

The Advancement and Greatness of Mordecai

Esther 10

Esther 10 - *“And King Ahasuerus imposed tribute on the land and on the islands of the sea. ² Now all the acts of his power and his might, and the account of the greatness of Mordecai, to which the king advanced him, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia? ³ For Mordecai the Jew was second to King Ahasuerus, and was great among the Jews and well received by the multitude of his brethren, seeking the good of his people and speaking peace to all his countrymen.”*

Background Notes

As we come to our last talk on the book of Esther, here's a background note that I may have mentioned it before, but it's worth repeating. In the Dead Sea Scroll scrolls and fragments that were uncovered in 1947, all the canonical books of the Old Testament were found – except for Esther. Thus far, not even a fragment of Esther has been found. I say “thus far” because you never know if another cave will be discovered in the Judean wilderness near the ruins of the Qumran community. It's unlikely, but it could happen, and maybe some fragments of a scroll containing Esther still exist.

But Esther most probably won't be found, because the scribes of the Qumran community did not put a great emphasis on copying Esther. Why not? The obvious reason is that the name of God is not found in the book. The hand of God is certainly there working behind the scenes, but the name of God is not mentioned in the book of Esther.

The name of God is not found in the canonical book of Esther, and this probably explains why there are apocryphal additions to Esther in some Bibles. These apocryphal additions are *not part of the inspired text* of Esther. These additions were never considered to be Scripture by the Jewish people, to whom God gave the Old Testament Scriptures. As Romans 3:2 says, *“Unto the Jewish people were committed the oracles of God.”*

Let me read part of one of the apocryphal additions, about a supposed dream. “In the second year of the reign of Artaxerxes the great, on the first day of the month of Nisan, Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, had a dream. He was a Jew, dwelling in the city of Susa, a great man, serving in the court of the king. He was one of the captives whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had brought from Jerusalem with Jeconiah king of Judea; and this was his dream: Behold, noise and confusion, thunder and earthquakes tumult upon the earth. And behold, two great dragons came forth ready to fight, and they roared terribly. And at their roaring, every nation prepared for war to fight against the nation of the righteous. And behold, a day of darkness and gloom, tribulation and distress, affliction and great tumult, upon the earth. And the whole righteous nation was troubled, they feared the evils that threatened them, and were ready to perish. Then they cried to God, from whom their cry as though from a tiny spring,

there came a great river with abundant water. Light came and the sun rose, and the lowly were exalted, and consumed those held in honor. Mordecai saw in his dream what God had determined to do and after he awoke, he had it on his mind, and sought all day to understand it in every detail.”

Notice that the name of God is mentioned twice in this apocryphal addition. There are six apocryphal additions to the canonical book of Esther. Again, remember that apocryphal additions and apocryphal “books” are **not** Scripture - they are **not** inspired.

You may be wondering how these apocryphal additions got into some Bibles? The Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Greek in the intertestamental period (this Greek version of the Old Testament is known as the *Septuagint*). Apocryphal additions and books, written in Greek, began to circulate with the copied scrolls of the Septuagint (the true canonical Old Testament scripts). The old Latin version of the Bible was based on the Septuagint, and these apocryphal books were simply added along with the Old Testament books when copies of the old Latin version were prepared in book form. Thus it was easy for people to assume that these additions were also inspired books of the Bible.

In about 400AD a priest named Jerome prepared a new Latin translation of the Bible, known as the Latin Vulgate. Jerome included the apocryphal additions at the end of Esther, not as Scripture, but as apocryphal additions. English Bibles today that trace back through the Latin Vulgate contain these additions, but unfortunately some people consider them to be part of the inspired Scripture.

The book of Esther is the historical record of what really took place in history regarding the Jewish people during time of the Persian Empire. However, like all the historical records in the Bible, there are a number of doctrinal points and practical applications in the book of Esther.

In addition, we have mentioned that the book of Esther has prophetic implications. The anti-Semitism in the book of Esther is a *type*, or a foreshadowing, of the anti-Semitism of the last days. The books of Daniel and Revelation (and other prophetic passages) speak of a notorious world leader, whose number is “666,” who will spearhead anti-Semitism in the future Tribulation period. The meaning of “666” will be known at that time.

Haman is certainly a *type* of this coming Hitler-like End Time leader. This first “beast” of Revelation 13 will head the “revived Roman Empire” (so called because it will encompass the same areas as the old Roman Empire). Daniel 7 and Revelation 17 reveal that there will be ten End-Time kings who will be part of this revived Roman Empire. They will give power and authority to the Roman beast and assist him in his evil strategy.

The ten sons of Haman, who appear to have gone along with their father and his evil plans to annihilate the Jews, may foreshadow these wicked End-Time kings. Just as Haman and his sons were brought down and executed in a sudden amazing reversal, and victory came for the Jews, so these wicked anti-Semitic End-Time rulers will be brought down and eliminated. Victory will then be given to the Jewish people.

One other area of interpretation for the book of Esther should be mentioned. Some Christians have interpreted the book of Esther as an *allegory*. In the allegorical view, the inspired record in Esther is seen as real history, but it was written up in such a way as to be an allegory about the Christian life. In the allegorical view, Haman, who represents the flesh, and Mordecai, who represents the Holy Spirit, portray the constant battle between the flesh and the Spirit. They're in constant opposition to one another. As Galatians 5:17 says: *"The flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary to one another so that you do not do the things that you wish."*

In the allegorical view of Esther, King Xerxes represents "the throne of your life," and Esther represents your decision-making capacity. Will Esther make the right decision and yield to the influence of Mordecai, so that Haman is cut off, and the throne comes under the control of Mordecai? The application of this view would be: Will you yield to the conviction of the Holy Spirit and cut off the flesh? Will you make the right decisions, and let the throne of your life be under the continual control of the Holy Spirit?

A commentary on the book of Esther, entitled [If I Perish, I Perish](#), written by Major Ian Thomas, takes the allegorical view of the book of Esther. While this allegory certainly presents biblical truth, I'm not sure that the Holy Spirit meant the book of Esther to be an allegory. I think I'll wait until I get to Heaven before I make up my mind on this particular interpretation.

Doctrinal Points

1. The righteous are exalted and remembered in due time.

The righteous will indeed be exalted and remembered in due time - and this truth is certainly illustrated in the life of Mordecai. At the beginning of the book, events did not look promising for Mordecai - humanly speaking. He was the target of Haman's hatred for the Jews. But Mordecai did what was right, and God turned the tables. Esther 10 is an account of the greatness of Mordecai. *"Now all the acts of his power and his might, and the account of the greatness of Mordecai, to which the king advanced him, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?"*

We've mentioned before that Mordecai was one of the Jewish people who remained in Persia and did not return home to Jerusalem. Thus he may not have had the same level of faith as Ezra or Nehemiah, for example. However, throughout the book of Esther Mordecai was shown to be a righteous and just man. Mordecai sought the good of his people, and he spoke and acted for the welfare and peace of his nation.

Mordecai followed the exhortation of Micah 6:8 - *"And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God."* Mordecai followed this exhortation, and God honored Mordecai for his righteous life. Psalm 58:11 says, *"Surely there is a reward for the righteous"* - and this is still true today.

However, Scripture indicates that righteous people are likely to be persecuted in this life, so in many cases, the reward and exaltation of the righteous will not come until the final judgment. But ultimately, the righteous will be exalted and remembered and honored in due time.

2. The wicked are humbled and forgotten in due time.

1 Peter 5:6 says, *“Humble yourselves at the mighty hand of God so that He may exalt you in due time.”* Mordecai followed the principle of this verse, but Haman certainly did not. Haman is nowhere to be found at the end of the book of Esther. If people will not humble themselves before the Almighty God, He will humble them. God will see to it that they are humbled in due time - and then forgotten.

Psalm 1:4 says, *“the wicked are the like chaff that the wind drives away.”* Haman had his day of power and prestige in the Persian Empire, but we know the rest of the story. The wicked are humbled and forgotten in due time.

Practical Application

Let's follow the model of Mordecai!

Verse 3 says that *“Mordecai the Jew was... seeking the good of his people and speaking peace to all his countrymen.”* What a great model to follow!

Do we seek the good and the peace of other people - or are we too self-centered, and involved only in seeking our own good? As we share the good news of Jesus Christ with the people around us, and as we do what we can to bring this nation back to biblical standards and values, we are following the model of Mordecai - seeking to give people the best, and caring for the welfare of the nation.

Let's follow the model of Mordecai!