

**THE INFLUENCE OF EVIL**

**Esther series, part 3**

Esther's inner beauty and faith had an influence on the king, but there are other influences working to undo the good God desires. We explore the attempts of evil to influence an ancient king--and all of us.

**LSB 901 OPEN NOW THY GATES OF BEAUTY** sts. 1–2, 5

- 1 Open now thy gates of beauty; Zion, let me enter there,  
Where my soul in joyful duty Waits for Him who answers prayer.  
Oh, how blessèd is this place, Filled with solace, light, and grace!
- 2 Gracious God, I come before Thee; Come Thou also unto me.  
Where we find Thee and adore Thee, There a heav'n on earth must be.  
To my heart, O enter Thou; Let it be Thy temple now!
- 5 Speak, O God, and I will hear Thee; Let Thy will be done indeed.  
May I undisturbed draw near Thee While Thou dost Thy people feed.  
Here of life the fountain flows; Here is balm for all our woes.

Text: Benjamin Schmolck, 1672–1737; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt.

Text: Public domain

**P** In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

**+ CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION +**

**P** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

**C** **But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

*(Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.)*

**P** Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

**C** **Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**

**P** Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** **Amen.**

*GLORIA IN EXCELSIS*

LSB 154

**A** Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His people on earth.

**C** **Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God and Father:  
We worship You, we give You thanks, we praise You for  
Your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God,  
Lamb of God:**

**You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.**

**You are seated at the right hand of the Father; receive our prayer.**

**For You alone are the Holy One, You alone are the Lord, You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

### *SALUTATION AND COLLECT OF THE DAY*

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** **And also with you.**

**P** Let us pray.

O Lord, keep Your family the Church continually in the true faith that, relying on the hope of Your heavenly grace, we may ever be defended by Your mighty power; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** **Amen.**

### **+ GOD'S WORD FOR US +**

#### *OLD TESTAMENT READING*

Esther 3 NIV

<sup>1</sup>After these events, King Xerxes honored Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, elevating him and giving him a seat of honor higher than that of all the other nobles. <sup>2</sup>All the royal officials at the king's gate knelt down and paid honor to Haman, for the king had commanded this concerning him. But Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor.

<sup>3</sup>Then the royal officials at the king's gate asked Mordecai, "Why do you disobey the king's command?" <sup>4</sup>Day after day they spoke to him but he

refused to comply. Therefore they told Haman about it to see whether Mordecai's behavior would be tolerated, for he had told them he was a Jew.<sup>5</sup> When Haman saw that Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor, he was enraged.<sup>6</sup> Yet having learned who Mordecai's people were, he scorned the idea of killing only Mordecai. Instead Haman looked for a way to destroy all Mordecai's people, the Jews, throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes.

<sup>7</sup> In the twelfth year of King Xerxes, in the first month, the month of Nisan, the *pur* (that is, the lot) was cast in the presence of Haman to select a day and month. And the lot fell on the twelfth month, the month of Adar.

<sup>8</sup> Then Haman said to King Xerxes, "There is a certain people dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom who keep themselves separate. Their customs are different from those of all other people, and they do not obey the king's laws; it is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them.<sup>9</sup> If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will give [375 tons] of silver to the king's administrators for the royal treasury."

<sup>10</sup> So the king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews.<sup>11</sup> "Keep the money," the king said to Haman, "and do with the people as you please."

<sup>12</sup> Then on the thirteenth day of the first month the royal secretaries were summoned. They wrote out in the script of each province and in the language of each people all Haman's orders to the king's satraps, the governors of the various provinces and the nobles of the various peoples. These were written in the name of King Xerxes himself and sealed with his own ring.<sup>13</sup> Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with the order to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews—young and old, women and children—on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods.<sup>14</sup> A copy of the text of the edict was to be issued as law in every province and made known to the people of every nationality so they would be ready for that day.

<sup>15</sup> The couriers went out, spurred on by the king's command, and the edict was issued in the citadel of Susa. The king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was bewildered.

**A** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

*EPISTLE*

1 Peter 5:7–9 NIV

<sup>7</sup> Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

<sup>8</sup> Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

**A** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

*HOLY GOSPEL*

John 8:42–44 NIV

**P** The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the eighth chapter.

**C** Glory to You, O Lord.

<sup>42</sup> Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God. I have not come on my own; God sent me.

<sup>43</sup> Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. <sup>44</sup> You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

**P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C** **Praise to You, O Christ.**

*LSB 655 LORD, KEEP US STEADFAST IN YOUR WORD*

- 1 Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word;  
Curb those who by deceit or sword  
Would wrest the kingdom from Your Son  
And bring to naught all He has done.
- 2 Lord Jesus Christ, Your pow'r make known,  
For You are Lord of lords alone;  
Defend Your holy Church that we  
May sing Your praise eternally.
- 3 O Comforter of priceless worth, Send peace and unity on earth;  
Support us in our final strife And lead us out of death to life.

Text: Martin Luther, 1483–1546; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt.

Text: Public domain

*MESSAGE: THE INFLUENCE OF EVIL*

Esther, God's Influencer, part 3

*NICENE CREED*

**C** **I believe in one God,**  
**the Father Almighty,**  
**maker of heaven and earth**  
**and of all things visible and invisible.**  
**And in one Lord Jesus Christ,**  
**the only-begotten Son of God,**  
**begotten of His Father before all worlds,**

**God of God, Light of Light,  
very God of very God,  
begotten, not made,  
being of one substance with the Father,  
by whom all things were made;  
who for us men and for our salvation came down from  
heaven**

**and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary  
and was made man;  
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.  
He suffered and was buried.**

**And the third day He rose again according to the  
Scriptures**

**and ascended into heaven  
and sits at the right hand of the Father.**

**And He will come again with glory to judge both the living  
and the dead,**

**whose kingdom will have no end.**

**And I believe in the Holy Spirit,**

**the Lord and giver of life,**

**who proceeds from the Father and the Son,**

**who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped  
and glorified,**

**who spoke by the prophets.**

**And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,**

**I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,**

**and I look for the resurrection of the dead**

**and the life ✝ of the world to come. Amen.**

## OFFERING

## OFFERTORY

LSB 159

- C** What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me?  
I will offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving and will call on the name of the Lord.  
I will take the cup of salvation and will call on the name of the Lord.  
I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the presence of all His people,  
in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

### + SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT +

## INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNION

### THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

- P** Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."



## *LORD'S PRAYER*

**☐** Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be Thy name,  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done on earth  
as it is in heaven;  
give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom  
and the power and the glory  
forever and ever. Amen.

## *AGNUS DEI*

LSB 163

**☐** Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have  
mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have  
mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; grant us  
peace.

## *DISTRIBUTION*

## *LSB 728 HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION*

- 1 How firm a foundation, O saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!  
What more can He say than to you He has said  
Who unto the Savior for refuge have fled?
- 2 “Fear not! I am with you, O be not dismayed,  
For I am your God and will still give you aid;  
I’ll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand,  
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.
- 3 “The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose  
I will not, I will not, desert to his foes;  
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,  
I’ll never, no never, no never, forsake!
- 4 “When through fiery trials your pathway will lie,  
My grace, all-sufficient, will be your supply.  
The flames will not hurt you; I only design  
Your dross to consume and your gold to refine.
- 5 “Throughout all their lifetime My people will prove  
My sov’ reign, eternal, unchangeable love;  
And then, when gray hairs will their temples adorn,  
Like lambs they will still in My bosom be borne.”

Text: A Selection of Hymns, 1787, London, alt.

Text: Public domain

## *LSB 850 GOD OF GRACE AND GOD OF GLORY*

- 1 God of grace and God of glory, On Your people pour Your  
pow'r;  
Crown Your ancient Church's story; Bring its bud to glorious  
flow'r.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage  
For the facing of this hour, For the facing of this hour.
- 2 Lo, the hosts of evil round us Scorn the Christ, assail His ways!  
From the fears that long have bound us Free our hearts to faith  
and praise.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage  
For the living of these days, For the living of these days.
- 3 Cure Your children's warring madness; Bend our pride to Your  
control;  
Shame our wanton, selfish gladness, Rich in things and poor in  
soul.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage  
Lest we miss Your kingdom's goal,  
Lest we miss Your kingdom's goal.
- 4 Save us from weak resignation To the evils we deplore;  
Let the gift of Your salvation Be our glory evermore.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,  
Serving You whom we adore,  
Serving You whom we adore.

Text: Harry Emerson Fosdick, 1878–1969

Text: Public domain

**P** The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

**C** Amen.

*LSB 763 WHEN PEACE, LIKE A RIVER*

sts. 1, ref, 2–3

1 When peace, like a river, attendeth my way;

When sorrows, like sea billows, roll;

Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,

It is well, it is well with my soul. **Refrain**

**ref It is well (It is well)**

**with my soul, (with my soul),**

**It is well, it is well with my soul.**

2 Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,

Let this blest assurance control,

That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate

And hath shed His own blood for my soul. **Refrain**

3 He lives—oh, the bliss of this glorious thought;

My sin, not in part, but the whole,

Is nailed to His cross, and I bear it no more.

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul! **Refrain**

Text: Horatio G. Spafford, 1828–88, alt.

Text: Public domain

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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