

# High and Exalted (3): In the Year that King Uzziah Died

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(Isaiah 6)

## I. Introduction

- A. There for a while, I thought that I was pretty much bad luck omen
  - 1. For 3-out-of-4 years, we had to evacuate Nags Head due to hurricanes
    - a. We'd schedule vacation; plywood, water, batteries would sell out
    - b. Nags Head Chamber of Commerce offered us free tickets to Disney
  - 2. I have another claim to shame that involves the deaths of celebrities
    - a. I applied to FHC in 1974, in the year that Buford Pusser died (1974)
      - 1) Pusser was the sheriff in "Walking Tall," much of it filmed at FHC
      - 2) Lynn and I were in a scene in the sequel (well, our shoes were)
    - b. Then I applied to grad school in Memphis in 1977, the year Elvis died
      - 1) **Factoid:** Churches of Christ are usually named after their street
      - 2) Not the Southaven church in Memphis... on Elvis Presley Blvd
    - c. The reason I didn't go on for a PhD; I didn't want to kill anyone else
- B. We continue today with our study of the book of Isaiah, "*High and Exalted*"
  - 1. And today we come to the text that the title of series comes from
    - a. It is the text where Isaiah receives his commission as a prophet
    - b. This stands as one of the most dramatic scenes in the book
  - 2. Before we let Isaiah testify, let set up a part of the story we skipped
    - a. Isaiah has 66 chapters, so we'll be skipping quite a few of them
    - b. Isaiah 5 pronounces a series of woes on the land of Judah
      - 1) There is greed where the rich take and take and take (**5:8**)
      - 2) There was an endless party where it's always Miller Time (**5:11**)
      - 3) Right and wrong were jumbled; people ran after wrong (**5:20**)
      - 4) Judah had all the answers; they certainly didn't hear God (**5:21**)
  - 3. This was a time of unparalleled prosperity and power for Judah
    - a. The king that reigns over Judah as Isaiah begins was King Uzziah (**1:1**)
    - b. Our text begins with the statement, "*In the year that king Uzziah died*"
    - c. Let's start by reading the first part of Isaiah 6 (**Reading: Isaiah 6:1-4**)

## II. The Temple Vision of Isaiah

- A. Isaiah sees God high and exalted; he doesn't describe God (only his robe)
1. He does go into detail describing the Seraphim that are worshipping God
    - a. This is the only time Seraphim is used; cherubim is used 75 times
      - 1) Seraphim & cherubim have wings; so do 4 living creatures in **Rev 4**
      - 2) As far as I can tell, angels are never described as having wings
    - b. Seraphim uses their wings to fly and cover their faces and their feet
      - 1) In the ancient world, you didn't show kings your face or feet
      - 2) You entered bowing low and you exited backwards, bowing low
  2. There is a technical word for bowing low like that. *It's called worship*
    - a. That's exactly what the seraphim are doing, crying "*Holy, holy, holy*"
    - b. This echoes the worship of God's people all through scripture
      - 1) This was the Song of Moses after the Red Sea (**Exo 15:11-13**)
      - 2) It is the Song of Moses and the Lamb in heaven (**Rev 15:2-4**)
    - c. Isaiah says that the worship of the Seraphim shook the Temple
- B. They only had a quartet! Why don't we shake this place in our worship?
1. No, I'm not suggested that Isaiah 6 is meant as a pattern for worship (*God has some pretty special special-effects in Isaiah 6; all we have is PowerPoint*)
  2. Sometimes we miss the point of worship by focusing on our experience
    - a. What do these statements said about worship have in common?  
*I could really feel the Holy Spirit moving in our worship today*  
*God was really there today in our worship; I was moved by His presence*  
*I can feel the brush of angles wings...surely the presence of the Lord is in this place*
    - b. What does those have in common... besides you don't hear it here?
    - c. It is focusing on what I experience, what I feel, what I get out of it
  3. The focus of the Seraphim was God! How could that be half-hearted?
    - a. Maybe our worship is often half-hearted is because we focus on us
    - b. What we like. What either floats our boat or offends our sensibilities
    - c. If we are really focusing on God, then we will not see ourselves
      - 1) We praise God for truth (*not be offended that Newsboys had music*)
      - 2) We'll lift our hears to God; not care that some did/didn't lift hands

### III. In the Year King Uzziah Died

- A. Let's go back to how text begins, *"In the year that King Uzziah died"*
1. That would have been in 740 BC, but is this just date/time stamp?
    - a. Remember, Isaiah is a collection of prophetic oracles or sermons
    - b. They are not in chronological order. So why begin with the date?
  2. The point is not the date, but rather the fact that King Uzziah died
    - a. Uzziah was most powerful and prosperous of all the kings of Judah
      - 1) He raised and equipped a large, powerful army (**2 Chron 26:11ff**)
      - 2) He built great war machines for his archers (**2 Chron 26:15a**)
      - 3) He defeated the Philistines and exacted tribute from Ammonites
    - b. The fame of King Uzziah spread all the way to Egypt (**2 Chron 26:8b**)
  3. So the death of the great King Uzziah was devastating to all of Judah
    - a. That's why Isaiah tells us his vision was *"in the year King Uzziah died"*
    - b. Before he could be a prophet, Isaiah had to see who was really King
- B. Judah could see Uzziah's throne more clearly than they could see God's
1. And we make the same mistake! We world falls apart and we panic!
    - a. If Isaiah wrote today, he would begin *"In year of the great recession..."*
    - b. Or maybe it would begin, *"In the year the Twin Towers fell..."*
    - c. Or maybe the vision would begin *"In the year of the great election..."*
    - d. Or more personally, *"In the year I got cancer"* or *"the year I lost my job"*
  2. We need to remember who really is on the throne of the universe!
    - a. We need to look up into the night sky and remember the glory of God
    - b. We need to know He is king, no matter what pretender rule on earth
    - c. We need to know that He reigns over the ups and downs of our lives
      - 1) When life is good, God reigns; when life falls apart, God reigns
      - 2) When the foundations of our world are shaken, God reigns
      - 3) In the good times and bad times and in-between times, God reigns
      - 4) When darkness is so thick there seem no room for light, God reigns
      - 5) Over our life and our death and over worlds to come, God reigns
  3. When we see the glory of God, then we will see ourselves differently

## IV. What If We Truly Saw the Lord?

A. **First**, we wouldn't take ourselves so seriously or sin so cavalierly ([Isa 6:5](#))

1. Isaiah's first response to seeing God's holiness was to go to his knees
  - a. The holiness of God caused him to see his own unholiness
  - b. Did he take his sin seriously? He thought he was a dead man!
2. Do we really see the holiness of God as we come to church?
  - a. If we did, would we go away complaining about the service?
  - b. If we did, would we leave here unconcerned about sinful lives?
3. We're standing on holy ground and God calls us to be holy

B. **Second**, if we truly saw God's holiness, we' be driven to serve him ([Isa 6:8](#))

1. God has a task that must be done, "*Who will I send? Who will go for us?*"
  - a. *Who will go for us?* Is this a clue to God's triune nature? *Interesting*
  - b. But Isaiah doesn't sit around doing theology; he volunteers to work
2. What if Bailey gets up later and asks for last minute VBS volunteers?
  - a. Everyone starts looking at their shoes or their phones. Crickets!
  - b. That's Biblical, right? Moses made excuses ("I can't speak well...")
    - 1) Gideon was from too obscure family; Jeremiah was too young
    - 2) Queen Esther was too worried about proper palace protocol
3. Isaiah wasn't like that at all; he jumps at the chance to be used by God
  - a. Why? He knew that glory and majesty of God and wanted others to
  - b. Maybe that's why we're so timid and reticent to take on God's work
  - c. Maybe we just don't really realize what a mighty God we serve

C. **Third**, Isaiah had just been sanctified and forgiven of His sin ([Isaiah 6:6-7](#))

1. Isaiah's unclean lips had been made clean-- so he was sanctified
  - a. Do we realize the debt of sin that Jesus took off of us at cross?
  - b. Has it become an ordinary, ho-hum idea that we have been saved?
2. If we really know that God has rescued us, we will want others rescued
3. Are you ready to be ready to be rescued? Are you ready to repent today?
  - a. Line in song, "*Touch my lips with holy fire and make me more like you*"
  - b. Isaiah experience being purified and made clean is our invitation