

The Tribe of Naphtali

Genesis 49:1: *“And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.”*

Jacob is preparing to bestow the blessing and judgment to Naphtali the 6th born son of Jacob. Genesis 49:21: *“Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words.”*

A hind is a type of deer or doe. When a deer is “let loose,” it now becomes wild and strays from the flock. The one thing that kept the flock of Israel in order is the law (Exodus 18:20). Naphtali, just as his brethren, would find themselves loosed from the laws of The Most High. Israel is always destined to be put in captivity when we transgress. During the time of the Assyrian captivity, the Most High chose a man of Naphtali to “speak goodly words” to his brethren and keep the sanctity of our laws and commandments.

II Esdras 14:13: *“Now therefore set thine house in order, and reprove thy people, comfort such of them as be in trouble, and now renounce corruption.”*

This is an example of speaking goodly words. When one is to set their house in order according to the commandments and reprove (correct) our people through the righteousness of The Most High. Ceasing from sin and corruption is a must when speaking goodly. The man referred to whom spoke goodly words to his people was Tobit. It is important to obtain a King James 1611 Apocrypha as it contains close to 500 years worth of history, as well as ceremonial laws Israel was instructed to keep. The word “Apocrypha” is Greek in origin and means to hide or take away. These 15 books were taken out from the original scrolls by the Catholic Puritans approximately in the 17th Century. This was done under a movement known as the Westminster Confession of Faith. During this time, the books of the Apocrypha were deemed to be non-canonical or rejected for not being part of the cannon law books of Moses. These books are indeed part of the original writings and without them the true understanding of the tribes cannot be achieved.

Tobit 1:1-5: *“[1] The book of the words of Tobit, son of Tobiel, the son of Ananiel, the son of Aduel, the son of Gabael, of the seed of Asael, of the tribe of Nephthali; [2] Who in the time of Enemessar king of the Assyrians was led captive out of Thisbe, which is at the right hand of that city, which is called properly Nephthali in Galilee above Aser. [3] I Tobit have walked all the days of my life in the ways of truth and justice, and I did many almsdeeds to my brethren, and my nation, who came with me to Nineve, into the land of the Assyrians. [4] And when I was in mine own country, in the land of Israel being but young, all the tribe of Nephthali my father fell from the house of Jerusalem, which was chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, that all the tribes should sacrifice there, where the temple of the habitation of the most High was consecrated and built for all ages.[5] Now all the tribes which together revolted, and the house of my father Nephthali, sacrificed unto the heifer Baal.”*

Tobit explains the history and plight of his tribe and nation. Israel fell into wickedness. By breaking the commandments of the Most High and performing idol worship, a judgment ensued. Tobit himself explained how Naphtali was “loosed” from the law as they fell from Jerusalem and committed acts of idolatry with the rest of the tribes in the northern kingdom. Israel soon found themselves in the hands of the Assyrian King Shalmaneser. Tobit always maintained himself as a just man of truth and kept the laws (Psalms 119:142).

Genesis 49:21: “...he giveth goodly words.” This prophecy was fulfilled as Tobit not only spoke goodly words but performed righteous acts for his nation.

Tobit 1:16-19: “[16] And in the time of Enemessar I gave many alms to my brethren, and gave my bread to the hungry, [17] And my clothes to the naked: and if I saw any of my nation dead, or cast about the walls of Nineve, I buried him. [18] And if the king Sennacherib had slain any, when he was come, and fled from Judea, I buried them privily; for in his wrath he killed many; but the bodies were not found, when they were sought for of the king. [19] And when one of the Ninevites went and complained of me to the king, that I buried them, and hid myself; understanding that I was sought for to be put to death, I withdrew myself for fear.”

During our Assyrian captivity, many Israelites were slain and their bodies left on city streets and roads. Tobit, being a just man, kept the law of burials (Deuteronomy 21:21, Ecclesiasticus 38:16 [Apocrypha]) even if it meant death for himself. He sacrificed his life for his brethren, gave alms (free will offerings or donations), fed the homeless, and clothed the poor of our people.

Tobit 2:1-5: “[1] Now when I was come home again, and my wife Anna was restored unto me, with my son Tobias, in the feast of Pentecost, which is the holy feast of the seven weeks, there was a good dinner prepared me, in the which I sat down to eat. [2] And when I saw abundance of meat, I said to my son, Go and bring what poor man soever thou shalt find out of our brethren, who is mindful of the Lord; and, lo, I tarry for thee. [3] But he came again, and said, Father, one of our nation is strangled, and is cast out in the marketplace. [4] Then before I had tasted of any meat, I started up, and took him up into a room until the going down of the sun. [5] Then I returned, and washed myself, and ate my meat in heaviness.”

Even during the Holy Feast of Pentecost, Tobit found it necessary to bury his brethren and feed the poor of his brethren that feared the Most High.

Tobit 4:5-11: “[5] My son, be mindful of the Lord our God all thy days, and let not thy will be set to sin, or to transgress his commandments: do uprightly all thy life long, and follow not the ways of unrighteousness. [6] For if thou deal truly, thy doings shall prosperously succeed to thee, and to all them that live justly. [7] Give alms of thy substance; and when thou givest alms, let not thine eye be envious, neither turn thy face from any poor, and the face of God shall not be turned away from thee. [8] If thou hast abundance give alms accordingly: if thou have but a little, be not afraid to give according to that little: [9] For thou layest up a good treasure for thyself against the day of necessity. [10] Because that alms do deliver from death, and suffereth not to come into darkness. [11] For alms is a good gift unto all that give it in the sight of the most High.”

Goodly words of wisdom were given to Israel, in the past and in the present, in regards to the value of loving thy neighbor as thyself (Leviticus 19:18). Principles of sacrifice and the importance of giving alms were also given.

Tobit 13:1-6: “[1] Then Tobit wrote a prayer of rejoicing, and said, Blessed be God that liveth for ever, and blessed be his kingdom. [2] For he doth scourge, and hath mercy: he leadeth down to hell, and bringeth up again: neither is there any that can avoid his hand. [3] Confess him before the Gentiles, ye children of Israel: for he hath scattered us among them. [4] There declare his greatness, and extol him before all the living: for he is our Lord, and he is the God our Father for ever. [5] And he will scourge us for our iniquities, and will have mercy again, and will gather us out of all nations, among whom he hath scattered us. [6] If ye turn to him with your whole heart, and with your whole mind, and deal uprightly before him, then will he turn unto you, and will not hide his face from you. Therefore see what he will do with you, and confess him with your whole mouth, and praise the Lord of might, and extol the everlasting King. In the land of my captivity do I praise him, and declare his might and majesty to a sinful nation. O ye sinners, turn and do justice before him: who can tell if he will accept you, and have mercy on you?”

Tobit continually prayed and rejoiced for the deliverance of his people. Notice he even knew of the scattered Israelites amongst the Gentiles (http://www.truenation.org/The_Gentiles.pdf).

Tobit 14:11: “Wherefore now, my son, consider what alms doeth, and how righteousness doth deliver. When he had said these things, he gave up the ghost in the bed, being an hundred and eight and fifty years old; and he buried him honourably.”

Judges 4:4-6: “[4] And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. [5] And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. [6] And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphtali, and said unto him, Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun?”

Another great hero of Israel that descended out of Naphtali was Barak, who along with Deborah judged Israel. Barak led the charge as Israel slaughtered our enemies of Canaan and delivered Israel out of another one of our many captivities.

Deuteronomy 33:23: “And of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the LORD: possess thou the west and the south.”

Naphtali was to be satisfied with favour due to the principles of righteousness that would come from noble men of his tribe. An entire book of the bible was dedicated after a man of Naphtali that delivered valuable principles of alms, sacrifice, and righteousness could be achieved by keeping the commandments. The tribe of Naphtali was promised to possess the land on the western coast of Israel, near Asher and would stretch to the south near the lands of Zebulun and Issachar.

Joshua 19:31-34: “[31] this is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families, these cities with their villages. [32] The sixth lot came out to the children of Naphtali, even for the children of Naphtali according to their families. [33] And their coast was from Heleph, from Allon to Zaanannim, and Adami, Nekeb, and Jabneel, unto Lakum; and the outgoings thereof were at Jordan: [34] And then the coast turneth westward to Aznoth-tabor, and goeth out from thence to Hukkok, and reacheth to Zebulun on the south side, and reacheth to Asher on the west side, and to Judah upon Jordan toward the sunrising.”

