

Revelation 13:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

Analysis

Giving life to the beast's image so it speaks represents the animation of idolatry through demonic power or human ventriloquism. The speaking image recalls ancient oracles and pagan temple deceptions. The command to kill non-worshippers creates forced conformity through fear. Reformed theology recognizes that coerced worship is no worship at all—true worship requires willing hearts. The persecution for refusing the image's worship parallels Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace (Daniel 3). This tests genuine faith; true believers endure to death rather than compromise. The violence reveals Satan's hatred and the state's demonic character when demanding divine honors.

Historical Context

Ancient temples featured mechanical statues producing sounds, deceiving worshipers into believing statues spoke. Imperial cult enforcement included death penalties for refusing worship. Christians faced execution for treason (not worshiping Caesar). This vision warned that religious systems demanding worship under death threat are demonic, regardless of legal authority or popular participation.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How should you prepare spiritually for potential future situations demanding compromise between worship of God or facing severe consequences?
2. What does the image's demand for worship reveal about the essential nature of totalitarian systems—whether ancient or modern?

Interlinear Text

καὶ δοῦναι αὐτῷ δοῦναι πνεῦμα τῇ εἰκόνα τοῦ
And he had power he had power life the image G3588 G3588
G2532 G1325 G846 G1325 G4151 G1504

θηρίου ἵνα καὶ λαλήσῃ ἡ εἰκόνα τοῦ
of the beast should be killed And should G3588 the image G3588
G2342 G2443 G2532 G2980 G1504

θηρίου καὶ ποιήσῃ ὅσοι ἀν μὴ προσκυνήσωσιν
of the beast And cause that as many as would not worship
G2342 G2532 G4160 G3745 G302 G3361 G4352

τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ θηρίου ἵνα ἀποκτανθῶσιν
the image G3588 of the beast should be killed G615
G1504 G2342 G2443

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 16:2 (Worship): And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

Revelation 19:20 (Worship): And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Revelation 20:4 (Worship): And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Revelation 13:14 (Parallel theme): And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

Revelation 14:11 (Worship): And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

Revelation 14:9 (Worship): And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

Revelation 17:6 (Parallel theme): And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

Revelation 18:20 (Parallel theme): Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

Daniel 7:25 (Parallel theme): And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.