

## From Despair to Delight

Esther 8-10 – April 11, 2010

- **The \_\_\_\_\_: An Irrevocable Law**  
Esther 8:1-4

Proverbs 16:33  
Daniel 6:8  
Ezekiel 18:20  
Exodus 34:7  
Romans 8:2

- **The \_\_\_\_\_: Counter But Not Annul  
The First Law** Esther 8:5-14

- **The \_\_\_\_\_: Both By Jews and  
Persians** Esther 8:15-17

God's people in Persia began to occupy a place of privilege and \_\_\_\_\_.

The king who once \_\_\_\_\_ the Jews  
now \_\_\_\_\_ them.

Romans 8:33-34

- **The Day of \_\_\_\_\_: A God-Thing**  
Esther 9

- **The \_\_\_\_\_: Sorrow Turned To  
Gladness**

### ➤ What We Learn

**Principle:** Sin, wickedness and evil will not ultimately  
\_\_\_\_\_.  
Galatians 6:7

**Principle:** Occasionally God lets us see \_\_\_\_\_  
results from \_\_\_\_\_ experiences.

**Principle:** But most of the time God \_\_\_\_\_  
how He's causing all things to work together for good.

II Corinthians 4:18 & 5:7

**Principle:** God does not always give happy \_\_\_\_\_ to  
everyone's story.

**Principle:** Good does not always triumph over evil in our  
life! But good always triumphs over evil \_\_\_\_\_.

### Wrap Up

- In the Book of Esther we get to \_\_\_\_\_ how God worked to bring about good results.
- In our life we get to \_\_\_\_\_ that God will bring about good results.

### My NEXT STEP for This Week:

- Tell Pastor George how the message of Esther applies in your personal situation. (On these lines or in an email to [george@riverpark.org](mailto:george@riverpark.org))

## From Despair to Delight

Esther 8-10 – April 11, 2010

**Intro:** In our study today we see the Israelites move from being victims to victors. A few hundred years ago, the phrase “poetic justice” was introduced. Poetic justice is a turn of events in which a person gets what they deserve. This is precisely what happens in the Book of Esther. Wicked and arrogant Haman gets what he deserves – death on his own gallows.

But if the story ended here ... the poetic justice would be incomplete. For the law and decree Haman was able to get approved remained on the books. A certain day was established by law to slaughter all Jews in King Xerxes (King Ahasuerus) kingdom.

**Today in orthodox synagogues** ... the Feast of Purim is commemorated in an interesting way. Orthodox Jews assemble and a rabbi reads the entire story to the congregation. As they read it, they spit as the name of Haman is mentioned. I understand that they can use one or two expressions: “*Let his name be blotted out,*” or “*Let him be accursed.*” If this was an American melodrama ... we’d boo and hiss at the mention of the villain’s name.

But there would be no celebration ... no rejoicing ... nothing good to follow ... had the story ended with Haman’s death - for a holocaust would still follow unless Esther takes action. Praise God she did!

### ➤ **The PROBLEM: An Irrevocable Law**

Let’s remember the rule of law of that land. It is called the **Law of the Medes and Persians**. This kind of law is an irrevocable law. Once a law is made – it cannot be overturned – it could not be vetoed. There was no such thing as a Supreme Court in Persia. The king was supreme and his laws were unchangeable.

#### Observe the sovereign work of God

Haman determined the month and day to kill the Jews by casting lots ... like throwing dice ... to determine when the slaughter of the Jews would occur. He probably had lots or dice with the 12 months of the year and lots or dice with each day of the month. He cast lots in the first month of the year.

#### **Esther 3:7**

In the first month, which is the month Nisan ... the lot was cast before Haman .... the twelfth month, that is the month Adar.

What appears to be a random selection of month and day turns out to be 11 months away. God was behind this because time would be needed to prepare defensive against those who would seek to slaughter the Jews.

#### **Proverbs 16:33**

The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord.

Back to the Law of the Medes and Persians-

**COMPARE:** Daniel’s enemies tried to get him executed by tricking King Darius into signing a law guaranteeing Daniel’s death.

**Daniel 6:8**

"Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document so that it may not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, *which may not be revoked.*"

**PARALLEL TRUTH IN THE SPIRITUAL REALM ...**

God made irrevocable laws ... laws that cannot be changed or ignored!

**Ezekiel 18:20**

The person who sins will die ...

**Exodus 34:7**

"... He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished ..."

These laws are laws God established that cannot be changed.

- ✓ It is the same today as it was back in the time of Adam and Eve.
- ✓ God would have to change His character to change this law ... and He is immutable
- ✓ He never changes.

Ever since Adam and Eve sinned ... "*the law of sin and death*" has been active.

God will not remove this law. It is fixed!

The wages of sin is still death (Romans 6:23)

But when Jesus died on the cross ... and followed it by His resurrection ... another law was enacted.

**Romans 8:2**

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

**Warren Wiersbe**

*God obeyed the law of sin and death when He gave His Son Jesus to bear our sins and die on the cross.*

**Transition:** Back to the law King Ahasuerus put in place ...

King Ahasuerus made a law that kept uninvited guests from just dropping in at the palace. If an uninvited guest appears and the king ignores them by not holding up his golden scepter – the visit is short lived ... or should I say ... the person's life is short lived.

Unwittingly ... King Ahasuerus made a law that all Jews would be executed on a certain day. Though the king did not realize that his own wife would be executed – he could not change the law! It was set! It could not be nullified.

Again ... King Ahasuerus holds out his golden scepter to Esther.

In Christ Jesus ... God holds out His golden scepter ...

- ✓ that if we believe in Him ...
- ✓ see our sin and the consequences facing us ...
- ✓ and trust in Him ...
- ✓ God is extending to us the scepter of His grace
- ✓ He holds it out to sinners ...

O what a glorious thought! Christ's death on my behalf – Christ being my substitute takes the death penalty I deserve ... I earned ... that I might have forgiveness and eternal life.

A well known Bible teacher said (J Vernon McGee)

*God cannot save us today by perfection because we cannot offer it.*

*God cannot save us by imperfection because He cannot lower His standard.*

Christ had to save us by paying the penalty for our sin.

Christ did this so

- ✓ God's holiness could be maintained
- and
- ✓ God's justice satisfied.

The law of the Medes and the Persians was in affect at Esther's time ... when King Ahasuerus signed Haman's evil law.

#### **Esther 3:12**

“... and it was written just as Haman commanded ... written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet ring.”

#### **Transition: TURN TO CHAPTER 8**

Wicked Haman has been executed ... but the law granting the legal right Jew haters to kill all Jews needs to be dealt with. Notice Esther's confidence though uninvited into the king's presence ...

#### **Esther 8:1-4**

On that day King Ahasuerus gave the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews, to Queen Esther; and Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had disclosed what he was to her.

8:2 The king took off his signet ring which he had taken away from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

8:3 Then Esther spoke again to the king, fell at his feet, wept and implored him to avert the evil scheme of Haman the Agagite and his plot which he had devised against the Jews.

8:4 The king extended the golden scepter to Esther. So Esther arose and stood before the king.

The secret is out ...

Esther is a Jew – Mordecai adopted her many years before and raised her.

Mordecai is Esther's adopted father ...

Mordecai ... the man who overheard a plot to the kill king and saves the king's life ... is made #2 man in the country. Mordecai is made Prime Minister.

But Esther is still THE KEY PERSON in God's plan to protect His people.

She needs to make a request ... And her request will be to the point ...

#### ➤ **The SOLUTION: Counter But Not Annul The First Law**

#### **Esther 8:5-6**

Then she said, “If it pleases the king and if I have found favor before him and the matter seems proper to the king and I am pleasing in his sight, let it be written to **revoke the letters**

**devised by Haman**, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the king's provinces.

8:6 "For how can I endure to see the calamity which will befall my people, and how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?"

The king grants her everything she wants ... saying ... (8:8)

### **Esther 8:8**

"Now you write to the Jews as you see fit, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's signet ring; for a decree which is written in the name of the king and sealed with the king's signet ring may not be revoked."

Another law is put on the books ...

### **Esther 8:11-12**

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

### Watch this

The new law takes effect on the same day as Haman's edict. But this edict comes with the enthusiasm of the king. This law is the more popular law. The first law was disturbing even to the majority of non-Jews. The second law comes is welcomed by the people.

**Transition:** The first law put the city of Susa in turmoil. But the second law does just the opposite. When the new law was enacted we observe ...

## ➤ **The CELEBRATION: Both By Jews and Persians**

### **Esther 8:15-17**

Then Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal robes of blue and white, with a large crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple; and the city of Susa shouted and rejoiced.

8:16 For the Jews there was light and gladness and joy and honor.

8:17 In each and every province and in each and every city, wherever the king's commandment and his decree arrived, there was gladness and joy for the Jews, a feast and a holiday. And many among the peoples of the land became Jews, for the dread of the Jews had fallen on them.

### Here's an interesting thing:

*"... many among the peoples of the land became Jews"*

God's people in Persia began to occupy a place of privilege and **ENVY**

The triumph of the Jews became a joy to Gentiles ...

- Some probably embraced faith in Jehovah God

- I suspect that some actually pretended to be Jews
  - Where once Esther had hidden her identity as a Jew ... now non-Jews are trying ways to be mistaken for Jews
  - It became an *in-thing* to be a Jew ... to dress like them ... to be a Jew
- OH THAT CHRISTIANS WOULD LIVE SUCH A GODLY LIFESTYLE THAT OTHERS WOULD DESIRE THE SAME

### Compare: RONALD REAGAN

The new attitude towards the Jews reminds me of what took place when President Reagan was shot. When he was being prepared for surgery he jokingly said to the medical team, ***“I hope all of you are Republicans.”***

One of the doctors replied,

***“Mr. President, today all of us are Republicans.”***

Seems like that was the thinking of the people in Persia at this time ... when Mordecai’s edict was published: ***“Today, ALL of us are Jews.”***

My friends, when God brings about one good thing ... invisibly He’s brought about a million things.

### Don’t forget

To get to this point in the story ... God caused all kinds of things to line up

- ✓ Queen Vashti would reject the king’s invitation ...
- ✓ Esther, a secret-saint – a Jew would become queen in her place
- ✓ Mordecai would overhear a plot to kill the king ... but not be honored for it
- ✓ But the assassination story is recorded in the palace minutes
- ✓ Mordecai – a godly man – refuses to bow down to wicked Haman
- ✓ Haman plots to kill all Jews
- ✓ Esther is God’s secret-agent – for no one in the palace knows she is a Jew ...
- ✓ Moody King Ahasuerus hasn’t seen Esther in 30 days ...
- ✓ But Esther will risk her life to do what is right ... and seek the lives of Jews
- ✓ The king is in a good mood when Esther arrives ... and offers her the world
- ✓ Esther is delayed in asking that Jews be spared ...
- ✓ Haman wants to kill Mordecai for he’s again refused to bow down to Haman
- ✓ Royal insomnia strikes – and the king experiences a sleepless night
- ✓ In an attempt to be put back to sleep ... the minutes of palace happenings is read
- ✓ Providentially God has the servant read about Mordecai’s heroic act
- ✓ The king is shocked to hear that he’s never honored Mordecai for his loyal act
- ✓ Haman is asked what should be done ...
- ✓ Haman ... thinking that king wants to honor him, but he ends up honoring Mordecai ... suggests the king’s robe be put on this person ... and this person be paraded through the city on the king’s horse
- ✓ The king loves the plan ... and Haman gets to honor the man he’s planning to kill
- ✓ Esther ... at the perfect time ... reveals Haman’s plot and the king goes ballistic!
- ✓ Haman is hung on the gallows he’s built for Mordecai

Observe the response of the people to Haman’s death and Mordecai’s promotion

### **Esther 8:15-16**

Then Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal robes of blue and white, with a large crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple; and **the city of Susa**

**shouted** and rejoiced.

8:16 For the Jews there was light and gladness and joy and honor.

The decree that the king enacts does everything to protect the Jews. They can now defend themselves legally and with the support of most people

God's marvelous workings

The king who once **CONDEMNED** the Jews now **PROTECTS** them.

Application:

Parallel

God on His throne protects us today

**Romans 8:33-34**

Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;

8:34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

Our protection is based on the work of Christ

- He died
  - He was raised
  - He is at the right hand of God
  - He intercedes for us (Hebrews 4:14-16)
- One who sympathizes with our weaknesses  
 One who has been tempted in all things as we are ... yet without sin  
 One who tells us to draw near with confidence to the throne of grace  
 One who extends mercy and grace to help in time of need

**Transition:** God provides the Jews several months to prepare for the big day – the day the haters of the Jews will attack ... a day they will be ready to defend themselves.

➤ **The Day of BATTLE: A God-Thing**

**Esther 9:1-2**

Now in the twelfth month (that is, the month Adar), on the thirteenth day when the king's command and edict were about to be executed, on the day when the enemies of the Jews hoped to gain the mastery over them, it was turned to the contrary so that the Jews themselves gained the mastery over those who hated them.

9:2 The Jews assembled in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on those who sought their harm; and no one could stand before them, for the dread of them had fallen on all the peoples.

How could things be so positive for the Jews? God did something!

Key phrase

9:2 "... the dread of them had fallen on all the peoples"

Watch this

The Jews were given permission to defend themselves ... not attack their enemies.  
 God had given them time to ready themselves

God had put a dread on just about everyone ...  
And God gave the Jews the victory!

AND ONCE AGAIN LET'S REMEMBER ...

NOT ONE TIME IS GOD'S NAME MENTIONED IN THIS BOOK ... BUT HE'S APPARENT ALL OVER THIS BOOK. HE'S CLEARLY AT WORK OVER AND OVER AGAIN!

**Esther 9:5**

Thus the Jews struck all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying; and they did what they pleased to those who hated them.

Don't miss this

They are dealing with their enemies in self-defense  
Critics have used this to say how wrong this was and how evil the Jews were.  
The Jews were granted the freedom to plunder their enemies but they chose not to do that.

What comes to light

The Jews were motivated by self-defense not greed  
By not plundering their enemies they could keep a generation of bitterness and resentment from happening.  
Jews for a period of time would experience a time of peace in the empire.

**Transition:** In just two days ... what was feared by the Jews turned to victory for God's people.  
Notice in our next point ...

➤ **The AFTERMATH: Sorrow Turned To Gladness**

**Esther 9:20-22**

Then Mordecai recorded these events, and he sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far,  
9:21 obliging them to celebrate the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same month, annually,  
9:22 because on those days the Jews rid themselves of their enemies, and it was a month which was **turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday**; that they should make them days of **feasting and rejoicing** and **sending** portions of food to one another and **gifts to the poor**.

**What's behind the Feast of Purim?**

The name "Purim" is the plural of the Babylonian word *pur* which means "lot."

- ✓ It originates from Haman's casting of lots to determine the day **WHEN** the Jews would be destroyed
- ✓ Mordecai named the Feast "Purim" because he saw it as a divinely controlled act of God's providence!

Remember the verse I mentioned earlier ...

**Proverbs 16:33**

The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord.

Notice the great statement about Mordecai

**Esther 10:3**

For Mordecai the Jew was second only to King Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews and in favor with his many kinsmen, one **who sought the good of his people** and one **who spoke for the welfare of his whole nation**.

The story of Esther concludes almost like a fairy tale. We almost think the Bible would say ... and they lived happily ever after.

But there are some very practical lessons to be gained from this story ...

## ➤ What We Learn

**PRINCIPLE:** Sin, wickedness and evil will not ultimately **TRIUMPH**

**Galatians 6:7**

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

God has set a day of reckoning for those who sow a life of evil and compromise. It's a fact that cannot be escaped.

**PRINCIPLE:** Occasionally God lets us see **GOOD** results from **BAD** experiences

- ✓ We see it here in the Book of Esther
- ✓ We see it in the life of Joseph ...
- ✓ We see it in Christ's death ... that which brings about our greatest good was at first considered the greatest evil

**PRINCIPLE:** But most of the time God **VEILS** how He's causing all things to work together for good

*Why?*

**SO WE WILL TRUST HIM!**

If God always revealed exactly how He's causing all things to work together for good we'd be walking by sight and not by faith!

**II Corinthians 4:18**

while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

**5:7** for we walk by faith, not by sight--

**PRINCIPLE:** God does not always give happy **ENDINGS** to everyone's story.

Some people live godly lives in the work-place and get fired because of it.

**PRINCIPLE:** Good does not always triumph over evil in our life! But good always triumphs over evil **EVENTUALLY**

AND THAT IS ONE OF THE LESSONS OF ESTHER.

God is in control of His universe ... and around the clock causing all things to work together for good for those that love Him and are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).

## Wrap Up

- In the Book of Esther we get to **SEE** how God worked to bring about good results
- In our life we get to **TRUST** that God will bring about good results

ALL THIS WITH VEILED EYES ... but believing hearts

*Do you believe this? Will you in your next step ... trust God even though you don't know why He's allowing whatever it is you're experiencing?  
He's worthy of your trust!*