

Revelation 4:1-11—The Open Door (a Postlude to the Revelation series)

I. Context

- a. Previous passage: messages were shared to the 7 churches in Asia Minor—a call to stay faithful; provocative imagery throughout Revelation to counter the Roman images that shape their thinking
- b. Chapter 4 is a vision where John is taken into heaven and sees God on His throne; symbolizes God's reign; word *throne* used 19x in *Rev.4 & 5*
- c. The churches' call to be faithful and endure rests upon understanding who is truly the sovereign Lord

II. The Open Door (vv.1-3)

- a. God is not preventing people from coming to Him
 - i. What prevents us? Our hearts are set upon other things; need to be free from entanglements to enter the door
- b. Sees the Lord on his throne (we are accountable to the One on the throne)

III. Surrounded by the worship of heaven (vv.4-8a)

- a. Encircled—everything is centered on the throne (note: humans on the periphery; you and I are not the center of the world or even our own lives)
- b. Twenty-four elders represent the complete of God's people (12 tribes of Israel + 12 apostles); 4 Living creatures may represent God's creation (c.f. *Isa. 6*)
- c. Thunder & lightning suggests God's power; 7-fold Spirit= complete presence of God's Spirit
- d. Sea=chaos; but under God's feet= forces of chaos are tamed

IV. The Neverending Worship (vv.9-11)

- a. Worship is the natural response of comprehending God in his greatness.
- b. Emphasizes God's eternal nature (over and against *Roma Aeterna*)
- c. What hinders a person from continuous worship now? Limits imposed on our present (and imperfect) bodies? Time and busyness? Lack of understanding?
- d. Worship is based on who Christ is and what he has done—only the divine is worthy of this kind of devotion. Do we ever settle for less—the created—to which we give our honor and praise?

V. So what?

- a. Think of the present things that distract us from God and living out our joy in Him? He is inviting you into the throne room to worship.
- b. What images in this world have a hold on us? In what way does our worship in church subvert the claims of the world?
- c. We were created for worship (of the one true God). What can you do to better gaze your focus on God? How can you make worship a more important part of your life in 2025?