

Revelation 3:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Analysis

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me....

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

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 3:20 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

ἰδού, ἔστηκα ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν καὶ κρούω· ἐάν τις
Behold **I stand** **at** **G3588** **the door** **and** **knock** **if** **any man**
 G2400 G2476 G1909 G2374 G2532 G2925 G1437 G5100

ἀκούσῃ τῆς φωνῆς μου καὶ ἀνοίξῃ τὴν θύραν
hear **G3588** **voice** **my** **and** **open** **G3588** **the door**
 G191 G5456 G3450 G2532 G455 G2374

εἰσελεύσομαι πρὸς αὐτὸς καὶ δειπνήσω μετ' αὐτὸς καὶ
I will come in **to** **he** **and** **will sup** **with** **he** **and**
 G1525 G4314 G846 G2532 G1172 G3326 G846 G2532

αὐτὸς μετ' ἐμοῦ
he **with** **me**
 G846 G3326 G1700

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 19:9 (Parallel theme): And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

Matthew 24:33 (Parallel theme): So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

Luke 17:8 (Parallel theme): And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?