

Revelation 6:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

Analysis

And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the m... This verse from Revelation's vision of seven seals - god's judgments on rebellious earth, cry of martyrs 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 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 6:15 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	οἱ	βασιλεῖς	τῆς	γῆς	καὶ	οἱ	μεγιστᾶνες	καὶ
And	G3588	the kings	G3588	of the earth	And	G3588	the great men	And
G2532		G935		G1093	G2532		G3175	G2532
οἱ	πλούσιοι	καὶ	οἱ	χιλίαρχοι	καὶ	οἱ	δυνατοὶ,	
G3588	the rich men	And	G3588	the chief captains	And	G3588	the mighty men	
	G4145	G2532		G5506	G2532		G1415	
καὶ	πᾶς	δοῦλος	καὶ	πᾶς	έλευθερος	ἐκρυψαν	ἐαυτοὺς	
And	every	bondman	And	every	free man	hid	themselves	
G2532	G3956	G1401	G2532	G3956	G1658	G2928	G1438	
εἰς	τὰ	σπήλαια	καὶ	εἰς	τὰς	πέτρας	τῶν	όρέων
in	G3588	the dens	And	in	G3588	the rocks	G3588	of the mountains
G1519		G4693	G2532	G1519		G4073		G3735

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 2:19 (Parallel theme): And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

Isaiah 2:21 (Parallel theme): To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

Isaiah 2:10 (Parallel theme): Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty.

Hebrews 11:38 (Parallel theme): (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

Isaiah 42:22 (Parallel theme): But this is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore.

Psalms 76:12 (Kingdom): He shall cut off the spirit of princes: he is terrible to the kings of the earth.

1 Samuel 13:6 (Parallel theme): When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits.

Judges 6:2 (Parallel theme): And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds.

Micah 7:17 (Parallel theme): They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth: they shall be afraid of the LORD our God, and shall fear because of thee.