

Revelation 19:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written,
KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Analysis

And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.... 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

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 19:16 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 ἔχει ἐπὶ τὸ ἵμάτιον καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν μηρὸν αὐτοῦ
 AND he hath on his vesture AND on thigh G846
 G2532 G2192 G1909 G2440 G2532 G1909 G3382

τὸ ὄνομα γεγραμμένον· βασιλέων βασιλέων καὶ κυρίων
 G3588 a name written KING KING AND LORD
 G3686 G1125 G935 G935 G2532 G2962

κυρίων

LORD
 G2962

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 17:14 (Kingdom): 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.

1 Timothy 6:15 (Kingdom): Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

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.

Psalms 72:11 (Kingdom): Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.

Daniel 2:47 (Kingdom): The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret.

