

ESTHER 8

A SECOND DECREE

Shortly before the events recorded in this chapter, we saw Esther and Mordecai in tears and in fears, but also fasting and praying. But now we see how light arose to them in their time of darkness! (Ps. 112:4) Haman had been hanged as a traitor; and therefore, his estate was forfeited to the crown – and the king gave it all to Esther, in recompence for the fright which that wicked man had put her into. His houses, lands, property, and all the money which he had heaped up as the king's grand vizier (which was surely no little sum) were given to Esther as her own. Thus we see the wealth of the sinner being laid up for the just (Prov. 13:22). Mordecai was also advanced and promoted from his lowly service as the king's gatekeeper. His honored procession through the streets of the city, earlier that very morning, was only a sudden flash or blaze of honor; but now he was raised to a permanent position of honor. So humble and modest a man was Mordecai that he had concealed his relationship to the queen for the last five years, and never made use of it for any advantage of his own. But now he was brought before the king; for Esther had told him how close he was to her – not only as a cousin; but also as the best friend that she had in the world, who took care of her when she was an orphan, and whom she still respected as a father. And now the king made Mordecai the prime minister of Persia, in the place of Haman. All the trust which he had reposed in Haman, and all the power which he had given him, were transferred to Mordecai. The king made a happy change of his closest friend; and no doubt, he and his people soon experienced the blessing of it.

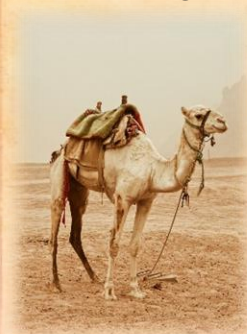
After Haman was hanged, Mordecai and Esther were sufficiently protected; but many other enemies were still in the king's dominions, who hated the Jews and desired their ruin. Haman's edict of destruction against them was still in effect, and the laws of the Medes and Persians could not be revoked; so they would have been deemed as rebels against the king if they tried to take up arms in their own defense. For the preventing of this, Queen Esther made intercession before the king. It seems that she came a second time, uncalled, into his presence; and she was again encouraged to present her petition, by the king's holding out the golden scepter to her. Her petition now was that the king – having put away Haman – would also put away Haman's wicked plot against the Jews. Esther did not allow herself to enjoy the fruit of her services for her own personal comfort, until she saw that her people were also cared for. And while we admire Esther in this, we cannot overlook our Savior! When He had vanquished death, hell, and the grave, and then returned to glory; He did not dimin-

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ Haman's estate is confiscated and given to Esther and Mordecai – verses 1-2
- ❖ Esther earnestly intercedes for the reversal of Haman's edict – verses 3-5
- ❖ Another edict is published to counter the effects of the first one – verses 7-14
- ❖ This second edict brings great joy to the Jews and their friends – verses 15-17

ish His attention to His people, not even for one moment. Such is His unequalled love to His redeemed ones, that His triumphs will never be complete until He has brought them all home to Him in glory!

In order that Haman's plot would be defeated, Esther pleaded with the king for another act of grace. She fell down at his feet and besought him with tears that he would write another edict which would reverse the decree made by Haman. He informed Esther that according to the constitution of the Persian government, the former edict could not be flat-out revoked. However, he contrived a way to counteract the bad effects of Haman's scheme, by signing and publishing a second decree, which fully authorized the Jews to stand up in self-defense. So the secretaries of state were ordered to draw up this new edict and publish it in the respective languages of all the king's provinces, and copies were sent throughout the kingdom by speedy express-riders on mules and camels.



The essence of this second decree was to commission the Jews – upon the same day which had formerly been appointed for their destruction – to draw together in a unified body for their own defense. They were to stand for their life, so that whoever assaulted them would do so at their own peril. They were also given the authority to destroy all the people who would attack them, and to enrich themselves with the property of their enemies. This second decree certainly showed the king's kindness and favor to the Jews, and sufficiently provided for their safety; yet it still showed the absurdity of that clause in the Persian constitution, that no edict might ever be repealed – for in this case, it laid the king under the necessity of basically creating a civil war in his own kingdom, between the Jews and their enemies.

This new proclamation – which brought great joy and gladness to the Jews – was made about nine months before the fatal day which Haman had appointed for their destruction. Thus it was about two months from the time of Mordecai's bitter cry (chapter 4:1) to this time of deliverance. The Lord sometimes allows His dear children to be under trials for a while, even when He has determined their deliverance all along. His people are sometimes made to sow in tears, so that they may reap so much more joy (Ps. 126:5). May God give us grace to always keep such things in remembrance! Very shortly, He will bruise Satan under our feet; and this song shall be sung in full chorus in glory: "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night!" (Rev. 12:10)

Lord Jesus, we thank You for the picture here in this chapter of Esther's care for her people, which represents the even greater love that You have for Your Church; for, having paid the price for the redemption of Your children, You will not allow the least one of them to perish! Amen.