Apocryphon of Jeremiah

(4Q383, 385a, 387, 387a, 388a, 389-90)

Originally considered as part of an Ezekiel apocryphon, the remains of these manuscripts, written in a well-imitated biblical Hebrew, have been identified by the editor as pertaining to an apocryphal account of the life of Jeremiah in Babylon and in Egypt. The script probably dates to the end of the first century BCE.

For the editio princeps, see D. Dimant, DJD, XXX, 91–260. For the related 4Q384, see M. Smith, DJD, XIX, 136–52.

4Q385a, fr. 18 i–ii

I vacat ... Jeremiah the Prophet [departed] from before the Lord (YHWH) ... [to accompany the] captives who were taken captive from the land of Jerusalem and came [to ... Nebuchadnezzar,] king of Babel, when Nabuzaradan, the chief of the bodyguard, smote ... and took the vessels of the house of God, the priests ... and the sons of Israel and led them to Babel. And Jeremiah the Prophet went [with them as far as] the river and he commanded them what they were to do in the land of [their] captivity ... [And they obeyed] the voice of Jeremiah in regard to the words which God commanded him ... and they were to keep the covenant of the God of their fathers in the land [of their captivity ... and they were not to d]o as they had done and their kings and priests [and ... and they] profaned [the name] of God ...

II In Tahpanes which is in the land of Egypt ...] and they said to him, Inquire of God for us. ... But Jeremiah [did not listen] to them and did not inquire for them of God ... a jubilation and prayer. And Jeremiah lamented ... lamentations over Jerusalem ... vacat [And the word of the Lord was addressed to] Jeremiah in the land of Tahpanes which was in
the land of Egypt ... Go to] the sons of Israel and the sons of Judah and Benjamin [...] and speak to them saying,] Day by day seek my decrees and ke[ep] my commandments ... and do not [follow] the idols of the nations [after] which [your fathers] wa[lked ... for] they will not sa[ve you ... nor ...]

4Q387, fr. 2 ii (4Q385a, fr. 4, 4Q389, fr. 8 ii)

... strengthen yourselves to serve Me with all your heart and all[your soul] ... in their distress. But I will not seek them on account of their unfaithfulness by which they were unfaithful to me until the completion of ten jubilee of years. And you will walk in ... and blindness and stupefaction of the heart. And after the completion of that generation I [will tear away] the kingship from the hand of those who have been holding fast to it and I shall place over it others from another people and impudence will rule on all [the earth and the kingship of Israel will perish. In those days [there]] will [be a king and he] will be a reviler and he will perform abominations, but I will tear away [his] kingship and that king will be (destined) for kings. And My face will be concealed from Israel ... will return to many nations. And the sons of Israel will cry because of the heavy yoke in the lands of their captivity and there will be no saviour for them because they despised my decree and their soul loathed my Law ... 5

Fr. 2 iii (4Q388a, fr. 7, 4Q389, fr. 8)

... In his days I will break the kingship of [Egypt] ... and I will break Israel and I will deliver them to the sword, [and I will de]stroy the [f]and and I will distance man and will leave the land into the hand of the angels of hostilities. And I will conceal [my] face [from Is]rael. And this is the sign for them. On the day when I will forsake the land ... the priests of Israel [will return] to worship other gods [and will perform the abominations of the [nations] ... 10
BIBLICALLY BASED APOCRYPHAL WORKS

Fr. 3 (4Q385a, fr. 5)

5 ... three priests who did not walk in the ways of the former [priests] and are called by the name of the God of Israel. And in their days the pride of the wicked ones of the Covenant and the worshippers of strange (gods) will be brought low. Israel will be torn in that generation, each man waging war against his neighbour because of the Law and the Covenant. And I will send famine into the land but not concerning bread and thirst, but not concerning water ...

4Q388a, fr. 7 (4Q387, fr. 2 iii, 4Q389, fr. 8 ii)

I have despised them and they will again perform evil and evil will be greater than [the former evil, and they will breach] the Covenant which I concluded with Abraham and with Isaac and with [Jacob. In] those [days] a king will rise up [for the nations, a reviler and he will do evil. And in [his] days I will [stop] Israel from being a people ... In his days I will break the kingship of [Egypt] ... and I will break Israel and I will deliver them to the sword, [and I will de]stroy the [l]and and I will distance man and will leave the land into the hand of the angels of hostilities. And I will conceal [my] face [from Is]rael. And this is the sign for them. On the day when I will forsake the land ... the priests of Israel [will return] to worship other gods [and will perform the abominations of the [nations] ... 

4Q389, fr. 8 (4Q385a 4, 4Q387, 2 ii--iii, 4Q388a 7 ii)

II ... a reviler and he will do abominations. And I will tear away his kingship and he too will be (destined) to (hostile) kings. And my face will be concealed from Israel and [the kingship] will return to many nations. And the sons of Israel will cry because of the heavy yoke in the lands of their captivity and there will be no saviour for them because they despised my decree and their soul loathed my Law. Therefore I have concealed my face from [them] until they have completed their iniquity. vacat And this is the sign for them regarding the completion of their iniquity. [For] I have forsaken the land because of the pride of their heart
towards Me and they have not known that I have despised them and they will again perform evil which will be greater than the former evil. [And they will breach the Covenant which I concluded with Abraham and with Isaac and with [Jacob. In] those [days] a king will rise up [for the nations, a reviler and he will do evil. And in [his] days I will stop Israel from being a people. In his days I will break the kingship of [Egypt] ... Egypt and I will break Israel and I will deliver them to the sword ... 

4Q390, fr. 1

... [and a]gain [I will give them] into the hand of the sons of Aar[on] ... seventy years. And the sons of Aaron will rule over them, but they will not walk [in] my [wa]ys which I command you to testify to them. And they will also do what is evil in my eyes just as everything the Israelites did in the earlier days of their kingship apart from those who return first from the land of their captivity to build the Sanctuary. And I will speak to them and send to them a commandment and they will understand all that they have forsaken, they and their fathers. And from the end of this generation in the seventh jubilee of the destruction of the land they will forget decree, festival, Sabbath and Covenant. And they will breach everything and will commit evil in my eyes. And I will conceal my face from them and will give them into the hand of their enemies and deliver [them] to the sword. But I will cause refugees to remain from among them so that [they should] not be an[nih]ilated by my anger [and] when [my] fa[ce] is concealed from them. And the angels of hostilities will rule over them and ... and again they will commit evil in [my] eyes and they will walk in the stub[bornness] of their heart ... 

Fr. 2 i

I ... and the dominion of Belial will be on them to hand them over to the sword for a week of years ... And in] that jubilee, they will break all my precepts and all my commandments which I will have commanded th[em ... by the hand of] my servants the prophets, and they will [start] to contend one with another for seventy years from the day of breaking the [Law and the] Covenant which they will break. I will give them [into the hand of the an]gels of Persecutions, and they will rule over them,
and they will not know and understand that I am furious with them because of their transgressions [by which they will have forsaken Me and will have done that which is evil in my eyes, and will have chosen that which I do not desire, striving for wealth and gain [and . . . , on]e stealing that which is his fellow's, and one oppressing another. They will pollute my Sanctuary [profane my sabbaths]; they will for[get my [appointed times and will pollute their s[ee]d. Their priests will act violently . . .