

#AncientWisdom #Reality #Truth&Appearances

Who's the real 'enemy'? When appearances don't match reality:

Who do I trust? The 'good guy' we know coerces a prominent influencer to do something that disobeys God's word right after a seemingly 'bad guy' acknowledges God and frees him to do what he thinks best. A good lesson in discernment, the role of government, and 'self-control.

Backstory: 2500 years ago conflict in the Middle East resulted in the fall of Israel as a nation. Babylon (modern day Iraq) burned down the capitol and took all the leaders captive. They left a caretaker governor and just enough people to maintain the infrastructure. The departing general released the prominent political influencer Jerry (Jeremiah). Afterwards certain guys killed the governor and forcibly took Jerry and everyone else to flee to Egypt in order to escape Babylonian control. Notice the contrast:

Enemy General

The Lord has done this. You guys sinned & would not listen to the Lord and disobeyed. So He sent us to punish you. Now, I release you. You are free to go wherever you wish, with me or remain here. (Jer 40:2-4)

Fellow Judaites

Johanah & all the 'proud' captains would not obey the Lord saying, Jeremiah speaks falsely. Instead they forcibly took all the people remaining, including Jeremiah, to Egypt. (Jer 43:4f)

Q: How was the appearance different from the reality?

Q: Who fell for the appearance of things?

Q: Who was most aligned with the truth?

Q: And really who are the 'proud' today?

It would be going further than the Bible itself allows to draw firm conclusions about who are "God's people" in truth and who are not in our day. I do think, though, that the Bible is our starting point for sharp discernment between freedom and coercion. Free people need to beware coercing others or being pressured, especially against the known will of God.

Furthermore, the Bible elsewhere informs us that while God provides human government to protect our God-given liberties, it is only God's Spirit who can enable free people to be 'self-controlled'. In other words, responsible to use and maintain our freedom for good and not for evil.