

77.5 Servants of God

If you were to visit Paris, you could see the statues of two men named "Louis." The first is of Louis XIV, France's absolute monarch, who is remembered today chiefly for his exclamation, "I am the State." He represents one of the supreme achievements of greatness through power. His philosophy of life was that the whole nation and the world should serve him insofar as he could compel it.

A less pretentious statue is a few blocks away. There is no uniform on this figure carved in stone, no badge of office, no sword, no crown. It is a memorial to Louis Pasteur, the servant of humanity and servant of God. His life of unselfish, devoted research conferred immeasurable benefits upon all humanity in the years to come through overcoming disease and suffering. The monarch's statue is nothing more than a piece of sculpture; the statue of Pasteur is a shrine where pilgrims from all over the world pay grateful homage. The uncrowned servant of humanity wears the crown of men's love and honor.

Whenever I think about a "*servant of God*," I tend to think of the humble men and women of the Bible who faithfully followed Him like Pasteur. However, earthly kings can also be servants of the Most High God and often not realize it, and God can even use evil people as His servants. It is hard to understand how ungodly people can accomplish godly purposes. Let me read two passages of scripture that make this point.

Jeremiah 27:6 (NKJV) – ⁶ And now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant; and the beasts of the field I have also given him to serve him.

Isaiah 45:1 (NKJV) – "Thus says the LORD to His anointed, To Cyrus, whose right hand I have held— To subdue nations before him And loose the armor of kings, To open before him the double doors, So that the gates will not be shut:

Romans 8:28 reminds us that God works out all things for the good of the people who love Him. An example was in the story of Joseph when his jealous brothers sold him into Egyptian slavery, and God directed the story's circumstances for the good of His people. Joseph explained this to his brothers in **Genesis 50:20 (NKJV)**:

But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.

God worked through the jealous hearts of Jacob's ten sons, Pharaoh, and Joseph, to accomplish His purpose of creating and saving the nation of Israel. In so doing, He preserved the lineage of His Son, the Messiah, who would be born as a descendant of Abraham through Isaac. As Paul stated in **Galatians 4:4-5 (NLT)**:

. . . God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Let's think about our two texts regarding Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus. Nebuchadnezzar served God by removing the nation from Judah to Babylon for seventy years. This time allowed the land to rest and prepared the people of God to renounce idolatry. In their idol-worshiping impenitence at the preaching of Jeremiah and others, God sent the people to the "idol capital of the world," Babylon. Here they learned the inevitable end of worshiping something other than God.

God gave them the desires of their hearts, which was the worship of idols. Time and time again, our jealous God urged them to return to Him, but they did not, so He sent them to the place they thought they wanted to be – in the depths of idol worship. We must be careful about what we crave. God may give it to us, which may not be what we thought we wanted.

Our second text speaks of Cyrus, king of the Medo-Persian Empire, which replaced Babylon as the dominant world power. God called Cyrus His "anointed," the word for Messiah. God held Cyrus in high regard for his mission of sending the Jews back to Israel to rebuild the temple and reestablish the nation

under Cyrus' domain. Cyrus even paid the Jews' expenses for their rebuilding enterprises. Funny how God works!

Most Jews stayed in Babylon, but a remnant returned under Zerubbabel's direction. Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem. Ezra reestablished the priesthood and Law of Moses in the Land, while Zerubbabel concentrated on restoring the temple. Haggai and Zechariah preached to the people to motivate them to their tasks, and God accomplished His purposes through a pagan king.

The remnant has been vital in American History. The Pilgrims, for instance, were a small band of believers who came to America to establish a mission point to further the gospel in the world. They started as a small number, but with the loss of their ship, the "*Speedwell*," they reduced their number even further as the Mayflower alone could not carry passengers from two ships. On that occasion, **Governor William Bradford** stated:

And thus, like Gideon's army, this small number was divided, as if the Lord, by this work of His providence, thought these few too many for the great work He had to do.

Once the Pilgrims arrived in America, their numbers declined even further by the harsh Massachusetts winter. Yet, America sprang from this faithful remnant.

I have read that one-third of Americans at the time of our Independence favored Liberty, one-third were loyal to the Crown, and one-third were indifferent to the pursuit of Freedom. One-third of the population, 33%, was a minority, but it gets better. An even smaller number, 3%, fought the British in our War for Independence. This 3% was a remnant indeed!

As Americans declared independence and defended themselves against the British, God worked through well-intentioned but flawed people to secure our freedom, as he works through damaged people today. Some of the broken have openly opposed Him, and some have served Him, but all have shortcomings.

God has been firing warning shots across America's bow for many years, warning us to return to Him and His ways. He places various leaders in political offices to accomplish His purposes. Sometimes God works through people who affirm Him and sometimes through people who deny Him. In either case, He will accomplish His will for America. It is up to us to grasp His will.

The past two years have brought hardships. Do you feel closer to God or further from Him? Problems tend to get us back to God, while prosperity leads us away. Please read **Deuteronomy 8-9** when you have time. I want to read a few verses from **Deuteronomy 8**, and we will close.

(1-3) "Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply and go in and possess the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers. ² And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you *and* test you, to know what *was* in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. ³ So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone, but man lives by every *word* that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. (11-14) ¹¹ "Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, ¹² lest—when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell *in them*; ¹³ and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; ¹⁴ when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;

God can work through good or evil people to accomplish His purposes. He can work through the great or small. In either case, let's Keep The Light of *Serving God* Burning!