

Revelation 9:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

Analysis

And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.... This verse from Revelation's vision of fifth and sixth trumpets - demonic torment and massive army, unrepentant humanity 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

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 9:2 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	ἤνοιξεν	τὸ	φρέατος	τῆς	ἀβύσσου	καὶ	ἀνέβη
And	he opened	G3588	of the pit	G3588	the bottomless	And	there arose
G2532	G455		G5421		G12	G2532	G305
καπνοῦ	ἐκ	τοῦ	φρέατος	ὡς	καπνοῦ	καμίνου	
a smoke	by reason of	G3588	of the pit	as	a smoke	furnace	
G2586	G1537		G5421	G5613	G2586	G2575	
μεγάλης	καὶ	ἐσκοτίσθη	ὁ	ἥλιος	καὶ	ὁ	ἀήρ
of a great	And	were darkened	G3588	the sun	And	G3588	the air
G3173	G2532	G4654		G2246	G2532		G109
ἐκ	τοῦ	καπνοῦ	τοῦ	φρέατος			
by reason of	G3588	a smoke	G3588	of the pit			
G1537		G2586		G5421			

Additional Cross-References

Joel 2:10 (Darkness): The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining:

Genesis 19:28 (Parallel theme): And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.

Joel 2:2 (Darkness): A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.

Isaiah 14:31 (Parallel theme): Howl, O gate; cry, O city; thou, whole Palestina, art dissolved: for there shall come from the north a smoke, and none shall be alone in his appointed times.

Acts 2:19 (Parallel theme): And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:

Joel 2:30 (Parallel theme): And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.

Revelation 14:11 (Parallel theme): And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

Exodus 19:18 (Parallel theme): And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

Genesis 15:17 (Darkness): And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.