

Revelation 6:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

Analysis

And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.... This verse from Revelation's vision of seven seals - god's judgments on rebellious earth, cry of martyrs 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

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 6:1 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

καὶ	εἶδον	ὅτε	ἤνοιξεν	τὸ	ἀρνίον	ἐνὸς	ἐκ	τῶν
And	I saw	when	opened	G3588	the Lamb	one	of	G3588
G2532	G1492	G3753	G455		G721	G1520	G1537	
σφραγίδων	καὶ	ἤκουσα	ἐνὸς	ἐκ	τῶν	τεσσάρων	ζώων	
the seals	And	I heard	one	of	G3588	the four	beasts	
G4973	G2532	G191	G1520	G1537		G5064	G2226	
λέγοντος	ὡς	φωνῆς	βροντῆς	ἔρχου	καὶ	βλέπε		
saying	as it were	the noise	of thunder	Come	And	see		
G3004	G5613	G5456	G1027	G2064	G2532	G991		

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 5:1 (Parallel theme): And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

Revelation 6:5 (Parallel theme): And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

Revelation 19:6 (Parallel theme): And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

Revelation 6:7 (Parallel theme): And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

Revelation 14:2 (Parallel theme): And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

Revelation 6:3 (Parallel theme): And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

Revelation 11:19 (Parallel theme): And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

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