

## QUEEN ESTHER

### INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Esther 4:13-16**. From Roy H. Enoch (01-09-1994).
- B. The Book of Esther is one of only two books in the Bible which is named after a woman.
  - 1. Her name appears 55 times in its 10 chapters.
  - 2. She is a Jewess of the tribe of Benjamin, living in Persia.
  - 3. The book is one of the most controversial in the Bible.
    - a. It does not mention God, but focuses on His providence.
    - b. It gives the background and origin of the Jewish feast of Purim or "lots."
  - 4. Like many great historical figures, she is introduced in the most humble circumstances: she is a Jewish orphan.
    - a. She is raised by her uncle, Mordecai, a Benjamite official at the palace gate.
    - b. He sees the royal notice that beautiful young virgins are sought, for the king to select one to be Queen.
    - c. Esther is one of those that are selected, and Mordecai instructs her not to reveal her nationality.
    - d. Four years she is a Queen of great power, who uses it wisely.
- C. The story of Esther shows great confidence in God's providence.
  - 1. Like the stories of Daniel and the Hebrew children, it teaches that, even in a foreign country and in a pagan political system, one can be faithful to God.
  - 2. The persecution for not going along with sinful policies in business or in politics, is not as great as the consequences of sin.
  - 3. We need to love and trust God enough that we will be willing to suffer rather than go against His will.
- D. There are several lessons that we can learn from this beautiful story.
  - 1. God gives us opportunities to serve and holds us responsible for using our opportunities.
  - 2. There will be trials to test our faith, and they will give us endurance if we meet them.
  - 3. God will provide deliverance for His people.

### I. GOD HOLDS US RESPONSIBLE FOR HOW WE USE OUR OPPORTUNITIES.

- A. The setting is Persia in the third year of Ahasuerus or Artaxerxes II (404-358BC).
  - 1. He made a great feast for all the Nobles and Princes of Media and Persia, and for the Princes of the 127 provinces.
  - 2. It lasted for 180 days (6 Months) and he showed them all splendor and glory of his kingdom which extended from India to Ethiopia (including Judea).
  - 3. After this he made a great feast for 7 days for all of the people of Shushan, the capital. His wife, Vashti, was having a feast for the wives.
  - 4. On the seventh day, when "the heart of the king was merry w/wine" he commanded the eunuchs to bring Queen Vashti to show her beauty to the people and nobles.
    - a. She refused to come.
    - b. The king was very angry and conferred w/ the seven advisors and they said that he should divorce her as a warning lest other wives disobey their husbands.
    - c. He followed the advice.
    - d. When he got over his anger, he missed his wife.
    - e. They advised that he gather the most beautiful virgins in the kingdom and select the one that pleased him the best and make her queen.
  - 5. Among the most beautiful was a Jewish orphan named Hadassah, who was raised by her cousin, Mordecai, one of the gate-keepers of the king's palace.
    - a. The Hebrew name, Hadassah, meant "myrtle" and she was given a Persian name, Esther,

- which meant "star."
- b. She continued to do what her cousin told her, and he advised that she not reveal her national origin.
  - c. He inquired daily of her welfare (2:11).
6. She was selected and made Queen of Persia.
  7. As gate-keeper, Mordecai overheard two of the king's officers conspire to kill the king, and sent word of it to Esther, who reported it to the king to Mordecai's credit.
  8. The king made Haman, an Agagite, his prime minister or grand visier, and commanded all the king's servants to pay him royal honor, or to bow down to him.
    - a. Mordecai refused to bow to him.
    - b. Haman was so angry that he investigated Mordecai's nationality so that he could destroy all of his people.
    - c. He got the king's permission to let him draft the decree and cast lot (pur) to determine the most propitious time for the destruction.
    - d. They cast lot in the 1st month and it fell on the 12th month, 13th day. (a year away)
    - e. He then sent a decree to all 127 provinces that on that day, all the Jews were to be killed and their
  9. Mordecai's reaction was appropriate (4:1).
    - a. Esther's maids and eunuchs told her of Mordecai's mourning and she sent one to ask him the reason.
    - b. He sent her a copy of the edict and explained how it was necessary for her to request of the king, mercy and rescue for her people.
    - c. She sent him word that if any approached the king w/o permission they would be put to death unless he extended his scepter, and she had not been called by the king in a month.
  10. Mordecai's reply is a classic statement of faith, and responsibility (4:13,14).
  11. Her answer is one to match his faith (4:16)..
    - a. We might say that she was ready to risk her life to save her people.
    - b. But she was also under the same sentence of death.
- B. "Who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this." (4:14).
1. We are responsible for what we are in a position to do (1Jn. 3:17-19).
  2. After the three days of fasting and prayers, Esther put on her royal robes and went to the court of the king.
    - a. When he saw her, she found favor in his sight and he extended his golden scepter, asking her wish.
    - b. Before she asked it, he told her that he would grant it up to the half of his kingdom.
    - c. She asked that the king and Haman dine w/ her.
    - d. Immediately the king called for Haman that they might do as she requested.
    - e. Then she asked that they come to a banquet she would prepare for them tomorrow and she would make her request.
  3. Haman was elated with the invitation and went home to brag to his family and friends.
    - a. But his own hatred for Mordecai spoiled his honor.
    - b. They suggested that he build gallows 75' high and hang Mordecai.
    - c. Haman had the gallows built immediately.
  4. That night the king could not sleep, so he called for the royal records to be read to him.
    - a. It was found written how Mordecai had saved the king's life.
    - b. The king asked what honor or dignity was bestowed upon Mordecai for this deed, and they said, none.
    - c. The king asked who was in the court, and Haman had just entered to ask permission to

- hang Mordecai.
- d. The king asked Haman what he should do for a man, he wished to honor (6:7-9).
- e. The king said, Hurry and do it for Mordecai!
- 5. Haman went home mourning and w/ his head covered.
  - a. He told his family and friends what had happened (6:13).
  - b. Then the king's servant came for him to go to Esther's second banquet.
- 6. Esther now makes her request to the king to spare her people from complete annihilation (7:3-6).
- 7. The king had Haman hanged upon his own gallows and appointed Mordecai to Haman's position and over his possessions.
  - a. Then Esther revealed how Mordecai was related to her.
  - b. The King gave Mordecai his ring that he could draft a decree for the Jews to defend themselves since a decree could not be changed or revoked (8:11,12).
- 8. When Mordecai was elevated second only to the king, there seems to have been many political conversions (8:17).
- 9. On the appointed day the Jews defended themselves (9:5,6).
- 10. The King asked Esther what else she requested.
  - a. She asked that the Jews in Sushan be permitted to do the same tomorrow.
  - b. Three hundred more were killed.
- 11. Some have condemned Esther for being bloodthirsty in asking for another slaughter.
  - a. But the only ones they could kill were (8:11).
  - b. Also they did not touch the possessions.
- C. The Jewish feast of Purim was celebrated to commemorate this great deliverance of God's people.

II. **WE CAN LEARN SEVERAL LESSONS FROM THIS BEAUTIFUL STORY.**

- A. We are responsible for using our abilities resources and opportunities for God's service.
- B. Our faith will be tested w/ trials and hardships, but God will enable us to bear them.
- C. God will provide a deliverance for His people, even if we fail to do what we can.