

# Revelation 20:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

## Analysis

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**And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured 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

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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

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

## Study Questions

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1. How does Revelation 20:9 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

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καὶ	ἀνέβησαν	ἐπὶ	τὸ	πλάτος	τῆς	γῆς	καὶ
And	they went up	on	G3588	the breadth	G3588	of the earth	And
G2532	G305	G1909		G4114		G1093	G2532
ἐκύκλωσαν	τὴν	παρεμβολὴν	τῶν	ἀγίων	καὶ	τὴν	
about	G3588	the camp	G3588	of the saints	And	G3588	
G2944		G3925		G40	G2532		
πόλιν	τὴν	ἡγαπημένην	καὶ	κατέβη	πῦρ	ἀπὸ	τοῦ Θεοῦ
city	G3588	the beloved	And	came down	fire	from	G3588 God
G4172		G25	G2532	G2597	G4442	G575	G2316
ἐκ	τοῦ	οὐρανοῦ	καὶ	κατέφαγεν	αὐτούς		
out of	G3588	heaven	And	devoured	them		
G1537		G3772	G2532	G2719	G846		

## Additional Cross-References

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**Ezekiel 38:16** (Holy): And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.

**Ezekiel 39:6** (Parallel theme): And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the LORD.

**Ezekiel 38:22** (Parallel theme): And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.

**Ezekiel 38:9** (Parallel theme): Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee.

**Psalms 97:3** (Parallel theme): A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about.

**Psalms 106:18** (Parallel theme): And a fire was kindled in their company; the flame burned up the wicked.

**2 Thessalonians 1:8** (References God): In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

**Revelation 13:13** (Parallel theme): And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

**Revelation 11:5** (Parallel theme): And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

**Luke 17:29** (Parallel theme): But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.