

A Higher Throne

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[0 : 00] Well, we turn now to our Bibles and to our readings for this evening, and you'll find that in the book of Revelation. That's the very last book of the New Testament, the very last book of the Bible.

And we're going to read together Revelation chapter 5. And this is the passage that Alistair will be preaching on. And it's a great picture of the vision that was given to John when he saw a door standing open in heaven and a voice calling to him.

And Revelation chapter 5 verse 1 says, Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written, and on the back sealed with seven seals.

And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals. And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it.

And I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. And one of the elders said to me, weep no more.

[1 : 17] Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.

And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders, I saw a lamb standing as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

And they sang a new song, saying, Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals. For you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

And you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth. And then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.

[2 : 58] And I heard every creature in heaven and on the 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.

And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the elders fell down and worshipped. Amen.

I invite you to turn again to Revelation and chapter 5 to the passage that was read for us. And as you're turning there, let me first of all bring you the greetings of the church that I serve on the east side of Cleveland in Ohio and have done now for the last 29 years.

We feel ourselves to be in partnership with you in so many different ways and pray for you regularly and consistently and rejoice in every evidence of God's grace and goodness to you and through you.

I am very grateful for the privilege that has been afforded me this last week and is about to be afforded me next week in being here among these men and along with your pastor and with the others who have spoken.

[4 : 18] And then to be with these young men this coming week, it's hard for me to realize that they are young and I am not so young, but that is the way it is. And it's a privilege to be in this pulpit.

I have never been in this one. The last time I was here, you were in the halls. I was in the other one, the ice cream cone, but I've never been here. And I'm glad of the opportunity.

It's a strange sensation to be here on a Sunday night when, as a boy, it was not an infrequent occurrence for me to be brought here by my parents on a Sunday night and to realize that we're now talking about 50 years ago when that was taking place.

It really is quite remarkable. And so, with all that said, we'll pause for a moment and pray. An old Anglican prayer. Father, what we know not, teach us.

What we have not, give us. What we are not, make us. For your Son's sake we pray.

[5 : 26] Amen. Well, in this opening anecdote, I need to acknowledge immediately that I speak to you as an American citizen. I hold two passports, but it is important for me to acknowledge this, especially if some of my American brothers and sisters are here.

Americans will be the first to admit that they are deficient when it comes to history. It's not only that we don't have much history, but nor do we have much of a grasp of it either.

And especially if it takes us beyond either the Atlantic or the Pacific Ocean. And this anecdote was told by an American against himself.

And that's what gives me comfort in mentioning it to you. But a group of tourists were here from the States. They were visiting in Britain. And in the course of their desire to engage in the vast history of the British Isles, they had gone down the Thames to Runnymede and to the site of the signing of the Magna Carta.

The Magna Carta was signed 797 years ago on the 15th of June. And there they were, completely amazed and overwhelmed by it all.

[6 : 39] And the guide, in true fashion, was giving a wonderful expose of the way in which this Charter of Liberty had been established. And with a moment of rhetorical flourish, he said to the people, building to a great finale.

And so it was here, 1215, when this great signing took place. And a fellow from Texas turned to his wife and said, you know, we only miss this by 25 minutes.

Now, I mention that because in turning to the book of Revelation, as we're doing now, which is not for the faint-hearted, some of us have missed it, and we've missed it by more than 25 minutes.

The book of Revelation suffers from two polar extremes. Some people are completely fascinated by it and spend an inordinate amount of time tampering with it and often engaging in all kinds of fanciful and elaborate interpretations.

Interpretations that Leon Morris describes in terms of their ingenuity being matched only by their improbability. On the other side, there are those who, frustrated by those kind of notions, have virtually rejected the book of Revelation in its entirety.

[8 : 03] And so what I want to do tonight, in the time that we have, is not work our way through all of the drama of this book, not even through all of the drama of chapter 5, but to establish clearly in our minds that when we turn to this final book of the New Testament, we're not turning to some kind of theological Rubik's Cube.

We're not turning to a book of biblical riddles. We're not turning to a book that was written to intrigue people who lived far away and beyond the immediate time frame in which John was writing.

But rather, we're turning to a book that was written not to intrigue, but to instruct. And to instruct those who were small in number, who were persecuted by the state, and who, when they awakened on a Monday morning, were confronted by the challenge of somehow or another reconciling the fact of their suffering and their persecution with the facts of the gospel itself.

So they had been embraced by the truth of the gospel. They had come to believe the message about Jesus. They were affirming the story of his life and of his death and of his resurrection and his ascension.

And the triumph of his resurrection and the prospect of his final return were then set for these people within the context in which the empires around them were growing in their influence.

[9 : 37] There was a flourishing of idol worship. And there was an immediate infringement upon their freedom in their expression of their Christian faith.

So let's be clear in our minds. It's not written for us to fiddle with in the 21st century, but it is written, first of all, to those who are facing life in this way. And in chapter 1, the writer himself identifies who he is and where he is.

In verse 9 of chapter 1, if you have your Bible open, it will be a help. He introduces himself, I, John. He is a brother in Christ. He is a partner in the tribulation or a companion, if you like, in the sufferings that they're facing and the kingdom.

And he is part and parcel of that patient endurance that are in the Lord Jesus Christ. So he writes to them as one who is identified with them within the body of Christ, sharing in all that they're facing.

And he tells us that he is on the island of Patmos, off the coast of Turkey. And presumably, he is exiled there on account of his commitment to the gospel.

[10 : 52] I take it that that's what he means when he says, on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. For some reason, he finds himself there because of these things.

And he now writes to them in order that these believers will be reminded, and a vital reminder it is, of the fact that, as he puts it later on in the Revelation, the Lord our God, the Almighty reigns.

That's primarily the whole ethos of the book. So that these people facing what they're facing will be reminded of the fact that nothing's out of control, that nothing is about to get out of control, and the reason that they were able to affirm that is simply because God is in control.

And if it was a necessary reminder for the beleaguered believers in the first and second centuries, it is as yet a necessary reminder for those of us who are living in Scotland or elsewhere this evening.

God is supremely in control, no matter what comes our way. Now, when we turn to these chapters, and we are only in chapter 5, but we'll look a little at chapter 4, we immediately encounter a great collage, a great dramatic portrayal of sights and sounds and symbols, all of which are establishing this fundamental notion that God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, reigns.

[12 : 31] And so what I'd like to do is simply sketch, as it were, a few thumbnail sketches. Thumbnail sketches. In other words, if you've brought your cranes, you're going to have to fill in the colors by yourself.

But all I will do is what my art teacher at Oakley Grammar School used to say to me when I asked him, please help me with this, I don't know how to draw a chair. And he would always pull his chair up beside me and he would say, beg, I'll get you started, but I'm not going to do it for you.

And so that is what I'm going to be doing right now. I'm going to get you started, but I'm not going to do it for you. There will be a measure of frustration, which I hope will lead to your own further study. And the thumbnail sketches will be as follows.

First of all, of a throne, then of a scroll, then of a lamb, and then very briefly, of a song. First of all then, of a throne.

Chapter 4 and verse 2, and then chapter 5 and verse 1. And John says, After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard speaking to me was like a trumpet that said, Come up here and I will show you what must take place after this.

[13 : 42] At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven with one seated on the throne. You go to chapter 5 and verse 1.

Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. Now let's just think about this for a moment. John being invited to come up through this open door, as it were, into heaven.

What is that saying? It's not saying that he has been invited into some kind of never-never land of fanciful notions. But rather he's been invited to gain a perspective which, if you like, is in the ever-ever land of God's eternal values, of God's eternal judgments.

And it is in that context that we read at the end of chapter 4, verse 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 are created.

Establishing the fact that the one who inhabits this throne is worshipped as the Creator God. And we may nod to that and affirm it because it's routine for us, but it is an important thing to be reminded of this evening, isn't it?

[15 : 02] And to teach to our children in Sunday school and to those who follow us to be able to say to them, before there was time, before there was anything, there was God.

And the God to whom we are introduced in the Bible is not a God that we find in looking into ourselves, nor is he a God who is confused with the creation that he has established, but he is a God who stands both outside of time and outside of creation.

And it is this God who is seated upon the throne. And so we realize that he is establishing for his readers two things. First of all, the fact of God's sovereignty, and that is borne out as you read through all the details.

And then secondly, of the security of the people of God. And that's the significance of the company that you find gathered around this throne. And when you do your homework, as I'm sure you're going to do, you will discover that what John is doing there is he's describing the saints of the Old Testament together with those who have died so far in the New, and they are now before the glassy sea, as Reginald Heber puts it in his hymn, Holy, Holy Lord, God Almighty.

The glassy sea mentioned in verse 6 of chapter 4, and they are casting down their crowns before him around the glassy sea. Now let's just pause for one moment before we move on and recognize this, that the things that we see are temporal, they are transient, and they are not actually reality.

[16 : 43] It is the things that are unseen that are eternal and that are reality. So that when we think of John being caught up into a realm as if he was accompanying Paul, remember, who in 2 Corinthians 12 is caught up into that third heaven, he is caught up into the real dimension of reality where the events of life, the experiences of suffering, all of the ebb and flow of human history is being, if you like, orchestrated and overseen by the ascended Christ.

That Jesus, as the ascended king, is orchestrating, is watching over the affairs of the nations, the affairs of Scotland tonight, the affairs of all of the nations for whom we prayed this morning in our morning service.

And if we get too embedded in the transient and in the ephemeral, if we get too lost in that which is apparently the real and lose sight of the reality which is unreal but really real, then we will be tempted to miss the point entirely.

When Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 2, remember he says, eye has not seen nor ear has heard neither has it entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those that love him.

In other words, eye hasn't seen it. It's invisible. Ear hasn't heard it. It's inaudible. It hasn't entered into the heart of a man.

[18 : 11] It's inconceivable. It's inconceivable. And yet he says, this is the reality. This is what is true of you in Christ, he says. So John, as he has the door opened, as he has a little entry, as it were, into the reality of these things, it's almost as if he was able to see into the war room, as it were, of Churchill in the Second World War.

If you'd been able to go in there, you would have seen that in the drama of all the events that were unfolding. There were all kinds of flags put in position, all kinds of warships and armies and implements of destruction and support and sustenance and so on that would never have been apparent to anybody, and especially not to the troops immediately on the ground.

All that they would see was the barrage of everything that was coming against them. And that's what these dear folks were facing. Waking up in the morning to the idolatry in which they lived.

Waking up in the morning to the threat that was again upon them. And John is picked up and he sees a throne. Secondly, a scroll.

A scroll. Verse 1 of chapter 5, I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back sealed with seven seals.

[19 : 33] In other words, it was a scroll that was filled with writing and it was not immediately accessible. Now this, the historians tell us, was not entirely an unusual picture.

And apparently, last wills and testaments and contracts of a legal nature would have been put together in this way and may well have been sealed just in this fashion.

So that as various pieces of that which had been sustained in that way were opened up one at a time, then the picture improved.

And so it is that we have here a scroll, a book in some of the translations that is as identified. And I saw verse 2, a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice who is worthy to open this scroll and break its seals.

Now it's interesting at least to me and perhaps to you as well that the question that this strong angel asks is not what is in this scroll. But who is going to open the scroll?

[20 : 43] The preoccupation with the commentators is to be able to tell us what is in the scroll. Although we're not actually told what is in the scroll, not in chapter 5, we're supposed to wait until chapter 6 and begin to pay attention at that point.

It's a good lesson to us in the way we study our Bibles. But, there has to be something in there and Leon Morris says this book is surely that which contains the world's destiny.

Or, the scroll contains the purposes of God in judgment and in salvation. Well, then surely there may be something in both of those observations.

But again, notice that the point is not the content of the scroll, but the fact that there is no one who is able to open it up. who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals.

And there you find in verse 3, and there was no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth. It's a comprehensive impotence that there is just nobody around that is able to do anything with it at all.

[21 : 47] Neither somebody up in the heaven or on the earth or under the earth. Now, this must have been a little frustrating for John and we see that he's about to weep because remember back in chapter 4 and verse 1, he was told that if he came up there, he would be shown what must take place after this.

So he had a promise that he was going to have an insight into these things, but now we find him in verse 4 and he is weeping. And I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.

The secrets of the world belong to God and nobody can actually pry into them. Nobody knows what a day brings. All the days of your life were written in his book before one of them came to be.

God knows. A God who doesn't know the future would not be God. A God who is not omniscient would not be God. He is the God who searches us and knows us.

He's the God who knows when we sit down and when we stand. He's the God who knows the words of our mouths before we even speak them. But we know nothing of these things. And so John in recognition of that weeps.

[23 : 13] And then the good news comes in verse 5. And one of the elders said to me it's always good when you have a good elder especially if you're a preacher and one of the elders said to me weep no more the lion of the tribe of Judah the root of David has conquered so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.

What does that mean? Well it means simply this that the glorified reigning Jesus is the one who is able to unlock the kingdom of God and he is the one who is able to make the reality of his kingdom known.

That's what Jesus was doing in his earthly life wasn't it? Do you remember when he came back to the synagogue in Nazareth where he had grown up and he read from the scroll of the prophet in Isaiah that he has sent me to bring good news to the poor preach good news to the poor recovery of sight to the blind and so on and then Luke tells us that he sat down and every eye in the synagogue was fastened on him and then he said what must have been so dramatic in its impact today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing in other words he says this is about me this is about me that's why when he begins his earthly ministry he says the kingdom of God is near repent and believe the good news so when you fast forward into the book of Revelation now that Jesus has triumphed over sin and death he's ascended into heaven still it is he who is the glorified and reigning king who is able to unlock the mysteries of the scroll thirdly a lamb a lamb because what we discover is that this lion of the tribe of Judah is actually made known to him that is to John as a lamb verse 6 and between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders

I saw a lamb standing as though it had been slain with seven horns and with seven eyes which are the spirits of God sent out into all the earth if you're doing a home bible study you will find that somebody immediately begins to tell you all about the seven horns and the seven eyes and the seven spirits you should probably thank them and ask them to go out and make a cup of coffee and hopefully they'll be out for quite a while because that's not the main and the plain thing it obviously isn't no you missed the point entirely there is a lamb standing as though it had been slain and somebody wants to talk about the perfection of seven and so on it's not irrelevant but it's not the main thing I saw a lamb standing in other words God has provided a solution to the tears of John God has provided the answer in himself in his own son to the question that John is confronted with God has provided in himself the one who answers our cries of uncertainty our inability to comprehend what's going on and the tears that so readily flow when we are facing trials and suffering and this lamb was standing as though it had been slain in other words the lamb was there still bearing the marks of suffering very much alive but still identified as a lamb that had been slain so that the hymn writer puts it these wounds yet visible above in beauty glorified and it was this lamb as though it had been slain that was there described as the one who has provided a ransom or redemption for the people so notice in verse 9 worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals why because you were slain and by your blood you ransomed people for God now all of the section there in verses 6 and 7 and 8 with the taking of the scroll and the moving around and the singing and the harps and the bowls of incense has been more than covered in hymnody throughout the years what you have here is the genesis of the hymn that begins with harps and with vials there stand a great throng in the presence of Jesus and sing this new song the hymn writer is taking it from there but the thing that we need to notice is this that it is the Lord Jesus

Christ as the lamb that provides the answer to this question this is really at the heart of it because what John is doing here is he's pointing out the paradox that lies at the very heart of the good news and what is that paradox well it is simply this that the victory that God has accomplished he has accomplished in the humiliation and in the death of his son that the majesty and might of the lion picture is only made accessible to us and understandable to us when we meet that lion as it were in the context of the lamb we might put it in this way that the riddle of life is to be found in the story of a crucified Christ now let's just step back from it a moment and recognize that all throughout Glasgow tonight there are people going hither and yon and they are and some of them may have actually come in here because they heard the bell ringing and you're saying to yourself there's got to be some reason for human existence there's got to be something that makes sense of all of this and if you're old like me you may have grown up in the 60s on the lyrics of Paul Simon and you may actually find yourself still rehearsing these things through the corridors of sleep and past the shadows dark and deep my mind dances and leaps in confusion

[29 : 29] I don't know what is real I can't touch what I feel and I hide behind the shield of my illusion so I'll continue to pretend that my life will never end which it will and the flowers never bend with the rainfall it doesn't matter if you're born to play the king or pawn for the lion is thinly drawn to enjoy and sorrow and so my fantasy becomes reality and I must be where I must be and face tomorrow so I'll just continue to pretend that my life is never going to end and the flowers never bend with the rainfall where is the answer to that found John says somebody pulled by the curtain of heaven and I saw a throne on which was seated the creator of the universe and the son took the scroll from the hand of the father and the son namely Jesus is the one who unlocks the mysteries of that and the main mystery of it is that he does so in the death of himself you were slain and by your blood you redeemed or you ransomed people for God in other words what John is doing here is not introducing a new dimension in the book of Revelation the answer to the book of Revelation or the key to the book of Revelation is the same key to every book in the entire Bible and it is this the gospel the story of the life the death the resurrection the ascension and the coming return of Jesus so that's why in our Sunday school classes our teachers told us that the Bible is a book about Jesus that in the

Old Testament he is predicted that in the gospels he is revealed that in the epistles he is explained in the acts he is preached and in the book of Revelation he is expected John is not introducing some new dimension now what he is doing is essentially what you have in the New Testament is essentially the sonata form if you like of the unfolding story of God and Haydn and Beethoven and others developed the sonata form in symphonic music didn't they first you have the exposition where the da da da da da da comes then you have the development I remember this because I was a genius at this barely got a grade 6 and O level music and then you have the development of it and then you have the recapitulation and in the recapitulation you don't have new things being thrown in here you have the writer coming back to say this is why

I said what I said at the beginning in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth this God who created the universe is the God who made you this God who made you is seated in all of his triumphant power and this God in the person of his son the Lord Jesus Christ has made a way for sinners to be brought into his presence now when you look at that phrase you were slain and by your blood you ransomed people for God think about it for a moment how will anybody how does anybody look on the distressed on the disgraced on the disregarded frame of Jesus of Nazareth and say oh that must be the Messiah Jewish people certainly didn't they did not look on the bloodied mess of Jesus of Nazareth and say oh that must be the

Messiah because he's hanging on a cross they looked up and said that can't be the Messiah because he's hanging on a cross because only those who were cursed of God would hang upon a cross and what do they need to learn Revelation chapter 5 you were slain and by your blood you ransomed people for God he dies in the place of sinners and it is this kingdom the kingdom of the Lord Jesus that uses this symbol of his majesty I was just looking again at the crest of Glasgow I'd seen it in a number of places in the last few days and it's a jolly nice crest and when you think about the various things that are put in crests especially for nations bears lions and tigers and pictures of might and triumph what kind of kingdom has a lamb as its symbol what kind of kingdom has a king on a donkey what kind of kingdom has a leader who dies such an ignominious death no you see what John is doing here is he's saying here is the great paradox and when people looked at Jesus in his earthly ministry some of them just disregarded him in unbelief others of them looked to him to give them things that they thought would make them better perhaps to free them from the tyranny of the empires around them even his own disciples didn't get the picture there'll be people here tonight in the same way you've thought about

Jesus but you really don't believe in him or perhaps you've been hoping that if he is around at all that you'll be able to get from him something that you desperately need perhaps like the disciples you totally misunderstand what it was he was doing and yet a few turned to him didn't they in implicit trust here we are tonight in the center of Glasgow reading this book from such a long time ago tempted tempted to believe that the things that really matter are the things that await us tomorrow morning that grant us significance and so on and we're confronted by the Bible and it says here's the real issue of time here's the real issue and that is that God has in a moment in time in the person of his son made provision for the fact that we are turned in upon ourselves that we are the champions of our own destiny that we are disregarding of God and what he's saying here is that those who would know as it were the triumph that is represented in this lion of

[36 : 43] Judah will meet the triumph and the victory in the one who is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world imagine the circumstances when as the few women gathered around the foot of the cross and most of the disciples all of the disciples had run away and fled and Jesus now the lamb of God hangs between these two characters who are abusing him if you're really a messiah why don't you get down from this cross and get us down at the same time if you saved other people can't you even save yourself and as the darkness closes in upon them suddenly one of the fellows says to his colleague I don't think you should keep this up because he says we are up here getting what we deserve but this man has done nothing wrong where did that come from how did he know that how did he say that and then he says

Lord remember me when you come into your kingdom and he said I'll do better than that today you will be with me in paradise what happened there the spirit of God was at work in the mind of the dying thief inclining him to the lamb that was slain and introducing him to the reality of what it means for this one in the center cross to bear all of the judgment that he on the outer cross deserves the hymn writer says the dying thief rejoice to see that fountain in his day and there may I though vile as he wash all my sins away that brings us to our final word and that is to the song

I just say a word because there is this amazing choir that is then unleashed quite wonderful isn't it and then I look verse 11 and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the voice of many angels numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands saying with a loud voice and it's quite fascinating that these angels are able to declare him as king without knowing him as savior they realize that he is worthy to receive power and wealth and wisdom and so on and the hymn writer in an earlier era and I often tried to find this song and I finally found it I think it was from my childhood and one stanza and it was the one I was looking for and it goes like this there is singing up in heaven such as we have never known as the angels sing of victory and the lamb upon the throne but when we sing redemption story they will fold their wings for angels never knew the joy that our salvation brings so you have this vast company of individuals and they are declaring the victory of God

John has explained to them not that in Jesus all their suffering will go away because it clearly hasn't but he has explained to them that Jesus has opened the scroll not just so that we can see that there will be trouble in life not just so that we can see the agenda that unfolds but so that we can understand that none of these things that come our way is meaningless we're not rats in a maze we're not caught on the sea of chance we're not held in the grip of blind deterministic forces the scroll is opened up and the lamb who has taken the place of the sinner explains this for us and the meaning of human existence the meaning of all history is here in this scene in Revelation 5 it's impossible actually to understand history properly without the history of redemption I know that university students would dismiss that out of hand but I think I can argue it successfully from the

Bible that the meaning of all existence is actually found here in the gospel that's why for example the post impressionist painter Gauguin whose largest painting on three canvases making one huge painting he wrote on it's the only painting on which he wrote that we have recorded and he wrote three questions do ven on new where do we come from kiss on new what are we who along new where are we going where do we come from where are we where are we going and the buses go down the street and the crowds throw on

[42 : 25] Buchanan street and life continues on its way and the church seems to be impoverished pressed upon invaded neutralized marginalized and John says wait a minute don't go there consider the fact that he has made ransom for people as we saw from every tribe and language and people and nation and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God and they shall reign on the earth it's wonderful isn't it's so exciting that these people are here and about to do this thing in Glasgow and in chapter 7 you have that a multitude that no one could number from every nation all the tribes peoples languages standing before the throne and before the lamb and clothed in white robes with palm branches and crying out salvation belongs to God who sits on the throne and to the lamb it's a strange thought that isn't it that if you're a

Christian tonight there's a sense in which John saw you he saw you he saw the picture faces added remember when you used to on rainy Saturday afternoons get those those little books that you took a paintbrush with just water and then you just washed it over the page and then in a miraculous way characters appeared and faces appeared and suddenly out of absolutely nowhere but they were all there before it was just that that wash brought them to light and John says and here they are names and faces throughout the ages so to these people who are pressed upon by the idolatry of the time who are persecuted who are threatened who are tempted to be overwhelmed he basically says to them

God is still on the throne and he will remember his own though trials may press us and burdens distress us he never will leave us alone God is still on the throne he never forsaketh his own his promise is true he will not forget you God is still on the throne father thank you that the bible affirms this with great authority and we pray that as we take these thumbnail sketches and seek to study and ponder these truths that you will write in our hearts the reality of that which we've considered we thank you that you are a God who is seated on a throne high and lifted up as Isaiah saw we thank you that you are the one who holds the keys of death and hell in your hands that you are sovereign over all these affairs and that your people are secure in your love we thank you too that you are the one who puts a new song in our hearts a song of praise to you and I pray that you will take each of us tonight and remind us of these things that you will open our eyes to the truth of your word that you will open our hearts to bid you welcome that you will open our minds to be galvanized by these convictions and that you will bless and keep us in your perfect will for Jesus sake amen to be understand what we have importante run efforts to been in going in does feels good