

Revelation 14:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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.... This verse from Revelation's vision of lamb and 144,000 - redeemed firstfruits, three angels' messages, harvest judgment 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

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 14:11 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 τοῦ καπνὸς τοῦ βασανισμοῦ αὐτοῦ ἀναβαίνει εἰς

And who the smoke who torment his ascendeth up for

G2532 G3588 G2586 G3588 G929 G846 G305 G1519

αἰώνων αἰώνων καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἀνάπαυσιν ἡμέρας καὶ

and ever and ever And no they have rest day And

G165 G165 G2532 G3756 G2192 G372 G2250 G2532

νυκτός τοῦ προσκυνοῦντες τοῦ θηρίου καὶ τοῦ εἰκόνα

night who worship who the beast And who image

G3571 G3588 G4352 G3588 G2342 G2532 G3588 G1504

αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰ τις λαμβάνει τοῦ χάραγμα τοῦ ὄνόματος

his And G1487 G5100 receiveth who the mark who name

G846 G2532 G2983 G3588 G5480 G3588 G3686

αὐτοῦ

his

G846

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 19:3 (Parallel theme): And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

Isaiah 34:10 (Parallel theme): It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.

Revelation 20:10 (Parallel theme): And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Matthew 25:46 (Parallel theme): And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Matthew 25:41 (Parallel theme): Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Revelation 18:18 (Parallel theme): And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!

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,

Isaiah 33:14 (Parallel theme): The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?

Genesis 19:28 (Parallel theme): And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.