

2 ESDRAS 7

2 Esdras 7 is from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations are also from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved."

INTRODUCTION

2 Esdras (also referred to as 4 Esdras) has a lot to say about the Messiah; end time prophesy, state of the dead and final judgment.

Since this is only a glimpse into the Apocrypha, I thought 2 Esdras 7 would be an excellent place to begin.

To give you an idea what's in store, the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), gives us the following subtitles:

- [Response to Ezra's Questions](#) (verses 1 – 16)
- [The Fate of the Ungodly](#) (verses 17 – 25)
- [The Temporary Messianic Kingdom](#) (verses 26 - 44)
- [Only a Few Will Be Saved](#) (verses 45 - 61)
- [Lamentation of Ezra, with Response](#) (verses 62 - 74)
- [State of the Dead before Judgment](#) (verses 75 - 101)
- [No Intercession for the Ungodly](#) (verses 102 – 45 115)
- [Lamentation over the Fate of Most People](#) (verses 46 116 – 61 131)
- [Ezra Appeals to God's Mercy](#) (verses 62 132 – 70 140)

My personal remarks are few; however, a few verses, from the King James Version (KJV), were added to support the text in 2 Esdras 7.

Highlights were also added for emphasize.

2 Esdras 7

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

Response to Ezra's Questions

7 "When I had finished speaking these words, the angel who had been sent to me on the former nights was sent to me again. ² He said to me, "Rise, Ezra, and listen to the words that I have come to speak to you."

³ I said, "Speak, my lord." And he said to me, "There is a sea set in a wide expanse so that it is deep and vast, ⁴ but it has an entrance set in a narrow place, so that it is like a river. ⁵ If there are those who wish to reach the sea, to look at it or to navigate it, how can they come to the broad part unless they pass through the narrow part? ⁶ Another example: There is a city built and set on a plain, and it is full of all good things; ⁷ but the entrance to it is narrow and set in a precipitous place, so that there is fire on the right hand and deep water on the left. ⁸ There is only one path lying between them, that is, between the fire and the water, so that only one person can walk on the path. ⁹ If now the city is given to someone as an inheritance, how will the heir receive the inheritance unless by passing through the appointed danger?"

¹⁰ I said, "That is right, lord." He said to me, "So also is Israel's portion. ¹¹ For I made the world for their sake, and when Adam transgressed my statutes, what had been made was judged. ¹² **And so the entrances of this world were made narrow and sorrowful and toilsome; they are few and evil, full of dangers and involved in great hardships.** ¹³ **But the entrances of the greater world are broad and safe, and yield the fruit of immortality.**

- **Matthew 7:13-14**

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

¹⁴ Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."
(KJV)

- **2 Esdras 8:53-54**

"The root of evil is sealed up from you, illness is banished from you, and death is hidden; Hades has fled and corruption has been forgotten; ⁵⁴ sorrows have passed away, and in the end the treasure of immortality is made manifest." (NRSV)

¹⁴ Therefore unless the living pass through the difficult and futile experiences, they can never receive those things that have been reserved for them.

- **1 Peter 1:3-5**

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

⁴ To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

⁵ Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
(KJV)

¹⁵ Now therefore why are you disturbed, seeing that you are to perish? Why are you moved, seeing that you are mortal? ¹⁶ Why have you not considered in your mind what is to come, rather than what is now present?"

The Fate of the Ungodly

¹⁷ Then I answered and said, "O sovereign Lord, you have ordained in your law that the righteous shall inherit these things, but that the ungodly shall perish.

- **Psalm 37:8-11**

"Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

⁹ For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.

¹⁰ For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

¹¹ But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." (KJV)

- **Matthew 5:5**

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." (KJV)

- **Psalm 37:17-19**

"For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the Lord upholdeth the righteous.

¹⁸ The Lord knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever.

¹⁹ They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied." (KJV)

- **Matthew 19:29**

"And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."
(KJV)

- **Matthew 25:33-35**

"And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

³⁴ Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

³⁵ For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:" (KJV)

- **Mark 10:17-22**

"And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

¹⁸ And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.

¹⁹ Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

²⁰ And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

²¹ Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

²² And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions." (KJV)

- **Revelation 21:6-8**

“And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

⁷ He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

⁸ But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” (KJV)

¹⁸ The righteous, therefore, can endure difficult circumstances while hoping for easier ones; but those who have done wickedly have suffered the difficult circumstances and will never see the easier ones.”

- **Proverbs 11:18-20**

“The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.

¹⁹ As righteousness tendeth to life: so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death.

²⁰ They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the Lord: but such as are upright in their way are his delight.” (KJV)

¹⁹ He said to me, “You are not a better judge than the Lord, or wiser than the Most High! ²⁰ **Let many perish who are now living, rather than that the law of God that is set before them be disregarded!** ²¹ **For the Lord strictly commanded those who came into the world, when they came, what they should do to live, and what they should observe to avoid punishment.**

- **Deuteronomy 30:6-20**

“And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

⁷ And the Lord thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee.

⁸ And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the Lord, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day.

⁹ And the Lord thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers:

¹⁰ If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.

¹¹ For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.

¹² It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

¹³ Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

¹⁴ But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

¹⁵ See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;

¹⁶ In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

¹⁷ But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them;

¹⁸ I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it.

¹⁹ **I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:**

²⁰ **That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days:** that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.” (KJV)

- **Matthew 22:36-40**

“Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

³⁷ Jesus said unto him, **Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.**

³⁸ This is the first and great commandment.

³⁹ And the second is like unto it, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.**

⁴⁰ **On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”** (KJV)

- **Luke 10:25-28**

“And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

²⁶ He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

²⁷ And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

²⁸ And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.” (KJV)

²² Nevertheless they were not obedient, and spoke against him;

they devised for themselves vain thoughts,

²³ and proposed to themselves wicked frauds;

they even declared that the Most High does not exist,

and they ignored his ways.

²⁴ They scorned his law,

and denied his covenants;

they have been unfaithful to his statutes,

and have not performed his works.

²⁵ That is the reason, Ezra, that empty things are for the empty, and full things are for the full.

The Temporary Messianic Kingdom

²⁶ “For indeed the time will come, when the signs that I have foretold to you will come to pass, that the city that now is not seen shall appear, and the land that now is hidden shall be disclosed.

- **Isaiah 65:17**

“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.” (KJV)

- **Isaiah 66:22-23**

“For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain.

²³ And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.” (KJV)

- **Revelation 21:1-2**

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

² And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” (KJV)

²⁷ Everyone who has been delivered from the evils that I have foretold shall see my wonders. ²⁸ For my son the Messiah shall be revealed with those who are with him, and those who remain shall rejoice four hundred years. ²⁹ After those years my son the Messiah shall die, and all who draw human breath. ³⁰ Then the world shall be turned back to primeval silence for seven days, as it was at the first beginnings, so that no one shall be left.

- **Isaiah 24:1-6**

“Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.

² And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.

³ The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word.

⁴ The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish.

⁵ The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.

⁶ Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.” (KJV)

- **Isaiah 24:17-22**

“Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth.

¹⁸ And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake.

¹⁹ The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly.

²⁰ The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.

²¹ And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.

²² And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.” (KJV)

- **Jeremiah 4:20-26**

“Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment.

²¹ How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet?

²² For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

²³ I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light.

²⁴ I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly.

²⁵ I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled.

²⁶ I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by his fierce anger.” (KJV)

³¹ After seven days the world that is not yet awake shall be roused, and that which is corruptible shall perish.

- **2 Peter 3:1-13**

“This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:

² That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:

³ Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

⁴ And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

⁵ For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

⁶ Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

⁷ But **the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.**

⁸ But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that **all should come to repentance.**

¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

¹¹ Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

¹² Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

¹³ Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, **wherein dwelleth righteousness.**” (KJV)

³² The earth shall give up those who are asleep in it, and the dust those who rest there in silence; and the chambers shall give up the souls that have been committed to them.

- **Revelation 20:13**

“And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man **according to their works.**” (KJV)

³³ The Most High shall be revealed on the seat of judgment, and compassion shall pass away, and patience shall be withdrawn.

- **Revelation 20:11**

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.” (KJV)

³⁴ Only judgment shall remain, truth shall stand, and faithfulness shall grow strong. ³⁵ Recompense shall follow, and the reward shall be manifested; righteous deeds shall awake, and unrighteous deeds shall not sleep.

- **Revelation 20:12**

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and **the dead were judged** out of those things which were written in the books, **according to their works.**” (KJV)

³⁶ The pit of torment shall appear, and opposite it shall be the place of rest; and the furnace of hell shall be disclosed, and opposite it the paradise of delight.

- **Psalms 9:17**

“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.” (KJV)

- **Proverbs 15:24**

“The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.” (KJV)

- **Isaiah 5:14**

“Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.” (KJV)

³⁷ Then the Most High will say to the nations that have been raised from the dead, ‘Look now, and understand whom you have denied, whom you have not served, whose commandments you have despised.

- **Matthew 10:1-15**

“And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

² Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

³ Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus;

⁴ Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

⁵ These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

⁶ But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

⁷ And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

⁸ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

⁹ Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses,

¹⁰ Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.

¹¹ And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.

¹² And when ye come into an house, salute it.

¹³ And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

¹⁴ And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.

¹⁵ Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in **the day of judgment**, than for that city.” (KJV)

- **Matthew 11:20-24**

“Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:

²¹ Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

²² But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

²³ And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

²⁴ But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in **the day of judgment**, than for thee.” (KJV)

³⁸ Look on this side and on that; here are delight and rest, and there are fire and torments.’ Thus he will speak to them on the day of judgment— ³⁹ a day that has no sun or moon or stars, ⁴⁰ or cloud or thunder or lightning, or wind or water or air, or darkness or evening or morning, ⁴¹ or summer or spring or heat or winter or frost or cold, or hail or rain or dew, ⁴² or noon or night, or dawn or shining or brightness or light, but only the splendor of the glory of the Most High, by which all shall see what has been destined.

- This reminds me of a Youtube video titled [URGENT WARNING!! GOD SHOWED THIS MAN THE JUDGMENT DAY](#). I have no idea if the young man read 2 Esdras.

⁴³ It will last as though for a week of years. ⁴⁴ This is my judgment and its prescribed order; and to you alone I have shown these things.”

Only a Few Will Be Saved

⁴⁵ I answered and said, “O sovereign Lord, I said then and I say now: Blessed are those who are alive and keep your commandments!

- **Revelation 22:14-16**

“**Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.**

¹⁵ For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

¹⁶ I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.” (KJV)

⁴⁶ But what of those for whom I prayed? For who among the living is there that has not sinned, or who is there among mortals that has not transgressed your covenant? ⁴⁷ And now I see that **the world to come will bring delight to few, but torments to many.**

- **Zechariah 13:7-9**

“Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.

⁸ And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein.

⁹ And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God.” (KJV)

- **Luke 13:23-29**

“Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them,

²⁴ Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

²⁵ When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:

²⁶ Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

²⁷ But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; **depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.**

²⁸ There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

²⁹ And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.” (KJV)

⁴⁸ For an evil heart has grown up in us, which has alienated us from God, and has brought us into corruption and the ways of death, and has shown us the paths of perdition and removed us far from life—and that not merely for a few but for almost all who have been created.”

⁴⁹ He answered me and said, “Listen to me, Ezra, and I will instruct you, and will admonish you once more. ⁵⁰ For this reason the Most High has made not one world but two. ⁵¹ Inasmuch as you have said that the righteous are not many but few, while the ungodly abound, hear the explanation for this.

⁵² “If you have just a few precious stones, will you add to them lead and clay?” ⁵³ I said, “Lord, how could that be?” ⁵⁴ And he said to me, “Not only that, but ask the earth and she will tell you; defer to her, and she will declare it to you. ⁵⁵ Say to her, ‘You produce gold and silver and bronze, and also iron and lead and clay; ⁵⁶ but silver is more abundant than gold, and bronze than silver, and iron than bronze, and lead than iron, and clay than lead.’ ⁵⁷ Judge therefore which things are precious and desirable, those that are abundant or those that are rare?”

⁵⁸ I said, “O sovereign Lord, what is plentiful is of less worth, for what is more rare is more precious.”

- **Matthew 13:45-46**

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

⁴⁶Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.” (KJV)

- **1 Peter 2:5**

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” (KJV)

- **Revelation 21:19**

“And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;” (KJV)

⁵⁹He answered me and said, “Consider within yourself what you have thought, for the person who has what is hard to get rejoices more than the person who has what is plentiful. ⁶⁰So also will be the judgment that I have promised; for I will rejoice over the few who shall be saved, because it is they who have made my glory to prevail now, and through them my name has now been honored. ⁶¹I will not grieve over the great number of those who perish; for it is they who are now like a mist, and are similar to a flame and smoke—they are set on fire and burn hotly, and are extinguished.”

- **Isaiah 24:5-6**

“**The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof;** because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.

⁶Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.” (KJV)

- **Isaiah 42:24-25**

“Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law.

²⁵Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart.” (KJV)

James 4:14

“Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.” (KJV)

Lamentation of Ezra, with Response

⁶²I replied and said, “O earth, what have you brought forth, if the mind is made out of the dust like the other created things? ⁶³For it would have been better if the dust itself had not been born, so that the mind might not have been made from it.

- **Ecclesiastes 3:20-21**

“All go unto one place; **all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.**

²¹Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?” (KJV)

- **Ecclesiastes 12:1-8**

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

² While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain:

³ In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened,

⁴ And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of musick shall be brought low;

⁵ Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets:

⁶ Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.

⁷ Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

⁸ Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity.” (KJV)

⁶⁴ But now the mind grows with us, and therefore we are tormented, because we perish and we know it. ⁶⁵ Let the human race lament, but let the wild animals of the field be glad; let all who have been born lament, but let the cattle and the flocks rejoice. ⁶⁶ It is much better with them than with us; for they do not look for a judgment, and they do not know of any torment or salvation promised to them after death.

- **Psalms 116:3**

“The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.” (KJV)

- **Luke 16:19-31**

“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

²⁰ And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

²¹ And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

²² And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

²³ And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

²⁴ And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

²⁵ But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

²⁶ And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

²⁷ Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

²⁸ For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

²⁹ Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

³⁰ And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

³¹ And he said unto him, **If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.**” (KJV)

- **2 Peter 3:6-9**

“Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

⁷ But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

⁸ But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

⁹ **The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.**” (KJV)

⁶⁷ What does it profit us that we shall be preserved alive but cruelly tormented? ⁶⁸ For all who have been born are entangled in iniquities, and are full of sins and burdened with transgressions. ⁶⁹ And if after death we were not to come into judgment, perhaps it would have been better for us.”

⁷⁰ He answered me and said, “When the Most High made the world and Adam and all who have come from him, he first prepared the judgment and the things that pertain to the judgment. ⁷¹ But now, understand from your own words—for you have said that the mind grows with us. ⁷² For this reason, therefore, those who live on earth shall be tormented, because though they had understanding, they committed iniquity; and though they received the commandments, they did not keep them; and though they obtained the law, they dealt unfaithfully with what they received.

- **Jeremiah 17:10**

“I the Lord search the heart
and test the mind,
to give every man according to his ways,
according to the fruit of his deeds.” (ESV)

- **Revelation 14:9-11**

“And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.” (KJV)

⁷³ What, then, will they have to say in the judgment, or how will they answer in the last times?

⁷⁴ How long the Most High has been patient with those who inhabit the world!—and not for their sake, but because of the times that he has foreordained.”

- **Daniel 8:19**

“And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be.” (KJV)

- **Daniel 12:1-4**

“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

² And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

³ And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

⁴ But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.” (KJV)

- **Matthew 8:29**

“And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” (KJV)

- **Revelation 22:10-12**

“And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

¹¹ He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

¹² And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” (KJV)

State of the Dead before Judgment

⁷⁵ I answered and said, “If I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, show this also to your servant: whether after death, as soon as everyone of us yields up the soul, we shall be kept in rest until those times come when you will renew the creation, or whether we shall be tormented at once?”

⁷⁶ He answered me and said, “I will show you that also, but do not include yourself with those who have shown scorn, or number yourself among those who are tormented. ⁷⁷ For you have a treasure of works stored up with the Most High, but it will not be shown to you until the last times. ⁷⁸ Now concerning death, the teaching is: When the decisive decree has gone out from the Most High that a person shall die, as the spirit leaves the body to return again to him who gave it, first of all it adores the glory of the Most High. ⁷⁹ If it is one of those who have shown scorn and have not kept the way of the Most High, who have despised his law and hated those who fear God— ⁸⁰ such spirits shall not enter into habitations, but shall immediately wander about in torments, always grieving and sad, in seven ways. ⁸¹ The first way, because they have scorned the law of the Most High. ⁸² The second way, because they cannot now make a good repentance so that they may live. ⁸³ The third way, they shall see the reward laid up for those who have trusted the covenants of the Most High. ⁸⁴ The fourth way, they shall consider the torment laid up for themselves in the last days. ⁸⁵ The fifth way, they shall see how the habitations of the others are guarded by angels in profound quiet. ⁸⁶ The sixth way, they shall see how some of them will cross over into torments. ⁸⁷ The seventh way, which is worse than all the ways that have been mentioned, because they shall utterly waste away in confusion and be consumed with shame, and shall wither with fear at seeing the glory of the Most High in whose presence they sinned while they were alive, and in whose presence they are to be judged in the last times.

⁸⁸ “Now this is the order of those who have kept the ways of the Most High, when they shall be separated from their mortal body. ⁸⁹ During the time that they lived in it, they laboriously served the Most High, and withstood danger every hour so that they might keep the law of the Lawgiver perfectly. ⁹⁰ Therefore this is the teaching concerning them: ⁹¹ First of all, they shall see with great joy the glory of him who receives them, for they shall have rest in seven orders. ⁹² The first order,

because they have striven with great effort to overcome the evil thought that was formed with them, so that it might not lead them astray from life into death.

- **Deuteronomy 30:10-16**

“If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.

¹¹ For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.

¹² It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

¹³ Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

¹⁴ But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

¹⁵ See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;

¹⁶ In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.” (KJV)

- **Matthew 5:7-9**

“Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” (KJV)

- **John 5:22-25**

“ For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

²³ That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

²⁴ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

²⁵ Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.” (KJV)

- **Matthew 5:48**

“ Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” (KJV)

- **Revelation 2:7**

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” (KJV)

- **Revelation 2:11**

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.” (KJV)

- **Revelation 2:17**

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.” (KJV)

- **Revelation 2:26**

“And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:” (KJV)

- **Revelation 3:12**

“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.” (KJV)

- **Revelation 3:21**

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” (KJV)

- **Revelation 21:7**

“He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.” (KJV)

⁹³The second order, because they see the perplexity in which the souls of the ungodly wander and the punishment that awaits them. ⁹⁴The third order, they see the witness that he who formed them bears concerning them, that throughout their life they kept the law with which they were entrusted. ⁹⁵The fourth order, they understand the rest that they now enjoy, being gathered into their chambers and guarded by angels in profound quiet, and the glory waiting for them in the last days. ⁹⁶The fifth order, they rejoice that they have now escaped what is corruptible and shall inherit what is to come; and besides they see the straits and toil from which they have been delivered, and the spacious liberty that they are to receive and enjoy in immortality.

- **Isaiah 61:1**

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;” (KJV)

- **Luke 4:18**

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,” (KJV)

- **James 1:25**

“But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.” (KJV)

⁹⁷The sixth order, when it is shown them how their face is to shine like the sun, and how they are to be made like the light of the stars, being incorruptible from then on.

- **Daniel 12:3**

“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” (KJV)

- **Matthew 13:43**

“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.” (KJV)

⁹⁸The seventh order, which is greater than all that have been mentioned, because they shall rejoice with boldness, and shall be confident without confusion, and shall be glad without fear, for they press forward to see the face of him whom they served in life and from whom they are to receive their reward when glorified. ⁹⁹This is the order of the souls of the righteous, as henceforth is announced; and the previously mentioned are the ways of torment that those who would not give heed shall suffer hereafter.”

¹⁰⁰Then I answered and said, “Will time therefore be given to the souls, after they have been separated from the bodies, to see what you have described to me?”

¹⁰¹He said to me, “They shall have freedom for seven days, so that during these seven days they may see the things of which you have been told, and afterwards they shall be **gathered in their habitations.**”

- **Genesis 25:8**
“Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people.” (KJV)
- **Genesis 25:17**
“And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, an hundred and thirty and seven years: and he gave up the ghost and died; and was gathered unto his people.” (KJV)
- **Genesis 35:29**
“And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.” (KJV)
- **Genesis 49:33**
“And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.” (KJV)
- **Numbers 20:26**
“And strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son: and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there.” (KJV)
- **Deuteronomy 32:50**
“And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people:” (KJV)
- **Deuteronomy 32:48-50**
“And the Lord spake unto Moses that selfsame day, saying,
⁴⁹Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, unto mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession:
⁵⁰And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people:” (KJV)
- **Psalms 26:9**
“Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men:” (KJV)
- **Psalms 50:5**
“Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.” (KJV)

- **Isaiah 24:17-22**

"Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth.

¹⁸ And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake.

¹⁹ The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly.

²⁰ The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.

²¹ And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.

²² And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners **are gathered in the pit**, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited." (KJV)

- **Enoch 22**

"And thence I went to another place, and he showed me in the west another great and high mountain [and] of hard rock.

² **And there was in it four hollow places, deep and wide and very smooth. How smooth are the hollow places and deep and dark to look at.**

³ Then Raphael answered, one of the holy angels who was with me, and said unto me: '**These hollow places have been created for this very purpose, that the spirits of the souls of the dead should assemble therein, yea that all the souls of the children of men should assemble here.**

⁴ **And these places have been made to receive them till the day of their judgement and till their appointed period [till the period appointed], till the great judgement (comes) upon them.'**

⁵ I saw the spirits of the children of men who were dead, and their voice went forth to heaven and made suit.

⁶ Then I asked Raphael the angel who was with me, and I said unto him: "This spirit--whose is it whose voice goeth forth and maketh suit?"

⁷ And he answered me saying: 'This is the spirit which went forth from Abel, whom his brother Cain slew, and he makes his suit against him till his seed is destroyed from the face of the earth, and his seed is annihilated from amongst the seed of men.'

⁸ The I asked regarding it, and regarding all the hollow places: 'Why is one separated from the other?'

⁹ And he answered me and said unto me: 'These three have been made that the spirits of the dead might be separated. And such a division has been made (for) the spirits of the righteous, in which there is the bright spring of water.

¹⁰ And such has been made for sinners when they die and are buried in the earth and judgement has not been executed on them in their lifetime.

¹¹ Here their spirits shall be set apart in this great pain till the great day of judgement and punishment and torment of those who curse for ever and retribution for their spirits. There He shall bind them for ever.

¹² And such a division has been made for the spirits of those who make their suit, who make disclosures concerning their destruction, when they were slain in the days of the sinners.

¹³ Such has been made for the spirits of men who were not righteous but sinners, who were complete in transgression, and of the transgressors they shall be companions: but their spirits shall not be slain in the day of judgement nor shall they be raised from thence.'

¹⁴ The I blessed the Lord of glory and said: 'Blessed be my Lord, the Lord of righteousness, who ruleth for ever.'"

No Intercession for the Ungodly

¹⁰² I answered and said, “If I have found favor in your sight, show further to me, your servant, whether on the day of judgment the righteous will be able to intercede for the ungodly or to entreat the Most High for them— ¹⁰³ fathers for sons or sons for parents, brothers for brothers, relatives for their kindred, or friends for those who are most dear.”

¹⁰⁴ He answered me and said, “Since you have found favor in my sight, I will show you this also. **The day of judgment** is decisive and displays to all the seal of truth. Just as now a father does not send his son, or a son his father, or a master his servant, or a friend his dearest friend, to be ill or sleep or eat or be healed in his place,

- **Matthew 11:21-24**

“Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

²² But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at **the day of judgment**, than for you.

²³ And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

²⁴ But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in **the day of judgment**, than for thee.” (KJV)

- **Matthew 12:36**

“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in **the day of judgment.**” (KJV)

- **Mark 6:11**

“And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah in **the day of judgment**, than for that city.” (KJV)

- **2 Peter 2:9**

“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto **the day of judgment** to be punished:” (KJV)

- **2 Peter 3:7**

“But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against **the day of judgment** and perdition of ungodly men.” (KJV)

¹⁰⁵ so no one shall ever pray for another on that day, neither shall anyone lay a burden on another; for then all shall bear their own righteousness and unrighteousness.”

^{36 106} I answered and said, “How then do we find that first Abraham prayed for the people of Sodom, and Moses for our ancestors who sinned in the desert, ^{37 107} and Joshua after him for Israel in the days of Achan, ^{38 108} and Samuel in the days of Saul, and David for the plague, and Solomon for those at the dedication, ^{39 109} and Elijah for those who received the rain, and for the one who was dead, that he might live, ^{40 110} and Hezekiah for the people in the days of Sennacherib, and many others prayed for many? ^{41 111} So if now, when corruption has increased and unrighteousness has multiplied, the righteous have prayed for the ungodly, why will it not be so then as well?”

^{42 112} He answered me and said, "This present world is not the end; the full glory does not remain in it; therefore those who were strong prayed for the weak. ^{43 113} But the day of judgment will be the end of this age and the beginning of the immortal age to come, in which corruption has passed away, ^{44 114} sinful indulgence has come to an end, unbelief has been cut off, and righteousness has increased and truth has appeared. ^{45 115} Therefore no one will then be able to have mercy on someone who has been condemned in the judgment, or to harm someone who is victorious."

Lamentation over the Fate of Most People

^{46 116} I answered and said, "This is my first and last comment: it would have been better if the earth had not produced Adam, or else, when it had produced him, had restrained him from sinning. ^{47 117} For what good is it to all that they live in sorrow now and expect punishment after death? ^{48 118} O Adam, what have you done? For though it was you who sinned, the fall was not yours alone, but ours also who are your descendants. ^{49 119} For what good is it to us, if an immortal time has been promised to us, but we have done deeds that bring death? ^{50 120} And what good is it that an everlasting hope has been promised to us, but we have miserably failed? ^{51 121} Or that safe and healthful habitations have been reserved for us, but we have lived wickedly? ^{52 122} Or that the glory of the Most High will defend those who have led a pure life, but we have walked in the most wicked ways? ^{53 123} Or that a paradise shall be revealed, whose fruit remains unspoiled and in which are abundance and healing, but we shall not enter it ^{54 124} because we have lived in perverse ways? ^{55 125} Or that the faces of those who practiced self-control shall shine more than the stars, but our faces shall be blacker than darkness? ^{56 126} For while we lived and committed iniquity we did not consider what we should suffer after death."

^{57 127} He answered and said, "**This is the significance of the contest that all who are born on earth shall wage:** ^{58 128} if they are defeated they shall suffer what you have said, but if they are victorious they shall receive what I have said. ^{59 129} For this is the way of which Moses, while he was alive, spoke to the people, saying, 'Choose life for yourself, so that you may live!'

- **Deuteronomy 30:18-20**

"I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it.

¹⁹ I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that **I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:**

²⁰ That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them." (KJV)

^{60 130} But they did not believe him or the prophets after him, or even myself who have spoken to them. ^{61 131} Therefore there shall not be grief at their destruction, so much as joy over those to whom salvation is assured."

Ezra Appeals to God's Mercy

^{62 132} I answered and said, "I know, O Lord, that the Most High is now called merciful, because he has mercy on those who have not yet come into the world; ^{63 133} and gracious, because he is gracious to those who turn in repentance to his law;

- **2 Peter 3:9**

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (KJV)

^{64 134} and patient, because he shows patience toward those who have sinned, since they are his own creatures; ^{65 135} and bountiful, because he would rather give than take away; ^{66 136} and abundant in compassion, because he makes his compassions abound more and more to those now living and to those who are gone and to those yet to come— ^{67 137} for if he did not make them abound, the world with those who inhabit it would not have life— ^{68 138} and he is called the giver, because if he did not give out of his goodness so that those who have committed iniquities might be relieved of them, not one ten-thousandth of humankind could have life; ^{69 139} and the judge, because if he did not pardon those who were created by his word and blot out the multitude of their sins, ^{70 140} there would probably be left only very few of the innumerable multitude."

- **Jeremiah 29:11**

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." (KJV)

- **Psalms 51:9-10**

"Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.
¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." (KJV)

- **Isaiah 43:24-26**

"Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.
²⁵ I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.
²⁶ Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified." (KJV)

- **Acts 3:19**

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." (KJV)

- **Matthew 7:13-14**

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:
¹⁴ Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (KJV)