

Revelation 18:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

Analysis

Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.... This verse from Revelation's vision of fall of babylon - economic, political, religious system destroyed, god's people called out 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

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 18:8 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

διὰ	τοῦτο	ἐν	μῇ	ἡμέρᾳ	ἔξουσιν	ὁ	πληγαὶ	αὐτήν
G1223	Therefore	in	G1520	day	come	who	plagues	her
	G5124	G1722		G2250	G2240	G3588	G4127	G846
θάνατος	καὶ	πένθος	καὶ	λιμός	καὶ	ἐν	πυρὶ	
death	and	mourning	and	famine	and	in	fire	
G2288	G2532	G3997	G2532	G3042	G2532	G1722	G4442	
κατακαυθήσεται	ὅτι	ἰσχυρὸς	κύριος	ὁ	θεὸς	ὁ		
she shall be utterly burned	for	strong	is the Lord	who	God	who		
G2618	G3754	G2478	G2962	G3588	G2316	G3588		
κρίνων	αὐτήν							
judgeth	her							
G2919	G846							

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 50:31 (References God): Behold, I am against thee, O thou most proud, saith the Lord GOD of hosts: for thy day is come, the time that I will visit thee.

Jeremiah 50:34 (References Lord): Their Redeemer is strong; the LORD of hosts is his name: he shall thoroughly plead their cause, that he may give rest to the land, and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon.

Revelation 17:16 (Parallel theme): And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

Revelation 18:19 (Parallel theme): And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all

that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

Jeremiah 51:6 (References Lord): Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD'S vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence.

Jeremiah 51:58 (References Lord): Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire; and the people shall labour in vain, and the folk in the fire, and they shall be weary.

1 Corinthians 10:22 (References Lord): Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?

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

Revelation 18:17 (Parallel theme): For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,

Revelation 17:18 (Parallel theme): And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.