

## ***“Paul’s First Letter to Timothy — Prisoners of Hope — Part 3”***

### **Review:**

- ***The sacred history regarding Rahab and Ruth is dramatic and powerful in illustrating our theme. Many were “prisoners of hope” (Zech. 9:12) and that made all the difference through Israel’s history. The developing theme of how the Lord God faithfully accomplishes that plan is on clear display. This is through the seed of the women leading to the Promised Seed! We have seen how through Rahab, then Ruth, and Hannah, and finally, last time, Jehosheba God further accomplished his will as declared in the great Genesis promise at the beginning when sin first came into this world through God’s own creation, Adam and Eve. It would be through the “seed of the woman”, through childbearing, that this would ultimately be accomplished, first through one or two, then many tribes (the Twelve), finally through a divinely ordained nation (Israel) and, as we shall see soon in our studies, through Israel’s Messiah, even our Lord Jesus. TODAY, EVEN THOUGH CHRIST OUR LORD HAS COME, HAS DIED, AND BEEN GLORIOUSLY RISEN AGAIN, HOPE STILL SPRINGS IN THE HEARTS OF MANY WHO ARE CALLED, AND SURELY IN THE WOMEN.***
- ***Ah, the hope of women — to marry and bear children WITH THE HOPE AND EXPECTATION THAT ONE MIGHT BE THE VERY ONE CHOSEN BY ALMIGHTY GOD TO BEAR THE PROMISED “SEED OF THE WOMAN”. Eve, Sarah, Moses’ mother, Rahab, Naomi, then Ruth knew something of it, though this hope had perhaps been largely lost for many. It seems it was passed down from mother Eve that they were with the judgment also privileged to be a part of a long line of those that would bring this hope to its conclusion, which was ultimately based on the hope and promise of Gen. 3:15 & 16. This was the hope of women as it was of Eve beginning at that promise so long ago.***

***Eve’s words spoken on the occasion of her first childbearing establish that indeed she was a “prisoner of that hope”:***

***Gen. 4:1*** And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man [from] the LORD.

***This surely hints at the rest of that long and continuing story where we all find ourselves even today. Surely these women were caught up in the web of time and this “prison of hope” was becoming a reality for them as God worked in their midst.***

***The Overall Scriptural Theme: God Sees the End from the Beginning but his plan develops in history and that is where we all find ourselves. According to the glorious will of Almighty God we are bound to the course of a history with a glorious end. God knows the end from the beginning and has placed us in the very center of it all. We have been made “prisoners of that hope eternal” as the prophet Zechariah writes in chapter 9 of his great work of prophecy.***

***Last Time: “Prisoners of Hope’, Part 2 (Hanna), and today Part 3 (Esther).***

***Background:***

- ***As we have seen, Paul in 1 Timothy goes back to the beginning, to the book of Genesis where it is the SOURCE of the Rebellion there in the Garden of Eden that was most relevant to him at this time. But Eve, not Adam, is the main focus here due to the gravity of the circumstances in Ephesus with some of the women in active rebellion against the chosen leadership.***

***Gen. 3:15-16***

***15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.***

***16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire [shall be] to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.***

***1 Tim. 2:15 Notwithstanding she shall be saved in [THE] childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.***

- ***There was a judgment placed upon the woman and it was significant in its effect on her and her husband and all that would follow in future generations. Eve had rebelled against her husband Adam and against Almighty God, her creator. But Adam bears the true and final responsibility for what has been done as Paul writes here in Timothy and also in other places, such as in Romans. HOWEVER, IN ADDITION TO THE JUDGMENTS, WE FIND HIDDEN BLESSINGS!!***

***This is most wonderful indeed. And amen! That the blessings would outweigh the effects of the curse as God saw it and as his chosen plan dictated. That the curse put upon women would be turned into blessing IF “they”, that is, the children, grow and prosper under the living and tender and heart-felt and spiritual care of their mothers. That is God’s promise to women and that is the basis for their “salvation” from the effects of the***

*judgment given to Eve and all that follow her. For she is “the mother of all living” (Gen. 3:20).*

**Our Outline Today:**

- *God Used Women to Promote His Working Through the Promised Seed*
- *God Used Even Unbelievers to Further His Redemptive Plan*
- *God Chooses Mordecai & Esther to Save the National and Royal Line*
- *The Victory is the Lord’s and Satan’s Plot Through Haman Is Defeated*
- *God Reigns Supreme Protecting His Ongoing Promises Regarding Israel*
- *God Uses the Humble and the Weak to Bring to Nothing the Mighty*
- *God’s Work in Support of His Promises Is Glorious Indeed!*

**I. God Used Women to Promote His Working Through the Promised Seed**

*What does the rest of the revealed word say about this? The genealogy tells us and might find it quite incredible the first time we see this written here:*

***Ruth 4:18-22***

***18 Now these [are] the generations of Pharez [of the tribe of Judah, by Tamar]: Pharez begat Hezron,  
19 And Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab,  
20 And Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon,  
21 And Salmon begat Boaz [by Rahab], and Boaz begat Obed [by Ruth],  
22 And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David.***

- *So, David’s great-great-grandfather was Salmon and his great-great-grandmother was Rahab; his great-grandfather was Boaz and his great-grandmother was Ruth!! The Promise concerning the Seed of the Woman takes center stage here in God’s word and in the genealogies it is very evident indeed.*
- *Later (less than one generation, it seems) Hanna and her son Samuel take center stage. They provide the connecting link in sacred history between Rahab / Ruth and King David as we have seen in our study on “The Long War Against God”.*
- *You will remember Hannah’s “song of praise and thanksgiving” at the birth of Samuel, her long expected son. God had provided a son after many years of barrenness leading Hannah to proclaim in song what goes down in history as one of the greatest testimonies of God’s sovereign and eternal purpose ever spoken. It is matched*

*only by Mary's as found in the gospel of Luke. The two are quite similar in fact:*

**1 Sam. 2:8-10**

**8** He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, [and] lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set [them] among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth [are] the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them.

**9** He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail.

**10** The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.

- *As one reads on, one sees how Samuel becomes the link to David.*
- *Studying scripture further, we come a number of centuries later to a time when the wife of the high priest, Jehosheba, has opportunity to demonstrate her hope in the unseen as she was tested against all odds. This was in the days of a prophet named Zechariah, whom Christ mentioned in his earthly teaching. The Long War Against God had reached the point where even the Royal Line to Messiah had been breached nearly to the breaking point:*

**[Read ] 2 Kings 11:1-3, 21**

**1** And when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal.

**2** But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons [which were] slain; and they hid him, [even] him and his nurse, in the bedchamber from Athaliah, so that he was not slain.

**3** And he was with her hid in the house of the LORD six years. And Athaliah did reign over the land.

...

**21** Seven years old was Jehoash when he began to reign.

- *We may never have heard of (or remembered) Jehosheba. During a time of great rebellion and idolatry within God's own nation, Israel, this woman valiantly and at very great risk saved the child and heir to the throne, Joash. As it turned out, he was the only remaining one of the royal sons in David line chosen by God to deliver in his*

**good timing the very Seed of the Woman, Israel's Messiah and our Lord Jesus Christ. So the royal line was preserved and ultimately delivered the Seed of the Woman, our Lord Jesus Christ! Amen.**

**God's will shall be accomplished, and the "prisoners of hope" are truly in the center of this great work of Almighty God. And all are a part of that great work, especially the women.**

## **II. God Used Even Unbelievers to Further His Redemptive Plan:**

- ***The Overall (and Subtle) Theme of the Book of Esther: Godly submission of women to their husbands. Now for the rest of this This is illustrated so well here in the pages of sacred history with Mordecai and his young orphan niece Esther on the very center stage:***

- ***The principles behind this entire Old Testament book come from Genesis 3:15-16 as we shall see! Ahasuerus, King of Persia, rejects his wife Vashti and banishes her due to her rebellion against her husband's command as we see in Chapter 1. He was concerned that her example would lead many other wives to rebel against their husbands and to attempt rather to rule over them rather than to be in proper submission as had been handed down from generation to generation.***

***[READ ] Est. 1:17 For [this] deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, so that they shall despise their husbands in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not.***

- ***So God used a heathen king (again) to accomplish his purpose. Here were laid down the very foundations for ensuring the fulfillment of the promise concerning the Seed of the Woman and God's plan of redemption.***

## **III. God Chooses Mordecai & Esther to Save the National and Royal Line:**

- ***Background: The stage is set when Esther is orphaned is then raised by her uncle Mordecai, a godly Jew - chapter 2. Who was this Mordecai?***

**Ezra 2:1-2 (see also Neh. 7:7)**

1 Now these [are] the children of the province that went up out of the captivity, of those which had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away unto Babylon, and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city;

**2 Which came with Zerubbabel: Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, Baanah. The number of the men of the people of Israel:**

- ***Setting of the Scene - King's Commandment Required Unmarried Girls to Join His Harem and Esther is obedient to the king's command - Chapter 2***

**Est. 2:1-8 [Read verse 8]**

1 After these things, when the wrath of king Ahasuerus was appeased, he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what was decreed against her.

2 Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, Let there be fair young virgins sought for the king:

3 And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan the palace, to the house of the women, unto the custody of Hege the king's chamberlain, keeper of the women; and let their things for purification be given [them]:

4 And let the maiden which pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti. And the thing pleased the king; and he did so.

5 [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;

6 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.

7 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.

**8 So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was brought also unto the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women...**

- ***So Mordecai and Esther are brought directly into the plan of Satan to destroy the children of Israel. And she is Chosen to be Queen and***

***Reveals a Plot Against the King revealed to her by Mordecai - Chapter 2. This also puts her in good stead with the king. And the plot develops ...***

**IV. Satan's Plot Is Revealed Through Haman, But the Victory is the Lord's:**

- ***Now, Haman, the King's High Servant, son of the Agagite, Is Given Authority to Destroy All Jews Including Mordecai Whom He Despised because he would not bow down in submission when commanded. His Jewish faith would not allow that - Chapter 3***

***Est. 3:1-2, 5-11***

**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.

**2** And all the king's servants, that [were] in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did [him] reverence.

...

**5** And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath.

**6** And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had shewed him the people of Mordecai: wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that [were] throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, [even] the people of Mordecai.

**7** In the first month, that [is], the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that [is], the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, [to] the twelfth [month], that [is], the month Adar.

**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.

**9** If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring [it] into the king's treasuries.

**10** And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy.

**11** And the king said unto Haman, The silver [is] given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee.

- ***Mordecai Reveals the Plot to Esther and Commands Her to Ask Mercy of the King***
- ***He also Reveals That She May Die But That It Would Be The High Calling of Her Life to So Sacrifice Herself for Her People - Chapter 4***

***[READ ] Est. 4:13-14***

**13** Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.

**14** For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, [then] shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for [such] a time as this? *[such confidence in Almighty God's promise especially regarding the seed of the woman.]*

...

***[READ ] Est. 4:16*** Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which [is] not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

- ***Haman Is Called along with the King by Esther to a Banquet she had prepared, the purpose being to honor Human whom the king has already honored. Other princes are not invited. There, she is asked by the king what she would request of him. She says that she will tell him what she desires at another banquet the following day. Haman assumes that at that banquet he will be Honored as Greatest In the Kingdom — but he sees Mordecai on the way hope being honored in the gate and wants him destroyed. His wife suggests that a gallows be built in their house and that Mordecai be hung on it the following day, after securing the king's approval just before the banquet - Chapter 5***
- ***At Haman's Personal Request of the king, Haman asks his favor, that a Special Display of Great Honor Is Prepared for The One To Be Honored As Greatest. He Believes This to be Himself! The king grants his request and commands Haman to do the prep as Haman has requested, except that at his request it should be Mordecai so honored, NOT Haman! - Chapter 6. But Haman's own wife and his***



***valued advisors have a sense of doom about this entire thing and they should indeed, as God is at work to defeat their satanic plan.***

***[READ ] Est. 6:13*** And Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his friends every [thing] that had befallen him. Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him, If Mordecai [be] of the seed of the Jews, ***before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him.***

***V. God Reigns Supreme Protecting His Ongoing Promises Regarding Israel:***

- ***Esther is Granted Her Request to Preserve the Life of the Jews When She Reveals that She Herself was a Jew - Haman is Condemned to Death for His Treachery and Is Hung - Chapter 7***
- ***The King's Command Could Not Be Revoked, Mordecai Is Given Authority to Proclaim that All Jews in the Kingdom be Allowed by Royal Command to Defend Themselves Against the Executioners - Chapter 8***

***Est. 8:15-17***

15 And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple: and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad.

16 The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour.

***17 And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.***

***VI. God Uses the Humble and the Weak to Bring to Nothing the Mighty:***

- ***The Jews Defend Themselves Victoriously, Haman's Son's Are All Executed, and Purim is Instituted, 2 Days of Celebration Every Year - Chapter 9***

***Est. 9:24-32***

***24 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; [see 1 Sam. 15 for Agag references]***

25 But when [Esther] came before the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked device, which he devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.

26 Wherefore they called these days Purim after the name of Pur.

Therefore for all the words of this letter, and [of that] which they had seen concerning this matter, and which had come unto them,

27 The Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so as it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to their writing, and according to their [appointed] time every year;

28 And [that] these days [should be] remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and [that] these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their seed.

29 Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with all authority, to confirm this second letter of Purim.

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,

31 To confirm these days of Purim in their times [appointed], according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them, and as they had decreed for themselves and for their seed, the matters of the fastings and their cry.

**32 And the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim; and it was written in the book.**

- *Mordecai is Placed as Second Command Permanently and His Great Acts Are Memorialized - Chapter 10*

***The teaching in a nutshell - Pur speaks of the throw of the dice - Almighty God is in charge of the dice even. His seed of the woman SHALL BE PRESERVED!***

#### **VII. God's Work in Support of His Promises Is Glorious Indeed!**

- *There is always even more to the story, it seems. If only we could open the curtain on history even further to see it. But much is masked in scripture and sometimes only hints are given. That is so in this case.*
- *Cyrus and the return to the promised land is the rest of the story for there is good reason to think that Cyrus is the son of Ahasuerus and Esther! In that case it is also reasonable to assume that he was raised under Esther's and of course Mordecai's tutelage, or, in other words, as a Jew. That is not established by scripture, but would explain the references we find to him in*

***Ezra, Isaiah, and 2 Chronicles. In fact, they might not even seem surprising to us at all, for God does accomplish his purposes, doesn't he. He works in the human heart as he wills and the results are as planned. Amen!***

***Ezra 1:1-7***

**1** Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and [put it] also in writing, saying,

**2** Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which [is] in Judah.

**3** Who [is there] among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which [is] in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he [is] the God,) which [is] in Jerusalem.

**4** And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that [is] in Jerusalem.

**5** Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all [them] whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the LORD which [is] in Jerusalem.

**6** And all they that [were] about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all [that] was willingly offered.

**7** Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods ...

***Is. 44:28*** That saith of Cyrus, [He is] my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

***Is. 45:1-25***

**1** Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;

**2** I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:

**3** And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call [thee] by thy name, [am] the God of Israel.

**4** For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

**5 I [am] the LORD, and [there is] none else, [there is] no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:**

6 That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that [there is] none beside me. I [am] the LORD, and [there is] none else.

7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these [things].

8 Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it.

**9 Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! [Let] the potsherd [strive] with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?**

**10 Woe unto him that saith unto [his] father, What begettest thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth?**

11 Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me.

12 I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, [even] my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.

13 I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts.

14 Thus saith the LORD, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, [saying], Surely God [is] in thee; and [there is] none else, [there is] no God.

15 Verily thou [art] a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.

16 They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together [that are] makers of idols.

17 [But] Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.

**18 For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I [am] the LORD; and [there is] none else.**

**19 I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.**

20 Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye [that are] escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god [that] cannot save.

21 Tell ye, and bring [them] near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? [who] hath told it from that time? [have] not I the LORD? and [there is] no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; [there is] none beside me.

22 Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I [am] God, and [there is] none else.

23 I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth [in] righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

24 Surely, shall [one] say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: [even] to him shall [men] come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.

25 In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.

**Application:**

- ***So, again, the seed of the woman prospers against all odds.***
- ***Satan controls many hearts but the Lord God is at work too through human hearts. And even the heart of kings such as Ahasuerus and Cyrus, his son.***

***WHERE DO WE FIT IN ALL OF THIS? WE ALSO ARE PRISONERS OF HOPE INDEED! AMEN!***