

***“But as the heaven is distant from the earth, so is my way distant from your ways, and your thoughts from my mind.”***

***(Isaiah 55:9)***

### ***My Way***

*Dear Friends,*

*Greetings! We thought you may find the following information interesting as well as useful and inspiring.*

*We are going to be looking at the book of 2 Esdras which can be found in the Apocrapha. We are going to be spotlighting verses mostly from chapters four and seven. These chapters are similar in content to the book of Job in the Old Testament in that they deal with deep philosophical questions and answers concerning “the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence”, and why suffering.*

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#### **Ezra's comments:**

O Lord, who bearest rule, thou spakest at the beginning, when thou didst plant the earth, and that thyself alone, and commandedst the people, And gavest a body unto Adam without soul, which was the workmanship of thine hands, and didst breathe into him the breath of life, and he was made living before thee. And thou leadest him into paradise, which thy right hand had planted, before ever the earth came forward. And unto him thou gavest commandment to love thy way: which he transgressed, (^Thou didst lay upon him one commandment of thine; but he transgressed it.) and immediately thou appointedst death in him and in his generations,

Then said I unto him, It were better that we were not at all, than that we should live still in wickedness, and to suffer, and not to know wherefore. For it would have been better if the dust itself had not been born, so that the mind might not have been made from it. I answered then and said, This is my first and last saying, that it had been better not to have given the earth unto Adam: or else, when it was given him, to have restrained him from sinning. For what profit is it for men now in this present time to live in heaviness, and after death to look for punishment?

O thou Adam, what hast thou done? for though it was thou that sinned, thou art not fallen alone, but we all that come of thee. 3:4-7, 4:12, (^7:63), 7:46-48

#### **God's Comments:**

And the angel that was sent unto me, whose name was Uriel, gave me an answer, And said, Thy heart hath gone to far in this world, and thinkest thou to comprehend the way of the most High?

Then said I, Yea, my lord. And he answered me, and said, I am sent to shew thee three ways, and to set forth three similitudes before thee: Whereof if thou canst declare me one, I will shew thee also the way that thou desirest to see, and I shall shew thee from whence the wicked heart cometh.

And I said, Tell on, my lord. Then said he unto me, Go thy way, weigh me the weight of the fire, or measure me the blast of the wind, or call me again the day that is past.

Then answered I and said, What man is able to do that, that thou shouldst ask such things of me? Ch. 4:1-6

Then answered he me, and said, The more thou searchest, the more thou shalt marvel; for the world hasteth fast to pass away, And cannot comprehend the things that are promised to the righteous in time to come: for this world is full of unrighteousness and infirmities. If therefore that which is sown be not turned upside down, and if the place where the evil is sown pass not away, then cannot it come that is sown with good. 4:26-

For this reason the Most High has made not one world but two.

He answered me, and said, This present life is not the end where much glory doth abide. But the day of doom shall be the end of this time, and the beginning of the immortality for to come, wherein corruption is past, Intemperance is at an end, infidelity is cut off, righteousness is grown, and truth is sprung up. (^7:50), 7:42-44

For thou comest far short that thou shouldest be able to love my creature more than I: but I have oftentimes drawn nigh unto thee, and unto it, but never to the unrighteous.

(^You have often compared yourself to the unrighteousness. Never do so!) 8:47

*In both Ezra's and Job's search for answers and in the questioning of God's motives in allowing certain "negative" situations to exist, God answers by posing questions that are almost incomprehensible for the human mind to comprehend let alone answer.*

*What this does is to show both Ezra and Job and the world the "intellectual" superiority of the "thinking" power of God which far exceeds anything man is able to comprehend.*

*To question God as far as His "righteousness" is concerned is something beyond the ability of human comprehension.*

*This does not however mean that God can not and will not reveal mysteries to us if we ask Him and He chooses to do so. "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." Jeremiah 33:3*

## 2 Esdras

Excerpted from Wikipedia

2 Esdras (also called 4 Esdras, Latin Esdras, or Latin Ezra) is the name of *an apocalyptic book in many English versions of the Bible*[1] [2][3]Its authorship is ascribed to Ezra.[4] It is reckoned among the apocrypha by Roman Catholics, Protestants, and most Eastern Orthodox Christians.[5]

As with 1 Esdras, there is some confusion about the numbering of this book. The Vulgate of Jerome includes 1, 2, 3 and 4 Esdras. Protestant writers, after the Geneva Bible, called 1 and 2 Esdras of the Vulgate Ezra and Nehemiah, and called 3 and 4 Esdras of the Vulgate 1 and 2 Esdras which *became common in English Bibles*.[6] This text is sometimes also known as Apocalypse of Ezra (chapters 3–14 known as the Jewish Apocalypse of Ezra.

The Ethiopian Church considers 4 Ezra to be canonical, written during the Babylonian captivity, and calls it Izra Sutuel (Ĉè · d' ገ ስ ). It was also often cited by the Fathers of the Church.

Wellhausen, Charles, and Gunkel have shown that the original composition was in Hebrew, which was translated into Greek, and then to Latin, Armenian, Ethiopian and Georgian, but the Hebrew and Greek editions have been lost.

The chapters corresponding to 4 Ezra, i.e. 2 Esdras 3–14, make up the Book of II Izra, aka Izra Sutuel, canonical in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church; it was also widely cited by early Fathers of the Church, particularly Ambrose of Milan. It may also be found in many larger English Bibles included as part of the Biblical Apocrypha, as they exist in the King James version, the Revised Standard Version, and the earliest editions of the Catholic Douay-Rheims Bible, among others.[1]

The introitus of the traditional Requiem Mass in the Catholic Church is loosely based on 2:34–35.

Most Latin editions of the text have a large lacuna[14] of seventy verses between 7:35 and 7:36 that is missing due to the fact that they trace their common origin to one early manuscript, Codex Sangermanensis I, which was missing an entire page. In 1895 Robert Lubbock Bensly and James published a critical edition restoring the lost verses;

it is this edition that is used in the Stuttgart edition of the Vulgate. The restored verses are numbered 7:35 to 7:105, with the former verses 7:36–7:70 renumbered to 7:106–7:140.[15]

#### Notes

1. a b Including the KJB, RSV, NRSV, NEB, REB, and GNB
2. NETBible, Apocalyptic Esdras
3. 4 Ezra is the title used in modern English translations as in Charlesworth's (ISBN 978-0-385-09630-0). See also bibliography there.
4. Stone, Michael Edward (1990). Fourth Ezra; A Commentary on the Book of Fourth Ezra. Hermeneia. Fortress Press. p. 37. ISBN 0-8006-6026-9.
5. For example, it is listed with the apocrypha in the Anglican Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion.
6. "Esdras."Catholic Encyclopedia[1]
14. Article from Early Jewish Writings
15. Biblia Sacra Vulgata, 4th edition, 1994, ISBN 3-438-05303-9.  
*Any verses marked with an ^ will not be found in the King James Version. They are from the 1895 Robert Lubbock Bensly and James published critical edition.*