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In the Year King Uzziah Died

6: 1-4

In the year king Uzziah died DIG: If King Uzziah represents stability to Judah, what did his death mean? Why does YHVH choose this time to reveal Himself to Isaiah? Imagine you are Isaiah. What do you tell a friend about what you saw, heard, felt, and smelled in these verses? What questions about God's nature and purpose does this encounter raise?

REFLECT: The LORD's holiness and universal reign awed Isaiah. Which of ADONAI's attributes most impresses you? Why? Personally, what do you have to do to have God become real to you?

Isaiah apparently wished to locate **his** vision in time. The reason is a theological one. **Judah** had known no **king** like **Uzziah** since the time of Solomon. **He** had been an efficient administrator and an able military leader. Under **his** leadership, **Y'hudah** had grown in every way (**Second Chronicles 26:1-15**). **He** had been a true **king**. How easy it must have been to focus one's hopes and trust upon a **king** like that. What will happen, then, when such a **king dies**, and coupled with that **death** there comes the recognition that a resurgent Assyria is pushing nearer and nearer? In moments like that, it would be easy to see the futility of any hope. No earthly **king** could help **Judah** in that hour! In the context of such a crisis, **ADONAI** can make **Himself** more easily known to us than when times are good, and we are self-confident and complacent. So, **the** inspired **prophet** starts with the words: **In the year that King Uzziah died (6:1a).**

The symbolism of a **dying king** leads to the vision of the living **God**. What is in view here is **a vision of the splendor, awe, and majestic holiness that surrounds the throne of ADONAI in the heavenly Temple**. Although the Hebrews normally believed that you would die if you saw **YHVH** (**Genesis 32:30; Exodus 19:21, 20:19, 33:20; Deuteronomy 18:16, Judges 13:22**). Yet, in our weakness, **He** sometimes clothes **Himself** with visibility. Showing us a mere glimpse of **His glory** was usually done for encouragement or confirmation (**Genesis 16:9-13, 28:13-15; Exodus 24:9-11, 34:5-10; Judges 6:11-24**).

For **Isaiah**, **ADONAI** became visibly **seated on a throne, high and exalted (1:1a)**.

Evidently the inner veil had been removed and where the ark should have been, was a great **throne**. Later, **Isaiah** will use those same words to refer to **the Suffering Servant, Jesus Christ (52:13 and 57:15)**. The vision that **Isaiah** saw, **high and exalted** symbolized **Messiah's** position, supreme before the nations. While **Judah's king** may sin, this **King** could not sin. **The hem of His robe filled the Temple** in heaven (**6:1b CJB**), pointing us to **His** royalty and majesty. The absolute sovereignty of **God** is being stressed. **The Temple** and its sacrifices pictured the righteous dealings of **ADONAI**, dwelling in the midst of **His** covenant people, **Isra'el**.

As in **Exodus 24:10**, where **the pavement** under **God's** feet is described, so here the description of **ADONAI's** presence can only rise to **the hem of His robe**. It is as though words fall apart when we try to describe **God Himself**. The elders of **Isra'el** can only tell us of **something like** blue **pavement** under **His** feet; **Isaiah** can only tell us about how huge **His** robe was. Did the robe fill **the Temple**? No, **ADONAI** did! The point is well made. There is a point beyond which it is too personal, too awesome for man to explain. The human authors of the Scriptures do the best they can.

Above Him were seraphs, each had six wings that were ready for praise and service, which give us a picture of the appropriate response to **God's** holiness. **With two wings they covered their faces**. The verb **covered** is in the imperfect, indicating continuous action. For even the **seraphs** dared not brazenly look into the face of **the Creator**. The sight would be too much for them. **With** another pair of **wings they covered their feet**. The exact meaning of this action is not clear. The Targum, an Aramaic translation of the TaNaKh written or compiled from the Second Temple period until the early Middle Ages, uses the word *body* or *feet* and says **the body was covered so that it might not be seen**. As the created should not look upon **the Creator**, so the created should not be displayed in the sight of **Him** either. **And with two wings they were flying (6:2)**. This is **their** only reference in Scripture. **Seraphs** mean, *to burn*, possibly suggesting that **they** were passionate in **their** zeal for **the LORD**. It is also noteworthy that one of these **seraphs** took **a burning coal** to **Isaiah** in **6:6**. There are three different orders of beings in heaven: angels, cherubs, and **seraphs**. **Seraphs** are noted for having **six wings**; cherubs have four **wings** and angels have no **wings (Ezeki'el 1:5-6)**.



The ministry of **the seraphim** is seen here. They are **calling to one another: Holy, holy, holy is ADONAI-Tzva'ot (6:3a)**. Whatever else this experience did for **Isaiah**, it convinced him that **God** alone is **holy**; distinct and separate from everyone and everything else. **His holiness** is a reflection of **His** character, and for mankind it pointed toward ethical behavior. Other nations had laws, like the Code of Hammurabi, that they believed came from gods. But what was different about **Isra'el** was that the entire nation was to reflect **His** holiness. **ADONAI** had communicated this through **His** prophet Moses: **Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy (Leviticus 19:1)**. As a result, the righteous of the TaNaKh before the cross, and believers after the cross are held to a higher standard of ethical holiness. To oppress the helpless was to curse **ADONAI's** name (**Jeremiah 34:16**). To use a prostitute dedicated to Ba'al (**Hosea 4:14; Genesis 38:21**) was to defile **the holy name of the LORD (Amos 2:7)**. Or to practice homosexuality was, and is, to pollute **His** name (**Genesis 19:1-11; Leviticus 18:22 and 29-30, 20:13; Judges 19:16-24; First Kings 14:24, 15:12; Second Kings 23:7; Romans 1:18-32; First Corinthians 6:9-11; First Timothy 1:8-10; Jude 7**).

Who was this that sat on **the throne**? Not just any god, but the **holy One**. **He is holy, holy, holy, the holiest One** of them all. **He is the holy One**. There is none other who is called by that name. It is the strongest form of being beyond compare in the Hebrew. The way it is used here points to the fact that **ADONAI**, the **God** of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, was superior to *all* of the so-called gods.

Isaiah then declared that **the whole earth is full of His glory (6:3b)**. From this statement we know that **the Sh'khinah glory**, the very presence of **God Himself**, was not restricted to the Tabernacle in the wilderness or **the Temple** in Jerusalem (**to see link click Ju - The Glory of the LORD Rises Upon You**). But it is also a way of saying that what we see all around us is merely **His** reflection (see the commentary on **Revelation Fu - A Great High Wall with Twelve Gates**). As mentioned above, **the LORD** is the

embodiment of purity and ethics. Consequently, wherever **God** is present, judgment of sin is present. For the two cannot coexist one without the other (**Psalm 29:1-9, 89:5-18; Jeremiah 13:15-17; Amos 4:13, 5:8-9, 9:5-6**).

Lastly was the result of this declaration of **His** holiness. **At the sound of their voices, the doorposts and thresholds shook and the Temple was filled with smoke (6:4). The thresholds (Amos 9:1)** were large foundation stones on **which the doorposts** stood. The shaking suggests the awesome presence and power of **ADONAI (Exodus 19:18)**. When **the Temple** fills with smoke, it is always a sign of **the Sh'khinah glory (Exodus 20:18; First Kings 8:10-13; and Ezekiel 10:4)**.

Isaiah's whole life changed when **he** saw the majestic **LORD** seated on **His** heavenly throne. **His** awesome vision of **God** pierced **him**, causing **him** to cry out: **I am a man of unclean lips . . . For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts (Isaiah 6:5)**. You will never deal effectively with your sin without first realizing who **God** is. When you study **His** Word and begin to grasp **His** holiness, a deep reverence for **Him** grows in your heart. You, like **Isaiah**, are humbled before **Him** and realize that you fall far short of **His** holiness. Yet before discouragement can creep in, you also realize that **God** loves you deeply. □Through **Jesus'** death on the cross, **ADONAI** takes away your sins and shows you **His** amazing love. The crucifixion and resurrection are the beautiful visions **YHVH** gives you of **His** awesome holiness and majesty.