

06-18-2017

Message: Those Who Fight Against God Will Fail

Test: Esther 6:13 - 8:2

Introduction

- A. In the book of Esther, whose unknown author is inspired by the Spirit of the Lord, the Lord is showing us that by His unseen hand He is in control, sovereignly working behind all human history and all the individual events of our personal lives for the accomplishment of His glorious purposes, including the good and ultimate preservation of His people.
1. The Lord is showing us this to sustain and strengthen our faith and hope in Him, especially during difficult times that test our faith.
 2. The way God has inspired the author to communicate this to us is through several means ...
 - a. satire - poking fun at the folly of those who, thinking they are in control, oppose God's people and purposes.
 - b. extreme reversal of fortunes between the righteous and the wicked
 - c. apparent coincidences that are too extraordinary to be truly coincidental to those with eyes of faith.
- B. Last week in chapter 6 we saw God using all three of these means to communicate His sovereign love and protective hand orchestrating the events in the lives of His people.
1. On the same evening when prince Haman was having gallows built on which to execute and humiliate Mordecai the Jew, it just happened that king Ahasuerus couldn't sleep and had the history of the Persian kings read to him. And it just happened that the section recording Mordecai's saving the king from an assassination plot was read to the king, who determined to give Mordecai a reward that just happened to have been uncharacteristically neglected four years earlier.
 2. And Haman just happened to come to the king's court early to ask to have Mordecai hanged, just as the king looked to ask someone how Mordecai might be rewarded.
 3. And now the satire kicks in. Haman, full of himself, assuming the king wants to reward him, advises that a chief prince should lead the honoree around Susa on the king's horse proclaiming his honor. So the king responds, "Good idea. You, my chief prince, lead Mordecai around."
 4. So in a humorous and dramatic reversal of fortunes, Mordecai is honored and Haman is humiliated.

Esther 6:11 So Haman took the robe and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and led him *on horseback* through the city square, and proclaimed before him, "Thus it shall be done to the man whom the king desires to honor."¹² Then Mordecai returned to the king's gate. But Haman hurried home, mourning, with *his* head covered.

- C. But Haman's humiliation would not stop there. God was bringing him down to destruction. Haman made himself an instrument in the hands of the evil one, fighting against God, His purposes and His people. Those who resist and fight against God do so to their own destruction, for our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ will achieve the total defeat of His enemies, and the total preservation of His people.

I. 6:13 Family, friends, rulers and the wise of this world have no counsel against the Lord.

Esther 6:13 Haman recounted to Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him. Then his wise men and Zeresh his wife said to him, "**If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish origin (zera = seed), you will not overcome him, but will surely fall before him.**"

- A. Previously Haman's wife and friends gave him counsel to alleviate his frustration with Mordecai the Jew.

Esther 5:12 Haman also said, "Even Esther the queen let no one but me come with the king to the banquet which she had prepared; and tomorrow also I am invited by her with the king."¹³ "Yet all of this does not satisfy me every time I see **Mordecai the Jew** sitting at the king's gate."¹⁴ **Then Zeresh his wife and all his friends said to him,** "Have a gallows fifty cubits high made and in the morning ask the king to have Mordecai hanged on it; then go joyfully with the king to the banquet." And **the advice pleased Haman,** so he had the gallows made.

- B. Yet when Haman came to the king's court to ask to have Mordecai hanged, God reversed the counsel of family and friends so that Haman would end up honoring the one he came to execute. Once Haman's family, friends, wise men saw their counsel reversed, even they came to a level or realization that the God of Mordecai would cause Haman to fall and his plan to exterminate the seed of Abraham to fail.
- C. God had purposed and promised that in the seed of Abraham people from all nations of the earth would be blessed. That purpose and promise would be fulfilled by the One who would come to earth around 450 years later from Esther as the divine man and Messiah, Jesus Christ the Lord, the descendent of Abraham.

Esther 6:13 ... "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, **is of Jewish origin (zera = seed),** you will not overcome him, but will surely fall before him."

Genesis 22:18 "In your **seed (zera)** all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because

you have obeyed My voice."

Galatians 3:16 Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to **his seed ... that is, Christ.**

- D. There is no defeating God's purposes. There is no wisdom or counsel against the Lord. Rejoice in this, people of God. It is because of this that we are His gathered people of promise today!

Proverbs 19:21 Many plans are in a man's heart, but **the counsel of the LORD will stand.**

Proverbs 21:30 There is **no wisdom and no understanding and no counsel against the LORD.**

Psalms 33:10 The **LORD nullifies the counsel** of the nations; **He frustrates the plans** of the peoples. ¹¹ **The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of His heart** from generation to generation.

- E. Do not neglect or resist the counsel of His Word. How blessed are those who walk in it!

Psalms 107:11 ... they had rebelled against **the words of God** and spurned **the counsel of the Most High.**

Psalms 1:1 **How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,** nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! ² But his delight is in **the law of the LORD,** and in His law he meditates day and night.

II. 6:14 Those who resist and oppose the Lord will lose even the control they think they have.

Esther 6:14 While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hastily brought Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared.

- A. Even before Haman was ready, the king's eunuchs hurriedly brought him to Esther's banquet with the king. Haman was losing control. He was never truly in control, and even the control he thought he had was being taken away from him, because he did not listen to the counsel of the Lord.

Luke 8:18 "So **take care how you listen;** for whoever has, to him *more* shall be given; and whoever does not have, **even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.**"

- B. We resist/fight against the purpose and promise of God to fill the earth with His glory when we resist His control over our lives. We think we are in control, that what we do with our

bodies, our energies, our recreation, time, possessions, our sin is no one's business but ours, not even God's. In that case even the control over our lives that we think we have will be taken away. God, not you, will be minding your business, and there is nothing you can do about it.

Habakkuk 2:14 "For **the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD**, as the waters cover the sea.

Isaiah 14:27 "For **the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it?** And as for **His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?**"

III. 7:1-4 The Lord appoints us to reflect His image by identifying with and interceding for His people.

- A. God continues to turn the heart of the king in favor of Esther, Ahasuerus addressing her a "Queen Esther," resurrecting the subject of her request, and offering to generously grant it.

Esther 7:1 Now the king and Haman came to drink *wine* with Esther the queen.² And the king said to Esther on the second day also as they drank their wine at the banquet, **"What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you.** And what is your request? **Even to half of the kingdom it shall be done.**"

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is *like* channels of water in the hand of the LORD; **He turns it wherever He wishes.**

- B. Esther puts herself at risk by identifying with her people who are under the decree of death, and interceding on their behalf. (Esther underscores the gravity of her request, both by using the 3 words "destroyed," "killed," and "annihilated," as well as by showing it is of greater gravity than would have been the total enslavement of her people.)

Esther 7:3 Then Queen Esther replied, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, **let my life be given me as my petition, and my people as my request;**⁴ for **we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed and to be annihilated.** Now if we had only been sold as slaves, men and women, I would have remained silent, for the trouble would not be commensurate with the annoyance to the king."

- C. In being willing to forfeit her royal status and very life in order to identify with and intercede for the life of her people, Esther reflects the heart and image of Christ, Who would leave His royal glory above to come to identify with His people under condemnation to death, in order to intercede for them.

Hebrews 2:14 Therefore, **since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same,** that through death He might render powerless him

who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

Isaiah 53:12 Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, and He will divide the booty with the strong; because **He poured out Himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors**; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and **interceded for the transgressors**.

- D. We ourselves ought not to be ashamed to be identified with Christ and His people, but rather to further the name of Christ and intercede for the well-being of His people.

2 Timothy 1:8 Therefore **do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner**, but join with *me* in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God ...¹⁶ The Lord grant mercy to the house of **Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains**;¹⁷ but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me--¹⁸ the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day-- and you know very well what services he rendered at Ephesus.

Romans 12:16 Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, **but associate (be led away with) with the lowly**. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

IV. 7:5-7 The Lord will expose the sin of the wicked.

Esther 7:5 Then King Ahasuerus asked Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who would presume to do thus?"⁶ Esther said, "**A foe and an enemy is this wicked Haman!**" Then Haman became terrified before the king and queen.⁷ The king arose in his anger from drinking wine *and went* into the palace garden; but **Haman stayed to beg for his life from Queen Esther, for he saw that harm had been determined against him by the king**.

- A. All these years Esther had hidden her ethnic identity. Haman had no idea that when he manipulated the king to give him authority to condemn and annihilate the Jews, that Ahasuerus's queen was a Jewess. Beyond any affection Ahasuerus had for his queen was his desire to keep his honor in tact. To have his queen under his protection be killed by his own unwitting edict both angered and created a problem for the king. Perhaps he went angrily to his garden to think of how to both preserve Esther and his honor.

Isaiah 54:17 "No weapon that is formed against you will prosper; and **every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn**. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their vindication is from Me," declares the LORD.

- B. Haman foolishly expected to carry out the annihilation of the Jews without it becoming a concern of or even exposed to the King as anything wicked. One day Jesus will return to expose the thoughts, intentions, actions of all, and the foolish live as though this won't happen.

Proverbs 10:9 He who walks in integrity walks securely, **but he who perverts his ways will be found out.**

Luke 12:1 ... He began saying to His disciples first *of all*, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.² "But **there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.**³ "Accordingly, **whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light**, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms will be **proclaimed upon the housetops.**

1 Corinthians 4:5 Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, *but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts*

- C. Just as Haman was unwittingly hostile toward Ahasuerus by condemning Ahasuerus's queen, so also those who condemn and commit hostility and violence against believers will be held guilty of doing the same to the Lord.

Matthew 25:40 "The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, **to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.**'

Luke 10:16 "The one who listens to you listens to Me, and **the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me.**"

Acts 9:4 Now **Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord,** went to the high priest,² and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.³ As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him;⁴ and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "**Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?**"

V. 7:8 - 8:2 God causes the wicked to fall by their own wickedness while preserving His people in safety.

- A. Another dramatic reversal of fortunes occurs in a moment, pointing again to the unseen hand of God's providence, orchestrating events for His purposes. Esther had just been pleading for her and Jewish lives to be delivered from the hand of Haman. Now Haman was pleading with Esther, a Jew, for his life.

Esther 7:8 Now when the king returned from the palace garden into the place where they were drinking wine, **Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was.** Then the king said, "**Will he even assault the queen with me in the house?**" As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.

1. One Persian edict on harem conducts states, "A courtier or eunuch when he would speak with a woman of the palace should not approach closer than seven steps." But desperate Haman fell on Esther's couch.
 2. In another "coincidence" by which we see the unseen hand of God, Ahasuersus enters at that very moment. Whether or not he believed Haman was actually sexually assaulting the queen, the mere position of Haman gave the king the pretense he needed to preserve both Esther and his honor. He could execute Haman for sexual assault without any mention of Haman's edict against the Jews to which he had in his indifference and ignorance given his consent. His eunuchs then covered Haman's face, implying his condemnation.
- B. At the suggestion of a eunuch, the king ordered Haman to be hung (or impaled) upon the 50 cubit gallows (or pole) Haman had built to execute and shame Mordacai.

Esther 7:9 Then Harbonah, one of the eunuchs who *were* before the king said, "Behold indeed, the gallows standing at Haman's house fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai who spoke good on behalf of the king!" And the king said, "Hang him on it."¹⁰ **So they hanged Haman on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai,** and the king's anger subsided.

1. And so the wisdom the Lord had given His people through David and Solomon 500 years earlier to teach them to trust in Him came true ...

Psalm 7:15 He has dug a pit and hollowed it out, and **has fallen into the hole which he made.**¹⁶ **His mischief will return upon his own head, and his violence will descend upon his own pate.**

Proverbs 11:8 The righteous is delivered from trouble, **but the wicked takes his place.**

2. And the prayer the Lord had given His people to call on Him in such times of trouble was answered ...

Psalm 141:8 For **my eyes are toward You, O GOD, the Lord; In You I take refuge;** do not leave me defenseless.⁹ Keep me from the jaws of the trap which they have set for me, and from the snares of those who do iniquity.¹⁰ **Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while I pass by safely.**

3. In yet another dramatic role reversal, Mordecai not only had his life spared and his enemy's taken instead, but he inherited the king's honor, authority, and house which once belonged to Haman.

Esther 8:1 On that day King Ahasuerus gave the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews, to Queen Esther; and Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had disclosed what he was to her.² The king took off his signet ring which he had taken away from Haman,

and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman

Conclusion

- A. This Persian king's wrath would not subside until the man who dishonored him was destroyed.

Esther 7:10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai, **and the king's anger subsided.**

- B. The wrath of our God who created us, the King of all creation, will never subside against us humans who have all dishonored Him by our sin and resistance to Him, unless the death of His Son, Jesus Christ, is applied to our guilt, removing God's wrath from us. That wrath is removed from all who sincerely and wholeheartedly give their lives in faith to His Son Jesus as Lord, in Whom believers dwell in safety.

Romans 3:23 for **all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God,²⁴ being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in **Christ Jesus;**²⁵ **whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith ...** so that **He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.**