

ruch brings the law and wisdom to Israel's mind and refers to the unique God of Israel, who provides knowledge (LXX: ἐπιστήμη) to "Jacob-Israel" (Bar 3:36–38). In v.38, it is "knowledge" or God (or Christ?) who "shew himself upon earth, and conversed with men." If it is God who visits humankind, this universal idea contradicts that of the God who self-reveals to Israel (v.6). And on the other hand, the idea that wisdom or knowledge was first revealed to Israel (cf. v.37), and afterwards to the whole world (cf. Job 28; Prov 8), is very uncommon in ancient Jewish texts. Thus, this verse is considered to be of early Christian origin (cf. Steck: 153–54).

The remaining sources relating to Baruch obviously passed through a more intensive process of Christian editing. The reason for this phenomenon is the fact that Baruch and those writings related to him were much more prominent in early Christianity than in ancient Judaism. In general, we have to consider rather late works, mainly of Christian provenance; in the *Ethiopic Apocalypse of Baruch* (5th–7th cent. CE), the angel Sutu'el shows heaven and hell to Baruch. The book closes with prophecies concerning Ethiopic kings and queens. The prophecies include the coming of Christ and the resurrection. There exists also a Coptic version of the *Apocryphon of Jeremiah*. Also of importance is a "Gnostic Book of Baruch" of a certain Justin, mentioned by Hippolytus (*Ref.* 5.23–27 [GCS 26:125–33]), but lost, wherein Jesus follows in the line of the "angel" Baruch with special view to their *kerygma*. A late syncretistic work called *Book of the Bee* (Bishop Solomon of Basra; d. 1240) identifies Baruch with Zaradosth (Zarathustra) who predicts the birth, crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. This short overview attests that there existed a lively tradition of interpretations concerning the "prophet" Baruch in early Christianity (cf. Harlow 2001: 432–34).

Some of the roots of these Christian traditions stem from motives and also from Christian interpolations within the earlier Baruch writings, listed above, that are mainly of Jewish provenance. *Second Baruch* is a Palestinian apocalypse from the early 2nd century CE. The text, originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic, is fully preserved only in Syriac, translated from Greek. The work combines visions with admonitions, starting with the Chaldean conquest of Jerusalem. It announces a tribulation that will last 12 years, the coming of the Messiah, resurrection, and judgment. The Christian reception of *2 Baruch* is rather meager: In Syrian circles, maybe among the Nestorians, the letter of Baruch to the nine and a half tribes (*2 Bar.* 78:1–87:1) had a "canonical" status. *Barnabas* 11:9 refers to *2 Bar.* 61:7, and some quotations from the NT allude to passages from *2 Bar.* (cf. *2 Bar.* 3:3 with Phil 1:23; Rom 9:19 or *2 Bar.* 21:20 with 2 Pet 3:9; see Harlow 1996: 170). Nevertheless, recently, *2 Bar.* was charac-

II. Christianity

Ancient Jewish (and maybe also Christian) writings that refer to the former scribe and friend of the biblical prophet Jeremiah, Baruch (cf. Jer 32:12; 36:4; 45:1), were mainly written in Hellenistic-Roman times and came to us as four different books: the book of Baruch; *2 Baruch*, a Syrian apocalypse that includes several parallels with *2 Esdras*; *3 Baruch*, a Greek apocalypse (cf. *2 En.*, *T.Ab.*) and, finally, *4 Baruch* or *Paraleipomena Jeremiou* ("The Rest of the Words of Baruch"), also a Greek legendary text that resembles some passages and traditions, especially from *2 Baruch* and other traditions, e.g., the *Apocryphon of Jeremiah* (or, *Narratio de capta Jerusalem*), a late Arabic composition in Syrian script (called "Garshuni"; cf. also rabbinic literature, e.g., *PesRab* 26). All these texts were transmitted in manuscripts stemming from Christian circles. Nevertheless, the contents of these sources are basically Jewish. Some passages represent Christian doctrine, and the extent of Christian interpolations, glosses or comments is still a matter of scholarly dispute. Even the book of Baruch, an apocryphal writing from the Maccabean era or later, transmitted (among others) in Greek manuscripts and also included in the Septuagint, preserves a single Christian interpolation: Within a speech of admonition (Bar 3:9–4:4), Ba-

terized as a Christian composition (Nir); e.g., the coming of the Messiah in 2 Bar. 30:1 was suspected of referring to Jesus. But the exhortation of keeping the law (Torah; cf. 2 Bar. 32:1; 48:22; 51:3, 5–7) rather suggests a Jewish setting (Davila: 126–31).

The apocalypse of 3 Baruch is preserved in two versions: a longer Greek and shorter Slavonic edition (cf. Harlow 1996: 5–10). Affinities with Egyptian Judaism indicate a Diaspora setting. And for the assumed Greek *Vorlage*, a date in the 2nd century CE is probable. After Baruch's mourning over the destruction of Jerusalem an angel brings Baruch on a guided tour to five heavens. In general, the book can be read as a Jewish and, equally well, as a Christian text (cf. Harlow 1996: 109–205; de Jonge: 56–58). Besides this general appraisal, 3 Bar. attests several Christian interpolations (cf. Harlow 2001: 436–39). Though the two superscriptions show no Christian terminology, they attest late vocabulary, and, further, they are lacking in the Slavonic version and also allude to the Abimelech story in 4 Bar. 3:9–10 (12–14), 15 (21); 5:1–6:1. The turning of bitter into sweet vine, interpreted as “blood of God” (3 Bar. 4:15), contradicts the condemnation of vine (4:17), and, further, “Jesus Christ the Emmanuel” is a clear Christian expression. This passage is also lacking in the Slavonic version. Besides this, the listings of misbehaviors (*Lasterkataloge*) in 4:17, 8:5, and 13:4 are suspected of being Christian. The liturgical role of Michael is foiled by his military epithet, ἀρχιστρατήγος in 11:4, 6–8, and 13:3 that reveals Christian ideas and is also lacking in the Slavonic version. In 13:4, the church (ἐκκλησία) is mentioned, and, lately, further references echo early Christian motives (cf. 15:2, 4 with 2 Cor 9:6 and Matt 25:21, 23). All in all, it is probable that the scene in the fifth heaven (3 Bar. 11:1–16:4) has undergone a Christian re-edition.

The *Paraleipomena Jeremioi*, or 4 Baruch, was a very prominent text in early Christianity. The “supplementary” (cf. *paraleipomena*) narration, an originally Palestinian, Greek writing from the 2nd century CE, starts with the capture of Jerusalem that is interpreted as a judgment. The story continues with the announcement of the return of captives from Babel. Also included are the legends of the “sleep of Abimelech” (4 Bar. 5:1–6:7 [10]) and of the “resurrection and stoning of Jeremiah” (9:10 [11]–32). The assumption of several Christian interpolations is rather unconvincing (Herzer 1994: 171–76). In this respect the only clear Christian insertion can be found in 4 Bar. 9:10 [11]–32, wherein an explicit naming of Jesus Christ (9:13 [14]) who is resurrected and is parallel to the Christian tradition of the “Ascension of Isaiah” (cf. 4 Bar. 9:20 with *Ascen. Isa.* 3:9) is included.

In sum, the majority of traditions that are connected with Baruch the scribe of Jeremiah are basically Jewish. Some common strands in these tradi-

tions, such as the destruction of Jerusalem and its interpretation in a context of individualized eschatology, obviously fit into early Christian ideologies. And that causes interpolations and re-workings on different levels.

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