

THE MIRACLE OF ISRAEL: REGATHERED-2 *GOD'S UNBREAKABLE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM*

As long as man has been on earth Satan has sought to derail the plan of redemption.
Cain kills Abel.

God has to exterminate the contaminated race except for Noah and kin.

Babel unites the world against God.

Abram is chosen.

The Jews are persecuted first by Egypt then by Amalek. Finally they get to go to the land of Canaan where they slowly drift from God over and over until they are judged by dispersion.

A 1,000 years has passed. Israel lies scattered in exile from one corner to the other across the Persian Empire. "The¹ Persian Empire was remarkable; it stretched virtually over a continent, from Greece to Afghanistan, and from Egypt and Libya to western India. There was nothing like it before, and its size and durability were not repeated until the time of the Roman Empire". There² were perhaps 15 million Jews scattered throughout the Persian Empire. Because of Haman's hatred, all of them were now appointed to die, unless they pulled up stakes and left the kingdom. But if they did that, where would they go? Even their own land of Israel wasn't safe because it was under the rule of Ahasuerus. Since the Persians ruled "from India to Ethiopia" (1:1), there were very few accessible places to which the Jews might flee.

So we look tonight at one of the greatest moments in history was the moment that God's Chosen people of promise were within a few days of almost total extinction. Never in all the countless years from Abraham's call to the birth of Christ were they ever closer than in our study tonight. Please open with me to the 17th Book of God's Word is the only book in the Bible completely devoted to examining how completely the Lord is committed to the Preservation of Israel as His chosen people. That book is the Book of Esther and to that little 10 chapters just before Job and Psalms is where we need to go this evening!

THE THEME

One of the most comforting and powerful themes of God's Word is the providence of God. Kings may issue their unalterable decrees, but God overrules and accomplishes His purposes. In seminary most pastors encounter the monumental works of Augustus

¹ Matthew Stolper, the John A. Wilson Professor of Oriental Studies and an expert on Persia.

² Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Committed*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1994.

Hopkins Strong's *Systematic Theology*. In that massive work he states that providence was "that³ continuous agency of God by which He makes all the events of the physical and moral universe fulfill the original design with which He created it . . . Providence is God's attention concentrated everywhere". What an encouraging definition! "God's attention concentrated everywhere."

- Throughout Scripture⁴, God is revealed as the One who controls all things. He controls in sovereign freedom:
 - the thunder and the lightning,
 - the rain and the snow
 - the rivers and the mountains,
 - the heat and the cold,
 - the animals and the birds,
 - the cities and the nations,
 - the newborn and the dying,
 - the healthy and the sick,
 - the poor and the rich,
 - the weak and the strong,
 - the simple and the complex,
 - the ruler and the ruled,
 - the human and the demonic, and
 - the natural and the supernatural

THE EXAMPLE OF JOSEPH. As one of twelve brothers born to Jacob in fulfillment of God's covenant promise to Abraham, he innocently became the target of the jealous hatred of his brothers. Joseph was sold into slavery, taken to Egypt, falsely accused of seducing his employer's wife, thrown into prison. and divinely enabled to interpret dreams for a fellow prisoner and then for the pharaoh. Joseph was eventually elevated to rulership second only to Pharaoh himself and because of that high position was able to rescue his own family from famine and was marvelously reunited with them. Without the use of a single miracle, God sovereignly, by providence, directed every moment of Joseph's life and the lives of those around him. Realizing that profound truth, Joseph was able to say to his repentant brothers, "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive" (Gen. 50:20; cf. 45:5).

THE EXAMPLE OF RUTH. In another beautiful picture of providence, God directed the lives of the godly Naomi, her Moabite daughter-in-law Ruth, and her future son-in-law, Boaz. Through the faithful witness of Naomi, Ruth was brought to faith in the true God, and through the unselfish love of Boaz, Ruth was brought into the lineage of the Messiah, becoming the great-grandmother of David.

THE BOOK

³ Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 419-420.

⁴ MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Romans*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

Esther⁵ is one of five Old Testament books that the Jews call "The Writings" or "The Five Megilloth." (The word *megilloth* means "scrolls" in Hebrew.) The other books are Ruth, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Solomon, and Lamentations. Each year on the Feast of Purim, the Book of Esther is read publicly in the synagogue; and whenever the reader mentions Haman's name, the people stamp their feet and exclaim, "May his name be blotted out!" To Jews everywhere, Haman personifies everybody who has tried to exterminate the people of Israel. This evening we will see why Haman was such a dangerous man. By the 7th chapter of Esther Haman was dead, but his murderous edict (Esther 3:8-15) was still very much alive. Long after wicked people are gone, the consequences of their evil words and deeds live on. In one stroke the death warrant for every Jew known to be alive on Earth was signed by the King who ruled the Persian Empire. Unless something intervened, within nine months the Persians would attack the Jews and wipe them off the face of the earth. There were about 15 million Jews among the estimated 100 million people in the empire. Therefore, the odds were definitely against God's people. Of course, God's people have always been a minority; and "one with God is a majority." The Lord had brought Esther and Mordecai to the kingdom "for such a time as this," and they were prepared to act.

- God not mentioned in Esther. The word "king" is found over 100 times in the Book of Esther, and the name of the king nearly 30 times; but God's glorious name is not mentioned once. Just as God's name is also found to be absent from Song of Songs by Solomon. But in both the Lord is wonderfully presented to the eye of faith.
- The events described in this book took place between 483 and 473 B.C. when the Persians were in control. The Book of Esther fits between chapters 6 and 7 of the Book of Ezra. Xerxes ruled from 485 to 465, and Esther became queen in 479. At that time a Jewish remnant was struggling to rebuild their nation in the Holy Land (Ezra 1–6), but the people were not totally committed to God.
- This book also reminds us that God was caring for His people Israel and fulfilling His promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:1–3). Every enemy that has ever tried to exterminate the Jewish nation has been defeated. At Passover, the Jews celebrate God's victory over Egypt. Every December at Hanukkah ("Feast of Lights"), they celebrate the victory of Judas Maccabaeus and the cleansing of the temple in Jerusalem. Purim commemorates their victory over Haman and his conspiracy in the Persian Empire. Satan continues to attack Israel, but the Jews, protected by God, are still in the community of nations and will be until Jesus comes and establishes them in their promised kingdom.

Nowhere is the drama of God's plan for Israel and Satan's attacks against Israel more clearly seen than in the backdrop of Esther. In this short ten chaptered book of 147 verses we meet two men who represent God's plan at work in the world today. First is the instrument Satan was using at that moment to try to thwart God's Word. His name was **HAMAN**. He is mentioned 45x in the Scriptures. Hamaan means literally "magnificent", he was the chief minister of Ahasuerus, he was the enemy of Mordecai

⁵ Much of this background material is quoted and adapted from Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Committed*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1994.

and all the Jews, who plotted to kill the Jews but, being foiled by Esther, was executed, with his family, on the post he had made for Mordecai]. **Haman was the last descendent of the Jew killing Amalekites** [3:1] poised to at last exterminate the people of the Covenant.

And then there is the instrument God was using **MORDECAI**. Mordecai is mentioned 60x in the Scriptures, and his names means literally "little man". He was the cousin and adoptive father of queen Esther. From God's perspective he was the son of Jair of the tribe of Benjamin who would be deliverer under Divine providence of the children of Israel from the destruction plotted by Haman the chief minister of Ahasuerus. God used Mordecai as the institutor of the feast of Purim. He also became a Jew who returned from exile with Zerubbabel. But most of all in the larger view of things, God found at last **a faithful and obedient descendent of Saul** [2:5] to be the tool God uses to complete His plan for the Amalekites.

THE TEXT

Esther 4:12-16 And they related Esther's words to Mordecai. Then Mordecai told [them] to reply to Esther, "Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape any more than all the Jews. "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. **And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?"** Then Esther told [them] to reply to Mordecai, "Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish." (NASB)

THE HISTORY

Satan is our mortal enemy. He works through the nations of the world. The Amalekites represent the world arrayed against the people of God. They were first to attack the people of God. The chronology of the Agagites, Amalekites and Israel:

1. **AMALEK WAS ISRAEL'S FIRST FOE** Exodus 17:8 Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. (NKJV) through v. 16 THIS IS at the exodus (1445 BC).
 - o **GOD IS OUR VICTORY.** Jehovah-nissi, our Banner as He fights the enemies of His Kingdom for us. Exodus 17:8-10, 14-16 Then Amalek came and fought against Israel at Rephidim. 9 So Moses said to Joshua, "Choose men for us, and go out, fight against Amalek. Tomorrow I will station myself on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand." 10 And Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought against Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this in a book as a memorial, and recite it to Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven." 15 And Moses built an altar, and named it The LORD is My Banner; 16 and he said, "The LORD has sworn; the LORD will have war against Amalek from generation to generation." (NASB)

A. **WE NEED TO SEEK HIS INTERVENTION IN THE BATTLES OF LIFE.**

Exodus 17:11 So it came about when Moses held his hand up, that Israel prevailed, and when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed. 12 But Moses' hands were heavy. Then they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it; and Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other. Thus his hands were steady until the sun set. 13 So Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

2. **GOD COMMANDS THEM TO DESTROY THEIR ENEMIES COMPLETELY.** God told Moses to write in a book that He had declared war on the Amalekites and would one day utterly destroy them because of what they had done to His people. Moses reminded the Israelites of the Amalekites' treacherous attack before they entered the Promised Land. Deuteronomy 25:17-19 Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, 18 "how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you [were] tired and weary; and he did not fear God. "Therefore it shall be, when the LORD your God has given you rest from your enemies all around, in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess [as] an inheritance, [that] you will blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. You shall not forget. (NKJV) THIS IS CONQUEST (1406 BC.)

3. **SAUL FAILED TO CARRY OUT GOD'S ORDER:** Saul, the first king of Israel, was commanded to destroy the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15); and he failed in his commission and lost his own crown. (It was an Amalekite who claimed he put Saul to death on the battlefield. See 2 Sam. 1:1–10.) 1 Samuel 15:20 And Saul said to Samuel, "But I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. (NKJV). THIS IS 400 years later (1050-1010 BC)

- AMALEK WAS THEIR FOE. Deuteronomy 25:17-19 "Remember what Amalek did to you along the way when you came out from Egypt, 18 how he met you along the way and attacked among you all the stragglers at your rear when you were faint and weary; and he did not fear God. 19 "Therefore it shall come about when the LORD your God has given you rest from all your surrounding enemies, in the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you must not forget. (NASB)
- THE FLESH IS OUR FOE. Colossians 3:5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. (NASB)
- THE HOLY SPIRIT IS JEALOUS FOR OUR WHOLE HEARTED DEVOTION. James 4:5 Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? (NASB)
- THE REWARD FOR COMPLETE DEVOTION TO THE LORD IS FABULOUS. Isaiah 33:14-16 Sinners in Zion are terrified; Trembling has seized the godless. "Who among us can live with the consuming fire? Who among us can live with continual burning?" 15 He who walks righteously, and speaks with sincerity, He who rejects unjust gain, And shakes his hands so that they hold no bribe; He

who stops his ears from hearing about bloodshed, And shuts his eyes from looking upon evil; 16 He will dwell on the heights; His refuge will be the impregnable rock; His bread will be given [him;] His water will be sure. (NASB)

- GOD HAS PROMISED THE VICTORY. In the Old Testament Balaam prophesied the coming doom of the Amalekites. Numbers 24:20 And he looked at Amalek and took up his discourse and said, "Amalek was the first of the nations, But his end [shall be] destruction." (NASB)
- GOD WANTED TO USE SAUL FOR THE TASK BUT SAUL FAILED THE TEST. He did not finish the work of God.
- THE COMMAND WAS CLEAR. 1 Samuel 15:1-3 Then Samuel said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you as king over His people, over Israel; now therefore, listen to the words of the LORD. 2 "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I will punish Amalek [for] what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt. 3 'Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.' " (NASB)
- THE DISOBEDIENCE WAS TRAGIC. 1 Samuel 28:18 "As you did not obey the LORD and did not execute His fierce wrath on Amalek, so the LORD has done this thing to you this day. (NASB)

3. **HAMAN IS THE RESULT OF SAUL'S FAILURE:** Now Haman the Agagite serving under Xerxes [486-465 BC] attacks Israel again 500 years later ! Because Saul didn't fully obey the Lord, some Amalekites lived; and one of their descendants, Haman, determined to annihilate his people's ancient enemy, the Jews.

- Note God's providence in the fact that King Saul, a Benjamite, failed to destroy the Amalekites; but Mordecai, also a Benjamite (Es. 2:5), took up the battle and defeated Haman.
- Note God's providence in the fact that the founder of the Amalekites was a descendant of Esau (Gen. 36:12), and Esau was the enemy of his brother Jacob. This was another stage in the age-old conflict between the flesh and the Spirit, Satan and the Lord, the way of faith and the way of the world.
- Note the seven evil characteristics God hates, and remember them as you read the Book of Esther, for you will see them depicted in this depraved man. Everything about Haman *God hated!* "These six things the Lord hates, yes seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren" (Prov. 6:16-19, NKJV).

THE LESSONS

HAMAN IS A TRAGIC EXAMPLE IN Esther 3:1

1. **HAMAN EXEMPLIFIES INJUSTICE:** At some time between the seventh and twelfth years of the reign of Ahasuerus (v. 7; 2:16), the king decided to make Haman chief officer in the empire. Think of it: Mordecai had saved the king's life and didn't receive a word of thanks, let alone a reward; but wicked Haman did nothing and

was promoted! There are many seeming injustices in this life; yet God knows what He's doing and will never forsake the righteous or leave their deeds unrewarded. (See Ps. 37.)

2. **HAMAN EXEMPLIFIES ANTICHRIST:** Some Bible students have seen in Haman an illustration of the "man of sin" who will one day appear and ruthlessly rule over humanity (2 Thes. 2; Rev. 13).
 - o Haman was given great authority from the king, and Satan will give great power to this wicked world ruler we call the Antichrist (Rev. 13:2, 4).
 - o As Haman hated the Jews and tried to destroy them, so the Antichrist will usher in a wave of worldwide anti-Semitism (12:13–17). At first, he will pretend to be friendly to Israel and will even make a covenant to protect them, but then he will break the covenant and oppose the very people he agreed to help (Dan. 9:24–27).
 - o As Haman was ultimately defeated and judged, so the Antichrist will be conquered by Jesus Christ and confined to the lake of fire (Rev. 19:11–20).
 - o God permitted Haman to be appointed to this high office because He had purposes to fulfill through him. (See Rom. 9:17.) God takes His promises seriously and will not break His covenant with His people. J. Vernon McGee used to say, "The Jew has attended the funeral of every one of the nations that tried to exterminate him"; and Haman was not to be an exception.⁶

GOD SHOWS HIS PROVIDENCE EVEN IN THE SELECTION OF DATES BY HAMAN (Es. 3:7).

- o Haman and some of the court astrologers cast lots to determine the day for the Jews' destruction. This was done privately before Haman approached the king with his plan. Haman wanted to be sure that his gods were with him and that his plan would succeed.
- o The Eastern peoples in that day took few important steps without consulting the stars and the omens. A century before, when King Nebuchadnezzar and his generals couldn't agree on a campaign strategy, they paused to consult their gods. "For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the road, at the fork of the two roads, to use divination: he shakes the arrows, he consults the images, he looks at the liver" (Ezek. 21:21, NKJV). The Babylonian word *puru* means "lot," and from it the Jews get the name of their feast, Purim (Es. 9:26).
- o It's interesting that Haman began this procedure in the month of Nisan, the very month in which the Jews celebrated their deliverance from Egypt. As the astrologers cast lots over the calendar, month by month and day by day, they arrived at the most propitious date: the thirteenth day of the twelfth month (v. 13). This decision was certainly of the Lord, because it gave the Jews a whole year to get ready, and because it would also give Mordecai and Esther time to act. "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord" (Prov. 16:33, KJV).

⁶Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Committed*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1994.

GOD SHOWS HIS PROVIDENCE IN THE PLACEMENT OF ESTHER IN THE KING'S COURT

Her being in the palace was not an accident, for she had "come to royal position for such a time as this" (Es. 4:14, NIV). Mordecai asked Esther to step back and notice God's hand in her life. Joseph had the same perspective: "But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive" (Gen. 50:20, NKJV). As you ponder Mordecai's words, you will learn⁷ some basic truths about the providence of God that are important for Christians today.

- The first is that ***GOD HAS DIVINE PURPOSES TO ACCOMPLISH IN THIS WORLD***. God's purposes involve the Jewish nation as well as the Gentile nations of the world. They also involve the church. God deals with individuals as well as with nations. His purposes touch the lives of kings and queens and common people, godly people and wicked people. There is nothing in this world that is outside the influence of the purposes of God.
- Mordecai made it clear that ***GOD ACCOMPLISHES HIS PURPOSES THROUGH PEOPLE***. While He was not the author of his sins, God permitted the king's drunkenness and his foolishness in deposing Vashti. He used the king's loneliness to place Esther on the throne; and, in chapter 6, he will use the king's sleeplessness to reward Mordecai and start to overthrow the power of Haman. In great things and little things, God is sovereign.
- The third truth that Mordecai emphasized was that ***GOD WILL ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSES EVEN IF HIS SERVANTS REFUSE TO OBEY HIS WILL***. If Esther rejected the will of God for her life, God could still save His people; but Esther would be the loser. When ministers and missionaries appeal to the church for volunteers for Christian service, they sometimes give the impression that God's work is at the mercy of God's workers; but this isn't true. If you and I refuse to obey God, He can either *abandon us* and get somebody else to do the job, and we will lose the reward and blessing; or He can *discipline us* until we surrender to His will. Two examples come to mind.
 1. Since John Mark left the mission field and returned home (Acts 13:13; 15:36–41), God raised up Timothy to take his place (16:1–3).
 2. When Jonah ran from God, the Lord kept after him until he obeyed, even though he didn't obey from his heart.
- The fourth lesson from Mordecai's speech is that ***GOD ISN'T IN A HURRY BUT WILL FULFILL HIS PLANS IN DUE TIME***.
 1. God waited until the third year of the king's reign before taking Vashti off the throne.
 2. Then he waited another four years (Es. 2:16) before putting Esther on the throne.
 3. It was not until the king's twelfth year (3:7) that God allowed Haman to hatch his evil plot,
 4. and He decreed that the "crisis day" for the Jews would be almost a year away.

⁷ Adapted from Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Committed*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1994.

GOD SHOWS HIS PROVIDENCE IN HIS PATIENCE: If you were reading the Book of Esther for the first time, you might become impatient with God and conclude that He was doing nothing.

- In chapters 1 and 2, a drunken king and his flattering advisers seem to be in charge.
- From chapter 3 to chapter 6, it looks as though wicked Haman is in control.
- Even after Haman is off the scene, it's the king's unalterable decree that keeps everybody busy. *But where is God?* God is never in a hurry. He knows the end from the beginning, and His decrees are always right and always on time.
- Dr. A.W. Tozer compared God's sovereign purposes to an ocean liner, leaving New York City, bound for Liverpool, England. The people on board the ship are free to do as they please, but they aren't free to change the course of the ship.

"The mighty liner of God's sovereign design keeps its steady course over the sea of history," wrote Dr. Tozer. "God moves undisturbed and unhindered toward the fulfillment of those eternal purposes which He purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began" (*The Knowledge of the Holy*, p. 118). The sovereignty of God doesn't suggest fatalism or blind determinism, both of which would make life a prison. Only a sovereign God is great enough to decree freedom of choice for men and women, and only a sovereign God could fulfill His wise and loving purposes in this world and even make evil cooperate in producing good (Gen. 50:20). The question is not, "Is God in control of this world?" but, "Is God in control of my life?" Are we cooperating with Him so that we are a part of the answer and not a part of the problem? To quote Dr. Tozer again: "In the moral conflict now raging around us whoever is on God's side is on the winning side and cannot lose; whoever is on the other side is on the losing side and cannot win" (p. 119).⁸

PERSONAL APPLICATIONS WE CAN DRAW FROM ESTHER

GOD'S PROVIDENCE MEANS HE IS AT WORK GUIDING HIS PLAN FROM START TO FINISH. Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform [it] until the day of Jesus Christ: (KJV)

GOD WILL DEFEAT HIS ENEMIES WHOEVER THEY MAY BE! EVERY ENEMY THAT HAS EVER TRIED TO DESTROY ISRAEL HAS BEEN DESTROYED. "I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you" is God's promise to Israel (Gen. 12:3, NKJV), and He has always kept it. God takes His promises seriously even if the nations of the world ignore them or challenge them. This doesn't mean that God necessarily approves everything Israel has done or will do, but it does mean that God doesn't approve of those who try to destroy His chosen people. Whether it's Pharaoh in

⁸ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Committed*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1994.

Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon, Haman in Persia, or Hitler in Germany, the enemy of the Jews is the enemy of Almighty God and will not succeed.

- Amalekites 1500 BC
- Canaanites 1400-1300 BC
- Philistines 1200-1000 BC
- Syrians 1000-800 BC
- Assyrians 800-700 BC
- Babylonians 700-600 BC
- Persians 600-300 BC
- Greeks 300 BC - 100 BC
- Romans 100 BC - 400 AD
- Europeans, Moslems, etc. 400 AD onward

GOD ALWAYS WINS

- His Sovereign plans are never frustrated . . .
- Human hatred and bitterness always lead to personal destruction as in Haman.
- God uses regular people like us who will obey Him. 2 Chronicles 16:9 For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of [them] whose heart [is] perfect toward him. (KJV)

GOD'S PROVIDENCE IS SEEN NEGATIVELY IN HIS LAWS OF SOWING AND

REAPING: God's law of sowing and reaping is illustrated throughout the Bible, *and it applies to both believers and unbelievers*. NEGATIVELY "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked," warned Paul. "A man reaps what he sows" (Gal. 6:7, NIV). "Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same" (Job 4:8, KJV). "He who sows wickedness reaps trouble" (Prov. 22:8, NIV).

- Haman sowed anger against Mordecai, and he reaped anger from the king.
- Haman wanted to kill Mordecai and the Jews, and the king killed Haman.
- Jacob killed an animal and lied to his father, pretending to be Esau (Gen. 27:1–29); and years later Jacob's sons killed an animal and lied to him, pretending that Joseph was dead (37:31–35).
- Pharaoh gave orders to drown the Jewish baby boys (Ex. 1), and one day his army was drowned in the Red Sea (Ex. 14–15).
- David secretly took his neighbor's wife and committed adultery (2 Sam. 11), and David's own son Absalom took his father's concubines and openly committed adultery with them (16:20–23).
- David killed Bathsheba's husband (11:14–25), and three of David's own sons were slain: Absalom (2 Sam. 18), Amnon (13:23–36), and Adonijah (1 Kings 2:13–25).
- Saul of Tarsus encouraged the stoning of Stephen (Acts 8:1); and when he became Paul the missionary, he was stoned at Lystra (14:19–20).

GOD'S PROVIDENCE IS SEEN POSITIVELY IN HIS LAWS OF SOWING AND

REAPING: If we sow to the flesh, we reap corruption; but if we sow to the Spirit, we reap life everlasting (Gal. 6:8). No good deed done for the glory of Jesus Christ will ever be forgotten before God. No loving word spoken in Jesus' name will ever be wasted. If we don't see the harvest in this life, we'll see it when we stand before the Lord. Even a cup of cold water given in the name of Christ will have its just reward (Matt. 10:42; 25:31–46).

NO WEALTH OR POWER ON EARTH CAN EVER HELP US ESCAPE GOD: Haman was hanged, or impaled, on his own gallows, and his body taken down and buried. *All of Haman's wealth and glory couldn't rescue him from death nor could he take any of it with him.* "Those who trust in their wealth and boast in the multitude of their riches, none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him—for the redemption of their souls is costly. . . . Do not be afraid when one becomes rich, when the glory of his house is increased; for when he dies he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him" (Ps. 49:6–8, 16–17, NKJV)