

ESTHER:

An Apostolic People

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The book of Esther is rich with revelation for today. It has a “Third Day” message in it. It’s hidden there for us. Their lives and conditions have spiritual parallels for the church. Our destiny as the body of Christ is revealed. The preparations and conditions we must attain are all similar.

As with every good story, whether fictional or true, there must be a villain, a hero, potential victims and a damsel! This true account of the lives of the Jewish people is no different and holds tremendous intrigue, drama and suspense...

Israel was living in captivity, taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. They had been idolatrous and now were paying for it. Xerxes was king when Esther was taken into his harem. He did have a beautiful but rebellious wife in Queen Vashti. Her defiance cost her rights to the throne and the king wanted a suitable replacement. She must be beautiful and a virgin (Esther 2:2). The church must be the same.

Three main characters emerge. They are Mordecai, Haman, and Esther. Their struggle and its outcome shadow a present day truth of our conflict and destiny. Like Esther, our goal is to be in the presence of the king, in the throne room, with His sceptre of favour extended towards us.

Let’s Start With The Villain:

Haman is an evil oppressor and was the chief minister to the king. Like satan himself, he would love for all God’s people to be slain.

He may have been an Amalekite descendent. These are the ones who destroyed the Israelites as they journeyed from Egypt to the Promised Land, and the Lord swore that He would eternally war against them!

Because of his hatred towards Mordecai, he devised a wicked plan and got the king to buy into it. Haman had stirred up the king to decree that all should bow when in Haman’s presence. Mordecai of course wouldn’t, provoking the wrath of Haman, and thus a plot was devised to have Mordecai hanged on an 80-foot gallows.

Mordecai:

Mordecai is of the tribe of Benjamin, the same as the apostle Paul.

Given that Paul is considered “the Apostle” of the New Testament Church, because of all that the Lord accomplished through him, this proves to be a very exciting fact. As in essence, Mordecai was an Apostle and Senior Leader of that local church!

Let us for a brief moment look at that name BENJAMIN:

It means “son of my right hand”. However, when Rachel was giving birth to him she named him “son of my sorrows” as she was dying in labour. His father, Jacob is the one who named him “son of my right hand”. Oh! this so reflects our Lord Jesus Christ as He was known as the Man of sorrows (Isaiah 53:3) and later called the “Man of God’s Right Hand” (Revelation 1:17, Psalms 80:17, 89:21, Acts 5:31).

Ben means "Son of" and Jamin means "Fortunate"

Benjamin was Jacob's twelfth son (twelve is the number of the apostolic and also the number of divine government - 12 apostles of the Lamb, 12 tribes of Israel, 12 foundations of the New Jerusalem).

The tribe of Benjamin was also a Warfaring Tribe as prophesied by their father (Genesis 49:27). This speaks so much to the apostolic nature. They were also a tribe that knew how to gather the spoils of war, which were then distributed to others as a blessing. This is also part of the dynamics of the apostolic – the ability to wisely distribute wealth (in the early church they brought the wealth and laid it at the apostles' feet and they distributed it as they felt led of the Lord)! – AWESOME, totally AWESOME!!!

I declare to you saints, that we are called of the Lord to be a Benjamin tribe! Hallelujah!!!

Mordecai is the cousin of Esther, yet he adopts her as his own daughter (Esther 2:7). He thus foreshadows the adoptive work of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Adoption (Romans 8:15).

He lives to see Esther prepared for the king (Esther 2:7-17), this is also the work of the Holy Spirit as He prepares the Bride for Christ. Thus the king, upon seeing Esther, immediately extended favour towards her and invited her to his palace. The king loved Esther above all the other women. Mordecai's life can be compared to that of the Holy Spirit as He prepares the church which the Lord will present to himself (Ephesians 5:27).

Esther:

Her Hebrew name is Hadassah, which means "myrtle". In classic mythology the myrtle shrub was a symbol of heroism and immortality. For the Hebrews it typified peace and thanksgiving. It was one of the four kinds of bow branches used for the making of the booths for the Feast of Tabernacles. Myrtle is very fragrant and was used to make wreaths for the heads of nobles. If this isn't a name pregnant with meaning I don't know what is!

The church, like Esther, is to be brave and of course it is immortal. It is to live in peace and bring peace. It is to show forth its thanksgiving. It is the dwelling place of God; it is His tabernacle. It will be crowned as royalty.

Myrtle:

It is a picture of God's Promised Blessings – Isaiah 53:13 (Isaiah 47:19)

It was also used to make booths for the Feast of Tabernacles - The Feast of Tabernacles, or the Feast of Booths or Ingathering. This feast consisted of three main elements, which were:

- The Blowing of Trumpets – Leviticus 23:24-25
- The Day of Atonement – Leviticus 16 & 23: 27-32
- The Feast of Tabernacles – Exodus 23:16, Leviticus 23:34-44 and Deuteronomy 16:13-15

This event is yet to be fulfilled and we are on the road to it happening. It is the Unity of the Church! Ephesians speaks clearly about it, and in John 17 Jesus prayed that it will happen, and it will.

Esther can also represent the strength and dynamics of an apostolic church and an apostolic people, which is not restricted to gender. She is truly “Apostolic” in her function and mandate...

This is also reflected in her preparation to the throne. Notice that she spends 12 months in preparation. Again, twelve is the number of Government and it is also the number of the Apostolic... this is just awesome. Esther is truly the picture of an APOSTOLIC PEOPLE!!!

Esther is also a woman of incredible courage. Haman’s relentless hatred of the Jews had influenced the king to issue a decree that all Jews living in the 27 provinces will be put to death within 11 months (Esther 3: 8-15).

All the Jews are in sackcloth, weeping and wailing. Mordecai gives her a challenge, that if she keeps quiet before the king she will not escape the death edict either (Esther 4:14).

Mordecai tells her that deliverance will arise from another place. And it is here that Esther rises to her call.

It is in this framework that we see five attitudes for the Third Day church.

First, “The Church Will Experience A New Sense Of Corporate Destiny”

We too have come into the kingdom for “such a time as this” (Esther 4:14). We have come to a royal position for purposes beyond our own personal desires and petty agendas. Crisis often defines destiny. For instance, if one says they are an apple but bring forth lime juice when pressures and challenges “squeeze” them, know for sure, they were never an apple. Crisis does not make us, it only reveals who we have always been. The Word of God declares this: “If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small.” (Proverbs 24:10)

In many places saints and local churches are suffering from what is called “an identity crisis”. Some have had their identities stolen, while others have been wrongly named and are trying to fulfill a destiny that is not theirs. Every local church must know their identity and mandate from the Lord. We cannot function without our identity. It is the same as in the natural – one needs his/her identity to move around. Everywhere you go you see signs posted - “ID required”. Identity theft has become a burning issue and a question of grave concern. The same can be applied in the spirit. In essence, some have their present focus blurred and it will take the pressure of a crisis to remedy the situation. The moment we know our true identity, we will be on our way to fulfilling our destiny as our destiny is truly wrapped in our identity. As He was/is so are we in the world (1 John 4:17). We must put on our royal robes just as Esther (Esther 5:1)

Second, “A New Level Of Corporate Unity Is Required”

We must all “gather together” just as the Jews in Shushan, who fasted and prayed for three days, Esther 4:16. We have far too many men and women in ministry today with the mindset of “my ministry”; “we are the only ones that God will use to establish His will” We have the wrong people setting the agenda for the church. With the restoration of the apostles we will need to come to grips with the fact that God established them and gave them the responsibility of leading the church (1 Corinthians 12:28). Through them, the type of unity described in Ephesians 4:3-6 will be maintained. I emphasize maintained and not attained. We cannot attain something that is already given in the Spirit. We can only walk in it by faith.

Third, “Apostolic Endurance And Determination Will Be Instilled In The Church”

One of the primary marks of an apostle is the ability to endure, and the character that says, “I will not quit”. Endurance is not just a sign of an apostle but also the apostolic church (2 Corinthians 12:12). We must say as Esther did, “If I perish, I perish”, Esther 4:16. Living in a society of ease, comfort and immediate gratification has made us weak in patience and endurance. We have bailed out too soon, failed to cross too many finish lines and given up just short of the manifestation of a prayer. (By the way, endurance may be the most significant sign of an apostle. An apostle without endurance is not an apostle). This is so key and cannot be overemphasized. Endurance, stick-to-itiveness, determination, patience are truly signs of an apostle/apostolic people. I declare over Dominion-Life International Ministries’ saints “we are an enduring Benjamin people/tribe!”

Fourth, “We Must Have An Understanding Of The Third Day”

It is a time set in the plans of God. We must see that we have “come to such a time as this” (Esther 4:14). But notice clearly, it was on the third day that Esther went in to see the king, (Esther 5:1). Timing is every bit as important as the cause. It is when time and purpose come together that you achieve the goal. Jesus was born in the fullness of time (Galatians 4:4). There is a time for everything (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

There is much in scripture regarding the “Third Day” and it will augur well for us to explore a few: 2 Peter 3:8 & Luke 13:32

As we press deeper into this third day since Jesus, exploring the third day references in scripture and extracting some principles for us to function by in this hour, will no doubt prove to be a thought-provoking journey. As we read these verses let us also personalize them. Are you experiencing or have you experienced “a third day” in the Lord? Significant things will happen in your life as you step into your “third day” in the Lord!

The Earth was created – Genesis 1:9-13

Abraham’s ultimate test – Genesis 22: 1-5

God’s major appearing to all of Israel – Exodus 19:9-11

Saul’s death was announced – 2 Samuel 1:1-4

The rebuilding of the temple was finished – Ezra 6:14-15a

Esther put on her royal apparel and found the king’s favour – Esther 5:1-2

Jesus was launched into His ministry of miracles, water was turned into wine – John 2:1-11

Jesus rose again from the dead – Matthew 16:21 Acts 10:38-41

These are just a few examples of this powerful truth!

Fifth, “We Must Expect Favour From The King – This Is A Time Of Favour!” - Esther 5: 2-3.

This is a season of God’s favour. We are not talking about a few acts of favour granted to an undeserving people. There is no obligation on God’s part to do something good for us. This kind of favour is a condition, not an act! Just as Mary was highly favoured, and Jesus walked in favour with God and man, so is the church to accept and walk in its position as favoured with both God and man! It has been said that a sure way to get what you ask for is to expect nothing and thus you will get exactly what you expected - nothing. Beloved, we must ensure that our expectation levels agree with our condition as favoured of God. There is “GREAT GRACE/FAVOUR” being released from the Lord upon His people in this hour and as such we must maintain a high level of expectancy as we pray!!!



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