

Revelation 14:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

Analysis

And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed fro... 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

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 14:3 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	ἀδούσιν	ὡς	ἀδὴν	καινὴν	ἐνώπιον	τῆς	θρόνου
And	they sung	as it were	song	a new	before	which	the throne
G2532	G103	G5613	G5603	G2537	G1799	G3588	G2362
καὶ	ἐνώπιον	τῆς	τέσσαρες	ζῷων	καὶ	τῆς	πρεσβυτέρων
And	before	which	and four	beasts	And	which	the elders
G2532	G1799	G3588	G5064	G2226	G2532	G3588	G4245
καὶ	οὐδεὶς	ήδυνατο	μαθεῖν	τῆς	ἀδὴν	εἰ	μὴ
And	no man	could	learn	which	song	G1487	G3361
G2532	G3762	G1410	G3129	G3588	G5603		G3588
ἐκατὸν	τεσσαράκοντα	τέσσαρες	χιλιάδες	τῆς			
the hundred	and forty	and four	thousand	which			
G1540	G5062	G5064	G5505	G3588			
ἠγορασμένοι	ἀπὸ	τῆς	γῆς				
were redeemed	from	which	the earth				
G59	G575	G3588	G1093				

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 5:9 (Redemption): And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

Revelation 14:1 (Parallel theme): And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

Revelation 15:3 (Parallel theme): And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

Revelation 2:17 (Parallel theme): He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

Isaiah 42:10 (Parallel theme): Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof.

Psalms 98:1 (Parallel theme): O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.

Psalms 149:1 (Parallel theme): Praise ye the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints.

Psalms 40:3 (Parallel theme): And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.

Psalms 96:1 (Parallel theme): O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth.

Psalms 144:9 (Parallel theme): I will sing a new song unto thee, O God: upon a psaltery and an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee.