

Esther Series

Revised – August 2010

Good News Bible Studies

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The Lord's Protection

Esther 9

A Day of Reversal (Esther 9:1-4)

1. “Now in the twelfth month (that is, the month Adar), on the thirteenth day when the king’s command and edict were about to be executed, on the day when the enemies of the Jews hoped to gain the mastery over them, it was turned to the contrary so that the Jews themselves gained the mastery over those who hated them” (Esther 9:1)
 - It remains interesting to me that the “enemies of the Jews” still planned on going through with Haman’s plan.
 - 1) Perhaps it was because they _____ the Jews so much
 - 2) Perhaps it was because they still thought they could _____
 - 3) The date for the attack against the Jews was the exact date of the original edict introduced by Haman and signed by the king – the 13th day of the 12th month. (Esther 3:13)
 - 4) The attackers had hoped to somehow gain _____ over the Jews and perhaps get rich from their plunder.
 - The results; we are told, and we will see are just the opposite of what the **enemies of the Jews** expected.
 - 1) This is another good reminder that when the Lord is in something – His will _____!
 - 2) Even the evil one (Satan) cannot overthrow God – though he may think that he can. (Isaiah 14:12-17)

2. “The Jews assembled in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on those who sought their harm; and no one could stand before them, for the dread of them had fallen on all the peoples. Even the princes of the provinces, the satraps, the governors and those who were doing the king’s business assisted the Jews, because the dread of Mordecai had fallen on them.” (Esther 9:2-3)

- The Jews boldly gathered themselves together in each city throughout the Persian Empire just as Mordecai had instructed them and just as the edict permitted.

- 1) The edict provided the Jews with the right to _____ themselves from attack as well as to kill those who intended _____ against them.
- 2) The results were that no one could stand against the Jews as the Persians not only feared them but they no doubt also feared the God of the Jews.

- There is also an interesting notation that the political figures (satraps, governors and those doing the king’s business) were _____ of Mordecai.

- 1) The shift in power from Haman to Mordecai causes these political figures to rethink who they would support as the two opposing edicts were worked out.
- 2) Since Haman is dead they no longer had an allegiance to him and now that Mordecai was in this position of authority they thought it best to back him.
- 3) The culture of the Persian Empire would have expected retaliation and retribution from Mordecai (since he now had the authority to do so) and as such these political figures assumed those would be the results – but that was not at all what will take place.

3. “Indeed, Mordecai was great in the king’s house, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces; for the man Mordecai became greater and greater” (Esther 9:4)

- While it is true that Mordecai put a plan together to protect the Jews – it was a plan to defend them and not bring harm or retribution to the innocent.
- The fame that will spread in regard to Mordecai is a powerful testimony to his _____ as we will see by his actions.

A Day of Reckoning (Esther 9:5-19)

1. “Thus the Jews struck all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying; and they did what they pleased to those who hated them.....**but they did not lay their hands on the plunder**” (Esther 9:5-10)
 - The day of battle came that was set in motion by the two edicts – **March 13, 473**
 - 1) On one side were those who chose to attack the Jews in an attempt to fulfill the evil plan put on place by Haman.
 - 2) On the other side were the Jews who were permitted by the other edict to defend themselves against these attacks.
 - The casualties were very high for those who chose to attack the Jews
 - 1) Initially _____ men from the Palace at Susa were killed
 - 2) The _____ sons of Haman were also killed and their name were listed
 - A few of interesting things to note here:
 - 1) No _____ among the Jews are mentioned
 - 2) The fact that the sons of Haman were killed no doubt eliminated any opportunity for them to seek _____ against the king or against Mordecai.
 - 3) The actions by the Jews were in _____ of their lives against those who hated them.
 - It is also made clear that the Jews were not the aggressors as we are told that they did not lay their hands on the _____ (the wealth of the attackers) even though it was their right to do so as the victors.
 - What might have been the reason that the author emphasized that the Jews only defended themselves but did not keep the plunder?

2. “On that day the number of those who were killed at the citadel in Susa was reported to the king. The king said to Queen Esther, the Jews have killed and destroyed five hundred men and the ten sons of Haman at the citadel in Susa. What then have they done in the rest of the king’s provinces! Now what is your petition? It shall even be granted you. And what is your further request? It shall also be done” (Esther 9:11-12)

- The results of the battle in Susa are reported to the king and he doesn’t appear to be surprised or shaken by the outcome.
- The king appears to want to know about the additional results of the battle throughout the provinces and probes further with the queen as to what additional requests she might have.

1) I think it is highly probable that the king was aware of the events and was simply agreeing with the results but he does open the door for Esther to make any additional requests that would be of benefit to her people.

2) What do you think the king’s attitude was toward the Jews and their God?

- This reminds me of what the Lord said to Abraham; “And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed” (Genesis 12:3)

3. “Then said Esther, if it pleases the king, let tomorrow also be granted to the Jews who are in Susa to do according to the edict of today; and let Haman’s ten sons be hanged on the gallows. So the king commanded that it should be done so; and an edict was issued in Susa, and Haman’s ten sons were hanged.” (Esther 9:13-14)

- There was an apparent need for one more additional day to accomplish the task of rounding up all of the attackers and putting an end to their evil plan and the king granted this request by Esther via special edict.
- In addition and to put an end to any future uprising against the king or the Jews by Haman’s family – the king granted Esther’s request to also have the 10 sons of Haman hanged/impaled on the gallows as a public statement that any future aggression against the Jews within the provinces of Persia would not be tolerated.

4. “The Jews who were in Susa assembled also on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and killed 300 men in Susa but they did not lay their hands on the plunder.” (Esther 9:15)
- The Jews in Susa needed an extra day to completely rout those aggressors who intended harm against them – as such they killed an additional 300 men there.
 - Once again the emphasis is made that the Jews were not doing this for money as they did not lay their hands on the plunder.
5. The author makes the distinction between the events taking place in the outlying provinces to those taking place in Susa:
- “Now the rest of the Jews who were in the king’s provinces assembled to defend their lives and rid themselves of their enemies, and kill 75,000 of those who hated them, but they did not lay their hands on the plunder. This was done on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar and on the fourteenth day they rested and made it a day of feasting and rejoicing” (Esther 9:16-17)
 - “But the Jews who were in Susa assembled on the thirteenth and the fourteenth of the same month, and they rested on the fifteenth day and made it a day of feasting and rejoicing.” (Esther 9:18)
 - “Therefore the Jews of the rural areas, who live in the rural towns, make the fourteenth day of the month Adar a holiday for rejoicing and feasting and sending portions of food to one another” (Esther 9:19)
6. These significant victories by the Jews had an immediate impact:
- The people of the Persian Empire at the time retained a healthy _____ and _____ of the Jews living throughout the provinces.
 - The people of the Persian Empire recognized the God of the Jews and many of them turned their hearts in _____ toward Him.
 - These victories brought about the establishment and celebration of the Feast of Purim – something the Jews still celebrate in their synagogues in our present day.

A Day of Remembrance (Esther 9:20-32)

1. This day that was set aside was called the Feast of _____
 - It was a fitting celebration designed to remind the people of the miraculous preservation of the Jewish people who the Lord _____ and turned them from victims to _____.
 - This was not one of the established and required feasts of the **Mosaic Law**
 - This feast was instituted by Mordecai and Esther and they commanded the Jews to celebrate this day each year as a memorial of what the Lord did to protect them.
 - This feast is still celebrated as a holiday by the Jews even today
2. “Then Mordecai recorded these events, and he sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far, obliging them to celebrate the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same month, annually, because on those days the Jews rid themselves of their enemies, and it was a month which was turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and rejoicing and sending portions of food to one another and gifts to the poor” (Esther 9:20-22)
 - This was to be a _____ day celebration
 - The festival was intended to serve as a reminder to the Jews of the goodness of God and how He _____ them from possible extinction.
 - This feast was to designed to be a celebration in which their _____ and _____ was turned to _____ and _____.
 - They were to send _____ to one another
 - They were also to share with the poor by sending them _____

3. “Thus the Jews undertook what they started to do, and what Mordecai had written to them. For Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the adversary of all the Jews, had schemed against the Jews to destroy them and had cast Pur, that is the lot, to disturb them and to destroy them. But when it came to the king's attention, he commanded by letter that his wicked scheme which he had devised against the Jews, should return on his own head and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows” (Esther 9:23-25)

- The writer reminds us of the reason purpose of the celebration which served as a reminder of how they were spared from destruction and the evil intentions of Haman.
- The writer also reminds us of the intervention by the king who was an instrument of God to help deliver the Jews from extinction.

4. “Therefore they called these days Purim after the name of Pur. And because of the instructions in this letter, both what they had seen in this regard and what had happened to them, the Jews established and made a custom for themselves and for their descendants and for all those who allied themselves with them, so that they would not fail to celebrate these two days according to their regulation and according to their time annually” (Esther 9:26-27)

- Purim is derived from the word _____
 - 1) It's not a Hebrew word
 - 2) Most commentators conclude that “**Pur**” originated in Assyrian, Babylonian or Persian culture and its meaning is to draw lots or roll dice and the outcome was believed to be determined by the choice of the spirits (divination).
- This celebration had special _____ to the Jews as they recognized that their _____ and _____ was determined by the Lord.
- The _____ of the feast was to instill in their minds forever that the Lord _____ on their behalf and _____ them from extinction.

5. “So these days were to be remembered and celebrated throughout every generation, every family, every province and every city, and these days of Purim were not to fail from among the Jews or their memory fade from their descendants” (Esther 9:28)

- This festival was intended for not just the immediate but it was to be _____ on to future generations and _____ celebrated as a remembrance of what happened on these two days and how the Lord spared their lives.
- This festival is still practiced in modern day Jewish culture
 - 1) In present day it is celebrated in late February or early March of each year
 - 2) The month Adar corresponds with the month of March
 - 3) It is a late winter feast and occurs one month before the Passover celebration
 - 4) It is considered an additional feast to those established in the book of Leviticus but may well be the best known Jewish holiday added since the time of Moses.
 - 5) The Feast of Purim is considered a “minor holiday” which means there are no restrictions on work.
- The modern day celebration of the Feast of Purim involves:
 - 1) Reading the Book of Esther in the Synagogue
 - 2) Each time Haman’s name is read the people in the audience will make all sorts of noise to drown out his name. Some people will put Haman’s name on the bottom of their shoe to stomp on his name.
 - 3) Money is collected to meet the needs of the poor
 - 4) All sorts of food that has special meaning will be made and eaten together and they will send presents to one another and to the poor.
 - 5) In Tel Aviv they have a carnival each year to commemorate Purim.

6. “Then Queen Esther, daughter of Abihail, with Mordecai the Jew, wrote with full authority to confirm this second letter about Purim. He sent letters to all the Jews, to the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, namely, the words of peace and truth, to establish these days of Purim at their appointed time just as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had established for them, and just as they had established for themselves and for their descendants with instructions for their time of fasting and their lamentations. The command of Esther established these customs for Purim and it was written in the book” (Esther 9:29-32)
- A second letter was written by Esther and Mordecai which was to confirm that the Jews were to celebrate the feast of Purim.
 - The letter contained words that promoted goodwill (_____ and _____) both in the Jewish community as well as throughout the provinces of Persia.
 - The customs established for the Feast of Purim were recorded in the royal archives of Persia and also recorded in Jewish historical records.
 - This Festival served as a reminder of how the Lord protected them
7. This book is not just about the Lord’s protection for His people, but it also makes it possible for the Lord to provide full _____ through the promised Messiah.
8. “But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law so that He might redeem those who are under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Galatians 4:4-5)