

INTRODUCTION: HOW SHOULD WE READ REVELATION?

Before entering Revelation Chapter 4, it is important to understand how this book is interpreted. There are four primary views:

The Preterist view teaches that most or all of Revelation was fulfilled in the first century, often connected to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

The Historicist view sees Revelation as a symbolic timeline of church history stretching from the apostles to the end of the world.

The Idealist view treats Revelation as a poetic or symbolic depiction of the ongoing battle between good and evil, without a specific timeline of events.

The Futurist view, which we hold, teaches that Revelation Chapters 4 through 22 describe literal future events that will take place.

Revelation itself calls this book “prophecy,” which means it includes real prediction and real fulfillment. While symbolism is present, it does not replace literal meaning—it supports it. Therefore, the most consistent approach is a literal, grammatical, historical interpretation.

INTRODUCTION: SETTING THE STAGE (REVIEW OF CHAPTERS 1–3)

Before we step into Revelation Chapter 4, we must pause and understand where we are in the book.

Revelation is the only book in Scripture that gives us a clear, divinely inspired outline:

Revelation 1:19 tells us to write:

- The things which you have seen
- The things which are
- The things which will take place after this

The first section is Chapter 1 — the glorified Christ.

The second section is Chapters 2 and 3 — the Church Age, where Jesus dictated seven letters to seven literal churches. These letters applied:

- Historically to those churches
- Practically to all believers
- Prophetically to the entire span of Church history

These seven churches align with seven eras:

- Apostolic Church (30–100 A.D.) – Ephesus
- Persecuted Church (100–313 A.D.) – Smyrna
- State Church (313–590 A.D.) – Pergamos
- Papal Church (590–1517 A.D.) – Thyatira
- Reformed Church (1517–1730 A.D.) – Sardis
- Missionary Church (1730–1900 A.D.) – Philadelphia
- Apostate Church (1900–Present) – Laodicea

We are now living in the final stage—the Laodicean era.

THE FINAL FOUR CHURCHES AND THE RAPTURE THREAD

One of the most important observations you made is this:

The final four churches (Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea) are still present today—and each contains language connected to Christ’s return.

Thyatira

Those who follow false doctrine are cast into great tribulation, but the faithful are promised authority to rule with Christ.

Sardis

Jesus warns:

If you do not watch, I will come upon you as a thief.

This is a warning tied to readiness for His coming.

Philadelphia

This is the key promise:

“I will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world.”

This is not protection through the trial—it is removal from it.

Laodicea

Jesus stands at the door and knocks.

This is the final call before the transition.

THE TRANSITION POINT

That brings us to the hinge of the entire book:

Revelation 4:1

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

The phrase “After these things” (Meta Tauta) appears twice.

This is not poetic—it is structural.

It means:

After the Church Age

After Chapters 2–3

Now begins the future

This marks the start of:

“The things which will take place after this”

THE OPEN DOOR IN HEAVEN

John sees a door open in heaven.

This is exactly what was promised to Philadelphia:

An open door that no one can shut.

This door represents:

- Access to heaven
- A divine invitation
- A transition from earth to heaven

THE VOICE LIKE A TRUMPET

John hears:

“Come up here”

This matches:

- 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17
- 1 Corinthians 15:52

This is not the trumpet of angels in Revelation—it is the trumpet of God.

THE RAPTURE CONNECTION

John represents the Church:

- Called up suddenly
- By a trumpet-like voice
- Immediately in heaven

And here is a key observation:

The Church is mentioned repeatedly in Chapters 1–3, but after this moment, it is never seen on earth during the Tribulation.

Instead:

- Chapters 4–5 → Church in Heaven
- Chapters 6–19 → Judgment on Earth
- Chapter 19 → Church returns with Christ

THE DOCTRINE OF IMMINENCE

Scripture teaches that Christ can come at any moment.

- No one knows the hour
- Be ready at all times
- His coming is sudden

If events must happen first, then His return is not imminent.

This is why the pre-tribulation view aligns best with Scripture.

JEWISH WEDDING TYPOLOGY

The Jewish wedding provides a powerful picture:

- The bride is purchased (Christ redeems the Church)
- The groom prepares a place (John 14)
- The father determines the timing
- The groom comes suddenly with a shout and trumpet
- The bride is taken to the father's house
- A seven-day celebration follows

This parallels:

- The Rapture

- The Church in heaven
- The seven-year Tribulation on earth

REVELATION 4:2-3 — THE THRONE

“Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven...”

The first thing John sees is a throne.

The throne is “set”—fixed, established, immovable.

This reveals:

- God is sovereign
- Heaven is not in chaos
- Nothing takes God by surprise

THE ONE ON THE THRONE

He is described using imagery:

- Jasper (clear, pure)
- Sardius (red, blood-like)
- Emerald rainbow

This points to:

- Holiness
- Redemption
- Covenant mercy

CONNECTION TO THE HIGH PRIEST

These stones connect to Exodus 28:

- Sardius = first stone
- Jasper = last stone
→ Jesus is the First and the Last

The emerald connects to the priestly tribe:

→ Jesus is our Great High Priest

The tabernacle was a shadow of this heavenly reality.

REVELATION 4:4 — THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS

Around the throne are 24 elders:

- Sitting on thrones
- Clothed in white
- Wearing crowns

They represent the Church:

- Ruling with Christ
- Clothed in righteousness
- Rewarded for faithfulness

THE CROWNS (STEPHANOS)

These are victor's crowns:

- Rewards for faithfulness
- Not crowns of authority
- Given by Christ

REVELATION 4:5 — POWER FROM THE THRONE

“Lightnings, thunderings, and voices...”

This reflects Mount Sinai.

It signals:

- Power
- Authority
- Coming judgment

THE SEVEN LAMPS

These are the Seven Spirits of God:

- The fullness of the Holy Spirit
- Perfect execution of God's will

REVELATION 4:6 — THE SEA OF GLASS

A sea of glass like crystal.

This represents:

- Complete cleansing
- No more separation
- No more need for washing

We are fully purified.

REVELATION 4:6–8 — THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES

They are:

- Full of eyes (complete awareness)
- Surrounding the throne
- Constantly worshiping

Their faces:

- Lion
- Ox
- Man
- Eagle

They represent all creation.

They declare continually:

“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!”

REVELATION 4:9–10 — CROWNS DOWN

Whenever the creatures worship:

- The elders fall down
- They worship
- They cast their crowns

This is not loss—it is worship.

It declares:

Everything we have comes from Him.

THE FIVE CROWNS

Scripture identifies five reward crowns:

1. Imperishable Crown – discipline
2. Crown of Rejoicing – evangelism
3. Crown of Righteousness – longing for His return
4. Crown of Life – endurance
5. Crown of Glory – faithful leadership

All are eternal.

All are laid at His feet.

REVELATION 4:11 — THE CLIMAX

“You are worthy, O Lord...”

Why?

Because He is Creator.

“By Your will they exist...”

Everything exists because He willed it.

FINAL SUMMARY

Revelation Chapter 4 reveals:

- A throne that cannot be shaken
- A God who is fully sovereign
- A Church already in heaven
- A Savior worthy of all worship
- A future that is ordered, not chaotic

Heaven is not reacting.

Heaven is ruling.

God is on His throne.

And everything is unfolding exactly according to His plan.

Sermon Outline Notes

REVELATION 4 — CONDENSED SERMON NOTES (5 SECTIONS)

“A Door Standing Open in Heaven”

1. THE INTERPRETATION & THE TRANSITION

(Revelation 1:19; 4:1)

- Revelation gives its own outline:
 - Things seen → Christ (Ch. 1)
 - Things which are → Church Age (Ch. 2–3)
 - Things after this → Future (Ch. 4–22)
- Four interpretive views:
 - Preterist, Historicist, Idealist, Futurist
- We hold to **Futurist**:
 - Because Revelation calls itself *prophecy* (prediction + fulfillment)
- Key phrase: **“Meta Tauta” (After these things)**
 - Marks a clear transition into the future
- The Church:
 - Mentioned 19× in Chapters 1–3
 - Not seen on earth in Chapters 6–19

Point:

Revelation 4 begins the future prophetic program—after the Church Age.

2. THE OPEN DOOR & THE RAPTURE

(Revelation 4:1; 1 Thess. 4:16–17)

- John sees:
 - A door open in heaven
 - A voice like a trumpet
 - A command: “Come up here”
- This parallels:

- The **Rapture of the Church**
- John represents the Church:
 - Called up suddenly
 - Taken into heaven
- **Doctrine of Imminence:**
 - Christ can come at any moment
 - No events required beforehand
- **Jewish Wedding Picture:**
 - Bride purchased → Christ redeemed us
 - Groom prepares a place → John 14
 - Father sets timing
 - Sudden return with trumpet
 - 7-day celebration → picture of Tribulation period

Point:

The open door is the Church's "Blessed Hope"—being called up to be with Christ.

3. THE THRONE & THE ONE WHO SITS ON IT

(Revelation 4:2–4)

- First thing John sees:
- A throne set in heaven (fixed, immovable)
- Meaning:
 - God is sovereign
 - Heaven is not in panic
 - Nothing is out of control
- Description of the One:
 - Jasper → purity, holiness
 - Sardius → blood, redemption
 - Emerald rainbow → covenant mercy

- Connection to High Priest (Exodus 28):
 - First stone (Sardius) + Last stone (Jasper)
Jesus = First and Last
 - Emerald → priestly connection
 - Jesus = Great High Priest
- 24 Elders:
 - Represent the Church
 - On thrones, clothed in white, wearing crowns

Point:

Before judgment begins, we see who is in control—Jesus on the throne.

4. THE THRONE'S POWER & HEAVENLY REALITY

(Revelation 4:5–8)

- From the throne:
 - Lightnings, thunderings, voices
Echo of Mount Sinai → judgment coming
- Seven lamps:
 - The Seven Spirits of God
Fullness of the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11:2)
- Sea of glass:
 - Crystal, unmoving
No more separation, no more cleansing needed
- Four living creatures:
 - Full of eyes → complete awareness
 - Lion, Ox, Man, Eagle → all creation represented
- Their cry:
 - “Holy, Holy, Holy”

Point:

Heaven is ordered, powerful, and centered on the holiness of God.

5. WORSHIP & “CROWNS DOWN”

(Revelation 4:9–11)

- Worship is continuous:
 - Creatures worship → elders respond
- The elders:
 - Fall down
 - Cast their crowns
- Crowns = **Stephanos (reward crowns):**
 1. Imperishable (discipline)
 2. Rejoicing (evangelism)
 3. Righteousness (longing for His return)
 4. Life (endurance)
 5. Glory (shepherding)
- Casting crowns means:
 - Not loss—but worship
 - Acknowledging everything comes from Him
- Final declaration:

“You are worthy... You created all things”

Point:

All reward, all glory, all purpose ultimately belongs to Christ.

FINAL SERMON LANDING

- The Church is in Heaven
- The Throne is established
- Judgment is about to begin
- Worship is the proper response

Big Idea:

Before God pours out His wrath on the world, He first reveals His glory in heaven—and reminds us who is truly worthy.