

Brief Summary of Apocrypha

Tobit

Carried away captive to Nineveh. Had a political post with Shalmanesar. Tobit mentions his own righteousness, his givings to the poor, and particularly his burying of Jewish corpses left out. This annoyed the king. He says that those who give to the poor are blessed. He has a son called Tobias. One day Tobit is sleeping outside and bird droppings go into his eyes giving him cataracts and leaving him blind. His son goes on a journey with a young man who is really the Angel Raphael (calls himself Azariah son of Hananiah) in disguise to get money Tobit left with Gabael at Rages. He marries Sarah. She lived in Ecbatana. She had a demon that followed here and that killed seven of her husbands on their wedding nights. Gabriel tells Tobias how to scare the demon away with a fish – and prayer. They return and heal Tobit with the Fish.

Judith

A town in Israel called Bethulia is besieged by the Assyrian army. They take control of the water supply. After 34 days the people want to surrender. Judith is a beautiful intelligent widow. She goes down with her maid – dressed up beautifully with fine clothes and jewellery. She pretends to be a deserter. The commander, Holofernes, fancies her and wants to seduce her. At a party after a few days she gets the commander drunk and then cuts off his head. She returns to Bethulia with his head. Israel's men go out armed – the Assyrians seek out their commander and find him dead. Then their army is in disarray and is defeated by Israel. Judith was honoured in Israel- many want to marry her but she never marries again.

Wisdom of Solomon

Wisdom at creation of world (Chapter 9). Female. Barren women

that are wise are well off. A list of deeds that the patriarchs did by wisdom is given similar to Hebrews 11 (Chapter 10). The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God (Chapter 3).

Sirach

Sirach is a long wisdom book that was very influential with Jews and later Christians. There is an introduction that introduces the author. A particular section of interest is Chapters 44-50 which summarise a large portion of Biblical history and refer to nearly every Biblical book except Esther, It mentions Enoch, Elijah, Abraham, Noah, Moses – loved by God, Aaron adorned with beautiful things, Joshua, Caleb – given a long life, Ezekiel – who had the great vision, David and the prophet Nathan, Solomon had peace and was able to build the temple. Solomon led astray by women and idolatry. Rehoboam was foolish and split Israel. Hezekiah was good. Isaiah made the shadow go back and the king live longer. In that time God smote the Assyrians. Josiah is like sweet perfume. David, Hezekiah and Josiah were the good kings, the rest were bad. It also mentions that three groups are not a people – the Samaritans, those among the Philistines and those in Shechem.

Of interest to studies of Galatians, it mentions the zeal of Phineas.