

## Lesson 40 Zechariah 9 - 14 and Tobit

### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. *Scholars doubt the historicity of the charming story of Tobit. Be your own critic. The Holy Spirit inspired both its writing and its place in Holy Scripture. Does it seem historical to you? Why or why not?*
2. *In the first chapter do you recognize the historical background? Where was Tobit from? What was his tribal background? Where did he worship? Why was that unusual?*
3. *Tobit poses a question we have seen before and will see again why do the righteous suffer? Where is suffering placed in the overall love of God? It is a pious and loving story and comes up with a solution. What is it?*
4. *What Catholic doctrine is presented in Tobit? What does "Asmodeus" mean? What does "Raphael" mean? Who are the other archangels we know by name?*

### Proverbs 3:1-18 and prayer

If a class is studying together, open this lesson by assigning the readings of Wisdom Literature that are printed at the beginning of the next lesson.

**This Proverbs' reading is an example of wisdom literature.** We will be reading and discussing wisdom literature in the next lesson. As the Jews are without prophets during these times, and the current writing, apocalyptic eschatology - hidden knowledge of the last things, is in place to be pondered but hardly to be lived with, there has grown up a body of religious knowledge to be lived out in the daily life that is practical and sensible.

**Zechariah 9-14 is written in apocalyptic eschatological style.** St. Jerome called this writing the most obscure in the Old Testament. Yet through its riddles some resounding pictures come through. It was probably written during the Greek period and contains peculiar allusions which are difficult to decipher. It does give some intriguing prophecies which are woven into the life of Christ. Jesus quotes from

this book so we know that He identified himself with its motifs. As inspired writing that was formed against a background of persecution, we understand that the writer forecasts the coming of a Messiah, believes that there will be a faithful people in the future, and that the people will have a secure place in Jerusalem. All of this we transpose to mean, the Messiah - Jesus the Christ; a faithful people - those who accept Christ's salvation; and a place - the Church of Jesus Christ.

**There are cryptic words that apply to Jesus.** In the 9th chapter, the prophet prophesies that the king will come victorious and humble, riding on an ass and the colt of an ass. Verse 9:9ff There will be a last battle like Gog from Magog of Ezekiel's prophecy. After this comes a colossal divine victory. In the 10th chapter, "out of Judah will come the cornerstone and the chosen ruler" is comparable to Genesis 49. It refers to the diaspora of the Jews, many of whom in the writer's time, despite the return from exile, are still scattered among the nations. In the years since the return, various circumstances have found them moving to many parts of the world; and of course, many descendants of those exiled remained in foreign lands. In the eleventh chapter there is cryptic reference to a shepherd who will be rejected by the sheep and his "wages" will be thirty pieces of silver - the price of a slave that Judas was paid for Jesus. In the 12th, the martyr will be looked upon and mourned after having been pierced through. In the 13th, baptism is alluded to in the first verse, and there will be no more prophets because false prophecy has so degraded the profession that the one who calls himself a prophet shall be pierced by his own relatives, wounded by his own in "the house of his friends." Jesus quotes from Zech 13:7 "The shepherd will be stricken and the sheep scattered." In the 14th chapter is the verse that is widely interpreted to mean that Jesus' Second Coming will be on the Mt. of Olives, the place from which He also ascended. The plague mentioned in that chapter sounds eerily like atomic sickness. Yet afterward the survivors will worship the King (God) and there will be no more pestilence. Afterward everything will be holy to the Lord, even the bells on the horses, and the pots and bowls. All will be holy, not just vessels consecrated to hold sacrifice. The book thus ends abruptly.

**Zechariah is hardly a guide to one's daily life.** On the other hand, the religious life as it is practiced in that the pious family of Tobit, he,

his wife and son, relies on the homely proverb. With simple memorized maxims they keep faith present in their lives moment to moment. Such religious formulation, called “wisdom” was taught by the rabbis. Famous rabbis gathered students to teach and to train in proverbs of wisdom. Tobit is written during this time when Jewish wisdom has become highly esteemed, it and depicts a family who centers its daily life on wise sayings. Tobit, the most read of the books found only in the Catholic Bible, is in itself part of the Wisdom literature of the Bible, as is the book of Job.

**Why does suffering continue?** Tobit tells the story of a man who is extremely pious but who suffers. The problem of suffering preoccupied the Jews in the last centuries of the old era. Even with all their concentration on being holy for their Holy God, they were suffering the worst persecution of their whole existence as God’s people. Why this? Moses’ theology, “be good and be blessed,” was not lived out in their experience. This tortured the conscience of post-exilic Judaism. Tobit shares the philosophy and theology of the books of Daniel and II Maccabees - that the world is under the control of Almighty God, but is also under the influence of both good and bad angels or demons who impinge on our lives in hidden ways, and whose activity often explains what happens to us. By the use of this story the Holy Spirit affirms the insights of Daniel and II Maccabees, that spiritual powers have a great influence for good and evil in daily experience. Yet, beyond that, Tobit asserts that trust in God will bring good out of that otherwise ambiguous suffering.

**The home of Tobit is a glimpse into the pious home of Jesus’ time.** The Jew living in the century before the birth of Christ had need of a safe and secure home rooted in the wisdom of God to give him balance and safety in an otherwise unfriendly time. It probably gives us insight into the home of Joseph and Mary, or Elizabeth and Zechariah. Such a home was essential for an individual to maintain his integrity in a society which was riddled with Hellenistic paganism and practices. Here we see a man who goes beyond the requirements of the Law, who gives generously of himself in charitable acts even when it endangers

his personal security under a hostile ruler. Through Ahikar, his nephew (the RSV note says this was a storied man in the Middle East at the time), he is reinstated after losing his possessions, but again, true to his nature, he extends himself in a charitable work which leads to loss of his eyesight due to a natural though strange occurrence, pigeon dung.

**Two devout Jews are ready for death.** Tobit asks God to take him from this life (after a rebuke from his wife about his being super religious but still capable of accusing her of lying), and on the same day, in a city far away, another devout but troubled person prays the same prayer. At the mercy of a jealous evil spirit, Sarah, who has had seven attempts at marriage end in the death of each prospective husband, is also in despair. Tired of rebuke and reproach, she, too, begs for death. Through the angel visitant God will aid these two in a way far greater than their prayers. One of the Archangels, Raphael, is sent, and the story slowly unrolls to its end which is the good of all. Raphael, disguised as Azarias, goes with Tobiah to recover his father’s money which is safely kept by a relative in a city far away. It is a journey which brings him to marry Sarah, and also puts in his possession the gall of a fish with which to exorcise the demon, and to heal Tobit’s blindness. It is interesting to note that the fish, *ecthus* in Greek, was used as a sign by the early Christians to designate the title of Jesus, who will in a hundred years, bring to believers both deliverance from evil spirits and the healing of bodily ills. Again the writer presents more than he knows in his use of pregnant symbols.

**Religious proverbs are a guide to the good life.** The discrepancy in figuring time in the first chapter tells us that the book was not written during the Assyrian exile as it states. The first verses say that Tobit was taken into exile at the fall of Samaria in 721 B.C., and that he was a young man when they ceased to go to the Temple in Jerusalem to worship in 931 B.C. - he certainly was a young man! But also the emphasis on the wise sayings dates this writing to the period of Jewish Wisdom literature. This particular religious literary form typical of the book of Proverbs is found in two blocks of sayings in Tobit. The first is Tobit’s instruction to his son Tobiah, chapter 4:5, little wise sayings all hung together much like the reading from Proverbs with which we began; and the second, the speech before the angel reveals his identity

in 12:6, which again strings a series of wise saying together. Typical of this last hundred years of Old Testament history, Tobit exemplifies the age of the proverb. Do good, give alms, be charitable, pray, fast, be righteous. All these admonitions are couched in a form we call a proverb which is an easily remembered, polished saying, to be memorized as a guide to the righteous life, and which is readily repeated to children and grandchildren.

A STORY TO EXPLAIN SUFFERING OF THE RIGHTEOUS  
AN INTRODUCTION TO WISDOM LITERATURE

TOBIT IS THE FAITHFUL JEW WHO OBEYS THE LAW IN POST-EXILIC JERUSALEM

HE SUFFERS FROM NATURAL CAUSES -AND FROM DOING GOOD

SARAH SUFFERS FOR CAUSES THAT ARE SUPERNATURAL

A VIEW INTO THE PIOUS JEWISH FAMILY JUST BEFORE THE TIME OF CHRIST.

WHY DO THE RIGHTEOUS SUFFER ?



SUFFERING IS THE RESULT OF SIN  
YET THE RIGHTEOUS ALSO SUFFER

ANGELIC FORCES, GOOD AND BAD ACCOUNT FOR MUCH THAT HAPPENS.

RAPHAEL MEANS "GOD HEALS"

THE ICTHUS JESU, OF GOD, SON, OUR SAVIOUR  
"The fish" in Greek

HEALS DEMONIC POWER AND RESULT OF NATURAL DISASTER.

1. SARAH'S DEMON LOVER
2. TOBIT'S EYES ARE HEALED

DELIVERER HEALER

GOD IS WORKING BEHIND THE SCENES TO MAKE ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD FOR THOSE WHO LOVE GOD.

3:16  
12:12

- WISDOM MAXIMS**
1. walk uprightly
  2. do what is true
  3. you will prosper through your deeds
  4. give alms
  5. do not turn from the poor
  6. beware of immorality
  7. be disciplined etc.

- HOW TO SURVIVE IN A HOSTILE TIME**
1. Strong family ties, no matter how scattered
  2. a pious, obedient life
  3. faith in the angels of God who are helping the innocent.
  4. living by axioms of faith

THE ARCHANGELS  
GABRIEL - in DANIEL  
MICHAEL - in DANIEL  
RAPHAEL - in TOBIT

**Lesson 40 Zechariah 9 - 14  
and Tobit Synopsis**

**ZECHARIAH 9-14**

9 an oracle against enemies  
the Lord will strip of possessions  
devour by fire five Philistine cities  
write: Philistia's pride will fall it too  
will be a remnant  
rejoice, O daughter Jerusalem  
your king is coming on an ass he  
commands peace to nations his  
dominion shall be sea to sea  
I will restore double  
to those of the blood covenant  
Zion will overcome the Greeks  
the Lord of hosts protects Judah  
who drinks Greek blood in a bowl  
God's flock will shine on his and  
10. ask rain from the Lord  
idols give empty consolation  
people wander without a shepherd  
my anger is against the shepherd  
out of the house of Judah comes  
the cornerstone, they shall fight  
because the Lord is with them  
I have not rejected Judah, Joseph  
their children will see my salvation  
scattered, I will gather them home  
from afar like time of the Exodus  
they shall pass through the sea  
11. wail, Lebanon and Bashan  
your glory is despoiled  
someone is called to shepherd  
a flock that's doomed to slaughter  
no pity on the inhabitants  
I became shepherd of a flock

doomed to be slain  
I had two staffs, Grace and Union  
and destroyed three shepherds  
detested, I will not be shepherd  
I broke the staff Grace  
and annulled the covenant  
my wages, 30 silver shekels  
cast in treasury of Lord's house  
annulled the brotherhood  
between Judah and Israel  
the Lord said take the implements  
of a shepherd who cares not  
for his flock, woe to him  
12. word of the Lord Creator to Israel  
Jerusalem to be a cup of reeling  
to all round about  
those who try to lift her will be hurt  
Jerusalem has strength thru God  
the Lord gives victory to Judah who  
won't be outshone by David on that  
day, feeble will be strong David's  
house like an angel of God all  
nations against it, destroyed he  
whom they have pierced will have  
compassion in Jerusalem like  
mourning over a first-born the land  
mourns: David, Nathan, Levi,  
Shimei's families mourn all mourn,  
wives by themselves  
13. on that day, a fountain will open to  
cleansing from sin, idols cut off  
prophet, unclean spirit, removed  
no so-called prophet will live  
parents will pierce him for his lies  
punished, he will not admit he ever  
called himself a prophet strike  
shepherd, sheep scattered

only a third in the land will be  
left I will test and refine them  
they will call on my name  
I will answer, they are my  
people they'll say, "The Lord is  
my God"  
14. a day is coming when there will  
be a great battle in Jerusalem  
half the people will go into exile  
then the Lord will fight  
his feet standing on Mt. of Olives  
which shall split in two, half north  
half south, flee from earthquake on  
that day neither frost nor cold  
continuous day, as it is to the Lord  
on that day living waters shall flow  
from Jerusalem, she'll be secure a  
plague will smite all  
who war against Jerusalem  
their flesh, eyes and tongues rot  
a great panic shall fall on them  
wealth of nations to be gathered  
the plague will fall on all animals  
the survivors shall worship  
with the King in Jerusalem  
and keep the Feast of Booths  
if they do not worship in Jerusalem  
the plague shall fall upon them  
everything, even horses' bells  
pots and pans will be holy  
no traders in the house of the Lord

**TOBIT**

1. Tobit of tribe of Naphtali in days  
of Shalmaneser is taken from  
Thisbe to Nineveh into captivity  
Tobit is righteous, charitable  
his tribe had deserted the Temple

and worshipped the calf of Baal  
Tobit continued to go to Jerusalem  
he tithed to the sons of Aaron he  
married Anna, fathered Tobiah  
captive in Nineveh, he kept laws  
Shalmaneser liked his looks he  
became a buyer  
left 10,000 dollars with Gabael a  
relative in Rages in Media a new  
king in power, Sennacherib  
conditions change, roads unsafe  
Tobit does acts of charity  
burying those killed by the King  
he flees, his goods confiscated  
Esarhaddon takes kingship  
Tobit's nephew, Ahikar  
intercedes Tobit returns to  
Nineveh the family reunited at  
2. Pentecost the feast of wheat  
harvest  
sends his son to share with poor  
finds corpse that needs burying  
Tobit takes the body to shelter  
washed, he goes back to the  
feast eats the meal in sorrow at  
sunset he buries the body  
regardless of dangers now  
unclean, he sleeps by the wall  
pigeon dung drops into his eyes  
films form making him blind  
Ahikar takes care of him  
but he leaves Nineveh  
Anna then supports the family  
paid for her work with a kid  
bleating kid surprises Tobit  
who believes she stole it  
Anna rebukes religious Tobit  
3. Tobit weeps, prays for death

- sums up post-exilic Jew's feeling punished for unwitting offenses go ahead and punish us it's better to die than to live on the same day at Ecbatana Sarah, Raguel's daughter suffers for the death of seven husbands Asmodeus, a demon, slew them her maids scorn her she wants to hang herself but will not disgrace her father she prays - nothing to five for she declares herself innocent both prayers are heard by God Raphael (God heals) is sent to heal them both, rout the demon Tobiah, kinsman, has right to her at the same moment Tobq and Sarah resume their lives
4. Tobit tells Tobiah about the money with Gabael in Media instructions are given to him concerning his death then all the virtues outlined for a good family life if you do what is true all your ways will prosper give alms, gifts in proportion beware of immorality love your brethren don't be proud or shiftless be honest with your workers be disciplined, not drunken give to charity, seek wisdom remember these commands don't be afraid of poverty you will have wealth if you obey
5. take receipt, go get the money find a man to go with you Tobiah finds Raphael, the angel claims to be a relative of Gabael Tobit approves him as companion "may God's angel attend you" to Anna, "An angel will go with him" Anna stops weeping
6. at evening at the Tigris River a fish leaps to swallow Tobiah but they caught the fish take the heart, liver, and gall keep them, roasted the fish ate it, and came to Ecbatana well stay with Raguel your relative Raphael suggests Tobiah marry Tobiah is entitled to Sarah and to the inheritance of her house Tobiah objects to what he hears not to die for his parent's sake Raphael tells how to banish demon they will burn the fish heart, liver both praying, they shall be saved Sarah is destined for Tobiah Tobiah falls in love with her even before he sees her
7. arrival in Ecbatana, at Raguel's Sarah greets them, Tobiah tells Raguel he is Tobit's son Raguel happy for that sad for Tobit's eyes sets feast before the travelers Tobiah, through Raphael, proposes marriage to Sarah Raguel explains the curse Tobiah wants binding agreement Edna and Raguel set their seals
8. on the contract, prepare the room Sarah weeps, her mother comforts Tobiah escorted in to Sarah makes smoke with fish the demon flees to remote Egypt and Raphael binds him there the two rise and pray they sleep for the night Raguel, however, digs a grave a maid finds them both asleep Raguel blesses God, fills in grave a fourteen day wedding feast half of the property is their gift now to have the rest at parent's death
9. Azarias sent to Gabael for money they both come back to the feast
10. Tobit counts the days Anna mourns for Tobiah Tobit tells her not to worry but she watches the road eating nothing in the daytime Tobiah wants to go home they are sent with their wealth Sarah entrusted to Tobiah by her mother, don't grieve her Tobiah blesses his in-laws Tobiah and Raphael run ahead take the gall of the fish Anna seeing them, tells Tobit Raphael says, anoint Tobit's eyes he does, the cataracts removed with great rejoicing he meets his daughter-in-law Sarah another seven day celebration half of the fortune goes to Raphael Raphael gives the rules of life gratitude to God with good works
11. an angel has been with them Tobit and Tobiah are alarmed do not be afraid, Raphael comes by God's will, praise Him forever! write down what has happened
13. Tobit writes a prayer of rejoicing blesses God who holds everything in His hand, tell His greatness He punishes iniquity, yet merciful turn to Him with all your heart, soul give thanks in Jerusalem many nations will come there with gifts for the Kng of heaven Jerusalem in jewels and gold
14. Tobit praises and fears God aged, he sends son, grandsons to Media - Jonah's prophecy about Nineveh to come to pass they will be safer in Media Jerusalem will be desolate but, the Temple will be rebuilt not as gloriously until a later time cavorted Gentiles will praise God sin will disappear children, keep the commandments bury me properly do not live in Nineveh be righteous, give alms Tobit dies, has a great funeral Anna is buried with Tobit Tobiah, Sarah return to Ecbatana to her father where Tobiah gave his in-laws grand funerals he died in Ecbatana at 127 years rejoiced at Nineveh's destruction and blessed God forever.

## Lesson 40 Zechariah 9 - 14 and Tobit Outline

### I, Background and Content of Zechariah 9.14

#### A. Written during the Greek period

1. there are differences in style from chapters 1-8
2. the Greeks are mentioned in 9:13
3. Opens with an oracle describing the ravishing of the world by the Greeks
  - a. Tyre mentioned, Alexander's great conquest there
  - b. Philistia, ancient enemy, will be humbled by the Greeks

#### B. The Messiah will come from Zion

- 1, riding on a colt, foal of an ass (Davidic sign)
2. no more war, peace to the nations
3. dominion will be his from sea to sea, to the ends of the earth
- 4, a covenant of blood will free all captives
5. restoration will be double the losses
- 6, Zion will overcome the Greeks
7. the final battle described (at Megiddo?)
  - a. a colossal divine victory
    - 1) like Ezekiel 38 describes Gog of Magog,
    - 2) and Joel's Valley of Decision Joel 3:9ff
    - 3) also Mat 24, I Thes 1:12
  - b. God will tread them down His enemies
  - c. the people of God will be saved 10:6 ff
    - 1) some still consult teraphim and there are diviners 10:2
    - 2) they wander for lack of a shepherd 10: 2 (Mk 6:34)
      - a) God is angry at the shepherds
      - b) out of Judah will come a cornerstone 10:4 also Genesis 49, Matt 21:42, Mk 12:10. Luke 20:17, Acts 4:11, 26:26
    - 3) all hearts will exult in the Lord
    - 4) though scattered they will be returned with their children
      - a) from Assyria (the dispersion in 721)
      - b) from Egypt (many had gone there even in Josiah's time)
      - c) it is to be like the Exodus all over again

#### C. The Messiah speaks

1. He is appointed by Yahweh
2. set over the flock doomed for slaughter
3. He has two shepherd staffs, Grace and Union
  - a. broke Grace, annulling the covenant with the sheep who detest him

- b. broke Union, annulling union of Judah and Israel
4. destroys three false shepherds? (who is meant?)
5. he is paid his wages
  - a, the price of a slave
  - b. 30 pieces of silver Ex 21:32, Mt 26:15
  - c. the Lord said, "cast them into the Treasury in the Temple"
6. the Lord speaks to him
  - a. He is raising up another worthless shepherd
  - b. who will not care for the sheep at all
  - c. woe to him!

#### D. The Word of the Lord through the Prophet 12

##### 1. Jerusalem and Judah to be sieged

- a. all nations of earth shall come against it - reiterated in 14:1.2
- b. every horse struck with blindness
- c. those who fight against Jerusalem 14:12
  - 1) a plague shall visit them
  - 2) flesh shall rot, eyes shall rot, tongue shall rot
  - 3) great panic sent from the Lord
  - 4) even Judah shall fight Jerusalem
  - 5) plague to be on the animals, too
  - 6) wealth of all nations will be collected
- d. the survivors
  - 1) will worship the Lord of Hosts
  - 2) if they don't, they won't have rain
  - 3) if they don't, they will be punished

##### 2. the clans of Judah

- a. Jerusalem shall devour all those roundabout
- b. the Lord will give victory to Judah first
  - 1) promises to Judah (Gen 49) preceded those to David
  - 2) therefore greater than promises to David
    - a) yet David exalted - he's of the house of Judah
    - b) his house is "like God"
    - c) God will destroy all who come against Jerusalem

##### 3, The shepherd next to the Lord will be killed 13:7

- a. the sheep will be scattered Mat 26:31
- b. 2/3 of the land will perish
- c. the 1/3 left will be refined in the fire 1) they will call on the name of the Lord

- 2) the covenant reestablished Is.66:15-23, Ez.38-39, Jl.3:9-21, Mk.13:7-27, Rev. 20-22
  - a) God will call them, "my people"
  - b) they will say "the Lord is my Gad"
- 4. a spirit of compassion will be on the house of David 12:10
  - a. they will look on him whom they have pierced
  - b. they shall mourn him
    - 1) as an only child
    - 2) weep bitterly over him
  - c. the mourning will be great
    - 1) the family of David and his wives
    - 2) Nathan's family (who prophesied over David) and wives
    - 3) Levi's house and wives (the priests)
    - 4) Shimeites and wives (Shimei abused David)
    - 5) all the families that are left and wives
- 5. the Messiah will come again
  - a. to the Mount of Olives 14:4
  - b. split in half in the earthquake, everything rearranged
  - c. God will come and all the holy ones with Him
  - d. will be King over all the earth 14:9
- 6. on That Day
  - a. a fountain shall be opened ( Baptism?)
  - b. to cleanse inhabitants of the Davidic house
  - c. to cut off the names of the idols
    - 1) they will be remembered no more
    - 2) remove the unclean spirit
  - d, there will be no more prophets
    - 1) they are liars
    - 2) the mother or father of such a one will kill him
    - 3) a prophet will deny he is, he will say
      - a) he was wounded
      - b) in the house of his friends
  - e. there will be neither cold nor frost 14:6
  - f. a continuous light 14:6
  - g. living waters shall flow out of Jerusalem Ez.46 or 7
  - h. Jerusalem will dwell in security
  - i. everything shall be clean and holy 14:20

- 1) even the bells on horses inscribed
- 2) every pot, not just sacrificial pots
- 3) no traders in the house of the Lord

## II. The Religious Sense of the Book of Tobit

- A. It expresses the conscience of post-exilic Israel
  - 1. why do the righteous suffer?
    - a. they may sin, but only unintentionally
    - b. when they attempt to be righteous, they still suffer
      - 1) Tobit does right even when persecuted
      - 2) like Israel, he only suffers for it
  - 2. is faith valid in a difficult time?
- B. Author asserts that God is control
  - 1. behind the scenes God is working His way
  - 2. angelic forces, both good and bad account for much that happens
    - a, Raphael (his name means "God heals")
      - 1) his instructions - the fish organs deliver from evil, and heal
      - 2) the fish - ictus later is a sign of Jesus's name
    - b. Asmodeus
      - 1) is a demonic power
      - 2) he brings bandages of various kinds
- C. The family unit is the place of faith
  - 1. here is support for times of trouble
  - 2, here axioms of faith are worked out
    - a. Tobit's instructions to his son
    - b. homey loyalty of Anna to Tobit and he to her
  - 3. family members must serve God and each other
  - 4. here is where religious integrity abides in a pagan society
- D. The family extends beyond the immediate core
  - 1. no matter how scattered, relatives look out for each other
    - a. Gabael in Rages in Media looks after great wealth faithfully
    - b. Raguel and Edna in Ecbatana happily accept Tablah
  - 2. the family must stay in close touch with all its members
  - 3. the whole family serves God and each other
- E. This faith will give Israel the role of mediating salvation for all men

### III. The writing of Tobit

#### A. A fictionalized historical and geographical scene

1. mentions 921 B.C. apostasy at the split of the kingdom
2. mentions 721 B.C. exile
3. the Assyrian kings, Shalmaneser, Sargon, Sennacherib loosely treated
4. distances between the cities of Nineveh, Rages, and Ecbatana, confused

#### B. A very real human scene

1. probably a home like Jesus, Mary, and Joseph
2. lovely warm devotional attitude of the common man and woman
3. two people despair at the same time

#### C. added to this the strong spiritual beliefs

1. God will bring good from anything if you trust
2. angels walk with men to help them when they don't know it
3. do good, give alms, be righteous and all will be well

#### D. Tobit is part of Wisdom Literature, see Proverbs and Sirach

1. the apocalyptic writings gave little immediate spiritual nourishment
2. since the exile, pithy spiritual and religious sayings and maxims related to the Law became the religious meat and drink of the faithful
3. these were taught by the rabbis who gathered "schools"
  - a. walk uprightly
  - b. do what is true
  - c. you will prosper through your deeds
  - d. give alms from your possessions
  - e. do not turn away from the poor
  - f. make gifts in proportion to your possessions
  - g. charity is an excellent offering
  - h. beware of immorality
  - i. take a wife from your family
  - j. love your brethren
  - k. avoid pride which is ruin and confusion l. avoid shiftlessness - the mother of famine
  - m. don't hold a man's wages
  - n. be disciplined
  - o. what you hate don't do to anyone
  - p. do not be drunk
  - q. give bread to the hungry, clothing to the naked
  - r. give all your surplus to charity

s. seek advice from every wise man

t. bless the Lord always

#### E. Tobit uses and interweaves a current story of Ahikar

1. Ahikar current in many languages
2. he was a chancellor for Sennacherib and Esarhaddon
3. a wise man, who is betrayed, sentenced about to be killed, executioner spares him, betrayer punished, Ahikar reinstated
4. In this story Ahikar is Tobit's cousin