

ESTHER – EXAMPLE OF COURAGE

In the third year of Ahasuerus, who reigned from India to Ethiopia, the king made a great feast in Shushan, displaying his wealth and majesty. While Vashti, the queen, made a feast for the women, Ahasuerus sent for her “to show the princes and the people her beauty: for she was fair to look on” (1:11). When she refused, the king consulted his wise men who counseled him to make her an example lest other women be emboldened to rebel against their husbands. Her estate was given to another, and the king enacted a law to compel all wives in the kingdom to give honor to their husbands.

To replace her, fair young virgins from all over the kingdom were brought to Shushan, to be purified under the oversight of Hege, the chamberlain. In Shushan, lived Mordecai, a Benjamite whose forefathers had been taken captive with Jeconiah, king of Judah. Into Mordecai’s care, had come the beautiful Hadassah, or Esther, daughter of Abihail, his uncle, upon the death of her parents. She was taken to Hege, but as Mordecai had charged her, she did not apprise Hege she was a Jewess. “Esther obtained favor in the sight of all them that looked upon her” (2:15), and Ahasuerus chose her above all others, loved her, and put the crown upon her head.

Later, when two chamberlains sought to harm the king, Mordecai informed Esther, and she told the king. The two men were hanged, and the account was written in the royal record. However, when Ahasuerus promoted Haman, and all the servants revered him, Mordecai would not, although charged daily to do so. Thus, Haman became wroth, and sought to destroy all the Jews in the kingdom in order to destroy Mordecai. He deceived the king into making a law allowing the slaughter of the Jews— young and old, women and little children.

Upon learning of the proclamation, Mordecai mourned and wept, as did also the Jews in all the provinces. The

queen’s maids informed her of the king’s decree, and she sent Hatach to inquire further of Mordecai. Mordecai sent a copy of the decree, and called upon Esther to go in unto the king to make supplication for her people. Esther replied: “All the king’s servants, and the people of the king’s provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden scepter, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days” (4:11).

Mordecai responded: “Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king’s house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether boldest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father’s house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (4:13-14).

Esther showed great courage in her reply: “Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish” (4:16).

On the third day, Esther entered the king’s court, obtained his favor, and was summoned forward. She requested the king and Haman come to a banquet. The invitation thrilled Haman, yet he could not rejoice for Mordecai still would not bow to him. On the advice of Zeresh, his wife, Haman had a gallows built, fifty cubits high, on which to hang Mordecai.

That very night, the sleepless king called for the chronicles, was reminded of Mordecai’s good deed, and inquired what was done to reward him. The king asked Haman, “What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour? Now Haman thought in his heart, To

whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself?” (6:6). Therefore, Haman responded, only to learn the king sought to honor Mordecai, and Haman would be the one to see the honor was bestowed. Haman’s wise men and his wife assured him this was a sign he would fall before Mordecai.

At Esther’s banquet, Ahasuerus asked what Esther requested—even to the half of his kingdom. She petitioned him for her life, and for the life of her people, and informed the king that Haman sought to destroy them. Enraged, the king went into the palace garden, and Haman fell upon the queen’s bed, pleading. Returning, the king saw Haman, and said, “Will he force the queen also before me in the house?” and had Haman hanged upon his own gallows. In Haman’s place, the king put Mordecai.

Again, Esther approached the king, and besought his help for her people, and he commanded the Jews could “stand for their life,” and take the spoil of their enemies. “Thus the Jews smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, and slaughter, and destruction, and did what they would unto those that hated them” (9:5). As well, they slew the ten sons of Haman, hanging them upon the gallows. Mordecai’s influence and honor grew, and he and Esther established a feast (Purim) on the fourteenth and fifteenth days of Adar to remember their victory. Esther’s exemplary courage brought deliverance to the Jews, destruction to their enemies, and is remembered to this day.

Bobby Liddell from Vigil

“I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.”

Psalms 27:14

ANNIVERSARY

Gary and Lynda Cole, 02-14.

BIRTHDAY

Julia Thrasher, 02-17.

ILL

Sunday: Robin Brown, Melissa Cole, Sarah and Jill Marcum, Millie Robertson, Lauren and Lindsey Brown (PM), Taylor Nemechek (PM). **Wednesday:** Gary Cole, Melissa Cole, Jeff, Monica, Taylor and Brooke Nemechek, Millie Robertson. Allen Scott received a good test report from his doctor. Bob Adams returned to the Johnson County Nursing Center on Friday.

Those battling cancer: Jamal Abyad, Diane Cannon, David Cole, and Ledgia Campbell. Please remember these, as well as: Meredith Greer, Millie Robertson, Allen Scott, and Ralph and Helen Franklin.

HOME BOUND

Bob Adams resides at Room D-4 of the Johnson County Nursing Center in Olathe. Marion Stone is at home. Please remember these in your prayers and visitation.

SYMPATHY

Our sympathy is extended to Kathleen Camp in the passing of her brother-in-law. Funeral services were held in Ft. Scott, KS on Tuesday, February 6, 2007.

MEN'S BUSINESS MEETING

Our monthly Men's Business Meeting will be this Sunday following our AM worship. All men of the congregation are encouraged to attend this meeting.

INDIA MISSIONS

Jim O'Connor and John Shafer will return from India and Singapore on February 14. There is a report from John Shafer on the bulletin board in the foyer.

ATTENDANCE

Sunday AM, 46; Sunday PM, 29; Wednesday PM, 30.

Those To Serve

February 11, 2007

BUILDING AND COMMUNION..... Brown

MORNING WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS..... Joel Nelson
SONG LEADER..... George Thomas
OPENING PRAYER Jared Nelson
PRESIDE..... Jeff Nemechek
ASSIST..... John James
ASSIST..... Allen Scott
CLOSING PRAYER..... Steve Brown

EVENING WORSHIP

OPENING PRAYER John Carter
CLOSING PRAYER..... Gary Cole
LORD'S SUPPER..... Jeff Nemechek

WEDNESDAY 14th

SONG LEADER..... Joel Nelson
INVITATION Jared Nelson

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday

Bible Study 9:30 AM
Morning Worship 10:30 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Ladies Bible Study 10:00 AM
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Preacher: Ted J. Thrasher

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