

Last time we had Haman leaving the party that Esther had prepared for him and the King, with the expectation that there was going to be a second party the next day in honor of him. But as he left the banquet he saw Mordecai.

And as always, Mordecai would not give him the homage that Haman expected and this infuriated Haman, but he remained in control and called for his wife and friends to join him in a celebration.

Esther 5:11-12 ¹¹ Then Haman recounted to them the glory of his riches, and the number of his sons, and every *instance* where the king had magnified him and how he had promoted him above the princes and servants of the king. 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.

And so, as far as Haman is concerned he is the guest of honor at tomorrow's banquet and this certainly adds to the already glorious things he has recounted for his family.

And yet, as we saw last week, all of the things this man has attained and takes glory in there is one thing that would trump all of these achievements in his life.

Esther 5:13 ¹³ "Yet all of this does not satisfy me every time I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

He hated Mordecai along with every Jew like him in all the kingdom and he knows that in a short time his plan, which was sanctioned by the king, will come to fruition and all will be well.

But as we come to the end of chapter 5 we get a glimpse into the hearts of Haman's wife and friends.

Esther 5:14 - 6:1 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.

It seems that Haman and all of those close to him treat other human beings the way you and I treat our garbage. It's eventually got to be put out of the house because it is undesirable. We don't

give it a second thought. In fact, it's meant to put out to the curb. That's where garbage belongs and we're happy to see it go.

People who have been given authority and the power to execute it, if their hearts are bent on nothing but their advancement, eventually they see other people as only nuisances that get in the way of their happiness. And if they can order other people to build a gallows in just a few hours so as to take someone's life, then so be it.

What is it about the human heart that allows this sort of attitude?

Jeremiah 17:9 ⁹ "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?"

^{NAU} **Ecclesiastes 9:3** This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that there is one fate for all men. Furthermore, the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives. Afterwards they *go* to the dead.

Genesis 6:5-7 ⁵ Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. ⁷ The LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them."

We've touched on this passage before but it's worth noting again in light of the wickedness of man's heart as is seen in Haman and his family and friends who casually plot to kill someone they hate like you and I plan a birthday party. Paul addresses this.

Romans 3:10-18 ¹⁰ as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; ¹¹ THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; ¹² ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE." ¹³ "THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING," "THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS"; ¹⁴ "WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS"; ¹⁵ "THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD, ¹⁶ DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS, ¹⁷ AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT

KNOWN." ¹⁸ "THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES."

Paul is quoting Psalm 14 and Psalm 55.

What was true in David's day was true in Paul's day and is true today. But Paul put it into perspective when he wrote to the Ephesians.

Ephesians 2:1 ^{NAU} And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,

Keep in mind, who was Paul addressing in this passage?

The Ephesian believers.

But notice the past tense, you were dead, which suggests what about their spiritual condition now?

They are alive.

By the way, how does a dead person make a decision about anything?

What decision was Lazarus able to make before Christ came to him and told him to come out of the tomb?

He could not make any decision.

Then how did Lazarus hear and then walk out of the tomb alive?

He was given life.

So, then did he hear and act after he was given life by Jesus Christ, or before he was given life by Jesus Christ?

So, if the heart of all men is naturally wicked, as Jeremiah says, and dead, as Paul tells the Ephesians, and then according to Paul in Romans, is unable to seek for the Lord and unable to understand anything that relates to life eternal, how then is it possible for a dead man outside of Christ to hear His voice, let alone walk out of the tomb of eternal damnation?

So, what is the condition of all men as they are born into this world?

Ephesians 2:1-3 ^{NAU} And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. ³ Among

them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

What is the picture Paul is painting here of these Ephesians outside of Christ?

They were dead in their trespasses and sins. They lived in the lusts of their flesh and were by nature children of wrath.

In other words, Paul is saying that every person born into this world, including these Ephesian believers were by nature children of wrath, which is to say, people who hate God and who will suffer the wrath of God because of the deadness of their hearts which leads them to hate God.

But Paul is not talking to people who are dead in their trespasses and sins any longer, and who are no longer children of wrath.

What happened?

Ephesians 2:4-9 ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Look at verses 4- 5. How were these people made alive?

God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love toward His people made them alive and gave them eyes to see and ears to hear, because before He called them out of the grave He gave them life and they, like Lazarus, did the only thing a living person can do, and this is to respond in gratitude and love by faith in the One who called them.

This is the only reason that Mordecai stood on the promises of God along with Esther. They were no different than Haman or the king. They were part of the same group that David spoke of in Psalm 14 that Paul quoted.

Psalm 14:1-3 ^{NAU} For the choir director. *A Psalm* of David. The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does

good. ² The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God. ³ They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one.

So, what makes men like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Noah, or women for that matter, like Rahab, Esther or Ruth, seek after the things of God in faith which is reckoned to them as righteousness?

Because they have been given a new heart, born from above that only God can perform.

Ezekiel 11:19-20 ¹⁹ "And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, ²⁰ that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God.

Ezekiel 36:26-27 ²⁶ "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

Haman was a man like all men at his very heart and only desired to destroy the things of God including Mordecai whose heart of stone had been replaced with a heart of flesh by God Himself.

But notice how God, who is always in the business of turning the minds and hearts of people for His own good pleasure, begins to thwart the plans of Haman.

Esther 6:1-3 ^{NAU} During that night the king could not sleep so he gave an order to bring the book of records, the chronicles, and they were read before the king. ² It was found written what Mordecai had reported concerning Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs who were doorkeepers, that they had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. ³ The king said, "What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?" Then the king's servants who attended him said, "Nothing has been done for him."

So, what do you do when you can't get to sleep? You find the most boring book you can think of, a book of numbers and names and you have someone read it to you.

Well instead of putting the king to sleep it awakens him to a reality that he evidently had not considered. The reality is that the man

Mordecai had saved his life and he had not done anything noteworthy to thank him publicly. Well, that's going to change.

But what to do and how to go about honoring such a man. Well, lo and behold one of your most trusted advisors happens to be outside the hall, so why not seek his wisdom in this matter?

And who is this trusted advisor?

Haman. And why is Haman there in the first place according to verse 4?

To discuss the hanging of Mordecai whose gallows have already been built and for all we know it was all that racket of that construction that kept the king up.

Esther 6:6 ⁶ So Haman came in and the king said to him, "What is to be done for the man whom the king desires to honor?"

Now, remember I told you last week that this Haman is one who is proud, arrogant, full of himself, and one who puffs himself up at every opportunity. And I said that this attitude was going to be his downfall. And we see it at the end of verse 6.

Esther 6:6 And Haman said to himself, "Whom would the king desire to honor more than me?"

Now, if Haman were truly wise, what would have been his first question to the king?

Whom do you desire to honor, my lord? But that's not what Haman does. Because of his arrogance, there is only one person in the kingdom, especially in light of Esther's honoring him the day before and soon to be done again, who is worthy to be personally honored by the king.

Do you see how Esther's being wise as a serpent and innocent as a dove has set the stage for Haman's downfall? Now, I say Esther's wisdom. But, as we see all of this unfolding, who is really setting the stage for Haman's downfall and deliverance of the Jews?

God is not limited by man's choices in life or man's supposed autonomy. God is sovereign and will do as He pleases for His good pleasure to His glory.

Daniel 4:35 ³⁵ "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And *among* the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'

^{NAU} **Psalm 115:3** But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases.

^{NAU} **Job 42:2** "I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.

Isaiah 46:10-13 ¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure'; ¹¹ Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned *it, surely* I will do it. ¹² "Listen to Me, you stubborn-minded, Who are far from righteousness. ¹³ "I bring near My righteousness, it is not far off; And My salvation will not delay. And I will grant salvation in Zion, *And My glory for Israel.*

^{NAU} **Isaiah 14:24** The LORD of hosts has sworn saying, "Surely, just as I have intended so it has happened, and just as I have planned so it will stand,

You see there's a tendency to think that God is a by-stander when it comes to how the world works and operates and that periodically in history He will intervene and nudge people in the direction He would like them to move, but pretty much leaves it up to man as to how the world goes.

But from the verses we read what seems to be God's involvement in His creation, particularly the way in which He is involved in the affairs of men?

Have you ever thought, why was I born in a country that is, for at least the time-being, the most free and prosperous country in the world, when most people are born in countries that are less free, less prosperous, and in many cases steeped in poverty and despair?

Acts 17:24-26 ²⁴ "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; ²⁵ nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all *people* life and breath and all things; ²⁶ and He made from one *man* every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, ***having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,***

You and I were not born where and when we were born by accident. God had planned it for your life and nothing in this world

would have prevented it from happening because this is what God desired for a specific reason according to His good pleasure.

And so, when it comes to King Ahasuerus having the book of Chronicles, and by the way, this is not the book of Chronicles we have in our bibles. This would have been the written record of what was happening in his kingdom, but none the less he is prompted to have these records read to him. But this desire to do this was not by accident or a mere whim. God was even directing this for His purposes.

And what purposes might this serve?

To ultimately save His people.

So, in answer to the King's question to Haman about how to honor such a person, Haman blurts out what he would desire.

Esther 6:7-9 ⁷ Then Haman said to the king, "For the man whom the king desires to honor, ⁸ let them bring a royal robe which the king has worn, and the horse on which the king has ridden, and on whose head a royal crown has been placed; ⁹ and let the robe and the horse be handed over to one of the king's most noble princes and let them array the man whom the king desires to honor and lead him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him, "Thus it shall be done to the man whom the king desires to honor."

And so, thinking that the king would turn to Haman and declare him to be the recipient of such honor the king blind sides him with this.

Esther 6:10-11 ¹⁰ Then the king said to Haman, "Take quickly the robes and the horse as you have said, and do so for Mordecai the Jew, who is sitting at the king's gate; do not fall short in anything of all that you have said." 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."

And as is expected Haman finds himself in trouble because he knows that his request to have Mordecai hanged will not happen but when the king finds out that the people Haman wanted to destroy are the Jews, this is not going to go well in light of the fact that the king knows he is honoring the Jew, Mordecai. And worse, will soon discover that his queen is a Jew.

Esther 6:13-14 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, you will not overcome him, but will surely fall before him." ¹⁴ While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hastily brought Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared.

God is orchestrating all of this as He has placed His people in strategic places to accomplish His will and as we will see this also includes the way in which He will judge those who come against His people.

You and I in Christ are not alone, nor are we just out here in the world aimlessly being carried along. We have a God who purchased us with the blood of His Son, to whom we now belong, and He is using us and moving us in the world in which He has placed us for a purpose.

It is our responsibility to first and foremost to acknowledge this and then to walk in this life that He has purchased for us in Christ.

This is why we move forward with confidence knowing this.

Romans 8:28-31 ²⁸ And we know that ¹God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. ²⁹ For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; ³⁰ and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. ³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us?