

The New English Bible Version
2 Esdras, chapters 15 & 16
Prophecies of Doom

Chapter 15

“Proclaim to My people the words of prophecy which I give you to speak, says the LORD; and have them written down, because they are trustworthy and true. Have no fear of plots against you, and don’t be troubled by the unbelief of those who oppose you. For everyone who does not believe will die because of his unbelief.

Beware, says the LORD, I am letting loose terrible evils on the world, sword, famine, death and destruction, because wickedness has spread over the whole earth and there is no room for further deeds of violence.

Therefore the LORD says, I will not keep silent about your godless sins; I will not tolerate their wicked deeds. See how the blood of innocent victims cries to Me for vengeance, and the souls of the Just/Righteous never cease to plead with me! I will most surely avenge them, says the LORD, and will hear the plea of all the innocent blood that has been shed. My people are being led to the slaughter like sheep. I will no longer allow them to remain in Egypt but will use all My power to rescue them; **I will strike the Egyptians with plagues, as I did before**, and destroy their whole land. How Egypt will mourn, shaken to its very foundations, when it is scourged and chastised by the LORD.

Rev 6:9-11 “And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, do you not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given to every one of them; and it was said to them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”

How the tillers of the soil will mourn, when the seed fails to grow, and when their trees are devastated by blight and hail and terrible storm! Alas for the world and its inhabitants. The sword that will destroy them is not far away. Nation will draw sword against nation and go to war.

Stable government will be at an end; one faction will prevail over another, caring nothing in their day of power for king or leading man of rank. A man may want to visit a city but will not be able to do so; for ambition and rivalry will have reduced cities to chaos, destroyed houses, and filled men with panic. A man will violently assault his neighbor's house and plunder his goods; no pity will restrain him, when he is in the grip of famine and grinding misery.

See how I summon before me all the kings of the earth, says God, from sunrise and south wind, from east and south to turn back and repay what they have been given. I will do to them as they are doing to My Chosen people even to this day. I will pay them back in their own coin."

These are the words of the LORD God: "I will show sinners no pity, the sword will not spare those murderers who stain the ground with innocent blood. The Lord's anger has overflowed in fire to scorch the earth to its foundations and consume sinners like burning straw. Alas for sinners who flout My Commands! Says the LORD, I will show them no mercy. Away from Me, you rebels! Don't bring your pollution near My Holiness! The LORD well knows all who sin against Him and has consigned them to death and destruction. Already disaster has fallen upon the world, and you will never escape it; God will refuse to rescue you, because you have sinned against Him.

How terrible the sight of what is coming from the east! Hordes of dragons from Arabia will sally forth with countless chariots, and from the first day of their hissing will spread across the land, to fill all who hear them and consternation.

The Carmanians, mad with rage, will rush like wild boars out of the forest, advancing in full force to join battle with them and will devastate full tracks of Assyria with their tusks. ... Terror and trembling will cover the earth; all who see the raging fury will shudder and be stricken with panic. ... Huge mighty clouds, full of fury, will mount up and ravage the whole land and its inhabitants; a terrible storm will sweep over the great and the powerful, with fire and hail and flying swords; and a deluge of water will flood all the fields and rivers. They will flatten to the ground cities and walls, mountains and hills, trees in the woods and crops in the fields. They will advance all the way to Babylon and blot it out. When they reach it, they will surround it and let loose a storm in all its fury. The dust and smoke will reach the sky, and all her

neighbors will mourn for Babylon. Any of her survivors will be enslaved by her destroyers.

And you, Asia, who have shared the beauty and the splendor of Babylon, alas for you, poor wretch! Like her, you have dressed up your daughters as whores to attract and catch your lovers who have always lusted for you. You have copied all the schemes and practices of that vile harlot. Therefore God says, I will bring terrible evils: widowhood and poverty, famine, sword and plague, bringing ruin to your homes, bringing violence and death. Your strength and splendor will wither like a flower, when that scorching heat bears down on you. Then you will be as a poor, weak woman, bruised, beaten, and wounded unable to receive your wealthy lovers anymore. Would I be so fierce with you, says the LORD, if you hadn't killed My Chosen Ones continually, gloating over the blows you struck them, and hurling your drunken taunts at their corpses? Isa 47; Rev 18:4-10

Paint your face, make your face beautiful! The harlot's pay shall be yours; you will get what you have earned. What you do to My Chosen people, God will do to you, says the LORD; He will consign you to a terrible fate. Your children will die of hunger; you will fall by the sword, your cities will be blotted out, and all your people will fall on the field of battle. Those who are up on the mountains will be dying of hunger, and their hunger and thirst will force them to gnaw their own flesh and drink their own blood.

You will be foremost in misery, and still there will be more to come. As the victors go past on their way home from the sack of Babylon, they will smash your peaceful city, destroy part of your territory, and bring much of your splendor to an end. They will destroy you—you will be stubble, and they the fire. They will completely devour you and your cities, your land and your mountains and will burn all your forests and your fruit trees. They will make your children prisoners and plunder your property; and not a trace will be left of your splendid beauty.

Chapter 16

Alas for you, Babylon and Asia! Alas for you, Egypt and Syria! Put on sackcloth and hair-shirt and raise a howl of lamentation for your sons; your doom is close at hand. The sword is let loose against you, and who will turn it aside? Fire is let loose against you and who is there to stop them? Can any man stop a hungry lion in a forest or put out a fire among the stubble once it has begun to blaze? Can any man stop an arrow shot by a strong archer?

When the LORD God sends calamities, who can stop them? When His anger overflows in fire, who can put it out? When the lightning flashes, who will not tremble? When it thunders, who will not shake with dread? When it is the LORD who utters his threats, is there any man who will not be crushed to the ground at his approach?

The earth is shaken to its very foundations, and the sea is churned up from its depths; the waves and all the fish with them are in turmoil before the presence of the LORD and the majesty of his strength. For strong is his arm which bends the bow and sharp the arrows which he shoots; once they are on their way, they will not stop before they reach the ends of the earth. Calamities/disasters are let loose and will not turn back before they strike the earth. The fire is alight and will not be put out until it has burnt up/consumed earth's foundations. An arrow shot by a powerful archer does not turn back; no more will the calamities be recalled which are let loose against the earth. Alas, alas for me! Who will rescue me on that day?

2 Esdras 16:18 (Goodspeed) "**It is the beginning of sorrows**, when there will be great mourning; the beginning of famine, when many will perish; the beginning of wars, when powers will fear; the beginning of disasters, when all will tremble. What will they do in these circumstances, when disasters come?"

Matt 24:4-8 "And Jesus answered and said to them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that you are not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in diverse places. **All these are the beginning of sorrows.**"

"It is the beginning of sorrows"... when troubles come, many will groan; when famine strikes, many will die; when wars break out, empires will tremble; when the calamities come, all will be filled with terror. What will men do then, in the face of calamity? Famine and plague, suffering and hardship, are scourges sent to teach men better ways. But even so they will not abandon their crimes, nor keep in mind their scourging. A time will come when food grows cheap, so cheap that they will imagine they have been sent peace and prosperity, But at that very moment the earth will become a

hotbed of disasters—sword, famine and anarchy. Most of its inhabitants will die in the famine; and those who survive the famine will be destroyed by the sword. The dead will be tossed out like dung, and there will be no one to offer any comfort. For the earth will be left empty, and its cities a ruin. None will be left to till the ground and sow it. The trees will bear their fruits, but who will pick them? The grapes will ripen but who will tread them? There will be vast desolation everywhere. A man will long to see a human face or hear a human voice. For out of a whole city, only ten will survive; in the country-side, only two will be left, hiding in the forest or in the holes in the rocks. Just as an olive-grove three or four olives might be left on each tree, or as a few grapes in a vineyard might be overlooked by the sharp-eyed pickers, so also in those days three or four will be overlooked by those who search the houses to kill. They will be left a desert, and the fields will be overrun with briars; thorns will grow up over all the roads and paths, because there will be no sheep to tread them. Girls will live in mourning with none to marry them, women will mourn because they have no husbands, their daughters will mourn because they have no one to support them. The young men who should have married them will be killed in war and the husbands wiped out by the famine.

But listen to me, you who are the LORD's servants, and take my words to heart. This is the Word of the LORD. Receive it, and don't disbelieve what it says. Calamities are here, close at hand, and will not delay. When a pregnant woman is in the ninth month and the moment of her child's birth draws near, there will be two or three hours in which her womb will suffer pangs of agony, and then the child will come from the womb without a moments delay; in the same way calamities will come on the earth without delay, and the world will groan under pangs that grip it.

Listen to My words, My people; get ready for battle, and when the calamities surround you, be as though you were strangers in the earth. The seller must expect to have to run for his life, the buyer to lose what he buys; the merchant must expect to make no profit, the builder never to live in the house he builds. The sower must not expect to reap, nor the pruner to gather grapes. Those who marry must expect no children; the unmarried must think of themselves as widowed. For all labor is labor in vain. Their fruits will be gathered by foreigners, who will plunder their goods, pull down their houses, and take their children captive. If they have children, they will have been bred only for captivity and famine; any who make money do so only to have it plundered. The more care they lavish on their cities, houses and property, and on their own persons, the fiercer will be My indignation against their sins,

says the LORD. Like the indignation of a virtuous woman towards a prostitute, so will be the indignation of justice towards wickedness with all her finery; she will accuse her to her face, when the champion arrives to expose all sin upon earth. Don't imitate wickedness, therefore, and her actions. For in a very short time she will be swept from the earth, and the Reign of Justice over us will begin. Eph 6:12-18, Jude :14-16, Rev 17

The sinner must not deny that he has sinned; he will only bring burning coals on to his own head if he says, 'I have committed no sin against the majesty of God.' For the LORD knows all that men do; he knows their plans, their schemes, and their innermost thoughts. He said, 'Let the earth be made', and it was made; and 'Let the Heavens be made', and they were made. It was by the LORD's Word that the stars were fixed in their places; the number of the stars is known to Him. He looks into the depths with their treasures; he has measured the sea and everything it contains.

By His Word he has contained the sea within the bounds of the waters, and above the water he suspended the land. He spread out the sky like a vault and made it secure upon the waters. He provided springs in the desert and pools on the mountain tops as the source of the rivers flowing down to water the earth. He created man and placed a heart in the midst of his body; he gave spirit, life, and understanding, the very breath of Almighty God who created the whole world and searches things in secret places. He knows well your plans and your inward thoughts. Alas for sinners who try to hide their sins! The LORD will scrutinize all their deeds; he will call you all to account. You will be covered with confusion, when your sins are brought into the open and your wicked deeds stand up to accuse you on that day. What can you do? How can you hide your sins from God and his angels? God is your judge, fear Him! Abandon your sins and have done with your wicked deeds for ever! Then God will set you free from all distress.

Fierce flames are being kindled to burn you. A great horde will descend on you; they will seize some of you and make you eat pagan sacrifices. Those who give in to them will be derided, taunted and trampled on. In place after place and in all the neighborhood there will be a violent attack on those who fear the LORD. Their enemies will be like madmen, plundering and destroying without mercy all who still fear the Lord. They will destroy and plunder their property and throw them out of their homes. Then it will be seen that My Chosen people have stood the test like gold in the assayer's fire.

Listen, you whom I have chosen, says the Lord; the days of harsh suffering are close at hand, but I will rescue you from them. Away with your fears and doubts! For God is your leader. You who follow My Commandments and instructions, says the Lord God, must not let your sins weigh you down, nor your wicked deeds get the better of you. Alas for those who are entangled in their sins and overrun with their wicked deeds! They are like a field overrun by bushes, with brambles across the path and no way through, completely shut off and doomed to destruction by fire.”