

SUBSTITUTING GOD

“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple.” —ISAIAH 6:1

There are times in the lives of many Christians when they allow something or someone to create a barrier between themselves and God. This may have been what happened to Isaiah in the beginning of his ministry. The reference to the year King Uzziah died is not merely dating the event, but more likely the event of his death became the means that brought Isaiah into this extraordinary encounter with God.

King Uzziah's life was both exciting and tragic. At 16 years old, he became king and reigned in Jerusalem 52 years. God gave him victory not only in warfare, but in building up the land of Judah. His fame spread and he became a hero to the people and a role model for the youth of Judah. Then something went wrong. We are told, “But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the LORD his God, and entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense” (2 Chronicles 26:16). This was something only a priest was allowed to do, but thinking the rules did not apply to him, Uzziah ignored the priests' warnings. The Lord struck him with leprosy and he lived the remainder of his days in isolation.

There are two possible explanations why Isaiah did not have this remarkable vision of God until after King Uzziah died. Perhaps he was unaware Uzziah's leprosy was a judgment from God. He had grown up under his reign and his own dealings with God may have become second-hand through Uzziah whom he had looked up to as a great spiritual leader. The other explanation may have been that Isaiah did know Uzziah's leprosy was God's judgment, and his own confidence was shaken. When Uzziah died, Isaiah then saw the Lord where He has always been – seated on the throne. This is a fresh vision for him as in his mind it was Uzziah on the throne.

Seated on a throne is being seated in a position of authority and power. High and exalted is a position of supremacy and sovereignty. This presents a problem for many people in that they feel inadequate or even intimidated to deal directly with God. They think it much safer to latch onto the coattails of someone they greatly admire in ministry or to a close friend or family member who has a much stronger faith. What they fail to realize is that God's position of authority, power, supremacy and sovereignty is to their benefit. We all stand on equal ground, and if we really mean business with God, there is no substitute for dealing with Him directly.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, in my spiritual growth, help me to keep my focus on You, and not on what I admire in the faith of others.

TO REFLECT UPON: Do I tend to look to someone else rather than to God?