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T O B I T

1:1-2 TOBIT'S HISTORICAL SETTING

¹The book of the acts^a of Tobit the son of Tobiel, son of Ananiel, son of Aduel, son of Gabael, of the descendants of Asiel and the tribe of Naphtali, ²who in the days of Shalmaneser,^b king of the Assyrians, was taken into captivity from Thisbe, which is to the south of Kedesh Naphtali in Galilee above Asher.

^a Gk words ^b Gk Enemessarum

Overview: The Fathers, especially Bede, found much that was useful in reading Tobit, especially from an allegorical perspective. Israel's perennial enemy, for instance, the king of Assyria, was depicted as the devil, the perennial adversary of Christians (BEDE).

1:1-2 *The Acts of Tobit*

THE USEFULNESS OF READING TOBIT. BEDE: The book of the holy father Tobit is clearly of saving benefit to its readers even in its superficial meaning, inasmuch as it abounds in both the noblest examples and the noblest counsels for moral conduct, and anyone who knows how to interpret it historically (and allegorically as well)

can see that its inner meaning excels the mere letter as much as the fruit excels the leaves. For if it is understood in the spiritual sense, it is found to contain within it the greatest mysteries of Christ and the church. ON TOBIT, FOREWORD.¹

AN IMAGE OF THE DEVIL. BEDE: This captivity at the hands of the king of the Assyrians denotes the captivity of the human race whereby, through the king of all the perverse, that is, the devil, it was banished from the abode of its heavenly homeland and deported to its sojourn in this exile. ON TOBIT 1.2.²

¹BTACH 39; CCL 119B:3. ²BTACH 39; CCL 119B:3.

1:3 - 22 * DEPORTATION

³I, Tobit, walked in the ways of truth and righteousness all the days of my life, and I performed many acts of charity to my brethren and countrymen who went with me into the land of the Assyrians.

ians, to Nineveh. ⁴Now when I was in my own country, in the land of Israel, while I was still a young man, the whole tribe of Naphtali my forefather deserted the house of Jerusalem. This was the place which had been chosen from among all the tribes of Israel, where all the tribes should sacrifice and where the temple of the dwelling of the Most High was consecrated and established for all generations for ever.

⁵All the tribes that joined in apostasy used to sacrifice to the calf^f Baal, and so did the house of Naphtali my forefather. ⁶But I alone went often to Jerusalem for the feasts, as it is ordained for all Israel by an everlasting decree. Taking the first fruits and the tithes of my produce and the first shearings, I would give these to the priests, the sons of Aaron, at the altar. ⁷Of all my produce I would give a tenth to the sons of Levi who ministered at Jerusalem; a second tenth I would sell, and I would go and spend the proceeds each year at Jerusalem; ⁸the third tenth I would give to those to whom it was my duty, as Deborah my father's mother had commanded me, for I was left an orphan by my father. ⁹When I became a man I married Anna, a member of our family, and by her I became the father of Tobias.

¹⁰Now when I was carried away captive to Nineveh, all my brethren and my relatives ate the food of the Gentiles; ¹¹but I kept myself from eating it, ¹²because I remembered God with all my heart. ¹³Then the Most High gave me favor and good appearance in the sight of Shalmaneser,^b and I was his buyer of provisions. ¹⁴So I used to go into Media, and once at Rages in Media I left ten talents of silver in trust with Gabael, the brother of Gabrias. ¹⁵But when Shalmaneser^b died, Sennacherib his son reigned in his place; and under him the highways were unsafe, so that I could no longer go into Media.

¹⁶In the days of Shalmaneser^b I performed many acts of charity to my brethren. ¹⁷I would give my bread to the hungry and my clothing to the naked; and if I saw any one of my people dead and thrown out behind the wall of Nineveh, I would bury him. ¹⁸And if Sennacherib the king put to death any who came fleeing from Judea, I buried them secretly. For in his anger he put many to death. When the bodies were sought by the king, they were not found. ¹⁹Then one of the men of Nineveh went and informed the king about me, that I was burying them; so I hid myself. When I learned that I was being searched for, to be put to death, I left home in fear. ²⁰Then all my property was confiscated and nothing was left to me except my wife Anna and my son Tobias.

²¹But not fifty^d days passed before two of Sennacherib's^e sons killed him, and they fled to the mountains of Ararat. Then Esarhaddon,^f his son, reigned in his place; and he appointed Ahikar, the son of my brother Anael, over all the accounts of his kingdom and over the entire administration. ²²Ahikar interceded for me, and I returned to Nineveh. Now Ahikar was cupbearer, keeper of the signet, and in charge of administration of the accounts, for Esarhaddon^f had appointed him second to himself.^g He was my nephew.

b Gk *Enemessar* c Other authorities read *heifer* d Other authorities read *fifty-five* e Gk *his* f Gk *Sacherdonus* g Or a second time * Tob 1:3-25 Vg. The Latin and the Septuagint are very different, especially because the Vulgate uses the first person and the Septuagint the third person.

OVERVIEW: Israel has received the Word of God, making it known to the pagans and later entrusting it to them until its own conversion. Tobit's adulthood is an image of Israel, who receives the Law. Tobias is Tobit's firstborn

as Christ is the firstborn of the Father. The king is a symbol of the devil, who tries in vain to destroy the church and the synagogue. The unexpected change in the fortunes of Tobit is a symbol of the fortunes of the church (BEDE).

1:8 *The Third Tenth*

ISRAEL SHARES THE WORD OF GOD. BEDE: Tobit shared all he could get every day with captives who were of his own kin, but also he gave tithes to strangers and proselytes.¹ And the people of Israel through their teachers ministered the alms of God's Word not only to the unlettered audience of their own nation but also to those of the Gentiles who wished to convert to the religious observance of their way of life. For whatever natural good thing they could get that was not confiscated by the enemy who held them captive, they showed it all to their own folk as an instance of virtue. But also they always gave a certain portion of their saving knowledge even to the Gentiles, which explains the significance of Tobit's assigning a tithe of his property to strangers. ON TOBIT 1.2.²

1:9 *Marriage and Fatherhood*

ISRAEL'S MATURITY. BEDE: And this people, after they had grown up and increased in Egypt,³ espoused the synagogue, which had been established by Moses with legal ceremonies. ON TOBIT 1.9.⁴

AN IMAGE OF CHRIST, THE FIRSTBORN OF THE FATHER. BEDE: He learned that Christ was to be born of his own kin, as Moses had said, "Your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brethren; to him you shall listen";⁵ and the Lord said to David, "One of the fruit of your womb I will set upon my throne."⁶ He gave him his own name believing and confessing what the Father says of him, "And I will make him the firstborn,"⁷ as he says of the people themselves, "Israel is my firstborn son."⁸

"He taught him from his infancy to fear God and refrain from all sin,"⁹ believing and confessing that he would commit no sin and that no deceit would be found on his lips¹⁰ but that the spirit of the fear of the Lord would fill him.¹¹ ON TOBIT 1.9.¹²

1:14 *Ten Talents of Silver Left in Trust*

ISRAEL LOANED THE OLD TESTAMENT TO THE PAGANS. BEDE: To Gabael his fellow kinsman who was in need, Tobit gave ten silver talents in trust.¹³ And the people of God entrusted to the Gentiles through the seventy translators¹⁴ the knowledge of the divine law that is contained in the Decalogue in order thereby to free them from the indigence of unbelief; but they gave it in trust, that is, on condition that it be repaid after they themselves got wealthy or the one who had given it asked it back.¹⁵ On the other hand, the Gentiles received the Word of God from the people of Israel through the medium of translation because now after the Lord's incarnation they also understand it spiritually and work at acquiring the riches of the virtues; but they pay back the creditor when they receive into the unity of the church the Jews who believe at the end of the world;¹⁶ and, as well as entrusting to them the mysteries of Christ for their salvation, they also unlock for them the secrets of the Scriptures. ON TOBIT 1.9.¹⁷

1:19 *Fleeing Persecution*

THE DEVIL PERSECUTES THE CHURCH AND THE SYNAGOGUE. BEDE: Orders were given by the king that Tobit be killed and all his property confiscated¹⁸ on account of the good deeds he had done, but he with his son and wife fled naked and went into hiding because many people loved him.¹⁹ And the devil did his utmost to bring about the spiritual death of the people of God through idolatry and strip them of all the

¹Tob 1:3, 8 (1:3, 7 Vg). ²BTACH 39; CCL 119B:3. ³See Ex 1:7. ⁴BTACH 40; CCL 119B:3. ⁵Deut 18:15; see Acts 3:22. ⁶Ps 132:11 (131:11 LXX). ⁷Ps 89:27 (88:28 LXX). ⁸Ex 4:22. ⁹Tob 1:10 Vg. ¹⁰Is 53:9; see 1 Pet 2:22. ¹¹See Is 11:3. ¹²BTACH 40*; CCL 119B:3-4. ¹³See Tob 1:14 (cf. 1:16-17 Vg); see Col 2:14. ¹⁴The text alludes to the translation of the Septuagint, which is reported in the Letter of Aristeas. ¹⁵See Tob 9:5 (cf. 9:6 Vg). ¹⁶See Rom 11:25-26. ¹⁷BTACH 40; CCL 119B:4. ¹⁸Tob 1:19-20 (1:22 Vg). ¹⁹Tob 1:23 Vg.

riches of their virtues but could not because there were many holy teachers among them who made provision for their life and salvation. However, he fled with his son and wife because the enemy could not rob them either of belief in the Lord's incarnation or of the synagogue as an institution, however ferociously he persecuted them, as became evident in the tortures of the Maccabees.²⁰ ON TOBIT 1.22-23.²¹

1:21 Sennacherib Assassinated

THE FORTUNES OF THE CHURCH CHANGE.

BEDE: But when the king was assassinated by his sons, all Tobit's belongings were restored to him because often after the devil had been overcome and condemned by reason of his crimes which he spawned like a thoroughly wicked brood, prosperity returned to the people of God.²² In these vicissitudes we can see the church too as an institution being tossed to and fro like the waves after the Lord's incarnation. ON TOBIT 1.22-23.²³

²⁰See 2 Macc 6-7. ²¹BTACH 40-41; CCL 119B:4. ²²Tob 1:21-22 (1:24-25 Vg). ²³BTACH 41; CCL 119B:4.

2:1 – 3:6 * THE BLIND

¹When I arrived home and my wife Anna and my son Tobias were restored to me, at the feast of Pentecost, which is the sacred festival of the seven weeks, a good dinner was prepared for me and I sat down to eat. ²Upon seeing the abundance of food I said to my son, "Go and bring whatever poor man of our brethren you may find who is mindful of the Lord, and I will wait for you." ³But he came back and said, "Father, one of our people has been strangled and thrown into the market place." ⁴So before I tasted anything I sprang up and removed the body^b to a place of shelter until sunset. ⁵And when I returned I washed myself and ate my food in sorrow. ⁶Then I remembered the prophecy of Amos, how he said,

"Your feasts shall be turned into mourning,
and all your festivities into lamentation."

And I wept.

⁷When the sun had set I went and dug a grave and buried the body.^b ⁸And my neighbors laughed at me and said, "He is no longer afraid that he will be put to death for doing this; he once ran away, and here he is burying the dead again!" ⁹On the same night I returned from burying him, and because I was defiled I slept by the wall of the courtyard, and my face was uncovered. ¹⁰I did not know that there were sparrows on the wall and their fresh droppings fell into my open eyes and white films formed on my eyes. I went to physicians, but they did not help me. Ahikar, however, took care of me until heⁱ went to Elymais.

¹¹Then my wife Anna earned money at women's work. ¹²She used to send the product to the owners. Once when they paid her wages, they also gave her a kid; ¹³and when she returned to me it began to bleat. So I said to her, "Where did you get the kid? It is not stolen, is it? Return it to the owners; for it is not right to eat what is stolen." ¹⁴And she said, "It was given to me as a gift in addition to my wages." But I did not believe her, and told her to return it to the owners; and I blushed for her. Then she replied to me, "Where are your charities and your righteous deeds? You seem to know everything!"

3 Then in my grief I wept, and I prayed in anguish, saying, ²"Righteous art thou, O Lord; all thy deeds and all thy ways are mercy and truth, and thou dost render true and righteous judgment for ever. ³Remember me and look favorably upon me; do not punish me for my sins and for my unwitting offences and those which my fathers committed before thee. ⁴For they disobeyed thy commandments, and thou gavest us over to plunder, captivity, and death; thou madest us a byword of reproach in all the nations among which we have been dispersed. ⁵And now thy many judgments are true in exacting penalty from me for my sins and those of my fathers, because we did not keep thy commandments. For we did not walk in truth before thee. ⁶And now deal with me according to thy pleasure; command my spirit to be taken up, that I may depart and become dust. For it is better for me to die than to live, because I have heard false reproaches, and great is the sorrow within me. Command that I now be released from my distress to go to the eternal abode; do not turn thy face away from me."

h Gk him i Other authorities read I * The Vulgate not only has the text in the third person but also instead of Tob 2:10b has a long passage (Tob 2:12-18).

OVERVIEW: The Jews celebrate Easter and Pentecost as prefigurations of the Christian feasts (AUGUSTINE, ORIGEN). Works of mercy are more important than the earthly goods but less important than following Jesus (MAXIMUS OF TURIN). Those who neglect watchfulness and fall into lewdness and arrogance are like the blind (BEDE). The trials of the just are for their improvement in Christ (PSEUDO-AUGUSTINE). Scripture records any number of women who acted foolishly, whom blind Tobit ridicules (JULIAN OF ECLANUM). In spite of his blindness, Tobit could see spiritual matters better than his relatives (BEDE). There are many ways of glorifying God through prayer (ORIGEN).

2:1 At Pentecost

THE JEWISH PENTECOST PREFIGURES THE CHRISTIAN CELEBRATION. AUGUSTINE: Often

we are asked, "If we celebrate Pentecost because of the coming of the Holy Spirit, why do the Jews celebrate it?" The Jews do, in fact, also celebrate Pentecost. You heard that earlier this morning when you followed with attention the reading of the book of Tobit as it was read at the memorial shrine of the blessed Theogenes.¹ There it was said that on the day of Pentecost Tobit prepared a lunch and invited some of his friends who were worthy to participate in this feast since they feared the Lord. It says, "On the day of Pentecost, that is, the holiest day of the weeks." In fact, seven times seven equals forty-nine; to this number, one is added for the sake of unity in order to be able to bring us back to the head, the beginning. Unity in fact provides cohesion to every multitude; and the multitude if it is not cemented in unity is an

¹Theogenes (or Theagenes) is a martyr of Hippo whose date is unknown.

agglomerate of disputing and quarrelsome people. If, however, there is concord, they form a single soul. Scripture asserts just this when speaking about those who had received the Holy Spirit. It says that “they had a single soul and heart toward God.”² Thus it makes fifty days, which is the mystery of Pentecost.

But why, then, do the Jews celebrate Pentecost, if not because in their celebration there was something prefigured there? Pay close attention to me! You know that among the Jews a lamb is killed and the Passover is celebrated thus, like a figure of the passion of the Lord that would happen later. No Christian can ignore what I am saying. You also know that they were commanded to find a lamb among the goats and the sheep.³ But can a lamb be found among goats and sheep? That command, in itself, was impossible, but it pointed toward the possibility that the Christ would come in truth in our Lord Jesus, who according to the flesh was born from the seed of David⁴ and drew his origin from both the sinners and the righteous. In the genealogy of the Lord, according to the generations that the Evangelist recorded,⁵ we find many sinners, because he also came from sinners; and the church today is assembled from both the just and sinners. **NEWLY DISCOVERED SERMONS 31.2.**⁶

2:4 *Removing the Body*

FOLLOWING JESUS MAKES US FORGET EVERYTHING ELSE. **MAXIMUS OF TURIN:** We understand how devoted he was who, as he himself maintained, left his dead father so as to lay hold of the Lord of life. For he says, “First permit me to go and bury my father.”⁷ The one whom he had left behind as dead he begs that he might return and bury. Sorrow did not hold him nor death detain him, because he was hastening to life. He had not yet closed the eyes of the dead man, not yet buried the stiff limbs, but as soon as he learned that the Lord had come he forgot the feeling of paternal piety, believing that there

was a greater piety in loving Christ more than one’s parents. Perhaps he had read the prophetic passage that says, “Forget your people and your father’s house.”⁸ So he forgot his father and remembered his Savior. Perhaps he had also heard the Lord’s Gospel words: “The one who loves his father or mother more is not worthy of me.”⁹ Thus, as Tobit is justified because he abandons his meal for the sake of a burial, this man is approved because he abandons the burial of his father for the sake of Christ. For the one is not afraid to pass over his meal because of some earthly work intervenes, while the other fears lest some delay cause him to omit the eating of heavenly bread.¹⁰ Thus, although in consideration of Christ we owe burial to everyone, this man forsook his father’s burial out of love for Christ. **SERMONS 41.2.**¹¹

2:6 *Feasts Turned into Mourning*

JEWISH FESTIVALS TRANSFERRED TO CHRISTIANS. **ORIGEN:** Once the people fell down in the desert and died,¹² Aaron their chief priest came and “stood in the midst of those who died and of those who lived,”¹³ so that the devastation of death might not advance even further among the rest. And then came the true high priest, my Lord, and he came into the midst between those dying and the living. That is, he came between those Jews who accepted his presence and those who not only did not accept but also killed themselves more completely than him, saying, “The blood of that one be on us and on our children!”¹⁴ So also “all the righteous blood that has been poured forth on the earth, from the blood of the righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah whom they killed between the sanctuary and the altar, will be required from that generation”¹⁵ that said, “His blood on us and on our children.”¹⁶ Therefore, these are a part of the dead people because

²Acts 4:32. ³See Ex 12:5 LXX. ⁴See Rom 1:3. ⁵See Mt 1:1-17; Lk 3:23-38. ⁶NBA 35/2:811-13. ⁷Mt 8:21. ⁸Ps 45:11 (44:11 LXX). ⁹Mt 10:37. ¹⁰See Jn 6:31-32. ¹¹ACW 50:102. ¹²See Num 17:12. ¹³Num 17:13. ¹⁴Mt 27:25. ¹⁵Mt 23:35-36. ¹⁶Mt 27:25.

they do not properly perform either the feast of unleavened bread or the feast days. But “their feast days have been turned into sorrow and their songs into lamentations,”¹⁷ they who, even if they wished, could not celebrate the feast days in that place that the Lord God chose.¹⁸ And indeed we ourselves did not say to them, “You will have no part in this altar or in the inheritance of the Lord,” but they themselves of their own accord refute the true altar and the heavenly high priest and have been brought to such a point of unhappiness that they both lost the image and did not accept the truth.¹⁹ Therefore it is said to them, “Behold, your house is left to you deserted.”²⁰ For the grace of the Holy Spirit has been transferred to the nations; the celebrations have been transferred to us because the high priest has passed over to us, not the imagined but the true high priest, chosen “according to the order of Melchizedek.”²¹ It is necessary that he offer for us true sacrifices, that is, spiritual,²² where “the temple of God is built from living stones,”²³ which is “the church of the living God”²⁴ and where true Israel exists. HOMILIES ON JOSHUA 26.3.²⁵

2:10 Sparrows on the Wall

WATCHFULNESS GUARDS AGAINST LEWDNESS AND ARROGANCE. BEDE: Do not be surprised, reader, that sometimes, typologically speaking, people’s good deeds have a bad meaning and their bad deeds a good meaning; that “God is light”²⁶ would never have been written in black ink but always in bright gold²⁷ if this were not permissible. But even if you should write the name of the devil in pure white chalk, it still means deep darkness. Tobit’s being blinded, therefore, denotes, as the apostle says, “that blindness has come on a part of Israel.”²⁸ He was wearied with burying and blinded,²⁹ because the one who tirelessly perseveres in good works is never deprived of the light of faith; the one who neglects to watch and stand firm in the faith and act powerfully and be strengthened³⁰ spiritually lies down and sleeps from fa-

tigue. The apostle’s saying fits him well: “Rise, you who sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ will enlighten you.”³¹ Because of their swift flight, swallows³² are a figure of pride and volatility of heart, since their uncleanness immediately blinds those over whom it holds sway.³³ For the one who recklessly enslaves his soul to the volatility of licentiousness and pride sleeps, as it were, lying down beneath a swallow’s nest. Now this blindness got the better of the people of Israel especially as the coming of the Lord in the flesh was imminent, when they were both being oppressed by the yoke of Roman slavery and transgressing the precepts of the divine law by very immoral living. ON TOBIT 2.10-11.³⁴

2:12³⁵ Trials and Patience

THE JUST ARE TESTED. PSEUDO-AUGUSTINE: The righteous are tested in order to bring about their improvement. This is why we must be strong in the face of temptations, knowing they do not occur in order to humiliate us but in order to make us grow if we face them with a serene mind for the sake of Christ. QUESTIONS FROM BOTH TESTAMENTS 99.³⁶

2:14 Where Are Your Righteous Deeds?

BLIND TOBIT RIDICULES UNCHARITABLE WOMEN. ANONYMOUS ANOMOEAN: “Why have you spoken like one of the many foolish women?”³⁷ He says, O woman, there have been many foolish women since the beginning of the world. There are countless women who, from

¹⁷See also Amos 8:10. ¹⁸See Deut 12:5. Origen alludes to the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. ¹⁹See Heb 10:1. ²⁰Lk 13:35. ²¹See Heb 5:6. ²²See Rom 12:1. ²³See 1 Pet 2:5. ²⁴See 1 Tim 3:15. ²⁵FC 105:219-20. ²⁶1 Jn 1:5. ²⁷Bede alludes to manuscripts in which the text written with black ink alternates with golden initials. ²⁸See Rom 11:25. ²⁹See Tob 2:10-11 Vg. ³⁰See 1 Cor 16:13. ³¹Eph 5:14. ³²See Tob 2:11 Vg (Tob 2:10 LXX). Only the Vulgate mentions swallows; the Septuagint says “sparrows.” ³³See 2 Pet 2:19. ³⁴BTACH 41-43*; CCL 119B:5. ³⁵Vg. ³⁶PL 35:2300. ³⁷Job 2:10. The anonymous author understands the phrase literally.

the earliest times, have shown themselves unreasonable: some less so, others more, some carnally, others also spiritually. Rebecca was foolish when she said to Isaac, “Give me children,”³⁸ because in fact Isaac did not have the power to do so, since the power and initiative were God’s. But even more foolish was that obscene Egyptian whore who, assaulting the chaste and righteous Joseph with the utmost godlessness, said, “Lie with me!”³⁹ Tobit’s wife was foolish, who unjustly said to Tobiah, “Where are your alms? Where are your good works? See, this shows how you have been brought low!”⁴⁰ But even more foolish, because she was more wicked, was that abominable, filthy and lustful Delilah, who, having seduced Samson in secret, who loved her purely, ruthlessly consigned him to derision and death.⁴¹ COMMENTARY ON JOB 2.54.⁴²

2:17⁴³ *Tobit’s Rebuke*

TOBIT SAW SPIRITUAL MATTERS. BEDE: Tobit’s relatives taunted him,⁴⁴ and even his wife upbraided him as if he had served God in vain.⁴⁵ But he rebuked and instructed them⁴⁶ and turned to God in prayer. There were some among that people who with foolish temerity treated with derision the misfortunes of his people because they were already far from the original happiness of their holy ancestors who once nobly served God in their midst. But the same people earnestly took care to correct these through all their more learned and chosen ones and turned to imploring God’s mercy to obtain eternal life. Nor should it seem absurd that this Tobit, blind as he was and preaching God’s word, is said to signify both reprobate and elect alike. For the patriarch Jacob too, while wrestling with the angel, was both lamed and blessed, signifying, that is, by his limping the unbelievers of his nation and by his blessing the believers.⁴⁷ ON TOBIT 2.10-11.⁴⁸

3:1 *Praying in Anguish*

EXAMPLES OF PRAYER FOR GOD’S GLORIFICATION. ORIGEN: Regarding the second kind of prayer,⁴⁹ see Daniel: “And Azarias standing up prayed in this manner and opening his mouth in the midst of the fire he said . . .”.⁵⁰ And Tobias: “And I began to pray with tears, saying, You are just, O Lord, and all your works are just and all your ways mercy and truth. And your judgments are true and just forever.” And since the passage in Daniel has been obelized⁵¹ on the ground that it is not found in the Hebrew text, and those of the circumcision reject the book of Tobias as not being canonical,⁵² I shall quote the words of Anna from the first book of Kings: “And she prayed the Lord, shedding many tears. And she made a vow, saying, O Lord of hosts, if you will look down on the affliction of your servant,” and so on.⁵³ And in Habakkuk: “A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet with song. O Lord, I have heard your voice and was afraid. O Lord, I reflected on your works and was astonished. In the midst of two animals you will be known; in the approach of the years you will be recognized.”⁵⁴ The example just given illustrates very well the definition of prayer inasmuch as he who offers it unites it with praise of God. And again, in the book of Jonah: “Jonah prayed to the Lord his God out of the belly of the fish. And he said, I cried out of my affliction to the Lord my God, and he heard me. Out of the belly of hell you heard the screams of my voice. And you have thrown me into the deep in the heart of the sea, and a flood has surrounded me.”⁵⁵ ON PRAYER 14.4.⁵⁶

³⁸Gen 30:1, but this verse makes reference to Rachel and Jacob.
³⁹Gen 39:7. ⁴⁰Tob 2:14 (2:16 Vg). The grammar seems to confirm that the anonymous writer confuses Tobias with Tobit. ⁴¹See Judg 16:4-31. ⁴²CSEL 96:331. ⁴³Vg. ⁴⁴See Tob 2:15-16 Vg. This phrase appears only in the Vulgate. ⁴⁵See Tob 2:22-23 Vg (2:14 LXX). ⁴⁶See Tob 2:17-18 Vg. This phrase appears only in the Vulgate. ⁴⁷See Gen 32:24-29. ⁴⁸BTACH 43*; CCL 119B:5. ⁴⁹Origen distinguishes four kinds of prayer: supplication, glorification, intercession and thanksgiving. ⁵⁰Pr Azar 2 (Dan 3:25 LXX). ⁵¹This was a text-critical mark that Origen used in his Hexapla. ⁵²Even if the additions to Daniel and Tobit are not recognized by the Jews, Origen would use them. ⁵³1 Sam 1:10-11. ⁵⁴Hab 3:1. ⁵⁵Jon 2:2-4. ⁵⁶ACW 19:55.

3:7-17* SARAH

⁷On the same day, at Ecbatana in Media, it also happened that Sarah, the daughter of Raguel, was reproached by her father's maids, ⁸because she had been given to seven husbands, and the evil demon Asmodeus had slain each of them before he had been with her as his wife. So the maids^j said to her, "Do you not know that you strangle your husbands? You already have had seven and have had no benefit from^k any of them. ⁹Why do you beat us? If they are dead, go with them! May we never see a son or daughter of yours!"

¹⁰When she heard these things she was deeply grieved, even to the thought of hanging herself. But she said, "I am the only child of my father; if I do this, it will be a disgrace to him, and I shall bring his old age down in sorrow to the grave."^l ¹¹So she prayed by her window and said, "Blessed art thou, O Lord my God, and blessed is thy holy and honored name for ever. May all thy works praise thee for ever. ¹²And now, O Lord, I have turned my eyes and my face toward thee. ¹³Command that I be released from the earth and that I hear reproach no more. ¹⁴Thou knowest, O Lord, that I am innocent of any sin with man, ¹⁵and that I did not stain my name or the name of my father in the land of my captivity. I am my father's only child, and he has no child to be his heir, no near kinsman or kinsman's^m son for whom I should keep myself as wife. Already seven husbands of mine are dead. Why should I live? But if it be not pleasing to thee to take my life, command that respect be shown to me and pity be taken upon me, and that I hear reproach no more."

¹⁶The prayer of both was heard in the presence of the glory of the great God. ¹⁷And Raphaelⁿ was sent to heal the two of them: to scale away the white films from Tobit's eyes; to give Sarah the daughter of Raguel in marriage to Tobias the son of Tobit, and to bind Asmodeus the evil demon, because Tobias was entitled to possess her. At that very moment Tobit returned and entered his house and Sarah the daughter of Raguel came down from her upper room.

j Gk they k Other authorities read *have not borne the name of* l Gk to Hades m Gk his n Other authorities read *the great Raphael. And he* * Tob 3:7-25 Vg.

OVERVIEW: The seven men to whom Sarah was promised were symbols of pagan science, which cannot raise itself beyond the visible world (BEDE). The whole creation and every part of the human being direct their prayer to the Lord (AUGUSTINE). The angels present to the Lord the prayers of people and of the saints (ORIGEN). Raphael is a likeness of the Lord, who heals and frees from darkness (BEDE).

BOUND GENTILES FREED FROM DEMONIC IDOLATRIES. BEDE: Sarah, Raguel's daughter, in a city of the Medes, who had been given to seven husbands whom a demon killed as soon as they went in to her, figuratively denotes the mass of the Gentiles. Their teachers all knew about life in this world only, which runs a course of seven days,¹ but were unable to

¹See Gen 2:3. Seven is a symbol of the visible world, which was created in seven days. Eight was in the early church a sign of fullness and perfection and a symbol of the eternal life.

3:8 Given to Seven Husbands

say anything about eternal life. And so they were all carried off by the devil inasmuch as they were given over to idolatry until the true bridegroom, our Lord, came. He overcame the enemy and through faith united them (i.e., the Gentiles) to himself, as Tobias took Sarah to wife after tying up the devil on the instructions and with the aid of the archangel.² ON TOBIT 3:7-8.³

3:12 *Turning Toward the Lord*

EVERYTHING DIRECTS ITS PRAYER TO THE LORD. AUGUSTINE: Accept the sacrifice of my confession⁴ as the offering of my tongue,⁵ which you have formed and stimulated to confess to your name.⁶ Heal all my bones⁷ and let them say, “Lord, who is like you?”⁸ Not that he who confesses to you teaches you anything of what goes on within him, for the heart that is closed does not shut your eye, nor does the hardness of human beings stay your hand. Rather, you soften it, when you desire, either in compassion or in punishment. “There is no one who can hide from your heat.”⁹ Rather, my soul praises you,¹⁰ so that it may love you; let it confess to you your mercies,¹¹ so that it may praise you. Your whole creation never stops or grows silent in your praises—every spirit praises you¹² through the mouth that is turned to you,¹³ and all animals and bodily things through the mouth of those who look on them—so that our soul springs up to you from its weakness, supported by those things that you have made and passing over to you who have made these things so wonderfully.¹⁴ There is refreshment and true strength. CONFESSIONS 5.I.I.¹⁵

3:16 *The Prayer of Both Was Heard*

THE INTERCESSION OF ANGELS. ORIGEN: It is not only the high priest who prays with those who truly pray, but also the angels, who “have joy in heaven on one sinner who repents, more than on ninety-nine just who need no

repentance,¹⁶ and the souls of the saints who have passed away. This is clear from the case of Raphael offering a reasonable sacrifice to God for Tobias and Sarah.¹⁷ For the Scripture says that after they had prayed, “the prayers of them both were heard in the sight of the glory of the great Raphael, and he was sent to heal them both.” And Raphael, in revealing to them his mission to them both, enjoined on him as an angel by God, says, “When you prayed, you and your daughter-in-law Sarah, I offered the memory of your prayer before the Holy One”;¹⁸ and a little further on: “I am Raphael, one of the seven angels who hear the prayers of the saints and enter before the glory of the Holy One.”¹⁹ And so, according to the word of Raphael, “prayer is good with fasting and alms and justice.”²⁰ And in the case of Jeremiah, who appears in the Maccabees as “admirable for age and glory” so that “an extraordinary dignity and greatness” was about him, and who “stretched forth his right hand and gave to Judas a sword of gold”²¹—to him another holy man²² who had died bore witness saying, “This is he who prays much for the people and for all the holy city, Jeremiah the prophet of God.”²³ ON PRAYER II.I.²⁴

3:17 *Raphael Sent to Heal Them*

HEALED AND FREED FROM DARKNESS. BEDE: The reason why the Lord’s holy angel Raphael (which means “the healing of God”) was sent was to rid Tobit of blindness and Sarah of the demon.²⁵ The Lord, who says of himself, “It is not those who are well that need the physi-

²See Tob 6:15-17 (6:16-19 LXX); 8:2-3. ³BTACH 43*; CCL 119B:6.

⁴See Ps 51:21 (50:21 LXX). ⁵See Prov 18:21. ⁶See Ps 54:8 (53:8 LXX). ⁷See Ps 6:3. ⁸Ps 35:10 (34:10 LXX). ⁹Ps 19:7 (18:7 LXX).

¹⁰See Ps 119:175 (118:175 LXX); 146:2 (145:2 LXX). ¹¹See Ps 107:8,

15, 21, 31 (106:8, 15, 21, 31 LXX). ¹²See Ps 150:6. ¹³See Tob 3:12

(3:14 Vg); Ps 51:15 (50:15 LXX). ¹⁴See Ps 72:18 (71:18 LXX); Ps

136:4 (135:4 LXX). ¹⁵FC 21:101-2. ¹⁶Lk 15:7. ¹⁷See Tob 12:12.

¹⁸Tob 12:12. ¹⁹Tob 12:15. ²⁰Tob 12:8. ²¹2 Macc 15:13. ²²See

2 Macc 15:12, where the high priest Onias is praised. ²³2 Macc

15:14. ²⁴ACW 19:43. ²⁵See Tob 3:17 (cf. 3:25 Vg).

cian but those who are ill,"²⁶ was sent into the world to redeem both the Jewish people from the darkness of unbelief and the Gentiles from the bondage of idolatry. And of him the prophet

said, "And his name shall be called the angel of great counsel."²⁷ ON TOBIT 3.25.²⁸

²⁶Mt 9:12. ²⁷Is 9:6 LXX. ²⁸BTACH 44*; CCL 119B:6.

4:1-21* TOBIAS

¹On that day Tobit remembered the money which he had left in trust with Gabael at Rages in Media, and he said to himself: ²"I have asked for death. Why do I not call my son Tobias so that I may explain to him about the money^o before I die?" ³So he called him and said, "My son, when I die, bury me, and do not neglect your mother. Honor her all the days of your life; do what is pleasing to her, and do not grieve her. ⁴Remember, my son, that she faced many dangers for you while you were yet unborn. When she dies, bury her beside me in the same grave.

⁵"Remember the Lord our God all your days, my son, and refuse to sin or to transgress his commandments. Live uprightly all the days of your life, and do not walk in the ways of wrongdoing. ⁶For if you do what is true, your ways will prosper through your deeds. ⁷Give alms from your possessions to all who live uprightly, and do not let your eye begrudge the gift when you make it. Do not turn your face away from any poor man, and the face of God will not be turned away from you. ⁸If you have many possessions, make your gift from them in proportion; if few, do not be afraid to give according to the little you have. ⁹So you will be laying up a good treasure for yourself against the day of necessity. ¹⁰For charity delivers from death and keeps you from entering the darkness; ¹¹and for all who practice it charity is an excellent offering in the presence of the Most High.

¹²"Beware, my son, of all immorality. First of all take a wife from among the descendants of your fathers and do not marry a foreign woman, who is not of your father's tribe; for we are the sons of the prophets. Remember, my son, that Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, our fathers of old, all took wives from among their brethren. They were blessed in their children, and their posterity will inherit the land. ¹³So now, my son, love your brethren, and in your heart do not disdain your brethren and the sons and daughters of your people by refusing to take a wife for yourself from among them. For in pride there is ruin and great confusion; and in shiftlessness there is loss and great want, because shiftlessness is the mother of famine. ¹⁴Do not hold over till the next day the wages of any man who works for you, but pay him at once; and if you serve God you will receive payment.

"Watch yourself, my son, in everything you do, and be disciplined in all your conduct. ¹⁵And what you hate, do not do to any one. Do not drink wine to excess or let drunkenness go with you on your way. ¹⁶Give of your bread to the hungry, and of your clothing to the naked. Give all your surplus to charity, and do not let your eye begrudge the gift when you made it. ¹⁷Place your bread on the grave of the righteous, but give none to sinners. ¹⁸Seek advice from every wise man, and do not despise any useful counsel. ¹⁹Bless the Lord God on every occasion; ask him that your ways

may be made straight and that all your paths and plans may prosper. For none of the nations has understanding; but the Lord himself gives all good things, and according to his will he humbles whomever he wishes.

“So, my son, remember my commands, and do not let them be blotted out of your mind.²⁰ And now let me explain to you about the ten talents of silver which I left in trust with Gabael the son of Gabrias at Rages in Media.²¹ Do not be afraid, my son, because we have become poor. You have great wealth if you fear God and refrain from every sin and do what is pleasing in his sight.”

o Other authorities omit *about the money* * Tob 4:1-23 Vg.

OVERVIEW: A light different from the sun illuminates the just. The wicked complain when they are mistreated, but they do not change their behavior. It is better to remember piously the just than bring gifts to their tombs (AUGUSTINE).

4:10 Showing Charity

A SPECIAL LIGHT ILLUMINATES THE JUST. AUGUSTINE: “Light has arisen for the just person.”¹ What light is there for a just man or woman? A certain light that does not rise for the unjust, different from the light that dawns on good and bad alike.² Another light rises on a righteous person, that light of which the unrighteous will confess at the end that it never dawned for them: “No doubt of it, we strayed from the path of truth. On us the light of righteousness did not shine, nor did the sun rise for us.”³ Reveling in the common light, they lay in darkness of heart. What did it profit to them to see daylight with their eyes, if their minds could not see the light beyond? Tobit was blind, yet he taught his son the way of God. You know this is true, because Tobit advised his son, “Give alms, my son, for almsdeeds save you from departing into darkness,” yet the speaker was in darkness himself. Do you see from this that it is a different light that rises for a just person and good cheer for those of straightforward heart⁴? EXPOSITIONS OF THE PSALMS 96.18.⁵

4:15 Disciplined Conduct

THE WICKED PREFER WICKEDNESS TO

GOODNESS. AUGUSTINE: “You loved malice above kindness.”⁶ Do you want proof that an evil person can see both, malice and kindness, yet chooses malice and turns away from kindness? Here it is. Why do such people complain when suffering unjustly? Why do they, in that situation, exaggerate the injustice as much as possible while commending kindness and denounce the offender who in treating them so badly has put malice above kindness? Let such people be their own criterion; let them judge their own behavior by their experience. If they will only obey Scripture’s injunction, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,”⁷ and “Whatever good you want people to do for you, do the same yourselves for them,”⁸ they will have within themselves evidence that they must not treat others as they would not wish to be treated themselves. EXPOSITIONS OF THE PSALMS 51.10.⁹

4:17 Honoring the Righteous

THE JUST SHOULD BE REMEMBERED PIOUSLY. AUGUSTINE: It is obvious that a banquet does not benefit the dead, and that it is a custom of the pagans, and that it does not flow from the channel of justice derived from our ancestors the patriarchs; we read about their funerals being celebrated; we do not read of funeral sacrifices being offered for them. This can also be observed in the customs of the Jews, for while they

¹Ps 97:11 (96:11 LXX). ²See Mt 5:45. ³Wis 5:6. ⁴See Ps 32:11 (31:11 LXX). ⁵NBA 27/1:395-97. ⁶Ps 52:5 (51:5 LXX). ⁷Lev 19:18; Mt 19:19; 22:39; Mk 12:31. ⁸Mt 7:12. ⁹WSA 3/17:22.

have not inherited from their ancestors the fruit of virtue, still they have retained the ancient customs in a number of their celebrations and ceremonies. And as for the objection some people bring forth from the Scriptures: “Break your bread and pour out your wine on the tombs of the just but do not hand it over to the unjust,”¹⁰ this is not the occasion, indeed, to expatiate on it; but still I will say that the faithful can

understand what is being said. It is well known, after all, to the faithful how the faithful do these things out of a religious respect for their dear departed; and that such rites are not to be granted to the unjust, that is, to unbelievers, because “the just person lives by faith.”¹¹ SERMON 361.6.6.¹²

¹⁰Tob 4:17 (4:18 Vg). ¹¹Rom 1:17. ¹²WSA 3/10:228.

5:1-21* A FELLOW TRAVELER

¹Then Tobias answered him, “Father, I will do everything that you have commanded me; ²but how can I obtain the money when I do not know the man?” ³Then Tobit gave him the receipt, and said to him, “Find a man to go with you and I will pay him wages as long as I live; and go and get the money.” ⁴So he went to look for a man; and he found Raphael, who was an angel, ⁵but Tobias^p did not know it. Tobias^p said to him, “Can you go with me to Rages in Media? Are you acquainted with that region?” ⁶The angel replied, “I will go with you; I am familiar with the way, and I have stayed with our brother Gabael.” ⁷Then Tobias said to him, “Wait for me, and I shall tell my father.” ⁸And he said to him, “Go, and do not delay.” So he went in and said to his father, “I have found some one to go with me.” He said, “Call him to me, so that I may learn to what tribe he belongs, and whether he is a reliable man to go with you.”

⁹So Tobias^p invited him in; he entered and they greeted each other. ¹⁰Then Tobit said to him, “My brother, to what tribe and family do you belong? Tell me.” ¹¹But he answered, “Are you looking for a tribe and a family or for a man whom you will pay to go with your son?” And Tobit said to him, “I should like to know, my brother, your people and your name.” ¹²He replied, “I am Azarias the son of the great Ananias, one of your relatives.” ¹³Then Tobit said to him, “You are welcome, my brother. Do not be angry with me because I tried to learn your tribe and family. You are a relative of mine, of a good and noble lineage. For I used to know Ananias and Jathan, the sons of the great Shemaiah, when we went together to Jerusalem to worship and offered the first-born of our flocks and the tithes of our produce. They did not go astray in the error of our brethren. My brother, you come of good stock. ¹⁴But tell me, what wages am I to pay you—a drachma a day, and expenses for yourself as for my son? ¹⁵And besides, I will add to your wages if you both return safe and sound.” So they agreed to these terms.

¹⁶Then he said to Tobias, “Get ready for the journey, and good success to you both.” So his son made the preparations for the journey. And his father said to him, “Go with this man; God who

dwells in heaven will prosper your way, and may his angel attend you.” So they both went out and departed, and the young man’s dog was with them.

¹⁷But Anna,⁹ his mother, began to weep, and said to Tobit, “Why have you sent our child away? Is he not the staff of our hands as he goes in and out before us? ¹⁸Do not add money to money, but consider it rubbish as compared to our child. ¹⁹For the life that is given to us by the Lord is enough for us.” ²⁰And Tobit said to her, “Do not worry, my sister; he will return safe and sound, and your eyes will see him. ²¹For a good angel will go with him; his journey will be successful, and he will come back safe and sound.” So she stopped weeping.

p Gk *he* q Other authorities omit *Anna* *Tob 5:1-28 Vg.

OVERVIEW: Raphael’s words and deeds foretell in many ways the coming of Christ: his apparition to Tobias is viewed by the Fathers as an image of Christ’s incarnation; when he affirms that Tobit will be healed, he anticipates the salvation brought by Christ; the names of his ancestors contain the promise of Christ’s help and grace; when he assures that Tobias will return safely, he predicts the return of the Jewish people at the end of time (BEDE). Essential and absolute goodness is shared only by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (ORIGEN).

5:4-5 Raphael, an Angel

CHRIST APPEARED TO THE WORLD. BEDE: An angel appeared to Tobias and offered himself as a companion through whom he might perform wonders for the people to whom he had been sent.¹ And the Son of God assumed the nature of a human being so that, thus visibly spending his life with human beings, he might save the human race.² ON TOBIT 3.25.³

5:12 Azarias, a Relative

RAPHAEL’S “ANCESTORS.” BEDE: Azarias means “the Lord is my helper,” Ananias, “the favor of the Lord.” And the Lord intimates to those who believe in him that he is the one whom the prophet longed for when he sang, “Lord, you are my helper and liberator; do not delay,”⁴ and of him too the Evangelist says, “And we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the Only-

begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”⁵ ON TOBIT 5.18.⁶

5:13⁷ Be of Good Courage

CHRIST BRINGS HEALING. BEDE: And our Lord through the miracles he wrought in the flesh showed the Jewish people from whom he had taken flesh that he was the Son of God and the angel,⁸ that is, the messenger, of his Father’s will.⁹ He also announced to them the joy of eternal salvation saying, “Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven will draw near”,¹⁰ and to those who despaired of obtaining heavenly light he said, “I am the light of the world; the one who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”¹¹ ON TOBIT 5.11-13.¹²

5:15 Traveling in Safety

THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL WILL RETURN. BEDE: The angel promises Tobit to bring his son to Rages, a city of the Medes, and bring him back to him.¹³ The Lord promises the believers among the Jewish people (although this same people is largely blinded) that he will reveal the mysteries of his incarnation to the Gentile people, and again at the end of our times he will make them known more widely to his own people from

¹See Lk 1:49. ²See Bar 3:37 (3:38 Vg). ³BTACH 44*; CCL 119B:6. ⁴Ps 70:5 (69:6 LXX). ⁵Jn 1:14. ⁶BTACH 45*; CCL 119B:7. ⁷Vg.

⁸See Rom 9:5. ⁹Bede alludes to the etymology of the Septuagint word *angelos*, which originally meant “messenger.” ¹⁰Mt 4:17. ¹¹Jn 8:12. ¹²BTACH 45; CCL 119B:7. ¹³See Tob 5:10-16 (5:14-15 Vg).

whom he had taken flesh,¹⁴ when faith in his divinity will both accompany him everywhere and accomplish everything. Of the “bringing” to the Medes he says, “And I have other sheep which are not of this fold; these too I must bring,” and so forth.¹⁵ Of the “bringing back” the apostle says, “Until the fullness of the Gentiles should come in, and so all Israel should be saved.”¹⁶ ON TOBIT 5.II-13.¹⁷

5:21 A Good Angel

ONLY THE TRINITY IS ABSOLUTELY GOOD.

ORIGEN: There is no other second goodness existing in the Son, except that which is in the Father. And therefore the Savior also rightly says in the Gospel, “There is none good except one only, God the Father.”¹⁸ With such an expression it may be understood that the Son is not of a different goodness but of that only that exists in the Father. He is rightly termed the image of the Father¹⁹ because he proceeds from no other source but from that primal goodness. Otherwise there might appear to be in the Son a different goodness from that which is in the Father.

Nor is there any dissimilarity or difference of goodness in the Son. Therefore, no one should imagine that there is a kind of blasphemy, as it were, in the words, “There is none good except one only, God the Father,”²⁰ as if someone thinks this denies that either the Son or the Holy Spirit is good. However, as we have already said, the primal goodness is to be understood as residing in God the Father, from whom both the Son is born and the Holy Spirit proceeds,²¹ retaining within them, without any doubt, the nature of that goodness that is in the source from which they are derived.²² And if there is anything else in Scripture that is called good (angels, human beings,²³ servants,²⁴ treasure,²⁵ or a good heart²⁶ or a good tree²⁷), the word *good* is not used with its proper meaning, since these uses refer to outward goodness, not an essential goodness. ON FIRST PRINCIPLES I.2.13.²⁸

¹⁴See Rom 9:5. ¹⁵Jn 10:16. ¹⁶Rom 11:25-26. ¹⁷BTACH 45*; CCL 119B:7. ¹⁸Mk 10:18. ¹⁹See Col 1:15. ²⁰Mk 10:18. ²¹See Jn 15:26. ²²See Jn 15:26. ²³See Mt 12:35. ²⁴See Mt 25:21. ²⁵See Lk 6:45. ²⁶See Lk 8:15. ²⁷See Mt 7:17. ²⁸Simonetti UTET 162-63; ANF 4:251.

6:1-17* THE FISH

¹Now as they proceeded on their way they came at evening to the Tigris river and camped there. ²Then the young man went down to wash himself. A fish leaped up from the river and would have swallowed the young man; ³and the angel said to him, “Catch the fish.” So the young man seized the fish and threw it up on the land. ⁴Then the angel said to him, “Cut open the fish and take the heart and liver and gall and put them away safely.” ⁵So the young man did as the angel told him; and they roasted and ate the fish.

And they both continued on their way until they came near to Ecbatana. ⁶Then the young man said to the angel, “Brother Azarias, of what use is the liver and heart and gall of the fish?” ⁷He replied, “As for the heart and liver, if a demon or evil spirit gives trouble to any one, you make a smoke from these before the man or woman, and that person will never be troubled again.” ⁸And as

for the gall, anoint with it a man who has white films in his eyes, and he will be cured.”

⁹When they approached Ecbatana,^r ¹⁰the angel said to the young man, “Brother, today we shall stay with Raguel. He is your relative, and he has an only daughter named Sarah. I will suggest that she be given to you in marriage, ¹¹because you are entitled to her and to her inheritance, for you are her only eligible kinsman. ¹²The girl is also beautiful and sensible. Now listen to my plan. I will speak to her father, and as soon as we return from Rages we will celebrate the marriage. For I know that Raguel, according to the law of Moses, cannot give her to another man without incurring the penalty of death, because you rather than any other man are entitled to the inheritance.”

¹³Then the young man said to the angel, “Brother Azarias, I have heard that the girl has been given to seven husbands and that each died in the bridal chamber. ¹⁴Now I am the only son my father has, and I am afraid that if I go in I will die as those before me did, for a demon is in love with her, and he harms no one except those who approach her. So now I fear that I may die and bring the lives of my father and mother to the grave in sorrow on my account. And they have no other son to bury them.”

¹⁵But the angel said to him, “Do you not remember the words with which your father commanded you to take a wife from among your own people? Now listen to me, brother, for she will become your wife; and do not worry about the demon, for this very night she will be given to you in marriage. ¹⁶When you enter the bridal chamber, you shall take live ashes of incense and lay upon them some of the heart and liver of the fish so as to make a smoke. ¹⁷Then the demon will smell it and flee away, and will never again return. And when you approach her, rise up, both of you, and cry out to the merciful God, and he will save you and have mercy on you. Do not be afraid, for she was destined for you from eternity. You will save her, and she will go with you, and I suppose that you will have children by her.” When Tobias heard these things, he fell in love with her and yearned deeply for her.

^r Other authorities read Rages * Tob 6:1-22 Vg.

OVERVIEW: The dog shows how we should defend faith (AMBROSE), especially how those who preach Christ’s message should act. The Lord was untouched by the sin, which is represented by the river Tigris. The fish is the devil, who tries to seize humankind but is defeated by Christ. Its tossings are the persecutions against the faithful. Its heart is a symbol of the shrewdness of the snake, its gall evokes circumspection, and its liver recalls reflection. Tobias’s cry foretells Christ’s anguish as his death was approaching. Christ’s heat transforms those who were subject to the devil, and the salt is Christ’s teaching. Raguel’s and Sarah’s names are figures of the church (BEDE).

6:1¹ The Dog Followed Them

THE GRATEFUL DOG DEFENDS THE FAITH.

AMBROSE: What shall I say about dogs, who have a natural instinct to show gratitude and to serve as watchful guardians of their masters’ safety? Therefore Scripture cries out to the ungrateful, the slothful and the craven, telling them that they are “dumb dogs, not able to bark.”² To dogs, therefore, is given the ability to bark in defense of their masters and their homes. Thus you should learn to use your voice for the sake of Christ, when ravening wolves attack his sheepfold. Have the word ready on your lips, lest, like a silent watchdog, you may appear because of your unfaithfulness to abandon the post entrusted to you. Such a dog was the friend and companion of an angel. Not without reason did Raphael in the prophetic book³ cause this

¹Vg. ²Is 56:10. ³Ambrose underlines that the book of Tobit is inspired, a position that was still occasionally questioned in his milieu.

dog to accompany the son of Tobias when he went on a journey, in order to drive out Asmodeus and thereby confirm the marriage.⁴ The demon is driven out as the result of a grateful recognition, and the union is stabilized. And so, under the symbolism of a dumb animal, the angel Raphael, as director of the young man Tobias whom he had agreed to protect, was able to arouse sentiments of gratitude in him.⁵ HEXAMERON 9.4.17.⁶

THOSE WHO PREACH CHRIST'S MESSAGE.

BEDE: When the Lord came to save the Gentiles, holy preachers followed in his footsteps because they carried out what he had commanded: "Go and teach all the nations."⁷ Finally the Lord filled the home of Cornelius with the Holy Spirit, and so Peter baptized them with water.⁸ The teachers are called dogs because they defend their founder's spiritual home, property and sheep from thieves and beasts, that is, from unclean spirits and heretical people. ON TOBIT 6.1.⁹

THE TIGRIS RIVER REPRESENTS SIN. BEDE: Tobias stopped over by the waters of the Tigris because the Lord, when he appeared in the world, spent his life among sinners and mortals; but the water of sin did not touch him, nor did the prince of darkness, when he came, find in him anything of his own.¹⁰ ON TOBIT 6.1-2.¹¹

6:2 A Fish Leaped from the River

THE FISH IS THE DEVIL. BEDE: Here again the mystery of the Lord's passion is quite obviously signified. For the huge fish, which, since it wanted to devour him, was killed by Tobias on the angel's instructions, represents the ancient devourer of the human race, that is, the devil.¹² When the latter desired the death of humanity in our Redeemer, he was caught by the power of the divinity. The river Tigris, which, because of its swift current, takes its name from the tiger, a very swift animal, intimates the downward course of our death and mortality.¹³ In it lurked

a huge fish, inasmuch as the invisible seducer of the human race held the power of death.¹⁴ ON TOBIT 6.1-2.¹⁵

TOBIAS'S CRY FORETELLS CHRIST'S AN-

GUISH. BEDE: And the Lord as the critical moment of death was on him "began to tremble with fear and be deeply dismayed,"¹⁶ not that he was greatly afraid of the devil but, through the natural frailty of the flesh, dreaded death, which "entered the world through the devil's envy."¹⁷ This is why "he also prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him, and said, 'Abba, Father, all things are possible to you; remove this cup from me, but not what I will but what you will.'"¹⁸ ON TOBIT 6.3.¹⁹

6:3 Catch the Fish

THE LORD RESCUED THOSE SEIZED BY THE DEVIL.

BEDE: The Lord seized hold of the devil and by dying caught and conquered the one who wanted to catch him in death.²⁰ Moreover he seized him by the gill²¹ so that, with the right hand of his power, he might separate his most wicked head from his entrapped body, that is, that he might remove the wickedness of the ancient enemy from the heart of those whom he had wickedly allied to himself and had made, as it were, one body with him, and that, as a merciful redeemer, he might graft them into the body of his church.²² For a fish has a gill at the joining of its head and body. Now, just as our Lord is the head of his church and the church is his body, so the devil is the head of all the wicked and all the wicked are his head and members. The reason why the Lord

⁴See Tob 3:8; 8:3. ⁵See also Tob 11:5 (11:9 Vg). ⁶FC 42:236-37.

⁷Mt 28:19. ⁸See Acts 10:44-48. ⁹BTACH 46*; CCL 119B:8.

¹⁰See Jn 14:30. ¹¹BTACH 47; CCL 119B:8. ¹²Tob 6:3 (6:4 Vg).

¹³The connection between "Tigris" and "tiger" has no etymological foundation, even if it is traditional. ¹⁴See Heb 2:14. ¹⁵BTACH

46-47; CCL 119B:8. ¹⁶Mk 14:33. ¹⁷Wis 2:24. ¹⁸Mk 14:35-36;

see Mt 19:26; Mk 10:27; Lk 18:27. ¹⁹BTACH 47*; CCL 119B:8-9.

²⁰See Heb 2:14. ²¹See Tob 6:4 Vg. ²²See Eph 1:22-23; 5:23.

seized the very savage fish by the gill, dragged it towards him and cast it up on dry land²³ was that, in smashing them to pieces, he openly and boldly exposed the devil's capabilities in public and rescued from the power of darkness²⁴ those whom he foreknew to be children of light. ON TOBIT 6.4.²⁵

6:4²⁶ *The Fish Began Tossing*

PERSECUTION PROVOKED BY THE DEVIL.

BEDE: Although the Lord on overcoming the wickedness of the malicious enemy brought him forth into the light and exposed him to everyone, the latter was still arrogant and contrived to instigate persecution against the Lord's elect who are his feet because by their means the Lord, who is king in heaven over all things, walks on the earth. ON TOBIT 6.4.²⁷

6:5 *Tobias Follows the Angel's Instructions*

THE MEANING OF HEART, LIVER AND

GALL. BEDE: The Lord gutted the fish when he exposed more extensively to his saints the devil's wickedness and tore from their flesh, as it were, the secrets of his snares. He put away his heart for himself because he wanted to point out in the holy books his cunning, of which it is written, "Now the serpent was more cunning than any of the beasts of the earth";²⁸ and of this heart Paul too says, "For we are well aware of his intentions."²⁹ He also put away the gall, since, in his concern for caution he wanted the extent of the malicious fury with which he raged against the human race to be written about and put on record. The liver too he put away because he deigned to make known to us through the teachers of the truth the mischievous maturity of his intrigues against us. For they say that it is by the heat and power of the liver the hidden properties of the food that is eaten are "cooked out" and reach the system. But when with careful consideration we seek to find in what order the things we propose to do

are to be carried out, we, as it were, cook out by the heat of the liver the foods received in the stomach. ON TOBIT 6.5.³⁰

CHRIST'S HEAT TRANSFORMS THE FAITHFUL. BEDE: The amount of the fish they took for themselves signifies those who are changed from members of the devil into members of Christ, that is, are converted from unbelief to the faith; but the amount they left represents those who, on hearing God's Word, prefer to remain behind among the dead and decaying members of their deceiver rather than return to the companionship of the Savior. He broiled its flesh in those whom he found carnal but rendered spiritual and strong again by the fire of his love.³¹ Finally the Holy Spirit came down on the apostles in a vision of fire.³² "The rest,"³³ he says, "they salted," which is particularly applicable to teachers to whom it is said, "You are the salt of the earth."³⁴ Now they, that is, Tobias and the angel, salted it, because the same "mediator between God and people" both humanly taught the apostles by word and divinely gave them the salt of wisdom in their hearts.³⁵ ON TOBIT 6.6.³⁶

6:10 *Raguel and Sarah*

FIGURES OF THE CHURCH. BEDE: Raguel stands for the people of the Gentiles whom the Lord deigned to visit through his preachers in order to take himself a bride from their stock, that is, make of the Gentiles a church for himself. Also Sarah's name befits the church because of Sarah, the patriarch Abraham's wife, who bore Isaac the son of the promise, that is, the free people of the church.³⁷ Raguel's name too, which means "God is his sustenance" or "God is my friend,"³⁸

²³Tob 6:4 Vg. ²⁴See Col 1:13. ²⁵BTACH 47-48; CCL 119B:9.

²⁶Vg. ²⁷BTACH 48*; CCL 119B:9. ²⁸Gen 3:1. ²⁹2 Cor 2:11.

³⁰BTACH 49*; CCL 119B:9-10. ³¹See Tob 6:5 (6:6 Vg). ³²See

Acts 2:3. ³³Tob 6:5 (6:6 Vg). ³⁴Mt 5:13. ³⁵See 1 Tim 2:5.

³⁶BTACH 50*; CCL 119B:10. ³⁷See Gal 4:28; Rom 9:7-9. ³⁸This etymology is traditional.

denotes the people who, after overcoming the devil's deceit, unite themselves and their folk to the community of the Lord and can say, "The Lord is my shepherd, and I shall want for nothing,"³⁹ and earn the reward of hearing, "I shall

no longer call you servants" but "friends."⁴⁰ ON TOBIT 6.6.⁴¹

³⁹Ps 23:1 (22:1 LXX). ⁴⁰Jn 15:11. ⁴¹BTACH 50*; CCL 119B:10.

7:1-18 * RAGUEL

¹When they reached Ecbatana and arrived at the house of Raguel, Sarah met them and greeted them. They returned her greeting, and she brought them into the house. ²Then Raguel said to his wife Edna, "How much the young man resembles my cousin Tobit!" ³And Raguel asked them, "Where are you from, brethren?" They answered him, "We belong to the sons of Naphtali, who are captives in Nineveh." ⁴So he said to them, "Do you know our brother Tobit?" And they said, "Yes, we do." And he asked them, "Is he in good health?" ⁵They replied, "He is alive and in good health." And Tobias said, "He is my father." ⁶Then Raguel sprang up and kissed him and wept. ⁷And he blessed him and exclaimed, "Son of that good and noble man!" When he heard that Tobit had lost his sight, he was stricken with grief and wept. ⁸And his wife Edna and his daughter Sarah wept. They received them very warmly; and they killed a ram from the flock and set large servings of food before them.

Then Tobias said to Raphael, "Brother Azarias, speak of those things which you talked about on the journey, and let the matter be settled." ⁹So he communicated the proposal to Raguel. And Raguel said to Tobias, "Eat, drink, and be merry; ¹⁰for it is your right to take my child. But let me explain the true situation to you. ¹¹I have given my daughter to seven husbands, and when each came to her he died in the night. But for the present be merry." And Tobias said, "I will eat nothing here until you make a binding agreement with me." ¹²So Raguel said, "Take her right now, in accordance with the law. You are her relative, and she is yours. The merciful God will guide you both for the best." ¹³Then he called his daughter Sarah, and taking her by the hand he gave her to Tobias to be his wife, saying, "Here she is; take her according to the law of Moses, and take her with you to your father." And he blessed them. ¹⁴Next he called his wife Edna, and took a scroll and wrote out the contract; and they set their seals to it. ¹⁵Then they began to eat.

¹⁶And Raguel called his wife Edna and said to her, "Sister, make up the other room, and take her into it." ¹⁷So she did as he said, and took her there; and the girl^s began to weep. But the mother^s comforted her daughter in her tears, and said to her, ¹⁸"Be brave, my child; the Lord of heaven and earth grant you joy^t in place of this sorrow of yours. Be brave, my daughter."

s Gk she t Other authorities read favor * Tob 7:1-20 Vg.

OVERVIEW: Raguel is a figure of the pagans who welcome the preaching of the gospel. The seven husbands who died are the pagan sages who do not know eternal life (BEDE).

7:1 Brought into the House

PAGANS WELCOME THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL. BEDE: The Lord went to the Gentile people through the teachers of his word, and they gladly received it in a great many places, as the Acts of the Apostles testify. ON TOBIT 7.1.¹

7:11 Seven Husbands

THE PAGAN SAGES. BEDE: The Gentile people,

on hearing the message of the faith and being admonished by the apostles to form the church of Christ from their progeny throughout the world, were able (but only after reliable investigation) to undertake the obligations and rules of the new religion. For they knew that in former times they had had many teachers who all (comprised, as it were, in the number seven) knew about the joys of this life alone but had nothing reliable to say about eternal joys; and consequently the destruction of eternal death would have snatched them away without hope of immortal life. ON TOBIT 7.11.²

¹BTACH 51; CCL 119B:11. ²BTACH 51*; CCL 119B:11.

8:1-21* THE TOMB

¹When they had finished eating, they escorted Tobias in to her. ²As he went he remembered the words of Raphael, and he took the live ashes of incense and put the heart and liver of the fish upon them and made a smoke. ³And when the demon smelled the odor he fled to the remotest parts of Egypt, and the angel bound him. ⁴When the door was shut and the two were alone, Tobias got up from the bed and said, "Sister, get up, and let us pray that the Lord may have mercy upon us." ⁵And Tobias began to pray,

"Blessed art thou, O God of our fathers,
and blessed be thy holy and glorious name for ever.
Let the heavens and all thy creatures bless thee.

⁶Thou madest Adam and gavest him Eve his wife
as a helper and support.

From them the race of mankind has sprung.

Thou didst say, 'It is not good that the man should be alone;
let us make a helper for him like himself.'

⁷And now, O Lord, I am not taking this sister of mine because of lust, but with sincerity. Grant that I may find mercy and may grow old together with her." ⁸And she said with him, "Amen." ⁹Then they

both went to sleep for the night.

But Raguel arose and went and dug a grave,¹⁰ with the thought, “Perhaps he too will die.”¹¹ Then Raguel went into his house¹² and said to his wife Edna, “Send one of the maids to see whether he is alive; and if he is not, let us bury him without any one knowing about it.”¹³ So the maid opened the door and went in, and found them both asleep.¹⁴ And she came out and told them that he was alive.

¹⁵Then Raguel blessed God and said,

“Blessed art thou, O God, with every pure and holy blessing.

Let thy saints and all thy creatures bless thee;

let all thy angels and thy chosen people bless thee for ever.

¹⁶Blessed art thou, because thou hast made me glad.

It has not happened to me as I expected;

but thou hast treated us according to thy great mercy.

¹⁷Blessed art thou, because thou hast had compassion on two only children.

Show them mercy, O Lord;

and bring their lives to fulfilment in health and happiness and mercy.”

¹⁸Then he ordered his servants to fill in the grave.

¹⁹After this he gave a wedding feast for them which lasted fourteen days.²⁰ And before the days of the feast were over, Raguel declared by oath to Tobias^u that he should not leave until the fourteen days of the wedding feast were ended,²¹ that then he should take half of Raguel’s^v property and return in safety to his father, and that the rest would be his “when my wife and I die.”

^u Gk him ^v Gk his * Tob 8:1-24 Vg.

OVERVIEW: Burning the entrails of the fish indicates the renunciation of Satan at baptism. The desert and Egypt are symbols of the hearts of the unbelieving, which are deserted and in the darkness. The doctors of faith are like cows who take on themselves the yoke of the gospel and like rams who govern the people. The four rams echo and prefigure many biblical themes—the cardinal virtues and the four Gospels to the four quarters of the world (BEDE).

8:2 Ashes of Incense

RENOUNCING SATAN TO JOIN THE LORD.

BEDE: And the Lord, as he is about to receive the church from the Gentiles as his bride, bids it at first betrothal (in the person of each individual believer) to renounce Satan and all his works and all his pomps, and then to confess its faith in the holy Trinity for the remission of sins, which is the significance of burning up with live coals the innermost entrails of the fish.¹ ON TOBIT 8.2.²

8:3 The Demon Fleed

FREEDING THE UNBELIEVING. BEDE: Both “desert” and “Egypt” refer to the hearts of unbelievers, which are deserts, that is, forsaken by God of whose indwelling they are unworthy; and according to the meaning of the name “Egypt,” these same hearts are plunged into shadow by the darkness of their own unbelief.³ And not without reason is the one who is deserted by the grace of divine light filled by the prince of darkness. The reason why the angel got hold of the demon that wanted to kill Tobias and bound him in the desert of upper Egypt is that the devil, while restrained from snatching away the faithful who are members of their Redeemer, is allowed by this Lord and redeemer of ours to have dominion over unbelievers only. And even

¹ Bede summarizes the ritual of baptism. ² BTACH 52*; CCL 119B:11. ³ Often Egypt is characterized as the country from which the darkness of idolatry originates.

in their case the Lord holds him bound because even the wicked, the very ones of whom he is master, he is not allowed to harm as much as he longs to in his insatiable rage. ON TOBIT 8.3.⁴

8:19 Calves and Rams Slaughtered

SYMBOLS OF THE FAITH, THE GOSPELS AND THE VIRTUES. BEDE: Our own teachers are indeed like cattle⁵ because they bear the light yoke of the gospel,⁶ for by preaching they beget and nurture those also who would advance further toward bearing the same yoke. They are the rams too because they are the fathers and leaders of the peoples who follow them, of whom it is said, “Bring to the Lord the offspring of rams.”⁷ They are moreover fat cattle because they are teachers filled to overflowing with the grace of heavenly love, of which grace the psalmist prays, “Let my soul be filled as with marrow and fat.”⁸ They are the two slaughtered cattle because all who for Christ either voluntarily mortify their body themselves, that they may become a living victim,⁹ or hand it over to the enemy to be killed, these assuredly have learned to withstand the enemy

“with the weapons of uprightness to the right and to the left,”¹⁰ that is, in prosperity and adversity. They are the four slaughtered rams because holy teachers and martyrs preserve the four books of the holy gospel by faith and action, because they are supported by the four cardinal virtues of prudence, fortitude, temperance and justice, for they instruct the flock of Christ throughout the whole world, which is divided up into four quarters. Raguel had cattle and rams slaughtered because the Gentile people taught that those who had come to the faith from their own stock were like those whom, because of their outstanding virtue, the enemy desired to tempt and succeeded not in conquering after they were tempted but rather in making victorious as martyrs.¹¹ Or at all events he had those killed whom he taught to crucify their flesh for Christ with its vices and passions.¹² ON TOBIT 8.22.¹³

⁴BTACH 52*; CCL 119B:11-12. ⁵The Vulgate affirms that Raguel had had “two cows” slaughtered; the Septuagint speaks of “two calves.” ⁶See Mt 11:30. ⁷Ps 29:1 (28:1 LXX), variant. ⁸Ps 63:6 (62:6 LXX). ⁹See Rom 12:1. ¹⁰See 2 Cor 6:7. ¹¹See Tob 8:19 (8:22 Vg). ¹²See Gal 5:24. ¹³BTACH 53-54*; CCL 119B:12-13.

9:1 – 10:12* THE WEDDING

¹Then Tobias called Raphael and said to him, ²“Brother Azarias, take a servant and two camels with you and go to Gabael at Rages in Media and get the money for me; and bring him to the wedding feast. ³For Raguel has sworn that I should not leave; ⁴but my father is counting the days, and if I delay long he will be greatly distressed.” ⁵So Raphael made the journey and stayed over night with Gabael. He gave him the receipt, and Gabael^w brought out the money bags with their seals intact and gave them to him. ⁶In the morning they both got up early and came to the wedding feast. And Gabael blessed Tobias and his wife.^x

10 Now his father Tobit was counting each day, and when the days for the journey had expired and they did not arrive, ²he said, “Is it possible that he has been detained?^y Or is it possible that Gabael has died and there is no one to give him the money?” ³And he was greatly distressed. ⁴And his wife said to him, “The lad has perished; his long delay proves it.” Then she began to mourn for him, and said, ⁵“Am I not distressed, my child, that I let you go, you who are the light of my eyes?” ⁶But Tobit said to her, “Be still and stop worrying; he is well.” ⁷And she answered him, “Be still and stop deceiving me; my child has perished.” And she went out every day to the road by which they had left; she ate nothing in the daytime, and throughout the nights she never stopped mourning for her son Tobias, until the fourteen days of the wedding feast had expired which Raguel had sworn that he should spend there.

At that time Tobias said to Raguel, “Send me back, for my father and mother have given up hope of ever seeing me again.” ⁸But his father-in-law said to him, “Stay with me, and I will send messengers to your father, and they will inform him how things are with you.” ⁹Tobias replied, “No, send me back to my father.” ¹⁰So Raguel arose and gave him his wife Sarah and half of his property in slaves, cattle, and money. ¹¹And when he had blessed them he sent them away, saying, “The God of heaven will prosper you, my children, before I die.” ¹²He said also to his daughter, “Honor your father-in-law and your mother-in-law; they are now your parents. Let me hear a good report of you.” And he kissed her. And Edna said to Tobias, “The Lord of heaven bring you back safely, dear brother, and grant me to see your children by my daughter Sarah, that I may rejoice before the Lord. See, I am entrusting my daughter to you; do nothing to grieve her.”

w Gk be x Cn: Gk And Tobias blessed his wife y One Gk Ms Lat: Gk they are put to shame or they are disappointed * Tob 9:1-6; 10:1-12; (9:1-12; 10:1-13 Vg).

OVERVIEW: Servants and camels are the preachers of the faith serving those who evangelize. Tobit’s affliction concerns the Jews’ long wait for salvation (BEDE).

9:2 Take a Servant and Two Camels

THOSE WHO PREACH THE FAITH. BEDE: The preachers chosen from the Gentiles through whom the Lord gathers in others too are Raguel’s servants and camels: servants because they serve the needs of those they evangelize; camels because with the deference of brotherly love they also carry the burdens of their infirmity.¹ But the reason why there were four servants and two camels has been shown above

where two cows and four rams were slaughtered.² ON TOBIT 9.6.³

10:3 Greatly Distressed

THE LONG WAIT. BEDE: And now as Christ through faith delays in the church assembled from the Gentiles, all who are converted to faith in him individually from among the Jews are deeply distressed in spirit that the Lord, detained as he is among the Gentiles, is slow in coming to save them.⁴ ON TOBIT 10.1-3.⁵

¹See Is 53:4. ²See Tob 8:19 (8:22 Vg). ³BTACH 55; CCL 119B:13-14. ⁴Bede plays on the two senses of the Latin word *mora* (“delay” and “stay”). ⁵BTACH 55; CCL 119B:14.

11:1-19* THE EYES

¹After this Tobias went on his way, praising God because he had made his journey a success. And he blessed Raguel and his wife Edna.

So he continued on his way until they came near to Nineveh. ²Then Raphael said to Tobias, "Are you not aware, brother, of how you left your father?" ³Let us run ahead of your wife and prepare the house. ⁴And take the gall of the fish with you." So they went their way, and the dog went along behind them.

⁵Now Anna sat looking intently down the road for her son. ⁶And she caught sight of him coming, and said to his father, "Behold, your son is coming, and so is the man who went with him!"

⁷Raphael said, "I know, Tobias, that your father will open his eyes. ⁸You therefore must anoint his eyes with the gall; and when they smart he will rub them, and will cause the white films to fall away, and he will see you."

⁹Then Anna ran to meet them, and embraced her son, and said to him, "I have seen you, my child; now I am ready to die." And they both wept. ¹⁰Tobit started toward the door, and stumbled. But his son ran to him ¹¹and took hold of his father, and he sprinkled the gall upon his father's eyes, saying, "Be of good cheer, father." ¹²And when his eyes began to smart he rubbed them, ¹³and the white films scaled off from the corners of his eyes. ¹⁴Then he saw his son and embraced him, and he wept and said, "Blessed art thou, O God, and blessed is thy name for ever, and blessed are all thy holy angels. ¹⁵For thou hast afflicted me, but thou hast had mercy upon me; here I see my son Tobias!" And his son went in rejoicing, and he reported to his father the great things that had happened to him in Media.

¹⁶Then Tobit went out to meet his daughter-in-law at the gate of Nineveh, rejoicing and praising God. Those who saw him as he went were amazed because he could see. ¹⁷And Tobit gave thanks before them that God had been merciful to him. When Tobit came near to Sarah his daughter-in-law, he blessed her, saying, "Welcome, daughter! Blessed is God who has brought you to us, and blessed are your father and your mother." So there was rejoicing among all his brethren in Nineveh. ¹⁸Abikar and his nephew Nadab^z came, ¹⁹and Tobias' marriage was celebrated for seven days with great festivity.

^z Other authorities read *Nasbas* * Tob 11:1-21 Vg.

OVERVIEW: The dog indicates those who labor announcing the salvation and rejoice when it arrives. The white films indicate the current blindness of the Jews, and the egg is a symbol of hope. The two meanings of number seven: the gifts of grace and the arrival of Israel's conversion (BEDE). There are both differences and similarities between the healings of the man born blind and Tobit's (ORIGEN).

11:4 The Dog Went Behind Them

THE DOG ANNOUNCES THE ARRIVAL OF SALVATION. BEDE: One must not dismiss with scorn the figure of this dog, which is a traveler and the companion of an angel. So, as we have also pointed out above, he represents the church's teachers who by combating heretics often drive off troublesome

wolves¹ from the supreme pastor's fold.² To them fittingly applies the fact that it is natural to dogs to repay a favor to those who are kind to them and patrol in restless vigil for their masters' safety. The reason why the dog ran ahead is that the teacher first preaches salvation; then the Lord, the enlightener, cleanses hearts. And the writer made the charming observation, "arriving as if bringing the news,"³ because, of course, every sincerely believing teacher is a messenger of truth; charmingly "did he show his joy by wagging his tail,"⁴ for the tail, which is the end of the body, suggests the end of a good work, that is, its perfection, or at any rate the reward that is granted without end. The dog then showed his joy by wagging his tail when he saw once more his master's homestead from which he was absent for a long time; teachers rejoice at the results of their work when they realize that by means of their ministry Judea is to be brought together again by the Lord; they rejoice at receiving an eternal award, and with this same reward common to all the elect they cheer the hearts of those they preach to when they promise them that Christ's grace will come without delay. ON TOBIT 11.9.⁵

11:13 *The White Films Scaled Off*

HOPE FOR THE CURRENT BLINDNESS OF THE JEWS. BEDE: And the Jewish people, on realizing the very bitter malice of the most wicked enemy, will recover the light they have lost. The white film that had obstructed his eyes denotes the folly of self-indulgence. For "they have a zeal for God, but it is not based on knowledge," and as Paul says again, "seeking to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit to the righteousness of God."⁶ The black pupil of the eye sees, the white one grows dark; and people who in their own estimation are wise, saying, "Are we also blind?"⁷ in such people there is no truth.⁸ But those who are aware of their frailty and ignorance and know how to say, "My God, enlighten my darkness," are destined to

enjoy the light of life in the Lord.⁹ Moreover, the white film was well compared with the skin of an egg. By the egg hope is surely indicated, because it is obviously not alive, not an animate creature, but it is hoped by the bird that laid it that sometime it may live, walk, run and fly. And the apostle says, "But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience."¹⁰ Thus in the Gospel parable by the terms "bread," "fish" and an "egg" the three supreme virtues, namely, faith, hope and love, are symbolized.¹¹ ON TOBIT 11.14-15.¹²

11:14 *Tobit Sees His Son*

THE MAN BORN BLIND AND TOBIT. ORIGEN: It is necessary to observe the means of expression the Evangelist used as to whether he says to us that the eyes of the blind person were opened or that he saw. He expresses that he opened his eyes with the words, "It was the sabbath when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes."¹³ But it also says that he saw with the words, "He went and returned seeing."¹⁴ We will be able to find the difference between the expressions from Tobit. When white patches had formed over his eyes, it is not written that his eyes were later opened but that he saw. Of the rest, you will be able to observe one or the other aspect in the course of the entire episode related concerning the blind person, where one person asserts one thing and another that, with quite a bit of dissent from each other.¹⁵ COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, FRAGMENT 66.¹⁶

11:19 *For Seven Days*

GRACE AND ISRAEL'S CONVERSION. BEDE: The seven days suggest the light of the grace of the

¹See Acts 20:29. ²See 1 Pet 5:4. ³Tob 11:9 Vg. ⁴See Tob 11:9 Vg. ⁵BTACH 57*; CCL 119B:15. ⁶Rom 10:2-3. ⁷Jn 9:40. ⁸See Jn 8:44; 1 Jn 2:4. ⁹Ps 18:28 (17:29 LXX). ¹⁰Rom 8:25. ¹¹See Lk 11:11-12. ¹²BTACH 58-59*; CCL 119B:16. ¹³Jn 9:14. ¹⁴Jn 9:7. ¹⁵See Jn 9:16. ¹⁶Trad. Corsini 870.

Spirit, which is received in sevenfold form.¹⁷ The reason why his son's wife arrives seven days after Tobit is given the light of vision¹⁸ is that after Judea is given the light through faith, after it receives the grace of the Holy Spirit, the church will come in to it so that there may be "one fold

and one shepherd"¹⁹ and one house of Christ supported on one cornerstone.²⁰ ON TOBIT 11.16-18.²¹

¹⁷See Is 11:2-3. ¹⁸See Tob 11:18 Vg. ¹⁹Jn 10:16. ²⁰See Eph 2:20; 1 Pet 2:5-6. ²¹BTACH 59-60*; CCL 119B:17.

12:1-22 RAPHAEL

¹Tobit then called his son Tobias and said to him, "My son, see to the wages of the man who went with you; and he must also be given more." ²He replied, "Father, it would do me no harm to give him half of what I have brought back. ³For he has led me back to you safely, he cured my wife, he obtained the money for me, and he also healed you." ⁴The old man said, "He deserves it." ⁵So he called the angel and said to him, "Take half of all that you two have brought back."

⁶Then the angel^a called the two of them privately and said to them: "Praise God and give thanks to him; exalt him and give thanks to him in the presence of all the living for what he has done for you. It is good to praise God and to exalt his name, worthily declaring the works of God. Do not be slow to give him thanks. ⁷It is good to guard the secret of a king, but gloriously to reveal the works of God. Do good, and evil will not overtake you. ⁸Prayer is good when accompanied by fasting, almsgiving, and righteousness. A little with righteousness is better than much with wrongdoing. It is better to give alms than to treasure up gold. ⁹For almsgiving delivers from death, and it will purge away every sin. Those who perform deeds of charity and of righteousness will have fulness of life; ¹⁰but those who commit sin are the enemies of their own lives.

¹¹"I will not conceal anything from you. I have said, 'It is good to guard the secret of a king, but gloriously to reveal the works of God.' ¹²And so, when you and your daughter-in-law Sarah prayed, I brought a reminder of your prayer before the Holy One; and when you buried the dead, I was likewise present with you. ¹³When you did not hesitate to rise and leave your dinner in order to go and lay out the dead, your good deed was not hidden from me, but I was with you. ¹⁴So now God sent me to heal you and your daughter-in-law Sarah. ¹⁵I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels who present the prayers of the saints and enter into the presence of the glory of the Holy One." ¹⁶They were both alarmed; and they fell upon their faces, for they were afraid. ¹⁷But he said to them, "Do not be afraid; you will be safe. But praise God for ever. ¹⁸For I did not come as a favor on my part, but by the will of our God. Therefore praise him for ever. ¹⁹All these days I merely appeared to you and did not eat or drink, but you were seeing a vision. ²⁰And now give thanks to God, for I am ascending to him who sent me. Write in a book everything that has happened." ²¹Then they stood up; but they saw him no more. ²²So they confessed the great and wonderful works of God, and acknowledged that the angel of the Lord had appeared to them.

^a Gk *he*

OVERVIEW: We should not spread the mysteries of the faith carelessly but should rather keep them in our hearts to be given only to those who will appreciate them (HILARY OF POITIERS). If you do not fast, give at least food to the hungry. Wealth is an occasion to make mercy to the poor (GAUDENTIUS). The angels rejoice when we worship God, whereas the devil wants to be worshipped (AUGUSTINE). Tobias and Raphael are symbols of Christ's humanity and divinity (BEDE). The angels nourish themselves from the vision of God; their mission is to praise and serve him (JOHN OF DAMASCUS).

12:7 *Guard the Secret of a King*

KEEPING IN OUR HEARTS THE MYSTERIES OF FAITH. HILARY OF POITIERS: "I have hidden your words in my heart, so as not to sin against you."¹ Recall that something similar is often read, where it says, "It is good to hide the mystery of the king." Recall that Paul also hid some divine words from the Corinthians, who were still young in the faith, saying, "I have given you milk to drink, not solid food. In fact, you were not yet ready, and neither are you now."² We also read in the Gospel of the treasure found in a fertile, fruitful field and that was hidden in the field once it was purchased.³ We know also that pearls should not be thrown before swine, and what is sacred should not be given to dogs.⁴ We thus understand that some things are enclosed in the secret of our hearts. If they were to be divulged, it would imply the guilt of an unpardonable sin. HOMILIES ON THE PSALMS 118.BETH.6.⁵

12:8-9 *Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving, Righteousness*

PRETEXTS NOT TO HELP THE POOR. GAUDENTIUS OF BRESCIA: It is written that fasting with almsgiving is a good thing. It was necessary to do both, to mitigate the Lord's indignation. Perhaps you cannot fast, and you cannot because you do not want to—at least give food to someone who

is hungry. You who cannot stand to fast for three hours past the usual hour can certainly understand what someone would suffer who unwillingly goes hungry because of his poverty. Your cruelty forces him to fast, you who, fattened by sumptuous banquets, do not think to relieve the poor person's hunger with even a little food. You point to the possibility of famine, you pretend to be in need, you complain of unfavorable circumstances. You beg more shamefully than that poor person—indeed, you behave toward God like an ingrate with your false complaining. But what if there was a famine? Would you perhaps be the only one to feel it, and not that poor person? How is it that every day you lay out new silver, beautify your houses with marble, buy silk garments, trade necklaces adorned with gold and gems? It is shameful to mention and painful even to think of the number of peasants who, living on the lands of people who live in the luxury we have described, have died of hunger or been supported by the alms of the church. SERMONS 13.21-23.⁶

ALMS ARE A TREASURE IN HEAVEN. GAUDENTIUS OF BRESCIA: Perhaps some rich person might object, "Therefore it must have been with malice that God gave us wealth, if because of it the rich are tormented."⁷ Such people, in fact, advance the wrong-headed idea that God wants to see human beings make mistakes and therefore provides not only the mode of sin but also the reason for it. Not out of malice but out of providence has God made you rich. He intended that through your works of mercy you would again find medicine to treat the wounds of your sins. "Certainly alms freely given preserve one from death and purify from every sin." The rich man was not tormented because he was rich but because Lazarus suffered hunger while he banqueted.⁸ Although holy Abraham had been

¹Ps 119:11 (118:11 LXX). ²1 Cor 3:2. ³See Mt 13:44. ⁴See Mt 7:6. ⁵CTP 186:31-32. ⁶CTP 129:125-26. ⁷See Lk 16:22-31. ⁸See Lk 16:19-21.

a rich man, he was a servant of the poor and indigent. Also, holy Job possessed the kingdom of Arabia,⁹ but, as it is written, no one was deprived, no poor person left his house empty-handed.¹⁰ And then, when he came to find himself in pain, he was excoriated by his wife for his works of mercy that she implied he had kept working at in vain. “And now,” she says, “here you are suffering.”¹¹ Whew! See how astutely this poisonous snake offers her venom! Since she could not make him recede from the good works he was doing as a servant of God, she was given to make him repent of the good he had accomplished because he lost the fruit of his goodness. The rich, therefore, should beware of the terrible example of those who enrich themselves at the expense of mercy so that they do not undergo similar tortures. Rather, they should practice almsgiving with generosity, frequency and joy; “God in fact loves one who gives with joy.”¹² They distribute their wealth to the poor, acquiring “treasures in heaven where neither rust nor moth destroy or thieves dig and steal.”¹³ Thus, leaving this world, they will be able to find rest in the truly rich bosom of Abraham.¹⁴ TO BENIVOLUS 21-27.¹⁵

12:12 *Bringing a Reminder of Prayer*

ANGELS AND SATAN. AUGUSTINE: If some human being, but also if any angel, seemingly, should wish to tempt you, either through some kind of apparition or through a dream, and say, “Do this for me, celebrate this rite for me, because I am,” for example, “the angel Gabriel,” don’t believe him.¹⁶ As for you, stick safely to worshipping the one God who is Father and Son and Holy Spirit. If it is really an angel, he will rejoice at your worshipping like that; but if he gets angry because you haven’t given him something extra, then you must now understand him to be the one about whom the apostle says that he “transfigures himself into an angel of light.”¹⁷ He wants to block your way; he is intruding himself with evil intent; he is not the mediator who rec-

onciles but rather the one who separates. I mean, that angel in the Apocalypse and others like him do not want themselves, but God, to be adored.¹⁸ They are messengers, announcing whatever message they have been given to announce; they are “attendants,”¹⁹ doing whatever they have been ordered to do, presenting our prayers to God, not demanding them for themselves in God’s stead. The angel says to the man, “I offered your petition in the presence of the glory of God,” and yet the man was not pleading with the angel but with God; the attendant offered his prayer. NEWLY DISCOVERED SERMONS 198.48.²⁰

12:15 *I Am Raphael*

CHRIST’S HUMANITY AND DIVINITY. BEDE: By the latter, quite appropriately, the divinity of our Savior is signified, just as his humanity is by Tobias. And the fact that we say that by two persons, that is, an angel and a man, the one person of the mediator between God and people is denoted in a figure,²¹ will be no surprise to the one who reads in the commentaries of the venerable Fathers that in Isaac who was offered up by his father on an altar, and in the ram that was immolated, was denoted in figure as the one person of him who suffered for the world’s salvation.²² He in his humanity was slaughtered like a sheep, but in his divinity he remains with God the Father incapable of suffering, just as Isaac came back home alive with his father.²³ For if the ram aptly represents the humanity of Christ and the man his godhead, why should not a man much more aptly signify his humanity and an angel his divinity? ON TOBIT 3.7-8.²⁴

12:19 *Not Eating or Drinking*

THE NATURE AND MISSION OF THE ANGELS.

⁹See Job 42:17 LXX. ¹⁰See Job 22:9. ¹¹Job 2:9. ¹²2 Cor 9:7. ¹³Mt 6:20. ¹⁴See Lk 16:22. ¹⁵CTP 129:25-26. ¹⁶See Gal 1:8. ¹⁷2 Cor 11:14. ¹⁸See Rev 19:10; 22:9. ¹⁹See Heb 1:14. ²⁰WSA 3/11:217. ²¹See 1 Tim 2:5. ²²See Gen 22:10-13. ²³See Is 53:7; Acts 8:23. ²⁴BTACH 43-44*; CCL 119B:6.

JOHN OF DAMASCUS: The angels see God to such extent as is possible for them, and this is their food. Although, because they are incorporeal, they are superior to us and free of all bodily passion, they are certainly not passionless, because only the Divinity is passionless. They take whatever form the Lord may command, and thus they

appear to people and reveal the divine mysteries to them. They live in heaven and have as their one work to sing the praises of God and minister to his sacred will. ORTHODOX FAITH 2.3.²⁵

²⁵FC 37:207-8.

13:1-18 * ZION

¹Then Tobit wrote a prayer of rejoicing, and said:

*“Blessed is God who lives for ever,
and blessed is his kingdom.*

²For he afflicts, and he shows mercy;
he leads down to Hades, and brings up again,
and there is no one who can escape his hand.

³Acknowledge him before the nations, O sons of Israel;
for he has scattered us among them.

⁴Make his greatness known there,
and exalt him in the presence of all the living;
because he is our Lord and God,
he is our Father for ever.

⁵He will afflict us for our iniquities;
and again he will show mercy,
and will gather us from all the nations
among whom you^b have been scattered.

⁶If you turn to him with all your heart and with all your soul,
to do what is true before him,
then he will turn to you
and will not hide his face from you.

But see what he will do with you;
give thanks to him with your full voice.
Praise the Lord of righteousness,
and exalt the King of the ages.

I give him thanks in the land of my captivity,
and I show his power and majesty to a nation of sinners.

Turn back, you sinners, and do right before him;
 who knows if he will accept you and have mercy on you?

⁷I exalt my God;
 my soul exalts the King of heaven,
 and will rejoice in his majesty.

⁸Let all men speak,
 and give him thanks in Jerusalem.

⁹O Jerusalem, the holy city,
 he will afflict you for the deeds of your sons,
 but again he will show mercy to the sons of the righteous.

¹⁰Give thanks worthily to the Lord,
 and praise the King of the ages,
 that his tent may be raised for you again with joy.

May he cheer those within you who are captives,
 and love those within you who are distressed,
 to all generations for ever.

¹¹Many nations will come from afar to the name of the Lord God,
 bearing gifts in their hands, gifts for the King of heaven.

Generations of generations will give you joyful praise.

¹²Cursed are all who hate you;
 blessed for ever will be all who love you.

¹³Rejoice and be glad for the sons of the righteous;
 for they will be gathered together,
 and will praise the Lord of the righteous.

¹⁴How blessed are those who love you!
 They will rejoice in your peace.

Blessed are those who grieved over all your afflictions;
 for they will rejoice for you upon seeing all your glory,
 and they will be made glad for ever.

¹⁵Let my soul praise God the great King.

¹⁶For Jerusalem will be built with sapphires and emeralds,
 her^c walls with precious stones,
 and her towers and battlements with pure gold.

¹⁷The streets of Jerusalem will be paved^d with beryl and ruby and stones of Ophir;
¹⁸all her lanes will cry 'Hallelujah!' and will give praise,
 saying, 'Blessed is God, who has exalted you for ever.'"

b Other authorities read we c Gk your d Or inlaid * Tob 13:1-23 Vg.

OVERVIEW: Blessed are those who love God and everybody in and because of God (AUGUSTINE). In heaven the praise of God is eternally chanted (GREGORY THE GREAT). Heavenly Jerusalem is the place where there is every good thing and every rejoicing in the presence of God (PSEUDO-

AUGUSTINE). The hallelujah is chanted during Eastertide as a pledge of perpetual joy (BEDE).

13:14 Blessed Are Those Who Love God

LOVE FRIENDS AND FOES IN GOD. AUGUSTINE:

Everything is loved among friends, and it is so loved that the human conscience feels guilty before itself if it does not love one who returns the love and if it does not give love for love, seeking nothing in a bodily way beyond the signs of good will. From this comes that lamentation, if someone dies, the darkness of sorrow and the heart steeped in tears, by sweetness turned to bitterness, and the death of the living arising from the lost life of the dead. Happy is one who loves God and his friend in God and his enemy because of God.¹ He alone loses no dear one, since all people are dear in God who is never lost. And who is this but our God, the God who is the maker of heaven and earth² and who fills them up³ because he makes them by filling them? No one loses God unless he leaves God. And, because he leaves God, where can he go or flee⁴ except from your pleasure into your ire? For where does he not find your law in his punishment? And “your law is the truth”⁵ and “you are the truth.”⁶ CONFESSIONS 4.9.14.⁷

13:18 Crying “Hallelujah!”

PRAISE OF THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM.

PSEUDO-AUGUSTINE: Will I ever be able to see what is so desirable, what the angels long to gaze on,⁸ so I can say, “Look, now I see what I have so longed for, what I wanted I now possess!”? When will I come and appear before the face of the Lord,⁹ to contemplate him in the blessedness of his elect, to know the joy of his people and to glory in his inheritance?¹⁰ When will I see that city of which it is said, “Your squares, Jerusalem, will be paved with pure gold, and in you will resound a hymn of exultation, and in all your streets they will say, ‘Alleluia!’”¹¹ O holy city, O splendid city! I salute you from afar, I invoke you, I seek you. I desire to see you and to rest in you, but the flesh that holds me back does not let me do so. O desirable city! Your walls are a single stone, your guardian will be God, your citizens will always be glad, since they enjoy forever the vision of God. There is no corrup-

tion in you, or defect, or old age or anger—but perennial peace, unchanging glory, eternal joy, continual celebration. Truly there is only joy and exultation, the flower and confidence of youth and of complete salvation. In you there is neither yesterday nor past, but all is today, since yesterday is your tomorrow and the past is everlasting and the same. Health is in you, life is in you, to you belongs infinite peace, and for you God is everything. “Of you they say marvelous things, O city of God.”¹² “All make their dwelling in you with joy.”¹³ In you there is no fear or sadness. Every desire is turned into joy, since everything that can be desired is within reach, and everything one could want is there in abundance. All your inhabitants will receive a full measure¹⁴ of happiness, so that all might visibly rejoice together, without end. All will rejoice together, because the brothers and sisters will live together¹⁵ when all will gather in a single place. Finally, all will be one, as he who was worthy of his prayer being heard deigned to pray for his family, “As you, Father, are in me and I in you, may they also be one in us.”¹⁶ BOOK ON THE SPIRIT AND THE SOUL 60.¹⁷

THE BIBLE REVEALS THE HEAVENLY SONGS.

GREGORY THE GREAT: So as to gladden you in the promise of the joy to come, you know the songs of eternal praise that are written in this book, “Blessed are those who dwell in your house, O Lord; forever they will sing your praise!”¹⁸ And how through a certain wise man¹⁹ it is said of the heavenly Jerusalem, “All your squares will be paved with precious stones, and in all your streets they will sing alleluia.”²⁰ This song of the eternal homeland was proclaimed to us by its citizens, who together cried out,

¹See Tob 13:15 (13:18 Vg); Mt 5:44; Lk 6:27. ²See Gen 1:1. ³See Jer 23:24. ⁴See Ps 139:7 (138:7 LXX). ⁵Ps 119:142 (118:142 LXX). ⁶See Jn 14:6. ⁷FC 21:85. ⁸See 1 Pet 1:12. ⁹Ps 42:3 (41:3 LXX). ¹⁰See Ps 106:5 (105:5 LXX). ¹¹Tob 13:17-18 (13:22 Vg). ¹²Ps 87:3 (86:3 LXX). ¹³Ps 87:7, variant (86:7 LXX). ¹⁴See Lk 6:38. ¹⁵See Ps 133:1 (132:1 LXX). ¹⁶Jn 17:21. ¹⁷PL 40:824-25. ¹⁸Ps 84:5 (83:5 LXX). ¹⁹Gregory omits Tobit’s name as if it were still not wholly proper to use the book. ²⁰Tob 13:17-18 (13:22 Vg).

“Glory to God in the highest heavens, and peace on earth to people of good will.”²¹ HOMILIES ON EZEKIEL 1.9,34.²²

AN ANTICIPATION OF ETERNAL JOY. BEDE:

Thus our custom is to chant “Alleluia” more frequently and happily during these fifty days in memory of this, our most peaceful and blissful action.²³ Alleluia is a Hebrew word, and in Latin it means “praise the Lord!” Accordingly, where we chant in the psalms, “Praise the Lord,” in place of this expression among the Jews “Alleluia” is always chanted. In his book of Revelation, John the Evangelist mentions that he had heard the throngs of heavenly virtues singing it.²⁴ And when the venerable father Tobit had understood from an angelic vision what the glory of the citizens on high is, and the great brightness of the heavenly Jerusalem, he said the following with mystical voice, “All its streets are paved with precious and shining stones, and throughout all its districts ‘Alleluia’ will be sung.”²⁵

It is most proper and beautiful that a general custom has prevailed in holy church of all the

faithful throughout the world singing this word of praise in the Hebrew language, out of reverence for the primitive practice. This has come about so that, through the harmony of such a devotion, the whole church may be admonished that now it ought to consist in one faith, confession and love of Christ, and in the future it ought to hurry to that land in which there is no discord of minds, no disharmony of speech. For just as once in Jerusalem the heart and soul of the multitude of the believers was one and all things were theirs in common, so in the “vision of supreme peace” the heart and soul of the entire multitude of those who see God will be one, loving and praising him by whose grace they see that they have been saved.²⁶ There everything will truly be theirs in common, for, as the apostle says, “God will be all in all.”²⁷ HOMILIES ON THE GOSPELS 2.16.²⁸

²¹Lk 2:14. ²²CTP 17:203. ²³Bede refers to the Western liturgy, which sings the Alleluia at Eastertide, after having omitted it during the Lent. ²⁴See Rev 19:1. ²⁵Tob 13:17-18 (13:22 Vg). ²⁶See Acts 4:32. ²⁷1 Cor 15:28. ²⁸CS 111:154-55; CTP 90:414-15.

14:1-15* NINEVEH

¹Here Tobit ended his words of praise. ²He was fifty-eight years old when he lost his sight, and after eight years he regained it. He gave alms, and he continued to fear the Lord God and to praise him. ³When he had grown very old he called his son and grandsons, and said to him, “My son, take your sons; behold, I have grown old and am about to depart this life. ⁴Go to Media, my son, for I fully believe what Jonah the prophet said about Nineveh, that it will be overthrown. But in Media there will be peace for a time. Our brethren will be scattered over the earth from the good land, and Jerusalem will be desolate. The house of God in it will be burned down and will be in ruins for a time. ⁵But God will again have mercy on them, and bring them back into their land; and they will rebuild the house of God,^c though it will not be like the former one until the times of the age are com-

pleted. After this they will return from the places of their captivity, and will rebuild Jerusalem in splendor. And the house of God will be rebuilt there with a glorious building for all generations for ever, just as the prophets said of it. ⁶Then all the Gentiles will turn to fear the Lord God in truth, and will bury their idols. ⁷All the Gentiles will praise the Lord, and his people will give thanks to God, and the Lord will exalt his people. And all who love the Lord God in truth and righteousness will rejoice, showing mercy to our brethren.

⁸“So now, my son, leave Nineveh, because what the prophet Jonah said will surely happen. ⁹But keep the law and the commandments, and be merciful and just, so that it may be well with you. ¹⁰Bury me properly, and your mother with me. And do not live in Nineveh any longer. See, my son, what Nadab^f did to Ahikar who had reared him, how he brought him from light into darkness, and with what he repaid him. But Ahikar^g was saved, and the other received repayment as he himself went down into the darkness. Ahikar^g gave alms and escaped the deathtrap which Nadab^b had set for him; but Nadab^f fell into the trap and perished. ¹¹So now, my children, consider what almsgiving accomplishes and how righteousness delivers.” As he said this he died in his bed. He was a hundred and fifty-eight years old; and Tobias^b gave him a magnificent funeral. ¹²And when Anna died he buried her with his father.

Then Tobias returned with his wife and his sons to Ecbatana, to Raguel his father-in-law. ¹³He grew old with honor, and he gave his father-in-law and mother-in-law magnificent funerals. He inherited their property and that of his father Tobit. ¹⁴He died in Ecbatana of Media at the age of a hundred and twenty-seven years. ¹⁵But before he died he heard of the destruction of Nineveh, which Nebuchadnezzar and Ahasuerus had captured. Before his death he rejoiced over Nineveh.

e Gk house f Other authorities read Aman g Other authorities read Manasses h Gk he * Tob 14:1-17 Vg.

OVERVIEW: The prophets predicted the conversion of pagans, which stems from the cross (ATHANASIUS). The counsels given by Tobias are a model concerning the education of children (CYPRIAN).

14:6 Gentiles Will Turn to the Lord God

THE CONVERSION OF PAGANS. ATHANASIUS: See then what human beings considered the foolishness of God because of the cross,¹ how this has become above anything else the most honored. For our resurrection is stored up in it. No longer Israel alone, but from this time forward all the nations, as the prophet has foretold, abandon their idols and acknowledge the true God, the Father of Christ.² The illusion of demons has come to nothing, and he alone who is truly God is worshiped in the name of our

Lord Jesus Christ.³ DISCOURSES AGAINST THE ARIANS I.43.I.⁴

14:9 Be Merciful and Just

A MODEL FOR THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.

CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE: Be to your children such a father as was Tobias. Give useful and salutary precepts to your pledges such as he gave to his son; command your children as he too commanded saying, “And now, sons, I command you, serve God in truth, and do before God what pleases him; and command your children that they do justice and almsdeeds and that they be mindful of God and bless God’s name on every occasion.” WORKS AND ALMSGIVING 20.⁵

¹See 1 Cor 1:18. ²See also Is 11:10. ³See 1 Cor 3:16. ⁴CTP 173:99-100; NPNF 1 4:331**. ⁵FC 36:246.

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