

EPISTLE OF JEREMIAH

¹ *Here beginneth a sample of the epistle of the same Baruch, which epistle Jeremy sent to the Jews, that were led away prisoners into Babylon, of the king of Babylonians, that he should tell to them, by that that was commanded of God to him. [Here beginneth the ensample of the same epistle, which Jeremy sent to the captives led away into Babylon, of the king of men of Babylon, that he should show to them, after that it is commanded to him of God.]*

² For the sins which ye sinned before God, ye shall be led prisoners [*or captives*] into Babylon, of Nebuchad-nezzar, king of Babylonians.

³ Therefore ye shall enter [*or go*] into Babylon, and ye shall be there full many years, and into long time, till to seven generations; forsooth after this I shall lead out you from thence with peace.

⁴ But now ye shall see in Babylon gods of gold, and of silver, and of stone, and of tree, to be borne on shoulders, showing dread to heathen men [*or to folks*].

⁵ Therefore see ye, lest also ye be made like [*to*] alien deeds, and lest ye dread, and [*that*] dread take you in them. Therefore when ye see a company behind and before, worship ye God, [*or And so the company of people seen from behind and from before worshipping*],

⁶ say in your hearts, Lord God, it behooveth that thou be worshipped. [*say in your hearts, Lord God, it behooveth thee for to be worshipped.*]

⁷ Forsooth mine angel is with you, but I shall seek [*out*] your souls.

⁸ For why the trees of them be polished of a carpenter; also they be arrayed with gold, and arrayed with silver, and be false, and may not speak.

⁹ And as to a virgin [*or a maiden*] loving ornaments, so, when gold is taken, *ornaments* be made *to idols*. Certainly the gods of them have golden crowns on their heads;

¹⁰ wherefore priests withdraw from those *gods* gold and silver, and spend it in themselves.

¹¹ Soothly they give also of that to whores, and array [*or adorn*] whores; and again when they receive that of whores, they array [*or adorn*] their gods.

¹² But those [*or these*]*gods* be not delivered from rust and moths. Forsooth when they be covered with a cloth of purple,

¹³ *priests* shall wipe the faces of them, for dust of the house, which is full much among those *gods*.

¹⁴ Forsooth *idols* have a sceptre, [*or king's rod*], as a man *hath*; as the judge of a country, that slayeth not a man sinning against himself.

¹⁵ Also they have in the hand a sword, and an ax; but they deliver not themselves from battle and from thieves.

16 Wherefore be it known to you, that they be not gods; therefore worship ye not them.

17 For as a broken vessel of a man is made unprofitable, such also be the gods of them. When they be set in the house, the eyes of them be full of dust, of the feet of men entering.

18 And as [*the*] gates be set about a man, that offended the king, either as when a dead man is brought to the sepulchre, so priests keep securely the doors with closings, and locks, lest they be robbed of thieves.

19 They tend lanterns to them, and soothly many lanterns, of which they may see none;

20 forsooth they be as beams in an house [*or in the house*]. Soothly men say that serpents, that be of earth, lick out the hearts of them; while *the serpents* eat them, and their clothes [*or clothing*], and they feel it not.

21 The faces of them be black of the smoke, which is made in the house.

22 Night crows [*or bats*] and swallows fly above the body of them, and above the head of them, and birds also, and cats in like manner.

23 Wherefore know ye, that they be not gods; therefore dread ye not them.

24 Also the gold which they have, is to fairness; no but some man wipe away the rust, they shall not shine. For they feeled not, the while those were welled together [*or they were molten together*].

25 They be bought of all price, in which [*things*] no spirit is in them.

²⁶ They without feet be borne on shoulders of men, and show openly their unnobility to men;

²⁷ be they shamed also that worship them. Therefore if they fall down to earth, they shall not rise of them-selves; and if any man setteth that *idol* upright, it shall not stand by itself, but as to dead things [*or dead men*] shoulders shall be put to them.

²⁸ The priests of them sell the sacrifices of them, and mis-use; in like manner and the women of them ravish [*or taking*] away, neither to a sick man, neither to a beggar, they give anything.

²⁹ Of their sacrifices foul women, and in unclean blood [*or menstruate*], touch. Therefore know ye by these things, that they be not gods, and dread ye not them.

³⁰ For whereof be they called gods? For women set sacrifices to gods of silver, and of gold, and of tree;

³¹ and priests that have coats rent [*or torn*], and heads and beards shaven, whose heads be naked, sit in the houses of them.

³² Soothly they roar and cry against their gods, as in the supper of a dead man.

³³ Priests take away the clothes of them, and clothe their wives, and their children.

³⁴ And if they suffer anything of evil of any man, or if they *suffer* anything of good, they may not yield back. Neither they may ordain [*or make*] a king, neither do away.

³⁵ In like manner they may neither give riches, neither yield evil [*thing*]. If any man

maketh a vow to them, and yieldeth not, they ask [*or require*] not this [*thing*].

³⁶ They deliver not a man from death, neither ravish a sick man from a mightier [*or neither deliver a sick man from a more mighty*].

³⁷ They restore not a blind man to sight; they shall not deliver a man from need.

³⁸ They shall not have mercy on a widow, neither they shall do good to fatherless children.

³⁹ Their gods of tree, and of stone, and of gold, and of silver, be like stones of the mountain; forsooth they that worship them, shall be shamed [*or confounded*].

⁴⁰ How therefore is it to guess, either to say, that they be gods? for why yet when Chaldeans honour not them.

⁴¹ Which when they hear that a dumb man may not speak, offer him to Bel, and ask of him to speak; as if they that have no stirring, may feel.

⁴² And they, when they shall understand, shall forsake those *idols*; for those gods of them have no wit.

⁴³ Forsooth women gird with ropes [*or cords*] sit in ways, and kindled bones of olives. Soothly when any of these *women* is drawn away of any man passing, and sleepeth *with him*, she despiseth her neighbour, that she is not had worthy as herself, neither her rope [*or her cord*] is broken.

⁴⁴ Forsooth all things that be done to them, be false. How therefore is it to guess, either to say,

that those be gods? [*or How is it to be guessed, or to be said, them to be gods?*]

⁴⁵ Forsooth *those idols* be made of smiths [*or carpenters*], and of gold-smiths. They shall be none other thing, no but that that priests will that they be.

⁴⁶ Also those goldsmiths that make them, be not of much time; therefore whether those things [*or the things*] that be made of them, may be gods?

⁴⁷ Soothly they left false things, and shame to men to coming afterward [*or coming after.*]

⁴⁸ For why when battles and evils come on them, priests think, where they shall hide themselves with those [*or with them*].

⁴⁹ How therefore owe those [*or they*] to be deemed, that they be gods, which neither deliver themselves from battle, neither deliver themselves from evils?

⁵⁰ For why when those be of tree, and of stone, and of gold, and of silver, it shall be known afterward,

⁵¹ of all folks, and kings, that those things be false, that be made open; [*or known*], for those [*or they*] be not gods, but the works of hands of men [*or of men's hands*], and no work of God is with them.

⁵² Whereof therefore it is known, that they be not gods, but the works of hands of men [*or of men's hands*], and no work of God is in them.

⁵³ They raise not a king to a country, neither shall give rain to men.

54 Also they shall not deem, [*or judge*], [*a*] doom, neither they shall deliver the country from wrong. For those may *do* nothing, as little crows betwixt the midst [*or the middle*] of heaven and of earth.

55 For when fire falleth into the house of gods of tree, and of gold, and of silver, soothly the priests of those [*or of them*] shall flee, and shall be delivered; but they shall be burnt as beams in the midst.

56 Forsooth they shall not against-stand a king and battle. How there-fore is it to guess, or to receive, [*or to be guessed, or to be received*], that they be gods?

57 Gods of tree, and of stone, and of gold, and of silver, shall not deliver themselves from night thieves, neither from day thieves, and wicked men be stronger than those gods.

58 They shall take away gold, and silver, and clothes, by which those [*or they*] be covered, and they shall go away; neither they help themselves.

59 Therefore it is better to be a king showing his virtue, either a profitable vessel in the house, in which he shall have glory that wieldeth it, than false gods; either a door in the house, that keepeth those things that be in it, *is better* than false gods.

60 Forsooth the sun, and moon, and stars, when they be bright [*or be shining*], and sent out to profits, obey.

61 In like manner and *[the]* lightning, when it appeareth, is clear. Soothly the same thing and wind breatheth in each country.

62 And clouds, to which, when it is commanded of God to go through all the world, perform that, that is commanded to those *[or do what thing is commanded to them]*.

63 Also fire sent from above, to waste mountains and woods, doeth that, that is commanded to it; but these *idols* be not like to one of those things, neither by forms, neither by virtues.

64 Wherefore it is neither to guess, neither to say, *[or to be guessed, either to be said]*, that they be gods, when they may not neither deem doom, neither do to men.

65 Therefore know ye that those *[or they]* be not gods, and dread ye not them.

66 For they shall neither curse, neither bless kings.

67 Also they show not to heathen men signs in heavens, neither those *[or they]* shall shine as the sun, neither they shall give light as the moon.

68 Beasts that may flee under a roof, and do profit to themselves, be better than they.

69 Therefore by no manner it is open to you, that they be gods. For which thing, dread ye not them.

70 For why as a man of rags, or shoeless, in a place where gourds, *[or cucumbers, that be bitter herbs]*, waxed, keepeth nothing, so be their gods of tree, and of silver, and of gold.

⁷¹ In the same manner and a white-thorn in a garden [*or a yard*]*keepeth nothing*, on which *thorn* each bird sitteth, in like manner and their gods of tree, and of gold, and of silver, be like [*to*] a dead man cast forth in darkneses.

⁷² Also of [*the*] purple and of marble, which they hold above it; therefore ye shall know, that they be not gods. Also those be eaten at the last [*or at the last they themselves be eaten*], and it shall be into shame [*or reproof*] in the country.

⁷³ Better is a just man, that hath no simulacra, for why he shall be far from shames.

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Wycliffe's Bible with Modern Spelling, was made in response to requests from readers who wanted my Wycliffe's Old and New Testaments and Apocrypha in one volume. Printing limitations dictated the number of pages available to me and the letter size. In my previous books, Wycliffe's Bible, Wycliffe's Old Testament, Vols. 1 amp 2, Wycliffe's New Testament, and Wycliffe's Apocrypha, I have tens of thousands of rewritten verses, presented in parentheses "()", to provide help in comprehending the 14th century Middle English vocabulary and grammar. In this present volume, with space at a premium, those "helps" had to be eliminated, to make room for the text of the Apocrypha.

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