

The Book of Esther – Part Nine

March 21st, 2010

Adapted from John Herbert's Notes; Presented by Ralph Alley

1). Last week we saw that Haman's promotion to second-in-command to the king brought with it (within this pagan government) the status of a deity. As a result of Mordecai refusing to worship Haman as a god, and because of Mordecai's position (seen seated in the king's gate) in the kingdom, Haman determines to annihilate the entire Jewish race within the kingdom of Ahasuerus –

Esther 3:10

So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. 11 And the king said to Haman, "The money and the people are given to you, to do with them as seems good to you." 12 Then the king's scribes were called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and a decree was written according to all that Haman commanded-to the king's satraps, to the governors who were over each province, to the officials of all people, to every province according to its script, and to every people in their language. In the name of King Ahasuerus it was written, and sealed with the king's signet ring. 13 And the letters were sent by couriers into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day...

a). Last week we also looked at how this presents a picture of what will happen with respect to Antichrist and the Jewish people during the final 3 ½ years of the Tribulation, when Antichrist will seek to annihilate the entire Jewish people within his kingdom. Antichrist will declare himself to be God and the Jews will refuse to worship him. And because of this, and their position as God's firstborn son, Antichrist will bring down his full wrath upon the Jews.

b). However, if we look at how events are recorded in prophecy concerning the beginning of Daniel's 70th week (the beginning of the Tribulation),

everything at that time will have the appearance of going well for the Jews

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Daniel 9:27

Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,

c). Notice that this says that there is a covenant made between Israel and the nations at the beginning of the week. This covenant will apparently resolve the problem that has plagued the Middle East for generations - even to the extent that the Jews will rebuild their temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem and for the first time since 70AD will once again begin the daily sacrifices and offerings as given in the Law of Moses. We can assume that they will also begin the celebration of their feasts, as having a Temple will now give them that focal point.

d). However, as we see in the second part of our Daniel 9 scripture, during the middle of the week, after 3 ½ years, when Antichrist has been given Satan's throne, power and great authority (having now become world ruler), he will bring an end to sacrifice and offering. Jesus Himself tells of this event in -

Mark 13:14

"So when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not" (let the reader understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

e). And further detail is given by Paul to the Church in Thessalonica -

2 Thessalonians 2:3

Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

f). So in the middle of Daniel's 70th week, Antichrist (the seed of Satan - a Gentile), will enter the newly built Jewish Temple and declare himself to be God - demanding that the whole world, including the Jews, worship him as God. When the Jews refuse, as typified in Mordecai, the plan to enact genocide on the entire Jewish race will be unleashed -

Mark 13:19

"For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be.

g). Jerusalem will be destroyed, the nation of Israel will cease to exist, and the Jews will be scattered amongst the nations and given into Antichrist's hands for 'a time, times and half a time'.

2). And here is one of the most poignant ironies to be found in scripture - at the height of his power, when the whole world is in his hand, Antichrist sets in motion a series of events designed to exterminate the Jews, and yet it is these very events themselves that will bring about the Jews deliverance and his own destruction.

3). What we have just described should not be an unfamiliar picture for us, because we have already seen it played out in the parallel type in Exodus. In that account in Exodus we see where the Jewish people held captive in Egypt are persecuted by the Assyrian Pharaoh with a view to their destruction.

a). But because of the harshness of Pharaoh's actions, the Jewish people are brought to such a deplorable condition that they have no alternative but to cry out to the God of their fathers.

b). Exodus 2:23

Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage. 24 So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with

Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged them.

c). And when God's people cry out to Him, He hears and He acts -

Exodus 3:7

And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. 8 "So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.

d). God Himself will act on behalf of His people, and so Pharaoh , the most powerful man in the known world of his day, is powerless to do anything about it.

e). And not only does God bring about the deliverance of His people, but He also acts in accordance with His unchangeable word as it applies to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob recorded in the beginning pages of Scripture -

Genesis 12:3

I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you;

f). And in another facet of this same picture, we can see that Pharaoh reaps what he has sown, in accordance with the laws of the harvest -

Galatians 6:7

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

g). And in Pharaoh's case, that recorded in Hosea would give us great insight into what this looked like for him. And not only for him, but also

for Haman and for Antichrist – for that which is reaped (whether a blessing or a cursing) is abundantly more than that which is sown –

Hosea 8:7

"They sow the wind, And reap the whirlwind.

h). Pharaoh “sows the wind” by setting his anti-Semitic hand against the people of God, the word of God, and consequently God Himself. And so what he reaps is “the whirlwind.” He receives the complete destruction of his army and the absolute overthrow of his kingdom, which was the most powerful Gentile nation in the world. This is done as God works through the hand of Moses, a Jew – the leader of the very people he wanted to exterminate –

Exodus 14:26

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen." 27 And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and when the morning appeared, the sea returned to its full depth, while the Egyptians were fleeing into it. So the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. 28 Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained.

i). And all this occurs with Pharaoh’s certain knowledge that Israel, and not Egypt, occupies the position of rulership within God’s economy –

Exodus 4:22

"Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: "Israel is My son, My firstborn.

j). Again a situation he is powerless to change.

k). Exodus, and Esther, provide us with different perspectives of the same

picture – hence the reason why we must compare scripture with scripture and take ‘here a little, there a little’.

4). Another variation on this same theme can be seen in the Book of Daniel with respect to Nebuchadnezzar’s vision. God has used and is using the Gentile nations as the instrument by which He will bring about Israel’s repentance. But those same nations, although participating in God’s revealed purpose, will also be judged for their actions – just as Pharaoh was.

a). They sow the wind of persecution and *attempted* genocide, and so reap the whirlwind of utter destruction that is brought about as a result of the actions of the very people they have sought to exterminate –

Daniel 2:40

"And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. 41

"Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. 42

"And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. 43 "As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. 44 "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. 45 "Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this.

b). We see that it is the **entire** image standing in Babylon that is shattered by the “stone cut out of the mountain without hands,” demonstrating

clearly the absolute and complete destruction of Gentile world power – the power that has been wielded over the Jews since the days of Nebuchadnezzar.

5). And this, as we have seen in our many weeks of study, is the very same picture presented to us in Esther. And Chapter 3 concludes with the king's couriers taking the decree issued against the Jews to all parts of Ahasuerus's kingdom, with the determination that they should be annihilated in a single day.

a). The impending extermination of the Jews then produces the following result, which is recorded at the beginning of Chapter 4 –

Esther 4:1

When Mordecai learned all that had happened, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city. He cried out with a loud and bitter cry. 2 He went as far as the front of the king's gate, for no one might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. 3 And in every province where the king's command and decree arrived, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

b). So serious is the situation, that action is required from the queen herself if disaster is to be averted. And this action could put her own life in jeopardy –

Esther 4:6

So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the city square that was in front of the king's gate. 7 And Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries to destroy the Jews. 8 He also gave him a copy of the written decree for their destruction, which was given at Shushan, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her, and that he might command her to go in to the king to make supplication to him and plead before him for her people. 9 So Hathach returned and told Esther the words of Mordecai. 10 Then Esther spoke to Hathach, and

gave him a command for Mordecai: 11 "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, he has but one law: put all to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days." 12 So they told Mordecai Esther's words. 13 And Mordecai told them to answer Esther: "Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. 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?" 15 Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai: 16 "Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!" 17 So Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther commanded him.

6). Here in the actions of Mordecai and Esther we have a complete picture of Israel in repentance. Mordecai and the Jews in "sackcloth and ashes" presents for us the picture of Israel in recognition of their sin and acknowledging their need for the only One who can deliver them. And with Esther going before the king, we see the Jewish nation crying out to God, coming into His presence to plead for deliverance -

Esther 5:1

Now it happened on the third day that Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, across from the king's house, while the king sat on his royal throne in the royal house, facing the entrance of the house. 2 So it was, when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, that she found favor in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther went near and touched the top of the scepter. 3 And the king said to her, "What do you wish, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given to you-up to half the kingdom!"

a). It is Israel alone (out of all the nations of the world) that is destined to stand before the King on the Third Day wearing royal robes, which is what our scripture here in Esther 5 points to.

b). But in order to understand how the events here fit with regards to Israel's repentance, because we know that Israel does not appear before God in royal robes when crying out for deliverance, we can look to Young's Literal Translation as see this scripture recorded in a slightly different way-

Esther 5:1

And it cometh to pass on the third day, that Esther putteth on royalty...

c). The word 'robes' in our NKJV has been added by the translators and does not appear in the original language.

d). The Hebrew word translated 'royal' in NKJV and 'royalty' in YLT is - 'malkuwth' which comes from the word - 'malak' which means "to reign" or "to ascend the throne."

e). What we see here then is a multi-layered image: Israel, as we have said, is destined to stand before the King on the 3rd Day in a position of royalty - but for this to happen, Israel must first be inducted into that position of royalty. And this induction takes place through repentance (and of course with all that is involved in them getting to that place of repentance).

f). In other words, as Israel cries out to God in repentance, this will make possible Israel's induction into the position of royalty which God had always intended for her, which will then result in Israel occupying a regal position during the 3rd Day - the Millennial Kingdom. All this is contained in the account of Esther appearing in Ahasuerus's presence on the third day.

g). We see Esther properly prepared to be in the king's presence, and as a result of this she 'finds favor in his sight', and the king holds out to her the golden scepter of rulership. In that coming Day, Israel (in repentance) will be properly prepared as she cries out to God, and because of repentance she will find favor in His sight and He will hold out to her the scepter of rulership. And He will ask the same question as Ahasuerus asks Esther, 'what is your request?'

7). We find a parallel event to this in Revelation Chapter 12, which will make all of this clearer still -

Revelation 12:1

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

a). The woman here in our scripture is Israel, and the imagery used to describe her calls to mind Joseph's dream in Genesis 37 (which we won't be reading here), but note that she is wearing a crown. And this picture we see of her in Revelation is just a few verses before we see Satan cast out of heaven, when he gives his throne and power and great authority to Antichrist.

b). Given the timing of this 'great wonder' appearing in heaven in Revelation 12:1, we will realize that we are still at the mid-point of the Tribulation at this point, before Antichrist has declared himself to be God and before Israel has come to repentance. Therefore Israel cannot be in a regal position at this time. And yet, she is seen wearing a crown of twelve stars.

c). If we will remember what we learned about crowns last week, what seems to be a problem is easily resolved. The word translated 'crown' here in Revelation 12:1 is 'stephanos' (a victor's crown) and not 'diadema' (a ruling crown) - therefore the word itself would denote that the woman, Israel, is destined to attain a regal position, but has not attained it yet.

d). It is Antichrist in Revelation 13:1 that is seen with the 'diadema,' the ruling crown-

Revelation 13:1

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, [diadema]

e). By comparing Esther's appearance before king Ahasuerus in Esther Chapter 5 with the woman's appearance in heaven in Revelation Chapter 12, we have the confirmation of that which we already know - Israel is destined to occupy a regal position in the 3rd Day. And so the events about to unfold in Esther (in the type) and Revelation (in the antitype) move all the protagonists to that unavoidable end.

f). Hosea 5:13

When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound. 14 For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him. 15 I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early. 6:1 ¶
Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. 2 After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.

g). Antichrist can no more change the outcome of this than Pharaoh could.

8). In Esther, the attempted annihilation of the Jews is a single event to be accomplished in one day -

Esther 3:13

And the letters were sent by couriers into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day,

a). An event that, because of Mordecai's and Esther's intervention with the king, does not take place. And this would clearly point to that future time when Antichrist's attempted annihilation of the Jews will also fail for exactly the same reason.

b). In Esther however, there is no indication of what the Jews will go through before Antichrist's plans are brought to an end. For that we would have to go to related scripture, some of which we have already seen in Hosea. The following are some further examples.

c). Jeremiah 30:7

Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob's trouble...12 "For thus says the LORD, 'Your wound is incurable, And your injury is serious. 13 'There is no one to plead your cause; No healing for your sore, No recovery for you. 14 'All your lovers have forgotten you, They do not seek you; For I have wounded you with the wound of an enemy, With the punishment of a cruel one, Because your iniquity is great And your sins are numerous. 15 'Why do you cry out over your injury? Your pain is incurable. Because your iniquity is great And your sins are numerous, I have done these things to you. 16 'Therefore all who devour you shall be devoured; And all your adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; And those who plunder you shall be for plunder, And all who prey upon you I will give for prey. 17 'For I will restore you to health And I will heal you of your wounds,' declares the LORD,

And—

d). Matthew 24:15

"Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), 16 "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 "Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. 18 "And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. 19 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 20 "And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. 21 "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

g). There is no doubt that the suffering of the Jewish people during the last 3 ½ years of the Tribulation will be of an intensity that is beyond our comprehension. We know that during the holocaust some 6 million Jews were exterminated in a period of about 7 years. Current estimates of the number of Jews throughout the world today shows that there are approximately 13 million in Israel, and some 12-15 million scattered amongst the other nations. And we know from Zechariah 13:8 that 2/3 shall be cut off and die. In rough figures, this would be about 14 million Jews who will die in less than 3 ½ years.

9). Despite the horror of these events, we must keep in mind their purpose – it is to bring Israel to repentance for the purpose of regality. God has from the beginning declared things that are not yet done. As we see in –

Hosea 6:2

After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.

a). As we would also see in –

Jeremiah 30:7

Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it. 8 'For it shall come to pass in that day,' Says the LORD of hosts, 'That I will break his yoke from your neck, And will burst your bonds; Foreigners shall no more enslave them. 9 But they shall serve the LORD their God, And David their king, Whom I will raise up for them. 10 ¶ 'Therefore do not fear, O My servant Jacob,' says the LORD, 'Nor be dismayed, O Israel; For behold, I will save you from afar, And your seed from the land of their captivity. Jacob shall return, have rest and be quiet, And no one shall make him afraid. 11 For I am with you,' says the LORD, 'to save you; Though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, Yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, And will not let you go altogether unpunished.'

b). In Matthew 24 we see that the days will be shortened for the elects sake.

c). And in Zechariah-

Zechariah 13:9b

...They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; And each one will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"

d). And here in Zechariah is the key to the matter - 'they will call on My name, and I will answer.'

e). This is the promise that God has made to His people, exactly as it is recorded in -

2 Chronicles 7:14

"...if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

g). And in all of this, let's not forget that everything we have looked at is moving to one end - the establishment of Christ's Kingdom -

Psalm 2:1

Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, 3 "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us." 4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. 5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: 6 "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion."

h). Everything is moving toward that time in which the fullness of the promise given to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 will be realized –

Genesis 12:3

I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

i). And the enormity of what is involved in this blessing is something at present we can only wonder at.

i). Perhaps now we may have an added incentive to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, as we realize what it is we are asking for, while also realizing the seriousness of what is contained in our petition –

Psalm 122:3

Jerusalem is built As a city that is compact together, 4 Where the tribes go up, The tribes of the LORD, To the Testimony of Israel, To give thanks to the name of the LORD. 5 For thrones are set there for judgment, The thrones of the house of David. 6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you. 7 Peace be within your walls, Prosperity within your palaces."

So let's do just that, and pray for the peace of Israel. For when peace comes to Israel – everlasting peace from the Prince of Peace – then peace comes to all of mankind.