

— **Practical Reflections on Esther** —
Encouragement For Dark Times

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Prologue

The book of Esther is a remarkable book—divinely inspired, of course—but exceptional in the wealth of practical, moral principles it contains for the encouragement, stirring up and guidance of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is my desire to consider this book in light of some of God’s moral principles found in it, applying them with the Lord’s help, to our 21st century world. I think specially of precious families as well as dear young people beginning life’s pathway in a world full of violence, corruption, and religious confusion—perhaps to a degree such as has not been known since the days of Noah.

I believe the coming of the Lord Jesus to receive to Himself His beloved church for which He died surely must be very near (1 Thess. 4). His own precious Word tells us this for He has said, “*Surely I come quickly. Amen*” (Rev. 22:20). And we also read in James 5:8, “*Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*”

In the meantime, while we await our Lord Jesus’ momentary return, in the measure that we want to live “*Godly in Christ*” we will find the day dark, the times difficult (2 Tim. 3:1) and the enemy active.

It is today so important to realize that in the measure Christians walk by faith truly resisting the devil, that there will be victory—the devil will flee (James 4:7).

The life and times of Esther are appropriate in their *moral application* to our current day. May the Lord be pleased to bless this little meditation to the encouragement of each who read it, finding in His precious Word, as guided by the Holy Spirit the light, wisdom and courage needed to *fight the good fight* and *witness a good confession* (1 Tim.6:12).

Introduction

Historic Background

Though in our Bible the book of Esther follows the accounts of Ezra and Nehemiah, in actual time the circumstances recorded in Esther happened between Ezra and Nehemiah. The account begins in the palace of Shushan in the Babylonian Empire during the rule of Ahasureus (The “Xerxes” of history)—486–465 B.C. The temple in Jerusalem, rebuilt in the book of Ezra, was completed some 30 years before Ahasureus’ reign and about 45 years before Nehemiah returned to rebuild the wall around the city.

Between these two happy events—the temple rebuilt, worship to Jehovah reestablished in Jerusalem and the wall rebuilt to protect it from its enemies—the people of God who had remained in Babylon (rather than returning to the land of Israel), came under a horrible attack of the enemy: one which was intended to totally annihilate God’s beloved earthly people, the Jews.

Perception And Reality

It is hard for us in North America—used to an easy, comfortable and tolerant life style—to perceive of something as horrible as government sponsored exterminations of a whole ethnic groups of people. The most well known in our time happened during WW II when Hitler attempted to destroy the Jews as well as other races of peoples he considered inferior to the German race. But both before and since that awful time, less well documented, but equally horrible, campaigns of genocide have been perpetrated upon defenseless races by heartless tyrants.

In all such atrocities we see the workings of the *prince of this world*, Satan, using man, his helpless slave by nature, to sin against the God who created and loves him (“*let us make man in our image...*”).

Not only is the devil a liar, but our Lord Jesus calls him a murderer (Jn. 8:44). Since Cain committed the first murder in Gen. 4, the history of mankind has been stained with the blood of his fellowman, capped by the murder of the only Perfect Man to walk this earth—man’s Creator, our Lord Jesus Christ.

However, the solemn reality is that though there have been unspeakable physical slaughters wreaked upon helpless peoples, Satan is *far more active* in seeking the moral destruction of God's people—Christians—and the ruin of any true testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ. Beloved reader (especially young believers), don't be deceived! You have an unrelenting enemy! One who is unceasingly working to destroy your life, happiness, and effective testimony for Jesus Christ in this world.

Satan's Special Target

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8)

All Christians of all ages are, in one way or another, targets of Satan's hostility. But the young believers are especially so. It is today no different than when Moses was born. Pharaoh (a type of Satan in Exo. 2) ordered the destruction of all the Israelite *boy babies* (the source of future *strength* and *hope* for the people of God). Today, Satan continues to specially focus his violent attempts on dear Christian young people. And he has, as we will see a vast array of weapons and methods used in this deadly warfare.

In the measure the devil is successful in discouraging, turning aside, or destroying a young believer's life and witness for Christ, he has achieved his goal of weakening the people of God and dishonoring the name of Christ. His attack is against both young men and young women. He endeavors to make young men spiritual *eunuchs in Babylon* (2 Ki. 20:18), causing them to tolerate and, at times, act as *natural brute beasts* (2 Pet. 2:12). He actively works to *corrupt* and *defile* young women by destroying their purity and innocence.

Light And Hope In Dark Times

What a terrible battle Satan wages against Christians!—the most difficult part is that often it doesn't seem like we are in a battle. Things are so easy, so comfortable—we have such abundant material possessions and great liberty as to how we use them. But we are in a terrible battle (especially in

the Western World), and all the more so because it is cloaked and made to seem as though life is easy, with no necessity to really take a stand for Christ or to suffer for his Name.

But just as there was a Haman in Esther's day who planned the total destruction of the people of God, so there is in our day a far worse *Haman* who intends the destruction and misery of every single soul, truly redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.

May our blessed God be pleased to encourage those who read the following pages, knowing that, if belonging to Christ—a true child of God—we are ultimately safe for time and eternity in His loving arms.

Chapter One

Partial Glory Displayed

Esther 1:1 “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:)”

v 2: “That in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the palace,”

v 3: “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:”

v 4: “When he shewed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty many days, even an hundred and fourscore days.”

The Spirit of God begins by describing the background of the stage on which the events of Esther, Mordecai and the Jews’ lives were to be played out. The description begins with a feast put on by the king—or as we may say in our culture today, a **royal party**. For Ahasuerus and his princes, nobles and servants, it must have been a very awesome exhibition of his power, wealth and glory. This display of the king’s glory lasted nearly 6 months!

There were, however, only a select few allowed to enjoy the grandeur and glory of Ahasuerus’ majestic exhibition—his personal entourage of servants and the nobility, the elite, the socially prominent persons of his kingdom—only these were invited to observe and enjoy his wealth, power, grandeur and majesty.

Yet, as lavish as this party must have been it had an end. After 6 months the party was over. Ahasuerus had no more riches or kingdoms to display—his kingdom did not have **lasting glory**.

Christians look forward to a glory infinitely superior. Daniel prophesies of this glorious kingdom: “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his do-

minion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Daniel 7:13,14).

Our blessed Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ will someday (perhaps very soon now) rule as “King of Kings and Lord of Lords”. Very shortly after His blood bought, loved church is called home to Himself there will finally be such a joyous feast as has never been seen, even in heaven. And in this world, after seven years of the most terrible tribulations, there will be a display of the glory of a kingdom with our Lord as Ruler, a kingdom of peace and joy such as this world has never known.

That will be the time the Apostle Paul speaks of in Ephesians: “...for the administration of the fullness of times; **to head up all things in the Christ**, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth; in him” (Eph.1:10). We know that our Lord Jesus, when walking here as Man was still truly God *manifest in flesh*: “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell” (Col.1:18,19).

Thus will come the time when the grandeur and glory of our blessed Saviour, His Godhead glory and His kingdom will fill all of eternity and men will see then what is reality now. All other mere kingdoms of lowly, fallen man pale into the dust of insignificance in light of our blessed God’s eternal glory.

As Christians are confronted and attacked and mocked in this *present evil world* let us remember that all that belongs to our Lord’s glory belongs to us. The day is coming when we (the church, His body) will not only behold this indescribable glory, but we will be part of that glory! “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, **then shall ye also appear with him in glory**” (Col.3:4).

A Feast for Everyone

v 5 “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;”

It must have been both a beautiful and a peaceful backdrop for those who were invited to King Ahasuerus' feast in his palace garden. This feast reminds us of that coming moment, very near at hand, when our blessed Lord will give that joyful shout to rapture away from this sad world, His blood bought bride. What peace, joy and delight will be ours in the presence of our blessed Saviour when we are gathered forever in the Father's House!

v 6 “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.”

The beauty of Ahasuerus' palace garden is marvelous to consider. *White, green, and blue hangings* morally present purity, peace, and a heavenly source. Fine linen and purple—perfect righteousness and royal majesty—connected these beautiful hangings to silver rings and pillars of marble. The redemptive work of our Saviour's blood shed once, forever has perfectly satisfied God and perfectly cleanses forever all the sins of the repent believer.

Those who attended Ahasuerus' feast found rest on beds of gold and silver firmly anchored to beautifully colored marble. All this again morally reminds us that God's rest for sinners is based on His Divine forgiveness, Christ's redemption and is anchored on the never changing promises of God (see 2 Peter 1:4).

Gardens Compared

We are reminded of the first garden created in this world—the garden of Eden. What a beautiful and glorious place it must have been! The difference between these two gardens is that Eden had the most beautiful trees upon which grew all the fruit that Adam and Eve would need to be perfectly content and happy. It was a garden that was watered, blessed by God, and had not one thing that would defile or ruin *obedient* man. Above all, in its very center was a tree whose fruit, if eaten, would impart life everlasting.

As magnificent as Ahasuerus' palace garden may have been, that Monarch could never provide a garden like Eden with such beauty and

blessings for his subjects, rich and poor alike, as God provided for Adam and Eve. Nor can any man, regardless of wealth, power or position prepare today such a place of blessing on earth as God has prepared for *them that love Him*.

Those who by faith receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour are promised eternal life in the *paradise* of God. Rich and poor alike—all responsible mankind—are invited to God's glorious eternal feast provided through the death of His Son, Jesus, at the cross. Accepting His invitation by faith in Christ is the only way of entrance into this indescribably glorious eternal feast.

Full Joy

v 7 “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.”

The joys that belong to a child of God are beyond compare for they are divine in origin, limitless in number and only enjoyed by those who are truly His children. Such infinite joys are the reason that the Apostle Paul wrote; “Rejoice *evermore*” (1 Thess. 5:16), and the Apostle Peter wrote; “Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*” (1 Pet.1:8). Ahasuerus' golden drinking vessels could all be filled to the brim with his wine, no matter what size the vessel was.

v 8 “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”.

Should even a very poor, common subject of Ahasuerus decide that he would like to taste more of the king's wine, he could without fear of offending the Monarch, request “*refills*”. Should any one of the guests decide that a small golden vessel of wine had sufficed, there was no concern that King Ahasuerus would be insulted. The *heart* and *appetite* of each one invited to his feast determined the amount of wine enjoyed.

Vashti's Feast

v 9 *“Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to king Ahasuerus”.*

It is historically an accepted fact that during these times men and women did not mix publicly on such occasions. The women were not left out of the celebration of Ahasuerus' palace feast for they too were called to enjoy his feast, but only in a way that was appropriately modest for women—thus the feast of Queen Vashti was held in the *royal house* rather than the *royal garden*.

Our blessed Lord has told us in John 14:1, *“In My Father's house are many mansions...I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”* Indescribably beautiful the *royal house* Heaven will be for the redeemed!

But our Lord will also have His kingdom on this earth. During the millennium He will reign as King supreme—the earth's peace and joy will be such that the Godly remnant of the Jews as well as the nations (Gentiles) will have what may be described as His *palace garden* in which to live and rejoice.

Vashti's Beauty—Ahasuerus's Glory

vv 10,11 *“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.”*

Though doubtless an incredible sum of money had been expended by King Ahasuerus to display the glory of His kingdom both in the six months display throughout his kingdom as well as the seven days in his palace garden for everyone in the royal city, Ahasuerus' glory was not fully complete until he had his beloved Queen Vashti sitting with him in the garden. She was the crowing glory to all that belonged to Ahasuerus. Yet without her, his full glory could not be complete.

What a beautiful picture of Christ and the church! Though what symbolizes it in the story of

Esther' shows man failing miserably, as usual. Yet that very failure turns our hearts and thoughts to the One who never has and never will fail. How He must long for that moment when He will come to get His bride. When our blessed Saviour has us, His body and bride, with Himself in glory, we may say, His glory will be complete (though there will be a full display of it later in this world during the millennium).

Even though our blessed Saviour surely is eagerly anticipating that wonderful day (speaking reverently), His beloved blood bought Bride has so grieved His blessed heart these past 2000 years. How little love, faithfulness, joy and true representation of the Lord Jesus has shown out in testimony from the church. But the day will come very soon when the church will no longer cause grief to our blessed Lord. *“He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied”* (Isa. 53:11). And we may say too, that our God and loving Father will see *“of the travail of His soul and be satisfied”* as well. Think what it must have meant to the Father to see the agony His beloved, only begotten Son must pass through that He would have a companion, one with Himself, for all eternity!

Vashti's Self-Will—Ahasuerus' Anger

v 12 *“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.”*

Dear believer in Christ, think how precious you are to Him. Think what He paid for you at the cross. Think how we are told in Isaiah 53 that *“He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied”*! If you truly can say by faith, *“The Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me”* (Gal.2:20), are you allowing your precious Saviour to be your Lord? If He is your Lord in truth, you (and all believers) have not one thing to say about His ways, what He does and what He is working. We are to simply obey Him, trusting His love without question.

Ahasuerus called Vashti to come that her beauty might, as we may say, put the finishing touch on his display of all his glory. Without her, his glory was not complete. Oh dear Christian!—are you and I willingly stepping forward in public, and by our lives, our actions and our words, willingly displaying the glories of our blessed Lord

Jesus Christ, our Saviour!?

Think about this passage in the Song of Solomon 2:14; “*O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely*”. It is for His joy and his glory that the bridegroom there, longs to have his beloved come out of ‘hiding’ that she might show herself, her beauty, and in doing so, give joy to his heart. May we be willing to joyfully do the same for our Saviour.

Sowing and Reaping

vv 13-15 “*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?”

Our blessed God deals with us in perfect love, but also in perfect wisdom and judgement. The judgement for our sins was fully atoned for by the death and shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ at the cross (when His side was pierced by the soldier's spear). But, sad to say, how often do we as His beloved children individually and collectively, go astray in a self-willed path, which requires the chastening of our loving Father.

When such a thing becomes necessary, we can be sure that it is done in perfect wisdom and love. Just as Ahasuerus had those seven princes who *knew the times* and had wisdom to give needed guidance in each circumstance of Ahasuerus' kingdom.

We are reminded of Revelation 1:4 where we read; “*John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;*”. There are not seven different Holy Spirits. God is One—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But here John, by divine revelation, refers to the perfect completeness of the wisdom, love and power of the Holy Spirit.

In Revelation 5, the *Lamb that was slain* (who is the Lord Jesus Christ) is seen as having among other characteristics, *seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God*. Our God and Father is *light and love*, but in Him alone is there to be found perfect wisdom, perfect discernment and perfect judgement—indeed, all is fully, eternally perfect with God.

Thus we find in type a picture of Ahasuerus. He had *seven* men who were the chief princes of his kingdom and whose work was to give guidance, to know what went on throughout his kingdom, and to bring light and solutions to any difficulties which beset Ahasuerus' kingdom. They now are called to pass judgment on the self-willed action of Vashti—not only to pass judgment, but to provide wisdom to know what should be done to maintain the overall good of the kingdom. They also must have wisdom as to what should be done to Vashti who by her self-willed refusal to obey the king's command, would bring serious damage to the whole kingdom,

The Bitter Root Defiling Many

vv 16-18 “*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.*”

Memucan (his name means ‘dignity, dignified’ or possibly ‘dignity of wisdom’) precisely and in a concise, clear manner sums up the whole problem. (1) Vashti's rebellion not only dishonored the king, but set a harmful example for all women in His kingdom. (2) Her action of rebellion will encourage all women in Ahasuerus' kingdom to become rebellious against their husbands. (3) Even the king's own princes' wives would copy the actions of Vashti bringing much more wrath. Worse yet, there would be increased contempt for man whom God has set in a place of authority over the woman.

What a solemn example and what incalculable hurt is done by a Christian who acts in self-will, whether to God's established order in creation and in the realm of nature, but far worse, in personal self-will towards our God, Himself! May the Lord keep us walking in a way that honors him; that we not by our lives provide actions which teach others to disobey and dishonor our blessed God and Father.

The Bitter Result of Self Will

vv 19-22 *"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. 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."*

Perhaps we ought to point out that the Biblical picture presented here is the failure of the Church to display the glory of Christ—its rebelliousness against the One who loved and gave Himself for it. The true church is caught away at the rapture and the false, apostate church is left. It is put aside by God while the Jewish remnant, so beautiful and precious to Christ in this world, once again becomes the object of His love and glory in this world. Vashti represents the Gentile church, Esther, the Jewish remnant.

Headship

However, the vital importance of the man's responsibility to maintain orderly control and headship in his home is illustrated in the account of Esther in a very striking manner. Even the actions of a remarkably beautiful and powerful woman (Vashti) were not enough to ignite a 'women's liberation movement' in Ahasuerus' kingdom. Then, there was found with the wise men wisdom, courage, and authority to thwart actions which would have led to the kind of sad conditions which mark

most Western lands today.

Today it is far different. The woman is found in every sphere of life except where God desires her to be: *"I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully"* (1Tim.5:14). Let us also remember the words of the Apostle Peter: *"For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord..."* (1 Pet. 3:5,6). The woman was never intended by God to be the man's slave, but she is to submit to her husband's headship. Where this is done God works in blessing.

Vashti either didn't know this (being a pagan) or she did know it and rebelled against what she knew was right. Esther was given a **great** feast by Ahasuerus while Vashti suffered a **great** loss as a result of her self-will.

The King, following the wise advice of Memucan, wrote a law requiring that men *bear rule in their own house*. Thus we also learn that while the woman is in a role of submission, the man is in a role of responsible headship. The laws enacted by Ahasuerus were written in the language of every province over which he ruled. No one could excuse a refusal to to obey Ahasuerus' commands because they couldn't understand the language of his laws.

From cover to cover the Bible clearly teaches the spheres in which our blessed God has placed the man and the women. He has told us of the solemn responsibility for each to obey, and also, has given many examples of the sorrow that comes through disobedience to His expressed will. The precious Bible is available in innumerable languages throughout the world. Man has no excuse to disregard God's Word.

On the other hand, there is **great joy and blessing** in submission to His will—**sorrow and trouble** from disobedience to His will. May every Christian man, woman, and child take this to heart!

Chapter Two

Esther's Beauty and Obedience

vv 1-4 “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. (2) Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, Let there be fair young virgins sought for the king: (3) 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: (4) And let the maiden which pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti. And the thing pleased the king; and he did so.”

King Ahasuerus could never be satisfied without a companion, a queen to set beside him who would complete his glory as king. Seeing that his angry thoughts towards Vashti's rebellion were softening, his servants suggest that the king choose a new queen who would be selected from among all the beautiful young virgins brought to the palace. The young woman who won his favor would take her place, reigning with him as his queen.

The qualities of the potential queen are lovely to observe. (1) Certain *officers* appointed by the king would select the most promising young women. The women did not put themselves forward, but rather were *chosen* and *called* by these royal servants. (2) They were in appearance and actions, *beautiful* women. (3) Being young, they were possessed of energy to walk in a way pleasing to the king. (4) They were morally pure (virgins). (5) They willingly made themselves acceptable to the king (*things for purification*).

These are the very qualities which those who belong to Christ, who know Him as Lord and Saviour ought to display in our lives. We have been *chosen*, our actions and ways ought to be, as we may say, *beautiful* to our Saviour. We should have energy in our lives to be pleasing to Him. Walking in moral purity in this *present evil world* is vitally important for each believer, and those who take the name of Christ ought daily, by reading and prayer, purify themselves from the world's filth and corruption. We read

in Eph, 5:26 that our blessed Lord Jesus Christ desires “*That He might sanctify and cleanse it [His body, the church, His bride] with the washing of water by the word*”.

Mordecai and Esther

vv 5-7 “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; (6) 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. (7) 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.”

Apart from what we read in the Biblical account of Esther, very little if anything is ‘historically’ known about these two and their history. Since the account in Esther chronologically takes place between Ezra and Nehemiah however, we do know that Mordecai and his cousin/stepdaughter *did not* return to Jerusalem. Some have suggested that Mordecai may have held some sort of official office or post in Ahasuerus' kingdom, for we do read of him sitting in the ‘*king's gate*’ — a place of political importance.

Since the Bible records that Esther was “*fair and beautiful*” she (nor Mordecai) would have had no choice about her being brought into the king's harem as one of those from among who would be chosen queen in the place of Vashti.

Perhaps we can see an evidence of faith in Mordecai as well as an unspoken, but lived out example of submission to God's sovereign actions. We have no sense from the account that Mordecai tried to hide Esther from the people in the kingdom. Neither do we read that either one disputed with the king's servants when they took Esther with the other maidens, into the royal house of women.

How peaceful it might be we believers if each one consciously lived a pure life and submitted without question to the sovereignty of God's dealings in their lives! Though perhaps at times appearing dark, dangerous and foreboding, His counsels and purposes of love and wisdom always prove themselves to be the best in every circumstance allowed in our lives.

A Pleasing Spirit

vv 8-11 “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. (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. (10) Esther had not shewed her people nor her kindred: for Mordecai had charged her that she should not shew it. (11) And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women’s house, to know how Esther did, and what should become of her.”

As we have mentioned, Esther could not refuse to be taken into King Ahasuerus’ harem as one who possibly would become his choice as queen. She submits to what she may not have understood, nor may have been personally comfortable with. The result was that not only her physical beauty, but her beautiful, submissive spirit pleased the one charged with her care (Hegai). There was *happy* reaping for Esther because of this. She receives *speedily* all that was needed to prepare her for the king’s presence. Along with that, she and her maidens (those who waited on her) were given the very best, most comfortable part of the women’s house in which to live.

A Christian who has a submissive spirit in all that the Lord allows, always receives the best from Him. We may not understand what He is doing, but it will always be best. “*Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter*” (Jn.13:7).

One feels keenly how **very far short** of this lovely attribute he personally falls. Yet our blessed God is full of tender, loving kindness. How thankful we are—our hearts go out in praise and worship to Him who so loves us and is so infinitely patient with us.

Mordecai’s Wisdom, Esther’s Obedience

Esther had shown her beautiful spirit of submission and obedience long before she was selected to be one of the ‘candidates’ for Ahasuerus’ queen.

Her older cousin, Mordecai, had raised her as his daughter after her parents died. She was as obedient to him as she would have been to her own parents. Mordecai had an *understanding of the times* (1 Chron. 13:32) living in Shusan the palace, and he knew what actions would be best for Esther. Thus it was that he directed her not to tell anyone that she was a Jew.

Because Mordecai held an official position, he was able to stay near Esther to observe what happened to her and how she was doing. How he loved and cared for his cousin/stepdaughter! Everything that effected her was of intense interest to him.

What a lovely picture of the wisdom and care with which our blessed God cares for each of His dear children! He knows the path we take for He has marked it out in love and wisdom—not the wisdom of this world—but in His infinite love and wisdom as God. We do well to quietly and happily submit in obedience to His plan for each of us. That personal, loving plan will be found through reading His precious Word and daily praying in communion with our Father.

Mordecai’s interest in and concern for Esther pales to insignificance in view of our blessed Lord’s loving, perfect interest in every single thing which effects each of His own, each day of our lives. Unquestioned obedience to His blessed, perfect will brings joy—sometimes immediate and sometimes, as in Esther’s case, later on. Her obedience to Mordecai did not bear immediate noticeable fruit, but when it did, what an immense blessing she was to all her beloved people! May it be so with each of us.

Principles of Purity

vv 12-14 “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;) 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.

These verses detail what the group of young women who had been assembled at the first house of the women in King Ahasuerus' palace were subjected to for one year. Let's notice some of the vitally important principles found here that will guide our beloved young sisters in walking in Godly purity though living in an defiled, immoral world that seeks to ruin each young sister's purity.

There was a lengthy preparation time of twelve months required for each maiden who might possibly become the wife/queen of the king. *"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;)"*

Dear young sister, **wait** for the Lord to **prepare** you for marriage (and to prepare your future mate for marriage, too!)—21st century Western culture teaches that immediate intimate physical contact between a couple **before** marriage is not only *acceptable* and *tolerated*, but sexual immorality is now considered *expected* and normal conduct for young people who have just begun dating or a courtship. That is a godless, wicked and lustful teaching that will only bring sorrow to a Christian man or woman who gives in to its wicked lies and temptations.

Spices

Specific kinds of aromatic spices were used during this 12 month time by the young female candidates, to purify them and make them fit for the king's presence.

Myrrh

This aromatic spice is often referred to in Scripture. Most importantly, it was what the wise men (Matthew 2) brought the Lord Jesus when he was a little child (perhaps not more than 2 years old) as part of the gifts of worship for the true King whose star they followed.

Myrrh is very interesting in that, though bitter, its resin forms in a tear drop shape, yet when mixed

with other appropriate spices creates a very precious, highly sought after perfume.

It is also used to dull pain. When it was offered to the Lord Jesus mixed with the soldiers sour wine, He refused to drink any thus the awful crucifixion pain was not deadened in the least with our blessed Lord and Saviour.

How wonderful the results for dear young sisters who, submitting to the ways of God in their lives make use of the *myrrh* which the Lord gives. There may be bitter testings and experiences, tears shed, waiting for prayers to be answered—but accepting all from the results in the sweet perfume and joy of a Godly and pure life which above all else, glorifies the Lord.

"Sweet Odours"

Besides the six months purification with myrrh, there came another six months in which the young women applied "*sweet odours*" and other unnamed things, all part of the purifying process. All of these ointments and materials were meant to produce, for the king, a beautiful, pure and acceptable young woman. How wonderful when the life, actions, and words of a young woman are like 'sweet odours'—how praise worthy the character of a young woman who willingly walks in holiness and purity. Surely such a life is of great value to our God: *"...an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God"* (Phpp.4:18).

The Beauty of Submission

v 15 *"Now when the turn of Esther...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."*

Before a maiden was presented to King Ahasuerus, she could ask for anything she wanted to take with her (perhaps special clothing, ointments, or splendid jewelry)—whatever things a maiden might believe would add to her beauty and at the same time, impress and please the king. Whatever she asked was given her before she went into his presence.

What a commendable and lovely spirit we see in Esther! She neither asked for or demanded anything save for what the king's chamberlain in charge of the maidens had already given to her.

Such a quiet, submissive spirit added far more to Esther's beauty than all the jewelry, ointments and beautiful garments might have done. She truly was a lovely maiden "*Whose adorning [was] not ... that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But...the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves...*" (1 Pet.3:3-5).

May beloved sisters be content to follow Esther's example. The world's false frosted coatings and baubles used to enhance a woman's physical appearance cannot begin to match the incredible beauty a godly, pure and submissive sister in Christ displays.

The Reward of Submission

vv 16-18 *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. Then the king made a great feast...Esther's feast...*

Though repeating a fact, we again mention that there are *eight feasts* or banquets mentioned in the book of Esther. Each of these celebrations have an *application* for Christians, containing unique and beautiful principles that may, with profit, be applied to our Christian life.

Of all these eight feasts however, the *only* feast that is characterized as a *great feast* is the feast the king held in honor of Esther. We may apply this in many profitable ways, but we would first think of the joy and expectancy our blessed Lord Jesus must have as He awaits that grand, glorious moment when He will receive His blood bought bride to Himself. "*Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it...*" (Eph. 5:25). "*And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*"

(Eph.1:22,23). What a day of glory—an unending feast we may say—will be ushered in when the Lord Jesus has His bride, the church forever with Himself in eternal glory!

How delighted, how joyful King Ahasuerus was in His beautiful queen, Esther. Nothing that he could provide was too good for her and nothing that he could provide to display her beauty and his joy in her was left wanting. What a *great* feast that occasion must have been!

vv 19-20 "*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 may make a precious 'moral' application of these verses. The church, the bride of Christ is one with Him and will reign with Him. But there will also be other blessed groups (or 'families') in heaven—blessed forever because of their faith as God has been pleased to reveal Himself to them.

During this time, our blessed God reminds us of the wonderful obedience of dear Esther. What an encouragement (as well as warning) to dear parents we have in this short passage!

Esther, no longer under Mordecai's care, has been taken into Ahasuerus' palace, living a very demanding, discreet life of personal responsibility as her Monarch's queen. Yet it was Mordecai's wise, Godly *parenting* of Esther and her faithful obedient submission that now guided her when alone in the palace. How wonderful is the principle of submission, learned at home, and the blessed results it brings to our precious children and grand children, as they enter upon young adulthood—a principle that even in the most difficult circumstances will bring blessing.

Dear Dads and Moms, the Lord is faithful in His promises: "*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it*" (Prov. 22:6). Esther, as we will see, will be sorely tested and God will use her submission to bring blessing from this coming trial.

Good Deed Forgotten

vv 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 hand 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."

In the very next chapter we read that King Ahasuerus promoted the wicked Amelekite enemy of the Jews, Haman, to the highest place of honor in the his kingdom. We might wonder why Mordecai was not promoted rather than Haman. Had it not been for Mordecai's faithfulness to him, King Ahasuerus would have been assassinated. Yet, nothing is done, no honor given, no special respect shown by the king to his benefactor, while at the same time, the most wicked of men is promoted to the highest place of honor in the kingdom.

How often in our blessed Lord Jesus' life we find the very same thing happen. He provided blessing after blessing, miracle after miracle (even raising souls from the dead)—what grace, compassion, loving kindness and tender mercy was continually shown to undeserving souls by *God manifest in flesh!* Yet, let us meditate carefully on what the result was of our Lord's blessings? In the end we read that "*And they all forsook him, and fled*" (Mr.14:50).

In the face of the most severe opposition, our blessed God encourages His dear children to not give up or give in; "*As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith*" (Gal.6:10). "*...abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord*" (1Cor.15:58).

Chapter Three

The Enemy

vv 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 revered 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 transgresses 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.”*

No doubt Haman, though not a Jew, presents a picture (in application) of the coming anti-Christ who will be given his power during the tribulation, by Satan. Being an Amalekite, Haman is a fit picture of the Satanic influence that will then openly seek to usurp the place of God.

“*The Agagite*” likely refers to the time that King Saul defeated the Amalekites, but spared their king, Agag, though Samuel, in faithfulness to God, slew him. We also read of Amalek in Exodus 17:14,16; “*And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven...For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.*”

Haman, an Amalekite, sworn enemy of the Jews was one of those whom Jehovah had said He would be *utterly put out of remembrance under heaven*. They would always be at war with God’s earthly people seeking to destroy Israel until the Messiah’s coming day of glory. This, as a faithful Jew, was a fact Mordecai of which he was well aware.

Mordecai’s refusal to show reverence to Haman was in fact, the appropriate actions of a faithful Jew who loved Jehovah and desired only to walk in obedience before Him. He provides a wonderful Old Testament example of the words of the Apostles in Acts 5:29; “*Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.*”

Ignorance of God’s Mind

Though Mordecai had attained a certain moral respect among the king’s servants, they had no understanding or appreciation of his actions regarding the wicked Haman. Mordecai was not ashamed of his race [Jew] nor, it seems, was he intimidated by Haman’s newly acquired rise to a place of honor in Ahasuerus’ kingdom, something the king’s servants could only think of as Mordecai *transgressing* the king’s commandment (much like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did in an earlier time). When they were informed why Mordecai acted thus, there does not seem to be any sympathy shown for him, nor understanding of why this godly man refused to bow and honor one who was fully set against Jehovah and His people.

Rather, it seems that they waited to see how Mordecai would fare, assuming that to disobey Ahasuerus’ commandment and dishonor Haman would surely bring a swift reprisal of judgement. They *daily* pressured Mordecai to ‘*give in*’ and obey the commandment, but that dear man of God knew what they did not understand or know—the man of God feared Him, obeyed the Word of God and did so as one who “*...sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not*” (Psa.15:4). Mordecai was not a man who would bow to pressure from the world and dishonor the Lord. “*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful*” (Psa.1:1).

The Enemy’s Wrath

vv 5,6 *“And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath. 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.”*

We certainly see here a vivid illustration of the beloved Apostle Paul’s warning to Timothy when he writes: “*This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come*” (2 Tim.3:1). The god and prince of this world (see Eph.2:2) knows that his time is short. He is increasingly active and energetically working to destroy any true Christian testimony and faith exhibited by dear souls. This

may be through open violent persecution or through much more subtle pressure on Christians, specially in the Western World, to show ‘love’ by tolerating all manner of evil. Those who refuse to tolerate and accept what our God calls abomination are quickly made to feel the persecution and pressure of being labeled ‘intolerant’ and ‘haters’

As in Mordecai’s day, Satan today doubtless makes special efforts to trip prominent faithful Christians who seek the spread the gospel, the truth of the one body of Christ, and those spiritual leaders who seek to ‘hold fast’ to the principles and precepts of the Word of God.

However, the wicked one, just like Haman, not only seeks to destroy God’s dear people for Satan would, if allowed, destroy every true believer in the world. Since God does not allow him to do this, he is diligent in trying to destroy the *truth* and *testimony* of Christian life being faithfully lived in obedience to the Lord. When we look at Mordecai as a picture of Christ, it is easy to understand how the devil, throughout history, has sought to destroy Him [the final, ultimate attempt was at Calvary’s cross] and His beloved saints.

The Enemy’s Plans

vv 7,8,9 *“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. 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”*

The enemy, Haman, sets in motion his plans to destroy Mordecai and all his people (the Jews) that lived in Ahasuerus’ kingdom by common means used by many nations in those times. “*They cast Pur*”—(or we may say, ‘*they cast lots*’), this was Haman’s way of determining the most auspicious time to put his horrible plan of Jewish geno-

cide into action. But the very God he hated and refused to worship, so ordered Haman’s casting of the ‘lot’ (“*casting the Pur*”) that there would be adequate time for His dear people’s deliverance. “*The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole decision is of Jehovah*” (Prov.16:33, JND Trans.).

Having, by the *casting of Pur*, established the day in which he would have all the Jews in Ahasuerus’ kingdom slain, Haman proceeds to seek the King’s favor for his plans. Do we not in just the same way, realize that the devil speaks in God’s presence, of Christians today? “*...their laws are diverse from all people...therefore it is not for the king’s profit to suffer them*”. Satan is the accuser of the brethren (Rev.12:10). The wicked one would also seek to turn mankind’s heart against Christ and His people—Satan knows not love and hates Christ, His beloved people and all that is associated with our God. Like Satan, Haman was a liar as well. He intimated that the Jews did not observe the laws of Ahasuerus’ kingdom—a lie, for the people were not disobedient and rebellious, only that God’s law and His Word was rightly given higher precedence than any other law. “*Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men*” (Acts 5:29)

What Are God’s People Worth?

The amount of money which Haman was willing to pay to destroy God’s people, comparing Biblical monetary units as best we can, with prices today, believers are *worth very much to Satan* in order to destroy them somehow. He hates us and the price he is willing to pay to get rid of believers is beyond our ability to understand! The wicked one will pay any price to stamp out true Christian faith!

Though not accurate, it seems, according to our currency values based on monetary values from even 100 years ago, Haman was willing to pay several hundred million dollars into the Persian King’s treasury in order to destroy the Jews. Doubtless this vast sum of money would come, at least partially, from the spoil taken by those who destroyed them. Many of the Jewish people in Ahasuerus’ kingdom that did not go back to Jerusalem and the land of Caanan when given liberty to do so, had doubtless become quite wealthy in their scattered surroundings. Doubtless, their enemies lusted after that wealth.

What we may learn morally from this is that **Satan will pay anything** in order to destroy even one soul—or the testimony of even one believer, so great is his hatred of Christ, of God, and His beloved people (and mankind as well).

A Perplexing Victory

vv 11-15 *“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. 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.”*

Haman made sure that everyone in Ahasuerus’ kingdom clearly understood that no Jew was to be tolerated. He had no mercy for he wanted all the Jews killed—young and old, children and women, helpless or not—all were to be slaughtered. We may even say that Haman had subtly made it a commandment of the king (*“sealed with the king’s ring”*) when we read that *“they should be ready against that day”*. Mercy would not to be shown to any Jew, nor could Persian law be repealed.

This is exactly what Satan, the enemy of each soul has decreed—no mercy is to be shown to Christians. Even more, he has no mercy or care for any of mankind, wanting nothing less than to destroy all those *made in the image and likeness of God!* We read that the city (palace) Shushan was

perplexed by such a command, apparently from the king. We should little wonder at the perplexity of the royal city. The Jews, in the main, doubtless had been a blessing to the kingdom (naturally speaking). Why would the king allow them to be summarily destroyed?

Christianity has been a blessing to this world, and though many unsaved souls are bitter foes of ‘the faith’, many others recognize that order, kindness, love, uprightness, honesty and multitudes of other blessings that Christianity has brought to nations who once basked in its glorious light. There are those who, not wanting to lose the blessings of Christianity though having no love for the Christ of Christianity, still seek to guide their lives and their culture by Christian principles, (even though those principles today are often given other names).

Haman was urgent. The posts were rushed to every part of Ahasuerus’ kingdom in haste. In this we may see how very determined Satan is to crush, destroy, and wipe out Christianity and all the souls of man. He hates believers, he hates all mankind, and seeks to destroy both. For believers, Satan would destroy the testimony to Christ, their happiness in Christ. For the unsaved, he would keep them blinded to their eternal ruin if refusing to accept the offer of eternal life the God has made to man. The result is horribly unspeakable—unbelievers condemned to eternal separation from the God of love who created them. Cast with the devil and his angels into hell forever! What a wicked and determined foe! May God be pleased by His blessed Spirit to stir the hearts of many dear souls before it is forever too late!

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom.6:23).

Chapter Four

Heartfelt Sorrow

vv 1-4 “*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. 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.*”

Mordecai was deeply moved in agony and sorrow when he realized what had been decreed against God’s people. His heart, perhaps, was not fearing for himself as much as for the awful spectre that hung over the Jews—the genocide of the Jewish people by command of the king through Haman’s wicked machinations.

Mordecai’s reaction reminds us of dear Nehemiah, who, when hearing of the condition of the God’s beloved city Jerusalem, broke down and wept (see Neh. 1). Mordecai did feel the sorrow silently but publicly expressed it in a way that showed he was acting according to the mind of God—“*a loud and bitter cry...clothed with sackcloth*”.

The Jews throughout Ahasuerus’ kingdom felt the awfulness of the decree as well—and they also acted appropriately with weeping, wailing, laying in sackcloth and ashes. All of these things are a sign of true sorrow, humility and repentance before God.

How Do We Feel About the Lost?

We read in the Word of God that Satan fooled Eve—Adam and Eve sinned against God’s command and brought death, sorrow and destruction upon all mankind. Ezekiel 18:20 tells us that “*The soul that sinneth, it shall die...*”. We learn from Rom.3:23 that “*all have sinned and come short of the glory of God*”. No one can escape the judgement of God (save our blessed Lord Jesus Christ when born a babe in Bethlehem)! Death (eternal

separation from God) is the portion of every soul born in this world because of our fallen, sinful nature. This solemn condition is starkly brought to our hearts in Rom.6:23 where we read that “*the wages of sin is death...*”. How accurately the decree in Mordecai’s and Esther’s day pictures the condition of all mankind born in this world!

Let those of us who know Christ as Saviour and have been saved from eternal doom and given eternal life through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, ask ourselves how the righteous and solemn decree of our Holy, blessed God found in these and many other verses, affects our hearts.

Is there a such a deep heart love for our Lord and for dear souls, that we can, in type, react to the solemn judgement of God as dear Mordecai reacted to the command of King Ahasuerus (Haman)? Do we have enough love in our hearts for the Lord to feel the sorrow He feels at the multitude of lost souls all around us who are on that “*broad road that leads to destruction*”? Will we pray for them?

How Do We Feel About the Saved?

Mordecai was in great grief and agony for the people of God. They were the special targets of Satan’s hatred using Haman’s wicked plan. How is it with us, dear reader? If you know Christ as Saviour, do you and I realize the hatred and attempts of Satan to destroy God’s dear people today—the church of God, the body of Christ? We know that a truly saved soul—one who has by faith trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Saviour—can never be lost, for we read in the Bible Jesus’ own words: “*And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand*” (Jn.10:28,29). But we also know that Satan seeks to destroy the happiness and the testimony of God’s dear people—and that, far more energetically than Haman sought to kill all of God’s people in Ahasuerus’ kingdom.

He may come against believers as a *roaring lion* (see 1 Pet.5:8). Or he may come much more subtly as an *angel of light* (see 2 Cor.11:14). But come against believers he will. His attacks on believers are more sure, more deadly, more subtle, and more effective by far than Haman’s plan

against the Mordecai and the Jews. Oh! That this may affect our hearts and cause each saved soul to truly feel the awfulness and dangers through which all believers pass in this life—and learn to be in much diligent prayer for the whole church of God!

How Did the Jews Feel About the Command?

Suppose that someone told you a law had been passed that in 11 months it would be legal to kill any Christian, and further, the killers could legally take for themselves all that their victims had owned. Would Christians would be laughing, going to parties, entertaining themselves, and especially, joining and entertaining themselves *with* the very ones who were going to kill them in a few months! It is impossible to think of anyone becoming that blind. Certainly the people of God in Mordecai's time were not blinded like that! As a people, wherever they lived, when they heard the king's decree, there was mass weeping, fasting, grieving and crying. Those dear people did not take the law made against them lightly—they were in earnest!

Sadly, we must say, many believers in well favored Western lands seem to have become callous, apathetic or indifferent to the awful attacks of Satan against Christians living throughout the whole world. The once Christianized West is rapidly apostasizing from true Christianity, and so many real believers seem to have morally gone to sleep. May God stir our hearts and wake us up to the deadly attacks of Satan which are so effectively destroying Christian faith, truth and happiness.

*“But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: **we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation**” (1 Thess.5:4-8).*

When Christians Have ‘It Good’ Here

vv 5-9 *“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. 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”.

Not realizing what had happened, Esther tried to stop her cousin Mordecai's grief. She had sent fresh clothing desiring Mordecai replace his sackcloth (a sign of sorrow and mourning) with fresh clothing. She had no concept of the awful destruction Haman planned against her people. Mordecai refused the clothing, causing Esther to send a higher official to learn why he was acting that way.

Mordecai faithfully reveals all to Esther, assuring her of the reality by sending her a copy of the king's decree which he had received. Further, so deeply did Mordecai realize and feel the danger God's people were in, that he sent a ‘commandment’ to the queen!—*“We ought to obey God rather than men”* (Acts 5:29).

Perhaps many Christians today are living like Queen Esther—everything is peaceful (in their view), they have no need of anything, and the world seems like a friendly place that holds its hand out as though it desires nothing more than peaceful fellowship with Christians. But Oh! how bloody is that ‘hand’—stained with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and with the blood of countless numbers of martyrs! Let us, dear believer, not fall into such a morally dull, sleepy condition that we do not understand the true enmity of the world, built by Cain with Satan as its prince. It has no desire to show true kindness or friendship to Christians who love and live for their blessed Lord and Saviour!

Faith Tested

vv 10-12 *“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 woman, 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 scepter, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days. And they told to Mordecai Esther's words."

Esther still did not know what Haman had caused King Ahasuerus to decree against her people. There seems a dullness of her heart—perhaps because she was in such a comfortable privileged position herself, as queen. She seemed to have forgotten that she too was a Jew. She evidently did not comprehend that not only were God's beloved people in danger, but she herself was in danger as well. Her chief concern at that moment seemed to be the danger of appearing without invitation in the presence of the king.

There were no exceptions to this law, not even for the Queen except should Ahasuerus hold out his golden scepter as a sign of welcome. Esther carefully details this danger—momentarily it seemed to eclipse all other concerns—apparently her faith wavered. She didn't think of God's power to preserve her when going in to plead for the life of her people, though uninvited by Ahasuerus. Since she had not been called to come into his presence for 30 days, Esther evidently assumed that his interest in her had waned, and certain death awaited as her portion if she were to obey Mordecai and go in without invitation.

We may wrongly think hard thoughts of Esther in her privileged position, thinking of herself first. But we must admit that it is often so with us. "Self" so often comes first in our lives! But let us too realize that we are **always** welcome at God's throne of grace. Not only so, but we are encouraged to **boldly** go there without fear, confident in our acceptance in Christ and our blessed God and Father's delight to always have us there.

Those who are saved are children of God. Thus we may come into the presence of our Holy God and our blessed Saviour God for help at any moment. Indeed, we have been encouraged to come into His blessed presence with boldness which gives wonderful peace, because believers come there as those who are infinitely loved by God. "*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace,*

that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

Let us ask ourselves if love for the blessed Lord and love for His beloved people finds us often at the throne of grace crying to Him for preserving care of His own, our brethren? Satan has terrible and wicked plans that He seeks to use against our blessed God's dear people. Do we recognize that? Do we feel it? Do we often find ourselves in His blessed presence praying for preserving mercy and care? At present, Christians in North America especially are, I believe, very responsible as to how we hold up in prayer the beloved people of God throughout this *present evil world*.

"Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you..." (1Sam.12:23).

"Pray without ceasing" (1Thess.5:17).

"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phpp.2:4).

Obedience Tested

vv 13-18 "*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? 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."*

With one concise statement of warning, Mordecai convinced Esther of the danger of her seeming lack of interest in the terrible law that had been passed against her people. He made it very clear that wealth, prominence, or position—none of these things would avail to keep Esther and her household safe from the murderous intent of Haman.

To dear Esther's credit, she immediately listened and obeyed Mordecai's word to her. She,

having finally understood the awfulness of the decree made against her beloved people, was willing to die in order to spare them. Oh! Dear believer, do we have such a heart for the people of God? Are we that quick to obey the Word of God when the Spirit of God uses whatever means He sees good to deeply impress God's Word on our hearts? All too often, sad to say, there may be no question in a believer's heart as to what God is telling them to do in a given situation, yet unfortunately, too often we believers don't listen to God's clear warnings, and, moving ahead, suffer innumerable sorrows which otherwise may well have been avoided.

Esther, once understanding the enormity of what Mordecai was telling her, deeply felt the need of having **all** her people—**all** the Jews in Shushan—one with her as she fasted for deliverance, yet prepared to face death should Ahasuerus have no pleasure in seeing her standing in his court. It is also very striking to see how Mordecai whose moral superiority caused Esther to agree without further argument, to his warning and plea, humbles himself and follows in obedience all that Esther requested. He accepts her word as a command to himself and the Jews in Shushan. While we would speak very reverently and carefully, it is quite wonderful to see how our God answers prayers that are made according to His will. He may not immediately answer, but we learn from His Word that our blessed God does hear and answer that which is prayed according to His "*good and perfect will*". "*And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him*" (1Jn.5:15).

Chapter Five

More Banquets

vv 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.”

Esther came into the presence of King Ahasuerus clothed in the dignity of her position — his queen. Her garments were appropriate for what she was. Do we come into the presence of our King wearing those garments which are fitting for what we are — God’s redeemed children, members of the body of Christ? How good if we realize by faith and act according to the glorious position into which He has brought us.

Ahasuerus, seeing Esther standing there held out the golden sceptre in love for her which granted to her the privilege of his presence. Esther did two things when the sceptre was held out; 1) she *drew near the king* and 2) she *touched the top of the sceptre*. We may say that this presents a most lovely picture of that Divine link between Holy God and sinful man — the Lord Jesus Christ. He is very God and perfect Man who is that *Mediator* spoken of in 1 Tim.2:5: “*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*”. He is that glorious *golden sceptre* and we are invited to draw near Him assured of a loving welcome by our blessed God and Father. Dear reader, will you just now ask yourself this question; “Have I in faith come to Christ, owning my need of Him as Saviour, trusting His precious blood shed at Calvary to wash my sins away and make me fit for His glorious presence?” This is the most important question any soul will ever ask. May our loving God grant that your answer be ‘yes’!

vv 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.”

What a strange response Esther gave to Ahasuerus’ benevolent welcome — whatever she wanted even to the half of his kingdom! But what she wanted from him was far more important. She wanted the life of her people preserved. God surely gave Esther much wisdom in how she went about requesting for the life of her people.

A banquet of wine would picture to our hearts a time of happiness. How could Esther be happy at such a banquet when her invitation included the very one who was conspiring to kill her people? The answer seems very precious to one’s heart. By inviting the king *and* Haman, Esther submitted the sovereign will of the king. Her invitation gave Haman the place that the king allowed him to occupy. She displayed no rebellion, but rather, accepted what the king had done.

Notice however, that when Esther gives the king her invitation to the banquet of wine, it is a banquet to which the queen clearly could have enjoyment only with the king for she said: “*Let the king and Haman come to the banquet which I have prepared for him*”. Haman might be there with them according to the king’s decree, but Esther would only prepare the banquet for the one she could enjoy — King Ahasuerus.

Perhaps we may learn from this that when fears and sorrows press on us and we rightly run to our blessed God and Father, the first thing that ought to be on our hearts is the joy of being in His presence at the throne of grace — there enjoying His divine, infinite love and in our feeble measure, expressing our joy and love in Christ to Him. Satan, the accuser of the brethren will surely be there as well [until the time comes when he is forever cast out of heaven], but that never need hinder communion with the Father. One feels personally his own great, great failure in coming into the Lord’s presence in this manner. Yet our gracious Father assures each of His children that they are always welcome in His blessed presence, there to pour out their heart before Him.

vv 7-8 “*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”.

Esther’s submission to the king’s will is remarkable. Perhaps you or I would have immediately begged the king for our lives while accusing Haman of wanting to kill our dear families and Christians everywhere. Yet she places herself totally in the hands of the king—if she *is pleasing* to him, if *it is his good pleasure* to answer her request. How beautiful to observe such a spirit and it should not surprise anyone that the king was happy and eager to grant her tender request.

Notice too, that since at the second banquet of wine, Esther would indeed plead for her people and her own life, she makes her invitation plainly for **both** the king and Haman—“*that I shall prepare for them*”. If Ahasuerus were pleased at that banquet to spare Esther and her people it would mean the down fall of Haman. Thus Esther’s request very much involves Haman’s presence.

Let us consider the striking order in which Esther petitioned the king at these two banquets. One feels this, in application, would be good if it would picture one’s prayers. **First** is the joy of being in the Father’s presence in prayer, enjoying Himself and sweet communion with Father and Son—a time of worship and praise to Him. **Next** comes praying for our fears, desires, sorrows—interceding and supplicating for those things that weigh so heavily on our heart. What a beautiful order this would be in a Christian’s prayer life!

Again, one sadly must admit how very, very far short of this he personally comes. Yet, our blessed God and Father, our precious Lord and Saviour, through the work of the Holy Spirit hears our prayers and presents them at the *throne of grace* as they ought to be presented. What a comfort this should be to our hearts—we who often don’t even know how to put into words what is weighing on our hearts!

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Rom.8:26).

vv 9-14 *“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. 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 was not only an idolatrous hater of God and His dear people, the Jews, but he was very proud and covetous. He doubtless had plans to usurp King Ahasuerus’ kingdom and all that pertained to it, including Queen Esther, for himself. He obviously thought of himself as superior in every way and thus he wanted to have first place in the kingdom for himself. But Haman was *totally* ignorant of God’s truth regarding pride even as he was *willingly* ignorant of the true God. He knew not that *“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall”* (Prov.16:18).

Mordecai’s refusal to acknowledge Haman’s high position in the kingdom smote his pride and dampened all that Haman mistakenly thought were going his way. Even after boasting of all his wealth and greatness to his wife and friends, Haman was not satisfied, admitting that as long as Mordecai lived, he could not be happy.

It is interesting to note that his wife’s name (Zeresh) likely means ‘gold’, or perhaps ‘riches’. It was the lusting after this that drove Haman above all else. When she suggested how Haman might get rid of Mordecai, he became happy for when he

had destroyed Mordecai nothing, he thought, would stand in the way of gaining wealth and power.

Following his wife's advice, Haman had a gallows built planning to hang Mordecai. However, it would be that very gallows which would mark the final end of that wicked enemy's life.

What a picture, in application, of the cross of Christ! Satan doubtless thought that the cross where man showed his absolute utter hatred of God, would be the end—he would be victorious and would have man under his wicked will unopposed. But Satan understands nothing of love and grace nor, evidently, of the infinite power of God, even as Haman in a small picture, understood nothing of the love and power of God. How wonderful for Christians to remember that our Lord Jesus came into this world and we read in Jn. 1:14, “...*the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*”

We also read that our blessed Lord spoke these wonderful words of victory after His resurrection from among the dead: “*And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, **All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth***” (Matt. 28:18). May we take courage and press on in this pilgrim pathway. We surely are not far from home. Let's not give in to despair even in the very dark and discouraging day in which we live! Satan, who had the power of death, has been defeated *forever* and his final end surely cannot be far off! (see Revelation). Let us constantly have these thoughts on our hearts that we might be encouraged to *press on*.

“*Even so come Lord Jesus*” (Rev. 22:20).

“*Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh*” (Jas. 5:8).

Chapter Six

The Beginning of Deliverance

vv 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.*”

Haman may have been sleeping soundly that night satisfied that his wicked plans were moving forward, but King Ahasuerus wasn’t! God, though working unseen, took sleep from the king so that in order to pass the night he requested that the history of his reign be read to him. Such a history would take up no small amount of pages in a book. In this we also see the infinite, incredible working of our blessed God for the very place read to the king dealt with Mordecai’s kindness to the him in warning of the assassination plot. How much this reminds of that precious hymn where we read; “*God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform*”. Surely we see here a striking example of Prov.21:1; “*The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will.*”

Haman had built a gallows for Mordecai—but the king wanted to give Mordecai honor and dignity. What a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ we see here. Satan had a cross for our blessed Saviour but God had and has infinite honor and dignity for His beloved Son. How thrilling to think that in a very soon coming day we will behold our blessed Saviour in all His glory—and for all eternity we shall bask in the glory of that Blessed Person. No honor, no dignity, no crown, is too great for our precious Saviour!

We too see a picture of the world’s reaction to the perfect life, the atoning death, and the glorious resurrection of our Lord. The world has given Him no honor and no dignity for the infinite perfection of His completed work. From the cross we hear His words; “*It is finished*”—from the world

we hear “*There is nothing done for Him*”. May we, Christians, seek to live honoring and glorifying our blessed Saviour. Surely there is much we can do for Him in praise, worship and service!

The Beginning of Haman’s End

vv 4-6 “*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?*”

Haman’s thoughts were fixed on hanging Mordecai but the king’s thoughts were about honoring him. How blind and dull Haman’s hatred of God and his people as well as his pride, caused him to become. Here we see a striking example from ancient times of a philosophy that is very popular in our world today—the *New Age* movement coupled with *Humanism*. It is a philosophy that makes everything of ‘me’—‘I’ am the center of the universe and it is ‘my’ world. ‘My’ thoughts, desires, likes, dislikes, etc. are always the most important and connected with ‘humanism’, ‘I’ become the only god a soul answers to or has to do with. We see this in reading Ezekiel 28:11-19 which pictures to us Satan as God’s highest created being before he, in pride, sought to take God’s place.

This was what Haman was all about as well. He, no doubt, had designs on Ahasuerus’ kingdom, thinking himself the supreme person in that kingdom. He was biding his time until the moment when he might overthrow the king and usurp the kingdom. Thus Haman’s thoughts all centered on himself, his wealth, power and glory. And when the king asked him what should be done *for the man whom the king delighted to honor*, Haman, before he suggested anything, could only and immediately think of himself. Surely, he thought, the king could be talking of none other than Himself! Thus we see again, strikingly, that *pride cometh before a fall*! The awful fall that would consume Haman was just about to begin.

Vain Conceit

vv 7-9 “*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.*”

This clearly shows the desire of the wicked Haman—to usurp the place of the king. He coveted the place of supreme rule in the kingdom and he, like Absalom in David’s time, would do whatever was necessary to cause the people of Shushan to begin to view him as a good and acceptable king in the place of Ahasuerus. Haman would do anything in his power to take that place, but in all this, He was seeking to seize upon glories and honors that were not nor ever could be, his. He was not worthy of them.

This strikingly pictures Satan as he seeks to cause fallen man, in his rebellion against the true and only Divine Authority that exists—God—to promote himself to a place he will never have. It is especially a striking picture of the seven years of tribulation when Satan, knowing his time is short, does all in his power to take the place of supreme leader in this world—taking the place that belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ alone. In this we too see how that Mordecai presents a wonderful picture of the Lord Jesus, the One whom the King [God] truly delights to honor. “*For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*” (2 Pet.1:17).

Haman Humbled

What a shamed, humbled man Haman must have been! The very one he so hated and despised, the one whom he had made plans to execute, making Mordecai a terrible example of warning for any who, like Mordecai would dare to refuse to honor and bow before himself, was now the object of awe and honor and glory of all the city of Shushan. The

proud, wicked schemer must take King Ahasuerus’ royal garments, his crown and the ultimate symbol of his power—the royal horse—all the majesty that Haman coveted for himself, and array one who was truly worthy of it. What wretched shame and anger must have filled Haman’s heart as he led Mordecai throughout the palace city of Shushan, crying to all those who observed: “*Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour*”.

Our Privilege

What a privilege and joy it ought to be for those who have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, to, as it were, lead Him in our lives throughout this world’s moral ‘city’ and proclaim His glories, beauty and authority to all around! In a far deeper and infinite way, the Lord Jesus Christ (who Mordecai pictures) is supremely worthy to be displayed thus in our lives, though hated and murdered by this world. May we be eager and diligent in carrying out this blessed service for Him.

It will be through our actions *first* and *then* our words, that each believer in the Lord Jesus Christ will ‘bear’ Him through this world proclaiming His Divine glory, worthiness and love. His ‘apparel’ answers to our ‘conduct’. Scripturally, a garment morally speaks of the character of the one wearing it. How wonderful when, as Christians, we display the apparel of His royal majesty and glory, by our actions.

A crown morally speaks not only of the glory due to the one to whom the crown belongs, but also suggests the authority which is rightfully His who wears the crown. Let us—believers in our Lord Jesus Christ—ask ourselves if Christ’s authority over us is displayed in our daily lives. It is solemn to think that there are those to whom the Lord Jesus speaks thus: “*And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*” (Luke 6:46). If we call Him Lord, let us make sure that we individually, in daily life, walk as those who have submitted to His blessed authority.

When these things are so, there will be power in our lives (Mordecai riding on King Ahasuerus’ horse) and we will be able to verbally, with joy, proclaim Him as Lord and Saviour—“*Christ...who is over all, God blessed for ever*”. (Rom.9:5).

Haman Trapped and Defeated

vv 10-14 “*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. 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.*”

We read these solemn words in Proverbs 29:6: “*In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare: but the righteous doth sing and rejoice*”. Haman was an *evil man* who planned a terrible destruction against God and His beloved people — an unspeakably horrible transgression. But our God is not mocked (Gal.6:7) and thus Haman is treading an inescapable path to his destruction. He is about to be *snares* by his own awful transgression.

We must, perhaps, wonder what was going through Haman’s mind as King Ahasuerus’ chamberlains came to *haste* him to Esther’s banquet. His own wife had prophesied that he would not gain the victory over the hated Mordecai, for he, himself, was the one who had ‘*begun to fall*’ before the Godly Jew. Esther’s second banquet would indeed become a banquet of joy for Esther and her people. For the wicked Haman it would be a final, awful judgement of his iniquity and hatred, a banquet of doom and death for he who had set himself against God and His beloved people.

Chapter Seven

Free From the Enemy

vv 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*”.

The king’s love for his queen had not lessened since the first banquet had taken place. He encourages Esther to make her request known using exactly the same words as he did at the first banquet. Esther was to know that she was welcome and had complete freedom to express her heart desire to the king. More than that, she was to know that the king would be delighted to abundantly answer her request. His abundant answer would display his glory, his kindness and his love for her.

Our loving Saviour God and Father is infinitely more giving. He perfectly answers each of His children’s requests in His perfect time and way—the divine loving way which brings the greatest blessing and joy to the one who has come into His presence in the spirit of requesting prayer. Having already given the very best in His beloved Son we are reminded: “*He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*” (Rom.8:32). “*Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think...*” (Eph.3:20).

Esther’s Plea for Deliverance

vv 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 [“offset”] the king’s damage.*”

It is so lovely to observe dear Esther’s humble cry for deliverance. The beautiful moral order of her request ought to mark every prayer of each

believer today, as well. “*If I have found favour in thy sight...*”. Esther most certainly had found favour—by her actions, her submission, her spirit, and her beauty. With what confidence a true believer who has a conscience clear of anything that might have displeased the Lord, go at all times before the *throne of grace* !

Then next she says: “*and if it please the king...*”. Esther’s request would not be according to her will, though her will in this matter seems obvious and one we can certainly understand. Still, in sweet moral beauty, Esther sets aside her will and submits to King Ahasuerus’ will. Does this not remind us of that blessed One who ever perfectly did only His Father’s will. Let us with deep reverence hear Him once again in Gethsamene: “*...Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done*” (Luke 22:42).

Next comes her request. Here again we see moral beauty in Esther’s spirit and words. She *petitions* the king for her own life, but *requests* the king for the life of her people. In the Hebrew, it seems that *request* is a stronger word than *petition*. She certainly rightly desires that her life might be spared and so makes a *petition* or *simple request* to the king for her life. But when it comes to her beloved people, the Jews, she uses a stronger word for her desire—she *entreats* or *begs* the king for their lives. How sweet to see that she puts her loved people ahead of herself in this way, though she mentions herself first. This is not unkind of Esther, but rather, displaying to the one who loves her that her life was in danger as well as the lives of those she loved. We are reminded of the words of our precious Saviour when the mob came to take him in the garden: “*Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way*” (Jn.18:8). Can any dear saint measure the infinite depth of the Saviour’s love for them in thinking on these precious words he uttered before he allowed Himself to be taken away to the cross?

Finally we read Esther’s humble statement that if she and her people had just been sold into slavery, she would not have even made a request to the king—even though the enemy [Haman] could never offset the damage that doing such a thing would cause King

Ahasuerus. But, it was not slavery that cast its dark shadow over Esther and the Jews, it was genocide/death, She surely had an urgent reason to cry to the king for all their preservation.

Truth Triumphs

vv 5,6 *“Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, that durst [dares] presume in his heart to do so? And Esther said, The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen.”*

King Ahasuerus was understandably infuriated at the thought that someone would dare to harm his beloved Esther and her people. It was incomprehensible to the king that anyone would even think of such a wicked act, so shameful and displeasing to him. At that moment he may not have realized that the plan had already been put into action, but the king doubtless did realize the wicked plan of Haman’s was one that he had been talked into sealing with the royal seal. Now however, fully realizing what had happened and the result being the death of his beloved Queen Esther, his fury, humanly speaking, must have known no bounds.

How precious to realize that our blessed loving God and Father, the Father of eternity, would infinitely more, feel the same regarding those who have been saved by His grace, through the death of His beloved Son. We may reverently hear Him saying: “Who dares to think in his heart that he will harm those I love, those who have been redeemed by my Son’s precious blood, those I have brought (adopted) into my family, those born of the Spirit? Those that oare ‘one’ with my beloved Son and Myself”. The solemn challenge rings throughout eternity. There is none who dare answer. None dare harm those that belong to Him of whom the prophet Zecariah prophetically speaks: *“For thus saith the Lord of hosts; After the glory hath He sent me unto the nations which spoiled you [the Jews]: **for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye**”* (Zec.2:8). This may certainly be applied to believers today!

Thus it is that we read in Romans 8:28: *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose”*. Satan is powerless

against this promise and he knows it. He knows too that his time is very short, thus he is desperately seeking to destroy souls and true Christian testimonies before his time is forever over.

Haman obviously had every reason to be afraid before the King and the Queen. His wicked plan had been found out by one who was more powerful than he. Haman’s fall had begun.

Haman’s End

vv 7-10 *“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. 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 the 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 had 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.”*

In his desperation, wicked Haman seeks protection from Queen Esther. Falling on her bed to beg for his life, it is remarkable to note that she says nothing. Her words to her king were few and concise. *“The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman”*. She could peacefully leave all in the control of the one with ultimate power in that kingdom—one who loved her. She need not and did not lower herself to give any answer to Haman.

The king, coming back from the garden and seeing Haman there, assumes the worst and immediately Haman is covered in his shame and iniquity, and led away to his ultimate destruction. What he had planned for Mordecai was the method by which he himself was cast into eternity.

Satan must have thought that the cross where the enmity and hatred of man reached its ultimate height in the death of the Saviour, would be his victory. Yet it was that very cross which spelled

the final defeat of Satan. *“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He [Jesus] also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil”* (Heb.2:14).

The Garden

What thoughts must have gone through King Ahasuerus’ mind as he, full of fury, entered his garden! This had been the very place where he had desired to display the fullness of his glory and kingdom by having Vashti, his queen at that time, come into his presence. He was not complete, his glory was not complete, nor was the beautiful garden complete without his queen at his side. Vashti had refused and Esther had taken her place.

But now the king stands alone again in that very place where he would have desired to show his glory to all, realizing that if Haman were to have his way, Ahasuerus would again be denied the company of his loved queen standing there with him. The only thing that could take away his wrath and fury was to destroy the enemy that would rob him of the person of his loved Queen Esther, and the joy he had in having her as one with himself.

We can never know the depths of the love that our blessed Lord Jesus has for His beloved bride, the church. She is indeed that pearl of whom we read: *“Who [referring to the Lord Jesus in type], when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it”* (Matt.13:46). How infinitely our blessed Lord Jesus Christ loves the church—His body and His bride for whom He gave Himself (Eph.5:25). None can ever harm or touch her—can never break the bond of love Christ has for His beloved church. She will be one with Him for all eternity, infinitely sharing His glory, praising and rejoicing and resting in His eternal love for her forwhom He gave Himself.

Chapter Eight

Mordecai Honored

vv 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.”*

Mordecai is finally and publicly given his rightful position of honor and royal authority in King Ahasuerus’ dominion while Esther is given authority over her enemies, the house of Haman. Haman, once so feared because he held the power of death over God’s beloved people, is dead—completely defeated—no longer posing any threat to the Jews.

The day is soon to come when our blessed Lord Jesus, as the Son of Man, once reviled, spit upon, hated and cast out of this scene, will appear in all His rightful honor and glory—all the beauty and loveliness that the Father now sees in Him will then be displayed before a wondering world (pictured in the ring King Ahasuerus gave to Mordecai). Then, the blessed Son of God will finally take His place of authority in this world as the glorious Son of Man—God’s beloved and chosen One—and He will take that place with His beloved bride, the church. When this happens, Satan will have been cast into the bottomless pit, bound and unable to bring sorrow, suffering, pain and sin into this world (see Rev.20:1-3).

Esther’s Plea for Protection

vv 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 scepter toward Esther. So Esther arose, and stood before the king, And said, If it please the king, and if I have found 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?”

We might be surprised by Esther’s second request—especially the way in which she made it with such tears of grief and concern for her beloved people. Hadn’t Haman been put to death? He certainly no longer represented any threat to the people of God. Mordecai had replaced Haman as Ahasuerus’ personal confidant and advisor. Surely now all would be well with the Jews wouldn’t it?

No!

Remember that when King Ahasuerus made a law in Persia, it could not be rescinded. The law passed could not be changed even if the king wanted to change it. Persian law stood unchangeable. The 13th day of Adar was still, by Persian law, the day when legally enemies of the Jews might slay them and take their possessions. Haman’s death, Mordecai’s advancement to prominence, Ahasuerus’ love for his queen Esther—none of it could change the terrible law that Haman had enacted in the King’s name and with his seal of authority.

Dear Esther, well aware that the danger for her beloved people was not passed, falls at the king’s feet weeping and pleading for her people. And what reaction do we see Ahasuerus display to his beloved Queen? The very same one he had the first time she stood in his court without being invited there. His love for his queen caused him to hold out, once again, the golden scepter of favor towards her. Again she was free to bare her heart to her king, pleading still for the life of her people.

How beautifully personal she makes that plea. Not one word of plea for herself! She has been accepted by the king and none dare touch her or they would face the same end as Haman. But her heart bursting with grief, she weeps before him precious, loving and heartfelt words of compassion: *“...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?”*. Yet the law demanded their destruction—the law could not be changed—what possibly could be done for God’s dear people whom Esther and Mordecai so loved!?

Christian Supplication and Intercession

Esther again takes the lowest place of humility, realizing that her actions must be pleasing to the king. More however, her desires must be according to his will. Though he had showed her personal kindness, now it was for others she was interceding, but if she had found *favour* in his sight, and if she had pleased him, she could be fully confident of her intercessory requests.

Christians have an infinitely more wonderful *golden scepter* held out to them by our blessed God—the very Person of our Lord Jesus Christ is the divine and perfect link of love between Holy God and those who have sinned (see 1 Tim.2:5). Because of faith in Him and because of God’s infinite love for His beloved Son and His infinite love for the redeemed—and for mankind too—(those who have been given eternal life *through Jesus Christ our Lord*) we are encouraged to come “...boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb.4:16). The *golden scepter*, we may say, is ever held out to us and we never need question if it will be withdrawn. No! It cannot be withdrawn for the Lord Jesus has told us in John 10:28,29 that; “...I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.” A soul that has fled to Christ for refuge and salvation can never be lost, nor ever be unwelcome at the *throne of grace*.

The solemn question we believers must ask ourselves is this: do we have the earnestness and love, as Esther had, for the people of God, whether those in individual trouble or the whole church of God so persecuted and undermined by wicked teachings today, that we find ourselves often at the throne of grace, conscious of our welcome there, able to pour our heart and tears out for the beloved people of God? Also pouring our hearts out in supplicating for the salvation of souls that our blessed God by the Spirit may have specially laid on each individual heart.

Oh! That we might be found, like Esther, falling at His blessed feet, pleading and supplicating for all Christians who still, though Satan is a defeated foe, are in terrible danger! Such earnest

prayer requires a heart filled with love for our Lord Jesus and love for souls. May we say with dear Esther, in holy, humble pleading with our blessed loving God... “*How can I endure to see the destruction of my people*”.

Much to Intercede For

One specially thinks of dear Christian families with their young children, teenagers and older ones. How precious are children and families! The Lord loves children but there is an enemy, though defeated, who is still actively at work seeking to destroy the lives, testimonies, and families of Christians. Do we love them enough to be frequently in the presence of our blessed God, interceding in earnest combatting prayer for them?

What about our neighbors and those we work with who are still strangers to the loving Saviour. Do we love these dear souls enough to be at the feet of our blessed God at the throne of grace, interceding for their precious, eternal souls?

What about our beloved older Christian brethren. Those who are going through trials of old age, illness, loneliness, and all the things that affect our bodies *of humiliation* as we age. The Lord never leaves or forsakes us, but should we not be much in prayer for these dear ones who have walked the path of faith for many more years than some of the rest of us have?

What about our beloved brethren who are being martyred in other lands? All the sorrow, pain, torture and agony they are passing through while we still are allowed to live in relative freedom in these North American lands. Do we often fall on our knees at the throne of grace and beseech our blessed God and Father for these dear ones?

How very much we should be able to identify with dear Esther’s plea to her king as we think of these things and many more besides. Our blessed Saviour has told us: “*This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you*” (Jn. 15:12). We cannot say we love our Lord if there is not love and concern for all of His beloved people in our heart. Let us be faithful in praying for them—daily and frequently. The throne of grace is ever open to our cry—a loving God and our Father is ever ready to hear every feeble prayer and desire of our heart. We are so loved. Let us so love one another in that same spirit!

The Answer to Esther's Second Plea

vv 8,9 *“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. 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.”*

What a wonderful principle for Christians we find in Esther’s *second* earnest plea for her dear people! She had fallen at the king’s feet fully submissive to his decision, but owing to him how it would affect her if the Jews, her people, were still allowed to be attacked. Remember, a law made by the king could not be rescinded or changed. This was close to causing Ahasuerus to be an ‘absolute monarch’ — with one major exception. An absolute monarch could, if he were truly such, change a law he had passed. In the case of Ahasuerus and the Medio-Persian kingdom, not even the king could change a law that had been passed. Thus, though Haman was dead and no longer represented personally, any threat to the Jews, the law was *still very much a threat to them*. Esther realized this and pled for them even as Christians today have the privilege, joy and comfort of pleading in the presence of our blessed God at the throne of grace to overturn what seems to us to be impossible situations that have happened because of man’s fallen sin nature.

Asking For the Impossible

And what was Ahasuerus’ answer to his beloved queen? Oh dear believer, let us bask in joy and comfort as we read these words—*“Write ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king’s name...”*. It’s as if Ahasuerus had told Esther and Mordecai, ‘I am unable to change the law that allows the Jews to be killed on the 13th day of the month Adar. However, I will seal with my signet any request you have for your people. It will also become a

law that cannot be overturned. So ask freely as you desire and best see fit for the welfare of your dear people and I will do it—it will become law!’.

Believers cannot do anything about the ravages of sin that have ruined this ‘*present evil world*’. We cannot reverse Holy God’s law in Ezekiel that says *“the soul that sinneth, it shall die”*. God has spoken and it can never be overturned—*“The wages of sin is death...”*. But our blessed God and Father, infinitely more than King Ahasuerus, invites us to the throne of grace to plead our hearts, sorrows, supplications and intercessions for those we love—for souls as we are led by the Spirit. God’s government never changes, but His divine grace rises above His perfect government to bring the ultimate and best blessings to those we pray for—to each situation as He best sees fit. The great question for you and I is; **‘Am I praying, interceding, weeping for those that are on my heart, before the throne of grace’?** It is *only* there that the impossible can be changed to the possible for *“With God all things are possible”!*

The Impossible Becomes Possible

Could the Jews be saved and protected against those that would harm them according to Haman’s former commandment and in spite of Persian law being unchangeable?

Yes!

How beautiful to see the wisdom of Mordecai and of Esther in what they asked the king to do. First of all, not one individual in all of Ahasuerus’ kingdom could excuse themselves from Mordecai’s commandment by maintaining that they did not understand what Mordecai and Esther had written in the king’s name. It was written in all the languages of Ahasuerus’ kingdom so that all would clearly understand his law. No one had any excuse to disregard what had been commanded. All were responsible to hear and to obey Mordecai’s commandment. How much more critical to realize that our God has also made His blessed mind known to this world through His Word! There are no excuses for not knowing God, not knowing of His Holy Nature and of His beloved Son our Lord Jesus Christ who, by His death at Calvary, has given eternal hope to the hopeless.

It is also quite striking to notice that Esther steps out of the way, as we may say, in deference to

Mordecai. That is, Mordecai was responsible for the writing that went out to the Jews and all the people. The wording is quite strong—we read of Mordecai *commanding* the Jews to follow his writing, as well as all those that were in a position of authority in Ahasuerus’ kingdom. In like manner, our blessed God, by His Word, and in some cases through other means—though most certainly by His Word above all else—requires that *all* mankind heed and obey what He has commanded. Those who do so will find ultimate blessing in this life as well as eternal life with Christ in glory—a blessing beyond compare.

The Importance of Oneness

vv 11,12 “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, Upon one day in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, namely, upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar.”

What wisdom we find in Mordecai’s law which was sealed with King Ahasuerus’ signet. The previous law which condemned the Jews to utter destruction could not be changed. The new law however, gave the Jews full liberty to do **two** things—(1) They could *gather together* [as one] and (2) those gathered could defend themselves against any who would seek their destruction. We read that most all of Ahasuerus’ kingdom suddenly became very fearful of attacking the Jews. They might have no problem attacking one family or one individual, but to attack a company of Jews who stood together to defend themselves with the full backing of the king caused many to change their thinking and become supporters of the Jews, rather than enemies turning against them!

Surely this wonderful deliverance is but a little picture (in application) of Christians today. Though Satan is forever a defeated foe because of the work of Christ at Calvary, the day for the Devil’s final, eternal punishment in the lake of fire has not come yet. Thus there is still the very real danger of attacks from this implacable enemy, even as there was a danger that some of the enemies of the Jews

would disregard the new liberty God’s people were given in defending themselves. Some would still seek to kill them and then arrogate to themselves what belonged to the Jews.

Strengthening or Fighting?

What can Christians do in a world that is fully set against them, though unable to do anything against believers, unless allowed of God? Oh! What beautiful and vital moral principles may be gleaned from this precious account. Yet, sad to say, though believers may assent that these applications are right and wise, must we not with much shame and sorrow admit how greatly we have failed in standing together as one! We read in Ephesians 4:16; “From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” Little else can be as important for believers today, members of the church of God by faith in Christ, than seeking to stand together as one! Christ’s body is one!

This is surely our blessed Lord’s desire for **all** His own—His body and His bride! Each member of His blessed body has been given something unique to use in strengthening and building up the body of Christ, the church/assembly—to the end that it may be blessed and *the faith* effectively defended in the face of the enemy’s constant attacks. Yet, with much shame we must admit that throughout the ages, those who have and presently do bear the blessed Name of Christ, have been fighting with each other far more rigorously than we have been fighting against our common enemy, Satan and the world. We have spent far too much time and energy contending with each other rather than with the enemy of our souls. We have not been ‘**standing together**’ in that sense, so that there might be a strengthening of the common *faith* and the ability to withstand the flood of apostasy that is presently inundating Christianity throughout this world.

Fighting or Helping Each Other?

Too often one group of believers has found itself at odds in its doctrines or practices with another group of believers. This has been sadly and solemnly true through out the day of grace, and is so even though there may be large numbers of mere

professors who call themselves Christians. All true believers are called upon to *earnestly contend for the faith once delivered* (see Jude), but even with those who fall under the solemn description of heretics we do not read of *fighting* with them, but rather; “*A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject*” (Titus 3:10). We are to *contend* for the faith not *contend with each other*. It may be sadly necessary to break fellowship with some dear believers because of their course of life and/or doctrine, but we can still pray for one another!

Each true believer ought to earnestly seek to fit the description that the Apostle Paul gives to us of dear Timothy in Philippians 2:19-21; “*But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s*”. While it is true that the truth of God found in His precious Word must be upheld at all costs, should we not be found in earnest, diligent prayer for one another? Surely the truth that James writes has never changed; “*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*” (Jas.5:16). This is by no means a plea for lukewarmness and giving in to clearly bad doctrine. Rather, by prayer if no other means seem available, let us learn to *stand together* against Satan who would use any means at his disposal to divide and destroy the true testimony that the church ought to render to Christ, as well as those who truly belong to our Lord.

vv 15-17 “*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. 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*”.

What a precious, blessed result for Esther and Mordecai and all the Jews — as well as a beautiful

picture of our Lord Jesus Christ and His eternal victory. First, of course, in view of His beloved earthly people and the blessing that will surely be theirs in a soon coming day. Too however, we may see a lovely moral application to the church, the bride of Christ and that soon coming glorious day when we shall forever be with our Saviour in heaven. Here we read that Mordecai is finally honored as he ought to have been, God’s dear people safe and rejoicing together, and many of the Gentiles in Ahasuerus’ kingdom becoming part of God’s people. All this has a wonderful comfort and encouragement for we Christians today (in application). Christ will very soon finally receive the honor and glory that is rightfully His while His beloved body and bride, God’s dear children, the church, will have eternal rejoicing, light and blessing. “*Even so come, Lord Jesus*”.

We would add in closing this chapter; may it be that our hearts’ desire is to see souls saved even as in Mordecai’s day we read that many became Jews. The day of grace is fast coming to a close — we may say we are very near *Adar 13* and the day of grace is fast coming to a close (when the true church will be caught away from this world to be with Christ forever).

Chapter Nine & Ten

Victory and Joy

Chp. 9:15-18 “*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, 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*”.

Again we read in this account how that the Jews ***gathered themselves together*** in order to withstand any foe who would still be foolish enough to attack them. The result was a great victory for the Jews and a terrible defeat for their few attackers. The Jews, however, did not take the prey of their defeated foes for themselves. All went to the king’s treasuries. It should be so for Christians as well. There is nothing this world has to offer which could replace our blessed Lord Jesus. We do not fight or contend for the faith in order to enrich ourselves, but rather, in order that our blessed Lord Jesus might be honored and glorified and His beloved people might be supported, defended, blessed and kept in safety from those who would destroy our faith.

Days of the Jews feasting and gladness were set up to keep as a memorial of this wonderful victory. Christians have a more wonderful memorial to keep—the remembrance of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ in His death. His death and resurrection was a victory of infinite and eternal consequences. Satan and sin forever defeated, God infinitely glorified in the finished work of His Son, individual believers’ sins forgiven and given the gift of eternal life. For all this wonderful, divine victory, a simple request was made by the One who accomplished all for the glory of God. We read in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26: “*For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which*

He was betrayed took bread: And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till He come.”

There is no greater or more wonderful memorial feast, no more blessed and joyful time for believers than the occasion when Christians gather together to remember the blessed Saviour, as He desires, in His death. What a time of spiritual feasting and joy, of thanking God for His beloved Son’s sacrifice—worshipping God for what Christ means to Him—while remembering His death and thinking on what our sins caused Him in His suffering. Christians have a precious opportunity expressing spiritual thoughts as led by the Spirit of God, songs of praise and worship while remembering our blessed Saviour—a dead Christ as another has said. We partake of Him (the loaf) as having died—given up His life that we might live forever.

What a day indeed of *feasting and gladness* the remembrance of the Lord Jesus ought to be for we who are Christians! Surely the thought of such a feast should bring joy and delight to our hearts as we meet *together*.

Chp 10:3 “*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.*”

What a place of honor the despised Jew and hated enemy of Haman was brought to—Mordecai’s rightful place! To an infinitely greater extent it will be with our Saviour in a soon coming day. He will sing with joy in the midst of the great congregation, for we read: “*I [Jesus] will declare Thy [God] name unto **My brethren**, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee*” (Heb.2:12).

He who went into such unspeakable poverty that we might be rich has brought eternal wealth to those who trust Him by faith. We would close this little meditation with the words of that lovely hymn; “*God is satisfied with Jesus, we are satisfied as well*”.

Amen.

Practical Reflections on Esther

*Encouragement in Dark Times
for Young and Old*

