

Queen for A Day Such as This

Studies in the Book of Esther

10:1-3

"The Advance of a Lifetime"

Martin Luther, credited with starting the Protestant Reformation that we can trace our Bible-believing roots back to, had this to say about the Book of Esther:

...[T]hough I could rightly reject this book [Ecclesiastes], for the time being I accept it so as not to waste time by getting involved in a dispute about the books received in the Hebrew canon. For you poke more than a little sarcastic fun at this when you compare Proverbs and The Song of Solomon (which with a sneering innuendo you call the "Love Song") with the two books of Esdras, Judith, the story of Susanna and the Dragon, and Esther (which despite their inclusion of it in the canon deserves more than all the rest in my judgment to be regarded as noncanonical).

I know; it's hard to follow. The gist of it is that Luther called the Book of Esther "noncanonical," meaning he thought it should not be in the Bible.

Why would he think that? Esther is odd in that never, not even once, does the word "God" appear. It is, in fact, the only book in the Bible that doesn't mention God in any way.

Strangely enough, the book of Esther is the only Old Testament book (the only books around at the time, mind you) not discovered at Qumran amongst the Dead Sea Scrolls.

I pointed out that the heroine, Esther, was not only not walking with the Lord at the start of the book; she was positively living in sin.

Ah, but there is one overriding spiritual truth driven home by this book despite all those things. In some ways, it is more powerful because of those things.

It is the providence of God, meaning, simply, that God provides for Himself for the protection and progress of His plan of redemption.

And He does it without violating anyone's free will to choose.

My summary of the book would read, "Without violating anyone's free will, God, by His providence, protected and preserved the Jews in order that His plan of redemption might make progress."

Queen Vashti, a Persian, was deposed and Esther, a closet Jew, became queen and saved her people. Haman, once exalted, was brought low, and Mordecai and the Jews, a subjected people, were exalted and honored. A decree that would have wiped out the Jews was overruled by one which led to the destruction of nearly 76,000 enemies of the Jews.

Mordecai made an important statement concerning the relationship between God's overruling providence and mankind's free will.

Est 4:14 For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

God would see to it the Jews survived. He didn't need Esther's co-operation. He could provide for Himself. She was free to do as she pleased, only her decisions would, of course, have consequences.

You and I can have the utmost confidence that God will provide for His plan for the ages, and for His plan for our lives. We are free within His providence to experience the blessings of obedience, or the consequences of disobedience.

As for the plan of God, we are living in the time between the two comings of Jesus Christ to the earth. We're getting a strong dose of this on Sunday mornings, in our study of the Gospel of Mark; but it's something we cannot emphasize too much.

We are not living in the kingdom of God, but, rather, the kingdom of Satan, who is called the ruler of this world, the prince of the power of the air.

The apostle Peter, thinking about this age and our responsibilities, made the statement, "how should we then live?"

All of us are working out the answer to that question daily as we seek to walk with Jesus, and work for Him.

With that in mind, I think we can take a look at Mordecai, living among the Persians, and glean some insight as to how we should (then) live.

In a world dominated by a godless ruler, Mordecai nevertheless was elevated and enabled to help further God's cause.

[Est 10:1](#) And King Ahasuerus imposed tribute on the land and on the islands of the sea.

That's what godless rulers do. They exert their influence, their authority, over the less powerful, and demand something to show their submission.

This verse is reminding us that, despite the relative godlessness or godliness of the country we might live in, overall, the kingdoms of this world are Satan's.

It's why he could offer them to Jesus during the wilderness temptation.

It's why, in the Book of the Revelation, we read of a future time when, "the kingdoms of the world... become the kingdoms" of Jesus Christ, and "He shall reign."

Thus as we see Mordecai described, it is against this dark background - on this unlit stage. He shines forth; and so should we.

Est 10:2 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?

Just as you think the writer is going to mention "the acts of his power and might," he breaks off to highlight Mordecai instead.

The devil is powerful; he is mighty. But he is defeated.

Think of the Book of Acts, which tells of the spreading of the Gospel from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria and to the ends of the world.

The devil constantly flexed his power and might against a rag-tag group of men and women with little in the way of resources.

But in every way that counts, they went on, victoriously, as the devil's strategies, one after another, failed to silence them.

The "greatness" we see is the glory of God in Jesus Christ, empowering us, enabling us. Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.

In Persia, it was Ahasuerus who advanced Mordecai. I'm not suggesting that Satan advances us; he does not.

Just as every detail in a parable need not have a deep, hidden meaning, so in our comparing ourselves to Mordecai, some details will not translate over.

Alternately, we could say that the devil **does** advance us, in that often his efforts backfire. Geno is teaching the Book of Acts on Wednesday mornings to our Men's Fellowship. We recently covered the story of Paul and Silas being imprisoned in the dungeon at Philippi, after being beaten.

Satan's strategy to silence them backfired when Paul invoked his Roman citizenship, terrifying the magistrates. He left behind a small but vibrant and Spirit-filled church - right on Satan's beach.

Est 10:3 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.

I'm reminded of Joseph and Pharaoh, and of Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar. Both men were elevated to the second chair, and both excelled - despite all the pressure to the contrary.

I wouldn't put Mordecai in the same class as Joseph and Daniel... Except that I wouldn't put myself in that class either. I can nevertheless dare to be a Joseph, or a Daniel, because, from God's perspective, if I'm saved, I am no less righteous than they or any other believer.

If Mordecai seems second string to us, he still was used mightily by God. We can be, too.

You and I can do what Mordecai did: seek the good of God's people, and speak peace to them.

Those are big, broad categories that can encompass any number of godly actions and reactions to the members of the body of Jesus on the earth - the church.

Just ask yourself, "Am I seeking the good of other Christians?" If you answer, "Yes," then what would you cite as evidence?

Ask yourself, "Am I speaking peace to other believers?" Do folks walk away from an encounter with you built-up, or torn-down; ready to serve, or wanting to quit?

I get torn-down plenty by the devil. I come here to be built-up in my most holy faith.

Let's build something together.

