

JESUS OPENS THE DOOR TO WORSHIPING GOD: Revelation of Worship in the Heavenly Holy of Holies

Revelation 4:1-2

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Introduction: King David the prophetic psalmist sees by faith beyond the earthly creation and the mystery world of the Tabernacle of the LORD to a Heavenly reality made known by divine revelation and engages all who hear, "Who is this King of glory?" (Psalm 24)

Revelation chapter 4--another vision in the cycle of 7 that make up the Book of Revelation is introduced, e.g. think of stretching out a slinky...

***In the 1st vision cycle John was given revelation of Jesus as the glorified Royal High Priest in the Heavenly Holy Place, now in the 2nd vision cycle he is given revelation of the heavenly throne-room that emerges from the Heavenly Holy Place—this is the Heavenly Holy of Holies!**

There is connection to what has been revealed in chapters 1-3.

Ch. 4:1, "**After these things...**" the reference is not to a time-line of events, but to the ongoing cycle of visions. A common mistake is to interpret the Book of Revelation as a temporal/historical account or earth bound, whereas the main theme of the book—The Revelation of the Ascended and Glorified Jesus Christ—is timeless & heavenly...

"I looked, and behold..." cf. 1:10 &12, "I was in Spirit on the Lord's Day and I heard behind me a loud voice...Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw..."

[Ch. 1:1-9 is John's introduction very probably written after the cycle of visions was revealed to him, also consider the idea that the scroll was sealed from end to beginning so that each seal was broken/opened as the scroll was unrolled, thus God knows the end from the beginning but reveals from beginning to end...]

Ch. 4:1, "**...a door standing open in heaven...**" John has already received revelation from the glorified Jesus about "a door", cf.

3:8, to the church in Philadelphia, "*See, I set before you an open door, and no one can shut it...*"

3:20, to the church of the Laodiceans, "*Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any one hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.*"

Ch.4:1, "**And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet (cf. 1:10) speaking with me, saying, 'Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.'**"

"*the first voice*", is the most important, first in rank and previously heard and identified (cf. 1:10, 17ff), i.e. the glorified Jesus Christ...

John is bidden/ invited into the vision of the heavenly worship liturgy. Once again the "*after these things*" is not a secular/time-bound reference. The scene is in heaven!

"The revelation of 'what is to happen later on' ['which must take place after this'] does not mean that everything after the heavenly council depicted in Rev. 4-5 (recorded in 6-22) must be viewed as a prediction of what is to happen chronologically in the future. John does not think in purely linear terms. His eschatology, as we have seen (12-13, 16-17), is balanced; from a heavenly perspective past, present and future belong together. So the visions of 'what must take place later on' will include historical events, which are judged in the light of the end; but God's eternal and saving purposes in Christ for his world also give meaning to what has happened in the past (cf. 12. 1-6), and what always will come about in the present (cf. 1.19; 2-3). John consistently interweaves heaven and earth. 'What must take place' refers, finally, not so much to events as to the coming of Jesus, in time and in eternity, and to the relationships with him and with each other which stem from that advent." (Smalley, Stephen S., The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse, Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2005, 114)

**Remember this is Divine apocalyptic vision given to accommodate believers in the local/visible church on earth who are as yet neither resurrected nor finally glorified; so we are given visions using figures/types, similes, analogies, of earthly created things.*

This vision of the heavenly worship liturgy in the Heavenly Holy of Holies is connected to and surpasses the prophetic visions of Psalm 24, et al., Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel (ch. 4 ad loc.).

The opening vision of Jesus' ascended glory is of the royal high priest in the heavenly holy place among the golden lampstands holding the 7 stars=the 7 churches and angel/messengers (ch.1).

**The context of Jesus' messages to the 7 churches (ch. 2-3) is about the priority of public worship by the sufficiency of the word of God and the means of grace, i.e. to each church Jesus identified Himself relative to their "works"= public service, religious service or liturgy.*

Jesus' messages to the 7 churches are intended for the local/visible churches on earth throughout time and history, because concluding the message to each church Jesus says, "he who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (ad loc.)

>The Glorified Jesus Charges the Church to Love Worshiping God First, Revelation 2:4-7,

>The Glorified Jesus Charges the Church to Remain Faithful, Revelation 2:8-11,

>The Glorified Jesus Warns the Church that His Sword of Truth and Judgment is Drawn, Revelation 2:12-17

>The Glorified Jesus Shall Make Known Intentionally and Decisively that He Searches Minds and Hearts, Revelation 2:18-29

>The Glorified Jesus Warns the Church that Spiritual Life is the Work of the Holy Spirit through the Appointed Means of Grace, Revelation 3:1-6,

>The Glorified Jesus Encourages the Church That He keeps the Door of Salvation Open, Revelation 3:7-13

>The Glorified Jesus Shames the Church for Neglecting His Worship and Thereby Excluding His Presence, Revelation 3:14-22

Ch.4:1, "And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet (cf. 1:10) speaking with me, saying, 'Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.'"

The vision opening chapter 4 is of the door from the heavenly holy place into the heavenly holy of holies where God's throne is central and like a nuclear model the identified worshipers orbit and the revealed visions are unrolled like a scroll...

This is a book of prophetic visions and symbolism with the number 7 being most prominent:

7 torches of fire burning before the throne of God symbolizing the 7 Spirits of God's ultimate holy perfections...

7 local churches represented in heaven by 7 golden candlesticks & 7 stars representing 7 angels/messengers...

7 sealed book/scroll...

7 horned lamb with 7 eyes representing the 7-fold fullness of the Holy Spirit...

7 angels/messengers with 7 trumpet-judgments...

7 thunder-voices from heaven...

7 Legends of the Church's Perseverance...

7 bowl-judgments...

**All leading to the visions of the returning victorious King of Kings and Lord of Lords and the beautifying of His bride for the marriage supper of the Lamb!*

"Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle! Lift up your heads, O gates! And lift up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory!"

(Psalm 24)