

A Vision of the Throne – The One who is worthy.

Revelation 4:1-11

(Expanded Sermon Notes)



As we walked closer, you could hear the voices of the crowds proclaiming praise and extolling worth on those who were in front of them. The signs were easy to see. This place was oriented all around one thing, and they took great joy in the glory of that thing. In fact, if you looked a little closer to the scene, there was an order to the events, a liturgy of sorts. People would come and prepare themselves for the event, gathering in small groups beforehand. Next, they would make sure that they were adorned in the right garments and would begin the journey to the place of worship. Finally, as they passed over the threshold of the gates, their eyes would catch a glimpse of the most central place. It was a temple of sorts with an inner sanctum. This was, after all, the house that Lambert, Swann, Harris, Bradshaw, and the Rooneys built. This was Heinz Field. A hallowed ground, a place of worship, and a destination for pilgrimage. On a Thursday night, playing the Cleveland Browns, there was no more sacred place to be in all of Pittsburgh than there. Those assembled weren't merely fans; in this place and in this team, they lived, moved, and found their being. For many, this was as close to church that they would ever come. But don't mistake their actions. They are worshippers in the purest sense of the word. And, in their experience, we find that we all are worshipers, **but there is only One we were created to worship.**

The visions in Revelation 4–7 can be called a “cycle” because they begin and end with worship in the heavenly throne room. The four living creatures, the elders, and the angelic hosts that sing praises to God in chapter 4 see the Lamb receive a scroll that is sealed with seven seals in chapter 5. As the Lamb opens the first six seals in chapter 6, threatening visions relentlessly erode readers' sense of security, pressing them to join with all who cry out, “Who is able to stand?” (6:17). As if in response, John tells readers about the redeemed who are able to stand in the heavenly throne room, where they join the four creatures, the elders, and the angelic hosts in offering songs of praise to God and the Lamb (7:10–12). Only then is the seventh seal opened, bringing reverent silence (8:1). The cycle begins in the presence of God and the Lamb and returns to the presence of God and the Lamb.¹ When we consider this opening vision in chapter 4, we are confronted with the question of worship. Who and what do we worship? Who and what do we look to for security and provision? Who and what do we ascribe power and authority? Jesus reminds us through John that only he is worthy, and **there is only one who is worthy of my worship.**

¹ Craig R. Koester, *Revelation and the End of All Things*, Second Edition. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 76.

1. A vision of the throne. (vv. 1-8)

- a. **Reminder** – Revelation started with a vision of Jesus, and here, before we get into the future judgments section, **we are centered on the one who is worthy, Jesus.**
- b. How to read Revelation responsibly.
 - i. The Book of Revelation is not about who and what's new but *what's always been true*? **It's not about explaining timelines but learning transforming principles. Not secret codes and hidden messages, but timeless truths and amazing promises that have blessed the church for 2000 years.**
 - ii. We will avoid the "Bible in one hand, news feed in the other hand" approach that has dominated a lot of teaching in the US for the last 50 years or so.
 - 1. I.e., You will need your Bible and an open heart and mind. You will not need a secret decoder ring or some secret knowledge to really unlock the meaning of the text.
 - iii. This is a letter – That means that John is writing to address the specific situation that the original audience has found themselves.
 - 1. The letter also falls into a larger genre that we find in the OT specifically apocalyptic literature.
 - 2. **It will use repetition to make its central point...** Only Jesus is worthy – Only Jesus has the victory.
- c. **Keep the main thing... The main thing. (A quick lesson in hermeneutics.)**
 - i. **A text without a context is a pretext for a prooftext."**² – This is a core hermeneutical principle for good Bible study and reading.
 - 1. I.e., **The text cannot mean something to us today that it did not mean to the original audience.**
 - 2. So, we look for the melodic line (main idea) of the book and always... and I mean always use that to help us work through the hard stuff within the text.
 - a. This is another hermeneutical principle – We let the easy interpret the hard. Or, in other words, we work from clear to unclear, and the unclear cannot contradict the clear.
 - b. **What is the melodic line? → Jesus is the victor.**
 - i. Chap 5 has been said to be the key section in interpreting Revelation. It is the chapter that we come to see Jesus who is seated on the right-hand side of the Father, is the slain lamb.
 - ii. **⁶ And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. (Rev. 5:6)**
 - 1. **The implication of both proclamations in their contexts is that no created being, only God, possesses the**

² I first heard this in a preaching co-lab at TIU. It originates from "Exegetical Fallacies" by D.A. Carson. "Exegetical Fallacies" was originally recommended to me by a professor after I gave my first sermon in my initial preaching co-lab. He started off his comments with several positive notes, and then said, "About your text work, you might want to consider this resource." It was a slice of humble pie! LOL!

worthiness and authority to be sovereign over history
and to be able to execute his cosmic plan.³

d. What is the central point of chapter 4 and 5?

- i. **The main point of chs. 4–5 is God’s punitive and redemptive purpose for the world beginning to be accomplished through the death and resurrection of Christ, through whose reign God’s purpose for creation will be consummately executed and divine glory accomplished.**
- ii. The pastoral purpose is to assure suffering Christians that God and Jesus are sovereign and that the events that the Christians are facing are part of a sovereign plan that will culminate in their redemption and the vindication of their faith through the punishment of their persecutors.⁴
- iii. **When John’s readers turned on their (metaphorical) televisions and opened their first-century equivalent of newspapers, this is what they saw: the power and pomp of the Roman Empire. Everywhere they looked they saw the symbols of Roman might.** They saw the eagle standard carried by Roman soldiers and fixed over public buildings. The coins they held in their hands had images of the goddess Roma. They heard stories of war and slaughter followed by famine and disease. If they had had eyes to see, they may also have seen injustice and murder. They could “enjoy” the blood of gladiatorial combat. They may have seen natural disasters and environmental catastrophes.⁵
 1. **Again, in contrast to the injustices of the world they lived in, Jesus stands worthy, sovereign, and victorious over all the evil they experienced and cold experience.**
 - a. I.e., This is not a sanitized or idealized message for a sanitized world. This is a message of hope for a world that experienced a historically significant amount of injustice.
 2. See additional notes below on Roman authority. → This vision offers not only a critique of Roman authority but it also offers a future hope in that Rome was not the supreme authority, Jesus was... and is.

e. How are we to understand the images of this vision? (vv.1-8)

- i. This vision marks a transition point in the letter, the messages to the seven churches are finished, and now we enter into section that refreshes our understanding of who God is.
- ii. **V. 1-** A divine voice beckons John to come through heaven’s open door, opening the second cycle of visions. **The voice is not a new one but the same trumpet-like voice that introduced the messages to the churches (1:10; 4:1).** Similarly, the visions in this second cycle do not raise new issues but deal with those that emerged in the messages to the churches.⁶
- iii. **V. 2** – The throne: A symbol of power and authority.
 1. **John uses the word *throne* forty-seven times out of a total of sixty-two times in the New Testament.** The emphasis he gives the term may be gauged from the fact that in Matthew, the book with the next highest number, the word occurs only five times. John’s readers were evidently familiar with earthly thrones and

³ G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 338.

⁴ G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 311.

⁵ Chester, Tim. *Revelation For You: Seeing history from heaven's perspective* (p. 48). The Good Book Company. Kindle Edition.

⁶ Craig R. Koester, *Revelation and the End of All Things*, Second Edition. (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 75.

- they were troubled by all that Caesar's throne meant. **John will not let them forget that there is a throne above every throne.**⁷
2. **Regardless of how rampant evil seems to run and to cause God's people to suffer, they can know that his hand superintends everything for their good and his glory.** This is demonstrated by the fact that all the judgments in chs. 6–16 issue from God's throne (e.g., 6:1–8, 16; 8:3–6; 16:17).⁸
- iv. **V. 3** – The emerald rainbow → God's presence is indescribable.
1. **God is central to this vision.** His presence is the radiant point around which the galaxy of other heavenly beings revolves, yet his appearance eludes direct description. John describes the heavenly court in a manner reminiscent of Ezekiel, who saw the throne of God together with lightning, a rainbow, a crystal sea, and four creatures.⁹
 2. **It is better, however, to understand it of a *rainbow* in its usual sense and see a reference to the sign of God's covenant (Gen. 9:16).**¹⁰
- v. **V. 4–7** – The elders and creatures around the throne. → God deserves right worship.
1. One of the purposes of the church meeting on earth in its weekly gatherings (as in 1:3, 9) is to be reminded of its heavenly existence and identity by modeling its worship and liturgy on the angels' and the heavenly church's worship of the exalted lamb, as vividly portrayed in chs. 4–5. This is why scenes of heavenly liturgy are woven throughout the Apocalypse¹¹
- vi. **We should not miss the fact that the only one being worshipped is God. He is again at the center of the worship (cf. 1:13), reminding us of his rightful position. It is next set of verses that clue us into the worship that is going on and what God is being praised for, namely his character and nature.**
1. As Swete puts it: **'The four forms suggest whatever is noblest, strongest, wisest, and swiftest in animate Nature. Nature, including Man, is represented before the Throne, taking its part in the fulfillment of the Divine Will, and the worship of the Divine Majesty.'**¹²
 2. **The hymns make explicit the main point of the vision and of the whole chapter: God is to be glorified because of his holiness and sovereignty.**¹³

2. The one who is thrice Holy. (v.8)

- a. What is holiness?
 - i. **A biblical term generally meaning "to be set apart."** The term is used widely in Scripture to refer to a variety of people and objects alike but ultimately points to God as the one who is qualitatively different or set apart from creation. *Holy* may also be used to describe someone or something that God has "set apart" for special purposes.

⁷ Leon Morris, *Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 20, Tyndale NT Commentaries (InterVarsity Press, 1987), 88.

⁸ G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 320.

⁹ Craig R. Koester, *Revelation and the End of All Things*, Second Edition. (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 77.

¹⁰ Leon Morris, *Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 20, Tyndale NT Commentaries (InterVarsity Press, 1987), 89.

¹¹ G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 323.

¹² Leon Morris, *Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 20, Tyndale NT Commentaries (InterVarsity Press, 1987), 92.

¹³ G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 332.

- ii. In the NT, holiness takes on the sense of ethical purity or freedom from sin. The fullness of the biblical witness, then, testifies to God's holiness, understood as God's "otherness" and "purity," as well as to God's prerogative to set people and things apart for God's own purposes, together with the resulting godliness in the lives of those whom God declares to be holy.¹⁴
- b. What does it mean for God to be thrice holy?**
 - i. God is altogether set apart from anything in the created world.
 - 1. **The actions that occur in the heavenly throne room show that in the proper order of things, all creation is oriented toward its Creator. Human beings are not at the center, much as they like to think that they are. God is central.**¹⁵
 - a. I.e., God is God and man is not.
 - ii. There are two basic aspects to God's holiness. The first is his uniqueness. He is totally separate from all of creation. This is what Louis Berkhof called the "majesty-holiness" of God. The uniqueness of God is affirmed in Exodus 15:11: **Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?**
 - iii. "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty" (Isa. 6:1–4). The Hebrew word for "holy" (קָדוֹשׁ—*qadosh*) means "marked off" or "withdrawn from common, ordinary use." The verb from which it is derived suggests to "cut off" or "to separate."¹⁶
 - iv. **The other aspect of God's holiness is his absolute purity or goodness.** This means that he is untouched and unstained by the evil in the world. He does not in any sense participate in it. Note the way **Habakkuk 1:13** addresses God: **"Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong."**¹⁷
- c. Who are you in Christ? → A look in the mirror.**
 - i. You are now set apart and to live set apart.
 - 1. God's perfection is the standard for our moral character and the motivation for religious practice. The whole moral code follows from his holiness.¹⁸
 - 2. In Christ, you are called to live in accordance with this same moral character and code that is set forth by God's character and Holy nature.
 - ii. 1 Pet 2:9-10 - **⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a *holy nation*, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.**
 - 1. Just as believers are a new spiritual race and a new spiritual priesthood, so they are a new spiritual *nation* which is based now neither on ethnic identity nor geographical boundaries but rather on allegiance to their heavenly King, Jesus Christ, who is truly King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:16).¹⁹
 - iii. What parts of my inner life are encouraged by this truth, and what parts of my inner life are a little or a lot shaken up by this truth?

¹⁴ Stanley Grenz, David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* (InterVarsity Press, 1999), 60.

¹⁵ Craig R. Koester, *Revelation and the End of All Things*, Second Edition. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 77–78.

¹⁶ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 256.

¹⁷ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 256.

¹⁸ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 257.

¹⁹ Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 117.

1. **“We tell ourselves that we've changed our minds on unpopular Christian convictions because we've become more compassionate and thoughtful. But, in many cases, we've simply surrendered and sought to relieve ourselves of the tension they bring. We've shrunk from cross-bearing.”** – Justin Giboney
- d. If God is thrice Holy, he then is worthy on a cosmic and eternal scale.

3. The one who is worthy. (v. 11a)

- a. What does it mean for Christ / God to be worthy?
 - i. Let us come back to the action of worship - **The actions that occur in the heavenly throne room show that in the proper order of things, all creation is oriented toward its Creator.** → There is only one who is worthy of worship, God.
 - ii. Those gathered around the throne - Their song begins with *You are worthy*. In the most literal sense, they worship (ascribe **worship**). They salute God as *our Lord and God* and ascribe to him worthiness to receive *glory and honor and power*.²⁰
 1. V.10 – God is referred to in terms of majesty (*the throne*) and eternity (*lives for ever and ever*). The *elders* join in. They prostrate themselves before *him ... on the throne*, worship the Eternal, and throw down their crowns before him. All these are ways of giving him the chief place. They themselves worship: they take the lowliest place. The throwing down of their crowns expresses the truth that he alone reigns. **All other sovereignty must yield to his.**²¹
 - iii. God's worthiness stands in direct contrast to the worthiness of Cesar. → Cesar demanded worship and worthship (that his people would see him as worthy). God is worthy whether humanity recognizes it or not.
 1. **“God is glorious, and that His glory does not allow itself to be diminished, to be disturbed in its gladness and the expression of that gladness, to be checked in the overflowing of its fulness.”**²² – Karl Barth
- b. Who are you in Christ? → A look in the mirror.
 - i. You are now righteous. i.e., Made worthy.
 1. 1 Pet 2:9-10 - ⁹ **But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.** ¹⁰ **Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.**
 - ii. The gospel tells us that it is only through Christ that we are made worthy before God. → This is the doctrine of imputed righteousness.
 1. Imputed Righteousness - This refers to the righteousness of Christ being transferred to those who believe on him for salvation.²³
 2. We were unworthy in our sin. → Through faith in Christ, his worthiness was put on us. → Now we are worthy.

²⁰ Leon Morris, *Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 20, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 93.

²¹ Leon Morris, *Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 20, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 93.

²² Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. Geoffrey William Bromiley, trans. Geoffrey William Bromiley, First American edition. (London; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 163–166.

²³ Stanley Grenz, David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 65.

3. God has chosen a new race of people, Christians, who have obtained membership in this new 'chosen race' not by physical descent from Abraham but by coming to Christ and believing in him.
- iii. What or whom is the one who made you worthy?
 1. **In what things or relationships do we look to find our worth?**
 - a. Our vocations & accomplishments.
 - b. Friends / Romance / Spouses
 - c. Moral positions / Legalistic obedience
 2. How does Jesus making me worthy reorient my perspective on these things?
- c. What demonstrates God's worthiness? → Creation / His ability to create.
 - i. The one who created all things.

4. The one who created all things. (v. 11b)

- a. Why is this important?
 - i. Again, let's come back to the central point of Revelation – Jesus is victorious, and he offers his victory to us. His victory only matters if he has the power to achieve it and to extend it.
 1. As the author of all creation, he holds authority over all things, and therefore holds all things accountable.
 - ii. God, they say, created all things. It was due to his will that they *were created* and *have their being*. In view of the troubled state of the little church this is a noteworthy affirmation in the first heavenly vision. **God has not abandoned the world, and it is indeed his world. He made all things and made them for his own purpose. John's readers must not think that evil is in control. Evil is real. But the divine purpose still stands.**²⁴
 1. They are not to look to the power structures of the world for their relief or hope. They are to look to the one who created all things.
- b. Who are you in Christ?
 - i. You were created by God in his image. (Gen. 1:26)
 1. This means that it is in him that you will find your greatest purpose and delight.
 2. You will find delight in ways.
 3. You will find delight in relationships when they are oriented around him.
 4. You will find delight in work when it is done for his glory.
 - ii. In Christ → You are restored to live in the fullness of your created purpose.
 1. 1 Pet 2:9-10 - **9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.**¹⁰ **Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.**
 - iii. Are you regularly taking delight in God's presence through his Word, prayer, and community?

²⁴ Leon Morris, *Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 20, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 93.

Additional Notes:

Roman authority - The heavenly throne is the vantage point from which John wants readers to look out upon the world of human affairs. Popular culture in the world of the seven churches gravitated toward human centers of power. Public appearances of the emperor often featured him sitting on a throne and accompanied by a crowd of friends, advisors, and attendants. When the emperor traveled, communities would send representatives, sometimes dressed in white, to greet him and present him with golden crowns to show their recognition of his sovereignty. Those who approached the throne would prostrate themselves, sometimes bowing down before the throne even when the emperor was absent (Aune, *Apocalypticism*, 99–119).²⁵

- Toward the end of the first century, the emperor Domitian was said to have demanded that people address him as “Lord and God” (Suetonius, *Domitian* 13.2), but such blatant compulsion would have been an exception. Emperors preferred to cultivate the impression that people sang their praises because their virtues were universally recognized and made them worthy of such honors. A throne of admirers could keep up a thunder of applause day and night, referring to the emperor and even to lesser kings as “gods” (Acts 12:22; Tacitus, *Annals* 14.15). Flatterers would lavish the title “Lord and God” on the emperor, not so much out of coercion, but in the hope of winning his favor and advancing their social positions (Martial, *Epigrams* 5.8; 7.34; 10.72). By giving readers a glimpse of God’s heavenly court, John presses Christians in the seven churches to see such popular displays of power as garish imitations of the true sovereignty that belongs to the Creator, who alone is truly worthy of being called “Lord and God” (Rev. 4:11).²⁶

On the elders: (v.4)

- Round God’s *throne* were *twenty-four other thrones* and on them *twenty-four elders*. These are probably a superior order of angels (angels may be called ‘elders’, Isa. 24:23). Some argue that the number twenty-four is to be seen as the sum of the twelve patriarchs of the Old Testament and the twelve apostles of the New, who are thus seen to form a unity. The song of Moses and of the Lamb are indeed one (15:3). And, while the names of the twelve tribes are on the gates of the New Jerusalem, those of the apostles are on its foundations (21:12, 14). It is objected that their song (5:9–10) differentiates them from the redeemed (so Mounce), and that in any case, the redeemed do not sit on thrones until the final consummation.²⁷
- Best is probably the view of Charles; the *elders* are angelic beings indeed, but angelic beings who are ‘the heavenly representatives of the whole body of the faithful’. The thrones point to royal state and *white* is the colour of triumph. The *crowns of gold* also emphasize the high estate of these exalted beings (the Greek *stephanos* usually denotes a wreath of victory or festivity rather than a royal crown: see note on 2:10; but here we must take the crowns in conjunction with the thrones).²⁸

²⁵ Craig R. Koester, *Revelation and the End of All Things*, Second Edition. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 79.

²⁶ Craig R. Koester, *Revelation and the End of All Things*, Second Edition. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 79.

²⁷ Leon Morris, *Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 20, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 89.

²⁸ Leon Morris, *Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 20, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 90.

- **The elders certainly include reference to OT and NT saints.** They are either angels representing all saints or the heads of the twelve tribes together with the twelve apostles, representing thus all the people of God. Identification of them as angels is consonant with some of our earlier observations that many of the traits and functions characteristic of angels are likewise applicable to humans (see on 1:20b). Probably, the elders are angels who are identified with the twelve tribes and the twelve apostles, thus representing the entire community of the redeemed of both testaments (the songs in 15:3–4 may also point to the inclusion of OT and NT saints).²⁹
- If the four living creatures (v 6) are heavenly representatives of all animate life throughout creation, as most interpreters think, then the elders are probably heavenly representatives of God’s people (in 1 En. 60:2 both “angels and the righteous stand around” God’s throne). The four creatures represent general creation and the elders the elect of God’s special creation.³⁰

On the timing of the vision and future events: (v.1) Μετὰ ταῦτα (“after these things”) does not place the events within the visions in chs. 4–5ff. after the events narrated in chs. 1–3. It indicates rather only that a new vision is coming after the vision in chs. 1–3. This is the order in which John saw the visions but not necessarily the historical order of their occurrence as events. The phrase is also used in this way in subsequent sections of the book (7:1, 9; 15:5; 18:1; 19:1).³¹

- Interestingly, the vast majority of futurist commentators have taken Rev. 4:1 as one of the most obvious indicators of their position. However, as in 1:19, μετὰ ταῦτα (“after these things”) is likely synonymous with Daniel’s ἐπ’ ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν (“in the last days”), so that the visions of Rev. 4:2–22:5 are generally eschatological in scope (see discussion of the use of Dan. 2:28–29ff. in 1:1 and 1:19 above). μετὰ ταῦτα is probably also equivalent to such inaugurated latter-day phrases as are found in Mark 1:15; Acts 2:17; Gal. 4:4; 1 Cor. 10:11; 2 Cor. 6:2; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1; 1 Pet. 1:20; 2 Pet. 3:3; Heb. 1:2; 9:26; Jas. 5:3; 1 John 2:18; Jude 18. We have already seen that the μετὰ ταῦτα allusion from Daniel in 1:19 (and its equivalent ἐν τάχει [“quickly”] in 1:1) has indicated that the fulfillment of the Daniel 2 prophecy concerning the establishment of God’s kingdom has begun in Christ and the church.
- If our inference concerning μετὰ ταῦτα in 1:19 is correct and the same use occurs here, then the visions beginning in ch. 4 need not refer exclusively to a period after that of chs. 1–3. Rather, the concluding phrase of 4:1 affirms only that the subsequent visions of the book are further visions concerned with an explanation of the “latter days,” which are both “realized” and “unrealized,” set in motion but not consummated (as ch. 1 affirms), including the eschatological past and present as well as the future.
- The significance of the Daniel 2 allusion is that suffering Christians can take heart that God not only has all knowledge of historical affairs but has decreed them and guides them.³²

²⁹ G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 322.

³⁰ G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 322.

³¹ G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 316–317.

³² G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 317–318.