

Again, that's Esther chapter 7 verse 1, reading through chapter 8 verse 2. The fall of Haman has begun. And boy, am I excited about it. And that's what we're supposed to be. We're supposed to be excited about the fall of Haman. He's had his day, and his day is drawing to an end. We saw that begun in the last chapter. As Haman begins at the second part of chapter five, he's on top of the world. And by the end, he's covering his face and has whisked away to the banquet of Esther, still with those words of Zeresh ringing in his ears from verse 13. If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish origin, you will not overcome him, but will surely fall before him.

Well, now we're gonna see exactly how those words are fulfilled. So let's read this text together. Before we do, let's ask God's help in prayer. Our Father and our God, as we come to your word, we pray that you'd sanctify us through your word, for your word is truth. May the words of my mouth, the meditations of my heart be pleasing in your sight. Oh Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

Amen. Reading from Esther chapter seven, beginning at verse one. Now the king and Haman came to drink wine with Esther the queen. And the king said to Esther on the second day, also as they drank their wine at the banquet, what is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted to you. And what is your request? Even to half my kingdom, it shall be done.

Then Queen Esther answered and said, if I had found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleased the king, let my life be given to me as my petition. and my people as my request, 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.

Then King Ahasuerus asked Queen Esther, who is he, where is he, who would presume to do this to us? And Esther said, a foe and an enemy is this wicked Haman. Then Haman became terrified before the king and queen. And the king arose in his anger from drinking wine and went into the palace gardens. But Haman stayed to beg for his life from Queen Esther, for he saw that harm had been determined against him by the king. 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. Then Harbona, 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.

So they hanged Haman on the gallows, which he had prepared for Mordecai, and the king's anger subsided. On that day, King Ahasuerus gave the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews, to Queen Esther, And Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had disclosed what he was to her. And the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken away from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman. This is the word of the Lord. May he add his blessing to it.

Proverbs 26, 27 says, if a man digs a pit, he'll fall into it. If a man rolls a stone, it'll roll back on him. Jesus said, what a man sows, that will he also reap. This kind of wisdom that says if you plan something wicked, you shouldn't be surprised when that wickedness comes back on your own head, is not unique to the Bible.

We find proverbs like this all throughout the world. It's part of God's general revelation. Because that's how the world generally works. This is God's world. And in God's world, generally speaking, in his providence, if you plan evil, evil will come to you. Now, the problem is that doesn't always happen.

There are many times when things seem to be going very well for the wicked man. We read in our prayer meeting, Psalm 73, the wicked as fat and sleek, who seem to be rewarded for oppressing the righteous. That's really the figure that we've seen with Haman thus far in this book. Haman, every step of the way, has been rewarded. He's been raised on high. He has ten sons and all this wealth.

And we see here a figure of the prosperity of the wicked. That's what we see in the world today, too, isn't it? Oftentimes, it seems as though the wicked prosper, and we wonder, how can God be sovereign? How can God be providentially at work when the wicked prosper? Well, in this passage, we're going to see a figure, a snippet, a little taste of what is in store for the wicked. The way of the wicked will perish. The way of the wicked will perish. We're gonna look at this passage under three major headings.

The first is Esther pleads for her people. Esther pleads for her people. Look with me at chapter seven, verse one. Now the king and Haman came to drink wine with Esther, the queen. And the king said to Esther on the second day also, as they drank their wine at the banquet, what is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted to you. And what is your request?

Even to half my kingdom, it shall be done. Now, things have been going fairly well for Esther thus far. I mean, she's certainly in a much better place than we saw her way back at the beginning of chapter 5. At the beginning of chapter 5, we were concerned that her just going to the king might get her killed. Well, thus far her plan appears to be working. God providentially through Esther's wisdom, causes her to have favor with the king when she first comes, he holds out the golden scepter, and then her plan comes into play. First, she invites him to the first banquet, butters him up a little bit, and then gets him to agree to grant whatever petition she might have at the second day of the banquet. However, Esther still has a major challenge ahead of her.

She shouldn't get ahead of herself. Think about it, remember what happened to the last queen. All the way back in chapter one, I know it was a while ago, but it sets important context for this part of the story here. Remember what Queen Vashti did. Queen Vashti opposed a minor command from the king and was deposed for it. Esther is about to actively oppose an empire-wide decree of the king, put forward by one of his right-hand men. What's in store for her? This is a major challenge. Also, remember how that decree was passed. Haman may have written the decree, but who gave Haman the signet ring?

Ahasuerus did. Who did Haman have to go to to get permission to do this decree first? He had to go to Ahasuerus. Ahasuerus is to a certain extent as culpable as Haman is. And Esther now has to get the king to completely reverse course on a decision that he has made. How is she going to do that? Not just convince the king, but also get him to move in his pride. This is Ahasuerus we're talking about. Mister deposes his queen because she wouldn't come when he called her. Mr., I don't want any people in sackcloth in my palace. No buzzkills in the palace, thank you. I want to have my nice drinking parties. This is a very difficult task ahead of Esther. Also, remember who Haman is.

Haman is the king's right-hand man. The guy that the king has been promoting and honoring at every stage. And Esther needs to turn the king against him.

This is a difficult task ahead of her. But Esther is up for the challenge. Esther employs some charisma. Remember how we characterized Esther from the very beginning? This is fitting with her character. Everybody loves Esther. Esther is a charismatic person. And in the beginning, we saw how God used that charisma in spite of her disobedience to put Esther where she needed to be. Well, here we're seeing how Esther uses the gifts that God has given her in order to enact God's will in obedience to God. There's something there for us. A lot of times we focus on how God works through people's weaknesses. And that's certainly true.

God doesn't need people to be talented for them to be used by him. God doesn't need your talents for you to be used by him. However, God generally works through your talents. Why? Because he gave you those talents. God is the one who made you skilled at speaking at teaching, at organizing. It's God who gave you those gifts. And generally speaking, in God's normal providence, he works through those gifts.

And that's not sinful. It's not unspiritual to use the gifts God has given you for the furtherance of his kingdom. It's a funny thing to say, but sometimes it seems as though it seems as though we think that it's somehow less spiritual when someone uses a gift God has given them to accomplish his will, as opposed to him working through their weakness. He can work through weaknesses, and that's great, that's awesome, but that's not generally how God works.

And that's what we see with Esther. Esther is using her God-given gifts, her charisma, to save her people and to obey God's will. Now, look at her method here. She is She is very charismatic. Look at verse three. Then Queen Esther answered and said, if I have found favor in your Sidon king and if it please the king, let my life be given to me as my petition and my people as my request. Look at how she opens. She unites her own fate with that of her people.

When King Ahasuerus asked her what her petition and what her request was, he was using a form of speaking in the ancient world known as parallelism. He's really referring to one thing, to one request, the request that he's expecting Esther to give. But instead of giving one request, Esther gives two. But by doing so, what she's saying is that those two requests, her life and the life of her people, are really one request.

Her life, what she's telling the king is that her life is bound up in the life of her people. If her people are destroyed, she is destroyed. The king can't simply get off by saving Esther. He must save her people. She binds together her fate with the fate of her people.

Also note, this comes out even more so in verse four. For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. Now look what else she does. 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. Here, she does a couple of interesting things. First, she highlights the cruelty of it.

She says, we weren't just being sold as slaves, we're being destroyed, killed, and annihilated. This is not a simple decree, this is a genocide. She highlights the cruelty of the decree. This especially comes out in the Hebrew text because the word to enslave and the word to annihilate are homonyms in Hebrew.

But notice one other thing that she does. She's very winsome here. Look back at the beginning of verse four, for we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. Now, those of you who teach English right now are probably a little bit unnerved, because she's using the passive voice. Watch out. Watch out. She needed some red marks on her paper. It's not going to be good. Yeah, the passive voice. But the thing is, the passive voice is the proper voice to use here. Why? Because she's being sneaky. Who were the people of Israel sold to? Well, they're sold to Haman. And she doesn't want the king to know that she's talking about Haman yet. She wants to wait until he gets angry first.

That's what we see in verse five. This is very similar to what the prophet Nathan did when David had sinned. Nathan didn't immediately go to David and say, David, you committed adultery with Bathsheba and then you killed her husband? You're in trouble. Instead, he went to him and told him a story about a rich man and a poor man, about how the rich man had many sheep, but instead of slaughtering one of his sheep, he went and he stole the poor man's lamb. And when David was infuriated, then Nathan said, you are the man.

That's really what Esther's doing here. She's waiting until the right moment, until the king's wrath has been kindled in the abstract before she makes it concrete. But there's one other thing she's doing here. Notice she says, we have been sold, I and my people, Who sold the people of Israel? Who sold her people to Haman?

Well, the king did. The king did. Look back at chapter three. Chapter three, verse nine. This is the words of Haman. If it is pleasing to the king, let it be decreed that they be destroyed. And I will pay 10,000 talents of silver into the hands of those who carry on the king's business to put in the king's treasury. It was the king who sold the people.

Esther leaves that out. Why? She's being winsome. It's not appropriate right now for her to arouse the king's wrath by accusing him of selling the people. That's not her point. She's being very sly. Again, we see Esther's being very charismatic. Very winsome. So Esther makes her plea, and it has its intended effect. Look at verse five. Then King Ahasuerus asked Queen Esther, who is he?

Where is he? Who would presume to do this? His questions start coming out like a machine gun. His wrath is kindled. We know Ahasuerus. Ahasuerus is the guy who has a quick temper. And then comes the bombshell from the queen. A foe and an enemy. is this wicked Haman. You know, we all have a little bit of Ahasuerus in us, don't we?

Many of us are very quick for our wrath to be aroused against the sins of other people, but not our own sins. When it sins out there, oh, it's terrible, it's wicked, it's awful, what a foe, what a Haman. But like Ahasuerus, we don't realize that we're just as culpable. That same sin, the seed of that same sin is in our own heart.

Stephen Covey very insightfully says, that we judge others by their actions and ourselves by our intentions. Look at your own heart. When we see the latest scandal, and there's plenty of scandals out there, when we see our neighbor and how he lost his temper and how he cheated on his taxes or whatever it might be, and we're tempted to think, oh, what is he thinking? How could that happen? Listen for the voice of the spirit saying, hey, you are the man. That sin, the seed of that sin's in your own heart. Watch out.

Ahasuerus, though, does not have that same kind of insight into his own psyche. Again, Ahasuerus is a flat character. This Ahasuerus is the same one we met in chapter one, and so he has a different dilemma on his mind. His dilemma is similar to that of Esther.

His wrath has now been aroused. He wants to punish Haman. But he's got a bit of a problem. How can he punish Haman for doing something that he had told him to do? That's gonna be a bit of a political issue. I mean, he's the king, he can do what he wants, I suppose, but how is he going to maintain his own honor, maintain his own dignity? Wouldn't punishing Haman for publishing this decree undermine his own authority? After all, Haman had done it in the name of the king.

He's in a bit of a pickle and so he decides to do what I generally do when I have something on my mind. He goes for a walk. Look at verse seven. And 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. Now this moves us from our first point. Esther pleads for her people. To our second point, Haman pleads for his life. Look again, look at verse eight.

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. Now, in order to fully understand the gravity of the situation from Haman's perspective, we need to get a little bit about Persian culture. In the Persian culture, kings were highly protective of their wives.

You'll notice that every servant that Esther interacts with is always a eunuch. Haman is not a eunuch. And so a non-eunuch in the Persian world was only allowed within seven steps of a wife of the king. If they came any closer, they were liable to execution. And so Haman is surely within more than seven steps of the queen in this moment. Moreover, it gets even worse. Again, in Persian culture, a woman was not allowed to be alone with a man that she was not married to, especially a queen. So Haman is guilty of impropriety on two counts. Now, from his perspective, we can't necessarily blame him. I mean, after all, Esther is really his only hope at this point.

He can't plead for his life from Ahasuerus. Ahasuerus is mad, and when Ahasuerus is mad, he can't really reason with him. And what was he gonna do, leave the room with Ahasuerus while he's storming off? That's probably not a good look either. He's in a bad position. But he nevertheless decides, this is his best course of action, he falls down on the couch next to Queen Esther in order to beg for his life. There's impropriety in the situation. There's also a lot of irony. The irony just goes on and on in this scene. First, before that, first look back at verse five. Second part of, actually no, the second part of verse six, I'm sorry.

Then Haman became terrified before the king and queen. He had just been boasting to Zeresh and their friends about how he was in the king and queen's good graces, how he'd been invited to their private banquets. Now he's terrified in front of them. How did this whole situation begin? How did the whole rivalry, the decree against the Jewish people begin?

Well, it began because Mordecai wouldn't bow down, wouldn't fall down, before Haman. And now Haman is falling down before Esther, Mordecai's adoptive daughter. Zeresh had said, you have begun to fall before Mordecai. Now the fall was complete. And it gets even better. Look at the second part of verse eight. Then the king said, will he even assault the queen with me in the house? The king misinterprets the situation, given the fact Haman is still there and he's falling on the queen's couch. He misinterprets that Haman is trying to assault the queen.

And to a certain extent, this may have been convenient for Ahasuerus. I mean, after all, he'd been thinking about how in the world he was going to punish Haman. Well, now the situation to punish Haman has arisen. The providence of God, the wicked falling. And so it was far too late for Haman. Look at the rest of verse eight. As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. Haman, when he'd left from having to exalt Mordecai, had covered his own face in shame. Now he can't even do that. Someone has to do it for him. It's far too late for Haman to be begging for his life. Judgment has come. It was too late.

And friends, this is the end of all the wicked. This is the end for all of us outside of Christ. For all of us, like Haman, are born children of wrath, destined for judgment, destined for condemnation. Because like Adam, we have all sinned. and fallen short of the glory of God.

And one day, there will come a day when repentance will no longer be an option. Like Haman, when Jesus comes again, all will fall down, every knee will bow, every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. But some will confess in love, in joy, and unto their salvation. Others will confess in fear, in shame, and to their condemnation. And every day, that day grows closer. One day like Haman, you'll be far too late. So we've seen Esther plead for her people, and we've seen Haman plead for his life. And now we see justice is raised up. Justice is raised up. Look with me at verse nine.

Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs, who were before the king, said, behold, indeed, the gallows standing at Haman's house, 50 cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai, who spoke good on behalf of the king. And the king said, hang him on it. So they hanged Haman on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai, and the king's anger subsided.

Justices raised up, how? Well, Haman is raised up on the gallows. Haman, who had wanted to be exalted over everyone else in Susa, well, now he is exalted over everyone else in Susa, 75 feet high on a stake. Haman, who had prepared a gallows for Mordecai, who had falsely accused the Jewish people of treason against the king, well, now he is falsely accused of sexual assault and hanged on the gallows for it. He wanted that high position, well, now he has a permanent high position. The jokes write themselves. So, justice is raised up as Haman is raised up on the gallows, and justice is raised up as Mordecai is raised up to Haman's position. Look at chapter 8, verse 1.

On that day, King Ahasuerus gave the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews, to Queen Esther and Mordecai. came before the king, for Esther had disclosed what he was to her. And the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther sent Mordecai over the house of Haman."

Once again, we see how a wrong is righted. How did this whole story begin? Well, it began because Haman got a promotion that Mordecai rightfully deserved. It was Mordecai who had saved the king's life. He should have been the one who was raised up and said Haman was raised up. Now that wrong is righted. All of the wealth, all of the power, all of the influence that Haman had been bragging about to his wife and to their friends is now in the hands of Mordecai.

Again, we see a great reversal. What else we see? We see a type of the final judgment. This right here is what biblical theologians call a day of the Lord. A day of the Lord. This appears all throughout the Bible. A day of the Lord is a time, a place, where the wrath of God against sin, where the judgment of God that is destined for the last day, comes into the present.

But for a moment, a small taste of it, a small prefigurement of it, jumps ahead. We see this with the flood. As Noah and his family are saved in the ark while the rest of the world is destroyed. We see it in Sodom and Gomorrah as Lot and his family are ushered out of the city while the wrath of God burns the rest up. We see it in the fall of Jerusalem.

As the righteous surrender and are saved while the wicked are destroyed. Small types of God's judgment. This is a day of the Lord. where the wicked are judged and the righteous are lifted up. Now, I want you to notice something about this day of the Lord. What caused Mordecai to be raised into Haman's position and Haman to be hanged on the gallows? What was the deciding factor in determining the fate of Mordecai on the one hand and Haman on the other? What did it come down to?

Well, it came down to intercession. the intercession of Esther. Esther interceded against Haman, and he was condemned. And Esther interceded on behalf of Mordecai, and he was raised up. Look again at chapter eight, verse one. On that day, King Azares gave the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews, to Queen Esther, and Mordecai came before the king. Why? For Esther had disclosed what he was to her." You know, and we see here in Esther a type of Jesus Christ, of prefigurement.

How will we stand in the judgment? Will it be because we're more righteous? Will it be because we did the law better? No, it all comes down to who is interceding for us. Do you have Christ as your intercessor? Remember, the work of Jesus Christ as our high priest is not just that he sacrificed himself for our sins, not just that he presented that sacrifice to God as a perfect sacrifice that perfectly atones for all the sins of those who believe, but also that he ever stands at the right hand of the Father to intercede for his people, to send out his Holy Spirit, to call them to himself, to keep them in himself, to sanctify them, and to one day glorify them. That is the deciding factor in the final day of judgment.

Just as with Mordecai, Mordecai was not saved on this day of the Lord fundamentally because he was better than Haman, but because of his intercessor, his intercessor, Esther. So we've seen justice arise as Haman is raised up on the gallows and as Mordecai is raised to Haman's position.

And finally we see justice arises as Esther arises as queen. Esther arises as a queen. Remember how we met Esther at the beginning of the story? Esther was an orphan girl. who through no activity on her own part was thrust into this position where she had to vie for the queenship.

And through her charisma and through some of her own cunning, she is put on the throne by the providence of God. How she is passive, how she works to please those around her, and how she passively receives the instruction of Mordecai to her own folly. Look at her now. She is a queen who intercedes for her people and who now will intercede to save not just Mordecai, but the entire Jewish people.

See, the king's wrath is satisfied. Haman has been put on the gallows, but his decree still stands. The decree to destroy all the Jewish people is still there. And it will come. unless someone does something to stop it. How will that decree be stopped?

Well, tune in next time. Let's close with a word of prayer. Our Father and our God, we thank you for the intercession of Jesus Christ. We thank you, Lord, that the way of the wicked will perish, that one day, that one day all of those who oppress your people, all of those who stand against them, to accuse them, to destroy them, will one day be destroyed. And Lord, we hope for deliverance on that great day of judgment, not on our own merits, not on our own strength, but only by the intercession of Jesus Christ. And so Lord, we ask, we pray, we beg for that intercession. We thank you for it. In Jesus' name, Amen.