



Esther 7-10

CHAPTER 7

Let's turn to the book of Esther, and it's, of course, turning to the book of Esther, it's always good to know that God has His hands upon our lives, even in things that may seem disastrous at the moment, and yet God is working, God is positioning, God is on the throne, and all things are working together for good to those who love God, and are called according to His purpose, and it will work to the glory of God, I am certain. But we're in that portion of the chapter right now where it looks pretty grim and pretty dismal, as you see the thing from this partial vista. We can't see the whole story, yet.

In the book of Esther, there are places where things look pretty desperate, pretty sad; but God had positioned the people in those right places, in order that He might manifest His power, and His work.

So, if you remember in our last lesson, Esther had gone in before Ahasuerus, contrary to the law of the Medes and the Persians. She had gone in with great hesitancy, but the king raised the scepter. She went up and touched it, and he said, "Ask me what you want to the half of the kingdom." And Esther said, "I want you and Haman to come to a dinner that I will prepare for you." And so, the king and Haman went to the dinner, and the king after the dinner said, "Oh, ask whatever you want, and I'll give it to you to the half of the kingdom." It could be that at this point, Esther was still just a little hesitant, reluctant, frightened to really say what was on her heart. So she put it off, as we often do some of those decisions; "Well, tomorrow," she said, "I'd like you to come to dinner again, and then I'll tell you all that's in my heart." And so, it was arranged that Haman and the king should return the next day for the dinner that Esther would prepare, for the banquet that she would prepare for them.

And that night, you remember, was when the king could not sleep. They brought in the records, they read to him of how Mordecai had warned the king of the assassination plot, and how that Mordecai had not been rewarded. And so the king planned to reward him. And in the morning, he asked Haman what the king should do to a man that he wants to bestow great honor upon, and Haman, thinking, "Surely the king wants to do it on me, he's just going to give me a pleasant little surprise," told the king that he thought the king ought to put him in the royal robes, let him ride on a royal horse, and put the crown upon his head, and let him go through the streets, and let them cry before him, one of the noblemen, let him cry, "This is the man whom the king delights to honor." And the king said, "Great, do that to Mordecai." And so, he was, of course, chagrined. He went home afterwards. It was a humiliating experience, and he went home and told his family what had gone on, and he was warned at that time, "If that man is a Jew, you better be careful, because the hand writing's on the wall for you."

So, that brings us then up into chapter seven.

For while they were yet talking, he was telling his family and his friends about this horrible thing that just took place, the king's chamberlains came and hurried to bring him to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

Now, if Esther was reluctant to tell the king about this decree; you see, she had not yet revealed the fact that she was a Jewess. He didn't know her national identity. And it could be that she was just reluctant. She didn't know how he was going to react, though he says magnanimous things like, "Ask me whatever you want to the half of the kingdom," yet when you really get down to it, you don't know what their reaction is going to be. And if indeed she the day before was just a little frightened and thought, "Well, I'll get another day," which would appear to be the only reason why she would delay it, it was interesting how that the Lord

on that next day so exalted Mordecai, that it no doubt gave her courage. I mean, she could see, "Hey, the Lord is already beginning to work," and it was probably a real encouragement to her, as far as letting now her case be known before the king. Things are starting to turn our direction. The Lord is already at work, and she can see the hand of the Lord already at work. And so, it now doubt gave her a lot of confidence and courage on the next day.

So the king and Haman, verse one of chapter seven, came to the banquet which Esther the queen had prepared. And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What is your petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted to you; what is your request? it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom. And Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favor in thy sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given to me at my petition, and my people at my request;

So, queen Esther is begging for her very life and for the life of her people, for she said,

We are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed.

So, this is the first time now the king realized that she's a Jewess; but it is also the realization that he is he one who has sold them out, in a sense, for he accepted the bribe from Haman to write the decree that would eradicate these people. And so, it's just like a ton of bricks falling on him when she is there crying and pleading for her life, and the life of her people.

We've been sold out, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. If we had been sold for slaves, she said, I'd be silent. I wouldn't do anything. Then king Ahasuerus answered and said unto her, though I'm sure that he knew at this point just what it was all about, he said, Who is he, and where is he, that would dare to presume in his heart or do such a thing? And she said, The adversary and the enemy is that wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen. and the king,

angry, and yet, perturbed; because once a law had been signed with the king's signet ring, the law of the Medes and the Persians was that there could be no changing or altering of that law. Thus, the king of Persia was not an absolute, autocratic monarch, as was the king of Babylon, who could, whom he would, he would slay, whom he would, he would keep alive. He did whatever he wanted. Could change as often as he wanted. But not the Persian kings; they were subject to their own decrees. Once they had been signed and sealed with the signet ring, there could be no changing or altering.

You remember in the story, well, we haven't got there, yet; when we get to the story of Daniel, and some of you have been there already, but when we get to the story of Daniel; when Darius had been flattered by these counselors who were jealous of the position that Daniel had, and they were watching Daniel carefully to find something that they could charge him with, but the guy was so honest, so pure, that there was just no charges that they could come up with against this guy, and they said, "We're going to have to create something." And knowing that he was a very spiritual man, and that he prayed three times every day, they came to the king with flattering lips, and they said, "Oh, Darius, you are the greatest person in the world. You're the greatest king, and people need to recognize just how marvelous you really are. And to help them to get this kind of recognition of your greatness, we feel that you should make a decree that for thirty days, no one could pray to anyone but you in all of the kingdom; and should they violate this decree, they should be thrown into the den of lions." And with these flattering words, the king was puffed up, and he thought, "Yes, I am pretty wonderful, and it's too bad people don't know how great I really am, and maybe this is a good idea." And so, they had the decree all prepared and they said, "Look, we've made this up. We think you're so great, and we love you so much, we've already made up the decree. Look, just sign

it, and seal it with your ring." So Darius signed the thing, sealed it; and so these guys headed down to Daniel's house because they knew that he prayed every morning, every noon, and every afternoon. And they waited outside to hear if Daniel was going to violate the decree.

Now, when Solomon dedicated the temple, and we're going back, back, back; but when Solomon dedicated the temple, he said, "Lord, if the people sin, and they're carried away captive to another land, if they turn toward this palace and they pray and call upon Thy name, hear Thou from the heaven where You dwell, and answer their prayer, and return them from their captivity."

So, Daniel would open his window towards Jerusalem, towards where the temple once stood, it's been devastated, but where the temple once stood. He would open the windows towards Jerusalem, and pray unto the Lord for the restoration. So they were waiting outside. And Daniel opened the windows, he didn't try to hide it, and he called unto the Lord, and they went running back, and they said, "We've found a fellow who dared to violate the king's decree." The king said, "Who is it?" They said, "It's Daniel." And then was the king troubled and grieved. He realized he'd been snookered, and he sought all day, all day he sought to find some loophole; but these guys were attorneys, and they had drawn that thing up pretty tight. And so, he called Daniel in and he apologized, because even he as the king could not change the decree; for the law of the Medes and the Persians, once a decree had been made and signed, and sealed with the king's ring, there could be no altering, or changing of that decree. And so, he said, "Daniel, man, I'm sorry. I was a fool. But the God that you serve, great God, and surely He can deliver you out of the mouth of the lions." And of course, you know the story, and if you don't you can read it, it's in the book of Daniel.

But here again we find, and this historically follows the book of Daniel; this is some years after Daniel; about, oh, thirty years after Daniel, and here again, we find this same law of the Medes and the Persians taking force in this decree that was made by Ahasuerus. And so he sort of in a, you know, he gets up and he walks out into the garden, and paces for a bit in the garden, no doubt trying to figure out, realizing, "Hey, I've been had by this guy Haman;" and then secondly, no doubt, trying to figure out if he could possibly countermand the decree that had gone forth. What can be done? According to the law of the Medes and the Persians, you can't change or alter the decree, so probably trying to figure some solution in his mind.

And so, he, arising from the banquet of wine, in his wrath, went into the palace garden; and Haman came over to plead for his life; for he saw that evil had been determined upon him by the king.

He saw the king's eyes flashing, and he realized, "Man, I've had it."

Then the king returned out of the palace garden into the place of the banquet of wine; and Haman had fallen upon the bed whereon Esther was.

Now, in those days, they really didn't sit at tables to banquet like we do. they sort of reclined on couches, you know, and it was more of a relaxed kind of a thing. And Esther was on her couch, and Haman had come over and probably grabbed her feet, which in that culture was usually a way a pleading and begging; grabbing a person's garment, or grabbing their feet; and Haman had gone over to the bed where Esther was, and no doubt had grabbed hold of her.

Then said the king, Will he force the queen before me in the house?

What's he trying to do?

And with this, the servants immediately covered over his head.

Again, a Persian custom which more or less indicated the fact that this man deserves not to see the light of day. It's really just sort of, well, like when they used to put a hood over a fellow before they hung him. He doesn't really deserve to see the light of day anymore. And so they put this hood over him, as the word went out of the king's mouth.

And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said unto the king, Behold the gallows that are fifty cubits high, or seventy-five feet high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, they are standing over there at the yard in the house of Haman, or in his property there. Then the king said, Hang him on it. So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared of Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.

Now, before when Mordecai was plotting the death, I mean, when Haman was plotting the death of Mordecai, he was so angry, he wanted to do something dramatic. And so, they said, "Why don't you build a huge gallows right here in the yard to hang him on it. You'll be satisfied. You'll get this out of your system if you see that little guy hanging there." And so, he had prepared these gallows, had them prepared there in his yard. But now, he gets hung on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai, as God sort of turns the tables.

It is interesting to me how many times, God will turn the tables upon the enemies of his people, how God watches over those who trust in Him. And sometimes those very instruments that we are sure are going to be our destruction turn out to be the destruction of our enemy as God watches over us. I love the way God so often just sort of turns things around, just when you think, "Well, there's no way out. Look, there are the gallows there waiting for me," and then God just turns the whole circumstances of our lives around, and God delivers His people.

I think of the cross of Jesus Christ; how that the enemies of Jesus felt that they had triumphed when they hung Him on the cross. When they nailed Him there, when they watched Him die, I'm certain that the enemies of Christ thought that they had triumphed, and went to their homes to celebrate with sort of a smug kind of a satisfaction, "We've finally gotten rid of this fellow who was a threat to our position." Satan, I believe, felt that he had triumphed. But that cross in which the enemy thought that they had triumphed over our Lord, became His place of victory over the enemy.

It is by the cross of Jesus Christ that we have been redeemed unto God. It is by the cross of Jesus Christ that we have been delivered from sin. It is by the cross of Jesus Christ that He actually defeated those forces and powers that are against us. Colossians chapter two tells us that He defeated those principalities and powers that were against us as He triumphed over them in His cross, and made an open display of His victory. God turned the tables, just like in the story of Haman and Mordecai; it was just turned. And the cross which they thought was their victory, became their place of defeat; and Satan was defeated at Calvary.

Years ago, before the days of radio, when Britain was fighting against France a great naval battle, news was hard to come by. The people in Britain knew, though, that this was the critical battle; that the fate of England was in the balances. And they were standing on the cliffs of Dover, watching for the navy ships to come; be they British or French, they didn't know which, but a British ship showed up through the fog, and the fellow on the deck began to signal with the flags and the semaphore code, "CROMWELL--DEFEATED, THE BRITISH ADMIRAL." And when that news, "Cromwell, the British Admiral, defeated," was signaled to those standing on the bluffs, the ship was enshrouded in a fog bank, and so they sent out the news, the couriers went out from there with the tragic news, "Cromwell's defeated, and it's only a matter of time," they felt, "until Britain is going to fall," and just a heavy pall just hung over Britain as the

news was carried out. But as the ship made port, they got the full message, "CROMWELL DEFEATED THE ENEMY;" and instead of that sorrow and that great grief, it was victory, it was joyous.

And, you know, when Jesus was taken down from the cross, there went out the message "Jesus--defeated," and there was sorrow, and there was grief in the hearts of His disciples and His followers. But the third day, they got the full message; Jesus defeated the enemy; and there at the cross, He triumphed over the principalities and powers of darkness, and He made an open display of His victory. God triumphed through the cross.

Interesting picture here, the same kind of a situation, where the gallows intended for Mordecai became the ruin of Haman.

CHAPTER 8

Now, still we've got a problem. There is this decree that can't be changed or altered that's been sent out.

And so on that day did the king Ahasuerus give the house of Haman the Jews' enemy unto Esther the queen.

So, Haman was hung, and Esther was given the house as a gift from the king; and no doubt it was a beautiful palace adjacent the king's palace.

And Mordecai came before the king; for Esther had told of the relationship.

"He's my cousin." And so, Mordecai, who was honored earlier by the king is now brought before the king.

And the king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman,

He had entrusted Haman with a signet ring, and now he takes it off and gives it to Mordecai,

and Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

So, let him manage the house. She had her own house, the queen's chambers, and so she let Mordecai have the house of Haman.

And Esther spoke again before the king, she fell down at his feet, and she besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite, and his devices whereby he devised against the Jews. The king held out again the golden scepter towards Esther.

She came in again, this time weeping and crying.

So Esther arose, and stood before the king, and said, If it pleases the king, if I have found favor in your sight, and the thing seems right before the king, and if it is pleasing in your 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 of the king's provinces; for how can I endure to see the veil that shall come unto my people? Or how can I endure to see the destruction of my family?

So, do something to countermand this order.

Then the king Ahasuerus said to Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew, Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and him they've hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews. Write also for the Jews whatever you like in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring; for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse.

In other words, I can't reverse the earlier order; so you write an order, write what you want, and seal it with my ring.

So then the king's scribes were called at this time in the third month,

The order of extermination was to be in the month,

so in the third month, the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day of the month; they wrote another decree that Mordecai commanded to the Jews, and the lieutenants, and the deputies and the rulers of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, a hundred and twenty-seven, unto every province according to the writing thereof, and unto every people after their language,

so written in many languages to all the provinces,

to the Jews according to their writing, and according to their language. He wrote in the king Ahasuerus' name, and he sealed it with the king's ring, and he sent letters by the postmen and on horse back, and the riders on mules, camels, and young dromedaries;

I mean, postmen in those days had interesting vehicles; camels, mules, and young dromedaries, horseback;

wherein the king granted the Jews which were in every city to gather themselves together, and to defend themselves.

In other words, he gave the Jews now the permission to gather in groups to defend themselves. On the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, when the order was to destroy them, he is saying they can defend themselves.

And they can destroy and slay and cause to perish, all the power of the people in the province that would assault them,

So, anyone who comes against them, they are given the permission to destroy them and to kill them,

both their little ones and their women, and to take the spoil of them as a booty. And upon one day in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, namely, upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, March in our calendar, the copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all the people, that the Jews should be ready to defend themselves and to avenge themselves and their enemies. So these posts that rode upon mules and camels went out, being hastened and pressed on by the king's commandment. And the decree was given at Shushan there in the area of the palace. And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple; and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad. And the Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honor. And in every province, in every city, wherever the king's

commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews, they proselyted; for fear of the Jews had fallen upon them.

And so there's a tremendous reversal here; from the weeping and the wailing, and the mourning that the Jews were in, with this new decree comes joy, and gladness. Preservation is assured, because they can defend themselves.

CHAPTER 9

Now when this twelfth month came, the month of Adar, on the thirteenth day, that crisis day, when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put into execution, in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have the power over them, (though it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated them;)

And again, the Lord turned the tables completely. Where they were hoping to have power over the Jews, God gave the Jews the power over them that hated them.

the Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, to lay hands on such as sought their hurt; and no man could withstand them; for the fear of them fell upon all the people. And all the rulers of the provinces, the lieutenants, and the deputies, the officers of the king, helped the Jews; because the fear of Mordecai was upon them.

He had been made the prime minister, and so the officers aided the Jews in their defending of themselves.

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. Thus the Jews smote all of their enemies with the stroke of the sword, and the slaughter, and destruction, and did what they would unto those that hated them. And in Shushan the palace the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men.

That was right there in the palace. And it gives you then the names, the Persian names of the ten sons of Haman, who were also slain. I'll let you read those names.

Then the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews, they slew; but the spoil they did not touch.

They wouldn't take the spoil.

And on that day the number of those that were slain in Shushan was brought before the king.

They came and told the king, "There's been five-hundred killed right here in the area of the palace."

And the king said unto Esther the queen, The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the palace, and the ten sons of Haman; what have they done in the rest of the king's provinces?

How many do you suppose have been slain throughout all of the provinces? If they did five hundred

right here in the palace area, how many do you suppose they've slain in all of the provinces?

Now what do you want? and it shall be granted thee; what do you further request? it shall be done. So Esther said, If it pleases the king, let it be granted to the Jews which are in Shushan to do the same thing tomorrow here in Shushan according to this day's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged on the gallows.

Now the Persians often would do that. After they had killed their enemies, they would put them up on these poles, just as a warning, and just as a sort of a threat to sort of inspire terror to anyone who would think to rebel against the king, they would take the bodies of those who had been slain, and put them up on poles. And so, she's asking that the ten sons of Haman be put upon poles.

And so the king commanded it to be done; and the decree was given at Shushan; and they hanged the ten sons of Haman. For the Jews that were in Shushan gathered themselves together on the fourteenth day also of the month of Adar, and they slew three hundred men at Shushan; but of the prey they did not lay their hand.

They had the right if they wanted to take the spoil, but they did not do that.

But the other Jews that were in the king's provinces gathered themselves together, and stood for their lives, and had rest from their enemies, and they slew of their foes seventy-five thousand, but they did not lay their hands upon the spoil. And on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar; on the fourteenth day of the same they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

So it was the thirteenth day, the day of defense; the fourteenth day, they had had great victory, and so they were feasting, and a day of fasting, and a day of celebration, for they were preserved.

But the Jews that were at Shushan assembled on the thirteenth day, and on the fourteenth day; and it wasn't until the fifteenth day that they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness. Therefore the Jews of the villages, that dwelt in unwalled towns, made the fourteenth day of the month of Adar a day of gladness and feasting, or the holiday, and the good day and the sending of portions one to another.

Even to the present day, they celebrate two days, this feast of Purim; in the villages, in the countryside, they celebrate it on the fourteenth; in the walled city of Jerusalem, and in the walled cities, they celebrate it on the fifteenth. They still follow that ancient pattern from the Bible.

So now here's the proclamation of this feast, this feast that is to be observed from year to year; and the Feast of Purim, that is still held today in and among the Jews, and especially over in Israel. The interesting thing is that it has turned into pretty much a day for the children to dress in costumes, and it looks like our Halloween when you're over in Israel. I've been there several times during the Feast of Purim, and the children all dress in these costumes, and the girls dress in these beautiful Esther costumes, and Esther gowns, and some of the bad boys dress in Haman's villain clothes, and others dress as Mordecai, and they wear their mask and all, and they have a special cookie that they bake for this particular time of year called the Hamantasch; which, Haman is Haman, Hamantasch, ear; Haman's ears; and they shape the cookie sort of like an ear, and they have a poppy seed filling in it, delicious cookie; and so they eat the Hamantasch cookies on this day of Purim, and the day in which they still commemorate God's deliverance and preservation of their race through the intercession of Esther. So this is the decree by which this Jewish holiday was established.

Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters to all the Jews that were in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, both near and far, to establish this among them, that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, yearly; the fourteenth day in the villages, the fifteenth in the walled cities; as the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, from mourning into a good day; that they should make them days of feasting and joy, the sending of gifts to each other, and to give gifts to the poor. And the Jews undertook to do as they had begun, and as Mordecai had written unto them; because Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had devised against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur,

Pur is the casting lots. It is the Persian name for "lots". And that is the lot, it says,

to consume them, and to destroy them.

There is a bit of superstition with this casting of lots; it's to determine which day by chance, or by the dice, or whatever, would be the appropriate day for this decree to be fulfilled.

But when Esther came before the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked device, which he devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows. Wherefore they called these days Purim.

Now Pur is the singular, but Purim; you know that the Hebrew plural is the "im". So they took a Persian word and gave it a Hebrew plural; so you have a combination here, Purim, which is lots, after the name of Pur.

Therefore all the words of this letter, and of that which they had seen concerning this matter, in which they had come to them, the Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so as they should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to their writing, and according to their appointed time every year;

So, as this decree went out, they all said, "Yes, we'll do it," and as I say, they continue to do it to the present day.

and that these should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, e every family, and every province, every city; that the days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their seed.

It's to be a perpetual holiday throughout the generations.

Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with all authority to confirm this second letter of Purim.

So that it would become an official holiday.

And he sent the letters unto all the Jews, to the hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with the words of peace and truth,

It is interesting that the Jews said that when the Messiah comes, all of their holidays will cease, with the exception of Purim. They said that will be the one that will continue, even after the Messiah comes.

to confirm these days of Purim in their times appointed, according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them, and as they had decreed for themselves and for their seed, the matters of the fasting and their cry. And the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim; and it was written in the book.

Thus, an official Jewish holiday, and a memorial of Esther's successful intercession and of God's preservation of His people; turning the evil that was intended against them for good, turning their sorrow into joy.

And you are a child of God, and God will do the very same things for you. I love the prophesy of Jesus in Isaiah 61, where it says, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, to set at liberty those that were bound, to open the prison doors, to proclaim the day of the Lord, to give them beauty for ashes, and the oil of joy for sorrow." And how often the Lord does that in our lives; turns our sorrow into joy, turns our ashes into something you; you know, people make a mess of their lives. Their lives are like ashes. They just abuse and destroy themselves; but ooooooh, what glory it is to see the work of Jesus Christ in their life, turning things around, and making beauty out of the ashes.

Again, I think of the book *Harvest*, and these men that I've had the privilege of knowing, having the privilege of serving with, having the privilege of watching God's grace at work in their lives; and so many of them, their lives were so totally messed up, but yet see the beauty that God has brought forth, and the ministries, and the way these young guys are just impacting our world. And it is so exciting.

CHAPTER 10

And the king Ahasuerus laid a tribute on the land, and upon the isles of the sea.

Or the coast of the sea. So, a general taxation.

And all of the acts of his power and of his might, the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai, whereunto the king advanced him, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?

They very well could be. We don't have them. They have been long lost, but these things were recorded in the chronicles of the king's of Media and Persia.

But for Mordecai the Jew, he was next to king Ahasuerus,

Promoted to the place of prime minister,

and he was great among the Jews, and he was accepted of the multitude of his brother,

He was well received, and then I love this;

seeking the wealth of his people,

It is tragic that some people who are promoted to positions of authority use that position of authority to enrich themselves. So often, this is one of the problems of government in authority. Those who are placed in these positions abuse the position because they use it to make themselves wealthy. Mordecai, exercising authority in the God-given way, used that authority to bring wealth to the people, and he was seeking the welfare of the people; not his own welfare, but the welfare of the people.

I do believe that very few men are capable of really governing others. I believe that a man is really not qualified to govern others, unless he himself is governed. I think that any man who tries to govern others without the awareness of himself being under authority, or being governed, is a danger to society. And that is why I believe that no man can be president or king and exercise that authority or power rightfully, unless that man is conscious of his responsibility to God. I think that that's an absolute requirement for any man who's going to rule, to realize that he is not the end. He also is responsible unto God for how he rules.

You remember when the centurion, a Roman officer, had his servants come to Jesus in regards to a servant of his that was ill. And they told Jesus, "Oh, the centurion's a great fellow. He's done a lot of favors to the Jews. He's built a synagogue and all, and he really deserves your attention." And Jesus said, "I will come and heal the servant." And when he heard that Jesus was coming, he sent other servants, and said, "Lord, you don't need to trouble yourself by coming to my house, for I also am a man under authority, and I have under me men. And I can say to one to go, and he will go. I can say to another "Come," and he comes.

He's saying to Jesus, "I know what authority is all about, because I am under authority. I know how to take orders. I also have authority; I know how to give orders. I know what this chain of authority is all about. I can say to man, "Go," and he goes; to another, "Come," and he comes." But the recognition that I am under authority makes him then qualified to have authority. It's that man who isn't under authority that becomes a tyrant, that abuses his position. Only a man who is ruled can rule.

Mordecai was a good ruler, because he sought the welfare of the people,

and he spoke peace to all of his seed.

He brought peace to the nation, and to the people.

So, the beautiful story of Esther. One of the classic stories of the Old Testament. A story that is designed to show us God's providential care over His people; a story that gives to us the origin of one of the Jewish holidays celebrated to the present time. A story in which many lessons can be drawn for ourselves, how that if we put our trust in God, God will take care of us; stepping out in faith and commitment, God will preserve us.

Shall we pray.

Father, we thank You for the opportunity again of looking into Your Word, and seeing, Lord, Your providential care, Your over ruling government; how that, Lord, You do overrule in the affairs of man to protect Your people. We're so thankful, Lord, that You've called us to be Your children, and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. Help us, Lord, to rest in that confidence that God knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly will perish; and may we walk, Lord, before You, in a way that is acceptable and pleasing unto You. In Jesus' name, Amen.