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“I Saw the Lord...” (Isaiah 6)

Study 4
God is Still on the Throne!
(Is. 6:1-4)

God is Still on the Throne!

This is a statement often shared among believers. It is an encouraging word to those who seek to follow God. We often proclaim it when times are difficult, when trials are faced, and when things happen that are difficult to understand. When we face struggles and heartbreak in our own lives, when we look around our state and our nation and see the troubles we face, when we are in the middle of the arduous days of the session it is encouraging to know, “God is still on the throne”. Yet how do we make this truth more than just a platitude or Christian cliché?

*This was what God did for Isaiah in his vision in chapter six. Isaiah was facing difficult times. The King of Judah was dead. The people of Israel were in a terrible spiritual condition. God gave Isaiah a vision that reminded him of this grand truth. As we study Isaiah’s vision together, let us be impacted by the wonderful fact that **GOD IS STILL ON THE THRONE!***

In the face of difficult times, God reminded Isaiah in a dramatic way that He was still on the throne. The earthly king, Uzziah was dead, but God still ruled on the throne of Heaven. As God showed Himself to Isaiah in this vision, He revealed a great deal about what He is like. These were most certainly things Isaiah already “knew” in his head. But with this vision these qualities or attributes became real and struck home in his heart. Let us learn and be reminded what God is like as we take a closer look at Isaiah’s vision. May the fact that God is still on His throne become more real to us as we seek to understand Isaiah’s marvelous experience.

¹ In the year of King Uzziah’s death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. ² Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called out to another and said, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory.” ⁴ And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke.

We should notice that when Isaiah says, “**I saw the Lord**” that “**Lord**” is written with a capital “L” with the rest in lower case. Later in verse 3, we read the angels are praising the “**LORD**”, spelled with all capital letters. Our English Bibles do this to help us differentiate between two different Hebrew words which are both translated “Lord” in English. “**Lord**” is the Hebrew word “*Adonai*” meaning “sovereign one”, “owner”, or “master”. It is not the name of God, rather the title of

God. “**LORD**” is “*Jahweh*”, the sacred name of God by which He revealed Himself to Moses and the people of Israel. Jim Justice is our governor. “Governor” is his title; “Jim” is his name. “Lord”, or “Sovereign One” is God’s title. “LORD” is His sacred name. Isaiah saw the “Lord” – the King, the Master, the Sovereign One.

The reality of both God’s position and His attributes struck Isaiah deeply. Let us try to understand what he experienced when he “saw the Lord”.

“Sitting on a Throne” - Isaiah saw God’s Sovereignty and Authority.

God is the absolute ruler of the universe and of everyone and everything in it. God’s sovereignty is the exercise of His supremacy, His infinite rule, His authority and power. “**God is actively exercising the duties of His executive office, administering over the affairs of His creation. God has not been impeached. He is not up for reelection. There are no term limits on God being the King!**”¹

Much was done in setting up our government to insure against too much power ever being given to one person. We did not want a king. While this is indeed important for human government, perhaps in our emphasis on individual rights we have lost the concept of what it means to have God as our absolute ruler. It is human (sinful) nature to rebel against God to begin with. Our focus on our rights, on democracy, on “majority rule” further pushes us to forget or rebel against what it means that “God is still on the throne”.

God's sovereign rule is described many times throughout the Bible:

¹ The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty; The LORD has clothed and girded Himself with strength; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved. ² Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting. Ps. 93:1-2

⁶ Sing praises to God, sing praises; Sing praises to our King, sing praises. ⁷ For God is the King of all the earth; Sing praises with a skillful psalm. ⁸ God reigns over the nations, God sits on His holy throne. Ps. 47:6-8

The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, And His sovereignty rules over all. Ps. 103:19

Few things are more humbling than the truth that God is sovereign and rules over all things. We do not give Him this authority. He has it whether we like it or not. Isaiah knew this. He was likely familiar with these very Psalms. But in his vision, he caught a glimpse of the reality of this truth. What an impact it had upon him!

“Lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple” - Isaiah saw God’s Majesty and Glory

In times past kings would wear grand robes and crowns and sit on raised thrones as symbols of their position and authority. Isaiah saw God lofty and exalted. He saw His royal robes filling the entire temple. God showed Isaiah a glimpse of His glory and majesty. Isaiah caught a glance of the beautiful splendor of God.

“Seraphim stood above Him...and called out... ‘Holy, Holy, Holy’” – Isaiah Saw God’s Holiness

Isaiah saw the angels whose only job was to sing praises to the holiness of God. “Holiness” means to be separate, to be set apart. God is totally, infinitely, completely set apart from us. This is the indescribable perfection of God’s nature and character. Words always fail when we try to describe God’s holiness, so God gave Isaiah just a little glimpse. We will devote a whole study to this important topic.

“The foundations trembled and the temple filled with smoke” – Isaiah saw God’s Power

The temple was a grand, massive building but with the presence of God Isaiah saw the foundations of the thresholds trembling and the building filling with smoke. This is just a hint of God’s strength and power.

How Did Isaiah Respond to His Vision of God?

In future studies we will look in detail at Isaiah’s response to this amazing vision. We read his glimpse of God led him to complete awe and repentance. It caused him to bow in submission and go on to faithful service.

As this study focuses on God’s sovereignty and reign over all things, let us focus on our response of submission to His rule over our lives.

The Roman Empire had a serious crime called “Laesa Maiestas”, literally “Violated Majesty”. It referred to offenses against the dignity and majesty of a reigning ruler or emperor. This was considered a capital crime and offenders would be put to death.

We have all committed “Laesa Maiestas” against God. We have violated His dignity and majesty by breaking His laws (sinning). For this reason, we are under the sentence of His righteous judgment upon us. Isaiah realized this when he responded, “Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips” (Is. 6:5). He realized he, along with all the people of Judah, had sinned against God and deserved His wrath.

But in Isaiah 6, as well as the rest of the book, we see God’s grace and mercy. In Isaiah 6 we read of the altar, where the sacrifices for sin were made. Throughout the rest of the book, we read of how God would send His Son to be “pierced through for our transgressions” and to be “crushed for our iniquities” and to cause “the iniquity of us all to fall on Him”. (Is. 53). Though we are the ones who broke God’s laws and violated His authority and majesty, Jesus was treated as if He had been the one to do so. When we repent and trust Him, our “Laesa Maiestas” is completely pardoned and we are made right with God.

The truth of God’s sovereignty, authority, glory, and power is either marvelous because He is for us, or terrifying because He is against us. Ambivalence or indifference simply means we have never gotten a glimpse of the truth that God is still on the throne!

- Have you submitted and surrendered to God’s sovereignty and authority over your life?
- Are you seeking to get a better view of God’s sovereignty and glory as you read and hear God’s Word? Let us ask God to “***Open our eyes, that we might behold wonderful things from His word***” (Psalm 119:18).

¹ Krell, Keith. *A Glimpse into Glory*. March 6, 2006. www.bible.org.

BIBLE STUDIES

Thursdays

8:00 House Government Org Conference Room (East Wing)

12:00 Noon Treasurer’s Conference Room (EB54)

5:00 PM Senate President’s Conference Room