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## Bartimaeus

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# Bartimaeus

## **Abstract**

"Son of Timaeus." A blind beggar healed by Jesus as the latter exits Jericho (Mark 10:46-52).

## **Disciplines**

Biblical Studies | History of Religion | Other Religion

## **Comments**

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**BARTIMAEUS** bahr'tuh-mee'uhz [Βαρτιμαῖος Bartimaios]. "Son of Timaeus." A blind beggar healed by Jesus as the latter exits Jericho (Mark 10:46-52). Thereafter, Bartimaeus follows Jesus, presumably into Jerusalem. Similar stories are found in Matt 20:29-34, which mentions two anonymous blind men healed upon leaving Jericho, and in Luke 18:35-43, wherein Jesus heals one blind man upon entering Jericho. All these narratives may serve to contrast the obstructive role of the blind in David's conquest of Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:6-8). See BLINDNESS; DISEASE.

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**BARUCH** bair'uhk [ברוך barukh]. "Blessed." The son of Neriah was JEREMIAH's scribe and a member of a prominent Judean family. Baruch appears only in the book of Jeremiah (32:12-16; 36; 43:1-7; 45). He served Jeremiah by performing standard scribal duties: certifying land transactions, writing down the prophet's words, and presenting Jeremiah's divine oracles to the people and the royal court. Some scholars conclude from the narratives about Baruch's scribal activity that he was the editor of some portions of the book of Jeremiah. While this cannot be confirmed, it seems likely that someone with Baruch's scribal skills would have made compiling Jeremiah's speeches a priority. Outside of the OT, the image of Baruch developed significantly in the religious imagination of ancient Jews and Christians. There are many extrabiblical traditions about Baruch in the Jewish and Christian books attributed to him (see PSEUDEPIGRAPHA). These materials portray Baruch as a sage and seer as well as Jeremiah's prophetic successor. He was imaged as one who speaks with God, receives divine revelations, comforts his people, and ascends to heaven.

A *bulla* (clay seal impression) exists bearing the inscription (see WRITING AND WRITING MATERIALS) "belonging to Berekyahu, son of Neriyahu, the scribe." The names Berekyahu and Neriyahu are long forms of the names Baruch and Neriah. Although the forms of the letters on this *bulla* appear to date to the 6<sup>th</sup> cent. BCE, since the true archaeological provenance of this artifact is unclear, it is uncertain that this *bulla* is authentic.

**Bibliography:** J. E. Wright. *Baruch ben Neriah: From Biblical Scribe to Apocalyptic Seer* (2003).

J. EDWARD WRIGHT

**BARUCH, BOOK OF** [Βαρούχ Barouch]. This apocryphal text is attributed to Baruch, the son of Neriah and secretary to JEREMIAH, although most scholars think the book was written not in the purported time of the Babylonian exile but sometime during the 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. BCE. The book nonetheless explores the theme of exile, defined as the consequence of disobeying God's law (4:12), and clearly elaborated in the book's four parts.

An introduction (1:1-14) is followed by a public prayer of penitence (1:15-3:8). After the prayer concludes by highlighting Mosaic law and the obedience it elicits, the third section (3:9-4:4) follows in the form of a poem that compares the Mosaic law to wisdom, an association not uncommon in the period of the Second Temple (Ps 1:1-2; Sir 24:23-29). The fourth section (4:5-5:9) is a prophetic address signaling the restoration of exiles to Jerusalem as a result of their repentance.

Although an original Hebrew version once might have existed, the earliest extant text of Baruch is in Greek. Baruch appeared in the LXX between the books of Jeremiah and Lamentations, and this Greek translation became the basis for later versions. No copies of Baruch were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, although there was a Greek fragment of the LETTER OF JEREMIAH (7Q2), a deuterocanonical text that has been appended to Baruch since the 4<sup>th</sup> cent. CE, as well as multiple copies of the APOCRYPHON OF JEREMIAH, an apocalypse with marked parallels to the book of Baruch, such as the introductory setting at the royal court in exile.

In dating the text, the consensus is that the Greek period (332-63 BCE) is the most likely setting for the book, and that the 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. is the most plausible time of Baruch's composition. The hypothesis that Baruch was written in 163-162 BCE when a portion of Jerusalem's Jews had reached détente with their Seleucid overlords and were urging their coreligionists to do the same remains influential among scholars.

For readers of the OT, a striking feature of Baruch is its echoing diverse books of scripture. The final section, a prophetic address, draws upon the language and thought of Deutero-Isaiah as well as DEUTERONOMY, LAMENTATIONS, and the PSALMS OF SOLOMON. The wisdom poem in the third section echoes PROVERBS, JOB, BEN SIRA, and again Deuteronomy. Baruch's second section, the penitential prayer, borrows copiously from Lev 26, from Deut 4; 28, and 30; from 1 Kgs 8, and from Jer 24 and 32. The most significant confluence is between Baruch's prayer and the penitential prayer in Dan 9:4-19, with the following parallels: Dan 9:5-8 and Bar 1:15-17; Dan 9:10 and Bar 1:21; Dan 9:12-13 and Bar 2:1-4; 3:8; Dan 9:15 and Bar 2:11; Dan 9:17 and Bar 2:14. Scholars have generally thought that Daniel's prayer serves as the basis for that of Baruch, although the issue is still debated.

Citing Baruch's assumed dependence on DANIEL and other texts, certain scholars have judged the book to be derivative and artless. In this vein, critics have also cited stylistic and thematic inconsistencies that are said to detract from Baruch's literary and theological integrity. Recently, however, attention has been drawn to formal literary features of Baruch that impart unity as they bring forth more complex and nuanced points of theology. This recent work has focused on the prayer in 1:15-3:8. As the prayer subdivides into a confession