

The Anglican Orthodox Church

Testimony of Great Kings

³ *How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.* Daniel 4:3

² *Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. ³ Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem.* Ezra 1:2-3

How mighty is the Lord in bringing His elect through many perils and dangers to the place of rest in His Will and Kingdom. He not only brings the hopeless derelict, but also kings and great men of war. Daniel 4:3, quoted above, was spoken by King Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. Little did he know when he uttered this testimony that the Words He was speaking were not his, but the Word of God. It was this King who had wickedly cast Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the red hot furnace and saw “one as the Son of God” walking with them. He later cast Daniel, whom he loved, into a den of lions; yet after being exiled to the fields as an animal for seven years, he came to know the God of Daniel, and of each of us.

2. It is the glory of God to conceal a thing : but the honor of kings is to search out a matter. 3. The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings is unsearchable. Prov 25:2 & 3

Charles Bridges in his ‘Exposition of Proverbs’ says of this testimony: The great King of heaven and the puny kings of earth are here finely contrasted. *The glory* of each is opposite—*of God to conceal ; of kings .to search out.* Whether “ *he dwelleth in his pavilion of thick darkness,*” or whether “*clothed in his garment of light, and dwelling in unapproachable light*”³—*it is the glory of God to conceal a thing.* What glory indeed could belong to a God, whose name, and ways, and works were open to the view, and within the comprehension of worms of the earth ? What he has brought to light only shows how much is *concealed.* We look at his works—“ *Lo ! these are parts of his ways ; but how little a portion is heard of him !*”³ We study the dispensations of his Providence—“ *Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters ; and thy footsteps are not known !*”⁴ We ponder the great purposes of his grace ; and our hearts only find vent in reverential adoration—crying—“ Oh ! the depth !” rather standing on the shore, and silently admiring it, than entering into it. To be wading in those depths is the sure way to be overwhelmed in them.

In the 44th chapter of Isaiah, God mentions His anointed whom he will bring out of Persia to restore His people and Temple. He even mentions him by the name, *CYRUS*. Cyrus the Great was my 5th grade hero. I read in my public school textbook how this great king ruled the known world and was the first to be kind and charitable with his subjects. It is a fact, verified by archeological science, that the Book of Isaiah was written almost two hundred years before Cyrus – yet God mentions him by NAME!

Isaiah 44:²⁸ *That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.*

Matthew Henry says (in his Commentary):

“The particular favours God designed for his people in captivity, were foretold here, long before they went into captivity. Very great difficulties would be in the way of their deliverance; but it is promised that by Divine power they should all be removed. God knew who should be the Deliverer of his people; and let his church know it, that when they heard such a name talked of, they might know their redemption drew nigh. It is the greatest honour of the greatest men, to be employed as instruments of the Divine favour to his people. In things wherein men serve themselves, and look no further, God makes them do all his pleasure. And a nobler Shepherd than Cyrus does his Father's will, till his work is fully completed.” —Matthew Henry Concise Commentary

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Isaiah 45:¹ *Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;* ² *I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:* ³ *And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.*

Amazingly, this prophecy was fulfilled to the minutest detail. After a two year siege of Babylon, Cyrus re-routed the Euphrates River into a great desert basin. The river bed dried up, and Cyrus no longer had to follow the meandering river back to Babylon. Instead, his way was made straight...*"I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight"*.. He entered through the channel that had been made below the river's waterline and the iron-leaved gates had been left open due to the drunkenness of the guards..*"I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight"*. The whole of the city were in a drunken orgy. It was at this time that the evil King Belshazzar lifted the golden vessels, taken from the Temple at Jerusalem, in a drunken toast...and the Finger of God wrote upon the wall to the great terror and disarming of the King...*"and I will loose the loins of kings"*.

We find a strong testimony to the Works of God given by Cyrus, in Ezra 1:¹ *Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,* ² *Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.* ³ *Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem.* ⁴ *And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.*

Several years ago, I had the privilege to stand in the ruins of the Temple of Cyrus, and the same before which Daniel had uttered many words of prophecy. I read on the stone walls of Persepolis the words of Cyrus the great King which were inscribed in Mesopotamian cuneiform letter, *"Behold, I am Cyrus the Great King. I freed the peoples of (names of several conquered empires), I lifted the unbecoming yoke from their necks, and made the strong not to strike the weak."* These are the words that caused him to become my hero. Not only was he a great king (according to my fifth grade reader, but he was a great king anointed by God!

It is amazing to me that we may speak the Word of God unwittingly. Even the words of the wicked may become the Word recorded in Scripture, witness the words of Caiaphas, the High Priest, who sat in judgment of Christ to crucify Him...⁴⁷ *Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.* ⁴⁸ *If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.* ⁴⁹ *And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all,* ⁵⁰ *Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.* ⁵¹ *And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;* ⁵² *And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.* John 11:47-52

If the Lord is able to frame the words of great kings and even the wicked, how much more should our words be Godly and righteous. If Christ is King of Kings, and God the Father owns the hearts of kings, how much more should He own your heart and your speaking? If you are a child of the Great King of Kings, then you have a Royal heritage...you are princes and princesses. We must quit ourselves as being sons and daughters of the Great King in all that we say, do, and think. We must conduct our lives in ways befitting royal blood, for we are His emissaries to a wicked generation.

May we say with King David: *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Ps 119:105*

AMEN!

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