

The Missing Fragment

4 Ezra, Chapter 7

36 Then the pit of torment shall appear, and opposite it shall be the place of rest; and the furnace of She'ol shall be disclosed, and opposite it the paradise¹ of delight. **37** Then **El Elyon** will say to the nations that have been raised from the dead: Look now, and understand whom ye have denied, whom ye have not served, whose commandments ye have despised! **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 splendour of the glory of **El Elyon**, by which all shall see what has been determined for them. **43** For it will last for about a week of years. **44** This is my judgment and its prescribed order; and to you alone have I shown these things. **45** I answered and said: O **Yahuah Tseva'oth**, I said then and I say now: Blessed are those who are alive and guard your commandments!

46 But what of those for whom I prayed? For who among the living is there that has not sinned, or who among men 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. **48** For an evil heart has grown up in us, which has alienated us from **Elohiym**, 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 just a few of us but 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 yet again.

50 For this reason **El Elyon** has made not one world but two. **51** For whereas you have said that the righteous are not many but few, while the wicked 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: **Yahuah**, 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 brass, and also iron and lead and clay; **56** but silver is more abundant than gold, and brass than silver, and iron than brass, 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 **Yahuah Tseva'oth**, what is plentiful is of less worth, for what is more rare is more precious. **59** He answered me and said: Weigh within yourself what you have thought, for he who has what is hard to get rejoices more than he who has what is plentiful.

¹ Luqas 23:43

60 So also will be the judgment which 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 honoured. **61** And I will not grieve over the multitude 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. **62** I replied and said: O earth, what have you brought forth, if the mind is made out of the dust like the other created things! **63** 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. **64** But now the mind grows with us, and therefore we are tormented, because we perish and know it. **65** Let mankind lament but let the beasts of the field be glad; let all who have been born lament but let the four-footed beasts and the flocks rejoice! **66** For it is much better with them than with us; for they do not look for a judgment, nor do they know of any torment or yeshu`ah² promised to them after death. **67** For what does it profit us that we shall be preserved alive but cruelly tormented? **68** For all who have been born are involved in iniquities and are full of sins and burdened with transgressions. **69** And if we were not to come into judgment after death, perhaps it would have been better for us.

70 He answered me and said: When **El Elyon** made the world and A'dam and all who have come from him, he first prepared the judgment and the things that pertain to the judgment. **71** And now understand from your own words, for you have said that the mind grows with us. **72** For this reason, therefore, those who dwell on earth shall be tormented, because though they had understanding they committed iniquity, and though they received the commandments they did not guard them, and though they obtained the Torah they dealt unfaithfully with what they received. **73** What, then, will they have to say in the judgment, or how will they answer in the last times? **74** For how long the time is that **El Elyon** has been patient with those who inhabit the world, and not for their sake, but because of the times which he has foreordained!

75 I answered and said: If I have found favour in your sight, O **Yahuah**, show this also to your servant: whether after death, as soon as every one of us yields up his 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 be associated with those who have shown scorn, nor number yourself among those who are tormented. **77** For you have a treasure of works laid up with **El Elyon**; 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 forth from **El Elyon** that a man shall die, as the ruach leaves the body to return again to him who gave it, first of all it adores the glory of **El Elyon**. **79** And if it is one of those who have shown scorn and have not guarded the Way of **El Elyon**, and who have despised his Torah, and who

² salvation

have hated those who fear **Elohiym**; **80** such ruachoth shall not enter into habitations, but shall immediately wander about in torments, ever grieving and sad, in seven ways.

81 The first way, because they have scorned the Torah of **El Elyon**.

82 The second way, because they cannot now make a good repentance that they may live.

83 The third way, they shall see the reward laid up for those who have trusted the covenants of **El Elyon**.

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 pass 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 **El Elyon** before whom they sinned while they were alive, and before whom they are to be judged in the last times.

88 Now this is the order of those who have guarded the ways of **El Elyon**, when they shall be separated from their mortal body. **89** During the time that they lived in it, they labouriously served **El Elyon**, and withstood danger every hour, that they might guard the Torah of the Torah giver 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 which was formed with them, that it might not lead them astray from life into death.

93 The second order, because they see the perplexity in which the souls of the wicked wander, and the punishment that awaits them.

94 The third order, they see the witness which he who formed them bears concerning them, that while they were alive they guarded the Torah which was given them in trust.

95 The fourth order, they understand the rest which they now enjoy, being gathered into their chambers and guarded by angels in profound quiet, and the glory which awaits them in the last days.

96 The 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 which they are to receive and enjoy in immortality.

97 The sixth order, when it is shown to 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.

98 The 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 hasten to behold the face of him whom they served in life and from whom they are to receive their reward when glorified.

99 This is the order of the souls of the righteous, as henceforth is announced; and the aforesaid are the ways of torment which those who would not give heed shall suffer hereafter. **100** 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? **101** He 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. **102** I answered and said: If I have found favour in your sight, show further to me, your servant, whether on the day of judgment the righteous will be able to intercede for the wicked or to pray to **El Elyon** for them, **103** fathers for sons or sons for parents, brothers for brothers, relatives for their kinsmen, or friends for those who are most dear. **104** He answered me and said: Since you have found favour 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, **105** so no one shall ever pray for another on that day, neither shall anyone lay a burden on another; for then everyone shall bear his own righteousness and unrighteousness.