

Heaven: The Throne Room of the Universe

LOOKING THROUGH THE DOORWAY OF HEAVEN

Revelation 4

Heaven is the word God uses for where we as believers are headed. Heaven is mysterious to many; and a place of many fanciful speculations. But, God's Word has given us all He wants us to know about Heaven.

As we open to Revelation 4, we open to the first words of the only guided tour of Heaven found in God's Word. Note these opening words:

Revelation 4:1 (NKJV) After these things I looked, and behold, ***a door standing open in heaven***. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this." 2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, ***a throne set in heaven***, and One sat on the throne.

Think of what we are witnessing as we begin this morning looking through:

The Door of Heaven: Standing Open

There have been many wonderful sights that people have been able to witness: the light from the first light bulb, the awesome sight at the launch of giant rockets into the sky, the glimpse of lost treasures in ancient tombs: but nothing anyone has ever seen compares to this.

These next two chapters we will study in Revelation, starts with each of us given this sight, through the Apostle John's eyes: of the door to Heaven standing open.

As John is taken by the Spirit of God, from his exile, to see through that doorway, he finds himself transported to the Throne Room of the Universe. That is a profound truth. Heaven is where God sits enthroned. It is not just a place "somewhere", Heaven is THE place, made so by God being THERE. If you have ever wondered about Heaven, this is God's way of answering your questions. If we will listen, we will find all that He wants us to know about His Place, His Throne, and life in the Presence of God.

Just like we saw happening in Rev. 1:10, John is guided by the Spirit to hear the words of a loud voice that sounds like a trumpet. It must have been shocking to go from familiar scenes in Patmos, and of the seven churches: to the scenes of Revelation 4 & 5.

The glimpse of the Throne of God, dominated by hard to imagine numbers of angels, as well as sights and sounds that are so immense: boggles our minds. But that is what is seen through the open door.

1. Heaven is dominated by the Throne of God.
2. Heaven is what surrounds God and His worship.
3. Heaven is always described as God's presence and His Dominion; and with all the events of this world are all seen in perspective to God's Throne.

Jesus sent us Revelation as a reminder that:

Heaven is a Real Place Existing at This Moment

After "these things" (4:1), which summarizes the words and events of chapters 1-3: a new scene unfolds before John's eyes. Just as real as those early churches was the Throne of God: that towered over everything happening to John on Patmos. That is the message. Heaven is real.

The scenes of Revelation 1-3 are given on the island of Patmos, between Roman Asia (modern Turkey) and Greece. John was a prisoner of the Roman Emperor Domitian (AD 51-96) who ruled Rome from AD 81-96. God was on His Throne while John was exiled.

Domitian's father was Vespasian who is best known for building the Colosseum; and who ruled from AD 69-79, winning the Empire after Nero's suicide in AD 68. ***God was on His Throne while the Emperor Vespasian designed the Colosseum.***

Domitian's brother was Titus who ruled from AD 79-81; but is most remembered as the Roman General who destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70. ***So God was on His Throne while the Emperor Titus destroyed Jerusalem and a million Jews in AD 70.***

Domitian persecuted the church by allowing provincial purges of churches and believers, but not on an Empire wide basis, just here and there. He banished the last living disciple of Christ, the Apostle John, to Patmos. John had been living and pastoring in Ephesus when he was imprisoned on Patmos, and after Domitian's death in AD 96, John returned back to live his last days in Ephesus. ***God was on His Throne while the Emperor Domitian exiled John to Patmos.***

The vision of Christ (Rev. 1) and the letters to the seven churches (Rev. 2 & 3) are literal events, with letters to historic places that are still identifiable today by their geographic ruins.

The sights and sounds of Revelation 4 & 5 are equally real, literal, and John is presented with the fact that while the Romans were doing their thing on Earth, above all the Emperors, soldiers, persecutions, and life's many details: God was ruling the Universe,

seated on the Throne, and the perfect symphony of adoring worship was playing distinctly in God's presence.

Why Does God Give Us This Sight of Heaven?

We can't enter the hallowed ground of Heaven, captured in Revelation 4 & 5, without first reminding ourselves why God sent us these truths.

All of the words packaged in the 404 verses, spread across the 22 chapters of Revelation: are dominated by the opening words of Revelation 1:1-3.

Turn back and look again at what God said. I want to underline three phrases in that opening God wrote. Each are simple and life-changing if you really let it sink in, what God said. Here are the two phrases.

Please **stand** with me, and together read these three verses aloud with me in unison:

Revelation 1:1-3 (NKJV) ***The Revelation of Jesus Christ***, which God gave Him ***to show His servants***—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, 2 who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. 3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and ***keep those things*** which are written in it; for the time is near.

Pray

Note that this book we are reading is not merely the "Book of Revelation". This last book of the Bible is the book of "The Revelation of Jesus Christ". It isn't just a book of revelation, it is specifically showing, or revealing, or literally unveiling: Jesus Christ.

The Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ

So, this is the Revelation of Jesus Christ we are opening, above all else.

Whether you agree with Dispensational Eschatology, Biblical Prophecy, and the End Times events, or not: That really doesn't matter.

This book is intended to be ***supremely*** about Jesus Christ.

No other book of the Bible claims to be that. Every word, event, and every teaching in this book is tied to Christ, and ***supremely reveals something about Him***.

Let me repeat: no other book in the Bible is like this one.

No other book is declared by God to be the full unveiling of Christ.

No other book is given completely as a book about Him.

This last book is unique, and very transformational to our lives.

This book is what God wants us to think about Jesus Christ in our every day lives.

This is the picture of Him that we need to always keep before us.

This is the **Revelation of Jesus Christ**: who He is today, and everything He is planning to do from today until we get to join Him forever.

Secondly, look in the middle of verse three. There is a second phrase that can slip right by us if we aren't careful. Those words are the frame for all our studies in this book.

The Responsibility of Every Believer

Revelation contains a final and complete statement of what every believer needs to know and do to get blessed by God. These words before us in this book are so important that God says: above and beyond all the promises already attached to my Word, here is a bonus.

Look at what God Himself says in v. 3:

Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and
keep those things which are written in it;
for the time is near.

If you want to know why Revelation is the most important book to the daily life of any believer: here is why.

Do you see the words in bold, larger print? That is the message many of God's people have missed. There is an inexpressible blessing from God offered.

The blessing is upon those who take the time to read, hear, and DO what God has told them. This book contains what God calls "things" that constitute His desire for His servants. That's us. We are saved to be God's servants who DO what he asks, desires, and commands us to do.

What does God want us to do with the truths of this revelation of Christ, and the clear responsibilities for us as believers? One word sums up His desire: KEEP.

The Greek word God chose to use here is one of the key words that describes the life of following Christ in the New Testament. The word is **tereo** which means to "watch over, protect, guard". God tells us that:

Believers Guard the Truths of God's Word

In the New Testament every positive use of this word speaks of a believers relationship to God's expressed desires in His Word. This is the word from the Great Commission. Look at Matthew 28:18-20:

Matthew 28:18-20 (NKJV) And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to **observe** all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen.

Turn onward to one of the most intimate chapters John 14, where we find the promise of Heaven, and the comfort of Christ as the Way, Truth, and Life. Starting in verse 15, this is the same word Christ uses to define who are the real believers, His children, headed for eternal life. John 14:15, 21, 23-24:

15 "If you love Me, **keep My commandments**. 21 He who has My commandments **and keeps them**, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." 23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, **he will keep My word**; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. 24 **He who does not love Me does not keep My words**; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.

This is the same word Paul used when he said at the end of his life that he had "**kept**" the faith (II Tim. 4:7).

This is the same word from James that says believers "keep" themselves from the corruption of the world (Jam. 1:27).

Finally, this is the same word John uses seven times in his epistle of I John, and that Jesus uses seven times in Revelation: both places as the description of true, obedient, blessed followers of Christ. For believers:

The Sign of Authenticity is Keeping Hold of the Truth

Starting in I John 2, look with me at the way believers hold onto, guard, and keep the truths of God.

I John 2:3-5 (NKJV) 3 Now by this we know that we know Him, if we **keep His commandments**. 4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever **keeps His word**, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.

I John 3:22, 24 (NKJV) 22 And whatever we ask we receive from Him, **because we keep His commandments** and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. 24 Now he who **keeps His commandments** abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

I John 5:2-3, 18 (NKJV) 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and **keep His commandments**. 3 For this is the love of God, that we **keep His commandments**. And His commandments are not burdensome. 18 We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God **keeps himself**, and the wicked one does not touch him.

Jude 1:21 (NKJV) **keep yourselves in the love of God**, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Revelation 2:26 (NKJV) And he who overcomes, and **keeps My works until the end**, to him I will give power over the nations—

Revelation 3:10 (NKJV) Because you have **kept My command to persevere**, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. (Also Rev. 12:17; 14:12; 16:15; 22:7,9).

What “truths” does this tiny glimpse into Revelation 4’s doorway into Heaven give us to hold onto and guard today, this week, and for the rest of our lives?

We can distill some simple truths from this chapter. Truths like those that kept the early saints through the gloomy days of persecution and prison; and that made them radiant even when they lost their health, possessions, and freedoms.

What Truths Need Guarding Today?

Let me suggest Four Truths to Guard in Your heart and life:

1. **Heaven is Real:** that means, start planning on the best being yet ahead; and start believing that everything in this final book is really happening. **Heaven is Real!** Say that with me: Heaven is Real. Now say it again and emphasize that last word: **Heaven is REAL!**
2. **God is on the Throne:** that is true even if you are being persecuted like early believers, or are suffering at the hands of your enemies like John on Patmos, or struggling just to make it through one day at a time because life is so hard. **God is on the Throne!** Say that with me: **God is on the Throne**. Now say it again and emphasize that last word: **God is on the THRONE!**
3. **I am His Servant:** God saved me to be His servant-slave forever. That is what I am designed for, that is what makes me hum spiritually. All systems are calibrated in me

to run best when in His service. That makes everything secondary to serving God. ***I am His Servant.*** Say that with me: ***I am His Servant.***

4. ***Christ is My True Treasure:*** that means that the measure of what matters in life is Christ. For me, living is Christ. He is what is worth waiting for, sacrificing for, and living for. Say that with me: ***Christ is My True Treasure.***

So, the door swings open, Heaven is right in front of John. God has sent us a message. We are seeing what the vast majority of all humans have never stopped to examine, understand, or even pay attention to.

These truths are so important God says GUARD them, keep them, hold them close.

Repeat them one more time as we stand together.

Say these truths, and remember these truths.

- ***Heaven is REAL!***
- ***God is on the THRONE!***
- ***I am His Servant.***
- ***Christ is My True Treasure.***

Guard these things. Live these things.