

## **ESTHER-----Keith Fordham**

Like Song of Solomon, Esther does not mention God by proper name. However, the Messiah's mark (Aleph Tau) occurs 110 times in Esther. **Aleph & Tau** are the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet and mean "Strength of Covenant." Jesus Christ is the mediator of the covenant to ensure that God's promise to Abraham "*all nations of the earth will be blessed through his seed,*" comes true. One of the 10 or more things the Aleph Tau marks shows is ownership. Even King Ahasuerus' wealth has the Messiah's mark. This teaches us that all wealth belongs to God and we are stewards of what God gives each of us. Ahasuerus's pride made him show off his riches as if he owned them and not God. His defeat by the Greeks over the next 4 years shows that pride goes before a fall.

### **DAY 1**

#### **First Read Esther, Chapters 1-2**

Here we are first introduced to Ahasuerus. The Greeks call him Xerxes and he ruled from 486 BC to 465 BC. In the opening chapter of Esther, we read about a party the king is throwing before he attempts to conquer the Greeks. Queen Vashti has the Messiah's mark through Esther 2:1 when the mark is removed. William Sanford says that in typology, this shows that Israel disobeyed and rejected God just as Queen Vashti disobeyed and rejected Xerxes.

The Kings advisors passed a law throughout the kingdom saying that every man is the ruler of his own home. As a result, Vashti was removed as Queen and her position was to be given to another. Even in Christian homes the husband is to be the spiritual leader in the house.

Four years passed before Esther was chosen to be Queen. During this time the Xerxes' attempted to attack the Greeks and was defeated. In Esther 2, Ahasuerus returns to his winter palace at Shushan 200 miles east of Babylon and goes about choosing his new queen. An orphan girl raised by her uncle was summoned before the king, her Persian name was Esther. The Persian name means star and indeed she became a star of hope, a star of joy and superiority for her people. However, the Jewish meaning of the name Esther is "to hide." Rabbi Jehuda says this is an accurate depiction as she was hidden in her uncle Mordechai's house and she kept the fact she was a Jew hidden from the Persians.

Mordecai was a good citizen in Persia. Christians are to be good citizens, but we are to share the fact that we belong to Jesus. Esther would, one day, be forced to tell that she was a Jew one of God's people. Do not be forced to obey the Great Commission, share the Gospel gladly and freely.

God is acting through every circumstance of life as seen here when Mordecai warns the king of a plot to overthrow him. Mordecai is unrewarded for his action at the time. Our service for Jesus may not be rewarded on this side of eternity, but God will provide crowns for us to lay at Jesus' feet when this earthly life is over. Serve the Lord with gladness.

## DAY 2

### **First Read Esther, Chapters 3-4**

King Saul's disobedience to kill the Agagites (Amalekites) would see dangerous consequences nearly 600 years later, in the time of Esther. Haman, an Agagite, had become Ahasuerus's prime minister. He was determined to destroy the Jews from the face of the earth. In so doing, he would destroy the line of Christ and stop God's plan of salvation for all mankind.

Over 500 years before Esther's time, Shimei a Benjamite of the house of King Saul, was cursing King David as he fled from Absalom, his rebellious son. King David said, "*Let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him; it may be that the Lord will look on shine affliction, and requite me good for his cursing.*" Later Shimei would beg David's forgiveness. However, David told Solomon to take care of Shimei after David died. As long as Shimei stayed in Jerusalem and did not leave the city, he could live. After a three year period one of Shimei's slaves escaped and Shimei left the city, chasing him. When Shimei got back to Jerusalem, Solomon sent Benaiah to kill him. Benaiah did as commanded and killed Shimei even as he held on to the horns of the altar.

However, Shimei had children and Mordecai was one of his descendants. Mordecai would be instrumental in saving the line of Christ. This shows that God is in control no matter how strange the circumstances.

Mordecai practiced civil disobedience by not bowing down to Haman, God's enemy. The disciples, in the book of Acts, were beaten and commanded not to witness for Christ. They also obeyed God rather than men.

Haman agreed with Satan and was instrumental in getting a law passed to destroy all the Jews. Although Mordecai and Esther were both of the tribe of Benjamin, God used them to save the lineage of our Savior who would be from the tribe of Judah. God will use you to bring men to Christ if you will let Him.

Haman cast "pur" or lots to choose the day the Jews would be killed. Proverbs 16:33 "*The lot is cast into the lap, but the decision is wholly of the Lord [even the events that seem accidental are really ordered by Him].*" AMP God does not gamble, He already knows what is going to happen.

Mordecai told Esther that she could not escape death and she had no choice but to stand for God's people. Mordecai told Esther that if she did not stand for the Jews, God would do it some other way. Esther said "*if I perish, I perish.*" In other words, like the three Hebrew children thrown into the fiery furnace, "I will do what is right whether I live or die." That is the kind of attitude with which we should serve the Lord Jesus.

The Feast of Purim gets its name from "PUR". Furthermore, **fasting has to do with praying** and Esther, her maids, Mordecai and the Jews in Susa, fasted for three days.

## **DAY 3 READ**

### **First Read Esther, Chapters 5-7**

Haman was so wealthy that he paid 10,000 talents (\$12 Billion in today's money) to have all the Jews killed. Haman never named who he would kill. Messages were sent as far away as Egypt and India to kill all the Jews on a certain day, 12 months later.

Haman built a 75 foot high place for Mordecai's execution. Esther had the king invite Haman to a banquet where he would eat with the king and queen. On the way to the banquet, Haman saw Mordecai and was filled with indignation because Mordecai would not bow down to him. Haman went to see the king with plans to ask the king to allow him to kill Mordecai.

Unknown to Haman, the Lord had caused the king not to sleep the night before. The king called for the Persian Chronicles to be read to him. There are no coincidences with God. The story of Mordecai saving the king's life was read to him. The king asked "Did I reward him?" The answer was no and the king felt compelled to reward Mordecai. When Haman entered the king's presence, before Haman could speak, he was asked "How can the king honor a man who most deserves it?" The reply was "Let him wear the king's robe and crown, ride the king's horse, and have a high ranking official parade him through the streets and have people bow to him." Instead of Haman getting the reward, he was made to parade Mordecai through the street and bow to him. You reap what you sow! Those who exalt themselves will be abased and those who humble themselves will be exalted. This truth is clearly shown in the proud Haman and humble Mordecai.

Esther waited for the second banquet with Haman and the king to reveal to Ahasuerus what she wanted to request of him. She requested that her life be spared and that of her people, the Jews. The king asked "Who would kill you and your people?" She told him that it was wicked Haman. The king was so angry that he stepped into his Garden to cool down and decide what he was going to do next. Haman had fallen on the couch with Esther to beg for her help. The king walked in and saw only Haman attacking his queen. He commanded that a bag be placed over Haman's head and that he be executed on the very pole he planned to nail Mordecai to. Salvation only comes through the Lord Jesus Christ. We must always stand with Him, His word and His people.

God says concerning Israel, "*I will bless those who bless Israel and curse those who curse Israel.*"

Although Haman, the enemy, was defeated the law of Persia for the Jews to be killed was not removed. Another way of salvation had to be provided. In the same manner, Jesus died in our place and rose from the dead to make a way for us to be saved from the punishment of the law.

## DAY 4

### **First Read Esther, Chapters 8- 9:5**

Psalm 39:6—*Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.*

Haman was dead and his wealth was given to Esther. The ring on Haman's finger was now on Mordecai's finger. Mordecai was Prime Minister, yet the Jews were still under condemnation by the LAW. Out of the one hundred million people in the empire, fifteen million were Jews that would be slaughtered in nine months. Long after the wicked are gone, their evil deeds still have an impact on people's lives.

Esther acted as intercessor for the Jews, asking the King to let his will be known concerning the Jewish race. Christ is our advocate pleading our case to God the Father. It is God's will that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

The law of the Medes and Persians, once written, could not be changed. However, the king tells them to write a new law that would counter Haman's law and he sealed it with the king's ring. The king was giving Esther and Mordecai a blank check. Romans 10:13 "*Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,*" is our blank check from God.

Mattoon titles chapter 8 as "*From Gloom and Doom to Joy in June*" He goes on to say:

#### **1. The First Decree of GLOOM**

The sentence of death was upon the whole Jewish race. The sin of humanity puts them under the sentence of death too. The Jews believed this decree and were sorrowful of what was to come. *The destiny of spiritual death for unsaved men and women must be believed by the lost and by the saved too.* Lost people need salvation through Christ and the saved need to get that message to the lost. Many don't because the reality of Hell has not really set in their souls. Many deny the destiny of Hell but it is still true. You can deny that two plus two is four. The truth of the matter is it is still four. Truth does not change.

#### **2. The Second Decree of GRACE**

This decree is a picture of the Gospel or Good News! Did the law of Mordecai cancel the first law of gloom? No! The Gospel does not cancel the law of sin either. The second decree declared how a person could be liberated from death. It stated how they could be saved from the first law of death. This is exactly the message of the cross. The Gospel explains how to be saved from the law of sin.

**The second law had to be believed and accepted if they were to find deliverance.** Ignoring it would have meant death. When the day of death came, they would have died if they were unprepared. Their enemies would have wiped them out. In the same manner, deliverance from sin comes by believing the Gospel and trusting Christ as Savior. Ignoring this truth will lead to eternal death in Hell. Have you trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior from the penalty of sin?

There is a tremendous message here for us.

## **DAY 5**

### **First Read Esther 9:6 – 10:3**

Isaiah 54:17—*No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.*

It took two days for the Jews to destroy their enemies. In Shushan, the capitol, 500 were killed plus Haman's ten sons. Throughout the Empire 75,000 were killed.

The Jews did not attack, they defended themselves and took two days to do so. On the third day they rejoiced. Although they could have taken the spoils of their enemies they chose not to. The Jews were like Abraham when he refused to take the spoils from the King of Sodom; there would be no occasion for anyone to say that the death of these people made them rich.

Remember the greed of Elisha's servant which gave him leprosy and King Saul taking plunder of the Amalekites that cost him his kingdom.

#### **Mattoon-Key Lessons of the Book of Esther**

1. God is in control. Worship and serve Him.
2. A plot intended to destroy God's people resulted in a fast which united and sustained them.
3. The book proves the truth of Romans 8:31.. *If God be for us, who can be against us.*

God is watching over His people still. A similar event took place 2,400 years later in 1953. Eight years after WW2, Joseph Stalin of the Soviet Union unveiled a plan to exterminate three million Jews in the USSR. This data was confirmed by Ludmila Lufanov, a Soviet librarian who worked in the top-secret archives in Moscow. Stalin was a paranoid enemy of the Jews. In the 1930's, thousands were killed, even loyal friends.

After the first ambassador to Israel, Golda Meir, visited the USSR, he stepped up efforts by killing Jewish poets, writers, artists, and many Jewish leaders in the satellite communist nations. He charged these leaders with treason.

In 1953, Stalin accused Jewish doctors of trying to assassinate him. These doctors were vilified in the "press" and it festered anti-Semitism in the nation. This is exactly what Stalin wanted to do. Stalin planned to hang these doctors and use it as a catalyst to inspire the people to riot and eliminate at least two million of the three million Jews. The surviving Jews would be sent to camps in Siberia and killed by angry masses on the way to the frozen frontier.

Stalin read his "Doctor's Plot" plan for extermination of the Jewish people to the Politburo in the Kremlin at noon on March 1, 1953. The leaders were told they would hang these doctors in Red Square on March 9th for everyone to see. The cabinet responded with a deafening silence and Stalin cursed them as he slammed the door behind him. The next day, March 2, seven days before this blood bath was to be implemented, Stalin died of a stroke. His body lay in state for a week and was buried on March 9th, which just happened to be the Feast of Purim. If you have not learned anything from Esther, learn this....

**GOD IS STILL IN CONTROL!  
TRUST HIM AND YOU WILL NEVER REGRET IT.**

