

FOLLOW UP - TNS 14, 1 (23 January 2024)

PRAYER TO GUARDIAN ANGEL

Angel of God,
my guardian dear,
To whom God's love
commits me here,
Ever this day,
be at my side,
To light and guard,
Rule and guide.
Amen.

"ANGELS" – CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

I. The Angels

The existence of angels—a truth of faith

328 The existence of the spiritual, non-corporeal beings that Sacred Scripture usually calls "angels" is a truth of faith. The witness of Scripture is as clear as the unanimity of Tradition. (150)

Who are they?

329 St. Augustine says: " '**Angel**' is the name of their office, not of their nature. If you seek the name of their *nature*, it is 'spirit'; if you seek the name of their *office*, it is 'angel': from what they are, 'spirit,' from what they do, 'angel.' " ¹⁸⁸ With their whole beings the angels are *servants* and messengers of God. Because they "always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven" they are the "mighty ones who do his word, hearkening to the voice of his word." ¹⁸⁹

330 As purely *spiritual* creatures angels have intelligence and will: they are personal and immortal creatures, surpassing in perfection all visible creatures, as the splendor of their glory bears witness. ¹⁹⁰ [1]

Karl Rahner, SJ – The great danger at the present time is that affirmations about angels in the teaching of the Christian faith will be rejected as a *mythology* which is no longer credible, and so succumb to demythologization.

*¹⁸⁸ St. Augustine, *En. in Ps.* 103, 1, 15: PL 37, 1348.

*189 Mt 18:10; Ps 103:20.

*190 Cf. Pius XII, *Humani Generis*: DS 3891; Lk 20:36; Dan 10:9–12.

[1] Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd Ed. (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2000), 85–86.

GENERAL COMMENTS

*This is the story [lit. “**book of deeds**”].* The book of Tobit begins, quite appropriately, with this Hebraism, the Gk *biblos logōn* being a rendering of the Heb *spr dbry* (cf. 2 Kgs 14:28 of the LXX). While the Heb *dbr* can be legitimately translated by either “word” or “deed,” **Tobit is, ultimately, “a book, not of words, but of deeds” (Clamer 416). It is Tobit’s conduct, his courageous and selfless deeds, that provides the real message of the book, not his pious words of advice, the eloquence and profundity of 4:3–19 and 14:8–11 notwithstanding.** Tobit is not bragging, however; he is writing his story, he says, on orders of the angel Raphael (cf. 12:20).^[1]

In this regard, the Book of Tobit has similarities to Lewis’ *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. The latter is a book meant to describe the reality of the Christian discipleship, and how one does that together, with others, not alone ... and what happens when a person tries to go it alone. But central to the description of the Christian vocation is that of ADVENTURE, which includes a great deal that those involved in the Adventure are unable to predict, to see coming toward them. And as is true of the Book of Tobit, the characters in VDT are flawed, are able to be tempted, whom Aslan “tests” but while being-with each one in his or her challenges.

The author’s adaptation of various secular folktales and his pronounced biblical patterns and content clearly indicate that, broadly speaking, **he intended to edify his readers by entertaining them.** “Subsequent religious tradition,” wrote Alter (1981), “has by and large encouraged us to take the Bible seriously rather than to enjoy it; **but the paradoxical truth of the matter may well be that by learning to enjoy the biblical stories more fully, we shall also come to see more clearly what they mean to tell us about God, man, and the perilously momentous realm of history**” (189).^[2]

The author of Tobit wrote for Jews who were concerned about being faithful to God and who were questioning God’s fidelity to them in the midst of the cultural turmoil [in the Seleucid Period] ... [Tobit’s story] demonstrates the fidelity of God and the courage of believers.... human beings are ministers of God’s providences, ordinary human events are the setting for God’s faithful care. (Nowell 1988b: 832–33).^[3]

The book of Tobit concerns ideas and practices of men and women who lived thousands of years ago and many thousands of miles away from us. At first glance, they were also quite different from us. Theirs was not an industrialized, pluralistic, secular, impersonal, and science-enthralled civilization like ours. **Moreover, Tobit contains a number of elements, including angels, demons, and “medicines/magic,” in which many twentieth-century men and women do not believe. Levine (1992) spoke to all of this when she wrote, “Tobit may be an ancient folktale, but it concerns ... separation from one’s ancestral land, [cultural] assimilation, intermarriage, the relationship between politics and religion, the role of women, even the apparent absence of God and the impression that the world is a place of chaos—[and so it] resonates in the modern world (50).”**^[4]

APOCRYPHA

The book of Tobit is not included in the Hebrew Scriptures and thus is not a part of the Old Testament in the Protestant tradition. **It is, however, contained in the Septuagint, the ancient Greek translation of Jewish holy books, and was translated by Jerome and included in the Latin Vulgate. Thus, it remains part of the Old Testament canon for Roman Catholics and for the Orthodox churches.**^[5]

The term “Apocrypha” (or “deuterocanonical books” in Roman Catholic usage) is popularly understood to describe **the fifteen books or parts of books from the Pre-Christian period that the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Eastern churches accept, wholly or partially, as canonical Scripture but Protestants and Jews do not.** The designation and the definition are inaccurate on many counts. An *apocryphon* is literally a “hidden writing,” kept secret from all but the initiate, being too exalted for the general public; virtually none of these books makes such a claim. Roman Catholics do not accept all of them as canonical Scripture, for 1 and 2 Esdras and the Prayer of Manasseh are not included in the official Catholic canon drawn up at the Council of Trent (1545–63). Many Protestant churches have no official decision declaring these books to be noncanonical; in fact, up to the last century they were included in most Protestant Bibles.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* at “**Septuagint**” – The **Greek** version of the **Hebrew** Scriptures (compare sense 3) was traditionally thought to have been produced by seventy-two Jews (six scholars from each of the Twelve Tribes of Israel) in seventy-two days, at the request of Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt (308–246 B.C.). The number seventy-two was subsequently rounded to seventy. Doubts began to be cast on this legend in the 16th cent. and it is not generally accepted by modern scholars, but

the translation of the Pentateuch does appear to have been made in the 3rd cent. B.C., probably in Alexandria.

What is certain is that these books did not find their way into the final Jewish Palestinian canon of Scripture. Thus, despite their Jewish origins (though parts of 2 Esdras are Christian and Latin in origin), they were preserved for the most part in Greek by Christians as a heritage from the Alexandrian Jewish community and their basic text is found in the codices of the **Septuagint**. However, recent discoveries, especially that of the Dead Sea Scrolls, have brought to light the original Hebrew or Aramaic texts of some of the books. **Leaving aside the question of canonicity, Christians and Jews now unite in recognizing the importance of these books for tracing the history of Judaism and Jewish thought in the centuries between the last of the Hebrew Scriptures and the advent of Christianity.** [6]

DATE – BETWEEN 200 AND 180 BCE

The most probable date for the writing of the book of Tobit, then, is between 200 and 180 BCE. [7]

THE DATE INSIDE THE STORY - Tobit is introduced with a seven-member genealogy, tracing him back to the tribe of Naphtali. The names of his ancestors all end in "el," meaning "God." Tobit's own name seems to be a nickname. In the Aramaic version of the story, probably the original, he is called "Tobi," perhaps short for "Tobi-el" or "Tobi-yahu," meaning "God/Yhwh is my good." Tobit lived in the area settled by his tribe, that is, the northern kingdom known as Israel. **The ten tribes making up this northern kingdom had separated from the southern tribe of Judah in the tenth century. Tobit's story is set toward the turn of the eighth–seventh century BCE, the time of the collapse of the northern kingdom [overrun by the Assyrian Empire in 722 BCE].** [8]

THE DATE OF ITS COMPOSITION AS A BOOK - There is a consensus that it was written in the early second century BCE at which time the *novella* became a popular form (see also *Judith and Esther*). There is no evidence in the book of a belief in meaningful life after death, a belief that began to emerge in the mid-second century around the time of the Maccabees. **It shares its theology and worldview with the book of Sirach, which was written around the same time.** [9]

Taken by itself, none of the above arguments is persuasive, let alone decisive. **But their cumulative effect makes a composition date no earlier than ca. 300 BCE**

quite plausible.^[10]

WHAT KIND OF BOOK?

Hence, the book of Tobit belongs to a mixed genre, created to respond to the needs of the post-exilic community to which its author belonged, a genre shared with Esther, Judith, and Susanna.⁹ **Overall, the book of Tobit is best described as a Hebrew romance.**^[11]

To say that a tale is pure fiction or “non-historical” is in no way to denigrate or minimize its importance or even its truth. **For as Paul Ricoeur (1978) has so astutely observed, “We may say that history by opening us to the different, opens us to the possible, while fiction, by opening us to the unreal, opens us to the essential” (177).**^[12]

The book of Tobit is a biblical *novella*, that is, a short, fictional tale told to make a point and to encourage its readers to greater fidelity. Its purpose is not to recount history but rather both to entertain and to edify. **This story is rich with irony, the situation where the reader knows more than the characters.** For example, the reader knows that Raphael is an angel, but Tobit and Tobiah do not. The irony is often amusing, but this story is not a comedy. It is a serious meditation on the mystery of human suffering and God’s justice.^[13]

Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms - IRONY - A subtly humorous perception of inconsistency, in which an apparently straightforward statement or event is undermined by its *context so as to give it a very different significance. In various forms, irony appears in many kinds of literature, from the *tragedy of Sophocles to the novels of Jane Austen and Henry James, but is especially important in *satire, as in Voltaire and Swift. **At its simplest, in verbal irony, it involves a discrepancy between what is said and what is really meant, as in its crude form, sarcasm;** for the *figures of speech exploiting this discrepancy, see antiphrasis, litotes, meiosis. **The more sustained *structural irony* in literature involves the use of a naïve or deluded hero or *unreliable narrator, whose view of the world differs widely from the true circumstances recognized by the author and readers; literary irony thus flatters its readers’ intelligence at the expense of a character (or fictional narrator). A similar sense of detached superiority is achieved by *dramatic irony*, in which the audience knows more about a character’s situation than the character does, foreseeing an outcome contrary to the character’s expectations, and thus ascribing a sharply different sense to some of**

the character's own statements; in *tragedies, this is called tragic irony. The term cosmic irony is sometimes used to denote a view of people as the dupes of a cruelly mocking Fate, as in the novels of Thomas Hardy. A writer whose works are characterized by an ironic tone may be called an *ironist*.

Irony. There are two major and several minor types of irony in the book of Tobit. The basic conflict of the book—the problem that the apparent consequence of doing good is not prosperity but suffering—is an example of the “general irony of events.”²⁹ **The veiled identity of Raphael constitutes an example of the second major type of irony, “dramatic irony,” in which the readers know what the characters do not.**³⁰ Raguel’s digging of the unnecessary grave (8:9–18) is also an example of dramatic irony. The “irony of self-betrayal” is evident in the contradiction between Anna’s words and her actions, for she continues to watch the road even though she declares that Tobiah is dead. Irony carries the main theme of the book of Tobit: God blesses the righteous and punishes the wicked; yet God remains free. This final type of irony may be called “divine irony.”^[14]

THE REALISM OF SIMPLE FOLK (NOWELL, OSB)

Second, the personalities of the six main characters (Tobit, Hannah, Tobiah, Raguel, Edna, and Sarah) are not two-dimensional, straw characters, but are clearly and individually developed. Thanks to the narrator’s skill, their distinctive characters and personalities are effectively created for the reader, not so much by detached, objective statements about them by the “omniscient observer” as **by what the characters themselves say and do.**⁴ **By their actions, and not just by their words,** Tobit shows himself to be a genuinely pious and charitable man; Tobiah to be a dutiful son and a courageous young man; Raguel a generous and convivial person. As for the women, Hannah and Edna are scarcely cast from the same mold. Yet each in her own way clearly loves her husband and her only child. Even Sarah, who in the entire book speaks only one word in the presence of another person (“Amen” in 8:8), nonetheless reveals, in her desperate prayer, her faith in God and her love for her father (3:1–6).⁵ ^[15]

Tobit is a good and holy man. He makes every effort to observe God’s law and to teach his son Tobiah to do the same. His goodness is attested by Raphael, who praises his prayer and his attention to burying the dead (12:12–13), and by Raguel, who describes him as “righteous and charitable” (7:7). **But Tobit has his flaws. In the early part of the story, he seems preoccupied by money. He will send his**

only son on a dangerous journey to regain the money he deposited with Gabael (4:2; 4:20–5:3). It is Tobit's wife Anna who declares that the son's life is more important than the money (5:18–20). But money is still uppermost in Tobit's mind. Weeks later when Tobiah is delayed he worries that there was no one to give him the money (10:2). He also, however, gives alms to the poor and encourages Tobiah to do the same (4:7–11). At the end of the story he is willing to give the guide Azariah (Raphael) half the money they have brought back (12:4–5). **Tobit is also greatly distressed by his need to be supported by his wife's work. He shares the sentiment of his contemporary, Ben Sira, who says, "Harsh is the slavery and great the shame / when a wife supports her husband" (Sir 25:22; cf. Tob 2:11–14).**

HIS GRANDMOTHER DEBORAH – Tobit was also careful to marry someone of his ancestral family (endogamous marriage), a practice that is described as common among the early tribes (1:9; see 4:12–13). **Perhaps the most significant quality of his righteousness, however, is his care for the weak and vulnerable, especially his practice of burying the dead. All these qualities of wise and holy living he learned from his grandmother, Deborah, who appears in only one sentence (1:8), but whose influence permeates the whole book.** From her he learned to obey the law. **He must also have learned from her the Deuteronomic principle that *obedience brings success and disobedience brings punishment* (see Deut 28).** His confidence in this principle, however, is about to be tested. ^[16]

It is possible that Tobit himself was taken captive to Nineveh during the reign of Pekah in an earlier Assyrian raid led by Tiglath-Pileser III on the northern territory of Naphtali (see 2 Kgs 15:29; Tob 1:2), although he names Shalmaneser as the king. **In the midst of this turbulent time, Tobit remained completely faithful to his tradition. He reminds the reader of the separation of the twelve tribes into two political entities at the death of Solomon in 922 BCE (Tob 1:4–5). Judah (with tiny Benjamin) pledged allegiance to Solomon's son Rehoboam, but the ten northern tribes followed another king, Jeroboam, who had been in charge of forced labor under Solomon (see 1 Kgs 12). Jeroboam, not wanting his subjects to go to Jerusalem, the capital of Judah, to worship, established two shrines: one at Bethel and the other at Dan. Tobit, however, insists he continued to go to the temple in Jerusalem to worship God (Tob 1:6–8).** He is there for the three established feasts: Unleavened Bread (Passover), Weeks, and Booths, and also makes the offering of first fruits (Deut 16:16; 18:4). ^[17]

At the end of the story, it is evident that Tobit also is a person of hope. His prayer begins with a strong encouragement to trust in God even in the midst of suffering (13:1–8). Then he proclaims the glory of a future Jerusalem, rebuilt

with a glorious temple as its center (13:9–18). In his final exhortation to Tobiah and his family Tobit assures them that, after the exile, Jerusalem will be rebuilt, and faithful people will be gathered to it again (14:4b–7).^[18]

OBEDIENCE IN EXILE (CHAPTER 1)

Tobit 1 – ³ I, Tobit, have walked in paths of truth and in good works all the days of my life.^d I have given much in alms to my brothers and fellow country-folk, exiled like me to Nineveh in the country of Assyria. ⁴ In my young days, when I was still at home in the land of Israel, the whole tribe of Naphtali my ancestor broke away from the House of David and from Jerusalem, though this was the city chosen out of all the tribes of Israel for their sacrifices; here, the Temple—God’s dwelling-place—had been built and hallowed for all generations to come. ⁵ All my brothers and the House of Naphtali sacrificed on every hill-top in Galilee **to the calf** that Jeroboam king of Israel had made at Dan.*^[19]

What interests me here is how Tobit has understood *obedience*, and that as an expression of fidelity to God, while exiled in Nineveh. He uses his religious devotion (all well described in chapter 1) as **a means of keeping himself distinct/separated** (the original meaning of “holy”) from the people among whom he lives.

Tobit 1 – ¹⁰ When the banishment into Assyria came, I was taken away and went to Nineveh. All my brothers and the people of my race ate the food of the heathen,^g ¹¹ but for my part I was careful not to eat the food of the heathen. ¹² And because I had kept faith with my God with my whole heart,*¹³ the Most High granted me the favour of Shalmaneser, and I became the king’s purveyor.^[20]

I am also interested in how Tobit assumes, theologically, that if he is faithful in this way – **strict adherence to the Law and the acceptance of a separate existence in a hostile culture** – that God will be faithful to him; that is, it is “guaranteed” that God will bless Tobit with prosperity. This Book, as is the case with the Book of Job, will profoundly attack this *transactional* assumption. **God does what He does for His own reasons, acting freely. God is not constrained by our religious performances to deliver to us what we expect or require!**

Deuteronomy 28 – The “transactional” model of spirituality:

'But **IF** you faithfully obey the voice of Yahweh your God, by keeping and observing all his commandments, which I am laying down for you today, **[THEN]** Yahweh your God will raise you higher than every other nation in the world,² and all these blessings will befall and overtake you, for having obeyed the voice of Yahweh your God.*

³ 'You will be blessed in the town and blessed in the countryside;*_
⁴ blessed, the offspring of your body, the yield of your soil, the yield of your livestock, the young of your cattle and the increase of your flocks;
⁵ blessed, your basket and your kneading trough. ⁶ You will be blessed in coming home, and blessed in going out. ⁷ The enemies who attack you, Yahweh will defeat before your eyes; they will advance on you from one direction and flee from you in seven. ⁸ Yahweh will command blessedness to be with you, on your barns and on all your undertakings, and he will bless you in the country given you by Yahweh your God. [21]

But it is the point of Christian mission in the world NOT to establish a separate existence in the midst of a hostile society, whose culture is odious to us, but to move into the society in which we are placed and to be light and genuine-ness and exemplars there. I think of something that St. Thomas Aquinas, OP demonstrated in his practice of the "scholastic" habit of erudition: He knew his foe's intellectual position better than his foe did, and proved it to him.

The Book of Job. A final pattern influencing the book of Tobit appears in the book of Job. **The structure of the two books is similar.** Each book contains a "framing" section that sets the stage in the beginning and summarizes the situation at the end (Job 1:1–2:13; 42:7–17; Tob 1:1–3:17; 12:1–14:15). The central action is set into this frame (Job 3:1–42:6; Tob 4:1–11:18). **The progress of Tobit's life is modeled on that of Job.** Each man suffers bodily affliction, even though he is righteous (Job 2:7; 27:6; Tob 1:3; 2:10); each is grieved by the sharp words of a wife (Job 2:9–10; Tob 2:14–3:1) and prays for death (Job 7:15; Tob 3:2–6). After his testing, each man is vindicated and rewarded (Job 42:7–17; Tob 14:1–3). Imagery of light and darkness is prevalent in both books. More than a quarter of the occurrences of the words אור (*ôr*, "light") and חֹשֶׁךְ (*hōšek*, "darkness") in the Hebrew Bible are in the book of Job. The story of Tobit moves from light to darkness and back to light. [22]

THE TRUE OBEDIENCE

I am beginning to think clearer about this. Up to this point I have always thought of Angels as created beings **who cross back and forth** between God's world – Heaven – and our world. I have thought that when they appear to human beings it is because they have been sent from Heaven to accomplish some specific purpose (like "actual" or "helping" grace).

It has not occurred to me until now how God **built them into** the very structure of the created world, **a scheme of recurrence** (their consistency around their mission to uphold, heal, and sustain God's creative purposes in our world – **they can be counted on**).

Angels "dwell" throughout the entire created universe, an essential part of its Pattern, who serve that Pattern in unique, creative ways. Angels are not "sitting around" waiting for God to send them to make right a broken part of the Pattern or to further a Divine, creative action; **they already know** how God made and sustains the created universe and they do not need to be told when something has gone awry. **They act**. And because they know the HOW of God's creation, they act in a way harmonious with God's way.

Angels are **creatively faithful**, which means that what they choose to do, always in accord with God is doing in the created world, is **a genuine development in salvation history**. Karl Rahner (see below) in this regard speaks of the **supernatural vocation** given each Angel. This kind of "singularity" of a particular Angel is what is captured in the Tradition in the personal **names** given to some of the Angels.

Allow me the following analogy to Jesuit life. Jesuits like to imagine themselves (and some actually are what they imagine) as **sent**, as defined by their mission. **Take a mission away from a good Jesuit, and you badly damage him**, taking from him the very context he needs to be able to be discerning about his particular purpose.

Angels act **obediently**, *but not in the way we imagine it*.

I learned how to become obedient wrestling because of and through my Vow of Obedience in the Jesuit Order. Only a highly immature Jesuit would consider his Vow as *doing what he is told to do* by his Superior, when his Superior tells him to do something. No!

A maturely obedient Jesuit grows yearly in his ability to understand what the We of the Jesuit Order endeavors to do, and he pays close attention to how his Superior serves those purposes (discerning also how often those Superiors ignore the We). The mature Jesuit acts in the concreteness of his life and circumstances to make sure that what the We is trying to do is done, but **he acts uniquely and creatively**.

A Jesuit Superior commanding obedience to do a particular thing should rarely, if ever, tell the Jesuit *how* to act. That is up to the freedom and creativity of the individual Jesuit. **In other words, a mature Jesuit should rarely, if ever, be surprised by what is commanded him to do according to the We, because he *already knows* what We are doing and has activated himself to serve that purpose before ever being told to act.**

lit. literally

Gk Greek

Heb Hebrew

cf. compare

LXX The Septuagint

Heb Hebrew

Clamer Tobie traduit et commente. *La Sainte Bible*, 4th. eds. Louis Pirot and Albert Clamer, 4. Paris: Letouzey et Ané. Pp. 385–480. Cited as Clamer.

cf. compare

[1] Carey A. Moore, *Tobit: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 40A of *Anchor Yale Bible* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 99.

[2] Carey A. Moore, *Tobit: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 40A of *Anchor Yale Bible* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 22.

Nowell "Tobit." *The Collegeville Commentary, Old Testament*, 1. ed. Diane Bergant. Collegeville, Minn. Liturgical Press, 1: 832–43.

[3] Carey A. Moore, *Tobit: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 40A of *Anchor Yale Bible* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 24.

[4] Carey A. Moore, *Tobit: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 40A of *Anchor Yale Bible* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 33.

[5] Irene Nowell, "*The Book of Tobit*," in *New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994–2004), 977.

[6] Carey A. Moore, *Tobit: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 40A of *Anchor Yale Bible* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), xv.

[7] Irene Nowell, "*The Book of Tobit*," in *New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994–2004), 977.

[8] Irene Nowell, *Jonah, Tobit, Judith*, ed. Daniel Durken, vol. 25 of *The New Collegeville Bible Commentary* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015), 22.

[9] Irene Nowell, *Jonah, Tobit, Judith*, ed. Daniel Durken, vol. 25 of *The New Collegeville Bible Commentary* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015), 20. ca. circa (about, approximately)

[10] Carey A. Moore, *Tobit: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 40A of *Anchor Yale Bible* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 42.

*9 See O. Loretz, "Roman und Kurzgeschichte in Israel," *Wort und Botschaft des Alten Testaments*, ed. J. Schreiner (Würzburg: Echter, 1969) 325.

[11] Irene Nowell, "The Book of Tobit," in *New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994–2004), 978.

[12] Carey A. Moore, *Tobit: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 40A of *Anchor Yale Bible* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 11.

[13] Irene Nowell, *Jonah, Tobit, Judith*, ed. Daniel Durken, vol. 25 of *The New Collegeville Bible Commentary* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015), 20.

*29 D. C. Muecke, *Irony* (London: Methuen & Co., 1970) 67.

*30 *Ibid.*, 64–66.

[14] Irene Nowell, "The Book of Tobit," in *New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994–2004), 984.

*4 Except when some specific detail of physical appearance is highly relevant to the biblical story, **biblical authors say virtually nothing about the physical appearance of their characters**, whether the biblical character is tall (e.g., Saul) or short, fat (Eglon) or thin, hairy (Esau) or bald (Elisha), huge (Goliath) or petite. In Tobit, the one exception to this generalization is Sarah, who, like most biblical heroines, is "very beautiful" (6:12).

*5 The Danish philosopher and theologian **Sören Kierkegaard (1813–55)** regarded Sarah as the heroine of the book of Tobit and treated her, at length, in his *Fear and Trembling* (so Metzger [1957: 37]).

[15] Carey A. Moore, *Tobit: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 40A of *Anchor Yale Bible* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 7–8.

[16] Irene Nowell, *Jonah, Tobit, Judith*, ed. Daniel Durken, vol. 25 of *The New Collegeville Bible Commentary* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015), 24.

[17] Irene Nowell, *Jonah, Tobit, Judith*, ed. Daniel Durken, vol. 25 of *The New Collegeville Bible Commentary* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015), 23.

[18] Irene Nowell, *Jonah, Tobit, Judith*, ed. Daniel Durken, vol. 25 of *The New Collegeville Bible Commentary* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015), 18.

* 1 K 12:26–32

[19] [The New Jerusalem Bible](#) (New York; London; Toronto; Sydney; Auckland: Doubleday, 1990), Tob 1:3–5.

* [Dn 2:48, 49](#)

[20] [The New Jerusalem Bible](#) (New York; London; Toronto; Sydney; Auckland: Doubleday, 1990), Tob 1:10–13.

* [4:30; Gn 49:25–26](#)

* [11:10–15](#)

[21] [The New Jerusalem Bible](#) (New York; London; Toronto; Sydney; Auckland: Doubleday, 1990), Dt 28:1–8.

[22] Irene Nowell, "[The Book of Tobit](#)," in *New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994–2004), 982.



The Book of Tobit



Illustrated by

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Introduction

The Book of Tobit is the story of a Jewish man, Tobit, who was carried away to Ninevah as a captive, and his son Tobias. Tobit is considered a model of the righteous Israelite, and was particularly revered for providing proper burials for the deceased. The story was clearly a favorite of the Seventeenth Century Dutch painter Rembrandt van Rijn.

In this introduction we will first consider the origin of *The Book of Tobit*, and its recognition – or rejection – as a religious text. Then we will consider possible reasons for Rembrandt’s interest in illustrating its events. We will explore possible influences on Rembrandt’s religious convictions and also touch on his interest in the main themes in Tobit’s story.

The story is set in the 8th century BC^[17] and its author is unknown. Scholars date the book’s composition to between 225 and 175 BC.^[9] Reference in verse 7:13 to the “Law of Moses” places authorship after the Fourth Century BC, and the absence of knowledge of the Maccabean Revolt in 165 BC helps put an upper bound on the date of composition. Dating is also partially determined by the fact that fragments of the book were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls in a cave at Qumran. Fragments were found in both Aramaic and Hebrew, casting doubt on the original language.

The Book of Tobit has been a canonical book in the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Churches since The Council of Trent in 1546.^[4] It is not a part of the Protestant or Jewish canon. One reason cited for the rejection of it by Jewish scholars is that Raguel, the bride’s father, writes the marriage document instead of the bridegroom as required by rabbinical law.^[9] The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States concluded in 1801 that Tobit could be read for examples of life and instruction in manners, but it could not be used to establish any doctrine.^[1]

The Book of Tobit was included in the Dutch Bible as authorized by the Synod of Dordrecht in 1618. But Dutch readers were warned about it being possibly unreliable because the angel in it lies by telling Tobit that he is Azarias, the son of a relative of Tobit, and it felt that it was not likely that seven bridegrooms were killed by an evil spirit.^[2], p. 126.

We know Rembrandt owned a Bible. The inventory done in 1656 in preparation for the bankruptcy sale of his possessions lists “one old Bible.” Many other books were listed but very few were not books of illustrations. One was identified as “One Josephus in high Dutch, filled with pictures by Tobias Stimmer.” Whether or not Rembrandt was interested in the text or just the pictures, which ever Josephus work it was, the topic dealt with first century Judiasm – background he could use for his Biblical pictures.^[6]

Rembrandt was well known for his religious paintings. But he left no notes on his work or motivations, and little is known about his commissions. The dominant sect in Amsterdam was Protestant and did not seek paintings for its churches. Other than the observation that history painting was the most respected genre at the time[16] little else is known of the painter's motivation for his interest in religious art.

He had an early introduction to the Bible. From the age of 7 to 14 Rembrandt attended the Latin School in Leiden. The motto over the school door read "Pietate, Linguis et Artib.liberalis", or in English "Piety, Languages, and Liberal Arts" and the curriculum included the strict teachings of John Calvin. Students were expected to attend two services on Sunday and were tested on the content of the sermons on Monday.[8], p. 55.

When he got to Amsterdam, Rembrandt was exposed to a variety of religious views. Art dealer Hendrik Uylenburgh became his dealer, and through him he became exposed to the Mennonite community. He did portraits of Cornelis Anslø, a famed Mennonite preacher.

The Mennonites took their name from Menno Simons. He taught that *The Book of Tobit* provided excellent examples of patience, piety, charity, and morality.[2], p. 128. So some of Rembrandt's interest in Tobit could have come through his Mennonite contacts.

Rembrandt's home in the Breestraat was near the first Portuguese synagogue in Amsterdam. A Sephardic Jewish community had grown up in the area—drawn there from their persecution in Spain and Portugal by the religious tolerance in Holland. Among the leaders of the community was Manasseh Ben Israel who lived diagonally across the street from Rembrandt.[2], p. 109. Rembrandt etched a portrait of him, and also provided four etchings to illustrate his book *The Glorious Stone, or Nebuchadnezzar's Dream*.[2], p. 114.

Among Manasseh Ben Israel's friends was Adam Boreel. Boreel's radical teaching denied the existence of a single church but held the view that all faiths possessed a fragment of the revealed truth.[20], p. 609.

Whatever beliefs Rembrandt may have absorbed from his Mennonite and Jewish friends, on paper he was part of the Dutch Reformed Church. He was married in it, his children were baptised in it, and he was buried in it. And not long before his death he was a sponsor for his granddaughter's christening. The role of a sponsor was reserved for those considered sound in the faith.[2], pp. 128-9.

Whatever his faith, a likely reason for his interest in religious subjects was the status of the Bible in Dutch life in his time:

"For Rembrandt, as for almost all Protestants in the Netherlands, the Bible was an element of life, as current and indispensable as food, drink, and air." [2], p. 120.

The opinion expressed by Rotermund in [19] seems an excellent assessment of Rembrandt's relationship to the Bible:

“Why, then, this abundance of drawings on biblical subjects? One can answer this question in two ways. One can say that evidently Rembrandt's artistic imagination was so powerful that only a fraction of his imaginative energy led to finished works whereas most of it took the form of sketches. This is certainly true. But the other answer is equally true: apparently Rembrandt's relation to the biblical narrative was so intense that he repeatedly felt impelled to depict what he read there. These sketches of Rembrandt's have the quality of a diary. It is as though Rembrandt, reading the Bible, made marginal notes for himself . . .”

Seymour Slive summed up Rembrandt's relationship to the Bible in [7]: “Judging from his existing oeuvre, religious pictures were closest to his heart . . .”

There is a non-Biblical motivation for Rembrandt's interest in Tobit. The theme of blindness occurs frequently in his work: He shows Claudius Civilis from the side with the missing eye, his most horrific painting features the blinding of Samson, he drew blind beggars, two of his paintings involve the blind Homer, and there is a blind man in his *Hundred Guilder Print*. And perhaps most importantly, in the only documented portrait of his father it appears that he may be blind.[22], p. 143. So a story in which blindness is cured could be of interest.

Finally, Rembrandt seemed interested in events involving angels—particularly as the angel related to humans. In his paintings an angel stays the hand of Abraham to save Isaac, an angel wrestles with Jacob, an angel whispers to Joseph about the need to flee to Egypt, an angel dramatically frees Peter from prison, and an angel looks over Matthew's shoulder to inspire him as he writes his gospel. And there are many other instances of angels appearing in his work. Browse through [3] for many more.

The angel Raphael figures prominently in *The Book of Tobit*, and even though he is in disguise as a human most of the time, Rembrandt shows him with wings. Apparently he just really liked drawing angels!

And there were certain moments in the story that were among his favorites—you will find six drawings of Tobias being scared by a fish, and a painting and seven drawings of Tobias curing his father. One of Rembrandt's earliest biographers, Arnold Houbraken, commented on the frequency with which he illustrated the same event:

“As regards his art he was very inventive, which is why one so frequently sees so many different sketches of the same subject by his hand, which are also full of alterations as regards characterization, posture, and details of costume. In this he deserves to be praised above others . . .”[13]

My goal is to enrich *The Book of Tobit* with illustrations by Rembrandt—my favorite artist. He obviously was very involved with the story, and my hope is that being able to envision scenes from it as he did helps others appreciate it.

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Pittsburgh, PA
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Acknowledgements

The King James text of the *Book of Tobit* presented here is adapted from the online Bible <http://ebible.org/>. [24]. Their site states that the text is in the public domain.

Most of the images were obtained through internet search and the sources are identified in the List of Illustrations. All museum websites for which a policy has been determined allow the use of their online images. Such policies are generous contributions to scholarship.

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26. *Tobit and Anna Waiting for Tobias' Return*, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Oil on panel, 40.3×54 cm, 1659. Page 32.

27. *Tobit and Anna waiting for their son Tobias*, Louvre, Paris, Oil on an oak panel, 280×340 mm, signed "RHL-van Rijn", 1632.

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29. *The return of Tobias*, Attributed to Rembrandt and workshop, Drawing, reed pen and wash in dark brown bistre, reworked with Indian ink, 200×301 mm., 1651–52. Page 35

30. *The Blindness of Tobit: A Sketch*, Rosenwald Collection, The National Gallery of Art, Washington, Etching, c. 1629. Page 35.

31. *The blindness of Tobit*, The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, Etching, 161×129 mm, 1651. Page 35.

In this etching of blind old Tobit making his way to the door to greet his returning son, Rembrandt adapted the figure of the blind man by Raphael from a cartoon for tapestries ordered by Pope Leo X for the Sistine Chapel. Rembrandt could have known the design from an engraving.[23]

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44. *Departure of Angel*, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, Drawing. Page 43.
 45. *Old Tobit Seated in Front of His Bed Having His Feet Bathed*, Drawing, pen and bistre, inscribed "Rembrandt", 170×234 mm., 1649–50. Page 45.

Some think that this drawing could also be from mythology with that possibility being Odysseus disguised as an old beggar having his feet washed by his old nurse. (Homer, *Odyssey*, XIX, 386ff.)[3]

The Book of Tobit

THE BOOK OF THE WORDS OF TOBIT, son of Tobiel, the son of Ananiel, the son of Aduel, the son of Gabael, of the seed of Asael, of the tribe of Nephthali;

1:2 Who in the time of Enemessar king of the Assyrians was led captive out of Thisbe, which is at the right hand of that city, which is called properly Nephthali in Galilee above Aser.

1:3 I Tobit have walked all the days of my life in the ways of truth and justice, and I did many almsdeeds to my brethren, and my nation, who came with me to Nineveh, into the land of the Assyrians.

1:4 And when I was in mine own country, in the land of Israel being but young, all the tribe of Nephthali my father fell from the house of Jerusalem, which was chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, that all the tribes should sacrifice there, where the temple of the habitation of the most High was consecrated and built for all ages.

1:5 Now all the tribes which together revolted, and the house of my father Nephthali, sacrificed unto the heifer Baal.

1:6 But I alone went often to Jerusalem at the feasts, as it was ordained unto all the people of Israel by an everlasting decree, having the firstfruits and tenths of increase, with that which was first shorn; and them gave I at the altar to the priests the children of Aaron.

1:7 The first tenth part of all increase I gave to the sons of Aaron, who ministered at Jerusalem: another tenth part I sold away, and went, and spent it every year at Jerusalem:

1:8 And the third I gave unto them to whom it was meet, as Debora my father's mother had commanded me, because I was left an orphan by my father.

1:9 Furthermore, when I was come to the age of a man, I married Anna of mine own kindred, and of her I begat Tobias.

1:10 And when we were carried away captives to Nineveh, all my brethren and those that were of my kindred did eat of the bread of the Gentiles.

1:11 But I kept myself from eating;

1:12 Because I remembered God with all my heart.

1:13 And the most High gave me grace and favour before Enemessar, so that I was his purveyor.

1:14 And I went into Media, and left in trust with Gabael, the brother of Gabrias, at Rages a city of Media ten talents of silver.

1:15 Now when Enemessar was dead, Sennacherib his son reigned in his stead; whose estate was troubled, that I could not go into Media.

1:16 And in the time of Enemessar I gave many alms to my brethren, and gave my bread to the hungry,

1:17 And my clothes to the naked: and if I saw any of my nation dead, or cast about the walls of Nineveh, I buried him.

1:18 And if the king Sennacherib had slain any, when he was come, and fled from Judea, I buried them privily; for in his wrath he killed many; but the bodies were not found, when they were sought for of the king.

1:19 And when one of the Ninevites went and complained of me to the king, that I buried them, and hid myself; understanding that I was sought for to be put to death, I withdrew myself for fear.

1:20 Then all my goods were forcibly taken away, neither was there any thing left me, beside my wife Anna and my son Tobias.

1:21 And there passed not five and fifty days, before two of his sons killed him, and they fled into the mountains of Ararath; and Sarchedonus his son reigned in his stead; who appointed over his fathers accounts, and over all his affairs, Achiacharus my brother Anael's son.

1:22 And Achiacharus intreating for me, I returned to Nineveh. Now Achiacharus was cupbearer, and keeper of the signet, and steward, and overseer of the accounts: and Sarchedonus appointed him next unto him: and he was my brothers son.



Figure 1. Tobit reading the Bible to his wife Anna



NOW WHEN I WAS COME HOME again, and my wife Anna was restored unto me, with my son Tobias, in the feast of Pentecost, which is the holy feast of the seven weeks, there was a good dinner prepared me, in the which I sat down to eat.

2:2 And when I saw abundance of meat, I said to my son, Go and bring what poor man soever thou shalt find out of our brethren, who is mindful of the Lord; and, lo, I tarry for thee.

2:3 But he came again, and said, Father, one of our nation is strangled, and is cast out in the marketplace.

2:4 Then before I had tasted of any meat, I started up, and took him up into a room until the going down of the sun.

2:5 Then I returned, and washed myself, and ate my meat in heaviness,

2:6 Remembering that prophecy of Amos, as he said, Your feasts shall be turned into mourning, and all your mirth into lamentation.

2:7 Therefore I wept: and after the going down of the sun I went and made a grave, and buried him.

2:8 But my neighbours mocked me, and said, This man is not yet afraid to be put to death for this matter: who fled away; and yet, lo, he burieth the dead again.

2:9 The same night also I returned from the burial, and slept by the wall of my courtyard, being polluted and my face was uncovered:



Figure 2. Tobit Asleep

2:10 And I knew not that there were sparrows in the wall, and mine eyes being open, the sparrows muted warm dung into mine eyes, and a whiteness came in mine eyes: and I went to the physicians, but they helped me not: moreover Achiacharus did nourish me, until I went into Elymais.



Figure 3. Blind Tobit, drawn twice, with the dog diverting his steps

2:11 And my wife Anna did take women's works to do.

2:12 And when she had sent them home to the owners, they paid her wages, and gave her also besides a kid.

2:13 And when it was in my house, and began to cry, I said unto her, From whence is this kid? is it not stolen? render it to the owners; for it is not lawful to eat any thing that is stolen.



Figure 4. Anna Accused by Tobit



Figure 5. Tobit and Anna with the Goat



Figure 6. Anna Accused by Tobit of Stealing the Kid

2:14 But she replied upon me, It was given for a gift more than the wages. Howbeit I did not believe her, but bade her render it to the owners: and I was abashed at her. But she replied upon me, Where are thine alms and thy righteous deeds? behold, thou and all thy works are known.



THEN I BEING GRIEVED did weep, and in my sorrow prayed, saying,
3:2 O Lord, thou art just, and all thy works and all thy ways are mercy and truth, and thou judgest truly and justly for ever.

3:3 Remember me, and look on me, punish me not for my sins and ignorances, and the sins of my fathers, who have sinned before thee:

3:4 For they obeyed not thy commandments: wherefore thou hast delivered us for a spoil, and unto captivity, and unto death, and for a proverb of reproach to all the nations among whom we are dispersed.

3:5 And now thy judgments are many and true: deal with me according to my sins and my fathers: because we have not kept thy commandments, neither have walked in truth before thee.

3:6 Now therefore deal with me as seemeth best unto thee, and command my spirit to be taken from me, that I may be dissolved, and become earth: for it is profitable for me to die rather than to live, because I have heard false

reproaches, and have much sorrow: command therefore that I may now be delivered out of this distress, and go into the everlasting place: turn not thy face away from me.

3:7 It came to pass the same day, that in Ecbatane a city of Media Sara the daughter of Raguel was also reproached by her father's maids;

3:8 Because that she had been married to seven husbands, whom Asmodeus the evil spirit had killed, before they had lain with her. Dost thou not know, said they, that thou hast strangled thine husbands? Thou hast had already seven husbands, neither wast thou named after any of them.

3:9 Wherefore dost thou beat us for them? If they be dead, go thy ways after them, let us never see of thee either son or daughter.

3:10 When she heard these things, she was very sorrowful, so that she thought to have strangled herself; and she said, I am the only daughter of my father, and if I do this, it shall be a reproach unto him, and I shall bring his old age with sorrow unto the grave.

3:11 Then she prayed toward the window, and said, Blessed art thou, O Lord my God, and thine holy and glorious name is blessed and honourable for ever: let all thy works praise thee for ever.

3:12 And now, O Lord, I set mine eyes and my face toward thee,

3:13 And say, Take me out of the earth, that I may hear no more the reproach.

3:14 Thou knowest, Lord, that I am pure from all sin with man,

3:15 And that I never polluted my name, nor the name of my father, in the land of my captivity: I am the only daughter of my father, neither hath he any child to be his heir, neither any near kinsman, nor any son of his alive, to whom I may keep myself for a wife: my seven husbands are already dead; and why should I live? but if it please not thee that I should die, command some regard to be had of me, and pity taken of me, that I hear no more reproach.

3:16 So the prayers of them both were heard before the majesty of the great God.

3:17 And Raphael was sent to heal them both, that is, to scale away the whiteness of Tobit's eyes, and to give Sara the daughter of Raguel for a wife to Tobias the son of Tobit; and to bind Asmodeus the evil spirit; because she belonged to Tobias by right of inheritance. The selfsame time came Tobit home, and entered into his house, and Sara the daughter of Raguel came down from her upper chamber.



IN THAT DAY TOBIT remembered the money which he had committed to Gabael in Rages of Media,

4:2 And said with himself, I have wished for death; wherefore do I not call for my son Tobias that I may signify to him of the money before I die?

4:3 And when he had called him, he said, My son, when I am dead, bury me; and despise not thy mother, but honour her all the days of thy life, and do that which shall please her, and grieve her not.

4:4 Remember, my son, that she saw many dangers for thee, when thou wast in her womb: and when she is dead, bury her by me in one grave.

4:5 My son, be mindful of the Lord our God all thy days, and let not thy will be set to sin, or to transgress his commandments: do uprightly all thy life long, and follow not the ways of unrighteousness.

4:6 For if thou deal truly, thy doings shall prosperously succeed to thee, and to all them that live justly.

4:7 Give alms of thy substance; and when thou givest alms, let not thine eye be envious, neither turn thy face from any poor, and the face of God shall not be turned away from thee.

4:8 If thou hast abundance give alms accordingly: if thou have but a little, be not afraid to give according to that little:

4:9 For thou layest up a good treasure for thyself against the day of necessity.

4:10 Because that alms do deliver from death, and suffereth not to come into darkness.

4:11 For alms is a good gift unto all that give it in the sight of the most High.

4:12 Beware of all whoredom, my son, and chiefly take a wife of the seed of thy fathers, and take not a strange woman to wife, which is not of thy fathers tribe: for we are the children of the prophets, Noe, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: remember, my son, that our fathers from the beginning, even that they all married wives of their own kindred, and were blessed in their children, and their seed shall inherit the land.

4:13 Now therefore, my son, love thy brethren, and despise not in thy heart thy brethren, the sons and daughters of thy people, in not taking a wife of them: for in pride is destruction and much trouble, and in lewdness is decay and great want: for lewdness is the mother of famine.

4:14 Let not the wages of any man, which hath wrought for thee, tarry with thee, but give him it out of hand: for if thou serve God, he will also repay thee: be circumspect my son, in all things thou doest, and be wise in all thy conversation.

4:15 Do that to no man which thou hatest: drink not wine to make thee drunken: neither let drunkenness go with thee in thy journey.

4:16 Give of thy bread to the hungry, and of thy garments to them that

are naked; and according to thine abundance give alms: and let not thine eye be envious, when thou givest alms.

4:17 Pour out thy bread on the burial of the just, but give nothing to the wicked.

4:18 Ask counsel of all that are wise, and despise not any counsel that is profitable.

4:19 Bless the Lord thy God alway, and desire of him that thy ways may be directed, and that all thy paths and counsels may prosper: for every nation hath not counsel; but the Lord himself giveth all good things, and he humbleth whom he will, as he will; now therefore, my son, remember my commandments, neither let them be put out of thy mind.

4:20 And now I signify this to thee that I committed ten talents to Gabael the son of Gabrias at Rages in Media.

4:21 And fear not, my son, that we are made poor: for thou hast much wealth, if thou fear God, and depart from all sin, and do that which is pleasing in his sight.



TOBIAS THEN ANSWERED and said, Father, I will do all things which thou hast commanded me:

5:2 But how can I receive the money, seeing I know him not?

5:3 Then he gave him the handwriting, and said unto him, Seek thee a man which may go with thee, whiles I yet live, and I will give him wages: and go and receive the money.

5:4 Therefore when he went to seek a man, he found Raphael that was an angel.

5:5 But he knew not; and he said unto him, Canst thou go with me to Rages? and knowest thou those places well?

5:6 To whom the angel said, I will go with thee, and I know the way well: for I have lodged with our brother Gabael.

5:7 Then Tobias said unto him, Tarry for me, till I tell my father.

5:8 Then he said unto him, Go and tarry not. So he went in and said to his father, Behold, I have found one which will go with me. Then he said, Call him unto me, that I may know of what tribe he is, and whether he be a trusty man to go with thee.



Figure 7. Tobit Interviewing “Azarias”

5:9 So he called him, and he came in, and they saluted one another.

5:10 Then Tobit said unto him, Brother, shew me of what tribe and family thou art.

5:11 To whom he said, Dost thou seek for a tribe or family, or an hired man to go with thy son? Then Tobit said unto him, I would know, brother, thy kindred and name.

5:12 Then he said, I am Azarias, the son of Ananias the great, and of thy brethren.

5:13 Then Tobit said, Thou art welcome, brother; be not now angry with me, because I have enquired to know thy tribe and thy family; for thou art my brother, of an honest and good stock: for I know Ananias and Jonathas, sons of that great Samaias, as we went together to Jerusalem to worship, and offered the firstborn, and the tenths of the fruits; and they were not seduced with the error of our brethren: my brother, thou art of a good stock.

5:14 But tell me, what wages shall I give thee? Wilt thou a drachm a day, and things necessary, as to mine own son?

5:15 Yea, moreover, if ye return safe, I will add something to thy wages.



Figure 8. The Departure of Tobias and the Angel



Figure 9. Tobit blesses his departing son Tobias at the house door, while the Guardian Angel waits outside

5:16 So they were well pleased. Then said he to Tobias, Prepare thyself for the journey, and God send you a good journey. And when his son had prepared all things for the journey, his father said, Go thou with this man, and God, which dwelleth in heaven, prosper your journey, and the angel of God keep you company. So they went forth both, and the young man's dog with them.



Figure 10. The Departure of Tobias and the Angel

5:17 But Anna his mother wept, and said to Tobit, Why hast thou sent away our son? Is he not the staff of our hand, in going in and out before us?

5:18 Be not greedy to add money to money: but let it be as refuse in respect of our child.

5:19 For that which the Lord hath given us to live with doth suffice us.

5:20 Then said Tobit to her, Take no care, my sister; he shall return in safety, and thine eyes shall see him.

5:21 For the good angel will keep him company, and his journey shall be prosperous, and he shall return safe.

5:22 Then she made an end of weeping.



Figure 11. Anna and the Blind Tobit



AND AS THEY WENT ON THEIR JOURNEY, they came in the evening to the river Tigris, and they lodged there.



Figure 12. Tobias and “Azarias” Walking

6:2 And when the young man went down to wash himself, a fish leaped out of the river, and would have devoured him.



Figure 13. The Angel Showing the Fish to Tobias



Figure 14. Tobias Scared by the Fish



Figure 15. Tobias Frightened by the Fish



Figure 16. Tobias Frightened by the Fish



Figure 17. Tobias Frightened by the Fish

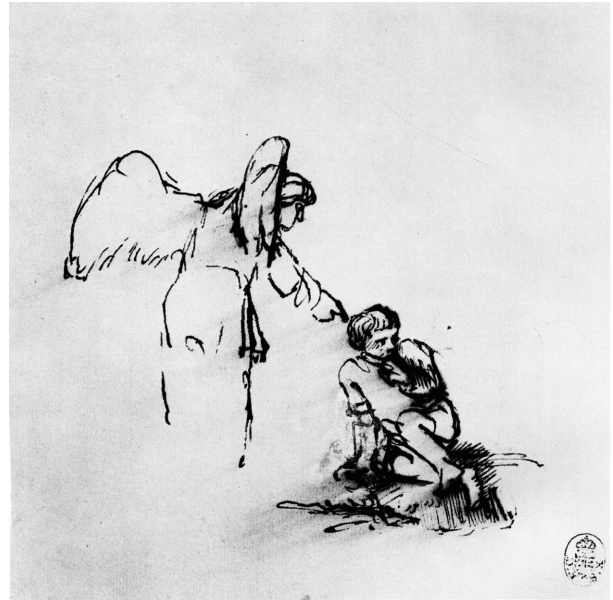


Figure 18. Tobias Frightened by the Fish



Figure 19. Tobias Frightened by the Fish, with the Angel in a Mountainous Landscape

6:3 Then the angel said unto him, Take the fish. And the young man laid hold of the fish, and drew it to land.

6:4 To whom the angel said, Open the fish, and take the heart and the liver and the gall, and put them up safely.



Figure 20. Tobias with the Angel Disembowelling the Fish



Figure 21. Tobias cutting the intestines from the fish



Figure 22. Tobias Disboweling the Fish with the Angel

6:5 So the young man did as the angel commanded him; and when they had roasted the fish, they did eat it: then they both went on their way, till they drew near to Ecbatane.

6:6 Then the young man said to the angel, Brother Azarias, to what use is the heart and the liver and the gall of the fish?

6:7 And he said unto him, Touching the heart and the liver, if a devil or an evil spirit trouble any, we must make a smoke thereof before the man or the woman, and the party shall be no more vexed.

6:8 As for the gall, it is good to anoint a man that hath whiteness in his eyes, and he shall be healed.

6:9 And when they were come near to Rages,

6:10 The angel said to the young man, Brother, to day we shall lodge with Raguel, who is thy cousin; he also hath one only daughter, named Sara; I will speak for her, that she may be given thee for a wife.



Figure 23. Tobias and “Azarias” Resting

6:11 For to thee doth the right of her appertain, seeing thou only art of her kindred.

6:12 And the maid is fair and wise: now therefore hear me, and I will speak to her father; and when we return from Rages we will celebrate the marriage: for I know that Raguel cannot marry her to another according to the law of Moses, but he shall be guilty of death, because the right of inheritance doth rather appertain to thee than to any other.

6:13 Then the young man answered the angel, I have heard, brother Azarias that this maid hath been given to seven men, who all died in the marriage chamber.

6:14 And now I am the only son of my father, and I am afraid, lest if I go in unto her, I die, as the other before: for a wicked spirit loveth her, which hurteth no body, but those which come unto her; wherefore I also fear lest I die, and bring my fathers and my mother's life because of me to the grave with sorrow: for they have no other son to bury them.

6:15 Then the angel said unto him, Dost thou not remember the precepts which thy father gave thee, that thou shouldest marry a wife of thine own kindred? wherefore hear me, O my brother; for she shall be given thee to wife; and make thou no reckoning of the evil spirit; for this same night shall she be given thee in marriage.

6:16 And when thou shalt come into the marriage chamber, thou shalt take the ashes of perfume, and shalt lay upon them some of the heart and

liver of the fish, and shalt make a smoke with it:

6:17 And the devil shall smell it, and flee away, and never come again any more: but when thou shalt come to her, rise up both of you, and pray to God which is merciful, who will have pity on you, and save you: fear not, for she is appointed unto thee from the beginning; and thou shalt preserve her, and she shall go with thee. Moreover I suppose that she shall bear thee children. Now when Tobias had heard these things, he loved her, and his heart was effectually joined to her.



AND WHEN THEY WERE COME to Ecbatane, they came to the house of Raguel, and Sara met them: and after they had saluted one another, she brought them into the house.

7:2 Then said Raguel to Edna his wife, How like is this young man to Tobit my cousin!

7:3 And Raguel asked them, From whence are ye, brethren? To whom they said, We are of the sons of Nephthalim, which are captives in Nineveh.

7:4 Then he said to them, Do ye know Tobit our kinsman? And they said, We know him. Then said he, Is he in good health?

7:5 And they said, He is both alive, and in good health: and Tobias said, He is my father.



Figure 24. Tobias Welcomed by Raguel

7:6 Then Raguel leaped up, and kissed him, and wept,

7:7 And blessed him, and said unto him, Thou art the son of an honest and good man. But when he had heard that Tobit was blind, he was sorrowful, and wept.

7:8 And likewise Edna his wife and Sara his daughter wept. Moreover they entertained them cheerfully; and after that they had killed a ram of the flock, they set store of meat on the table. Then said Tobias to Raphael, Brother Azarias, speak of those things of which thou didst talk in the way, and let this business be dispatched.

7:9 So he communicated the matter with Raguel: and Raguel said to Tobias, Eat and drink, and make merry:

7:10 For it is meet that thou shouldest marry my daughter: nevertheless I will declare unto thee the truth.

7:11 I have given my daughter in marriage to seven men, who died that night they came in unto her: nevertheless for the present be merry. But Tobias said, I will eat nothing here, till we agree and swear one to another.

7:12 Raguel said, Then take her from henceforth according to the manner, for thou art her cousin, and she is thine, and the merciful God give you good success in all things.

7:13 Then he called his daughter Sara, and she came to her father, and he took her by the hand, and gave her to be wife to Tobias, saying, Behold, take her after the law of Moses, and lead her away to thy father. And he blessed them;

7:14 And called Edna his wife, and took paper, and did write an instrument of covenants, and sealed it.

7:15 Then they began to eat.

7:16 After Raguel called his wife Edna, and said unto her, Sister, prepare another chamber, and bring her in thither.

7:17 Which when she had done as he had bidden her, she brought her thither: and she wept, and she received the tears of her daughter, and said unto her,

7:18 Be of good comfort, my daughter; the Lord of heaven and earth give thee joy for this thy sorrow: be of good comfort, my daughter.



AND WHEN THEY HAD SUPPED, they brought Tobias in unto her.

8:2 And as he went, he remembered the words of Raphael, and took the ashes of the perfumes, and put the heart and the liver of the fish thereupon, and made a smoke therewith.

8:3 The which smell when the evil spirit had smelled, he fled into the utmost parts of Egypt, and the angel bound him.

8:4 And after that they were both shut in together, Tobias rose out of the bed, and said, Sister, arise, and let us pray that God would have pity on us.



Figure 25. Tobias and His Wife Sarah Praying

8:5 Then began Tobias to say, Blessed art thou, O God of our fathers, and blessed is thy holy and glorious name for ever; let the heavens bless thee, and all thy creatures.

8:6 Thou madest Adam, and gavest him Eve his wife for an helper and stay: of them came mankind: thou hast said, It is not good that man should be alone; let us make unto him an aid like unto himself.

8:7 And now, O Lord, I take not this my sister for lust but uprightly: therefore mercifully ordain that we may become aged together.

8:8 And she said with him, Amen.

8:9 So they slept both that night. And Raguel arose, and went and made a grave,

8:10 Saying, I fear lest he also be dead.

8:11 But when Raguel was come into his house,

8:12 He said unto his wife Edna. Send one of the maids, and let her see whether he be alive: if he be not, that we may bury him, and no man know it.

8:13 So the maid opened the door, and went in, and found them both asleep,

8:14 And came forth, and told them that he was alive.

8:15 Then Raguel praised God, and said, O God, thou art worthy to be praised with all pure and holy praise; therefore let thy saints praise thee with all thy creatures; and let all thine angels and thine elect praise thee for ever.

8:16 Thou art to be praised, for thou hast made me joyful; and that is not come to me which I suspected; but thou hast dealt with us according to thy great mercy.

8:17 Thou art to be praised because thou hast had mercy of two that were the only begotten children of their fathers: grant them mercy, O Lord, and finish their life in health with joy and mercy.

8:18 Then Raguel bade his servants to fill the grave.

8:19 And he kept the wedding feast fourteen days.

8:20 For before the days of the marriage were finished, Raguel had said unto him by an oath, that he should not depart till the fourteen days of the marriage were expired;

8:21 And then he should take the half of his goods, and go in safety to his father; and should have the rest when I and my wife be dead.



THEN TOBIAS CALLED RAPHAEL, and said unto him,

9:2 Brother Azarias, take with thee a servant, and two camels, and go to Rages of Media to Gabael, and bring me the money, and bring him to the wedding.

9:3 For Raguel hath sworn that I shall not depart.

9:4 But my father counteth the days; and if I tarry long, he will be very sorry.

9:5 So Raphael went out, and lodged with Gabael, and gave him the handwriting: who brought forth bags which were sealed up, and gave them to him.

9:6 And early in the morning they went forth both together, and came to the wedding: and Tobias blessed his wife.



NOW TOBIT HIS FATHER counted every day: and when the days of the journey were expired, and they came not,

10:2 Then Tobit said, Are they detained? Or is Gabael dead, and there is no man to give him the money?

10:3 Therefore he was very sorry.

10:4 Then his wife said unto him, My son is dead, seeing he stayeth long; and she began to wail him, and said,

10:5 Now I care for nothing, my son, since I have let thee go, the light of mine eyes.

10:6 To whom Tobit said, Hold thy peace, take no care, for he is safe.



Figure 26. Tobit and Anna Waiting for Tobias' Return



Figure 27. Tobit and Anna Waiting for their son Tobias

10:7 But she said, Hold thy peace, and deceive me not; my son is dead. And she went out every day into the way which they went, and did eat no meat on the daytime, and ceased not whole nights to bewail her son Tobias, until the fourteen days of the wedding were expired, which Raguel had sworn that he should spend there. Then Tobias said to Raguel, Let me go, for my father and my mother look no more to see me.

10:8 But his father in law said unto him, Tarry with me, and I will send to thy father, and they shall declare unto him how things go with thee.

10:9 But Tobias said, No; but let me go to my father.

10:10 Then Raguel arose, and gave him Sara his wife, and half his goods, servants, and cattle, and money:

10:11 And he blessed them, and sent them away, saying, The God of heaven give you a prosperous journey, my children.

10:12 And he said to his daughter, Honour thy father and thy mother in law, which are now thy parents, that I may hear good report of thee. And he kissed her. Edna also said to Tobias, The Lord of heaven restore thee, my dear brother, and grant that I may see thy children of my daughter Sara before I die, that I may rejoice before the Lord: behold, I commit my daughter unto thee of special trust; where are do not entreat her evil.



AFTER THESE THINGS TOBIAS went his way, praising God that he had given him a prosperous journey, and blessed Raguel and Edna his wife, and went on his way till they drew near unto Nineveh.

11:2 Then Raphael said to Tobias, Thou knowest, brother, how thou didst leave thy father:

11:3 Let us haste before thy wife, and prepare the house.

11:4 And take in thine hand the gall of the fish. So they went their way, and the dog went after them.

11:5 Now Anna sat looking about toward the way for her son.



Figure 28. Tobias and Sarah led by the Angel on their Return to Ninevah

11:6 And when she espied him coming, she said to his father, Behold, thy son cometh, and the man that went with him.

11:7 Then said Raphael, I know, Tobias, that thy father will open his eyes.

11:8 Therefore anoint thou his eyes with the gall, and being pricked therewith, he shall rub, and the whiteness shall fall away, and he shall see thee.

11:9 Then Anna ran forth, and fell upon the neck of her son, and said unto him, Seeing I have seen thee, my son, from henceforth I am content to die. And they wept both.



Figure 29. The Return of Tobias

11:10 Tobit also went forth toward the door, and stumbled: but his son ran unto him,



**Figure 30. The Blindness of Tobit:
A Sketch**



Figure 31. The Blindness of Tobit

11:11 And took hold of his father: and he strake of the gall on his fathers eyes¹, saying, Be of good hope, my father.

11:12 And when his eyes began to smart, he rubbed them;

¹For a discussion of the use of bile to cure blindness see [14]

11:13 And the whiteness pilled away from the corners of his eyes: and when he saw his son, he fell upon his neck.



Figure 32. Tobias Healing his Father



Figure 33. Tobias Curing the Old Tobit



Figure 34. Tobias Cures his Father's Blindness



Figure 35. Tobias Healing his Father's Blindness



Figure 36. The Healing of Tobit



Figure 37. The Healing of Tobit



Figure 38. The Healing of Tobit



Figure 39. The Healing of Tobit

11:14 And he wept, and said, Blessed art thou, O God, and blessed is thy name for ever; and blessed are all thine holy angels:

11:15 For thou hast scourged, and hast taken pity on me: for, behold, I see my son Tobias. And his son went in rejoicing, and told his father the great things that had happened to him in Media.

11:16 Then Tobit went out to meet his daughter in law at the gate of Nineveh, rejoicing and praising God: and they which saw him go marvelled, because he had received his sight.

11:17 But Tobias gave thanks before them, because God had mercy on him. And when he came near to Sara his daughter in law, he blessed her, saying, Thou art welcome, daughter: God be blessed, which hath brought thee unto us, and blessed be thy father and thy mother. And there was joy among all his brethren which were at Nineveh.

11:18 And Achiacharus, and Nasbas his brothers son, came:

11:19 And Tobias wedding was kept seven days with great joy.



THEN TOBIT CALLED HIS SON TOBIAS, and said unto him, My son, see that the man have his wages, which went with thee, and thou must give him more.

12:2 And Tobias said unto him, O father, it is no harm to me to give him half of those things which I have brought:

12:3 For he hath brought me again to thee in safety, and made whole my wife, and brought me the money, and likewise healed thee.

12:4 Then the old man said, It is due unto him.

12:5 So he called the angel, and he said unto him, Take half of all that ye have brought and go away in safety.

12:6 Then he took them both apart, and said unto them, Bless God, praise him, and magnify him, and praise him for the things which he hath done unto you in the sight of all that live. It is good to praise God, and exalt his name, and honourably to shew forth the works of God; therefore be not slack to praise him.

12:7 It is good to keep close the secret of a king, but it is honourable to reveal the works of God. Do that which is good, and no evil shall touch you.

12:8 Prayer is good with fasting and alms and righteousness. A little with righteousness is better than much with unrighteousness. It is better to give alms than to lay up gold:

12:9 For alms doth deliver from death, and shall purge away all sin. Those that exercise alms and righteousness shall be filled with life:

12:10 But they that sin are enemies to their own life.

12:11 Surely I will keep close nothing from you. For I said, It was good to keep close the secret of a king, but that it was honourable to reveal the works of God.

12:12 Now therefore, when thou didst pray, and Sara thy daughter in law, I did bring the remembrance of your prayers before the Holy One: and when thou didst bury the dead, I was with thee likewise.

12:13 And when thou didst not delay to rise up, and leave thy dinner, to go and cover the dead, thy good deed was not hid from me: but I was with thee.

12:14 And now God hath sent me to heal thee and Sara thy daughter in law.

12:15 I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One.

12:16 Then they were both troubled, and fell upon their faces: for they feared.

12:17 But he said unto them, Fear not, for it shall go well with you; praise God therefore.

12:18 For not of any favour of mine, but by the will of our God I came; wherefore praise him for ever.

12:19 All these days I did appear unto you; but I did neither eat nor drink, but ye did see a vision.

12:20 Now therefore give God thanks: for I go up to him that sent me; but write all things which are done in a book.

12:21 And when they arose, they saw him no more.

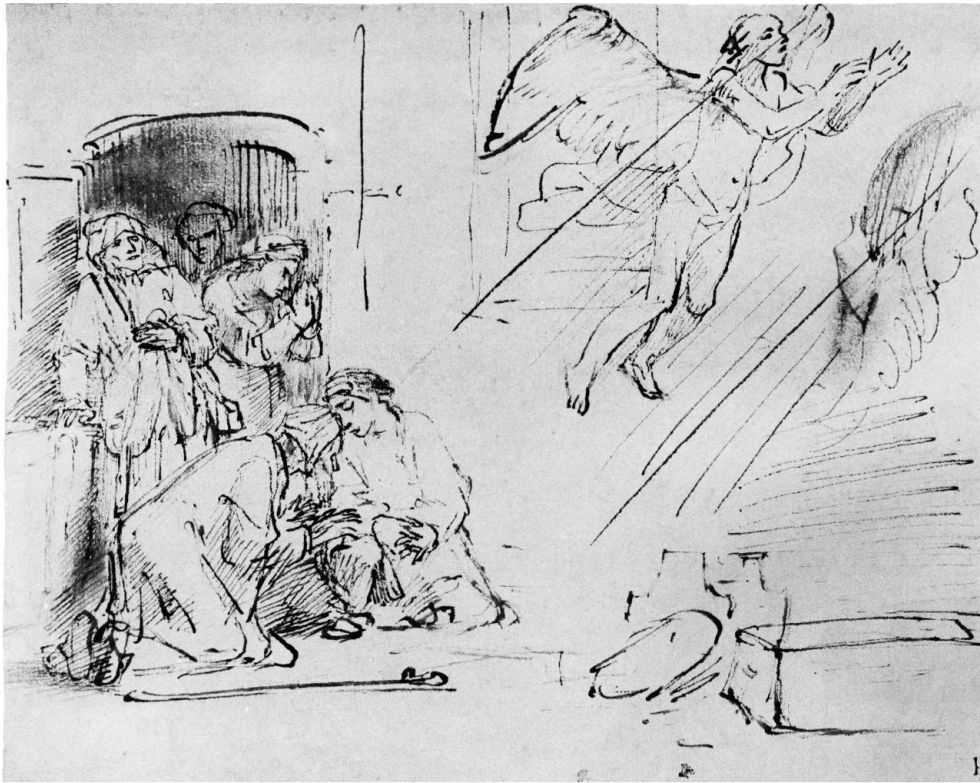


Figure 40. Departure of Angel



Figure 41. The Angel Departing from the Family of Tobias



Figure 42. The Angel Departing from the Family of Tobias



Figure 43. Sketch of Tobias' Wife



Figure 44. Departure of Angel

12:22 Then they confessed the great and wonderful works of God, and how the angel of the Lord had appeared unto them.



THEN TOBIT WROTE A PRAYER of rejoicing, and said, Blessed be God that liveth for ever, and blessed be his kingdom.

13:2 For he doth scourge, and hath mercy: he leadeth down to hell, and bringeth up again: neither is there any that can avoid his hand.

13:3 Confess him before the Gentiles, ye children of Israel: for he hath scattered us among them.

13:4 There declare his greatness, and extol him before all the living: for he is our Lord, and he is the God our Father for ever.

13:5 And he will scourge us for our iniquities, and will have mercy again, and will gather us out of all nations, among whom he hath scattered us.

13:6 If ye turn to him with your whole heart, and with your whole mind, and deal uprightly before him, then will he turn unto you, and will not hide his face from you. Therefore see what he will do with you, and confess him with your whole mouth, and praise the Lord of might, and extol the everlasting King. In the land of my captivity do I praise him, and declare his might and majesty to a sinful nation. O ye sinners, turn and do justice before him: who can tell if he will accept you, and have mercy on you?

13:7 I will extol my God, and my soul shall praise the King of heaven, and shall rejoice in his greatness.

13:8 Let all men speak, and let all praise him for his righteousness.

13:9 O Jerusalem, the holy city, he will scourge thee for thy childrens works, and will have mercy again on the sons of the righteous.

13:10 Give praise to the Lord, for he is good: and praise the everlasting King, that his tabernacle may be builded in thee again with joy, and let him make joyful there in thee those that are captives, and love in thee for ever those that are miserable.

13:11 Many nations shall come from far to the name of the Lord God with gifts in their hands, even gifts to the King of heaven; all generations shall praise thee with great joy.

13:12 Cursed are all they which hate thee, and blessed shall all be which love thee for ever.

13:13 Rejoice and be glad for the children of the just: for they shall be gathered together, and shall bless the Lord of the just.

13:14 O blessed are they which love thee, for they shall rejoice in thy peace: blessed are they which have been sorrowful for all thy scourges; for they shall rejoice for thee, when they have seen all thy glory, and shall be glad for ever.

13:15 Let my soul bless God the great King.

13:16 For Jerusalem shall be built up with sapphires and emeralds, and precious stone: thy walls and towers and battlements with pure gold.

13:17 And the streets of Jerusalem shall be paved with beryl and carbuncle and stones of Ophir.

13:18 And all her streets shall say, Alleluia; and they shall praise him, saying, Blessed be God, which hath extolled it for ever.



SO TOBIT MADE AN END of praising God.

14:2 And he was eight and fifty years old when he lost his sight, which was restored to him after eight years: and he gave alms, and he increased in the fear of the Lord God, and praised him.

14:3 And when he was very aged he called his son, and the sons of his son, and said to him, My son, take thy children; for, behold, I am aged, and am ready to depart out of this life.



Figure 45. Old Tobit Seated in Front of his Bed Having his Feet Bathed

14:4 Go into Media my son, for I surely believe those things which Jonas the prophet spake of Nineveh, that it shall be overthrown; and that for a time peace shall rather be in Media; and that our brethren shall lie scattered in the earth from that good land: and Jerusalem shall be desolate, and the house of God in it shall be burned, and shall be desolate for a time;

14:5 And that again God will have mercy on them, and bring them again into the land, where they shall build a temple, but not like to the first, until the time of that age be fulfilled; and afterward they shall return from all places of their captivity, and build up Jerusalem gloriously, and the house of God shall be built in it for ever with a glorious building, as the prophets have spoken thereof.

14:6 And all nations shall turn, and fear the Lord God truly, and shall bury their idols.

14:7 So shall all nations praise the Lord, and his people shall confess God, and the Lord shall exalt his people; and all those which love the Lord God in truth and justice shall rejoice, shewing mercy to our brethren.

14:8 And now, my son, depart out of Nineveh, because that those things which the prophet Jonas spake shall surely come to pass.

14:9 But keep thou the law and the commandments, and shew thyself merciful and just, that it may go well with thee.

14:10 And bury me decently, and thy mother with me; but tarry no longer at Nineveh. Remember, my son, how Aman handled Achiacharus that brought him up, how out of light he brought him into darkness, and how he rewarded him again: yet Achiacharus was saved, but the other had his reward: for he went down into darkness. Manasses gave alms, and escaped the snares of death which they had set for him: but Aman fell into the snare, and perished.

14:11 Wherefore now, my son, consider what alms doeth, and how righteousness doth deliver. When he had said these things, he gave up the ghost in the bed, being an hundred and eight and fifty years old; and he buried him honourably.

14:12 And when Anna his mother was dead, he buried her with his father. But Tobias departed with his wife and children to Ecbatane to Raguel his father in law,

14:13 Where he became old with honour, and he buried his father and mother in law honourably, and he inherited their substance, and his father Tobit's.

14:14 And he died at Ecbatane in Media, being an hundred and seven and twenty years old.

14:15 But before he died he heard of the destruction of Nineveh, which was taken by Nabuchodonosor and Assuerus: and before his death he rejoiced over Nineveh.



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ix Amos	1279
xi Obadiah	1293
xv Jonah	1297
xviii Micah	1303
xxi Nahum	1315
xxiii Habakkuk	1321
xxv Zephaniah	1327
xxviii Haggai	1333
xxix Zechariah	1337
Malachi	1351
The Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books	
Tobit	1357
Judith	1379
Esther (the Greek Version Containing the Additional Chapters)	1401
The Wisdom of Solomon	1419
Sirach	1451
Baruch	1521
The Letter of Jeremiah	1531
The Additions to Daniel	1537
The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Jews	1539
Susanna	1543
Bel and the Dragon	1547
1 Maccabees	1551
2 Maccabees	1595
1 Esdras	1633
The Prayer of Manasseh	1655
Psalm 151	1659
3 Maccabees	1661
2 Esdras	1677
4 Maccabees	1723
The New Testament	
Matthew	1745
Mark	1801