

Tobit

Introduction

The book of Tobit has an unusual setting: its main protagonist, Tobit, is an exile from the Northern Kingdom of Israel, who has been taken captive to Nineveh by the Assyrians. Much of the story also takes place in Media, and most particularly in the city of Ecbatana (modern Hamedan, in northwest Iran), where other members of Tobit's extended family are living. The book has a profound interest in Jerusalem, however, and in the restoration of a united Israel: its Jewish characters are not typical of the apostate North depicted in the biblical histories, but are pious victims of circumstance. Correspondingly, they still enjoy the protection of God, and the narrative is centred upon the angel Raphael's mission to resolve the serious problems faced by Tobit and his young relative Sarah, who have each been driven to despair. The narrative also serves as a vehicle, though, for extensive prayers, praises and instructions.

Tobit is well attested amongst the manuscripts from Qumran, and medieval Jewish versions of the book have survived, suggesting that it may have remained popular, at least in certain circles or communities, for many centuries. It never became authoritative in Judaism, however, and its absence from the Jewish canon, noted by St Jerome in the prologue to his translation of the book, led subsequently to its rejection from the Protestant canon and its classification as apocrypha. It remains, however, a part of the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and other Christian canons.

Narrative Description

The textual history of Tobit is complicated, as we shall see below, and although the broad outline of the story is consistent between the different versions, some details and aspects of the presentation vary. These differences are especially visible in the first few verses: 1:1-2 introduce Tobit with a genealogy which varies enormously between texts, and a note which explains how he was taken captive from Thisbe in the Galilee (a complicated, and again rather variable description of Thisbe's geographical position suggests that it may have been no better known to the original readership than it is now). The first part of the story follows in 1:3-3:6, and in the earliest versions of the book, this is narrated by Tobit himself.

After an initial claim that he has been righteous throughout his life and charitable towards his fellow exiles, Tobit looks back to his younger days in Israel, when his tribe, Naphtali, was separated from Judah and Jerusalem, and other members of the tribe would sacrifice 'on all the mountains of Galilee to the bull-calf which Jeroboam the king of Israel had made in Dan' (1:5). Recognizing that it was Jerusalem that had been divinely appointed for all the tribes, Tobit travelled there instead, and he offers a detailed account of the offerings which he used to take. On reaching manhood, he married

Anna, from within his own extended family, and they had a son, Tobias. After that, the family was taken into exile, where Tobit again demonstrated his piety by avoiding the food of the gentiles, which his other compatriots used to eat. God gave him favour with the Assyrian king, however, and Tobit's life in captivity was at first a prosperous one, working in Media on the king's behalf: he notes that on one trip he deposited with one Gabael a considerable sum of money – ten talents of silver – in Media; this will become significant later in the story.

Tobit's fortunes change with the death of this first king, who is called Enemessar in the Greek text (1:15). The roads to Media become too dangerous for travel, and the new king Sennacherim is unsympathetic to Jews when he has been forced to retreat from Judah after an unsuccessful invasion (see 2 Kings 19:36). Tobit's charity towards his fellow exiles has always included burial of the unclaimed dead, and this now becomes a risky activity, when he starts to steal away the bodies of the Sennacherim's victims. After an informer tells the king, Tobit has to go into hiding and all his possessions are confiscated. Tobit is only able to return to Nineveh following Sennacherim's assassination, when the next king puts Ahiqar the son of Anael in charge of internal affairs: Ahiqar is a close relative of Tobit, and is able to intercede on his behalf (1:22). Things rapidly go wrong again, however, when Tobit's charitable instincts lead him to send Tobias out to find a pious pauper, with whom he may share his ample dinner (2:2). Tobias finds instead a corpse, which Tobit feels obliged to retrieve and bury. As he is sleeping outside in the courtyard afterwards, birds nesting on the wall above drop excrement in his eyes, which become affected by white spots. Medical attention only makes these worse, and Tobit is ultimately left completely blind. Unable to work, he has to be supported out of Anna's earnings. His piety then gets him into trouble once more, when he suggests that a kid she has been given by a client might in fact be stolen, and in the face of his anger she asks what has happened to the charity and righteousness which used to define him (2:14).

The Sayings of Ahiqar

Probably composed originally in the 7th or 8th century BCE in Syria, this work tells the fictional story of an Assyrian royal counsellor, Ahiqar, who is betrayed by the nephew, Nadin, whom he had adopted as a son. He is saved from execution by a soldier whom he had earlier helped, and eventually restored to his former station, enabling him to exact revenge on Nadin. The story serves as a vehicle for a long collection of sayings, and it was adapted into many different languages over many centuries. Its great popularity gave it considerable influence, and there were various imitations. In some respects, Tobit is just such an imitation, using another story of rescue as a vehicle for its own prayers and advice. The debt is acknowledged, moreover, with direct reference made to the Ahiqar story in Tobit 14:10. With a certain *chutzpah*, the writer even introduces Ahiqar as Tobit's nephew, making him Jewish (see 1:21-22; 2:10; 11.18).

At this point in the story, Tobit is in despair, and wishes to die. He is not alone in this, however: far away in Ecbatana, Sarah, the daughter of Raguel, has also reached the point when she wishes to die,

and the 3:7-15 tells her story more briefly: the demon Asmodeus has killed each of the seven men married to her before they could consummate the marriage, and she is now being accused by her maids of killing them. Simultaneously, Tobit and Sarah both pray to God for death, and their prayers are heard. To deal with their situations, the angel Raphael is sent to restore Tobit's sight and to release Sarah from the attentions of the demon; the solution to each problem is to involve marrying Sarah to Tobit's son Tobias (3:16-17). As Raphael is dispatched, Tobit and Sarah each return from the place where they had prayed.

The rest of the story plays out accordingly. Having prayed for death, Tobit remembers the money which he had deposited in Media many years before, and summons Tobias to tell him about it. He offers him teaching, mostly about the need to honor his mother after he has gone, about the benefits of charity, and about the need to marry within his own tribe (4:3-19), but then makes arrangements for Tobias to go and fetch the money. A guide is needed, so Tobias is sent out to find one, and immediately bumps into Raphael, who has disguised himself as Azarias, another distant relative: when Tobit learns that he is family, which seems more important to him than Azarias' qualities as a guide, he is delighted and dispatches them immediately, rather to Anna's distress.

The first key event in their journey occurs when Tobias and Raphael reach the River Tigris on their first night (6.2-6). A fish attacks Tobias (it tries to eat him in some later versions, but only to nibble his feet in the earliest telling). At Azarias/Raphael's urging, Tobias catches it and kills it, removing the gall-bladder, heart and liver. As they go on, Azarias/Raphael explains that the heart and the liver can be burned to make a smoke which drives away demons, whilst the gall-bladder will heal white spots on a man's eyes. Later in the journey, as they approach Media, he then tells Tobias that they will have to stop overnight at the house of Raguel: he explains that Tobias is related to Raguel, and that Raguel's daughter Sarah has no relative eligible to marry her closer than Tobias himself, who therefore stands not only to gain a beautiful girl for his wife, but also to inherit all that is Raguel's, since she is an only child. When Tobias expresses some reservations, having already heard the story of Sarah's troubles, his fears are calmed by Azarias/Raphael's advice to drive away the demon using the fish innards, and by the time they reach Raguel's house, he is quite smitten with the idea of marrying Sarah.

After the initial introductions, to Raguel, his wife Edna, and Sarah, which result in a warm welcome for Tobias when his relationship to Tobit is discovered, the matter of marriage is broached over dinner (7.1-9), and Raguel gives Sarah to the insistent Tobias despite warning him of the precedents. He is sufficiently pessimistic to have a grave dug during the night, but Tobias has followed the advice given to him, burned the fish parts, and prayed with Sarah to God; when a maid investigates in the morning, the young couple are both alive (8.13-14). Asmodeus, driven to Egypt, has been bound there by Raphael. A delighted Raguel insists on throwing a lengthy wedding-party, keeping Tobias with him

for two weeks, during which Raphael, as Azarias, goes and collects the money from Gabael in nearby Rages, bringing him back to join the feast. Raguel would continue longer, but Tobias is worried about his father and insists on returning (10:7-9). He sets off for home with his new bride, and with half of Raguel's wealth.

Tobias hurries ahead with his guide as they near Nineveh (11:1), and is seen by the now desperate Anna. As Tobit stumbles trying to get out of the door to meet him, this offers an opportunity for Tobias to make use of the fish gall, which he puts into Tobit's eyes, healing them. It is a newly invigorated Tobit, possessed once again of his sight, who makes his way to meet Sarah at the city gate, praising God as he goes. Another long wedding party follows (11:18), after which Tobit suggests that they should pay the guide who had served Tobias so well, and it is agreed that they should offer him a generous bonus of half the wealth with which they had returned. Azarias, however, summons Tobit and Tobias to meet him secretly (12:6), and he reveals to him both his true story and the plan which has been worked out through the preceding events. He disappears, but urges Tobit to write a record of what has happened. Chapter 13 then consists largely of a prayer by Tobit, on the theme of punishment and mercy: Israel, which has been punished, should turn to God and look for restoration; Jerusalem faces destruction, but can expect also a great and glorious re-building.

Finally, and almost by way of a postscript, Tobit is given another speech in 14:3-11 – a second death-bed speech, since his first proved premature. Confident that prophetic predictions about the fall of Nineveh are accurate, he urges Tobias to take his family away. Israel and Judah are also to be destroyed and become desert for a while before their eventual restoration (at which point, all the Jews will return to Jerusalem, and all the peoples of the world fear God, according to 14:6-7). Tobit dies at a great age, with a final commendation of charity and condemnation of injustice, in 14:11. Tobias waits until after his mother has died too, and then returns to Raguel's house, where he cares for his parents-in-law until they die. When he finally reaches the end of his own life, and the book reaches its conclusion, Nineveh has itself been destroyed, and its population carried off to Media.

Author/Provenance

The main events of the story, are supposed to have happened in Assyria and Media during the 7th century BCE. Even allowing that some details may have become obscured in the course of transmission, however, it is not clear that the author really knew very much about either the period or the place: his understanding of the Assyrian monarchy, for instance, is sketchy (Sennacherib did not succeed Shalmaneser as 1:15 claims), and his geographical knowledge misleading – Rages is much more than the two day trip from Ecbatana suggested in 5:6, and Raphael might have needed his angelic powers to get there and back (with servants and camels) well inside the fourteen days of Tobias' wedding feast (9:2-6). The work is perhaps supposed to be identified with the book which Raphael told Tobit to write (12:20), but the actual provenance and authorship are unknown

Date/ Occasion

It is generally supposed that the book was actually composed at some point between the late fourth and early second century B.C.E, and probably in the later part of this period. Attempts to tie it to specific situations have not generally won wide acceptance, and it is not clear what audience was intended. At most, perhaps, we can say that it seems to address the situation of diaspora communities, and was perhaps composed within such a community (although probably not the one within which it is set).

Text, Language, Sources & Transmission

The textual problems surrounding Tobit are notoriously complicated. Briefly, the work was composed in either Aramaic or Hebrew (probably the former), and versions in both languages have been found at Qumran (4Q196-200). Perhaps quite early on, it was translated into Greek from a text very like the Qumran ones, but by the time of our earliest complete manuscripts, the original translation (commonly known as G2) had been replaced almost entirely by an extensively revised version (G1). The only major manuscript to preserve an unrevised text is Codex Sinaiticus, but Sinaiticus has inherited a text which had been badly corrupted by scribal errors and omissions. To an extent this can be 'repaired', in some places more confidently than in others, by reference to the revised text, to the surviving Old Latin translations based on the original Greek, and to a few chapters of unrevised text found in one other manuscript (ms. 319). The common revised text G1, and a less well known, independent revision, which is preserved in Georgian, and, for the second half of the book only, in Syriac and in a few, quite late Greek manuscripts (G3), can also offer guidance, as can the Qumran versions. The translation offered below is based on comparison of those sources with Sinaiticus, and although necessarily speculative in a few places, it probably offers something much closer to the original G2 text than do the usual translations of G1 or Sinaiticus. The relationship between the medieval Hebrew and Aramaic versions and the early text has not yet been established clearly. The Vulgate is often implicated in that discussion, because Jerome claimed to have used an Aramaic text for his translation, which has points of contact with some of the later materials, but it is more likely that they have been influenced by his readings than he by theirs.

Theology

It has been common in recent scholarship to describe Tobit as Deuteronomic, but it lacks most of the concerns associated specifically with Deuteronomic theology. The Law is important (e.g. 1:8; 6:13) – although it is difficult to pin down a biblical basis for the insistence on inter-marriage within a tribe (4:12-13), or the threat of death for Raguel if he gives Sarah to someone other than Tobias (6:13). The book places far more weight, though, on such matters as charity and burial of the dead, which largely define Tobit's own behaviour, and have more to do with personal piety and community service than

legal obligation. In the closing chapters, which are sometimes thought to include major additions to the text, there is a strong emphasis on the future restoration of Jerusalem and of Israel, which is eschatological in character, but tied to the book's perception that its story offers an insight into the mercifulness of God. If there is a single, simple message, it is that Jews in exile must retain their personal piety and their religious or ethnic integrity, helping each other and trusting God until such time as he will restore them to Jerusalem. Setting aside its central concerns, the book's interest in angels and demons, and, indeed, its portrayal of angels carrying memos to God (12:12) seem to reflect a relatively late, and perhaps somewhat popular understanding. It also has a strong interest in prophecy, and 14:4, in particular, is keen to emphasize that every word of prophecy will find its fulfillment at the right time.

Relevance to NT Writings

Tobit is not clearly cited in the New Testament, although the book was known and quoted by church fathers from the 2nd century onward: suggested resemblances to various passages tend to be very vague or untenable, and, in particular, the description of Raphael's eventual disappearance may resemble the Ascension narratives simply because of the similar subject-matter. The book is interesting, though, as a source of insight into early Jewish piety, prayer and praise at a personal level – aspects of Judaism which have not always received due attention in considerations of the background to early Christianity.

Discussion Questions

1. Is Tobit's piety portrayed as excessive?
2. What understandings of divine action seem to underpin the narrative's portrayal of Tobit and Sarah suffering for long periods before Raphael is sent in response to their prayers?
3. Many earlier commentators were profoundly troubled by Raphael's impersonation of Azarias and his subsequent lies about his experience. Were they right to be?
4. Is Tobit's prayer in chapter 13 so completely disconnected from the preceding narrative that it should be considered a secondary addition to the book?

Beginner Resources

Di Lella, Alexander A., 'Tobit'. In *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included under that Title*. Edited by Albert Pietersma and Benjamin Wright, pp. 456-77. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Jacobs, Naomi S., 'Tobit, Book of'. In *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism* edited by John J. Collins and Daniel C. Harlow, pp. 1314-15. Grand Rapids, MI, & Cambridge, 2010.

Moore, Carey A., 'Tobit, book of' in *ABD* 6:585-94.

Otzen, Benedikt, *Tobit and Judith*. Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002.

Intermediate/ Advanced Resources

Bredin, Mark (ed.), *Studies in the Book of Tobit. A Multidisciplinary Approach*. Library of Second Temple Studies 55. London & New York: T & T Clark, 2006

Corley, J., and Skemp, V. (eds), *Intertextual Studies in Ben Sira and Tobit*. CBQMS 38. Washington: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2005.

Fitzmyer, Joseph A., *Tobit*. CEJL. Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2003.

Littman, Robert J., Tobit. *The Book of Tobit in Codex Sinaiticus*. Septuagint Commentary Series. Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2008.

Moore, Carey A., *Tobit: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. The Anchor Bible 40A. New York: Doubleday, 1996.

Xeravits, Géza G. and József Zsengellér (eds.), *The Book of Tobit. Text, Tradition, Theology*. JSJ Supplements, 98. Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2005.

Translation:

1.1 The book of words of Tobit, son of Tobiel, son of Ananiel, son of Adouel, son of Gabael, from the seed of Asiel, from the tribe of Naphthali,

1.2 who was taken captive in the days of Enemessar,¹ the king of the Assyrians, out of Thisbe, which is to the right of Kedesh-of-Naphthali, in the upper Galilee, above Asser² beyond the western side, on the left of Phogor.

¹ Shalmaneser: that name is in fact attested in the Latin texts, but may be a correction there in the light of 2 Kings 17:3-6; 18:9-11.

² Hazor?

1.3 I, Tobit, walked in ways of truth, and in righteous deeds all the days of my life, and performed many acts of charity toward my brothers and my people, who came with me into captivity to the land of the Assyrians, to Nineveh.

1.4 And when I was in my country, in the land of Israel, and when I was a younger man, all the tribe of Naphthali my ancestor were in secession from the House of David, and from Jerusalem, a city which had been selected from all the tribes of Israel for sacrificing by all the tribes of Israel; and the temple of God's dwelling was sanctified and built in it, for all generations of time.

1.5 And all my brothers, the house of Naphthali my ancestor, sacrificed on all the mountains of Galilee to the bull-calf which Jeroboam the king of Israel had made in Dan,

1.6 while I, all alone, would go frequently to Jerusalem on the feast-days, as is prescribed for all Israel in an eternal commandment, holding the first-fruits, and the first products, and the tithes of the produce, and the first-shearings of the flocks.

1.7 And I would give them to the priests, the sons of Aaron, before the altar. And the tithe of grain, and of wine, and of oil, and of figs and of pomegranates, and of the remaining fruits I would give to the sons of Levi, who minister in Jerusalem. And I would tithe the second tithe in money every six years, and go and spend it in Jerusalem each year,

1.8 and I would give it to the orphans and to the widows, and to proselytes who were attached to the sons of Israel. I would take and give to them in the third year, and we would consume these things according to the commandment commanded about them in the law of Moses, and according to the instructions which Deborah gave – the mother of Ananiel, our ancestor – for my father left me an orphan and died.

1.9 And when I had become a man, I took a wife, Anna, from the seed of our lineage, and had a son by her, and called his name Tobias.

1.10 After being taken captive to Assyria, and while I was held in captivity at Nineveh, all of my brothers and the members of my race used to eat gentiles' food,

1.11 but I kept my self safe from eating the gentiles' food.

1.12 And when I remembered my God in my whole self,

1.13 then the Most High gave me grace and favor in the eyes of Enemessar; and I used to procure everything useful for him,

1.14 and I would go to Media and do his procurement there until he died. And I deposited ten talents of silver with Gabael, the brother of Gabri, in the land of Media.

1.15 But when Enemessar died, and Sennacherim³ his son reigned in his place, then the roads of Media became unsafe, and I was no longer able to travel to Media.

1.16 In the days of Enemessar, I had performed many charitable acts for my brothers, from my race:

1.17 I would give my food to the hungry and clothes to the naked, and if I observed anyone of my race dead and cast out behind the wall of Nineveh, I would bury him.

1.18 And if Sennacherim killed someone when he retreated fleeing from Judea – in the days of the sentence which the King of Heaven executed on him, because of the blasphemies which he had blasphemed – I did the burying. For he killed many of the children of Israel in his anger, and I would steal their bodies and do the burying, while Sennacherim sought them and did not find them.

1.19 And a certain somebody from the residents of Nineveh went and informed the king about me, that I was burying them, and I hid. And when I realized that the king knew about me, and that I was being sought for execution, I was afraid and made a getaway.

1.20 Then all the things which belonged to me were seized, and I was left with nothing that had not been confiscated for the royal revenues, except Anna, my wife, and Tobias, my son.

1.21 But not forty-five days had passed when his two sons killed him and fled to the mountains of Ararat, and Sacherdonos⁴ his son ruled in his place. And he put Ahiqar, the son of Anael, my brother, in charge of all the auditing of his kingdom, and he held power over the whole internal administration.

1.22 Then Ahiqar petitioned on my behalf, and I returned to Nineveh, for Ahiqar had been the Chief Cup-Bearer, and in charge of the seal, and of administration and finance in the time

³ Sennacherib.

⁴ Esarhaddon.

of Sennacherim, king of Assyria, and Sacherdonos appointed him a second time. But he was my nephew, and of my kin.

2.1 And under King Sacherdonos I returned to my home, and my wife Anna was returned to me, along with my son Tobias. And on our feast-day Pentecost, which is the Holy of Weeks, there was a fine dinner for me, and I lay down to dine.

2.2 And the table was set for me, and I saw there were many dishes. So I said to Tobias my son, ‘Lad, go round, and any pauper you should find from our brethren, from the Ninevite captives, who remembers God with all his heart, then bring him and he will share my meal with me; and, look, I shall wait for you lad, until you come’.

2.3 And Tobias went to seek some pauper from our brethren, and returning he said, ‘Father!’ And I said to him, ‘Here I am, lad’. Then replying, he said to me, ‘Father, look! One of our race has been killed and cast into the market place, and he has just this moment been strangled!’

2.4 And jumping up, I left the dinner before I’d tasted it, and picked him up from the street. And I put him in one of the outhouses until the sun should set and I could bury him.

2.5 Returning, therefore, I washed myself, and ate my food with mourning.

2.6 And I remembered the word of the prophet, such things as Amos had spoken at Bethel, saying ‘Your feasts will be turned to mourning, and all your songs to lamentation’,

2.7 and I wept. And when the sun had set, I went off and, after some digging, I buried him.

2.8 And my neighbors made fun, saying, ‘Is he still not afraid? For he has already been sought for execution for doing this and run away – but look, he is burying the dead again!’

2.9 And that night I washed myself after burying him, and went to my courtyard, and lay down against the courtyard wall, with my face uncovered because of the heat.

2.10 But I had not been aware that there were sparrows in the wall above me, and their droppings lodged in my eyes while warm, and brought on white spots. And I went to the doctors to be treated, and the more they smeared me with medicines, the more my eyes were blinded by the white spots, until the onset of total blindness. And I was incapacitated in my eyes for four years, and all my relatives and friends grieved over me. Ahiqar cared for me for two years, before his departure to Elymais.

2.11 And during that time, my wife Anna was employed at women's tasks,

2.12 making wool and weaving, and she supported me out of her earnings. And she would dispatch (her products) to those who were in charge of them, and they would pay her the fee. And on the seventh day of Dystros, she finished a piece of weaving and sent it to those in charge. Then they gave her the whole fee, and also gave her a kid from the goats for the pot.

2.13 And when the kid came in towards me, it began to bleat, and I called her in, and said, 'Where is this kid which is bleating from? Stolen, perhaps? Give it back to its owners, for we don't have the right to eat anything stolen!'

2.14 And she replied and said to me, 'It has been given to me as a gift, on top of my pay'. But I did not believe her, and said all the more 'Return it to the owners!' – and I got red in the face at her over this. Then in reply she said to me, 'And where are your good deeds? Where are your righteous actions? Look, these are the things associated with you!'

3.1 And becoming distressed of spirit and sighing, I wept and went to my courtyard, and began to pray, sobbing:

3.2 'You are just, Lord, and all your deeds are just and all your ways are mercy and truth. You judge forever.

3.3 And now you, Lord, be mindful of me and look upon me. And do not punish me for my sins, and for the oversights by me and my forebears. They sinned before you

3.4 and disobeyed your commandments. And you gave us over to plunder and captivity and death, and to be a cautionary tale and a by-word, and a target of abuse for all those peoples amongst whom you scattered us.

3.5 And now your judgments are many: they are fair with regard to me, so far as the sins by me and my forebears are concerned, for we did not enact your commandments, and did not walk properly before you.

3.6 And now deal with me according to your pleasure, and order that my breath be taken, so that I might be released from the surface of the earth, and become earth – as it is better for me to die rather than live, for I have heard false reproaches, and am much grieved. Lord, command, therefore, that I be released from this hardship; let me go to the eternal place. And

do not turn your face away from me, for it is better for me to die, rather than see so much hardship in my life, and to hear reproaches no more.’

3.7 On that very day, it happened likewise to Sarah the daughter of Raguel, who was in Ecbatana of Media, that she too was hearing reproaches – from one of her father’s maids.

3.8 For she had been given in marriage to seven husbands, and Asmodeus, the evil demon, killed them before they had sex with her, as one is supposed to with wives. And the maids said to her, ‘You are the one smothering your husbands: look, you have already been given to seven husbands, and have enjoyed not a single one of them!’

3.9 Why do you punish us? Is it about about your husbands, because they have died? Go with them! And may we never see from you a son or daughter!’

3.10 On that day she was distressed in spirit, and wept; and going to her father’s upper floor, she wanted to hang herself. Then she thought again, and said, ‘Let no-one ever reproach my father and say “You had a single beloved daughter, and she hanged herself”, nor let me bring down my father’s old age to Hades through grief. It would be better for me not to strangle myself, but rather to beg the Lord that I might die, and that I and my father might no longer hear any reproach.’

3.11 At that very time, having spread her hands toward the window, she prayed, and said, ‘Blessed are you, merciful Lord God, and blessed your holy and honorable name for all eternity: may all your works bless you always.

3.12 And now, Lord, with my face upon you, and with my eyes I have looked up:

3.13 give the word for me to be released from the earth, and for me to hear reproaches no more.

3.14 You know, master, that I am clean of all uncleanness of man

3.15 and have not defiled my own name, nor the name of my father in the land of my captivity. I am an only child to my father, and he has no other child that might be his heir, nor does he have any close relative or kinsman for whom I might keep myself, or be a wife for some son. Seven have perished already, so what point is there for me in living? And if it does not seem good to you to kill me, then give the order, and pay attention to me, and take pity on me, so that I don’t have to listen to reproach any more.’

3.16 At that very time the prayer of each was heard in the presence of the glory of the great God.

3.17 And Raphael was sent to heal them both: Tobit, by removing the white spots from his eyes, so that he might see the light of the sky, and Sarah, the daughter of Raguel, by giving her as wife to Tobias the son of Tobit and by releasing the evil demon Asmodeus from her. For by inheritance it fell to Tobias to take possession of her, before anyone else who wanted to take her. At the same moment, Tobit returned from his courtyard to his house, and Sarah, the daughter of Raguel, she too went down from the upper floor.

4.1 On that day, Tobit remembered the money which he had deposited with Gabael in Rages of Media.

4.2 And he said in his heart, ‘Look, I have requested death. Why don’t I call Tobias my son, and let him know about this money before I die?’

4.3 Then he called his son, and he came to him. And he said, ‘Son!’ And he said, ‘Here I am, father!’, and he said, ‘Son, when I die, bury me properly. And honor your mother, and do not abandon her for all the days of her life, and do what pleases her, and do not cause her spirit to be distressed by any deed.

4.4 Remember, lad, for she experienced many dangers on your behalf when you were in her womb. And when she dies, bury her with me in a single grave.

4.5 And for all your days, lad, be mindful of God, and do not be willing to sin and transgress his commandments. Do what is right all the days of your life, and do not walk the ways of iniquity.

4.6 For when you are doing truth there will be success for all your deeds , as for all who are doing what is right.

4.7 Give charity according to your circumstances, lad, and do not turn your face away from any poor man – and then the face of God will not be turned from you.

4.8 Do so according to what you have, lad. If you have plenty, give charity from that, and if you have little, give charity in line with that little. And do not be afraid, lad, when you are giving charity,

4.9 for you are saving up a good nest-egg for yourself against a day of need.

4.10 For charity delivers from death, and does not let one depart into the darkness.

4.11 Charity is a good gift to all who do it, before the Most High.

4.12 Keep yourself, lad, from all sexual misconduct. At the first opportunity, take a wife from the seed of your forebears. And do not take a wife from outside, who is not of the tribe of your forebears. For we are children of prophets, and true-born children of prophets. The first prophet was Abraham, then Isaac and Jacob, our forebears of old. Remember, lad, that these all took wives from among their relatives, and were blessed in their children – and their seed will inherit the earth.

4.13 And now, lad, love your relatives, and do not be disdainful in your heart of the daughters of the sons of your people, so that you do not take one of them. For in disdain is destruction, and much disorder. And in idleness, there is loss and great want: idleness is mother to starvation.

4.14 As for every person who works with you, give him his pay daily, and don't let a person's pay stop over with you. And your pay will not stop over, if you serve God truly. Take care for yourself, lad, in all your doings, and be well-bred in all your conduct.

4.15 And whatever you hate, do to nobody else. And may no evil travel with you on any of your path.

4.16 Give of your food to someone who is hungry, and of your clothes to the naked. Use for charity whatever you have in surplus: lad, may your eye not be grudging when you give to charity.

4.17 Pour out your food and your wine on the grave of the righteous, and do not give it to sinners.

4.18 Seek advice from every wise man, and do not be disdainful when there is value in all advice.

4.19 Bless God on every occasion, and ask of him that your ways may be straight and all your paths and plans prosper. For no nation has good counsel, but by gift of the Lord himself. And whom he wants to, he exalts, and whom he wants to, he lowers to Hades below. And now, lad, remember these commands of mine, and let them not be erased from your heart.

4.20 And now, lad, let me inform you that I deposited ten talents of silver with Gabael, who is the son of Gabri in Rages of Media.

4.21 And do not be apprehensive, lad, because we have become poverty-stricken. You possess much wealth if you fear God and flee all sin, and do what is good before the Lord your God.’

5.1 Then, replying, Tobias said to Tobit his father, ‘All that you have commanded me I shall do, father.

5.2 But how shall I be able to get it from him? He does not know me, and I do not know him. What sign should I give to him so that he will recognize me, and trust me, and give me the money? And I do not know the roads to Media, so as to travel there.’

5.3 Then, replying, Tobit said to Tobias his son, ‘He gave me his note of hand, and he took my note of hand and tore it in two: I kept one part, and put the other with the money. And now look, it’s twenty-six years since I deposited this money. So now, lad, seek for yourself some trustworthy person who will travel with you, and we shall give him a wage. Get this money from him while I’m alive!’

5.4 Then Tobias went out to seek a man who would go with him to Media, who would be acquainted with the route. And going out, he found the angel Raphael standing in front of him, and he did not know that he was an angel of God.

5.5 And he said to him, ‘Where are you from, young man?’ And he replied to him and said, ‘From the children of Israel, your relatives, and I have come here to work.’ And he said to him, ‘Do you know the way to get to Media?’

5.6 And he said to him, ‘I know many, and I’m acquainted with all the roads. I have travelled often to Media, and lodged with Gabael, our brother, who lives in Rages of Media. And it is a distance by road of two standard days from Ecbatana to Rages – for it lies in the hill-country, Ecbatana in the midst of the plain.’

5.7 And he said to him, ‘Wait, young man, until I can go in and tell my father. For I need you to journey with me, and I shall pay you.’

5.8 And he said to him, ‘Look, I’ll wait for you – just don’t be long.’

5.9 And going in, Tobias told Tobit his father, and said to him, ‘Look, I have found a man from our brethren, the children of Israel, who will go with me.’ And he said to him, ‘Call the man for me, so that I may know what his ancestry is, and from what tribe he is, and whether he is trustworthy, that he might go with you, lad.’

5.10 And Tobias went out and called him, and said to him, ‘Young man! Come in! Father is calling you!’ And he went in to him, and Tobit greeted him first. Then he said to him, ‘Many happy greetings to you!’ But, replying, Tobit said to him, ‘What is there for me still to greet happily? I am a man with no function in my eyes, and I do not see the light of the sky, but lie in darkness, like the dead who no longer perceive the light. Living, I am among the dead: I hear the voice of people, and don’t see them.’ And he said to him, ‘Take courage! Your healing by God is close at hand! Take courage!’ And Tobit said to him, ‘ Tobias my son wishes to travel to Media. If you are able to accompany him, and guide him, then I shall pay you, brother.’ And he said, ‘I shall be able to travel with him, and I am familiar with all the roads, and have often gone to Media, and crossed all its plains and hills; and I know all its roads.’

5.11 And he said to him, ‘Brother, of what lineage are you, and from what tribe? Tell me, brother.’

5.12 And he said, ‘What need have you of a tribe or lineage? Are you looking for a hired man to travel with your son, or for a tribe and lineage?’ And he said to him, ‘I wish to know the facts of what your family is, brother, and what your name is.’

5.13 And he said to him, ‘I am Azarias, son of Ananias the older, from your brethren.’

5.14 And he said to him, ‘May you be well and safe, brother, and do not be irritated, brother, by my wishing to know the truth about your lineage. And you happen to be my relative, and you are from a fine and good family. I used to know Ananias and Nathanas, the two sons of Semelios the older, and they used to travel with me to Jerusalem, and worship with me there. And these men, our fine brethren, did not go astray. You are from good stock, brother, and may you come welcome!’

5.15 And he went on, saying, ‘I am going to give you a fee of a drachma per day, and expenses for you, just as for my son. And do travel along with him,

5.16 then I shall give you a bonus to your pay.’ And he said to him, ‘I shall travel along with him, and do not fear: we shall go safe and return safe to you, for the road is secure.’

5.17 And he said to him, ‘Bless you, brother’. And he called his son and said to him, ‘Lad, get ready and go out with your brother. And may God who is in heaven bring you both there safe, and bring you back to me well, and may his angel accompany you in peace.’ Then he prepared things needed for the road, and he went out to set off on his journey. And he kissed his father and mother, and Tobit said to him, ‘Travel safely!’

5.18 And his mother wept, and said to Tobit, ‘Why is it that you have sent away our son? Is he not the staff of our hand, and does he not go in and go out before us?’

5.19 May he not attain money for the money,⁵ but may it become what our son disdains.

5.20 What is given us to live by the Lord is sufficient for us.’

5.21 And he said to her, ‘Have no concern. Our son will travel safely, and come back to us safely, and your eyes will see him on the day when he comes to you safely. Have no concern, do not be afraid for him, sister.

5.22 For a good angel will accompany him and his journey will be made easy, and he will return safe.’

6.1 And she was silent, not weeping.

6.2 And the boy went out, and the angel with him; and the dog went out with him, and travelled with them. And they travelled together, and the first night came upon them. Then they spent the night at the river Tigris.

6.3 And the boy went down to wash his feet in the river Tigris, and a large fish, leaping up from the water, tried to swallow the boy’s foot, and the boy cried out.

6.4 And the angel said to him, ‘Catch and control the fish!’ And the boy controlled the fish, and dragged it on to the land.

⁵ The text is obscure, and probably corrupt.

6.5 And the angel said to him, ‘Cut up the fish, and take out the gall-bladder, and the heart, and its liver, and set them aside with you. And throw away the entrails. For it is useful as medicine – the gall-bladder, and the heart, and its liver.’

6.6 And the boy cut up the fish and collected the gall-bladder, and the heart, and the liver, and he roasted some of the fish, and ate, and took some for the journey, and he put aside some of it salted. And they both journeyed together until they were approaching Media.

6.7 And then the boy questioned the angel, and said to him, ‘Azarias, brother, what is the medicinal property in the heart, and in the liver of the fish, and in the gall-bladder?’

6.8 And he said to him, ‘The heart and the liver of the fish: make smoke from them in the presence of a man or woman who has contact from a demon or unclean spirit, and it will flee away from them, every contact – and they will not hang around them ever again.

6.9 And the gall-bladder: anoint the eyes of a man who has white spots growing upon them, or puff on them, on the white spots, and they will heal.

6.10 And when they had got to Media, and were already approaching Ecbatana,

6.11 Raphael said to the boy, ‘Tobias, brother’. And he said to him, ‘I’m here’, and he said to him, ‘We have to spend tonight in the household of Raguel; and the man is your relative, and he has a beautiful daughter, whose name is Sarah.

6.12 And he has no male child nor any daughter other than just Sarah. And you are her next of kin: you are first in line to inherit her, and her father’s things, and to take her as a wife. And the girl is intelligent, and courageous and very beautiful, and her father loves her. Whatever he possesses, he gives to her, and so her father’s inheritance is destined for you’

6.13 It is right for you to take her. And now listen to me, brother, and speak about the girl tonight, so that we may get her as a bride for you. And when we return from Rages, we shall have her wedding. And I know that Raguel will not be able to withhold her from you, because he knows that if he were to give her to another man he would become liable to death, according to the judgment of the book of Moses, when he is aware that it is fitting as an inheritance for you, above every man, to take his daughter. And now listen to me, brother, and we shall speak about the girl tonight, and get her betrothed to you. And when we return from Rages, we shall take her, and lead her away with us to your home.’

6.14 Then Tobias said to Raphael in response, ‘Azarias, brother, I’ve heard that she has already been given to seven husbands, and that they died in their wedding chambers, the night they approached her – and they *died!* And I’ve heard people saying that a demon kills them.

6.15 And now I am afraid of this demon. For he does no harm to her, but he kills anyone who wants to get close to her. I am my father’s only child: let me not die and drag down the life of my father and mother to their grave through grief for me, when they have no other child to bury them.’

6.16 And he said to him, ‘Do you not recall your father’s admonishments, that he told you to take a wife from your father’s household? And now listen to me, brother: do not worry about this demon, but take her. And I know that tonight she will be given to you as a wife.

6.17 And when you enter the wedding chamber, take some of the liver of the fish and the heart, and place them on the embers of the incense-burners, and there will be a smell.

6.18 And the demon will catch the smell and flee, and will never anymore appear around her. And when you are about to be with her, you must both first get up and pray, and ask the Lord of heaven for there to be mercy and salvation upon you. Do not be afraid, for she has been set apart for you from eternity. And you will save her, and she will go with you, and I expect that you will have children by her, and they will be like siblings for you. Have no concern.’ And when Tobias heard the words of Raphael, and that she was a sister to him from the seed of his father’s household, he loved her very much, and his heart became extremely attached to her.

7.1 And when he arrived at Ecbatana, he said to him, ‘Azarias, brother, take me straight off to Raguel, our brother!’ And he led him, and they went to the house of Raguel. And they found him sitting by the door of the courtyard, and they greeted him first. And he said to them, ‘Many greetings, brothers, enter in peace.’ And he led them into his house.

7.2 And he said to Edna, his wife, ‘How alike this young man is to Tobit, my relative!’

7.3 And Edna questioned them, and said to them, ‘Where are you from, brothers?’ And they said to her, ‘From the children of Naphthali: we are some of those held captive in Nineveh.’

7.4 And she said to them, ‘Do you know Tobit, our brother?’ And they said to her, ‘We know him.’ And she said to them, ‘Is he well?’

7.5 And they said to her, 'He is well, and living.' And Tobias said, 'He is my father.'

7.6 And Raguel jumped up and kissed him and wept.

7.7 And he spoke, and said to him, 'Bless you, lad! The son of a fine and good father! Oh, what a terrible business, that a righteous and charitable man should be blinded!' And falling upon the neck of Tobias, his relation, he wept.

7.8 And Edna his wife wept for him, and Sarah their daughter wept, she too.

7.9 And they welcomed them warmly, and killed a ram from the flock. And when they had cleansed themselves, and washed and lain down to dine, Tobias said to Raphael, 'Azarias, brother, speak to Raguel, about giving me Sarah, my sister.'

7.10 And Raguel heard what was said, and said to the boy, 'Eat and drink and spend tonight happily, since there is no man other than you suitable to take Sarah my daughter. Furthermore, I do not have the power to give her to a man other than you, for you are my next of kin. But I shall point out to you the plain truth, lad:

7.11 I have given her to seven husbands from among our brethren, and they all died the night they approached her. So now, lad, eat and drink, and the Lord will deal with you.' But Tobias said, 'I'm not going to eat or drink from now on until you discuss my concerns.' And Raguel said, 'I am doing so: she has been given to you according to the decree of the book of Moses, and she is decreed from heaven to be given to you. Receive your sister: from now on you are her brother, and she is your sister; she is given to you from this day and forever. And the Lord of heaven will make straight the way for you both tonight, lad – and may he bring mercy and peace upon you.'

7.12 And Raguel summoned Sarah his daughter, and she came to him. And taking her hand, he handed her over to him, and said, 'Receive – according to the Law, and according to the decree written in the book of Moses, about giving you your wife. Keep – and take her away to your father, keeping her safe. And may the God of heaven make straight the way for you, in peace.'

7.13 And he summoned her mother, and said to fetch a scroll for him to write a written document of marriage, and about how he was giving her to him as wife, according to the decree of the law of the book of Moses. And her mother fetched (it), and he wrote and set a seal.

7.14 From that moment they began to eat and drink.

7.15 And Raguel summoned Edna his wife, and said to her, ‘Sister, prepare the other chamber, and take her there.’

7.16 And she proceeded to furnish the room, as he had told her. Then she took her there, and wept over her. And she wiped away the tears, and said to her:

7.17 ‘Be brave, daughter. May the Lord of heaven give you joy in place of your grief! Be brave, daughter.’ And she left.

8.1 And when they had finished eating and drinking, they wanted to go to bed. And they led the young man out, and took him to the chamber.

8.2 And Tobias remembered the words of Raphael, and took the liver of the fish, and the heart, from the bag which he was holding; and he put them on the embers of the incense-burners.

8.3 And the smell of the fish was repellent, and the demon ran away to the upper parts of Egypt. Then Raphael went and bound him there, and tied him immediately.

8.4 Then they went out, and closed the door of the chamber. And Tobias got up from the bed and said to her, ‘Sister, get up! Let us pray and ask the Lord to bring mercy and salvation upon us!’

8.5 And she got up, and they began to pray and to ask for salvation for themselves. And he started by saying, ‘Blessed are you, Lord, the god of our fathers, and blessed your name for all the ages of time. And may the heavens bless you, and all your creation.

8.6 You made Adam and gave him an assistant, a support – Eve his wife. And from the two came the seed of humans. And you said that it was not right for the man to be alone, “let us make for him an assistant like him”.

8.7 And now Lord, I take this, my sister, not in lust but in sincerity. Ordain that there may be mercy for me and her, and that we may grow old together, and give us children with blessing.’

8.8 And they said with each other, ‘Amen. Amen.’

8.9 And they went to bed for the night. But getting up, Raguel summoned the household servants to him, and they went out and dug a grave.

8.10 For he said, 'Just in case he should die, and we become an object of ridicule and reproach ...'

8.11 And when they finished digging the grave, Raguel went to the house, and he summoned his wife.

8.12 And he said, 'Send one of the maidservants, and let her go in and see whether he is alive or has died, so that we may bury him without anyone knowing.'

8.13 And Edna sent the maidservant, and they lit the lamp, and opened the door, and she went in, and found them lying and sleeping together.

8.14 And coming out, the maidservant told them that he was alive, and nothing was wrong.

8.15 And they blessed the God of heaven, and he said, 'Blessed are you, God, with every holy and pure blessing; may your holy angels bless you, and your elect bless you for all ages.

8.16 Bless you for making me happy, and because things did not turn out for me as I expected; rather, you dealt with us according to your great mercy.

8.17 Bless you for being merciful to two only children. Show them mercy, master, and salvation, and fulfil their life with mercy and happiness.'

8.18 Then he told his servants to fill in the grave before it should be sunset,

8.19 and he told his wife to make many loaves. And going to the herd, he took two oxen and four rams, and gave the order for them to be slaughtered; and they began to make the preparations.

8.20 And he summoned Tobias, and put him under oath, saying to him, 'You may not move from here for fourteen days, but will stay here, eating and drinking with me, and cheer the troubled spirit of my daughter.

8.21 And take half straight away of as much as belongs to me, then depart to your father with my best wishes: the other half belongs to the two of you when I and my wife die. Be of good cheer, lad: I am your father, and Edna your mother: we are yours and your sister's, from now for ever. Be happy, lad!

9.1 Then Tobias summoned Raphael and said to him,

9.2 ‘Azarias, brother, take with you four household servants and two camels, and travel to Rages, and go to the house of Gabael, and give the note of hand to him. Get the silver, and bring him with you to the wedding.

9.4 For you know that father is going to be counting the days, and if I delay for a single day, I shall cause him a lot of pain.

9.3 But you see what Raguel swore – and I cannot break his oath.

9.5 Then Raphael travelled – along with the four servants and the two camels – to Rages of Media, and lodged with Gabael, and gave him his note of hand, and told him about Tobias the son of Tobit, how he had taken a wife, the daughter of Raguel, and how he was inviting him to the wedding. And getting up, he counted out for him the money-bags with their seals, and they agreed them.

9.6 Then they got up early together, and went to the wedding. And they went to the home of Raguel and found Tobias reclining at table. And he jumped up and greeted him, and he wept and blessed him, and said to him, ‘May the Lord who has given you peace bless you, you fine and good son of a fine and good man, righteous and a doer of good deeds. May the Lord give the blessing of heaven to you, and to your wife, and to your father and to your mother, and to the father and to the mother of your wife. Blessed be God, for I have seen Tobit my cousin, his very image!’

10.1 But each day after day, Tobit was calculating the days: how many it would take him to travel, and within how many he would return. And when the days were up, and his son was not there,

10.2 he said, ‘Perhaps he has been detained there, or perhaps Gabael has died, and nobody is giving him the silver.’

10.3 And he began to grieve.

10.4 But Anna his wife said, ‘My son is lost, and belongs no more among the living: why is he late?’ And she began to weep and to mourn her son, and said,

10.5 ‘Woe is me, child, for I let you, the light of my eyes, travel away.’

10.6 And Tobit said to her, ‘Calm down, and don’t worry, sister: he is well, and surely something is keeping them busy there. And the man who is travelling with him is trustworthy, and one of our brothers. Do not grieve for him, sister – he will be here shortly.

10.7 But she said to him, ‘Be quiet – get away from me, and don’t deceive me: my son is lost!’ And rushing out, she looked up and down the road by which her son had left each day, and could be persuaded by no-one. And when the sun set, she would go in and mourn and weep the whole night, and get no sleep. And when the fourteen days of the wedding which Raguel had promised to provide for his daughter came to an end, Tobias went in to him, and said, ‘Send me out, for I know that my father and my mother believe that they will never see me again. And now I ask you, father, that you send me on my way, so I can travel to my father. I have told you already how I left him.’

10.8 And Raguel said to Tobias ‘Stay, lad, stay with me, while I send messengers to Tobit your father, and they will tell him about you.

10.9 And he said to him, ‘No! I am asking you to send me on my way from here to my father’.

10.10 And getting up, Raguel handed over to Tobias Sarah his wife and the half of his belongings, servants and maidservants, oxen and sheep, donkeys and camels, clothing, and silver, and goods.

10.11 And he sent them on their way with his best wishes, and bade him goodbye, and said to him, ‘Farewell, lad, have a safe return. May the Lord of heaven smooth the way for you all and for Sarah your wife, and may I see from you both children before I die!’

10.12 And he said to Sarah his daughter, ‘Depart to your father-in-law, for from now on they are your parents, as if they had given birth to you. Go in peace, daughter: let me hear good things about you for so long as I live. And taking his leave, he let them go. And Edna said to Tobias, ‘My child and beloved brother, may the Lord carry you back, and may I see your children whilst I am alive, and those of Sarah my daughter before I die. In front of the Lord, I entrust my daughter to you, to be held in trust. Do not cause her any grief all the days of your life. Lad, go in peace. From now, I am your mother, and Sarah a sister. May we all find our way smooth together for all the days in our life.’ And she kissed them both, and sent them off faring well.

10.13 And Tobias went away from Raguel faring well, and rejoicing, and blessing the Lord of heaven and earth, the king of all, because he had made his path smooth. And he blessed Raguel and Anna his wife, and said, 'May it fall to me to honor them all the days of their life.'

11.1 And they travelled until they neared Haran, which is opposite Nineveh,

11.2 Raphael said, 'Don't you know how we left your father?

11.3 Let us hurry ahead of your wife and prepare the house for their coming.'

11.4 And they both travelled together. And he said to him, 'Put the gall in your hands'. And the dog went with them, behind him.

11.5 And Anna was sat looking up and down her son's route.

11.6 And she caught sight of him coming, and said to his father, 'Look! your son is coming, and the man who was travelling with him!'

11.7 And Raphael said to Tobias, before he drew near to his father, 'I know that his eyes will be opened:

11.8 Coat the gall of the fish on his eyes, and the medicine will shrink and peel the white spots from his eyes, and your father will recover his sight, and will see light.'

11.9 And Anna ran up and fell on the neck of her son, and said to him, 'I have seen you, lad: now I can die!' And she wept.

11.10 Then Tobit got up, and stumbled with his feet, and went out the door of the courtyard. And Tobias went on toward him.

11.11 And the gall of the fish was in his hand, and he blew into his eyes, and took him, and said, 'Don't worry, father'. And he put the medicine on him and it stung.

11.13⁶ And with each of his hands, he peeled from the corners of his eyes, and he saw his son and fell on his neck.

⁶ Verse 11:12 appears only in the G1 version (see above).

11.14 And he wept, and said to him, 'I have seen you, son, the light of my eyes!' And he said, 'Blessed be God, and blessed his great name, and blessed all his holy angels. May his name be holy for ever.

11.15 For he has punished me and had mercy on me, and look, I see Tobias my son!' And Tobit went in rejoicing and praising God with all his voice. And Tobias told his father that his journey had been made smooth, and that he had brought the silver, and how he had taken Sarah the daughter of Raguel as a wife, and that, look, she was coming, and was close to the gate of Nineveh.

11.16 And he went out to meet his daughter-in-law, rejoicing and praising God, toward the gate of Nineveh. And those in Nineveh, seeing him walking, and striding through with all his strength, and with nobody guiding him by the hand, were amazed.

11.17 And Tobit declared before them how God had had mercy on him, and how he had opened his eyes. Then Tobit drew near to Sarah, the wife of Tobias his son, and he blessed her and said to her, 'May you come in welcome, daughter – and blessed be your God who brought you to us, daughter, and blessed your father and your mother, and blessed Tobias my son, and blessed you. Enter your home welcome, in blessing and joy! Enter, daughter!' On that day, there was joy among all the Jews who were in Nineveh.

11.18 And Ahiqar and Nabad, his nephew, came rejoicing to Tobit. And the wedding-feast was celebrated for seven days with joy, and many gifts were given.

12.1 And when the wedding-feast was completed, Tobit called Tobias his son and said to him, 'Lad, see to giving the fee to the man who travelled with you; we should give him something beyond the fee.

12.2 And he said to him, 'Father, how much pay shall I give? I wouldn't hurt myself by giving him half of the possessions which he brought back with me.

12.3 For he has guided me safe, and healed my wife, and brought the money with me, and healed you. How much more pay should I give him?'

12.4 And Tobit said to him, 'It would be right for him, lad, to take half of everything which he came holding.'

12.5 And he summoned him, and said, ‘Take half of all which you came holding for your pay, and depart with my best wishes.’

12.6 Then he called the two secretly, and said to them, ‘Bless God, and give thanks to him before all the living for what he has done with you, good things for the blessing of God and praising of his name in hymns. Show the words about the deeds of God to all humans with honor, and do not hesitate to give thanks to him.

12.7 It is best to hide a king’s secret, but honorable to give thanks for, and to reveal the works of God. Do what is good, and evil will not find you.

12.8 Prayer is good with fasting, and charity with justice better than both. A little with justice is better than a lot with injustice: it is better to do charity than to hoard up gold.

12.9 For charity rescues from death, and it purges every sin. Those who do charity are fed full of life,

12.10 but those who do sin and injustice are enemies of their own life.

12.11 I shall show you all the truth, and will hide no word from you: I already showed you, and said “It is best to hide the secret of a king, and to reveal the works of God gloriously.”

12.12 And now, when you prayed, along with Sarah, I presented the memorial of both your prayers before the glory of the Lord, and when you used to bury the dead, likewise.

12.13 And when you did not hesitate to get up and leave your meal, and went and laid out the corpse,

12.14 Then I was sent to you to test you, and at the same time God sent me to heal you and Sarah, your daughter-in-law, also.

12.15 I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels who are present and go in before the glory of God.’

12.16 And the two men were agitated, and fell on their face, and were afraid.

12.17 And he said to them, ‘Do not be afraid! Peace be with you! Bless God for all the age!

12.18 I, when I was with you, was not acting on my own account, but by the will of God: bless him, every day praise him in hymns.

12.19 And you observed me, that I did not eat or drink anything, but it was an illusion observed by you.

12.20 And now bless the Lord on the earth, and give thanks to God. Look, I am ascending to him who sent me. Write down all the things which have happened to you.' And he ascended.

12.21 And they got up, and were no longer able to see him.

12.22 And they blessed and praised God in hymns, and gave thanks to him for these great deeds and wonders of his, as the angel of God had appeared to them.

13.1 Then Tobit spoke and wrote a prayer in praise, and he said, 'Blessed be God, living forever, as his kingdom is for all time.

13.2 For he punishes and shows mercy, he pushes down to Hades below, and he pulls back up from great destruction, and there is nothing which escapes his hand.

13.3 Give thanks to him, sons of Israel, before the peoples, for he scattered you among them,

13.4 and recount his greatness there. And exalt him before everyone alive, seeing as he is our Lord, and he is our God, and he is our father, and he is God for all the ages.

13.5 He will punish you for your sins, and will show mercy to all of you, and will gather you out of all the peoples, wherever you have been scattered amongst them.

13.6 Whenever you turn to him with all your heart and with all your soul, to do truth before him, then he will turn to you, and will hide his face from you no longer. And now observe what he did with you, and give thanks to him with all your voice, and bless the Lord of righteousness, and exalt the king of the ages. I, in the land of my captivity, give thanks to him and make known his strength and greatness to a nation of sinners. Turn, sinners, and do righteousness before him: who knows if he might favor you, and be charitable to you?

13.7 I, and my soul, shall speak joy to the king of heaven, and my soul will rejoice all the days of my life.

13.8 May all chosen ones bless the Lord, and may all praise his greatness; let them speak with hymns of joy and give thanks to him.

13.9 Jerusalem, holy city, he will punish you for the deeds of your hands.

13.10 Give thanks to the Lord properly, and bless the king of ages, so that again your tabernacle will be built for you with joy, and may he cheer within you all the captives and may he love within you all those who suffer, for all the generations of the age.

13.11 A bright light, you will shine into all the farthest parts of the earth. Many peoples from afar will migrate to you from all the ends of the earth, to your holy name. And holding gifts in their hands for the king of heaven, generations of generations will give exultation in you, and the name of 'the chosen' for all the generations of the age.

13.12 Cursed be all those who reject you, and all who blaspheme you; cursed are all who hate you and all who speak a harsh word; cursed are all those who raze you and pull down your walls; and all who ruin your towers, and set fire to your houses. And blessed are all those forever who build you.

13.13 Be happy and rejoice at the sons of the righteous, for all will be gathered together and bless the Lord of the age.

13.14 Happy those who love you, and happy those rejoicing in your peace; and happy all the people who grieved for you, for all your punishments, as they will rejoice in you, and see all your joy forever.

13.15 My soul blesses the Lord, the great king,

13.16 For Jerusalem will be built again as his home for all the ages. I should be happy were a remnant of my seed to exist to see your glory and give thanks to the king of heaven. And the doors of Jerusalem will be built with lapis lazuli and emerald, and with precious stone all your walls. The towers of Jerusalem will be built with gold, and their battlements with pure gold.

13.17 The streets of Jerusalem will be laid with carbuncle, and with stone of Ophir.

13.18 And the doors of Jerusalem will speak hymns of exultation, and all her houses say, "Alleluia! Blessed be the God who exalts you, and blessed for all ages" because in you they will bless the holy name for ever and beyond.'

14.1 And the words of Tobit's thanksgiving were brought to a close. And he died in peace at the age of one hundred and twelve years, and was buried honorably in Nineveh.

14.2 And he was fifty-eight years old when he became impaired in his eyes, and after he could see again, he lived for fifty-four years in prosperity and did charitable deeds, and he still continued to bless God, and to give thanks for the greatness of God.

14.3 And when he was dying, he summoned Tobias his son and his seven sons, and commanded him, saying, ‘Lad, take your sons away,

14.4 and flee to Media, for I believe in the word of God about Nineveh, that all will be and will happen to Ashur and Nineveh, and whatever things the prophets of Israel said, whom God sent, all those will happen, and nothing will be left out from all the sayings, and all will come to pass at their proper times. And it is in Media that there will be safety, rather than among the Assyrians or in Babylon. Therefore I know and trust that all things which God has said will be fulfilled and will be, and no saying will escape from the words. And our brothers who are dwelling in the land of Israel will all be scattered and taken captive from the good land, and all the land of Israel will be a desert, and Samaria and Jerusalem will be a desert, and the house of God which is in it will be burned down, and will be desert for a time.

14.5 Then once more, God will have mercy on them, and God will return them to the land of Israel. And once more they will build the house, but not as the first one, until the occasion when the occasion of times will be fulfilled. And after these things, they will return from their captivity, all of them, and will build Jerusalem with honour, and the house of God will be built in it, and it will be built for all time, just as the prophets of Israel have spoken about it.

14.6 And all the peoples who are in the whole world will all turn and fear God in truth, and set aside all their idols which mislead them, false in their misleadingness.⁸

14.7 And they will bless God for ever in righteousness. All the sons of Israel who are saved in those days, sincerely mindful of God, will be brought together and come to Jerusalem, and they will dwell for ever in that day with safety, and all justice will be among them. And those who love God truly will rejoice, and those doing wrong and injustice will be absent from all the world.

14.9⁹ And now, children, I charge you: serve God in truth, and do what is pleasing to him, and see that doing righteousness and charity will be associated with your children, and that

⁸ The text and meaning are uncertain.

they may be mindful of God and bless his name on every occasion sincerely and with all their might.

14.8 And now you, lad, leave Nineveh, and do not remain here.

14.10 On the day you bury your mother with me, on that very day, do not stay overnight within its borders. For I see that much injustice exists in it, and much deceit is accomplished in it, and they have no shame. See, lad, what Nadab did to Ahiqar, who was raising him: was he not brought down to the ground alive? And God repaid the dishonor to his face, and Ahiqar went out to the light, while Nadab went into the eternal darkness, for he sought to kill Ahiqar. By doing charity, he escaped from the deadly trap which Nadab had set for him, while Nadab fell into the deadly trap, and it destroyed him.

14.11 And now, lad, see what charity does, and what injustice does, that it destroys. And look, my life is failing.⁹ And they laid him on the bed, and he died, and was buried with honor.

14.12 And when his mother died, Tobias buried her with his father, and he went away, along with his wife, to Media. And he lived in Ecbatana with Raguel, his father-in-law.

14.13 And he cared for them in old age honorably, and buried them in Ecbatana of Media. And he inherited the house of Raguel and of Tobit, his father.

14.14 And he died at the age of one hundred and seventeen years, gloriously.

14.15 And he saw and heard before he died the destruction of Nineveh, and saw its captive population led to Media, which Achiacharos the king of Media had captured. And he blessed God for all that he had done to the children of Nineveh and Assyria; before dying, he rejoiced about Nineveh, and blessed the Lord God for ever. Amen.

⁹ The verse numbers are drawn from another Greek tradition (G1, see above), which presents this material in reverse order.