

Be Afraid!

Our Text: **Esther 9:1-16** Now in the twelfth month, that is, the month of Adar, on the thirteenth day, the time came for the king's command and his decree to be executed. On the day that the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, the opposite occurred, in that the Jews themselves overpowered those who hated them. The Jews gathered together in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on those who sought their harm. And no one could withstand them, because fear of them fell upon all people. And all the officials of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and all those doing the king's work, helped the Jews, because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them. For Mordecai was great in the king's palace, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces; for this man Mordecai became increasingly prominent. Thus the Jews defeated all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, with slaughter and destruction, and did what they pleased with those who hated them.

And in Shushan the citadel the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men. ⁷ Also Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vajezatha—the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews—they killed; but they did not lay a hand on the plunder.

On that day the number of those who were killed in Shushan the citadel was brought to the king. And the king said to Queen Esther, "The Jews have killed and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the citadel, and the ten sons of Haman. What have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? Now what is your petition? It shall be granted to you. Or what is your further request? It shall be done."

Then Esther said, "If it pleases the king, let it be granted to the Jews who are in Shushan to do again tomorrow according to today's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged on the gallows."

So the king commanded this to be done; the decree was issued in Shushan, and they hanged Haman's ten sons.

And the Jews who were in Shushan gathered together again on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and killed three hundred men at Shushan; but they did not lay a hand on the plunder.

The remainder of the Jews in the king's provinces gathered together and protected their lives, had rest from their enemies, and killed seventy-five thousand of their enemies; but they did not lay a hand on the plunder.

God is on record in telling the Jews to "seek peace" at times even with their enemies:

Jeremiah 29:7 *And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace*

And they had done this up to this point . . . **But It wasn't the Jews who had declared war on the Gentiles, but the Gentiles who had declared war on the Jews . . . AND NOW WAS THE TIME TO RESPOND!!!**

I like how Warren Wiersbe put it, "'**D Day**' arrived for the Jews, the day appointed by Haman's decree for the slaughter of God's chosen people in the empire . . . But Mordecai's decree had changed that "**D**" from "**destruction**" to "**deliverance!**"'

- The Jews had permission to resist their enemies.
- They had been given nine months to prepare for the encounter.
- There were still people in the empire who hated the Jews.
- They were still wanting to exterminate them.
- But . . .

Esther 9:1 Now in the twelfth month, that is, the month of Adar, on the thirteenth day, the time came for the king's command and his decree to be executed. On the day that the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, ***the opposite occurred, in that the Jews themselves overpowered those who hated them.***

- The Jewish men were organized and armed,
- They were ready to meet any enemy who would attack them and their families and try to take their possessions.
- But the Lord had given them a greater weapon than their swords, because ***“the fear of the Jews fell upon them”***:

Esther 8:17 And in every province and city, wherever the king's command and decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a holiday. Then many of the people of the land became Jews, because fear of the Jews fell upon them.

Esther 9:2 The Jews gathered together in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on those who sought their harm. And no one could withstand them, because fear of them fell upon all people.

This was a fear that God had sent into the hearts of the Gentiles to keep them from fighting His people. Yes, there were going to be some who suppress that fear and try to attack . . . **BUT THEIR OWN DEATHS WILL BE THE RESULT!!!**

This is the same type of fear that fell around those who encountered Jacob:
Genesis 35:5 And they journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities that were all around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob.

It was this same fear that went before Israel as they entered the Promised Land:
Deuteronomy 2:25 This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the nations under the whole heaven, who shall hear the report of you, and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you.'

Deuteronomy 11:25 No man shall be able to stand against you; the LORD your God will put the dread of you and the fear of you upon all the land where you tread, just as He has said to you.

Rahab told the two Jewish spies that the fear of Israel had paralyzed the nations in Canaan, and that fear helped give Israel the victory:

Joshua 2:8-11 Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, and said to the men: "I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted;

neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.

Joshua 5:1 So it was, when all the kings of the Amorites who were on the west side of the Jordan, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of the Jordan from before the children of Israel until we had crossed over, that their heart melted; and there was no spirit in them any longer because of the children of Israel.

Joshua 9:24 So they answered Joshua and said, “Because your servants were clearly told that the LORD your God commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you; therefore we were very much afraid for our lives because of you, and have done this thing.

This is one of the biggest problems with our world today:

Romans 3:18 “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

Like Pharaoh, many people are saying:

Exodus 5:2 And Pharaoh said, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go.”

But the question has to be asked, **“Have they seen anything in the people of God that would make them want to fear the Lord?”**

Is there such devotion to God among God’s people that an outsider attending one of our services would:

1 Corinthians 14:25 And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.

To put it simply . . . **The fear of God protects those who fear God and believe His promises!**

• *(Story of my dad coming into summer fun to deal with the leader who took my marble.)*

That person didn’t fear me, **BUT THEY ABSOLUTELY FEARED MY FATHER!!!**

Because the Jews believed Mordecai’s decree, they had new courage and they were not afraid of the enemy . . . **In fact, THEIR COURAGE ONLY ADDED FEAR INTO THE HEARTS OF THEIR ENEMIES!!!**

What if, “WE THE PEOPLE” did this when we are challenged by a wicked government to compromise standards based on the Word of God?!

Do we want to heed some wise counsel before the battle?

2 Chronicles 20:20 So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, “Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.”

But there was another aspect to this fear that helped give the Jews their victory: ***Esther 9:3*** *And all the officials of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and all those doing the king's work, helped the Jews, **because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them.***

THE PEOPLE FEARED MORDECAI!!!

- The princes, deputies, governors, and officers of the king throughout the empire were in such awe of Mordecai that they even helped the Jews defend themselves against the other Persians!
- God had given Mordecai his high position and his great reputation, **AND MORDECAI USED HIS AUTHORITY IN THIS OPPORTUNITY TO DO THE WILL OF GOD, AND THAT WAS POWERFUL!!!**
- **MORDECAI WAS THE MAN IN CHARGE AND HE WAS GOING TO TAKE CHARGE!!!**

Now we, as Christians today who live in a democratic and pluralistic society, can't get into political office in order to use that office to promote our own religious faith and destroy those who disagree with us. **However, we can live our faith so that the power of God is seen in our lives, and the enemy will think twice before attacking!**

And yet sadly, instead of the godless world being afraid of the church, the church is too often afraid of the world! *How do we know this? Because the church often imitates the world and makes it difficult to tell the difference between the two!*

The church today is no longer:
Song of Solomon 6:10 *Who is she who looks forth as the morning, Fair as the moon, Clear as the sun, Awesome as an army with banners?*

Rather, many times she is like the church of Laodecia:
Revelation 3:17 *Because you say, "I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing"—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—*

This latter verse describes a prisoner of war more than the conquerors that we are supposed to be! No wonder the world has no fear of the Lord!
2 Corinthians 10:3–6 *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.*

Whenever the church has tried to use the weapons of this world to fight its battles, the consequences have been both embarrassing and disastrous . . .

But when we wear the whole armor of God, and depend on prayer and the Word of God, we as Christian soldiers can march forward with courage and faith!

Galatians 6:10-20 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.
Acts 6:4 but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”

Yes . . . Some Persians still attacked the Jews and were actually cooperating with Haman, ***an Amalekite***, and this made them the enemies of God!

Esther 9:5 Thus the Jews defeated all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, with slaughter and destruction, and did what they pleased with those who hated them.

Some may say this is brutal . . . But, in slaying those who attacked them, the Jews were only doing to the enemy **WHAT KING SAUL WAS TOLD TO DO YEARS BEFORE!!!**

1 Samuel 15:1-34 Samuel also said to Saul, “The LORD sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the LORD. Thus says the LORD of hosts: “I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt. Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.’ ”

So Saul gathered the people together and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men of Judah. And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and lay in wait in the valley.

Then Saul said to the Kenites, “Go, depart, get down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt.” So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. And Saul attacked the Amalekites, from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is east of Egypt. He also took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.

Now the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, “I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments.” And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the LORD all night. So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel, saying, “Saul went to

Carmel, and indeed, he set up a monument for himself; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal.” Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, “Blessed are you of the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD.”

But Samuel said, “What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?”

And Saul said, “They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.”

Then Samuel said to Saul, “Be quiet! And I will tell you what the LORD said to me last night.” And he said to him, “Speak on.”

So Samuel said, “When you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the LORD anoint you king over Israel? Now the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, “Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.’ Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you swoop down on the spoil, and do evil in the sight of the LORD?”

And Saul said to Samuel, “But I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal.”

So Samuel said: “Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king.”

Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. Now therefore, please pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD.”

But Samuel said to Saul, “I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel.”

And as Samuel turned around to go away, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. So Samuel said to him, “The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent. For He is not a man, that He should relent.”

Then he said, “I have sinned; yet honor me now, please, before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD your God.” So Samuel turned back after Saul, and Saul worshiped the LORD.

Then Samuel said, “Bring Agag king of the Amalekites here to me.” So Agag came to him cautiously. And Agag said, “Surely the bitterness of death is past.”

But Samuel said, “As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women.” And Samuel hacked Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul. ³⁵ And Samuel went no more to see Saul until the day of his death. Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul, and the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.

GOD DOES NOT FORGET HIS WORD AND HIS COMMANDS WILL COME TO PASS!!!

In Esther 9:5–15, we’re given the report from Shushan:

Esther 9:6-15 *And in Shushan the citadel the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men. Also Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and*

Vajezatha — the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews—they killed; but they did not lay a hand on the plunder.

On that day the number of those who were killed in Shushan the citadel was brought to the king. And the king said to Queen Esther, “The Jews have killed and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the citadel, and the ten sons of Haman. What have they done in the rest of the king’s provinces? Now what is your petition? It shall be granted to you. Or what is your further request? It shall be done.”

Then Esther said, “If it pleases the king, let it be granted to the Jews who are in Shushan to do again tomorrow according to today’s decree, and let Haman’s ten sons be hanged on the gallows.”

So the king commanded this to be done; the decree was issued in Shushan, and they hanged Haman’s ten sons.

- Since the Jews were not the aggressors, it means that the ten sons of Haman had taken up arms and attacked the Jews, and all ten of them were slain.
- The bodies of the ten sons were hanged on Haman’s gallows as a warning to the enemy. *(In the text of the Hebrew Scriptures, the ten names are arranged on the page to look like a gallows. On the Feast of Purim, the synagogue reader reads these ten names all in one breath because the sons of Haman all died together.)*
- The sight of ten corpses on Haman’s gallows would certainly deter the Persians from attacking the Jews and would result in the saving of lives.

So the Jews who *were* in Shushan gathered together again on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and killed three hundred men at Shushan . . . But notice, that they did not lay a hand on the plunder.

Then, in verses 16–17, additional news is given about what happened in the other parts of the empire:

Esther 9:16-17 *The remainder of the Jews in the king’s provinces gathered together and protected their lives, had rest from their enemies, and killed seventy-five thousand of their enemies; but they did not lay a hand on the plunder. This was on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar. And on the fourteenth of the month they rested and made it a day of feasting and gladness.*

The Jews in the other parts of the empire killed seventy-five thousand in one day, which shows just how many people hated the Jews and wanted to destroy them.

But what their enemies couldn’t destroy was their God and His Word, and so they would continue to fear Him the rest of their days!

Let’s pray . . .