

# Revelation

LESSON

4

■ A Study of Revelation 4

## DAY ONE

## Doors

Read Revelation 4:1-11, concentrating on verse 1.

1. In verse 1, what did John see?
2. There are a number of applications for the word “door” in the Bible. Record phrases showing how “door” is used in these verses:  
Psalm 141:3  
Hosea 2:15  
Luke 13:24  
John 10:7  
Acts 14:27  
1 Corinthians 16:9  
Colossians 4:3  
Revelation 3:8  
Revelation 3:20

In the New Testament Jesus calls himself *the door* (John 10:7, 9). Faith in Him is the only way to enter the kingdom of God. God gave to the Gentiles *a door of faith*, or an opportunity to know Him as Lord (Acts 14:27). Paul constantly sought *a wide door for effective service*, an occasion for ministry in the name of Christ (1 Corinthians 16:9). Jesus stands at the door and knocks (Revelation 3:20). He calls all of us to himself but will not enter the door of our hearts without our permission. We must open the door for Him before He can open the door of heaven for us.

3. God will one day open the door for us as He did for John in his vision; the trumpet will sound, and God's people will be called to heaven. Record 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

4. Meanwhile, we must take advantage of the open door of faithful service He gives us. Personalize the following verses by inserting your name in the appropriate places.

Matthew 5:16

Colossians 1:10

1 Peter 2:12

## MEMORY CHALLENGE

## Psalm 103:4

*Who redeems your life  
from the pit,  
who crowns you with  
lovingkindness and compassion.*

Are you entering doors that you should close? Is there a closed door that you should enter?

In our study of Revelation, God is revealing a closed door that must be opened. He has used Paul Marshall's book *Their Blood Cries Out* to say, *He who has ears to hear, let him hear*.

It is Sunday morning in Sudan, in China, in Nepal, in Iran, in Cuba. . . .

Some . . . make their way across their villages to attend worship services. . . . Intent as they are on gathering together with other believers, they know full well that they may pay dearly for doing so.

Others arise with the dawn, assemble their poorly-fed children inside shabby homes, and those that have them read quickly from well-worn Bibles that remain carefully hidden during the week. They pray for their daily bread and for the courage to carry on.

Still others encounter the first day of the week in the darkness of their prison cells. Prayer is on their lips, too, as they look forward to further interrogation, torture and perhaps eventually execution.

Meanwhile, in America, a somewhat different scene unfolds. . . . Worshipers in air-conditioned buildings, . . . in upholstered pews, eagerly receive the Good News. Encouraging words are offered in myriad sermons, dramatic presentation and testimonials. The message is televised, recorded in countless books and on audio tapes. It is sung in anthems, cried out in rock tunes and chanted in gospel choruses. It is expressed with tearful promises, with witty anecdotes or with pop-psych platitudes. The promise is one of peace.

The beatings, looting, torture, jailing, enslavement, murder and even crucifixion of increasingly vulnerable Christian communities is met with silence and indifference of the Western world.<sup>1</sup>

Rev. David Stravers, vice president of the Bible League, gives two reasons for American Christians' relative lack of interest in the plight of suffering sisters and brothers worldwide:

1. American Christians, for the most part, are not interested in anything that happens outside the boundaries of the United States, and in many cases, outside the boundaries of their own communities.

2. American Christians have no experience of persecution or suffering for their faith that even remotely resembles the experiences of many of our overseas brothers and sisters. It is difficult to empathize when many, many, many American Christians refuse to believe what's reported because it's so far outside their experience.<sup>2</sup>

Scriptures give us clear guidelines for addressing persecution. First and foremost, we are called to concerted prayer. When Peter and Paul were in prison, the entire church gathered to pray for their release. Beyond the call to prayer is the call to action. Jesus left the 99 sheep to go look for the lost one. Action is also taken in the parable of

the Good Samaritan. In striking contrast to the priest, who took the easy road of prayer alone, the Samaritan stopped his equally busy journey to extend the love of Christ to the wounded. Galatians 6:10 tells us, *As we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers* (NIV).

What does God require of us when our Christian brothers and sisters are suffering and dying? How would we react if a loved one was sacrificing his or her life to answer God's call to preach the gospel under these circumstances?

We could pray and recruit others to join us. We could contact authorities in our government to inform them and request aid from them. We could find organizations fighting religious persecution and work with them to do anything we could to remedy human suffering.

Shouldn't we begin now to respond to these tragedies? This is a door that we should open and never close.

For further information, contact these United States offices of groups fighting religious persecution:

Open Doors with Brother Andrew  
P.O. Box 27000  
Santa Ana, CA 92799  
(714-531-6000)

(a large international, evangelical organization formed to help suffering Christians throughout the world)

Compass Direct News Service  
P.O. Box 27250  
Santa Ana, CA 92799

(a highly informative newsletter on the persecution of Christians, published by Open Doors)

The Voice of the Martyrs  
P.O. Box 443  
Bartlesville, OK 74005  
(918-337-8015)

(a large international Christian association serving the persecuted Church in over 50 countries)