

Revelation 4:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

Analysis

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This verse from Revelation's vision of throne room of heaven - god's sovereignty, holiness, and worship 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

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 4:1 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

μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον καὶ ἴδού, θύρα ἡνεῳγμένη ἐν τῷ
 After this I looked and behold a door was opened in G3588
 G3326 G5023 G1492 G2532 G2400 G2374 G455 G1722

 οὐρανῷ καὶ ἡ φωνὴ ἡ πρώτη ἀ ἥκουσα
 heaven and G3588 voice G3588 the first things which I heard
 G3772 G2532 G5456 G4413 G3739 G191

 ὡς σάλπιγγος λαλούσης μετὰ ἐμοῦ λέγουσα,
 was as it were of a trumpet talking After me which said
 G5613 G4536 G2980 G3326 G1700 G3004

 Ανάβα ὕδε καὶ δείξω σοι ἀ δεῖ γενέσθαι
 Come up hither and I will shew thee things which must be
 G305 G5602 G2532 G1166 G4671 G3739 G1163 G1096

 μετὰ ταῦτα
 After this
 G3326 G5023

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 11:12 (Parallel theme): And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

Exodus 24:12 (Parallel theme): And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.

Revelation 1:19 (Parallel theme): Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

Revelation 1:10 (Parallel theme): I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

Mark 1:10 (Parallel theme): And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him:

Revelation 16:17 (Parallel theme): And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

Revelation 22:6 (Parallel theme): And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

John 16:13 (Parallel theme): Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

Acts 7:56 (Parallel theme): And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

Exodus 19:24 (Parallel theme): And the LORD said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them.