

Worship the LORD of His-story

✠ **Summoning kings by name (vv.1-4)**

✠ **Strengthening His people (vv.5-7)**

In the name of Jesus, the Lord and Master of history as **His-story**, dear children of God:

If you were living in Mississippi today, you might be madder than a wet hen at the government. Folks who lost their homes in Hurricane Katrina are still waiting according to one of their conservative senators. Trailer homes were finally delivered, but they sat for days before one crew hooked up the water, a few days later the electricity, a day or two before inspection, but still no key to get inside. Meanwhile, local landscapers were not hired for cleanup because out-of-state contractors got the grants.

So why do so many Americans think government can solve their problems? And why do so many American scholars think governments modern or ancient can determine the course of history? What I'm about to tell you today most Bible commentaries deny. Strange as this may sound, modern Bible scholars start with the premise that there is no miraculous in the Bible. Therefore, they reason, God could not be involved directly everyday life, much less the course of history. They think all ancient authors were like our biased media using forged documents to force their political template. But we don't worship reporters or scholars. We **Worship the LORD of history** which He writes as **His-story** of salvation. And because we **Worship the LORD of His-story** we are grateful for God's blessing of government. God is still...

✠ **Summoning kings by name (vv.1-4)**

It's safe to say that you would never dare to summon your boss into your office, not if you want to keep your office. Everybody knows the greater summons the lesser. And that's why it was so disgusting for believers in Isaiah's day to listen to big headed Assyrian kings like Sennacharib brag about destroying the God of Israel: *"As one reaches into a nest, so my hand reached for the wealth of the nations; as men gather abandoned eggs, so I gathered all the countries; not one flapped a wing, or opened its mouth to chirp."* (Isaiah 10:14 NIV) Wonder what Sennacharib was thinking that morning when he woke up and found his soldiers dead, all 185,000 of them killed by the angel of the LORD! He ran from the land of the LORD God of Israel, back home to his god Nisroch in Nineveh. But he wasn't even safe there. Two of his own sons killed him while praying in Nisroch's temple. Life can be such a bear!

But this is what befuddles the scholars. Isaiah is not talking about Sennacharib here. He's not even talking about Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians whom God used to conquer Assyria a century later. This is like a man in Mosel, Iraq, 200 years ago, naming President George W. Bush as the man who would come and free their country. No matter what you think of our President or the war in Iraq, you'd have to be impressed by such a prediction. In 1805, our country had just bought the land on which Minneapolis is built west of the Mississippi River in the Louisiana Purchase. Thomas Jefferson was President, and only God knew what was out there toward the setting sun, and whether America would survive the Civil War, two World Wars, Korea, Vietnam and the culture war killing souls today.

In a land far away Isaiah's God speaks to the king who 200 years later would conquer the next empire after the one attacking them then: *"This is what the Lord says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut: I will go before you and will level the mountains; I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron. I will give you the treasures of darkness, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the Lord, the God of Israel, who summons you*

by name. For the sake of Jacob my servant, of Israel my chosen, I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honor, though you do not acknowledge me.”

If you thought governments were free to do whatever they wanted, think again. The God of the Bible is the Creator-Savior God who calls Himself “the LORD.” He explains what His Name means: *“compassionate and gracious..., slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.”* (Exodus 34:6f NIV) He used the Assyrians against the ten Northern tribes, and the Babylonians 100 years later on Judah and Jerusalem. The lesson is simple. God will not let His Name be mocked by His chosen people of Israel or by Americans today. We can take His Ten Commandments out of our courtrooms, but “justice” goes with them. We can keep it legal to kill unborn babies, but we die with each one. We can let killers live unpunished, but bloodshed cries out for justice from God who created life. We may think we can write our own history, but check the dates on Cyrus King of Persia. **Worship the LORD of His-story for Summoning kings by name.** With this warning for nations God is powerfully...

† **Strengthening His people (vv.5-7)**

Still talking to 200-years-away Cyrus King of Persia, the God of the Bible says, *“I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me, so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides me. I am the LORD, and there is no other. I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things.”*

You ask, “How will this strengthen me if God helped a king I never hear of, who didn’t even accept the LORD as God?” Think of this the next time you wake up worrying at night. You and I keep trying to rely on our own talents and ingenuity to master our destiny as if making a life is like writing a paper or filling out a form. Our minds toss all night about dollars and cents as if we could add up the bottom line by hard work or smart investing. We try so hard to match this relationship with that one and figure out how long this one might last as compared to the one we had ten years ago, but all we manage to make is a splitting headache and another reason someone might not want to be around us. We know it’s true. And it’s just a shame it takes so many heartaches and tears before we’ll finally admit it to ourselves and to our God. We’ve got as much control over our lives as a moth on a windshield at 70 miles an hour. Do you really think riding planet earth is easier? What will you do in the end?

God created us in order to bless us throughout this life, then take us home for boundless joy in heaven’s eternal bliss. Sin ruined all that and would have left death as the last word for all us rebellious sons and daughter of Adam and Eve. But we **Worship the LORD** who writes history as **His-story**. He spoke directly to Cyrus 200 years before he was born in order to strengthen the troops of God Almighty, about to suffer through a firestorm of judgment on Israel’s unbelief and rebellion. God still wants this to strengthen us today to know that God would actually line up the life of a pagan king just to bless us then and now. You see, by bringing God’s people back from exile, Cyrus would be God’s tool to get the family of our Savior back to the Promised Land. There Christ, the Messiah, would come through the womb of the virgin Mary to live a perfect life, die an innocent death, and by His holy precious blood wash away all our sinful worries and cares – most of which we can’t remember. God doesn’t remember them either because He promised, *“Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more”* (Jeremiah 31:34; Hebrews 10:17). Because of Jesus we are now enjoying the spiritual *prosperity* of nestling close to the heart of God. We trust our God who *create[s] disaster* and then turns it into blessings beyond imagination. God used Cyrus to inflict *disaster* on the cruel Babylonians and punish them for what they did to His people. Waiting for our Savior to come once more, we see **His-story** still being written. But we already know the ending. Living in a tent or a house, life is an adventure with God. And as He writes the final chapters, as critics like to say, “It’s a good read.” Just hang onto Jesus and trust in the LORD. Amen.