



**Can  
I  
Trust  
The  
Bible?**

## Part 6

By

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# Tobit and Enoch

Gabriel and Michael we know, but who is the archangel Raphael? Raphael is not mentioned in the Bible, but we meet him in the apocryphal books of Tobit and Enoch. Catholics and Orthodox Christians believe that Tobit is God's Word and Ethiopian Orthodox and Eritrean Orthodox believe Enoch is God's Word. They believe that Raphael is one of God's chief angels who is personally involved with God's people. True?

The book of **Tobit** is about a member of the Israelite tribe of Naphtali named Tobit. He lived in Nineveh with his wife and son (Tobias) after the northern tribes were defeated and moved to Assyria. A woman named Sarah lived far away in Media and prayed for death because she had lost seven husbands to a demon named Asmodeus. The demon killed every man she married on their wedding night before the marriage could be consummated. The story has God answering Sarah's prayer by sending the archangel Raphael to free her from the demon. Raphael disguised himself as a man and went with Tobias on a journey to Media. Many Christians believe Raphael is one of seven archangels named in Scripture. Where did that come from? "I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One." (Tobit 12:15) Raphael disappeared from view and was not heard from again in the Book of Tobit. Interestingly, Raphael played a prominent role in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

**Enoch** chapter 10 mentions Uriel, Raphael, Gabriel, and Michael in the same paragraph. Uriel is another archangel mentioned in the apocryphal books – specifically in Enoch and the Second Book of Esdras (also known as Esdras 4 in Catholic versions). Also note the use of the term “Watchers” in Enoch 10. This is another concept that has been used often in both Christian and non-Christian literature. Enoch 10 is supposed to reveal more of what was happening during the events of Genesis 6.

“Then said the Most High, the Holy and Great One spake, and sent Uriel to the son of Lamech, and said to him: ‘Go to Noah and tell him in my name ‘Hide thyself!’ and reveal to him the end that is approaching: that the whole earth will be destroyed, and a deluge is about to come upon the whole earth, and will destroy all that is on it. And now instruct him that he may escape and his seed may be preserved for all the generations of the world.’ And again the Lord said to Raphael: ‘Bind Azâzêl hand and foot, and cast him into the darkness: and make an opening in the desert, which is in Dûdâêl, and cast him therein. And place upon him rough and jagged rocks, and cover him with darkness, and let him abide there for ever, and cover his face that he may not see light. And on the day of the great judgement he shall be cast into the fire. And heal the earth which the angels have corrupted, and proclaim the healing of the earth, that they may heal the plague, and that all the children of men may not perish through all the secret things that the Watchers have disclosed and have taught their sons. And the whole earth has been corrupted through the works that were taught

by Azâzêl: to him ascribe all sin.’ And to Gabriel said the Lord: ‘Proceed against the bastards and the reprobates, and against the children of fornication: and destroy [the children of fornication and] the children of the Watchers from amongst men and cause them to go forth]: send them one against the other that they may destroy each other in battle: for length of days shall they not have. And no request that they (*i.e.* their fathers) make of thee shall be granted unto their fathers on their behalf; for they hope to live an eternal life, and that each one of them will live five hundred years.’ And the Lord said unto Michael: ‘Go, bind Semjâzâ and his associates who have united themselves with women so as to have defiled themselves with them in all their uncleanness. And when their sons have slain one another, and they have seen the destruction of their beloved ones, bind them fast for seventy generations in the valleys of the earth, till the day of their judgement and of their consummation, till the judgement that is for ever and ever is consummated. In those days they shall be led off to the abyss of fire: and to the torment and the prison in which they shall be confined for ever. And whosoever shall be condemned and destroyed will from thenceforth be bound together with them to the end of all generations. And destroy all the spirits of the reprobate and the children of the Watchers, because they have wronged mankind. Destroy all wrong from the face of the earth and let every evil work come to an end: and let the plant of righteousness and truth appear: and it shall prove a blessing; the works of righteousness and truth shall be planted in truth and joy for evermore. And then shall all the righteous escape, And shall live till

they beget thousands of children, And all the days of their youth and their old age Shall they complete in peace. And then shall the whole earth be tilled in righteousness, and shall all be planted with trees and be full of blessing. And all desirable trees shall be planted on it, and they shall plant vines on it: and the vine which they plant thereon shall yield wine in abundance, and as for all the seed which is sown thereon each measure (of it) shall bear a thousand, and each measure of olives shall yield ten presses of oil. And cleanse thou the earth from all oppression, and from all unrighteousness, and from all sin, and from all godlessness: and all the uncleanness that is wrought upon the earth destroy from off the earth. And all the children of men shall become righteous, and all nations shall offer adoration and shall praise Me, and all shall worship Me. And the earth shall be cleansed from all defilement, and from all sin, and from all punishment, and from all torment, and I will never again send (them) upon it from generation to generation and for ever.” Enoch 10

The writer of Enoch has the archangel Uriel speaking to Lamech, Noah's father, telling him to warn his son to hide himself because of the approaching deluge God was going to send upon the earth. Enoch has God telling the archangel Raphael to “bind Azazel” hand and foot, and cast him into darkness, making an opening in the desert in Dudael. The Hebrew word *la-aza'zeyl* is used in Leviticus three times to refer to the “scapegoat” (absolute removal).

*“He shall take the two goats and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the Lord’s lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness.” Leviticus 16:8-10*

Moses wrote about the double blessings of God’s forgiveness: sin remitted and sin atoned. The goat for the Lord was killed as a sin offering. The scapegoat was presented alive before the Lord and sent into the wilderness. Another way of saying this is that God forgives and forgets. The Lord’s goat was killed as payment for the debt (thus forgiven) and the scapegoat carried the memory of the sins into the wilderness to be remembered no more – forgiven and forgotten.

Enoch presents Azazel as an evil supernatural being [e.g. demon, Satan] and Raphael as the archangel who binds and casts Azazel into a deep, dark hole to be held there until the judgment at which time Azazel would be cast into “the fire”. The Book of Revelation (Chapter 20) says that “an angel” (not named) will bind Satan and cast him into “the bottomless pit” and shut him up and set a seal on him for a thousand years. After the thousand years, Satan will be released from his prison and allowed to deceive the nations of the earth and gather them together to fight against Christ in Jerusalem. Fire will come down from God out of Heaven and devour all of the

armies of the earth. Satan will be cast into “the lake of fire and brimstone” and be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Though Enoch and Revelation are not identical in every detail about this event, it is interesting to read something written before the Birth of Christ that is similar to the Revelation Christ gave the Apostle John many years after His Birth, Death, and Resurrection.

## Inspired?

So, is Enoch God's Inspired Word? What about Tobit? Should they be included in all copies of the Bible?

After reading, studying, and considering these books, I don't find any compelling evidence that the Holy Spirit inspired the writings of Enoch and Tobit. Jesus and His Apostles never quoted from Tobit. Jude, the half brother of Jesus, quoted once from Enoch, but never gave the book the elevation of Scripture (e.g. as in "thus says the Lord," "Scripture says"). Enoch is supposedly the word of the seventh from Adam in the lineage of Seth. Since everything was destroyed in the Flood, except for what Noah took with him on the Ark, there are questions about how an unnamed author was able to quote Enoch thousands of years later. If Noah had a copy of Enoch's writings and it was passed from generation to generation, why is there no mention of it by those men who may have received it (e.g. Shem, Abram, Isaac, Jacob). If Enoch's prophecies were passed along orally from generation to generation, the question remains why no one in the lineage ever mentioned Enoch's prophecies until someone wrote them down in the 2nd century BC and called it "Enoch".

What is written about Enoch in Old Testament Books, other than Genesis (1 Chronicles 1) and in the New Testament other than Jude (Hebrews 11), is consistent with the story of Enoch as Moses wrote it in Genesis 4 and 5. I would think that a document written by Enoch or

an oral history of what he said would have been included somewhere in the Old Testament, especially by Moses who wrote about him first. God told Moses about Enoch and Noah, why not everything if there was more to tell?

Tobit is a historical romance. It covers some interesting aspects of Jewish life (e.g. temple worship, importance of prayer, paying tithes, giving alms to the poor, and marrying only within the Jewish faith), but does that make it the inspired Word of God? Why is it not referenced anywhere in the Hebrew Bible or New Testament? God certainly knew the effort Jews and Christians would make in trying to determine the authenticity of Tobit, so why didn't He include something about it in the Old or New Testament writings that would call it Scripture?

Both books, Enoch and Tobit, introduce named angelic creatures who are not mentioned in the Hebrew Old Testament or Christian New Testament. Raphael's involvement with Tobit, Tobias and Sarah opens many interpretations about angelic involvement in human life and history, if true. Raphael's involvement during the time of Noah and what it says about the archangels Gabriel and Michael's involvement during that time raise many questions about interpreting what happened to the human race during the years leading up to the Flood. Enoch introduces us to evil supernatural beings named Azâzêl and Semjâzâ and a supernatural group called the "Watchers." The writer of Enoch has the archangel Uriel speaking to Lamech, Noah's father, telling him to warn his son to hide himself because of the

approaching deluge God was going to send upon the earth. All of these events involving archangels during the years leading up to Noah building the Ark and God sending the Flood seem to be of the kind of importance that Moses would have included some mention of them in the Book of Genesis, if it were true.

Raphael has become known around the world as the archangel of healing. Where did that come from? The name translates from Hebrew as “God heals” and in the story of Tobit, Tobias and Sarah, Raphael heals with the assistance of a fish.

“And as they went on their journey, they came in the evening to the river Tigris, and they lodged there. And when the young man went down to wash himself, a fish leaped out of the river, and would have devoured him. Then the angel said unto him, Take the fish. And the young man laid hold of the fish, and drew it to land. To whom the angel said, Open the fish, and take the heart and the liver and the gall, and put them up safely. So the young man did as the angel commanded him; and when they had roasted the fish, they did eat it: then they both went on their way, till they drew near to Ecbatane. Then the young man said to the angel, Brother Azarias, to what use is the heart and the liver and the gal of the fish? And he said unto him, Touching the heart and the liver, if a devil or an evil spirit trouble any, we must make a smoke thereof before the man or the woman, and the party shall be no more vexed. As for the gall, it is good to anoint a man that hath

whiteness in his eyes, and he shall be healed.” Tobit 6:1-8

As the story goes, Tobit remembered to do what the angel Raphael had told him to do on his wedding night.

“And when they had supped, they brought Tobias in unto her. And as he went, he remembered the words of Raphael, and took the ashes of the perfumes, and put the heart and the liver of the fish thereupon, and made a smoke therewith. The which smell when the evil spirit had smelled, he fled into the utmost parts of Egypt, and the angel bound him.” Tobit 8:1-3

The story continues with the healing of Tobit.

“Then Raphael said to Tobias, Thou knowest, brother, how thou didst leave thy father: Let us haste before thy wife, and prepare the house. And take in thine hand the gall of the fish. So they went their way, and the dog went after them. Now Anna sat looking about toward the way for her son. And when she espied him coming, she said to his father, Behold, thy son cometh, and the man that went with him. Then said Raphael, I know, Tobias, that thy father will open his eyes. Therefore anoint thou his eyes with the gall, and being pricked therewith, he shall rub, and the whiteness shall fall away, and he shall see thee. Then Anna ran forth, and fell upon the neck of her son, and said unto him, Seeing I have seen thee, my son, from henceforth I am content to die. And they wept both. Tobit also went forth toward the door, and

stumbled: but his son ran unto him, And took hold of his father: and he strake of the gall on his fathers' eyes, saying, Be of good hope, my father. And when his eyes began to smart, he rubbed them; And the whiteness pilled away from the corners of his eyes: and when he saw his son, he fell upon his neck. And he wept, and said, Blessed art thou, O God, and blessed is thy name for ever; and blessed are all thine holy angels: For thou hast scourged, and hast taken pity on me: for, behold, I see my son Tobias. And his son went in rejoicing, and told his father the great things that had happened to him in Media." Tobit 11:2-15

# Raphael?

The story about the angel Raphael helping Tobias defeat the demon and heal his father's blindness has led to a movement that has elevated Raphael to a high position within many churches and religious groups. They look to him as the patron of health, healers, travelers, and happy marriages. Here are a few of many prayers that are written for approaching Raphael for healing, protection, and guidance.

“Glorious Archangel St. Raphael, great prince of the heavenly court, you are illustrious for your gifts of wisdom and grace. You are a guide of those who journey by land or sea or air, consoler of the afflicted, and refuge of sinners. I beg you, assist me in all my needs and in all the sufferings of this life, as once you helped the young Tobias on his travels. Because you are the “medicine of God” I humbly pray you to heal the many infirmities of my soul and the ills that afflict my body. I especially ask of you the favor (here mention your special intention), and the great grace of purity to prepare me to be the temple of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

“Dear St. Raphael, your lovely name means ‘God heals.’ The Lord sent you to young Tobias to guide him throughout a long journey. Upon his return you taught him how to cure his father's blindness. How natural, therefore, for Christians to pray for your powerful help for safe travel and a happy return. This is what we ask for

ourselves as well as for all who are far from home. Amen.”

This next one will take us to an important point about the story of Raphael in Tobit.

“Mary, Queen of the Angels, pray for us. Saint Raphael, the Archangel, pray for us. Saint Raphael, whose name means ‘God has healed’, pray for us. Saint Raphael, preserved with the good Angels in God’s kingdom, pray for us. Saint Raphael, one of the seven spirits that stand before the Most High, pray for us. Saint Raphael, ministering to God in heaven, pray for us. Saint Raphael, noble and mighty Messenger of God, pray for us. Saint Raphael, devoted to the Holy Will of God, pray for us. Saint Raphael, who offered to God the prayers of the father Tobit, pray for us. Saint Raphael, traveling-companion of the young Tobiah, pray for us. Saint Raphael, who guarded your friends from danger, pray for us. Saint Raphael, who found a worthy wife for Tobiah, pray for us. Saint Raphael, who delivered Sarah from the evil spirits, pray for us. Saint Raphael, who healed the father Tobit of his blindness, pray for us. Saint Raphael, guide and protector on our journey through life, pray for us. Saint Raphael, strong helper in time of need, pray for us. Saint Raphael, conqueror of evil, pray for us. Saint Raphael, guide and counselor of your people, pray for us. Saint Raphael, protector of pure souls, pray for us. Saint Raphael, patron Angel of youth, pray for us. Saint Raphael, Angel of joy, pray for us. Saint Raphael, Angel of happy meetings, pray

for us. Saint Raphael, Angel of chaste courtship, pray for us. Saint Raphael, Angel of those seeking a marriage partner, pray for us. Saint Raphael, Angel of a happy marriage, pray for us. Saint Raphael, Angel of home life, pray for us. Saint Raphael, Guardian of the Christian family, pray for us. Saint Raphael, protector of travelers, pray for us. Saint Raphael, patron of health, pray for us. Saint Raphael, heavenly physician, pray for us. Saint Raphael, helper of the blind, pray for us. Saint Raphael, healer of the sick, pray for us. Saint Raphael, patron of physicians, pray for us. Saint Raphael, consoler of the afflicted, pray for us. Saint Raphael, support of the dying, pray for us. Saint Raphael, herald of blessings, pray for us. Saint Raphael, defender of the church, pray for us.”

Raphael, a supposed angel, is addressed as a “saint.” Are angels ever addressed as “saints” in the protocanonical Books of the Bible? Gabriel, Michael, and Lucifer are the only angels addressed by name in those Books and never called “saints.” The only time we find the word “angel” and “saint” used together is in Revelation.

“Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel’s hand.” Revelation 8:3-4

The angel offered incense with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the Throne of God. The incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. The angel was not called a saint and the angel did not pray for believers. The angel offered God the "prayers of the saints" to God.

Do angels "pray" for believers? Not according to the protocanonical Books of the Bible. Angels respond to the prayers of believers (e.g. Daniel 10), but there is no evidence that they pray for saints in the sense Raphael is requested to do.

Look at how Raphael is addressed in this prayer ... whose name means 'God has healed,' noble and mighty Messenger of God, guide and protector on our journey through life, protector of pure souls, Guardian of the Christian family, protector of travelers, patron of health, heavenly physician, helper of the blind, healer of the sick, patron of physicians, consoler of the afflicted, support of the dying, herald of blessings, defender of the church.

If I didn't know better, I would think this *Litany in Honor of St. Raphael* was a prayer to Jesus Christ based on all the things Raphael supposedly can do. And that is a big problem with Tobit. It leaves the reader with a strong impression that Raphael is someone to whom we should pray and pay homage. The honor given to Raphael sounds like something Satan would enjoy hearing. How might one of God's angels respond to such accolades?

*“Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then he said to me, ‘See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.’ Revelation 22:8-9*

“Worship God.” A true angel of God will not allow any believer to worship them, pay homage to them, or give them special honor. They know that all worship, homage and honor belong to the God of Heaven. Do a thorough study of angels in the Bible (not including Apocrypha) and you will see that angels are fellow servants and ministering spirits, not idols to be worshipped and praised.

This angel worship is something the Apostle Paul warned about in his letter to the Christians at Colosse. We would be wise to heed his advice.

*“So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God. Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles*

*of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations— ‘Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,’ which all concern things which perish with the using— according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.” Colossians 2:16-23*

Christians must take great care to never allow anyone, angel or man, take the place of Jesus in our heart and mind. God is a Jealous God and will not share His Glory with any man or angel. If you want health, safe travel, and a happy marriage, pray to God.

# Judith and Sirach

So far we have looked at Enoch, Tobit, 1-4 Maccabees, and 1 & 2 Esdras. We have several more to look at in our study, including Judith, Sirach, Baruch, Epistle of Jeremy, Song of the Three Children, Story of Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, Wisdom of Solomon, Additions To Esther, Prayer of Azariah, and Prayer of Manasseh.

Let's look next at **Judith**. The author is unknown, but the time of writing is believed to be during the Hasmonean period (late 2nd century BC). Judith has some historical and geographical problems at the beginning of the book. The author of Judith presents King Nebuchadnezzar of Assyria on the throne at the time the Jews returned from exile. The problem is that Cyrus of Persia was king when the Jews returned from exile in 538 BC. According to 2 Kings 24, Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon when he attacked Jerusalem and took Jehoiachin king of Judah and his family as prisoners. That was in the early part of the 6th century BC. Nebuchadnezzar was responsible for the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of Jews, not returning Jews to Jerusalem to rebuild the city he destroyed. Plus, Nebuchadnezzar died years before King Cyrus conquered Babylon and That's a big error in Judith. (You can learn more about the history of Nebuchadnezzar in the Book of Daniel.)

Judith opens with a statement about two ancient kings: Nebuchadnezzar of the Assyrians, who ruled in Nineveh, and Arphaxad of the Medes, who ruled in Ecbatane.

“In the twelfth year of the reign of Nabuchodonosor, who reigned in Nineve, the great city; in the days of Arphaxad, which reigned over the Medes in Ecbatane.” Judith 1:1

History records that King Nebuchadnezzar ruled from his capital city of Babylon where he built the famous Hanging Gardens. History does not record that Arphaxad was ever king of Medes. The kings of Medes during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar were Cyaxares and Astyages. The only Arphaxad mentioned in history was the son of Shem (grandson of Noah). Several errors already in Judith and we're just into the first sentence of the book!

What do scholars think of Judith? Many dismiss it as a historical romance written to teach Jews to depend on the covenant God made with Israel. That's a good lesson, but not enough to place it among the Writings of Holy Scripture. What else does Judith have for us? Not much. Even Catholic theologians admit there are many problems with historical facts in Judith. Did a Hebrew woman named Judith become a hero to her people? We don't know for sure, but what is written about her doesn't match other historical information from the time period. While an interesting story, I find no compelling reason to believe Judith is God's Word.

Next we move to **Sirach**, also known as the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, The Book of the All-Virtuous Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira, Wisdom of Sirach, The Book Ecclesiasticus, and Siracides. The author is believed to be Jesus ben Sirach, a Hebrew scribe from Jerusalem writing during the early part of the 2nd century BC. The book emphasizes the importance of the Jewish Law and obedience to it. The Hebrew Bible does not include the book of Sirach, but citations from the book are included in the Talmud (commentary and opinion about the Hebrew Bible written between 200 AD and 500 AD) and other rabbinic writings. The grandson of ben Sirach translated the book into Greek and added a prologue. As with Judith and the other books of the Apocrypha we've looked at so far, no prophets are involved. Hebrews 1:1 and other Scriptures make clear that God spoke before the coming of Christ Jesus through prophets.

The Wisdom of Sirach has much to say about "wisdom." Reading the book reminds me of the writings of King Solomon. Here are the first seven verses from the King James Version of Sirach.

"All wisdom cometh from the Lord, and is with him for ever. Who can number the sand of the sea, and the drops of rain, and the days of eternity? Who can find out the height of heaven, and the breadth of the earth, and the deep, and wisdom? Wisdom hath been created before all things, and the understanding of prudence from everlasting. The word of God most high is the fountain of wisdom; and her ways are everlasting commandments. To whom hath the root of wisdom been revealed? or who hath known her

wise counsels? [Unto whom hath the knowledge of wisdom been made manifest? and who hath understood her great experience?]"

Sirach 1:1-7

As did Solomon in the Proverbs, ben Sirach personified wisdom as a woman.

"To fear the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and it was created with the faithful in the womb. She hath built an everlasting foundation with men, and she shall continue with their seed. To fear the Lord is fullness of wisdom, and filleth men with her fruits. She filleth all their house with things desirable, and the garners with her increase. The fear of the Lord is a crown of wisdom, making peace and perfect health to flourish; both which are the gifts of God: and it enlargeth their rejoicing that love him. Wisdom raineth down skill and knowledge of understanding standing, and exalteth them to honour that hold her fast." Sirach 1:14-19

While we should be concerned about a writer copying the inspired Word of God like Proverbs and presenting it as his own, a larger concern might be where the writer presents doctrines that are in opposition to Scripture. Keep in mind that many religious groups that call themselves Christians have used the teachings of the Apocrypha through the centuries to exercise theological authority over people who believe they are following the Word of God. The book of Sirach

contains many errors in this regard, but here are a couple of examples for your consideration. I've included the problem verses from Sirach and the corrective verses from the Word of God.

“Whoso honoureth his father maketh an atonement for his sins: And he that honoureth his mother is as one that layeth up treasure.” Sirach 3:3-4

“Water will quench a flaming fire; and alms maketh an atonement for sins.” Sirach 3:30

Is it true that a son who honors his father makes an atonement for his sins? Can alms make atonement for sin? I'm sure the religious groups that claim Sirach is Scripture believe alms can make atonement for sin, but what do the protocanonical Books of the Old Testament teach about atonement? What does the New Testament teach about atonement? Clearly atonement is made by **blood alone** – not by good works, like honoring your father or giving alms. (e.g. see Exodus 30:10; Leviticus 17:11; Ezekiel 43:19-21; Acts 20:28; Romans 3:21-26; 5:9; Ephesians 1:7-8; Colossians 1:14, 19-21; Hebrews 9, 10, 13; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 John 1:7)

“When thou wilt do good know to whom thou doest it; so shalt thou be thanked for thy benefits. Do good to the godly man, and thou shalt find a recompence; and if not from him, yet from the most High. There can no good come to him that is always occupied in evil, nor to him that giveth no alms. Give to the godly man, and

help not a sinner. Do well unto him that is lowly, but give not to the ungodly: hold back thy bread, and give it not unto him, lest he overmaster thee thereby: for [else] thou shalt receive twice as much evil for all the good thou shalt have done unto him. For the most High hateth sinners, and will repay vengeance unto the ungodly, and keepeth them against the mighty day of their punishment. Give unto the good, and help not the sinner.” Sirach 12:1-7

This sounds like the writings of a Pharisee and reminds me of what Pharisees thought about Jesus – “And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said to His disciples, “Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” (Matthew 9:11) Jesus made it clear that He had come to save sinners, not the self-righteous Pharisees. “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance.” (Luke 5:31-32) Jesus spoke out boldly about the incorrect teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees, especially as concerning the issue of giving only unto the good and helping not the sinner.

*“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven;*

*for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 5:43-48*

How could Sirach be inspired by the Spirit of Christ when Christ Himself taught the opposite? No book can be inspired if its teaching opposes the clear teaching of the protocanonical Books of the Old Testament and the Books of the New Testament. I find many compelling reasons to believe that Sirach should not be included in the Bible.

## Book of Baruch and Letter of Jeremiah

The next books of the Apocrypha we're going to look at are the **Book of Baruch** and the **Letter of Jeremiah**. Baruch ben Neriah served as scribe to the prophet Jeremiah and appears several times in the protocanonical Book of Jeremiah.

*“So I took the purchase deed, both that which was sealed according to the law and custom, and that which was open; and I gave the purchase deed to Baruch the son of Neriah, son of Mahseiah, in the presence of Hanamel my uncle's son, and in the presence of the witnesses who signed the purchase deed, before all the Jews who sat in the court of the prison.” Jeremiah 32:11-12*

Baruch helped Jeremiah purchase a field from the prophet's cousin Hanameel, which was a symbol of hope for the future of Judah.

*“Then I charged Baruch before them, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Take these deeds, both this purchase deed which is sealed and this deed which is open, and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may last many days.’ For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.’” Jeremiah 32:13-15*

Baruch is mentioned several more times in the Book of Jeremiah. Baruch was a close friend and confidant of Jeremiah and helped him many times, including the dangerous work of reading from the scroll of Jeremiah's warnings against Israel, Judah, and all nations. "It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the adversities which I purpose to bring upon them, that everyone may turn from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin." (Jeremiah 36:3) Jeremiah was confined and not able to read the scroll to the nation's leaders, so Baruch read from the scroll in the Temple. When Judah's wicked King Jehoiakim heard a portion of what Jeremiah had dictated to Baruch, the king cut the scroll with a knife and burned it in a fire. The Lord instructed Jeremiah to write the words again on another scroll and include an even harsher warning to Jehoiakim.

*"Now after the king had burned the scroll with the words which Baruch had written at the instruction of Jeremiah, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying: 'Take yet another scroll, and write on it all the former words that were in the first scroll which Jehoiakim the king of Judah has burned. And you shall say to Jehoiakim king of Judah, 'Thus says the Lord: 'You have burned this scroll, saying, 'Why have you written in it that the king of Babylon will certainly come and destroy this land, and cause man and beast to cease from here?' Therefore thus says the Lord concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah: 'He shall have no one to sit on the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out to the heat of the day and the frost of the night. I will punish him, his family, and his servants for their iniquity; and I*

*will bring on them, on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and on the men of Judah all the doom that I have pronounced against them; but they did not heed.’ Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote on it at the instruction of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire. And besides, there were added to them many similar words.”*  
*Jeremiah 36:27-32*

You can read more about Baruch in Jeremiah chapters 43 and 45. The reason I share this with you is to establish that Baruch was an important figure in the protocanonical Book of Jeremiah, which was written during the time of the end of the 7th century and beginning of the 6th century BC. What we have in the Book of Baruch is from the deuterocanonical books of the Apocrypha. It claims to be the writings of Baruch when he was in Babylon.

The Book of Baruch consists of two parts. The first is prose with a historical introduction. It includes confession of national sin, recognition of the justness of its punishment as a nation, and a prayer for God’s mercy. The second part is poetic and consists of an exhortation to Israel to learn wisdom and wait hopefully for God’s salvation. Even though the book claims to be written by Baruch in the early part of the 6th century BC, most scholars believe an unknown writer penned the book in the latter part of the 2nd century BC. Many believe the book was most likely written by two or three writers since

the prose and poetry sections are so different in style.

Our concern here is whether this book rises to the level of Scripture. Is it God's Word? There are difficulties with some of the historical facts between the events and people listed in the books of Jeremiah and Daniel and the Book of Baruch. Let's begin with the first 14 verses of Baruch from the King James Version.

*“And these are the words of the book, which Baruch the son of Nerias, the son of Maasias, the son of Sedecias, the son of Asadias, the son of Chelcias, wrote in Babylon, In the fifth year, and in the seventh day of the month, what time as the Chaldeans took Jerusalem, and burnt it with fire. And Baruch did read the words of this book in the hearing of Jechonias the son of Joachim king of Juda, and in the ears of all the people that came to hear the book, And in the hearing of the nobles, and of the king's sons, and in the hearing of the elders, and of all the people, from the lowest unto the highest, even of all them that dwelt at Babylon by the river Sud. Whereupon they wept, fasted, and prayed before the Lord. They made also a collection of money according to every man's power: And they sent it to Jerusalem unto Joachim the high priest, the son of Chelcias, son of Salom, and to the priests, and to all the people which were found with him at Jerusalem, At the same time when he received the vessels of the house of the Lord, that were carried out of the temple, to return them into the land of Juda, the tenth day of the month Sivan, namely, silver vessels,*

*which Sedecias the son of Josias king of Jada had made, After that Nabuchodonosor king of Babylon had carried away Jechonias, and the princes, and the captives, and the mighty men, and the people of the land, from Jerusalem, and brought them unto Babylon. And they said, Behold, we have sent you money to buy you burnt offerings, and sin offerings, and incense, and prepare ye manna, and offer upon the altar of the Lord our God; And pray for the life of Nabuchodonosor king of Babylon, and for the life of Balthasar his son, that their days may be upon earth as the days of heaven: And the Lord will give us strength, and lighten our eyes, and we shall live under the shadow of Nabuchodonosor king of Babylon, and under the shadow of Balthasar his son, and we shall serve them many days, and find favour in their sight. Pray for us also unto the Lord our God, for we have sinned against the Lord our God; and unto this day the fury of the Lord and his wrath is not turned from us. And ye shall read this book which we have sent unto you, to make confession in the house of the Lord, upon the feasts and solemn days.”*

Some of the historical challenges to the authenticity of the Book of Baruch come from 2 Kings 25:14-15, Daniel 5:1-4 and Ezra 1:7-11. At issue is whether Baruch could have gotten hold of the silver vessels taken from the Temple in Jerusalem to Babylon to return them to the land of Judah. The protocanonical Books present a history of those vessels being in Babylon until 538 BC, even though Baruch was

supposedly written 50 years earlier. Another problem is the idea that a high priest and other Jews living in Jerusalem could have used those silver vessels to offer sacrifices on the altar of God. Jerusalem was in ruins, the Temple had been burned, and most Jews had been taken captive or scattered across the ancient world. 2 Kings 25 makes it clear that the only people remaining in Jerusalem after its destruction were “the poor of the land.” (verse 12) The captain of the Babylonian guard took the chief priest, the second priest, three Temple doorkeepers and many officers and chief people from Jerusalem to meet with the king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath. The king put them all to death – “Thus Judah was carried away captive from its own land.” (verse 21).

Another historical problem concerns the Babylonian king’s treatment of Judah’s defeated king Jeconiah in exile. Baruch presents Jeconiah with a certain amount of freedom that he did not receive until many years later. Jeconiah (Jehoiachin) was not released from prison until the 27th day of the 12th month of the 37th year of captivity. That’s when Babylonian King Evil-Merodach spoke kindly to Jeconiah and gave him a prominent seat among other captured kings who were with him in Babylon. (2 Kings 25:27-30)

Another major problem in the Book of Baruch is that he wrote about living under and praying for King Nabuchodonosor (Nebuchadnezzar) and his son Balthasar (Belshazzar). The historical problem with this is that King Nebuchadnezzar died in 561 BC and Belshazzar’s father Nabonidus did not seize the throne until 556 BC. Nabonidus named

Belshazzar as a co-regent in 553 BC, eight years after the death of Nebuchadnezzar. Major problems indeed. Even though some early Church fathers quoted from the Book of Baruch (e.g. Thomas Aquinas, Clement of Alexandria, Hilary of Poitiers), the problems cited above cause me great pause to accepting it as Holy Scripture.

The last chapter of the Book of Baruch is often called **The Letter of Jeremiah** (also known as the Epistle of Jeremy) because it is viewed as being a dictation from the prophet Jeremiah to his secretary Baruch. “A copy of an epistle, which Jeremy sent unto them which were to be led captives into Babylon by the king of the Babylonians, to certify them, as it was commanded him of God.” (Letter of Jeremiah 1) It is similar to the 29th Chapter of the protocanonical Book of Jeremiah – “Now these *are* the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the remainder of the elders who were carried away captive—to the priests, the prophets, and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon.” (Jeremiah 29:1)

The Letter of Jeremiah is short (70 verses) and deals with what the captive Jews would witness in Babylon, including the Babylonian worship of gods - “Now shall ye see in Babylon gods of silver, and of gold, and of wood, borne upon shoulders, which cause the nations to fear. Beware therefore that ye in no wise be like to strangers, neither be ye and of them, when ye see the multitude before them and behind them, worshipping them. But say ye in your hearts, O Lord,

we must worship thee.” (Letter of Jeremiah, verses 3-5) It is questionable that Jeremiah dictated a second letter to the captives in Babylon. Also at issue is that the earliest manuscripts of the Letter of Jeremiah are all in Greek and dated from the 1st Century BC. Some scholars believe the original letter was written in Hebrew or Aramaic and later translated into Greek, but that seems doubtful in light of all the manuscripts that have been found of ancient Hebrew writings.

Another and bigger problem with the Letter of Jeremiah is what is written in verse two: “So when ye be come unto Babylon, ye shall remain there many years, and for a long season, namely, seven generations: and after that I will bring you away peaceably from thence.” This deuterocanonical prophecy of the Letter of Jeremiah has the captives from Judah remaining in Babylon for “seven generations” before being released peaceably to return to Judah. That does not match what Jeremiah prophesied in the protocanonical Book of Jeremiah – “For thus says the Lord: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.” (Jeremiah 29:10) 70 years in captivity is a lot different than seven generations. A generation was the number of years from birth to procreation – viewed by ancient people as somewhere between 25 and 40 years. Seven generations would have been three to four times as long as the 70 years Jeremiah prophesied in the Book of Jeremiah. Which prophecy is correct? Protocanonical Jeremiah or deuterocanonical Letter of Jeremiah? I choose protocanonical Jeremiah, a prophet and Holy Book referred to by name in the New Testament (e.g. Matthew

2:17-18; 16:14; 27:9), quoted by Jesus Christ (e.g. Matthew 21:13; Mark 11:17; Revelation 17:10) and the Apostle Paul (e.g. 1 Corinthians 1:31; 2 Corinthians 6:16-18; 10:17; Hebrews 8:8-12; 10:16-17).

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