

BRIDES - Esther (7)

Reading: Esther 2 v 5 – 11, 16 - 20
Esther 4 v 10 - 17
Esther 7 v 1 – 8 v 2

In the book of Esther the name of God is never mentioned, yet His sovereignty, the over ruling of God in the affairs of men is clearly seen. We see that God is on the throne and he has a care for His people.

The Danger to God's People – Chap 1 – 4 v 3

The advancement of Haman, the Jews enemy, and the succession of Esther as queen

The Decision of God's Servant – Chap 4 v 4 – 5 v 14

The evil plan of Haman to destroy the Jews is thwarted

The Deliverance of God's People – Chap 6 – 10

- a) chap 6 + 7 - Haman hanged
- b) chap 8 + 9 – Enemies destroyed
- c) chap 10 - Greatness of Mordecai

The key part of the story is found in chapter 4 and perhaps the key phrase is found at the end of v14 '*who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?*'

The Dangers to God's People:

Satan's man is brought on to the scene and promoted to a position of power and influence. He formulates a plan to destroy the people of God. Satan is active, seeking to destroy the line from which the Saviour would come, the one who would bruise his head – see Gen. 3 v 15. But God is supreme, He is on the throne and every move, every plan of Satan He knows and prepares for. As Haman is promoted, God prepares his people to bring deliverance and victory to His people. Esther (Hadassah), a young Jewish girl, an orphan in a foreign land, due to a series of unusual events becomes queen of Persia. Her cousin, Mordecai, due to a different set of events gains favour with the king. How good to know in the circumstances of life that God is still on the throne and with God all things are possible Mark 9 v 23 '*all things are possible to him that believeth*'.

At the end of chap 3 the scene is set, the plan of Satan is in place... '*the seed of the woman*' would be destroyed. On the 13th day of the 12th month all Jews to be destroyed (see 3 v 13). At the beginning of chap 4 '*there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing*'. However, 3 v 15 '*And the king and Haman sat down to drink*'. Evil seemed to have won, but God was going to bring a great deliverance to his people.

The Decision of God's Servant:

Esther, the queen, hears the news and the request of Mordecai 4 v 8 '*charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people.*' This was a big step for the young queen, for to approach the king unbidden meant death, v11 '*except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre that he may live*'.

It is wonderful to know that we are encouraged to come into the presence of the king of kings (Heb. 10 v 22). We can come to him without fear, *'to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him'*. We read in Esther 8 that any decree written in the king's name can not be reversed (cf. Dan 6 v 8). When we come to God we can be certain, like Jeremiah found Jer. 32 v 24 *'and what thou hast spoken is come to pass'*.

In chap 4 v 14 we read some great words of faith, *'then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place'*. Mordecai was a man who knew his God and had confidence in his God. A man who believed *'what thou hast spoken is come to pass'*. Like other Jews he mourned and wept at the royal decree, but he had faith in God. He tells Esther that the opportunity to serve God is hers, but if she fails to take the opportunity God's purpose would be fulfilled and she would lose out (cf. Luke 19 v 40). We too can have the confidence that however unlikely it may seem the purpose of God will be fulfilled.

Mordecai brings a further challenge to Esther in 4 v 14 *'who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this'*. Esther had been made a bride of the king; she was close to the king and in a position of influence. None other of the people of God were in such a position and says Mordecai it is all *'for such a time as this'*. There are no mistakes or accidents with God, all is in his control and happen according to his predetermined plan. What about you? Who you are, where you are, the abilities and gifts you have....is there something to do for God that you can do? Are you where you are *'for such a time as this'*?

We can learn also from the faith of Esther. She is aware of the danger to herself (see 4 v 11) and yet she made the decision v 16 *'so will I go in unto the king...and if I perish, I perish.'* Whatever the cost she was determined to serve God and do his will (cf. Daniel's friends in Dan 3). Does this characterise us? Paul reminded Timothy 1 Tim 1 v 7 *'For God hath not given us the Spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.'*

The Deliverance of God's People:

We learn in the closing chapters whatever the plans of men (and Satan), God is on the throne and he remembers and cares for his people. We also find the explanation, the origin of the Jewish Feast of Purim. This feast takes place on the 13th and 14th day of Adar (Feb – March) – see chap 9 v 26 – 28.

In chap 6 and 7 Haman is exposed and judged 7 v 6 *'The adversary and the enemy is this wicked Haman.'* The wise proverb writer said Prov. 26 v 27 *'Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will it will return upon him.'* So Haman is hanged upon the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai.

There was still the issue of the decree that had been issued in the king's name, a decree that could not be reversed. How this is overcome is described in chap 8 and 9. Mordecai had been promoted to a position of influence and power (see 10 v 3). Although the decree of Haman could not be reversed, in chap 8 Mordecai and Esther work together to issue a second decree permitting the Jews to defend themselves. In chap 9 the appointed day arrived – 13th Adar – and there is a great slaughter of the enemies of the Jews. It was a day 9 v 22 *'which was turned from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day'*. This is like the Christian life *'suffering before glory'* Ps 30 v 5 *'weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.'* We can wonder with the Psalmist Ps 118 v 23 *'This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.'*