

Revelation 20:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

Analysis

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them....

This verse from Revelation's vision of millennium, satan bound, final rebellion, great white throne - ultimate justice 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

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 20:11 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	θρόνον	λευκὸν	μέγαν	καὶ	τὸν	καθήμενον	ἐπ'
And	I saw	throne	white	a great	And	G3588	him that sat	on
G2532	G1492	G2362	G3022	G3173	G2532		G2521	G1909
αὐτοῖς	οὗ	ἀπὸ	προσώπου	ἔφυγεν	ἡ	γῆ	καὶ	ὁ
for them	whose	from	face	fled away	G3588	the earth	And	G3588
G846	G3739	G575	G4383	G5343		G1093	G2532	
οὐρανός	καὶ	τόπος	οὐχ	εὐρέθη	αὐτοῖς			
the heaven	And	place	no	there was found	for them			
G3772	G2532	G5117	G3756	G2147	G846			

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 21:1 (Parallel theme): And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2 Peter 3:7 (Parallel theme): But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

Daniel 2:35 (Parallel theme): Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

Romans 2:5 (Parallel theme): But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

Matthew 25:31 (Parallel theme): When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

Matthew 24:35 (Parallel theme): Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Revelation 16:20 (Parallel theme): And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

Revelation 6:14 (Parallel theme): And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

Revelation 12:8 (Parallel theme): And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

Revelation 20:2 (Parallel theme): And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

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