

Honey Bee

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A Hebrew word meaning honey bee appears as the name of three Old Testament characters: 1) Deborah the nurse of Rebekah, the wife of the patriarch Jacob, was buried under an oak at Bethel which was named The Oak of Weeping (Genesis 35: 8); 2) Deborah the judge and prophetess of Israel (Judges 4: 4); 3) Deborah, grandmother of Tobit, raised her grandson after his father's death (Tobit 1:8). The story of Tobit is about God sending out an archangel. Michael, Uriel, Gabriel, and Raphael, are the names of some of the angels of which I speak.

Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which presents the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One (Tobit 12: 15 LXX), instructed Tobit who walked all the days of his life in the ways of truth and justice, and did many almsdeeds to his brethren and nation who came to Nineve (Tobit 1: 3 LXX). The son of Ananiel, the son of Aduel, the son of Gabael, of the seed of Asael, of the tribe of Nephthali; who in the time of Enemessar king of the Assyrians was led out of Thisbe, which is at the right hand of that city, which is called properly Nephthali in Galilee above Asher (Tobit 1: 1-2 LXX); to give God thanks written in a book.

Tobit made an end of praising God, and he increased in the fear of the Lord God, and praising Him (Tobit 14: 1-2). 18 Many that believed came, confessing, and declaring their deeds. Acts 19: 18 ASV What deeds? When Tobit was young, all the tribe of Nephthali fell from the house of Jerusalem and revolted from sacrificing in the temple of the most High. They chose to sacrifice unto the heifer Baal. Tobit alone went to Jerusalem at the feasts, as ordained of Israel by everlasting decree. Having the firstfruits and tenths of increase he gave them to the priests of the children of Aaron. Another tenth part he sold away and spent in Jerusalem. The third tenth part he gave to them to whom it was meet, as Debora his father's mother had commanded, because Tobit was left an orphan by his father. When he came to the age of a

man, Tobit married Anna of his own kindred, and of her begat Tobias. When the tribe of Nephthali was carried away captives to Nineve, all ate of the bread of the Gentiles, but Tobit kept himself from eating, remembering God with all his heart. The most High gave him grace and favor before Enemessar, who made him purveyor (food supplier).

If a brethren was hungry Tobit gave them his bread. He gave his clothes to the naked. When king Sennacherib came in wrath, he killed many. If Tobit saw one dead or cast about the walls of Nineve, he buried them privily, and the bodies were not found when sought for the king. One of the Ninevites complained to the king that Tobit had buried the bodies. Tobit fled to Judea and all his goods were forcibly taken away. Nothing was left beside Anna and Tobias.

Not fifty-five days passed before two of the kings sons killed him, fleeing to the mountains. Sarchedonus, his son reigned in his stead; appointing over all his affairs Achiacharus, son of Anael. Cupbearer, keeper of the signet, steward, and overseer of accounts, Achiacharus intreated Tobit to return to Nineve.

Tobit came home again and Anna was returned to him with his son Tobias, at the feast of Pentecost, a holy feast lasting seven weeks. Tobit told his son to go and bring whatever poor man of their brethren he could find to eat. One of their nation had been strangled and cast into the marketplace. Before tasting any meat Tobias told Tobit who went into a room until the going down of the sun; remembering the prophecy of Amos; ¹⁰ I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning for an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day. Amos 8: ¹⁰ ASV Tobit being grieved and in sorrow prayed LORD now thy judgments are many and true; deal with me according to my sins and my fathers': because we have not kept commandments, neither have we walked before Thee (Tobit 3: 1-5 LXX). Tobit made a grave and buried him. Returning home he slept in the courtyard by a wall, being polluted. His face uncovered,

the sparrows in the wall muted warm dung into his eyes causing a whiteness that the physicians could not help.

The same day, in Ecbatane a city of Media, Sara daughter of Raguel, who had been married to seven husbands, whom Asmodeus the evil spirit had killed before they had lain with her; was reproached by her father's maids. She prayed LORD I set mine eyes and face toward Thee, that I may hear no more reproach, Thou knowest I am pure from all sin with man, and never polluted my name or the name of my father, in the land of my captivity (Tobit 3: 7-15 LXX).

The prayers of both were heard before the majesty of God. Raphael was sent to heal Tobit and Sara, who belonged to Tobias by right of inheritance, and to bind Asmodeus.

Tobit remembered he committed ten talents to Gabael, the son of Gabrias, in Rages of Media. He sent Tobias to signify the money with his blessing. Tobit instructed Tobias to seek a man to go with him for wages. Tobias found Raphael, not knowing he was an angel, and they began their journey. In the evening they came to the river Tigris and lodged there. When Tobias went down to wash himself, a fish leaped out of the river, and was dragged to land. The angel told Tobias to open the fish and take the heart and the liver and the gall. The young man did as commanded, then roasted the fish. They continued on their way to Ecbatane.

When they were near Rages, the angel said today we shall lodge with Raguel, who is thy cousin and has a daughter Sara; I will speak for her that she may be given thee for wife, thou only are her kindred. The young man said I am afraid lest if I go in unto her, I die, as the other before me. The angel said, remember thy father's blessing and the heart and the liver of the fish. Lay them upon ashes in the marriage bed chamber and it shall make smoke and when you come to her both of you pray to God, who will be merciful and save you. Fear not, she is appointed unto you from the beginning.

When they came to the house of Raguel, he and wife Edna, was told Tobias was kinsman, son of an honest and good man, Tobit, who was blind, and Tobias wanted Sara for wife. Raguel wrote an instrument of covenants and sealed it. Tobias and Sara went into the marriage bed chamber and when they were shut in, Tobias took the heart and liver and put them upon the ashes saying let us pray that God would have pity on us. The next morning when the chamber door was opened they both came forth alive. Raguel kept the wedding feast fourteen days and gave half of his goods to Tobias by oath.

Tobias called Raphael instructing him to continue to Rages and bring back the money. Raphael went and lodged with Gabael giving him the writing and they both came together with bags of money sealed up, to the wedding, to bless Tobias and his wife.

Tobias returned to Tobit with Raphael and Sara. Raphael told Tobias to anoint his father's eyes with the gall when they met. Tobias rejoiced, telling his father the great things that had happened in Media. Tobit went to meet his daughter-in-law, giving thanks because he had received his sight.

Raphael confessed the great and wonderful works of God saying give thanks; for I go up to Him that sent me; but write all things which are done in a book, and how the angel of the Lord had appeared to them. God breathed Tobit, by the archangel Raphael. It was inspired!

All three Deborah's were found faithful. Faithfulness is a virtue which characterizes those who serve the Lord and requires dedication, discernment, determination, and discipline.

1) To be found faithful we must go. Jonah was instructed to go to Ninevah and cry against that wicked city. Isaiah heard God's call to go and responded "Here I am, send me." Obedient Christians have always been ready to go do the Master's bidding. Those who go must hear God's call, consent to obey that call and accept the commission

of that call. God has this intelligent, individual, and indispensable requirement of service if we would be found faithful. No one may go for us. Each must go himself.

2) To be found faithful we must give. Giving one's time, talent, tithe, and testimony is a natural dimension of the obedient servant. The spirit of giving rather than getting enables one to cheerfully implement the go element which God requires. Time must be set aside for the Lord's work. Talent must be redirected. The tithe must be considered a minimum. All our treasures must be at God's disposal. A ready testimony accompanies those who look to give, not to get.

3) To be found faithful we must grow. Growth is as much God's divine plan for His children as is going and giving. The development process is planned by God along with the prompt for it. Dwarfed development contributes to Christian worker casualties. It is only avoided by dogged grow or die determination. Growth in one's Christian experience is never by accident, but the result of careful attention to God's prescribed plan.

4) To be faithful we must be on guard. The Christian worker must be on guard lest he stray under the influence of false teachers. Paul warns of dangerous trends in the last times when some will depart from the faith. Sound doctrine, saintly deportment and spiritual development only come to those who take God seriously in the matter of guarding against personal error, those who offer no excuses for the sordid lives of others, but who at the same time reject anything less than the best for God.

5) To be faithful we must glorify. This is thank worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, when you do well, and suffer for it, you take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. You were called because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps. Being found faithful is glorifying our Heavenly Father. The whole testimony of a man's actions is regarded in its unity.

There is only one thing that produces faithfulness on the order God requires. Genius is not the building block of faithfulness, nor is gift or amiability. God only builds on character – pristine character and sterling integrity.

A day for fasting and prayer, Friday, 18, August, 2017, confession was made by mouth of what is believed in the heart. Even so, let these first be proved, wives must be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things, well reported of for good works; if she brought up children, if she lodged strangers, if she washed the saints' feet, if she relieved the afflicted, if she diligently followed every good work. In pure conscience holding to the mystery of the faith. They must give attendance to reading, exhortation, doctrine, not neglecting the gift in them, which was given by prophecy. Meditate on these things; give yourself wholly to them; that your profiting may appear to all. Take heed to yourself, and to continue in them: for in doing this you shall both save yourself, and them that hear you.

Deborah will you come and let man account of us, as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God?

I Deborah will, the Lord being my helper.

In precept and practice you will be constantly influencing those entrusted to your care in the deepest things of life – eternal things. Will you be faithful, earnest, sympathetic, and preserving, keeping in mind that the goal of Christian ministry included evangelism, education, edification, encouragement, equipping, and establishing others in the faith?

I Deborah will, the Lord being my helper.

Inasmuch as you have been called to this ministry, will you endeavor, God being your helper, to discharge faithfully its duties? Will you be diligent in your study of the scriptures and dedicated in serving the

Lord Jesus Christ?

I Deborah will, the Lord being my helper.

Today we witnessed Deborah pledge to give herself to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. Will the brethren faithfully in prayers and efforts support Deborah in the consecration of service?

We brethren will, the Lord being our helper.

Benediction: Deborah, may God bless you in the responsibilities you have assumed and make you fruitful in all your service. May you be a faithful steward over these few things, that in the end you may be made ruler over many things. May the church be prospered and honored by your fidelity. For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. I Timothy 4: 5 KJV Amen.

You are invited to join us!

We continue steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and prayers every Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

We study doctrine and pray every Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.