

Revelation 3:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

Analysis

Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.... This verse from Revelation's vision of letters to sardis, philadelphia, laodicea - dead religion, faithful witness, lukewarmness 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

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 3:2 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

γίνου γρηγορῶν καὶ στήριξον τὰ λοιπὰ ἂ
Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain that
G1096 G1127 G2532 G4741 G3588 G3062 G3739

μὲλλει ἀποθανεῖν οὐ γὰρ εὔρηκά σου τὰ ἔργα
are ready to die not for I have thy works
G3195 G599 G3756 G1063 G2147 G4675 G3588 G2041

πεπληρωμένα ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ
perfect before God
G4137 G1799 G2316

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 16:15 (Parallel theme): Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

1 Peter 5:8 (Parallel theme): Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

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

Isaiah 35:3 (Parallel theme): Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.

2 Chronicles 25:2 (Parallel theme): And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, but not with a perfect heart.

Acts 18:23 (Parallel theme): And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

Matthew 25:13 (Parallel theme): Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

Deuteronomy 3:28 (Parallel theme): But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see.

Revelation 2:4 (Parallel theme): Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

Ezekiel 34:16 (Parallel theme): I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.

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