

Revelation 19:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

Analysis

And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great 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

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 19:17 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	ἐνα	ἄγγελον	ἐστῶτα	ἐν	τῷ	ἡλίῳ	Καὶ
And	I saw	an	angel	standing	in	G3588	the sun	And
G2532	G1492	G1520	G32	G2476	G1722		G2246	G2532
ἔκραξεν	φωνῇ	μεγάλου	λέγων	πᾶσιν	τοῖς	όρνεοις	τοῖς	
he cried	voice	of the great	saying	to all	G3588	the fowls	G3588	
G2896	G5456	G3173	G3004	G3956		G3732		
πετωμένοις	ἐν	μεσουρανήματι,	Δεῦτε	Καὶ				
that fly	in	the midst of heaven	Come	And				
G4072	G1722	G3321	G1205	G2532				
συνάγεσθε	εἰς	τὸ	δεῖπνον	τοῦ	μεγάλου	θεοῦ		
gather yourselves together	unto	G3588	the supper	G3588	of the great	God		
G4863	G1519		G1173		G3173	G2316		

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 19:21 (Parallel theme): 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 8:13 (Parallel theme): And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

Jeremiah 12:9 (Parallel theme): Mine heritage is unto me as a speckled bird, the birds round about are against her; come ye, assemble all the beasts of the field, come to devour.

Isaiah 56:9 (Parallel theme): All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, yea, all ye beasts in the forest.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org