

# Outside the Bible

*Ancient Jewish Writings Related to Scripture*

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# 1 Baruch

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1 Baruch (also known as the book of Baruch) is classified in the "Old Testament Apocrypha," meaning it is one of the books of the Septuagint (LXX) not included in the canon of the Hebrew Bible but included in various Christian Bibles. It is named for the scriptural figure Baruch (son of Neriah son of Mahseiah), who was the prophet Jeremiah's scribe and confidant (Jer. 32:9–15; 36:1–32; 43:1–7; 45:1–5) and who accompanied Jeremiah into exile following the conquest of Jerusalem and destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians in 586 BCE. In 1 Baruch, and in other works ascribed to him, he becomes a prophetic figure in his own right. In the LXX (and in subsequent Christian Bibles) 1 Baruch follows the book of Jeremiah as an appendix. Scholars universally are of the view that the books that bear Baruch's name are pseudepigraphs, that is, fictitiously and retroactively ascribed to him.

1 Baruch is a composite literary work, made up of three to five distinct compositions, depending on how they are divided or combined, which differ from one another in theme, mood, language, divine appellation, literary form, scriptural dependency, and perspective, but which have been editorially combined at some point after their individual compositions. Their common theme is seeking to convey the meaning of the Babylonian exile, perhaps as a paradigm for subsequent periods of exile and foreign rule. The parts of the book may be summarized as follows:

1. Historical introduction (1:1–14). Presents the book as a letter sent by Baruch from exile in Babylonia to the priests and people in Jerusalem, in the fifth year of the exile (582 BCE), instructing them to read it as a confessional liturgy during the festivals.
2. Confession of sins (1:15–2:5 [or 1:15–2:10]). A preliminary confession and prayer emphasizing that the sins committed by the people and their received punishments are in accord with Moses' predictions. This section and the next are especially dependent upon Dan. 9:4–19, with many elements from Deut. 28–32 and Jer. 29–52.
3. Petitionary prayer (2:6–3:8 [or 2:11–3:8]). Written from the perspective of the Diaspora Jews, a petition to rescue the repentant remnant from exile, where they suffer, returning them to the Promised Land and renewing the covenant.
4. Poem in praise of Wisdom (3:9–4:4). The powerful and the rich are unable to find Wisdom (here personified), for Wisdom is identical with Torah, which has been given to Israel alone. Thus, the praise of Wisdom ends as a praise of Israel. Close affinities to, and perhaps incorporation of, wisdom texts such as Job, Proverbs, **Wisdom of Solomon**, and **Wisdom of Ben Sira**.
5. Psalm of consolation (4:5–5:9). The final section of 1 Baruch offers words of encouragement to the remnant of Israel in exile, featuring personified "mother"

Jerusalem as both the source and recipient of consolation. Following the biblical, especially Deuteronomic, pattern of sin-exile-return, Israel is assured that its exile is not permanent, but will be followed by return to the Promised Land, accompanied by the punishment of Israel's enemies in the very ways that they were the agents of Israel's punishment. In effect, Israel's confessional and petitionary prayers have been answered, its sorrow has turned to joy. This section is particularly dependent on Isa. 40–55 (Deutero-Isaiah), with Bar. 4:36–5:9 displaying similarities to *Pss. Sol.* 11:1–7.

### *Authorship and History*

The dating and provenance of 1 Baruch are clouded by its anonymous, pseudepigraphic authorship and its composite contents. That is, it is likely that its component parts were authored separately and only later combined to form the book as we have it. It is generally held that the major parts were originally authored in Hebrew (at least 1:1–3:8), but since no part of the book survives in Hebrew even this has been questioned.<sup>1</sup> Arguments for a Hebrew original for 3:9–5:9 rest on weaker grounds. The earliest surviving text is in Greek, from which other versions (Syriac, Latin, Arabic, Armenian, Bohairic, Ethiopic) are thought to be translations. Since it is difficult to date the text, either as a whole or in its parts, because it lacks specific internal historical references, scholars have sought to date it with respect to earlier texts upon which it might be dependent and according to its attitude toward continuing exile and the rule and fate of foreign rulers. Neither of these criteria allows for precise dating. The predominant view arrives at a chronological span from the first half of the 2nd century through the 1st century BCE, with some extending into the 1st century CE. Based on the Greek, the relation of the translation to that of Jeremiah, and the possible meaning for a later time of the fictional historical setting of the Babylonian exile, an early to mid-2nd century BCE date, at least for the bulk of the book, seems the most likely.<sup>2</sup>

1 Baruch was authored neither by Baruch nor by any single person. Some think that the compiler of 1:15–5:4 added the historical introduction (1:1–14) so as to establish the pseudepigraphic historical setting, while someone later added the final stanza (5:5–9) so as to conclude with the fulfillment of God's reassuring promises having been accomplished. Yet some see the poem in praise of Wisdom (3:9–4:4) as a later interpolation.<sup>3</sup> Thus, notwithstanding its composite nature, it is uncertain whether a single compiler produced the text as it now stands. Those who favor a Hebrew original tend to assume that the work was authored in Palestine, notwithstanding its exilic setting. While it is generally presumed that the author/compiler was Jewish (the term itself being somewhat anachronistic),<sup>4</sup> some have thought that 3:37 reveals a Christian hand (or at least interpolation), but this need not be the case (see commentary).

### *Significance*

Once excluded from the canon of the Hebrew Bible, 1 Baruch, even if based, and if only in part, on a Hebrew original, appears to have eventually disappeared from Jewish study and communal liturgical life. The church fathers Origen and Jerome (3rd and 4th centuries,

respectively) are both unaware of any Hebrew versions of the text in their time, and the latter claims the book was not read any longer among the "Hebrews." How much earlier it fell from Jewish use, in whatever language, is impossible to know. We have no record of its being cited or referenced by any Jewish author in a religious context.<sup>5</sup> Nor is there any evidence for its having been translated into any Jewish dialect of Aramaic. No remnant of it has been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls (unlike other apocryphal and pseudepigraphic works), nor is there any allusion to it in early Rabbinic literature. Even among Christians, in whose biblical canons it was included, reference to 1 Baruch (aside from 3:36–37) is extremely rare.

Therefore, consideration of the significance of 1 Baruch as a Jewish writing must be limited to its supposed time of composition and original reception in the early to mid-2nd century BCE, a period of Seleucid domination and Maccabean resistance. Its fictive setting in the time of Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Jerusalem and exile of its inhabitants would provide a powerful template for a later time, in which the book's call for confession, contrition, devotion to Torah, and hope in Israel's imminent restoration would no less ring true. The significance of 1 Baruch, then, is in the artful way that it has reworked and combined its scriptural (from our perspective, both canonical and noncanonical) sources and composite parts to offer an urgent call that deeply reverberated and resonated both with received traditional memories and with pressing historical circumstances.

#### GUIDE TO READING

The reader of 1 Baruch would benefit from consulting the frequent scriptural parallels to, and possibly sources of, the text in *Wisdom of Ben Sira*, *Wisdom of Solomon*, and *Psalms of Solomon* indicated in the commentary.

#### SUGGESTED READINGS

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*Baruch and the Jews in Babylon*

<sup>1:1</sup>These are the words of the book that Baruch son of Neriah son of Mahseiah son of Zedekiah son of Hasadiah son of Hilkiyah wrote in Babylon, <sup>2</sup>in the fifth year, on the seventh day of the month, at the time when the Chaldeans took Jerusalem and burned it with fire.

<sup>3</sup>Baruch read the words of this book to Jeconiah son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and to all the people who came to hear the book, <sup>4</sup>and to the nobles and the princes, and to the elders, and to all the people, small and great, all who lived in Babylon by the river Sud.

<sup>5</sup>Then they wept, and fasted, and prayed before the LORD; <sup>6</sup>they collected as much money as each could give, <sup>7</sup>and sent it to Jerusalem to the high priest<sup>7</sup> Jehoiakim son of Hilkiyah son of Shallum, and to the priests, and to all the people who were present with him in Jerusalem. <sup>8</sup>At the same time, on the tenth day of Sivan, Baruch<sup>8</sup> took the vessels of the house of the LORD, which had been carried away

## COMMENTARY

- 1:1. Baruch son of Neriah son of Mahseiah son of Zedekiah son of Hasadiah son of Hilkiyah** In Jer. 32:12, Baruch's name is given as "Baruch son of Neriah son of Mahseiah." A seal inscription found in a royal archive reads, "Belonging to Berechiah, son of Neriah, the scribe."<sup>15</sup> The long list of patronyms in our text may serve to emphasize that Baruch comes from a prominent scribal family.
- wrote in Babylon** According to Jer. 43:1-7, Baruch (along with Jeremiah) was forcefully exiled to Egypt rather than to Babylonia, contrary to God's will. For the tradition that Baruch was exiled to Babylonia in later Jewish literature, see *S. Olam Rab.* 26; *Songs Rab.* 5:5; *B. Meg.* 16b.
- 1:2. in the fifth year, on the seventh day of the month** It is not clear whether the "fifth year" counts from the siege and exile of Jerusalem (597 BCE), as in 2 Kings 24:10-17, or from the destruction of the Temple (586 BCE), as in 2 Kings 25:8-12. The continuation of Bar. 1:2 would favor the latter, resulting in the year of 582 BCE for the date of the narrative setting. Although the specific month is not provided here, it can be presumed to have been the fifth month (Av), as per 2 Kings 25:8. Thus, this gathering would commemorate the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple.
- 1:3. Jeconiah**, also known as Jehoiakim, last king of Judah, exiled in 597 BCE.
- to all the people** Repeated in Bar. 1:4 (cf. 1:7). For similar emphases on the totality of the assembly for a public reading of revelation, see Deut. 31:12; 2 Kings 23:2; Jer. 36:6; Neh. 8:1-8; 2 Chron. 34:30.
- 1:4. by the river Sud** Otherwise unknown. For the significance of prophecy at rivers in the exile, see *Mek. R. Ish., Pisha* 1, citing Dan. 8:2; 10:4; Ezek. 1:3.
- 1:5. then they wept, and fasted, and prayed before the LORD** Contrast how Baruch's reading of a scroll with Jeremiah's prophetic words is received by King Jehoiakim, Jeconiah's father, in 604 BCE, as recounted in Jer. 36:20-26.
- 1:7. the high priest Jehoiakim** The Greek has "the priest," which may denote "the high priest," but no high priest by the name of Jehoiakim is known.<sup>16</sup>
- 1:8. the vessels of the house of the LORD** Cf. Ezra 1:7-11, for the return of the Temple vessels by the Persian king Cyrus in 538 BCE. For the removal of the Temple vessels by Nebuchadnezzar in 597 and 587 BCE, see 2 Kings 24:13; 25:13-17; 2 Chron. 36:10, 18; Jer. 52:17-23, where no mention is made of silver replacements. Regarding their return, see Jer. 27:16; 28:6; Ezra 6:5.

Source of Translation: The translations are from the NRSV.

from the Temple, to return them to the land of Judah—the silver vessels that Zedekiah son of Josiah, king of Judah, had made, <sup>9</sup>after King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had carried away from Jerusalem Jeconiah and the princes and the prisoners and the nobles and the people of the land, and brought them to Babylon.

### *A Letter to Jerusalem*

<sup>1:10</sup>They said: Here we send you money; so buy with the money burnt offerings and sin offerings and incense, and prepare a grain offering, and offer them on the altar of the LORD our God; <sup>11</sup>and pray for the life of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and for the life of his son Belshazzar, so that their days on earth may be like the days of heaven. <sup>12</sup>The LORD will give us strength, and light to our eyes; we shall live under the protection<sup>9</sup> of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and under the protection of his son Belshazzar, and we shall serve them many days and find favor in their sight. <sup>13</sup>Pray also for us to the LORD our God, for we have sinned against the LORD our God, and to this day the anger of the LORD and his wrath have not turned away from us. <sup>14</sup>And you shall read aloud this scroll that we are sending you, to make your confession in the house of the LORD on the days of the festivals and at appointed seasons.

### *Confession of Sins*

<sup>1:15</sup>And you shall say: The LORD our God is in the right, but there is open shame on us today, on the

*1:9. and brought them to Babylon* Echoing Jer. 24:1.

*1:10. they said* The letter is supposed to be written from the exiles in Babylonia to their brethren who remained in Jerusalem, providing them with words of confession to recite.

*on the altar of the LORD our God* Presuming the continuation of sacrificial worship after the destruction of the Temple. See also Jer. 41:5, where grain and incense offerings are mentioned, but no animals (burnt and sin offerings in our text).

*1:11. pray for the life of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon* The practice of Diaspora Jews praying for the welfare of the foreign ruling monarch (or government) goes back at least to the time of Persian rule (see Ezra 6:10) and continues down to the present. In the mid-3rd century BCE Egypt, synagogues have dedicatory inscriptions that honor the Ptolemaic king, his wife, and children. The cessation of the offering of sacrifices in the Second Temple in Jerusalem on behalf of the Roman emperors is cited as marking the beginning of the Jewish revolt against Roman rule.

*Belshazzar* Cf. Dan. 5:2, 11–12, 30, which similarly identify Belshazzar as the son of Nebuchadnezzar and as king (cf. 7:1; 8:1). However, Balthazar's father was Nabonidus, and Belshazzar was never king of Babylon. The text is most likely influenced by Dan. 5.

*so that their days on earth may be like the days of heaven* For the idiom, see Deut. 11:21: "To the end that you and your children may endure . . . as long as there is a heaven over the earth."

*1:14. and you shall read aloud this scroll* For the conjunction of reading from a scroll, confession of sin, and prayer, see Neh. 9:3.

*1:15. the LORD our God is in the right* God is blameless for our suffering, since we brought it upon ourselves. In later Jewish prayer and confession, this is known as *tzidduk hadin*, the rightness of the (God's) verdict. Cf. Dan. 9:7: "With You, O LORD, is the right [*tzedakah*], and the shame is on us to this very day, on the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, all Israel, near and far, in all the lands where You have banished them, for the trespass they committed against You." The

people of Judah, on the inhabitants of Jerusalem,<sup>16</sup> and on our kings, our rulers, our priests, our prophets, and our ancestors,<sup>17</sup> because we have sinned before the LORD.<sup>18</sup> We have disobeyed him, and have not heeded the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in the statutes of the LORD that he set before us.<sup>19</sup> From the time when the LORD brought our ancestors out of the land of Egypt until today, we have been disobedient to the LORD our God, and we have been negligent, in not heeding his voice.<sup>20</sup> So to this day there have clung to us the calamities and the curse that the LORD declared through his servant Moses at the time when he brought our ancestors out of the land of Egypt to give to us a land flowing with milk and honey.<sup>21</sup> We did not listen to the voice of the LORD our God in all the words of the prophets whom he sent to us,<sup>22</sup> but all of us followed the intent of our own wicked hearts by serving other gods and doing what is evil in the sight of the LORD our God.

<sup>2:1</sup> So the LORD carried out the threat he spoke against us: against our judges who ruled Israel, and against our kings and our rulers and the people of Israel and Judah.<sup>2</sup> Under the whole heaven there has not been done the like of what he has done in Jerusalem, in accordance with the threats that were<sup>10</sup> written in the law of Moses.<sup>3</sup> Some of us ate the flesh of their sons and others the flesh of their daughters.<sup>4</sup> He made them subject to all the kingdoms around us, to be an object of scorn and a desolation

section beginning here and continuing through Bar. 3:8 is made up largely of a pastiche of quotes from Daniel and Jeremiah, with particular affinities to Dan. 9:4–19, as will be indicated below.

**1:17. *we have sinned before the LORD*** The confession is in the collective, plural first person, as in the confession (*Vidui*) of the later Yom Kippur liturgy. Cf. Dan. 9:8; Neh. 9:32–34; Jer. 32:32.

**1:18. *have not heeded the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in the statutes*** For very similar language, see Dan. 9:9–10 and Neh. 9:26 for rebellion and rejection of God's Torah.

**1:19. *from the time when the LORD brought our ancestors out of the Land of Egypt until today*** For Israel's rebelliousness beginning with the Exodus from Egypt, see Deut. 9:7; Jer. 7:25.

***in not heeding his voice*** See Dan. 9:11.

**1:20. *so to this day there have clung to us the calamities and the curse*** The recent and present sufferings are the result of the cumulative sins of the Israelites over time, continuing to the present, thereby underscoring the depth of the guilt. See Dan. 9:11; Jer. 11:4–5. Cf. the Dead Sea Scrolls, 1QS 2:15–16: "And may all the curses of this covenant stick to him."

***that the LORD declared through his servant Moses*** The present sufferings are the fulfillment of the predicted curses recorded by Moses in Deut. 28–32, esp. 29:19–20.<sup>17</sup>

**1:21. *we did not listen to the voice*** See Dan. 9:10. The language of rejection of God's voice/commands is very Deuteronomic: Deut. 9:23–24; 28:15; Jer. 26:5.

**1:22. *doing what is evil in the sight of the LORD*** Cf. Jer. 7:24; 32:30.

**2:1. *so the LORD carried out the threat*** See Dan. 9:12.

**2:2. *under the whole heaven there has not been done*** For the uniquely exceptional nature of Israel's calamity, see Dan. 9:12.

***in accordance with the threats that were written in the law of Moses*** See Dan. 9:13 and comment on Bar. 1:20.

**2:3. *some of us ate the flesh of their sons*** For the consumption of one's own children as one of the most dire effects of being under siege, see Lev. 26:29; Deut. 28:53; 2 Kings 6:28–29; Jer. 19:9; Lam. 2:20; 4:10.

**2:4. *to be an object of scorn*** See Jer. 29:18.

among all the surrounding peoples, where the LORD has scattered them. <sup>5</sup>They were brought down and not raised up, because our nation<sup>11</sup> sinned against the LORD our God, in not heeding his voice.

<sup>6</sup>The LORD our God is in the right, but there is open shame on us and our ancestors this very day. <sup>7</sup>All those calamities with which the LORD threatened us have come upon us. <sup>8</sup>Yet we have not entreated the favor of the LORD by turning away, each of us, from the thoughts of our wicked hearts. <sup>9</sup>And the LORD has kept the calamities ready, and the LORD has brought them upon us, for the LORD is just in all the works that he has commanded us to do. <sup>10</sup>Yet we have not obeyed his voice, to walk in the statutes of the LORD that he set before us.

### *Prayer for Deliverance*

<sup>2:11</sup>And now, O LORD God of Israel, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand and with signs and wonders and with great power and outstretched arm, and made yourself a name that continues to this day, <sup>12</sup>we have sinned, we have been ungodly, we have done wrong, O LORD our God, against all your ordinances. <sup>13</sup>Let your anger turn away from us, for we are left, few in number, among the nations where you have scattered us. <sup>14</sup>Hear, O LORD, our prayer and our supplication, and for your own sake deliver us, and grant us favor in the sight of those who have carried us

**2:5. *they were brought down and not raised up*** See Deut. 28:13, for the blessing: "You will always be at the top and never at the bottom," the Greek terms being identical.

***in not heeding his voice*** See Dan. 9:10–11 and Bar. 1:19, 21.

**2:6. *the LORD our God is in the right*** Repeating the language of 1:15, it would appear that the confession is beginning anew. Whereas the preceding confession is from the perspective of the remnant remaining in Jerusalem and displays the particular influence of Daniel, what follows is usually understood to express the perspective of those suffering exile and dispersion in foreign lands (e.g., 2:13–14, 30) and displays the additional influence of Jeremiah. See Dan. 9:7.

**2:8. *yet we have not entreated the favor of the LORD*** The emphasis of the confession continues to be that of continued disobedience and unworthiness of divine favor. Similarly, 2:10. See Dan. 9:13; Jer. 7:24.

**2:9. *and the LORD has kept the calamities ready*** Closely following Dan. 9:14.

**2:10. *yet we have not obeyed his voice*** See Bar. 1:19, 21; 2:5; Dan. 9:10–11.

**2:11. *and now*** Following the initial confession, here begins the petitionary section of the prayer (2:11–18), even though the confessional theme will recur (2:12). This section closely follows Dan. 9:15–19 and like it employs the language of the Exodus from Egypt (e.g., Exod. 3:7–8, 20–21), framing the return from exile in terms of a second exodus. Cf. also Jer. 32:20–21.

**2:12. *we have sinned*** For the confessional language, see Dan. 9:5; 1 Kings 8:47; 2 Chron. 6:37.

**2:13. *let your anger turn away from us*** See Dan. 9:16.

***few in number, among the nations where you have scattered us*** See Deut. 4:27; Jer. 42:2.

**2:14. *Hear, O LORD, our prayer and our supplication*** See Dan. 9:17.

***for your own sake deliver us*** A recurring theme of the traditional Jewish High Holiday liturgy is "for your sake if not for our sake," as in the *Avinu Malkeinu* prayer: "Our father, our king, act for your sake if not for ours; our father, our king, graciously answer us, although we are without merits."

In our text, the petition is to redeem Israel for the sake of God's reputation among the non-Jewish nations, even though Israel is unworthy. See 2 Kings 19:19; Dan. 9:18–19.

***grant us favor in the sight of those who have carried us into exile*** Cf. Gen. 39:21.



into exile; <sup>15</sup>so that all the earth may know that you are the LORD our God, for Israel and his descendants are called by your name.

<sup>16</sup>O LORD, look down from your holy dwelling, and consider us. Incline your ear, O LORD, and hear; <sup>17</sup>open your eyes, O LORD, and see, for the dead who are in Hades, whose spirit has been taken from their bodies, will not ascribe glory or justice to the LORD; <sup>18</sup>but the person who is deeply grieved, who walks bowed and feeble, with failing eyes and famished soul, will declare your glory and righteousness, O LORD.

<sup>19</sup>For it is not because of any righteous deeds of our ancestors or our kings that we bring before you our prayer for mercy, O LORD our God. <sup>20</sup>For you have sent your anger and your wrath upon us, as you declared by your servants the prophets, saying: <sup>21</sup>Thus says the LORD: Bend your shoulders and serve the king of Babylon, and you will remain in the land that I gave to your ancestors. <sup>22</sup>But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD and will not serve the king of Babylon, <sup>23</sup>I will make to cease from the towns of Judah and from the region around Jerusalem the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, and the whole land will be a desolation without inhabitants.

<sup>24</sup>But we did not obey your voice, to serve the king of Babylon; and you have carried out your threats, which you spoke by your servants the prophets, that the bones of our kings and the bones of our ancestors would be brought out of their resting place; <sup>25</sup>and indeed they have been thrown out to the heat of day and the frost of night. They perished in great misery, by famine and sword and pestilence. <sup>26</sup>And

*2:15. for Israel and his descendants are called by your name* See Dan. 9:19.

*2:16. look down from your holy dwelling* See Deut. 26:15.

*2:16-17. incline your ear, O LORD, and hear; open your eyes O LORD, and see* See Dan. 9:18; 2 Kings 19:16.

*2:17. the dead who are in Hades . . . will not ascribe glory or justice to the LORD* The dead cannot praise God, only the living, and especially those who have been tried. See Ps. 6:6: "For there is no praise of You among the dead; in Sheol, who can acclaim You?" Similarly, Ps. 30:9; 88:10-12; 115:17; Isa. 38:18. For the netherworld, see also Job 10:21-22.

*2:18. with failing eyes and famished soul* See Deut. 28:65.

*2:19. not because of any righteous deeds of our ancestors* Compare the later Rabbinic idea of the *zekhut 'avot* (merits of the ancestors), which accrue to the credit of the people as a whole, and which credit can be drawn upon to avert the consequences of the sinful behavior of later generations. See Bar. 2:14 and Dan. 9:18-19.

*2:20. your anger and your wrath* See Ps. 78:49.

*by your servants the prophets* See Jer. 26:5.

*2:21. thus says the LORD* What follows is a pastiche from Jer. 7:34; 27:9, 12; 48:9. Jeremiah urged the acceptance, rather than resistance, of Babylonian rule as part of God's historical use of the nations to punish Israel.

*2:23. the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness* The Hebrew of Jer. 7:34, upon which this is based, is combined with Jer. 33:10-11 and included in the seventh traditional Jewish wedding blessing: "May there soon be heard in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the groom and the voice of the bride."

*2:24. but we did not obey your voice* A continuation of confession of Israel's disobedience and justification of God's punishment of them, with echoes of 1:11-12, 20-2:1.<sup>18</sup>

the house that is called by your name you have made as it is today, because of the wickedness of the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

### *God's Promise Recalled*

2:27 Yet you have dealt with us, O LORD our God, in all your kindness and in all your great compassion, <sup>28</sup>as you spoke by your servant Moses on the day when you commanded him to write your law in the presence of the people of Israel, saying, <sup>29</sup>"If you will not obey my voice, this very great multitude will surely turn into a small number among the nations, where I will scatter them. <sup>30</sup>For I know that they will not obey me, for they are a stiff-necked people. But in the land of their exile they will come to themselves <sup>31</sup>and know that I am the LORD their God. I will give them a heart that obeys and ears that hear; <sup>32</sup>they will praise me in the land of their exile, and will remember my name <sup>33</sup>and turn from their stubbornness and their wicked deeds; for they will remember the ways of their ancestors, who sinned before the LORD. <sup>34</sup>I will bring them again into the land that I swore to give to their ancestors, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and they will rule over it; and I will increase them, and they will not be diminished. <sup>35</sup>I will make an everlasting covenant with them to be their God and they shall be my people; and I will never again remove my people Israel from the land that I have given them."

<sup>31</sup>O LORD Almighty, God of Israel, the soul in anguish and the wearied spirit cry out to you. <sup>2</sup>Hear, O LORD, and have mercy, for we have sinned before you. <sup>3</sup>For you are enthroned forever, and we are perishing forever. <sup>4</sup>O LORD Almighty, God of Israel, hear now the prayer of the people<sup>12</sup> of Israel, the

2:27. *you have dealt with us . . . in all your kindness* See Ps. 119:124: "Deal with Your servant as befits Your steadfast love [*hesed*]." Here, and through the end of the chapter, purporting to quote God's words recorded through Moses, the tone turns much more hopeful, emphasizing God's mercifulness, and the ability of the surviving remnant in exile to return. This section draws heavily on Jeremiah, but with some Deuteronomic highlights (e.g., Deut. 30:1-5).

2:29. *if you will not obey my voice* See Bar. 2:10 and Deut. 28:15.

*this very great multitude will surely turn into a small number* See Jer. 42:2.

*among the nations, where I will scatter them* See Jer. 24:9.

2:30. *but in the land of their exile they will come to themselves* See 2 Chron. 6:37.

2:31. *I will give them a heart that obeys* See Jer. 24:7.

2:33. *turn from their stubbornness and their wicked deeds* See Jer. 25:5.

2:34. *I will bring them again into the land that I swore to give to their ancestors* See Jer. 30:3; Deut. 30:5.

*I will increase them, and they will not be diminished* See Jer. 29:6. Cf. Deut. 28:62.

2:35. *I will make an everlasting covenant with them* See Jer. 32:40.

*and they shall be my people* See Jer. 31:33.

*I will never again remove my people Israel* Cf. 1 Kings 14:15.

3:1-8. *O LORD Almighty, God of Israel* Concluding section of confessional and petitionary prayer.

Though battered, the exilic remnant is confident that it is not abandoned. Cf. Lev. 26:40-45;

Deut. 30:1-10; Jer. 29:12-14.

3:1. *the soul in anguish and the wearied spirit cry out to you* See Ps. 107:5-6.

3:2. *hear, O LORD, and have mercy* See Ps. 27:7.

3:3. *enthroned forever . . . perishing forever* See Isa. 57:15; Ps. 9:19.

children of those who sinned before you, who did not heed the voice of the LORD their God, so that calamities have clung to us. <sup>5</sup>Do not remember the iniquities of our ancestors, but in this crisis remember your power and your name. <sup>6</sup>For you are the LORD our God, and it is you, O LORD, whom we will praise. <sup>7</sup>For you have put the fear of you in our hearts so that we would call upon your name; and we will praise you in our exile, for we have put away from our hearts all the iniquity of our ancestors who sinned against you. <sup>8</sup>See, we are today in our exile where you have scattered us, to be reproached and cursed and punished for all the iniquities of our ancestors, who forsook the LORD our God.

### *In Praise of Wisdom*

<sup>3:9</sup>Hear the commandments of life, O Israel;  
give ear, and learn wisdom!

<sup>10</sup>Why is it, O Israel, why is it that you are in the land of your enemies,  
that you are growing old in a foreign country,  
that you are defiled with the dead,

*3:4. calamities have clung to us* See Bar. 1:20.

*3:5. do not remember the iniquities of our ancestors* See Ps. 79:8 and Bar. 2:19. Just as the "merits of the ancestors" could be credited to their descendants, so too the sins of the ancestors could be visited upon their descendants. <sup>19</sup>

*3:7. for you have put the fear of you in our hearts* See Jer. 32:40.

*3:8. see, we are today in our exile where you have scattered us* See Jer. 24:9.

*for all the iniquities of our ancestors* See Bar. 3:5. While having confessed their own sins, the extent of their exile and suffering can be understood only as the cumulative effect of ancestral sinfulness. Their confession is, thus, not just for themselves, but for previous generations as well. Cf. Lev. 26:40: "And they shall confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers." The text suggests a petition from the penitents to be gathered from their exile and returned to their land, which is never made explicit.

*3:9. hear the commandments of life, O Israel; give ear, and learn wisdom!* Here through 4:4 is a poem in praise of Wisdom that is noticeably different in language, form, and content from what precedes it, even though it shares the theme, more subtly expressed here, of exile.

*hear . . . O Israel* For the call to listen up, often in didactic contexts, cf. Deut. 4:1; 5:1; 6:3-4; 9:1, and elsewhere.<sup>20</sup> For the parallelism of "hear" and "give ear," see Deut. 32:1; Isa. 1:2.

*3:10. you are in the land of your enemies . . . growing old in a foreign country* In contrast to the preceding sections (cf. 1:2, 11), here the sense is that the exile has already lasted a while. Some use this to push the dating of the composition later rather than earlier. The continuing exile is now not so much the consequence of Israel's sinful behavior as its failure to find the true source of wisdom. Cf. the opening of the *Damascus Document*, now found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, which describes the period of the sectarian movement's wandering in the wilderness, before they were provided with the Teacher of Righteousness to instruct them: "And they discerned their iniquity and knew that they were guilty people; and they were as blind as those who grope for a way" (1:8-10).

*you are defiled with the dead* Probably intended figuratively. Having rejected the "commandments of life," Israel in exile is as good as dead.

<sup>11</sup>that you are counted among those in Hades?

<sup>12</sup>You have forsaken the fountain of wisdom.

<sup>13</sup>If you had walked in the way of God,  
you would be living in peace forever.

<sup>14</sup>Learn where there is wisdom,  
where there is strength,  
where there is understanding,  
so that you may at the same time discern  
where there is length of days, and life,  
where there is light for the eyes, and peace.

<sup>15</sup>Who has found her place?  
And who has entered her storehouses?

<sup>16</sup>Where are the rulers of the nations,  
and those who lorded it over the animals on earth;

<sup>17</sup>those who made sport of the birds of the air,  
and who hoarded up silver and gold  
in which people trust,

and there is no end to their getting;

<sup>18</sup>those who schemed to get silver, and were anxious,  
but there is no trace of their works?

3:11. *you are counted among those in Hades* Cf. Ps. 55:16; 88:4, as well as Bar. 2:17.

3:12. *fountain of wisdom* See Prov. 18:4. Water is frequently used in wisdom and prophetic, as well as later Rabbinic, literature as a metaphor for wisdom and Torah teaching. The fountain, or source of wisdom, is God. See Jer. 2:13: "For My people have done a twofold wrong: They have forsaken Me, the Fount of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, which cannot even hold water." For God as the source of all wisdom, see Sir. 1:1, 5. The present verse is the beginning of the response to the rhetorical question of Bar. 3:10-11.

3:14. *learn where there is wisdom . . . strength . . . understanding . . . length of days, and life . . . light . . . peace* See Prov. 3:13-18; Job 12:13; 28:12, 20. Wisdom is seen as the source of all other desirable qualities.

3:15. *who has found her place?* Here through 3:31 we are told of those who have failed to find wisdom, mainly the rich and powerful. The answer does not come until 3:32-4:4. See Job 28:12-28.

3:16. *those who lorded it over the animals on earth* For Nebuchadnezzar's dominion over animals and his descent to the level of the animals, see Dan. 2:37-38; Jer. 28:14; Jdt. 11:7; and especially Dan. 4:20-21. Sporting with and collecting animals was associated with royal power. See 1 Kings 10:22; Jer. 27:6.

3:17. *those who made sport of the birds of the air* The mighty in ruling over and sporting with animals fail to learn from them. See Job 12:7-9.

3:18. *those who schemed to get silver*<sup>21</sup> The mighty accumulate riches, which prove to be transient. Cf. Prov. 2:4.

<sup>19</sup>They have vanished and gone down to Hades,  
and others have arisen in their place.

<sup>20</sup>Later generations have seen the light of day,  
and have lived upon the earth;  
but they have not learned the way to knowledge,  
nor understood her paths,  
nor laid hold of her.

<sup>21</sup>Their descendants have strayed far from her<sup>13</sup> way.

<sup>22</sup>She has not been heard of in Canaan,  
or seen in Teman;

<sup>23</sup>the descendants of Hagar, who seek for understanding on the earth,  
the merchants of Merran and Teman,  
the story-tellers and the seekers for understanding,  
have not learned the way to wisdom,  
or given thought to her paths.

<sup>24</sup>O Israel, how great is the house of God,  
how vast the territory that he possesses!

<sup>25</sup>It is great and has no bounds;  
it is high and immeasurable.

<sup>26</sup>The giants were born there, who were famous of old,  
great in stature, expert in war.

3:20–21. *later generations . . . their descendants* Here the emphasis is less on the mighty per se, than on the unawareness of humanity in general, in successive generations, with respect to wisdom.

3:21. *from her way* Following the Syriac version, with “her” referring back to wisdom, as preferred by most commentators. However, the Greek has “their,” referring to the previous generation.

3:22. *Canaan . . . Teman* Places associated with wisdom do not know true wisdom. For Canaan, land of the Phoenicians (Zeph. 2:5), with cities Tyre and Sidon, see Isa. 23:8; Ezek. 28:3–5; Zech. 9:2–4. For Teman, see Jer. 49:7; Obad. 8–9.

3:23. *the descendants of Hagar* Ishmaelite merchants, Ishmael being the son of Hagar (Gen. 16:11–12, 15). For Ishmaelites as traveling merchants, see Gen. 37:25. Travelers may be thought to seek and transmit wisdom (Sir. 39:4), but in this case they are as lost as everyone else.

*Merran* Unknown. Perhaps an error for Midian, since Midianites are associated with caravans. See Gen. 37:28.

3:24. *the house of God* In light of what follows, this refers to the whole universe and not to the Temple, either earthly or heavenly.

3:25. *it is great and has no bounds* The enormity of the universe suggests the majesty of God and his wisdom.

3:26. *the giants* The offspring of the antediluvian “fallen angels” and human women of Gen. 6:1–4, there called in Hebrew the Nephilim. For their deeds, including waging war, see 1 En. 7:2–5; Jub. 7:22–23; Sir. 16:7.

<sup>27</sup>God did not choose them,  
or give them the way to knowledge;  
<sup>28</sup>so they perished because they had no wisdom,  
they perished through their folly.

<sup>29</sup>Who has gone up into heaven, and taken her,  
and brought her down from the clouds?

<sup>30</sup>Who has gone over the sea, and found her,  
and will buy her for pure gold?

<sup>31</sup>No one knows the way to her,  
or is concerned about the path to her.

<sup>32</sup>But the one who knows all things knows her,  
he found her by his understanding.

The one who prepared the earth for all time  
filled it with four-footed creatures;

<sup>33</sup>the one who sends forth the light, and it goes;  
he called it, and it obeyed him, trembling;

<sup>34</sup>the stars shone in their watches, and were glad;  
he called them, and they said, "Here we are!"

They shone with gladness for him who made them.

*3:27–28. or give them the way to knowledge . . . because they had no wisdom* According to 1 En. 6–11, their fathers, the "fallen angels," brought wisdom from heaven to earth. If that tradition is alluded to here, then the wisdom received by the giants was not true wisdom and was certainly of no value to them.<sup>22</sup>

*they perished through their folly* According to Wis. 14:6, they perished in the Flood.

*3:29–30. who has gone up into heaven . . . who has gone over the sea* Cf. Deut. 30:12–13 as well as Prov. 30:4; Isa. 40:12–14. Here, however, the emphasis is on the *impossibility* of finding wisdom unassisted, no matter how far one might travel (or how powerful and rich). Cf. Sir. 24:4–5 and Wis. 9:4, where Wisdom is said to dwell in heaven. In the many similarities between this section of Baruch and Sir. 24, it should be noted that in Sir. 24:1–22 personified Wisdom speaks in the first person, whereas here she is referred to in the third person.

*3:30. and will buy her for pure gold* See Job 28:15–19.

*3:31. No one knows the way to her* The negative answer to the rhetorical question of 3:29–30. For the same pattern, see 3:12.

*3:32. but the one who knows all things knows her* God alone has direct access to wisdom. See Job 28:23–27.

*3:33. the one who sends forth the light* "Light" here most likely refers to lightning, as in Job 36:30, 32; 37:11, 15. Cf. Job 38:35: "Can you dispatch the lightning on a mission and have it answer you, 'I am ready?'" See also Job 37:3.

*3:34. he called them* The stars appear in response to God's call to them. See Isa. 40:26.

<sup>35</sup>This is our God;  
 no other can be compared to him.  
<sup>36</sup>He found the whole way to knowledge,  
 and gave her to his servant Jacob  
 and to Israel, whom he loved.  
<sup>37</sup>Afterward she appeared on earth  
 and lived with humankind.

<sup>4:1</sup>She is the book of the commandments of God,  
 the law that endures forever.  
 All who hold her fast will live,  
 and those who forsake her will die.  
<sup>2</sup>Turn, O Jacob, and take her;  
 walk toward the shining of her light.  
<sup>3</sup>Do not give your glory to another,  
 or your advantages to an alien people.

- 3:35. *this is our God; no other can be compared to him*** Like the stars, Israel bears witness to God, here proclaiming God's uniqueness. See Exod. 15:2, 11; Deut. 4:35; Isa. 43:10–11; 44:6–7; 45:18.
- 3:36. *he found the whole way to knowledge*** Here, finally, begins the answer to the question rhetorically asked in 3:15: God, and not the seemingly rich and mighty humans, has found wisdom. Cf. Job 28:23: "God understands the way to it; He knows its source."
- and gave her to his servant Jacob*** Having concluded that wisdom is with God alone, our text pronounces that he has given it, in an act of love, to Israel alone and, by implication, not to the Gentiles. See Sir. 24:8: "Then the Creator of all things gave me [= Wisdom] a command, and my Creator chose the place for my tent. He said, 'Make your dwelling in Jacob, and in Israel receive your inheritance.'" For a similar paralleling of Israel and Jacob, see Isa. 44:1.
- 3:37. *afterward she appeared on earth*** Through Israel, Wisdom lives on earth and is finally available to humankind. Early church fathers saw in this verse a prediction of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Some modern scholars have suggested that the verse is a Christian interpolation. However, presuming that the subject of "appeared" is the "feminine" "knowledge" of the previous verse (and "she" of the next verse), the verse is consistent with other expressions of Wisdom's having come to dwell on earth. See Prov. 8:1–3, 31; Wis. 9:10; Sir. 24:10–12.<sup>23</sup>
- 4:1. *she is the book of the commandments of God*** Having located Wisdom in God, gifted to Israel, it is now, in conclusion, identified with the eternal Torah (Greek *nomos*). For the same identification, see Sir. 24:23: "All this is the book of the covenant of the Most High God, the law [*nomos* = Torah] that Moses commanded us as an inheritance for the congregations of Jacob." The last clause is identical in Greek to Deut. 33:4 LXX. See also Deut. 4:5–8.
- that endures forever*** For the eternity of Torah/Wisdom, see Sir. 1:15.
- all who hold her fast will live*** Cf. Prov. 3:18: "She is a tree of life to those who grasp her."
- 4:2. *the shining of her light*** See Prov. 6:23: "For the commandment is a lamp, the teaching is a light."
- 4:3. *do not give your glory to another . . . alien people*** Cf. Deut. 4:6–8. Israel's distinction from the other peoples by virtue of possessing the Torah would be gone if were to become a universal

<sup>4</sup>Happy are we, O Israel,  
for we know what is pleasing to God.

*Encouragement for Israel*

<sup>4:5</sup>Take courage, my people,  
who perpetuate Israel's name!

<sup>6</sup>It was not for destruction  
that you were sold to the nations,  
but you were handed over to your enemies  
because you angered God.

<sup>7</sup>For you provoked the one who made you  
by sacrificing to demons and not to God.

<sup>8</sup>You forgot the everlasting God, who brought you up,  
and you grieved Jerusalem, who reared you.

<sup>9</sup>For she saw the wrath that came upon you from God,  
and she said:

Listen, you neighbors of Zion,  
God has brought great sorrow upon me;

<sup>10</sup>for I have seen the exile of my sons and daughters,  
which the Everlasting brought upon them.

possession. Perhaps an allusion to the (false) wisdom, and its competing claims, of other (e.g., Greek) cultures.<sup>24</sup>

**4:4. *for we know what is pleasing to God*** See Wis. 9:18: "And people were taught what pleases you, and were saved by wisdom."

**4:5. *take courage, my people*** Here through the end (5:9), what was probably once a separate poetic composition offers words of encouragement to Israel, first from God (4:5-9a) and then from personified Jerusalem (4:9b-29), continuing (4:30-5:9) with words addressed to Jerusalem. The Deuteronomic motif of sin, exile, and return is emphasized, drawing heavily for language on Isa. 40-55, with its image of Mother Zion and her children. The opening "take courage" is repeated in Bar. 4:21, 27, 30.

***who perpetuate Israel's name*** Literally, the "memory of Israel." The remnant of the people who have survived the exile preserve the memory/reputation/name of Israel (Jacob), perhaps alluding to past covenantal fortunes and promises, expected to be restored.

**4:6. *it was not for destruction that you were sold to the nations*** That is, sent into exile. Israel's exile, in punishment for its sins, is not final. It was not intended to sever God's covenantal relationship with it, but a necessary aspect of that relationship. See Isa. 50:1; 52:3.

**4:7. *sacrificing to demons*** That is, to false gods. See Deut. 32:17, most likely the basis for this verse.

**4:8. *you grieved Jerusalem, who reared you*** Literally, "who nursed you." For this image of a nursing God, see Hosea 11:4; Ezek. 16:4-7. While the parental image of God's relationship to Israel is biblically common, casting Jerusalem as aggrieved parent is less so.<sup>25</sup>

**4:9. *listen, you neighbors of Zion*** From here through 4:16, personified Jerusalem addresses its hostile neighbors.



<sup>11</sup>With joy I nurtured them,  
 but I sent them away with weeping and sorrow.  
<sup>12</sup>Let no one rejoice over me, a widow  
 and bereaved of many;  
 I was left desolate because of the sins of my children,  
 because they turned away from the law of God.  
<sup>13</sup>They had no regard for his statutes;  
 they did not walk in the ways of God's commandments,  
 or tread the paths his righteousness showed them.  
<sup>14</sup>Let the neighbors of Zion come;  
 remember the capture of my sons and daughters,  
 which the Everlasting brought upon them.  
<sup>15</sup>For he brought a distant nation against them,  
 a nation ruthless and of a strange language,  
 which had no respect for the aged  
 and no pity for a child.  
<sup>16</sup>They led away the widow's beloved sons,  
 and bereaved the lonely woman of her daughters.  
<sup>17</sup>But I, how can I help you?  
<sup>18</sup>For he who brought these calamities upon you  
 will deliver you from the hand of your enemies.  
<sup>19</sup>Go, my children, go;  
 for I have been left desolate.  
<sup>20</sup>I have taken off the robe of peace  
 and put on sackcloth for my supplication;  
 I will cry to the Everlasting all my days.  
  
<sup>21</sup>Take courage, my children, cry to God,  
 and he will deliver you from the power and hand of the enemy.  
<sup>22</sup>For I have put my hope in the Everlasting to save you,

4:15. *for he brought a distant nation against them, a nation ruthless and of a strange language* See Deut. 28:49–50, where the “distant nation” is Babylonia. Some have suggested that the image is to bring to mind a more recent conqueror, e.g., the Seleucids or the Romans, depending on one’s dating of the poem. See also Jer. 5:15; 6:22–23.

*of a strange language* See Ezek. 3:5.

4:17. *but I, how can I help you?* Here through 4:29, personified Jerusalem, the aggrieved widow, whose children have been taken from her, seeks to comfort them by assuring them that God, who has punished them, will soon deliver them back to Jerusalem.

4:20. *and put on sackcloth for my supplication* See Lam. 2:10; Isa. 52:1.

4:22. *Everlasting* The repeated use of this epithet (Greek *aiōnios*) for God distinguishes this section from those that precede it. See Isa. 26:4; 40:28.

and joy has come to me from the Holy One,  
because of the mercy that will soon come to you  
from your everlasting savior.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>23</sup>For I sent you out with sorrow and weeping,  
but God will give you back to me with joy and gladness forever.

<sup>24</sup>For as the neighbors of Zion have now seen your capture,  
so they soon will see your salvation by God,  
which will come to you with great glory  
and with the splendor of the Everlasting.

<sup>25</sup>My children, endure with patience the wrath that has come upon you from God.  
Your enemy has overtaken you,  
but you will soon see their destruction  
and will tread upon their necks.

<sup>26</sup>My pampered children have traveled rough roads;  
they were taken away like a flock carried off by the enemy.

<sup>27</sup>Take courage, my children, and cry to God,  
for you will be remembered by the one who brought this upon you.

<sup>28</sup>For just as you were disposed to go astray from God,  
return with tenfold zeal to seek him.

<sup>29</sup>For the one who brought these calamities upon you  
will bring you everlasting joy with your salvation.

#### *Jerusalem Is Assured of Help*

<sup>4:30</sup>Take courage, O Jerusalem,  
for the one who named you will comfort you.

<sup>31</sup>Wretched will be those who mistreated you  
and who rejoiced at your fall.

*Holy One* See Bar. 4:37; 5:5; Isa. 41:20; Hab. 3:3; Ps. 71:22; 78:41; Sir. 48:20.

<sup>4:23</sup>. *but God will give you back to me with joy and gladness* See Ps. 126:6; Isa. 35:10; 51:11.

<sup>4:24</sup>. *so they soon will see your salvation . . . with the splendor* See Isa. 60:1–3 (especially in Greek).

<sup>4:25</sup>. *and will tread upon their necks* See Deut. 33:29. Cf. Isa. 51:23.

<sup>4:26</sup>. *my pampered children* For the expression (in Greek), see Deut. 28:56; Isa. 47:1, 8; Mic. 1:16.

<sup>4:30</sup>. *take courage, O Jerusalem* The addressee from here through the end is now Jerusalem, the speaker being either God (4:34) or the prophet on God's behalf. For God as Israel's comforter, see Isa. 51:12. For God's (re)naming of Israel, see 62:2, 4. Through Bar. 4:37, the first indication of Israel's redemption will be the downfall and ruination of those who oppressed Israel, all at God's hand. Contrast this with the attitude to Babylonia expressed in 1:11–12.

<sup>4:31</sup>. *rejoiced at your fall* Repeated in 4:33. For nations, especially Edom, having gloated at Jerusalem's destruction, see Lam. 4:21; Obad. 12–13.

<sup>32</sup>Wretched will be the cities that your children served as slaves;  
wretched will be the city that received your offspring.

<sup>33</sup>For just as she rejoiced at your fall  
and was glad for your ruin,  
so she will be grieved at her own desolation.

<sup>34</sup>I will take away her pride in her great population,  
and her insolence will be turned to grief.

<sup>35</sup>For fire will come upon her from the Everlasting for many days,  
and for a long time she will be inhabited by demons.

<sup>36</sup>Look toward the east, O Jerusalem,  
and see the joy that is coming to you from God.

<sup>37</sup>Look, your children are coming, whom you sent away;  
they are coming, gathered from east and west,  
at the word of the Holy One,  
rejoicing in the glory of God.

<sup>5:1</sup>Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem,  
and put on forever the beauty of the glory from God.

<sup>2</sup>Put on the robe of the righteousness that comes from God;  
put on your head the diadem of the glory of the Everlasting;

<sup>3</sup>for God will show your splendor everywhere under heaven.

<sup>4</sup>For God will give you evermore the name,  
"Righteous Peace, Godly Glory."

4:33. *so she will be grieved at her own desolation* She (the nation that has dispossessed Israel) will receive her own punishment in due time. See Deut. 30:7. For the enemy personified as a woman, see Isa. 47:1-9.

4:35. *for fire will come upon her* See Jer. 50:32; 51:30, 58.  
*she will be inhabited by demons* See Isa. 13:21; 34:14.

4:36. *look to the east, O Jerusalem, and see the joy* Through 5:4, Jerusalem's joy at seeing its children returning from exile. Cf. Isa. 40:9-11.

4:37. *gathered from east and west* Cf. 4:36, "Look to the east." Although the returning exiles are coming mainly from the east, that is, from Babylonia, "from east and west" denotes from all directions. The same is restated in 5:5.<sup>26</sup>

5:1-2. *take off the garment . . . put on the robe* Reversing the signs of mourning of 4:20. Donning new clothes symbolizes a new (or renewed) condition. See Isa. 52:1, 61:10; Job 29:14 (especially in the Greek); *Pss. Sol.* 11:7.

5:4. *for God will give you evermore the name* A change of name signifies a change in status. See Isa. 1:26; 62:2-4. For names given to Jerusalem, see Isa. 60:14; Jer. 33:16; Ezek. 48:35.

*Righteous Peace* For the combination, see Isa. 32:17.

<sup>5</sup>Arise, O Jerusalem, stand upon the height;  
look toward the east,  
and see your children gathered from west and east  
at the word of the Holy One,  
rejoicing that God has remembered them.

<sup>6</sup>For they went out from you on foot,  
led away by their enemies;  
but God will bring them back to you,  
Carried in glory, as on a royal throne.

<sup>7</sup>For God has ordered that every high mountain and the everlasting hills be made low  
and the valleys filled up, to make level ground,  
so that Israel may walk safely in the glory of God.

<sup>8</sup>The woods and every fragrant tree  
have shaded Israel at God's command.

<sup>9</sup>For God will lead Israel with joy,  
in the light of his glory,  
with the mercy and righteousness that come from him.

5:5. *arise, O Jerusalem* Regarded and renamed, Jerusalem is now ready to welcome back its returning children (exiles). Elements of this verse resonate with Isa. 40:9; 43:5; 51:17; and 60:4. Its closest parallel is Pss. Sol. 11:2: "Stand on a high place, Jerusalem, and look at your children, from the east and the west assembled together by the LORD" (OTP 2:662).

*that God has remembered them* As predicted in 4:27–29. In what follows, the final (seventh) stanza, what was previously predicted is now unfolding.

5:6. *Carried in glory, as on a royal throne* Unlike Israel's exile, its return will be like a festive, victory procession. See Isa. 49:22; 66:20.

5:7. *every high mountain and the everlasting hills be made low* Here and in the following verse, all of nature obeys God's commands so as to facilitate Israel's glorious return to Jerusalem. See Isa. 40:4–5; Pss. Sol. 11:4.

5:8. *the woods and every fragrant tree have shaded Israel* See Pss. Sol. 11:5–6.

5:9. *in the light of his glory* See Isa. 60:1–3.

#### NOTES

1. For a retroversion of 1:1–3:8 from Greek to Hebrew, see Emanuel Tov, ed. and trans., *The Book of Baruch Also Called 1 Baruch (Greek and Hebrew): Edited, Reconstructed, and Translated*, Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations 8/Pseudepigrapha Series 6 (Missoula MT: Scholars Press, 1975). For a challenge to the claim for a Hebrew original, see James R. Davila, "(How) Can We Tell If a Greek Apocryphon or Pseudepigraphon Was Translated from Hebrew or Aramaic?" *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 15 (2005): 3–61.
2. See Emanuel Tov, *The Septuagint Translation of Jeremiah and Baruch: A Discussion of an Early Revision of the LXX of Jeremiah 29–52 and Baruch 1:1–3:8*, Harvard Semitic Museum, Harvard Semitic Monographs 8 (Missoula MT: Scholars Press, 1976), 111–33, 165; George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 97.

3. See Carey A. Moore, *Daniel, Esther, and Jeremiah: The Additions*, Anchor Bible 44 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), 260.
4. See James R. Davila, *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha: Jewish, Christian, or Other?* Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 105 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 225–27.
5. But see *Apostolic Constitutions* 5:20 (ca. 380), referred to by Moore, *Daniel, Esther, and Jeremiah*, 261, whose historicity is suspect.
6. Translation from *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (Nashville: Nelson, 1989).
7. Gk. *the priest*
8. Gk. *he*
9. Gk. *in the shadow*
10. Gk. *in accordance with what is*
11. Gk. *because we*
12. Gk. *dead*
13. Other ancient authorities read *their*
14. Or *from the Everlasting, your savior*
15. Berechiah is a long form of Baruch. See N. Avigad, "Baruch the Scribe and Jerahmeel the King's Son," *Israel Exploration Journal* 28 (1978): 52–56 (rpt. *Biblical Archaeology* 42 [1979]: 114–18).
16. See James C. VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas: High Priests after the Exile* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004).
17. For the curses, see Deut. 28:15–68; Lev. 26:14–39. Cf. Dan. 9:13.
18. The language is adapted from Jer. 8:1; 11:17; 16:4; 32:36; 36:30; 44:6.
19. For the latter, see Exod. 20:5–6; 34:7; Num. 14:18; Jer. 32:18; Lam. 5:7. For discomfort with this idea, see Deut. 24:16; Jer. 31:29–30; Ezek. 18:1–4, 20; B. Mak. 24a. For an extensive discussion of transgenerational punishment, see Bernard M. Levinson, *Legal Revision and Religious Renewal in Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
20. See also Deut. 20:3; Prov. 1:8; 4:1, 10; 5:7; 8:32–33.
21. On the difficulty of the translation, see Moore, *Daniel, Esther, and Jeremiah*, 298.
22. See Walter Harrelson, "Wisdom Hidden and Revealed according to Baruch (Baruch 3:9–44)," in *Priests, Prophets, and Scribes: Essays on the Formation and Heritage of Second Temple Judaism in Honour of Joseph Blenkinsopp*, ed. Eugene Ulrich et al., *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement* 149 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 164–65.
23. For further discussion and references, see Moore, *Daniel, Esther, and Jeremiah*, 301–2.
24. On the question of the availability of Torah to non-Jews in Rabbinic traditions, see Marc Hirshman, *Torah for the Entire World* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1999) (Hebrew); idem, "Rabbinic Universalism in the Second and Third Centuries," *Harvard Theological Review* 93 (2000): 101–15.
25. See Bar. 4:9–16; Isa. 51:17–20; 54:1–6; Lam. 1:1, 16–18; 2:19–22; Tob. 13:9.
26. See Isa. 43:5–6; 49:18; 59:19; 60:4; Zech. 8:7–8; Ps. Sol. 11:2–3.