Life-Application Bible Study



Esther

The Beauty of Courageous Submission

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The Beauty of Courageous Submission

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All Scripture unless otherwise noted is taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

Bible Study – Esther: The Beauty of Courageous Submission

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Darlene's Other Books include:

The Good Wife's Guide: Embracing Your Role as a Helpmeet

Reshaping it All: Motivation for Physical and Spiritual Fitness (co-author)

Ruth: A Woman of Virtue (Bible Study)

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Introduction

The book of Esther is a beautiful story of one woman who courageously gave of herself for the will of God and His people. Women like you and I can glean inspiration from her strength, wisdom and her dignity as we face our fears and boldly stand before the throne of our God.

The events in the story of Esther reveal the plot of one man who desired to have God's people destroyed, and the courage of a woman who stepped out in faith to turn that plan around.

Esther gives us something to celebrate as it chronicles the deliverance of God's chosen people, the Jews. It is also a great lesson on Biblical submission for both women and the church in general. It inspires believers to trust God's wisdom and timing, and to stand strong in the face of persecution.

"Righteousness" is one of the main themes in the book. This story teaches us that righteousness is imputed to us. It's given to us freely through faith in Jesus Christ.

It is in the book of Esther that the feast of Purim (a feast that the Jews still celebrate today) is established.

The Book of Esther or the Megillah is the basis for the Jewish celebration of Purim. Its full text is read aloud twice during the celebration, in the evening and again the following morning. (Wikipedia, The Book of Esther)

But let's not get ahead of ourselves as we'll talk more about that in chapter nine.

Esther Chapter One

Main characters in the first chapter and the Hebrew meaning of their names:

Ahasuerus – Mighty or venerable (respected) king.

Vashti – Beautiful

Esther 1:1-4

Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, (this is Ahasuerus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces. That in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the palace, in the third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his princes and his servants; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, being before him:

When he shewed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty many days, even an hundred and fourscore days.

In chapter one, we're introduced to King Ahasuerus. We are told in verse 1 that he

reigned over 127 provinces, and in verse 2 we see that his kingdom was in Shushan, which is also known as "Susa." See map.

The king made a feast greater than any other that we have read about in scripture--except of course the marriage supper of the lamb, which is yet to come! The reason for the feast is unknown for sure, but what we do know is that it lasted 180 days, followed by a 7-day feast.

Esther 1:5-9

And when these days were expired, the king made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan the palace, both unto great and small, seven days, in the court of the garden of the king's palace; where were white, green, and blue, hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble: the beds were of gold and silver, upon a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black, marble.

And they gave them drink in vessels of gold, (the vessels being diverse one from another,) and royal wine in abundance, according to the state of the king. And the drinking was according to the law;

none did compel: for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man's pleasure.

Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to king Ahasuerus.

What we learn about in these verses is that the seven day feast was extremely lavish. As you're reading these scriptures, what do you learn about these four things?

1. The location of the feast:

2. The decorations:

3. The drink:

4. The furnishings:

As we continue to read, we start to notice that King Ahasuerus was a foreshadow of a greater King and his party of yet a greater feast—Jesus and the marriage supper of the lamb.

Note: He's not a flawless example of Christ by any means, as neither were David or Solomon. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," but the lives of many flawed men have been used throughout scripture to illustrate Jesus as our Lord and King.

Notice the intimacy of the location at this seven-day feast? It was in the court of the garden of the King's palace. In Revelation we are invited to come and sup with Jesus, our King, in the most honored and intimate place—His throne room:

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. ~ Revelation 3:20-21, KJV

Esther 1:10-15

On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven chamberlains that served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king, to bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to shew the people and the princes her beauty: for she was fair to look on. But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by his chamberlains: therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him.

Then the king said to the wise men, which knew the times, (for so was the king's manner toward all that knew law and judgment: and the next unto him was Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, which saw the king's face, and which sat the first in the kingdom;)

What shall we do unto the queen Vashti according to law, because she hath not performed the commandment of the king Ahasuerus by the chamberlains?

Compare verses 10-12 with that of the parable found in Matthew 22:1-7. What similarities do you find?

Esther 1:16-19

And Memucan answered before the king and the princes, Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes, and to all the people that are in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus. For this deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, so that they shall despise their husbands in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not.

Likewise shall the ladies of Persia and Media say this day unto all the king's princes, which have heard of the deed of the queen. Thus shall there arise too much contempt and wrath. If it please the king, let there go a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, That Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she.

It's interesting to note here that while Queen Vashti was an ancient example of women's liberation with her refusal to submit to her husband, we are dealing with a much deeper issue which is that of God's people refusing to submit to Jesus Christ as their King.

I know that some readers may disagree with me, saying that the King was drunk (the heart of the king was merry with wine) and therefore Vashti had good reason to refuse him.

And yet some others may say, "This was the seventh day of the feast, and I'm sure that she was tired from wearing open toed shoes all week…"

Okay, seriously—what? This is the King we are talking about. Not a drunken back-yard mechanic that's calling you into the garage to show you off to the guys. It was an honor even for the queen to be called into the King's presence. And besides that, the scripture doesn't give us any valid reason she didn't. So making excuses for her would be speculation at best.

The way I see it, this is a matter of submission and "righteousness." Now before I lose you, let me explain…

Righteousness is conformity to God's laws. But you see, since we are all human beings and

therefore fallible, not one of us can be righteous by our own work. Therefore, righteousness is imputed (freely given) to us by God through faith in Jesus Christ.

The Jews refused to accept Jesus as their King, and continued to live by the works of law in much the same way as Vashti refused to submit to the King. Both beauty and sacrifice are merely skin deep, unless they stem from obedience to God through Jesus Christ.

It's a lack of faith on our part when we can't trust God's wisdom over our own. And so people distort the truth of God's word delivered by the hand of His messengers. We see this happening every minute of every day as people assume that good deeds and being a good person somehow makes them righteous. It doesn't make us righteous any more than her beauty did. The truth is that we are all born in sin, and we all fall into sin, therefore we are in need of a savior.

To say that she didn't go because her husband was drunk wouldn't make all that much sense since she was beckoned to come by his

messengers.

Compare verse 19 to Matthew 22:11-13.

In this parable, what do you think the wedding garment represented and how might that compare to the attitude of Queen Vashti?

How does it compare to the attitude of many "god" believing people today?

If you have trouble answering those questions, consider this verse:

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. ~ Isaiah 61:10, KJV

Esther 1:20-22

And when the king's decree which he shall make shall be published throughout all his empire, (for it

is great,) all the wives shall give to their husbands honour, both to great and small.

And the saying pleased the king and the princes; and the king did according to the word of Memucan: for he sent letters into all the king's provinces, into every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language, that every man should bear rule in his own house, and that it should be published according to the language of every people.

I love this one little verse tucked into scripture—in fact my heart started beating crazy hard when I read it!--because it's packed with direction for today's church:

And when the king's decree which he shall make shall be published throughout all his empire, (for it is great,) all the wives shall give to their husbands honour, both to great and small. ~ Esther 1:20, KJV

See another similarity to The New Testament church there? In verse 20 all women were commanded to honor their husbands. Why? Because this sent an important message to everyone: that the Queen must submit to the King!

If Jesus is the King, then who is His Queen?

Compare Ephesians 5:22-28. What are the roles of both husbands and wives?

When you and I submit to our husbands, we are not only submitting to the commandments found in scripture, we are sending a message out to the kingdom far and wide: that the Queen must submit to the King of all kings!

Chapter one is an illustration of God beckoning his people to come to the marriage supper of the Lamb through faith in Jesus.

When you are saved through faith in Jesus Christ, your righteousness is imputed (freely given) to you. And so yes, we will stumble and fall and sin because we are human. It is because we love Jesus that we obey His commandments. Not perfectly, but that is our goal.

Esther Chapter Two

In chapter one I didn't want to get ahead of myself by going too in-depth on the topic of the Jews and the Gentiles. What we did study was "righteousness" and how important the righteousness of Christ is to one's salvation. As we know from scripture, it is impossible for one to be saved without faith in Jesus Christ.

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. ~ Romans 5:19, KJV

The following verse is key in summing up chapter one and moving on to chapter two:

For they [the Jews] being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. ~ Romans 10:3, KJV

In this chapter we'll discuss this further, as the story of Esther leads us to explore the Jews, the Gentiles, and the plan of salvation.

Meaning of names in this chapter:

Mordecai: Worshipper of Marduk (a Babylonian god)
Hadassah: Myrtle (a flowering plant)
Esther: Star (Persian name)
Hegai: Meditation, Word, Groaning, Separation

Esther 2:1-3

After these things, when the wrath of king Ahasuerus was appeased, he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what was decreed against her.

Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, Let there be fair young virgins sought for the king: And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan the palace, to the house of the women, unto the custody of Hege the king's chamberlain, keeper of the women; and let their things for purification be given them:

Here we see a virgin being established in place of Queen Vashti.
As we return to the parable of the banquet, let

us compare Matthew 22:8-10 with these three verses.

What similarity do you see if any?

Esther 2:4

And let the maiden which pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti. And the thing pleased the king; and he did so.

Pay close attention to this verse as it says, "Let the maiden which pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti. And the thing pleased the king."

In understanding the story of Esther and the symbolism that it has to both Jews and Gentiles, we can look to the passage in Romans 11:7-12:

What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election [Gentiles] hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they

should not hear;) unto this day. And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.

I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? ~ Romans 11:7-12, KJV

We see from this scripture that God has never turned His back on the Jewish people in favor of a different bride. He was angry toward them, yes, but has never cast them away (Rom 1:11). A father chastens those he loves.

Look at Romans 11:20-22. What attitude are we commanded to have toward salvation and to the Jews?

Esther 2:5-6

Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite; Who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away.

Throughout scripture, and even more so in our modern language, the Israelites are often referred to as Jews. The word Jew however comes from the tribe of Judah. Here we see it being used in a broader sense as Mordecai (from the tribe of Benjamin) is referred to as a "Jew."

We see from verse five that Mordecai worked in the palace, but we aren't told what his duties were. And it would also seem from verse eight that they didn't live there.

Esther 2:7-8

And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter.

So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was brought also unto the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women.

Here we are introduced Hadassah which is Esther. What relationship does she have to Mordecai?

What do we know about her appearance?

In verse 8, who do we see as the keeper of the women at the palace?

It is believed by many that Hegai was a eunuch. Wikipedia describes a eunuch this way:

Eunuchs are mentioned many times in the Bible such as in the book of Isaiah (56:4) using the word סריס (saris). Although the Ancient Hebrews did not practice castration, eunuchs were common in other cultures featured in the Bible, such as Ancient Egypt, Babylonia, the Persian Emprie and Ancient Rome. In the Book of Esther servants of the harem of Ahasuerus such as Hegai and Shashgaz as well as

other servants such as Hatach, Harbonah, Bigthan, and Teresh are referred to as sarisim. Being exposed to the consorts of the king, they would have likely been castrated.

When I compare the story of Esther to that of the bride of Christ preparing herself for the King, I see that Hegai and Mordecai typify the Holy Spirit, which is given to us as a helper.

Looking at these two verses, what do we learn about the Holy Spirit?

John 14:26

John 16:13

Esther 2:9

And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness of him; and he speedily gave her her things for purification, with such things as belonged to her, and seven maidens, which were meet to be given her, out of the king's house: and he preferred her and her maids unto the best place of the house of the women.

How many maids were given to Esther?

As a Christian, who do you see as the "maids" in your life, i.e. who helps you prepare for the coming of Christ?

Esther 2:10-11

Esther had not shewed her people nor her kindred: for Mordecai had charged her that she should not shew it.

And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know how Esther did, and what should become of her.

We see here that Mordecai charged Esther to keep her presence at the palace a secret from their people. Dake's annotated Bible (p.515b) suggests that this was likely due to her Jewish origin. That would also explain why her name was changed from Hadassah to Esther, which is a Persian word for "star."

Esther 2:12

Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with other things for the purifying of the women.

How long was Esther in the palace before she saw the king?

What were the two beauty treatments that she had during her time of purification?

It's interesting to note the significance of the two treatments used in the purification process. They are similar to ours as believers. Let's look at them:

The first was the oil of myrrh. Myrrh comes from the Commiphoa Myrra tree. But the significance is in the way that it is extracted. The tree is pierced and the myrrh bleeds out of the tree in droplets. Many Christian historians believe that this symbolizes the suffering of Christ.

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-

heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. ~ Romans 8:17, KJV

In the second half of the purification Esther was treated with sweet odors.

Compare Ephesians 5:2 and Philippians 4:18 with this part of the purification process. What might "sweet odors" symbolize in a believer's life?

And finally, here is another verse that reflects our own purification treatment:

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: ~ 1 Peter 1:22, KJV

In those verses we see that believers are called to submit to the King through obedience, the very thing that Vashti was lacking.

Esther 2:13-15

Then thus came every maiden unto the king; whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her

out of the house of the women unto the king's house.

In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, which kept the concubines: she came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and that she were called by name.

Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her.

In verse 13 we're told that the other women took whatever they desired with them out of the house when they met with the king. More than likely it means that they took fine garments and jewels.

However, in verse 15 we see that Esther required nothing but what Hegai had appointed--I'm really liking this girl!

What lessons can we take from both Esther

and 1 Peter 3:3-5 when it comes to adorning ourselves?

Esther 2:16-17

So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti.

Looking at 1 Samuel 2:4-8 we find Hannah's prayer, a portion of scripture that illustrates how God can raise those who are lowly to a position of honor, and take down those who are mighty.

The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble. The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The

LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and he hath set the world upon them. ~ 1 Samuel 2:4-8, KJV

How does this compare to verse 17, and in what ways could this message affect your life?

Esther 2:18-20

Then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, even Esther's feast; and he made a release to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the state of the king.

And when the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai sat in the king's gate. Esther had not yet shewed her kindred nor her people; as Mordecai had charged her: for Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him.

We can see from verse 20 that her relationship to Mordecai was still being kept as a secret. But what we can tell from his position in the kingdom is that Mordecai still had access to Esther so that he could keep watch over her.

When I see the relationship between Esther and Mordecai, I'm warmly reminded of the love and dedication between Ruth and Naomi. What I'm also reminded of is this portion of scripture:

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless [orphans] and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. ~ James 1:27, KJV

Pure religion, in this sense, being the way that we live out our faith.

Esther 2:21-23

In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door, were wroth, and sought to lay hands on the king Ahasuerus.

And the thing was known to Mordecai, who told it unto Esther the queen; and Esther certified the king thereof in Mordecai's name. And when inquisition was made of the matter, it was found out; therefore they were both hanged on a tree: and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king.

What transpired in verse 21?

What two things came of it in verse 23?

Esther Chapter Three

Today we're continuing with chapter three. In order to get the best results from the study I suggest that you turn to each of the scriptures referenced in the study and read them in their full context. Keep a pen ready and make notes on things that you notice as well as things that you'll want to remember from this study.

Meaning of names in this chapter:

Haman: Persian word Hamayun meaning "illustrious." (Wikipedia)

Esther 3:1-4

After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him. And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and reverenced Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning

him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence.

Then the king's servants, which were in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the king's commandment?

Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand: for he had told them that he was a Jew.

And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath.

In Esther chapter three we are introduced to Haman the "Agagite." It is important to note that he is an Agagite in understanding the rest of the chapter as this will explain why Mordecai refused to bow down to him. And why there was bad blood between the two.

Many of us will remember the story from Exodus chapter 17 of Moses, Aaron, and Hur who went up to the top of the hill while the Israelites were in battle with the Amalekites below. When Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand,

they lost strength. And so we are told that when his hands got heavy, Aaron and Hur held them up.

In verse 16 of that chapter (Ex.17) we are told, "The Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

So how does this relate to Haman? Haman was a descendant of Agag, who we see from 1 Samuel 15:8 was king of the Amalekites.

If you've been following the symbolism in Esther you will begin to notice that Haman is a type of Satan as he is at war with the Jews.

Read Isaiah 14:12-14. From this scripture, what do we know about the fall of Satan?

Mordecai refused to bow down to Haman, which could give some people the impression that we don't need to obey the laws of our land or that we as believers are somehow above them.

However, we are clearly instructed in scripture to submit to authorities:

Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.~ 1 Peter 2:13&14, KJV

If Vashti was rebellious when she refused to submit to the King in chapter one, how then was it okay for Mordecai to refuse? We can find a clue to that answer when we read Acts 5:27-29. What do you deduct from the example of Peter and the apostles?

Esther 3:6-7

And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had shewed him the people of Mordecai: wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai.

In the first month, that is, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that

is, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar.

Haman begins to devise his plan to annihilate the Jews. This hatred illustrates the power that unchecked anger can have on a person. If left to fester, it will usually grow.

What does Proverbs 16:32 tell us about anger?

In verse 7 we see the use of the word "Pur," when it says, "they cast Pur…" This is where the word Purim comes from. As I mentioned in the introduction to chapter one, the feast of Purim is a Jewish feast that is still celebrated today. The full text of Esther is read aloud twice during the feast each year—once in the evening and again in the morning.

In biblical times they would often cast lots to determine decisions. Although it's unclear what method was used, it would compare to our drawing straws, throwing dice, or flipping coins. In this case they cast lots to determine when the Jews would be destroyed.

Esther 3:8-11

And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them. If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasuries.

And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy.

And the king said unto Haman, The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee.

Here we see that the King was deceived by Haman. He told the King that the Jewish people didn't keep his laws. However, in chapter 2:21-23 we learned how Mordecai saved the king's life. He was loyal to the king, but he wasn't loyal to the Amalekites which fueled Haman's anger toward all Jewish

people.

I'm reminded of the scripture in Job 1:9-12 where we read that Satan has access to God. He's a tattle-tale of sorts, who puts God's people in the worst possible light to discredit our faith as he seeks to tempt and destroy all believers.

But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he [Job] hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. ~ Job 1:11, KJV

Although God allows us to be tempted, He understands the benefits that trials bring to each believer. This is an example of God's wisdom exceeding that of man, and His power ruling over evil.

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: ~ 1 Peter 1:7, KJV

Esther 3:12-15

Then were the king's scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that were over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring.

And the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey. The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, that they should be ready against that day.

The posts went out, being hastened by the king's commandment, and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. And the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city Shushan was perplexed.

It's interesting to note that Haman and Mordecai represent the flesh at war with the spirit in a believer's life. Mordecai looks out for the best interest of Esther, while Haman is

taking steps to destroy her. As long as we're still in the flesh we will continue to struggle with this until the return of our Lord when Satan is destroyed for once and for all.

Look at the way that Paul describes it:

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. ~ Romans 7:18, KJV

Sound familiar? Have you ever set out to do good and lost your temper? Have you ever tried to change a bad habit and failed? This is the spirit and the flesh at war within you.

Consider your life. What things do you struggle with, i.e. temptation, addiction, lying, laziness, overeating, etc.? What areas of your life would you like to improve?

In verse twelve we see that letters were sent out informing the people that on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, all of the Jewish people were to be destroyed--men, women and children.

These letters of condemnation represent the law (Old Testament ordinances) that condemns all men to death.

Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. ~ Romans 3:19-20, KJV

In other words nobody other than Jesus Christ has been without sin. If we think that we'll go to heaven because we're a good person, we can simply take one look at the Ten Commandments to see how often we fail and fail again.

Sin separates us from God, and therefore we are in need of a Savior who reconciles us with the Father.

In the following chapters of Esther we will uncover a beautiful story of grace and redemption as Esther struggles against Haman who seeks to destroy her.

Until then be on the lookout for temptation in your life--struggle against he who seeks to destroy you.

Esther Chapter Four

Esther 4:1-3

When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry; And came even before the king's gate: for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth.

And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

This chapter opens by saying, "When Mordecai perceived all that was done…" Therefore he knew that the day was coming when he and his people would be put to death. His reaction to this was humility. We are told that Mordecai, "rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes."

Wearing sackcloth and ashes was an ancient custom that is often synonymous with

repentance. It signifies being broken and humble before the Lord.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. ~ Psalm 51:17, KJV

Mordecai was in need of a savior. This is the same attitude that unbelievers would have if they only accepted that that they are in danger of judgement and condemnation without the atoning blood of Jesus Christ.

Examine your life to see if you are in the faith? Have you accepted Jesus as your personal savior? Have you come to a place in your life where you understand that sin leads to death, and repentance leads to life?

Esther 4:4-7

So Esther's maids and her chamberlains came and told it her. Then was the queen exceedingly grieved; and she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai, and to take away his sackcloth from him: but he received it not.

Then called Esther for Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend

upon her, and gave him a commandment to Mordecai, to know what it was, and why it was.

So Hatach went forth to Mordecai unto the street of the city, which was before the king's gate. And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him, and of the sum of the money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them.

It's obvious from verse 8 that Esther wasn't aware of the pending doom. She didn't understand why Mordecai was in sackcloth and ashes. I find this portion of scripture very interesting given that Mordecai represents the Spirit that is given to each believer. We are told in John chapter 16 that, *"when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:" (v.8)*

The Holy Spirit is that voice inside us that convicts us of sin, while encouraging us to do better. Is there anything in your life that you've recently been convicted of or encouraged to improve upon?

Esther 4:8-11

Also he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them, to shew it unto Esther, and to declare it unto her, and to charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people.

And Hatach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai.

Again Esther spake unto Hatach, and gave him commandment unto Mordecai;

All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or women, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.

In verse eight we see Mordecai urging Esther to go to the King, "Charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people."

Esther replies, "Do know, that whosoever,

whether man or women, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days. (v.11)

Compare this with Matthew 16:24-6, "*Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*"

What instruction does this offer to believers today?

In much the same way, the Holy Spirit guides us toward paths of righteousness. We aren't called to do the *easy* thing, we're called to do the *right* thing. This goes against the modern mindset which will tell you, "If it feels good, it must be right."

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." ~ 1 Peter 4:12-13, KJV

What are some difficult things that you've endured for the sake of Christ? Looking back, can you see how you've been sharpened and matured by the trials?

Is there are trial in your life right now? Can you find a way to rejoice?

Esther 4: 12-14

And they told to Mordecai Esther's words.

Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house

shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

I love how Mordecai expresses wisdom to Esther here. He tells her that God can bring deliverance for His people from another place. But he points out that when God gives us an opportunity to serve Him we must take it. It is an honor and a privilege to serve God.

With that said, I have to point out that he didn't actually use the word, "God." He said that "deliverance" would arise for the Jews. In fact the word, "God" doesn't appear at all in the book of Esther. It's the only book of the Bible that doesn't use the word, with Song of Solomon coming in at a close second.

This is the most popular verse in the book of Esther: "For such a time as this." These words suggest to Esther that this was her purpose and the very reason she was in the Kings palace.

Esther 4:15-17

Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer, Go, gather together all the Jews that are

present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

Understanding her call, Esther is obedient to the faith and takes a step toward salvation. She asks that all of the Jews, including herself and her maidens fast for three days and three nights at which time she will approach the king.

She ends her plea by saying, "If I perish, I perish."

Compare her attitude to Philippians 3:8, "*Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.*"

At the end of this chapter we see a change in

Esther's heart as she is ready and willing to lose her life to gain her salvation. What do you think affected her decision most?

Esther Chapter Five

Esther 5:1-2

Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house: and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the gate of the house.

And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight: and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.

There is so much symbolism in these two verses that I can't help but get excited when I read them! I feel like a layer of scripture has been lifted to reveal the depth of God's plan for man. I knew that there was symbolism in this story, but in these two verses alone there are three things to note:

- Esther's royal robe
- The inner court
- The golden scepter

After fasting for three days, Esther approached the king in her "royal robe." In chapter one, we talked about a robe of righteousness that is imputed to us through faith in Jesus Christ. When we come to the throne of God, we cannot approach Him on our own merit as all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We must be clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. ~ Isaiah 61:10, KJV

Now let's talk about "the inner court." The Old Testament Tabernacle as described in Exodus, was divided into three parts. There was an outer court surrounded by a wall, with a gate to enter in. Within that area was a tent known as the tabernacle. It consisted of two areas: the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies--a veil dividing one area from the other

Image source: Wikipedia

What we know from scripture is that the priests entered the Holy Place to make sacrifices, but the high priest—and only the high priest entered the Holy of Holies—once every year. This was known as "the day of atonement."

Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people. ~ Hebrews 9:6-7, KJV

If anybody other than the high priest entered the holy of holies, he would have been put to death.

Here the king's inner court signifies the Holy of Holies. Esther knew that entrance to the room was punishable by death, unless she was invited there by the king himself.

I can't help but be reminded of our relationship

with God. It is only by the atoning blood of Jesus Christ that believers are united with God and invited to sit by His throne:

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. ~ Hebrews 4:16

The third thing we should look at is the golden scepter. This represents the grace of God on those who believe. It's through faith in Jesus Christ that we have access to the throne and peace with God.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. ~ Ephesians 2:8, KJV

Take a look at the following verses to see how well they are reflected in the story of Esther:

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full

assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. ~ Hebrews 10:19-22, KJV

You see? I told you that those two verses were packed with symbolism. I'm excited to read more!

Esther 5:3-5

Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? And what is thy request? It shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom.

And Esther answered, If it seem good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him.

Then the king said, Cause Haman to make haste, that he may do as Esther hath said. So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

Here we see that Esther had a chance to save herself and gain riches, but rather than seeking his riches, she continued with the plan of salvation. She invited both the king and Haman to a banquet of wine.

This is a wonderful example of how we can approach God in our prayer life. Unfortunately many believers use prayer in hopes of material gain, rather than pleading for salvation of the lost, and offering service to the King. This is not to say that we shouldn't ask God to supply our needs--we should, but we must keep our focus in check since so many people are lost.

Consider your own prayer life. Do you pray for unsaved people often, or do your prayers tend to be self centered?

Esther 5:6-8

And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed.

Then answered Esther, and said, My petition and my request is; if I have found favour in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition, and to perform my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do to morrow as the king hath said.

Again the king offers Esther whatever she desires, and again Ether delays her request by inviting Haman and the king to a second banquet. Scripture doesn't tell us why she delayed her request, but because all things worked out better than planned, I believe that it was a matter of God's divine timing.

It could be that she had full intention of making her request known that night, but God has a way of changing our plans according to His wisdom. Either way, it is evident that His mighty hand was at work in her life.

Consider your life. Have you seen evidence of God's timing? Do you wait upon the Lord, or do you tend to rush in to situations?

But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. ~ Isaiah 40:31, KJV

Esther 5:9

Then went Haman forth that day joyful and with a glad heart: but when Haman saw Mordecai in the

king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of indignation against Mordecai.

The greater one's ego, the harder he falls.

Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. ~ Proverbs 16:18, KJV

Matthew Henry's Commentary says:

Self-admirers and self-flatterers are really self-deceivers. Haman, the higher he is lifted up, the more impatient he is of contempt, and the more enraged at it. The affront from Mordecai spoiled all. A slight affront, which a humble man would scarcely notice, will torment a proud man, even to madness, and will mar all his comforts.

Carefully examine your life to see where you may be driven by pride. It feels good to hang onto pride at the time, but the end it leads to destruction.

Are there situations in your life that you need to change so that you are handling them with humility?

Esther 5:10-14

Nevertheless Haman refrained himself: and when he came home, he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife.

And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king.

Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to morrow am I invited unto her also with the king. Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.

Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and to morrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon: then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made.

Haman has everything he could possibly want, but because one thing is out of place--one thing isn't going his way, he is angry. "Yet all of this does not satisfy me every time I see Mordecai

the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

Remember how I said in chapter three that Haman and Mordecai represent the flesh at war with the spirit in a believer's life? Here we see a strong example of that fleshy nature in the form of greed.

Haman's greed is a polar opposite to Esther's desire for life.

We are warned against greed in scripture, while we are instructed to be content:

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. ~ 1 Timothy 6:6-9, KJV

What things can you thank God for today?

Look for ways to be content and avoid the pitfalls of lust that lead to destruction.

Esther Chapter Six

Esther 6:1-3

On that night could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king.

And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus.

And the king said, What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him.

This portion of scripture reminds us that God's is working to save His people. And that those things we count as "coincidence" are often a matter of God's hand at work in our life.

In these verses the king is referring to the events that transpired in Esther 2:21-23. In that chapter, I asked you two questions:

What transpired in verse 21?

Two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door, were wroth, and sought to lay hands on the king Ahasuerus.

What two things came of it in verse 23?

Mordecai notified Esther who sent word to the king, and the men were both hanged.

Finally (but no doubt due to God's timing) the king notices the records and inquires about the incident:

The king asks, "'"What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?"

When I read this I got to thinking… Okay, truth is I got excited and then I got to thinking… *How many times have I done a good deed that went unnoticed?* There's been more than a few.

And then it hit me—the reason our good deeds go unnoticed is because God has a better plan for our lives than we have for ourselves.

What if God purposely held back a reward to show His glory in my life? Wouldn't that be so much better than getting recognition from my peers? Absolutely! The glory of God trumps self-gratification any day of the week!

Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. ~ James 5:7, KJV

What are some areas of your life where you seek self-recognition? In what ways could you change your focus?

Esther 6:4-9

And the king said, Who is in the court? Now Haman was come into the outward court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

And the king's servants said unto him, Behold, Haman standeth in the court. And the king said, Let him come in.

So Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour? Now Haman thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself?

And Haman answered the king, For the man whom the king delighteth to honour, let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head: and let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

The bigger the tree is, the harder it falls.

Think about that… If a seedling falls to the ground, no one hears the rumble of its collapse, but when an enormous tree is taken down at the roots, the thunder of its fall is unmistakeable. So it is with those that God strengthens before a fall.

Compare the events that are transpiring with

Haman to that of Pharaoh in the story of Moses:

For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. ~ Romans 9:17, KJV

If you remember the story at all, you'll remember that God sent many plagues upon the Egyptians including the death of the firstborn in each household, but each time Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go. Incredibly stubborn and full of pride, he even changed his mind and pursued them after they left, which ultimately resulted in his death.

He was like Haman in so many ways.

What we see in this chapter is pride (Haman) warring against humility (Mordecai). This is a common battle within each and every believer, which is why we must be alert to the dangers of pride. Haman didn't only give in to his pride, he was driven by it.

It's God's style to wait until the storm has

reached full force before He calms the waves. That's when we see the glory of His mighty power.

We see the same thing happening with Haman as he has risen to a position of authority, and dining at the kings table. He has no idea what is going on behind the scenes, but he is about to fall--and fall hard!

The king asks Haman, "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?"

And Haman said to himself, "Whom would the king desire to honor more than me?"

The irony is rich here as God is about to let Haman use his pride as a weapon against himself.

Haman offers two suggestions:

1. Let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head.

2. And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him.

Esther 6:10-11

Then the king said to Haman, Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken.

Then took Haman the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

Here we see that Haman himself put the robe upon Mordecai and led him through the streets proclaiming, "This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!"

Remember as you're reading this that we were told in chapter three that King Ahasuerus promoted Haman above all the princes. This would have been a very humbling experience for any ruler, not to mention that this is one of the highest rulers who had serious contention with the man in the royal robe upon the horse.

Let's also look at the spiritual symbolism here:

The horse is a symbol of power and strength. (Job 39:19-22)
The crown is a symbol of holiness. (Exod. 39:30)
The robe is a symbol of righteousness (Isaiah 61:10)

Esther 6:12-14

And Mordecai came again to the king's gate. But Haman hasted to his house mourning, and having his head covered.

And Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his friends every thing that had befallen him. Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him, If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast

begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him.

And while they were yet talking with him, came the king's chamberlains, and hasted to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared.

Chapter six ends in a similar way to chapter five did, with Haman going home to complain to his household about his struggle with Mordecai.

This time however his family isn't as positive as they were the first time. Even they are starting to see that his plan is coming apart.

This entire chapter has a strong focus on the dangers of pride and the blessings of humility. It is further exemplified here as Mordecai is exalted and Haman is cut down.

Compare this verse:

A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit. ~ Proverbs 29:3, KJV

What are some of the ways that you might

protect your heart against pride?

In an article called, How to Fight the Sin of Pride, Especially When You are Praised, John Piper writes, "I strive to cultivate a joy in Christ and his wisdom and power and justice and love that is more satisfying than the pleasures of human praise, with the goal that, by the Spirit, I would be granted the miracle of self-forgetfulness in the admiration of Christ, and in love toward people."

Esther Chapter Seven

Esther 7:1-2

So the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther the queen. And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition, queen Esther? And it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? And it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom.

Setting the stage here, we know from chapter six that they had all experienced a big day. King Ahasuerus hadn't slept much the night before, and Haman was no doubt feeling the sting of that afternoon's events. They return to the banquet where the king is anxious to finally hear Esther's request.

Again he says, "What is thy request? And it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom."

This offer is generous, but scholars say it's not one to be taken literally. It was customary for kings to say this, with the intention of giving a generous gift. Compare, this portion of scripture from Mark 6:

And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee. And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom. And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.

This is the third time that Esther is offered a generous gift from the king, and each time she refuses to value the riches of this world over "life."

Let's look at Matthew chapter 18 where we see the account of Jesus talking to the rich young ruler:

And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? (v.18)

Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he

was very rich. (v.22-23)

The point here isn't that believers can't have money, a nice house, or a car. What it does mean is that *eternal life should be more important to us than anything this world has to offer.*

The riches of the world aren't necessarily monetary either. They can be anything from the praise of family and friends, addictions, and lust, etc. Any of these things can draw our hearts away from the prize ahead, which is eternal life with God.

Consider your life and ask yourself if there is anything that draws you away from your relationship with God, or distracts you from serving him.

If you have friends or family that disagree with your faith, ask yourself if you are driven to satisfy them or to live for the Lord.

Esther 7:3-4

Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request: For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage.

Notice in verse four that Esther says, "For we are sold…" What I am reminded of here is that all humanity was sold and sentenced to death by the sin of Adam and Eve. It was because of that original sin that we were born with a need for redemption (someone to pay a ransom for our sins).

For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. Romans 7:14, KJV

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: ~ Romans 5:12, KJV

Looking at Esther 3:9, we are reminded of who it was that purchased them:

If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I [Haman] will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasuries.

Esther 7:5

Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?

As we read these words I can only imagine the terror in Haman's mind. The king asks, "Who is he, and where is he?"

Up until this point, king Ahasuerus wasn't aware that his beloved wife, Esther was sentenced to death by his own hand. He was only aware of the situation according to what Haman had told him, which we have known all along was driven by nothing but pride. In fact he had outright lied to the king in Esther 3 verse 8 when he said, "*There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they*

the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them."

Haman is a devil type who prowled around seeking for ways to destroy God's people.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: ~ 1 Peter 5:8, KJV

One of Satan's weapons of destruction is the opposition of unbelievers. In what ways has he used unbelievers against you? In what ways can you prepare yourself for the next attack?

Esther 7:6-7

And Esther said, the adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen. And the king arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath went into the palace garden: and Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen; for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king.

When you feel overcome by evil, remember that Satan is terrified of the wrath of God, in fact we are told that the demons believe and they tremble (James 2:19). You're not going to see this however, because evil is driven by pride and does everything in its power to conceal its fear of God's wrath.

Because of redemption through Jesus Christ, we are overcomers in this life. Faith in God tells me that trials, pain, and suffering are here for a season, but there is coming a day when Satan and his angels will be punished and put away once and for all. We have access to throne of God, we have been saved by His grace, and we are the beloved Bride of Christ.

Look at the similarities in the following scripture when we hold it up for comparison to the events of this chapter. I went looking to paste one little verse here, but when I read the passage in its context, it only made sense to share this in its entirety with you.

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that

is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. ~ Romans 8:31-39, KJV

Imagine the King saying to you, "Who has put this charge against you?! Who is he that condemns you?! You are MY bride. Nobody can touch you, and nothing can separate you from my love!"

Can we all say a big "amen?!"

Look at the trials that you're facing in your life. Whether they are big or small, write

them down on a list. Now take that list and bring it to God in prayer trusting that He is willing and able to fight for His bride. But before you do that, look at that verse again, 2nd paragraph. It doesn't say that you can conquer these things. It says, we are MORE than conquerors through Him that loved us. That's a powerful statement!

Esther 7:8-10

Then the king returned out of the palace garden into the place of the banquet of wine; and Haman was fallen upon the bed whereon Esther was. Then said the king, Will he force the queen also before me in the house? As the word went out of king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king, Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then the king said, Hang him thereon. So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.

Things went from bad to dreadful for Haman

as he started to unravel before Esther and the king. Haman rose to plead his life to the queen and fell on her bed.

If you're confused about the word bed here, let's look at the following verse for some clarification. This same verse in the NIV is translated as "elegant couch." So it would seem that elegant couches (also called beds), were placed in dining areas:

And satest upon a stately bed [elegant couch], and a table prepared before it, whereupon thou hast set mine incense and mine oil. ~ Ezekiel 23:41, KJV

Throughout the entire story we see God's thumbprint at every turn, and this time is no different. I believe that Haman falling on Esther's bed was an act of God that moved the king to further see the extent of Haman's evil. If not the fall itself, then the timing was.

Would it not have been for Esther, Mordecai, and the Jewish people fasting and praying beforehand, things might have turned out quite differently. They sought God with all of their heart and the reward was far more than

they expected. Haman was put to death, and they were given their lives.

Many people wonder why Haman's face was covered, but the truth is that we don't know for sure. It could mean that he was being sent to his death as criminals often went to the gallows with their heads covered, or it could be that covering one's face represents shame. Look at these two verses:

I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. ~ Isaiah 50:6, KJV

My confusion is continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me. ~ Psalm 44:15, KJV

In the last chapter, Esther 6:12, we see that right after Haman led Mordecai around on horseback he, "hasted to his house mourning, and having his head covered."

I remember doing this exact same thing once when I got fired from my first job. I put my coat over my head when I arrived home and

walked through the door. I think it's in our nature to cover our head or face when we're put to shame, but it was also a custom executed by others.

Now compare that, with this and we see the flip side:

Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! Many are they that rise up against me… But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head. ~ Psalm 3:1&3, KJV

Finally, a good lesson in all of this is the reminder that everything we do will be revealed. There is nothing that we can hide from God:

For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither anything hid, that shall not be known and come abroad. ~ Luke 8:17, KJV

It is important for us to live an authentic life that is grounded in Christ.

Esther Chapter Eight

Esther 8:1-2

On that day did the king Ahasuerus give the house of Haman the Jews' enemy unto Esther the queen. And Mordecai came before the king; for Esther had told what he was unto her.

And the king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it unto Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

Let's start by back tracking a little bit… remember in Esther 7:4, she told the king that they had been "sold." This signified Esther's need for a redeemer.

In a nutshell, redemption is repurchasing something that has been sold, and it also means to set free. In Old Testament times, slaves could be redeemed (bought back) but only under certain terms.

Because Haman had betrayed the king by deceiving him, his entire house became the property of the king including the lives of the

Jews that he had purchased. And so, the second verse is very significant as the "ring" is a symbol of mutual possession.

Jesus redeemed us by giving His life as a ransom for our sins. Those who believe are under His possession, and in return we possess something of value—a Savior.

I wish I would have understood the symbolism behind the wedding ring when I got married as it would have made the ceremony that much more significant. But at least these are lessons I can now pass down to my children.

What other elements of a marriage ceremony do you see as typifying our relationship with Jesus Christ?

Esther 8:3-6

And Esther spake yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet, and besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite, and his device that he had devised against the Jews.

Then the king held out the golden sceptre toward Esther. So Esther arose, and stood before the king, and said, If it please the king, and if I have favour in his sight, and the thing seem right before the king, and I be pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews which are in all the king's provinces: For how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?

Once again we see Esther's passion that ALL of her people would be saved. She and her cousin Mordecai had already been redeemed by the king, but she couldn't bear the thought of others losing their life.

She is an incredible example to believers that we must keep on praying for the unsaved. We can't give up. It is not God's will that even one should perish, but yet so many around us are still under bondage to Satan.

Think of some of the unbelievers in your life. Do you pray for them enough? Make a list of

them and either put it in your prayer journal or keep it in your Bible, as a reminder to pray for them often.

Compare Esther's attitude in the three verses above to that of Vashti's in the first chapter. What difference(s) do you find?

Esther 8:7-8

Then the king Ahasuerus said unto Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew, Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and him they have hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews.

Write ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring: for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse.

Historically kings wore rings that had a unique stamp in them. These rings were used as a type of signature that when pressed into a soft

surface such as wax, they left a distinct and binding impression. In these verses, the king is instructing Esther to send out letters of freedom marked with the binding seal of the king.

Compare the symbol of the king's seal with the following verses:

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. ~ Ephesians 1:13, KJV

Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. ~ 2 Corinthians 1:21&22, KJV

The "seal" is a mark that is put upon us the moment that we become His. It's the gift of His Holy Spirit that literally becomes a part of who we are. The Holy Spirit dwells within each believer, which is our seal of ownership.

Here is a short list of Bible verses concerning the Holy Spirit. What do each of these say

about the role of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life?

- John 14:16
- John 16:7-11
- John 16:13
- John 16:14
- John 15:26

What fruit should be evident in a spirit-filled believer? Galatians 5:22-23

Esther 8:9-14

Then were the king's scribes called at that time in the third month, that is, the month Sivan, on the three and twentieth day thereof; and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded unto the Jews, and to the lieutenants, and the deputies and rulers of the provinces which are from India unto Ethiopia, an hundred twenty and seven provinces, unto every province according to the writing thereof, and unto every people after their language, and to the Jews according to their writing, and according to their language.

And he wrote in the king Ahasuerus' name, and sealed it with the king's ring, and sent letters by posts on horseback, and riders on mules, camels, and young dromedaries: Wherein the king granted the Jews which were in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, both little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey.

Do you see how the king has given every Jew instructions to stand up against evil? This is the same commandment that believers are given as we struggle against sin:

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ~ Ephesians 6:13, KJV

The important thing to note however is that we are not left standing without protection from

the King!

Read Ephesians 6:14-17. What does God offer in order to equip us for battle?

Esther 8:12-14

Upon one day in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, namely, upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar. The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, and that the Jews should be ready against that day to avenge themselves on their enemies. So the posts that rode upon mules and camels went out, being hastened and pressed on by the king's commandment. And the decree was given at Shushan the palace.

And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple: and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad.

There is so much to say about these verses, it's incredible!! Mordecai's outfit signifies that he

was the temple of the Holy Ghost. Compare the fabric to this scripture:

Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet. ~ Exodus 26:1a, KJV

It's interesting to note that while the tabernacle was made up of three areas: the outer court, the inner court, and the holy of holies, we each consist of three parts: body, soul and spirit. But that's a whole other study, let's get back on track here.

Purple dye was extremely expensive which is why it is usually associated with royalty. It's really quite interesting when you research how the color purple was obtained in ancient cultures; check it out sometime when you have a minute. It was worn by kings and queens because it was so costly and hard to come by. Because Mordecai belonged to the king, he was dressed in the finest garments.

As we discussed in a previous chapter, the Bible talks about believers being clothed with a robe of righteousness. Note here that the

person of Mordecai was helpless to help himself. Everything he had was a gift from the king. All was grace.

The golden crown is the crown of life given to all believers who endure temptation until the end:

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. ~ James 1:12, KJV

Esther 8:16-17

The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour. And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.

If we look at this in context with Jewish history, we see that this was definitely a time of celebration for the Jews! We learned in our study of chapter three that the initial reason that Mordecai wouldn't bow down to Haman

was because **the Amalekites were long-time enemies of God's people, the Jews**:

And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovahnissi: For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation. ~ Exodus 17:15-16, KJV

Now finally the Jews were not only given their life, they were given honor and were exalted above the enemy!

When we recognize the symbolism of this victory we also have reason to rejoice. The rise of the Jews represents the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the power that brings to all believers through Him. There is victory in Jesus!

And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen. ~ Romans 16:19&20, KJV

Esther Chapter Nine

Esther 9:1-3

Now in the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put in execution, in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them, (though it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated them;) The Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, to lay hand on such as sought their hurt: and no man could withstand them; for the fear of them fell upon all people. And all the rulers of the provinces, and the lieutenants, and the deputies, and officers of the king, helped the Jews; because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them.

In the latter part of chapter eight, and now in chapter nine we see that the tables have turned. **The Jews have power over the enemy**. We can compare this to the power that each believer has been given by the Holy Spirit. When Jesus was on earth with His disciples,

He sent them off to preach the gospel but not without assistance.

Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. ~ Luke 10:19-20, KJV

And just before His ascension in Acts chapter 1, He promised that power would come to all believers:

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. ~ Acts 1:8, KJV

In much the same way that God gave strength by the Holy Spirit to all believers, Mordecai brought strength to his people.

Do a little soul searching to find the evidence of the Holy Spirit at work in your life. Does it

convict you? Does it comfort you? Does it guide you? Perhaps you can think of some specific ways He's at work:

Esther 9:4-5

For Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame went out throughout all the provinces: for this man Mordecai waxed greater and greater. Thus the Jews smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, and slaughter, and destruction, and did what they would unto those that hated them.

Reading this, I'm reminded of the verse from 1 John 4:4, "*Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*" That's powerful!

Think back to chapter 8 where I asked you this question:

Read Ephesians 6:14-17. What does God offer in order to equip us for battle? One of your answers should have been, "the sword of the spirit."

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of

the Spirit, which is the word of God. ~ Ephesians 6:17, KJV

Without the sword of the spirit, believers are helpless to fight the battle against temptation, sin, and doubt. When Jesus was fasting in the desert for 40 days, He fought His temptation with knowledge of and obedience to scripture.

Because of the Bible we are equipped to fight temptation too. Here is a great verse that shows us why we need to study the scripture, and why our obedience to truth is also important:

(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. ~ 2 Corinthians 10:4-6, KJV

Knowledge of the word doesn't merely help to defend us against non-believers who question our faith, it defends us against our own

imagination, internal arguments, and disobedience. It is the light that guides our conscience and exposes sin.

What are some specific ways that knowing the Bible might protect us from sin? Can you think of any time in your life when conviction, knowledge or obedience has been there to save you?

Do you read the Bible on a regular basis? Do you see a need to improve on this area of your life?

Esther 9:6-11

And in Shushan the palace the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men. And Parshandatha, and Dalphon, and Aspatha, And Poratha, and Adalia, and Aridatha, And Parmashta, and Arisai, and Aridai, and Vajezatha, the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews, slew they; but on the spoil laid they not their hand. On that day the number of those that were slain in Shushan the palace was brought before the king.

An interesting thing to note here is that the Jewish people didn't lay hand on the spoil. However in Esther chapter 8:11, the King had given them every right to:

Wherein the king granted the Jews which were in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, both little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey. ~ Esther 8:11, KJV

It's evident by their actions that there were fighting for their life not for the things of this world. This is the same fight that we've witnessed in Esther throughout the story. She is always focussed on the goal ahead which is to attain life for both her and her people.

What are some of the things you like about the character of Esther?

Esther 9:12-14

And the king said unto Esther the queen, The Jews

have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the palace, and the ten sons of Haman; what have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? Now what is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: or what is thy request further? and it shall be done. Then said Esther, If it please the king, let it be granted to the Jews which are in Shushan to do to morrow also according unto this day's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged upon the gallows.And the king commanded it so to be done: and the decree was given at Shushan; and they hanged Haman's ten sons.

We know from the previous verse that Haman's sons were already dead, so why would Esther request that they be hanged? My understanding of this is that a public execution would put fear into the people.

Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. ~ 1Timothy 5:20, KJV

Esther 9:15-16

For the Jews that were in Shushan gathered themselves together on the fourteenth day also of the month Adar, and slew three hundred men at

Shushan; but on the prey they laid not their hand. But the other Jews that were in the king's provinces gathered themselves together, and stood for their lives, and had rest from their enemies, and slew of their foes seventy and five thousand, but they laid not their hands on the prey.

Again they had opportunity to take the riches, but the Jewish people took none.

Esther 9:17-21

On the thirteenth day of the month Adar; and on the fourteenth day of the same rested they, and made it a day of feasting and gladness. But the Jews that were at Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth day thereof, and on the fourteenth thereof; and on the fifteenth day of the same they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

Therefore the Jews of the villages, that dwelt in the unwalled towns, made the fourteenth day of the month Adar a day of gladness and feasting, and a good day, and of sending portions one to another.And Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters unto all the Jews that were in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, both nigh and far,To stablish this among them, that they should

keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, yearly.

This feasting of gladness is still celebrated every year amongst the Jews on the 13th of Adar, it is called the feast of Esther. That is followed by Purim which begins at sunset of the same day and end at sunset on the 14th. However, Sushan Purim is celebrated on the 15th of Adar.

This is how Wikipedia explains it:

It was decided that while the victory would be celebrated universally on Adar 14, for Jews living in Shushan, the holiday would be held on Adar 15. Later, in deference to Jerusalem, the Sages determined that Purim would be celebrated on Adar 15 in all cities which had been enclosed by a wall at the time of Joshua's conquest of the Land of Israel.

Also, a very interesting fact to note on this day: it is commonly accepted by scholars that Moses was born on the seventh of Adar (http://www.biu.ac.il/JH/Parasha/eng/tetzaveh/mrz.htm) and therefore, if Moses was circumcised six days later, this ceremony

would have taken place on the 13th of Adar—the same day that the Jews triumphed over the Persians!

That's very symbolic since circumcision represented the cutting away of the flesh, and the putting off of a former life. I love little facts like that!

Have you exchanged your sinful life for a new life? If not, you can make that decision right now by bowing your head and asking God to forgive you for your sins and inviting Jesus into your life. He promises new life to all who put their faith in Jesus.

Esther 9:22-23

As the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day: that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor. And the Jews undertook to do as they had begun, and as Mordecai had written unto them.

"Rested--" did you catch that? The Jews finally found rest from the enemy. The New Testament talks a lot about rest, in fact so does the Old Testament, since the beginning of time when God rested on the seventh day.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. ~ Matthew 11:28-30, KJV

What this verse is referring to are those people who are trying to get right with God on their own merit. It can't be done. The Old Testament laws were full of commandments and ordinances that were impossible for anyone to keep. There were so many laws within laws that trying to keep them was not only a burden it was impossible.

"Righteousness" is one of the main themes in the book of Esther. This story has taught us that righteousness is imputed to us. It's given to us freely through faith in Jesus Christ. The only thing that Esther did was come boldly to

the throne. That is what each and every one of us is asked to do, "Come unto me..."

Sin is the enemy that condemns us to death, but those who come to the throne of grace find forgiveness, righteousness, and rest.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. ~ Romans 8:1-2, KJV

Remember—there were two decrees that went out in this story: the first one sentenced the Jews to death, and the second offered them life. Those two decrees were symbolic of these two laws:

- The law of sin and death
- The law of the spirit of life

How does trying to get right on your own merit differ from living in obedience to the King? It might be a tough question, but I'd like you to think it through taking into account everything we've studies in these nine chapters.

Esther 9:24-28

Because Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had devised against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur, that is, the lot, to consume them, and to destroy them; But when Esther came before the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked device, which he devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows. Wherefore they called these days Purim after the name of Pur. Therefore for all the words of this letter, and of that which they had seen concerning this matter, and which had come unto them, The Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so as it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to their writing, and according to their appointed time every year; And that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their seed.

The other Jewish feasts have been ordained by God, but this one was ordained by the Jews and has since continued throughout the generations. As I pointed out earlier, it is an important feast among the Jews even to this day.

Esther 9:29

Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with all authority, to confirm this second letter of Purim. And he sent the letters unto all the Jews, to the hundred twenty and seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth, To confirm these days of Purim in their times appointed, according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them, and as they had decreed for themselves and for their seed, the matters of the fastings and their cry. And the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim; and it was written in the book.

Every time I see that Mordecai is penning a letter I'm reminded of the Bible written by holy men of God who were moves by the Holy Spirit. It says, that Esther and Mordecai "wrote

with all authority." There are many people who will scoff at the Bible saying that it is written by man, but those who have faith in Jesus Christ believe that it is inspired by the Holy Ghost. One of Jesus' closest disciples—Peter, on who he proclaimed to build His church--confirms this to be true:

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. ~ 2 Peter 1:20-21, KJV

As I mentioned in a recent chapter, Mordecai represents the Holy Spirit, and we've really seen that symbolism come out in this chapter.

Esther Chapter Ten

Esther 10:1-3

And the king Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land, and upon the isles of the sea. And all the acts of his power and of his might, and the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai, whereunto the king advanced him, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia? For Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed.

The story concludes with Mordecai receiving a generous reward from the king. His importance also recorded in the book of the chronicles of the kings.

Compare the advancement of Mordecai with this verse:

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in

Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ~ Ephesians 4:2-7, KJV

Their story inspires believers to trust God's wisdom and timing, and to stand strong in the face of persecution.

What I personally liked most about the story is that the King is ready and willing to fight for his bride!

That concludes this study. I hope you enjoyed it!