

# The Oddness of 2 Esdras

## Introduction

In many compilations of the Apocrypha, 2 Esdras is set as the second book. It is, unlike much of the Apocrypha, *not* part of the Septuagint, has almost *zero* Greek or Hebrew surviving text. It is found in the Latin Bible as 4 Esdras and in the Slavonic Bible as 3 Esdras (these numbers depend on how Ezra-Nehemiah is treated: the Latin splits them as 1 Esdras and 2 Esdras, and what Anglicans call 1 Esdras is 3 Esdras; Slavonic Bibles keep Ezra-Nehemiah together as 1 Esdras and 1 Esdras is called 2 Esdras):

Anglican	Latin	Slavonic
Ezra	1 Esdras	1 Esdras
Nehemiah	2 Esdras	
1 Esdras	3 Esdras	2 Esdras
2 Esdras	4 Esdras	3 Esdras

Parts of 2 Esdras has a definite anti-Semitic slant, pointing to Christian authorship after the Council of Javneh when Christian and Rabbinic Judaism permanently ruptured. Chapters 1-2 and 15-16 are considered by scholars to be a second century and third century gloss on the earlier Jewish text (chapters 3-14).

The book is a definite *apocalypse*, rooted in sections of Isaiah and other prophets, but fully flowering in the Book of Daniel. 2 Esdras and Revelation *both* have a common ancestor in Daniel, and sometimes share images and motifs.

The fourth archangel, Uriel, makes his appearance in this book (and apologies for missing that in earlier discussions of angels!) and is Ezra's visionary guide.

## Study

Week 1 (Oct 24): 2 Esd. 3.1-36

This section is Ezra's kick-off so to speak. Here he laments the sorry state of affairs.

Week 2 (Nov 8): 2 Esd. 4.1-52

Uriel makes his appearance and shares some parables with Ezra.

Week 3 (Nov 15): 2 Esd. 11.1-46

The vision of the eagle and the lion (Rome, anyone?).

Week 4 (Nov 22): 2 Esd. 12.1-51

The wrap-up of the eagle and the lion.

## More Resources

Please check out [https://www.biblewise.com/bible\\_study/apocrypha/2-esdras.php](https://www.biblewise.com/bible_study/apocrypha/2-esdras.php)