

Providence over Plots & Plans - Esther 2:19-3:15
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

The events of September 11, 2001 went a long way to shake our country's psyche. Of course, it left the nation feeling vulnerable and threatened. Add to that the loss of life and mourning of families and friends. But something else happened, although briefly, in the mind set of our country. We had been (and continue) to live in a culture that has embraced a worldview called Postmodernism that at the core declares that there is no such thing as truth, and also no such thing as right or wrong. In this view evil does not actually exist, people are basically good and if given the right upbringing, cultural situation, and opportunity they will generally do the right thing. But the relativism of our culture was confronted with the reality of evil, pure and demonic evil willing to commit atrocities that impacted masses. You see, relativism, which has affected all of us more than we want to admit, works here because we are able to keep this sort of evil at arms length. An honest assessment of the world, though, will confront the comfortable view that evil is nothing more than a social construct. We have September 11, the Holocaust and Hitler, and currently the atrocities being committed by the Taliban, the North Korean government, and China with the Uyghurs that reveal the reality of evil in this world. In our own history here we have the evils of slavery and the racism during the Civil Rights Movement, assassinations of presidents and other key leaders, dishonesty and atrocities toward Native Americans among many other evidences of wickedness and evil.

Back to September 11. For some reason, on September 12 you did not hear the message of moral relativism. Nobody ever looked at the wicked terrorist making the claim, "Well, if we were just to understand their situation we could see that what they did was really just them living out their truth." Nobody stood up defending Osama Bin Laden claiming, "You know, there is no such thing as right or wrong." Moments like this confront us with a simple truth, there is something deeply wrong in the world, but worse, something deeply wrong with the human heart. We are shocked and start asking, "How could something like this happen?" And of course there are questions about the existence of God and His goodness, claiming that if there was a good God this sort of evil and suffering could not exist. We even turn our focus toward the perpetrators of evil wondering what is wrong with those people. Yet, it did not take long for America to jump back on the Postmodernism train eating their meals in the relativism car. Yet, these events happen all over the world over and over again and should push us toward the unsettling truth that evil is a very real thing. But the question of evil should also push us to look at ourselves, and if we do, honestly do, what we will find is that there is also something deeply wrong, depraved, evil in us. Terrorists, evil rulers, genocidal maniacs, and assassins are evil. They deserve justice and they need Jesus. But so am I and so do I.

Our story in Esther this week brings us to two evil plots being devised by people. The plots are evil and so are the people involved. The first is an assassination plot against the king which is discovered by Mordecai. In other words, it just so happened that Esther was now the queen, and it just so happened that her cousin Mordecai caught wind of and foiled an assassination plot against Ahasuerus. The outcome is that Bigthan and Teresh got human justice, Mordecai's name was recorded in his historical annals, but beyond that he was basically forgotten (for now). The second half of the story involves a genocidal plot by the king's new right hand man, Haman, against the Jews. After Mordecai refuses to bow to him as a god, Haman determines

not only to rid the empire of Mordecai, but of all Jews. We learn in the text that Haman is an Agagite, a reference to his being a descendant of the kings of the Amalikites and one of Israel's staunchest enemies from the time of the Exodus. Now in power, he uses his political clout to get an edict issued for the mass extermination of all Jewish people around the entire Persian Empire on a specific day in the 12th month of Adar. The date was determined as Haman basically used the equivalent of dice to consult the gods to determine the day of their favor. And the edict went out everywhere, including to Jerusalem that on this date a year out all Jews were to be killed, and those who carried out the king's command could keep their stuff. This plot is pure evil, and at the time the question arises, where is God? Oh, but He is there, He is sovereign, and is ruling over even these events in His providence. God will save His people, and no evil plot can thwart the purpose of God. And the story highlights that God always has a people, often marginalized and weak in terms of worldly power, yet they are loved and backed by the Ruler of the Universe, and He will move heaven and earth to keep His promises and show His love to them (us).

Yet, to be among his people we first have to cast off our relativistic view of evil and realize that there is something deeply broken and in need of redemption inside me. This is the first step to finding Jesus.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Luke 7	Luke 8	Luke 9	Luke 10	Luke 11	Luke 12	Luke 13

Reading from this past week: Esther 2:1-19-3:15

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Esther 4:1-17

Family Worship

Song - *The Gospel*

<https://youtu.be/uCibVFxaJW8>

Gospel Project

Story: God Created People

Big Picture Question: Why Did God create everything?

Answer: God created everything for His glory and our good.

Scripture: Genesis 2

New City Catechism

Question #36: How does the Holy Spirit help us?

Answer: The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin, and he enables us to pray and to understand God's Word.

Verse: Ephesians 6:17-18

Scripture

Esther 2:19-3:15

- What is evil? Where do we see evil and wickedness in this story?
- How does the story show us God's providence even in evil circumstances and over wicked people?
- How does this story show us our own need for a Savior?

Prayer

*Pray for the people affected by deep evil in the world like that instigated by Haman.

*Pray for the men of Genesis Church.