

Revelation 1:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow;
and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

Analysis

His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;... This verse from Revelation's vision of vision of the glorified christ - his majesty, authority, and presence among the churches employs apocalyptic imagery rich with Old Testament allusions and symbolic meaning. The Greek text uses vivid apocalyptic language characteristic of Jewish prophetic literature, drawing heavily from Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Zechariah.

The symbolism must be interpreted within its first-century context while recognizing timeless spiritual realities. The imagery would resonate powerfully with persecuted believers facing Roman imperial cult worship, providing hope that despite present suffering, Christ reigns sovereign and will consummate His kingdom. The apocalyptic genre uses symbolic numbers (seven, twelve, 144,000), colors, beasts, and cosmic imagery to convey theological truth rather than photographic descriptions.

Christologically, Revelation consistently exalts Jesus as the victorious Lamb, the faithful witness, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Every vision ultimately points to Christ's supremacy, His finished redemptive work, and His certain return to judge the living and dead and establish the new creation.

Historical Context

John received this revelation circa AD 95 during Domitian's persecution, exiled on Patmos for his testimony. The seven churches of Asia Minor faced increasing pressure to participate in emperor worship and pagan religious practices. Refusal meant economic hardship, social ostracism, and potential martyrdom. Understanding this context illuminates Revelation's encouragement to faithful endurance.

The apocalyptic genre was familiar to first-century Jewish and Christian readers. Rather than newspaper-style predictions, apocalyptic literature uses symbolic imagery to reveal spiritual realities behind earthly events, encourage the faithful, warn the unfaithful, and assert God's ultimate sovereignty over history. Parallels with Daniel, Ezekiel, and intertestamental apocalyptic writings would help original readers decode the symbols.

Rome's imperial cult demanded worship of Caesar as divine, placing Christians in impossible situations—compromise their faith or face persecution. Revelation identifies Rome as "Babylon" and assures believers that despite appearances, the Lamb conquered through His death and resurrection, and all earthly kingdoms will submit to His reign.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 1:14 reveal God's character, particularly His sovereignty, holiness, and justice?
2. What specific encouragement or warning does this verse offer for maintaining faithful Christian witness amid cultural pressure?

3. How does this passage point to Christ's victory and the hope of new creation, and how should that shape your present priorities?

Interlinear Text

ἡ	δὲ	κεφαλὴ	αὐτοῦ	καὶ	αἱ	τρίχες	λευκόν	ὥσει
G3588					G3588			
His		head	his	and	his hairs	as white	like	
G1161		G2776	G846	G2532	G2359	G3022	G5616	
ἔριον	λευκόν	ὥς	χιών	καὶ	οἱ	ὀφθαλμοὶ	αὐτοῦ	ὥς
					G3588			
wool	as white	as	snow	and	eyes	his	as	
G2053	G3022	G5613	G5510	G2532	G3788	G846	G5613	
φλὸξ	πυρός							
a flame	of fire							
G5395	G4442							

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 10:6 (Parallel theme): His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.

Revelation 19:12 (Parallel theme): His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

Daniel 7:9 (Parallel theme): I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.

Revelation 2:18 (Parallel theme): And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;

Matthew 28:3 (Parallel theme): His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

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