

INJUSTICE WILL BE PUNISHED

Lesson Scripture: Esther 3; 5; 7

Focus Scripture: Esther 7:1-10

*Key Verse: So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai.
Esther 7:10 (NRSV)*

ESTHER 7:1-10 (NRSV)

1 So the king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther.

2 On the second day, as they were drinking wine, the king again said to Esther, "What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled."

3 Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have won your favor, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me—that is my petition—and the lives of my people—that is 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 held my peace; but no enemy can compensate for this damage to the king."

5 Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who has presumed to do this?"

6 Esther said, "A foe and enemy, this wicked Haman!" Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen.

7 The king rose from the feast in wrath and went into the palace garden, but Haman stayed to beg his life from Queen Esther, for he saw that the king had determined to destroy him.

8 When the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall, Haman had thrown himself on the couch where Esther was reclining; and the king said, "Will he even assault the queen in my presence, in my own house?" As the words left the mouth of the king, they covered Haman's face.

ESTHER 7:1-10 (KJV)

1 So the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther the queen.

2 And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? and it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom.

3 Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request:

4 For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage.

5 Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?

6 And Esther said, The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen.

7 And the king arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath went into the palace garden: and Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen; for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king.

8 Then the king returned out of the palace garden into the place of the banquet of wine; and Haman was fallen upon the bed whereon Esther was. Then said the king, Will he force the queen also before me in the house? As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.

9 Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, "Look, the very gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, stands at Haman's house, fifty cubits high." And the king said, "Hang him on that."

10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the anger of the king abated.

9 And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king, Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then the king said, Hang him thereon.

10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.

INTRODUCTION

When it comes to the matter of justice we can have no doubt that God takes the matter seriously.

Yet, it seems that God has a sense of humor, which circumstances sometimes reveal. This is one such case. In this lesson we see God's fingerprints all over a case of poetic justice. Purists may object to the reference about God's fingerprints because God is not mentioned in the book of Esther.

True; that is one of the peculiarities of the book. But, as we read the scripture we see all the hallmarks of God's standard of justice played out. There is a traditional proverb that warns us about digging wells and laying traps for others. For the wells we dig may become our own graves. This in essence is a proper summary of the book of Esther. Does that principle still

hold today? Follow the lesson!

Fortunately for many abusers of the modern justice systems, our society does not execute offenders as they did in Esther's day. Nevertheless, as you will see in the sections below, those who seek to manipulate justice systems pay a price. At times it takes years for injustices to come to light. However, come to light they do. And for this we say, to God be the glory!

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TELLING THE BIBLE STORY

The story of Esther is set in a time when Jewish people were under the rule of the Persian Empire. There are four main characters to the story: the king of the empire, his powerful "Secretary of State and Chief Administrator" Haman, Queen Esther, and her cousin Mordecai. Esther and Mordecai were both Jews –

devoted Jews, who felt the pain of their brothers and sisters. Haman had an oversized ego and loved people to praise and adore him. Mordecai (perhaps because Jews only did homage to God Jehovah) could not bring himself to give such praise and adoration to Haman. That offended the great and mighty chief Haman. This tension between Haman and Mordecai set the scene for what unfolds in Chapters 3, 5, and 7.

Offended by Mordecai's refusal to lavish respect to him, Haman devised a plan to get rid of Mordecai and all of his fellow Jews.

To execute the plan, Haman needed royal authority. So, he went to the king and tricked the king into authorizing the vile plan to eliminate the Jews. Queen Esther, a Jew herself, got word of the plan. It grieved her to the heart. She could not let her people suffer this wicked injustice. So, Queen Esther came up with a plan, a counter plan. Of course, as queen she had no authority on her own to put the plan in place. So, just as Haman had done, she set about to get the king's

approval. Meanwhile, Haman had gone ahead and built gallows for Mordecai's execution. Haman had no idea of what awaited him. As part of Esther's plan she invited the king and Haman to a special dinner party in the palace. Haman was beside himself. He thought the invitation was a tribute to his importance. But he was wrong, so wrong.

At what was supposed to be the dinner party, Esther exposed Haman's diabolic plan to the king. When the king heard of the evil Haman was planning, fire came out of his ears and nose. He was that mad. And in a display of good poetic justice, Haman was killed on the same gallows which he had built for Mordecai and the Jews. As my grandmother used to

“
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say, “Be careful what you wish for; you may get it.” Haman wanted someone to die in his gallows and it turned out to be him!

SANKOFA

Here is a 2018 story which was widely reported both in the Ugandan and international press. It appropriately gives

a modern-day example of the fall of a senior court prosecutor. The headlines should have been, “Prosecutor Now Prosecuted.” It is truly a story of how the tables of natural justice can turn.

According to the reports, William Bayo, a senior state prosecutor in the Gulu (Uganda) High Court, was arrested and charged for allegedly demanding a bribe from a suspect in a money theft case. The prosecutor was arrested at the Jojos Palace Hotel where he allegedly went to receive the bride.

This case had a glaring similarity with the Mordecai – Haman situation. The prosecutor allegedly asked for the bribe from a suspect in a robbery case. A person connected to the suspect informed the authorities of the bribe demand and a counter-operation was set up. As a result, the prosecutor was arrested at the place which was supposed to be the bribe-paying location. Just another case that proves the Bible is still very relevant to our times.

CASE STUDY

The Miami Herald reported this case in November 2018. In this case, “Raimundo Atesiano, the former Biscayne Park (Florida) police chief who directed his officers to frame innocent (black) men for a series of unsolved burglaries, admitted he wanted to appease community leaders and polish the village’s property crimes record.” Apparently, the community was

putting heavy pressures on the police to come up with answers for the crime situation. The police chief, by his own admission, gave in to that pressure and came up with a plan to show better results. As a result, the chief “directed his officers to frame innocent (black) men for a series of unsolved burglaries.”

They deprived these men of their civil rights because the charges laid against them had no legal basis. In the end, the judge sentenced the police chief to three years in prison!

But this case of poetic justice did not stop there. Other officers who had worked under the corrupt chief got free



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accommodations in the jails. These were the same jails they had worked so corruptly to put black men in. In one case, three officers pleaded guilty to charges of civil rights violations. According to the records, these now former officers were guilty of “falsifying the arrest affidavits for a 16-year-old black suspect for four unsolved break-ins in June 2013.” And here was the irony in this case. Shortly before this corruption unfolded, the police chief had “touted the town’s 100 percent burglary clearance record at a village commission meeting.” Each of the three officers in the case of the 16-year-old were sentenced to a year in jail. And note this! All the charges against the framed teenager were eventually dropped.

The revelations, investigations, and convictions that followed the former police chief’s arrest and conviction read like a Saturday night crime drama movie. We have deliberately omitted some details. We have enough to make one point: because of God’s standard of

justice, what is done in the dark must be revealed in the light. It does not matter where the injustice occurs. It could be in the back street of your neighborhood, or in the highest offices of government. God will use servants to find and expose it. As was the case with Mordecai, the person God may use to expose corruption does not have to be a clergy person.

LIFE APPLICATION

Most Christians are very familiar with two verses from the book of Esther – 4:14 and 4:16. Both of these reflect Esther’s great courage. For the sake of her people she was willing to risk her position as queen and face possible death for the sake of justice. Consider this. When you reflect on those verses, how do

they speak to you? And, to what extent do the sentiments in those verses awaken awareness that to stand for justice may involve personal sacrifice? No doubt God will move when we pray and ask for help in situations of injustices. However, we must be open to the idea that God may want to move through us. Also note

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the high level of cooperation that Esther and Mordecai used to find a solution to the threat of Haman. Often, no one person can force the justice a situation may demand. It usually takes a group marching in line to the same drum. Here again, we must assess our willingness to cooperate with others for the common good. For believers this is easy, right?

What is the takeaway from this lesson? The same conclusion we came to in other lessons on justice and injustice: in the end, right will always prevail. Injustice may flourish for a while. The plots to keep justice out of the courtrooms and government offices may get the support of many powerful people. Yet, at the right time and in the right way, God will ensure that justice prevails.

Sometimes you may bluntly ask yourself this question about a situation. “Will justice really prevail in the case of _____(enter the situation you are considering)?” If your answer is yes,

then you have mastered this lesson. If you have doubts, consider rereading the lesson.

QUESTIONS

1. What is your main take-away from the story in the book of Esther?
2. How is this story still relevant to us today?
3. How do you respond to the statement, “Esther shows that God is a revengeful God?”

CLOSING DEVOTION

We will close this lesson with a corporate reading of Psalm 7:6-8 (Message Bible).

⁶⁻⁸ Stand up, God; pit your holy fury against my furious enemies. Wake up, God. My accusers have packed the courtroom; it's

judgment time. Take your place on the bench, reach for your gavel, throw out the false charges against me. I'm ready, confident in your verdict: “Innocent.”

Amen.

“...at the right time and in the right way, God will ensure that justice prevails.”

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS**April 13-April 19**

Monday	Esther 3:1-6 (Mordecai Refuses to Bow to Haman)
Tuesday	Esther 3:7-11 (Haman Sets Decree to Destroy the Jews)
Wednesday	Esther 5:9-14 (Haman Builds Gallows to Hang Mordecai)
Thursday	Esther 8:3-8, 16-17 (Decree Against Jews Struck Down)
Friday	Esther 9:18-23, 29-32 (Festival of Purim Established)
Saturday	Esther 10:1-3 (Mordecai Advances Welfare of the Jews)
Sunday	Esther 7:1-10 (Esther's Plea and Haman's Punishment)