

## The Great Reversal

Esther 4:13-16 NIV \*Although God is not mentioned by name, Esther is all about His providence. Proverbs 21:30 NIV “There is no wisdom, no insight, no plan that can succeed against the LORD.” Psalms 7:15 “Whoever digs a hole and scoops it out falls into the pit they have made.”

- I. The great reversal in the time of Esther.
  - a. The book of Esther is read every year during the festival of Purim which remembers God’s deliverance in this critical time in their history.
  - b. Last week we covered the decree of Cyrus to rebuild the temple and about its completion in the time of the Persian king, Darius. 42,000 came back to Israel at that time but many were still in captivity. Esther tells of those still in captivity during the time of Xerxes, the next Persian king.
  - c. He ruled over 127 provinces and held a celebration that lasted six months – it ended with a seven-day feast with his royal court and his queen, Vashti, held a feast for the women at the same time. On the last day he commanded her to come and present herself so that all could look on her beauty, but she refused to come. This led to her banishment and a decree that every wife needed to honor every husband in the kingdom. It also led to a beauty contest to elect the next queen.
  - d. Hadassah was a Jewish captive who was adopted by her cousin Mordecai who worked in the royal court. She was selected but Mordecai told her not to reveal that she was Jewish so she went by the Persian name, Esther. Shortly after she arrived there was a plot to overthrow the king that Mordecai found out about and reported to her, she told the king, and the those who planned it were hung on gallows publicly to warn against any other treasonous acts.
  - e. Then the king promoted an evil man, Haman, to become his chief official. Haman demanded that everyone bow down to him when he passed them in the royal court, but Mordecai refused to bow – when asked, he said he was Jewish. Apparently this would be equivalent to idol worship in his mind similar to bowing to Nebuchednezzar’s image. Haman was infuriated and felt it was too little to kill Mordecai, he wanted to kill all the Jewish people in every province. He went into the king, the king gave him his signet ring, and Haman rolled the pur – the lot – and the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the 12 month was chosen – the month of adar, as the day everyone could kill the Jews and take over their property. This decree was sent throughout the kingdom and there was weeping, mourning, and fasting in sackcloth and ashes wherever the decree went.
  - f. When Esther heard that Mordecai was in sackcloth she sent clothes for him and he then told her about the decree and asked her to do something. Her first response was that she couldn’t because of the king’s rule. The last queen was banished for disrespecting the king – this would be

disrespecting him and the penalty would be death. The above text is her response.

- g. The king extends the royal scepter and promises Esther anything she asks, up to half of the kingdom. She requests a banquet that she will prepare for him and Haman. Then she asks for more time and a second banquet. Haman leaves and Mordecai won't bow, so he goes home and complains. Builds a gallows 75 feet high (how angry he is and how public Mordecai's humiliation will be) and plans to go early in the morning to ask the king for Mordecai's life. He can now sleep well.
  - h. But someone else can't sleep that night! The king is restless so he read the book of memorable deeds and finds that Mordecai saved his life – what has been done for him? Nothing – who's in the court – Haman. What should be done for the man the king wants to honor? Humiliation – his wife this is the beginning of your downfall.
  - i. Esther's request if only for her life, Haman is hung on the gallows he made for Mordecai, Esther is given his property and Mordecai is given the signet ring. A new decree is made on when the 13<sup>th</sup> day of Adar comes the Jews have a great victory and Purim is established celebrating this great reversal.
- II. The great reversal in the gospel.
- a. 1Corinthians 2:8 NIV "None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."
    - i. Satan was given authority by Adam – (Luke 4:6-7) He offers it to Jesus if He will bow down and worship him. Jesus refuses to bow.
    - ii. The devil can't understand God's plan because he can only imagine what he would do with power. \*He thinks he has killed Jesus and defeated his kingdom. Colossians 2:15 NIV "And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."
  - b. All authority in heaven and now on earth belongs to Jesus so He makes a second decree.
    - i. John 3:14-15 NIV "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>15</sup>that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him." \*The human race was bitten by sin and so would die, the wages of sin is death, so Jesus took our sin on the cross – to make us right with God. 2Corinthians 5:21 NIV "God made him who had no sin to be sin<sup>[a]</sup> for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."
    - ii. They all would die unless they looked up and then life was restored. There was no human way to get better – only symptoms could be treated; to get better was supernatural and it came by looking up at God's salvation. "whosoever believes has eternal life." John 3:16

III. For such a time as this.

- a. We need Esthers. See your position and time in history as a placement by God for other people's salvation. \*Become fearless – your promotion or demotion can release the fragrance of Christ.
- b. We need Mordecais. Esther needs someone to call her up and encourage her. \*1996 – “I’ll plant the church if you call me every week.” That was 28 years ago and I still call Shane on a regular basis. His church is way bigger than ours and his church reaches many more through the internet than we do. I rejoice for him and for the kingdom – if he’s winning we’re all winning! He now has several Esthers that he regularly calls and encourages.
- c. 2020 Covid, masks, should we meet?, race, politics, vaccines – November I had a dream. “It’s my time to shine.” Isaiah 61:1-3 NIV “Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.” \*We are called to be a catalyst for revival and awakening – rise up, look up!