

Revelation 1:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

Analysis

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand....

This verse from Revelation's vision of vision of the glorified christ - his majesty, authority, and presence among the churches 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

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 1:3 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

μακάριος ὁ ἀναγινώσκων καὶ οἱ ἀκούοντες τοὺς
 Blessed G3588 is he that readeth and G3588 they that hear G3588
 G3107 G314 G2532 G191

λόγους τῆς προφητείας καὶ τηροῦντες τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ³
 the words G3588 of this prophecy and G3588 keep G3588 therein G846
 G3056 G4394 G2532 G5083 G1722

γεγραμμένα ὁ γὰρ καιρὸς ἐγγύς
 those things which are written G3588 for G2540 is at hand G1451
 G1125 G1063 G2540 G1451

Additional Cross-References

Luke 11:28 (Word): But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

Revelation 22:10 (Prophecy): And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

1 Peter 4:7 (Parallel theme): But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

Romans 13:11 (Parallel theme): And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

Proverbs 8:34 (Blessing): Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.

Revelation 22:12 (Parallel theme): And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

2 Peter 3:8 (Parallel theme): But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

Revelation 22:20 (Parallel theme): He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

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