What You Should Focus on in the New year

Text: Isaiah 6:1-8

1. **"*The year king Uzziah died*" – why was this event significant to the prophet Isaiah?**

Uzziah was one of the most powerful kings of Judah. His name means "*Yahweh is strength*", His reign was one of strength.

Uzziah reigned for a long time – some 52 years. He was the second most prosperous King since Solomon. He did many military conquests and even invented a powerful machine that could project large stones, capable of breaking fortresses. 2 Chronicles 26:8-14 says that he became "exceedingly strong" and that his fame reached as far as Egypt. He was a very popular king with everyone. During his reign there was a great spiritual, political and military revival. It was hard to imagine a better king!

However, towards the end of his life, his heart was lifted with pride. At the peak of his reign, he once tried to force his way into the temple and offer sacrifices, which was something strictly reserved for priests. They resisted him and in the process of the argument, he was struck with leprosy.

Can you imagine,

- The shame and humiliation of becoming a leper (it was common for poor people to get leprosy but not a king).
- He had to move from the royal palace and could never again enter a public place, much less the temple.
- Visiting foreign dignitaries couldn't meet the king anymore.

Eventually the great king Uzziah died and that was a traumatic time. Isaiah was probably struggling with the loss of a great leader. In spite of his personal failure, Uzziah was still one of the greatest in the history of God's people. Nothing could erase his achievements. Isaiah was probably thinking of how irreplaceable a king like him was and how men of his calibre are so hard to find. His heart (and that of everyone in Judah) was probably full of apprehension about what would happen in the future.

What would the future of the nation be like? Who could they repy on now? What did the future hold?

It was in this context, and this year, that the prophet saw the Lord.

2. **Isaiah saw the Lord**

Isaiah had an open vision of the temple. He saw an object that was not part of the objects of the Holy of Holies: he saw a throne, and One sitting on it.

God could have appeared any way He wanted:

- He appeared to Abraham as the ram caught in the thicket.
- To Moses He appeared as a burning bush.
- To Job, He appeared as a whirlwind.

To Isaiah, however, He appeared as the King on the throne!

God normally reveals Himself in a way that is relevant to our situations: He is the Healer to the sick, the Provider for the poor, the Saviour to the lost.

- He is saying to Isaiah that the king may have died but Yahweh is the king Who is alive and never dies!
- He is saying that the earthly throne may be empty but not the heavenly throne.

3. The Year of the Lord

We tend to associate the year with calamities and negative events, like 2020, *the year of Covid*. We may say like Isaiah, '*the year king Uzziah died'* – however, God wants us to change how we name our years: we should call every year, the Year of the Lord!

Don't allow satan or any circumstance to name your years. From now on start saying, I don't care what happens next year – as for me it will be the year of the Lord! He is my constant king who never changes and never dies.

King Uzziah had really died. 'Stuff' really happens in the world we live in. How do you walk through 'stuff'? We respond differently because we <u>see the Lord high and lifted up!</u> We respond from an elevated perspective.

History doesn't happen to God. God doesn't read the feed of a news app to find out what's happening. No. Ultimately, history is unfolding in the palm of His hand. Nothing will happen in this world that will catch God off-guard.

That is why we need to focus on Jesus. He already knows what's coming in 2025. He knows the end from the beginning.

4. A change of focus

God changed Isaiah's focus: he saw a higher King, a greater throne and a greater kingdom!

More than ever before, **we will need to focus our eyes on Jesus in 2025!**

When it comes to future of world events, so many of us have a fear-based perspective. We are always looking for the next big negative thing that is going to happen. These are the end times indeed. However, that should be one more reason to have a faith - perspective and not a fear-based perspective. It is time to look to Jesus!

The antichrist may or may not be a geek behind some supercomputer called 'the beast' in Brussels. However, our eyes need to be in the appearing of Christ not living in fear of the antichrist.

The book Revelation is a revelation of Christ and of how when it is all said and done, we will stand with Jesus, the ***Lamb on the throne*** forever, victorious!

We should set our eyes on Jesus. He is the King high and lifted up! I don't know what will happen in 2025, but my Lord is high and lifted up!

We need to come into the New Year with this vision in our hearts.

Conclusion

"The year King Uzziah died I saw the Lord" – Isaiah saw Adonai, the supreme Lord and Master. He saw Him high and lifted up. I don't know what is going to happen in 2025 but I will be looking up to the Lord. I will keep my eyes on Jesus, the Author and finisher of our faith! He is high and lifted up. He is able to carry me through whatever happens next year. For me, every year is **the year of the Lord!**

I refuse to look down, but I look to the One Who is high and lifted up!

Psalms 34:1-6 - *I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. 2 My soul shall make its boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear of it and be glad. 3 Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. 4 I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. 5* ***They looked to Him and were radiant****, and their faces were not ashamed 6 This poor man cried out, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.*

Let us look to Jesus. Let us keep our eyes lifted to the greater things and the power of God.

Psalms 121:1-3 - *I will <u>lift up my eyes</u> to the hills— from whence comes my help? 2 My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth. 3 He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber.*

Matthew 14:15-18-20 - *15 When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food." 16 But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." 17 And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." 18 He said, "Bring them here to Me." 19 Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and <u>looking up to heaven</u>, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. 20 So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained.*

Mark 7:33-35 - *33 And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. 34 Then, <u>looking up to heaven</u>, He sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." 35 Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly.*