and show your suffering people his love forever.
- ¹¹"Jerusalem, you are a bright light that will shine
throughout the earth.
People from many faraway nations will come to you.
Those who live in the most remote areas of the earth will come
to you
because of your holy name.
They will have gifts in their hands for the king of heaven.
Generation after generation will joyfully praise you,
and your name—the name of the chosen city—
will endure forever.
- ¹²Everyone who says harsh things against you will be cursed.
Everyone who destroys you, tears down your walls,
knocks down your towers, or burns your houses will be cursed.
But everyone who respects^b you will be blessed forever.

^a 13:6 Tobit 13:6i-10b is not found in some manuscripts.

^b 13:12 Some manuscripts read "everyone who loves you." Other manuscripts read "everyone who rebuilds you."

- ¹³So rejoice with the people who do what God approves of,
because they will be gathered together
and will praise the Lord, who rules this world.
- ¹⁴Blessed are those who love you, Jerusalem,
and blessed are those who rejoice when you're at peace.
Blessed are all those who feel sorry when you're punished
because they will rejoice with you
and see all your happiness forever.
- ¹⁵"I praise the Lord, the mighty king,
¹⁶ because Jerusalem will be rebuilt
and his temple will be rebuilt for the city forever.
I will be happy if the rest of my descendants are still alive
to see Jerusalem's glory and acknowledge the king of heaven.
- "Jerusalem's gates will be rebuilt with sapphires and emeralds,
and its walls will be rebuilt with precious stones.
Jerusalem's towers will be rebuilt with gold,
and its fortifications with pure gold.
- ¹⁷Jerusalem's streets will be paved with rubies
and with stones from the country of Ophir.
- ¹⁸People will sing joyful songs from Jerusalem's gates,
and all those who live in Jerusalem's houses will sing,
'Hallelujah! Praise the God of Israel!'
All the people of Jerusalem will praise his holy name forever
and ever."

¹Then Tobit's psalm of praise came to an end.

Tobit's Death

14²Tobit died peacefully when he was 112 years old. He was given an honorable burial in Nineveh. He was 62 years old when he lost his eyesight. After he regained his sight, he lived a good life, gave to the poor, and continued to praise God and to acknowledge God's greatness.

³Before Tobit died, he called for his son Tobias and Tobias' seven sons.^a He said, "Son, take your children ⁴ and go quickly to the country of Media because I believe what God said about the city of Nineveh through the prophet Nahum. Everything that Nahum said will happen to Assyria and Nineveh. Everything that was spoken by Israel's prophets, whom God had sent, will happen. Not one single thing that they said will fail to come true. Everything will take place at its appointed time. So you will be safer in Media than in Assyria or Babylon. I know and believe that everything God has said will certainly come true. Not one

^a 14:3 Laton; Greek omits "and Tobias' seven sons."

single prediction that the prophets made will ever be wrong. All of our people who live in Israel will be scattered and taken from that good land as prisoners. The entire land of Israel will be deserted. Even the cities of Samaria and Jerusalem will be deserted. God's temple will be painful to look at for some time, because it will be burned down.

⁵“But God will have mercy on his people again. God will bring them back to the land of Israel. They will rebuild the temple, but it won't be like the first one until the right time comes. Then, when the time is right, all the people will return from the places where they were prisoners. They will be in their glory when they rebuild Jerusalem, and God's temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem as Israel's prophets predicted. ⁶Then every nation in the world will be converted and will worship God sincerely. All the nations will abandon their false gods, who used lies to lead them astray. ⁷Instead, they will praise the eternal God in a way that he approves of. At that time, all the Israelites who will be saved, who truly keep God foremost in their thoughts, will be gathered together. They will go to Jerusalem and live safely in the land of Abraham forever, and God will give them that land. Those who sincerely love God will be happy, but those who sin and do wicked things will disappear from the earth.^a

⁹“My children, listen to my instructions: Serve God sincerely, and do what pleases him. Tell your children to do what is right, to give to the poor, to keep God foremost in their thoughts, and to sincerely praise his name with all their might whenever they have the opportunity.

“Son, leave Nineveh. Don't stay here. ¹⁰On the day you bury your mother, get out of this city. Don't even stay here a single night. I have seen a lot of wickedness in this city and a lot of the dishonesty that goes on here, and people don't have any sense of shame. Remember what Nadab did to Ahikar, the man who brought him up. Didn't Nadab think he could kill Ahikar and get away with it? But Nadab ended up in a grave.^b God repaid him directly for the dishonorable thing he had done. Ahikar lived to see the light of day, but Nadab went into eternal darkness. Because Ahikar gave to the poor, he escaped the deadly trap that Nadab had set for him. But Nadab fell into his own trap and destroyed himself.

¹¹“My children, see what giving to the poor accomplishes. And look at what wrongdoing accomplishes. Wrongdoing brings death! But I'm having a hard time breathing now.”

Then they laid Tobit on his bed. He died and was given an honorable burial.

^a 14:7 Some manuscripts add verse 8: “Son, leave Nineveh because what the prophet Jonah said will certainly come true.”

^b 14:10 Or “Didn't Ahikar have to hide to save his life because Nadab tried to kill him?”

The Last Events in Tobias' Life

¹²When Tobias' mother died, he buried her next to his father. Then he and his wife left for Media and lived in the city of Ecbatana with Raguel, his father-in-law. ¹³He treated his wife's parents honorably in their old age and buried them in Ecbatana in Media. He inherited the property of both Raguel and Tobit, his father.

¹⁴Tobias died when he was 117 years old. He was a highly respected man. ¹⁵Before Tobias died, he heard about the destruction of Nineveh. Also, he saw King Ahikar's prisoners being led into Media. Tobias praised God for everything God had done to the people of Nineveh and Assyria. He was happy that Nineveh had been destroyed before he died. He praised the Lord God as long as he lived.