



# THE EXHORTER

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*“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40*

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. ([prchurchofchrist.org](http://prchurchofchrist.org))

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**Revelation 4:1** *“After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in Heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, ‘Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.’”*

I love this verse. It’s one of my favorites. It says so much. It’s encouraging, hopeful and powerful. We must not be afraid of Revelation. Some folks never read Revelation. Certainly there are some tough spots, but so does Romans, Ezekiel and Zachariah. Sprinkled all through Revelation is assurance, hope and encouragement for suffering saints.

Here are a few things from our verse today:

First, I always use upper case or capital “H” when writing Heaven. Most Bibles, most articles, and most people don’t. Heaven is a real place. If I was writing about Chicago, I would capitalize the “C.” Heaven is God’s home. It’s special. It carries the qualities of God. Heaven is where I want to be. There may be a grammatical reason not to do that, but I’m more interested in heart, faith and God. In my writings, Heaven gets that big “H”.

Second, God wants us to know what’s up there. That’s the idea behind the open door and the invitation to come up here and see things. God is not secretive. God is not trying to hide things from us. There’s no need for guessing or speculation. He wants you to know. Knowing will give you confidence, power and freedom. Knowing will drive away doubts and error. Knowing defeats lies every time.

It is shocking that there were periods in religious history when some tried to keep the Bible out of the hands of the common people. Some of the early English translators suffered cruel punishment for trying to put the Bible in the language of the people. They were trying to open doors that others had closed.

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Third, this passage reminds us that the book of Revelation is a “picture” book. Come up here and I will show you, is what the message said. He didn’t not say, come up here and read. Nor was it said, come up here and you will be told. I will show you. Visual works well with our senses. Sometimes it’s hard to put in words what our eyes see, such as sunsets, mountains, early morning dew on the grass. But the Holy Spirit helps with expressions that we understand such as gold, pearls, gates and bowls.

Fourth, the future belongs to the Lord. He knows tomorrow. He is already there. I will show you what must take place, is stated with a certainty. It’s not, here’s what might happen. Nor, I hope this happens. It will take place. How was that so certain? Because God was going to make it happen.

What John would be shown was not personal things, such as how many grandchildren he would have, or which job he ought to take. That’s how moderns believe God operates. There is very little “walking by faith” necessary if God were to tell us every detail in our lives. And, when things do not work out, I guess they’d just blame God. John was shown what would happen to the saints that were suffering. John would be shown the triumphant Christ and the defeat of Satan. What was revealed was the will and the promises of God. It was a vision involving the spiritual.

A door standing open. There was a time when the door to the ark was standing open, but then it closed. There was a time when the door was open during the parable of the wedding feast. Then the door was closed and the five foolish virgins who arrived too late were not allowed in. God’s invitation for grace and mercy is open to all. But a day will come, when that will close. The only picture some will have of God is that of judgment. They will have missed out on the greatest gift ever offered to them.

A door is open in Heaven. A door that is open for you. That sure is a wonderful thought.

Roger Shouse (Used by permission)

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