

Esther Series – God Is On Their Side Esther 8:1-9:2
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The title of the message is “God Is On Their Side.” I know you wanted me to say “our,” but just stay with me. God is on *their* side. We’re going to look at Esther chapter 8 and two verses into chapter 9 to finish up the story.

Today is February 19th 2012. It’s important that that is on the message. For 4,000 years since the days of Abraham (Abram becoming Abraham), God has protected his people that we call Israel and God is not about to stop now.

We have an immutable God. “Immutable” means “unable to change.” he can’t change. Even if he wanted to change, he can’t change. That’s why there had to be a sacrifice sufficient to pay for your sins because God cannot just arbitrarily change and say, “Oh, don’t worry about your sin.” he has to be holy and just – perfectly – and so there has to be a sacrifice for your sin. That’s part of God’s immutability. God does not change.

Hebrews 13:8 “***Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.***” Amen. God does not change.

Here’s a little thing that I really want you to get in your mind. Just grasp this for me. 2 Peter 3:8 (from the NLT) says this: “***But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day.***”

What does that mean? That means that God called Abram (to be renamed Abraham) out of the world to be his covenant people four days ago. That’s when Abraham was called out of Ur. That’s when Abraham was called to bring his family into the Promised Land. That’s when the promises were made to Abraham that God would make his descendants more than the sand in the sea. It was four days ago. We think, “Oh, 4,000 years ago. Well, certainly God has changed in 4,000 years.”

No. Not only is God immutable (meaning he cannot change), but his calling and his promise to Abraham was four days ago. So when I say “day,” you think thousand years where I exist but one day where God exists. Four days ago, God began to birth the nation of Israel, the Jewish people. Four days ago, God called Abram and made a promise to him that he would make a great nation out of him. God doesn’t change, certainly not in four days or 4,000 years – even 4,000 years in God’s years.

If every day in 4,000 years is a thousand years, then you take how many days there are in 4,000 years and you multiply that by a thousand and that’s how many days it’s been, and God has still not changed and he’s not going to change. When God called Abram in Genesis 15:6, it was really the reiteration of the covenant call.

Genesis 15:6 (NLT) says, ***“And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith.”***

I want you to know that this was the only condition on Abraham. Abram believed (Abram/Abraham, same person). That was the condition. Abram believed and the Lord counted him as righteous because of his faith. First salvation in the Bible by faith alone. God doesn't change. Sola fide (by faith alone), solely faith since Genesis 15:6 in the Abrahamic covenant. So then, right here in Genesis 15, God promises to Abraham again that he is going to give him the Land of Canaan. That's that area we call Israel today. He's going to give it to him as a permanent inheritance for his descendants.

In Genesis 15:8, just two verses later, Abraham says to God, ***“How can I be sure that I will actually possess it?”*** It's interesting how comfortable Abraham felt with God. “God, I know you're saying it, but how can I be sure?” And God, in his grace, at that moment made an incredible one-sided unconditional covenant with Abraham. He put him into a trance so that he knew that he had no part in this covenant. God made a covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15 that was unilateral, that was immutable, and that was unconditional. The only condition was Abraham's faith which we saw in verse 6.

From that moment in Genesis 15, God's covenant with the people who would become the people of Israel was put into permanent effect and it has not changed today. It has not changed. Why? One, because that was only four days ago. Two, because we have an immutable God who does not change.

Now the Jews had made a lot of bad choices in the last four days, haven't they? I don't mean our four days; I mean God's four days. In those four days, the Jews have really let God down a lot. Isn't it good for your sake that God has not changed his covenant to the Jews even though they let him down? Why? Because if he changed because of *their* failure, then that means he'll change because of *your* failure. You don't want a God who changes based on your failure. You want an immutable, unchangeable, covenant-making God. That's the God we have, and we see that God in the people of Israel, the nation of Israel.

God made a covenant with Abraham and then he revisited the covenant with Isaac and with Jacob who would be renamed Israel and his twelve sons would become the twelve tribes of Israel. Through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve tribes, God just reiterates and reiterates and reiterates his unilateral, unconditional, guaranteed covenant to love and protect his people and for them to accomplish what he purposes for them to accomplish.

This is as true as any truth in the Bible is. It's as true as any other truth you can find. It's all happened in the last four days where God exists, and it's still happening today – unilateral promise, unilateral unconditional covenant between God and his people that we call the Jews.

Just one more important thing: God also made a promise about the nation of Israel. He made a promise to other nations about the nation of Israel. This promise is both in the positive and in the negative. It's in Genesis 12, the first time God made his promise to Abraham. He says, "***I will bless those who bless you*** (that's a promise by an unchangeable God), ***and him who dishonors you*** (the word literally means "turns his back on you") ***I will curse.***"

We love the first half of that verse, especially in this country because our history is to bless Israel. And so we expect those blessings. God has made promises and we trust God, but this second half is just as true. "Him who dishonors or turns his back on you, I will curse."

Throughout Israel's four-day history with God, God has proven it over and over and over again. The nations that bless Israel, God blesses; the nations that dishonor or turn their back on Israel, God curses.

You might say, "Dave, why today and why the rant?" And I will tell you for two reasons. Number one, that's what our text is about today. How about that? What a coincidence – that we would just happen to teach Esther after Ruth, after Acts, after whatever else we taught. We just happen to be going verse by verse through Esther and we just happen to reach this critical chapter today, because the second reason I'm on this rant is because I am describing to you today's front page news.

I'm describing to you today's front page news which is why I put the date, which we don't normally do. This is both a historical message and a prophetic message. There are two things I want you to see as we jump in to Esther 8.

Number one, I want you to see God's sovereign and guaranteed protection of his people. By the way, Esther happened two and a half days ago. So as we read two and half days ago and we see God's sovereign protection and his guaranteed existence of his people, it's just as true today as it was two and a half days ago.

Number two, I'd like you to consider the consequences of the Genesis 12 promise. "I will bless those who bless Israel and curse those who turn their back on Israel." Maybe it's not so clear yet; you have to see it a little between the lines, but I might point it out for you. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we just say together as a church, "We love Israel. We love the people of Israel. We love your people." Lord, I pray, God, that number one, we would see how vitally important that is; and number two, Lord, that you would cause our hearts to be drawn to Your people. Lord, we would recognize that if we are in Christ today, then we are grafted in. We are grafted in to that olive tree, Lord. We don't belong and we don't deserve, but we're adopted sons and daughters. How can we curse the family we'd been adopted into?

And God, even more so you've given us, in our salvation, a higher standing before you than unbelieving Israel. But still we recognize, Lord, Your unconditional covenant with these people. Lord, may we have reverence and awe for that. And Lord, may we see in you your character of immutability. May we know, Lord, that if you won't change because of Israel's actions, you won't change because of our actions. And if you've promised to take care of them, Lord, just as much you've promised to take care of us if we belong to you, Lord.

Help us to see the connection and help us to see through the media haze into prophecy unfolding before our eyes, Lord. We pray you do it now by Your Word and by Your Spirit. In Jesus' name, amen.

We left Esther back in chapter 7 with enemy number one being impaled on a 75-foot pole. The illustrations of Haman being impaled on that pole are limitless. For instance, after Esther revealed Haman's plan, God made sure that Haman was *stuck* as an example to those who would curse Israel. I could just go all day with the illustrations of Haman being impaled on that pole.

Esther 8:1 ***“On that day*** (that was the same day that Haman was impaled), ***King Ahasuerus gave to Queen Esther the house*** (The estate, the property, everything that was owned of Haman. That was a lot. The estate of Haman was massive. Do you remember how much silver he gave King Ahasuerus to get him to allow him to sign the decree? It's a big estate.) ***of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mordecai came before the king*** (it's really “was called” before the king) ***for Esther had told what he was to her.”***

So finally, at this point, Esther tells the king, “Mordecai is actually my cousin. That guy that saved your life, that guy that you've honored, that you had Haman ride around town and you've put in your robes, that person you've put in that place of honor at the gate – that's my cousin.” Hey, cuz!

And so the king says, “Well, bring him in here.” Verse 2, ***“And the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house*** (or the estate) ***of Haman.”***

Do you remember the signet ring? This was the ring that enabled Haman to issue the decree to annihilate the Jews. To wear this ring was to have the signature of the king so he could seal that decree with the ring. And now, since he wasn't going to need it up where he was (see how those illustrations just roll), the king took it back and he gives it now to the Jew that Haman wanted to impale on the 75-foot pole. That's how God works. The signet ring comes back from Haman; the king gives it to Mordecai.

Esther 8:3 ***“Then Esther spoke again to the king (really it’s “she came again uninvited to the king”). She fell at his feet and wept and pleaded with him to avert the evil plan of Haman the Agagite and the plot that he had devised against the Jews.”***

The first time she did this, she was a little more fearful than this in three days of fasting. She comes again before the king without being requested, but this time she doesn’t plan any banquets. She’s not really being very careful. She just comes before the king and falls down and starts pleading with him to avert the plan of Haman.

Verse 4, ***“When the king held out the golden scepter to Esther (a move that she probably expected at this point, meaning she can live and talk), (Verse 5) Esther rose and stood before the king. And she said, ‘If it please the king, and if I have found favor in his sight, and if the thing seems right before the king, and I am pleasing in his eyes (that’s a lot of buildup), let an order be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the provinces of the king.’”***

Esther’s saying, “King, please, if you feel the same way you felt about me yesterday (that doesn’t mean a thousand years. That’s not God’s yesterday; that’s her yesterday.), if I still am in that same place in your sight, then please do something to revoke...” The ESV uses the word “revoke” and it’s a little bit unfortunate because of the way we understand the word “revoke.”

Really, it’s not revoke because the decree cannot be revoked. Do you remember when we found out that the Persian kings couldn’t be wrong? So no decree could ever be revoked because that would imply that he was wrong – that he made a mistake. So what Esther is really asking for (the NLT, as usual, captures the correct thought) is for this to be reversed. “Can you do something to reverse this?” because the king can’t just say arbitrarily, “Okay, the Jews aren’t going to be annihilated.” he can’t do it. So she says, “Is there any way you can reverse this?”

She continues in Verse 6. ***“For how can I bear to see the calamity that is coming to my people? Or how can I bear to see the destruction of my kindred?’ Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew (now they’re both together in the king’s throne room), ‘Behold, I have given Esther the house (or the estate) of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows, because he intended to lay hands on (or destroy) the Jews.’”***

He’s saying, “I’ve done all this so far,” and it’s not like he’s saying, “I’ve done enough.” he’s saying, “I’m with you, man. I’m already showing you my hand. I’m already showing you what I’m willing to do.” In verse 8 he says, ***“But you may write as you please with regard to the Jews, in the name of the king, and seal it with the king’s ring.”***

We haven't really poke too much fun at King Ahasuerus lately, but this is exactly what he did with Haman to have the Jews destroyed in the first place. "Yeah, sure, go ahead. Write whatever you want about the Jews. And here's my ring. So whatever you write, you seal it with my ring and it becomes law."

King Ahasuerus is just as fickle as he ever was, just as volatile. ***The king's heart is like water, like a stream in the hands of God. He moves it where he wants. (Prov 21:1)*** The king is still fickle, but God's controlling his heart. He takes the same ring he had given to Haman to allow him to write the decree to destroy the Jews and he gives it now to Mordecai and says, "Do whatever you want to try to reverse what Haman's already done." Are you following the picture here?

The NLT, again, adds critical words right here in Verse 8. It adds the words, "But remember." Those aren't really in the original text. That's why the NLT is a dynamic thought for thought translation. It says, ***"But remember, for an edict written in the name of the king and sealed with the king's ring, cannot be revoked."*** he's saying to Mordecai, "Write whatever you want, but you can't revoke the previous decree to destroy the Jews. So do what you can, but you can't change that."

So knowing that he's got some work to do, Esther starts out on it at Esther 8:9, ***"The king's scribes were summoned at that time, in the third month, which is the month of Sivan, on the twenty third day."*** That just happens to be most probably June 25th 474 BC. Fortunately, we have good Persian records from this era and we can correlate the Hebrew with the Persian calendar. The NLT just puts that date there, but it's very probably June 25th 474 BC, two and a half days ago.

"And an edict was written according to all that Mordecai commanded concerning the Jews to the satraps and the governors and the officials of the provinces from India to Ethiopia (massive territory), 127 provinces (in a multilingual kingdom) to each province in its own script and to each people in its own language, and also to the Jews in their script in their language." So Mordecai is making sure everyone gets the message that he's about to write. It's going to go everywhere.

Verse 10 says, ***"And he wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed it with the king's signet ring. Then he sent the letters by mounted couriers riding on swift horses that were used in the king's service, bred from the royal stud (fast horses)."***

Now this is really important. Verses 11 and 12 apply to today's headlines. How applicable is the Bible? These two verses apply to today's front page news.

Esther 8:11 ***"Saying (the decree is saying) that the king allowed the Jews who were in every city to gather and defend themselves, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate any armed force of any people or province that might attack them, children and women included, and to plunder their goods."*** Don't let last part of that throw you. Mordecai

was duplicating word for word the original decree and, legally, if he's going to try to reverse this decree that Haman wrote, he's going to write it in legal terms, word for word.

So, they don't plunder; they don't kill women and children. He's just matching the old decree completely. All that this is allowing the Jews to do is defend themselves against people who are committed to destroying them. In 474 BC, God makes sure that a king allows the Jews to defend their lives against people who are committed to their destruction.

That's happening right now. That's today's news, except that no one has given them this allowance to defend themselves. In fact, the world is doing everything they can to slow Israel down from defending itself. This is the exact situation that's happening in our papers today.

Verse 12 ***“On one day (they're allowed to do this) throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.”*** That's March 7th of the next year, 473 BC – the exact same day that the original decree was to take place. So on the day that their enemies were to annihilate them, they've now been given a legal right to defend themselves. Do you see it?

So this army of Persians is arrayed against them to destroy them, to annihilate them, to remove them from existence, and this king gives the Jews the legal right to defend themselves. Do you see it? I know you're saying, “Wow. What's the big deal?” Trust me. If you're a Jew it's a big deal, especially if you're a Jew in Jerusalem.

Again, first decree couldn't be revoked, so the reversing decree gives them the legal right. In 474 BC today's newspaper was written. God's making sure that the Jews have the legal right to defend themselves against any army or any people who is bent on their annihilation. Let's continue and see if it becomes any clearer for us.

Esther 8:13 ***“A copy of what was written was to be issued as a decree in every province, being publicly displayed to all peoples, and the Jews were to be ready on that day to take vengeance on their enemies.”***

Twice I've been in Israel with a wonderful Israeli captain (a previous captain) of the IDF and co-commissioner of Jericho. His name is Amir Tsarfati. Both times as we drove through Israel he described how prepared Israel is to defend itself – more prepared than we think. More prepared than the world wants them to be. They are very well prepared.

From 474 BC, this decree went out that says that the Jews were to be ready on that day to take vengeance on their enemies. Verse 14 ***“So the couriers, mounted on their swift horses that were used in the king's service, rode out hurriedly, urged by the king's command. And the decree was issued in Susa the citadel (the capital).”*** So the reversing decree is in place, allowing the Jews to defend themselves.

Verse 15 ***“Then Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal robes of blue and white, with a great golden crown and a robe of fine linen and purple, and the city of Susa shouted and rejoiced.”*** Notice that Mordecai is receiving what Haman was conniving for. So the conniver gets impaled and the faithful receives what the conniver was conniving for. There’s a little bit of a lesson there.

Verse 16 ***“The Jews had light and gladness and joy and honor*** (That’s a poetic way of saying they were just partying. They were celebrating. They were just ecstatic over this new decree).”

Verse 17 ***“In every province and in every city, wherever the king’s command and his edict reached, there was gladness and joy among the Jews, a feast and a holiday. And many from the peoples of the country declared themselves Jews, for the fear of the Jews had fallen on them.”***

Probably what this means is that the people who were planning to annihilate them were now saying, “Hey, I’m with you. I’m with you, man. Hey, you and me, we’re brothers, right? (Knuckle it up.) I’m with you.”

Warren Wiersbe tells the story about when Ronald Reagan was shot. After they had stabilized him, when they were taking him into the operating room, Ronald Reagan says to the surgeon and the nurses, “I really hope you guys are all Republicans.” And the surgeon says, “Mr. President, today we are all Republicans.” Because they were on Ronald Reagan’s side. They were pulling for him.

That’s probably what this verse means. The people are going, “Something’s going on here that’s beyond us. We don’t want to be on the wrong end of this. We do not want to be on the receiving end of this. We want to be on Israel’s side.” That’s what they’re saying. That’s wise council by illustration right there. I pray that’s how we turn out in the headline stories of the day – that we choose, even if it’s at the last minute, to be on Israel’s side.

We have to continue into chapter 9 for just two quick verses so we can see what the headline news is going to be. You want to read the newspaper, maybe April or May is what they’re saying – maybe somewhere after that, but here’s how the paper will read in the next few months. Esther 9:1: ***“Now in the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same*** (that’s March 7th 473 BC), ***when the king’s command and edict were about to be carried out, on the very day when the enemies of the Jews hoped to gain the mastery over them, the reverse occurred.”***

Mark it because you’ll be able to use it to write a newspaper article here this year. ***“On the very day when the enemies of the Jews hoped to gain the mastery over them, the reverse occurred.”*** The Jews gained mastery over those who hated them. That was two and a half days ago in God’s time. It was because of God’s sovereign protection of Israel.

The same God, the same Israel God exists today. It's a big deal. That happened because God is on their side.

Esther 9:2 *"The Jews gathered in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on those who sought their harm. And no one could stand against them, for the fear of them had fallen on all peoples."*

Those verses are historical, and they are prophetic. God supernaturally intervened in 473 B.C and he has supernaturally intervened over and over and over again on behalf of Israel. Two and a half days ago, God stepped in to make sure that Israel's existence was protected.

You might say, "Yeah, but between 473 BC and today, a lot of bad stuff has happened to the Jews. A lot." And I would say, "Yeah." It seemed at times they were headed for certain extinction. Has there not always been a Haman around trying to annihilate the Jews? Isn't it funny that these maniacal psychopaths just arbitrarily pick the Jews to annihilate? What a coincidence.

In 1941, the Haman named Hitler did the exact same thing that the Haman in the Book of Esther did. He was more successful than the Haman in the Book of Esther, but he ended up pretty much the same way. Six million Jewish lives lost to that Haman. But Hitler could not annihilate the Jews because God is on their side. And you might say, "But why did God allow six million to die?" Ask him when you get there. I don't know. But I know his promise to Israel stands and I know that Israel came rushing back from the Holocaust.

The truth is that the Israel we know today was birthed in the aftermath of the Holocaust. In fact, historians say it was birthed *because of* the Holocaust. Every single time a Haman shows up to annihilate the Jews, God steps in to protect them. Every single time, God is on their side. Quite a few documentaries were made to show the miraculous existence of present day Israel. But it's not just present day – it's 4,000 years. It's four days of Israel's miraculous existence. God has made sure that no Haman could annihilate them.

The same thing is happening today. Is there a Haman today? Does he almost have a nuclear bomb? And has he promised to use it to annihilate the Jews? Oh, I'm sorry, that was Esther I was talking about – except the nuclear bomb thing. It's Esther. It's Hitler. And honestly, it was Rome; it was the Crusaders in the name of Christ; it was the Turks; it was the Arabs. Century after century, there's a Haman trying to annihilate the Jews. God is on their side, and we need to understand that.

February 16th, 2012 (three days ago; today is the 19th), a group of 32 senators (read it; it's everywhere) – 16 Democrats, 16 Republicans – wrote a Senate resolution encouraging the President of this country to actually stop Iran from developing the nuclear bomb (meaning not just say it but actually do it).

When they presented their resolution to the Senate, they showed a massive missile on parade in Iran with this beautiful painting down the side that said, “Israel must be uprooted and erased from history.” That’s what the missile said – and professionally painted; I’m not talking about tagged. That is what it said. That was painted on the side of a missile big enough to be equipped with a nuclear warhead.

Another picture in the same parade was a massive banner in Iran that said, “Israel should be wiped out of the face of the world.” No grammar grades of “A” here. The translation is literal, but there’s a huge banner in the same parade. “Israel should be wiped out of the face of the world.”

If you look at certain sides of this media frenzy, there are half of the media frenzy contributors that say “Oh, these things aren’t true. Nobody would really do that. They just painted that on the missile by mistake. It rolled on the ground and came out like that. They don’t mean it. Oh, you guys get up all in arms when someone says they’re going to drop a nuclear bomb on Israel. Why are you getting all worked up?”

Because we know Bible history and because we know Bible prophecy – that’s why. Why have all the Hamans attempted to annihilate Israel? Why is Iran, both the political and religious leaders, 100% guaranteeing the world that they will annihilate Israel? Why? Because they are Jews – that’s why. That’s it – because they’re God’s people, and that’s a sign.

What if I told you there has only really been one Haman for the last 4,000 years? There has only been one Haman and he manifests (reveals himself) in different names, beginning with (for us today) the Haman in the Book of Esther – and right through the Roman period and the Crusader period and the Turks and the Arabs and Hitler, and now this guy (it’s not that I can’t say his name; it’s that I don’t want to) – this Haman.

There’s only one real Haman. His name is Lucifer. He is the real Haman. Why is he eternally set on the annihilation of the Jews? For this reason: Did you ever see a good suspense – like a kidnap movie? These are scary kind of movies for me, but here is what sets it up. The bad guy can’t hurt the good guy himself and so what does he do? He goes after his kids. I cussed in my mind right now (I just need to confess). That son of a gun has done that to me and I’m pretty pissed about it. Oh, is that a curse word? Did I just curse out loud?

The enemy has gone after my kids and I’m nobody. The enemy goes after God’s kids because he wants to hurt God. That’s why this pinhead in Iran wants to drop a bomb on Israel: because he’s trying to hurt God, because he’s working for the only real Haman – the prince of the power of the air; the old serpent; the deceiver.

Fortunately, it's not going to work. Here's why. Number one, because God is on their side. Number two, because there's a chance that we are seeing another step towards the end of the age.

There has to be a strong Israel before we can be raptured. There has to be a strong Israel *and* the world has to be set against them. That is part of the setup that allows us to take the rapture position and slip out of here, man! Yes, God is on their side, but the reason they are not going to annihilate Israel is because Israel must be strong to usher in the end of this church age that we're in. I'm not making any statements, but Biblically it's very reasonable to say that this nuclear threat from Iran fits perfectly with end time's prophecy. And it might be ushering in the end of this age.

Just one small concern. And I'm not being political here; I'm just stating the facts. It's not ironic to me (I won't say what it is to me) that we've elected a President that really, really, really, really, really, really wants to be friends with the Islamic nations. He really does. He really, really does. That's not an opinion. That's a reiteration of stated facts.

In his last State of the Union address he said, "First, I'm going to do everything necessary to keep Iran from developing a nuclear bomb." And then his very next sentence was this, "But my goal is a peaceful resolution that will allow Iran to join the community of nations." Hello? You want Iran to be brought into the fold of the community of nations?

In 2009, there was a big to-do when our President bowed to the King of Saudi Arabia (maybe you remember that), something that no President of this country has ever done. Saudi Arabia and the king, of course, are the protectors of the two most holy sites in Islam (by the way, Jerusalem is their third most holy site).

The two most holy sites are Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia. So the President shows up and bows to the king, and then he goes to a university and speaks. In that speech at the Muslim University, he's very naturally using Islamic phrases. He spoke to them in, not their own language, but he used Islamic phrases. He quoted the Koran throughout his speech. He has quoted the Koran far more than the Bible since he's been in the public eye. And then at the end of his speech, he said this. He said his goal was for the three major religions of the world (that's Judaism, Islam, and Christianity) to join together as one and to pray together.

That's part of the end of the age. I've been telling my wife, "It's time. I've got to teach Revelation." I've taught it before but never on a Sunday morning. That's a big sign – the one world religion. "Can't we just pray along? Really, do we have to split hairs?" Do you really want to tell the President of Iran to go and pray with the Jews? He's going to be like, "No. Actually, I'm going to drop a bomb on them and annihilate them." So our President really wants a one world religion and, again, I'm not being political. I'm just repeating his commitments.

I guess it's not surprising. I'm trying not to give commentary, but I will tell you this. Newsweek, one week ago (I'm giving you today's news), quoted a Senior Intelligence Official in Israel saying that they have stopped sharing intelligence information on Iran with the United States. For some reason, Israel doesn't feel safe to share their intelligence information with our country. That might not be a great sign. I'm just saying. You read it – Newsweek magazine one week ago. Israel has stopped sharing intelligence information with us.

I have no idea, really, honestly. I'm not saying I do. I have no idea where our President stands on this eternal issue. That might be the problem that we don't really know. But I know this: for 2,500 years (that's since Haman and Esther) there's been someone trying to annihilate the Jewish people just because they're Jews. The spiritual Haman behind it all has been our enemy, Lucifer. He is the one on a maniacal mission.

But I want you to know today, it's an eternal battle and Jesus said, "You're either for me or against me." We have to choose what side we're on. I will promise you, God is on Israel's side. I hope that gives you a little clue as to what side you should be on. God is on *their* side.

J. Vernon McGee said, "The Jew has attended the funeral of every one of the nations that tried to exterminate him." Way to go, Dr. McGee.

This has not been political rhetoric; that's not what I've been doing. I'm trying to explain to you that eternity is happening now. There is an eternal battle with eternal consequences. There are events unfolding before our lives that have eternal significance, and we are going to be one side or the other of this great conflict. Choose wisely.

Psalm 122:6 ***"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. May they prosper who love you."*** Psalm 122 – one of the Psalms of Ascent going up to Jerusalem. Read all of it. It's really, really good.

Ultimately, let me apply this message to your life personally. The biggest lesson, the biggest application for us is number one, if God is on Israel's side, we ought to be too.

Number two (here's the personal application), if God has kept his promise to Israel through thick and thin, no matter what they've chosen or what mistakes they've made or what they've been through, if God has kept his covenant to them, he will keep his covenant to you.

If God is unchangeable to Israel, he is unchangeable in your life. If their mistakes and their failures have not changed how God feels about them, then your mistakes and your failures will not change how God feels about you. That's the truth and that's the theology that we see watching Israel's history. That's the theology. Here's where you fit in.

Romans 8:16-17 (from the NLT) ***“For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God’s children. And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ, we are heirs of God’s glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.”***

Certainly Israel has done that. Honestly, eternally we actually have a higher standing than Israel because we have Christ, because we stand righteous before God, because we’ve been grafted into this family of God, but grafted in with the righteousness of Christ.

But if God has cared for Israel and because of us being his children through Christ, how much more so will he care for us? He will, I promise. Let’s pray.

Heavenly Father, God, thank you so much for your unconditional, unilateral, unchanging covenant with the nation of Israel. Thank you, Lord, for your love for the Jewish people, Lord. And God, not that you love the world, Lord, but Your relational, Your choosing them as Your own special people, Your making of a permanent covenant with them, and Your unfailing love –hesed – Your unfailing steadfast love to them, Lord. And God, you have grafted us in. In fact, through Paul, Lord, you said that the reason that they’ve turned away is so that we could be grafted in.

God, you love us as much, and in a way, eternally, that many even in Israel will not experience, Lord. Father, we pray for the peace of Jerusalem. And we pray, Lord, that we would be on your side and that we would trust you.

And we pray for the decision makers in this country. We know, Lord, that you have used Your Spirit and Your Word in the hearts of presidents of this country to come alongside Israel, to stand beside them, to stand up with them – not because of what they can offer us but because of what Your Word says.

We pray, Lord, that we would remain one nation under God and we pray that you would continue to lead and guide the decision makers of this country, Lord. And Father, overall, we thank you that the covenant you’ve made to Israel shows us that the covenant you’ve made to us is unchangeable. We rest in that. In Jesus’ name, amen.