



Setting the Scene for Our Call to Worship
P James • July 9, 2017

- I. Last week, Pastor Christine reminded us that John's Letter to the Seven Churches, known to us as "Revelation," is meant to revive our imagination. Can we find our imaginations revived again this morning?
- II. In Luke 21, Jesus calls us to recognize the signs of the end-times.
 - A. The end will not come "right away" (Luke 21:9)
 - B. In the midst of persecutions, we are called to stand firm! (Luke 21:12-19).
 - C. One of the clearest signs is given in Luke 21:20: "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies..." Of course even this has happened many times!
 - D. Verse 27 is the clearest sign: "When you see the Son of Man coming in his glory..." We will all see this at the same time and we will know the end is finally here!
 - E. Should we be in terror? Certainly not! Our King is coming!
- III. Psalm 24 celebrates the coming of our King!
 - A. The whole earth belongs to our King (verse 1).
 - B. We can only stand if we have clean hands and a pure heart (verse 4).
 - C. Are we then lost? This certainly doesn't describe me! Flee back to Revelation 1:5-6 for the short answer! (Our sins are forgiven, and we are ALL called as priests to serve God).
- IV. Revelation 4 sets a scene for the dramatic revelation found in chapter 5.
 - A. Picture this scene with me: A throne, its "jasper & ruby" occupant, emerald rainbow, 24 thrones and with white robed elders, a sea of glass, 4 very weird eye-covered creatures, seven lampstands (representing the seven churches), and the seven-fold Spirit of God... and then there are flashes of lightning and peals of thunder!
 - B. Contrast this to the best the Roman Emperor can manage. He's a wimp, and his throne room is paltry.
 - C. Each element in this scene can be explained and has been exhaustingly analyzed. Each has an antecedent – or several – in the Old Testament.
 - D. We should be struck with awe, and eager to see what happens next!
 - E. The four creatures are singing, join me: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come!"
 - F. At this the 24 elders fall on their faces, lay down their crowns, and say: "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."
- V. We learn in Revelation 4 that we are created for worship!
 - A. Worship is recognizing God's "worth" (worth-ship).
 - B. We worship God *because* God is glorious.
 - C. We worship God *because* God is honorable.
 - D. We worship God *because* God is powerful.
 - E. God showed us his glory, honor and power in creating all things.
 - F. Creation was no accident, but something God willed! God loves his creation!
 - G. Does God need our worship? Certainly not! God is not selfish or egotistical. God's love is self-giving love, and seeks to replicate itself in others for the sake of all others.
 - H. Worshiping God is good for us. God uses our worship to transform us into who he created us to be, for his sake and the sake of his creation. Amen!