

Revelation 7:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

Analysis

And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.... This verse from Revelation's vision of sealed servants and innumerable multitude - god's protection and salvation 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

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 7:1 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	μετὰ	ταῦτα	εἶδον	τέσσαρας	ἄγγέλους	ἑστῶτας		
And	after	these things	I saw	four	angels	standing		
G2532	G3326	G5023	G1492	G5064	G32	G2476		
ἐπὶ	τὰς	τέσσαρας	γωνίας	τῆς	γῆς	κρατοῦντας	τοὺς	
on	G3588	four	corners	G3588	of the earth	holding	G3588	
G1909		G5064	G1137		G1093	G2902		
τέσσαρας	ἄνεμος	τῆς	γῆς	ἵνα	μὴ	πνέῃ	ἄνεμος	ἐπὶ
four	the wind	G3588	of the earth	G2443	G3361	blow	the wind	on
G5064	G417		G1093			G4154	G417	G1909
τῆς	γῆς	μήτε	ἐπὶ	τῆς	θαλάσσης	μήτε	ἐπὶ	πᾶν
G3588	of the earth	nor	on	G3588	the sea	nor	on	any
	G1093	G3383	G1909		G2281	G3383	G1909	G3956
δένδρον								
tree								
G1186								

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 24:31 (Parallel theme): And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Daniel 7:2 (Parallel theme): Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.

Jeremiah 49:36 (Parallel theme): And upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and will scatter them toward all those winds; and there shall be no nation whither the outcasts of Elam shall not come.

Mark 13:27 (Parallel theme): And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

Daniel 8:8 (Parallel theme): Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven.

Ezekiel 7:2 (Parallel theme): Also, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD unto the land of Israel; An end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land.

Ezekiel 37:9 (Parallel theme): Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

Isaiah 27:8 (Parallel theme): In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it: he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind.

Revelation 9:14 (Parallel theme): Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

Isaiah 11:12 (Parallel theme): And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.