

Book Study on Esther
Mordecai thwarts Haman's wicked Decree
Esther 8:4-17
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Introduction

- Review books of the Bible: Genesis – Esther
- Last time we ended with
 - Esther and Mordecai were given Haman's estate
 - Esther approached Artaxerxes with another request

Let's pick up here in chapter 8 and verse 4

Bible

Est 8:4 Then the king held out the golden sceptre toward Esther. So Esther arose, and stood before the king,

Est 8:5 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:

Est 8:6 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?

Est 8:7 Then the king Ahasuerus said unto Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew, Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and him they have hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews.

Est 8:8 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.

Est 8:9 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.

Est 8:10 And he wrote in the king Ahasuerus' name, and sealed it with the king's ring, and sent letters by posts on horseback, and riders on mules, camels, and young dromedaries:

Est 8:11 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,

Est 8:12 Upon one day in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, namely, upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar.

Est 8:13 The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, and that the Jews should be ready against that day to avenge themselves on their enemies.

Est 8:14 So the posts that rode upon mules and camels went out, being hastened and pressed on by the king's commandment. And the decree was given at Shushan the palace.

Est 8:15 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.

Est 8:16 The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour.

Est 8:17 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.

Lets look a little deeper into these verses:

Est 8:4 Then the king held out the golden sceptre toward Esther. So Esther arose, and stood before the king,

- As a token that she had not incurred his displeasure by coming into his presence without leave, and that she was admitted to speak and make her request; see Esther 5:3¹
- she rose from the ground on which she lay prostrate, and stood upon her feet, in an humble manner, to make her speech, and present her petition to the king.¹

Est 8:5 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:

- Esther shows considerable skill in wording her request. She avoids speaking of the king's letters, but calls them "the letters, the device of Haman, which he wrote." It is the king, however, to whom the injury is done—"to destroy the Jews which are in all the king's provinces."²
- According to the constitution of the Persian government, no law or decree could be repealed or recalled. This is so far from speaking to the wisdom and honour of the Medes and Persians, that it clearly shows their pride and folly. This savours of that old presumption which ruined all, We will be as gods!³

Est 8:6 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?

- She explains the evil coming upon her people of the utter destruction of them, not barely an oppression, but an extermination of them; and she makes use of a word expressive of their relation to her, as more endearing, being her kindred; she and they being, as it were, of the same family, and with whom she could not but sympathize in distress.⁴

Est 8:7 Then the king Ahasuerus said unto Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew, Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and him they have hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews.

- The king, first of all, assures Esther and Mordecai of his kindly feeling towards the Jews, and points to the proofs of it. He felt, no doubt, that he was to blame for consenting to such a cruel edict, and now would convince Esther and her cousin that it sprang from no personal feelings of his own against the Jews.⁴

Est 8:8 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.

- Ahasuerus says in effect, 'I cannot reverse the decree. It is not, as you suggest, merely Haman's. It has been promulgated with my authority, and hence immutability attaches to it. But think of some means by which it may be neutralised.'⁵
- Whatever had passed the royal signet could never be revoked; no succeeding edict could destroy or repeal a preceding one: but one of a similar nature to the Jews against the Persians, as that to the Persians was against the Jews, might be enacted, and thus the Jews be enabled legitimately to defend themselves; and, consequently, placed on an equal footing with their enemies.⁶

Est 8:9 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.

- Sivan corresponds nearly to our June; it was the second month from the issue of the first edict Esther 3:12.⁷
- Mordecai dictated to the scribes, and ordered what they should write; and which were sent to the Jews in the first place, partly to ease them of their present distress, and partly that they might prepare against that time for their defence, for which they had sufficient time, it being now more than nine months to it:¹
- 127 provinces, all languages

¹ Gill, John. "Commentary on Esther 8:4". "The New John Gill Exposition of the Entire Bible". 1999.

² Ellicott, Charles John. "Commentary on Esther 8:5". "Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers". 1905.

³ Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible by Matthew Henry

⁴ Whedon, Daniel. "Commentary on Esther 8:7". "Whedon's Commentary on the Bible". -1909.

⁵ The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges

⁶ Clarke, Adam. "Commentary on Esther 8:8". "The Adam Clarke Commentary"

⁷ Barnes, Albert. "Commentary on Esther 8:9". "Barnes' Notes on the Whole Bible".

Est 8:10 And he wrote in the king Ahasuerus' name, and sealed it with the king's ring, and sent letters by posts on horseback, and riders on mules, camels, and young dromedaries:

- Posts.—The posts. Literally, the runners.²
- Young dromedaries — Hebrews sons of the rammachim. The word רמכים is found only here, and is of doubtful meaning. According to Gesenius and Furst, it means mares. But, as it has the masculine termination, others understand it to mean stallions. Rawlinson gives it the more general sense of highbred steeds. Perhaps the best version of all the words would be, riders of the swift coursers, the royal steeds, offspring of the thoroughbreds.⁴

Est 8:11 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,

- To stand for their life — To fight for the defence of their lives, against all that should seek to destroy them.⁸
- to cause to perish the power of the people, &c. — Either governors or governed, without any exception either of age, dignity, or sex.⁸
- Both little ones and women — Which is here added, to strike the greater terror into their enemies; and according to the laws and customs of that kingdom, whereby children were punished for their parents' offences: yet we read nothing, in the execution of this decree, of the slaughter of women or children; nor is it probable they would kill their innocent children, who were so indulgent to their families as not to meddle with the spoil.⁸

Est 8:12 Upon one day in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, namely, upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar.

- *i.e. March;*⁹

Est 8:13 The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, and that the Jews should be ready against that day to avenge themselves on their enemies.

Est 8:14 So the posts that rode upon mules and camels went out, being hastened and pressed on by the king's commandment. And the decree was given at Shushan the palace.

Est 8:15 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.

- such as the Persian kings wore, and were not allowed to any other, as Xenophon writes^{7:1}
- The "crown" was not a crown like the king's, but a mere golden band or coronet.⁷
- this must be an inner garment, since it is distinct from the royal robe before mentioned; though as the word signifies a wrap, or roll, it may design a turban, which was a roll of linen wrapped about the head;¹

Est 8:16 The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour.

- Light is often put for gladness, as 2 Samuel 22:29, and Job 18:5-6, because it is pleasant, and disposeth a man to joy.⁸
- And gladness, and joy — Here the sacred writer explains the former metaphor, by two words signifying the same thing, to denote the greatness of the joy.⁸
- And honour — Instead of that contempt under which they had lain.⁸

Est 8:17 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.

- "Became Jews" Applied for and obtained admission into the Jewish nation as full proselytes¹⁰
- There was about to be in each great city where there were Jews a day of straggle and bloodshed. The Jews would have authority on their side (Esther 9:3), and might be expected to be victorious. Persons feared lest, when victorious, they might revenge themselves on all who had not taken their part, and thought it safer to become Jews than remain neutral. But it can only have been a small minority of the population in each city that took this view. There was no sudden great increase in the numbers of the Jewish nation.¹⁰

⁸ Benson, Joseph. "Commentary on Esther 8:11". Joseph Benson's Commentary. 1857.

⁹ Scofield, C. I. "Scofield Reference Notes on Esther 8:12". "Scofield Reference Notes (1917 Edition)". 1917.

¹⁰ The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2010