

Revelation 8:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

Analysis

And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three a... This verse from Revelation's vision of seventh seal and first four trumpets - escalating judgments, angelic ministry 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

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 8:13 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	καὶ	ἤκουσα	ἐνὸς	ἀγγέλων	πετωμένου	ἐν
And	I beheld	And	heard	an	angel	flying	through
G2532	G1492	G2532	G191	G1520	G32	G4072	G1722
<hr/>							
μεσουρανῆματι	λέγοντος	φωνῶν	μεγάλη	οὐαὶ	οὐαὶ	οὐαὶ	
the midst of heaven	saying	voice	with a loud	Woe	Woe	Woe	
G3321	G3004	G5456	G3173	G3759	G3759	G3759	
<hr/>							
τῶν	κατοικοῦσιν	ἐπὶ	τῶν	γῆς	ἐκ	τῶν	λοιπῶν
which	to the inhabitants	of	which	the earth	by reason of	which	the other
G3588	G2730	G1909	G3588	G1093	G1537	G3588	G3062
<hr/>							
φωνῶν	τῶν	σάλπιγγος	τῶν	τριῶν	ἀγγέλων	τῶν	
voice	which	of the trumpet	which	of the three	angel	which	
G5456	G3588	G4536	G3588	G5140	G32	G3588	
<hr/>							
μελλόντων	σαλπίζειν						
are yet	to sound						
G3195	G4537						

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 11:14 (Parallel theme): The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

Revelation 9:12 (Parallel theme): One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

Revelation 14:6 (Parallel theme): And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

Revelation 19:17 (Parallel theme): And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

Revelation 9:1 (Parallel theme): And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

Ezekiel 2:10 (Parallel theme): And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.

Hebrews 1:14 (Parallel theme): Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

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