

Revelation 11:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

Analysis

And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.... This verse from Revelation's vision of two witnesses and seventh trumpet - faithful testimony, Christ's kingdom proclaimed 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

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 11:12 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

καὶ ἤκουσαν φωνὴν μεγάλην ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανὸν
And they heard voice a great from G3588 heaven
G2532 G191 G5456 G3173 G1537 G3772

λέγουσαν αὐτῶν ἀνέβησαν ὅδε καὶ ἀνέβησαν εἰς τὸν
saying their Come up hither And Come up to G3588
G3004 G846 G305 G5602 G2532 G305 G1519

οὐρανὸν ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ καὶ ἐθεώρησαν αὐτῶν οἱ
heaven in G3588 a cloud And beheld their G3588
G3772 G1722 G3507 G2532 G2334 G846

ἐχθροὶ αὐτῶν
enemies their
G2190 G846

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 4:1 (Parallel theme): After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

Acts 1:9 (Parallel theme): And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

2 Kings 2:11 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

1 Thessalonians 4:17 (Parallel theme): Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Revelation 12:5 (Parallel theme): And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org