

"The Second Banquet"

Part 1

Esther 7

Introduction: As we get back to our study today, I want to take a few moments and consider the events of the book of Esther from the perspective of the "average" Jew in the Persian Empire under the death sentence. The decree had been made public in chapter 3.

Esther 3:13-15

¹³ And the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey.

¹⁴ The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, that they should be ready against that day.

¹⁵ The posts went out, being hastened by the king's commandment, and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. And the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city Shushan was perplexed.

Here we are told that the city was perplexed when the decree was made public. The Jews went from having somewhat of a comfortable life with Esther as queen and Mordecai sitting in the king's gate, to now finding themselves under a death sentence that was irreversible. Now if you are the average Jew living in the Persian Empire you have heard nothing concerning God's intervention. You have been praying and waiting to see His hand, but you have seen nothing. As you listen to the talk on the street you hear many different stories as different rumors are spread. You are confused as to what is actually happening. Some say one thing and others say something else. Fear has swept through the entire Jewish population and the people are desperately search for answers. God however is silent!

As one writer put it you would feel like a swimmer on a lake who went for a swim and when he reached the middle of the lake a dense fog set in, and he cannot see loses sight of the shore. He swims one way and stops. Then he swims another way and stops. He cannot determine the correct way to safety and now the sun begins to set, and darkness is quickly taking over the lake. Fear and panic begin to take over the mind.

This is most likely how many of the Jews felt. They wondered, "Where is God?" What they did not know was that He was behind the scenes in the palace working His will so that He would be glorified, and the Jews would be preserved.

Application:

We are sometimes like the swimmer on the lake because there are times in our tests and trial when God is silent. It is then that we must be sensitive to His small workings. Like a king who cannot sleep, or a king who requests to hear the book of records read to him, or the reader turning to a page on which Mordecai's intervention is manifest. Sometimes we are caught up looking for major events which reveal God's hand but many times He is seen in the small events working in the lives of individuals. Today as we step back into our study of Esther, we are privileged to be invited to the second banquet which Esther has arranged for the king and Haman.

I. Esther's Resolve

Notice Esther 7:1-2

Let me give you some thoughts to consider here. As Haman comes to the banquet, he is not worried about the king's wrath. Haman had the gallows built but he had not yet asked the king for permission to execute Mordecai. Now that he knew how the king felt about Mordecai after his exaltation, he would need to wait to seek his revenge. As for now he did not see any real danger from the king because the king did not know what he had been planning. He would simply let his current plan slide by and get his wish when the decree would be carried out. Since Mordecai was a Jew, he would not be able to escape the death sentence. So deep down he is sad that he cannot hang Mordecai but at least he had this banquet to look forward to where he could get his ego built back up again. Now the spotlight shines on Esther. It was time! Her request had been postponed twice before but now it was time to speak up.

Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

⁷ **A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;**

Now was Esther's time to speak. The Lord had somehow silenced her in the previous two opportunities but now the time for great courage had come. The king has been charmed and is now curious and Mordecai has been exalted, God has opened the door.

Application:

We can clearly see the reason why God had silenced Esther previously. She went into her meetings with the king with her spiritual radar finely tuned and now she shall reap the rewards of exercising discernment. Let us be sure we also have our spiritual radar finely tuned to listen to the Spirit. There are times when silence is golden and then there are times when the Truth must be spoken. Balance is the key and the balance rests upon the timing of God. I have heard believers speak when they should have been silent. I have been one of those who should have been silent. I have also listened when the Truth should have been proclaimed and there was nothing but silence or words with no eternal significance. I will say that many people use the excuse "it is not the right time to proclaim the Truth" because they are afraid of what the reaction of others will be. This excuse is often used until all opportunities vanish. Then there is regret and often sorrow. Notice the words of an unknown writer on Esther's opportunity:

"The king has already two other times: when she first approached him and he held out his scepter, and then at the first banquet, but Esther never answered him, because the time wasn't right. Esther had a sensitive ear, a wise heart; she sensed something wasn't quite right. So, she didn't push it. She knew when to act—and she knew when to wait. Are you as sensitive as that? Do you know when to listen? Do you know when to speak up—and when to keep quiet? Do you know how much to say as well as when to say it? Do you have the wisdom to hold back until the right moment?"

Notice Esther 7:3-4

The second part of verse 4 could read as follows, "If we had been sold only as slaves then I would never have burdened the king with our hardship." Esther trusts in the Lord but at the same time she is very careful to show great respect unto the king. She does not want to be an offence to the king. She carefully avoids the details that the decree was issued in the king's name.

Esther 3:12

¹² Then were the king's scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that were over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring.

She never mentions this because she is careful not to offend the king.

Notice Esther 7:5-6

The king had no idea that Haman was a traitor and an enemy. Esther exposes Haman as a traitor who had been deceiving the king. When it is revealed to the king Haman is horrified. This man goes from honored to humbled and now to horrified and he will go on to be hanged and this all happened in 24-36 hours. There are two points to see concerning Esther here:

1. Courage

The words of Esther are a manifestation of the woman's courage. She says what needs to be said. This was not just any accusation. This was not an accusation against the average person in the Persian Empire. This is a statement that has just exposed the Prime Minister of the Persian Empire. This was the man whom the king trusted. This was the king's right-hand man. The king however trusted the words of Esther when she spoke against his Prime Minister. I point this out because there would be many a person who if they were king would defend Haman.

Application:

We see this all the time today. We see one politician exposed for his wickedness and those around him of the same party defend him and make excuses for him. It takes great courage to expose a person who is in a high position. Let me show you another example of great courage.

2 Samuel 12:1-7

And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.

² *The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds:*

³ *But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.*

⁴ *And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.*

⁵ *And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die:*

⁶ *And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.*

⁷ And Nathan said to David, **Thou art the man**. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;

Nathan was sent to call out David's sin. This too would have been very difficult, but Nathan was faithful to God. Getting back to Esther we can understand that she was definitely a woman of courage. When she promised to stand up for her people, she truly meant what she promised. There is yet another point to see here.

2. Respect

When the king asks, "Who is he?" her response could have been, "What do you mean who is he? What do you mean you don't know? He has been by your side for quite some time after you promoted him. You gave him your ring to authorize the decree to kill my people!" Many women in this situation would belittle their husbands for missing the true character of Haman. But not Esther. She showed respect to her husband the king. She most likely realized that he had many things to deal with as king. There were many decrees that came across his desk. When Haman brought the decree to kill the Jews the king signed it and he trusted Haman.

Notice Esther 7:7

When the king heard Esther's words concerning Haman he stood and departed from the banquet. When the king left Haman saw that evil was determined against him. Most likely the king had stepped out to find his executioners to carry Haman to his death.

Notice Esther 7:8

When the king returned Haman had thrown himself at the feet of Esther to beg for his life. The king saw this as an attempt to seduce the queen which only intensified the situation. Let me share an interesting thought:

"A Jewish writing says that the angel Gabriel pushed Haman, so he fell on Esther's couch just as king Ahasuerus was coming back into the room."

This is not Biblical, but it is interesting what the Jews believe happened in this situation. They covered Haman's face in preparation of the execution.

Notice Esther 7:9

Here it is revealed to the king that Haman had built the gallows for Mordecai and the direct order is, "Hang Haman on his own gallows!" Notice the words of David concerning the wicked in Psalm 7:

Psalm 7:14-16

14 Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood.

15 He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made.

16 His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.

Notice Esther 7:10

Haman was executed and the king's wrath was pacified.

Conclusion:

I will close with the words of Solomon to remind us that there is coming a day when the unsaved wicked will be caught in their own trap. God is fully aware of their evil dealings and the traps they set will eventually be their end.

Proverbs 1:10, 15-19

10 My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.

15 My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path:

16 For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood.

17 Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.

18 And they lay wait for their own blood; they lurk privily for their own lives.

19 So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which taketh away the life of the owners thereof.