



Introduction

- Throughout history, believers have found themselves in the midst of unsettled and even hostile political situations. In the aftermath of the sacking of Rome, Augustine of Hippo wrote of the those believers in the city who had been taken captive by the Visigoths:

"...many Christians were even led away captive. This indeed were a most pitiable fate, if they could be led away to any place where they could not find their God. But for this calamity also the Scriptures afford great consolation. The three youths were captives; Daniel was a captive; so where other prophets: and God, the Comforter, did not fail them. And in like manner He has not failed His own people in the power of a nation which, though barbarous, is yet human..."

Key Point: In the book of Revelation, the image of the throne in heaven serves to evoke the _____ of God's people and to assure them of His _____ power over the events on earth.

Throne Imagery in the Old Testament

- In the earliest portions of Scripture, throne imagery is associated with the political powers of the world that at times are benevolent to God's people (Gen. 41:40) and at other times hostile towards them (Exod. 11:5, 12:29). It is also used to refer to kingship in Israel (Deut. 17:18) which will be established through God's promises to David (2 Sam. 7:5-16).
- Following the division of the kingdom as a result of the failure of the descendants of David to walk with the Lord after his example, the focus of throne imagery shifts from earth to heaven.

Psa. 9:7—But the Lord sits enthroned forever; he has established his throne for justice,

Psa. 45:6—Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness;

Psa. 132:11—The Lord swore to David a sure oath from which he will not turn back: "One of the sons of your body I will set on your throne."

The Vision of the Prophet Micaiah — 1 Kings 22:19-23

- During the reigns of the kings Ahab (Israel) and Jehoshaphat (Judah), the kings consulted the prophets of Israel to see if they should go into battle with Syria. Jehoshaphat insisted that they consult another prophet to see if he would confirm this as the will of the Lord.
- The prophet Micaiah relayed to them a vision of God enthroned in heaven (1 Kings 22:19) which described His sovereign power over the events on earth, even those which were accomplished by evil spirits which would inspire false prophecy and deceive those who did not truly seek the Lord.

1 Kings 22:19-20a,23—¹⁹ And Micaiah said, "Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left; ²⁰ and the Lord said, 'Who will entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' ... ²³ Now therefore behold, the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; the Lord has declared disaster for you."

Key Point: This vision assures God's people that they can trust in His sovereignty even when events on earth seem to be the work of _____ forces.

The Vision of the Prophet Isaiah — Isaiah 6:1-8

- In the year that king Uzziah (Judah) died, the prophet Isaiah saw a vision of the Lord enthroned in heaven and being worshiped by angelic creatures. The response of the prophet to the majesty and holiness of the Lord was to declare his unworthiness (Isa. 6:5) but, having been cleansed by the Lord, to present himself to God for service.

Isa. 6:6-8—⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for." ⁸ And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me."

The Vision of the Prophet Ezekiel — Ezek. 1:4-2:7

- During the reign of Jehoiachin, the prophet Ezekiel saw a vision of the Lord enthroned in heaven and surrounded by angelic creatures. The response of the prophet was to fall before the Lord in worship. The Lord then commissioned the prophet to go among the people to proclaim His Word to them.

Ezek. 1:28b, 2:4-6a—²⁸ Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking. ⁴ The descendants also are impudent and stubborn: I send you to them, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God.' ⁵ And whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house) they will know that a prophet has been among them. ⁶ And you, son of man, be not afraid of them, nor be afraid of their words...

Key Point: These visions demonstrate the importance of God's people recognizing His majesty through worship in order that the might serve faithfully as His _____ as they live among unbelievers.

The Vision of the One Seated on the Throne—Revelation 4:1-11

1. The vision displays the sovereign _____ of God.

Rev. 4:2-3—² At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne. ³ And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald.

⇒ The centrality of the throne is emphasized by the description of the other heavenly beings being “around” the throne (Rev. 4:4,6).

⇒ There is a clear political dimension to the image of the divine throne.

Rev. 4:4— Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads.

2. The vision displays the proper _____ of creatures to their Creator.

Rev. 4:9-10—⁹ And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne...

⇒ The worship of the heavenly beings focuses on God's sovereign majesty as the Creator.

Rev. 4:8b—“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!”

Rev. 4:11—“Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”

Key Point: The vision of God Almighty enthroned in Heaven is intended to _____ His people who are on earth of the true nature of reality.

Throne Imagery in the Rest of Revelation

1. The end-time political forces that oppose God and His people will derive their earthly power from Satan who will give to them his _____ over the nations.

Rev. 13:2—And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority.

2. Around the throne of God is where His people are _____ after they have suffered persecution in the world.

Rev. 7:15-16—¹⁵ “Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.” ¹⁶ They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat.

3. God's throne is the place from which He will _____ unbelievers who have rejected His sovereign authority (6:16)

Rev. 20:12—And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.

4. God's throne will be among His people forever in the _____.

Rev. 22:3—No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.

Applying the Imagery

- Seeing God Almighty enthroned in the heavens should cause us to worship Him as our _____ and _____.

“It is a scene of worship into which the reader who shares John's faith...is almost inevitably drawn. We are thereby reminded that true knowledge of who God is is inseparable from worship of God...In this worship of God and the Lamb by the whole creation (5:13) the [future] goal of God's purpose for His creation is already anticipated.” —Richard Bauckham, The Theology of the Book of Revelation

Rev. 5:13—And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”

- Seeing God Almighty enthroned in the heavens should assure us that His _____ and _____ will not be thwarted on the earth, even by the political forces that hold power over His people.

“All heavenly beings find their significance in their placement around the throne, and all the earth's inhabitants are judged on the basis of their attitude to God's claim to rule over them from His throne. Regardless of how rampantly evil seems to run and to cause people to suffer, they can know that His hand superintends everything for their good and His glory...This is of special significance to churches facing persecution, suffering, and the temptation to compromise their faith.” —G.K. Beale, Revelation

Rev. 21:3—And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.