

Kingdom Economics: Guided by an Invisible Hand

Adam Smith, often called the father of modern economics, was an 18th-century Scottish philosopher and author. In 1759, he published a book, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. In 1776, the same year as the Declaration of Independence, he published his most famous book, *An Inquiry into the Nature, and Causes, of the Wealth of Nations*. In both books, he described economic forces, which he referred to with the metaphor of an invisible hand, that would automatically guide the economy to a point that is best for the economy and society.

These economic forces are self-interest, competition, and supply and demand. Self-interest is important because most people strive to better themselves. Competition is a force which causes many to try to improve themselves. Supply and demand use prices, incomes, and profits to ensure quantity demanded equals quantity supplied.

Businesses attempt to maximize profits, workers attempt to maximize incomes, and buyers attempt to maximize their satisfaction by making wise purchases. Businesses are successful if they better meet customer needs. Workers are successful if they are more productive. Consumers vote with their shopping preferences to determine which products should be produced and in what quantities.

Adam Smith's theories argue that the capitalistic system and free markets will always outperform regulated and planned economies. Taxes should be low. Government economic policies should be minimal. Labor should focus on jobs that match their skills. Private property should be protected. A strong legal system, which enforces private property rights, is a prerequisite. According to Adam Smith, and today's Classical and Neoclassical economists, there is an invisible hand which

directs an economy to an equilibrium which is best for society.

The scripture refers to the Lord as our Good Shepherd. A shepherd leads, guides, and protects the sheep. The scriptures do not specifically use the invisible hand metaphor, but His sovereign hand is evident throughout scripture, creation, and our individual lives. We know that His word does not return void, that our days are foreordained, that He will keep us safe, and that all things will work together for our good.

"Your eyes have seen my formless substance; and in Your book were written, all the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them," (Psalms 139:16, NASB 2020).

"For You are my rock and my fortress; for the sake of Your name, You will lead me and guide me. You will pull me out of the net which they have secretly laid for me, for You are my strength," (Psalms 31:3-4, NASB 2020).

Sometimes when it appears that all is lost, a series of what appears to be impossible consequences will converge until the Lord's will is accomplished. The book of Ester is one such story. Until victory was assured, it wasn't obvious that the Lord was moving or who the victor would be. But after the fact, it was obvious that events were being guided by an invisible hand to accomplish the will of God.

King Ahasuerus of Persia ordered Queen Vashti to display her beauty at a drunken party. The Queen refused. The King was angry and ordered that the Queen never come into his presence again. (Note that the culture in Persia would never condone a Queen displaying her beauty publicly.)

The King searched for a new queen. Beautiful young virgins were brought to Susa. After a year of beauty treatments, each virgin was to appear before the king. Among the virgins, was a Jewess named Ester. Ester received favor from her beauty attendant. Since Ester was an orphan, her cousin Mordecai had

been her guardian. Ester was selected as the new queen. (Note that this would be very unlikely in the natural.)

Mordecai was sitting at the King's gate. He missed Ester and they would share messages back and forth. Their relationship had not been made public. Mordecai heard of a plot against the King and informed Ester. The King stopped the plot and killed the guilty. (Note that this appears to be a random event unrelated to the story.)

Haman, a servant of the King, was promoted to a position of authority. All the servants and people were bowing to Haman, except Mordecai. He refused to bow to him. Haman plotted to have all Jews annihilated. A lot was cast to determine the month and day. A letter, under the King's seal, was sent to the provinces to eliminate the Jews on the 13th day of Adar and to seize their possessions (Note the situation appeared impossible).

Ester learned of Haman's plot. At the risk of her life, she went to the King and invited the King and Haman to a banquet. At the banquet, Ester asked that they return the next day for another banquet. As he was leaving, Mordecai failed to bow, and Haman was infuriated. He decided to have Mordecai hanged the next morning before Ester's banquet. (Note that even if Ester exposed the plot, it would have been too late for Mordecai.)

The King couldn't sleep. He decided to read the records which reminded him of the plot against him. The King discovered that the informant had not been honored and the very next morning he asked Haman to honor Mordecai publicly. (Note that the odds of Mordecai being rewarded that morning is nearly impossible. It appears the Lord is moving, and the Jews have hope.)

At the Banquet, Haman was exposed and shortly thereafter hanged. Mordecai was promoted to authority. The Jews were given permission to defend themselves. The Jews celebrate

their salvation from Haman every year. (Note that God is victorious.)

When it looked darkest, the Lord was still working. Negative circumstances were changed into blessings. All things work for our benefit. The Lord is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Although it may appear dark and currently impossible, the Lord is working and His invisible hand will change circumstances to bless His sons and daughters. {eoa}

“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose,” (Romans 8:28, NASB 2020).

Dr. James Russell *is a professor of economics at Oral Roberts University.*

Get Spirit-filled content delivered right to your inbox! Click [here](#) to subscribe to our newsletter.