

Esther Series

Revised – August 2010

Good News Bible Studies

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Mordecai's Promotion

Esther 8

The Tables are Turned (Esther 8:1-2)

1. “On that day King Ahasuerus gave the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews, to Queen Esther; and Mordecai came before the king for Esther had disclosed what he was to her”
 - On the very same day that Haman was hanged, the king will do two significant things:
 - 1) He _____ all of Haman’s property and possessions to Esther
 - 2) He will _____ Mordecai to Haman’s position
 - Things change for not just Haman but also his family and co-conspirators
 - 1) Haman (though now dead) was considered a criminal and Persian law (according to the Greek historian Herodotus) allowed for the property and possessions of the criminal to be handed over to the crown (the king).
 - 2) We are not told what happens to Haman’s wife and his wise men but we do know that Haman’s sons are later killed. (Esther 9:7-10)
 - 3) The king awarded all of Haman’s possessions to Esther
 - 4) This makes me think of the passage in Proverbs that reads; “A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children, and the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous” (Proverbs 13:22)

- Mordecai now had full access to the king in the same manner that Haman did
 - 1) Mordecai had previously been recognized by the king for his uncovering of the plot to kill the king (Esther 6:1-3, 10) and this access to the king by Mordecai is a continuation of the king's intent to honor him for his actions.
 - 2) In addition, this access to the king was given as a result of Mordecai's relationship to Queen Esther.
 - There is going to be a new sheriff in town and his name is _____
2. "The king took off his signet ring which he had taken away from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman" (Esther 8:2)
- This action by the king is not intended to be subtle in any way but instead it was a very _____ and _____ act:
 - 1) The "signet ring" carried the full legal _____ of the king and the one to whom it was given would be capable of shaping the events of Persian history.
 - 2) The fact that the signet ring was given to _____ (a Jew) was no accident and it was more than likely the result of the Lord's divine _____ in the king's life and a means to _____ the Jews (including Esther) from being exterminated under the law that Haman introduced.
 - 3) It put everyone in the Persian Empire on notice that the king had regained _____ and those who intended harm towards the Jews would meet the same fate as Haman.
 - The action by Esther was also very significant in that Mordecai now would oversee the return of the wealth that Haman had acquired back to the people from whom he extorted!
3. **What can we learn from what we read in Esther 8:1-2 as it related to the king, Esther, Mordecai and the Lord?**

The Tale of Two Edicts (Esther 8:3-14)

1. “Then Esther spoke again to the king, fell at his feet, wept and implored him to avert the evil scheme of Haman the Agagite and his plot which he had devised against the Jews. The king extended the golden scepter to Esther. So Esther arose and stood before the king” (Esther 8:3-4)
 - The edict to exterminate the Jews was still in effect so there was still a sense of urgency on Esther’s part to avert this pending crisis.
 - 1) The edict was issued by the king and it was decreed that all Jews throughout the province were to be destroyed (Esther 3:9) because they did not observe the laws of the king – at least this is how Haman portrayed it.
 - 2) The edict had provided the means for Haman to carry out a mass execution of the Jews throughout the Persian Empire in one day. (Let’s review...)
 - 3) “Letters were sent by couriers to all the king’s provinces to destroy, to kill and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to seize their possessions as plunder” (Esther 3:13)
 - 4) The date of this mass execution was just on the horizon and in order to avert this disaster, Esther had to move quickly or her people would face devastating harm.
 - Esther’s appeal to the king was made with humility and she begged for mercy to stop this potential massacre of her people.
 - Esther reminded the king that Haman was evil and his scheme affected more lives than just her own.
 - After listening to Esther’s appeal, the king was unable to refuse to hear her request (though it was unsolicited this time), and he extended the golden scepter towards her which signified his willingness to allow her to speak further. This was a delicate matter for the king and although he wielded a great deal of power, he still had to stay within the confines of Persian Law.

2. “Then she said, if it pleases the king and if I have found favor before him and the matter seems proper to the king and I am pleasing in his sight, let it be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the king’s provinces. For how can I endure to see the calamity which will befall my people, and how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?” (Esther 8:5-6)
 - Esther makes no assumptions (as Queen Vashti had done) and speaks to the king with respect in the hopes that the king will find favor with her request.
 - The request by Esther is simple; “let it be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the king’s provinces.”
 - 1) Esther puts all the responsibility for this diabolical plan and potential massacre squarely on the shoulders of Haman
 - 2) Persian law didn’t really allow for decrees to be altered or revoked so Esther’s request would be granted so the means by which the king would grant her request would require some political maneuvering and creativity.
 - 3) Some scholars conclude that Esther is somehow differentiating between the edict itself and the “letters” written by Haman so as to create a loophole in the Persian legal system and open the door for a second edict to be drafted that would counter/negate the first edict.
 - 4) As we read on we will see that the king will grant Esther’s request by giving authority to Mordecai to write a decree that effectively permits the Jews to defend themselves and effectively will save them from this pending disaster.
 - The One directing the affairs of the king and the events surrounding this decree is The Lord Himself. We should always remember that “With God all things are possible” even when things seem impossible to us.
 - Esther’s subtle reminder that she was Jewish was duly noted in the fact that she expressed that she could not stand to see her people destroyed and ultimately (if taken to its extreme), the king might also lose his beloved queen.

3. “So King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew, behold I have given the house of Haman to Esther, and him they hanged on the gallows because he had stretched out his hand against the Jews. Now you write to the Jews as you see fit in the king’s name, and seal it with the king’s signet ring; for a decree which is written in the name of the king and sealed with the king’s signet ring may not be revoked” (Esther 8:7-8)

- The same power and political resources that once belonged to Haman were now transferred to Esther and Mordecai to do as they seen fit even if they chose to use that authority to their advantage.
- The king understands that even he could not revoke the decree written to destroy the Jews, but by empowering Esther and Mordecai to draft their own instructions to the Jews (in essence to protect/defend themselves); they could make the evil plot crafted by Haman to be of no effect to the Jews.
- In the end, this move by the king would save his beloved queen and the Jewish from death and destruction and at the same time would maintain the rule of law within the Persian Kingdom and keep his own power and control intact.

4. “So the king’s scribes were called at that time in the third month (that is month Sivan), on the twenty third day; and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded to the Jews, the satraps, the governors, and the princes of the provinces which extended from India to Ethiopia, 127 provinces, to every province according to its script, and to every people according to their language as well as to the Jews according to their script and their language. He wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus, and sealed it with the king’s signet ring, and sent letters by couriers on horses, riding on steeds sired by the royal stud” (Esther 8:9-10)

- Take note of how quickly Mordecai’s authority was _____ (no doubt because of his outstanding character) and how careful he was to include everyone to ensure that this edict was received with the full authority of the king and understood in their own language.
- The Persian Pony Express was used once again to get the message out quickly so as to completely _____ the previous edict issued by Haman.

5. “In them the king granted the Jews who were in each and every city the right to assemble and to defend their lives, to destroy, to kill and annihilate the entire army of any people or province which might attack them, including children and women, and to plunder their spoil, on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month (that is, the month of Adar).” (Esther 8:11-12)

- Contained in the letters that were dispatched; the Jews were given the right to _____ together as a group for the purposes of organizing themselves.
- The Jews were also given the authority to _____ themselves from attack
- Since the plan put forth by Haman was an all-out attack against Jews for the purpose of annihilating them, the edict that was drafted by Mordecai and authorized by the king was a full on counter measure to completely defend themselves from attack even against women and children if needed.
- This gave the Jews about _____ months to prepare for the impending conflict

6. “A copy of the edict is to be issued as law in each and every province was published to all the peoples so that the Jews would be ready for this day to avenge themselves on their enemies. The couriers, hastened and impelled by the king's command, went out, riding on the royal steeds; and the decree was given out at the citadel in Susa” (Esther 8:13-14)

- This new edict (drafted by Mordecai) allowed King Ahasuerus to loosely keep from violating Persian Law that didn't permit an actual edict from being altered or revoked. The edict actually drafted by Haman was still in play but they lost the edge and certainly could not now attack the Jews without _____. This was a win-win for the king.
- Mordecai made it a point to identify the specific threat, referencing the “day” that was planned by Haman and his conspirators to kill the Jews. He readied the people for that potential threat and granted permission to defend themselves, even to the extent of total destruction of those who might attack them.
- The edict had the full authority of the king and it was dispatched in the same quick fashion as was Haman's decree.

The Turning of Possible Tragedy into Total Triumph (Esther 8:15-17)

1. “Then Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal robes of blue and white with a large crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple and the city of Susa shouted and rejoiced.” (Esther 8:15)
 - The clothes that Mordecai wore represented his position of authority
 - 1) Royal _____ of blue and white (Persian royal colors)
 - 2) A large gold _____
 - 3) A purple linen _____
 - He now held the very same position and status that was once held by _____ (Esther 3:1)...a rather ironic twist of events!
 - The people in the city of Susa who were once bewildered and confused under the edict written by Haman to kill the Jews – now rejoice that things are about to change.
2. “For the Jews there was light and gladness and joy and honor” (Esther 8:16)
3. “In each and every province and in each and every city, wherever the king’s commandment and his decree arrived, there was gladness and joy for the Jews, a feast and a holiday. **And many among the peoples of the land became Jews**, for the dread of the Jews had fallen on them” (Esther 8:17)
 - The news of Mordecai’s edict brought much _____ and _____ to all the peoples of the provinces of the Persian Empire.
 - The people of the city of Susa can now _____ with the Jews who lived among them rather than sit by and watch them be _____.
 - This change of events caused many Gentiles to become “Jewish proselytes” (converts) as they now witnessed the Lord’s _____ over the Jewish people and _____ their same belief and trust in Jehovah.