

## **Esther Brings Deliverance and Mordecai is Exalted**

Call to Worship: Proverbs 3:19-26

Hymn #271- *How Sweet and Awful is the Place*

1<sup>st</sup> Scripture: Psalm 91

Hymn #79- *Though Troubles Assail Us*

2nd Scripture: Esther 8

Hymn #487- *Faith of Our Fathers*

### **Introduction:**

The wicked plans of Haman have turned full circle, as he was hung on the very gallows that he had set up for Mordecai. Esther had acted in faith, and God honored her faithfulness by granting her the favor of the king, along with a handful of other key providences, which have caused the plans of Haman to backfire right into his own face.

However, one very serious problem remained. The king's decree, written by the hand of Haman, had already gone out, which called for the extermination and annihilation of all of the Jews, living within the king's provinces (which was virtually all of the Jews). The order was sealed by the signet ring of the king, and nothing could change the decree, once his seal was set upon it, and it had been delivered to all of the provinces. And, as has always been the case throughout all of Israel's history, there were no small amount of enemies who were zealous to carry out this decree. This morning then, we will see how Esther is used to bring about the deliverance of her people, while Mordecai is exalted at the same time, in place of Haman.

### **I. A Summary of the Events that Transpire in Esther 8**

Following the hanging of Haman, the king gives Haman's house, which we can presume was quite luxurious and valuable, to Esther. And in verse 2, we are told that Esther then "appointed Mordecai over the house of Haman." And furthermore, Mordecai was brought before the king, and after Esther had told him of their relation, the king "took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai." Clearly brethren, God has here providentially exalted Mordecai right into Haman's position, bringing about a most profound

display of the principle of reversal. The lowly Jew, who sat at the king's gate, unwilling to show honor to the proud Amalekite, was given the position, authority and living quarters of the Amalekite, who was himself hung on his own gallows.

Following this, Esther then makes her appeal on behalf of the Jews. After receiving, once again, the gracious nod of the king's golden scepter, Esther falls down at the king's feet, weeping and pleading with the king to issue a decree that would counteract the wicked decree sent out by Haman. Realizing that the other decree cannot be revoked, the king gives Esther and Mordecai full approval to compose another decree on behalf of the Jews; one which could serve to somehow counteract the first decree, since the first one could not be revoked. They jump right on this, and then have the scribes immediately translate it into all of the languages of the provinces, so that it could be sent out by way of the couriers. The couriers are then sent forth on royal horses bred from swift steeds, so that they can get to every province and disseminate the decree as swiftly as possible.

And in verses 11-12, we are given a summary of the decree's content: "By these letters the king permitted the Jews who were in every city to gather together and protect their lives--to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the forces of any people or province that would assault them, both little children and women, and to plunder their possessions, on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar." And so, while this would not revoke the first decree, it gave the Jews the authority to defend themselves, by carrying out the same judgment on their enemies, which was posed against them in the first decree. They were permitted to avenge themselves according to the same measure that was posed against them in the first decree. Again, we continue to see the principle of "reversal" at work, though in a national sense. What the enemies of God's people strive to do against the people of God, will ultimately be turned upon their own heads. They will drink the cup of their own wicked and evil plotting (we have seen this principal constantly at work in our study of Revelation).

As the word goes out in Shushan, the capital and citadel of Persia, Mordecai comes out of the palace decked in royal apparel of blue and white, with a great crown of gold and fine linen and purple, and the city of Shushan rejoices with great gladness (vs. 15). Mordecai has even advanced further than Haman had ever advanced, and that without trying. Indeed, God exalts the

humble in due time. Mordecai came into a position, which Haman had deeply coveted, all by the divine providence of his God! And the Jews, especially, were full of great joy over this, for God had delivered and exalted His people through Esther and Mordecai. We are told in verse 16, "The Jews had light and gladness, joy and honor." They had rest and peace and great joy, as God had brought about their deliverance. And this joy spread throughout the entire empire, as the king's decree went forth. In verse 17, we are told, "And in every province and city, wherever the king's command and decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a holiday." And many of the [non-Jewish] people of the land became Jews, because fear of the Jews fell upon them! Indeed, God has a way of prospering His great name in seemingly impossible situations, does He not?

## **II. Applications based on the recent events that have transpired**

1) Again brethren, see the principle of reversal here, not only in how God causes the plans of the wicked to fall upon their own heads, but furthermore, in how He exalts His faithful servants in due time. The Jews sought their refuge in God, here. They did not take it upon themselves to respond to their circumstances in whatever way would seem to work best, irrespective of the moral will of God. No, they put on sackcloth and ashes; they fasted, wept, and sought the help of their invisible, Almighty God. Like the Psalmist, God was their refuge and strength; their strong tower, their shield and their buckler. And in due time, their misery and anguish were turned into elation and great joy.

Some of you may be suffering from any number of hardships. Maybe you are mistreated or oppressed at work or among unsaved family members. Maybe you have a physical ailment or a variety of physical ailments that have racked you with ongoing pain. Or maybe you are suffering through a severe spiritual trial, overcome with anxiety, depression or some form of spiritual anguish. Or maybe you suffer from an ongoing psychological disorder or disorders? Or maybe you face the daily challenges of living with an unsaved and harsh spouse? Whatever the case may be, all people; indeed, all Christians will suffer much in the course of this short life. In fact, when you peer through church history, you will find many, many Christians who have suffered some of the most difficult trials imaginable, right up until the time that they died. They

have been pierced through with many sorrows, and from the standpoint of the world, these people are to be pitied. And they suffered all of these things, while remaining steadfast in their faith...and all for what?

Well brethren, let our text be a small picture of the reality of your end. Though you suffer now, joy; indeed, great joy comes in the morning. Soon, every cloud will be lifted and every pain and sorrow will flee away, to return no more. Great, unending, peace and joy awaits all of God's people in the end. The relief and elation and joy and peace that the Jews experienced when they were here delivered from a seemingly impossible situation, indeed, has relevance for us on this side of heaven, but all the more, carry it through to its most certain end. Beyond the gates of death, lies an infinite weight of joy and peace and comfort, for all who are in Christ! With Lazarus, you may suffer great hunger and be full of sores at the rich man's gate, for the duration of your life, but in the end, Lazarus is the one who plunges into eternal glory, resting peacefully in the bosom of Abraham.

The key for the present is to remain faithful even unto death. The key for the present is to cling to the unwavering conviction that God ought to be glorified in every avenue of your living. Let it be a settled conviction in your soul to say at all times, "Though He even slay me, yet will I serve Him!" Take your most joyful moments and your most painfully anxious moments in this life, and deposit them all into the account of serving Christ in His church. You will never, ever be given the opportunity to suffer unto the glory of God, and unto the building and edification of His church, and unto the salvation of the lost, when you pass beyond the grave. Suffering is hard, but it is a weighty investment that can only be added to, in this lifetime, and which by the grace of God, can be carried over beyond your lifetime. Make good use of it, brethren.

2) Notice how God glorified His Name in the salvation of His people here. Clearly, this was a work of God! And the level of difficulty of the dilemmas here posed, only served to magnify the evident reality that divine providence was at work. So powerful was the message here; so great and glorious was the signature of God here, that even non-Jews grew fearful of the Jews, and became proselytes themselves. Foreigners became Jews and embraced the God of the Jews, because of the evident divine deliverance they had begun to witness. Sometimes, God will take His people to the basement of incomprehensible woes, in order to manifest His glory in them, so that upon their standing firm, and upon their being delivered, outsiders, unbelievers,

come to know that there is, indeed, a God in Israel. And they seek Him in truth! Let your sufferings take you outside of yourselves in this respect, brethren (consider your unsaved children, spouse, friends, co-workers, family members...etc).

3) And brethren, let us see here, perhaps, a picture of our own glorious redemption from sin, in Christ. Though a decree has come out against us in the righteous Law of God; an unchangeable decree, which condemns all sinners, Christ, having fulfilled the Law for us (on our behalf), and having received the just penalty due sinners under the jurisdiction of the Law, has brought about a decree of grace for all who believe in Him. Unlike the decree written by Haman, God's legal decree is just and righteous and we deserve every bit of the condemnation proclaimed in it. But in Christ, we are brought under the jurisdiction of a new decree, the old having been fulfilled in Him. We are now under a decree of grace! Does this not excite you, brethren, and move you to want to be spent for Christ! You reside; indeed every moment of your life, you reside in a sphere of grace! And in this sphere of grace, like Mordecai, you are set in a royal position, as true sons of God and brethren of the Glorious "King of Kings and Lord of Lords!" We are decked in royal robes because of our union with Christ (serving as a kingdom of priests)!

This is yet a blessed hope for you too, unbeliever, if you would but repent today and flee to Christ!

Amen!!!

Benediction: Jude 1:24-25