

Theme: The Law of God, like that of Ahasuerus, cannot be revoked. The wages of sin is death.” But God, too, has written a law for deliverance for those who trust in Him, who are identified by His name.

Background & Introduction: God’s hand of deliverance has begun to show itself – but there is still a long way to go. Are the Jews still called to take vengeance on their enemies?

I. A New Edict!

A. Esther’s request

1. The approach - “If I have found favor/am pleasing in your eyes”
2. The request - “Please revoke the law!”

B. The king’s response (7 & 8)

- “Aren’t you satisfied?”
- “Write as you please”

C. Mordecai’s regulation

1. Mordecai’s reversal - sack-cloth to royal honor and authority
2. Mordecai’s edict of self-defense – Or *Revenge?*

D. The people rejoice

1. Great reversal (Compare 4:3 with 8:15-17)
2. Many “converted”??

II. An Old Battle/Problem (Questions that arise)

A. Esther – seeking *God’s* deliverance? Or man’s?

B. Why are the people rejoicing?

- Actual deliverance still months away.
- Praising God? Or just relieved?

C. Mordecai’s decree – defense? or vengeance?

1. Mordecai’s edict – Getting the context right

First: It is a complete – verbatim – reversal of the edict of Haman!
(compare 3:13 & 8:11,12)

Second: Haman’s edict points to the larger conflict.

Third: Mordecai’s edict also point to the ancient battle with the
“Amalekites”.

2. Is this a declaration of “Holy War?”

a. **Edict takes on the “form” of a “Holy War” declaration**

Holy War? “*Herem*” = *Devoted things, Devoted to God*

Defined: God carrying out His righteous judgment against His enemies, *through the agency of men*, in order to cleanse the land! (Deuteronomy 20)

QUESTION: Do we question God’s right to *judge* anyone at any time?

- Today many outside (and inside) the church do. “God is Love”
- God *judges* the wicked because He *is loving!*

QUESTION: If we understand the nature of “sin” is there anyone who is truly “innocent”?

- Romans 3:10-23; Psalm 14:1-3; Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12
- Depravity touches everyone.

b. It is *only* a picture.

3. It is, *Providentially*, God’s means of deliverance

4. It is a picture of judgment on God’s enemies!! The Ultimate Reversal!

- God will deliver his people from the edict of destruction!
- Points us forward to the final day of judgment.

QUESTION: Can we be called to Holy War today? NO.

1. The *Divine Warrior*, our champion has come!

- He has vanquished his foe, our enemy – death!
- The battle is not against flesh and blood but against “the spiritual forces of darkness”. (Ephesians 6:12)

2. He calls us into battle!

- The weapons have changed!
- The *battle field* has changed. (Eph.6:12; 2 Cor.10:3-6)

APPLICATION:

1. Are you living your life under the first edict or the second?

2. How closely, how securely are you *identified* with the people of God?

3. The “Holy War” we are called to is fought “on our knees”

- First in our hearts
- And in the world – with a message of our “reversal of fortune” in Christ. e decree!