

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	εἴ	τις	λαμβάνει	τοῦ	χάραγμα	τοῦ
his	And	G1487	G5100	receiveth	who	the mark	who
G846	G2532			G2983	G3588	G5480	G3588
							ὀνόματος
							name
							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.