

July 12, 2020 - Esther 9:26 -10:3 - "The Case for Purim"

Introduction

The people, who influenced human history the most from ancient times until today, have some things in common: they challenged the status quo. They were willing to take on the established norms, traditions and to make enormous sacrifices. Jesus Christ appears in every generated list, such as the NY Times, A&E, Security magazine, LA 500 and Wikipedia just to name a few. He is the central figure of Christianity and the most influential person in the world. I like to add Queen Esther and Mordecai to that list. You know why? Had they not saved the Jewish race from genocide, there would have been no descendants of David for Jesus to be born into. Thus, Satan would have usurped humanity. There also would never be a Sigmund Freud, Jonas Salk, Ruth Bader Ginsberg, Mark Zuckerberg, Steven Spielberg, Bobby Dylan, Barbara Streisand Benjamin Netanyahu, David Grossman and Michael Bloomberg just to name a few.

This closing message on the book of Esther may seem anticlimax because the exciting part of the story is over. The victory is won the Jewish people were saved from destruction. But the last section of the book serves a very important purpose to recognize Queen Esther and Mordecai as extraordinary people. It is designed to teach us the case for Purim.

The Jewish people still celebrate this story of Esther at the Feast of Purim. They set aside two days for this special holiday and enjoy family, food, games and celebrating. On the first evening they read through the story of Esther. This is a day that Jewish children come and participate doing their thing. They bring noise makers, little drums and horns to the service, and whenever the name of Haman is mentioned, they blow the horns and pound on the drums, booing and hissing through the reading of the book wherever Haman is mentioned. It is an exhilarating service to attend!

Today they've modified the celebrations quite a bit. And the children dress up in costumes much like Halloween costumes. The little girls will usually dress up like Esther, and some of the boys will dress up like Haman the bad guy, and others, will dress in cowboy outfits and everything else, just like you see kids at Halloween. Rather than trick-or-treating, they invite their friends over, and there is feasting and gladness. They invite their friends over and they have cookies and goodies that they share together like a Halloween parties with the children all in costume, and it is a time of festival for all during the month of March in Israel.

The second day is set aside for celebrating and for exchanging gifts very much like we would observe Christmas. All of this is in commemoration of the deliverance accomplished by Queen Esther and Mordecai. God's desire is that the Jewish people never forget this deliverance. It is a key day in their history and serves a purpose for all generations. That brings us to...

I. The Duration of the Celebration: 9:26 -28

1. In verse 26 we note they called these days Purim after the name of "Pur". In the Persian language this signifies "lot"; and the feast of Purim, or lots, has a reference to the time having been pitched upon by Haman through the decision of the lot. To this day the Jews have never forgotten the man named Haman. They are reminded of him each year at the Feast of Purim. During the theatrical reading of the Book of Esther in a Jewish synagogue at the Feast of

Purim, the congregation may be found taking the part of a chorus and bellowing at every mention of the name of Haman. The adults get to be kids too.

2. We observe that because of Mordecai's influence this letter is propagated in all 27 provinces and becomes a tradition. Verse 28 says interestingly enough within this tradition among the Jews the Feast of Purim is the only feast that will be observed after the Messiah comes. (Now we know that Jesus came 500 years after this event but they still observe it because they failed to see his coming.) The feasts of Tabernacles, Passover and all others will cease but the Feast of Purim will go on even in the days of the kingdom after the Messiah comes. Next we note...

II. The Authentication of the Celebration: 9:29-32

1. These verses show that the holiday of Purim was authenticate by the state of Persia. Queen Esther herself put her approval upon it and gave it full sanction in all 127 provinces according to scripture. Last, in verse 31 these letters established the Festival of Purim—an annual celebration of these days at the appointed time, decreed by both Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther. In verse 32 the command of Esther confirmed the practices of Purim, and it was all written down in the historical records of the Medes and Persia's.

2. Purim is not mentioned in any other biblical book, although it has been celebrated throughout the centuries in Israel. The book of Esther could be compared to a chess game. God and Satan (our invisible players) moved real kings, queens, and nobles. When Satan put Haman into place, it was as if he announced "Check." God then positioned Esther and Mordecai in order to put Satan into "Checkmate!" This holiday proved helpful during the many times the Jewish people have been threatened for annihilation. Recently I heard Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu mention Esther as he spoke of the threats launched by Iran. I am sure this holiday and its story served as an inspiration and motivation during the Jewish holocaust.

III The Champion of the Celebration 10:1-3

1. Now chapter 10 deals with the promoting of Mordecai. King Xerxes made him prime minister over the entire Persian Empire. He was given pretty much the office and the role that Haman once had. It is apparent from the scripture, vv.2 that Mordecai had many other great feats and that history has recorded them in the books of the Kings of the Medes and Persia.

2. The last verse speaks to the point that Mordecai was highly esteemed. However, we must note something of importance as we close this book and make application. He worked for the good of the people and for the welfare of his descendants. This means he cared about others and had a great influence in their lives. Would to God we had politicians today who were liken to Mordecai and Esther.

3. It is no doubt, because of Esther and Mordecai and their position, that when Esther's husband King Xerxes died, his son, also title with Ahasuerus in the scriptures, became the next king. Queen Esther, no doubt, had a great influence upon him, her stepson. So we learn the

important of the influence good people can have on the state of affairs. Scripture bear out that influence. We read in Nehemiah 2...In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes (King Xerxes son) as Nehemiah gave wine to the king, care was given to note the specific day these events began to show that Nehemiah prayed and waited for four months.

4. The date is important, because it establishes the date given to restore Jerusalem and its walls. We know from history that he began to reign in the year 465 B.C., which would make the year of this event, 445 B.C. In those days they used a lunar calendar so that the month of Nisan was part of March and April. In the year 445, the first of Nisan was March 14th. This was the day that Artaxerxes gave the commandment to Nehemiah to go to Jerusalem and oversee the rebuilding of the city. Almost 100 years earlier, the angel Gabriel had appeared to Daniel the prophet and told him the day that the Messiah would come to the earth. He told Daniel that from the time the command would go forth to restore and rebuild Jerusalem it would be 69 seven-year periods, or 483 years to the coming of the Messiah, the Prince.

5. Daniel 9:25 says that exactly 173,880 days from that day - which was March 14, 445 B.C. - Messiah the prince would be presented to Israel. Sir Robert Anderson, the eminent British astronomer and mathematician, makes a strong case that Jesus fulfilled this prophecy exactly, to the day, entering Jerusalem on April 6, 32 A.D., precisely 173,880 days from Nehemiah 2:1. And it was Esther's step-son who became King who gave to Nehemiah the permission to go back and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. The stepson of Esther gave the decree from which the beginning date of the prophecy of the coming of the Messiah. Four hundred and eighty-three years after that date the Messiah will come.

History is replete with examples of Christian's men and women who believe that God would work through them to make a significant difference; Esther and Mordecai are examples to us.

--- Gospel.

Application:

American founding father Samuel Adams expounded on this Biblical principle when he explained: "Nothing is more essential to the establishment of manners in a State than that all persons employed in places of power and trust be men of exceptional character".

Charles Haddon Spurgeon once said, "A good character is the best tombstone. Those who loved you, and were helped by you, will remember you when forget-me-nots are withered. Carve your name on hearts and not on marble".

Conclusion:

We learned in our Adult S.S. lesson this morning about Samuel a prophet and leader of integrity. Leadership is essential.

1. Jesus Christ
2. Albert Einstein

3. Isaac Newton
4. Leonardo Da Vinci
5. Aristotle
6. Galileo Galilei
7. Alexander the Great
8. Plato
9. William Shakespeare
10. Martin Luther King, Jr.
11. Socrates
12. Abraham Lincoln
13. George Washington
14. Moses
15. Julius Ceasar
16. Nikola Tesla