

THE BOOK OF ESTHER

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Lesson 1

A KING GIVES A GREAT FEAST

Lesson: Esther 1:1-22

Only two books of the Bible are named after women. We have just completed the book of Ruth, and we will now study Esther. Even though the name of God is not mentioned, Divine Providence is to be seen throughout this book.

The time of this book seems to have been between 486 B.C. and 465 B.C. King Ahasuerus was very likely Xerxes, the great Persian king who reigned during this period. There is some confusion over the names, since some of them seem to be titles, rather than actual names. Large numbers of the Jews were in captivity, and as we will see in this book, they were often under persecution and threats of extermination. (Persia is now known as Iran.)

Even though Queen Vashti is only mentioned in chapters 1 and 2, she is a shining example by her refusal to take part in a drunken orgy. We see God working behind the scenes, in spite of the wickedness of man, to bring Esther to the throne that she might be instrumental in the saving of the Jews.

I. A DRUNKEN FEAST CALLED – Verses 1-9

- A. The vastness of his reign – Verses 1-2. Look at a map of the Middle East that includes Ethiopia and India, and you can get an idea of the vast extent of the Kingdom.
- B. The feast was for the elite rulers in his kingdom – Verse 3
- C. The feast lasted for 180 days – Verse 4. During this time he showed off the wealth and the splendor of his reign.
- D. The feast to climax the long celebration – Verses 5-6. Colorful decorations and great wealth of gold, silver, and marble were displayed.

- E. An abundance of wine served in golden vessels – Verses 7-8. This is a dangerous practice by powerful rulers. God’s people need to know what the Bible says about strong drink. Habakkuk 2:15 “Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!” Proverbs 23:31 “Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.” Proverbs 31:4, “It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink.” By making wine and getting drunk, Noah brought God’s judgment on his son, grandson, and indeed upon the whole human race.
- F. Queen Vashti gave a feast for the wives of these lords and rulers in a separate place – Verse 9. There is nothing that indicates that it turned into a drunken party. It was the custom for the number one wives of the King and rulers, to be separated from leaders.

II. A WICKED DEMAND MADE – Verses 10-11

- A. This was a seven day drunken party – Verse 10
- B. The king was undoubtedly very drunk – Verse 10. If he had been sober, he would have not made this demand. The best way to avoid drunkenness is not to drink at all. No one ever became a drunk who did not drink. It also follows that no one will become a drug addict who never takes drugs. Proverbs 23:29-30 “Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.”
- C. Wicked rulers use strong drink to influence and to mislead others. The Russians plied Roosevelt, Truman, Churchill, and their advisers with Vodka at Yalta and Potsdown. This no doubt is one of the reasons for many of the bad decisions of the west in dealing with the Communists. Eastern Europe was handed to them for many years as a result.
- D. He sends for the queen who was famous for her beauty – Verse 11. This was because he wanted the envy and admiration of his guests, so that they would admire his beautiful wife. He reminds us of another wicked man who had a beautiful wife. 1 Samuel 25:3 “Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and she was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man was churlish and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb.” We should remember what the Bible says. Proverbs 31:30 “Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.”

III. THE DISOBEDIENCE OF THE QUEEN – Verse 12

- A. She may not have known God, but she certainly had principles that should prevail in the lives of true believers – Proverbs 11:22 “As a jewel of gold in a swine’s snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion.”
- B. She must have known what this might cost her.

- C. The king went into a rage, where all sane reasoning left him. We would do well to remember what the Bible says about anger – Proverbs 14:17 “He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated.” Proverbs 14:29 “He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.” Proverbs 16:32 “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.” Ecclesiastes 7:9 “Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.” James 1:19-20 “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”

IV. THE DETHRONING OF THE QUEEN – Verses 13-22

- A. He consults the wise men “which knew the times.” – Verse 3. These were likely astrologers, and they would likely give the wrong advice.
- B. He next consults his yes men who always sought to curry favor with the king – Verses 14-15. Remember they were probably all drunk as was the king.
- C. Memucan recites the possible damage to the king, and all of the men of the kingdom – Verses 16-18. He may have been thinking about the results that would come in his own marriage. There was no such thing as equality of men and women among the Persians. The rights of women were gained under Christianity in modern times. Those rights are being abused by feminists who know nothing of the Bible.
- D. The queen is to be humiliated and removed – Verse 19. She was perhaps fortunate that she was not beheaded, but she gave up her throne, her luxuries, and her life of ease. She was willing to do it out of principle, and did not choose the easy way. Contrast the biblical way that Christian wives are to be treated – Ephesians 5:25 “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.”
- E. Memucan advises a decree in order to keep the women under control – Verse 20. It is possible that he had trouble with his own wife. He seemed to be concerned that women should give honor unto their husbands. He says nothing about the husbands honoring their wives.
- F. The decree made by the king – Verses 21-22. The thing that he decreed was likely already practice throughout the kingdom.
- G. In the providence of God, the dethroning of Vashti made way for the enthroning of Esther who would be used to preserve the Jews. Romans 8:28 “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

Lesson 2

THE KING CHOOSES A NEW QUEEN

Lesson: Esther 2:1-23

The events in the book of Esther fall neatly between Ezra chapters 6 and 7. In Ezra 6, we read about Darius the Persian king. In Ezra 7, we read about Artaxerxes king of Persia. This father and his son ruled for many years. Darius had a plan to conquer Greece, and no doubt would eventually have tried for all of Europe. The Persian army far outnumbered the Greeks. In the plains of Marathon (famed for the Marathon races), they were soundly defeated in 490 B.C. When Artaxerxes came to the throne in 486 B.C. he had the same ambition of his father. In 480 B.C. his large fleet of warships was defeated at the battle of Salamis. Keep in mind that king Ahasuerus in Esther is the Artaxerxes in Ezra, and he is known in history as Xerxes.

The book of Esther has great historical value because it falls in a period of history where some of the decisive events that would determine the future destiny of Western civilization. The future of Europe was settled in two decisive battles fought during this period of time.

It is believed that the events of this chapter did not happen until after the king returned from his war against the Greeks.

I. DIVINE PROVIDENCE IN A PLAN – Verses 1-4

- A. The king remembers the beautiful Vashti – Verse 1. He may have regretted his foolish decision, but it could not be altered. Daniel 6:15 “Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.”
- B. Wicked advisers came up with a plan – Verses 2-3
- C. The king pleased by the plan – Verse 4. Remember that this was a wicked heathen king with wicked advisers. God is not responsible for what wicked men do, but God in His divine providence can turn it to His glory and purpose. These advisers didn’t want Vashti to be restored, because she could have revenge them because of their original advice.
- D. Always remember that God is in charge, and may well be working behind the scenes. Proverbs 21:1 “The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.” Daniel 4:35 “And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?” Psalm 93:4 “The LORD on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.”

II. DIVINE PROVIDENCE IN A CHOICE – Verses 5-20

- A. A Jew in a strategic place – Verses 5-6. Mordecai the Jew held a minor post in the government, but he was in the right place at the right time. He was from the same tribe as King Saul.
- B. He had raised a beautiful cousin as his own daughter – Verse 7
- C. Esther was one of those chosen as a candidate to become queen – Verses 8-9. Her name means “star” and she would soon be the star in being used to preserve the Jews from destruction. We cannot emphasize too much that this was a wicked sensual plan carried out by wicked men. However, we will see that God has the last say.
- D. Mordecai and Esther were Jews who had hid their racial identity – Verse 10. This means that they were not observing the law, or they could not have kept it secret. We believe that they were wrong in this. This was much different from Daniel, who openly practiced his religion. Daniel 1:8 “But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.” He kept up his devotion to God all through his life. Even when there was a death penalty added to the law of Persia for worshiping God. Daniel 6:7 “All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.” He was thrown into the lions’ den but he did not change. God protected him in it all.
- E. Mordecai was very concerned about Esther – Verse 11. Many people would rather worry than trust God.
- F. These women were given all the ceremonial means of purification, and for beautification – Verses 12-14. All of the women chosen were added to the king’s harem as concubines, but only one of them would be crowned queen.
- G. God decreed one wife for one man, but man has been ignoring this down through the centuries. Exodus 20:14 “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” That is plain enough, but what does a heathen king care about what God says. It is the same today. Wicked men and women ignore God and continue to commit fornication and adultery. Jesus made it clear that he holds man to a higher standard than the law. Matthew 5:28 “But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”
- H. Esther’s turn comes to go before the king – Verses 15-16. The date of this event proves that this took place after he returned from his defeat at Salamis in 480 B.C., so this event took place around 478 B.C., since he began his reign in 486 B.C.
- I. Esther chosen as queen – Verse 17. The love of the king was not biblical love. It was a love based upon his own carnal desires, but God overruled even in this.

- a. Isaac is an example of showing biblical love for his wife. Genesis 24:67 “And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah’s tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death.”
 - i. Rebekah chosen according to father Abraham, a type of God the father.
 - ii. She was chosen by the servant, a type of the Holy Spirit.
 - iii. She gladly accepts the responsibility of becoming the wife of Isaac. In this she is a type of the believing sinner who accepts Jesus Christ as Saviour.
 - iv. She is received and taken by Isaac, a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. This spiritual lesson can be applied to the Christian plan for marriage. 1 Corinthians 7:39 “... she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.”
- b. God instructs men how to love their wives – Ephesians 5:25 “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.”
- J. A celebration feast given – Verse 18. The king’s generosity is shown by the giving of gifts, and evidently releasing the provinces from taxes and tributes for a certain length of time. It proved to be a kingdom wide celebration.
- K. Evidently Mordecai was promoted since he is now sitting in the gate, a place of ruling and judging – Verse 19. This could have been because of the influence of the new queen.
- L. Esther still keeps her race secret, but it will providentially be revealed in due time – Verse 20. She still looks to Mordecai for guidance in this matter.

III. DIVINE PROVIDENCE IN A WICKED PLOT – Verses 21-23

- A. Two officials plot the death of the king – Verse 1. Such intrigue and plots happened where kings ruled. Many kings have been assassinated in the history of the world.
- B. A number of things may have contributed to this plan.
 - a. Dissatisfaction over the humiliating defeat by the Greeks at Salamis.
 - b. Dissatisfied over the choice of Esther.
 - c. Dissatisfied with the promotion of Mordecai. We can only speculate for the Bible does not explain.
- C. It was providential that Mordecai discovered the plot, and revealed it to Esther, now that she is in a strategic place – Verse 22; Romans 8:28, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”
- D. Later on it would be crucial that Mordecai get the credit.
 - a. The time is coming that Mordecai will be repaid – Proverbs 13:21 “Evil pursueth sinners: but to the righteous good shall be repayed.”

- b. We need not be surprised by how God used this event – Acts 15:18 “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.”
- E. Swift justice was done – Verse 23
- F. People wonder how these wicked kings prospered without any thing happening to them. Of course they did not get by with their evil deeds. This same Xerxes was assassinated in 465 B.C., through the same kind of plot that was foiled in this chapter.

Notes

Lesson 3

AN OUTBREAK OF ANTI-SEMITISM

Lesson: Esther 3:1-15

If this outbreak of anti-Semitism had succeeded, there would have been at least four terrible results. (1) There would have been no more Scriptures written. Romans 3:1-2 “What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.” (2) Jesus could not have been born. Romans 9:4-5 “Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.” Matthew 1:1 “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” (3) There could have been no salvation to preach, and no saviour to save us. (4) God would have been proven to be a liar, because all that he promised could never have been fulfilled.

I. A WICKED MAN PROMOTED – Verses 1-6

A. The Rise of Haman – Verses 1-2b

- a. Haman managed to gain 2nd place in the kingdom – Verse 1
- b. He was a descendant of king Agag the Amalekite – Verse 1
- c. Let us review the history of the Amalekites.
 - i. They descended from Esau through an illicit relationship – Genesis 36:12 “And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz Esau’s son; and she bare to Eliphaz Amalek: these were the sons of Adah Esau’s wife.”
 - ii. They represented the flesh, and they were the first to fight against Israel after they came out of Egypt – Exodus 17:8 “Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim.” The only way that Israel defeated them was through prayer and the sword. Every Christian will have to face Amalek (the flesh) after salvation. The only way to prevail is through prayer and the sword of the Spirit.
 - iii. God declared war on Amalek – Exodus 17:16 “For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.”

- iv. Even Balaam the disobedient prophet knew that Amalek would perish. Numbers 24:20 "... Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever." God told Israel to remember Amalek, and they were to blot them. Deuteronomy 25:19, "... thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it."
- v. King Saul was told to kill all of the Amalekites, and he disobeyed. This caused him to lose his throne – 1 Samuel 15:8 "And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword."
- vi. He lied about it, and an Amalekite took his crown – 2 Samuel 1:8 "And he said unto me, Who art thou? And I answered him, I am an Amalekite." 2 Samuel 1:10 "... I took the crown that was upon his head." Many Christians will lose their crown because they would not slay Amalek (the flesh).
- d. In the book of Esther we see that Israel is threatened with destruction, because they did not obey God concerning Amalek.
- e. Haman bowed before and revered – Verse 2

B. The Rebellion of Mordecai – Verses 2b-4

- a. A bow of respect was permitted, but they were not to bow down and worship false gods. Exodus 23:24 "Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them" Deuteronomy 6:4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD."
- b. "Reverence" meant to "worship," for it is rendered that way 99 times in our Bible. Mordecai had previously compromised, but now he refuses to worship a descendant of Amalek. Acts 5:29 "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men."
- c. The king's servants sought to persuade Mordecai – Verses 3-4
- d. At long last he testified that he was a Jew – Verse 4.

C. The Rage of Haman – Verses 5-6

- a. If there is anything that the world cannot stand, it is a non-conforming believer.
- b. The abortionists demand we approve of abortion. The homosexuals demand that we accept homosexuality as an alternate lifestyle. These groups have been successful, and they have the flourishing abortion clinics and the AIDS and other sexual diseases epidemic to prove it.
- c. They have convinced the government, the courts, the educational institutions, and much of the religious world to accept their demands. The only holdouts are the Bible believing Christians, and they are infuriated with us because we will not conform.

- d. There is not anything good that can be said about Haman. In his rage he plots to kill all the Jews. He did not know that Esther was a Jew, nor did he know what God had said to Abraham. Genesis 12:3 “And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”
- e. Pharaoh tried it and failed (Exodus 1). Haman tried it and failed. Hitler tried it and failed. All of these perished and Israel survived. Now the Islamics are trying it, but they will also fail.

II. A WICKED MAN PLOTS – Verses 7-15

A. A Day Chosen to Destroy the Jews – Verse 7

- a. The name of Haman means magnificent, and this is what he thought of himself.
- b. The casting of lots to choose a date to kill the Jews. Ezekiel 21:21 “For the king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination: he made his arrows bright, he consulted with images, he looked in the liver.”
- c. In the providence of God, the date chosen was for late in the year. We must understand that when he chooses, he did not know that God is in charge of the lot. Proverbs 16:33 “The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.”
- d. This long wait would give the Jews time to prepare.

B. The Convincing of the King – Verses 8-9

- a. We see that God’s people should be diverse from all the rest of the people – Verse 8; 2 Corinthians 6:17 “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.” It is tragic that many do not want to obey this.
- b. He offers to pay a huge amount into the treasury if this would be done – Verse 9. Some say that this was as much as two-thirds of the annual budget of the kingdom. Haman must have been wealthy.
- c. Haman was a liar and a murderer just like Satan the one that he served. John 8:44 “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”
- d. The king utterly failed to search out the matter, because he was easily influenced. Proverbs 25:2 “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.”

C. The Commandment of the King – Verses 10-15

- a. The ring was a symbol of authority and contained the seal of state which made documents official – Verse 10
- b. The king refused the money, but approved the plan – Verse 11
- c. Haman allowed to write the cruel law and seal it with the kings ring – Verse 12
- d. Men, women and children were to be killed and their wealth taken for a spoil – Verse 13. The “posts” was the messenger service, which may have operated somewhat like the pony express. We too are messengers for God, and we are failing to carry the good news that a Jew who was God has already died to save them from sin. We have the power, the authority, and the command of God, and we are failing to do what He commanded. Matthew 28:18-20 “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”
- e. The spoil or possessions of the Jews was to be a reward for doing the evil work of Haman – Verse 13. The Jews always seem to have the ability to gain wealth, and this has often brought envy and murder to them, in their long history.
- f. The day of death was widely published and greatly anticipated – Verses 14-15b
- g. The wicked duo has a drinking party, completely uncaring that they have issued the death warrant for all the Jews – Verse 15c. Amos 6:6 “That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.”
- h. How sad it is that our churches are having fun, frolic, and food, while all around sits a world of people who are doomed for hell without the saving gospel of Jesus Christ.

Lesson 4

PERILOUS TIMES

Lesson: Esther 4:1-17

Every Jew is now facing perilous times, and if God does not intervene, they will be wiped out by the wicked plot of Haman. It has been estimated that there were about 15 million Jews in the kingdom of Persia, which stretched from India to Ethiopia.

A small number of the Jews had returned to Jerusalem under Ezra and Nehemiah, but most of them were still scattered among the other provinces of the Persian Empire. The ones that returned to the land were busy trying to rebuild the Temple and the walls of Jerusalem. They were trying to carry on the worship and service of God.

The Jews in Shushan and elsewhere in Persia were not practicing their Jewish religion. The proof of this is to be found in the fact that they fasted and mourned, but there is no mention of prayer being offered to God during this crisis.

We must remember that the Jews were in captivity because of their sin and rebellion. 2 Chronicles 36:15-16 “And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.”

Now they are continuing to reap the bitter fruits of their sins. A merciful God had made a promise to Abraham and he will keep it – Genesis 12:3 “And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” All the Messianic prophecies were tied to the survival of the Jews, and our all powerful God will work to bring it to pass.

I. THE DISPLAY OF GRIEF – Verses 1-9

A. The Sorrow of Mordecai – Verses 1-3

- a. The renting of clothes was a sign of grief – Verse 1; 2 Samuel 1:11 “Then David took hold on his clothes, and rent them; and likewise all the men that were with him.”
- b. The sackcloth and ash are a sign of grief – Verse 1. Job repented, but in our lesson we see no sign of repentance. Job 42:6 “Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” Nehemiah 9:1-2 “Now in the twenty and fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, and with sackclothes, and earth upon them. And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers.”

- c. Now we see the importance of the promotion of Mordecai – Esther 2:19. As an important ruler sitting in the gate he had access to the decree of the king – Verse 1
- d. It is important for those who know the truth, to make it known, no matter what the cost. He is openly taking a stand as a Jew – Verse 2; Proverbs 24:11-12 “If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?”
- e. No grieving person was ever allowed to go anywhere near the king, so he is at the gate – Verse 2. The king was kept in an artificial paradise.
- f. The Jews mourned throughout Persia – Verse 3. There is still no mention of repentance or prayer. The reason why revival tarries in the 21st Century is because there is little repentance and prayer.

B. The Informing of Esther – Verses 4-9

- a. Esther told of the grief of Mordecai, and she too grieved, but did not know the cause – Verse 4a
- b. She loved her cousin, and desired that he have new garments, but he refused them – Verse 4b
- c. Hatach who attended to the queen was sent to investigate. He was likely a Eunuch, and may well have been a Jew – Verses 5-6
- d. Mordecai unfolded the whole plot to the queen’s chamberlain – Verse 7. This no doubt resulted in him revealing the shocking news that he was a Jew. It is a shame when Christians keep their relationship to God a secret – Acts 1:8 “... ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”
- e. He sent a copy of the decree, along with a request that Esther reveal she was a Jew and appeal to the king directly – Verses 8-9

II. THE DEVELOPING OF A PLAN – Verses 10-17

A. The Queen Challenged to Act – Verses 10-14

- a. The queen lived in luxury, but was kept in seclusion, so there was no way she could meet with Mordecai personally – Verse 10

- b. She may lose her life if she goes in before the king without being called – Verse 11. Only the mercy of the king could spare her, and he was known for not being merciful. It is sometimes necessary to hazard our lives for the cause of Christ. Acts 15:25-26 “It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 15:30 “And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?” 2 Corinthians 11:23-27 “Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.” Philippians 2:29-30 “Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.”
- c. He warns Esther than she will perish anyway, if all the Jews were killed, for she was a Jew – Verses 12-13
- d. Mordecai revealed his confidence that the Jews would be delivered one way or another – Verse 14a. Did he believe that the great God of the Jews would deliver, or was it just blind faith? He suggested that she had been placed there for this very thing – Verse 14b.

B. The Queen Accepts the Challenge – Verses 15-17

- a. She requests that the Jews fast for her venture – Verse 15-16a. There is still no mention of repentance and prayer to a Holy God. This is tragic in view of the fact that these people were the seed of Abraham, and heir to all the promised of God.
- b. She consents to try, even if it meant she would perish – Verse 16b. Sometimes Christians must do what is right no matter the cost. Acts 20:24 “But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”
- c. Mordecai proclaims the fast – Verse 17

C. The Providence of God Working

- a. We need to understand that even though he permits wicked people, wicked rulers and wicked governments, that God is still God and His divine providence is still in control to bring about His will. We see it in all of the events of history, especially those that are recorded in the Bible. Without God’s providential working, all of His people and plans for eternity would have perished long ago.

- b. Kings and rulers think that they are in charge of their own destiny, but the bible teaches differently. Daniel 2:20-21 “Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding.”
- c. We see God working on the behalf of His people everywhere in the Word of God. Romans 8:28 “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”
 - i. It was in God’s providence that queen Vashti was removed.
 - ii. It was in God’s providence that Esther was chosen as queen.
 - iii. It was in God’s providence that Mordecai was her cousin, and that he held a minor position in the government.
 - iv. It was in God’s providence that Mordecai was promoted and received the information about the plan to kill all Jews.
 - v. It was in God’s providence that Esther would risk her life to save them from extinction. In spite of all the maddening events of life, we must believe that God is still in charge.

LOWELL WROTE:

“Careless seems the great avenger;
 History’s pages but record
 One death grapple in the darkness,
 Twixt old systems and the Word.
 Truth forever on the scaffold;
 Wrong forever on the throne;
 But that scaffold sways the Future;
 And, behind the dim unknown
 Standeth God, within the shadow,
 Keeping watch above His own.”

Lesson 5

GOD AT WORK FOR HIS PEOPLE

Lesson: Esther 5:1-14

In this chapter we see the beginning of the end for the wicked Haman. He has plotted to destroy the Jews, but his own destruction would come very soon. Little does he know that all his schemes are going to backfire. God is now fashioning the way of Haman's destruction. The following states it well:

"Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceedingly small; Though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness grinds He all." — Friedrich von Logau

I. THE PROVIDENTIAL COURAGE OF ESTHER – Verses 1-8

A. Esther Approaches the King – Verses 1-3

- a. Esther dressed in her very best clothes – Verse 1a
 - i. If you were going to the White House, you would wear your best.
 - ii. When we come into God's House (Church), why should it be any different? Back in the Great Depression, we did not have much, but we wore our best. This was true, even if it was the best and cleanest work clothes we had.
 - iii. In this grungy, dress down, and sloppy clothes age, it should be the same for God's people.
- b. She approached the most powerful king in the world, and this was a deadly danger without an invitation – Verse 1b. I believe she had faith, although the Bible does not say so. James 2:20 "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" She must have known what God had promised to Abram. Genesis 12:3 "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."
- c. God's people (saved) are assured that they can always come to His throne in the name of Jesus Christ – Hebrews 4:16 "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."
- d. We can come with our garments stained with sin, but we had better come asking for cleansing – 1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

- e. The king shows her favor – Verse 2. The extended scepter was a sign of his mercy. Her touching the scepter was a sign of her submission to his rule. She came as an intercessor. God is looking for intercessors today. Isaiah 59:16 “And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.” Genesis 18:24 “Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?”
 - f. The king’s generous offer – Verse 3; Proverbs 21:1 “The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.” Ezra 6:22 “And kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy: for the LORD had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.”
- B. Esther Appeals to the King – Verses 4-5
- a. She invites the king and Haman to her banquet – Verse 4
 - b. Haman was flattered by the invitation to dine with the king and queen – Verse 5. Little did he know that the noose was settling around his neck.
- C. Esther Asks the King – Verses 6-8
- a. He grants whatever she wants, before she asks – Verse 6; Proverbs 16:1 “The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.”
 - b. She invites the king and Haman to an even more elaborate banquet – Verse 7-8
- D. Why did not Esther make her request right then?
- a. It was not the right place and the right time.
 - b. God must have put it in her heart, so that the king would make the discovery revealed in 6:1-3.
 - c. The promotion of Mordecai must take place, according to God’s providential plan.

II. THE PRIDEFUL CONDUCT OF HAMAN – Verses 9-14

- A. Haman’s Happiness – Verses 9-12
- a. He is beaming and blissful as he leaves the palace – Verse 9a; Proverbs 28:26 “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.” He reminds us of many others who walked in pride and confidence. 2 Chronicles 32:25 “But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem.” This happened to king Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel 5:20 “But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him.”
 - b. The one fly in his ointment was Mordecai, who refused to honor him – Verse 9b

- c. He was so joyful, he chose to ignore Mordecai for the time being – Verse 10a
- d. He could not wait to tell his wife and his friends of his exaltation – Verse 10b
- e. Notice the pride of this self-centered man – Verse 11
 - i. It is his wife, his riches, his children. It is his and him alone that he is interested in. It is his riches and his promotion, in which he boasts. Proverbs 16:18-19 “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.” Proverbs 29:23 “A man’s pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.”
 - ii. He reminds us of the rich barn building fool that Jesus spoke of in Luke 12:16-21. He had “I” trouble and Jesus told us of his destiny. Luke 12:20 “But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?”
 - iii. It was pride that caused Satan’s fall. Isaiah 14:12-15 “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.”
- f. He boasts of the fact that he was the only man except the king who was ever invited to dine at the palace of the queen – Verse 12; Job 20:5 “That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment?” Psalm 37:35-36 “I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.” One of the old Puritan preachers said, “Our father was Adam, our grandfather dust, and our great-great grandfather nothing.”

B. Haman’s Hate – Verses 13-14

- a. Haman’s heart was filled with hate against Mordecai and the Jews – Verse 11
- b. Mordecai had failed to honor this pompous man at the king’s gate – Verse 9
- c. Christians can expect the hatred of the world if we live Godly – John 15:18 “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.” 1 John 3:13 “Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.”

- i. Malice is another sin that is abhorrent to God. 1 Corinthians 5:8 “Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” Ephesians 4:31 “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.” Colossians 3:8 “But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.” 1 Peter 2:1 “Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,”
- d. His wife proposes the building of gallows to be used for the hanging of Mordecai – Verse 14. Little does he know that he is preparing his own gallows where he will be executed – Proverbs 26:27 “Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him.” Ecclesiastes 10:8 “He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him.”

Notes

Lesson 6

GOD'S JUSTICE AT WORK

Lesson: Esther 6-7

In these two chapters we see the hand of God at work, as He vindicates His people, and punishes their enemies. When we are suffering rejection by our enemies, let us be reminded how that God can make the wrath of man to praise Him.

I. THE HERO EXALTED – Verses 6:1-14

A. Sleep Halted – Verses 1-3

- a. God caused the king not to sleep – Verse 1
 - i. God gives sleep – Psalm 127:2 “It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.” Ecclesiastes 5:12 “The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.”
 - ii. If we cannot sleep, God may be trying to reveal something to us.
 - iii. The king called for something worthwhile to be read – Verse 1b. If you cannot sleep try reading the Bible and pray, and I have jokingly said, “The devil may put you to sleep.”
 - iv. We can be thankful that God never sleeps – Psalm 121:3-4 “He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.”
- b. The old conspiracy brought to light – Verse 2
- c. A great deed has not been rewarded – Verse 3. We can see Scripture being fulfilled. Romans 8:28 “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

B. Ambition Flaunted – Verses 4-9

- a. The timely arrival of Haman to carry out his plan – Verses 4-5; Proverbs 6:18 “An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief.”
- b. A false conclusion reached by Haman – Verse 6; Proverbs 21:30 “There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD.” Romans 8:31, “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”
- c. Haman pictures himself in all this splendor – Verses 7-9

C. Mordecai Exalted – Verses 10-11

- a. God is able to exalt whom He chooses – 1 Samuel 2:8 “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.”
 - i. He exalted Moses to be the son of a princess.
 - ii. He exalted Joseph to be a ruler in Egypt.
 - iii. He exalted Daniel to be prime minister in Babylon.
 - iv. He exalted Mordecai in Persia.
 - v. He will yet exalt His rejected Son to be King over the earth. Zechariah 14:9 “And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.” Revelation 19:16 “And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”
- b. Mordecai the hated Jew to be honored – Verse 10; Proverbs 11:8 “The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead.”
- c. He is publically acclaimed – Verse 11; Proverbs 29:23 “A man’s pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.”

D. Haman Humiliated – Verses 12-14

- a. He is in complete sorrow – Verse 12
 - i. This reminds us of the examples of others brought low – 2 Samuel 17:23 “And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.”
 - ii. It also reminds us of a dreadful day for sinners – Matthew 7:22-23 “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” Psalm 9:17 “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.”
- b. A sad report from his family – Verse 13. Contrast 6:13 with 5:11-14. Proverbs 28:18 “Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved: but he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once.” Hosea 14:9 “Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.”
- c. In sorrow he is brought to the banquet of Esther – Verse 14; Deuteronomy 32:35 “To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.”

II. HAMAN HANGED – Verses 7:1-10

A. The Guilty Revealed – Verses 1-6

- a. Had he known that Esther was a Jewess, he could not have been dragged to the banquet – Verse 1; Proverbs 16:5 “Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.” Ecclesiastes 8:11 “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.”
- b. The king was ready for the queen’s petition – Verse 2. God is also ready for our petitions. Hebrews 4:16 “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” Romans 8:15 “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” Ephesians 2:18 “For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.”
- c. The queen presents her petition – Verses 3-4
 - i. She petitions for herself. It is doubtful that the king had any idea that she was a Jewess.
 - ii. She petitions for her people. Psalm 122:6 “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.”
- d. The king wanted to know the source of this death sentence – Verse 5
- e. Wicked Haman identified – Verse 6; Job 18:8-10 “For he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he walketh upon a snare. The gin shall take him by the heel, and the robber shall prevail against him. The snare is laid for him in the ground, and a trap for him in the way.”

B. The Guilty Hanged – Verses 7-10

- a. The wrath of the king – Verse 7a; Proverbs 19:12 “The king’s wrath is as the roaring of a lion; but his favour is as dew upon the grass.” Proverbs 16:14 “The wrath of a king is as messengers of death: but a wise man will pacify it.” Proverbs 20:2 “The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul.”
- b. The plea of Haman – Verse 7b. It is now too late to seek mercy. Revelation 6:16 “And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.” Luke 23:30 “Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.”
- c. He had been enraged when a Jew would not bow to him, but he now falls prostrate before a Jewish woman – Verse 8a
- d. The king misinterprets the action of Haman – Verse 8b
- e. The covering over Haman’s head, indicated that he was about to die – Verse 8c

- f. Haman sentenced to be hanged on the gallows he had made – Verse 9; Psalm 7:15 “He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made.” Proverbs 11:5 “The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness.” Proverbs 11:8 “The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead.”
- g. Haman hanged – Verse 10; Psalm 37:35-36 “I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.” Proverbs 13:15 “Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.” Proverbs 15:10 “Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die.”

Notes

Lesson 7

VINDICATION AT LAST

Lesson: Esther 8:1-17

The wicked Haman has been executed, but the law to execute all Jews was still in effect. The law of the Medes and Persians could not be changed or altered. Daniel 6:15 “Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.” Since the Jews constituted 15% or less of the population, they did not seem to stand a chance. However, the mighty God of Jacob was on their side, so they were in reality on the majority side. God is the majority in all issues, so whoever is on the Lord’s side is always in the majority.

I. THE JEWS PROMOTED – Verses 1-6

A. Mordecai’s Reward – Verses 1-2

- a. Haman’s possession given to Esther – Verse 1a. This great wealth given to Esther was perhaps a reward for her, since the king had allowed himself to be duped.
- b. Mordecai’s relationship to Esther revealed – Verse 1b. The king learned that they were cousins, and that Mordecai had raised her as a daughter.
- c. Mordecai rewarded with the king’s ring of authority – Verse 2a. This means that Mordecai is now the prime minister. They now have a Jew as prime minister and a Jewess as queen.
- d. Esther sets Mordecai over Haman’s house – Verse 2b. This means that he is in possession of the vast wealth and estate of Haman.
- e. The events reveal that God is able and willing to reward His people. This reward and vindication for God’s people does not always come immediately, or even in this life, but it will come. Psalm 37:34 “Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.” Luke 14:11 “For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” 1 Peter 5:6 “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.”

B. Esther’s Request – Verses 3-6

- a. Esther was secure in her own safety at this point – Verse 3
 - i. She could not rest as long as millions of Jews were in were in great danger.

- ii. Christians should have the same attitude of compassion when vast numbers of lost people are doomed for hell, because they do not know Christ as Saviour. Ezekiel 3:18 “When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.”
 - iii. This knowledge should bring us before the King of Kings with our plea for their souls. Then we should go and witness to them, and present the gospel of salvation that they might be saved.
 - iv. We should also be concerned for the lost Jews in particular, even as Paul was burdened. Romans 9:1-3 “I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” Psalm 122:6 “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.” James 4:2 “... ye have not, because ye ask not.”
- b. The king again holds out the golden scepter – Verse 4
 - c. She pleads that he reverse the decree of Haman, which he is unable to do – Verse 5
 - d. She pleads, as we should plead, when we pray to the God of heaven on the behalf of others – Verse 6; Jeremiah 9:1 “Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!” Luke 19:41-42 “And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it. Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.” Romans 10:1 “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.”

II. THE KING PROCLAIMS – Verses 7-17

A. The Right of Self Protection – Verses 7-14

- a. The original decree could not be changed, according to Persian law, but the king could seek a way for the Jews to be saved.
- b. The law of God cannot be changed.
 - i. Ezekiel 18:4 “Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.” Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death” Psalm 9:17 “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.”

- ii. God had a way to save sinful man in spite of the law – Romans 3:26 “To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Galatians 3:13 “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” Galatians 3:22 “But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” Acts 3:19 “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.” Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
- c. The king declares what he has done – Verse 7
- d. He makes it clear that the decrees of a king cannot be reversed under any circumstances – Verse 8
- e. A new message was to be sent to the vast reaches of the Persian Empire – Verse 9. There was still about eight months left for the Jews to be warned and prepared.
- f. The king’s business requires haste – Verse 10
 - i. Mordecai wrote in the king’s name and sealed it with the king’s ring.
 - ii. It would take many fast riders to get the message to every place in the kingdom of Persia.
- g. The Jews granted the right of self-defense – Verse 11. They were given permission to slay the ones that fought against them. Notice the similar language in Haman’s decree against the Jews – Esther 3:13. The bible does not teach that we are to be pacifist. Consider the following facts.
 - i. Satan fell from his former glory. We can be sure that he did not accept this willingly – Isaiah 14:12 “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!”
 - ii. God blessed Israel and gave them victory when they were attacked by the Amalekites – Exodus 17:8-9 “Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand.”
 - iii. Saul was commanded to slay the Amalekites. 1 Samuel 15:18 “And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed.”
 - iv. God instructed Israel to fight against the inhabitants of Canaan.

- v. Jesus instructed the disciples to buy a sword. Later he told Peter to put up the sword. There is a time to fight and a time not to fight – Luke 22:36 “Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.” John 18:11 “Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?”
 - vi. Jesus himself will come back leading the army of heaven – Revelation 19:11 “And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.”
- h. They made great hast to take this message to all the Jews – Verses 12-14
- B. The Right of Promotion – Verses 15-17
- a. Mordecai dressed in the royal colors and the royal crown of authority, honor, and beauty – Verse 15a
 - b. The city of Shushan rejoicing with gladness – Verse 15b; Isaiah 9:2 “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.”
 - c. The Jews honored and made glad – Verses 16-17a. This reminds us when Israel will one day be the head of the nations – Deuteronomy 28:13 “And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them.”
 - d. Many Gentiles became Jews and took their side in the matter – Verse 17b. This fits in with what God promised Abram – Genesis 12:3 “And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

Lesson 8

VICTORY FOR THE JEWS

Lesson: Esther 9-10

I. THE VENGEANCE EXECUTED – Verses 1-16

A. The Fear of The Jews – Verses 1-4

- a. The time that the hated Jews were to be killed – Verse 1. It would have been a fatal day for the Jews, but God had not forgotten them, and so this was the day that the tables would turn.
 - i. David experienced God’s deliverance – 2 Samuel 22:41 “Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me.”
 - ii. There is coming a day when God will judge the enemies of His people. Revelation 11:18 “And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.”
- b. Three reasons why the enemy could not prevail – Verse 2
 - i. The Jews were assembled and unified – Verse 2a. This holds true for a New Testament Church as well. Hebrews 10:25 “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”
 - ii. No man could withstand them – Verse 2b
 - iii. People were afraid of the Jews – Verse 2c. They had heard what happened to Haman, and how Mordecai had been promoted. Joshua 2:9 “And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.”
- c. The rulers in the provinces were also afraid of Mordecai, and so they helped the Jews – Verse 3
 - i. This reminds us of the experience of Jacob – Genesis 35:5 “And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob.”

- ii. God's people had other similar experiences – Deuteronomy 2:25 “This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee.”
 - iii. An unbelieving world today does not fear God. They are like Pharaoh of long ago – Romans 3:18 “There is no fear of God before their eyes.” Exodus 5:2 “And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.”
 - iv. Can people see that God is among His people today? 1 Corinthians 14:25 “And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.”
 - v. Our churches are not what they should be, but fall far too short of God's will – Song of Solomon 6:10 “Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?” Revelation 3:17 “Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”
 - vi. We must remember that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual – 2 Corinthians 10:4 “(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)”
- d. Mordecai continued to increase in fame and power – Verse 4

B. The Fatal Judgment – Verses 5-16

- a. Five hundred enemies slain in Shushan – Verses 5-12. It seems that right under the king's nose there were five hundred loyal followers of Haman. Remember that they had been following and Amalekite, who hated the Jews with all his might.
- b. Even in 2002 A.D. the enemies of the Jews are trying to kill them in the land of Israel. The Jews have a God given right to defend themselves.
- c. The ten sons of Haman were slain – Verse 12
- d. Haman's ten sons hanged on the gallows of Haman – Verses 12-14
- e. The Jews fought in self defense and they were not interested in the “prey” (booty) – Verse 15
- f. The same thing happened throughout the provinces – Verse 16
 - i. They had been given the right in 8:11 to take the possessions of the enemy, but they did not do so.
 - ii. The slaying of 75,000 seems like many, but it was a small number compared to the total population of possibly 100 million.

- iii. It is amazing that these foes of the Jews attacked them at all, after they learned that the King and the government did not want them to do so. However, hatred for the Jews seems to bring out the worst in men.
- g. The Jews were saved because they believed the King's decree (8:10-11), and obeyed it. If they had not they would have perished. It was the only way that they could be saved.
- h. Both Jews and Gentiles only have one way of salvation today. They must repent and believe the gospel, or they will be eternally lost (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). John 14:6 "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Acts 4:12 "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

II. THE VICTORY CELEBRATED – Verses 17-32

A. The Day of Praise – Verses 17-19

- a. Days of rest, feasting and gladness – Verses 17-18.
 - i. This was very appropriate, since they had miraculously been delivered from an almost certain death.
 - ii. Christians need to have times when they reflect upon their deliverance by the salvation of the Lord.
- b. The celebration quickly spread through the un-walled villages – Verse 19
 - i. Notice that they made it a time of generosity by the giving of portions of food or possession to others.
 - ii. Christians above all people should be a giving people. We can give of our substance, and we can give the gospel.

B. The Feast of Purim – Verses 20-32

- a. The Jews instructed by Mordecai to celebrate this date each year as a memorial – Verse 20-21
- b. The kind of celebration they were to have – Verse 22
- c. This day was called the feast of Purim, and was to be kept each year for all generations – Verses 23-28. Purim comes from the word Pur which means a "lot" or "piece." It comes from a Hebrew which means to "break" or "crush." This is what Haman meant to do to all the Jews.
- d. Esther and Mordecai wrote new letters to all the Jews in the provinces to keep this feast of Purim – Verses 29-32

- e. The Orthodox Jews celebrate the feast of Purim every year down to this modern time. On the 13th day of March they meet at the synagogue and read the book of Esther. Whenever the name of Haman is read they cry out, “may he be accursed” or “may his name perish.” Children bring a rattle and use it to make a noise each time Haman is mentioned. On the 14th day they return to the synagogue and read the book of Esther again. They also read of Moses’ experience with Amalek from Exodus 17:8-16.
- f. Christians celebrate the Lord’s Supper, not on a certain date, but as a special remembrance – 1 Corinthians 11:26 “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.”
- g. As Americans we do well to celebrate our patriotic holidays, such as July 4th.

III. THE VICTOR ELEVATED – Verses 10:1-3

- 1. This passage extols the greatness of Mordecai.
- 2. Notice that this book of Esther opens with two Jewish cousins who have no authority or power in the kingdom of Persia. Even when Esther is elevated to a position as queen, she remains isolated in a palace where she knew nothing of what was going on. She had no access to the king except on rare occasions, and Mordecai was a nobody who was powerless. By the time we come to the end of the book, the queen has great power and is writing a message that is to be distributed to all the Jews in the 127 provinces of the Persian Empire. Mordecai is the Prime Minister exercising great power by the authority of the king.
- 3. This is a fitting illustration of the following Scriptures. 1 Samuel 2:8 “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.” Psalm 113:7 “He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill.”

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