

The Jews Deliverance

October 21, 2012

ESTHER 8:3-10:3

Vol. 2 Num. 42

Core Competency:

Eternity- *I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.*

"Your heart must not be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if not, I would have told you. I am going away to prepare a place for you. If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come back and receive you to Myself, so that where I am you may be also. You know the way to where I am going." (John 14:1-4)

Using This Study

❶ EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? The words God uses to communicate really matter, so pay close attention to the details emphasized or repeated in the passage.

❷ DISCOVER His Word

What does God MEAN? Answer the questions and then bring to your COMMUNITY GROUP to discover and discuss with others.

❸ LIVE His Word

How does this truth FIT? God's word is lived in real life so engage with truth in your LIFEGROUP.

Introduction

Many Jewish, as well as Christian, scholars have been critical of the moral tone of Esther. The queen has been indicted for hiding her Jewish identity, willingness to marry a Gentile, not showing mercy to Haman, and asking the king to permit the slaughter of the Jews' enemies.

Mordecai has been accused of pride, using his cousin for his own advancement, and rejoicing over fallen enemies. The massacre of the Jews' enemies has been termed as wicked as the original plot against them.

Rather than idealize the central characters or defend their actions, we can readily admit that God's O.T. and N.T. people have all too often fallen short of His standards. But the Book of Esther is not intended as an ethical treatise. Instead, it underlines the persecution experienced by the Jews in pagan nations and reminds us that God remains committed to preserving His ancient people.

We're also reminded that we do live in a moral universe. The Hamans of this world will lose everything in the end. God's people, imperfect as we are, will triumph. It may be wrong to seek vengeance, but it is not wrong to rejoice when God brings the wicked low and reveals continuing love for His own.

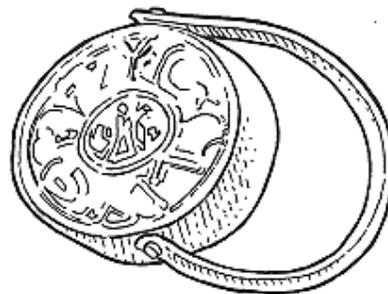


Illustration 1: In the ancient world the impression of an individual's signet ring in clay or in a wax seal served as his signature on an official document.

This Week:

In Chapters 8-10, God's care over His covenant people brings awe and conversion to those Gentiles that witness His character. As Christians, we also await God's ultimate purposes to occur in the lives of Jews and Gentiles. Learn this week what the Scriptures say about what is yet to come.

① EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? The words God uses to communicate really matter, so pay close attention to the details emphasized or repeated in the passage:

Read Esther 8:3-10:3

3 Then Esther addressed the king again. She fell at his feet, wept, and begged him to revoke the evil of Haman the Agagite, and his plot he had devised against the Jews.

4 The king extended the gold scepter toward Esther, so she got up and stood before the king.

5 She said, "If it pleases the king, and I have found approval before him, if the matter seems right to the king and I am pleasing in his sight, let a royal edict be written. Let it revoke the documents the scheming Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the king's provinces.

6 For how could I bear to see the disaster that would come on my people? How could I bear to see the destruction of my relatives?"

7 King Ahasuerus said to Esther the Queen and to Mordecai the Jew, "Look, I have given Haman's estate to Esther, and he was hanged on the gallows because he attacked the Jews.

8 You may write in the king's name whatever pleases you concerning the Jews, and seal it with the royal signet ring. A document written in the king's name and sealed with the royal signet ring cannot be revoked."

9 On the twenty-third day of the third month (that is, the month Sivan), the royal scribes were summoned. Everything was written exactly as Mordecai ordered for the Jews, to the satraps, the governors, and the officials of the 127 provinces from India to Cush. The edict was written for each province in its own script, for each ethnic group in its own language, and to the Jews in their own script and language.

10 Mordecai wrote in King Ahasuerus's name and sealed the edicts with the royal signet ring. He sent the documents by mounted couriers, who rode fast horses bred from the royal racing mares.

11 The king's edict gave the Jews in each and every city the right to assemble and defend themselves, to destroy, kill, and annihilate every ethnic and provincial army hostile to them, including women and children, and to take their possessions as spoils of war.

12 This would take place on a single day throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month Adar.

13 A copy of the text, issued as law throughout every province, was distributed to all the peoples so

the Jews could be ready to avenge themselves against their enemies on that day.

14 The couriers rode out in haste on their royal horses at the king's urgent command. The law was also issued in the fortress of Susa.

15 Mordecai went from the king's presence clothed in royal purple and white, with a great gold crown and a purple robe of fine linen. The city of Susa shouted and rejoiced,

16 and the Jews celebrated with gladness, joy, and honor.

17 In every province and every city, wherever the king's command and his law reached, joy and rejoicing took place among the Jews. There was a celebration and a holiday. And many of the ethnic groups of the land professed themselves to be Jews because fear of the Jews had overcome them.

9:1 The king's command and law went into effect on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month Adar. On the day when the Jews' enemies had hoped to overpower them, just the opposite happened. The Jews overpowered those who hated them.

2 In each of King Ahasuerus's provinces the Jews assembled in their cities to attack those who intended to harm them. Not a single person could withstand them; terror of them fell on every nationality.

3 All the officials of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and the royal civil administrators aided the Jews because they were afraid of Mordecai.

4 For Mordecai exercised great power in the palace, and his fame spread throughout the provinces as he became more and more powerful.

5 The Jews put all their enemies to the sword, killing and destroying them. They did what they pleased to those who hated them.

6 In the fortress of Susa the Jews killed and destroyed 500 men,

7 including Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha,

8 Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha,

9 Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vaizatha.

10 They killed these 10 sons of Haman son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews. However, they did not seize any plunder.

11 On that day the number of people killed in the fortress of Susa was reported to the king.

12 The king said to Queen Esther, "In the fortress of Susa the Jews have killed and destroyed 500 men, including Haman's 10 sons. What have they done in

the rest of the royal provinces? Whatever you ask will be given to you. Whatever you seek will also be done.”

13 Esther answered, “If it pleases the king, may the Jews who are in Susa also have tomorrow to carry out today’s law, and may the bodies of Haman’s 10 sons be hung on the gallows.”

14 The king gave the orders for this to be done, so a law was announced in Susa, and they hung the bodies of Haman’s 10 sons.

15 The Jews in Susa assembled again on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and killed 300 men in Susa, but they did not seize any plunder.

16 The rest of the Jews in the royal provinces assembled, defended themselves, and got rid of their enemies. They killed 75,000 of those who hated them, but they did not seize any plunder.

17 They fought on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar and rested on the fourteenth, and it became a day of feasting and rejoicing.

18 But the Jews in Susa had assembled on the thirteenth and the fourteenth days of the month. They rested on the fifteenth day of the month, and it became a day of feasting and rejoicing.

19 This explains why the rural Jews who live in villages observe the fourteenth day of the month of Adar as a time of rejoicing and feasting. It is a holiday when they send gifts to one another.

20 Mordecai recorded these events and sent letters to all the Jews in all of King Ahasuerus’s provinces, both near and far.

21 He ordered them to celebrate the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month Adar every year

22 because during those days the Jews got rid of their enemies. That was the month when their sorrow was turned into rejoicing and their mourning into a holiday. They were to be days of feasting, rejoicing, and of sending gifts to one another and the poor.

23 So the Jews agreed to continue the practice they had begun, as Mordecai had written them to do.

24 For Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to destroy them. He cast the Pur (that is, the lot) to crush and destroy them.

25 But when the matter was brought before the

king, he commanded by letter that the evil plan Haman had devised against the Jews return on his own head and that he should be hanged with his sons on the gallows.

26 For this reason these days are called Purim, from the word Pur. Because of all the instructions in this letter as well as what they had witnessed and what had happened to them,

27 the Jews bound themselves, their descendants, and all who joined with them to a commitment that they would not fail to celebrate these two days each and every year according to the written instructions and according to the time appointed.

28 These days are remembered and celebrated by every generation, family, province, and city, so that these days of Purim will not lose their significance in Jewish life and their memory will not fade from their descendants.

29 Queen Esther daughter of Abihail, along with Mordecai the Jew, wrote this second letter with full authority to confirm the letter about Purim.

30 He sent letters with messages of peace and faithfulness to all the Jews who were in the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus,

31 in order to confirm these days of Purim at their proper time just as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had established them and just as they had committed themselves and their descendants to the practices of fasting and lamentation.

32 So Esther’s command confirmed these customs of Purim, which were then written into the record.

10:1 King Ahasuerus imposed a tax throughout the land even to the farthest shores.

2 All of his powerful and magnificent accomplishments and the detailed account of Mordecai’s great rank to which the king had honored him, have they not been written in the Historical Records of the Kings of Media and Persia?

3 Mordecai the Jew was second only to King Ahasuerus, famous among the Jews, and highly popular with many of his relatives. He continued to seek good for his people and to speak for the welfare of all his descendants.

DISCOVER His Word

What does God MEAN? Answer the following questions and then bring to your COMMUNITY GROUP to discover and discuss with other.

1. Consider the contrasting effect that the decree Ahasuerus allowed Mordecai to make had on the Jewish and Persian peoples. Do you think this effect was natural, supernatural, or both (consider Leviticus 26:8; Deuteronomy 2:25; Joshua 23:10)?
2. Read 1 Thessalonians 1:9–10. How were the Thessalonians similar to the Jewish converts of Esther 8:17?
3. Read Matthew 24:9-14. Notice that Jesus, speaking of a time still yet future, describes a time in which His people are threatened, but then delivered. Summarize the similarities found in this Matthew passage with what we have seen in the story of Esther:
4. Based upon what Paul says in Romans 11:25-32, what is God accomplishing before He exercises judgment on His enemies?
5. Read Matthew 24:15-22 and compare it with 2 Thessalonians 2:3-9. Describe the event that precedes the Day of the Lord:
6. What will be the spiritual condition of God's enemies (2 Thess. 2:9-12)? Why?
7. God's will for believers until He comes is found in Romans 13:11-14. Discuss the meaning of verse 14 of this passage. How is this done?

Sermon Notes:

③LIVE His Word

How does this truth FIT? God's word is lived in real life so engage with truth in your LIFE GROUP.

Read Matthew 25:31-46 (which is to occur after the Day of the Lord right before the Millennial Kingdom) and discuss the following:

- Who are the nations of v. 32?
- Who are the sheep and the goats?
- Based on the context, who is the hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick and prisoner? How has this verse been wrongly applied to people today? (Think of the social gospel).

30 CORE Competencies

10 Core Beliefs

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation by Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9* I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I live life with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away God's Money *2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away God's money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians 6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 Core Virtues

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, me, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I demonstrate loyalty in my relationships with others in response to God's loyalty to me.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ

10 Core Practices

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33* I focus on God and His priorities for my life.