

Yes, the Devil Always Overplays His Hand

When I listened to my voice mail I was absolutely shocked. An angry young man on the other end line spewed, "How dare you, Jennifer LeClaire, tell Michael you don't believe me. Don't you know that I get every message you send and receive on your phone? How dare you!"

Yes, apparently someone I know found a way to hack into my smartphone's messaging system and intercept every text message I sent or received. This person was reading personal details about my life, as well as the lives of those I was ministering to, for months. It was beyond creepy.

Of course, when I realized this I immediately signed out of my messaging account and changed all my passwords. But when the dust settled I was reminded of a lesson: the devil always overplays his hand and, ultimately, the devil always exposes himself in the end. Although there's no scripture and verse in the Bible that says that, there are plenty of examples in the Word that prove the point.

Justifying Job

Job's faith was sorely tested at the hand of Satan. Job lost his sons and daughters, his possessions, and even his health. It was so bad that his embittered wife suggested he curse God and die and his friends suggested there was some secret sin in his life. But he would not turn his back on Jehovah.

"When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot has held fast to His steps; I have kept His way and not turned aside. I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth, more than my necessary food" (Job 23:11-12).

Although God gave Satan permission to sift Job, he overplayed his hand. God not only vindicated Job among his wife, brothers, sisters and friends who judged his heart, he also set Job up as their intercessor, elevating him to a position of honor.

Job had a heart tender before God even in the face of the enemy's attacks. And we know the end of the story: "And the Lord restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before" (Job 42:10)

Moses Marched On

Pharaoh kept the Israelites in bondage for hundreds of years. One day, God called a deliverer named Moses to tell Pharaoh, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel; 'Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness'" (Ex. 5:1). Pharaoh didn't take too kindly to that command and made things even harder for the Israelites, commanding the taskmasters to withhold the straw to make bricks without reducing the quota of bricks (see Ex. 5:6:9).

After each plague God released into Egypt, Pharaoh would promise to let Israel go—and then change his mind. This happened over and over and over again until finally, one last time, Pharaoh actually allowed Israel to start leaving. But before they got too far out, Pharaoh changed his mind again and sent his army out against them. Pharaoh overplayed his hand and was defeated at the Red Sea.

"Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and when the morning appeared, the sea returned to its full depth, while the Egyptians were fleeing into it. So the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained. But the children of Israel had walked on dry

land in the midst of the sea, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left" (Exodus 14:27-29).

Haman Figuratively Hanged Himself

Haman had it out for the Jews. He was second in command to the king. Everyone honored him except Mordecai, who refused to bow to him in the streets. Haman loathed Mordecai and when he discovered his Jewish descent he set in motion a plan to destroy not only Mordecai—but all the Jews.

"Haman said to King Ahasuerus, 'There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from all other people's, and they do not keep the king's laws. Therefore it is not fitting for the king to let them remain. If it pleases the king, let a decree be written that they be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who do the work, to bring *it* into the king's treasuries'" (Esther 3:7-9).

Mordecai called a fast and his niece, Esther—who happened to be married to the king—joined in. She found favor with the king, exposed Haman's plan and turned it around on him.

"The king said to Queen Esther, 'The Jews have killed and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the citadel, and the ten sons of Haman. What have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? Now what *is* your petition? It shall be granted to you. Or what *is* your further request? It shall be done.'" Esther said, 'If it pleases the king, let it be granted to the Jews who are in Shushan to do again tomorrow according to today's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged on the gallows" (Esther 9:12-13).

Here's the takeaway: Be encouraged. The enemy sometimes turns up the heat, but God is in control. He won't allow more to come on you than you can bear—and he won't let the enemy have his way in the end. The devil always overplays his hand and

God always restores anything Satan manages to kill, steal or destroy.

If you've lost anything at the enemy's hand, then believe for a Job-like restoration and if things look all but lost, remember Moses and Esther. You win! Amen!

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