

Providence in the Defeat of His Enemies - Esther 6:14-7:10
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

C'mon, be honest. If you read our chapter for this week you rejoiced a little bit that Haman got his, right? The ironic justice in the story is, well, satisfying. We want the horribly wicked people to get what is coming to them. Something inside of us ignites when we hear of this kind of evil and wickedness, and becomes full-fledged wrath when it happens to us or those we love. It is not satisfying for Hitler to die in the arms of his mistress in a Berlin bunker, we wanted him to be tried and executed in a way that would shame him for the atrocities. So when this foe of God's people, this wicked Haman has the tables turned in a single day we rejoice because justice is done and therefore the story is satisfying. The impulse for justice and for the wicked to be judged is not an accident, it is part of the glorious imago dei (image of God) that is core to our identity, which means it shows us that God is also a God of justice who rightfully displays His wrath against the evil in this world.

The story shows us the wrath of King Ahasuerus which ignites in a moment against Haman. Until now Haman has been the King's guy, and he actually is involved in the genocidal plan to exterminate the Jews and profit from their demise. Ahasuerus is actually all over the map emotionally in this story, and he really is just as guilty as Haman, but his guilt lies in his greed and desire for power and not his hatred of the Jews themselves. Yet, he is the king. So when he learns that the plan of Haman puts the life of his queen in danger, and was specifically pointed in the direction of Mordecai, the man who saved his life, lets just say the king's posture toward Haman changes rather quickly. Of course, this is also after a few drinks, which, you know, guarantees stability in decision making. Regardless though, the wrath of the king arises quickly and is compounded when he walks back in the room to find Haman falling toward Esther and he interprets this as an attempt at assault. Just like that, Haman is hanging from the same 75 foot tree he had prepared for Mordecai. Justice here is swift, albeit a bit imperfect and even irrational.

Now, before we get too excited in celebrating the demise of Haman, we have to learn how to read stories like this. We have been telling you all through the story of Esther that in reading this we must find the fingerprints of Yahweh as He orchestrates the story to display His glory in defending and rescuing His people. So we can't miss this, the whole story also demonstrates another King's wrath and justice. He uses the somewhat jacked justice of Ahasuerus as a display of the perfect wrath and judgment of God. So in reading we have to stop and wrestle with this, that the Bible tells us that the One True and Living God is a righteous judge who has holy wrath against all sin, idolatry, and injustice. Haman meets his end quickly in the story, and the Hebrew readers who engage this story will realize that this one in a long line of stories of God's wrath and judgment being poured out on people. They know the stories of Sodom and Gomorrah, Aaron's sons, Achan, and King Darius who quickly come to their end as God pours out His wrath. But we also have to understand the whole Biblical account of wrath and realize that the death of Haman is not the end of this wrath, he must then stand before God, the righteous judge. So too must Hitler and any other people who seemingly avoid the wrath of God on earth.

Our culture despises the doctrine of the wrath and judgment of God. Echoes of, "I can't believe in a God who judges people and sends them to hell," are chimed throughout the media and by our neighbors. We just want a God of love, a God who gives hugs and cute puppies to everyone. But I don't think people who are making this statement really know what they are asking. Think about this story. Do we really think a sweet loving grey bearded grandpa god is going to sway the evil heart of Haman. This god's people die by genocide without any recourse. While that may be loving to Haman, it is far short of loving to God's own people. Nope, the wrath of God is actually a deep expression of His love and settled disposition to hate evil and stand against it. Without His justice God's love would be nothing more than a sappy sentimentalism that would have no power to change anyone. But this also creates a massive problem for you and me. On one level, we are the Hebrews living in an evil world where evil threatens our very being and we need justice for us, someone who will step in and save us from

this evil. But on another level we too are Haman, perpetrators of evil and injustice and deserving of this wrath. What is our hope?

Of course, the answer the dilemma raised in Esther is the cross of Christ where the wrath of God was absorbed by God in the person of Jesus Christ. God's love is not sappy sentimentalism, it is a just love that judges all wickedness, yet He also absorbed that wrath as an act of His mercy and grace, maintaining His justice but granting His love freely to anyone who will turn from their evil and trust in Christ as their atoning sacrifice. The Bible uses the word propitiation to speak of Jesus' death for us. This word means an atonement that diverts God's wrath. This is the central truth of our faith. We are Haman deserving God's justice, yet God in His grace has provided rescue from His wrath through the death of Jesus. Oh the love of Jesus!

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Exodus 11	Exodus 12	Exodus 13	Exodus 14	Exodus 15	Exodus 16	Exodus 17

Reading from this past week: Esther 6:14-7:10

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Esther 8:1-17

Family Worship

Song - *Psalm 34 (Taste & See)*

<https://youtu.be/yOzf0VrDNGU>

Gospel Project

Story: God Spared Noah

Big Picture Question: What does it mean to sin?

Answer: To sin is to think, speak, or behave in any way that goes against God and His commands.

Scripture: Genesis 6-10

New City Catechism

Question #41: What is the Lord's Prayer?

Answer: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Verse: Matthew 6:9

Scripture

Esther 6:14-7:10

- Be honest, after hearing all the story of Esther, aren't you glad Haman got his just desserts?
- How is the wrath of God the same, and how is it different from the wrath of King Ahasuerus?
- Why is God's judgment necessary for His love to be real in this world? Which do you deserve, His love or His justice?
- Why is Jesus the answer to the dilemma created by God's holy justice and His perfect love?

Prayer

*Pray that the wrath and justice of God would lead you to quickly repent of sin and share the Gospel with your friends.

*Pray for our Genesis Kids leaders and ministry team.