

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Esther: Encouragements Of God's Faithfulness
B. Thriving In The Marginalized Zone
(Esther 2:21-5:2)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) Many of us have chosen not to take the Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna or Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccines that are offered in the United States because aborted fetal cell lines were used to develop them. (Fred Guterl, "COVID-19 Vaccines and Fetal Tissue: The Science and Controversy Explained," March 13, 2021; newsweek.com; "Catholic women issue statement opposing use of 'abortion tainted' vaccines," March 9, 2021; catholicnewsagency.com) However, that choice puts us at risk of being marginalized, of being viewed with contempt.

(a) President Joe "Biden, seemingly fed up with persistent vaccine resistance among Americans, delivered a sharp rebuke to those who have yet to get shots." (Alexandra Jaffe, Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivak and Jonathan Lemire, "Biden orders vaccine rules for workers," Republican-American, July 30, 2021, p. 9A)

(b) Accordingly, FOX reporter "Geraldo Rivera" explained "that people who choose not to get vaccinated . . . should not be surprised to find themselves marginalized by the rest of society." ("Geraldo Rivera Lashes Out at FOX's Anti-Vaxxers," Ibid., p. 13B)

(2) Nevertheless, it is very unjust for one to be marginalized for refusing these vaccines, for key officials who promote them have sown seeds of doubt and dismay among the public about the Covid-10 vaccination issue itself:

(a) "New York Times columnist Bret Stephens is critical of misinformation presented by immunologist Dr. Anthony Fauci" on "herd immunity and other COVID-19 truths . . . As a result, . . . 93 million Americans who are eligible to get the vaccines have not gotten [the shot] . . . (T)hey . . . are waiting to see if it is safe, and didn't trust vaccines or the government." (Tom Purcell, "America needs beach vacation," Ibid., August 4, 2021, p. 9A)

(b) Also, Jason L. Riley's column, "If Biden Is Serious About Covid, He'll Protect the Border" (The Wall Street Journal, August 4, 2021, p. A17) stated, "In late April, the New York Times reported that . . . 'the failure of U. S. authorities to test adult migrants for the coronavirus in jam-packed centers is creating a potential for new transmissions, public health officials and shelter operators warn.'" Mr. Riley argued that if President Biden were serious about checking the spread of Covid-19 infections in our country, he would close the southern border! (Ibid.)

(c) In addition, President Biden, a self-professed practicing Roman Catholic, promotes the Covid-19 vaccines that were developed by use of aborted fetal cell lines, what conflicts with his own Church's official stand against abortion! For the president then to rebuke those who refuse vaccination for conscience's sake is very wrong!

(3) Regardless of all this, refusing vaccination may cost one more than marginalization -- it may cost him his job! "(S)ome of the nation's biggest companies" are tightening "vaccination and mask policies" (Jacob Bunge, "Tyson to Require Vaccines for U. S. Workers," Ibid., p. B1) and Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont last Thursday ordered "(s)tate employees, K-12 teachers and other school staff, and early childhood workers . . . to get vaccinated against the coronavirus or submit to weekly COVID-19 testing . . ." (Paul Hughes, "Vax mandate for state workers," Ibid., Republican-American, August 20, 2021, p. 1A)

Need: *So, we ask, "How does God want us to handle unjust trials of marginalization for our beliefs?!"*

- I. Due to their Biblical beliefs, the Persian Hebrews were seriously marginalized by Haman, Esther 3:1-15:**
- A. When Persia's king Ahasuerus promoted Haman the Agagite above all of his other princes, the king ordered his servants to bow to Haman, giving him divine honor in accord with Persian custom, Esther 3:1-2a; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Esther 3:2.
 - B. However, one servant, the Hebrew Mordecai, heeded Deuteronomy 6:13-14, not bowing to Haman, Est. 3:2b.
 - C. Discovering Mordecai's refusal to bow to him to give him divine honor infuriated Haman, Esther 3:3-5.
 - D. Haman then learned that their Law ordered Hebrews like Mordecai to give divine honor only to God, so Haman planned to solve his problem by killing all of Persia's Hebrews, Est. 3:6, 8 ESV; Ibid., fn. to Est. 3:6.
 - E. Haman thus gained the king's approval to destroy all of the Hebrews in the realm of Persia, Esther 3:7-15.
- II. However, Haman's plan was his downfall: the king's edict included killing righteous Hebrews in Israel who were under Persian rule but who had obeyed God in returning to the land of Israel, and God had pledged in Deuteronomy 28:1-2, 7 to give them victory over their foes like Haman, B. K. C., O. T., p. 705.**
- III. Accordingly, God planned to defeat Haman along with his plan, but BEFORE the Lord did so, Mordecai and Esther exemplified how to handle serious marginalization for one's Biblical beliefs (as follows):**

- A. Mordecai tried to heed Persian law, exposing an assassination plot to kill the king, Est. 2:21-23; Rom. 13:1-4.
- B. However, when the king's edict countered Scripture's directive, Mordecai practiced civil disobedience, refusing to give divine honor to Haman and worshipping only the God of Scripture, Esther 3:1-2; Acts 5:29.
- C. Esther chose to appeal to the civil authority of the king to deliver her Hebrew people from harm, Est. 4:1-17.
- D. Esther also chose to help her people by taking a selfless personal stand for righteousness, Esther 4:11; 5:1-2.

Lesson: Mordecai and Esther handled trials of marginalization for their Biblical beliefs by heeding civil laws unless forced to practice civil disobedience in heeding Scripture, by taking a selfless stand to help the afflicted and by using one's position of influence to appeal to the civil authorities on behalf of their afflicted Hebrew people.

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 (a) heed secular authorities (b) unless we must practice civil disobedience to obey God over man, (c) may we take selfless stands to help the afflicted and (d) use what positions of influence we have to appeal to civil authorities on behalf of afflicted people.

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

We apply the sermon lesson to the issues presented in our sermon introduction (as follows):

(1) To obey Romans 13:1-4 and Acts 5:29, we allow for freedom of conscience on whether to take the Covid-19 vaccines. The many contradictions of the authorities in directing the public how to respond to the pandemic have made it difficult for many to discern truly right from wrong actions, so we allow for personal conscience and God's leading in each case. [If we decide **not** to take the vaccines, may we try to keep our immune systems in peak working condition by ingesting healthy foods and food supplements, getting adequate rest, exercise and minimizing stress!]

(2) Like Esther's personal stand in behalf of her Hebrew people, as a pastor, I have stated in my sermons that are posted on the Internet for the world to see my personal refusal to take the Covid-19 vaccines due to the use of aborted fetal cell lines that were used to develop them.

(3) Also, like Esther who used her position of influence to help her people, upon request by believers who attend our Church, and in their behalf due to their conscientious objection to the Covid-19 vaccines, I as a pastor am writing letters to various school and business authorities to explain and defend believers' opposition to the vaccines.

This is a legally acceptable action for me to take: Eric Brown, a labor lawyer here in Connecticut, asserted in his column, "Clear communication best way through vaccination minefield" (Sunday Republican, August 15, 2021, p. 2C), " . . . (I)f you have a religious objection that is personal and sincerely held, your employer should probably provide you with a vaccine exception . . . However, there remains no requirement for an employer to provide its employees with vaccine exceptions where there are no religious objections or disability concerns for the employee." The same provision applies to state employees: Governor Ned Lamont's order last Thursday for state employees to be vaccinated came with the provision that "(m)edical and religious exemptions will be allowed." (Ibid., Hughes)

(4) Regarding the **threat** of a job loss for refusing Covid-19 vaccines, Matthew 6:31-34 calls us not to worry about our livelihood needs, for God knows what we need, and He cares about our welfare. However, we must seek His kingdom and righteousness and He will then meet our livelihood needs. We need to function like the Hebrews in this sermon who obeyed God by returning to the land Israel from Persia under Ezra.

(5) If we would ever **lose** a job for taking a Biblical stand, Scripture provides guidelines (as follows):

(i) In response to the job loss, God may lead us to start up our own business, and if so, He directs that we humbly follow His lead each step of the process of starting up that business, James 4:13-17.

(ii) If we have been unjustly fired or not paid some income we have earned in our former job where we were a hired employee, we must patiently wait for God to act on our behalf to make amends, James 5:1-11.

(iii) If we face trials in getting hired for a new job after losing our former job for taking a stand, (1) we should pray for God's help (1 John 5:14-15), using (2) **persistent prayer (aiteite, present imperative)**, (3) **persistently seeking (zetaite, present imperative)** for a job and (4) **persistently knocking (krouete, present imperative)** on doors of job opportunities, Matthew 7:7-8. (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 22; William D. Mounce, The Analyt. Lex. of the Grk. N. T., 1993, p. 56, 232, 292) (5) Be aware that God may provide the job only when we are in desperate need, having run completely out of money (Hebrews 4:16), and that to teach us to trust Him or to teach us some other important lesson! When we greatly need income, God has our undivided attention, so He uses such a trial to teach us!

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 obey civil laws, practice civil disobedience only to obey God's Word over man, use our influence to help the wrongly marginalized and take public stands as needed to help other afflicted people.