

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL 2021

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ADVENT DEVOTIONAL DECEMBER 15, 2021

SCRIPTURE

Revelation 4:1-8

1 After this I looked, and there in heaven a door stood open! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." 2 At once I was in the spirit, and there in heaven stood a throne, with one seated on the throne! 3 And the one seated there looks like jasper and carnelian, and around the throne is a rainbow that looks like an emerald. 4 Around the throne are twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones are twenty-four elders, dressed in white robes, with golden crowns on their heads. 5 Coming from the throne are flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and in front of the throne burn seven flaming torches, which are the seven spirits of God; 6 and in front of the throne there is something like a sea of glass, like crystal.

Around the throne, and on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: 7 the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with a face like a human face, and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle. 8 And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and inside. Day and night without ceasing they sing,

"Holy, holy, holy,

the Lord God the Almighty,

who was and is and is to come."

DEVOTIONAL

In Revelation 3, John recounts a promise for repentant people: “Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me” (3:20). God promises fellowship—the intimacy of a shared meal.

In chapter 4, we get a startling beginning: now the door is opened (“After this I looked, and there in heaven a door stood open!”) and the view is staggering. God is enthroned in the heavens, surrounded by adoring elders wearing golden crowns. There are signs of created power—thunder and lightning, the celestial sea close at hand. Creatures that defy easy description (“one like...”) embody what is owed to God: worship.

How to account for the dramatic change between chapters 3 and 4? How can the all-powerful, barely-contained in heaven, worthy of all worship, knock on the door and share a simple meal with us? How can this be?

John offers a vision because the door to heaven was opened, and Jesus Christ walked through. As one Christmas hymn implores us, “Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!” The open door of heaven unveils the presence of God, who comes to us as one of us, enabling something beyond our imagination or understanding to be born, touched, held, killed, and raised. Now the door is wide open for John to behold the mystery behind it—and open for us, too.

PRAYER

Holy God, you are beyond us; yet in Jesus Christ you have become one of us. With all creation we praise and worship you for the mystery of your incarnation—for the unimaginable grace that awaits us in your real presence. As we wait on your promise this season, open the door to your love once again, and sustain us with a vision of hope for all the way ahead. We pray in Jesus Christ. Amen.

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