

Revelation 2:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Analysis

Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.... This verse from Revelation's vision of letters to ephesus, smyrna, pergamum, thyatira - love lost, faithful suffering, compromise 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 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 2:5 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

μνημόνευε	οὖν	πόθεν	ἐκπέπτωκας,	καὶ	μετανοήσης			
Remember	therefore	from whence	thou art fallen	and	repent			
G3421	G3767	G4159	G1601	G2532	G3340			
καὶ	τὰ	πρῶτα	ἔργα	ποίησον·	εἰ	δὲ	μή	ἔρχομαί
and	G3588	the first	works	do	G1487	G1161	G3361	I will come
G2532		G4413	G2041	G4160				G2064
σοι	τάχει	καὶ	κινήσω	τὴν	λυχνίαν	σου	ἐκ	τοῦ
unto thee	G5034	and	will remove	G3588	candlestick	thy	out of	G3588
G4671		G2532	G2795		G3087	G4675	G1537	
τόπου	αὐτῆς	ἐὰν	μή	μετανοήσης				
place	his	G1437	G3361	repent				
G5117	G846			G3340				

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 3:19 (Repentance): As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

Revelation 2:16 (Repentance): Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

Hosea 14:1 (Parallel theme): O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.

Revelation 2:19 (Parallel theme): I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

Revelation 1:20 (Parallel theme): The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are

the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

Isaiah 1:26 (Parallel theme): And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city.

Ezekiel 20:43 (Parallel theme): And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed.

Malachi 4:6 (Parallel theme): And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Mark 12:9 (Parallel theme): What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.

Luke 20:16 (Parallel theme): He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid.