**Wednesday Night Bible Study**

**Wednesday 8 September 2021**

**Queens Chapel UMC \* 7410 Muirkirk Road \* Beltsville, MD 20705**

**Instructor: Rev. Dr. Will Butler**

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

**Theme:** **“A Woman for Such a Time as This”** **(Esther 4:14)**

"…Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

**Esther** **Chapter 6**

**(Part 1)**

**Review:**

**Esther 5:12-14**

 12 Moreover Haman said, "Besides, Queen Esther invited no one but me to come in with the king to the banquet that she prepared; and tomorrow I am again invited by her, along with the king.

 13 "Yet all this avails me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

 14 Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Let a gallows be made, fifty cubits high, and in the morning suggest to the king that Mordecai be hanged on it; then go merrily with the king to the banquet." And the thing pleased Haman; so he had the gallows made.

* Haman is in an outrage, he wants to kill Mordecai. His wife Zeresh talks him into having a fifty cubits high [75 ft] gallows built to hang Mordecai on.
* The writer of Esther wanted the reader to know the height of the gallows because it expresses how anger and pride will kill if not controlled
* Remember, Mordecai’s name means “little”—he was probably about 5’ 4”
* Why would Haman need a 75-foot gallows to hang a short man upon?
* It revealed his hatred and resentment towards Mordecai and the Jewish people

 As we study Chapter 6 of Esther, we must remember God is the Almighty director of each event. This is called *Divine Providence*.

 **Divine Providence** is the means by which God directs all things; both animate *[what God gives life to]* and inanimate *[lifeless, spiritless parts of God’s creation]* Seen and unseen, good and evil—God directs all toward His divine will and purpose

* Providence indicates to us that God’s will must prevail—**Psalms 103:19**

 The LORD has established His throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all.

* There are two (2) words we need to keep in mind if we want to understand God’s providence:
* **1) *Creation***—God, by His Word, created the Heavens and the earth. Therefore, God rules and governs everything He created—**John 1:1-3**

 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

 2 He was in the beginning with God.

 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

* **2 *Preservation***—it is by God’s preservation that the universe is held together and continues to move and exist—**Colossians 1:16-17**

 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

* Providence is the way God moves everything into the future.
* Providence means God is also providing all that we need.
* Abraham and Isaac—**Genesis 22:7-8**

 7 But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

 8 And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together.

* Over 1900 years later, on that same hill where God provided a lamb for Abraham, God provided a Lamb that died on the cross for our sins—**John 1:29**

 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! **The Lamb of God** who takes away the sin of the world!

God is in full control of what’s taking place in the Book of Esther.

**Chapter 6**

 1 That night the king could not sleep. So one was commanded to bring the book of the records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king.

 2 And it was found written that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, the doorkeepers who had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.

 3 Then the king said, "What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?" And the king's servants who attended him said, "Nothing has been done for him."

1. This was a remarkable example of Divine Providence in action. God was guiding history every step along the way.
* King Ahasuerus did what many do when they cannot sleep. He brought out a book and used it to fill the sleepless night, hoping that the reading will make him sleepy again.
* King Ahasuerus could have chosen 20 different ways to fill his sleepless night – but he commands his eunuchs to bring a book and read it to him.
* The one commanded to bring the book could have brought any book but he brought one particular book.
* The book could have been opened to any page, but it was opened to the exact page telling the story of Mordecai and how he saved the King from assassination.
1. King Ahasuerus had a book of the records, which was a chronicle (literally **a book of remembrance**).
* We must never forget that God our Father also has a book of remembrance for the faithful who fear the Lord God.

**Malachi 3:16-17**

 16 Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard them; **So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who** **fear the LORD And who meditate on His name.**

 17 **"They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts,** "On the day that I make them My jewels. **And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him."**

1. God’s people complained about the difficulty of living godly. They saw things within the nation that were unfair. They noticed that those who were not believers were getting ahead in life. They asked God, "What good is it to be godly?"
* God replies to them with a promise in **verses 16-17**. God does not say that He would end the injustice and deal with the unrighteous right then.
* God showed that He was aware of what was happening in the world, and He wanted to encourage them to grow in God and hold on.
1. Even though God sends the Prophet Malachi to speak with Israel, God’s message is also intended for the church of today.
* God is encouraging those who are genuinely trying to be faithful to God. Yet they are feeling frustrated and doubtful because of what they see going in the world around them.
* God replies, through the Prophet Malachi, with this encouragement to those who serve Him. God says He is making a **book of remembrance**, and He will reward people for their faithful service to Him.
* God does not really need a book because God is omniscient—He knows all things. The Book of Remembrance is a figure of speech referring to God’s promise to remember the faithful.
1. God remembered the good that Mordecai did on behalf of the King. Therefore, it was a custom for the Persians to record the good people had done for the King

 **Esther 6:3**

 Then the king said, "What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?" And the king's servants who attended him said, "Nothing has been done for him."

* When King Ahasuerus heard what Mordecai did for him, he considered a reward for Mordecai.

**Esther 6:4-5**

 4 So the king said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace to suggest that the king hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

 5 The king's servants said to him, "Haman is there, standing in the court." And the king said, "Let him come in."

1. It was no coincidence that Haman entered the king’s court at just that moment

* It was no coincidence that Haman came at that moment to ask for the execution of Mordecai
* It was no coincidence that king Ahasuerus wanted to honor Mordecai at just that moment.
1. Haman is there, standing in the court: If this Book of Esther shows us anything, it shows us that God manages the affairs of men, even without their knowledge.
* Esther wasn’t lucky to be queen and Mordecai wasn’t lucky to have overheard the assassination plot.
* It wasn’t luck or chance that made Haman enter the royal courts at this time with this heart. All of these events were orchestrated by God and not by luck.
1. It becomes difficult, of course, when bad things happen to us.
* It is easy to see God’s management of all things when we see good things happen. But what about the bad?

Q = Is it easy to acknowledge that God is in control when life is going well? What about during the difficulties of life—is God still in charge?

Q = Why do bad things happen to good [innocent] people?

 *As of July 31, 2021, 411 mass shootings fit the Mass Shooting Tracker project criterion, leaving 437 people dead and 1,688 injured, for a total of 2,125 total victims, some including the shooter”*

***en.m.wikipedia.org***

* Even then, we must trust God’s total plan, realizing that “all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28

**Esther 6:6**

 So Haman came in, and the king asked him, "What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?" Now Haman thought in his heart, "Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?"

1. God arranged all things, so that not only will all the Jews be ultimately protected, but also so that both Mordecai and Haman would get what was coming to them.

 **Proverbs 26:27**

 Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, And he who rolls a stone will have it roll back on him.

 **Amplified**

 *Whoever digs a pit [for another man’s feet] will fall into it, And he who rolls a stone [up a hill to do mischief], it will come back on him.*

* God often allows fallen man to set his own trap. Haman’s pride and arrogance was the cause of his ultimate humiliation.

**Esther 6:7-9**

 7 And Haman answered the king, "For the man whom the king delights to honor,

 8 "let a royal robe be brought which the king has worn, and a horse on which the king has ridden, which has a royal crest placed on its head.

 9 "Then let this robe and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that he may array the man whom the king delights to honor. Then parade him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him: 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!'"

1. Haman thought the King was referring to him so he agrees with him by offering the king an answer.
* Haman, in his childish desire to be praised and honored by all, asked the king for things that would puff him up with pride.
1. Haman was a tragic man who can only believe he has done well when he heard applause.
* It is a good and sometimes appropriate thing to have applause here on earth, but it is tragic to live your life seeking for it.
* We should instead seek and be satisfied with the applause from heaven when we’ll receive our crown.

 There are Crowns we’ll receive from Heaven for our faithfulness to God and not our self-centeredness towards ourselves

* **The Imperishable Crown** – **1 Corinthians 9:24-25**

 24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.

 25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.

 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.

* **The Crown of Righteousness** – **2 Timothy 4:8**

 “Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

* **The Crown of Life** – **Revelation 2:10**

 "Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

1. James tells us that this crown of life is for all those who love God **James 1:12**

 “Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”

* The question then is how do we demonstrate our love for God? The apostle John answers this question for us:

**1 John 5:3**

 “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.”