

Revelation 10:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

Analysis

And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.... 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

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 10:4 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	ὅτε	ἐλάλησαν	αἱ	ἐπτὰ	βρονταί	τὰς	φωνὴν
And	when	had uttered	G3588	the seven	thunders	G3588	a voice
G2532	G3753	G2980		G2033	G1027		G5456
ἐαυτῶν,	ἔμελλον	γράψῃς	καὶ	ῆκουσα	φωνὴν	ἐκ	τοῦ
their	I was about	to write	And	I heard	a voice	from	G3588
G1438	G3195	G1125	G2532	G191	G5456	G1537	
οὐρανοῦ	λέγουσαν	μοι,	Σφράγισον		ἃ		
heaven	saying	unto me	Seal up	those things which			
G3772	G3004	G3427	G4972	G3739			
ἐλάλησαν	αἱ	ἐπτὰ	βρονταί	καὶ	μὴ	ταύτα	γράψῃς
had uttered	G3588	the seven	G1027	G2532	G3361	G5023	G1125
G2980							

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 12:4 (Parallel theme): But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

Daniel 8:26 (Parallel theme): And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days.

Daniel 12:9 (Parallel theme): And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

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

Deuteronomy 29:29 (Parallel theme): The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

Revelation 1:11 (Parallel theme): Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

Isaiah 29:11 (Parallel theme): And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed:

Isaiah 8:16 (Parallel theme): Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.

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