

# From Our Desk

## God Will Save His People

*(With or Without You)*

“For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?”

*Esther 4:14*

By the providence of God, a young Jewish girl named Esther had been exalted as the bride and queen of the great Persian King Ahasuerus (2:17). Because of the almost universal prejudice against the Jewish people and for Esther’s own preservation, her wise uncle Mordecai instructed her not to make her heritage known to the king (2:10, 20).

In time, King Ahasuerus promoted Haman the son of Hammedatha over all the princes of Persia. This turn of events placed the Jewish nation in great danger for two important reasons. First, Haman was an Amalekite, the bitter enemies of the Jewish people. Secondly, Haman was a proud man who was driven to rage by Mordecai’s refusal to bow before him (3:2-6). This rage led Haman to seek the destruction of every Jew throughout the entire kingdom of Ahasuerus (3:6).

The Scriptures report that Haman was as clever as he was evil. He deceived King Ahasuerus into believing that the Jews were a danger to his rule and that he should seal an irreversible decree that would legalize their total annihilation (3:8-15). The necessary papers were drawn up, signed, sealed, and sent to every province of Persia. Haman gloated in his power and rejoiced in the soon coming destruction of the Jews. There was nothing to stop him.

The future looked as dark as ever for the Jewish nation. They had no apparent political or economic power, and no voice or vote before the king. But God had exalted young Esther to a place of power. She alone had the privilege and position to intercede on behalf of the Jewish nation and save them from certain destruction. She was their only hope... or was she? In the passage quoted above, the wise Mordecai reminds Esther of several very sobering truths. First, Esther did not attain such a position of privilege and power on her own, but it was a result of God’s providence and for God’s purposes. Second, to whom much is given, much is required. With her great privilege came great responsibility. It was her task to intercede for her people. Third, she WAS NOT Israel’s only hope. If she did

not fulfill her responsibility, God would still deliver His people through other means. Fourth, Esther’s disobedience would not result in the destruction of the Jewish people, but it would result in her own. What would Esther do?

One may wonder what the story of Esther has to do with the Church and the Great Commission, but we will soon see that Mordecai’s wise warning to Esther provides both a promise and a warning to the present day people of God, especially to the Western Church, to those Christians who live in the United States, Canada, and Western Europe.

### We Have Been Given Privilege and Position

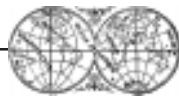
It cannot be denied that the Christian in the West has been given great privilege and position. By God’s providence or sovereign design, the Church in the United States, Canada, and Western Europe enjoys the greatest religious freedom, the greatest access to Scripture and theological resources, the greatest economic power, and the greatest open doors to do missions around the world.

For several decades, religious freedom has been the boast of the West. A man is free to believe as he chooses and to practice his religious convictions so long as they do not infringe upon the rights of others. Although this freedom is coming under increasing attack, we are still granted more freedom to practice our faith than any other group of Christians in the history of Christianity.

The Christians in the West have more Bibles, theological resources, and access to theological institutions than all the other Christians living outside the West combined. The West abounds with Christian publishers and printers, Christian bookstores and media corporations, Christian schools, colleges, and seminaries.

The Christians in the West have the greatest economic power of any other group of Christians in the history of Christianity. Although the poor are found even in the most affluent societies, most sociologists and economists would agree with the following statement: “If you live in the West you are rich.” When one considers the poverty in many of the third world countries with the economic status of the developed nations, the differences are staggering.

The Christians in the West have been given the greatest open door of opportunity for missions that the world has ever seen. In His providence, God has opened a tre-



mendous door for world missions. Not even the boldest missions strategist would have ever dreamed that there would be so many countries opened to Christian missionary work and the preaching of the Gospel.

### **We Are Responsible**

God had exalted Esther to a place of privilege and she was responsible to use her life as an instrument of blessing and salvation for her people. The same God holds the privileged western Church to the same responsibility.

Jesus soundly declared a principle that will be applied on the final day of His judgment – “To whom much is given, much is required.” Can we not see that these words apply to those of us who live in the West? We have been given so many wonderful opportunities to glorify God and advance His kingdom. We have also been given all the necessary resources to do His will. Can we not see that we will be judged in a greater way than our brothers and sisters of lesser advantage? God has not given us our exalted place and innumerable resources because He loves us more than them, or so that we might selfishly use all He has given us for ourselves. God has blessed us so that we might be a blessing to others. He has equipped us so that we might be His ministers to a needy world.



### **We Are Dispensable**

Esther had been exalted to the necessary position and she possessed all the necessary resources to save her people. If she sought her own self-preservation above the saving of her people, it would not have brought God's plan to a tragic end. God is sovereign over all things and He is directing His world to a final end. Nothing can thwart His plan, including the disobedience of His people.

With regard to the Great Commission, God has exalted the Church in the West to the necessary position and she possesses all the necessary resources to fulfill the Great Commission. If she continues to live in apathy and disobedience it will be tragic for her, but not for the work of God. God will make His Name great among the nations (Malachi 1:11), He will give the nations to His Son as an inheritance (Psalm 2:8), and there will be a multitude of people standing before the throne worshipping God from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation (Revelation 5:9). The Christian in the West and the western Church is not God's only hope, for He does not hope in man. God has sworn by His own right hand to do a great work in the world and He will do it with, or without us. If He can raise up children to Abraham from stones then from the same stones He can raise up missionaries to carry His precious Gospel to the world. He does not need us, but He has

granted us the privilege of working in the Great Commission. Let us not despise such a privilege and bring such great tragedy upon our lives.

### **We Will Be Judged**

If we as individual Christians and collectively as the Church continue to live in apathy and disobedience to the Great Commission, the loss will be ours. What will we lose?

*We will lose our eternal purpose.* You and I were created for God's good pleasure and for the doing of His will. To turn away from what God has ordained will only lead to chaos and meaninglessness in our lives. A guitar is made for music and a bow for shooting an arrow straight.

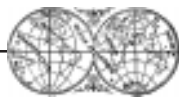
You cannot hunt with a guitar anymore than you can lead worship with a bow. Each instrument is made for a certain purpose, and it is in fulfilling that purpose that it discovers its significance and worth. As Christians we were made to bring glory and honor to the Lord, and we have been commanded to carry His Gospel to the ends of the earth. We will find significance and discover worth only to the degree that we fulfill this purpose.

*We will lose the fruit of our labors.* How many professing Christians are truly living for that which is eternal? How many are laboring for the fruit that will remain? What a tragedy to live one's life for things

that will be lost at death, things not worthy of eternity. It seems as though we have traded our royal inheritance and our exalted position as ambassadors of God, in order to work as slaves in the world's market place. We spend our lives and our resources to buy trinkets and toys that cannot satisfy us and will eventually turn to dust.

*We will lose the pleasure of God's presence and power.* It is impossible to experience God's presence and power when we are chasing after the world and its lusts. Can you recall those times when you have walked in obedience to God and His commands? Do you remember the joy and peace that accompanied you? Can you remember the Father's good pleasure when you were about the Father's business? Was it not better than anything that the world could ever afford to give? Heaven is heaven, not because of streets of gold or gates of pearl, but because of the nearness of God. That same nearness has been promised to us here on earth. When we walk with God, He walks with us. When we give ourselves to the doing of His will in the Great Commission, He gives Himself to us. Some of the most difficult, frightening, and lonely times I have ever suffered were on the mission field, and yet I would not trade them for all the pleasures of this world. For in my suffering for the cause of Christ and the spread-

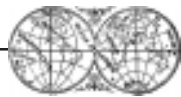




*ESTHER ACCUSING HAMAN by Gustave Doré*

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*Esther 4:14*



ing of His Gospel, the presence of God was my constant companion, and His power was my ever-present help.

*We will lose the joy of self-giving servanthood.* Amy Carmichel wrote that above all things the work of missions is an “opportunity to die.” The Great Commission requires sacrifice, self-giving, and servanthood. The three things that this world distains and we as Christians often try to avoid; and yet, they are the three things that will bring a person the greatest joy, peace, and satisfaction. Jesus told us that the way to true success was found, not by climbing up the ladder, but by climbing down it! When we give our lives away for the sake of Christ, for the sake of His Gospel, and for the sake of the people for whom He died, our lives are filled with joy!

*We will lose the joy of seeing the salvation of God in the lives of men.* What spectacle in the world can compare to a man’s conversion? What a wonderful privilege to see the salvation of the lost and to participate in their newly found joy. No joy can be compared to that of reaching the unreached, distributing the Bible among those who have never had the privilege to own a copy of their own, feeding the poor, clothing the hungry, restoring families, etc. etc. Let gold and silver turn to rust, and let the world keep its own. I would rather be an instrument in the conversion of men. Those who have followed the call of Christ in the Great Commission have no need of “Christian Entertainment,” they need nothing to amuse them, to break their boredom, or fill their time. The spectacle of salvation is all they desire to behold, and the doing of God’s will keeps them “entertained.” Tozer once said that he could tell how much God a man had by how much entertainment he needed. Is it possible that individual Christians and the Church as a whole have become so terribly engrossed with entertainment because they are no longer about the Master’s business? Are we so empty because we know nothing of true food – the doing of the Father’s will?

*We will lose the joy of celebration on that final day.* What joy there will be on that final day when all the redeemed from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation are gathered before the throne of God. When that great trumpet blows, those who plowed will lay down their plow, those who sowed will lay down their bag of seed, those who harvested will lay down their sickle, and all of the workers in God’s field will be called home to celebrate the harvest. How good it will be to rest from all our labors and to see the fruit of all our toil. But rest is not sweet to those who have not labored, and there is no harvest for those who have not toiled. The one who played at the time of

sowing and slept at the time of reaping will find little joy. Those who sought to gather souls for God will receive their reward in seeing a multitude that cannot be counted standing before the throne and worshipping God. But those who lived for the things of this world will see them burned up in the fire of God’s judgment.

## A Final Word

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ. Let us sacrifice all that stands in our way and labor with all our might in the Great Commission of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let us use our privileges for the sake of Christ and for the sake of those who have not received as abundantly as we. Let us heed Mordecai’s warning to Esther. God will save a people for Himself out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation. He will do it with or without our help, but He has graciously called us to be participants in His great work of salvation. Let us be careful not to despise so great a privilege. When our name is called, let us rise up quickly and stand at attention. Let us be ready for every good work. Let us put our hand to the plow and not turn back. A great door has been opened unto us, but we should not think that it will remain open forever. We must work while it is still day, for night comes when no man will be able to work.

My dear friends, God has worked in our lives so that we might be the instruments used in the salvation of a countless multitude of people. If we sleep through the sowing and are distracted during the harvest, God will still accomplish His work in the world, but we will lose too much to write in words. If we turn our eyes toward the fields and put our hand to the plow, if we sow the good seed to the four corners of the earth, then our gain will be will be immeasurable.

Your brother,

Paul David Washer

