

**TETLE: RESEARCH IN THE BOOK OF TOBIT**

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**EDITION1 Third- MAY 1998**

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# Holiness Pope Shenouda III

**His Grace Bishop Moussa**

**Fr. Marcos Khela Tawfik**

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# Preface

## **“The Holy Bible is the lamp of those who walk in the way to the kingdom”**

In The BIBLE, we find out:

- God’s dealings with man.
- Stories of different characters.
- Numerous experiences in the spiritual path.
- True promises of God.
- God’s stewardship for the salvation of man.
- The Lord’s commandments to his disciples.

Therefore, it is good to go deeply in the books of two testaments, the old and the new, also to study the different Bible characters.

In this book, a concentrated study of the Book of Tobit, the works of God with Tobit and Tobias through the angle of joy Raphael, and various questions. Also, the text of the book itself as well as the prophecies about the New Testament, the gates of Jerusalem and the fish.

May the Lord bless the writer of this research, the dear son Ehab Wahib, also bless whoever reads it, through the prayers of H.H. Pope Shenouda III the grace of our Lord be with us all. Amen.

**H.G. Bishop Moussa**

# Introduction

The Two TESTAMENTS of the Holy Bible, together the Deutero-canonical Books are considered priceless treasures because they are the words of God. Whoever possesses such treasure possesses the eternal life. When we say possess we do not mean keeping a copy of the Bible at home, or in your pocket or briefcase for blessing, but hearty possession, i.e. To keep his words and search for them... to transfer them into daily spiritual behavior.

The Loud commanded us to deal with his words and said, “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. “ (Deut.6: 6-9)

This book is the outcome of a great and honest effort by the blessed brother, The Theological Deacon Ehab Raeef Wahib. In an attractive way and he sheds some lights on the Deutero-canonical Books, especially the book of Tobit.

The book has an honest historical research and tells the story in its details. It also contains the spiritual in depth. It is not free from the comparisons and objections with answers, in a constructive and objective way, which makes me, pray to our beloved Lord to reward the blessed brother Ehab and all those who have helped him to bring out the book in this attractive form.

May this book be a blessing to many others through the pleadings of the Mother of God St Mary, and the patron of our church the Prince of Martyrs St. George. And through the prayers of our blessed father, H. H. Pope Shenouda III. May the Lord preserve his life AMen?

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**1<sup>st</sup>. may 1993 (23<sup>rd</sup> Buramoda 1709 AM)**  
**Feast of St. George**

# INTRODUCTION TO THE THIRD EDITION

thank the Lord that great interest has been shown in the second canonical books nine years after publishing this book for the first time both the first and second editions have ran out and a number of authors have written books entitled Tobit. I have also noticed special interest in the second canonical books from servants and pre-servants meetings. We also thank Lord who stood by us that seven books of this series have been published so far; these are Tobit, Judith, completion of Daniel, Baruch, completion of Esther, Wisdom of Solomon and Wisdom of Jesus son of Sirach.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed to bringing out this new edition where a new chapter has been added and the English translation has been improved. I would like to thank all those who supported me in writing this series. I would like to thank all the priests and servants who are committed to reviving and studying the second canonical books.

May this be a cause of blessing for all those who read it through the intercessions of Saint Mary, Saint George the Prince of Martyrs, Archangel Raphael and Tobit and through the blessing of the prayers of our honoured father his Holiness Pope Shenouda III and his partner in the apostolic ministry his Grace Bishop Moussa.

Remember us in your prayers.

This rite is still practiced until today. After the wedding ceremony, the couple goes to the monastery, especially a monastery that allows families to spend the night like St. Mina's monastery. The groom would stay in the Retreat house and the bride in the families' house. They would pray the liturgy together, attend vespers and spend the day reading the book of Tobit. These are beautiful days to start a marital life made up of holy, blessed days full of the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus, we hand down to the future generations the deep meanings of marriage and family.

A marriage which starts like this being linked with Christ from the first day becomes a successful marriage, blessed by Christ, unlike the marriages which we see starting with inappropriate parties and ending up with problems and alienation from God so that the evil one surrounds it completely.

If we know the true meaning of marriage, 90 % of marital problems would be solved before they even occur because marriage is a union between the couple by the Holy Spirit to become one body. If the bride and groom knew that they have become one body, talk of each individual's personal money or that the man of the house's orders has to be followed would not exist, for they are one body and one spirit. May the Lord bless your homes and your lives?



# Acknowledgement

I HAVE NEVER IMAGINED that one day I would be a writer. What a difficult task it is! No one writes a book today without saying the following day: if change this it will be good, or if I add this, it will be better.

This proves that deficiency possesses all over mankind, but the love of God allowed this research-now in your hands-as the fruit of prayers and constant encouragement I received from my fathers and brothers the servants. Para I would like to extend a special thanks to Fr. Macros who encouraged me to write the book which he kindly revised its contents as well as wrote the introduction.

Also, my thanks go to all those who helped in producing this book. May the Lord use this book for the blessing and salvation of many, through the pleadings of the blessed virgin St. Mary, the great St. George, the Archangel Raphael and the prophet Tobit, and through the prayers of **H. H. Pope Shenouda III** and his brother in the apostolic ministry **H. G. Bishop Moussa**.

*Ehab Wahib*

# Forward

In the name of the Father, the son and the holy spirit, one god amen

Dear Reader

The story of the book of Tobit is the story of every generation as it gives clear instruction of the importance of holding the law of the lord (commandments) even in the foreign land. As the righteous Joseph, Daniel, the three young youth and other saints lived. It is essential that we follow their example and do the saying of the lord “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven” (Matt.5: 16)

Also, the importance of prayer and charity, which are greatly rewarded by god.

We also find that it is the only book in the holy bible that fully reveals the works of Archangel Raphael, while only few events were mentioned about other archangels in various books.

It is considered nearly forgotten to the majority of people, preachers and writers as to-date there is no commentary written on the book of Tobit except some brief introductions.

We therefore ask our Lord to help us make this humble research to become a new addition to the library of the Coptic Orthodox Church. Pray that the Lord may use every work and every effort for the glory of his holy name and the salvation of many, through the prayers of Archangel Raphael and St. Tobit.

Ehab Wahib

# Chapter One

1. GENERAL VIEW ON THE DEUTERO - CANONECAL BOOKS
2. PERSONS WITH THE NAME OF TOBIT (TOBIAH)

### 3. The Book of Tobit

#### 1- GENERAL VIEW ON THE DEUTERO - CANONECAL BOOKS

The book of Tobit is one of the Deutero Canonical Books and is listed with the historical book. The Holy bible is called the first Canonical Books.

The following books (the Deutero-canonical) are deleted from the Protestant edition. But both the Orthodox approves them and Catholic churches:

TOBIT

JUDITH

THE COMPLEMENT OF ESTHER

THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON ECCLESIASTICUS (or the wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach)

BARUCH

THE LETTER OF JEREMIAH

THE COMPLEMENT OF DANIEL (Susanna and the Three Youth in the fire)

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE MACCABEES

THE SECOND BOOK OF THE MACCABEES

The naming of these books as “The Apocrypha” is incorrect, as it means “Hidden” relating to books, which contain legendaries, and absurdities that contradict the Christian ethics and which are not accepted as part of the books of the Holy Bible.

These books were not included in the books of the Old Testament compiled by Ezra the Pries when he put together the books of Torah in 534 B.C. because of the dispersion of the Israelites and some books were written after the death of Ezra.

#### THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE DEUTERO-CANONICAL BOOKS

- 1- The Council of Hippo held in 393 A.D. declared its authenticity among the other books (St. Augustine was present at this Council), also the Council of Cartagena in 397 A.D.
- 2- The father of the second and third generations like Clement of Alexandria Origen, Eronimios, Dionysius of Alixandria and Kipuianos, also the fathers of the fourth generation such as St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom and St. Gregory of Nazianzus as well as the great St. Athanasius the Apostolic, they all quoted many verses from both the first and Deutero canonical books in their writings.
- 3- These books were mentioned in the Holy Bible in the Apostles’ Teachings. El Saffy Ebn-Assal confirmed this in his book “The Laws Collection” capter2.
- 4- The traditional churches (the Coptic, Byzantine, Roman, and others) accepted these books among the first canonical books. The Catholic

- church declared the authenticity of these books at the Council of Trente in 1546 A.D. (and previously at the Council of Hippo where St. Augustine said the whoever rejects these books will be excommunicated as they have been read in the Greek church which consider them authentic. When the Protestants discussed this matter with the Greek church, patriarch Dositheos of Jerusalem hold a council in 1692 A.D. at which he made the following resolution: “We consider these books lawful and believe they are from the Holy Bible as we received them from the early church”. Also, the church of Antioch adhered to the viewpoint of the first church with regard to the legality of these books.
- 5- These books appeared in the Greek version of the Old Testament, which is known as the Septuagint, during the tome of Ptolemy 11 in 282 B.C. in Alexandria by 72 translators, six from each tribe, which proves that they regarded these books in the same standard as the other books. Whoever looks at the oldest Siptuagint: the three well know manuscripts written in the fourth century A.D. in Sinaitic, Alexandrian and Vaticanus, he will find these books. Also, it was found in the Coptic copy, in its different dialects, which is considered the oldest translation after the Septuagint, and in the Old Latin copy.
  - 6- In John’s Gospel (10:22) the Lord Christ mentioned the feast of dedication “Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter” This feast was not named in the Old Testament, but was referred to in the first book of the Maccabees (1MK 4:59). Judas Maccabees is the first to observe this feast after he cleansed the Sanctuary, removed the defiles of the Gentiles and dedicated its altar. This shows that the Jews received the celebration of this feast from this book.
  - 7- The writers of the New Testament used quotations from these books. We give below some examples relating, in particular, to the book of Tobit:
    - A. “Give alma from you possessions. Do not turn your face away from any poor man, and the face of God will not be turned away from you. So you will be laying up a good treasure for yourself against the day of necessity. Give of your bread to the hungry, and of your clothing to the naked.” (Tob4: 7-9-16) This corresponds to Luke (14:13/14) “But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”
    - B. “Be on your guard, son, against every form of immorality” (Tob.4: 12) which corresponds to:”For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality.” (1Thes4: 3)

- c. "And what you gate, do not do to any one." (TOB4: 15) which corresponds to: "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them." (MATH.7: 12) and "And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise."(LUK.6: 31)
- d. "Do not be afraid, my son, because we have become poor. You have great wealth if you fear God and refrain from every sin and do what is pleasing in his sight." (TOB.4: 21) which corresponds to: "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. These examples relate only to the book of Tobit, but if you need more information regarding the other books, please refer to "The Deutero Canonical Books". Long ago the Coptic Church used some chapters of these books among its reading of the Great Lent and Passion Week. The whole book of Tobit is read during the morning of Friday of the 6<sup>th</sup> week. The Position of these books in the order of the Holy Bible. The books of Tobit-Judith-Esther are to be placed after the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, as this is its historical order. These three books are of the narrative type from which we come out with many spiritual benefits and useful lessons as well as important geographical and historical facts. The book of Tobit was a great comfort to the Israelites during their hard times and captivity. It reveals to the faithful soul that the Lord never forgets and if he allowed any hardships, He "In all their affliction he was afflicted, And the Angel of his Presence saved them." (ISIAH63: 9)

## 2. PERSONS WITH THE NAME OF TOBIT (TOBIAH)

Some say that Tobit is a Hebrew word consisting of two syllables, which means (God is Kind). It was mentioned in the Holy Bible as a name for more than one person:

1. A Levite who was sent with others, by Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, “throughout the cities of Judah and taught the people the Book of the Law of the Lord.” (2CHR. 17:8)
2. An Ammonite servant who was against the restoration of the walls of Jerusalem (NEH. 2:10&4:3-7). It was also said that Tobiah the Ammonite was the head of his people, and he allied with the Jews who were against Nehemiah, he stayed for some time in the rooms of the sanctuary. But, when Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem, he expelled him. It is told that his palace and his grave were discovered at (Arak El Amir) East of Jordan.
3. Another Jewish captive, from whom and others God ordered Zecharia the Prophet to take the silver and gold, make an elaborate crown and set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. (ZECH. 6:11).

## Chapter Two

1. DEFINITION AND INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF TOBIT
2. OBJECTIONS AND ANSWERS
3. THE BOOK OF TOBIT



## 1. DEFINITION AND INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF TOBIT

Some of the researchers see that the writer of this book is Tobit the elder and his son Tobit. In the discovered Aramaic script, it was found that the name of Tobit, also (Tobi), is a Shemitic word which means good, as indicated in the verse (TOB.12: 20) “. And Angel Raphael talked to them, Praise God and speak out of his wonderful works”. This text is according to the Creek translation, with the addition of his saying “Write in a book everything that has happened.”

### TIME AND LANGUAGE OF THE BOOK

The time and language is an internal proof of the book of Tobit. We notice that Tobit was a captive in Nineweh in the days of Shalmaneser, King of Assyria. The book tells the history of Tobit and his son who lived until after the destruction of Nineveh in about 624 B.C., i.e. the book was written in the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C. in the Aramaic Language, and was kept with the captives. Consequently, it was not among the book collected by Ezra in Jerusalem.

### THEME AND SPIRITUAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BOOK

The book describes the life of Tobit and his son who were from the tribe of Naphtali. They were taken into the second captivity of the ten tribes in the days of Shalmaneser, King of Assyria that occurred about 722 B.C. (refer 2KG 17:1-6). The first captivity was in the days of his predecessor Tiglath- Pileser about 740 B.C.

### FIRSTLY: TOBIT’S VIRTUES AND RICHTEOUSNESS

1. Piety in his youth before captivity
  - A. In his youth, he knew God (TOB 1:4)
  - B. He did not go after the golden bull, which Jeroboam made in Israel. (TOB.1: 5)
  - C. He used to pay the tithes and first lings (TOB.1: 6)
  - D. When he became a man, he married Anna, a woman from his tribe and by her he became the father of Tobias. (TOB.1: 9)
2. When he was carried away captive, with his wife and son to Nineveh in the days of Shalmaneser (TOB.1: 11):
  - A. He kept himself from eating the food of the Gentiles. (TOB.1: 12)
  - B. He shared his daily earning with his captive fellow countrymen.
  - C. He remembered God with all his heart. (TOB.1: 13)
3. God gave him favor in the sight of Shalmaneser and allowed him to go wherever and do whatever he wanted (TOB.1: 13-14)
  - A. He used to travel and preach his brethren in captivity and hive them advice (TOB.1: 15). Once at Rages in Media, he left ten talents of silver in trust with Gabael.
4. When Shalmaneser died, Sennacherib his son reigned in his place and he persecuted the Jews. (TOB.1: 18). Tobit used to help his tribesmen,

he would give bread to the hungry, clothing to the naked, and bury the dead. When Sennacherib heard of what Tobit did, he sentenced him to death and confiscated his properties. Tobit hid himself until Sennacherib was killed by two of his sons. After 45 days Tobit returned home and his properties restored to him. (TOB.1: 22-25)

5. His continuity to perform acts of charity despite the dangers after the death of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon succeeded him.
  - A. He used to celebrate the feasts of the Lord by preparing good dinner and invite those who are mindful of the Lord. (TOB.2: 1-3)
  - B. He continued to bury the dead; he hid the bodies at his home until sunset, then he dug a grave and buried them. (TOB.2: 3-9)
  - C. He was not afraid of the king because his fear of God was greater. (TOB.2: 9)
6. His continual life of thanksgiving: Despite his righteousness, God allowed that his faith and patience be tested as in the case of Job the Upright. One day, after burying the dead, he was tired and when he returned home he slept by the wall of the courtyard. There were sparrows on the wall and their fresh droppings fell into his open eyes and he was deprived of eyesight. He was mocked by his relatives who said to him, "Where is your hope for which you give alms and burying the dead." Tobit rebuked them saying, "Do not talk like that, as we the sons of the holies look forward to the life which God grant to those who do not turn their faith from him."

What Job experiences, the same happened to Tobit. Not his kinsmen reproached him but his wife too. She worked for hire at weaving cloth. One day the owners paid her and also gave her a young goat. Tobit thought it was stolen and told her to give it back to its owners. She became angry and retorted: "Where are your charitable deeds and virtuous acts? See! Your true character is finally showing itself!" In his grief he prayed in anguish saying, "Deal with me according to your pleasure and command my spirit to be taken up, for it is better for me to die than to live" (TOB. 3:6) Compare this supplication to Elijah's when he escaped from Jezebel (1KINGS 19:4)

#### CONTEMPLATION

When sufferings become hard and human souls become weak, it is better for man to seek God, stick to him, disclose all his feelings and ask all his needs even if they are not according to God's will. As God knows the weakness of our nature, He encourages, strengthens and comforts our weak souls and answers our prayers. The Lord gently and kindly handled Elijah when he prayed he might die. He sent his angel that strengthened him and gave him food to eat and drink and he went in the strength of that

food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God where the Lord appeared to him.

The same happened to Tobit, and God was not angered by his prayer and did not punish him. He responded to the prayer in his way, and sent his angel to cure him and restore his wealth for his righteousness and thanksgiving.

#### SECONDLY: THE PLIGHE OF SARAH

On the same day Tobit prayed bitterly in Nineveh, a young woman, Sarah the daughter of Raguel, also prayed for death. She was a relative of Tobit, living at her father's house in Media. She had been given to seven husbands, and the evil demon Asmodeus (means destroyer) had killed each of them before he had been with her as his wife. It was a sad experience for Sarah. But what made it more painful when she reproached one of her maids; she answered her back saying, "Why do you beat us? Because your husbands are dead? Then why not join them! May we never see a son or daughter of yours!" When she heard these things she was deeply grieved. She went in tears to an upstairs room in her father's house and stayed for three days without food and water. She prayed, "O Lord, to I turn my face and raise my eyes. Command that I be released from the earth and that I hear reproach no more".

The faithful can endure adversities thankfully but might weaken because of reproach of others. God allows man to go through trials and sometimes to taste the bitterness of reproach especially if it comes from our beloved ones or relatives. But for God "Our of the strong came something sweet." Reproach keeps the heart away from consolation as well as relatives and induces it to stick to God and entreat consolation from Him alone. If man lost the humans consolation and felt the bitterness of the sating "When my father and mother forsake me he then tastes the sweetness of" Then the Lord will take care of me. "The reproach that caused a deep wound to Sarah, became a source of blessing to her. The prayers of Tobit and Sarah were heard in the presence of Almighty God, so Raphael was sent to heal them both.

#### THIRDLY: TOBIT'S INSTRUCTION TO HIS SON

When Tobit perceived that God heard his prayer, he thought his end is near, so he called his son Tobias and said to him:

1. When I die, honour your mother and do not abandon her remembering that she went through many trials for your sake.
2. Through all your days, keep the Lord in mind and suppress every desire to sin or to break his commandments.
3. Perform good works, "Give alms from your possessions. Do not turn your face away from any of the poor and God's face will not be turned away from you." (TOB.4: 7) "If you have great wealth, give alms out of

your abundance, if you have but little, distribute even some of it, you will be storing up a goodly treasure for yourself against the day of adversity.” (TOB.4: 9-10). Because “Alms are a worthy offering in the sight of the Most High for all who give them.” “Give the hungry some of your bread, and to the naked some of your clothing.” (TOB.4: 17) He also warned his son against:

- A. Adultery
- B. Pride
- C. Delay of wages payment
- D. Do to no one what you yourself dislike.

He asked him to go to Gab eel at Rages to bring back the money he formerly deposited with him. He told him a word of comfort and encouragement. “Do not be afraid, my son, because we have become poor. You have great wealth if you fear God and refrain from every sin and do what is pleasing in his sight.” (TOB.4: 23)

#### FOURTHLY: TRAVEL IN COMPANY WITH RAPHAEL

Tobit gave his son the receipt and asked him to find someone acquainted with the roads to travel with him to Media. He went out and found Raphael, who was an angel, but Tobias did not know it. When Tobias asked him if he can go with him to Rages, the other replied, “Yes, I have been there many times, I know all the routes, and I used to stay with our brother Gabael. Tobias was glad and went in to tell his father who asked his son to invite him in; he entered and they greeted each other. He told Tobit that he is Azarias the son of the great Ananias, and that he will take his son to Rages and return safe and sound. Will prosper your way, and may his angel attend you ”.

#### COMMENT: ABJECTION AND ANSWER

Some objects to the company of the angel to Tobias:

The teaching that the angels accompany us to serve us is a biblical instruction. “Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?” (HEB.1:14). God send them to keep us in our ways and deliver us from all evil, as it is written that, “For he shall give his angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. They shall bear you up in their hands, lest you dash your foot against a stone. ” (PSLM 91:11-12).

When Tobit said, “May God will prosper your way ”, he expressed faith that extends across the olden generations. We find it in the teachings of the holy books as well as the experiences of the fore fathers, when Abraham sent his servant Eliezer of Damascus to take a wife for his son Isaac, he said, “The Lord God of Heaven. He will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there.” (GEN. 24:7). Also, Jacob said, “The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the boys.”

(GEN.48: 16). The Lord said to the children of Israel in the wilderness, “Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared.” (EXOD.23: 20). Also “Behold, my Angel shall go before you.” (EXOD.32: 34) and “And I will send my Angel before you” (EXOD.33: 2). When we cried out to the Lord, he heard our voice and sent the Angel and brought us up out of Egypt. (NUMB.20: 16). It is also written “In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them” (ISIAH.63: 9). The Angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear him, and delivers them” (PSALM.34: 7)

#### FIFTHLY: FISHING OF WHALE AND ITS USSES

Tobias traveled with the Angel and slept the first night beside the Tigris River. When he went down to wash his feet in the river, a large fish leaped out of the water and tried to swallow his foot. He shouted in alarm. But the angel said to him, “Take hold of the fish and do not let it get away!” he seized the fish and hauled it up on the shore. Then he cut the fish open and took out its gall, heart and liver and kept them. He roasted and ate part of the fish, the rest he salted and kept for the journey... when Tobias asked the angel what medicinal value in the fish’s heart, liver and gall? He replied, “If you burn the heart and liver so that the smoke surrounds a person who is afflicted by a demon or evil spirit, the affliction will leave him completely and will never return to him again. As for the gall, it cures the eyes of a person who has cataracts.”

#### COMMENT: OBJECTION AND ANSWER

Some object to what the angel said about the heart and gall of the fish, and considers it a kind of superstitious prescriptions, which do not go in line with the holiness of the book and its holy teachings. The fact is the liver; heart and gall of the fish is only a mere sensory external picture through which the invisible miraculous power is revealed. Connecting the miracle with a materialistic tangible picture is a matter that agrees with the human nature, which consists of body and soul. If we say that the heart of the fish has in itself a power that casts out demons and that the gall of the fish is good to cure the eyes of the blind; such thing really does not agree with reason, and contradicts with the known medical evidences. But being, in this particular case, described as good to cure, is out of miracle, which we previously said that it agrees with the human nature and the teachings of the holy books. Healing in the New Testament is connected with the anointing with the holy oil. The Apostles practiced this“ ... and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.” (MAR.6: 13). “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick” (JAMES 5:14-15)

It is obvious that the power of healing is not in the substance of oil itself, however, the anointing with oil is essential as a materialistic way which the body feels and therefore the soul will be secure and feels the power of grace accompanying the oil, as well as the gift of the Holy Spirit in healing. That is what our Lord Christ did in the miracle of the man the saliva; and anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And he said to him, ‘God wash in the pool of Siloam.’ So he went and washed, and came back seeing.” (JOHN.9: 6-7).

It is clear that the clay has no power to heal, but on the contrary it might cause blindness to a healthy eye. All these materialistic matters feed the sensory elements in a person, and doing it indicates faith and helps to strengthen hope in him. Likewise the story of king Hezekiah; he was sick and near death. And after Isaiah told him that his prayer was heard he said to Hezekiah, “Take a lump of figs. So they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered.” (2KINS 20:7). This does not mean that his recovery was in the lump of figs, or figs are good medicine for boils.

Also, the miracle of healing Naaman the Syrian of his leprosy by washing in the Jordan River, as commanded by Elisha the Prophet. The healing was not in the water of the Jordan in which the people of Israel wash, but many lepers were not cleansed. Therefore, the secret lies in the gift accompanying the obedience of Naaman in carrying out the command of God. The means of performing many miracles were connected to the materialistic element.

Bitter waters made sweet by Moses who cast a tree into the waters. (EXOD.15: 25).

Elisha the Prophet who said, “Bring me a new bowl and put salt in it, healed the bad water of Jericho. Then he went to the source of the water and cast in the salt there, and said, “Thus says the Lord: I have healed this water to this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spoke” (2KINGS: 2:19-22).

Elisha purifies the Pot of Stew: “Then they served it to them to eat. Now it happened, as they were eating the stew, that they cried out and said, ‘O Man of God, there is death in the pot!’ And they could not eat it. So he said, “ bring some flour. ” And he put it in the pot, and said, ‘Serve it to the people, that they may eat. And there was nothing harmful in the pot.’” (2KINGS 4:40-41). Was the antitoxic power in the flour in the pot to fulfill the miracle?

Therefore, it is not difficult to understand that Tobit’s eyes were opened because of the fish gall, but by the invisible grace in the anointing, also the submission of Tobias to the Angel’s saying. To anoint his father’s eyes with the fish gall is an assurance of the power of the word of God. Also, to burn the fish’s heart to cast away demons. When man sees the smoke

coming out of the firebrand, he believes that as the fish's heart was burnt and its smoke went up and disappeared, all the works of demons will burn and vanish when we resort to the power of God and lead in the spirit as Tobias did in his spiritual marriage. The demon fled into Upper Egypt; the Angel pursued him there and bound him.

**SIXTHLY: MARRIAGE OF TOBIAS AND SARAH** (daughter of Raguel)

The Angel guided Tobias to the house of Raguel and recommended that he marry his only daughter Sarah. When he objected because of hearing that she had been given to seven husbands and the wicked demon had slain each of them on the wedding night. As he is the only son of his parents, he fears that he may die and bring the lives of his father and mother to the grave in sorrow. The angel told him the demon could rule over those who marry for lust and deny the fear of God. The angel commanded him, when they marry, to spend three days praying with Sarah and on the third day burn the fish's liver and this will defeat the demon.

Tobias carried out the Angel's instructions. But Raguel arose and dug a grave with the thought that perhaps Tobias too will die. He sent one of the maids to see whether he is alive or dead, so that he may bury him. Raguel was very glad that Tobias was alive, and that God heard his prayers. He gave a wedding feast as well as half of his property, and the rest would be his when Raguel and Edna die. This is how Tobias took his wife in God's fear.

Some might ask how the Angel interferes in a marriage affair, but in fact when the angel advised Tobias to marry Sarah, he was only carrying out the will of God who created Adam and gave him Eve his wife as a helper and support. God leads man to the suitable wife, "as a prudent wife is from the Lord" (PROV.19: 14).

The Lord interfered and gave Tobias a good woman, Sarah, who was oppressed by the demon. She was attached to God and prayed to him. He sent Angel Raphael to deliver her. We notice that the demon overpowered the seven husbands because they were not abiding in God, and were not good or worthy of Leer marriage. He could not kill Sarah because she was righteous but killed the husbands because they were evil. Sarah endured the trial with patience, so God kept her a righteous husband and by uniting together they form a family consecrated to the Lord. Also, we must notice the spiritual teaching the Lord wants us to know; the chastity in marriage...

The church designed that marriage be accomplished in a spiritual way, thus made it one of its sacraments celebrated by the priest with prayers in the church, calling for the fall of the Holy Spirit on the wedded couple to spiritually unify their bodies in the fear of God. Having Holy Communion

followed by the spiritual unification and then the bodily union also precedes marriage. Our fathers used to celebrate the sacrament of Matrimony on Saturday evening and spend the whole night in whole night in prayers at the church.

In the Middle Ages marriage was celebrated after Raising of Early Incense before Sunday Mass. If the bridegroom is a deacon, he serves in the sanctuary and the bride sits in the ladies sanctuary. They both have Holy Communion and spend the rest of the day and night in prayers. On Monday the priest goes and reads the absolution to them allowing them to practice their marriage rights in the fear of God and Christian purity and chastity “Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled.” (HEB.13: 4). This happens now in Egypt and some bridegrooms go to the monastery after the wedding ceremony and spend three days there as Tobias did. Christianity teaches us purity in matrimony, besides there are periods where no marital relations practiced to give you to fasting and prayer. “Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer, and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self control. (1CORIN.7: 5).

Lust in marriage is not an objective as the angel said to Tobias, but to make up a family and generate good children to the Lord.

#### SEVENTHLY: RECOVERY OF THE BOND FROM GABAEI

Tobias spent two weeks with Raguel for the wedding feast and when he found that he is behind the date he fixed for his return, he asked the angel to go to Raguel to recover the bond from Gabael, because he cannot violate the oath that Raguel has sworn. The angel went and came back with the money. Tobias took his wife, half the property of his father-in-law, the angel, and returned to his parents who were worried because of his delay. When he arrived his parents were very glad. Tobias anointed his father's eyes with the gall. Tobit regained his sight after four years. They all glorified the Lord God and rejoiced because of what God did to them, the healing of Tobit, the marriage of their son to Sarah and the recompense with many blessings. Tobit received no interest when he recovered the bond from Gabael, but God gave him all the wealth of Raguel. Tobit wanted to reward the angel with half of what Tobias brought back, but he said to them, “Praise God and give thanks to him and exalt him for what he has done for you.” He praised the fasting and prayers of Tobit, the burying of the dead and his endurance over the trial, and told them “I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels standing in the presence of the glory of the Holy One”. God commissioned me to reward Tobit and heal him and Sarah. Praise the Lord God and tell of his great and wonderful works. The angel ascended to heaven. Tobit lived forty-two years after his



eyesight was restored to him. He saw his grandchildren and died at the age of 102 years. The blessing of his prayer is with us. Amen.

The symbols and teachings in the book of Tobit

Like all the books of the Old Testament the book of Tobit, which follows the book of Nehemiah points to what, is going to happen in the New Testament in a symbolic manner. The beautiful statement expresses this: “the New Testament is hidden in the Old Testament and the Old Testament is manifested in the New Testament”.

### **Firstly: Theological Symbols**

We find that the symbolism between Tobit the father and Tobias the son on the one hand and God the father and his son Jesus Christ on the other is as follows:

Tobit the father symbolizes God the father while Tobias the son symbolizes his son Jesus Christ. As the father and the son have one name, for they are consubstantial, light out of light, true God out of true God.

As Tobit sent his son to bring back the bond, so too God the father sent his son to the world to bring back humanity from Satan’s grasp. As Tobias saved Sarah from Satan’s grasp, so too Christ saved humanity from Satan’s grasp, and as Sarah became his wife, so too Christ took the church to be his bride.

As Tobias did not return to his father’s house immediately, so too the Lord Christ did not ascend immediately after his resurrection.

As Tobias returned to his father’s house victoriously, having completed his mission, so too the Lord Christ ascended to the heavens victoriously, having completed redemption and salvation.

As there were celebrations with the Lord’s deed with Tobias, so too the church celebrates salvation and Christ’s resurrection and ascension.

As Tobias returned to Rages once more later, so too Christ will come once more in his second coming to judge the world.

### **Secondly: Ritual Symbols**

The book of Tobit contains beautiful symbols from the sacraments of the church including the sacraments of Matrimony and Unction of the sick.

#### **a. The Sacrament of Matrimony**

In the book of Tobit not only does the idea of rites appear but also even the traditions followed like the father of the bride holding his daughter and handing her to her groom and like a written marriage contract. Also the spiritual teachings in the Sacrament of Matrimony include Tobias and his wife starting their married life with prayer and fasting. They blessed the place by driving the demon away from it by the embers of the incense, which arose from burning the heart and liver of the fish; this symbolizes the church’s spiritual rite in blessing homes by prayers, incense and the sprinkling of water.

The expressions used by Tobias and his wife in their prayers closely resemble the church’s prayers in Matrimony, for he says, “let the heavens

and the whole creation bless you forever. You made Adam, and for him you made his wife Eve as a helper and support. From the two of them the human race has sprung. You said, ‘t is not good that the man should be alone, let us make a helper for him like himself’” (Tob. 8:5-6)

#### **b. The Symbol of the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick**

Applying the eyes of Tobit with the gall of the fish symbolizes the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick where the sick person is cured by being anointed with the holy oil.

Here it is very important to note that the book presents us with spiritual gifts, such as casting out the demon and the healing of Tobit happened through physical materials (the liver, heart and gall). Could not these blessings have happened with prayer alone without needing these physical materials?

The answer to this is that it is God’s way to have physical rites. Our Lord Christ gave his body and blood to the disciples in the form of bread and wine.

He also taught that the second birth is by water and the spirit. The bible also presents healing by oil and prayer. This is the church’s belief as it defines the sacrament as an invisible gift gained by man in a visible form through church prayers performed by a canonical priest.

#### **The spirited Teachings in the book**

The words of blessing and praise between members of the family:

Exchange of sweet spiritual words between members of the family appears in the book. This is essential in family life. When the angel greeted Tobit he said to him “Joyous greetings to you!” (Tob. 5:10) and when Tobit blessed his son before his journey saying, “may his angel, my son, accompany you both for your safety,” (Tob. 5:17) when Tobias agrees with the angel’s words, he tells him, “blessings of you, my child,” (Tob. 7:7) and when Raguel farewells Tobias, he says, “farewell, my child I have a safe journey.” (Tob. 10:11) when Tobias greeted his in laws he said,

Undoubtedly, sweet useful words between members of the one family form a spiritual bond and drives the spirit of conflict and division away.

#### **The Reasons for the Healing of Tobit**

The healing of Tobit was the fruit of his labors for God and a result of his victory over temptation for those who sow in tears should reap in joy. The who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. Thus, his healing was a consequence of the following: -

- a. **Tobit believed in giving and sacrifice he did not save any of his energy or money but offered it all for the sake of his love for the service he witnesses for himself by saying.**

His belief in charity and good works as manifested in his advice to his son Tobias, “give alms from your possessions... do not turn your face away from anyone who is poor. If you have many possessions, make your gift from them in proportion, if few; do not be afraid to give according to the little you have. So you will be laying up good treasure for yourself against the day of necessity. For almsgiving delivers from death and keeps you from going into the darkness. Indeed, almsgiving, for all who practice it, is an excellent offering in the presence of the most high.” (Tob. 4:7-11)

Almsgiving has protected people from sickness and tribulation, as the psalm promised, “blessed is he who considers the poor, the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.” (Ps 41 (40): 1).

Charity likewise helped Tobitha (Dorcas) who used to make tunics and garments for the poor. So when she died, the poor pleaded for her to Saint Peter, who came and raised her from the dead. One of the saints says, “whoever gives to God from his money is like him who has a patron in the governor’s house”.

b. **Tobit’s sincere honesty:** Tobit was faithful and was neither shaken nor lost his reliance on God. He did not seek false profit when he was in need. This was apparent when his wife took a goat for her handiwork. As soon as Tobit heard the goat bleating, he insisted that his wife should return it to its owners.

c. **Tobit bears tribulation and temptation: -**

Tobit faced a complex, he became poor and faced the temptation of need, he was tempted in losing his sight, and he was patient in his son’s absence on a long journey while he was very worried. In all this, he thanked the Lord. Therefore, it was natural for God to reward him by restoring his sight and his money and rejoicing in his son’s marriage and safe return. For God does not forget the labour of love or even a cup of cold water in his name.

This great spiritual book presented to us these deep teachings, showing us a strong picture of God’s sealing with his sons and beloved who hold onto him.

May the blessing of Archangel Raphael, Tobit and Tobias be with us all?

Amen.

## TOBIT

1 This book tells the story of Tobit son of Tobiel son of Hananiel son of Aduel son of Gabael son of Raphael of the descendants of Asiel, of the tribe of Naphtali, 2 who in the days of King Shalmaneser of the Assyrians was taken into captivity from Thisbe, which is to the south of Kedesh Naphtali in Upper Galilee, above Asher toward the west, and north of Phogor. 3 I, Tobit, walked in the ways of truth and righteousness all the days of my life. I performed many acts of charity for my kindred and my people who had gone with me in exile to Nineveh in the land of the Assyrians. 4 When I was in my own country, in the land of Israel while I was still a young man, the whole tribe of my ancestor Naphtali deserted the house of David and Jerusalem. This city had been chosen from among all the tribes of Israel, where all the tribes of Israel should offer sacrifice and where the temple, the dwelling of God, had been consecrated and established for all generations forever. 5 All my kindred and our ancestral house of Naphtali sacrificed to the calf that King Jerobam of Israel had erected in Dan and on all the mountains of Galilee. 6 But I alone went often to Jenu-salem for the festivals, as it is pre-scribed for all Israel by an everlasting decree. I would hurry off to Jerusalem with the first fruits of the flock, the tithes of the cattle, and the first shearings of the sheep. 7 I would give these to the priests, the sons of Aaron, at the altar: likewise the tenth of the grain, wine, olive oil, pomegranates, Figs. And the rest of the fruits to the sons of Levi who ministered at Jerusalem. Also for six years I would save up a second tenth in money and go and distribute it in Jerusalem. 8 A third tenth I would give to the orphans and widows and to the converts who had attached themselves to Israel. I would bring it and give it to them in the third year, and we would eat it according to the ordinance decreed concerning to the instructions of Deborah, for my father had died and left me an orphan. 9 When I became a man I married a woman, a member of our own family, and by her I became the father of a son whom I named Tobias. 10 After I was carried away captive to Assyria and came as a captive to Nineveh, every one of my kindred and my people ate the food of the gentiles. 11 but I kept myself from eating the food of the Gentiles. 12 Because I was mindful of God with all my heart. 13 The Most High gave me favor and good standing with Shalmaneser, and I used to buy everything he needed. 14 Until his death I used to go into Media, and buy for him there. While in the country of Media I left bags of silver worth ten talents in trust with Gabriel, the brother of Gabri. 15 But when Shalmaneser died, and his son Sennacherib reigned in his place, the highways into Media became unsafe and I could no longer go there. 16 in the days of Shalmaneser I performed many acts of charity to my kindred,

those of my tribe. 17 I would give my food to the hungry and my clothing to the naked; and if I saw the dead body of any of my people thrown out behind the wall of Nineveh, I would bury it. 18 I also buried any whom King Sennacherib put to death when he came fleeing from Judea in those days of judgment that the king of heaven executed upon him because of his blasphemies. For in his anger he put to death many Israelites; but I would secretly remove the bodies and bury them. So when Sennacherib looked for them he could not find them. 19 then one of the Ninevites went and informed the king about me, that I was burying them; so I hid myself. But when I realized that the king knew about me and that I was being searched for to be put to death, I was afraid and ran away. 20 Then all my property was confiscated; nothing was left to me that was not taken into the royal treasury except my wife Anna and my son Tobias.

21 But not forty days passed before two of Sennacherid's sons killed him, and they fled to the mountains of Ararar, and his son Esar-haddon reigned after him. He appointed Ahikar, the son of my brother Hanael over all the accounts of his kingdom, and he had authority over the entire administration. 22 Ahikar interceded for me, and I returned to Nineveh. Now Ahikar was chief cupbearer, keeper of the signet, and in charge of administrations of the accounts under king Sennacherib of Assyria; so Esar-haddon reappointed him. He was my nephew and so a close relative.

2 then during the reign of Esar-haddon I returned home, and my wife Anna and my son Tobias were restored to me. At our festival of Pentecost, which is the sacred festival of weeks, good dinner was prepared for me and I reclined to eat. 2 When the table was set for me and an abundance of food placed before me, I said to my son Tobias, "Go my child, and bring whatever poor person you may find of our people among the exiles in Nineveh, who is wholeheartedly mindful of God, and he shall eat together with me I will wait for you, until you come back." 3 So Tobias went to look for some poor person of our people. When he had returned he said, "Father!" And I replied, "Here I am, my child." Then he went on to say, "Look father, one of our own people has been murdered and thrown into the marker place, and now HW lies there strangled." 4 Then I sprang up, left the dinner before even tasting it, and removed the body from the square and laid it in one of the rooms until sunset when I might bury t. 5 When I returned, I washed myself and ate my food in sorrow. 6 Then I remembered the prophecy of Amos, how he said against Bethel, "Your festivals shall be turned into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation." And I wept. 7 When the sun had set, I went and dug a grave and buried him. 8 And my neighbors laughed and said, "Is he still not afraid? He has already been hunted down to be put to death for doing this,

and he ran away' yet here he is again burying the dead!" 9 That same night I washed myself and went into my courtyard and slept by the wall of the courtyard; and my face was uncovered because of the heat. 10 I did not know that there were sparrows on the wall; their fresh droppings fell into my eyes and produced white films. I went to physicians to be healed, but the more they treated me with ointments the more my vision was obscured by the white films, until I became completely blind for four years I remained unable to see. All my kindred were sorry for me, and Ahikar took care of me for two years before he went to Elymais.<sup>11</sup> at that time, also, my wife Anna earned money at women's work. <sup>12</sup>she used to send what she made to the owners and they would pay wages to her. One day, the seventh of Dystrus, when she cut of apiece she had woven and sent it to the owners; they paid her full wages and also gave her a young goat for a meal. <sup>13</sup> When she returned to me. The goat began to bleat. So I called her and said, "Where did toy get this goat? It is surely not stolen, is it? Return it to the owners, for we have no right to eat anything stolen. "<sup>14</sup> But she said to me. "It was given to me as a gift in addition to my wages." But I did not believe her, and told her to return it to the owners. I became flushed with anger against her over this. Then she replied to me, "Where are your acts of charity? Where are your righteous deeds? These things are known about you!"

<sup>3</sup>Then with much grief and anguish of heart I wept, and with groaning began to pray: <sup>2</sup> "You are righteous, O Lord, and all your deeds are just: all your ways are mercy and truth: you judge the world. <sup>3</sup> And now. O Lord. Remember me and look favorably upon me. Do not punish me for my sins and for my unwitting offenses and those that my ancestors committed before you. They sinned against you. <sup>4</sup> and disobeyed your commandments. So you gave us over to plunder, exile, and death to become the talk, the byword, and an object of reproach among all the nations among whom you gave dispersed us <sup>5</sup> and now your many judgments are true in exacting penalty from me for my sins. For we gave not kept your commandments and have not walked in accordance with truth before you. <sup>6</sup> so now deal with me, as you will command my spirit to be taken from me, so that I may be released from the face of the earth and become dust. For it is better for me to die than to live, because I have to listen to undeserved insults, and great is the sorrow within me. Command, O Lord, that I be released from this distress: release me to go to the eternal home, and do not. O Lord. Turn tour face away from me. For it is better for me to die than to see so much distress in my life and to listen to insults. <sup>7</sup> On the same day. At Ecbatana in Media, it also happened that Sarah, the daughter of Raguel, was reproached by one of her father's maids. <sup>8</sup> For

she had been married to seven husbands, and the wicked demon Asmodeus had killed each of them before they had been with her as is customary for wives. So the maid said to her, “You are the one who kills your husbands! See, you have already been married to seven husbands and have not borne the name of a single one of them. 9 Why do you beat us? Because your husbands are dead? Go with them! May we never see a son or daughter of yours!” 10 On that day she was grieved in spirit and wept. When she had gone up to her father’s upper room, she intended to hang herself. But she thought it over and said, “Never shall they reproach my father, saying to him, ‘You had only one beloved daughter but she hanged herself because of her distress.’ And I shall bring my father in his old age down in sorrow to Hades it is better for me not to hang myself, but to pray the Lord that I may die and not listen to these reproaches anymore. 11 “At that same time, with hands outstretched toward the window, she prayed and said, “Blessed are you, merciful God! Blessed is your name forever let all your works praise you forever. 12 And now, Lord, I turn my face to you. And raise my eyes toward you. 13 Command that I be released from the earth and not listen to such reproaches any more. 14 You know, O Master, that I am innocent of any defilement with a man, 15 and that I have not disgraced my name or the name of my father in the land of my exile. I am my father’s only child he has no other child to be his heir and he has no close relative or other kindred for whom I should keep myself as wife. Already seven husbands of mine have died. Why should I still live? But if it is not pleasing to you, O Lord, to take my life, hear me in my disgrace” 16 At that very moment, the prayers of both of them were heard in the glorious presence of God. 17 so Raphael was sent to heal both of them Tobit, by removing the white films from his eyes, so that he might see God’s light with his eyes. And Sarah, daughter of Raguel, by giving her in marriage to Tobias son of Tobit, and by setting her free from the wicked demon Asmodeus. For Tobias was entitled to have her before all others who had desired to marry her. At the same time that Tobit returned from the courtyard into his house, Sarah daughter of Raguel came down from her upper room.

4 That same day Tobit remembered the money that he had left in trust with Gabael at Rages in Media, 2 and he said to himself, “Now I have asked for death. Why do I not call my son Tobias and explain to him about the money before I die? 3 then he called his son Tobias, and when he came to him he said, “My son, when I die, give me a proper burial, honor your mother and do not abandon her all the days of her life. Do whatever pleases her, and do not grieve her in anything. 4 Remember her, my son, because she faced many dangers for you while you were in her womb.



And when she dies, bury her beside me in the same grave. 5 “Revere the Lord all you days, my son, and refuse to sin or to transgress his commandments. Live uprightly all the days of your life, and do not walk in the ways of wrongdoing 6 for those who act in accordance with truth will prosper in all their activities. To all those who practice righteousness 7 give alms from you possessions, and do not let your eye begrudge the gift when you make it. Do not turn your face away from anyone who is poor, and the face of God will not be turned away from you. 8 if you have many possessions, make your gift from them in proportion if few, do not be afraid to give according to the little you have. 9 so you will be laying up a good treasure for yourself against the day of necessity. 10 for almsgiving deliver from death and keep you from going into the Darkness. 11 indeed, almsgiving, for all who practice it, are an excellent offering in the presence of the Most High. 12 “beware, my son, of every kind of fornication. First of all marry a woman from among the descendants of your ancestors do not marry a foreign woman, who is not of your father’s tribe for we are the descendants of the prophets remember my son that Noah Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob our ancestors of old, all took wives from among their kindred. They were blessed in their children, and their posterity will inherit the land. 13 so now my son love your kindred and in your heart do not disdain your kindred, the sons and daughters of your people by refusing to take a wife for yourself from among them. For in pride there is ruin and great confusion. And in idleness there is loss and dire poverty because idleness is the mother of famine 14 do not keep over until the next day the wages of those who work for you but pay them at once if you serve God you will receive payment watch yourself my son in everything you do and discipline yourself in all your conduct 15 and what you hate do not do to anyone do not drink wine to excess or let drunkenness go with you on your way 16 give some of your food to the hungry and some of your clothing to the naked give all your surplus as alms and do not let your eye begrudge your giving of alms 17 place your bread on the grave of the righteous but give none to sinners 18 seek advice from every wise person and do not despise any useful counsel 19 at all times bless the Lord God and ask him that your ways may be made straight and that all your paths and plans may prosper for none of the nations has understanding but the Lord himself will give them good counsel but if he chooses otherwise he casts down to deepest Hades so now my child remember these commandments and do not let them be erased from your heart 20 and now my son let me explain to you that I left ten talents of silver in trust with Gabael son of Gabrias at Rages in Media 21 do not be afraid my son because we have become poor you have great wealth if you fear God and flee from every sin and do what is good in the sight of the Lord your God.

5 Then Tobias answered his father Tobit I will do everything that you have commanded me father 2 but how can I obtain the money from him since he does not know me and I do not know him? What evidence am I to give him so that he will recognize and trust me and give me the money? Also I do not know the roads to Media or how to get there 3 then Tobit answered his son Tobias he gave me his bond and I gave him my bond I divided his in two we each took one part and I put one with the money and now twenty years have passed since I left this money in trust so now my son find yourself a trustworthy man to go with you and we will pay him wages until you return but get back the money from Gabael 4 so Tobias went out to look for a man to go with him to Media someone who was acquainted with the way he went out and found the angel Raphael standing in front of him but he did not perceive that he was an angel of God 5 Tobias said to him where do you come from young man? From your kindred the Israelites he replied and I have come here to work then Tobias said to him do you know the way to go to Media 6 yes he replied I have been there many times I am acquainted with it and know all the roads I have often traveled to Media and would stay with our kinsman Gabael who lives in Rages of Media it is a journey of two days from Ecbatana to Rages for it lies in a mountainous area while Ecbatana is in the middle of the plain 7 then Tobias said to him wait for me young man until I go in and tell my father for I do need you to travel with me and I will pay you your wages 8 he replied all right I will wait but do not take too long 9 so Tobias went in to tell his father Tobit and said to him I have just found a man who is one of our own Israelite kindred he replied call the man in my son so that I may learn about his family and to what tribe he belongs and whether he is trustworthy enough to go with you 10 then Tobias went out and called him and said young man my father is calling for you so he went in to him and Tobit greeted him first he replied Joyous greetings to you but Tobit retorted what joy is left for me any more? I am a man without eyesight I cannot see the light of heaven but I lie in darkness like the dead who no longer see the light although still alive I am among the dead I hear people but I cannot see them but the young man said take courage the time is near for God to heal you take courage then Tobit said to him “my son Tobias wishes to go to Media. Can you accompany him and guide him? I will pay your wages, brother he answered, “I can go with him and I know all the roads for I have often gone to Media and have crossed all its plains and I am familiar with its mountains and all of its roads. 11 then Tobit said to him brother of what family are you and from what tribe tell me brother 12 he replied why do you need to know my tribe but Tobit said I want to be sure brother whose son you are and what your name is 13 he replied I am Azariah the

son of the great Hananiah one of your relatives 14 then Tobit said to him welcome God save you brother do not feel bitter toward me brother because I wanted to be sure about your ancestry it turns out that you are a kinsman and of good and noble lineage for I knew Hananiah and Nathan the two sons of Shemeliah and they used to go with me to Jerusalem and worshiped with me there and were not led astray your kindred are good people you come of good stock hearty welcome 15 then he added I will pay you a drachma a day as wages as well as expenses for yourself and my son so go with my son 16 and I will add something to your wages Raphael answered I will go with him so do not fear we shall leave in good health and return to you in good health because the way is safe 17 so Tobit said to him “blessings be upon you brother” then he called his son and said to him son prepare supplies for the journey and set out with your brother may God in heaven bring you safely there and return you in good health to me and may his angel my son accompany you both for your both for your safety before he went out to start his journey he kissed his father and mother Tobit then said to him “have a safe journey” 18 but his mother began to weep and said to Tobit “why is it that you have sent my child away? Is he not the staff of our hand as he goes in and out before us? 19 do not heap money upon money but let it be a ransom for our child 20 for the life that is given to us by the Lord is enough for us 21 Tobit said to her do not worry our child will leave in good health and return to us in good health your eyes will see him on the day when he returns to you in good health say no more do not fear for them my sister 22 for a good angel will accompany him his journey will be successful and he will come back in good health so she stopped weeping.

6 the young man went out and the angel went with him 2 and the dog came out with him and went along with them so they both journeyed along and when the first night overtook them they camped by the Tigris river 3 then the young man went down to wash his feet in the Tigris river suddenly a large fish then the young man went down to wash his feet in the Tigris river suddenly a large fish leaped up from the water and tried to swallow the young man’s foot and he cried out 4 but the angel said to the young man catch hold of the fish and hang on to it so the young man grasped the fish and drew it up on the land 5 then the angel said to him cut open the fish and take out its gall heart and liver keep them with you but throw away the intestines for its gall heart and liver are useful as medicine 6 so after cutting open the fish the young man gathered together the gall heart and liver then he roasted and ate some of the fish and kept some to be salted the two continued on their way together until they were near Media 7 then the young man questioned the angel and said to him “brother

Azariah what medicinal value is there in the fish's heart and liver and in the gall ? He replied "as for the fish's heart and liver you must burn them to make a smoke in the presence of a man or woman afflicted by a demon or evil spirit and every affliction will flee away and never remain with that person any longer 9 and as for the gall anoint a person's eyes where white films have appeared on them blow upon them upon the white films and the eyes will be healed 10 when he entered Media and already was approaching Ecbatana Raphael said to the young man "brother Tobias" here I am he answered then Raphael said to him we must stay this night in the home of Raguel he is your relative and he has a daughter named Sarah 12 he has no male heir and no daughter except Sarah only and you as next of kin to her have before all other men a hereditary claim on her also it is right of you to inherit her father's possessions Moreover the girl is sensible brave and very beautiful and her father is a good man 13 he continued you have every right to take her in marriage so listen to me brother tonight I will speak to her father about the girl so that we may take her to be your bride when we return from Rages we will celebrate her marriage for I know that Raguel can by no means keep her from you or promise her to another man without incurring the penalty of death according to the decree of the book of Moses indeed he knows that you rather than any other man are entitled to marry his daughter so now listen to me brother and tonight we shall speak concerning the girl and arrange her engagement to you and when we return from rages we will take her and bring her back with us to your house 14 then Tobias said in answer to Raphael brother Azariah I have heard that she already has been married to seven husbands and that they died in the bridal chamber on the night when they went in to her they would die I gave heard people saying that it was a demon that killed them 15 it dose not harm her but it kills anyone who desires to approach her so now since I am the only son my father has I am afraid that I may die and bring my father's and mother's life down to their grave grieving for me and they have no other son to bury them 16 but Raphael said to him do you not remember your father's orders when he commanded you to take a wife from your father's house? Now listen to me brother and say no more about this demon take her I know that this very night she will be given to you in marriage 17 when you enter the bridal chamber take some of the fish's liver and heart and put them on the embers of the incense an odor will given off 18 the demon will smell it and flee and will never be seen near her any more now when you are about to go to bed with her both of you must first stand up and pray imploring the Lord of heaven that mercy and safety may be granted to you do not be afraid for she was set apart for you before the world was made you will save her and she will go with you I presume that you will have children by her and they will be as brothers to

you now say no more when Tobias heard the words of Raphael and learned that she was his kinswoman related through his father's lineage he loved her very much and his heart was drawn to her.

7 now when they entered Ecbatana Tobias said to him brother Azariah take me straight to our brother Raguel so he took him to Raguel's house where they found him sitting beside the courtyard door they greeted him first and he replied joyous greetings brothers welcome and good health then he brought them into his house 2 he said to his wife Edna how much the young man resembles my kinsman Tobit 3 then Edna questioned them saying where are you from brothers they answered we belong to the descendants of Naphtali who are exiles in Nineveh 4 she said to them so you know our kinsman Tobit and they replied yes we know him then she asked them is he in good health 5 they replied he is alive and in good health and Tobias added he is my father 6 at that Raguel jumped up and kissed him and wept 7 he also spoke to him as follows blessings on you my child son of a good and noble father o most miserable of calamities that such an upright and beneficent man has become blind he then embraced his kinsman Tobias and wept 8his wife Edna also wept for him and their daughter Sarah like wise wept 9 then Raguel slaughtered a ram from the flock and received them very warmly when they had bathed and washed themselves and had reclined to dine Tobias said to Raphael brother Azariah ask Raguel to give me my kinswoman Sarah 10 but Raguel overheard it and said to the lad eat and drink and be merry tonight for no one except you brother has the right to marry my daughter Sarah likewise I am not at liberty to give her to any other man than yourself because you are my nearest relative but let me explain to you the true situation more fully my child 11 have given her to seven men of our kinsmen and all died on the night when they went in to her but now my child eat and drink and the Lord will act on behalf of you both but Tobias said I will neither eat nor drink anything until you settle the things that pertain to me so Raguel said I will do so she is given to you in accordance with the decree in the book of Moses and it has been decreed from heaven that she be given to you take your kinswoman from now on you are her brother and she is your sister she is given to you from today and forever may the Lord of heaven my child guide and prosper you both this night and grant you mercy and peace 12 then Raguel summoned his daughter Sarah when she came to him he took her by the hand and gave her to Tobias saying take her to be your wife in accordance with the law and decree written in the book of Moses take her and bring her safely to your father and may the God of heaven prosper your journey with his peace 13 then he called her mother and told her to bring writing material and he wrote out a

copy of a marriage contract to the effect that he gave her to him as wife according to the decree of the law of Moses 14 then they began to eat and drink 15 Raguel called his wife Edna and said to her “sister get the other room ready and take her there” 16 so she went and made the bed in the room as he had told her and brought Sarah there she wept for her daughter then wiping away the tears she said to her “take courage my daughter the Lord of heaven grant you joy in place of your sorrow take courage my daughter” then she went out

8 when they had finished eating and drinking they wanted to retire so they took the young man and brought him into the bedroom 2 then Tobias remembered the words of Raphael and he took the fish’s liver and heart out of the bag where he had them and put them of the embers of the incense 3 the odor of the fish so repelled the demon that he fled to the remotest parts of Egypt but Raphael followed him and at once bound him there hand and foot 4 when the parents had gone out and shut the door of the room Tobias got out of bed and said to Sarah “sister get up and let us pray and implore our Lord that he grant us mercy and safety” 5 so she got up and they began to pray and implore that they might be kept safe Tobias began by saying “blessed are you O God of our ancestors and blessed is your name in all generations forever let the havens and the whole creation bless you forever 6 you made Adam and for him you made his wife Eve as a helper and support from the two of them the human race has sprung you said it is not good that the man should be alone let us make a helper for him like himself 7 I now am taking this kinswoman of mine not because of lust but with sincerity grant that she and I may find mercy and that we may grow old together 8 and they both said “Amen, Amen” 9 then they went to sleep for the night but Raguel arose and called his servants to him and they went and dug a grave 10 for he said “it is possible that he will die and we will become an object of ridicule and derision” when they had finished digging the grave Raguel went into his house and called his wife 12 saying “send one of the maids and have her go in to see if he is alive but if he is dead let us bury him without anyone knowing it” 13 so they sent the maid, lit a lamp, and opened the door and she went in and found them sound asleep together then the maid came out and informed them that he was alive and that nothing was wrong 15 so they blessed the God of heaven and Raguel said “blessed are you O God with every pure blessing let all your chosen ones bless you let them bless you forever” 16 blessed are you because you have made me glad it has not turned out as I expected but you have dealt with us according to your great mercy 17 blessed are you because you had compassion on two only children be merciful to them O Master, and keep them safe bring their lives to fulfillment in happiness and

mercy 18 then he ordered his servants to fill in the grave before daybreak 19 after this he asked his wife to bake many loaves of bread and he went out to the herd and brought two steers and four rams and ordered them to be slaughtered so they began to make preparations 20 then he called for Tobias and swore on oath to him in these words “you shall not leave here for fourteen days, but shall stay here eating and drinking with me and you shall cheer up my daughter who has been depressed 21 take at once half of what I own and return in safety to your father the other half will be yours when my wife and I die take courage my child I am your father and Edna is your mother and we belong to you as well as to your wife now and forever take courage my child.

9 Then Tobias called Raphael and said to him 2 “brother Azariah take four servants and two camels with you and travel to Rages go to the home of Gabael, give him the bond, get the money and then bring him with you to the wedding celebration 3 for you know that my father must be counting the days, and if I delay even one day I will upset him very much. 4 you are witness to the oath Raguel has sworn, and I cannot violate his oath” 5 so ‘Raphael with the four servants and two camels went to Rages in Media and stayed with Gabael Raphael gave him the bond and informed him that Tobit’s son Tobias had married and was inviting him to the wedding celebration so Gabael got up and counted out to him the money bags, with their seals intact then they loaded them on the camels 6 in the morning they both got up early and went to the wedding celebration when they came into Raguel’s house they found Tobias reclining at table he sprang up and greeted Gabael who wept and blessed him with the words, “Good and noble son of a father good and noble upright and generous may the Lord grant the blessing of heaven to you and your wife and to your wife’s father and mother blessed be God for I see in Tobias the very image of my cousin Tobit”

10 Now day-by-day, Tobit kept counting how many days Tobias would need for going and for returning and when the days had passed and his son did not appear 2 he said “is it possible that he has been detained? Or that Ghabael has died, and there is no one to give him the money?” 3 and he began to worry 4 his wife Anna said “my child has perished and is no longer among the living” and she began to weep and mourn for her son saying 5 “woe to me my child, the light of my eyes, that I let you make the journey” 6 but Tobit kept saying to her be quiet and stop worrying, my dear he is all right probably something unexpected has happened there the man who went with him is trustworthy and is one of our own kin do not grieve for him my dear he will soon be her 7 she answered him “be quiet

yourself stop trying to deceive me my child has perished she would rush out every day and watch the road her son had taken and would heed no one when the sun had set she would go in and mourn and weep all night long, getting no sleep at all. Now when the fourteen days of the wedding celebration had ended that Raguel had sworn to observe for his daughter Tobias came to him and said “send me back, for I know that my father and mother do not believe that they will see me again so I beg of you father to let me go so that I may return to my own father I have already explained to you how I left him 8 but Raguel said to Tobias, “stay my child stay with me I will send messengers to your father Tobit and they will inform him about you” 9 but he said “No! I beg you to send me back to my father” 10 so Raguel promptly gave Tobias his wife Sarah, as well as half of all his property male and female slaves oxen and sheep, donkeys and camels, clothing, money, and household goods. Then he saw them safely off he embraced Tobias and said “farewell my child have a safe journey the Lord of heaven prosper you and your wife Sarah and may I see children of yours before I die 12 then he kissed his daughter Sarah and said to her my daughter honor your father in law and your mother in law since from now on they are as much your parents as those who gave you birth go in peace daughter and may I hear a good report about you as long as I live, then he bade them farewell and let them go then Edna said to Tobias, “my child and dear brother the Lord of heaven bring you back safely, and may I live long enough to see children of you and of my daughter Sarah before I die in the sight of the Lord I entrust my daughter to you do nothing to grieve her all the days of your life go in peace my child from now on I am your mother and Sarah is your beloved wife may we all prosper together all the days of our lives then she kissed them both and saw them safely off 13 Tobias parted from Raguel with happiness and joy praising the Lord of heaven and earth king over all because he had made his journey a success finally he blessed Raguel and his wife Edna and said “I have been commanded by the Lord to honor you all the days of my life”.

11When they came near to Kaserin which is opposite Nineveh Raphael said, 2”you are aware of how we left your father 3 let us run ahead of your wife and prepare the house while they are still on the way 4 as they went on together Raphael said to him “have the gall ready” and the dog went along behind them 5 Meanwhile Anna sat looking intently down the road by which her son would come 6 when she caught sight of him coming she said to his father “look your son is coming and the man who went with him” 7 Raphael said to Tobias before he had approached his father I know that his eyes will be opened 8 Smear the gall of the fish on his eyes the medicine will make the white films shrink and peel off from his eyes and



your father will regain his sight and see the light 9 then Anna ran up to her son and threw her arms around him saying “now that I have seen you my child, I am ready to die” and she wept. 10 then Tobit got up and came stumbling out through the courtyard door Tobias went up to him 11 with the gall of the fish in his hand and holding him firmly he blew into his eyes saying “take courage father” with this he applied the medicine on his eyes 12 and it made them smart 13 next with both his hands he peeled off the white films from the corners of his eyes then Tobit saw his son and threw his arms around him and he wept and said to him I see you my son the light of my eyes then he said “blessed be God and blessed be his great name and blessed be all his holy angels may his holy name be blessed throughout all the ages 15 though he afflicted me he has had mercy upon me now I see my son Tobias” so Tobit went in rejoicing and praising God at the top of his voice Tobias reported to his father that his journey had been successful that he had brought the money that he had married Raguel’s daughter Sarah and that she was indeed on her way there very near to the gate of Nineveh 16 then Tobit, rejoicing and praising God went out to meet his daughter in law at the gate of Nineveh. When the people of Nineveh saw him coming walking along in full vigor and with no one leading him they were amazed 17 before them all Tobit acknowledged that God had been merciful to him and had restored his sight when Tobit met Sarah the wife of his son Tobias he blessed her saying “come in my daughter and welcome blessed be your God who has brought you to us my daughter blessed be your father and your mother blessed be my son Tobias and blessed be you my daughter come in now to your home and welcome with blessing and joy come in my daughter” so on that day there was rejoicing among all the Jews who were in Nineveh 18 Ahikas and his nephew Nadab were also present to share Tobit’s joy with merriment they celebrated Tobias’s wedding feast for seven days and many gifts were given to him.

12 when the wedding celebration was ended Tobit called his son Tobias and said to him “my child see to paying the wages of the man who went with you and give him a bonus as well” 2 he replies “father how much shall I pay him? It would do no harm to give him half of the possessions brought back with me 3 for he has led me back to you safely he cured my wife, he brought the money back with me and he healed you how much extra shall I give him as a bonus?” 4 Tobit said “he deserves my child to receive half of all that he brought back” 5 so Tobias called him and said “take for your wages half of all that you brought back and farewell” 6 then Raphael called the two of them privately and said to them “bless God and acknowledge him in the presence of all the living for the good things he

has done for you bless and sing praise to his name with fitting honor declare to all people the deeds of God do not be slow to acknowledge him 7 it is good to conceal the secret of a king but to acknowledge and reveal the works of God and with fitting honor to acknowledge him do good and evil will not overtake you 8 prayer with fasting is good but better than both is almsgiving with righteousness a little with righteousness is better than wealth with wrongdoing it is better to give alms than to lay up gold 9 for almsgiving saves from death and purges away every sin those who give alms will enjoy a full life 10 but those who commit sin and do wrong are their own worst enemies 11 “I will now declare the whole truth to you and will conceal nothing from you already I have declared it to you when I said it is good to conceal the secret of a king but to reveal with due honor the works of God 12 so now when you and Sarah prayed it was I who brought and read the record of your prayer before the glory of the Lord and likewise whenever you would bury the dead. 13 and that time when you did not hesitate to get up and leave your dinner to go and bury the dead I was sent to you to test you and at the same time God sent me to heal you and Sarah your daughter in law I am Raphael one of the seven angels who stand ready and enter before the glory of the Lord 16 the two of them were shaken they fell face down for they were afraid but he said to them “do not be afraid peace be with you bless God forevermore 18 as for me when I was with you I was not acting on my own will but by the will of God bless him each and every day sing his praises 19 although you were watching me I really did not eat or drink anything but what you saw was a vision 20 so now get up from the ground and acknowledge God see I am ascending to him who sent me write down all these things that have happened to you” and he ascended 21 then they stood up and could see him no more 22 they kept blessing God and singing his praises and they acknowledged God for these marvelous deeds of his when an angel of God had appeared to them.

13 Then Tobit said “blessed be God who lives forever because his kingdom lasts throughout all ages 2 for he afflicts and he shows mercy he leads down to Hades in the lowest regions of the earth and he brings up from the great abyss and there is nothing that can escape his hand 3 acknowledge him before the nations O children of Israel for he has scattered you among them he has shown you his greatness even there Exalt him in the presence of every living being because he is our Lord and he is our God he is our Father and he is God forever 5 he will afflict you for your iniquities but he will again show mercy on all of you he will gather you from all the nations among whom you have been scattered 6 if you turn to him with all your heart and with all your soul to do what is true

before him then he will turn to you and will no longer hide his face from you so now see what he has done for you acknowledge him at the top of your voice bless the Lord of righteousness and exalt the king of the ages in the land of my exile I acknowledge him and show his power and majesty to a nation of sinners turn back you sinners and do what is right before him perhaps he may look with favor upon you and show you mercy 7 as for me I exalt my God and my soul rejoices in the king of heaven 8 let all people speak of his majesty and acknowledge him in Jerusalem 9 O Jerusalem the holy city he afflicted you for the deeds of your hands but will again have mercy on the children of the righteous 10 acknowledge the Lord for he is good and bless the king of the ages so that his tent may be rebuilt in you in joy may he cheer all those within you who are captives and love all those within you who are distressed to all generations forever 11 a bright light will shine to all the ends of the earth many nations will come to you from far away the inhabitants of the remotest parts of the earth to your holy name bearing gilts in their hands for the king of heaven generation after generation will give joyful praise in you the name of the chosen city will endure forever 12 cursed are all who speak a harsh word against you cursed are all who conquer you and pull down your walls all who overthrow your tower and set your homes on fire but blessed forever will be all who revere you 13 go then and rejoice over the children of the righteous for they will be gathered together and will praise the Lord of the ages 14 happy are those who love you and happy are those who rejoice in your prosperity happy also are all people who grieve with you because of your afflictions for they will rejoice with you and witness all your glory forever 15 my soul blesses the Lord the great king 16 for Jerusalem will be built as his house for all ages how happy I will be if a remnant of my descendants should survive to see your glory and acknowledge the king of heaven the gates of Jerusalem will be built with sapphire and emerald and all your walls with precious stones the towers of Jerusalem will be built with gold and their battlements with pure gold the streets of Jerusalem will be paved with ruby and with stones of Ophir 17 the gates of Jerusalem will sing hymns of joy and all her houses will cry Hallelujah blessed be the God of Israel and the blessed will bless the holy name forever and ever.

14 So ended Tobit's words of praise 2 Tobit died in peace when he was one hundred twelve years old and was buried with great honor in Nineveh he was sixty two years old when he lost his eyesight and after regaining it he lived in prosperity giving alms and continually blessing God and acknowledging God's majesty 3 when he was about to die he called his son Tobias and the seven sons of Tobias and gave this command my son take your children and hurry off to Media for I believe the word of God

that Nahum spoke about Nineveh that all these things will take place and overtake Assyria and Nineveh indeed everything that was spoken by the prophets of Israel whom God sent will occur none of all their words will fail but all will come true at their appointed times so it will be safer in Media than in Assyria and Babylon for I know and believe that whatever God has said will be fulfilled and will come true not a single word of the prophecies will fail all of our kindred inhabitants of the land of Israel will be scattered and taken as captives from the good land and the whole land of Israel will be desolate even Samaria and Jerusalem will be desolate and the temple of God in it will be burned to the ground and it will be desolate for a while 5 but God will again have mercy on them and God will bring them back into the land of Israel and they will rebuild the temple of God but not like the first one until the period when the times of fulfillment shall come after this they all will return from their exile and will rebuild Jerusalem in splendor and in it the temple of God will be rebuilt just as the prophets of Israel have said concerning it 6 then the nations in the whole world will all be converted and worship God in truth they will all abandon their idols which deceitfully have led them into their error 7 and in righteousness they will praise the eternal God all the Israelites who are saved in those days and are truly mindful of God will be gathered together they will go to Jerusalem and live in safety forever in the land of Abraham and it will be given over to them those who sincerely love God will rejoice but those who commit sin and injustice will vanish from all the earth 8,9 so now my children I command you serve God faithfully and do what is pleasing in his sight your children are also to be commanded to do what is right and to give alms and to be mindful of God and to bless his name at all times with sincerity and with all their strength so sow my son leave Nineveh so not remain her 10 on whatever day you bury your mother beside me do not stay overnight within the confines of the city for I see that there is much wickedness within it and that much deceit is practiced within it while the people are without shame see my son what Nadab did to Ahikar who had reared him was he not while still alive brought down into the earth for God repaid him to his face for this shameful treatment Ahikar came out into the light but Nadab went into the eternal darkness because he tried to kill Ahikar because he gave alms Ahikar escaped the fatal trap that Nadab had set for him but Nadab fell into it himself and was destroyed 11 so sow my children see what almsgiving accomplishes and what injustice does it brings death but now my breath fails me then they laid him on his bed and he died and he received an honorable funeral 12 when Tobias's mother died he buried her beside his father then he and his wife and children returned to Media and settled in Ecbatana with Raguel his father in law 13 he treated his parents in law with great respect in their

old age and buried them in Ecbatana of Media he inherited both the property of Raguel and that of his father Tobit he died highly respected at the age of one hundred seventeen years 15 before he died he heard of the destruction of Nineveh and he saw its prisoners being led into Media those whom king Cyaxares of Media had taken captive Tobias praised God for all he had done to the people of Nineveh and Assyria before he died he rejoiced over Nineveh and he blessed the Lord God forever and ever. Amen.

## OBJECTIONS & ANSWERS

### **The first Objection.**

Traveller Stragowa tells that Slukas built Rages, a city of Media in 300 B.C., while it was mentioned in the Book of Tobit, which dates from 700 B.C.

Answer

The existence of the city of Rages before that date is quite possible and Slukas might have reconstructed or built a new city at the same site of the old one, or that the old city was destroyed by an earthquake (many in this region) and Slukas rebuilt it. The same answer applies to the construction of the cities of Ion and Raamses, which were built by the children of Israel before the Exodus. While history tells they were built at the time of Ramses II after the Exodus. It might have been built for the second time or completed or extended after the Exodus.

### **The Second Objection**

In the Latin translation of the book, it was mentioned that Sarah daughter of Raguel was living in Rages in Medina (TOB.3: 7), also Gabael (TOB.9: 3) and that Tobias, when he was with Raguel, he sent Raphael to Gabael in Rages. It seems one of the texts is wrong.

Answer

Although the Latin translation mentioned that Sarah was living in Rages, she in fact was living in a village near Rages called Ecbaqtana. This is clear in the Greek manuscript - the oldest- that agrees with the Hebrew and Syrian copies. Thus, it was right that when Tobias was staying with Raguel at Ecbatana, he sent Raphael to Rages where Gabael lived, and consequently the contradiction is over. We would also like to point out that often names of the big cities were, and still are, given to suburbs and districts which belong to it. So the name is not restricted to the mother city but cover all the regions under its jurisdiction. This means that Sarah daughter of Raguel was living in Rages district, i.e. one of the towns near Rages, which the other translations called Ecbatana. This is also confirmed by the saying of the angel to Tobias, "I used to stay with our brother Gabael, who lies at Rages in Mesia situated at the mountain of Ecbatana."

### **The Third Objection**

It was said in (TOB.1: 1-2) that Tobit was from the tribe of Naphtale, who during the reign of Shalmaneser, King of Assyria, was taken captive. While in (2KINGS 15:29) it was mentioned that all the land of Naphtale was captured by Tiglath - Pileser, who reigned before Shalmaneser.

Answer

It was pointed out that Tiglath- Pileser who reigned in 750 B.C. captured part of the ten tribes in the days of Pekah the son of Remaliah (2KINGS 15:29). A large part of the people was left on the land. When his successor

Shalmaneser reigned in 734 B.C. he came up against Hoshea who became his vassal, and paid him tribute money. He went up to Samaria and besieged it for three years and carried Israel away to Assyria. (2KINGS 17:1-6). In the second captivity, Tobit was taken captive (TOB.1: 1-2).

### **The Fourth Objection**

The Book of Tobit presents Angel Raphael as a liar when he says, “I am an Israelite. I am Azariah, son of the great Ananias” (TOB.5: 18). Also, he said, “We belong to the sons of Naphtali, who are captives in Nineveh” (TOB.7: 3). Also, when he was asked, “Do you know the way to Mekia? He replied: Yes I have been there many times, I know all the routes. I have stayed with our brother Gabael”.

Answer

The appearance of the angel in a human shape happened many times and repeatedly mentioned in the Bible (to Abraham - Lot - Daniel - Joshua). For the saying, I am Azariah, son of Ananias, it means, I am the power of God from the passion of God. Such qualities apply to angels, therefore Angel Raphael was not lying when he said, and “I am the power of God” especyllai when it completely agrees with his mission. He was sent to help both Tobit and Sarah. As being an Israelite and belongs to the sons of Naphtali because he is responsible to guard God’s people in their captivity. There are evidences in the other books which refer to the assignments of angels which include the guardian angels, refer to (DAN.10: 12-13) “Then he said to me, Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before you God, your words were heard, and I have come to help me, for I had been left alone there with the Kings of Persia”.

As regards his knowing all the routes and staying with Gabael, this is possible for the angels especially those charged with the service of man.

### **The Fifth Objection**

The objection to what was mentioned in (TOB.3: 8& TOB.6: 14) that the wicked demon killed the seven husbands of Sarah. This confirms the superstitious beliefs that demons fell deeply in love with human beings, be jealous for them, marry from them and kill those who rival with them.

Answer

By revising the text there is nothing to indicate that the demon married Sarah or loved her, but the people understood that a demon killed her seven husbands because he loves her. Also, in olden times, people find in Sarah’s case evidence that demons marry human beings, but in the Holy Bible and the Book of Tobit there are no such text. Demons use these cases to support these beliefs in order to establish fear among people and scare of demons wrath, and submit them to their authority and make them

always seek their consent. It is not impossible for the demon to kill seven men. He made Adam fall and brought on him and his descendants the sentence of death, they were made slaves to him. He called himself the ruler of this world and the prince of the air. He breaks up wars and disputes, stirs up afflictions and disturbances as well as destroys and kills. (REFER JOHN 8:44) “You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning. He instigates the wicked to kill the faithful because his authority only covers the evils that are under his grip. But, he cannot harm or come near the righteous.” God warns his children saying. “Take heed that you be not deceived. For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he’ and, the time has drawn near. Therefore do not go after them.”(LUK.21:8) Because Sarah fears God, the devil could not harm her, but he killed her seven husbands who were evil. Tobias too, because he listened to what the angel said and prayed for three days before he joined Sarah in a spiritual marriage, he was not harmed by the devil who was then bound by the angel.

### **The Sixth Objection**

It is absurd that the droppings of the sparrows when settled in Tobit’s eyes, caused blindness. Also it is unreasonable that his son Tobias restored the sight by anointing his father’s eyes with the fish’s gall.

Answer

If the droppings fell into the eye it could cause blindness, as the eyes are easily affected and the acidity or alkalinity in the droppings causes inflammation and damage in the cornea of the eye. Regarding the healing of Tobit by using the fish’s gall, we have answered this in our study of the book.

### **The Seventh Objection**

Tobit prophesied the house of God, which was burnt, would be rebuilt although it was burnt after the death of Tobit (TOB.14: 7)

Answer

Here Tobit speaks with the spirit of prophecy like many of the prophets of the Old Testament who see the future as present and talk about it in the past. The whole Book of Tobit was written more than 500 years before the birth of Christ. It is a book of joy because he prophesied the return of the children of Israel from captivity, as Tobit said in his hymn of praise, “O Jerusalem, praise the Lord for his goodness and bless the king of the ages, so that his tent may be rebuilt in you with joy. May he cheer within you all who were captives, for all generations to come” (TOB.13: 12). He also said to his son Tobias, “The words of God will not go in vain and our brethren who were scattered over the earth will return back”.



**Chapter Three**  
**PROOPHECIES IN THE BOOK OF TOBIT**

## **PROOPHECIES IN THE BOOK OF TOBIT**

He prophesied the birth of the King of Kings our Lord Jesus Christ and the coming of the Maji to worship him, saying, “All Kings of the earth rejoice, worshipping the King of Israel.”

Tobit himself rejoiced saying; “My soul rejoices in him” and “Bless the Lord you chosen one and make confession to Him.”

His confidence in this is clearly seen in saying, “Behold if any of my descendants is left to see the glory of Jerusalem.”

The book connects between the captivity in Balyon and the joyful return to Jerusalem. Also between the captivity of man and its suffering and his return to heaven after being freed by our Lord Jesus Christ. Who said about Jerusalem, of course not the earthly but the heavenly, the gates of Jerusalem will be built with sapphires and emeralds, her walls with precious stones, and all markets paved with pure chalcedony, all her laves will cry “Hallelujah”, as mentioned in Revelation “...the construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.” (REV.21: 18)

“And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass” (REV.21: 21)

In the Book of Tobit - the Book of Joy - when Angel Raphael first met Tobit, he said to him, “May joy be yours always”

The book as a whole is a prophecy about salvation and coming out of captivity. The son’s name Tobit is the same as his father, and the Lord Jesus says, “I and the father are one.” And Tobit was obedient to his father as can be seen in this verse “ Then Tobias replied to his father Tobit: ‘everything that you have commanded me, father, I will do.’”

And this is what the Father said about the Son, the Word “So shall my mouth; It shall not return to me void. But it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. (ISIAH.55: 11)

In another situation “Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me. (ISIAH.6:8)

Angel Raphael walks with Tobias the Son and helps him in his journey like the angel of God who was strengthening the Lord Jesus on the eve of his passion in the garden.

As they proceeded on their way they came at evening to the Tigris River and camped there. Then Tobias went down to wash his feet. A big fish leaped up from the river, and the angel commanded him to seize the fish and throw it up on the land.

The big fish symbolizes Jesus who came out of the Jordan after the baptism. He gave us his body to eat as Tobias ate from the fish.

The bitterness in the Saviour's mouth on the cross, opened the eyes of those blind with sin, and the fish's gall healed Tobit's blindness

Also, the liver and heart of Jesus burst by the pierce of the spear and blood and water came out to save mankind from the captivity of Satas, as it happened with Tobias when he took live ashes of incense and put the heart and liver of the fish upon them and made smoke.

When the demon smelled the odour, he fled from Sarah, and the angel bound him, as the Lord Jesus bound the serpent with chains and shackles.

The son returned with his beloved wife - who was demon - haunted - clean and free, as Jesus did when he released us from Satan's captivity and presented us to his Father as a chaste virgin. (2COR.11: 2)

The letters in the word fish in the Greek language are the beginning of names for the Son of God "Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Saviour."

Jesus brought joy into our lives; also Angel Raphael - who was called the Cheering of Hearts - was concerned with the service of joy in the New Testament.

We came to the end of the research, and we thank God for everything and for His constant support.

I hope this research may become a source of blessing to whoever reads it.

Please pray for us so that we can truly work in the vineyard of God.

## Bibliography

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### Research in the book of Tobit

This is the first book in the Orthodox Church wholly dedicated to speaking about the book of Tobit, persons with the name of Tobit, The Second Canonical Book and virtues from the book such as purity in marriage.

Mentioned in this book are prophecies that occurred in Tobit. The cover picture is the only one that exists in our church depicting Tobit with the Archangel Raphael.

I hope that this book becomes a way for many blessings to the person who reads it.

Pray for us

The Author

