

Last week Queen Esther finally got around to telling King Ahasuerus what she desired as she prepared a banquet for both the King and his trusted servant Haman.

Esther 7:3-5 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." ⁵ Then King Ahasuerus asked Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who would presume to do thus?"

The day of reckoning has now come and the Queen has orchestrated this event so that there would be no question as to who she was and the people she was representing and the fate of both. And now the king reacts in anger and asks who this person is who would presume to kill his Queen and her people.

Esther 7:6-8 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. 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.

Haman has now been accused before the king as the one who had devised a plan that the king signed into law that would place Esther under that law to be killed.

As we've discussed before as to what the king was thinking when he signed that law into effect and gave Haman everything at his disposal to carry out this law, we are not told; only that he didn't seem to question who these people were that were to be destroyed by Haman.

But now that everything is put into perspective the king is incensed and instead of grabbing Haman by the neck and strangling him, he

goes into the palace garden, presumably to catch his breath, gather his thoughts and calm down a little before going back to confront Haman.

Now during this time of the king in the garden Haman is begging Esther for his life, and in fact he was so distraught that he must have been hanging on her as he embraced her with tears because when the king comes back into the palace he finds Haman falling on the couch next to Esther assaulting the queen according to the NAS.

The NET, I believe, gives a pretty good sense of the scene.

^{NET} **Esther 7:8** When the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet of wine, Haman was throwing himself down on the couch where Esther was lying. The king exclaimed, "Will he also attempt to rape the queen while I am still in the building!" As these words left the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.

I don't think the king actually believed that Haman was assaulting or trying to rape the queen, but in his anger he makes such an accusation because Haman had no business being in any close proximity to the queen and Ahasuerus notes this with that accusation.

And as soon as the king makes the statement his handlers or eunuchs take control and essentially arrest Haman by force.

But one of the eunuchs is actually named and he comes up with a plan for Haman as we see in the next couple of verses.

Esther 7:9-10 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.

Notice what Harbonah does not do. He does not say to the king, let's hang Haman on the gallows.

What does he do?

He simply notes that there are gallows that Haman made next to his house with the express purpose of hanging Mordecai. And then he adds that this is the Mordecai who spoke well of the king.

Knowing his place and his responsibilities before the king, Harbonah carefully places this option in front of the king for the king to decide what he would like to do.

And how long do you suppose it took for the king to make his decision?

Esther 7:9 And the king said, "Hang him on it."

Now in today's world, and by that I mean western countries, Haman would have been read his Miranda rights, given a lawyer, and a court date and there would be a long judicial process where the courts would try him. And there would certainly be an opportunity for him to defend himself to where he might actually have a chance to be declared not guilty. After all, was anybody actually killed?

No. And so, simply because the intent was there to kill Mordecai and the Jews no one had actually been killed by Haman up to this point. But of course Haman is not living in a western country of the 21st century, but rather a kingdom where the king does pretty much whatever he likes.

Now there are countries in the world today that operate the same way, some of which would include places like Russia, North Korea, China and any number of Muslim countries. But, when Ahasuerus discovers that Haman would even consider killing the people of Esther, including Esther and Mordecai, the judge, jury and executor are all wrapped up in one person and the sentence is handed down immediately.

And the king's servants carry out the command.

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

So, Haman is dead, but there is still a problem and Esther knows it.

What is the problem?

There is still a problem of a decree that is on the books that demands the destruction of the Jews that the king has signed into law.

But Esther thinks that the king can simply revoke the law and all will be well. And the first part of chapter 8 specifically deals with

this issue of Esther approaching the king to make the law null and void with the stroke of his pen.

The problem is that once a decree has been officially put into effect it cannot be revoked.

Esther 8:8 for a decree which is written in the name of the king and sealed with the king's signet ring may not be revoked."

There are people today who take the same attitude toward God when it comes to His decrees. And many would suggest that God is cruel for punishing anyone and that a good God would never carry out the decree that states that in the day that you eat of the fruit of the tree that I forbid you will surely die.

Well we know that Adam eventually did die and this his body was put into the ground. But that punishment goes beyond the physical body dying in this world because God has made it clear that there is a second death.

Revelation 2:11 ¹¹ 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.'

Does anyone know what the second death is?

If there is a second death, then what is the first death and do Christians escape this first death?

How does anyone escape this second death?

Revelation 20:6 ⁶ Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

Now there has been some confusion over some of these issues like the first resurrection, the second resurrection, the thousand years that God's people reign with Christ and where that thousand year reign takes place and when. And the reason for some of the confusion over the last number of years has to do with a proper understanding of hermeneutics.

Got Questions.com defines Biblical hermeneutics like this.

Biblical hermeneutics is perhaps summarized best by [2 Timothy 2:15](#), "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Biblical hermeneutics is the science of properly interpreting the various types of literature found in the Bible. For example, a psalm should often be interpreted differently from a prophecy. A proverb should be understood and applied differently from a law. This is the purpose of biblical hermeneutics—to help us to know how to interpret, understand, and apply the Bible.

We don't have time tonight to deal with the different resurrections and the thousand year reign of Christ on earth, but when we come to passages like Rev.2:11 and 20:6, that speaks of the second death, we must then determine how to understand what God means by that through the very same word He has given us.

And fortunately we don't need to go far to get the answer from God's word.

Revelation 20:11-15 ¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one *of them* according to their deeds. ¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

The point is that when the King makes a decree it stands, but the King can set other laws that essentially give a way out of having to come under the sentence of death that the first decree states.

And so, for the child of God who has experienced the first resurrection according to Rev.20:6, the law of second death no longer hangs over their head because we have escaped God's wrath through the shed blood of Christ and His resurrection from the dead in which we stand.

It is His resurrection, by the way, which the word of God describes as the first resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:20-23 ²⁰ But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. ²¹ For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,

We have partaken of the first resurrection as we are taken from death to life.

Ephesians 2:4-6 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,

Colossians 3:1-4 ^{NAU} Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. ³ For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

Romans 6:4 ⁴ Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

Have we been literally bodily buried with Christ?

Have we been literally bodily risen with Christ?

But we have been literally identified with the literal death and burial of Jesus Christ as if we had paid the debt in full though Jesus paid it on our behalf.

And we have been literally identified with His resurrection as if we had raised to the Father in the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. And because we were dead in our sins we had to be literally given a life from above which can only be identified with Christ's resurrection.

And so, for the world without Christ there are two deaths, physical death and eternal resurrection death in the Lake of Fire. For the believer there are two resurrections; the first is a resurrection to life through Christ's resurrection which Paul calls having been made

alive together with Christ in Eph.2:5, and having been raised up with Christ, in Col.3:1.

There's much more we could say on this but the point of all of this which relates to king Ahasuerus's law to destroy the Jews is that as the king who has placed his seal on this law it cannot simply be revoked.

However there can be an additional law that will confront the first. In like manner God's decree to judge sin cannot be revoked. But there is a second law that can and will confront the first law of death and that is the law of Christ.

That law whereby our Lord Jesus would be born of a woman under the law and would legally take our place for sin and then nail it to the cross. Those who rush to this law, if you will, will find safe harbor and a home with Christ forever.

And we who have embraced this law, this life found in Christ's atoning work on our behalf as we embrace Him by faith, have a new law written on our hearts. It is first and foremost a law of life that death cannot overtake.

^{NAU} **Romans 8:2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

^{NAU} **James 1:25** But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

When we use the word law in these instances we could just as easily replace the word law with the word covenant.

The covenant that was given to Israel was the law or codes written on stone tablets which were never meant to save anyone but were to point to the perfection of God and drive people to the Messiah as that law was a tutor to Christ.

But the second covenant or new covenant is in the blood of Christ.

Matthew 26:27-28 ²⁷ And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave *it* to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; ²⁸ for ^athis is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.

1 Corinthians 11:25-26 ²⁵ In the same way *He took* the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

The second law could not eradicate the first law that king Ahasuerus put into place, but it could provide life for those who came under a death sentence by the hand of Haman. This second law gave hope to the Jews and they rejoiced in it. Next week, we'll look at this second decree from the King that the Jews rejoice in.

Esther 8:14-17 ¹⁴ The couriers, hastened and impelled by the king's command, went out, riding on the royal steeds; and the decree was given out at the citadel in Susa. ¹⁵ Then Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal robes of blue and white, with a large crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple; and the city of Susa shouted and rejoiced. ¹⁶ For the Jews there was light and gladness and joy and honor. ¹⁷ In each and every province and in each and every city, wherever the king's commandment and his decree arrived, there was gladness and joy for the Jews, a feast and a holiday. And many among the peoples of the land became Jews, for the dread of the Jews had fallen on them.

And the One who made this all possible was not Esther, not Mordecai or Ahasuerus. It was the God and Creator who put all of these people in place to accomplish His will and He has done the same thing for us as He has come at the perfect time to establish His second law, His second covenant to redeem a people for Himself.

Though it may have seemed hopeless for the Jews in Babylon during the reign of Ahasuerus when the decree to have them annihilated was put in place, at just the right time God came to their rescue with a second decree that cannot be revoked either.

For you and me, it was hopeless until God came at just the right time to redeem us.

Romans 5:6 ⁶ For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

And though we have a present resurrection life in Christ where we are seated with Him in a sense in the heavenly places, it is the hope to come whereby we will finally be delivered from this death as we

long to see our risen Christ and we will be like Him in our physical resurrection bodies that Paul describes as imperishable.

1 Corinthians 15:54-58 ⁵⁴ But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. ⁵⁵ "O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; ⁵⁷ but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in* vain in the Lord.