

Revelation 10:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,

Analysis

And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,... This verse from Revelation's vision of angel with little book - mystery of god completed, prophetic commission renewed 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

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 10:2 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	εἶχεν	ἐν	τῇ	χειρὶ	αὐτοῦ	βιβλαρίδιον	ἀνεῳγμένον·
And	he had	in	G3588	hand	G846	a little book	open
G2532	G2192	G1722		G5495		G974	G455

καὶ	ἔθηκεν	τὸν	πόδα	αὐτοῦ	τὸν	δεξιὸν	ἐπὶ	τὴν
And	he set	G3588	foot	G846	G3588	right	foot on	G3588
G2532	G5087		G4228			G1188	G1909	

θάλασσαν,	τὸν	δὲ	εὐώνυμον	ἐπὶ	τὴν	γῆν,	
the sea	G3588	and	his left	foot on	G3588	the earth	
G2281		G1161	G2176	G1909		G1093	

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 10:5 (Parallel theme): And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,

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