

DAY 206 – THE BOOK OF BARUCH

Isaiah 32-33
Baruch 1-2
Proverbs 11:17-20

I will bring them again into the land which I swore to give to their fathers I will make an everlasting covenant with them to be their God and they shall be my people; and I will never again remove my people Israel from the land which I have given them. – Baruch 2:34-35

Baruch is another book, like Tobit, that was removed from the Bible by Martin Luther in the 1600's. The Sadducees only recognized the first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch. The Pharisees only recognized what is now called the Old Testament. But the Bible, as we read it today as Catholics, was established by the early Christians since the Old Testament is fulfilled in the New Testament – Jesus. That Bible has always contained the Book of Baruch.

Baruch was a contemporary of Jeremiah and he is writing while the people of Judah live in exile in Babylon. We hear Baruch praying for the people in exile and for the ruler, Nebuchadrezzar, because we are called to pray for the leaders, even the bad leaders.

Baruch offers a confession for the sins of the people and speaks a prayer for deliverance. It is a beautiful passage to read and worth re-reading it again. And then Baruch reminds the people of God's covenant with them. A sign of hope. God knows us and fights for us. He knows all we can be and works always for our good. He wants us to return to Him. Are you the best version of yourself? Are you walking towards holiness?

Isaiah is most likely talking about Hezekiah, the righteous king. It could also be Hezekiah's grandson, Josiah, but either way it is about God calling the people back. He talks about the complacent people – those who are self-indulgent not caring about the troubles around them as long as they are comfortable. Isaiah is giving them a call to wake up from this lukewarm complacency and turn back to God.

Isaiah is warning the people that everything belongs to God, even those who do not believe in Him. And everything will be burned away if the people don't turn back to Him.

*“Our true worth does not consist in what human beings think of us.
What we really are consists in what God knows us to be.”
– St. John Berchmans*