

PURIM
March 29th & 30th, 2014

Esther 9:17-22

March 16th was the celebration of the Feast of Purim.

- Purim celebrates the defeat of a plan by the Persian Prime Minister to kill all of the Jews of the known world, every single one. We learn about this extermination plan in the Old Testament book of Esther.
- Throughout world history, there have been several of these plots to exterminate all Jews.

Biblical trivia for the day: Esther is the only book of the Bible that doesn't mention God's name, however, God was very much a part of the events of Purim.

History is important to God!

“He who gives up his history, gives up his future” - George Orwell

- In Leviticus 23, there are 7 Biblical celebrations that God told His people to celebrate. All of the celebrations honor God and remember what He has done.
- Purim is a celebration that falls in the category of a post-Mosaic celebration because it is not one of the Feasts ordained in Leviticus 23. Purim was ordained as an annual celebration by Esther.

📖 Esther 9:23-32

Purim: An example of the Sovereignty of God

- Two thousand five hundred years ago, King Ahasuerus ruled his vast Persian kingdom of 127 provinces, its capital being Susa. Persia is today called Iran.
- During a great banquet of King Ahasuerus, Queen Vashti was to appear and show off her great beauty, however, she refused to dance before a bunch of drunken men and was permanently banished.
- Working in the palace of King Ahasuerus was a Jewish man named Mordekhi who was in Susa because his Jewish ancestors had been carried into exile by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.
- Esther, who had been adopted and raised by Mordekhi, was one of the many young virgins taken into custody as King Ahasuerus began his search for a new queen. Esther was favored by the King and became the new Queen.
- Haman, a very prideful man, became the chief of all nobles and demanded that everyone pay homage to him by bowing down before him.
- Mordekhi refused to bow down to anyone but Jehovah God, which enraged Haman so Haman decided not only to destroy Mordekhi but to destroy all of the Jews.

Lesson: God's plan will always be carried out!

It may take time or even different people, but it will be completed.

- Hamon was a descendant of Agog, the king of the Amelikites, descendants of Esau and Mordekhi was of the lineage of King Saul of the tribe of Benjamin. Centuries earlier God had pronounced a curse to blot out the remembrance of Amalek because of their treatment of the Israelites. *Deuteronomy 25:17-19*.
- In *I Samuel 15:3-8* God told Saul to kill all of the Amelekites, however, he was disobedient and left some alive which cost Saul his kingdom.
- 550 years later a descendant of Agog, Hamon, and a descendant of Saul, Mordekhi, are in battle over whether the Jews of the world will live or die.

Esther 4:10-17 “For such a time as this”

- When Mordekhi learned of the extermination plot against the Jews, he went into total mourning and got word to Esther asking her to go before the King to ask for a reprieve for the Jewish people.
- If someone went before the King without being summoned, and the King did not raise his scepter, that person would be put to death immediately, therefore, Esther was understandably reluctant to go before the king. Mordekhi told her that she may have been put in this position “*for such a time as this.*”
- After all of the Jews of the city had prayed and fasted for three days, Esther took the risk and went before the king. As God would have it, the king raised his scepter toward her.
- In the end, the king gave the Jews a reprieve, and gave Mordekhi Hamon’s former position. Hamon himself was hanged on the very gallows Hamon had built for Mordekhi.

Lessons Christians can learn from Purim and Esther.

1. The underlying principle of Purim is found in the Abrahamic Covenant. *Genesis 12:1-3*

- ◆ God was establishing His ultimate plan of deliverance and was establishing Himself as the only God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and those to follow.
- ◆ The Abrahamic Covenant acts like a boomerang. Over the centuries countries or individuals that took action to curse Israel had that action boomerang back at them. This explains the fate of Hamon. Every action he took against Mordekhi or the Jews boomeranged back at him.
- ◆ Ultimately Hamon sought to wipe out the worship of the one true God, as did his ancestors the Amalekites. What happened to Hamon is one example of the sovereignty and power of God. The world is littered with the remains of people and nations that have cursed Israel.
- ◆ Purim is far more than the defeat of God’s enemies; it is the deliverance of God’s people. Now that includes Christians because we have been “*grafted in.*” *Romans 11:17*

2. We must be willing and available to do God’s work.

- ◆ Before Esther acted she prayed and fasted. Only then did she act on her faith. Esther was willing to take a risk to save the Jews.
- ◆ God raised Esther to this royal position to risk her life to fulfill His plan on earth.
- ◆ Are we available to the Lord for Him to use us to fulfill His plan? *Ephesians 2:8-10*

3. We as individuals and as a nation must continue to pray for Jerusalem. *Psalms 122:6*

- ◆ Peace or Shalom is not just absence of war, but a total wholeness or completeness that only Jesus Christ can bring to that nation.
- ◆ What we do as a church must be done because of our love for our Lord Jesus Christ. *Revelation 2:1-6*

Are we like Esther? Are we ready to act even if it includes risk?
Are we listening to the Holy Spirit? Are we acting out our faith?
Do we want to be a light to our community and the body of Christ?
Are we here “for such a time as this?”

Be committed to following the leading
and prompting of the Holy Spirit.
Be an Esther!