

FROM A KING TO THE KING OF KINGS

TEXT

Isaiah 6:1-9: The Prophet Isaiah Speaking

1 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the LORD sitting upon a Throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple.

2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory.

4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Hosts.

6 Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the Altar:

7 And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

8 Also I heard the Voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us [The Trinity]? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

9 And He said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

Among the soul-stirring spectacles of our country, Yellowstone Park is uniquely wonderful.



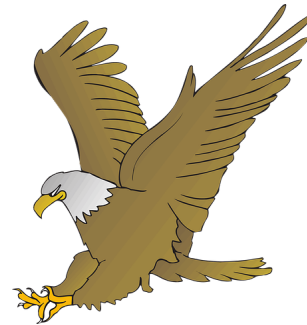
Vividly we recall standing at Inspiration Point. We looked down into the mighty gorge with its castellated minarets and kaleidoscopic coloring. This is climaxed in the distance by the majestic falls of the Yellowstone River as it hurls itself — a stream of molten silver — into the deep abyss below.

From this vantage point where the eye is ravished by the panorama of natural sublimity, the beauty is limited only by the distant horizons. One is acutely

conscious of the splendor that ties all things of the earth to the things of the skies.

Gazing down into the mighty deep with its irregular line of fantastic towers and spires that are erosion-made, one slender minaret of unusual height caught the eye. Upon its summit was a large nest. Poised on its edge was a huge bird.

After a preparatory flutter, it unfolded its broad pinions in a spiral flight of ascent. Soaring, it reached the level of our eyes. It was so near that the coloring of its plumage was clearly visible. Then, on and on it went in its upward sweep until it became but a speck against the golden glory of the sun.



“That bird”, said a bystander, “is the golden eagle, America’s imperial emblem.”

Then our hearts were thrilled as we saw the native haunt of this habitant of high horizons. This is indeed the king of birds. With sublime audacity, it dared to look into the very heart of the blazing sun itself.

Isaiah was the eagle soul of the prophets. None but he soared to such sublime heights. None but he beheld with such far-reaching vision the glories of the Coming King. Looking down the corridors of time, he saw the triumphant advent of the Prince of Peace — Emmanuel — Who should justly judge between the nations and reprove many peoples who would beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, when nation should no longer lift up sword against nation, nor any more learn war.

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Isaiah 2:2-4:

2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the House of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

4 And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Nowhere in the Old Testament is there recorded a more wonderful revelation than the vision so graphically pictured in the first eight verses of the sixth chapter of

Isaiah. These Words, though heard and spoken in a vision, are anything but visionary in practical application. This passage is like a constellation, made up of stars of the first magnitude, luminous with rich, suggestive texts for the expositor and preacher. This exalted vision of Isaiah's falls into three parts:



1. **A Vision of God**
2. **A Vision of Self**
3. **A Vision of Service**

“In the year that King Uzziah died . . .” God chooses His messengers from every walk of life. While many prophets were called from the keeping of flocks to the ministry of men, the Prophet Isaiah was summoned from the courts of the king to become the champion of the common people. Aristocratic, of noble lineage, with an unbroken record for the patriotism and for the worthy character, he was thoroughly at home amid the splendors of the king's palace.

Isaiah played an intense, intimate part in the life and affairs of his age.

Isaiah played an intense, intimate part in the life and affairs of his age. No yellow stain of cowardice ever besmirched his white escutcheon (shield). He was far removed from the opportunist who trims his sails to the fickle breeze.

One day we behold the Prophet at the temple service, lashing with scathing words the hollowness and hypocrisy of Israel's languorous, lifeless worshippers. Again — he watched the garish procession of opulence and arrogance; and from his stirred heart there flowed like molten lava, a stream of hot foul language against the selfish luxury that rolled by with a wanton smile and a cruel heart. Again — when the king and his counselors had failed to uphold the national standards of honor and integrity, he fearlessly confronted them — denouncing their grossly unfair policies, sternly demanding their abandonment.

But, as lion-hearted as Isaiah was, he had not yet attained the soul dimensions which would set him apart as the outstanding voice of his age. His vision was still horizontal. His reach had not yet extended beyond the glory of the king's court, and the temporal and moral welfare of his nation.

The reign of Uzziah had been brilliant indeed. It was not as spectacular as that of Solomon, yet in mighty achievements it was surpassed by none except David. To Isaiah's loyal, patriotic heart, no greater sovereign than his ruler could be imagined.

Uzziah ascended the throne when he was but a lad of sixteen. For more than 50 years he reigned in Jerusalem, wisely and well. We are told that under the guidance of the wise and reverent counselor, Zechariah, he *“had understanding in*

the vision of God;” and as long as he kept this vision, he prospered greatly. He drove back the Philistines, the centuries old enemies of Israel. His name was spread abroad, even to Egypt. He was always busy on behalf of his people. Appreciating the need of adequate water supply, he dug many wells. He planted vines and olive groves, and had multitudes of husbandmen busy with herds and flocks. He strengthened the national capitol, fortified it with many towers, and built bulwarks for the protection of those in the pastures and plains. His name was linked with all that was beneficent and good.



“He was marvelously helped till he was strong.”

Then came pride — and disaster. “For pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”

Proverbs 16:18: Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

He was smitten of God for his presumption in seeking to usurp the privilege of the priest in burning incense upon the altar. He went forth from society, an outcast — a leper. And then King Uzziah died.

2 Chronicles 26:16-21:

16 But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the Temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the Altar of Incense.

17 And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, that were valiant men:

18 And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the Sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God.

19 Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the House of the LORD, from beside the incense Altar.

20 And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hastened also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him.



21 And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the House of the LORD: and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land.

“In the year that king Uzziah died . . .” In the phrase there is much matter for profound thought. The word “king” is synonymous with power, ability, dominion, and sovereignty. It is easy to understand how death might limit the years and snatch away some ignorant yokel or worthless wayfarer. But the king! What a difference that makes.

We note in an obscure line of the daily paper that William, the street beggar, died. We also note in the deluxe volume of English history that William the Conqueror died. Someone casually remarks that Elizabeth, the rag picker, also died. But the records show that the dazzling Queen Elizabeth also died. Death is the great leveler of humanity.

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Uzziah died. How often places are empty in the heart of the home, the church, or the nation in order that God may fill them. Often the leaves must fall before God's blue sky can be seen.

“I saw the Lord!” The Prophet had lost his king, but found the King of Kings. Hitherto his hope had been centered in this able and aggressive monarch; now, with his sudden departure, Isaiah anticipated demoralization and disaster. But lo, in place of chaos, there has come the Lord of Order and Stability. Anticipating an end to a great regime, Isaiah found the beginning of a greater and a more Glorious Sovereignty.

Before this, we saw in Isaiah a good man whose horizon had been restricted to the king's court and to his people's welfare. Now there was an exalted seer with the eagle eyes with foreknowledge, looking far beyond his nation's boundaries. He sees the entire world belted with light and filled with the Glory of the transcendent King! Those coming midnight skies would be aglow with a shining host proclaiming their message of **“peace on earth and good will to men”**.

What a man sees determines what he is.

“I saw.” In Isaiah's two words, we have the making or unmaking of life. What a man sees determines what he is.

**“Two men looked through prison bars,
The one saw mud, the other stars.”**

Moses, beholding the invisible, laid aside the royal purple of the Egyptian palace to become — thru years of struggle and hardship — the white-crested leader of his nation's hosts, and the hero of Jewish history.

In Acts 9:1-22, To Saul of Tarsus, on the Damascus Road, came the vision which lifted him from the ignoble role of an intolerant, oppressive bigot to the lofty plane of world evangelist. And when we see the Lord — really SEE Him — we will never want to make Christianity just merely a fire escape.



“I saw the Lord sitting on a Throne . . .” In this vision of the Prophet there was a stupendous, awe-inspiring wonder. As a mighty towering mountain, so He Who inhabits eternity completely dwarfs and overshadows all earthly monarchs. *“High and lifted up,”* the Lord was surrounded by the Seraphim whose majestic song, “Holy, Holy, Holy”, shook the Temple to its very foundations. **These words signify the Trinity, as does the question asked by the Lord in Isaiah 6:8, “Who will go for Us?”**

Note: The Result — Isaiah became intoxicated with the Greatness of God.

Vision of Self

Previous to this revelation, Isaiah was a moral leader of his people. There is no reason to suspect that he was other than a man of most excellent character. But once Isaiah glimpsed the majesty and Holiness of God, he cried aloud, ***“Woe is me, for I am undone . . .”***

Isaiah 6:5: Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Hosts.

The certain cure for our self-contentment is a vision of the Holiness of God whether it be through our spiritual eyes, through our heart, in a prayer room, or witnessing a miracle. No man can see God aright who does not feel the wonder as the Prophet Isaiah did.

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