**The Apocalypse of Esdras**

*(Translation by Philip Schaff, 1885 – with minor modernisations.)*

**Prologue**

Word and Revelation of Esdras, the Holy Prophet and Beloved of God.

**Chapter 1**

**1**It came to pass in the thirtieth year, on the twenty-second of the month, I was in my house. **2**And I cried out and said to the Most High, “Lord, give the glory, in order that I may see Your mysteries.” **3**And when it was night, there came an angel, Michael the archangel, and says to me, “O Prophet Esdras, refrain from bread for seventy weeks.” And I fasted as he told me. **4**And there came Raphael the commander of the host, and gave me a storax rod. **5**And I fasted twice sixty weeks. And I saw the mysteries of God and His angels. **6**And I said to them, “I wish to plead before God about the race of the Christians. It is good for a man not to be born rather than to come into the world.” **7**I was therefore taken up into heaven, and I saw in the first heaven a great army of angels; and they took me to the judgments. **8**And I heard a voice saying to me, “Have mercy on us, O you chosen of God, Esdras.” **9**Then began I to say, “Woe to sinners when they see one who is just more than the angels, and they themselves are in the Gehenna of fire!” **10**And Esdras said, “Have mercy on the works of Your hands, You who are compassionate and of great mercy. **11**Judge me rather than the souls of the sinners; for, it is better that one soul should be punished, and that the whole world should not come to destruction.” **12**And God said, “I will give rest in paradise to the righteous, and I have become merciful.” **13**And Esdras said, “Lord, why do You confer benefits on the righteous? **14**For, just as one who has been hired out, and has served out his time, goes and again works as a slave when he come to his masters, so also the righteous has received his reward in the heavens. **15**But have mercy on the sinners, for we know that You are merciful.” **16**And God said, “I do not see how I can have mercy upon them.” **17**And Esdras said, “They cannot endure Your wrath.” **18**And God said, “This is the fate of such.” **19**And God said, “I wish to have you like Paul and John, **20**as you have given me uncorrupted the treasure that cannot be stolen, the treasure of virginity, the bulwark of men.” **21**And Esdras said, “It is good for a man not to be born. It is good not to be in life. **22**The irrational creatures are better than man, because they have no punishment; **23**but You have taken us and given us up to judgment. **24**Woe to the sinners in the world to come! because their judgment is endless, and the flame unquenchable.”

**Chapter 2**

**1**And while I was thus speaking to him, there came Michael and Gabriel, and all the apostles; **2**and they said, “Rejoice, O faithful man of God!” **3**And Esdras said, “Arise, and come hither with me, O Lord, to judgment” **4**And the Lord said, “Behold, I give you my covenant between me and you, that you may receive it.” **5**And Esdras said, “Let us plead in Your hearing.” **6**And God said, “Ask Abraham your father how a son pleads with his father, and come plead with us.” **7**And Esdras said, “As the Lord lives, I will not cease pleading with You on behalf of the race of the Christians. **8**Where are Your ancient compassions, O Lord? Where is Your long-suffering?” **9**And God said, “As I have made night and day, I have made the righteous and the sinner; and he should have lived like the righteous.” **10**And the prophet said, “Who made Adam the first-formed?” **11**And God said, “My undefiled hands. And I put him in paradise to guard the food of the tree of life; **12**and thereafter he became disobedient, and did this in transgression.” **13**And the prophet said, “Was he not protected by an angel? **14**And was not his life guarded by the cherubim to endless ages? **15**And how was he deceived who was guarded by angels? for You commanded all to be present, and to attend to what was said by You. **16**But if You had not given him Eve, the serpent would not have deceived her; **17**but whom You will, You save, and whom You will, You destroy.” **18**And the prophet said, “Let us come, my Lord, to a second judgment.” **19**And God said, “I cast fire upon Sodom and Gomorrah.” **20**And the prophet said, “Lord, You deal with us according to our deserts.” **21**And God said, “Your sins transcend my clemency.” **22**And the prophet said, “Call to mind the Scriptures, my Father, who has measured out Jerusalem, and set her up again. **23**Have mercy, O Lord, upon sinners; have mercy upon Your own creatures; have pity upon Your works.” **24**Then God remembered those whom He had made, and said to the prophet, **25**“How can I have mercy upon them? Vinegar and gall did they give me to drink, and not even then did they repent.” **26**And the prophet said, “Reveal Your cherubim, and let us go together to judgment; **27**and show me the day of judgment, what it is like.” **28**And God said, “You have been deceived, Esdras; **29**for, such is the day of judgment as that in which there is no rain upon the earth; **30**for, it is a merciful tribunal as compared with that day.” **31**And the prophet said, “I will not cease to plead with You, unless I see the day of the consummation.” **32**And God said, “Number the stars and the sand of the sea; and if you are able to number this, you are also able to plead with me.”

**Chapter 3**

**1**And the prophet said, “Lord, You know that I wear human flesh; **2**and how can I count the stars of the heaven, and the sand of the sea?” **3**And God said, “My chosen prophet, no man will know that great day and the appearing that comes to judge the world. **4**For your sake, my prophet, I have told you the day; but the hour have I not told you.” **5**And the prophet said, “Lord, tell me also the years.” **6**And God said, “If I see the righteousness of the world, that it has abounded, I will have patience with them; but if not, I will stretch forth my hand, and lay hold of the world by the four quarters, and bring them all together into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and I will wipe out the race of men, so that the world shall be no more.” **7**And the prophet said, “And how can Your right hand be glorified?” **8**And God said, “I shall be glorified by my angels.” **9**And the prophet said, “Lord, if You have resolved to do this, why did You make man? **10**You said to our father Abraham, ‘Multiplying I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand that is by the sea-shore;’ and where is Your promise?” **11**And God said, “First will I make an earthquake for the fall of four-footed beasts and of men; **12**and when you see that brother gives up brother to death, and that children shall rise up against their parents, and that a woman forsakes her own husband, **13**and when nation shall rise up against nation in war, then will you know that the end is near. **14**For then neither brother pities brother, nor man wife, nor children parents, nor friends their friends, nor a slave his master; **15**for, he who is the adversary of men shall come up from Tartarus, and shall show men many things. **16**What shall I make of you, Esdras? And will you yet plead with me?”

**Chapter 4**

**1** And the prophet said, “Lord, I shall not cease to plead with You.” **2** And God said, “Number the flowers of the earth. **3** If you are able to number them, you are able also to plead with me.” **4** And the prophet said, “Lord, I cannot number them. I wear human flesh; but I shall not cease to plead with You. **5** I wish, Lord, to see also the under parts of Tartarus.” **6** And God said, “Come down and see.” **7** And He gave me Michael, and Gabriel, and another thirty-four angels; **8** and I went down eighty-five steps, and they brought me down five hundred steps; **9** and I saw a fiery throne, and an old man sitting upon it; and his judgment was merciless. **10** And I said to the angels, “Who is this? And what is his sin?” **11** And they said to me, “This is Herod, who for a time was a king, and ordered to put to death the children from two years old and under.” **12** And I said, “Woe to his soul!” **13** And again they took me down thirty steps, and I there saw boiling up of fire, and in them there was a multitude of sinners; **14** and I heard their voice, but saw not their forms. **15** And they took me down lower many steps, which I could not measure. **16** And I there saw old men, and fiery pivots turning in their ears. **17** And I said, “Who are these? And what is their sin?” **18** And they said to me, “These are they who would not listen.” **19** And they took me down again other five hundred steps, **20** and I there saw the worm that sleeps not, and fire burning up the sinners. **21** And they took me down to the lowest part of destruction, and I saw there the twelve plagues of the abyss. **22** And they took me away to the south, and I saw there a man hanging by the eyelids; and the angels kept scourging him. **23** And I asked, “Who is this? And what is his sin?” **24** And Michael the commander said to me, “This is one who lay with his mother; for having put into practice a small wish, he has been ordered to be hanged.” **25** And they took me away to the north, and I saw there a man bound with iron chains. **26** And I asked, “Who is this?” **27** And he said to me, “This is he who said, ‘I am the Son of God,’ that made stones bread, and water wine.” **28** And the prophet said, “My lord, let me know what is his form, and I shall tell the race of men, that they may not believe in him.” **29** And he said to me, “The form of his countenance is like that of a wild beast; his right eye like the star that rises in the morning, and the other without motion; **30** his mouth one cubit; his teeth span long; his fingers like scythes; **31** the track of his feet of two spans; and in his face an inscription, ‘Antichrist’. **32** He has been exalted to heaven; he shall go down to Hades. **33** At one time he shall become a child; at another, an old man.” **34** And the prophet said, “Lord, and how do You permit him, and he deceives the race of men?” **35** And God said, “Listen, my prophet. He becomes both child and old man, and no one believes him that he is my beloved Son. **36** And after this a trumpet, and the tombs shall be opened, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible. **37** Then the adversary, hearing the dreadful threatening, shall be hidden in outer darkness. **38** Then the heaven, and the earth, and the sea shall be destroyed. **39** Then shall I burn the heaven eighty cubits, and the earth eight hundred cubits.” **40** And the prophet said, “And how has the heaven sinned?” **41** And God said, “Since … there is evil.” **42** And the prophet said, “Lord, and the earth, how has it sinned?” **43** And God said, “Since the adversary, having heard the dreadful threatening, shall be hidden, even on account of this will I melt the earth, and with it the opponent of the race of men.

**Chapter 5**

**1**And the prophet said, “Have mercy, Lord, upon the race of the Christians.” **2**And I saw a woman hanging, and four wild beasts sucking her breasts. **3**And the angels said to me, “She grudged to give her milk, but even threw her infants into the rivers.” **4**And I saw a dreadful darkness, and a night that had no stars nor moon; **5**nor is there young or old, nor brother with brother, nor mother with child, nor wife with husband. **6**And I wept, and said, “O Lord God, have mercy upon the sinners.” **7**And as I said this, there came a cloud and snatched me up, and carried me away again into the heavens. **8**And I saw there many judgments; **9**and I wept bitterly, and said, “It is good for a man not to have come out of his mother’s womb.” **10**And those who were in torment cried out, saying, “Since you have come hither, O holy one of God, we have found a little remission.” **11**And the prophet said, “Blessed are they that weep for their sins.” **12**And God said, “Hear, O beloved Esdras. As a husbandman casts the seed of the corn into the ground, so also the man casts his seed into the parts of the woman. **13**The first month it is all together; the second it increases in size; the third it gets hair; the fourth it gets nails; the fifth it is turned into milk; and the sixth it is made ready, and receives life; the seventh it is completely furnished; the ninth the barriers of the gate of the woman are opened; and it is born safe and sound into the earth.” **14**And the prophet said, “Lord, it is good for man not to have been born. **15**Woe to the human race then, when You shall come to judgment!” **16**And I said to the Lord, “Lord, why have You created man, and delivered him up to judgment?” **17**And God said, with a lofty proclamation, “I will not by any means have mercy on those who transgress my covenant.” **18**And the prophet said, “Lord, where is Your goodness?” **19**And God said, “I have prepared all things for man’s sake, and man does not keep my commandments.” **20**And the prophet said, “Lord, reveal to me the judgments and paradise.” **21**And the angels took me away towards the east, and I saw the tree of life. **22**And I saw there Enoch, and Elias, and Moses, and Peter, and Paul, and Luke, and Matthias, and all the righteous, and the patriarchs. **23**And I saw there the keeping of the air within bounds, and the blowing of the winds, and the storehouses of the ice, and the eternal judgments. **24**And I saw there a man hanging by the skull. **25**And they said to me, “This man removed landmarks.” **26**And I saw there great judgments. And I said to the Lord, “O Lord God, and what man, then, who has been born has not sinned?” **27**And they took me lower down into Tartarus, and I saw all the sinners lamenting and weeping and mourning bitterly. **28**And I also wept, seeing the race of men thus tormented.

**Chapter 6**

**1**Then God said to me, “Do you know, Esdras, the names of the angels at the end of the world? **2**Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, Raphael, Gabuthelon, Aker, Arphugitonos, Beburos, Zebulon.” **3**Then there came a voice to me, “Come hither and die, Esdras, my beloved; give that which has been entrusted to you.” **4**And the prophet said, “And whence can you bring forth my soul?” **5**And the angels said, “We can put it forth through the mouth.” **6**And the prophet said, “Mouth to mouth have I spoken with God, and it comes not forth thence.” **7**And the angels said, “Let us bring it out through you nostrils.” **8**And the prophet said, “My nostrils have smelled the sweet savour of the glory of God.” **9**And the angels said “We can bring it out through your eyes.” **10**And the prophet said, “My eyes have seen the back parts of God.” **11**And the angels said, “We can bring it out through the crown of your head.” **12**And the prophet said, “I walked about with Moses also on the mountain, and it comes not forth thence.” **13**And the angels said, “We can put it forth through the points of your nails.” **14**And the prophet said, “My feet also have walked about on the altar.” **15**And the angels went away without having done anything, saying, “Lord, we cannot get his soul.” **16**Then He said to His only begotten Son, “Go down, my beloved Son, with a great host of angels, and take the soul of my beloved Esdras.” **17**For the Lord, having taken a great host of angels, says to the prophet, “Give me the trust which I entrusted to you; the crown has been prepared for you.” **18**And the prophet said, “Lord, if You take my soul from me, who will be left to plead with You for the race of men?” **19**And God said, “As you are mortal, and of the earth, do not plead with me.” **20**And the prophet said, “I will not cease to plead.” **21**And God said, “Give up just now the trust; the crown has been prepared for you. **22**Come and die, that you may obtain it.” **23**Then the prophet began to say with tears, “O Lord, what good have I done pleading with You, and I am going to fall down into the earth? **24**Woe is me! Woe is me, that I am going to be eaten up by worms! **25**Weep, all you saints and you righteous, for me, who have pleaded much, and who am delivered up to death. **26**Weep for me, all you saints and you righteous, because I have gone to the pit of Hades.”

**Chapter 7**

**1**And God said to him, “Hear, Esdras, my beloved. I, who am immortal, endured a cross; I tasted vinegar and gall; I was laid in a tomb, and I raised up my chosen ones; **2**I called Adam up out of Hades, that I might save the race of men. Do not therefore be afraid of death; **3**for, that which is from me – that is to say, the soul – goes to heaven; and that which is from the earth – that is to say, the body – goes to the earth, from which it was taken.” **4**And the prophet said, Woe is me! Woe is me! What shall I set about? What shall I do? I know not.” **5**And then the blessed Esdras began to say: “O eternal God, the Maker of the whole creation, who has measured the heaven with a span, and who holds the earth as a handful? **6**Who rides upon the cherubim? Who took the prophet Elias to the heavens in a chariot of fire? **7**Who gives food to all flesh? Whom do all things dread and tremble at from the face of Your power. **8**Listen to me, who have pleaded much, **9**and give to all who transcribe this book, and have it, and remember my name, and honour my memory, give them a blessing from heaven; **10**and bless him in all things, as You blessed Joseph at last, **11**and remember not his former wickedness in the day of his judgment. **12**And as many as have not believed this book shall be burnt up like Sodom and Gomorrah.” **13**And there came to him a voice, saying, “Esdras, my beloved, all things whatever you have asked will I give to each one.” **14**And immediately he gave up his precious soul with much honour, in the month of October, on the twenty-eighth. **15**And they prepared him for burial with incense and psalms; and his precious and sacred body dispenses strength of soul and body perpetually to those who have recourse to him from a longing desire. **16**To whom is due glory, strength, honour, and adoration – to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to ages of ages. Amen.