

Revelation 7:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

Analysis

And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,... This verse from Revelation's vision of sealed servants and innumerable multitude - god's protection and salvation 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

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 7:2 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 ἄλλον ἀγγέλοις ἀναβάντα ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς

And I saw another angel ascending from the east

G2532

G1492

G243

angel

G32

ascending

G305

from

G575

the east

G395

ἡλίου ἔχοντα σφραγῖδα θεοῦ ζῶντος καὶ ἔκραξεν

G2246

having

G2192

the seal

G4973

God

G2316

of the living

G2198

And

G2532

he cried

G2896

φωνῇ μεγάλῃ τοῖς τέσσαρσιν ἀγγέλοις οἵς ἐδόθη

voice with a loud to the four angel to whom was given

G5456

G3173

G3588

to the four

G5064

angel

G32

to whom

G3739

G1325

αὐτοῖς ἀδικῆσαι τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν

it

G846

to hurt

G91

G3588

the earth

G1093

καὶ τὴν

G3588

the sea

G2281

Additional Cross-References

Ephesians 4:30 (References God): And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

2 Corinthians 1:22 (Parallel theme): Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

Revelation 9:4 (References God): And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

Ephesians 1:13 (Parallel theme): In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

2 Timothy 2:19 (References God): Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

Revelation 5:2 (Parallel theme): And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

John 6:27 (References God): Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

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