

Revelation 19:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

Analysis

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.... This verse from Revelation's vision of hallelujah chorus, marriage supper, christ's return - final victory, word of god rides forth 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

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 19:11 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 εἶδον τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνεωγμένον, καὶ ἰδοὺ, ἵππος
And **I saw** ^{G3588} **heaven** **opened** **And** **behold** **horse**
G2532 G1492 G3772 G455 G2532 G2400 G2462

λευκός καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπ' αὐτὸν καλούμενος
a white **And** ^{G3588} **he that sat** **upon** **him** **was called**
G3022 G2532 G2521 G1909 G846 G2564

πιστὸς καὶ ἀληθινός καὶ ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ κρίνει καὶ
Faithful **And** **True** **And** **in** **righteousness** **he doth judge** **And**
G4103 G2532 G228 G2532 G1722 G1343 G2919 G2532

πολεμεῖ
make war
G4170

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 96:13 (Righteousness): Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.

Revelation 6:2 (Parallel theme): And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

Psalms 98:9 (Righteousness): Before the LORD; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.

Revelation 3:14 (Faith): And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

Psalms 50:6 (Righteousness): And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah.

Isaiah 32:1 (Righteousness): Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment.

Jeremiah 33:15 (Righteousness): In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.

Revelation 4:1 (Parallel theme): After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

Revelation 3:7 (Truth): And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

Isaiah 45:21 (Righteousness): Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.