

NASB 1977 A Door to Heaven
Revelation 4:

I'm going to do things ever so slightly different this morning. For effect. We'll begin as always with a plea for gracious help. And then I'm going to speak about the world's condition for a few moments. And then I'm going to have you stand for the reading of God's word.

(prayer)

In Venezuela perhaps 4333 known dead from the earthquake and many thousands still missing. In France the hottest day in recorded history has got those folks shrieking at each other about who gets to have air conditioning and who doesn't. In England, muslim men repeatedly rape helpless teenagers who don't have family structure to protect, while the constabulary ingores it rather than stirring racial tensions. In our land more babies are slaughtered now than before Dobbs reversed the 1973 abortion on demand decision in all 50 states.

Close to home, a man we love suffers from losing a daughter and both of her children, one in the womb, and one in the child protection services system. And I look at Pam in the car and say, Satan's got the whole place already, why does he have to be so mean.

This world is in unspeakable chaos. We didn't mention the dead in Ukraine and Russia, or the suffering in Iran. The chaos and suffering in Haiti.

Is this an odd way to begin a sermon? I often teach by contrast. You paint the contrasting utter opposite background for your image you are desiring to teach to compare to.

Satan owns this world. He has usurped authority to reign here and holds this world hostage because all men are sinners. Therefore, rule here is forfeited to him. And he rules in utter evil despotic horror.

The single restraint in this world comes from God's people, God's book, and God's presence among His redeemed from sin adopted sons and daughters. Civilization stems from the moral laws written in this book. Otherwise it would be far more ruthless and dark than it is.

The world is frighteningly evil, even with God's restraining influence. Soon that influence will depart. The world is about to witness the horror of Satan in control with no restraints. At all. 1/2 of the population of the world will perish by murder, by pestilence, and by thermonuclear events. Half.

Meanwhile, and by contrast; God is in His heaven. Stand for the reading of God's word.

Rev. 4:1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things." 2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. 3 And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. 4 And around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.

5 And from the throne proceed flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God; 6 and before the throne there was, as it were, a sea of glass like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. 7 And the first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle. 8 And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say,

“ HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, is THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME. ”

9 And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11 “ Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created. ”

Heaven is unaffected by the horrors on earth. Oh, to be sure, God is storing up wrath to be released at the proper time as these events unfold, but I wanted the contrast of the scene on earth as opposed to the scene in heaven fresh in your thoughts.

On earth, chaos. In heaven, order. On earth blasphemous rebellion. In heaven every creature bows and worships. The difference is that earth is in rebellion against God.

This world and we humans, created in the image of God were made to glorify God. That scene in heaven should be what is happening on earth. Pure worship and praise for the Creator and owner of everything. Instead we have utter chaos and uproar of a planet that hates it's rightful owner. We want to overthrow God as King and ruler of His own creation.

For 6000 years of history, this rebellious planet has been at war with God. This book you hold in your hands is the story of God regaining this planet. It is the story of redemption for rebellious sinners, put in place, by the death of God's own Son. Each of us who has come out of the rebellion is purchased by the shed blood of Jesus who took our penalty in full, in our place, and gives us the same white linen garments that we will see the 24 elders clothed in vs.4

The Bible is the story of the loss of this planet to rebellion in Genesis 3 and the unfolding of God's plan to retake this place that He owns. The individual patriarchs that God works with and through as He chooses a people for Himself. Adam, Enoch, Noah, Job, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob who is Israel.

Then Moses and Israel and revelation unfolds through prophets and priests and kings. God reveals Himself in words over a 2500 year period of His people the sons of Israel. Promises are made. A Messiah, an annointed One who comes and makes a pathway to righteousness possible, and then rules here, on this earth, on David's throne, forever.

Revelation is the story of how the cataclysmic events that unseat Satan as usurped ruler and seat Jesus on the throne of this entire world, in righteousness happens.

How does the world go from chaotic rebellion to Jesus on David's throne in Jerusalem ruling a thousand years in a paradise similar to what we began with in Eden? There are cataclysmic events that will make all of that happen. And we're going to see these things unfold beginning in chapter 6. Satan doesn't leave quietly.

But chapters 4 and 5 show us, first, heaven, and rightful worship in chapter 4, and then in chapter 5, the giving of the title deed to this earth to the single person who is worthy to open the deed and claim what is His. A quick chronology of Revelation.

Chapter 1: Jesus glorified.

Chapter 2,3: The church age.

Chapter 4: Sovereign God in total control. The Almighty. The Creator.

Chapter 5: Title deed to the earth given to the Lamb who is found Worthy

Chapter 6-18 The horrors of earth with all restraints from God lifted.

Chapter 19 Jesus retakes His world

Chapter 20-22 Great white throne judgement, Jesus reigns forever and ever

What a God we have who tells us what He's doing! From eternity past to eternity future! Things too marvelous for human minds to completely comprehend!

You say, isn't that dangerous to unfold your entire plan before it happens! Give away all your strategy?? Not if you're God. He causes blindness and deafness on rebellors. They read these things and dismiss all of it as utter nonsense. We read it and dwell on every liquid gold word. What a God!!!

OK, let's see where we go in chapter 4 for this morning.

1 After these things After what things???

If you study John's particular style of writing, and OBTW, God speaks through men His inspired word, but the personality of the authors and how they do writing remains. God inspires every word. Plenary inspiration. But His chosen authors don't become automatons. Their unique personalities and quirks and foibles remain in their writing.

When John says *After these things* in his style of writing, he's making a chapter break. You can see that same thing in John 6:1, 7:1 and 21:1. That's John code for, we're done talking about this, and now we're talking about something entirely new. Like a chapter break.

1 After these things again, what things. Well what did John through Jesus just finish talking about. The church. After the church. This is chronological folks. Chapters 2,3 are all about the church. Even all about it's different prophetic time line ages.

After the end of chapter 3, the church is gone. Vanished. We never see the church again. That age is over. I'll make people crazy. That dispensation is over!

I will argue for a pre-tribulation rapture from this one chronological

statement. *After these things* The things we will see in this book beginning in chapter 4 are chronologically after the church is removed. The older I get, the more profoundly simple this seems to me.

Here's a conundrum I face continually. I'm reformed. My theology is in lock step with reformed folks. Until we get here. The reformed train goes off the track and has a massive train wreck when they get to eschatology. Eschatology is a 5 cylinder word that simply means; the study of future things.

Reformed theology which is so excellent on grace issues and election and almost everything else, goes into la la land here. Right here.

Christian nationalists are the logical end of reformed eschatology. No rapture. No millenium, for many of them. No further jewish nation. No promises to Israel realised, by Israel. The church causes the world to get better and better until finally, Jesus returns because it's ready for Him.

The influence of the church in the world is going to turn the world into a paradise, and Jesus will return when that's finished. How's that working out. Sort of going in the wrong direction lately. Like full speed over a cliff.

A pre-tribulation rapture, that removes the church and closes the church age, and returns God's dealings to the nation of Israel, the remnant of Jacob, which obtw has exactly seven years remaining for fulfilment in Daniels chapter 9 prophecy, makes perfect logical sense.

The church is removed between chapter 3 verse 22 and chapter 4 verse 1, and the rest of this book is God dealing with His unfulfilled promises to Israel, and final utter judgement against an evil sinful rebellious world.

I After these things Indeed.

I After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven,

and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."

A door standing open in heaven!

Let me show you 3 other times in the Bible where there is a door standing open in heaven.

On our vacation, one night while miss Pam was sleeping, I watched Apollo 13. We humans gaze into the skies. Vastness beyond our measuring. We leap into space and travel a few miles to the moon. Barely a speck of distance compared to the vastness of solar systems, plural. The expanse boggles our minds.

But all of it is nothing to our God. He lives beyond the limitless measureless expanse. Beyond any telescope to see. Unless He opens a door that goes beyond the expanse of space that hides Him from our view.

That happened for Ezekiel. And Ezekiel has the same exact problem John has. How do you describe the indescribable. All we have is human terms to form images in our minds based on things we've seen. Here's Ezekiel's stab at it;

In Ezekiel 1:1 a similar thing happens. *I Now it came about in the thirtieth year, on the fifth day of the fourth month, while I was by the river Chebar among the exiles, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.*

4 And as I looked, behold, a storm wind was coming from the north, a great cloud with fire flashing forth continually and a bright light around it, and in its midst something like glowing metal in the midst of the fire. 5 And within it there were figures resembling four living beings.

Ezekiel doesn't have much more luck describing what he saw, than John does.

Then at the baptism of Jesus, at the Jordan river, heaven opens and the Spirit descends on Him. Luke 3:

21 When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as He was praying, heaven was opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit descended on Him in a bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."

But there's a third time a door into heaven opens up, and it's in Revelation chapter 6. And the whole earth will witness this event in utter terror, at the same time.

*Rev. 6: 12 I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; 13 and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. **14 The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up,** and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; 16 and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; 17 for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"*

Three times with 3 affects, a door in heaven is opened, and a fourth perhaps in Revelation chapter 19 which may be a further description of the chapter 6 event. It explains why they cry out for rocks to squish them.

You don't want to be on earth on that day. Heaven is ripped open and the King of kings is furious with . . . you. No! You want to be in the previous paragraph in chapter 19, enjoying the marriage supper of the lamb. Trust me.

11 And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and

wages war. 12 And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems; and He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself. 13 And He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. 15 And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. 16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

A little glimpse at the end of the book. We win. Big time. Or, if you're a rebel and still here; You lose. Big time.

I After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."

This is a peaceful opening up of a doorway to heaven. Purposeful. Not wrath or judgement at this open door of heaven event. A door to God's heaven, beyond our heavens opens up, we meet Jesus in the air, and we all go to heaven with Him. A comparatively quiet event.

and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said,

This is the same loud voice, like a trumpet, that John records for us in chapter 1, vss 10,11. Jesus amongst the lampstands. And what does the voice say?

"Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."

John got to hear that voice saying those words in his God given vision. I

believe every true christian is going to hear those words. The living and the dead, who are redeemed by Jesus blood will hear: ***Come up here.***

And out of the graves will come millions upon millions of sleeping (dead) christians, with brand new bodies, together with Jesus, in the air, and those of us who are alive on that day, we'll hear those words, and in the twinkling of an eye, we will receive glorified bodies and we will rise up to meet Jesus and be with Him forever and ever. *“Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.”*

Again. Chronological. After these things. I'm happy to beat this to death. There's enough christian nationalists trying to accomplish a better world for Jesus because there's no rapture. The better world comes incrementally because of the influence of the church over the eons. It's up to us? The church regains the world??

No. The church leaves. The church departs! And instantly the clock restarts on Israel's 7 remaining years of judgement. We go to heaven and marry our husband, Jesus. Satan realizes perfectly well, he's got seven years left to torment God's people and prepare for battle. The restrainer, the Holy Spirit and the church leave. No restraints left. You DO NOT want to be here.

2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne.

John says this happened instantly. Immediately. There is no time delay when Jesus says Come up here some day soon. Instantly we'll have new bodies. Instantly we'll be in eternity, with Him.

But John says, he was in the Spirit for this trip. John's physical body, probably 80+ years old, never left the isle of Patmos. He was transported spiritually to see these things.

He's in a room with a throne, and someone is sitting on that throne. In our

translation One is capitalized. This is God's throne. He is the sitting King.

In a courtroom when the judge enters, the bailiff says "all rise". Then when the judge is seated, the rest of us can sit down. Speaking about the supreme court, we use this language. 9 justices are seated on that court. Trump is the sitting president.

Here, God sits in regal authority, sovereign over all the earth. Even in chaotic rule by a usurper, satan, God sits in sovereign omniscient and omnipotent authority to reign.

Sitting as used here means authority. That word in that context of use appears more often in Revelation than in any other book.

- Revelation 4:2-3—"One seated on the throne" radiates jasper and carnelian.
- Revelation 5:13; 7:10—Praise rises "to Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb."
- Revelation 6:2, 4, 5, 8—Horsemen "sitting" symbolize conquest, war, famine, and death.
- Revelation 17:3, 9, 15—The harlot "sits" on the scarlet beast and on many waters, a counterfeit reign.
- Revelation 20:11—The Judge sits on a "great white throne."

We need this constant reminder. God sits in authority over all the earth. Even now as we witness sin frighteningly increasing at a rate that makes your skin crawl, God IS on His throne.

I listen to these people all day long who sit in judgement over God. It's common. "I could never believe in a God who blah blah blah, _____" you fill in the blank. As if they were more righteous than God and he would do well to take some advice from them.

But I understand the desire for justice. It's built into us. We'll get to a verse in Revelation; How long O Lord, How long. When will you avenge

our blood Lord. It's the thousands of saints who believe during the tribulation period and promptly get their heads chopped off.

How long O Lord? Satan's reign is so cruel, so horrific. Jesus anticipates this in the Lord's prayer that He taught the disciples to pray. *Thy kingdom come*. Your authority to reign and the resulting justice and judgement as opposed to Satan's bloody rule, come. Let it come, Lord Jesus.

That's what you're asking for in that prayer. Bring ***your*** Kingdom Lord. Let it come Lord. Sooner than later Lord. We want the judgement. We long for the justice. We desire justice and peace that only Jesus can achieve. On earth!

We tell the world that you are sovereign King but the world asks, Why doesn't God do something about the evil then? What is He waiting for. The evil is so horrific, why does He allow it to continue. We know His timing and plans are righteous and perfect, but it's hard to convince a suffering world. God's time is best. His ways are perfect. In all of the evil, He is righteous altogether. In all His judgements, He is perfect.

Revelation 4 and 5 assure us, God is on His rightful throne. He sits in sovereign glorious control over every atomic particle in every atom in every molecule. He knows every living strand of human DNA by it's 6.4 billion digit unique name. And He knows the dead ones also.

Justice will come, Oh earth and all who have dwelt upon it.

Rom. 9:28 *For the Lord will carry out His sentence on the earth thoroughly and decisively.*” Ro. 9:28

12 Let the fields exult, and all that is in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy 13 before the LORD, for He is coming— He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in His faithfulness. Psalms 96:12,12

We should fear that justice, except His perfect love has cast out our fear. He has paid our debt for us. We can come before this throne in the same linen garments, white and clean, that we will see these elders clothed in.

Satan beware. Our God is enthroned in the heavens. Soon He will bring swift judgement upon all evil. Soon according to His perfect time, not ours. For now we wait and we pray the Lord's prayer. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

We say, with Isaiah the prophet;

8 Yes, we wait for You, O LORD; we walk in the path of Your judgments. Your name and renown are the desire of our souls. 9 My soul longs for You in the night; indeed, my spirit seeks You at dawn. For when Your judgments come upon the earth, the people of the world learn righteousness. Isaiah 26:8,9

John Lennon wrote a satanic song, Imagine. Isaiah imagined a coming world where Jesus reigns in righteousness and the people of the world learn righteousness. Our souls long for paradise regained.

This book describes that cataclysmic event. Meanwhile, God is on His rightful throne in heaven, and we worship Him, and we wait.