

Week 4 - Baruch

Introduction:

- The book of Baruch is one of the Deuterocanonical books, which the Orthodox church considers as part of the Old Testament.
- These books were written by the Jews in the exile after the time of Ezra and were included in the Septuagint translation of the Bible and many other early translations of the Bible, including the first Coptic translation. These books are:
 - Tobit - 14 chapters
 - Judith - 16 Chapters
 - The remainder of the book of Esther - Chapters 10 to 16.
 - The Wisdom of Solomon - 19 chapters.
 - Joshua the son of Sirach - 51 chapters
 - The Prophecy of Baruch - 6 chapters
 - The remainder of Daniel, which include the rest of chapter 3 and chapters 13 and 14.
 - The first Maccabees - 16 chapters
 - The second Maccabees - 15 chapters
 - Psalm 151
- **Author:**
 - The author is Baruch. The name "Baruch" is a Hebrew word meaning "Blessed,"
Baruch was born around 626 BC in Judah. He saw with his own eyes the Babylonian exile, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the temple.
Baruch was a disciple of the prophet Jeremiah and a scribe who recorded his prophecies. He remained obedient to Jeremiah throughout his life. Even when the Jews took Jeremiah to Egypt, Baruch followed him, witnessing Jeremiah's martyrdom by stoning.
Baruch went to Babylon, where he began writing and proclaiming prophecies. He lived to see the fulfillment of these prophecies when the exiles returned under Zerubbabel.
 - **Time and place of writing:**
 - Baruch wrote it after his arrival in Babylon, following the martyrdom of Jeremiah, five years after the burning of Jerusalem and the temple.
 - **To whom it was written:**
 - Baruch wrote it to the exiled Jews in Babylon
 - **Purpose of the book:**
 - To reject the idolatrous worship
 - Call for repentance
 - To comfort the exiled Jews and encourage them to adhere to God's commandments and remain steadfast in Him

- To proclaim Jeremiah's message to the exiles, urging them to avoid idols and live with God, who would bring them back from exile.
- **Sections:**
 - Historical introduction (Baruch 1:1-14).
 - Confession of sin (Baruch 1:15-3:8).
 - Acceptance of discipline and return to the law (Baruch 3:9-4:20).
 - Joy in salvation (Baruch 4:21-5).
 - Message of the prophet Jeremiah (Baruch 6).
- **Prophecies:**
 - **The Church and Eternity:** A prophecy about the covenant God will make with His people in Christ the Redeemer and the Church of the New Covenant (Baruch 2:35).
 - **The Incarnation:** The incarnation of Christ in the fullness of time (Baruch 3:36-38).
 - **Victory over the Babylonians and Satan:** The destruction of the enemies who enslaved God's people (Baruch 4:25).
 - **Return from Exile:** Rejoicing in Jerusalem (Baruch 4:37; 5:5,9).

Reading:

- **Prayer of repentance .**
 - Confession of sins. (Baruch 1:17-22, 2:5-13)
 - Seeking mercy and salvation, (Baruch 2:14-19, 3:1-5).
 - Praise and thanksgiving, (Baruch 3:6-7).
 - Prophecy about the church and eternity: (Baruch 2:35)
- **Acceptance of discipline and return to the law** (Baruch 3:9-14, 31-38).
- **Joy in salvation** (Baruch 4:21-27).
- **Return from exile** (Baruch 5:1-9).

Resources:

- Fr. Antonios Fekry Bible study of the Book of Baruch
- Fr. Dawood Lamaay Arabic sermon
- Fr. Luka Maher: Arabic sermon about Minor Prophets part 1

Key verse(s):

- "Take off, O Jerusalem, the garment of your sorrow and troubles, and put on your beauty and honor of that eternal glory, which you have from God." Baruch 5:1

Comments:

- ◦ **Prayer of repentance (Baruch 1:15-3:8).**
Baruch teaches us how to pray. Prayer begins with confession, where we acknowledge our sins. Then comes seeking mercy and salvation, knowing that God forgives. Finally, prayer includes praise and thanksgiving, as we acknowledge God's

greatness.

This part contains a deep prayer of repentance, this prayer begins from (Baruch 1:15 – 3:8).

This prayer includes three important spiritual themes:

1. Confession of sins. Read Baruch 1:17-22, 2:5-13

Baruch acknowledges that their exile and suffering are just consequences of their disobedience to God's law.

2. Seeking mercy and salvation, as in (Baruch 2:14-19, 3:1-5).

Baruch asks God for mercy to forgive their sins and to remember His covenant with their ancestors.

3. Praise and thanksgiving, as in (Baruch 3:6-7).

Baruch transitions to praising God

The beginning of any restoration is repentance and confession to receive the mercy of God.

- **The Church and Eternity: A prophecy** about the covenant God will make with His people in Christ the Redeemer and the Church of the New Covenant (Baruch 2:35). This is a clear prophecy about the Church, The covenant mentioned by Baruch here was referred to by Jeremiah as the "New Covenant" (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

Here, Israel represents the Church. The land that God gave to His people is His Church on earth. The covenant is a promise that God will grant His Church an eternal heavenly inheritance.

- **Acceptance of discipline and return to the law (3:9-14, 31-38).**

The focus in this part is to accept discipline and return to God's law as the source of wisdom and life. Baruch reminds us that wisdom cannot be found in earthly knowledge but only in God, who is the ultimate source of wisdom.

- **The Incarnation: Prophecy** about the incarnation of Christ in the fullness of time (Baruch 3:36-38).

These verses are a prophecy about the Incarnation, when God sent His only Son to take on human flesh, dwell among us, bring salvation and redemption, and show us His love and care.

- **Joy in salvation (Baruch 4:21-27).**

- This section describe the people's recognition that the suffering they went through was a result of their disobedience, but now, with repentance and God's mercy, they will rejoice in the salvation He offers.

- **Victory over the Babylonians and Satan: Prophecy** about the destruction of the enemies who

enslaved God's people (Baruch 4:25).

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Return from exile: Prophecy about the return from exile and rejoicing in Jerusalem (Baruch 5: 1-9)

- **Message of the prophet Jeremiah (Baruch 6).**

- It is stated at the beginning of this chapter that it is a message from God, written by the prophet Jeremiah, and given to those who would be exiled to Babylon. This message was then included at the end of Baruch's prophecy, who was a disciple and scribe of Jeremiah. This message is a warning to the exiled Jews not to be influenced by the idol worship widespread in Babylon. It cautions them against worshiping idols or sins, such as adultery.

Review/recap questions:

****Servant may add more questions**

- What are the Deuterocanonical books?
- Who is Baruch?
- Review the purpose of the book and the prophecies

Homework:

****Servant may add more questions**

- To whom did Baruch read this Book?
- How did God punish Israel?
- The people will be captive in Babylon for:
 - a) seven years b) seventy years c) seven generations d) forever

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