

## Lesson 13     26 January, 2013

### God Delivers His People

**Lesson Scope:** [Esther Chapters 8 to 10](#)

#### Lesson Focus

Lesson 12 ends with Esther having revealed to the king the evil plot that Haman had devised to destroy the Jews. Haman was immediately hanged "on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai." The king gave Haman's property to Esther and Haman's authority to Mordecai. For several reasons, however, these changes did not bring Haman's well-laid plans for exterminating the Jews to naught. Yet remaining were the economic incentive of destroying the Jews (3:9, 14), the legal tradition of unalterable laws (8:8), the influence of Haman's sons (9:10), and the apparent hatred of thousands of the people (9:12, 15, 16).

Esther's new petition (8:5, 6) paved the way for the king to sign a new law, giving the Jews permission to defend themselves against their enemies. With his new position of authority, Mordecai was able to influence the rulers of Persia to support the Jews (9:3). What Haman—and ultimately Satan—had intended to be a day of annihilation of the Jews turned into a day of "joy and gladness." And "many of the people of the land became Jews" (8:17).

God's people are "the apple of his eye." When His people honor Him and stand for the right, He will make a way for them.

**Lesson Aim:** To identify principles related to God's blessing upon His faithful people.

**Theme Verse:** [Psalm 46:10](#). Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

#### Lesson Text

##### Esther's Request

[Esther 8:1-6](#) <sup>1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> Then the king held out the golden sceptre toward Esther. So Esther arose, and stood before the king, <sup>5</sup> 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: <sup>6</sup> 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?

### **Mordecai's Advancement**

**Nehemiah 8:15-18** <sup>15</sup> And that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as *it is* written. <sup>16</sup> So the people went forth, and brought *them*, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the water gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim. <sup>17</sup> And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness. <sup>18</sup> Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day *was* a solemn assembly, according unto the manner.

**Esther 9:1-4** <sup>1</sup> Now in the twelfth month, that *is*, the month Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put in execution, in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them, (though it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated them;) <sup>2</sup> The Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, to lay hand on such as sought their hurt: and no man could withstand them; for the fear of them fell upon all people. <sup>3</sup>

And all the rulers of the provinces, and the lieutenants, and the deputies, and officers of the king, helped the Jews; because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them. <sup>4</sup> For Mordecai *was* great in the king's house, and his fame went out throughout all the provinces: for this man Mordecai waxed greater and greater.

### **The Jews' Deliverance**

**Nehemiah 9:5** <sup>5</sup> Then the Levites, Jeshua, and Kadmiel, Bani, Hashab-niah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, *and* Pethahiah, said, Stand up *and* bless the LORD your God for ever and ever: and blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.

**Esther 9:27** <sup>27</sup> The Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so as it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to their writing, and according to their *appointed* time every year;

**Esther 10:3** <sup>3</sup> 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.

### **Questions for Study**

#### **Esther's Request**

1. How did both Esther and Mordecai demonstrate their loyalty to God's people in this continuing crisis?
2. List some things that may test our loyalty to the brotherhood.

#### **Mordecai's Advancement**

3. In what special ways did God prepare His people for victory?
4. Explain how the characters of Haman and Mordecai produced the contrast seen in Esther 3:15 and 8:15.
5. How should the New Testament church respond to God's miraculous provisions for their blessing?

#### **The Jews' Deliverance**

6. Explain the purpose of the Feast of Purim.
7. What are some benefits of having memorials?
8. What are some practical ways of seeking the wealth of others and speaking peace to them, as Mordecai did?

## **Analyzing the Passage**

Chapter 8 details the transfer of authority (symbolized by the king's ring) from Haman to Mordecai and the writing of the new law that would supersede and reverse the effects of the law that Haman had instigated. In the hand of Haman (Esther 3:10-12), that authority had brought perplexity to the city Shushan (Esther 3:15); in the hand of Mordecai (Esther 8:2, 7-8), however, it brought joy and gladness (Esther 8:15). The new law that Esther and Mordecai drew up gave the Jews freedom to defend themselves against their enemies. The Jews were, apparently, not the aggressors (Esther 8:13). In fact, they did not even lay their hand on the spoil that they could legitimately have claimed (Esther 8:11; 9:10, 15).

Much of chapter 9 relates to the formation of the Feast of Purim, the festive celebration that Mordecai instituted after the victory over their enemies. The Jews derived this name ironically from Pur, the Hebrew term for the lot Haman used to decide on which day the slaughter would fall.

Chapter 10 is a beautiful tribute to righteous Mordecai, who was not puffed up because of his position. A man of sterling character, he devoted his energies and his unique opportunities to the well-being and peace of his people.

## **Principles and Applications**

### **Esther's Request**

1. God uses willing individuals who seek the good of His people (Esther 8:1-6). Loyalty to God's people should move us to "seek that [we] may excel to the edifying of the church" (1 Corinthians 14:12). It inspires us to restore the fallen, to bear each other's burdens, to share with our ministry "in all good things," and to "do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (see Galatians 6:1-10).

### **Mordecai's Advancement**

2. God's people rejoice as He accomplishes His purposes among them (Esther 8:15-17). God is always in control, and His people are the apple of His eye. Whether God delivers us from severe circumstances or allows us to go through suffering and martyrdom, we rest in His sovereign superintendence.

3. The testimony of God's people encourages others to identify with His kingdom (Esther 8:15-17). Mordecai's godly influence brought rest to the whole city. As the people pondered God's work on behalf of the Jews, many chose to identify with God and His people. The New Testament church fills a similar role as "a city that is set on a hill." May we confidently proclaim "all the counsel of God" and consistently live the Gospel, not foolishly forsaking fidelity to truth in a misguided attempt to win the multitudes.

4. God can turn the enemy's intended curse into a blessing for His people (Esther 9:1-2). Satan has tried to destroy the true church through persecution, but many times the blood of martyrs has proved to be "the seed of the church." Today the devil is using material ease, social acceptance, and technological advancements to destroy our faith. Will we allow these things to destroy us, or will we by God's grace use all our possessions and opportunities to build His kingdom?

5. God uses persons of authority and influence for the blessing of His people (Esther 9:3). He used Melzar (Daniel 1), Gamaliel (Acts 5), and many others to spare the faithful. We enjoy many liberties and exemptions because God moved the hearts of people in the right place at the right time. We are called to pray "for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (see 1 Timothy 2:1-2).

6. God exalts His people in due time (Esther 9:4). Year in and year out, Mordecai faithfully lived his principles. Step by step, God was moving for his promotion and exaltation. Not always does God bring the exaltation in this life, but all who commit themselves to God's righteous judgment and humble themselves under His mighty hand (1 Peter 2:23; 5:6) can rest assured of future glory.

### **The Jews' Deliverance**

7. God blesses His people with power to overcome the enemy (Esther 9:5). The New Testament does not guarantee physical protection and prominence but provides spiritual preservation and inner power. We can boldly preach the Gospel in any culture; we can steadfastly resist increasing socialistic pressures; we can confidently insist on intergenerational uniformity in practice. Jesus has promised to build His church, "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

8. God's faithful people establish memorials as reminders of His bless-

ings (Esther 9:27). Memorials such as the ordinances remind us of many aspects of God's great work in our behalf. They are important aids to indoctrinating the oncoming generations. For those who follow our footsteps, are we leaving a legacy of commitment to Biblical conservatism or a future filled with compromise and apostasy?

9. God leads His people to peace and rest under His blessing (Esther 10:3). Today, this is possible as the Mordecais (the leaders), as well as all the people, blend their goals and efforts to build the church. Ultimately, this will be possible as the "great Builder of [the] church below" gathers His faithful bride to the perfect, eternal realms of glory. Are we diligently following "peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord"?

### **Important Teachings**

1. God uses willing individuals who seek the good of His people (Esther 8:1-6).
2. God's people rejoice as He accomplishes His purposes among them (Esther 8:15-17).
3. The testimony of God's people encourages others to identify with His kingdom (Esther 8:15-17).
4. God can turn the enemy's intended curse into a blessing for His people (Esther 9:1-2).
5. God uses persons of authority and influence for the blessing of His people (Esther 9:3).
6. God exalts His people in due time (Esther 9:4).
7. God blesses His people with power to overcome the enemy (Esther 9:5).
8. God's faithful people establish memorials as reminders of His blessings (Esther 9:27).
9. God leads His people to peace and rest under His blessing (Esther 10:3).
10. God's richest blessing comes to those who take His way (Esther 8:1).
11. Faithful leaders are instrumental in God's people receiving His blessing (Esther 9:4).

## Answers to Questions

1. How did both Esther and Mordecai demonstrate their loyalty to God's people in this continuing crisis?

Both Esther and Mordecai had the vision and the will to meet crisis after crisis without giving up. Esther was willing to come yet again into the king's presence at the risk of her life. Both showed wisdom and discretion in writing the new decree. Mordecai responded humbly to honor and added responsibility.

2. List some things that may test our loyalty to the brotherhood.

Our loyalty is tested when we are called to serve the brotherhood—leading out in worship, directing in outreach activities, doing janitorial and trustee work, and so forth. It is tested when we are called to restore the fallen, to bear others' burdens, and to share with the ministry and with all men. The need to sacrifice for others and submit our opinions to the group consensus can be a strong test of our loyalty.

3. In what special ways did God prepare His people for victory?

God had brought the godly Mordecai to a position of honor and authority. He caused "the fear of the Jews" to fall upon the people. He moved in the hearts of many in positions of authority to help the Jews.

4. Explain how the characters of Haman and Mordecai produced the contrast seen in Esther 3:15 and Esther 8:15.

Haman was a selfish man, who sought position and honor for himself regardless of the pain and suffering he might inflict on others. Mordecai was a man of humility and integrity, who sought the benefit of his people.

5. How should the New Testament church respond to God's miraculous provisions for their blessing?

The church should always rest in God's sovereign superintendence of all events and influences. She should thank God and rejoice whenever God moves in her behalf. She should continue to proclaim the Gospel consistently, to use all her means to build God's kingdom, and to pray for peace and liberty.

6. Explain the purpose of the Feast of Purim.

The Feast of Purim was established as a memorial of the great deliverance God gave His people. It was intended to keep future generations of Jews from forgetting the devilish designs of the enemy and the miraculous work of God.

7. What are some benefits of having memorials?

Memorials help to keep alive our faith, to indoctrinate the rising generations, and to testify to the world.

8. What are some practical ways of seeking the wealth of others and speaking peace to them, as Mordecai did?

We must put others' interests above our own, do what we can to meet others' spiritual and material needs, be ready to offer helpful service and encouragement, and contribute to keeping the church pure and strong.

### **Summarizing the Lesson**

The conflict of the ages continues unabated, but the victory remains undoubtedly the Lord's. Although many times God does directly intervene for His people, He has chosen primarily to work through faithful men and women—with all their fears and nearsightedness. Are we, like Mordecai, developing vision and fidelity and, like Esther, developing submission and cooperation so that God may use us in His "kingdom for such a time as this"?

### **Research Guide**

1. Research the Jews' observance of the Feast of Purim.
2. Study other accounts that portray God overruling for the deliverance of His people, both in the Old and the New Testaments.