

Revelation 12:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Analysis

And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.... This verse from Revelation's vision of woman, child, and dragon - cosmic conflict, satan's defeat, messiah's victory 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

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 12:17 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 ὡργίσθη τοῦ δράκων ἐπὶ τοῦ γυναικί καὶ
 And was wroth which the dragon with which the woman And
 G2532 G3710 G3588 G1404 G1909 G3588 G1135 G2532

ἀπῆλθεν ποιῆσαι πόλεμον μετὰ τοῦ λοιπῶν τοῦ
 went to make war with which the remnant which
 G565 G4160 G4171 G3326 G3588 G3062 G3588

σπέρματος αὐτῆς τοῦ τηρούντων τοῦ ἐντολὰς
 seed of her which keep which the commandments
 G4690 G846 G3588 G5083 G3588 G1785

τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἔχόντων τοῦ μαρτυρίαν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ
 which of God And have which the testimony which of Jesus
 G3588 G2316 G2532 G2192 G3588 G3141 G3588 G2424

Χριστοῦ

Christ
 G5547

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 14:12 (Word): Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Genesis 3:15 (Parallel theme): And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Revelation 19:10 (Witness): And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Revelation 11:7 (Witness): And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

Revelation 6:9 (Word): 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:

Revelation 1:2 (Word): Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

Revelation 13:7 (Parallel theme): And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

John 8:44 (Parallel theme): Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Revelation 17:14 (Parallel theme): These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

Revelation 1:9 (Word): I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.