

Dear Sojourners of Faith,

I pray you are well. It's been a busy week—months—at Lake Wobegon, and I am just now emailing you the file I worked on for several weeks, viz., the text of Tobit with introductory notes. As I mentioned in previous classes, it was excluded from the Jewish canon (ca. end of 1st cent), has been a part of the Christian canon (Old Testament) for Orthodox churches and Roman Catholics, and was “demoted” from the canon to be a part of the Apocrypha for Protestants, i.e., edifying for Christians but not authoritative for faith and doctrine. All that notwithstanding, it is a page-turner—one of my favorite narratives in the biblical tradition of Jews and Christians, which I could not stop reading when I read it the first time. It is an inspiring story of faith, a kind of spiritual entertainment that would have encouraged, reinforced, and promoted faithfulness to God in times of distress and persecution. It is also a very revealing text when it comes to traditions (ideas, practices, life) that continue the biblical texts of the Hebrew Scriptures and the post-exilic period (i.e., Babylonian exile, 6th cent. BC) into the time of the Roman Empire and the New Testament.

When you get the chance, please do enjoy reading Tobit, and bring all your observations and questions, e.g., regarding familiar themes of (innocent) suffering, especially under persecution, death-wish of the faithful under such suffering and shame, angels and demons. If possible, also read **Daniel**, or at least skim and focus on **chapter 7**. See what you see. What do you think, especially with regard to relevance for our faith.

In the big picture, we are preparing for the Greeks to replace the Persians in the continual flow of “world” empires that intersect with the story of Israel.

As always, I look forward to **your observations and questions**, and please never hesitate to **suggest any biblical, theological, or life topics** along the way, even if they are only tangentially related. We can be flexible and take detours on our journey through the Bible. Remember that the unofficial title of our Bible study thus far is “Anything and everything you always wanted to ask about the Bible but were to afraid or busy to ask.”

Please see the **“syllabus” online** for where we are headed: **Bible intro 2021-04 Ann’s Choice** (also attached; printed copies available in front of my office in Resident Life, Liberty Commons).

For Zoomers, here are the instructions:

Zoom (online or using an app):

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82395191045?pwd=TTRiQklwR2RhRzZkNFnxU2RRbGRoUT09>

Meeting ID: 823 9519 1045

Meeting Password: annschoice

Dial in by telephone: nearest phone access in New York City

Dial 1 (929) 205 6099

Enter Meeting ID: 823 9519 1045, followed by “#”

Enter Passcode: 394871 if requested

See you in class or via Zoom. Have a wonder-ful evening.

With prayer and best wishes,

