

## Death and the Life Thereafter

When the final sentence goes forth from the Most High that a man is to die, when the soul departs from the body to return again to Him who gave it, first of all it prays to the glory of the Most High, and of those that have despised His Law, and of those who hate those that fear God, such spirits shall not enter dwellings but wander about thenceforth in torment, always grieving and sad, in seven ways:

*The first way* is that they have scorned the Law of the Most High.

*The second way* is that they can no longer make a good repentance, so that they may live.

*The third way* is that they will see the reward destined for those who have believed the agreements of the Most High.

*The fourth way* is that they will consider the torment destined for them in the last days.

*The fifth way* is that they will see that the dwelling-places of the others are guarded by angels in profound silence.

*The sixth way* is that they will see that some of them will pass over to be tormented henceforth.

*The seventh way*, which is worse than all the ways that have been mentioned, is that they will waste away in shame and be consumed in disgrace, and wither with fear, at seeing the glory of the Most High before whom they have sinned while they lived, and before whom they are destined to be judged in the last times.

“But of those who have observed the ways of the Most High, this is the order, when they shall be separated from this fragile jar. In the time when they lived in it, they carefully served the Most High, though they were in danger every hour, so as to keep the Law of the Lawgiver perfectly.

Therefore this is the teaching about them:

First of all, they see with great (ecstasy) the glory of Him who takes them up, for they will rest in seven orders.

**The first order** is that they have striven with much toil to conquer the wicked thought that was formed in them, so that it should not lead them away from life to death.

**The second order** is that they will see the labyrinth in which the souls of the ungodly wander, and the punishment that awaits them.

**The third order** is that they see the testimony that He who formed them has borne to them, because when they were alive they faithfully observed the Law which was given them.

**The fourth order** is that they understand the rest which they now enjoy, gathered in their chambers, in great quietness, watched over by angels, and the glory that awaits them in the last days.

**The fifth order** is that they exult that they have now escaped what is corruptible and will possess the future as their inheritance, and besides perceive the narrowness and toilsomeness from which they have been freed and the spaciousness they are destined to receive and enjoy in immortality.

**The sixth order** is that it is shown to them how their face is destined to shine like the sun, and how they are to be made like the light of the stars, and be incorruptible thenceforth.

**The seventh order**, which is greater than all those that have been mentioned, is that they will exult boldly, and that they will trust confidently, and rejoice fearlessly, for they hasten to see the face of Him whom they served in life, and from whom they are to receive their reward when they are glorified.

These are the orders of the souls of the upright, as henceforth proclaimed, and the above ways of torture are those which those who would not give heed will henceforth suffer.

**The Apocrypha 2<sup>nd</sup> Esdras 7:78-99**