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Baruk

Introduction

The book of *Baruk* is set among the people taken into exile in Bavel (Babylon) after Yerushalem (Jerusalem) was captured. It opens with Baruk reading to the exiles, who weep, pray, and send money and a message to the people still in Yerushalem. The prayer that follows openly acknowledges their disobedience and asks God to show mercy and bring his people home.

The book then calls Yisrael (Israel) to seek wisdom in God's instructions. Yerushalem is pictured as a grieving mother whose children have been taken away, but who can look forward to their return. These sections move from confession and sorrow to renewed hope in God's faithfulness.

The final chapter contains *The Letter of Yirmiyah* (Jeremiah), addressed to people facing exile. It warns them not to be impressed or frightened by the idols they will see in Bavel. Again and again, it points out that these objects can't speak, protect themselves, or help their worshippers.

The book of *Baruk* is recognised as Deuterocanonical Scripture by the Romaios Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Russian Orthodox Churches. In some Bibles, Baruk chapter 6 is listed as a separate book called *The Letter of Yirmiyah/Jeremiah*, reflecting its separation from Baruk in some copies of the Greek Septuagint.

Main components of this document

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Lighter type marks additions. Underscores join parts of a single source word.
Struck words are untranslated. The ◘ sign marks a verse with no text.
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The exiles send gifts and a message to Yerushalem

1:1 These are the words of the book which Baruk the son of Neriyah, the son of Mahseyah, the son of Tsidkiyah (Zedekiah), the son of Hasadyah, the son of Hilkiyah, wrote in Bavel (Babylon), 2 in the fifth year, in the seventh day of the month, at the time when the Kasdim (Chaldeans) took Yerushalem (Jerusalem) and burnt it with fire. 3 Baruk read the words of this book in the hearing of Yekonias the son of Yehoyakim king of Yehudah (Judah), and in the hearing of all the people who came to hear the book, 4 and in the hearing of the mighty men, and of the kings' sons, and in the hearing of the elders, and in the hearing of all the people, from the least to the greatest, even of all those who lived at Bavel by the river Sud. 5 Then they wept, fasted,[1] and prayed before the master. 6 They also made a collection of money according to every man's ability; 7 and they sent it to Yerushalem to Yehoyakim the high priest, the son of Hilkiyah, the son of Shalum, and to the priests and to all the people who were found with him at Yerushalem, 8 at the same time when he took the vessels of the master's house, that'd been carried out of the temple, to return them into the land of Yehudah, the tenth day of Sivan—silver vessels which Tsidkiyah the son of Yoshiyah (Josiah) king of Yehudah had made, 9 after Nevukadnetsar (Nebuchadnezzar) king of Bavel had carried away Yekonias, the princes, the captives, the mighty men, and the people of the land from Yerushalem, and brought them to Bavel.

10 And they said: Listen, we've sent you money; therefore buy with the money burnt offerings, sin offerings, and incense, and prepare an oblation, and offer on the altar of the master our god; 11 and pray for the life of Nevukadnetsar king of Bavel, and for the life of Belshatsar (Belshazzar) his son, that their days may be[2] as the days of heaven above the earth. 12 The master will give us strength and light to our eyes. We'll live under the shadow of Nevukadnetsar king of Bavel and under the shadow of Belshatsar his son, and we'll serve them many days, and find favour in their sight. 13 Pray for us also to the master our god, for we've sinned against the master our god. To this day the anger of the master and his indignation isn't turned from us. 14 Read this book which we've sent to you, to make confession in the master's house on the day of the feast and on the days of the solemn assembly.

The people confess their disobedience

15 Say: To the master our god belongs righteousness, but to us confusion of face, as at this day—to the men of Yehudah, to the inhabitants of Yerushalem, 16 to our kings, to our princes, to our priests, to our prophets, and to our fathers, 17 because we've sinned before the master. 18 We've disobeyed him and haven't listened to the voice of the master our god, to walk in the master's commandments that he's set before us. 19 Since the day that the master brought our fathers out of the land of Mitsrayim (Egypt) to this present day, we've been disobedient to the master our god, and we've been negligent in not listening to his voice. 20 Therefore the deadly diseases have clung to us, along with the curse which the master declared through Mosheh (Moses) his servant in the day that he brought our fathers out of the land of Mitsrayim to give us a land that flows with milk and honey, as at this day. 21 Nevertheless we didn't listen to the voice of the master our god, according to all the words of the prophets whom he sent to us, 22 but we each walked in the imagination of his own wicked heart, to serve strange gods and to do what is evil in the sight of the master our god.

2:1 Therefore the master has made good his word which he pronounced against us, and against our judges who judged Yisrael (Israel), and against our kings, and against our princes, and against the men of Yisrael and Yehudah (Judah), 2 to bring terrible deadly diseases onto

1 **RV 1:5 · Note** Another reading is, and vowed vows.

2 **RV 1:11 · Note** See Deuteronomy 11:21.

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us such as never happened before under the whole heaven,[3] as it happened in Yerushalem (Jerusalem), according to the things that are written in Mosheh's law, 3 that we should each eat the flesh of our own son, and each eat the flesh of our own daughter. 4 Moreover he's given them to be in subjection to all the kingdoms that are around us, to be a reproach and a desolation among all the people around us, where the master has scattered them. 5 Thus they were thrown down and not exalted, because we sinned against the master our god in not listening to his voice. 6 To the master our god belongs righteousness, but to us and to our fathers confusion of face, as at this day. 7 All these deadly diseases have come onto us which the master has pronounced against us. 8 Yet we haven't asked for the favour of the master by everyone turning from the thoughts of his wicked heart. 9 Therefore the master has kept watch over the deadly diseases. The master has brought them onto us, because the master is righteous in all his works which he's commanded us. 10 Yet we haven't listened to his voice, to walk in the master's commandments that he's set before us.

A prayer for mercy

11 And now, Oh master, you God of Yisrael (Israel) who've brought your people out of the land of Mitsrayim (Egypt) with a mighty hand, with signs, with wonders, with great power, and with a high arm, and have gotten yourself a name, as at this day: 12 Oh master our god, we've sinned. We've been ungodly. We've done wrong in all your ordinances. 13 Let your anger turn from us, for we're but a few left among the heathen where you've scattered us. 14 Hear our prayer, Oh master, and our petition, and deliver us for your own sake. Give us favour in the sight of those who've led us away captive, 15 that all the earth may know that you're the master our god, because Yisrael and his posterity is called by your name. 16 Oh master, look down from your holy house and consider us. Incline your ear, Oh master, and hear. 17 Open your eyes, and see; for the dead that are in Haidais, whose breath is taken from their bodies, will give to the master neither glory nor righteousness; 18 but the soul who's greatly vexed, who goes stooping and feeble, and the eyes that fail, and the hungry soul, will declare your glory and righteousness, Oh master.

19 Because we don't present our supplication before you, Oh master our god, for the righteousness of our fathers and of our kings. 20 Because you've sent your anger and your indignation onto us, as you've spoken by your servants the prophets, saying, 21 "The master says, 'Bow your shoulders to serve the king of Bavel (Babylon), and remain in the land that I gave to your fathers. 22 But if you won't hear the master's voice to serve the king of Bavel, 23 I'll cause to cease out of the cities of Yehudah (Judah) and from the region near Yerushalem (Jerusalem) the voice of mirth, the voice of gladness, voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride. The whole land will be desolate without inhabitant.' " 24 But we wouldn't listen to your voice, to serve the king of Bavel. Therefore you've made good your words that you spoke by your servants the prophets, that the bones of our kings and the bones of our fathers would be taken out of their places. 25 Listen, they're thrown out to the heat by day and to the frost by night. They died in great miseries by famine, by sword, and by[4] pestilence. 26 You've made the house that's called by your name as it's today because of the wickedness of the house of Yisrael (Israel) and the house of Yehudah.

God's promise to bring his people home

27 Yet, Oh master our god, you have dealt with us after all your kindness and according to all your great mercy, 28 as you spoke by your servant Mosheh (Moses) in the day when you commanded him to write your law in the presence of the Israeli people, saying, 29 "If you won't hear my voice, surely this very great multitude will be turned into a small

3 **RV 2:2 · Note** Another reading is, even as he has done.

4 **RV 2:25 · Note** See Yirmeyah/Jeremiah 32:36.

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number among the nations where I'll scatter them. 30 Because I know that they won't listen to me, because they're a stiff-necked people; but in the land of their captivity they'll take it to heart, 31 and will know that I'm the master their god. I'll give them a heart and ears to hear. 32 Then they'll praise me in the land of their captivity, and think about my name, 33 and will return from their stiff neck and from their wicked actions; because they'll remember the way of their fathers who sinned before the master. 34 I'll bring them again into the land which I promised to their fathers, to Avraham, to Yitshak (Isaac), and to Ya'akov (Jacob), and they'll rule over it. I'll increase them, and they won't be diminished. 35 And I'll make an eternal covenant with them to be their god, and they'll be my people. I'll no more remove my people Yisrael out of the land that I've given them."

3:1 Oh master Almighty, you God of Yisrael, the soul in anguish and the troubled spirit cries to you. 2 Hear, Oh master, and have mercy; for you're a merciful God. Yes, have mercy on us, because we've sinned before you. 3 Because you're enthroned forever, and we keep perishing. 4 Oh master Almighty, you God of Yisrael, hear now the prayer of the dead Israelis, and of the children of those who were sinners before you, who didn't listen to the voice of you their god; because of this, these deadly diseases cling to us. 5 Don't remember the iniquities of our fathers, but remember your power and your name at this time. 6 Because you're the master our god, and we'll praise you, Oh master. 7 Because this cause, you've put your fear in our hearts, to the intent that we should call on your name. We'll praise you in our captivity, for we've called to mind all the iniquity of our fathers who sinned before you. 8 Listen, we're yet this day in our captivity where you've scattered us, for a reproach and a curse, and to be subject to penalty according to all the iniquities of our fathers who departed from the master our god.

Finding the way to wisdom

9 Hear, Oh Yisrael, the commandments of life! Give ear to understand wisdom! 10 How is it, Oh Yisrael, that you're in your enemies' land, that you've become old in a strange country, that you're defiled with the dead, 11 that you're counted with those who are in Haidais? 12 You've forsaken the fountain of wisdom. 13 If you'd walked in the way of God, you'd have dwelled in peace forever. 14 Learn where there's wisdom, where there's strength, and where there's understanding, that you may also know where there's length of days and life, where there's the light of the eyes and peace. 15 Who's found out her place? Who's come into her treasuries? 16 Where are the princes of the heathen, and those who ruled the wild animals that are on the earth, 17 those who had their pastime with the fowls of the air, and those who hoarded up silver and gold, in which people trust, and of their getting there's no end? 18 Because those who diligently strived to gain silver, and were so anxious, and whose works are past finding out, 19 they've vanished and gone down to Haidais, and others have come up in their place.

20 Younger men have seen the light and lived on the earth, but they haven't known the way of knowledge, 21 nor understood its paths. Their children haven't embraced it. They're far off from their way. 22 It hasn't been heard of in Kena'an (Canaan), neither has it been seen in Teyman. 23 The sons also of Hagar who seek understanding, which are in the land, the merchants of Merran and Teyman, and the authors of fables, and the searchers out of understanding—none of these have known the way of wisdom or remembered her paths.

24 Oh Yisrael (Israel), how great is God's house! How large is the place of his possession! 25 It's great and has no end. It's high and unmeasurable. 26 Giants were born that were famous of old, great of stature, and expert in war. 27 God didn't choose these, nor did he give the way of knowledge to them, 28 so they perished, because they had no wisdom. They perished through their own foolishness. 29 Who's gone up into heaven, taken her, and brought her down from the clouds? 30 Who's gone over the sea, found her, and will bring her for choice

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gold? 31 There's no one who knows her way,
nor any who comprehend her path. 32 But he
that knows all things knows her, he found her
out with his understanding. He who prepared
the earth for all time has filled it with
four-footed animals. 33 It's he who sends forth
the light, and it goes. He called it, and it obeyed
him with fear. 34 The stars shone in their
watches, and were glad. When he called them,
they said, "Here we are." They shone with glad-
ness to him who made them. 35 This is our god.
No other can be compared to him. 36 He's found
out all the way of knowledge, and has given it
to Ya'akov (Jacob) his servant and to Yisrael (Is-
rael) who's loved by him. 37 Afterward she ap-
peared on earth, and lived with men.

4:1 This is the book of God's commandments
and the law that endures forever. All those who
hold it fast will live, but those who leave it'll
die. 2 Turn, Oh Ya'akov, and take hold of it. Walk
towards the shining of its light. 3 Don't give
your glory to another, nor the things that are to
your advantage to a foreign nation. 4 Oh Yis-
rael, we're happy; for the things that are pleas-
ing to God are made known to us.

Yerushalem mourns for her children

5 Be of good cheer, my
people, the memorial of
Yisrael. 6 You weren't sold to the nations for
destruction, but because you moved God to
anger, you were delivered to your adversaries.
7 Because you provoked him who made you by
sacrificing to demons and not to God. 8 You for-
got the eternal God who brought you up. You
also grieved Yerushalem (Jerusalem), who
nursed you. 9 Because she saw the anger that
came on you from God, and said, "Listen, you
who live near Tsiyon (Zion); for God has
brought on me great mourning. 10 Because I've
seen the captivity of my sons and daughters,
which the Eternal has brought on them. 11 Be-
cause with joy I nourished them, but sent them
away with weeping and mourning. 12 Let no
man rejoice over me, a widow and forsaken by
many. Because the sins of my children, I'm left
desolate, because they turned away from God's
law 13 and had no regard for his statutes. They
didn't walk in the ways of God's command-
ments or tread in the paths of discipline in his
righteousness. 14 Let those who live near
Tsiyon come and remember the captivity of my
sons and daughters, which the Eternal has
brought on them. 15 Because he's brought a na-
tion on them from afar, a shameless nation
with a strange language, who didn't respect old
men or pity children. 16 They've carried away
the dear beloved sons of the widow, and left her
who was alone desolate of her daughters."

17 But I—how can I help you? 18 Because he
who brought these calamities on you'll deliver
you from your enemies' hand. 19 Go your way,
Oh my children. Go your way, for I'm left deso-
late. 20 I've put off the garment of peace, and
put on the sackcloth of my petition. I'll cry to
the Eternal as long as I live.

God will bring the exiles back

21 Take courage, my
children. Cry to God, and
he'll deliver you from the power and hand of
the enemies. 22 Because I've trusted in the Eter-
nal, that he'll save you; and joy has come to me
from the Holy One, because of the mercy that'll
soon come to you from your Eternal Saviour.
23 Because I sent you out with mourning and
weeping, but God will give you to me again
with joy and gladness forever. 24 Because as
now those who live near Tsiyon (Zion) have
seen your captivity, so they'll shortly see your
salvation from our god which will come on you
with great glory and brightness of the Eternal.
25 My children, suffer patiently the anger that's
come on you from God, for your enemy has
persecuted you; but shortly you'll see his de-
struction and will tread on their necks. 26 My
delicate ones have travelled rough roads. They
were taken away like a flock carried off by ene-
mies.

27 Take courage, my children, and cry to God;
for you'll be remembered by him who's brought
this on you. 28 Because as it was your decision
to go astray from God, return and seek him ten
times more. 29 Because he who brought these
calamities on you'll bring you eternal joy again
with your salvation. 30 Take courage, Oh
Yerushalem, for he who called you by name will
comfort you. 31 Miserable are those who af-

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flicted you and rejoiced at your fall. 32 Miserable are the cities which your children served. Miserable is she who received your sons. 33 Because as she rejoiced at your fall and was glad of your ruin, so she'll be grieved at her own desolation. 34 And I'll take away her pride in her great multitude and her boasting will be turned into mourning. 35 Because fire will come on her from the Eternal for many days; and she'll be inhabited by demons for a long time.

Yerushalem's sorrow will turn to joy

36 Oh Yerushalem (Jerusalem), look around you towards the east, and see the joy that comes to you from God. 37 Listen, your sons come, whom you sent away. They come gathered together from the east to the west at the word of the Holy One, rejoicing in God's glory.

5:1 Take off the garment of your mourning and affliction, Oh Yerushalem, and put on forever the beauty of the glory from God. 2 Put on the robe of the righteousness from God. Set on your head a diadem of the glory of the Eternal. 3 Because God will show your splendour everywhere under heaven. 4 Because your name will be called by God forever "Righteous Peace, Godly Glory".

5 Arise, Oh Yerushalem, and stand on the height. Look around you towards the east and see your children gathered from the going down of the sun to its rising at the word of the Holy One, rejoicing that God has remembered them. 6 Because they went from you on foot, being led away by their enemies, but God brings them in to you carried on high with glory, on a royal throne. 7 Because God has appointed that every high mountain and the eternal hills should be made low, and the valleys filled up to make the ground level, that Yisrael (Israel) may go safely in God's glory. 8 Moreover the woods and every sweet smelling tree have shaded Yisrael by God's commandment. 9 Because God will lead Yisrael with joy in the light of his glory with the mercy and righteousness that come from him.

The Letter of Yirmiyah (Yirmeyah/Jeremiah)

6:1 A copy of a letter that Yirmiyah (Jeremiah) sent to those who were to be led captives into Bavel (Babylon) by the king of the Babylonians, to give them the message that God commanded him.

2 Because of the sins which you've committed before God, you'll be led away captives to Bavel by Nevukadnetsar (Nebuchadnezzar) king of the Babylonians. 3 So when you come to Bavel, you'll remain there many years, and for a long season, even for seven generations. After that, I'll bring you out peacefully from there. 4 But now you'll see in Bavel gods of silver, gold, wood carried on shoulders, which cause the nations to fear. 5 Beware therefore that you in no way become like these foreigners. Don't let fear take hold of you because of them when you see the multitude before them and behind them, worshipping them. 6 But say in your hearts, "O master, we must worship you." 7 Because my angel is with you, and I myself care for your souls.

Lifeless idols dressed like kings

8 Because their tongue is polished by the workman, and they themselves are overlaid with gold and with silver; yet they're only fake, and can't speak. 9 And taking gold, as if it were for a virgin who loves to be happy, they make crowns for the heads of their gods. 10 Sometimes also the priests take gold and silver from their gods, and spend it on themselves. 11 They'll even give some of it to the common prostitutes. They dress them like men with clothes, even the gods of silver, gods of gold, and gods of wood. 12 Yet these gods can't save themselves from rust and moths, even though they're covered with purple clothes. 13 They wipe their faces because of the dust of the temple, which is thick on them. 14 And he who can't put to death one who offends against him holds a sceptre, as though he were judge of a country. 15 He has also a dagger in his right hand, and an axe, but can't deliver himself from war and robbers. 16 By this they're known not to be gods. Therefore don't fear them. 17 Because like a vessel that a man uses is worth nothing when it's broken, even so it's with their gods. When they're set up in the temples, their eyes are full of dust through the feet of

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those who come in. 18 As the courtyards are secured on every side on him who offends the king, as being committed to suffer death, even so the priests secure their temples with doors, with locks, and bars, so that robbers won't carry them off. 19 They light candles for them, yes, more than for themselves, even though they can't see one. 20 They're like one of the beams of the temple. Men say their hearts are eaten out when things creeping out of the earth devour both them and their clothing. They don't feel it 21 when their faces are blackened through the smoke that comes out of the temple. 22 Bats, swallows, and birds land on their bodies and heads. So do the cats. 23 By this you may know that they're no gods. Therefore don't fear them. 24 Notwithstanding the gold with which they're covered to make them beautiful, unless someone wipes off the tarnish, they won't shine; for they didn't even feel it when they were molten. 25 Things in which there's no breath are bought at any cost. 26 Having no feet, they're carried on shoulders. By this, they declare to men that they're worth nothing. 27 Those who serve them are also ashamed, for if they fall to the ground at any time, they can't rise up again by themselves. If they're bowed down, they can't make themselves straight; but the offerings are set before them, as if they were dead men. 28 And the things that are sacrificed to them, their priests sell and spend. In the same way, their wives also lay up part of it in salt; but to the poor and to the impotent they give none of it. 29 The menstruous woman and the woman in childbed touch their sacrifices, knowing therefore by these things that they're no gods. Don't fear them. 30 Because how can they be called gods? Because women set food before the gods of silver, gold, and wood. 31 And in their temples the priests sit on seats, having their clothes torn and their heads and beards shaven, and nothing on their heads. 32 They roar and cry before their gods, as men do at the feast when one is dead. 33 The priests also take off clothes from them and clothe their wives and children with them. 34 Whether it's evil or good what one does to them, they aren't able to repay it. They can't set up a king or put him down. 35 In the same way, they can neither give riches nor money. Though a man make a vow to them and doesn't keep it, they'll never exact it. 36 They can save no man from death. They can't deliver the weak from the mighty. 37 They can't restore a blind man to his sight, or deliver anyone who's in distress. 38 They can show no mercy to the widow, or do good to the fatherless. 39 They're like the stones that are cut out of the mountain, these gods of wood that are overlaid with gold and with silver. Those who minister to them will be confounded.

Why idols aren't gods

40 How could a man then think or say that they're gods, when even the Kasdim (Chaldeans) themselves dishonour them? 41 If they see one mute who can't speak, they bring him and ask him to call on Bel, as though he were able to understand. 42 Yet they can't perceive this themselves, and forsake them; for they have no understanding. 43 The women also with cords around them sit in the ways, burning bran for incense; but if any of them, drawn by someone who passes by, lies with him, she reproaches her fellow, that she wasn't thought as worthy as herself and her cord wasn't broken. 44 Whatever is done among them is false. How could a man then think or say that they're gods? 45 They're fashioned by carpenters and goldsmiths. They can be nothing else than what the workmen make them to be. 46 And they themselves who fashioned them can never continue long. How then should the things that are fashioned by them? 47 Because they've left lies and reproaches to those who come after. 48 Because when there comes any war or deadly disease onto them, the priests consult with themselves, where they may be hidden with them. 49 How then can't men understand that they're no gods, which can't save themselves from war or from deadly diseases? 50 Because seeing they're only wood and overlaid with gold and silver, it'll be known in the future that they're false. 51 It'll be manifest to all nations and kings that they're

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no gods, but the works of men's hands, and that there's no work of God in them. 52 Who then may not know that they aren't gods?

53 Because they can't set up a king in a land or give rain to men. 54 They can't judge their own cause, or redress a wrong, being unable; for they're like crows between heaven and earth. 55 Because even when fire falls on the house of gods of wood overlaid with gold or with silver, their priests will flee away, and escape, but they themselves will be burnt apart like beams. 56 Moreover they can't withstand any king or enemies. How could a man then admit or think that they're gods? 57 Those gods of wood overlaid with silver or with gold aren't able to escape from thieves or robbers. 58 The gold, silver, and clothes with which they're clothed—those who are strong will take from them, and go away with them. They won't be able to help themselves. 59 Therefore it's better to be a king who shows his manhood, or else a vessel in a house profitable for whatever the owner needs, than such false gods—or even a door in a house, to keep the things safe that are in it, than such false gods; or better to be a pillar of wood in a palace than such false gods.

60 Because sun, moon, and stars, being bright and sent to do their jobs, are obedient. 61 Likewise also the lightning when it flashes is beautiful to see. In the same way, the wind also blows in every country. 62 And when God commands the clouds to go over the whole world, they do as they're told. 63 And the fire sent from above to consume mountains and woods does as it's commanded; but these are to be compared to them neither in show nor power. 64 Therefore a man shouldn't think or say that they're gods, seeing they aren't able to judge causes or to do good to men. 65 Knowing therefore that they're no gods, don't fear them. 66 Because they can neither curse nor bless kings. 67 They can't show signs in the heavens among the nations, or shine as the sun, or give light as the moon. 68 The wild animals are better than they; for they can get under a covert, and help themselves. 69 In no way then is it manifest to us that they're gods. Therefore don't fear them. 70 Because as a scarecrow in a garden of cucumbers that keeps nothing, so are their gods of wood overlaid with gold and silver. 71 Likewise also their gods of wood overlaid with gold and with silver, are like a white thorn in an orchard that every bird sits on. They're also like a dead body that's thrown out into the dark. 72 You'll know them to be no gods by the bright purple that rots on them. They themselves will be consumed afterwards, and will be a reproach in the country. 73 Better therefore is the just man who has no idols; for he'll be far from reproach.

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