



Repentance Tabernacle Church

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Mordecai and Esther!

Lesson Text: Esther 4:5-16

Focus Verse: Esther 4:14 -For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

Truth About Covenant: God is present even when He seems absent or silent.

Covenant Context: After the Medes and Persians conquered the Babylonians, a contingent of Hebrews remained in Persia. Among them was Mordecai and his young cousin, Hadassah. Again, God protected the Jews, even in a foreign land, and showed Himself faithful to His covenant people.

Mordecai served in a position in the palace of King Ahasuerus (Xerxes). The king promoted Haman the Agagite, a descendant of Agag, king of the Amalekites, ancient enemies of Israel, to second-in-command. Mordecai refused to bow to Haman, although the king had issued that command. To Mordecai, bowing would have implied worshiping anyone besides Jehovah. In an act of revenge and retribution, Haman plotted to kill all the Jews living in the kingdom ruled by Persia. Haman approached King Xerxes with his sinister plan and complained (Esther 3:8-9). The plan appealed to the king's pride, and he quickly gave his permission for the decree to be signed. When Mordecai heard what had been decreed, grief immediately struck him.

Mordecai's response to Esther's hesitation revealed his understanding of God's covenant and Esther's place in God's plan (Esther 4:13-14). His words hit her hard and she called a fast and requested all her people to fast and pray with her (Esther 4:16). One night Haman could no longer abide Mordecai's dishonor. He built a gallows on which to execute Mordecai. However, on that same night, the king could not sleep, and requested that someone read the chronicles to him. He discovered Mordecai had foiled an assassination attempt much earlier. He ordered Haman to honor Mordecai in the greatest and most public way possible.

After Esther's three-day fast, she mustered the courage to approach the king uninvited. At the second banquet, she told her story and revealed her identity and the danger she and her people faced against an enemy (Haman) bent on destroying them. The king ordered Haman to be executed on the same gallows he had built for Mordecai. The king signed a second decree giving the Jews authority to defend themselves against their enemies.

Living for Jesus Christ is not always the easy choice. In fact, the longer we live and the more corrupt our world becomes, our commitment to covenant identity will become more difficult to maintain as we also battle our human desire to be accepted. The world's acceptance cannot be our goal; our aim must be to please God in all things. When we seek to please Him, even in a strange land, He will take care of us.

As we consider Esther's story, we must prepare ourselves. We will experience moments of great conflict that demand we make a decision. In those moments we have a choice: run and hide or stand up and do what covenant people do. Covenant people trust in the God of their salvation. Covenant people know God has not forgotten them. Covenant people trust that God is working even when they cannot see or hear Him. We learn from Mordecai and Esther that God is present even when He seems absent or silent.

We live in a world ravaged by sin, holding people captive and sentencing them to an eventual eternal death. Their only hope is to hear the saving message of Jesus Christ and the hope of the gospel. Our responsibility is to stand in courage and tell the message of God's love to those who will listen, no matter what it may cost us. Standing for truth will not always be easy, but the Lord will be our strength. We will never stand alone; He will always stand with us.

We do not always see evidence of God's presence, even in moments of desperate need. However, He has promised to always be there, and His Word reminds us of His great faithfulness. He is committed to the covenant He has made, so let us remain confident in Him and live each day with the faith to stand firm, no matter the situation.