

BARUCH

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Baruch Meets With the Jews Living in Babylon

¹ This book was written by Baruch, who was the son of Neriah, the grandson of Mahseiah, and a descendant of Zedekiah, Hasadiah, and Hilkihah. It was written in Babylon ² on the seventh day of the month in the fifth year after the Babylonians captured Jerusalem and burned it down. ³ Baruch read this book aloud to Judah's King Jeconiah, who was the son of Jehoiakim, and to everyone who lived in Babylon by the Sud River. These are all the people who came to hear it read: ⁴ the nobles, the king's children, the leaders, and all the people, from the most important to the least important. ^a

Baruch Returns to Jerusalem

⁵ After the book was read, they cried, fasted, and prayed to the Lord. ⁶ Then they collected money. Each person gave as much as he could. ⁷ They sent the money to Jerusalem to the priest Jehoiakim, son of Hilkihah and grandson of Shallum, to the other priests, and to all the people who were with him in Jerusalem.

⁸ At the same time, on the tenth day of Sivan, Baruch took the utensils that belonged to the Lord's house, the utensils that were removed from the temple, and he returned them to Judah. These were the silver utensils that Judah's King Zedekiah, son of Josiah, had made ⁹ after King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had captured Jeconiah, the princes, the craftsmen, ^b the nobles, and the common people in Jerusalem and brought them to Babylon.

A Message to the Jews in Jerusalem

¹⁰ The Jews living in Babylon also sent [with Baruch] the following message:
We are sending you money to buy [animals] for burnt offerings and offerings for sin. Also, use some of the money to buy incense and to provide grain offerings. Offer them on the altar of the Lord our God. ¹¹ Pray for King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and for his son Belshazzar that they may live on earth as long as heaven lasts. ¹² Then the Lord will give us strength and a newfound hope. We will live under the protection of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and his son Belshazzar. We will serve them for a long time, and they will be pleased with us. ¹³ Also, pray to the Lord our God for us, because we have sinned against him and he is still very angry with us. ¹⁴ Finally, you must read aloud this scroll that we are sending you and confess your sins in the Lord's house on the first day of festivals and on the other days when you assemble for worship.

Confess Your Sins

¹⁵ You must say, "The Lord our God has done what is right. Those of us here today have shamefully done what is wrong. We, the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, ¹⁶ our kings, our rulers, our priests, our prophets, and our ancestors, ¹⁷ are ashamed because we have sinned against the Lord. ¹⁸ We have disobeyed him and have not listened to the Lord our God. We have not lived by the commands that the Lord gave us. ¹⁹ From the time the Lord brought our ancestors out of Egypt until now, we have disobeyed the Lord our God. All too often we have ignored him. ²⁰ When the Lord brought our ancestors out of Egypt to give us a land flowing with milk and honey, he threatened to bring disasters and curses on us through his servant Moses. These disasters and curses are still with us today. ²¹ We did not listen to the Lord

^a 1:4 The last part of verse 4 has been placed in verse 3 to express the complex Greek sentence structure more clearly in English.

^b 1:9 Jeremiah 24:1, 29:2; Greek "prisoners."

our God when he spoke to us through the prophets he sent us. ²² Instead, all of us followed the desires of our own wicked hearts. We served other gods and did what the Lord our God considered evil.

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¹ "So the Lord carried out his threat against us and against our judges, our kings, our rulers, and the people of Israel and Judah. ² Nowhere else in the world has the Lord done what he did to Jerusalem. These things were predicted in Moses' Teachings. ³ We even ate the flesh of our own sons and daughters. ⁴ So the Lord put us under the control of all the kingdoms around us. Then we were disgraced and rejected by all the people living in those nations where the Lord had scattered us. ⁵ We were humiliated, not honored, because our nation had sinned against the Lord our God by refusing to obey him.

⁶ "The Lord our God has done what is right. Our ancestors and those of us here today have shamefully done what is wrong. ⁷ All the disasters that the Lord threatened us with have happened to us. ⁸ Yet, we have not asked the Lord to help each of us remove the thoughts that come from our wicked hearts. ⁹ The Lord watched for the right moment to bring these disasters on us. The Lord is right about everything that he has commanded us to do. ¹⁰ But we didn't obey him or live by the laws he gave us.

Pray to the Lord for Help

¹¹ "Lord God of Israel, you used your mighty hand to bring your people out of Egypt. You used miraculous signs, amazing things, spectacular miracles, and your powerful arm. You made a name for yourself that is still famous today. ¹² Lord our God, we have sinned, we have been ungodly, and we have disobeyed all your commands. ¹³ Don't be angry with us anymore. There are only a few of us left among the nations where you have scattered us. ¹⁴ Lord, listen to our prayer and our plea for help. For your own sake rescue us, and make those who have captured us be kind to us. ¹⁵ Then the whole earth will know that you are the Lord our God and that the people of Israel and their descendants are called by your name.

¹⁶ "Lord, look down from your holy dwelling place, and keep us in mind. Open your ears, Lord, and listen (to our prayers). ¹⁷ Open your eyes, Lord, and see (our misery). The dead, who are in the grave and whose spirits have been taken from their bodies, cannot give you glory or do what you command. ¹⁸ People who are overwhelmed with grief, who walk bent over and are weak, or who have failing eyesight and are hungry will give you glory and do what you command, Lord.

¹⁹ "Lord our God, we're begging you for mercy, but not because our ancestors or our kings did what you considered right. ²⁰ You warned us through your servants the prophets that you would show us how very angry you were with us. You said, ²¹ "This is what the Lord says: Surrender to the king of Babylon, and serve him. Then you may remain in the land that I gave to your ancestors. ²² But if you will not obey the Lord and serve the king of Babylon, ²³ I will banish the sounds of joy and happiness and the sounds of brides and grooms from the towns of Judah and from the region around Jerusalem. The whole land will become deserted."

²⁴ "But we did not obey you and serve the king of Babylon. So you carried out the threat that you spoke through your servants the prophets: The bones of our kings and our ancestors were taken out of their graves. ²⁵ In fact, their bones were thrown out and exposed to the heat of day and the cold of night. These men died painful deaths from famines, wars, and plagues. ²⁶ You have made this house, which is called by your name, what it is today because of the wickedness of the people of Israel and Judah.

²⁷ "And yet, Lord our God, you have been kind to us and have shown us your rich mercy. ²⁸ This is what you promised through your servant Moses on the day you commanded him to write down your teachings in the presence of the people of Israel. You said, ²⁹ "If you will not obey me, even though you are a very large and noisy crowd, you will certainly be reduced to a small number of people among the nations where I will scatter you. ³⁰ I know you won't obey me. You people are impossible to deal with. But in the land where you are captives, you will come to your senses ³¹ and realize that I am the Lord your God. I will give you hearts that obey and ears that hear. ³² You will praise me in the land where you are captives, and you will remember my name. ³³ You will no longer be impossible to deal with, and you will no longer do evil things.

Instead, you will remember how your ancestors sinned against the Lord. ³⁴ Then I will bring you back to the land that I swore to give to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and you will take possession of it. I will increase your population; it will never decrease. ³⁵ I will make an eternal promise to ^a you: I will be your God, you will be my people, and I will never again remove you, my people Israel, from the land that I have given you.'

3

¹ "Almighty Lord, God of Israel, we are depressed and in distress. So we cry out to you. ² Listen to us, Lord, and have mercy on us, because we have sinned against you. ³ You are enthroned forever, but we are lost forever. ⁴ Almighty Lord, God of Israel, listen now to the prayer of the people of Israel. We are the descendants of those who sinned against you. Our ancestors did not obey you, the Lord their God. So we have suffered one disaster after another. ⁵ Do not remember the evil things our ancestors did. Instead, remember your power and your name. ⁶ You are the Lord our God, and we will praise you, Lord. ⁷ You put the fear of God in our hearts so that we would call on your name. We will praise you in the land where we are in exile, because we have turned away from all the evil things done by our ancestors, who sinned against you. ⁸ Today we are living as exiles in the land where you have scattered us. We are being insulted, cursed, and punished for all the evil things done by our ancestors, who deserted you, the Lord our God."

Desire Wisdom

- 9** Israel, listen to the commands that bring life.
Pay attention, and gain insight.
- 10** Israel, why is it that you are in the land of your enemies?
Why are you growing old in a foreign country?
- 11** Why are you unclean ^b like dead bodies?
Why are you compared to those who are in the grave?
- 12** You have deserted the fountain of wisdom.
- 13** If you had followed God's directions,
you would have lived in peace forever.
- 14** Learn where to find insight, where to find strength,
and where to find understanding.
Then you will know where to find a long and full life.
You will also know where to find peace and light to see [clearly].
- 15** Who has found where wisdom is located?
Who has entered its storehouses?
- 16** Where are the rulers of the nations?
Where are those who tamed wild animals
and hunted birds for sport?
- 17** Where are those who hoarded silver and gold?
(Those people trusted silver and gold,
and they always wanted more and more.)
- 18** Where are those silversmiths who worked so carefully
but left no trace of their work?
- 19** They have vanished and gone to their graves,
and others have replaced them.

^a 2:35 Or "covenant with."

^b 3:11 "Unclean" refers to anything that Moses' Teachings say is not presentable to God.

- 20 People from recent generations have seen the light of day
and have lived on earth.
But they have not learned the way of knowledge,
- 21 understood its paths, or even had any grasp of it.
Their descendants have strayed far from its paths.
- 22 Knowledge has never been heard of in Canaan or seen in Teman.
- 23 Hagar's descendants look for understanding on earth.
The merchants from Merran and Teman,
the storytellers, and the philosophers
have not learned the way of wisdom
or remembered where its paths are.
- 24 Israel, God's universe is so great!
The territory that he possesses is so vast!
- 25 It is wide and endless.
It is high and immeasurable.
- 26 The giants, who were famous long ago, were born there.
They were very tall and were experienced soldiers.
- 27 Yet, God did not choose them or show them the way of knowledge.
- 28 They died because of their lack of insight.
They died because of their stupidity.
- 29 Who has gone up to heaven to get wisdom
and brought it down from the clouds?
- 30 Who has crossed the sea to find wisdom
and bought it with pure gold?
- 31 No one knows the way to [find] it
or thinks about [finding] the path to it.
- 32 But the one who knows everything knows wisdom.
He found it by using his understanding.
He is the one who built the earth to last forever
and filled it with four-footed animals.
- 33 He is the one who tells the light to go, and it goes.
He calls it [back], and it respectfully obeys him.
- 34 The stars shine where he has put them, and they are happy.
- 35 He calls for them, and they say, "Here we are!"
They are happy to shine for their maker.
- 36 This is our God. No one can compare to him.
- 37 He found every way [that leads] to knowledge,
and he gave wisdom to his servant Jacob,
to Israel, whom he loved.
- 38 Later, wisdom appeared on earth and lived among humans.

- 1 Wisdom is the book of God's commands
and the law that lasts forever.
All who hold on to wisdom will live,

- but those who reject it will die.
- 2** Descendants of Jacob, go back and take hold of wisdom.
Walk toward its shining light.
- 3** Don't give your glory to anyone else
or your privileges to any other nation.
- 4** People of Israel, we are blessed.
We know what pleases God.

The People of Israel Are Reassured

- 5** Cheer up, my people! You keep Israel's name alive.
- 6** You were sold to the nations [by God], but not to be destroyed.
You were handed over to your enemies
because you made God angry.
- 7** You provoked the one who made you
by sacrificing to demons, not to God.
- 8** You forgot the eternal God, who nourished you.
You upset Jerusalem, who raised you like a mother.
- 9** When Jerusalem saw that God unleashed his anger against you, she said:
"Listen, you neighbors of Zion.
God has brought me so much misery.
I've seen my sons and daughters taken captive.
The eternal God brought this on them.
- 11** It was a joy for me to raise them.
But I cried and mourned when I saw them taken away.
- 12** No one should be happy now that I'm a widow
and have been abandoned by so many [loved ones].
I'm a deserted city because of the sins my children committed.
They turned away from God's teachings.
- 13** They didn't want to know his laws.
They wouldn't follow the directions in God's commandments
or live in the right ways that he taught them.
- 14** "Come here, you neighbors of Zion.
Remember that my sons and daughters were taken captive.
The eternal God brought this on them.
He brought people from a nation far away to attack them.
They were shameless people who spoke a foreign language.
They had no respect for the elderly
and no pity for young people.
- 16** They led away my dear sons and daughters,
and I was left a widow, completely alone.
- 17** But how can I help you, [my children]?
- 18** Only the one who brought this disaster on you
can rescue you from your enemies.
- 19** Go, my children. Go.
I have been left as a deserted city.
- 20** I have taken off the robe [I wore when there was] peace

- and have put on sackcloth to make my plea for help.
I will cry out to the eternal God as long as I live.
- 21** "Cheer up, my children! Cry out to God for help.
He will rescue you
from the power and oppression of your enemies.
- 22** I trust the eternal God to save you.
The Holy One, your eternal savior, has made me joyful
because of the mercy he will soon show to you.
- 23** I cried and mourned when I saw you taken away.
But I will rejoice and be glad forever
when God brings you back to me.
- 24** The neighbors of Zion watched as you were taken captive.
Soon they will see you rescued by God.
This rescue will happen to you with great glory
and with the splendor of the eternal God.
- 25** "My children, patiently endure the anger
that God has unleashed against you.
Your enemies have hunted you down,
but you will soon see their destruction
and put your feet on their necks.
- 26** My pampered children, you have traveled rough roads.
You were taken away like a flock captured in an enemy raid.
- 27** Cheer up, my children, and cry out to God for help.
The one who did this to you will not forget you.
- 28** Your minds were once set on wandering away from God.
But now go back and look for him
with ten times the determination.
- 29** The one who brought this disaster on you
will bring you everlasting joy when he rescues you."

Jerusalem Is Reassured

- 30** Cheer up, Jerusalem!
The one who gave you your name will comfort you.
- 31** Those who mistreated you and rejoiced when you fell will be sorry.
- 32** The cities where your children were slaves will be sorry.
The city that took your sons [and daughters] will be sorry.
- 33** Just as that city rejoiced when you fell
and was glad when you were destroyed,
so it will grieve when it, too, becomes a deserted city.
- 34** I will remove the large population that made that city so happy,
and I will turn its arrogance into mourning.
- 35** Fire from the eternal God will rain down on it for many days.
For a long time to come, it will be inhabited by demons.
- 36** Look to the east, Jerusalem.

37 See the joy that is coming to you from God.
Look! Your children that were taken away are coming {home}.
They are coming from the east and the west.
They were gathered at the command of the Holy One
and are rejoicing in the glory of God.

5

1 Jerusalem, take off the clothes you wore
when you were in mourning and distress.
Put on the beauty of God's glory and wear it forever.
2 Wrap the robe of his justice around you.
Put on the turban of eternal glory.
3 God will show your splendor to every nation under heaven.
4 God will always call you
Peace through Justice and Glory through Godliness.
5 Arise, Jerusalem! Stand in a high place.
Look toward the east, and see your children.
They are coming from the east and the west
at the command of the Holy One.
They are rejoicing because God has remembered them.
6 They left you on foot.
They were led away by their enemies.
But God will bring your children back to you.
They will be carried in glory, like a king on a throne.
7 God has given the following order:
Every high mountain and everlasting hill will be lowered,
and the valleys will be filled to make the ground level.
Then the people of Israel will walk safely in God's glory.
8 At God's command the woods and every fragrant tree
will give shade to the people of Israel.
9 God will lead the joyful people of Israel with the light of his glory
and guide them with his mercy and justice.