

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Esther: Encouragements Of God's Faithfulness

A. God's Encouraging Use Of Strong Rulers' Destructiveness

(Esther 1:1-2:20)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Some of the actions being performed by strong rulers today are very destructive, what can leave us unsettled:

(1) George Will, a syndicated columnist with the Washington Post, in his column, "The politicization of everything" (Republican-American, July 23, 2021, p. 8A), told how the "Surgeon General Vivek H. Murthy . . . advocates a 'whole-of-society effort' to stop what he calls an 'infodemic' of health 'misinformation,'" and he promotes "'product design and policy changes on technology platforms,' and government investment in 'rumor control mechanisms.'" The Surgeon General thus wants to control the information on medical issues we can obtain in order to control our thinking and actions in health issues while also placating us by allowing us freedom of speech!

(2) Mr. Will added that the Federal Reserve Board and some of its regional banks are "wading waist-deep into politics," taking the progressive stance, Ibid. (a) Senator "Patrick J. Toomey, R-Pa., notes" that the "Boston Fed has . . . an 'intense interest in 'racial justice activism,'" so it "favors political action against American society, which 'still is intentionally shaped by racism'" according to the bank. (Ibid.) (b) "The Minneapolis Fed" asserted that "'racism forms the foundation of inequality in our society'" and that (c) "(t)he Atlanta Fed" proposed "'restorative housing reparations'" (Ibid.) (d) while "(t)he San Francisco Fed's obsessions include climate change." (Ibid.)

With Federal Reserve banks promoting racial justice activism, restorative housing reparations and/or climate change initiatives, one wonders about our future tax burdens and the effects of political action against our society!

(3) As for the U. S. Congress, though "(a) Monmouth University poll taken in June showed 80% of Americans favor requiring voters to show government-issued photo IDs when they cast their votes, . . . U. S. Senate Republicans" had to stop House Resolution 1/S.1 "that would have imposed a nationwide ban on voter ID, . . . banned election officials from purging dead voters and other ineligible people from the rolls and . . . barred prosecution of illegal immigrants who had been registered automatically." (Letter by Russ Hurley, Goshen, Ibid., July 22, 2021, p. 8A)

Need: *So, we ask, "How does God want us to deal with strong rulers who perform destructive actions?!"*

- I. The rise of the Hebrew young woman Esther to become queen in Persia occurred because of several destructive actions that were performed by strong rulers, Esther 1:1-2:20 (as follows):**
- A. The feast that Persia's king Ahasuerus, alias Xerxes I (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, "Intro. to the Book of Ezra," p. 701) hosted in Esther 1:1-9 for his administrators and military leaders occurred in 482 B. C. to build up the morale of his army in preparation for its invasion of Greece. (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 702)
 - B. However, this was a reckless goal, for Ahasuerus' father, the King Darius I the Great, had repeatedly failed to conquer several rebellious Greek city-states due to his inferior military maneuvers, especially so at the epoch battle of Marathon that he lost in 490 B. C. (Compton's Ency., 1973, vol. 16, s. v. "Persian Wars," p. 214-215)
 - C. When Ahasuerus also foolishly became drunk at the feast only to call for his Queen Vashti to come to display her beauty to his guests, she might then have been pregnant with Persia's next king Artaxerxes I, so, appalled at being made a visual spectacle in her condition, she stayed away, Est. 1:10-12; Ibid., Bib. Know. Com., O. T.
 - D. Infuriated at Vashti's refusal to come, Ahasuerus sought counsel from his advisers, and they suggested that he depose Vashti as queen and that Ahasuerus decree that the men in Persia rule their wives throughout the land lest Vashti's insubordination example insubordination to their husbands by other women, Esther 1:13-20.
 - E. The king heeded this advice (Esther 1:21-22), another foolish move since he could not possibly enforce such an edict in every household in his dominion, but the foolish edict had come from a foolishly drunken king!
 - F. Then, in 479 B. C., Ahasuerus catastrophically invaded Greece only to suffer a terrible defeat at Platea when his ships were outmaneuvered by Greek boats much as his father's army was once outmaneuvered on land by the Greeks (Ibid., Compton's, p. 214-215). Ahasuerus then sought consolation from his harem and likely longed for his former Queen Vashti. (Ibid., Ryrie, "Intro. to the Book of Esther," p. 743, citing Herodotus 7.7)
 - G. However, Ahasuerus' advisers did not want Vashti to be reinstated lest she use her power as queen get the king to execute them in revenge for their past advice that he depose her. The advisers thus recommended that the king hold a competition among young virgins so he could select a new queen to replace Vashti, Esther, 2:2-4.
 - H. The king heeded this advice, and Esther won the competition to become Persia's next queen, Esther 2:5-20.
- II. However, God ALLOWED these destructive actions to occur to POSITION Esther to save her people:**

- A. God knew that a wicked man named Haman would try to destroy the Hebrews in Persia, Esther 3:1-15.
- B. Accordingly, the Lord arranged for Esther to be elevated to the position of Persia's queen that she might petition King Ahasuerus in behalf of herself and her people for their deliverance, Esther 4:13-14; 7:3-6.
- C. Furthermore, the Lord arranged for Persia's king Ahasuerus to need the consolation of his new queen Esther due to his colossal defeat at Platea that he might be even more inclined to grant her petition to save her people!

III. The Lord in turn ALLOWED Haman's potential catastrophe of the Hebrews to be faced by His people to move them out of a position of disobedience to do His will and to heed His Word (as follows):

- A. Hebrews like Mordecai and Esther who were still in Persia in 482 B. C. were actually disobedient to the Lord Who had used king Cyrus in 538 B. C. over 50 years beforehand to begin to direct them to return to Israel.
- B. Besides, Mordecai and Esther only partly obeyed God: Esther married a Gentile king in violation of Deuteronomy 7:3 and Mordecai's name honored Babylon's god Marduk, *Ibid.*, B. K. C., O. T., p. 703.
- C. Thus, God allowed the trial of Haman's threat to the Hebrews to rise that Hebrews like Mordecai and Esther be left feeling uneasy about remaining in Persia that they might obey the Lord and return to the land of Israel!

Lesson: *God encouragingly sovereignly allowed powerful secular rulers to make foolish, destructive decisions to demonstrate His faithfulness in preserving His people and to direct them to obey Him in returning to Israel.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Cor. 15:1-11. (2) May we realize that God is sovereign over even powerful, destructive rulers, using even their bad actions to help His people and to motivate them unto greater godliness.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

We apply the sermon on realizing God's sovereignty in using strong rulers' destructive actions (as follows):

(1) First, though God is sovereign over even strong, destructive rulers, He **does warn** us in Proverbs 20:2 to relate **cautiously** with strong, destructive human rulers, and Scripture elsewhere shows us **how** to do this (as follows):

(a) Proverbs 27:8 claims that even a "nobleman" (*ish*, Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1188; Robert B. Girdlestone, Syns. of the O. T., 1968, p. 48-50) who "is straying" (masc. ptc. *nodedet*, durative; *Ibid.*, Kittel) from his "place, post" (*maqom*, *Ibid.*, Kittel; B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 879-880) as a nobleman is like a baby bird that "is straying" (fem. ptc. *noded*, durative; *Ibid.*, Kittel) from its nest (and its mother's security). Even a nobleman must stick to God's assigned calling for him to enjoy God's [motherly] protection from foes like stronger, destructive kings!

(b) However, in heeding God's will, Proverbs 29:25a **nevertheless** warns us against personal "anxiety, terror" (*haradah*, *Ibid.*, B. D. B., p. 353) of others [like strong, destructive rulers], for such anxiety itself sets a harmful bird "snare" (*moqesh*, *Ibid.*, p. 678-681). We overcome such fear by "trusting" (durative ptc. of *batah*, *Ibid.*, p. 105) in the Lord Who "securely sets (us) on high" (*salag*, Pual impf., *Ibid.*, p. 960) above anxiety and its snare! (Prov. 29:25b)

(c) In summary, then, we must relate cautiously with strong, destructive rulers by (i) sticking to God's Biblical calling of us for His protection from such rulers (ii) while not being anxious about the rulers, but trusting God to help.

(2) Second, we discern God's Biblical will on the issues of concern in our introduction for His protection from strong, destructive rulers (as follows):

(a) On the Surgeon General's threat to try to keep us from gaining medical information the government claims is false, we can use God's Word that reveals many indisputably true practices for good hygiene such as the sanitary disposal of body discharges (Deut. 23:12-13), use of running water to cleanse (Lev. 14:50), quarantines (Lev. 12:1-4), sexual morality to avoid sexually transmitted diseases (Ex. 20:14), home remedies (1 Tim. 5:23), humility, revering God and shunning evil for blessings in health (Prov. 3:7-8) and eating natural foods (Gen. 1:29; 9:3; 1 Tim. 4:3b-5).

(b) On the threat of Federal Reserve banks directing taxpayer moneys toward harmful agendas, Scripture calls us to trust God for our livelihood provisions (Heb. 13:5-6) and that heads of households work for a living (1 Thess. 3:10; 1 Tim. 5:8; Psalm 62:10-12). Ecclesiastes 11:2 calls us to diversify our investments and accumulated assets for protection. However, accumulated assets and the political power to protect them can vanish (Prov. 27:24), so God calls us to focus on reliable income streams for financial stability and even wealth-building. (Prov. 27:23, 25-27)

(c) On the threat of many members of Congress trying to pass destructive legislation on voting, what can intensify lawlessness and disorder in society, Proverbs 29:18 teaches the value of **individual** self-control and obedience to God to gain God's **individual** blessings. Also, Proverbs 28:2 with 28:4 teach that understanding and knowledge lead an **individual** to influence a **troubled society** toward **lawful** and **orderly activities!**

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. May we realize God's sovereignty over even destructive, powerful rulers, and obey God's Word.