

SANCTUARY, SABBATH, SHALOM

First Presbyterian Church of Bakersfield
2026 Sept-Nov Sermon Series Study Guide

Revelation 4:1-11 (NIV)

¹ After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first 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 before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. ³ And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby. A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne. ⁴ Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. ⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits^[a] of God. ⁶ Also in front of the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.

In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. ⁷ The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. ⁸ Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying:

"Holy, holy, holy
is the Lord God Almighty,"^[b]
who was, and is, and is to come."

⁹ Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

¹¹ "You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they were created
and have their being."

Footnotes: [a] That is, the sevenfold Spirit; [b] Isaiah 6:3

Sanctuary: Worship Center

OPEN

- Describe a memorable worship experience. What about it made it meaningful for you?
- Background: Before we get into today's passage, read Revelation 1:9-11. Describe what is happening to John.
- Everyone stand as one person reads aloud Revelation 4:1-11.

STUDY

- Looking closely at the details of the scene in verses 1-6a, who and what does John see, hear, and experience when he walks through the open door?
- What do you think it means when John says, "At once I was in the Spirit" in verse 2?
- What is the focal point of the scene and how is it emphasized as such?
- What further details of the scene emerge in verses 6b-11?
- Describe the four creatures and their role in this heavenly arena.
- What is the role of the 24 elders?
- What do their words, and the words of the four creatures, tell us about God?
- What questions does this scene raise for you? What answers does it provide?
- In Sunday services, we have been talking about "Sanctuary". As we peak into God's heavenly sanctuary in this passage, how is it similar and how is it different from your vision and experience of sanctuary?
- Brainstorm ways our worship gatherings at First Pres could possibly look more like this worship scene. How might that affect our congregation and the community around us?

PRAY

- Spend time worshiping God now using the hymns from this passage and closing with, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven"! Amen & Amen!