

AN INTERESTING QUESTION

GOD'S SUPERVISION OF THE NATIONS

"THE MOST HIGH ruleth in the Kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men."
– Daniel 4:17.

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." – Romans 13:1,2.

Question. – Should we understand from the above Scriptures that God guides the affairs of nations, and chooses their rulers?

Answer. – These Scriptures are in harmony with other statements of Scripture. In the case of Nebuchadnezzar, for instance, after he had been seven years insane, lying amongst the beasts of the field, his reason returned to him and he extolled the God of Heaven, acknowledging that God setteth up those whom He will and putteth down those whom He will. We understand that God's dealing with King Nebuchadnezzar was *prophetic*.

In the case of Israel God had very particular oversight of their affairs, and dealt with their rulers. David was anointed when he was a youth, to be king in due time instead of Saul. So with several others of their kings – the Lord had them anointed in advance. It might be said of Israel, that whoever sat upon the throne was there as the Lord's representative. We remember also that on one occasion the Prophet of God was sent to anoint one of the kings of Syria and to give him a prophecy respecting himself, that he should take the throne.

Looking back, we see that in the case of Pharaoh, the perverse king of Egypt, God declared, "For this very purpose I raised thee up, that I might show forth My Power in thee." God did not approve of Pharaoh, but used him to show forth His own glory. God also used King Cyrus of Persia as a servant to perform His bidding.

GOD'S SUPERVISION OF CURRENT EVENTS

All of these recorded instances show a vital interest on God's part as to who shall come forward and who shall be retarded when these matters would affect His own Plan. We are not to understand that these different kings represented God's choice as respects their loyalty to Him, but that these were the ones through whom the **[R5466 : page 159]** Divine Plan in operation could be signally manifested and outworked. And so it is today. The Lord knew which of the men running for the office of President of the United States in the fall of 1912 would be the most suitable – the one who would most fully co-operate in the carrying out of the very conditions which He is pleased to permit to come to pass at this time.

The Lord guides in the affairs of nations now, only in so far as such oversight will promote the fulfilment of His own purposes. When the monarchs of various countries declare themselves "King by the grace of God," we do not agree to the thought they have in mind in making such claim. They are expressing the thought which has prevailed throughout Christendom for centuries – that they reign as representatives of the Kingdom of God, and by His special *favor*. And likewise the Catholic Church: When the pope claims that he is the head of the Church of Christ, claims that he is Christ's Vice-gerent, he thus claims that Christ has set up His Kingdom, and that the pope reigns in His stead.

OVERRIDE TO OUTWORKING OF GOD'S PLAN

After the Papal power waned in Europe, and the Protestants came into power, the Protestant rulers claimed the same right that the Catholics had claimed – to rule as the Lord's special representatives. And it is from this standpoint that kings maintain that they reign "by the grace of God," that the Kingdom of God is set up, and that they are reigning in God's Kingdoms. We do not understand this to be the right thought, but that in God's providence He permits these to occupy the thrones of the world for the time being. We understand that God does exercise a supervisory oversight in respect to them – not that He has authorized them to represent Him, or that He is responsible for their deeds and acts, but that He is so controlling matters as to cause them to outwork His own arrangements.

God will not convert a king in order to do this; He will not make him a saint. But He can allow or hinder events without interfering with the free will of any individual, and without becoming responsible for his government.

We may assume that this supervision of Divine Power is for the ultimate interest of mankind. We remember that there is a Prince of Darkness, who is seeking to do violence to humanity. Our thought is that the Divine Power hinders or restrains, so that the worst **[R5467 : page 159]** things cannot come to pass until His due time, and He overrides to bring those into power who will have the disposition to do what He purposes to permit when His due time has arrived. However, since the Lord does not explain to us *just how* He does this, it would be wise for us not to be too emphatic in our statements.

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