

“Fingerprints Of God”
The Book Of Esther

Introduction:

1. As We Looked At Last Week:
 - Our Theme For This New Year Is:
 - Hope! True Hope!
 - Not The Uncertain Kind Of Hope:
 - That The World Often Wishes For!
 - But The Certain Kind Of Hope:
 - That God Offers To His People!
 - And Our Theme Verse For This New Year Is:
 - Romans 15:4 - “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope!”
2. And So - To Begin Looking At:
 - Our Blessed Hope As Christians – On Sunday Mornings:
 - We Are Going To Be Looking More Closely At:
 - The Old Testament Book Of:
 - Esther!
 - So - Please Head There With Me:
 - In Your Bibles This Morning!
 - The Book Of Esther!
3. Now - The Book Of Esther:
 - Was Written About The Time Period:
 - In The History Of Israel:
 - When They Were In Captivity!
 - And The Reasons They Were In Captivity Were Because Of Their Sin & Their Rebellion & Even Their Rejection Of God!
 - By This Time:
 - The Nation Of Israel Had Been Split In Two!
 - The Northern Kingdom Of Israel:
 - Had Already Been Defeated, Destroyed & Taken Captive:
 - By The Assyrian Empire!
 - The Southern Kingdom Of Judah:
 - Had Been Defeated, Destroyed & Taken Captive:
 - By The Next Great Empire:
 - Babylon!
 - But God - In His Mercy & Grace:
 - Determined That This Punishment / This Captivity Of His People Would Last No More Than 70 Years!
 - And They Were The Ones Through Whom:
 - God Would Begin To Restore His People To Their Land:
 - Just As He Promised Through His Prophets!
 - And The Story – Or Rather – The History Of Esther:
 - Takes Place At This Time!
 - During The Dominion Of The Persian Empire:
 - And Most Likely Under The Rule Of One Of Their Most Powerful:
 - Though Unstable Rulers:
 - Xerxes! Known In Hebrew & In Esther As “Ahasuerus”!
 - In Fact - In All Of Esther Chapter 1 - Beginning In Verse 1:
 - The Focus Is On This King!
 - Ahasuerus!
 - And All Of His Power, His Wealth, And His Greatness!
 - Read 1:1 - “Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, (this is Ahasuerus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces:)
 - 5. Now - For The People Of God At This Time:

- Perhaps They Were Wondering:
 - “God – Where Are You?”
 - After All - Since Their Captivity - They Were Scattered & Spread Out All Over The Vast Reaches Of The Empire!
 - 127 Provinces!
 - From India Even Unto Ethiopia!
 - And There Was Likely A Community Of Jews:
 - In Each Of Those Provinces!
 - 9:30 - “And he sent the letters unto all the Jews, to the hundred twenty and seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth!”
6. Yet - There Was One Special Promise:
- Given By God To His Special People:
 - Around 250 Years Earlier:
 - By The Prophet Isaiah!
 - And It Was A Prophecy & A Promise:
 - Of Hope!
 - The Promise Of His Presence:
 - No Matter What!
 - Even During Their Time Of Captivity & Exile!
 - Find This Promise In Isaiah 43:1-2 - “But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. / When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee!”
 - The Promise Of God’s Presence:
 - Was Simply - “I Will Be With Thee!”
 - And That Promise Still Applied:
 - To The Time Of Esther!

7. And Yet - When You Read Through The Book Of Esther:

 - You Wonder - “Where Is God?”
 - After All - God’s Name Is Not Mentioned:
 - Even A Single Time!
 - Even Though The King Of The Persian Empire - Ahasuerus - Is Named 29 Times!
 - It Is As If The Human Author:
 - Under The Inspiration & Direction Of God:
 - Purposefully Wrote The Book To Exclude The Name Of God!
 - Now - Imagine How Difficult That Would Have Been For Him To Do!
 - Especially For A Deeply Religious People Like The Jews!
 - **IE:** It Would Be Like Trying To Write An Entire Book Without The Letter E - The Most Common Letter In The English Language! Seems Impossible - But This Too Has Been Done!

8. But - Just Because God’s Name Is Not Used:

 - Does Not Mean That God Is Not There!
 - In Fact - The Fingerprints Of God Are Seen:
 - All Over The Book / History Of Esther!
 - **IE:** Like A Thief May Leave Fingerprints At A Crime Scene! It Makes It Easy To Identify Who Was There!
 - But - Unlike A Crime Scene:
 - The Fingerprints Of God’s Presence & Providence:
 - Gives His People Hope!
 - Even In The Most Difficult & Dangerous Times & Circumstances We May Face!

9. So - To Begin Our Study Through:

 - The Book Of Esther - We Are Going To Look At:
 - Just Three Of The “Fingerprints” Of God!
 - Evidence Of God’s Presence:
 - And The Fulfilment Of His Promises To His People!
 - And God’s Great Faithfulness:
 - Gave Them & Continues To Give Us:

- Real Hope!

* The First Fingerprint Of God That We Find Is:

1. The People Of God!

- And Where The People Of God Are Present:
 - So Is God Himself – And That Gives Hope!
- After An Entire Chapter Focused On:
 - A Foreign / Heathen King & His Queen:
 - Ahasuerus & Vashti!
 - Even Though God Is Still Working Even In All Of The Intrigue Of The Palace!
 - Behind The Scenes!
- The First Mention Of God’s Chosen People:
 - Is Found In 2:5 - Where We First Meet & Are Introduced:
 - To “A Certain Jew!”
 - 2:5-7 - “Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite; / Who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away. / And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle’s daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter!”
- Now - The Jews Are Known As The “People Of God!”
 - Specially Chosen By Him – For His Own Purposes!
 - And This Was A Great Privilege & Blessing For The Jews!
 - And So - The “Jews” Are Mentioned:
 - Another 45 Times In The Entire Book Of Esther!
 - And Even Though The Name Of God Is Absent:
 - God’s People Are Not!
 - Instead - They Are Very Prominent!
 - And The People Of God Prove:
 - The Reality Of The Presence Of God Himself!
 - A Clear Fingerprint!
 - We Know This Because Of What God Himself Told His People In:
 - Deuteronomy 7:6-10 - “For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. / The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: / But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. / Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; / And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face!”
 - So God Promises That - No Matter When / No Matter Where They Live - They Still Belonged To Him!
 - And He Would Be Faithful To His Covenant With Them & Their Fathers!
 - And it Is This Truth That Gives All Of God’s People Hope!
 - Because This Promise / This Truth:
 - Does Not Just Apply To The Nation Of Israel:
 - But To A Special / Spiritual Israel!
 - It Applies To All Those Who Believe In Jesus Christ As Their Savior From Sin!
 - Because As We Discover From 1 Peter 2:9-10:
 - Christians Are Included In God’s Covenant!
 - “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: / Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy!”
 - And God Is Faithful To His Promises To Us As Well!
 - And So - Wherever the People Of God Are Present:
 - So Is God Himself! Jesus Christ Himself!

- Matthew 18:20 - "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them!"
 - This Is Christ's Promise To His People!
- And His Promise Gives Us Hope!
 - Even When It Feels Like / Seems Like:
 - God Is Absent!
 - For Where God's People Are:
 - There God Is – And Remains!
 - To Be Faithful To His People & His Promises!

* The Second Fingerprint Of God That We Find Is:

2. ***The Enemies Of God!***

- And Where The Enemies Of God & His People Are:
 - You Will Also Find God Himself!
 - And This Truth Gives Us Hope!
- Of Course - The Enemy We Find In The Book Of Esther:
 - Is Haman!
 - And We First Meet Haman In 3:1:
 - "After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him!"
 - And What We Learn Throughout The Book Of Esther:
 - Is That Haman Is The Jews Enemy:
 - And Therefore - Is God's Enemy!
 - In Fact - 3:10 - Haman Is Referred To As The "Jews Enemy" And Not Just Modecai's Enemy!
 - And He Is:
- The Ancient Enemy Of God's People!
 - When Haman Discovered That Mordecai Was A Jew:
 - It Appears That His Instincts Kicked In As:
 - An Agagite!
 - In Other Words - It Appears That Haman Was Not A Persian At All - But Instead Was A Canaanite!
 - He Was Likely A Descendent From The Noble & Royal:
 - Lines Of The Ancient Amalekites!
 - And the Amalekites Were The First Enemies To Attempt To Destroy God's People As They Were Escaping From Their Bondage In Egypt:
 - 1,000 Years Before!
 - And So In Exodus 17:14 - God Pronounced His Judgment:
 - Upon The Amalekites - "And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven!"
 - What We Learn From This Is That:
 - The Enemies Of God's People Are The Enemies Of God Himself!
 - Because - Zechariah 2:8 - "He That Toucheth You Toucheth The Apple Of His Eye!"
 - And So In Exodus 17:16 - We Read:
 - "The LORD hath sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation!"
 - Haman Would Have Remembered the Jews:
 - And Their God – As His Enemy!
 - And So - He Sought To Reignite The Ancient Battle & Saw His Chance To Destroy God's People Once And For All!
 - But The Enemies Of God's People:
 - Are The Enemies Of God!
 - And He Will Fight & Win The Battle For Us!
 - Haman Also Is & Represents:
- The Universal Enemy Of God's People!
 - He Was Not Just Willing To Settle For:
 - The Defeat Of Mordecai!

- But - According To 9:24:
 - He Was The Enemy Of “All” The Jews - “Because Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had devised against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur, that is, the lot, to consume them, and to destroy them!”
- Haman Offered Them:
 - No Refuge / No Peace / No Opportunity For Surrender! Whether Young / Old / Weak / Strong / Men / Women / Children! Considered All Of Them A Threat – Because Of Their God!
 - Haman Also Is & Represents:
- The Moral Enemy Of God’s People!
 - 7:6 - When Haman’s Plot Is Revealed By Esther:
 - “And Esther said, The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen!”
 - Haman Was A Man Of Evil!
 - His Actions / Motives / Heart!
 - Haman Is A Picture Of The Adversary / Foe / Enemy:
 - Of All Of God’s People!
 - The Devil Himself!
 - Remember 1 Peter 5:8? - “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour!”
 - The Devil Is Our Ancient Enemy / Our Universal Enemy / Our Moral Enemy!
- But What Can Give God’s People Hope:
 - With Such A Powerful & Ruthless Enemy?
 - Like Haman? Like The Devil Himself?
 - Remember This Fingerprint Of God!
 - Wherever The Enemies Of God Are Present:
 - So Is God Himself! Jesus Christ Himself!
 - 1 John 4:4 - “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world!”
 - The German Reformer, Martin Luther, Understood This:
 - When He Wrote - “A mighty fortress is our God, / A bulwark never failing; / Our helper He, amid the flood / Of mortal ills prevailing!”
- And This Truth Gives Us Hope!
 - Even When It Feels Like / Seems Like:
 - God Is Absent!
 - For Where God’s Enemies Are:
 - There God Is – And Remains!
 - To **Fight** For His People!
 - And In The Words Of Martin Luther:
 - “Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side,
The Man of God’s own choosing:
Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth, His name,
From age to age the same,
And He must win the battle!”

* The Third Fingerprint Of God That We Find Is:

3. ***The Law Of God!***

- Or The Word Of God!
 - And Where The Law Of God Is:
 - You Will Also Find god Himself!
 - And This Truth Gives Us Hope!
- We First Find This Fingerprint:
 - In Haman’s Accusation Against Mordecai & The Jews:
 - All Throughout The Empire!
 - In 3:8 - “And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed

- among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them!"
 - What Laws Were Haman Describing?
 - The Jewish Laws!
 - And Whose Laws Are The Jew's Laws?
 - God's!
 - And Yet - From Haman's Perspective:
 - They Were "Scattered Abroad" And Insignificant!
 - So What Was The Threat?
- What We See Here is:
 - A Great & Noticeable Difference:
 - Between The Jews & The Rest Of The World!
 - And So - Something Had Changed During Their Time Of Captivity!
 - Before Their Captivity:
 - They Were Known For:
 - Being Like The World!
 - And For Disobeying God & His Laws!
 - But Now - Close To The End Of Their Captivity:
 - They Were Known For:
 - To Some Degree:
 - Both Hearing & Heeding God's Law & God's Word To Them!
 - Even As We Hear From:
 - Joshua 1:8 - "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success!"
- You See - From The Very Beginning:
 - The Word Of God Is Equivalent To The Presence Of God!
 - Genesis 3:8 - "And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden!"
 - What We Learn From This Is:
 - God Is Always Present With & Through His Word!
 - And This Truth Gives Us Hope!
 - Even When It Feels Like / Seems Like:
 - God Is Absent!
 - For Wherever The Word Of God Is Present:
 - So Is God Himself!
 - So Is Jesus Christ Himself!
 - Who Is The Living Word!
 - Remember John's Words:
 - John 1:1-2, 14 - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. / The same was in the beginning with God. / And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth!"
 - And Just As The Jews In The Book Of Esther:
 - Would Have Both Heard & Heeded:
 - The Law Of God!
 - We Too Need To:
 - Both Hear & Heed:
 - The Living Word Of God!
 - Because It Is Through The Power Of His Word That We Are Saved & Changed More & More Into His Own Image & Likeness!
 - And Where God's Word Is:
 - There God Is – And Remains!
 - To Save & Sanctify His People!

Conclusion:

1. Three Fingerprints Of God!
 - The People Of God!
 - The Enemies Of God & His People!
 - The Law & Word Of God!
 - Whenever & Wherever These Things Are Present:
 - God Is Present!
2. And So - Even Though It May Seem Like God Is Absent:
 - In The Book Of Esther:
 - He Is There!
 - And Even Though At Times In Your Life:
 - God May Seem Absent:
 - Yet - If You Are A Child Of God Through Faith In The Lord Jesus Christ:
 - He Is Present! Always!
 - Remember Jesus' Final Words In Matthew?
 - Matthew 28:20 - "And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen!"
3. The Promise Of God's Presence Gives Us Hope!
 - Real & Lasting Hope!

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