

Between the Testaments

Passages from the book of Tobit (from the Apocrypha)

Tobit's Prayer (Tobit 3:1–6)

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. 3 Remember me and look favorably upon me; do not punish me for my sins and for my unwitting offenses and those which my fathers committed before thee. 4 For 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. 5 And 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. 6 And 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.”

Sarah's Prayer (Tobit 3:11–15)

“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. 12 And now, O Lord, I have turned my eyes and my face toward thee. 13 Command that I be released from the earth and that I hear reproach no more. 14 Thou knowest, O Lord, that I am innocent of any sin with man, 15 and 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 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.”

Tobias' Prayer (Tobit 8:5–8)

“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.
6 Thou 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.'

7 And 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." 8 And she said with him, "Amen."

Raphael's Exhortation (Tobit 12:6–10)

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. 7 It 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. 8 Prayer 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. 9 For 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; 10 but those who commit sin are the enemies of their own lives.

Tobias' Prayer of Thanksgiving

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

2 For 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.

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

4 Make 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.

5 He will afflict us for our iniquities;
and again he will show mercy,
and will gather us from all the nations

among whom you have been scattered.

6 If 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?

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

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

9 O 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.

10 Give 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.

11 Many 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.

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

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

14 How 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.

15 Let my soul praise God the great King.

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

17 The streets of Jerusalem will be paved with beryl and ruby and stones of Ophir;

18 all her lanes will cry 'Hallelujah!' and will give praise,
saying, 'Blessed is God, who has exalted you for ever.'"