

Esther

As We Begin... Esther (Chapter 8-10) – Class Notes for 05/23/2023

Video of Today's Study - <https://vimeo.com/pilgrimlutheran>

The Divine Provision of Protection

- **Xerxes' Edict** – The edict offered by Xerxes (Esther 8) provided the Jews with the right of self-protection. It did not, however, eliminate the first edict written by Haman.
 - **A challenge remains** – This new edict did provide a protective response from the king, but it didn't totally eliminate the threats that God's people faced. Consider how this is similar to the Lord's care in our lives.
 - **Example** – Jesus' High Priestly prayer. When Jesus offered a prayer for His disciples, He acknowledged that the disciples were still in the world, but He prayed for the Father's protection while they yet remained in the midst of their struggles. (John 17:13-17)
 - **Example** – Paul's counsel on Temptation. We often misquote Paul when we say, "God won't give you any more than you can handle." It says that God "gives" us problems when most of our troubles are the byproduct of sin and God is holy. This makes God the source of the temptations and evils we face rather than the evil intentions of men like Haman. Esther faced the temptation of chickening out at a crucial moment. Read Paul's counsel and how he offers God's TWO solutions when we face temptation. (1 Corinthians 10:11-13)
 - Solution #1 –
 - Solution #2 -
- **The Rejoicing of the Jews** – Even though they knew they would need to defend themselves, the Jews still rejoiced at the new edict. They were given hope. Describe how they could be so filled with joy even though they knew that trials could easily be a part of their future. (Esther 8) (John 16:20)
- **The Work of the ONE True King** – Sure enough, the King had offered a second chance, but the TRUE King of the Jews offered something more. Read the end of Chapter 8 to note how the Lord was working in a greater way to protect His people. Describe how the Lord regularly functions in an "above and beyond" manner for His people. (Ephesians 3:20)

As We Study ... The Jews Establish the Feast of Purim

- **The "Tables Were Tuned" (Esther 9:1)** – When the Jews "overtook" their enemies, note what they did and didn't do. (Esther 9:1-19) What lesson is provided by their actions/reserve?

- **The Feast of Purim** – After the Jews had avenged the plot of Haman, Mordecai established the Feast of Purim as a lasting celebration (Esther 9:20-32). Describe the nature of this annual feast.
- **The Purpose of Feasts & Festivals** – The Bible is filled with Feasts & Festivals. These feasts are often commanded by the Lord. In this case it is prescribed by man.
- Offer some examples of the rationale of feasts and festivals from the bible.
- The church still observes feasts and festivals. What is helpful for us in observing feasts & festivals? What feasts and festivals are observed well/poorly today? How do these feasts & festivals sometimes evolve into something less than God intended?

As We Go ... A Lasting Impact/Celebration

- **Xerxes' Official Actions** – The official acts of King Xerxes were recorded in the “annals of the kings of Media and Persia” (Esther 10:1-2).
 - **Mordecai** – The book of Esther ends with commentary about Mordecai. It seems that he is suddenly offered as the main character of the story. His fame in Persia is widespread. His position of authority is offered as second in command (10:3). His position might remind us of the sudden promotion of Joseph in Egypt.
 - **Hidden & Revealed Leadership** – Mordecai is a “hidden” character in the story of Esther. He works behind the scenes, caring for Esther and serving with effective advice. It appears that this quiet leadership will only get him killed, but the Lord is working in a similar manner. Mordecai’s work is “difficult and dangerous,” but it achieves a great result. Discussion: Let’s take a moment to describe some of the ways that our service is like that of Mordecai.
 - Unrewarded Faithfulness –
 - Direction for Others – Mordecai’s Celebration Mandates
 - Focus on More than Self – The story doesn’t end by saying, “Mordecai issued an edict that a statue should be built in his honor.”
- **Esther Summary** – Finally, let’s take a moment to recall this book and the instruction it provides.
 - “Strangers” – God’s people could often be called “foreigners.” (Gen. 15:13; Lev. 25:23; Psalm 119: 17-19; Ephesians 2:19; Heb. 11:13-16)
 - “Little Kings & The ONE King” (John 3:3; 18:36) -
 - The Greater Plan of Salvation (I John 4:4-6) -