

Revelation 19:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

Analysis

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God... 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

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 19:15 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	ἐκ	τοῦ	στόματος	αὐτὸς	ἐκπορεύεται	ῥομφαία		
And	out of	G3588	mouth	his	goeth	sword		
G2532	G1537		G4750	G846	G1607	G4501		
ὁξεῖα	ἴνα	ἐν	αὐτὸς	πατάσσῃ	τὰ	ἔθνη	καὶ	αὐτὸς
a sharp	that	with	his	he should smite	G3588	the nations	And	his
G3691	G2443	G1722	G846	G3960		G1484	G2532	G846
ποιμανεῖ	αὐτὸς	ἐν	ῥάβδῳ	σιδηρῷ	καὶ	αὐτὸς	πατεῖ	
he shall rule	his	with	a rod	of iron	And	his	he treadeth	
G4165	G846	G1722	G4464	G4603	G2532	G846	G3961	
τὴν	ληνὸν	τοῦ	οἴνου	τοῦ	θυμοῦ	καὶ	τῆς	
G3588	the winepress	G3588	G3631	G3588	of the fierceness	And	G3588	
G3025					G2372	G2532		
όργῆς	τοῦ	θεοῦ	τοῦ	παντοκράτορος				
wrath	G3588	God	G3588	of Almighty				
G3709		G2316		G3841				

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 1:16 (Word): And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

Revelation 2:27 (Parallel theme): And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

Psalms 2:9 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

2 Thessalonians 2:8 (Parallel theme): And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

Isaiah 11:4 (Judgment): But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

Revelation 19:21 (Word): And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

Revelation 12:5 (References God): And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

Revelation 2:16 (Word): Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

Revelation 2:12 (Word): And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

Isaiah 30:33 (Parallel theme): For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.