

Queen for A Day Such as This

Studies in the Book of Esther

"Signeted, Sealed, Delivered"

Mordecai got a makeover – complete with accessories.

The last time we saw him he was wearing sackcloth and covered with ashes. In chapter eight he is made-over and goes out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, with a great crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple.

The most important accessory of Mordecai's new wardrobe was the king's signet ring. It was the official seal of Persia. Once pressed into wax or ink, it was the seal and signature of the king.

Mordecai's makeover was not just a fashion statement:

- The robes introduced him as the king's ambassador.
- The ring endowed him with the king's authority.

Look closely at Mordecai. **You are looking at yourself** – in a spiritual sense:

- You have a signet. Or it might be more accurate to say you've been signet-ed. When a person becomes a Christian, the Bible says they are sealed... with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13). It says you are sealed for the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30). God gives every believer His 'signet' by the Holy Spirit indwelling us.
- You are the king's ambassador. An ambassador is one who represents his or her country. As a Christian, you are a citizen

of Heaven. While on the earth, you represent Heaven as one of its ambassadors.

- You have the king's authority. You can declare, with absolute authority, the Gospel of Jesus Christ – calling upon men and women and children to either be saved or perish for all eternity.

Previously in Esther... Persian Prime Minister Haman hated Mordecai because he refused to bow down before him. Haman convinced the king to issue a decree allowing Persians to annihilate any and all Jews throughout the empire on a particular date.

Little did Haman know that Mordecai was the uncle of Queen Esther and that the queen was a Jew. She revealed her true identity to the king and pleaded for her people. It resulted in Haman being taken away and executed on the gallows upon which he had intended to hang Mordecai.

The decree to annihilate the Jews on a certain day was still in effect – and it could not be revoked. The Jewish population of the Persian Empire was still in serious danger.

Esther 8:1 On that day King Ahasuerus gave Queen Esther the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had told how he was related to her.
Esther 8:2 So the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai; and Esther appointed Mordecai over the house of Haman.

You'd think by now that King Ahasuerus would be a little more discriminating about who he gave his signet ring. With it a person wielded tremendous authority.

I mentioned that the signet is used in the New Testament as a metaphor of God giving you His Holy Spirit. Look around. Believers are an odd bunch.

You'd think God would be a little more discriminating about who He saves.

He's not. God is no respecter of persons. He saves all who will believe on Jesus Christ. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all come to eternal life.

Esther 8:3 Now Esther spoke again to the king, fell down at his feet, and implored him with tears to counteract the evil of Haman the Agagite, and the scheme which he had devised against the Jews.

Esther 8:4 And the king held out the golden scepter toward Esther. So Esther arose and stood before the king,

Esther 8:5 and said, "If it pleases the king, and if I have found favor in his sight and the thing seems right to the king and I am pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to annihilate the Jews who are in all the king's provinces.

Esther 8:6 For how can I endure to see the evil that will come to my people? Or how can I endure to see the destruction of my countrymen?"

Esther implored the king with tears on behalf of her doomed countrymen. So should we if we are to be effective in sharing the Gospel. We should implore God, with tears, on behalf of our doomed countrymen – the human race.

When we implore God with tears, we are not getting Him to be more compassionate.

The Bible declares loudly, God so loved the world... Jesus wept over Jerusalem, desiring to save the people. God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. His will is for none to perish.

When we implore God with tears, it is to get our hearts right about sharing Jesus Christ with others.

Esther 8:7 Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew, "Indeed, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows because he tried to lay his hand on the Jews.

Esther 8:8 You yourselves write a decree concerning the Jews, as you please, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's signet ring; for whatever is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's signet ring no one can revoke."

The signed decree of a Persian king could not be revoked. It could only be countered by another decree.

There were, then, two decrees affecting the Jews: one issued in death, the other in life.

You live in a world in which there are two decrees:

1. A decree of death hangs over all the human race. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23) and ...the wages of sin is death... (Romans 6:23).
2. But a second decree has been issued that can save any of the people who are headed for destruction. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16).

God could not simply ignore the decree of death He gave Adam and Eve. He told them that, if they disobeyed Him by eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, they would surely die. They ate; they died. It could not be un-decreed or undone.

But God acted immediately to counter the decree of death with a second decree by sending Jesus to take our place in death. It is a decree of life – of eternal life – for whosoever believes in Him.

Esther 8:9 So the king's scribes were called at that time, in the third month, which is the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day; and it was written, according to all that Mordecai commanded, to the Jews, the satraps, the governors, and the princes of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, one hundred and twenty-seven provinces in all, to every province in its own script, to every people in their own language, and to the Jews in their own script and language.

Esther 8:10 And he wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus, sealed it with the king's signet ring, and sent letters by couriers on horseback, riding on royal horses bred from swift steeds.

Words were written in every language and tongue in order to save the Jews. Messengers then spread the good news throughout all the lands.

God has given His Word, the Bible. He's preserved it – sometimes miraculously. It is constantly being translated into other languages and tongues.

Esther 8:11 By these letters the king permitted the Jews who were in every city to gather together and protect their lives - to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the forces of any people or province that would assault them, both little children and women, and to plunder their possessions,

Esther 8:12 on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.

The practical advice in these letters was for the Jews to gather together and protect their lives. Though few, they would be stronger gathered together.

It's still good advice. Believers ought to gather together as often as they can. God promises to be present in our gatherings. He can, and will, speak to us as we worship Him and read and teach His Word.

In Persia, the Jews gathered together on a particular day because it was on that day they were in danger of attack.

What day are you in danger? *Everyday*. Should you gather everyday? In a way, "Yes!" While we don't have meetings everyday as a fellowship – you can 'gather' a little bit everyday, either with God in your devotions; or through the day as you read or hear God's Word; or as you enjoy the fellowship of believers.

Too many Christians find themselves suddenly plundered by the enemy because they were not prepared for the attack.

Esther 8:13 A copy of the document was to be issued as a decree in every province and published for all people, so that the Jews would be ready on that day to avenge themselves on their enemies.

Esther 8:14 The couriers who rode on royal horses went out, hastened and pressed on by the king's command. And the decree was issued in Shushan the citadel.

The decree originated in the capital and then was spread to every province.

It's like coming to Church. You hear about God, about His decrees, about His commands, about His compassions. Then you leave – and you are to take with you what you've heard and learned to your province. In biblical terms, we say you are being equipped to do the work of the ministry.

Esther 8:15 So Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, with a great crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple; and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad.

Mordecai looked like the king. You are to 'look like' your King. To be a Christian is to be like Christ. You are being changed, day-by-day and moment-by-moment, into the image of Jesus. You are His representation to the world.

What should you portray as an ambassador? Four things are mentioned in verse sixteen:

Esther 8:16 The Jews had light and gladness, joy and honor.

1. Light – The word can mean *prosperity*. It is a sense of your spiritual prosperity, of your resources in the Lord. It is depending upon your spiritual resources instead of fretting about the lack of earthly resources. It is knowing and showing that God's grace is always enough for you.
2. Gladness – It describes a festival. Life should be a celebration. Whether you are abounding, and feel like celebrating; or you are abased and don't feel like celebrating; you should celebrate. After all, you are signeted, sealed, and delivered and on your way to Heaven.
3. Joy – Here it means cheerfulness and the accompanying rejoicing. You should raise the mood in your circumstances – not drag everyone farther down.

4. Honor – This word is sometimes translated worship; sometimes triumph. The idea is you can always worship because you know you will triumph in the Lord.

Esther 8:17 And in every province and city, wherever the king's command and decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a holiday. Then many of the people of the land became Jews, because fear of the Jews fell upon them.

Their gatherings were inviting and celebratory – so much so that many Persians converted to become Jews.

When we gather to be equipped for the work of the ministry, it should be with joy and gladness. It should seem as if it were a feast and a holiday.

Notice the Persians had the fear of the Jews upon them. The gatherings may have been joyous and seem like a holiday; but the Persians understood something deeply serious and sincere was taking place.

We should always be looking at our methods – to be sure they are biblical but also contemporary. The key, though, seems to be us. We need to be genuine and exude light, gladness, joy and honor. Then we will have meetings that are like a spiritual feast and a holiday. Others will look on and want to join us.

Think of it like this: It was not really advisable to convert to being a Jew in Persia. After all, there was still coming a day of attack upon which Jews must defend themselves. But Persians converted anyway – knowing the consequences.

Spend time with the King, pleading for people. Then emerge looking like and acting like a Christian.

