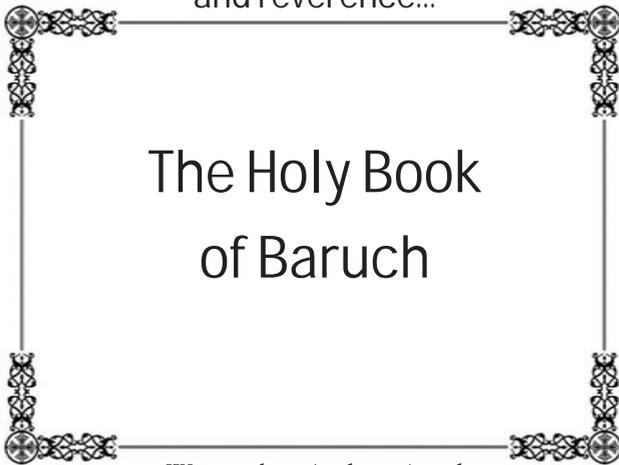




Held today with equal sacredness
and reverence...



The Holy Book of Baruch

Written by: Andrew Assad
St. George, Tampa, FL

Baruch, the secretary of the Prophet Jeremiah, wrote in his Holy Book concerning the children of Jerusalem and how they did not heed the Word of the Lord.

In the first chapter, Baruch writes about the meeting in Babylon (verses 1-12) and the confession of guilt (verses 13-22). In verse thirteen the children of Jerusalem say, ***“Pray for us also to the LORD, our God; for we have sinned against the LORD, our God, and the wrath and anger of the LORD have not yet been withdrawn from us at the present day.”***

The Lord told the children of Jerusalem through many prophets to turn from their evil ways of worshipping idols, committing adultery, and committing evil sins and that he would forgive them their sins.

Therefore, when the Lord fulfilled His Word and set wrath and evil upon His children, they desperately wanted to turn from their evil ways. They saw their great city overrun by the neighboring nations and their families were separated.

In chapter two, Baruch writes about the Prayer of Deliverance (verses 1-26) and God’s promises recalled (verses 27-35). The children of Jerusalem prayed and fasted because the Lord had fulfilled His Word that the warning He uttered against them and then they feared the Lord.

In verses 9-10 the children of Jerusalem say, ***“And the Lord kept watch over the evils, and brought them home to us; for the Lord is just in all the works he commanded us to do, but we did not heed his voice, or follow the***

precepts if the Lord which he set before us.”

The children of Jerusalem prayed, fasted, and wept much because the Lord fulfilled His word. Though, the Lord heard their prayers.

Through His prophets the Lord said in verses 34-35, ***“And I will bring them back to the land which with my oath I promised to their fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and they shall rule it. I will make them increase; they shall not diminish. And I will establish for them, as an eternal covenant, which I will be their God, and they shall be my people; and I will not again remove my people Israel from the land I gave them.”***

In chapter 3, Baruch writes about the Wisdom in the Law of Moses. The Wisdom in the Law of Moses states that the people perished for the lack of prudence and the perished because of the actions.

This same chapter also says to find prudence, strength, and understanding for when they are found you may also find peace. Chapter 4 talks about the City of Jerusalem and how she weeps for her captive children.

In this chapter we see in verses 5-8 that the children of Jerusalem were sold to the nation because they angered God; for they were handed over to their foes. They made sacrifices to demons and to idols, provoking their God, the Eternal God that nourished them.

Although they provoked the Lord, Jerusalem says that peace and salvation can be found if you turn to the Lord in verses 21-23, ***“Fear not, my children; call upon God, who will deliver you from oppression at the enemy hands. I have trusted in the Eternal God for your welfare, and joy has come to me from the Holy One because of the mercy that will swiftly reach you from your Eternal Savior.”***

Chapter 5 discusses Jerusalem shedding its misery and mourning for the Lord will show all the earth its splendor; and Jerusalem will be named by God forever the peace of justice, the glory of God’s worship.

Finally, chapter 6 is the Letter of Jeremiah against idolatry. In this chapter Jeremiah tells his people not to fear. Although they are taken captive in a foreign land he will come to that land and take them in peace. He told them hold to your beliefs and not to worship the idols of that land, for those idols are not the true God. The priests of that land are ungodly for they do not hold to the custom of the Lord and deceive their own people and rob them of their riches, for they know that none of them can rise up



against them.

Jeremiah tells his children to hold to their beliefs for those idols can not heal people and their priests steal from their own people to live a lavish life. May the Lord teach us through this Holy Book that we should always heed His Word. Also through times of troubles and tribulations that it is only through His name that we should offer prayer and fasting to as well as repentance and confession, for He is the only one that can save and help us in everything and Glory be to God forever, Amen.

Held today with equal sacredness
and reverence...



“Against Idol Worship”

A Might Arrow
St. Mary, Roswell, GA

These seventy-three verses purport to be a letter composed by Jeremiah for those about to be taken into exile from Judah to Babylonia in 597 BC by Nebuchadnezzar's forces. It was undoubtedly inspired by Jeremiah's letter (Jer 29.1-23) to those taken hostage in 597, a decade before the final defeat of Judah and the destruction of Jerusalem.

The Letter of Jeremiah is an impassioned sermon against idol worship and polytheism based on Jer 10, and particularly Jer 10.11: **“The gods who did not make the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens.”** The Letter is also influenced, however, by other Biblical polemics against idol worship (Ps 115.4-8; 135.15-18; Isa 40.18.20; 41.6-7; 44.9-20; 46.1-7; etc.). The body of the letter is composed of a series of ten warnings to Jews, who might be attracted to idol worship, to recognize and be wary of idolatry. Each part ends on a common refrain, with variations, insisting that idols are not gods nor

to be confused with the one, true God (vv. 16, 23, 29, 40, 44, 52, 56, 65, 69, 72).

Although all surviving manuscripts of the letter are in Greek, including one fragment from Cave 7 at Qumran, the Letter was probably composed originally in Hebrew or Aramaic. Most scholars date the Letter to the Hellenistic period. The reference in v. 3 to an exile lasting seven generations has been taken as a clue to the date of composition of the letter (317 BC), but the reference to seven generations is probably symbolic. The allusion to the Letter in 2 Macc 2.1-3 would indicate a date no later than the second century BC.

The Letter has different placements in various manuscripts and versions of the Holy Bible. It stands as a discrete work between Lamentations and Ezekiel in two major Greek Septuagint manuscripts (fourth-century Vaticanus and fifth-century Alexandrius), in the Milan Syriac Hexapla, and in Arabic. In other Greek and Syriac manuscripts, and in the Latin version, it appears as the sixth chapter of Baruch. Since it is, however, clearly independent of Baruch, the New Revised Standard Version treats it as a separate book. This pseudepigraphical work was written for a Jewish audience, perhaps in Palestine. It is not included in either the Jewish or Protestant canons, but is included among the Holy Books of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches.

The body of the letter is divided into 12 parts. It begins by introducing this letter from Jeremiah to those who were to be taken as exiles to Babylon by the King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, because of their sins. They are told that they will remain exiled in Babylon for up to 7 generations, or 280 years, after which God will bring them away in peace. And during this time they will encounter **“gods made of silver and gold and wood”** (4) in which they must resist in their heart and know that they are false. **“For my angel is with you, and he is watching over your lives”** (7).

The Letter goes on to **condemn the worship and creation of idols**. They're described as dolls decorated with gold, silver, and purple robes yet **“cannot save themselves from rust and corrosion”** (12). They hold scepters and daggers but cannot judge or defend. **“From this it is evident that they are not gods; so do not fear them”** (16). The **helplessness of the idols** is portrayed when they are locked up in temples to protect them from thievery and their images are blackened by the smoke of the temple.

The people are then reminded that the **idols are unable to feel or move**. **“It will not shine unless someone whips off the tarnish”** (24) and **“if it is tipped over, it cannot**