

Book of Tobit

Commentary

By

Father Antonious Fekry

Saint Mary Coptic Orthodox Church

Fagalla, Cairo, Egypt

Saint Mary Coptic Orthodox Church

Vancouver, BC, Canada

17 November 2024

Contents

- Introduction 1
- Chapter 1..... 8
- Chapter 2..... 10
- Chapter 3..... 12
- Chapter 4..... 14
- Chapter 5..... 16
- Chapter 6..... 18
- Chapter 7..... 20
- Chapter 8..... 22
- Chapter 9..... 23
- Chapter 10..... 24
- Chapter 11..... 25
- Chapter 12..... 27
- Chapter 13..... 29
- Chapter 14..... 31

Introduction

* Tobit is a Hebrew word (Tobiah = God is good).

* It is the story of a pious man named Tobit who lived in the Assyrian captivity in Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, but he held on to his piety and works of mercy. And the story of another pious family. But both families face painful trials despite their piety. Why?

1) For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives. (Hebrews 12: 5, 6). The Bible did not mention any sin for either family, but God knows what is inside each soul and what sin He chastens for.

2) God said about Job that he was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil. (Job 1: 1, 8). But we later discovered Job's clear mistake, which was his self-righteousness. God healed him to make him perfect. Perfection for humans is relative perfection. And God allowed the Apostle Paul to have a thorn in his flesh to protect him from exalting (2 Corinthians 12: 7).

3) It was said about Christ, "the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." (Hebrews 2: 10), for suffering, is the path to perfection and the path to ceasing sins (1 Peter 4: 1). But the Angel of the Lord accompanies the suffering person to comfort him, and this is an example that provides a way out with the trial (1 Corinthians 10: 13). But Paul the Apostle's saying about Christ that He is made perfect through suffering is completely different from our saying that we are made perfect through suffering, for Christ did not have to taste any pain, trial, distress, or death, for He is without sin. And suffering and death...etc. are the results of sin. But by His freedom and out of love for us, He wanted to taste suffering and death to be like us in everything, even suffering. As for us, we go through suffering to be purified and to resemble Christ in His purity.

4) And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God. (Romans 8: 28). These two families certainly love God. We find that things for them, even if they start with some pain, end with happiness and joy for everyone.

- The Apostle Paul said that angels are "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation" (Hebrews 1: 14). Here, we see a practical picture of what the Apostle Paul said. God, whose eyes are watching over His children, sends an angel, Raphael, to make things easy for His children. How many times does this happen to us without us realizing it? Perhaps we attribute the solutions to our problems to coincidences, luck, or our intelligence, while God, through His angels, is the one who made things easy for us:

- (Psalm 34: 7) "The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them."
- (Psalm 91: 11) "For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways."
- (Genesis 24: 7) Abraham says to his servant: "He will send His angel before you."
- (Genesis 48: 16) Thus said Jacob. "The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, Bless the lads."

- Raphael is one of the seven archangels who stand before the Lord.

* The devil who was killing the daughter's husbands was said to be called Asmodeus (Tobit 3: 8), meaning the destroyer or the demolisher.

Does Satan kill?

1) Jesus Christ said about Satan that "He was a murderer from the beginning" (John 8: 44). Didn't he cause Adam to fall into sin and die, and with him all the children of Adam died?

2) When Satan was striking Job, God set the limits of the temptation for him. God said to Satan, "Very well, he is in your power; only spare his life." (Job 2: 6). If it weren't for this limit that God set for Satan, he would have killed him.

3) Evil spirits killed and destroyed the herd of swine (Matthew 8: 32).

4) Satan used to throw people into fire and water (Matthew 17: 15). He stirs up wars, and many die.

5) Evil spirits wounded the children of Sceva so that they fled naked. (Acts 19: 16).

6) But this authority of Satan is over "those who deny God from their hearts and devote themselves to their own lusts" (Tobit 6: 16, 17). He had no authority over Tobit and Sarah, who carried out the Angel's words. Therefore, the Angel banished Satan to the desert of Upper Egypt, where pagan worship was practiced. Note that Egypt was referring to the land of slavery. The meaning is: 1) The Angel completely freed Tobit and Sarah from Satan and his slavery, and Satan no longer had any authority over them. 2) The meaning of Satan being banished to the land of slavery is exactly equivalent to the Lord's saying, "I have given you authority to trample on serpents...".

7) Thanks be to God. This authority was over humans before Christ. Through Christ, we have the authority to trample on Satan (Luke 10: 19).

8) Satan used to seize all souls after their death to take them to hades, and the first soul whom he could not do this to was the Lord Christ who said, "for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me." (John 14: 30). Christ did not accept a single sin from his hand. Now, everyone who abides in Christ can say, "The ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in me." And we pray to the Virgin Mother to come to us at this hour to drive out the demons from us (Vespers Prayer). So, we pray thus: "And when my soul departs my body, attend to me, and defeat the conspiracy of the enemies." And in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, we hear that the angels came to carry Lazarus' soul.

There is an objection to using the heart, gall and liver of the whale to defeat Satan and heal Tobias the father from blindness:

1) Some say, "Does gall heal a blind eye?" The answer is from (Isaiah 38: 21), who put a lump of figs on the boil and healed King Hezekiah. And the Lord Christ put clay on the eyes of the blind man, and his eyes were opened. So does fig heal or does clay open eyes?! And so, it is also with the miracles of Elisha.

2) The reason is simply that man = body + spirit. The works of the spirit are invisible to the body, so God allows material things to indicate spiritual things. For example, baptism forgives sins, and through it, we obtain sonship to God, and it is burial with Christ and resurrection. We do not see any of this, so we bury the baptized person in water, then we take him out of the water to indicate burial and resurrection. Baptism is a washing from sins, so we use water to indicate washing. God uses material things with us because we have a material body. We are not just spirits, so we must feel something material. The sensory image nourishes the senses of the body. Thus, the Lord Christ used oil with his disciples to heal diseases (Mark 6: 13) + (James 5: 14). In the same concept, Moses throws a piece of wood into bitter water, and it becomes sweet (Exodus 15: 25), and Elisha throws a stick of wood into the water and the iron floats (2 Kings 6: 6). And flour is thrown into a poisoned pot and the food does not harm anyone (2 Kings 4: 41). There is a question... Wasn't God able to fill King Saul or King David with the Spirit by a word from the Prophet Samuel and without pouring out oil?

3) The Angel said to Tobit, "If you burn the liver of the whale, Satan will be defeated." Is this magic? Absolutely not. Rather, it is a physical form of a spiritual act. The liver and the heart are an expression of feelings, and the Jews used to call feelings "entrails" (Philippians 2: 1 + Colossians 3: 12). Even now, the word heart is used to refer to feelings, so we say (so-and-so has a merciful heart or so-and-so has no heart). Therefore, we understand that the burning of the liver and the heart refers to the inflamed feelings between Tobit and his bride on the first night of marriage, but they overcame these feelings, and it was as if they had burned it. Living without touching each other is very difficult for a young man and woman. This is what was said about Saint John Kama and his wife, whose parents made them marry each other against their will as they wanted to live in virginity. They lived for a period as siblings until they both became monks. "It is beyond human nature that two youths sleep side by side and not be aroused by lust. Who can approach the fire and not be burned?" This is what was said about Saint John Kama and his wife.

As for the bitter taste of gall refers to the cross that Tobit carried in his illness. The sweet smell of myrrh refers to Tobit's endurance with gratitude. God allows the cross to purify us. This is what happened to Tobit. Tobit understood that the pains that befell him were for his discipline and purification (Tobit 11: 17).

4) Why did the Angel ask Tobias not to have intercourse with his wife for three days? There was a demon fighting the girl and killing her husbands. So how do you fight the demon? This question was answered by Jesus Christ, "This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting." What is fasting? It is depriving the body of its natural desire for food. The Angel instructs Tobit to deprive himself of his natural desire for his wife through prayer. This is a type of fasting. Therefore, the Angel's advice to Tobit was the same as Jesus Christ's advice to us, on how to defeat the demon: 1) Deprive him of his weapon (by fasting and abstaining from physical desires) + 2) Prayer, which is an effective weapon. We connect with God through prayer, so the demon cannot resist the God within us.

5) Jesus Christ defeated Satan by the same means; He fasted and refused to ask the Father to turn stones into bread, overcoming the stomach's desire for food, so Jesus said that by this He bound Satan (Mark 3: 27) "But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered." Satan's weapons are worldly pleasures (money/sexuality/food and drink...), and that is why Satan was called "the ruler of this world" (John 14: 30). Therefore, Satan said to Jesus Christ: I will give you all these: "All these I will give you" (Matthew 4: 9). Whoever rejects the temptations of the world deprives Satan of his weapons as if he has bound him. This is what Tobit did when he rejected his right to the pleasures of the world, so he bound Satan and Satan is overpowered. Jesus Christ used the expression overpowered: "But when one stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his plunder." (Luke 11: 22).

6) What does it mean for Satan to be bound in the land of Upper Egypt? Egypt, in the Bible, is the land where God's people were enslaved. Upper Egypt is the seat of idolatry (Luxor = Thebes), which is idol worship. The meaning is that Satan was enslaved to Tobit and Sarah = "I have given you authority to tread on serpents..."

7) The burning of the liver and heart was an expression of what Tobit and his wife did to kill their feelings and desires to bind Satan, and thus, they defeated him.

8) "But the second night thou shalt be admitted into the society of the holy Patriarchs." (Tobit 6: 20). This is what the Lord Christ said to the disciples when they returned, rejoicing that the demons had submitted to them. "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." (Luke 10: 20). There is a higher degree than demon submission, which is the company of the holy fathers in heaven. When they endured for one night, they bound the devil and defeated him. On the second night, their degree increased with their increased endurance. On the third night, and the number 3 is the number of perfection, the problem ended completely, and blessings filled their lives. Blessing means the presence of God in my life and His fellowship with me in everything (2 Corinthians 13: 14). The number 3 refers to the Trinity, and the third hypostasis, the Holy Spirit. It also refers to the resurrection and life, for Christ rose on the third day, and thus, the number 3 also becomes a reference to the resurrection from the death of sin so that man may live. If they had fellowship with the saints in heaven on the second day, then on the third day, they had fellowship with the Holy Spirit, and thus they had blessing and life.

9) For the above reasons, the Church advises newly married couples to abstain from sexual intercourse for the first three days, as a firstfruits to God, to expel demons from their lives, and as a blessing for their whole life. In the old days in the Church, the bride and groom would come to confession and receive communion so that there would be in spiritual unity. The marriage would occur on Saturday night, the hymns would continue all night, and they would receive communion on Sunday. The priest would go to them on Monday to pray for their absolution, and then they would begin physical intercourse.

- **The book's author:** It is most likely Tobit himself, as the Angel commanded them, " Write down all these things that have happened to you." (Tobit 12: 20).

- **The time of writing the book:** During the captivity of Israel in the land of Assyria. The captivity was in the year 722 BC; therefore, the writing was after this date. The book was written in the land of captivity. It was a reason for comfort for the captives, as they understood that God cares for them and sends His angels to protect them if they live in godliness.

- Tobit, due to his holiness, God guided him to a righteous wife whom He preserved for him. And Sarah, due to her holiness, God allowed Satan to kill her husbands because they were either pagans or wicked and did not deserve this saint. While Satan was planning destruction, sorrow and depression for the holy daughter and pain and even blindness for Tobit, God was bringing sweetness out of the strong. Satan was strong over the seven husbands because they were not righteous, as the Angel said, "But those who marry and banish God from their hearts and devote themselves to their own lust, like the horse and the mule, who have no understanding, over them Satan has power" (Tobit 6: 17).

The Angel Raphael: The meaning of his name is God's healing. When he appeared to Tobit, he was in the form of a young man so that he would not be disturbed, and he called himself "I am Azariah, the son of the great Hananiah, one of your relatives." Some said, "Does the angel lie?" He said about himself, "I am from the children of Israel... and I was staying with our brother Gabelus." Did he lie about this?

1) Azariah = God helps with power, and Hananiah = God's compassion and these great words refer to YHWH. The meaning is, I am the servant of the great God, Who, from His compassion, sent me with power to provide you with a great service. The power of God, which stems from His great compassion, will heal Tobit, save Sarah, cast out demons, and enrich them. Truly, God does not remain in debt. Tobit served Him, and God will return to him many times over. The name mentioned by the Angel here is not his name but rather an expression of a message that he will carry out.

2) It happened many times in the Bible that angels appeared in human form. Abraham hosted angels while they were in human form, and he did not know (Hebrews 13: 2). Thus, the angels appeared as humans before Lot.

3) His saying that he was from the children of Israel and from the tribe of Naphtali means that he was charged with guarding the people of God in this place, i.e. his saying from the children of Israel means coming from the children of Israel, and the tribe of Naphtali means I came from there. See (Exodus 23: 20; Daniel 10: 12, 13, 20). Among those who provided him with services was Gabelus = I was staying with our brother Gabelus.

An explanation by His Grace Bishop Raphael of a part of the Midnight Praise (the Psalmody):

This praise is specific to the angels and says:

Michael is the first.

Gabriel is the second.

Rafael is the third.

A symbol of the Trinity.

We notice that the Coptic Doxology in the Psalmody is full of sound Christian doctrines; we see an example here. To understand the meaning, let us see the meanings of the names of the angels:

Michael = None like God. This refers to the Father, the first hypostasis.

Gabriel = The might of God or the power of God. This refers to the Son, the second hypostasis.

Raphael = the healing of God. This refers to the Holy Spirit, the third hypostasis, Who heals our nature.

We note that God the Father is none like Him, and no one is similar to Him in His power and greatness. In His incomparable love He gave His only Son to save mankind, "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8: 32). And the Son is the power of God (1 Corinthians 1: 24). And the Holy Spirit was sent to heal and renew our nature, and this is what the Apostle Paul said about: "For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration (Baptism derives its power from the power of the blood of Christ) and renewing of the Holy Spirit (Who heals our nature), whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3: 3-7).

We see an example of God's healing of mankind in the healing of Tobit, the Father and the deliverance of Sarah from the wars of Satan and her psychological suffering.

We see the Angel accompanying Tobit on his way, which indicates the Holy Spirit's accompaniment of us in all matters of our lives, just as the cloud led the people of Israel in the wilderness. We hear about the Holy Spirit's fellowship with us in all matters of our lives in the apostolic blessing, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen." (2 Corinthians 13: 14).

There is another trilogy in this book:

Tobit the father - Tobit the son - the Angel Raphael

The father and the son have the same name Tobit. If we understand that they symbolize the Father and the Son, who are equal in essence, then the Angel Raphael is the third among the angels, referring to the Holy Spirit, the third person. As for Sarah, she refers to the Church.

Note that the Angel Raphael is the one who guided Tobit and led him to Sarah and asked him to marry her so that they would become one body. This is the work of the Holy Spirit now: to establish the Church in Christ the Son so that the Church would become the body of Christ (Ephesians 5: 30).

We note that the Angel Raphael is the one who brought Tobit as a groom for Sarah, the bride, just as the Holy Spirit prepared a body for Christ in the womb of the Virgin to be a groom for the Church.

Chapter 1

(Verses 1-25): **Tobias of the tribe and city of Nephtali, (which is in the upper parts of Galilee above Naasson, beyond the way that leadeth to the west, having on the right hand the city of Sephet,) 2 When he was made captive in the days of Salmanasar king of the Assyrians, even in his captivity, forsook not the way of truth, 3 But every day gave all he could get to his brethren his fellow captives, that were of his kindred. 4 And when he was younger than any of the tribe of Nephtali, yet did he no childish thing in his work. 5 Moreover when all went to the golden calves which Jeroboam king of Israel had made, he alone fled the company of all, 6 And went to Jerusalem to the temple of the Lord, and there adored the Lord God of Israel, offering faithfully all his firstfruits, and his tithes, 7 So that in the third year he gave all his tithes to the proselytes, and strangers. 8 These and such like things did he observe when but a boy according to the law of God. 9 But when he was a man, he took to wife Anna of his own tribe, and had a son by her, whom he called after his own name, 10 And from his infancy he taught him to fear God, and to abstain from all sin. 11 And when by the captivity he with his wife and his son and all his tribe was come to the city of Ninive, 12 (When all ate of the meats of the Gentiles) he kept his soul and never was defiled with their meats. 13 And because he was mindful of the Lord with all his heart, God gave him favour in the sight of Salmanasar the king. 14 And he gave him leave to go whithersoever he would, with liberty to do whatever he had a mind. 15 He therefore went to all that were in captivity, and gave them wholesome admonitions. 16 And when he was come to Rages a city of the Medes, and had ten talents of silver of that with which he had been honoured by the king: 17 And when amongst a great multitude of his kindred, he saw Gabelus in want, who was one of his tribe, taking a note of his hand he gave him the aforesaid sum of money. 18 But after a long time, Salmanasar the king being dead, when Sennacherib his son, who reigned in his place, had a hatred for the children of Israel: 19 Tobias daily went among all his kindred, and comforted them, and distributed to every one as he was able, out of his goods: 20 He fed the hungry, and gave clothes to the naked, and was careful to bury the dead, and they that were slain. 21 And when king Sennacherib was come back, fleeing from Judea by reason of the slaughter that God had made about him for his blasphemy, and being angry slew many of the children of Israel, Tobias buried their bodies. 22 But when it was told the king, he commanded him to be slain, and took away all his substance. 23 But Tobias fleeing naked away with his son and with his wife, lay concealed, for many loved him. 24 But after forty-five days, the king was killed by his own sons. 25 And Tobias returned to his house, and all his substance was restored to him.**

Verse (1): **Nephtali** = from the tribes of Israel, and the word means wrestling. And **Naasson** = means serpent. The meaning is that we continuously struggle with the serpent Satan. But because Tobias is a holy man, we hear Tobias.. **of Nephtali.. above Naasson**. This is the promise of the Lord Christ: " Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions" (Luke 10: 19).

Verses (2, 3): **he was made captive in the days of Salmanasar** = (see 2 Kings 17: 3) **he was made captive**: he was taken into captivity and removed from his land, and the captivity took place in the year 722 BC. The captivity occurred in several stages, except that Samaria as a capital fell, and its people were

taken captive in 722 BC. The book mentions Tobias's holiness and righteousness even after his captivity. Holiness does not only appear within the walls of the church but also outside the church.

Verses (4-8): Tobias, from his youth while still in Israel, rejected the wrong worship and used to go to Jerusalem adhering to the correct doctrine, despite the hardship this caused him in travel. Notice his concern for those in need.

Verses (11-12): Tobias did not say, "Since I am among the nations, I will do as they do."

Verses (13-17): God rewards the faithful. The king allowed him freedom. But we find that he used it to serve his people.

The Kingdom of Media: **a city of the Medes** = East of Assyria and North of Persia (currently Iran) and was under Assyria then.

Rages = History says that Seleucus Nicanor built Rages in 300 BC. So, how is it mentioned here? The reason is that Rages was a small neighbourhood or a small suburb of the city of Achmata. Nicanor made it a large city or renovated it after it was destroyed. In some versions, Achmata is written instead of Rages.

ten talents of silver = one talent of silver = 240 pounds. Tobias gave the money to a needy person. These are the morals of Tobias.

Verses (18-23): The story of Sennacherib is found in (2 Kings 18, 19) and the story of his two sons killing him (2 Kings 19: 37). Sennacherib's persecution of the Jews was most likely after the angel killed 185,000 men from his army, and his return in shame. We notice the Jews' were concerned in burying the bodies of their dead. So when no one buried the body of King Jehoiakim, the book said about him, " He shall be buried with the burial of a donkey" (Jeremiah 22: 19). Tobias' courage is shown in burying the bodies, thus challenging the king.

Verses (24-25): God takes revenge on the wicked. His god Nisroch did not protect him. King Esarhaddon came in Sennacherib's place, and there was no enmity between him and the Jews, so he returned Tobias' possessions and Tobiah returned to his home.

Chapter 2

(Verses 1-23): **But after this, when there was a festival of the Lord, and a good dinner was prepared in Tobias's house, 2 He said to his son: Go, and bring some of our tribe that fear God, to feast with us. 3 And when he had gone, returning he told him, that one of the children of Israel lay slain in the street. And he forthwith leaped up from his place at the table, and left his dinner, and came fasting to the body: 4 And taking it up carried it privately to his house, that after the sun was down, he might bury him cautiously. 5 And when he had hid the body, he ate bread with mourning and fear, 6 Remembering the word which the Lord spoke by Amos the prophet: Your festival days shall be turned into lamentation and mourning. 7 So when the sun was down, he went and buried him. 8 Now all his neighbours blamed him, saying: Once already commandment was given for thee to be slain because of this matter, and thou didst scarce escape the sentence of death, and dost thou again bury the dead? 9 But Tobias fearing God more than the king, carried off the bodies of them that were slain, and hid them in his house, and at midnight buried them. 10 Now it happened one day, that being wearied with burying, he came to his house, and cast himself down by the wall and slept, 11 And as he was sleeping, hot dung out of a swallow's nest fell upon his eyes, and he was made blind. 12 Now this trial the Lord therefore permitted to happen to him, that an example might be given to posterity of his patience, as also of holy Job. 13 For whereas he had always feared God from his infancy, and kept his commandments, he repined not against God because the evil of blindness had befallen him, 14 But continued immoveable in the fear of God, giving thanks to God all the days of his life. 15 For as the kings insulted over holy Job: so his relations and kinsmen mocked at his life, saying: 16 Where is thy hope, for which thou gavest alms, and buriedst the dead? 17 But Tobias rebuked them, saying: Speak not so: 18 For we are the children of the saints, and look for that life which God will give to those that never change their faith from him. 19 Now Anna his wife went daily to weaving work, and she brought home what she could get for their living by the labour of her hands. 20 Whereby it came to pass, that she received a young kid, and brought it home: 21 And when her husband heard it bleating, he said: Take heed, lest perhaps it be stolen: restore ye it to its owners, for it is not lawful for us either to eat or to touch any thing that cometh by theft. 22 At these words his wife being angry answered: It is evident thy hope is come to nothing, and thy alms now appear. 23 And with these, and other such like words she upbraided him.**

Verses (1-4): We see the greatness of Tobias in the following:

1. As soon as he heard of a body, he left the food, the feast, and his guests and went to carry the body.
2. He kept the body in his house.
3. He exposed himself to punishment from the king.
4. All this because he adhered to the law. Also, because of his adherence to the law, he made the feast to celebrate the feast day of the Lord. It also appears that the son Tobias was righteous like his father, as he quickly went to tell his father about the presence of the body, for the father is a role model for his sons.

Verses (5, 6): In his piety, he did not blame God for leaving his Jewish people tormented by the king but attributed this to the people's sin and remembered the prophecy of Amos (Amos 8: 10).

Verse (11): **hot dung** = feces.

Verse (14): God allowed this righteous man to be tested to be perfected as what we said in the introduction. Here, we see how we benefit from the test that God allows = **But continued immovable in the fear of God, giving thanks to God all the days of his life.** This is the same thing that Paul the Apostle said (Colossians 2: 7).

Verses (15-18): Among the battles of the devil is to use our friends and relatives (who are not steadfast in God or do not understand) to cast doubt on God's love (like Job's wife). But Tobias had two closed external eyes and two internal eyes with which he could see the Lord and not doubt Him.

Verses (19-22): His wife worked as a weaver in a workshop out of the need for money. Perhaps she bought the sheep or took it as a gift.

Chapter 3

(Verses 1-25): **Then Tobias sighed, and began to pray with tears, 2 Saying: Thou art just, O Lord, and all thy judgments are just, and all thy ways mercy, and truth, and judgment: 3 And now, O Lord, think of me, and take not revenge of my sins, neither remember my offenses, nor those of my parents. 4 For we have not obeyed thy commandments, therefore are we delivered to spoil and to captivity, and death, and are made a fable, and a reproach to all nations, amongst which thou hast scattered us. 5 And now, O Lord, great are thy judgments, because we have not done according to thy precepts, and have not walked sincerely before thee: 6 And now, O Lord, do with me according to thy will, and command my spirit to be received in peace: for it is better for me to die, than to live. 7 Now it happened on the same day, that Sara daughter of Raguel, in Rages a city of the Medes, received a reproach from one of her father's servant maids, 8 Because she had been given to seven husbands, and a devil named Asmodeus had killed them, at their first going in unto her. 9 So when she reproveth the maid for her fault, she answered her, saying: May we never see son, or daughter of thee upon the earth, thou murderer of thy husbands. 10 Wilt thou kill me also, as thou hast already killed seven husbands? At these words she went into an upper chamber of her house: and for three days and three nights did neither eat nor drink: 11 But continuing in prayer with tears besought God, that he would deliver her from this reproach. 12 And it came to pass on the third day, when she was making an end of her prayer, blessing the Lord, 13 She said: Blessed is thy name, O God of our fathers: who when thou hast been angry, wilt shew mercy, and in the time of tribulation forgivest the sins of them that call upon thee. 14 To thee, O Lord, I turn my face, to thee I direct my eyes. 15 I beg, O Lord, that thou loose me from the bond of this reproach, or else take me away from the earth. 16 Thou knowest, O Lord, that I never coveted a husband, and have kept my soul clean from all lust. 17 Never have I joined myself with them that play: neither have I made myself partaker with them that walk in lightness. 18 But a husband I consented to take, with thy fear, not with my lust. 19 And either I was unworthy of them, or they perhaps were not worthy of me: because perhaps thou hast kept me for another man. 20 For thy counsel is not in man's power. 21 But this every one is sure of that worshippeth thee, that his life, if it be under trial, shall be crowned: and if it be under tribulation, it shall be delivered: and if it be under correction, it shall be allowed to come to thy mercy. 22 For thou art not delighted in our being lost: because after a storm thou makest a calm, and after tears and weeping thou pourest in joyfulness. 23 Be thy name, O God of Israel, blessed for ever. 24 At that time the prayers of them both were heard in the sight of the glory of the most high God: 25 And the holy angel of the Lord, Raphael was sent to heal them both, whose prayers at one time were rehearsed in the sight of the Lord.**

Verses (1-6): Here we see the greatness of Tobit, for he attributed their suffering to their sins, thus justifying God, and he did not blame God. **and are made a fable** = a diminutive of an event, meaning something trivial. **command my spirit to be received in peace** = for a person to seek death for himself is a sin because he despairs of God's mercy. But God, who knows the weakness of human nature, forgives these mistakes. He forgave Elijah when he fell the same fall (1 Kings 19: 4). Let us understand that when Paul said, "having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better." (Philippians 1: 23), this is different from seeking death in despair of healing:

1. Paul the Apostle says, "which is far better." So what he is in is good, but he seeks the better, so he is not desperate, but rather his heart desires to see Christ.

2. Paul said so during his speech that he is confused, as he wants to live to serve God and glorify His name, and he wants to go to Christ. He was caught between two things, so he left the decision in the hands of the Lord and said, "Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you." meaning as long as God finds that I have work to do, I will remain to glorify God's name.

Verses (7-23): Here, we find another family living in holiness and having another problem. We find the daughter praying. Her problem did not push her to despair but to prayer. That is why the fathers said (Do not put the problem between you and God, but put God between you and the problem). Therefore, after her fasting and prayer, she blessed the Lord (**blessing the Lord**) (verse 12). She did not stop praying until she felt comforted. Let us notice the role of Satan: Just as he stirred up Tobias's friends and his wife to reproach him, he used the maid to reproach Sarah. Sarah received comfort through her prayer because she did not complain to God, and she confessed her sin and humility, saying, "**And either I was unworthy of them**" and her surrender to God = "**perhaps thou hast kept me for another man + For thy counsel is not in man's power.**"

As Tobias asked for death for himself in his distress, so did Sarah = **I beg, O Lord, that thou loose me from the bond of this reproach, or else take me away from the earth.** However, death is not a solution to problems, for God intervenes miraculously and turns pain into good. So what if Elijah died in his distress? Then he would have lost the chariot of fire carrying him, and let us see the good that God had prepared for Tobias and Sarah.

Verse (24, 25): After the trials bore fruit and God saw the perfection of the two families, here He sends His angel to end the two problems.

Chapter 4

(Verses 1-23): **Therefore when Tobias thought that his prayer was heard that he might die, he called to him Tobias his son, 2 And said to him: Hear, my son, the words of my mouth, and lay them as a foundation in thy heart. 3 When God shall take my soul, thou shalt bury my body: and thou shalt honour thy mother all the days of her life: 4 For thou must be mindful what and how great perils she suffered for thee in her womb. 5 And when she also shall have ended the time of her life, bury her by me. 6 And all the days of thy life have God in thy mind: and take heed thou never consent to sin, nor transgress the commandments of the Lord our God. 7 Give alms out of thy substance, and turn not away thy face from any poor person: for so it shall come to pass that the face of the Lord shall not be turned from thee. 8 According to thy ability be merciful. 9 If thou have much give abundantly: if thou have a little, take care even so to bestow willingly a little. 10 For thus thou storest up to thyself a good reward for the day of necessity. 11 For alms deliver from all sin, and from death, and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness. 12 Alms shall be a great confidence before the most high God, to all them that give it. 13 Take heed to keep thyself, my son, from all fornication, and beside thy wife never endure to know a crime. 14 Never suffer pride to reign in thy mind, or in thy words: for from it all perdition took its beginning. 15 If any man hath done any work for thee, immediately pay him his hire, and let not the wages of thy hired servant stay with thee at all. 16 See thou never do to another what thou wouldst hate to have done to thee by another. 17 Eat thy bread with the hungry and the needy, and with thy garments cover the naked. 18 Lay out thy bread, and thy wine upon the burial of a just man, and do not eat and drink thereof with the wicked. 19 Seek counsel always of a wise man. 20 Bless God at all times: and desire of him to direct thy ways, and that all thy counsels may abide in him. 21 I tell thee also, my son, that I lent ten talents of silver, while thou wast yet a child, to Gabelus, in Rages a city of the Medes, and I have a note of his hand with me: 22 Now therefore inquire how thou mayst go to him, and receive of him the foresaid sum of money, and restore to him the note of his hand. 23 Fear not, my son: we lead indeed a poor life, but we shall have many good things if we fear God, and depart from all sin, and do that which is good.**

Verses (1, 2): Tobit thought that God would solve his problem by causing him to die, but God was preparing a better end. God gives us "above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3: 20).

Verses (3-5): **When God shall take my soul** = It was indeed Satan who took souls to throw them into hades, but the children of God felt even in the Old Testament that they are in God's hand, and as for this matter of hades, it is a temporary situation. He who loves God does not imagine that God will abandon him; if that happens, it will only be temporarily.

Verses (7-12): Tobias is concerned to recommend almsgiving to his son. Tobias the father had an experience that the Lord Christ said, "for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me." "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come

to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' (Matthew 25: 35-40). He felt that he was meeting God personally in his almsgiving, so he did not want to deprive his son of this blessing. Tobias says that **For alms deliver from all sin, and from death** = God protects him so that he does not fall, and if he falls, He forgives him by directing his heart to repentance.

Verse (14): It is the same as what the Apostle Paul said, "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." (1 Corinthians 10: 12). And with the same thought, the wise man said, "Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall." (Proverbs 16: 18).

Verses (15-20): **Lay out thy bread, and thy wine upon the burial of a just man, and do not eat and drink thereof with the wicked:** This custom seems to mean to offer alms for the souls of the departed to the poor and needy. Tobias indicates to his son that it is better for him to spend his money this way so that the poor benefit from it rather than spend it on gatherings and feasts with the wicked.

Chapter 5

(Verses 1-28): **Then Tobias answered his father, and said: I will do all things, father, which thou hast commanded me. 2 But how I shall get this money, I cannot tell; he knoweth me not, and I know not him: what token shall I give him? nor did I ever know the way which leadeth thither. 3 Then his father answered him, and said: I have a note of his hand with me, which when thou shalt shew him, he will presently pay it. 4 But go now, and seek thee out some faithful man, to go with thee for his hire: that thou mayst receive it, while I yet live. 5 Then Tobias going forth, found a beautiful young man, standing girded, and as it were ready to walk. 6 And not knowing that he was an angel of God, he saluted him, and said: From whence art thou, good young man? 7 But he answered: Of the children of Israel. And Tobias said to him: Knowest thou the way that leadeth to the country of the Medes? 8 And he answered: I know it: and I have often walked through all the ways thereof, and I have abode with Gabelus our brother, who dwelleth at Rages a city of the Medes, which is situate in the mount of Ecbatana. 9 And Tobias said to him: Stay for me, I beseech thee, till I tell these same things to my father. 10 Then Tobias going in told all these things to his father. Upon which his father being in admiration, desired that he would come in unto him. 11 So going in he saluted him, and said: Joy be to thee always. 12 And Tobias said: What manner of joy shall be to me, who sit in darkness, and see not the light of heaven? 13 And the young man said to him: Be of good courage, thy cure from God is at hand. 14 And Tobias said to him: Canst thou conduct my son to Gabelus at Rages, a city of the Medes? and when thou shalt return, I will pay thee thy hire. 15 And the angel said to him: I will conduct him thither, and bring him back to thee. 16 And Tobias said to him: I pray thee, tell me, of what family, or what tribe art thou? 17 And Raphael the angel answered: Dost thou seek the family of him thou hirest, or the hired servant himself to go with thy son? 18 But lest I should make thee uneasy, I am Azarias the son of the great Ananias. 19 And Tobias answered: Thou art of a great family. But I pray thee be not angry that I desired to know thy family. 20 And the angel said to him: I will lead thy son safe, and bring him to thee again safe. 21 And Tobias answering, said: May you have a good journey, and God be with you in your way, and his angel accompany you. 22 Then all things being ready, that were to be carried in their journey, Tobias bade his father and his mother farewell, and they set out both together. 23 And when they were departed, his mother began to weep, and to say: Thou hast taken the staff of our old age, and sent him away from us. 24 I wish the money for which thou hast sent him, had never been. 25 For poverty was sufficient for us, that we might account it as riches, that we saw our son. 26 And Tobias said to her: Weep not, our son will arrive thither safe, and will return safe to us, and thy eyes shall see him. 27 For I believe that the good angel of God doth accompany him, and doth order all things well that are done about him, so that he shall return to us with joy. 28 At these words his mother ceased weeping, and held her peace.**

Verses (1-4): It seems that Tobias, the son, was not familiar with the meaning of the note, so he explained to him what the note was. At that time, when a person travelled on the road he did not know, he would take a guide with him for a fee, as there were no signs on the roads.

Verses (5-9): **Of the children of Israel**= This means that I am present among the children of Israel, so I am charged with protecting them. I am of the children of Israel and reside among them, which does not

mean that I am from the children of Israel. The angel used this formula to reassure Tobias, the young man who was afraid of travelling. To make him feel more reassured, he said, **and I have abode with Gabelus our brother**= It is not difficult for the angel to have visited his house. But he reassures the frightened young man that he knows Gabelus, whom he intends to visit. This is a quick response from God to the prayer of Tobias, the father.

Verse (13): The angel gives Tobias joy that God has answered him and will open his eyes and will not take him away. The divine solution is always more wonderful than what we think and it may be very far from our minds.

Verse (17): **Dost thou seek the family of him thou hirest, or the hired servant himself to go with thy son?** = The angel does not want to announce his person, but he announced his message (the introduction).

Verses (23-28): **And when they were departed**= that is, they disappeared from sight. **that we might account it as riches, that we saw our son** = seeing the child in the mother's eyes is more important than material wealth.

Chapter 6

(Verses 1-22): **And Tobias went forward, and the dog followed him, and he lodged the first night by the river of Tigris. 2 And he went out to wash his feet, and behold a monstrous fish came up to devour him. 3 And Tobias being afraid of him, cried out with a loud voice, saying: Sir, he cometh upon me. 4 And the angel said to him: Take him by the gill, and draw him to thee. And when he had done so, he drew him out upon the land, and he began to pant before his feet. 5 Then the angel said to him: Take out the entrails of the fish, and lay up his heart, and his gall, and his liver for thee: for these are necessary for useful medicines. 6 And when he had done so, he roasted the flesh thereof, and they took it with them in the way: the rest they salted as much as might serve them, till they came to Rages the city of the Medes. 7 Then Tobias asked the angel, and said to him: I beseech thee, brother Azarias, tell me what remedies are these things good for, which thou hast bid me keep of the fish? 8 And the angel, answering, said to him: If thou put a little piece of its heart upon coals, the smoke thereof driveth away all kind of devils, either from man or from woman, so that they come no more to them. 9 And the gall is good for anointing the eyes, in which there is a white speck, and they shall be cured. 10 And Tobias said to him: Where wilt thou that we lodge? 11 And the angel answering, said: Here is one whose name is Raguel, a near kinsman of thy tribe, and he hath a daughter named Sara, but he hath no son nor any other daughter beside her. 12 All his substance is due to thee, and thou must take her to wife. 13 Ask her therefore of her father, and he will give her thee to wife. 14 Then Tobias answered, and said: I hear that she hath been given to seven husbands, and they all died: moreover I have heard, that a devil killed them. 15 Now I am afraid, lest the same thing should happen to me also: and whereas I am the only child of my parents, I should bring down their old age with sorrow to hell. 16 Then the angel Raphael said to him: Hear me, and I will shew thee who they are, over whom the devil can prevail. 17 For they who in such manner receive matrimony, as to shut out God from themselves, and from their mind, and to give themselves to their lust, as the horse and mule, which have not understanding, over them the devil hath power. 18 But thou when thou shalt take her, go into the chamber, and for three days keep thyself continent from her, and give thyself to nothing else but to prayers with her. 19 And on that night lay the liver of the fish on the fire, and the devil shall be driven away. 20 But the second night thou shalt be admitted into the society of the holy Patriarchs. 21 And the third night thou shalt obtain a blessing that sound children may be born of you. 22 And when the third night is past, thou shalt take the virgin with the fear of the Lord, moved rather for love of children than for lust, that in the seed of Abraham thou mayst obtain a blessing in children.**

Verses (1-4): They slept the first night by the river. **the dog followed him**= The scene here is a very nice scene that brings back the image of the first paradise, as paradise was in the land of the Tigris and Euphrates (Genesis 2: 10-14), and in it, man was a friend of the angels, and the animals were under his authority. And here we are before the same image: the river is the Tigris River, an angel accompanies the man, and the dog (the animal) follows him, i.e., under his authority. **lodged the first night** = The first place they descended, rested, and slept. **and behold a monstrous fish came up to devour him**= This is a picture of what happened in paradise when the serpent attacked Eve and Adam, wanting them to die. **Sir**= You who guard and lead me. Also, this monstrous fish that attacked Tobias symbolizes the distress that attacks the children of God, and God brings out sweetness from the strong. The monstrous fish is a

symbol of Satan, who wants to draw Tobias into the water so that he drowns, and the water here symbolizes the world. But with the help and guidance of the angel, he did not enter the water and die, rather, he drew the devil, which is a sign of the final destruction of the devil, rather, healing came out of the fish. This is what happened, for the devil was used by God as a tool to discipline mankind (1 Corinthians 5: 5 + 2 Corinthians 12: 7-9).

Verses (10-13): The angel tells Tobias that Raguel is related to Tobias's family.

Verses (14-17): The news of the death of Sarah's husbands had reached Tobias's family, and this was most likely because Tobias, the father, was going around serving the Jews everywhere, so he may have passed by his relative Raguel and learned the news.

I should bring down their old age with sorrow to hell = This belief existed, but as righteous people, they knew that they were in God's hand. So Tobias said, "and command my spirit to be received in peace" (Tobit 3:6) + "When God shall take my soul" (Tobit 4:3). We notice that Satan has power over the lustful who do not know God = **shut out God from themselves**, meaning that God does not exist in their lives.

Verses (18-22): The weapon against Satan (fasting, represented here by not responding to the desires of the body) + prayer = **keep thyself continent from her, and give thyself to nothing else but to prayers with her**= this is what defeats Satan, not burning the liver of the whale. As for to **lay the liver of the fish on the fire**, it symbolizes burning their desires, or as if they killed them.

Chapter 7

(Verses 1-20): **And they went in to Raguel, and Raguel received them with joy. 2 And Raguel looking upon Tobias, said to Anna his wife: How like is this young man to my cousin? 3 And when he had spoken these words, he said: Whence are ye young men our brethren? 4 But they said: We are of the tribe of Nephtali, of the captive of Ninive. 5 And Raguel said to them: Do you know Tobias my brother? And they said: We know him. 6 And when he was speaking many good things of him, the angel said to Raguel: Tobias concerning whom thou inquirest is this young man's father. 7 And Raguel went to him, and kissed him with tears, and weeping upon his neck, said: A blessing be upon thee, my son, because thou art the son of a good and most virtuous man. 8 And Anna his wife, and Sara their daughter wept. 9 And after they had spoken, Raguel commanded a sheep to be killed, and a feast to be prepared. And when he desired them to sit down to dinner, 10 Tobias said: I will not eat nor drink here this day, unless thou first grant me my petition, and promise to give me Sara thy daughter. 11 Now when Raguel heard this he was afraid, knowing what had happened to those seven husbands, that went in unto her: and he began to fear lest it might happen to him also in like manner: and as he was in suspense, and gave no answer to his petition, 12 The angel said to him: Be not afraid to give her to this man, for to him who feareth God is thy daughter due to be his wife: therefore another could not have her. 13 Then Raguel said: I doubt not but God hath regarded my prayers and tears in his sight. 14 And I believe he hath therefore made you come to me, that this maid might be married to one of her own kindred, according to the law of Moses: and now doubt not but I will give her to thee. 15 And taking the right hand of his daughter, he gave it into the right hand of Tobias, saying: The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob be with you, and may he join you together, and fulfill his blessing in you. 16 And taking paper they made a writing of the marriage. 17 And afterwards they made merry, blessing God. 18 And Raguel called to him Anna his wife, and bade her prepare another chamber. 19 And she brought Sara her daughter in thither, and she wept. 20 And she said to her: Be of good cheer, my daughter: the Lord of heaven give thee joy for the trouble thou hast undergone.**

Verses (1-5): From the blessing of welcoming strangers, Abraham and Lot welcomed angels. Raguel received an angel and a husband for his daughter, who solved her problem. We understand that Tobias was very close to Raguel = **Tobias my brother (Tobias concerning whom thou inquirest is this young man's father)**.

Verses (10-14): Raguel's trembling shows his love for Tobias, as he did not think about his daughter's happiness but about the possibility of Tobias's death. The angel reassures Raguel that the death of the seven husbands was because Sarah should be Tobias's wife, and he deserves this as he is not a lustful husband like the others.

Verses (15-20): We find here in these verses the same current ritual [1] the father hands his daughter over to her bridegroom [2] (He represents the priest here) blesses the marriage in the name of God [3] writing a marriage contract [4] a feast of joy [5] designating a separate chamber (the man leaves his

father and mother and clings to his wife) [6] **blessing God** after the feast without dancing or debauchery, so God blessed them.

Chapter 8

(Verses 1-24): **And after they had supped, they brought in the young man to her. 2 And Tobias remembering the angel's word, took out of his bag part of the liver, and laid it upon burning coals. 3 Then the angel Raphael took the devil, and bound him in the desert of upper Egypt. 4 Then Tobias exhorted the virgin, and said to her: Sara, arise, and let us pray to God to day, and to morrow, and the next day: because for these three nights we are joined to God: and when the third night is over, we will be in our own wedlock. 5 For we are the children of saints, and we must not be joined together like heathens that know not God. 6 So they both arose, and prayed earnestly both together that health might be given them, 7 And Tobias said: Lord God of our father, may the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and the fountains, and the rivers, and all thy creatures that are in them, bless thee. 8 Thou madest Adam of the slime of the earth, and gavest him Eve for a helper. 9 And now, Lord, thou knowest, that not for fleshly lust do I take my sister to wife, but only for the love of posterity, in which thy name may be blessed for ever and ever. 10 Sara also said: Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us, and let us grow old both together in health. 11 And it came to pass about the cockcrowing, Raguel ordered his servants to be called for, and they went with him together to dig a grave. 12 For he said: Lest perhaps it may have happened to him, in like manner as it did to the other seven husbands, that went in unto her. 13 And when they had prepared the pit, Raguel went back to his wife, and said to her: 14 Send one of thy maids, and let her see if he be dead, that I may bury him before it be day. 15 So she sent one of her maidservants, who went into the chamber, and found them safe and sound, sleeping both together. 16 And returning she brought the good news: and Raguel and Anna his wife blessed the Lord, 17 And said: We bless thee, O Lord God of Israel, because it hath not happened as we suspected. 18 For thou hast shewn thy mercy to us, and hast shut out from us the enemy that persecuted us. 19 And thou hast taken pity upon two only children. Make them, O Lord, bless thee more fully: and to offer up to thee a sacrifice of thy praise, and of their health, that all nations may know, that thou alone art God in all the earth. 20 And immediately Raguel commanded his servants, to fill up the pit they had made, before it was day. 21 And he spoke to his wife to make ready a feast, and prepare all kind of provisions that are necessary for such as go a journey. 22 He caused also two fat kine, and four wethers to be killed, and a banquet to be prepared for all his neighbours, and all his friends. 23 And Raguel adjured Tobias, to abide with him two weeks. 24 And of all things which Raguel possessed, he gave one half to Tobias, and made him a writing, that the half that remained should after their decease come also to Tobias.**

Verses (4-6): **arise, and let us pray to God** + their distancing from lusts = **for these three nights we are joined to God** = This is exactly what Paul the Apostle meant when he said, "But he who is joined to the Lord, is one spirit." (1 Corinthians 6: 17). The number 3 is a complete number and it refers to the Triune God. This is a reference to joining with God and thus complete freedom from the authority of Satan, and this means life. Therefore, Tobias did not die. Note that Tobias is the groom number 8. The number 8 refers to eternal life. We are now on the seventh day, and after the resurrection we will live eternal life without death, which is what Tobias's escape from death represents.

Verses (17-19): Notice that everyone is praying in this book.

Chapter 9

(Verses 1=12): **Then Tobias called the angel to him, whom he took to be a man, and said to him: Brother Azarias, I pray thee hearken to my words: 2 If I should give myself to be thy servant I should not make a worthy return for thy care. 3 However, I beseech thee, to take with thee beasts and servants, and to go to Gabelus to Rages the city of the Medes: and to restore to him his note of hand, and receive of him the money, and desire him to come to my wedding. 4 For thou knowest that my father numbereth the days: and if I stay one day more, his soul will be afflicted. 5 And indeed thou seest how Raguel hath adjured me, whose adjuring I cannot despise. 6 Then Raphael took four of Raguel's servants, and two camels, and went to Rages the city of the Medes: and finding Gabelus, gave him his note of hand, and received of him all the money. 7 And he told him concerning Tobias the son of Tobias, all that had been done: and made him come with him to the wedding. 8 And when he was come into Raguel's house he found Tobias sitting at the table: and he leaped up, and they kissed each other: and Gabelus wept, and blessed God, 9 And said: The God of Israel bless thee, because thou art the son of a very good and just man, and that feareth God, and doth almsdeeds: 10 And may a blessing come upon thy wife and upon your parents. 11 And may you see your children, and your children's children, unto the third and fourth generation: and may your seed be blessed by the God of Israel, who reigneth for ever and ever. 12 And when all had said, Amen, they went to the feast: but the marriage feast they celebrated also with the fear of the Lord.**

Verses (1-5): To save time, Tobias asked the angel (Azariah) to go with the note to Rages, the city where Gabelus resides, to redeem the value of the note, so that he could spend as much time as possible with his father-in-law Raguel.

Here, critics raise a problem. In (Tobit 3: 7), Raguel was in Rages, and Gabelus was in Rages, so why would Tobias send the angel to redeem the value of the note and tell him to go to Rages!! Rages may have been a neighbourhood or a small city that Nicanor later renovated and made into a large city in 300 BC. It may have been a large city that was destroyed over time and renovated by Nicanor. In some versions, it is stated that Raguel resided in a village near Rages, and the village was probably called Rages because of its connection to Rages, the large city. And that Tobias would send the angel to Gabelus from Rages to Rages is certainly meaningless, and it also makes no sense that Tobias would be so far away from Gabelus that he would send the angel (whom he thought at the time was an ordinary young man). It is more logical that Tobias would send the angel to Gabelus, who was close to him, and the two, Raguel and Gabelus, were near this Rages, which is probably Ahmetah.

Verses (9-12): Other prayers as these righteous men did not cease praying.

Chapter 10

(Verse 1-13): **But as Tobias made longer stay upon occasion of the marriage, Tobias his father was solicitous, saying: Why thinkest thou doth my son tarry, or why is he detained there? 2 Is Gabelus dead, thinkest thou, and no man will pay him the money? 3 And he began to be exceeding sad, both he and Anna his wife with him: and they began both to weep together: because their son did not return to them on the day appointed. 4 But his mother wept and was quite disconsolate, and said: Woe, woe is me, my son; why did we send thee to go to a strange country, the light of our eyes, the staff of our old age, the comfort of our life, the hope of our posterity? 5 We having all things together in thee alone, ought not to have let thee go from us. 6 And Tobias said to her: Hold thy peace, and be not troubled, our son is safe: that man with whom we sent him is very trusty. 7 But she could by no means be comforted, but daily running out looked round about, and went into all the ways by which there seemed any hope he might return, that she might if possible see him coming afar off. 8 But Raguel said to his son in law: Stay here, and I will send a messenger to Tobias thy father, that thou art in health. 9 And Tobias said to him: I know that my father and mother now count the days, and their spirit is grievously afflicted within them. 10 And when Raguel had pressed Tobias with many words, and he by no means would hearken to him, he delivered Sara unto him, and half of all his substance in menservants, and womenservants, in cattle, in camels, and in kine, and in much money, and sent him away safe and joyful from him. 11 Saying: The holy angel of the Lord be with you in your journey, and bring you through safe, and that you may find all things well about your parents, and my eyes see your children before I die. 12 And the parents taking their daughter kissed her, and let her go: 13 Admonishing her to honour her father and mother in law, to love her husband, to take care of the family, to govern the house, and to behave herself irreprehensibly.**

Verses (10-12): Raguel says to his daughter and her husband = **The holy angel of the Lord be with you in your journey** and he does not know that this is happening, but God answers our prayers. Notice what Raguel says to Tobias and Sarah about Tobias's parents being your parents. This is true, as the husband's father is the wife's father, as they are one flesh. FATHER IN LAW, and LAW is the law of Moses, as the father-in-law is a father according to the law, so the wife must honour him and vice versa, as the husband must honour his father-in-law, as he is his father.

Chapter 11

(Verses 1-21): **And as they were returning they came to Charan, which is in the midway to Ninive, the eleventh day. 2 And the angel said: Brother Tobias, thou knowest how thou didst leave thy father. 3 If it please thee therefore, let us go before, and let the family follow softly after us, together with thy wife, and with the beasts. 4 And as this their going pleased him, Raphael said to Tobias: Take with thee of the gall of the fish, for it will be necessary. So Tobias took some of that gall and departed. 5 But Anna sat beside the way daily, on the top of a hill, from whence she might see afar off. 6 And while she watched his coming from that place, she saw him afar off, and presently perceived it was her son coming: and returning she told her husband, saying: Behold thy son cometh. 7 And Raphael said to Tobias: As soon as thou shalt come into thy house, forthwith adore the Lord thy God: and giving thanks to him, go to thy father, and kiss him. 8 And immediately anoint his eyes with this gall of the fish, which thou carriest with thee. For be assured that his eyes shall be presently opened, and thy father shall see the light of heaven, and shall rejoice in the sight of thee. 9 Then the dog, which had been with them in the way, ran before, and coming as if he had brought the news, shewed his joy by his fawning and wagging his tail. 10 And his father that was blind, rising up, began to run stumbling with his feet: and giving a servant his hand, went to meet his son. 11 And receiving him kissed him, as did also his wife, and they began to weep for joy. 12 And when they had adored God, and given him thanks, they sat down together. 13 Then Tobias taking of the gall of the fish, anointed his father's eyes. 14 And he stayed about half an hour: and a white skin began to come out of his eyes, like the skin of an egg. 15 And Tobias took hold of it, and drew it from his eyes, and immediately he recovered his sight. 16 And they glorified God, both he and his wife and all that knew them. 17 And Tobias said: I bless thee, O Lord God of Israel, because thou hast chastised me, and thou hast saved me: and behold I see Tobias my son. 18 And after seven days Sara his son's wife, and all the family arrived safe, and the cattle, and the camels, and an abundance of money of his wife's: and that money also which he had received of Gabelus: 19 And he told his parents all the benefits of God, which he had done to him by the man that conducted him. 20 And Achior and Nabath the kinsmen of Tobias came, rejoicing for Tobias, and congratulating with him for all the good things that God had done for him. 21 And for seven days they feasted and rejoiced all with great joy.**

Verses (1-4): Tobit and the angel are two young men who are able to hurry on the road, perhaps on horses. **the family** = slaves and maidservants.

Verses (7-9): **As soon as thou shalt come into thy house, forthwith adore the Lord thy God**= thank God first. Then greet your parents. And when we enter the church, this is what we do. We prostrate ourselves before God in front of the altar and pray before we speak to anyone.

Verses (13-15): **the skin of an egg** = the thin membrane surrounding the egg white. As for the gall with its bitter taste, refers to the cross that Tobias carried in his illness, and the beautiful smell of myrrh is a reference to Tobias's endurance with gratitude. And God allows the cross to purify us. And this is what happened to Tobias. And he understood that the pains were to discipline him.

Verses (16, 17): **thou hast chastised me**= This indicates the utmost spiritual awareness, as God allows the trial to discipline man so that he may be perfected.

Verses (18-21): There are nice symbols in the story of Tobias. Tobias symbolizes Christ in:

1. Tobias and his bride enter their chamber, which is the chamber of death in which 7 had died before, a sign of Christ accepting death for His bride, and the bride (the church) accepting the cross with her bridegroom.
2. Prayer: the prayer of Sarah and Tobias is a sign of their spiritual union (as prayer is a union). The secret of the life of the church and the blessings that it has obtained is its connection and union with its bridegroom, Christ.
3. The destruction of the fish is a symbol of the destruction of Satan.
4. Tobias arrives home a week before his bride, a symbol of Christ who first entered heaven, the house of His Father, to prepare a place for His bride.
5. The bride's arrival after seven days with her maids is a sign of the church's arrival in heaven after the seven days of creation have passed, to begin her life in heaven on the eighth day.
6. **And for seven days they feasted**= 7 is a complete number; it is an eternal feast, which the Book of Revelation called the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19: 9). The unworthy will not taste this supper (Luke 14: 24), and in this supper they **rejoiced all with great joy** = this is the characteristic of heaven.

Chapter 12

(Verses 1-22): **Then Tobias called to him his son, and said to him: What can we give to this holy man, that is come with thee? 2 Tobias answering, said to his father: Father, what wages shall we give him? or what can be worthy of his benefits? 3 He conducted me and brought me safe again, he received the money of Gabelus, he caused me to have my wife, and he chased from her the evil spirit, he gave joy to her parents, myself he delivered from being devoured by the fish, thee also he hath made to see the light of heaven, and we are filled with all good things through him. What can we give him sufficient for these things? 4 But I beseech thee, my father, to desire him, that he would vouchsafe to accept one half of all things that have been brought. 5 So the father and the son, calling him, took him aside: and began to desire him that he would vouchsafe to accept of half of all things that they had brought. 6 Then he said to them secretly: Bless ye the God of heaven, give glory to him in the sight of all that live, because he hath shewn his mercy to you. 7 For it is good to hide the secret of a king: but honourable to reveal and confess the works of God. 8 Prayer is good with fasting and alms more than to lay up treasures of gold: 9 For alms delivereth from death, and the same is that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting. 10 But they that commit sin and iniquity, are enemies to their own soul. 11 I discover then the truth unto you, and I will not hide the secret from you. 12 When thou didst pray with tears, and didst bury the dead, and didst leave thy dinner, and hide the dead by day in thy house, and bury them by night, I offered thy prayer to the Lord. 13 And because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee. 14 And now the Lord hath sent me to heal thee, and to deliver Sara thy son's wife from the devil. 15 For I am the angel Raphael, one of the seven, who stand before the Lord. 16 And when they had heard these things, they were troubled, and being seized with fear they fell upon the ground on their face. 17 And the angel said to them: Peace be to you, fear not. 18 For when I was with you, I was there by the will of God: bless ye him, and sing praises to him. 19 I seemed indeed to eat and to drink with you: but I use an invisible meat and drink, which cannot be seen by men. 20 It is time therefore that I return to him that sent me: but bless ye God, and publish all his wonderful works. 21 And when he had said these things, he was taken from their sight, and they could see him no more. 22 Then they lying prostrate for three hours upon their face, blessed God: and rising up, they told all his wonderful works.**

Verses (1-4): Tobias and his son were confused about what to offer the angel in return for all his services. This prompts us to ask. What do we offer God in return for all that he has done for us?

Verses (5-7): The angel does not ask for a fee. Rather, he asks that they glorify God and tell of his works with them. He said that earthly kings keep their affairs secret so no one can harm them. But the works of God must be made public so that God may be glorified, especially these sons of God, Tobias and his family living among the nations so that the nations may believe.

Verses (8-10): Here we see the three elements of worship that the angel guides them to: prayer with fasting and almsgiving. **For alms delivereth from death**= this is like unjust money. Prayer puts us in touch with the Lord, and fasting is asceticism that lifts us above the love of the world, so we draw closer

to God, and through almsgiving, we do good to the Lord Himself, so we see Him. The Lord put Himself in the place of the hungry, the thirsty, and the imprisoned....

Verses (11-15): We find God caring and seeing and rewarding every service we perform. And the angels lift up our prayers to God because our prayers are weak and have many impurities. We saw an image of that in the censers of the twenty-four priests who offer incense, which is the prayers of the saints (Revelation 5: 8) **And because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee**= to be perfected and have a greater crown when you are purified.

Verses (16-20): Their prostration to the angel showed their piety and the fear of God in their hearts.

Verses (21, 22): **Then they lying prostrate for three hours upon their face**= in reverence and prayers = **blessed God.**

Chapter 13

(Verses 1-23): **And Tobias the elder opening his mouth, blessed the Lord, and said: Thou art great, O Lord, for ever, and thy kingdom is unto all ages: 2 For thou scourgest, and thou savest: thou leadest down to hell, and bringest up again: and there is none that can escape thy hand. 3 Give glory to the Lord, ye children of Israel, and praise him in the sight of the Gentiles: 4 Because he hath therefore scattered you among the Gentiles, who know not him, that you may declare his wonderful works, and make them know that there is no other almighty God besides him. 5 He hath chastised us for our iniquities: and he will save us for his own mercy. 6 See then what he hath done with us, and with fear and trembling give ye glory to him: and extol the eternal King of worlds in your works. 7 As for me, I will praise him in the land of my captivity: because he hath shewn his majesty toward a sinful nation. 8 Be converted therefore, ye sinners, and do justice before God, believing that he will shew his mercy to you. 9 And I and my soul will rejoice in him. 10 Bless ye the Lord, all his elect, keep days of joy, and give glory to him. 11 Jerusalem, city of God, the Lord hath chastised thee for the works of thy hands. 12 Give glory to the Lord for thy good things, and bless the God eternal, that he may rebuild his tabernacle in thee, and may call back all the captives to thee, and thou mayst rejoice for ever and ever. 13 Thou shalt shine with a glorious light: and all the ends of the earth shall worship thee. 14 Nations from afar shall come to thee: and shall bring gifts, and shall adore the Lord in thee, and shall esteem thy land as holy. 15 For they shall call upon the great name in thee. 16 They shall be cursed that shall despise thee: and they shall be condemned that shall blaspheme thee: and blessed shall they be that shall build thee up. 17 But thou shalt rejoice in thy children, because they shall all be blessed, and shall be gathered together to the Lord. 18 Blessed are all they that love thee, and that rejoice in thy peace. 19 My soul, bless thou the Lord, because the Lord our God hath delivered Jerusalem his city from all her troubles. 20 Happy shall I be if there shall remain of my seed, to see the glory of Jerusalem. 21 The gates of Jerusalem shall be built of sapphire, and of emerald, and all the walls thereof round about of precious stones. 22 All its streets shall be paved with white and clean stones: and Alleluia shall be sung in its streets. 23 Blessed be the Lord, who hath exalted it, and may he reign over it for ever and ever, Amen.**

Verses (1-6): We see Tobias throughout the book as a man of prayer. **For thou scourgest, and thou savest**= He allowed Tobit to be wounded and then healed him, and so did with Sarah. He wounded the children of Israel when he sent them into captivity to heal them of their sins and to spread the name of God among the nations.

Verses (11-16): **that he may rebuild his tabernacle in thee**= Tobias said this with the spirit of prophecy since Jerusalem was destroyed and the temple was demolished many days after he said this. This happened with all the prophets because they knew what would happen with the spirit of prophecy. The spiritual meaning is that Jerusalem refers to the human soul that was destroyed by sin, and he looks forward to the day when God will return to dwell in her, and this is what happened with the redemption.

Verses (20-23): Here, the spirit of prophecy is made clear in Tobias = **Happy shall I be if there shall remain of my seed, to see the glory of Jerusalem**= He prophesied about the glory of Jerusalem that would return, and about the return of the captives, and this actually happened at the hands of Cyrus, the Persian king. The glory of Jerusalem was at its most splendid when Christ was in it. Rather, his sight extended with the spirit of prophecy, and he saw the heavenly Jerusalem. Here, he describes it as John the Theologian described it in the Book of Revelation = The walls of Jerusalem are of sapphire and emeralds (Revelation 21: 19, 20).

Chapter 14

(Verses 1-17): **And the words of Tobias were ended. And after Tobias was restored to his sight, he lived two and forty years, and saw the children of his grandchildren. 2 And after he had lived a hundred and two years, he was buried honourably in Ninive. 3 For he was six and fifty years old when he lost the sight of his eyes, and sixty when he recovered it again. 4 And the rest of his life was in joy, and with great increase of the fear of God he departed in peace. 5 And at the hour of his death he called unto him his son Tobias and his children, seven young men, his grandsons, and said to them: 6 The destruction of Ninive is at hand: for the word of the Lord must be fulfilled: and our brethren, that are scattered abroad from the land of Israel, shall return to it. 7 And all the land thereof that is desert shall be filled with people, and the house of God which is burnt in it, shall again be rebuilt: and all that fear God shall return thither. 8 And the Gentiles shall leave their idols, and shall come into Jerusalem, and shall dwell in it. 9 And all the kings of the earth shall rejoice in it, adoring the King of Israel. 10 Hearken therefore, my children, to your father: serve the Lord in truth, and seek to do the things that please him: 11 And command your children that they do justice and almsdeeds, and that they be mindful of God, and bless him at all times in truth, and with all their power. 12 And now, children, hear me, and do not stay here: but as soon as you shall bury your mother by me in one sepulchre, without delay direct your steps to depart hence: 13 For I see that its iniquity will bring it to destruction. 14 And it came to pass that after the death of his mother, Tobias departed out of Ninive with his wife, and children, and children's children, and returned to his father and mother in law. 15 And he found them in health in a good old age: and he took care of them, and he closed their eyes: and all the inheritance of Raguel's house came to him: and he saw his children's children to the fifth generation. 16 And after he had lived ninety-nine years in the fear of the Lord, with joy they buried him. 17 And all his kindred, and all his generation continued in good life, and in holy conversation, so that they were acceptable both to God, and to men, and to all that dwelt in the land.**

Verses (5-9): The spirit of prophecy is also clear in Tobias here, as he prophesies the destruction of Nineveh and the return of the children of Israel to the land of Israel and prophesies again about the house of God that will be burned and then return. Rather, he prophesies about the faith of the nations and **and shall come into Jerusalem**= Jerusalem here is the church. **And all the kings of the earth shall rejoice in it**= the kings of the earth did not bow down in Jerusalem but in the church. This is a prophecy about the spread of Christianity everywhere.

Verses (10-13): God opened Tobias's physical eyes and then his inner eyes, so he continued to prophesy about the destruction of Nineveh and asked his sons to leave the place.

Verses (14-17): Here we see Tobias, the son, obeying his father's command and leaving the place.

God is the Beneficent:

Sometimes, it seems to us that God has harsh judgments, but they are for good.

Tobias, the father, is struck blind.. Tobias is healed of his spiritual illnesses, disciplined and purified (Tobit 11: 17).

Tobias becomes poor, so he sends his young, inexperienced son to get money.... He finds a good wife from the Lord.

Sarah has 7 husbands die.... They are wicked. And God prepared a good husband for her.

remained in Babylon and did not return to Jerusalem. Let us note that in this way, the pagans participate with the Jews in their donations to building the temple of the Lord, just as Solomon involved the pagans in the building as a symbol of the entry of the nations and the Jews into the church of Christ, that is, His body. We note that the name Cyrus means sun, so he symbolizes Christ, the Sun of Righteousness. Cyrus's call to all to donate means that the Jews who do not wish to return must at least donate to build the temple. This act of Cyrus and the donations of the pagans is a kind of land aid for the woman (Revelation 12: 16). In (verse 3) **go up to Jerusalem** = as returning to Jerusalem is an ascent, and by repentance, we ascend and rise, and by sin we descend (Jonah 1: 3, 5)