

# Revelation 11:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

## Analysis

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**And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,...** This verse from Revelation's vision of two witnesses and seventh trumpet - faithful testimony, Christ's kingdom proclaimed 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

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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

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. How does Revelation 11:16 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

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καὶ	τῷ	εἴκοσι	καὶ	τέσσαρες	πρεσβύτεροι	τῷ	ἐνώπιον
And	which	twenty	And	the four	elders	which	before
G2532	G3588	G1501	G2532	G5064	G4245	G3588	G1799
τῷ	θεῷ	καθήμενοι	ἐπὶ	τῷ	θρόνους	αὐτῷν	ἔπεσαν
which	God	sat	on	which	seats	G846	fell
G3588	G2316	G2521	G1909	G3588	G2362	G4098	
ἐπὶ	τῷ	πρόσωπα	αὐτῷν	καὶ	προσεκύνησαν	τῷ	θεῷ
on	which	faces	G846	And	worshipped	which	God
G1909	G3588	G4383		G2532	G4352	G3588	G2316

## Additional Cross-References

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**Revelation 4:4** (Parallel theme): And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

**Revelation 4:10** (Worship): The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

**Revelation 7:11** (Worship): And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

**Revelation 19:4** (Worship): And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

**Revelation 5:14** (Worship): And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

