

Revelation 21:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

Analysis

Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;... This verse from Revelation's vision of new heaven, new earth, new jerusalem - eternal state, god dwelling with his people 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 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 21:11 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

ἔχουσαν	τὴν	δόξαν	τοῦ	θεοῦ	καὶ	ό	φωστὴρ	αὐτῆς
Having	G3588	the glory	G3588	of God	and	G3588	light	her
G2192		G1391		G2316	G2532		G5458	G846
ὄμοιος	λίθῳ	τιμιωτάτῳ		ώς	λίθῳ	ιάσπιδι		
was like	stone	most precious		even like	stone	a jasper		
G3664	G3037	G5093		G5613	G3037	G2393		
κρυσταλλίζοντι								
clear as crystal								
G2929								

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 22:5 (Light): And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

Revelation 4:6 (Parallel theme): And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

Revelation 22:1 (References God): And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Ezekiel 1:22 (Parallel theme): And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.

Revelation 4:3 (Parallel theme): And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

Ezekiel 1:26 (Parallel theme): And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.

Ezekiel 48:35 (Parallel theme): It was round about eighteen thousand measures: and the name of the city from that day shall be, The LORD is there.

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