

Esther 8:3-17

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[0:00] All right, Esther chapter 8, we looked at last time we were together in the book of Esther, because last Wednesday night we were actually in Mark, so it's been some time, but we looked at verses 1 and 2 of the 8th chapter, we'll look at that again, but our focus this evening will be in verse 3 and following.

But the Word of God says, On that day King Ahasuerus gave the house of Haran, the enemy of the Jews, to Queen Esther, and Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had disclosed what he was to her.

The king took off his signet ring, which he had taken away from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai, and Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman. Then Esther spoke again to the king, fell at his feet, wept, and implored him to avert the evil scheme of Haman the Agagite and his plot, which he had devised against the Jews.

And the king extended the golden scepter to Esther, and so Esther arose and stood before the king, Then she said, If it pleases the king, and if I have found favor before him, and the matter seems proper to the king, and I am pleasing in his sight, let it be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hamadathah the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the king's provinces.

For how can I endure to see the calamity which will befall my people, and how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred? So King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, Behold, I have given the house of Haman to Esther, and him they have hanged on the gallows, because he has stretched out his hands against the Jews.

[1:37] Now you write to the Jews as you see fit in the king's name, and seal it with the king's signet ring, for a decree which is written in the name of the king, and sealed with the king's signet ring, may not be revoked.

So the king's scribes were called at that time in the third month, that is the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day, and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded to the Jews, and the Sadrap, and the governors, and the princes of the provinces, which extended from India to Ethiopia, 127 provinces, to every province according to its script, and to every people according to their language, as well as to the Jews according to their script and their language.

He wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus, and sealed it with the king's signet ring, and sent letters by couriers on horses riding on steeds sired by the royal stud. In them the king granted the Jews, who were in each and every city, the right to assemble and to defend their lives, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate, the entire army of any people or province which might attack them, including children and women, and to plunder their spoil.

On one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar. A copy of the edict, to be issued as law in each and every province, was published to all the peoples, so that the Jews would be ready for this day to avenge themselves on their enemies.

The couriers, hastened and impelled by the king's command, went out riding on the royal steeds, and the decree was given out at the citadel in Susa. Then Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal robes of blue and white, with a large crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple.

[3:13] And the city of Susa shouted and rejoiced. For the Jews there was light and gladness and joy and honor. In each and every province and in each and every city, wherever the king's commandment and his decree arrived, there was gladness and joy for the Jews, a feast and a holiday.

And many among the peoples of the land became Jews, for the dread of the Jews had fallen on them. Esther chapter 8. Our text this evening picks up in verse 3 and gets us down to verse 17, the end of the chapter.

And I want you to see, pushing back the evil plan. Pushing back the evil plan. The first two verses tell of the wonderful events of that day. We saw the historically dealings of that day, that Esther had appealed to the king.

The king had indeed declared Haman guilty. We've seen all of that. He was hung on that day. And on that day, the house of Haman was given to Esther, who then was handed over to Mordecai. As Mordecai was put in charge of it, Mordecai was presented before the king of his relations with Esther.

And we've seen the faithfulness of God, even in the type and the imagery that is there. What it is foreshadowing for us, how on that wonderful day of deliverance, the day when the enemy of God's people is finally judged, then the people of God are presented before the Lord God because of our relationship with our Savior, who stands in his presence.

[4 : 37] But yet, there's something still remaining in the book of Esther, and that is the fact that a decree had been written, that there would be a day of annihilation that was dedicated to the Jewish people.

Just because Haman was removed does not mean the threat was removed because that decree had been written in the name of the king and sealed with a signet ring of the decree. And the law of the land was that no law could ever be reversed.

The law of the Medo-Persian Empire was a law that stood forever. So nothing could come along and change the law. The law stated that there would be a day of judgment and a day of death. There would be a day of destruction, a day set aside at the end of the year for the destruction of the entire Jewish people. That was the law of the land. Now, sure, it was written by a man who was no longer in existence, but the reality is that the law still stood.

So it is for that matter that now Esther comes before the king. And now she is crying out once again. And it was not enough to have the enemy of the Jews, the individual taken care of, but rather there is the problem that is confronting the Jews, and that is their soon impending destruction.

[5 : 48] And what is to be done about that day of destruction? What is to be done about that day of death that is waiting upon them? And it is that deliverance from that evil plan that she is longing for.

And as we have seen so much in the book of Esther, there are so much foreshadowing, so many types that are here. We have to be careful, and I've said this before, and I'll continue to say this. We have to be careful in reading scripture to impose too much foreshadowing or types or imagery upon it.

Sometimes it just literally means what it literally says. There are other instances where we can read it, and we can say, yes, that is a fulfillment that is a literal fulfillment, but it is also foreshadowing a greater fulfillment.

We see that much in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament, and we see it happening quite often. One of the most familiar passages of that is in the book of Isaiah, where it says that a virgin will conceive and bear a child.

Well, if you were to ever go to a Jewish individual who is practicing Judaism, not just a Jewish person, but when it's literally practicing Judaism, they will tell you that, yes, it does say that in Isaiah 7, but if you were to turn to Isaiah 9, you will see the fulfillment of the prophecy that is in Isaiah 7.

[7 : 03] And to that, you would have to say, yes, you're absolutely right, because that sign had a particular meaning for its time, that is, that before this virgin, the child born to the virgin could eat curds and honey, then this matter would happen, and that indeed does happen in Isaiah 9.

But it is Matthew that originally points out to us that there was a greater fulfillment of that prophecy, and the greater fulfillment was the coming of Christ. And so we need to understand, I know this is a lot to say, but you need to understand, especially when you're looking at the Old Testament, some things happen immediately.

The best way I've ever heard it explained to me is I had a professor of Old Testament tell me one time, most of the time when you're reading in the Old Testament, you're looking at a mountain range, but you're in line with all of the mountaintops.

So it looks to most of the prophets that there is just one great peak, and that one grand peak is all they see, but what they don't see is the valley in between the peaks, which is usually referred to as the church age, that there is an initial fulfillment, and then later on there is a greater fulfillment.

There's much of that that we see in the Old Testament. So much even in the prophetic writings where it says that the rod of the rule of Jesus' hand will never depart from him.

[8 : 18] He fulfilled the first part of that, then we have the valley or the church age until the fulfillment of the second part. Now I say all of that because when we study the book of Esther, there are things happening historically, but they are pointing to a grander narrative that is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ alone.

And it is the fulfillment there that strikes us as wonderful and amazing. Sure, this is God's interaction with his people, but why did God choose a particular people?

And it bears answering is he chose a particular people so that he could demonstrate his goodness, his grace, his mercy, and his love, and his interactions with the people of the world, and he could show them what it would look like to live in covenant relationship with him.

So here, as we see in the eighth chapter, starting in verse three, where the grand problem before the Jewish people is there was a day of doom that was determined beforehand, a day appointed to their death.

Well, if we look a little further along the mountain range, we know that it is appointed unto each one once to die. And after that death is the day of judgment. There is a day of doom appointed to each and every one of us, a day of death.

[9 : 35] And after that death, it is the day of judgment, where we will stand and we will give an account. And the grand problem of man is that we need someone not just to remove the enemy.

We have the enemy of our souls who leads us, but the problem is not that we have an enemy of our soul. The reality is that we are rotten to the core of our soul. That is the problem. All the enemy does is take what is in us and exploit it for his own purposes.

Think Judas. When Judas Iscariot forsook the Lord, we looked at the reality last Wednesday night. He was the keeper of the money box, right? He used to peel for the money. And when he didn't get his way, what happened?

He went and sold the Savior for 30 pieces of silver. Why? Because the enemy used what was in him for his own purposes. Satan filled him, sure.

But he didn't fill him and lead him to do something contrary to his own nature. Because by nature, before Satan, quote, filled him, he was already pilfering the money box of the disciples.

[10 : 38] Satan used the opportunity. And the problem is we don't need the enemy removed. The problem is we need the plan, the problem we all face, to be taken out of the way.

We need to push back this evil thing called death. And that is the grand narrative that we find that is happening here.

And we see for that to happen, there must first be a worthy intercessor. There must first be a worthy intercessor, one who could stand in the gap between us and the one who is appointed the day.

Now, Haman wrote the letter, correct? He did. Haman was a hater of the Jewish individuals. He's counted to be the enemy of the Jews. Haman wrote the letter. But in whose name was that letter written?

King Ahasuerus. With whose ring was that letter sealed? King Ahasuerus. So it was the decree of the king that led to a day appointed for the destruction of the Jews.

[11 : 45] Now, we know the back story that it was really Haman that was doing it, but the decree was from the king, so it could not be changed. So there had to be an intercessor present with the king that was the originator of the decree that could stop that day from coming.

We are deserving of our appointment of death. We are deserving of our judgment, for we have all sinned against a holy God, and he is just in his condemnation of us for our sins.

And our appointment of death is our own fault, but it is by his decree. For in the day you eat from it, you will die. And when man took of the tree that was given to him by the woman that was with him, then that appointment of death was there.

It was a decree of the Lord God Almighty. And what we need is we need an intercessor that will stand with the originator of the decree that would intercede on our behalf, but it must be one that is worthy.

And notice here that Esther stands before the king and she falls at his feet and she is crying out.

And notice the refrain, if I have found favor in your sight, if I am pleasing to you.

[12 : 59] Now, we don't want to put King Ahasuerus on too much of a pedestal because we know from the text that he was driven by the lust of the eyes and the pride of life and all of those things.

And surely by being pleasing to you and having found favor in your sight, he was saying, well, yes, you're my wife, you're the queen, and I think you are very beautiful. And we don't want to go any further than that. But what we do understand is she was basing her plea upon her worthiness to make it.

If you have deemed me pleasing, then let me intercede. Give me the right to do so.

So the king is the only one who could push back the evil plan, but the only one that could move the king to do it would be one that was accepted by the king.

Now, because of his death upon the cross, Jesus Christ has found favor. It tells us in the book of Isaiah, in Isaiah 53, it's a very hard passage, that God was pleased to crush his own son.

[14:05] That he was pleased. I had to explain that to Brayden just this past Friday. We had that discussion of that it was Good Friday. He said, well, it's Bad Friday because Jesus died.

I said, well, from the world's point of view, it's bad. He said, yes. I said, and it's our sins that put him there. I didn't tell him it was probably Thursday. We can talk about that Sunday, but I mean, I know Good Friday is what we call it.

And some of you say, wait a minute, Pastor, don't do that. We'll get to that. It's okay. We'll see it Sunday. If not Sunday, then we'll see it following because it was the day of preparation. Anyway, needless to say, we go a little bit further.

And what we find out, he said, but why is it Good Friday? I said, well, because we need it. And it's good. He said, yeah, but from the point of view of God, it was bad. I said, well, we would think so until we read Isaiah 53 and it says that God was pleased.

I said, now I can't wrap my mind around that, but a holy God was pleased to crush his sin for our peace. That it was pleasing in his sight.

[15:05] Not pleasing as if he enjoyed it, but it was acceptable to him. It found favor before him for it accomplished the purpose and it made him a worthy intercessor to stand at the right hand of the Father and to intercede for us.

It is the worthiness of the intercessor. And we need to make sure that the one who is interceding for us is worthy and indeed Christ is worthy.

He has found favor. God declares not once but twice, this is my son in whom I am well pleased. He found favor.

And therefore, what does it tell us? That he grew in wisdom and stature and favor with what? With God and man. He found favor.

And he is a worthy intercessor to intercede on our behalf for we are his people. He took on our flesh. He can put a hand, as Job says, upon man and a hand upon God and he alone can stand in the middle.

[16:17] Esther is a Jew but she is a queen and she alone can stand in the middle. It is the worthiness of the intercessor. Notice the second thing from our text though.

Look at the weight of the moment. Look at the weight of the moment. For God has called us to the ministry of intercession as well. Right?

We don't have the position of Christ. We don't have the position to intercede in the throne room of God on behalf of sinful man but we have the ministry of intercession through prayer where we can cry out in the name of Christ and we can cry out on behalf of others.

And it is the understanding of the weight of the moment that moved Esther to take on this ministry of intercession. intercession. Look at what she says.

She asks for a decree and she wants something to be written and why would she go so far to beg this of the king and verse 6 says for how can I endure to see the calamity which will befall my people?

[17:21] How can I endure? And she says and how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred? Now surely Esther was safe.

And Mordecai was safe. Why? For the plot and scheming of Haman had been discovered. Surely the king wouldn't let anything happen to Esther and Mordecai but what about everyone else?

What about those outside of the palace? What about those outside of the walls? And Esther knew these are my kindred, my people and she understood that though the enemy had been removed the problem still remained.

there's still a day appointed for their destruction. And the weight of that moment rests upon her that she said I must petition the king where they are going to die. How can I endure?

How could I stand? How could I set by? Though I am safe, though I feel like I'm pretty secure, how could I bear seeing their destruction? They are my kindred.

[18 : 24] And it is her connection to them that causes her to have a great concern for them. And the weight of the moment was is there was a reality that was approaching.

There was a death that was soon coming. They had the privilege of knowing the exact date of that death. They knew the date of destruction. They understood it.

But the equal reality is this. Those of us that know Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior have found our place inside the kingdom, those of us who have accepted him and we have been redeemed and restored by him, we have this security on that day.

And sure, there may come a day of death and when death does come, but oh death, where is your sting? For we are more than victorious through Jesus Christ our Lord. But the reality is, friend, listen to me, there are innumerable amounts of our kindred who still do not know.

And the weight of the moment is is that the appointment day of death is just as sure and certain for each and every one of them as it was for us. And what ought to move us to go to the throne room of heaven is the reality that it is a certain doom that is awaiting each and every one and they are our kindred.

[19 : 41] They're flesh and blood like us. And how can we endure? It was Charles Spurgeon who said, if men and women be damned to hell, may they only get there as they crawl over our kneeling bodies as we cry out to heaven that they be redeemed.

May we know the weight of the moment and the reality that it is coming. We may be secure, but they are not.

And it is an appointed time. So may we intercede on their behalf. Third, we notice from our text the warning that is extended and I have to say this because it appears from our text if we were just to read it at face value, it looks as if the Jews have the right to go annihilate, to completely wipe out men, women, boys and girls.

And some people say that's just not fair, it doesn't seem right. Well, read the text accurately and notice what the decree written by Mordecai gives them the right to do.

It is a very narrow decree. He does not give them the right to be on the offensive, that is, he does not give them the right to go attack anyone. Rather, the Jews are given the right to defend themselves.

[21 : 07] That's important. And I want you to notice too when we read the rest of the book of Esther, that they are given the right to plunder but none of the Jewish people ever plunder those that they kill.

Though, when Haman wrote his decree, his decree was for the intended purpose of enriching themselves on the plunder of the Jewish individuals that were slain. But the decree written now is one to defend, not one to be on the offensive.

And that is, if no one attacks you, then you kill no one. But if they come and they attack you, then you have the right to defend yourself. It is absolutely in alignment with the Abrahamic covenant.

And more than that, notice that this letter was written to the Jewish people, correct?

Because the Jewish people needed to know they had the right to defend themselves. And in all 127 promises, it is written to the Jewish individuals in their dialect. But what does it also say?

It is also written in the dialect of the people of the land. And it is written in such a way that everybody has the opportunity to understand it. Now I say this because it helps us to understand even how God, how can God be just and how can He be righteous and how can He permit such things?

[22 : 24] These are questions we get asked. Well, if God is good, why does He allow His people to slay men and women and children? Well, before that event came about, because a number of people do die, God gave due warning in the third month that if you attack them, they will have the right to fight back.

Only those who did not listen to the warning chose to attack. They rejected the warning.

And in case we fail to realize that many understood it, it tells us at the end of our text that when the decree was written, many became fearful of the Jews and actually became Jewish themselves.

They knew the favor that the people rested under in the kingdom. And so by the time we get to the next chapter and we see people dying, know that these are people who died knowingly, willingly, rejecting a decree by the king that the Jews have the right to defend themselves.

They went to battle with full knowledge. Contrary to that was a decree written by Haman that just said, go kill the Jews and take their stuff.

[23 : 45] Big difference. Big difference. So I want you to notice the warning that was given. fourth and finally from our text, what we see here is really a word of encouragement.

It is really simple. When the decree was read in each and every province and in particular when it was read in the capital city of Susa, it says there that there was shouting and rejoicing. Not too long before this there had been weeping and mourning and sackcloth and ashes and dust on their heads. And now the very people that walked around in mourning were shouting and rejoicing.

And it tells us in verse 16, for the Jews there was light and gladness and joy and honor. In every place that this went out there was the same thing, light and gladness and joy and honor.

Why? Because the king is concerned about us. It was a word of encouragement that the king had made a way for that day to be avoided. He had made a way that an intercessor had stood before him.

[24 : 58] And the word from the king was the reality that though that day was still coming it did not have to be a day of dread. It did not have to be a day of doom. It was not a day of destruction. Rather it was going to be transformed into a day of deliverance.

They were being delivered from the appointed destruction that was given to them. That is the gospel message. The decree of the king is that those who know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior will someday find that day of appointment still coming to their door.

They will die indeed. But it is not a day of destruction rather it is a day of deliverance for then as Paul says they will cast off this robe of flesh and join to meet him in the air and they will be delivered from this tent to go dwell in a body that is made eternal.

The day of doom becomes a day of joy. It is a word of encouragement for the king is concerned and the king has made a way. Sure the day is still on the calendar.

They knew when we do not but it is no longer a day to be dreaded but rather a day to be anticipated. And we see this reality because they have pushed back the evil plan because there was found in the presence of the king a worthy intercessor.

[26 : 20] Friend in Christ we have a worthy intercessor who has pushed back the evil plan against us. The enemy already knows his day is coming. Death, hell and the grave have already been defeated.

Satan is living on borrowed time and he knows that. But the effects of his plans and purposes among mankind still remain. Many still pushing forward and going to a day of destruction and judgment.

But in Christ we have been delivered from such a day and it has become a day of rejoicing because of the word of encouragement that has come from the king and been sealed not with a signet ring but with his own blood.

And we find that in Esther chapter 8 verses 3 through 17. Thank you my brothers.