

**Christ the Lord Episcopal Church**  
***Bible Study Tobit***  
*Session 5*

Review of Chapters:

Chapter 7:

Tobias and Azariah (angel in disguise) arrive at Ecbatana and meet Raquel and his wife Edna. They sit down to share a meal and Tobias requests of Raquel, his daughter's hand in marriage, which is agreed on per Jewish law. The chapter ends with Raquel's daughter Sarah being left in the bridal bedroom with her mother in tears praying that God will be able to take away her sorrow.

Comments:

*Interestingly enough when Tobias is asked about his father's health, he denies Tobit suffering in any way yet Raquel knows of Tobit's blindness. Within the marriage itself there is a juxtaposition between death threats and joyous feasting. There are many references to Tobias being the chosen one for his daughter.*

*\*The Jewish marriage contract (Heb. "Ketubah" "writing") protects the wife's financial interests; this is the **first recorded** reference to this well-known practice.*

## Chapter 8:

The time comes for Tobias to be brought to the bridal bedroom. Remembering the angel's instructions he burns the fish parts and incense and the angel helps bind the demon that was haunting Sarah and killing her husbands. After burning the incense Tobias requires of his new wife Sarah to pray to be thankful and bless God.

While Tobias and Sarah sleep safely on their wedding night Raquel has his servants dig a grave in case Tobias dies as all the other newly married husbands of Sarah had died. He makes a plan that should Tobias be dead, they would bury him in secret. However, Tobias and Sarah were found to be sleeping and alive by the servant. Raquel and his wife then pray in thanksgivings and blessings.

Raquel then had the servants fill the grave back up and he began to make preparations for a celebration. Raquel plans a two-week celebration and offers adoption into his family for Tobias.

### Comments:

*Asmodeus is exorcised and also bound by the angel. One is thought to wonder if there should be a comparison between the piety of Tobit and that of Raquel who digs a grave (just in case).*

*The prayers in this chapter represent historical Jewish figures that play deep into Jewish spirituality ie: God of our ancestors, Adam and Eve, not because of lust. Notice the only words of Sarah's except during her prayer is Amen, Amen.*

## Chapter 9:

Since the wedding celebration was extended out, Tobias asks Raphael the angel to take two camels and travel to retrieve the money his father has requested. Raphael informed Gabael that Tobias had married and then Gabael returned to Raquel's house to join the wedding celebration. Gabael exclaims that Tobias resembles his father.

### Comments:

*Tobias is now acting as an adult by commanding Raphael to do his bidding. Gabael's blessing now indicates that the two families are now one in the same.*

## Chapter 10:

Back at home while Tobias is gone, Tobit begins to worry that Tobias has experienced some kind of tragedy or that something has happened to Gabael and his money is gone. Anna, Tobias' mother also worried as Tobit tries to comfort her.

After the wedding celebration Tobias requests to return home to Tobit. After a lengthy discussion Raquel allows Tobias to return home with his daughter now Tobias' wife and half of all his property. Raquel blesses them and they set off to return home to Tobit.

### Comments:

*There is a tension in contrast between Tobit and Anna's worry and grief and Raquel and Edna's celebration experience. The phrase "light of my eyes" may be a glance into Tobit's blindness.*

*Although Tobit tries to comfort Anna, unlike the previous discussions Anna does not find comfort or heed Tobit's command.*

*As Tobias sets off, he again is given advice from his father in law at this time about honoring his mother and father and being a good husband.*

## Chapter 11:

Tobias and his entourage are making their way back to Tobit when Raphael suggests going ahead of the entourage and preparing the gall bladder for healing. Anna then sees Tobias and Raphael coming in their direction.

Raphael instructs Tobias on the use of the gall bladder to bring sight back to Tobit's eyes. Tobit's eyesight is healed and Anna is beside herself in happiness at their return. Tobit then prays thanksgivings to God.

Tobit then greets Sarah and acknowledges that God has blessed him and his family by providing his son a wife and healing his eyesight. Then Tobit began a celebration of Tobias' wedding for seven days.

### Comments:

*Gall at the time of this writing was considered a medicine as it contained bitter digestive juices and bile. Previous healers were unable to help Tobit even using similar means.*

*The mention of Holy Angels is interesting as Raphael has not yet revealed himself. Mercy is mentioned which implies there is a feeling of the need for divine punishment and then repentance leading to absolution and healing.*

## Chapter 12:

At the end of the wedding celebration Tobit requests Tobias pay Raphael for his support throughout the journey and to also give him a bonus. Tobias generously offers up his own new possessions in gratitude.

Raphael then invites Tobit and Tobias to praise God and be able to sing praises and share God's good deeds with others. He agrees with Tobit's former spirituality stating righteousness is worth more than material goods.

Raphael then confesses he is the angel that God sent to help them after their prayers. He admits that it was Tobit's willingness to bury the dead and act righteously that persuaded God to test him and then to help him.

As Tobit and Tobias fall on their knees before the angel, Raphael states the typical angelic greeting, "Do not be afraid, peace be with you." Raphael then explains that all his actions were decided on by God and what they witnessed as human responses to food and drink were visions to allow what happened to occur naturally. This led Tobit and Tobias to praise God even more.

### Comments:

*Half of the possessions is one-quarter of Raquel's estate plus half the loan. This is true generosity and is consistent with Tobit's faith system of almsgiving. Raphael appears to avoid women, as he reveals himself to Tobit and Tobias not the wives.*

*God had given Tobit the test of blindness and financial difficulties which then preempted God to heal Tobit. There is no mention if Sarah's difficulties were also a test or just an unfortunate event.*

*"Seven angels" is not represented in any earlier biblical materials. To prostrate in front of angels and as a reaction to epiphanies is an expected response. "Do not be afraid" and the notion that angels do not need to eat to sustain themselves is a reflection on traditional Jewish views that angels do not require food.*

## Chapter 13:

Tobit after having received healing, his son back who has taken a wife and who brought back all his monies and more, praises and prays to God. His prayer begins with praise, acknowledging God, advising those who struggle to turn to God and for those who are sinners to make themselves right before God. Tobit then states he exalts God and ties in his faith in God from generation to generation. He then asks God to make his descendants survive and to bless Jerusalem and Israel forever.

### Comments:

*The very style of Tobit's hymn resembles the Psalms especially 92-118 which were used during the Second Temple period. Tobit also repeats the Deuteronomic view that sin leads to punishment and repentance to redemption.*

*Another theme is that of the in gathering of the exiles which is popular during the Second temple period and becomes a traditional sign of the messianic age. Tobit also speaks of Jerusalem's glory rather than its destruction.*

## Chapter 14:

The last chapter of Tobit has Tobit dying peacefully at one hundred and twelve years old and being buried with honor. We learn that Tobias has seven sons and Tobit before he dies warns Tobias of the wars to come in the future of Assyria and Babylon. Tobit describes the destruction of the Temple and more exile for the people of Israel.

Tobit then goes on to share that God will not forsake his people forever and those that repent and give up error and their idols God will bless. He advises his family to do what is right and to give alms and for Tobias to bury his mother beside Tobit.

Tobit then dies and his wife also dies and they are buried alongside each other. Tobias and his wife and children then return to Media and settle back with Raquel his father in law. Tobias treats his in laws with great respect and then buries them in Ecbatana when their time comes. Tobias inherits both properties and dies as a respected citizen, but before he dies, he learns that his father's warnings were true and he rejoices over Nineveh and blesses the Lord.

### Comments:

*Tobias is obedient to his father's commands. There is no mention of Sarah's fate in the final chapter. Tobit's predictions seem to come true and appropriately the book ends praising God.*