

Message #18

Esther 9:20-32

Of all the things that the church celebrates, of all the things that the nation celebrates, we don't seem to have a celebration that honors Israel. There is no record that the "Feast of Purim" was instituted by God for God isn't even named in the book of Esther. But there is no doubt that the "Feast of Purim" is approved of God for it shows up in His Word and continues to be celebrated by the Jews every March.

Orthodox Jews still celebrate this holiday in their synagogues and at that time they read the entire book of Esther.

WHEN GOD ELEVATES HIS FAITHFUL PEOPLE TO POSITIONS OF POWER AND WHEN EVIL HAS BEEN COMPLETELY DESTROYED, ALL WHO ARE RIGHT WITH THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB WILL CELEBRATE AND REMEMBER THE GREAT WORK OF GOD, PARTICULARLY IN REGARD TO ISRAEL.

We, as believers in Christ, have the responsibility to understand that Israel holds a very special place in the mind, heart and program of God.

The day Israel rejoices because her enemies have been destroyed is a day all who are right with God will rejoice because that will mean Jesus Christ is reigning on earth.

SECTION #1 – The feast of Purim is established by Mordecai. **9:20-22**

Fact #1 - The feast was based on historical fact. **9:20a**

Mordecai carefully recorded the historical events of Esther. J. Vernon McGee says this verse to him establishes that Mordecai was the author of the book of Esther (McGee, p. 249).

It is not known for sure whether the words "these events" specifically refers to the entire book of Esther or to the facts about the destruction of enemies, or to the fact that some Jews were celebrating on one day and others on another day; but there can be no doubt that Mordecai carefully and accurately wrote all things down. All provinces got copies of this story.

Fact #2 - The feast was for all the Jews. **9:20b**

What this tells us is God wanted all of His people to know all of the facts and He wanted all of His people to celebrate in light of these facts.

The thing that all God's people need to know, the thing that ultimately has such a freeing power that is able to turn sorrow into joy is the truth of God.

Fact #3 - The feast was a two-day obligation for all Jews. **9:21-22a**

The word “obliging” means this two-day celebration was imposed on all the Jews (Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 728). Prior to this Mordecaian mandate, province Jews celebrated on the 14th (9:16) and Susa Jews celebrated on the 15th (9:18). Mordecai was demanding that all Jews celebrate on both days, the 14th and the 15th, because these were the two days that Israel’s enemies were destroyed.

The local church is to function as a single life organism of God. Every part is needed and connected to the whole.

Somehow we have grossly misunderstood that demanding people do things is not necessarily dictatorship; it may be the mark of good leadership.

Fact #4 - The feast was to feature feasting, rejoicing and giving. **9:22**

The feast of Purim was to be a joyous celebration. It was to be a time when all of Israel remembered and rejoiced at the delivering power of God.

SECTION #2 – The feast of Purim was accepted by the Jews. **9:23-28**

This is one time in history when Israel was not grumbling or complaining against God-ordained leadership, but was submitting to it.

Reality #1 - The events were remembered by the name of the feast. **9:24-26**

We may recall that the word “Pur” is originally a Babylonian name for dice or lot.

The feast was named Purim for three reasons: 1) It is what Mordecai instructed (**9:26a**); 2) It was consistent with what the people saw (**9:26b**) and 3) It was an accurate reflection of what had happened to the Jews (**9:26c**).

Reality #2 - The events were remembered by the establishment of a custom. **9:27-28**

The Jews made certain that her descendants and all her allies would always remember this special moment.

You and I have a biblically mandated responsibility to remember God’s care for Israel.

SECTION #3 – The feast of Purim was supported by Esther. **9:29-32**

Mordecai authorized her to write a second letter that promoted peace in the Persian world and that was based on truth.

What a wonderful time it was for Israel. Leadership and people were functioning together as people of God. In the aftermath of the battles were the memories of God's provisions and protection. These reflections were cause for great worship.

God's people will have their share of difficulties and hardships. They will face enemies and hurts, intense pressure and opposition. But if God's people stay faithful, they will see God work in marvelous ways—sorrow will be turned into joy, fasting will be turned into feasting, tears will be turned to smiles and worries will be turned into worship. That is the story of Esther, and every March there is a celebration, even to this day, called Purim that proves this eternal reality.