

up until Esther 9, verse 19. Again, that's chapter 8, verse 3, reading until Esther 9, verse 19. Haman is dead. Hallelujah. But his decree lives on. While Haman has been punished for his wickedness, while the wickedness that he planned against the Jews has now fallen on his own head, and he hangs on the gallows, The decree of death against the Jewish people is still coming. It's still on the books. While Esther and Mordecai have won, their people do not yet share their victory. And this is a problem. Because while Haman was difficult to deal with, the decree is even more difficult.

After all, this is a law according to the law of Medes and Persians. And as the book of Esther has repeatedly said, a law written according to the law of Medes and Persians cannot be reversed. So how will Esther and Mordecai reverse the irreversible? Or rather, how will God, through them, reverse the irreversible?

Well, let's read this text together and find out, but before we do, let's ask God's help in prayer. Father in heaven, this is your word. We pray that you'd sanctify us in 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 eight, beginning at verse three. Then Esther spoke again to the king. fell at his feet, wept, and implored him to avert the evil scheme of Haman the Agagite, and his plot which he had devised against the Jews. And the king extended the golden scepter to Esther. So Esther arose and stood before the king.

Then she said, if it pleases the king, and if I found favor before him, and the matter seems proper to the king, and I am pleasing in his sight, let it be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hamadathah, the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the king's provinces. For how can I endure to see the calamity which shall befall my people? And how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred? So King Azares said to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, behold, I have given the house of Haman to Esther, in him they have hanged on the gallows, because he stretched out his hand against the Jews. Now you write to the Jews as you see fit, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's signet ring. For a decree which is written in the name of the king and sealed with the king's signet ring cannot be revoked.

So the king's scribes were called at that time in the third month, which is the month of Sibon, on the 23rd day. And it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded the Jews and the satraps, the governors and the princes of the provinces, which extended from India to Ethiopia, 127 provinces, to every province according to its script, to every people according to their language, as well as to the Jews according to their script and their language. And he wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus and signed it with the king's signet ring and sent letters by couriers on horses riding on steeds sired by the royal stud. In them, the king granted the Jews who were in each and every city the right to assemble and defend their lives, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate the entire army of any people or province which might attack them, including women and children, and to plunder their spoils. on one day in all the provinces of King Asuerus, the 13th day of the 12th month, which is the month of Adar. A copy of the edict to be issued as law in each and every province was published to all the peoples, so that the Jews should be ready for this day to avenge themselves on their enemies.

And the couriers, hastened and impelled by the king's command, went out riding on royal steeds, and the decree was given out in Susa, the capital. Then Mordecai went out from the presence of the king, in royal robes of blue and

white, and a large crown of gold, and a garment of fine linen and purple. And the city of Susa shouted and rejoiced. For the Jews, there was light, and gladness, and joy, and honor.

And 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 fear of the Jews had fallen on them. Now, in the twelfth month, that is the month of Adar.

On the thirteenth day, when the king's command and edict were about to be executed, on that day, when the enemies of the Jews hoped to gain mastery over them, it was turned to the contrary, so that the Jews themselves gained mastery over those that hated them. The Jews assembled in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Asauerus to lay hands on those who sought their harm, and no one could stand before them, for the dread of them had fallen on all the peoples. Even all the princes of the provinces, the satraps, and the governors, and those who were doing the king's business assisted the Jews because the dread of Mordecai had fallen on them. Indeed, Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces, for the man Mordecai became greater and greater.

Thus the Jews struck their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying, and they did what they pleased to those who hated them. And in Susa, the capital, the Jews killed and destroyed 500 men, and Parshadatha, Delphon, Aspatha, Paratha, Adalia, Aridatha, Paramashtha, Arishai, Aradai, and Vaisatha, the 10 sons of Haman, the son of Hamadatha, the Jews' enemy. But they did not lay their hands on the plunder. On that day the number of those who were killed in Susa the capital was reported to the king. And the king said to Queen Esther, the Jews have killed and destroyed five hundred men and the ten sons of Haman in Susa the capital. What then have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? Now what is your petition? It shall even be granted to you. And what is your further request? It shall also be done.

Then Esther said, if it pleases the king, let tomorrow also be granted to the Jews who are in Susa to do according to the edict of today, and let Haman's 10 sons be hanged on the gallows. So the king commanded that it should be done, and an edict was issued in Susa, and Haman's 10 sons were hanged. And the Jews who were in Susa assembled also on the 14th day of the month of Adar, and killed 300 men in Susa, but they did not lay their hands in the plunder. Now the rest of the Jews who were in the king's provinces assembled to defend their lives and to rid themselves of their enemies and kill 75,000 of those who hated them. But they did not lay their hands on the plunder.

This was done on the 13th day of the month of Adar. And on the 14th day, they rested and made it a day of feasting and rejoicing. But the Jews who were assembled on the 13th and 14th of the same month, and they rested on the 15th day and made it a day of feasting and rejoicing. Therefore, the Jews of the rural areas who live in the rural towns make the 14th day of the month Adar a holiday for rejoicing and feasting and sending portions of food to one another. This is the word of the Lord. May he add his blessing to it.

I don't know about you, but especially when I read that last part, it makes me a tad uncomfortable. And I'm not alone. Many read that last section of the book of Esther, usually in isolation, and they think, okay, this story started like pretty nice, but now it seems like it's turned into some horrible blood feud. What's going on here?

Why are the Jews killing all these people? Well, one thing we have to remember is that though this day was a day of death for the Jews' enemies, it was a day of deliverance for the Jewish people because those enemies would have destroyed them, would have annihilated them.

And in this, as we saw last time, in this day of judgment, we have a day of the Lord, a day of the Lord. This is a motif that we see throughout scripture. It's a time in which the final judgment, the judgment that when Christ comes again, reaches back into history and performs and gives us a little taste of what that judgment's going to be like. We see it in the flood, when God saved Noah, but destroyed everyone else living on the planet. We see it with Sodom and Gomorrah, where Lot and his family are delivered out of the cities, but they are destroyed with fire. This is a common pattern.

And the key to the whole discussion is that if the Jews had mercy and did not enact this universally, then that would mean that the final judgment would not be universal. That the final judgment that it's pointing to would have to be selective. But the main point that I want you guys to take from this passage is that God's judgment is good news for his people and bad news for his enemies. God's coming judgment is good news for his people and bad news for his enemies.

Now, as we read this text, we're going to look at it under three major headings. First, we're going to see a new decree, then a new distinction, and third, a new deliverance. A new decree, a new distinction, and a new deliverance. So first, a new decree. Look with me at chapter 8, verse 3.

Then Esther spoke again to the king, fell at his feet, wept, and implored him to avert the evil scheme of Haman the Agagite and his plot which he had devised against the Jews. Now you may be wondering, Esther, didn't you already do this? Didn't you already ask Asauerus to save your people? Well, she had. Look back in chapter seven, that's the very thing he asked Asauerus to do. But what did Asauerus do?

While he was so mad at Haman, he was so angry that Haman had tricked him and then had fallen on the couch in front of Esther, disrespecting her, that he lost his temper and executed Haman, put him up on a gallows, and gave his stuff to Esther. However, in his anger, he completely forgot about the very petition that Esther had given to him that had prompted the anger in the first place. This is classic Asuerus. As we said before, the Asuerus we're meeting here is the same one we saw in chapter one. This is a flat character.

Nevertheless, Esther is not a flat character. Esther has developed. Esther now has come into her role as queen, and she will not take this lightly. She goes back to the king again. Now, notice a few things about Esther's approach. The first thing we should notice is that it is a confident approach. Remember the first time Esther was going to see the king?

She had to be goaded by Mordecai. She had to be reminded of God's sovereignty. She was afraid she was gonna lose her head. Yet now, she can approach the king with confidence. Why? Because she's been assured of his favor.

She goes to the king. She doesn't even have to look up. She knows he's gonna extend that golden scepter. Second thing we should notice is that her intercession here is heartfelt.

This is not Esther going through the motions. Look again at verse 3. Esther wept. This was a massive breach of Persian decorum. You did not weep in the presence of the king. Especially not King Asuerus. Remember, this is the guy that banned anyone wearing sackcloth from even entering the palace. You could not be in mourning and enter the palace. No buzzkills in the house of Asuerus. But Esther, Esther is so heartbroken. She is so distressed by the plight of her people that she weeps before the king for them. Not only that, but she identifies with her people. She puts herself as their representative. In this, again, we see a type of Christ, a taste of him. This is how our Savior pleads for us. Our Savior loves us and identifies with us.

What did Jesus say to Saul? when he met him on the road to Damascus. As Saul was about to go continue to persecute Christians in Damascus, he said, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? Jesus said to his disciples, for whatever you did to the least of these brothers of mine, you did to me. Jesus so identifies with his people that anything done to them is done to him.

And that's the same attitude that Esther has for her people. Her intercession, it's confident. Her intercession is also heartfelt. But the third thing we should notice, her intercession is winsome. Once again, what's the one thing we know about Esther? Everybody loves Esther. Esther is a charismatic person, and she is also a winsome person. She knows how to spin words.

Look at what she says in verse five. Then she said, if it pleases the king, and if I have found favor before him, and the matter seems proper to the king, and I am pleasing in his sight. Look, she does it again. She weaves two things together. This time, she's weaving together the king's delight in Esther with his willingness, with his delight in what Esther is proposing. She's saying, if you delight in me, you should delight in what I'm about to say.

And then she, so then she, what does she say? She says, if it is pleasing to the king and is proper to the king, let it be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hamadatha, the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the king's provinces. She reminds him of what he promised to do. King Asawaris, you said you would do this for me. Why haven't you done it? Well, Asawaris has a reminder of his own for Queen Esther.

Look at verse seven. So King Asauerus said to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, Behold, I have given the house of Haman to Esther, and him they have hanged on the gallows, because he stretched out his hand against the Jews. Now you write to the Jews, as you see fit, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's signet ring. For a decree which is written in the name of the king, and sealed with the king's signet ring, may not be revoked. In other words, he says, Esther, my hands are tied.

This is a law according to the law of Medes and Persians. I can't simply revoke this. I can't take it back. Not to mention, I've already done plenty of good things for you. Didn't I get rid of Haman the Agagite for you? Didn't I give him, didn't I give his house to you?

And after that, Asauerus slips back into a pattern we saw him slip into from the very beginning. He hands the whole case over to Esther and Mordecai. He gives them a blank check, just as he'd given Haman a blank check when Haman had told them about the Jewish problem. So now he hands a blank check to Mordecai and Esther. Once again, Asauerus has not changed.

What has changed? Who is in his favor? That's what's changed. And so what do Esther and Mordecai do? The king has said they can't reverse the old decree. So what can they do? Well, they write a new decree. Look at verse 11. What does this decree say?

In this decree, in them, the king granted to the Jews who were in each and every city the right to assemble and to defend their lives and to destroy and to kill and to annihilate the entire army of any people or province which might attack them. In other words, Esther and Mordecai even the playing field. They say, okay, We can't stop people from attacking the Jews, but we can say the Jews can also attack them. It's even parody. Now, I know especially the last part of verse 11 here makes us a bit uncomfortable, which might attack them, including children and women, and to plunder their spoil.

But there are a few things we need to notice in why that particular clause is there. The first reason is because of the purpose of the decree. The purpose of the decree is to even the playing field. It's to say the same rights that the enemies of the Jews have, the Jews have.

And this language of end their women and children and plunder their spoil is the same language from Haman's decree. It's evening the playing field. Esther and Mordecai don't want to create a situation in which the precedent is The enemies of the Jews have an advantage over the Jews. They are more favored than the Jews in this conflict.

The second thing that we need to recognize is that just because the decree gave the Jews the right to kill the women and children didn't mean they actually did it. The text doesn't say. We know that they didn't exercise all the rights the decree gave them because they didn't keep the spoil. We know that because it's pointed out specifically in chapter nine, they did not keep the spoil.

So the decree, this new decree essentially legalizes war between the Jews and their enemies. Now, the uncomfortableness that we have with texts like this, It's not just because there's been a covenantal change, because there has been a covenantal change. We are no longer living in the same circumstances that the Jews lived in this period.

We do not bear the sword. God has given the sword to the government. We bear the cross, the message of the cross, the gospel of Christ's salvation. That's what we bear. That's how we exercise spiritual warfare. Paul says our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against spiritualities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness in the heavenly places. Our war is not physical like the Jews was, it is spiritual.

That's not the reason, I think, that a lot of people, not the only reason, I should say, a lot of people are uncomfortable with this text. They're also uncomfortable with it because of what it points ahead to. They are uncomfortable with the idea that God will punish and destroy sinners without mercy. And you might say, but of course they're uncomfortable with that.

He's a merciful God. Yes, but his mercy has limits. It has a time limit. God will not be merciful forever. He will not always be patient. We'll read as Matt continues his series in 2 Peter, how Peter says, God is not slow to act, as some count slowness, but he is patient with you, not wishing that any should perish, but all should come to repentance. But that doesn't mean that it's not coming.

Peter talks about how the people of the day of the flood, when Noah was preaching about how the flood was going to come, was going to destroy them all. And they didn't repent. Notice the similar situation with this decree. This decree comes out at the first part of the year. I believe it's in the third or fourth month of the year. And the decree is not executed until the last month of the year. That's almost a full year that the people have this decree.

And notice also the targets of this decree, the Jews couldn't just simply kill anyone that they might come across, that they might perceive as an enemy. Rather, the decree very specifically says, they have the right to assemble and to defend their lives, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate the entire army of any people or province which might attack them. In other words, if you came under the condemnation of this decree, it was only because you actively assembled to destroy the Jewish people. That's the only way you could be under this condemnation.

That's the same thing now. The gospel has gone forth, and you, everyone in this room, has heard the gospel, has heard how Jesus has died to save you, and anyone anyone may come. Just as anyone may have escaped this decree, anyone can escape the decree of judgment. So we have here a new decree. And this new decree leads to a new distinction, a new distinction. Look with me at verse 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. If that description of Mordecai sounds sort of familiar, it's because it's a similar description to what the writer uses to describe the party of Ahasuerus, the banquet of Ahasuerus in chapter one. In other words, the wealth, the power, the influence, the opulence, of Ahasuerus and his kingdom now belongs to Mordecai, the righteous man.

And that crown, that golden crown that Haman, when he was making his request saying what should be done to the man whom the king desires to honor, Haman even didn't dare ask for the crown to be placed on his own head. Instead, he asked for the horse to be crowned. Well, now this crown is placed on Mordecai's head. Mordecai receives glory, honor, riches, and praise that Haman could only have dreamt of.

And why is this? Why has Mordecai changed his clothes? When was the last time Mordecai was in the square? Other than, of course, when the great reversal happened. Well, it was when he was in sackcloth and ashes. And why did he refuse to take off that sackcloth? when Esther requested him to, so that he could enter the palace and they could talk about their plans. Well, he didn't take it off because his people were still in danger.

His people were mourning, Mordecai mourned. But now, now that their salvation had been decreed, now that the danger that once faced them had been swept away, now that their victory had been decreed, Mordecai changes his clothes. The state of the people changed, he changed. He, their representative, and in Mordecai's rise, in Mordecai's exaltation, the people are exalted. There is a new distinction in all the kingdom of Asauerus. Look with me at verse 16.

For the Jews, there was light and gladness and joy and honor. and 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, and a feast, and a holiday. Contrast this, the result of this new decree, with the result of Haman's decree. What did Haman's decree yield? Haman's decree, according to chapter three, According to chapter three, verse 15, the couriers went out immediately by the king's command while the decree was being issued in Susa, the capital, and while the king and Haman sat down to drink, the city of Susa was in confusion. Well, the reign of Satan and his representative led to chaos, confusion, and mourning for God's people. The decree of Mordecai, God's representative, God's reign, leads to light, joy, gladness, feasting. A new distinction. A new distinction. Notice one more bit of irony here. Look at the last part of verse 17.

And among the peoples of the land, many became Jews, for the dread of the Jews had fallen on them. Again, I feel like a broken record, Remember, the story of Esther is one story. It's kind of a short story. We've been going through it kind of slowly, but we need to keep reaching back because this story is wrapping everything up. But how did this story begin? Well, it began in chapter two where Mordecai told Esther, hey, There are enemies in the king's court. So, and I'm afraid that if you tell people you're a Jew, you're going to be in trouble.

So, you need to pretend to be a Persian. You need to put on the guise of a Persian. Be a Persian for a while to protect yourself. And now, what are the people of the Persian Empire doing? Well, they're putting on the tassels. They're eating kosher. Why? Because they're afraid of the Jews. A great reversal. The irony is rich. And isn't this really what the gospel's all about? This decree being sent out by Esther and Mordecai, isn't this just like the gospel? Wherever the gospel goes, what does it yield? It's a message of release. It's a message of deliverance.

There was once a decree of death, a death that we could not escape, a decree of irreversible death. But then a new decree comes, a decree wrought by Jesus Christ and his death on the cross as he took on the curse of that first decree. He did not reverse it. He did not destroy the decree of death. God is still just. God still punishes sin. Sin is absolutely punished. but is punished in Jesus for all who believe. So that a new decree goes out, anyone who trusts in Jesus, anyone who puts their trust in him, anyone who calls upon his name is saved from that judgment.

And what is the result of that decree? Life, joy, gladness, worship, the reign of God. Good news, good news. So we see a new decree. which yields a new distinction. And this new distinction yields a new deliverance. A new deliverance. Look with me at chapter 9, verse 1.

Now in the 12th month, that is the month of Adar, on the 13th day when the king's command and edict were about to be executed, on the day when the enemies of the Jews hoped to gain mastery over them, it was turned to the contrary. so that the Jews themselves gained a mastery over those who hated them. The Jews assembled in their

cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on those who sought their harm, and no one could stand before them, for the dread of them had fallen on all the peoples. What we have here is a rout, a rout. That day of legalized warfare in the Persian Empire between the enemy of the Jews and the Jews, that day comes.

And what's the result? Well, it's the same result as in Judges. When God gave victory to Barak over Sisera. It's the same result as in the days of David. When David went to fight against the Philistines, no one could stand before them. Why? Because God delivered them. God gives them victory. God gives them a route. God gives them a route. Look at verse 5.

Thus the Jews struck their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying, and they did what they pleased to those who hated them. And in Susa, the capital, the Jews killed and destroyed 500 men. Then it goes on to list the 10 sons of Haman. Remember those 10 sons that Haman was so proud of, that he boasted to his wife Zeresh about, and their friends?

That legacy, that house that he once had, it's now gone. Now think for a moment from Zeresh's perspective here. What did Zeresh say after the reversal where Haman went out, was gonna get Mordecai hanged, and he comes back, he's moping because, well, you see Zeresh, it turned out that, well, I just led Mordecai around the city praising him with golden crown and robe and all that. It didn't turn out the way I thought. And what did Zeresh say? Zeresh said, Haman, things may not be working out for you.

Maybe you should think about this. Because if you trying to kill one Jew ended up this way, what's going to happen to you when you try to kill all the Jews? And we know what happened. He got hanged. Now, what do you think Zeresh was thinking when her ten sons get together and decide on that day Hey, we're going to get together. We're going to execute Dad's decree. We're going to go out there. We're going to get them. We're going to get those Jews. I think Zerush was probably like, guys, I've seen this movie before. This is not good. This is not going to end well. But they didn't listen.

And again, a route for God's people. A route for God's people. And this route was so successful that it comes to the king's attention. Look at verse 11. On that day, the number of those who were killed in Susa, the capital, was reported to the king. And the king said to Queen Esther, the Jews have killed and destroyed 500 men and the 10 sons of Haman in Susa, the capital. What then have they done in the rest of the king's provinces?

Now, what is your petition? It shall even be granted to you. And what is your further request? It shall be done also. Then said Esther, He that pleases the king, let Samar also be granted to the Jews who are in Susa to do according to the edict of today, and let Haman's 10 sons be hanged on the gallows. Now again, some of you might be thinking, well, if earlier the decree was not bloodlust, surely this is bloodlust. Surely Esther now has been overcome in an ethnic cleansing sort of mentality, and she's just gone overboard. Well, not quite.

Remember again who Haman and his followers are. The text reminds us in chapter 8, verse 3, Esther spoke again to the king, fell at his feet, wept, and implored him to avert the evil scheme of Haman the Agagite. And if that wasn't enough, the writer says it again in verse 5. If it is pleasing to the king and so on, let it be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hamadah, the Agagite. Why do they need to point that out again?

Well, remember, if the Israelites are God's people, if they represent God on earth, they represent his purposes. The Agagites, the Amalekites, represent Satan's purposes. And remember again, who Esther is. Esther is a descendant of Saul, according to chapter two. She and her adoptive father, Mordecai, are both ethnic descendants, almost direct descendants, of King Saul. And why is Haman called an Agagite, not just an Amalekite? Well, Agag, the father of the Agagites, was an Amalekite king whom Saul spared. This was very important in the story of Saul.

Those of you who remember from way earlier in Wayne's series through 1 Samuel will remember this. How God told King Saul, King Saul, I need you to execute my justice against the Amalekites. In a very similar situation to this, where again a day of the Lord was coming upon the Amalekites. And God said, here's what I want you to do, I need you to completely destroy them, leave none alive, don't spare anyone, and don't lay your hands on any of the plunder.

And what did Saul do? He spared some, and he took the plunder. And for that, God ripped the kingship away from him. Now what's Esther doing? Well, Esther is refusing mercy. She is zealous to fulfill God's purposes, and she and the people are not laying their hands in the plunder. This is the redemption of Saul's house. This is Esther doing what Saul did not do. Being obedient where Saul was disobedient, zealous to fulfill the commandments of God. Would that we had Esther's seal.

God has not told us to kill any Amalekites to my knowledge. But he has told us to be about killing sin, has he not? Be killing sin or sin will be killing you. If Esther had left some of Haman's descendants alive, you know what would have happened? Another Haman would have arose. Another threat to the Jewish people. The same thing goes for sin in your life. If you leave any of it, if you leave even the slightest bit, it'll come back to bite you.

You must be about killing sin. Paul says, put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts. No provision. Be zealous about killing sin. So we have this great route where the enemies of God's people are swept away. And this route results in rest. Rest. Look at verse 17.

This was done on the 13th day of the month of Adar. On the 14th day, they rested and made it a day of feasting and rejoicing. But the Jews who were in Susa assembled on the 13th day and the 14th day of the same month, and they rested on the 15th day and made it a day of feasting and rejoicing. Like in the days of the judges, like in the days of David, the deliverance of God's people, the rout of God's enemies, results in rest for God's people. They feast and they rejoice. And in this feasting and rejoicing, we have a picture, a little snapshot of the final rest and rejoicing that will follow the final judgment.

That's the purpose of the final judgment. God is not judging the world for no purpose. Jesus does not come again and sweep away his enemies for no reason. He sweeps them away so that his people might rest in him. So that the land might have rest so that we can enjoy a new creation. Rest. The enemies of God are routed. God's people rest. And then finally, reversal. Reversal. Look back again at chapter 9, verse 1.

Now in the 12th month, that is the month of Adar, on the 13th day when the king's command and edict were about to be executed, on the day when the enemies of the Jews hoped to gain mastery over them, it was turned to the contrary, so that the Jews themselves gained mastery over those who hated them.

The day of death turned to a day of deliverance. The day Haman's sons thought to avenge their father, they were avenged and hanged on the gallows. a day when Satan sought to destroy the seed of the woman, to destroy God's promise of salvation that would come through the line of Judah, an Israelite line. That day was a day of deliverance, a day that foreshadowed Satan's own defeat. And once again, we see this little snapshot of the final judgment, the great day of reversal. The day when the decree of death against God's people was reversed the day of the cross. The day when Jesus will come again to rescue his people finally and to sweep away his enemies.

And the good news is, the good news is, well, that second decree has been issued. It has not yet been executed. God's enemies, are still around. But that also means there's time to repent. There's time to turn. There's time to identify with Jesus. To like the Persians became Jews for the fear of the Jews. So you become a Christian for the fear of Christ. Turn to him. Turn to him. Join the winning side. You can't beat him, join him.

So we've seen a new decree, a decree issued to reverse the irreversible decree of death. And this new decree leads to a new distinction, where God's people are glorified, are magnified. And this new distinction leads to a new deliverance, a deliverance that points ahead to the final deliverance.

O come, Lord Jesus, come soon. Amen? Let's pray. Our Father and our God, we look at this text and while our first reaction was one of discomfort, now I pray it's comfort, knowing that you are on the throne, knowing that you are coming, coming to deliver us. Lord, I pray for any that still stand under the decree of death.

Lord, make them afraid. Afraid of your judgment, afraid of the almighty God whose purposes cannot be thwarted, who is coming to avenge their sin. Lord, and let that fear turn them to Jesus. Let that turn them to the only one who can save them, the only one who can deliver them. So they might look ahead, not with fear, but with expectation. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.