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honour me! ¹² But you dishonour me when you say that my altar is worthless and when you offer on it food that you despise. ¹³ You say, 'How tired we are of all this!' and you turn up your nose at me. As your offering to me you bring a stolen animal or one that is lame or sick. Do you think I will accept that from you? ¹⁴ A curse on the cheat who sacrifices a worthless animal to me, when he has in his flock a good animal that he promised to give me! For I am a great king, and people of all nations fear me."

2 The LORD Almighty says to the priests, "This command is for you: ² You must honour me by what you do. If you will not listen to what I say, then I will bring a curse on you. I will put a curse on the things you receive for your support. In fact, I have already put a curse on them, because you do not take my command seriously. ³ I will punish your children and rub your faces in the dung of the animals you sacrifice — and you will be taken out to the dunghill. ⁴ Then you will know that I have given you this command, so that my covenant with the priests, the descendants of Levi, will not be broken.

⁵ "In my covenant I promised them life and wellbeing, and this is what I gave them, so that they might respect me. In those days they did respect and fear me. ⁶ They taught what was right, not what was wrong. They lived in harmony with me; they not only did what was right themselves, but they also helped many others to stop doing evil. ⁷ It is the duty of priests to teach the true knowledge of God. People should go to them to learn my will, because they are the messengers of the LORD Almighty.

⁸ "But now you priests have turned away from the right path. Your teaching has led many to do wrong. You have broken the covenant I made with you. ⁹ So I, in turn, will make the people of Israel despise you because you do not obey my will, and when you teach my people, you do not treat everyone alike."

The People's Unfaithfulness to God

¹⁰ Don't we all have the same father? Didn't the same God create us all? Then why do we break our promises to one another, and why do we despise the covenant that God made with our ancestors?

¹¹ The people of Judah have broken their promise to God and done a horrible thing in Jerusalem and all over the country. They have defiled the Temple which the LORD loves. Men have married women who worship foreign gods. ¹² May the LORD remove from the community of Israel those who did this, and never again let them participate in the offerings our nation brings to the LORD Almighty.*

¹³ This is another thing you do. You drown the LORD's altar with tears, weeping and wailing because he no longer accepts the offerings you bring him. ¹⁴ You ask why he no longer accepts them. It is because he knows you have broken your promise to the wife you married when you were young. She was your partner, and you have broken your promise to her, although you promised before God that you would be faithful to her. ¹⁵ Didn't God make you one body and spirit with her? What was his purpose in this? It was that you should have children who are truly God's people. So make sure that none of you breaks his promise to his wife. ¹⁶ "I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel. "I hate it when one of you does such a cruel thing to his wife. Make sure that you do not break your promise to be faithful to your wife."

The Day of Judgement is Near

¹⁷ You have tired the LORD out with your talk. But you ask, "How have we tired him?" By saying, "The LORD Almighty thinks all evildoers are good; in fact he likes them." Or by asking, "Where is the God who is supposed to be just?"

3 The LORD Almighty answers, "I will send my messenger to prepare the way for me. Then the Lord you are looking

2.12 *One ancient translation* May... Almighty; *Hebrew unclear.*

2.15 *Probable text* Didn't God... her; *Hebrew unclear.*
See also: **3.1:** Mt 11.10; Mk 1.2; Lk 1.76, 7.27

for will suddenly come to his Temple. The messenger you long to see will come and proclaim my covenant.”

² But who will be able to endure the day when he comes? Who will be able to survive when he appears? He will be like strong soap, like a fire that refines metal. ³ He will come to judge like one who refines and purifies silver. As a metalworker refines silver and gold, so the LORD’s messenger will purify the priests, so that they will bring to the LORD the right kind of offerings. ⁴ Then the offerings which the people of Judah and Jerusalem bring to the LORD will be pleasing to him, as they used to be in the past.

⁵ The LORD Almighty says, “I will appear among you to judge, and I will testify at once against those who practise magic, against adulterers, against those who give false testimony, those who cheat employees out of their wages, and those who take advantage of widows, orphans, and foreigners — against all who do not respect me.

The Payment of Tithes

⁶ “I am the LORD, and I do not change. And so you, the descendants of Jacob, are not yet completely lost. ⁷ You, like your ancestors before you, have turned away from my laws and have not kept them. Turn back to me, and I will turn to you. But you ask, ‘What must we do to turn back to you?’ ⁸ I ask you, is it right for a person to cheat God? Of course not, yet you are cheating me. ‘How?’ you ask. In the matter of tithes and offerings. ⁹ A curse is on all of you because the whole nation is cheating me. ¹⁰ Bring the full amount of your tithes to the Temple, so that there will be plenty of food there. Put me to the test and you will see that I will open the windows of heaven and pour out on you in abundance all kinds of good things. ¹¹ I will not let insects destroy your crops, and your grapevines will be loaded with grapes. ¹² Then the people of all nations will call you happy, because your land will be a good place to live in.

God’s Promise of Mercy

¹³ “You have said terrible things about me,” says the LORD. “But you ask, ‘What have we said about you?’ ¹⁴ You have said, ‘It’s useless to serve God. What’s the use of doing what he says or of trying to show the LORD Almighty that we are sorry for what we have done?’ ¹⁵ As we see it, proud people are the ones who are happy. Evil people not only prosper, but they test God’s patience with their evil deeds and get away with it.’ ”

¹⁶ Then the people who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard what they said. In his presence, there was written down in a book a record of those who feared the LORD and respected him. ¹⁷ “They will be my people,” says the LORD Almighty. “On the day when I act, they will be my very own. I will be merciful to them, as a father is merciful to the son who serves him. ¹⁸ Once again my people will see the difference between what happens to the righteous and to the wicked, to the person who serves me and the one who does not.”

The Day of the LORD is Coming

4 The LORD Almighty says, “The day is coming when all proud and evil people will burn like straw. On that day they will burn up, and there will be nothing left of them. ² But for you who obey me, my saving power will rise on you like the sun and bring healing like the sun’s rays. You will be as free and happy as calves let out of a stall. ³ On the day when I act, you will overcome the wicked, and they will be like dust under your feet.

⁴ “Remember the teachings of my servant Moses, the laws and commands which I gave him at Mount Sinai for all the people of Israel to obey.

⁵ “But before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes, I will send you the prophet Elijah. ⁶ He will bring fathers and children together again; otherwise I would have to come and destroy your country.”

**THE
DEUTEROCANONICAL BOOKS
also called
THE APOCRYPHA**

Introduction

The following books: Tobit, Judith, Esther (the Greek text), Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, Song of the Three Young Men, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, 1 Maccabees and 2 Maccabees, formed part of the Septuagint Greek text and were interspersed among other books of the Old Testament.

This Greek text was widely used by Jews and was also known by many Gentiles who were attracted to the high moral teachings of the Old Testament, but did not themselves become converts to Judaism. Thus early Christianity, as it spread among Greek-speaking Jews and Gentiles, employed this Greek text. The majority of Old Testament quotations in the New Testament are based on this translation.

Precisely when Jewish leadership officially adopted the traditional 39 books of the so-called "Hebrew Canon" is not known; nor is there agreement as to exactly what criteria were used in determining this canon. According to tradition, the Hebrew canon was fixed about AD 90, but there is evidence that official agreement on this issue came somewhat later.

Among Christians it was apparently only in the fourth century that the issue of the canonicity of the books mentioned in the

first paragraph arose. Jerome denied their canonicity on the grounds that they were not part of the Hebrew Bible, and placed them in a separate section in his Vulgate translation of the Old Testament.

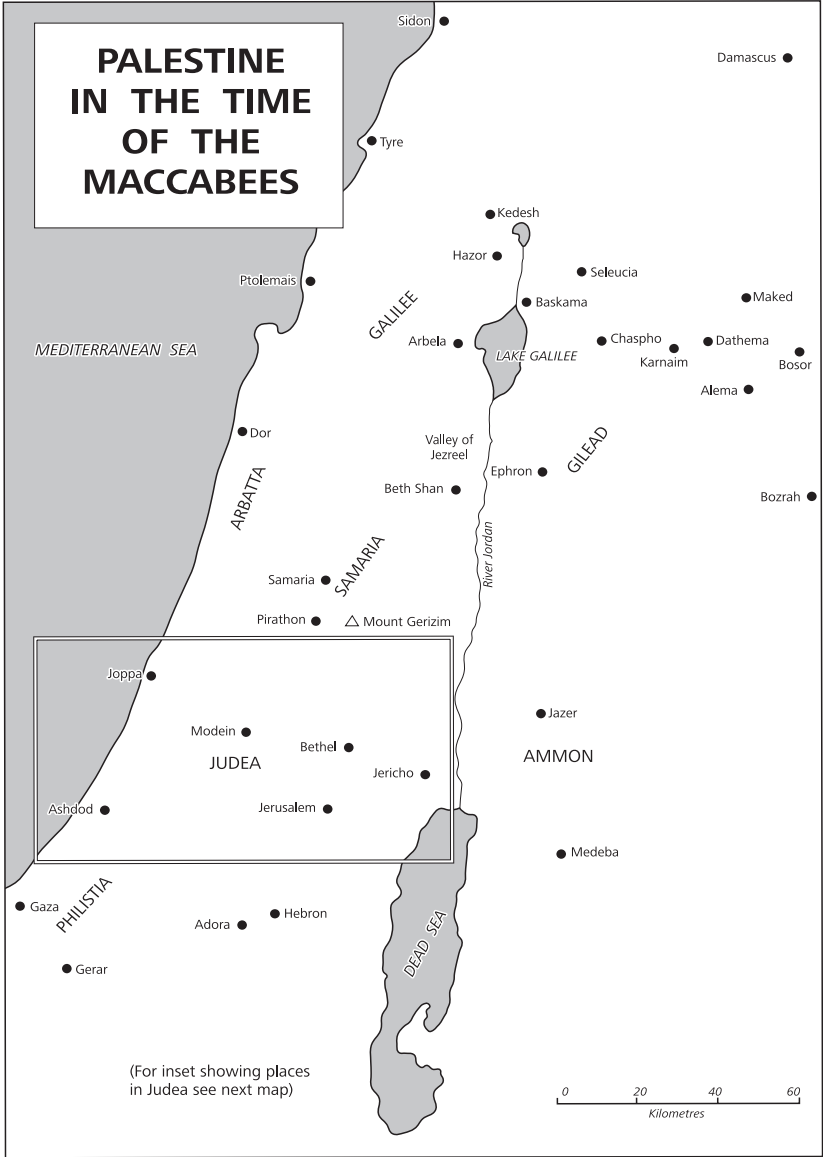
In 1546 at the Council of Trent the Roman Catholic Church officially declared these books to be sacred and canonical.

Martin Luther did not regard these books as Scripture but as "useful and good for reading". In his German translation of the Bible he followed Jerome in placing them at the end of the Old Testament with the superscription "Apocrypha". Protestants generally continued this practice in their translations of the Bible into other languages.

Christians of all traditions, however, recognise the importance of these books in providing much valuable information on Jewish history, life, thought, worship and religious practice during the centuries immediately before the time of Christ. They make possible a clearer understanding of the historical and cultural situation in which Jesus lived and taught.

Roman Catholics speak of these books as "deuterocanonical" to indicate that their canonical status as Scripture was settled later than that of the protocanonical books. Others usually refer to these books as Apocrypha.

PALESTINE IN THE TIME OF THE MACCABEES



MEDITERRANEAN SEA

GALILEE

LAKE GALILEE

GILEAD

ARBATTIA

SAMARIA

JUDEA

PHILISTIA

AMMON

DEAD SEA

River Jordan

(For inset showing places
in Judea see next map)

0 20 40 60
Kilometres

JUDEA IN THE TIME OF THE MACCABEES

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

DEAD SEA

● Joppa

● Tephon

● Arimathea

● Timmath

● Lydda

● Adida

● Ephraim

● Modein

● Beth Horon

● Berea

● Bethel

● Dok

● Jammia

● Gezer

● Elasa

● Michmash

● Kedron

● Mizpath

● Capharsalama

● Ekron

● Adasa

● Jerusalem

● Ashdod

● Ashkelon

● Bethbasi

● Beth Zachariah

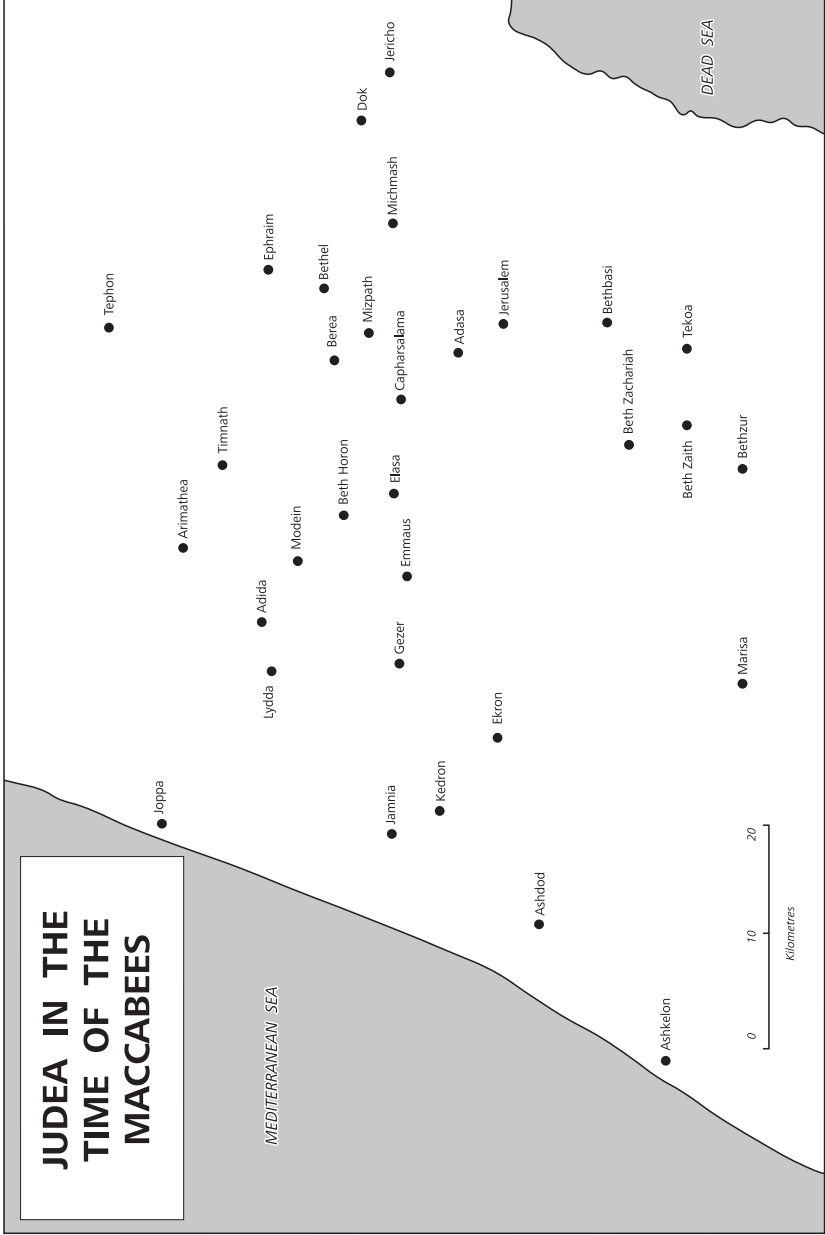
● Beth Zaita

● Tiekoa

● Marissa

● Bethzur

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THE BOOK OF TOBIT

INTRODUCTION

The book of *Tobit*, originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic, is a story which tells of miraculous help to God's faithful people and teaches Jewish piety and morality. The book offers a vivid picture of Jewish religion and culture in the period prior to the New Testament.

Outline of Contents

- Tobit in Nineveh and Sarah in Media suffer and pray 1.1—3.15
 - Their prayers are answered 3.16—11.18
 - a. In answer to their prayers God sends the angel Raphael 3.16, 17
 - b. Tobit gives advice to his son, Tobias 4.1—21
 - c. Raphael travels with Tobias to Media 5.1—7.12
 - d. Tobias marries Sarah 7.13—9.6
 - e. Raphael returns with Tobias and Sarah, and cures Tobit's blindness 10.1—11.18
 - The angel Raphael reveals who he is 12.1—22
 - Tobit praises God and gives advice to Tobias 13.1—14.15
-

1 I am Tobit and this is the story of my life. My father was Tobiel, my grandfather was Ananiel, and my great-grandfather was Aduel. Aduel's father was Gabael; his grandfather was Raphael; and his great-grandfather was Raguel, who belonged to the clan of Asiel, a part of the tribe of Naphtali. ² During the time that Shalmaneser was emperor of Assyria, I was taken captive in my home town of Thisbe, located in northern Galilee, south of Kadesh in Naphtali, north-west of Hazor, and north of Phogor.

Tobit's Early Life

³ All my life I have been honest and have tried to do what was right. I have often given money to help needy relatives and fellow Jews who were deported with me to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria.

⁴ When I was young, I lived in northern Israel. All the tribes in Israel were supposed

to offer sacrifices in Jerusalem. It was the one city that God had chosen from among all the Israelite cities as the place where his Temple was to be built for his holy and eternal home. But my entire tribe of Naphtali rejected the city of Jerusalem and the kings descended from David. ⁵ Like everyone else in this tribe, my own family used to go to the city of Dan in the mountains of northern Galilee to offer sacrifices to the gold bull-calf which King Jeroboam of Israel had set up there.

Tobit's Faithfulness to His Religion

⁶ I was the only one in my family who regularly went to Jerusalem to celebrate the religious festivals, as the Law of Moses commands everyone to do. I would hurry off to Jerusalem with the first part of my harvest, the first-born of my animals, a tenth of my cattle, and the freshly clipped wool from my sheep. Then I would stand

before the altar in the Temple, and give these offerings to the priests, the descendants of Aaron. ⁷ I would give a tenth of my grain, wine, olive-oil, pomegranates, figs and other fruits to the Levites who served God in Jerusalem. Every year, except the seventh year when the land was at rest,* I would sell a second tenth of my possessions and spend the money in Jerusalem on the festival meal.

⁸ But every third year, I would give a third tithe* to widows and orphans and to foreigners living among my people, and we would eat the festival meal together. I did this in keeping with the Law of Moses, which Deborah, the mother of my grandfather Ananiel, had taught me to obey. (I had been left an orphan when my father died.)

Tobit's Faithfulness in Exile

⁹ When I grew up, I married Anna, a member of my own tribe. We had a son and named him Tobias. ¹⁰ Later, I was taken captive and deported to Assyria, and that is how I came to live in Nineveh.

While we lived in Nineveh, all my relatives and fellow Jews used to eat the same kind of food as the other people who lived there, ¹¹ but I refused to do so. ¹² Since I took seriously the commands of the Most High God, ¹³ he made Emperor Shalmaneser respect me, and I was placed in charge of purchasing all the emperor's supplies.

¹⁴ Before the emperor died, I made regular visits to the land of Media to buy things for him there. Once, when I was in the city of Rages in Media, I left some bags of money there with Gabael, Gabrias's brother, and asked him to keep them for me. There were more than 300 kilogrammes of silver coins in those bags. ¹⁵ When Shalmaneser died, his son Sennacherib succeeded him as emperor. It soon became so dangerous to travel on the roads in Media that I could no longer go there.

Tobit Buries the Dead

¹⁶ While Shalmaneser was still emperor, I took good care of my fellow Jews whenever they were in need. ¹⁷ If they were hungry, I shared my food with them; if they needed clothes, I gave them some of my own. Whenever I saw that the dead body of one of my people had been thrown outside the city wall, I gave it a decent burial.

¹⁸ One day Sennacherib cursed God, the King of Heaven; God punished him, and Sennacherib had to retreat from Judah. On his way back to Media he was so furious that he killed many Israelites. But I secretly removed the bodies and buried them; and when Sennacherib later searched for the bodies, he could not find them.

¹⁹ Then someone from Nineveh told the emperor that I was the one who had been burying his victims. As soon as I realized that the emperor knew all about me and that my life was in danger, I became frightened. So I ran away and hid. ²⁰ Everything I owned was seized and put in the royal treasury. My wife Anna and my son Tobias were all I had left.

Tobit's Nephew Rescues Him

²¹ About six weeks later, two of Sennacherib's sons assassinated him and then escaped to the mountains of Ararat. Another son, Esarhaddon, became emperor and put Ahikar, my brother Anael's son, in charge of all the financial affairs of the empire. ²² This was actually the second time Ahikar was appointed to this position, for when Sennacherib was emperor of Assyria, Ahikar had been wine steward, treasurer, and accountant, and had been in charge of the official seal. Since Ahikar was my nephew, he put in a good word for me with the emperor, and I was allowed to return to Nineveh.

A Family Celebration

2 When I returned home I was reunited with my wife Anna and my son Tobias. At the Harvest Festival, which is also called the Festival of Weeks, I sat down to a

1.7 THE LAND WAS AT REST: See *Lev 25.1–7*.

1.8 a third tithe; *some manuscripts have the money.*

See also: 1.17: Job 31.16–20 **2.1:** Ex 23.16

³⁸ During the early days of the revolution he had risked his life for Judaism and had been brought to trial because of his loyalty. ³⁹ Wishing to show clearly how much he disliked the Jews, Nicanor sent more than five hundred soldiers to arrest Razis, ⁴⁰ because he thought his arrest would be a crippling blow to the Jews. ⁴¹ The soldiers were about to capture the tower where Razis had gone. They were forcing open the gates to the courtyard, and the order had been given to set the door on fire. Razis realized there was no escape, so he tried to commit suicide with his sword, ⁴² preferring to die with honour rather than suffer humiliation at the hands of evil men.

⁴³ Under the pressure of the moment, Razis misjudged the thrust of the sword, and it did not kill him. So, while the soldiers were swarming into the room, he rushed to the wall and jumped off like a brave hero into the crowd below. ⁴⁴ The crowd quickly moved back, and he fell in the space they left. ⁴⁵ Still alive, and burning with courage, he got up, and with blood gushing from his wounds, he ran through the crowd and finally climbed a steep rock. ⁴⁶ Now completely drained of blood, he tore out his intestines with both hands and threw them at the crowd, and as he did so, he prayed for the Lord of life and breath to give them back to him. That was how he died.

Nicanor's Cruel Plan

15 Nicanor learnt that Judas and his men were in the region of Samaria, so he decided to attack them on the Sabbath, when he could do so without any danger to himself. ² The Jews who were forced to accompany his army begged him not to do such a cruel and savage thing, but to respect the day that the all-seeing God had honoured and made the most holy of all days. ³ Then Nicanor, the lowest creature on earth, asked if there was some sovereign ruler in heaven who had commanded them to honour the Sabbath. ⁴ And the Jews replied, "Yes; the living Lord, who rules

in heaven, commanded us to honour the Sabbath."

⁵ But Nicanor answered, "I am the ruler on earth, and I order you to take up your weapons and to do what the king commands." However, he did not succeed in carrying out his cruel plan.

Judas Prepares His Troops for Battle

⁶ In his arrogance Nicanor had boasted that he would set up a monument in honour of his victory over Judas. ⁷ But Judas was fully confident that the Lord would help him, ⁸ so he urged his men not to be afraid of the enemy. He encouraged them to remember how the Almighty had helped them in times past and to rest assured that he would give them victory this time also. ⁹ He renewed their hope by reading to them from the Law and the Prophets and by reminding them of the battles they had already won. ¹⁰ When his men were ready for battle, he gave them their orders and at the same time pointed out how the Gentiles could not be trusted, because they never kept their treaties. ¹¹ He armed all his men, not by encouraging them to trust in shields and spears, but by inspiring them with courageous words. He also raised their morale by telling them about his dream, a kind of vision that they could trust in.

¹² He told them that he had seen a vision of Onias, the former High Priest, that great and wonderful man of humble and gentle disposition, who was an outstanding orator and who had been taught from childhood how to live a virtuous life. With outstretched arms Onias was praying for the entire Jewish nation. ¹³ Judas then saw an impressive white-haired man of great dignity and authority. ¹⁴ Onias said: "This is God's prophet Jeremiah, who loves his fellow Jews and offers many prayers for us and for Jerusalem, the holy city."

¹⁵ Then Jeremiah stretched out his right hand and gave Judas a gold sword, saying as he did so, ¹⁶ "This holy sword is a gift from God. Take it and destroy your enemies."

¹⁷ The eloquent words that Judas spoke encouraged everyone to be brave, and inspired boys to fight like men. Their city, their religion, and their Temple were in danger. So the Jews made up their minds not to waste any time, but to make a daring attack against the enemy and bravely decide their fate in hand-to-hand combat. ¹⁸ They were not so concerned about their own families and relatives as they were about the their sacred Temple. ¹⁹ And the people who had to stay in Jerusalem were deeply concerned about how a battle on open ground would turn out.

The Defeat and Death of Nicanor

²⁰ Everyone was waiting to see who would win the battle. The enemy troops were already moving forward, with their cavalry on each side of them, and their elephants placed in strategic positions. ²¹ Judas Maccabaeus looked at the huge enemy force, the variety of their weapons, and their fierce elephants. Then he raised his hands towards heaven and prayed to the Lord, who works miracles, because he knew that the Lord gives victory to those who deserve it, not to those who have a strong army. ²² Judas said: "Lord, when Hezekiah was king of Judah, you sent your angel, who killed 185,000 of Sennacherib's men. ²³ Now once again, Lord of heaven, send your good angel to make our enemies shake and tremble with fear. ²⁴ By your great power, destroy these people who have slandered you and have come out to attack your chosen people." So Judas ended his prayer.

²⁵ Nicanor and his army moved forward to the sound of trumpets and battle songs, ²⁶ but Judas and his men went into battle calling on God for help. ²⁷ So by fighting with their hands and praying to God in their hearts, the Jews killed more than 35,000 of the enemy. How grateful they were for the help they had received from God! ²⁸ When the battle was over and they were going home

celebrating their victory, they noticed Nicanor in full armour lying dead on the battlefield. ²⁹ Then with loud shouts they praised the Lord in their native language.

³⁰ Judas Maccabaeus, who had always fought with all his body and soul for his fellow Jews, never losing the patriotism of his youth, ordered his men to cut off Nicanor's head and right arm and to take them to Jerusalem. ³¹ When they arrived in the city, he called together all the people, stationed the priests before the altar, and sent for the men in the fort. ³² He showed them the head of the evil Nicanor and the arm which that wicked man had arrogantly stretched out against the sacred Temple of the Almighty God. ³³ Then he cut out the tongue of that godless man, promising to feed it bit by bit to the birds and to hang up his head opposite the Temple, as evidence of what his foolishness did for him. ³⁴ Everyone there looked up to heaven and praised the Lord, who had revealed his power and had kept his Temple from being defiled. ³⁵ Judas hung Nicanor's head from the wall of the fort, as a clear proof to everyone of the Lord's help. ³⁶ By unanimous vote it was decided that this day would never be forgotten, but would be celebrated each year on the eve of Mordecai's Day,* which is the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, called Adar in Aramaic.

Concluding Words

³⁷ That is how things turned out for Nicanor. The city of Jerusalem remained in the possession of the Hebrew people from that time on, so I will end my story here. ³⁸ If it is well written and to the point, I am pleased; if it is poorly written and uninteresting, I have still done my best. ³⁹ We know it is unhealthy to drink wine or water alone, whereas wine mixed with water makes a delightfully tasty drink. So also a good story skilfully written gives pleasure to those who read it. With this I conclude.

See also: 15.22: 2 Kgs 19.35
15.25–35: 1 Macc 7.43–50

15.36 MORDECAI'S DAY: *The Festival of Purim* (see Esth 9.17–22).

See also: 15.36: 1 Macc 7.49

SOME ADDITIONAL BOOKS

Introduction

1 Esdras, 2 Esdras, and the Prayer of Manasseh are accepted by many Protestants and Anglicans as being part of the Apocrypha. They are not accepted as canonical by Roman Catholics. 1 Esdras and the Prayer of Manasseh constituted

a part of the Septuagint Greek text of the Old Testament used by Christians during the early centuries of Christianity. The book of 2 Esdras may not have been in its final form until towards the end of the second century AD.

THE FIRST BOOK OF ESDRAS

INTRODUCTION

The *First Book of Esdras* parallels the account given in *2 Chronicles* 35—36, *Ezra*, and *Nehemiah* 6—8, although there are omissions, additions, and variations in both order and detail. The most distinctive new material is the debate before the emperor in chapters 3 and 4.

Outline of Contents

- Josiah and the fall of Jerusalem 1.1—5.8
 - The return from exile 2.1—30
 - The debate of the bodyguards before the emperor 3.1—4.63
 - The Temple rebuilt and dedicated 5.1—7.15
 - Ezra returns with other exiles 8.1—9.55
-

Josiah Celebrates the Passover

(2 Kgs 23.21–23; 2 Chr 35.1–9)

1 King Josiah celebrated the Passover at Jerusalem in honour of the Lord; on the fourteenth day of the first month they killed the animals for the festival. ² Josiah organized the priests, dressed in their priestly robes, to serve in the Temple according to the daily order. ³ He also instructed the Levites, the Temple servants, to purify themselves for the Lord's service, so that they could put the sacred Covenant Box of the Lord in the Temple that King Solomon, the son of David, had built. ⁴ Josiah said to them, "You must no longer carry it from place to place, but you are to serve the Lord your God and minister to his people Israel. Get ready by family and clan to carry out your duties ⁵ according to the directions given by King David and the splendid way that they were carried out by his son King Solomon. Take your places in the Temple in proper order according to your family divisions as Levites serving the Lord for the people of Israel. ⁶ Kill the Passover lambs and goats and prepare the sacrifices for your

fellow Israelites. Then celebrate the Passover according to the instructions that the Lord gave to Moses."

⁷ Josiah gave to the people who were present 30,000 young sheep and goats and 3,000 calves. These were a gift from the royal estates to carry out the promise he had made to the people, the priests, and the Levites. ⁸ The officials in charge of the Temple — Hilkiah, Zechariah, and Jehiel — also gave the priests 2,600 sheep and 300 calves for sacrifices during the festival. ⁹ And the army commanders — Conaniah, Shemaiah and his brother Nethanel, Hashabiah, Ochiel, and Joram — contributed 5,000 sheep and 700 calves for the Levites to offer as sacrifices.

^{10–11} This is what happened. The priests and the Levites, dressed in the proper manner and carrying the unleavened bread, came that morning to present the offerings to the Lord according to the instructions in the Law of Moses. They took their positions in front of the people in the order of tribal and family divisions. ¹² The Levites roasted the Passover sacrifices and then boiled them

in pots and cauldrons, making a pleasant smell. ¹³ Then they distributed the meat to all the people. After that was done, they took meat for themselves and for the priests, the descendants of Aaron, ¹⁴ because the priests were kept busy until night burning the fat of the sacrifices. ^{15–16} The guards at the Temple gates and the Temple singers of the Levite clan of Asaph (with Asaph, Zechariah, and Eddinus, who were representatives of the king) remained at the places assigned to them by King David's instructions. They did not need to leave their posts, because the other Levites prepared the Passover for them.

^{17–18} So, as King Josiah had commanded, everything that related to the sacrifices offered to the Lord was done that day; the Passover Festival was celebrated, and the sacrifices were offered on the altar. ¹⁹ All the people of Israel who were present at that time kept the Passover and observed the Festival of Unleavened Bread for seven days. ²⁰ Since the days of the prophet Samuel, the Passover had never been celebrated so faithfully. ^{21–22} None of the former kings of Israel had ever celebrated a Passover like this one celebrated by King Josiah in Jerusalem in the eighteenth year of his reign; it was celebrated by the priests, the Levites, and all the people of Judah and Israel.

The End of Josiah's Reign

(2 Kgs 23.28–30; 2 Chr 35.20–27)

²³ The Lord was pleased with everything Josiah did, for he was a deeply religious man. ²⁴ But the ancient records also tell the story of those who sinned and rebelled against the Lord during Josiah's reign. They sinned more than any other nation or kingdom and did things that offended the Lord so much that his judgement fell on the people of Israel.

²⁵ After Josiah had done all these things, the king of Egypt led an army to

fight at Carchemish on the River Euphrates. Josiah tried to stop him, ²⁶ but the king of Egypt sent Josiah this message: "The war I am fighting does not concern you, King of Judah. ²⁷ The Lord God did not send me to fight you; my battle is on the Euphrates. The Lord is with me, and he is urging me on; so withdraw your troops and don't oppose the Lord." ²⁸ But Josiah did not go back to his chariot and withdraw. He refused to listen to what the Lord had said through the prophet Jeremiah and decided to fight. ²⁹ He went into battle on the plain of Megiddo, and the Egyptian commanders attacked him.

³⁰ King Josiah ordered his servants, "Take me off the battlefield; I'm badly wounded." So they took him out of the line of battle immediately, ³¹ and he got into a second chariot and was taken back to Jerusalem. There he died and was buried in the royal tomb. ³² All the people of Judah mourned for him.

The prophet Jeremiah composed a lament for King Josiah. It has become a custom in Israel for the leaders and their wives to sing this song when they mourn for him. ³³ These things are recorded in *The History of the Kings of Judah*. Everything that Josiah did, how he gained his fame and his understanding of the Law, what he did earlier and what is told here, is all recorded in *The History of the Kings of Israel and Judah*.

King Joahaz of Judah

(2 Kgs 23.30–35; 2 Chr 36.1–4)

³⁴ The people of Judah chose Josiah's son Joahaz* and made him king. Joahaz was 23 years old, ³⁵ and he ruled over Judah and Jerusalem for three months. Then the king of Egypt deposed him ³⁶ and made the nation pay 3,400 kilogrammes of silver and 34 kilogrammes of gold as tribute. ³⁷ The king of Egypt appointed Joahaz's brother Jehoiakim king of Judah and Jerusalem. ³⁸ Jehoiakim put

1.34 Joahaz; some manuscripts have Jeconiah.

See also: 1.37; Jer 22.11–12

See also: 1.19; Ex 12.1–20

Word list

Abib The first month of the Hebrew calendar. It runs from about mid-March to about mid-April. This month is also called Nisan.

Abys The place in the depths of the earth where, according to ancient Jewish teaching, the demons were imprisoned until their final punishment.

Acacia A flowering tree with hard and durable wood.

Adar The twelfth month of the Hebrew calendar. It runs from about mid-February to about mid-March.

Agate A semi-precious stone of different colours, but usually white and brown.

Alabaster A soft stone, usually of a light creamy colour, from which vases and jars were made.

Aloes A sweet-smelling liquid produced from a plant. It was used as medicine and as a perfume.

Amen A Hebrew word which means "it is so" or "may it be so". It can also be translated "certainly", "truly", or "surely". In Revelation 3.14 it is used as a name for Christ.

Amethyst A semi-precious stone, usually purple or violet in colour.

Anoint To pour or rub olive oil on someone in order to honour him or to appoint him to some special work. The Israelite kings were anointed when they took office, and so the king could be called "the anointed one". "Christ", the Greek word for "The Anointed One", is the title of the one whom God chose and appointed as Saviour and Lord.

Apostle Usually one of the group of twelve men whom Jesus chose to be his special followers and helpers. It is also used in the New Testament to refer to Paul and other Christian workers. The word means "messenger".

Areopagus A hill in Athens where the city council used to meet. For this reason the council itself was called Areopagus, even after it no longer met on the hill.

Artemis The Greek name of an ancient goddess of fertility, worshipped especially in Asia Minor.

Asherah A goddess of fertility worshipped by the Canaanites; her male counterpart was Baal. After the Hebrews invaded Canaan, many of them began worshipping these two gods.

Astarte A goddess of fertility and war who was widely worshipped in the ancient Near East.

Atonement, Day of The most important of Israel's holy days, when the High Priest would offer sacrifice for the sins of the people of Israel (Leviticus 16). It was held on the 10th day of the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar (about 1 October). The Jewish name for this day is Yom Kippur.

Baal The god of fertility worshipped by the Canaanites; his female counterpart was Asherah. After the Hebrews invaded Canaan, many of them began worshipping these two gods.

Baal-of-the-Covenant A name by which the god Baal was known by the people of Shechem.

Balsam A tree from which sweet-smelling resin was obtained; the resin was used for perfume and medicine.

Barley A cultivated grain similar to wheat, grown as a food crop.

Bear: Great Bear and Little Bear Two groups of stars which can be seen north of the equator in the

northern sky. The star at the end of the "tail" of the Little Bear is Polaris, the Pole Star.

Beelzebub A New Testament name given to the Devil as the chief of the evil spirits.

Beryl A semi-precious stone, usually green or bluish green in colour.

Breastplate Part of a soldier's armour, made of leather or metal; it covered the chest and sometimes the back, to protect him against arrows and the blows of a sword.

Bul The eighth month of the Hebrew calendar. It runs from about mid-October to about mid-November.

Burnt offering A kind of sacrifice in which all the parts of the animal were completely burnt on the altar; in other sacrifices only certain parts of the animal were burnt.

Calamus A sweet-smelling plant, like a reed.

Capital The top part of a pillar holding up a roof.

Carnelian A semi-precious stone, usually red in colour.

Cassia A spice made from the bark of a tree; it is very like cinnamon.

Chalcedony A semi-precious stone, usually milky or grey in colour.

Christ At first it was a title, the Greek word for the Hebrew "Messiah". It means "The Anointed One". Jesus was called "The Christ" because he was the one whom God chose and sent as Saviour and Lord.

Circumcise To cut off the foreskin of the penis. As a sign of God's covenant with his people Israelite boys were circumcised eight days after they were born (Genesis 17.9–14).

Concubine A servant woman who, although not a wife, had sexual relations with her master. She had important legal rights and her master was referred to as her husband.

Coral A brightly-coloured stony substance found in the sea; it was used as jewellery.

Council The highest religious court of the Jews. It was made up of seventy leaders of the Jewish people. Its president was the High Priest.

Covenant An agreement, either between people or between God and a person or a group of people. God made a covenant with Noah (Genesis 9.8–17) and with Abraham (Genesis 17.1–8), but in the Old Testament the term usually refers to the covenant made between God and the people of Israel at the time of Moses (Exodus 24.4–8).

Covenant Box A wooden chest covered with gold. The two stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them were kept in it. It is often called "the Ark of the Covenant".

Cumin A small plant whose seeds are crushed and used for seasoning foods.

Cymbals A pair of thin pieces of metal held in the hands and struck together to make a loud sound in time with the music.

David's City In the Old Testament it usually refers to the part of Jerusalem which was captured from the Jebusites by King David. In the New Testament Bethlehem, David's boyhood home where Jesus was born, is referred to as David's town.