

"The Rock-Bottom of Rebellion" – Esther 7:1-10
Wednesday 10/31/18 – Jeff Lyle

I. God Reveals the Plans of the Wicked (1-6)

A. The king's generous offer (1-2) - "So the king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther. 2 And on the second day, as they were drinking wine after the feast, the king again said to Esther, "What is your wish, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled."

King Xerxes makes the same offer he has made to Queen Esther before. While proving to be an unenlightened man and one given to deep carnality, we do make note that the king is generous to those who please him.

B. Esther's unexpected news (3-4) - "Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be granted me for my wish, and my people for my request. 4 For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have been silent, for our affliction is not to be compared with the loss to the king."

A very long and delicate process now gives way to the full disclosure of all that is facing the Hebrew people in the Persian Empire. Esther is personally disclosing her identity as a Jewess. This carries a potential death sentence, but she nonetheless lays everything on the line. She communicates to her husband the king that all she is asking for is her desire to be spared from the impending holocaust. The king has committed to giving her up to half of his kingdom, but Esther wants something more valuable. She wants to live. She wants the Jews to live. She pours out the dire situation to the only human on earth who might be able to help her. Again, we see the narrow providence of God in His sovereign placement of Esther into the palace for a time like this.

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C. Haman's exposed plot (5-6) - "Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who has dared to do this?" 6 And Esther said, "A foe and enemy! This wicked Haman!" Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen."

We can almost see the blood draining out of Haman's face as he hears the indicting words coming from the queen. The king demands to know where this plot originated. Esther, holding nothing back, speaks stoutly when she declares Haman to be both a foe and an enemy to her. She accurately describes Haman as being a wicked man. Not surprisingly, Haman is terrified as he becomes painfully aware that everything that he has planned is coming crashing down around him. This moment of justice has been a long time coming. God does not always execute justice on our timetable. The reality is that we will often see the wicked seemingly prosper for a time. These seasons of waiting on God to act will deepen our trust and purify our confidence in our Father's ways. Esther did what she could. Then she waited on the Lord to give her an opportunity to move proactively toward a solution. As the moment arises, her enemy comes crashing down. For more revelation on what it looks like to wait upon the Lord to enact justice upon the wicked, read **Psalm 73:1-20**.

II. God Reverses the Plans of the Wicked (7-10)

A. Look who is in control (7) - "And the king arose in his wrath from the wine-drinking and went into the palace garden, but Haman stayed to beg for his life from Queen Esther, for he saw that harm was determined against him by the king."

The king was drunk and raging. Haman was terrified and begging. Yet we see that Esther was protected and empowered. The little orphaned exile who had experienced so much loss during her life is standing her in this scene as the most powerful person in the entire empire! God has exalted her. God has graced her. God has matured her through the various difficulties that she has been entrusted with. At this climactic moment, she is being harnessed by God to deliver the entire Jewish population from their destruction. The king is a prisoner of his passions. Haman is a prisoner of his own sin. Esther is walking fully free in the will of her invisible God.

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B. Things went from bad to worse for Haman (8a) - "And the king returned from the palace garden to the place where they were drinking wine, as Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was. And the king said, "Will he even assault the queen in my presence, in my own house?"

While Haman is groveling before Esther, pleading with her for his life, the enraged king returns from the room to see his former right-hand man in close proximity to his wife. Haman has now breeched royal protocol by approaching the queen in a manner that the king misinterprets as him assaulting the queen. What was initially just a dose of drunken rage now takes the shape of personal offense in the king's heart. Haman has now made a very bad situation much worse. There is no hope for him now. His rock-bottom reality has found him and there will be no bounce-back coming his way.

C. Destruction found the destroyer (8b-10) - "8b As the word left the mouth of the king, they covered Haman's face. 9 Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, "Moreover, the gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, is standing at Haman's house, fifty cubits high." And the king said, "Hang him on that."

The servants of the king did not wait on instruction. The situation was clear to everyone present. God orchestrates one final moment of sobering irony for Haman. The very gallows that he longed to see Mordecai executed upon would become Haman's final resting place. A complete turnaround in the situation had occurred in as little as five minutes. Esther originally came to the feast fearful for her life and the lives of the Jews. Haman had originally arrived intoxicated with the evil desire to gain permission to execute Mordecai. The king simply wanted to enjoy the food and the wine as he learned what it was that Esther would be asking of him. In the end, Esther got everything she wanted and exceedingly, abundantly more. Haman receives the horrifying reversal of fortune as he is blindfolded and taken to the gallows. When justice is left with the Lord, we are fully vindicated, and God is greatly glorified.

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D. Justice delayed was not justice denied (10) - "So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the wrath of the king abated."

Ecclesiastes 8: 11-13 - "Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil. 12 Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him. 13 But it will not be well with the wicked, neither will he prolong his days like a shadow, because he does not fear before God."