

Revelation 14:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

Analysis

These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God ... 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

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 14:4 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

οὗτοι	εἰσιν	οἵ	μετὰ	γυναικῶν	οὐκ	ἐμολύνθησαν
These	are they	which	with	women	not	defiled
G3778	G1526	G3739	G3326	G1135	G3756	G3435

παρθένοι	γάρ	εἰσιν	οὗτοι	εἰσιν	τῷ	ἀκολουθοῦντες
virgins	for	are they	These	are they	which	follow
G3933	G1063	G1526	G3778	G1526	G3588	G190

τῷ	ἀρνίῳ	ὅπου	ἄν	ὑπάγῃ	οὗτοι	ἥγοράσθησαν
which	the Lamb	whithersoever	G302	he goeth	These	were redeemed
G3588	G721	G3699		G5217	G3778	G59

ἀπὸ	τῷ	ἀνθρώπων	ἀπαρχῇ	τῷ	θεῷ	καὶ	τῷ
from	which	among men	being the firstfruits	which	unto God	and	which
G575	G3588	G444	G536	G3588	G2316	G2532	G3588

ἀρνίῳ
the Lamb
G721

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 3:4 (Parallel theme): Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

2 Corinthians 11:2 (References God): For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

James 1:18 (Parallel theme): Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

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;

John 12:26 (Parallel theme): If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

John 10:27 (Parallel theme): My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

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.

Psalms 74:2 (Redemption): Remember thy congregation, which thou hast purchased of old; the rod of thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed; this mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt.

Jeremiah 2:3 (Parallel theme): Israel was holiness unto the LORD, and the firstfruits of his increase: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the LORD.

1 Corinthians 6:20 (References God): For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.