

'God's Instrument': The Story of Squanto

Most of us know the story of the first Thanksgiving -- at least, we know the Pilgrim version. But how many of us know the Indian viewpoint?

No, I'm not talking about some revisionist, politically correct version of history. I'm talking about the amazing story of the way God used an Indian named Squanto as a special instrument of His providence.

Historical accounts of Squanto's life vary, but historians believe that around 1608 -- more than a decade before the Pilgrims arrived -- a group of English traders sailed to what is today Plymouth, Massachusetts. When the trusting Wampanoag Indians came out to trade, the traders took them prisoner, transported them to Spain, and sold them into slavery. It was an unimaginable horror.

But God had an amazing plan for one of the captured Indians -- a boy named Squanto.

Squanto was bought by a well-meaning Spanish monk, who treated him well and

taught him the Christian faith. Squanto eventually made his way to England and worked in the stables of a man named John Slaney. Slaney sympathized with Squanto's desire to return home, and he promised to put the Indian on the first vessel bound for America.

It wasn't until 1618 -- ten years after Squanto was first kidnapped -- that a ship was found. Finally, after a decade of exile and heartbreak, Squanto was on his way home.

But when he arrived in Massachusetts, more heartbreak awaited him. An epidemic had wiped out Squanto's entire village.

We can only imagine what must have gone through Squanto's mind: Why had God allowed him to return home, against all odds, only to find his loved ones dead?

A year later, the answer came. A shipload of English families arrived and settled on the very land once occupied by Squanto's people. Squanto went to meet them, greeting the startled Pilgrims in English.

According to the diary of Pilgrim Governor William Bradford, Squanto "became a special instrument sent of God for [our] good . . . He showed [us] how to plant [our] corn, where to take fish and to procure other commodities . . . and was also [our] pilot to bring [us] to unknown places for [our] profit, and never left [us] till he died."

When Squanto lay dying of a fever, Bradford wrote that their Indian friend "desir[ed] the Governor to pray for him, that he might go to the Englishmen's God in heaven." Squanto bequeathed his possessions to the Pilgrims "as remembrances of his love."

Who but God could so miraculously convert a lonely Indian and then use him to save a struggling band of Englishmen? It is reminiscent of the biblical story of Joseph, who



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was also sold into slavery -- and whom God, likewise, used as a special instrument for good.

Squanto's life story is remarkable, and we ought to make sure our children and grandchildren learn about it. Sadly, most books about Squanto omit references to his Christian faith. But I'm delighted to say that Eric Metaxas has written a wonderful children's book called *Squanto And The Miracle Of Thanksgiving*. I highly recommend it. It will teach your kids about the "special instrument sent of God" who changed the course of American history.

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A blessing on you for Thanksgiving as you think about ALL that you HAVE and ARE for which to be thankful to Almighty God.

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YOUR NAME before **GOD'S THRONE**.
God bless and watch over you today.

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