

Chapter VIII

LESSONS FROM HAMAN AND MORDECAI

Every book of the Bible is related in some way to the theme of the redemption of man. In some books this is more obvious than in others, but the relationship is there nevertheless. In ancient times there were those who felt the book of Esther should not be considered a part of the canon of Scripture because the name of God is not mentioned in it. Despite this seemingly apparent shortcoming, Esther still fulfills its role in the unfolding drama of the redemption of man, and the evidence of its inspiration by the Holy Spirit of God is irrefutable.

The book of Esther is primarily concerned with five people -- three Persians and two Jews. They are Ahasuerus, Vashti, Haman, Esther and Mordecai. The spiritual value of the book of Esther derives from the historical relationships among these five, which form an allegory portraying the salvation of king Ahasuerus. Ahasuerus and his realm portrays his whole person, body and soul; Vashti portrays his sense of human goodness; Haman portrays the flesh; Esther portrays his regenerated spirit; and Mordecai portrays the Holy Spirit. All of these were, or

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would become, a part of his realm and so portray events and conditions in the life of one who comes to faith in Jesus Christ.

To say that Ahasuerus was king is like saying, *The king was king*, because Ahasuerus was a title, not his name. He was the Persian king Darius Hystaspes, who, in Scripture, is called Darius, or by his titles: Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes, which mean the same thing. For example: ... *And they builded, and finished it [the temple], according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia* (Ezra 6:14).

This quotation from Ezra is not a description of three men, as has been supposed from its translation, but of two. Martin Anstey provides us with a literal translation of the above verse in his *Chronology of the Old Testament: And they builded and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel and according to the commandment of Cyrus and Darius, even the great shah, king of Persia*. Rev. Anstey points out that much confusion has arisen because the Hebrew word *vav* was translated *and*, when it should have been translated *even*, and Artaxerxes means *the great shah*. (Old Testament Chronology, Martin Anstey, Kregel Publications, 1973, pg. 244)

Thus Cyrus and Darius were the two monarchs who were responsible for the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem and of the temple in the fifth century before Christ. Cyrus gave the decree for the Jews to return to Jerusalem after seventy years of captivity in Babylon. Nearly fifty thousand Jews returned to the land under this decree and began rebuilding the city and the temple. The Samaritans resisted this work and had it stopped by an appeal to Artaxerxes (Pseudo Smerdis), who was co-ruler of Persia after the death of Cyrus. Then about seventeen years after the decree

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of Cyrus, the Jews made an appeal to Darius Hystaspes to allow them to resume the work of rebuilding the city and the temple. Darius searched the archives and found the decree of Cyrus and honored it, so that the work was completed under Esther's *great shah*.

As we open the book of Esther *the great shah* of Persia was married to Vashti. Since Vashti represents his sense of human goodness, our first view of Ahasuerus is as an unsaved man. Consequently it was quite natural for him to be concerned only with the affairs and pleasures of this world, for he had power, wealth, great possessions, and a beautiful wife. From the world's point of view, he had everything.

Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, (this is Ahasuerus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces:) that in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the palace, in the third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his princes and his servants; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, being before him: when he shewed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty many days, even an hundred and four score days. (Esther 1:1-4).

Men who have the kind of wealth and power possessed by Ahasuerus often love to display their greatness for the adulation of their subjects. More than once this has been done, as was the case with Ahasuerus, under the pretense of calling the lesser rulers of a political party, or kingdom together to receive honor from the leader of the realm:

And they gave them drink in vessels of gold, (the vessels being diverse one from another,) and royal wine in abundance, according to the state of the king. And the drinking was according to the law; none did compel: for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man's pleasure. Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to king Ahasuerus.

On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven chamberlains that served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king, to bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to shew the people and the princes her beauty:

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for she was fair to look on. But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by his chamberlains: therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him. (Esther 1:7-12)

This feast was for the adulation of the great shah. It was to show his greatness before his subjects, and an important part of that display was the incomparable beauty of Vashti, his queen; but rather than being able to glory in her beauty, he was embarrassed by her refusal to come before his subjects. In that one fateful moment, all she had been was as though it had never been: nothing but the wrath of the king remained. Ahasuerus thought of her as the unsaved before God: *There is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good and sinneth not. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?*

In her allegorical portrayal of Ahasuerus' human goodness, Vashti had acted as many an unsaved person acts in boasting their purity. She had drawn upon the best of her moral refinements and had refused to be put upon display before a drunken crowd. It had been morally repugnant to her to be displayed in such a fashion. Her pride had not let her be subjected to such indignities. We could mistakenly think her refusal to be put on display as the acts of a *godly* woman, a portrayal of goodness; but Vashti's actions are not to be confused with godliness. They are a revelation of the works of the flesh: feigning its goodness and trying to establish its righteousness before God in His Holiness, in His Righteousness and in His Justice, where the works of the flesh cannot possibly stand uncondemned.

When the flesh operates in the realm of its knowledge of good, it is much more difficult to recognize it as being intrinsically evil, than when the flesh operates in its knowledge of evil. It is this sense of right action which causes the unsaved man to trust in his own human goodness

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as adequate grounds for acceptance with God. It is the unsaved man's knowledge of good which deludes him into believing that he does not need a Savior. Vashti might have felt justified by her actions, but by her actions she violated the law of the land and she embarrassed her husband:

Then the king said to the wise men, which knew the times, (for so was the king's manner toward all that knew law and judgment: and the next unto him was Carshena, Shethar, Admantha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, which saw the king's face, and which sat the first in the kingdom;) what shall we do unto the queen Vashti according to law, because she hath not performed the commandment of the king Ahasuerus by the chamberlains?

And Memucan answered before the king and the princes, Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes, and to all the people that are in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus. For this deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, so that they shall despise their husbands in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not. Likewise shall the ladies of Persia and Media say this day unto all the king's princes, which have heard of the deed of the queen. Thus shall there arise too much contempt and wrath. If it please the king, let there go a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, That Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she. And when the king's decree which he shall make shall be published throughout all his empire, (for it is great,) all the wives shall give to their husbands honour, both to great and small.

And the saying pleased the king and the princes; and the king did according to the word of Memucan: for he sent letters into all the king's provinces, into every province according to the writing thereof, and every people after their language, that every man should bear rule in his own house, and that it should be published according to the language of every people. (Esther 1:13-22)

Thus Vashti was condemned for her actions. She could not reign as queen: she had violated the law of her husband, and she had violated the law of the land. There are many unsaved people who think as Vashti thought: they mock the authority of the Word of God as Vashti mocked the authority of Ahasuerus. They have the misconceived idea that their moral ideals make them fit for the presence of God, regardless of the many times they have failed to live up to their own standards, let alone the law of God. Vashti and all like her are described by James, *[W]hosoever*

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shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law (James 2:10-11). With the deposing of Vashti, it became incumbent upon those who served the king to find him a new wife:

Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, Let there be fair young virgins sought for the king: and let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan the palace, to the house of the women, unto the custody of Hege the king's chamberlain, keeper of the women; and let their things for purification be given them: and let the maiden which pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti. And the thing pleased the king; and he did so.

Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite; who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away. And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter.

So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was brought also unto the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women. And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness of him; and he speedily gave her things for purification, with such things as belonged to her, and seven maidens, which were meet to be given her, out of the king's house: and he preferred her and her maids unto the best place of the house of the women. (Esther 2:2-9)

Esther portrays the regenerated spirit of Ahasuerus. The events which brought her into his kingdom represent the preaching of the Word of God and the quickening power of the Spirit of God. Even so, before she was brought before the king, many virgins were also brought before him. They can be likened to the philosophies of this world, which can never bring satisfaction to the soul of one who is to be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, to one who has been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. One by one they were all rejected. In the meanwhile

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Esther came into favor with Hegai, the keeper of the women.

Several years earlier, in this same general locale, the prophet Daniel found favor with the keeper of the eunuchs in the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar. The favor which Daniel enjoyed was not accidental, it was the work of God. So, too, was it the work of God to bring Esther into favor with the keeper of the women. She obtained kindnesses of him, and she received from him the things necessary for her purification. She did not shirk her training, but was completely committed to the task of preparing herself for her presentation before the king, having been instructed of Mordecai, Who represents the Spirit of God.

Esther had not shewed her people nor her kindred: for Mordecai had charged her that she should not shew it. And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know how Esther did, and what should become of her.

Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with other things for the purifying of the women;) then thus came every maiden unto the king; whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house. In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, which kept the concubines: she came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and that she were called by name. (Esther 2:10-14)

Finally, as with the preparation of the heart of man by the Spirit of God and the Word of God, Esther's preparation was completed:

Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her. So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti.

Then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, even Esther's

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feast; and he made a release to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the state of the king. And when the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai sat in the king's gate. Esther had not yet showed her kindred nor her people; as Mordecai had charged her: for Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him. (Esther 2:15-20)

The marriage of Ahasuerus and Esther is typical of Ahasuerus' salvation, because Esther represents his regenerated spirit:

In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door, were wroth, and sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. And the thing was known to Mordecai, who told it unto Esther the queen; and Esther certified the king thereof in Mordecai's name. And when inquisition was made of the matter, it was found out; therefore they were both hanged on a tree: and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king. (Esther 2:21-23)

This is one more detail in the salvation of a soul, because Mordecai (who represents the Spirit of God) told Esther (the king's regenerated spirit) of the threat of death imposed by the chamberlains. The word which Esther received from Mordecai represents the Word of God, while the chamberlains represent sin (*the soul that sinneth, it shall die*). Ahasuerus believed the word of Mordecai (which represents the preaching of the Word of God). Therefore an investigation was made and the thing determined true. As a consequence Ahasuerus' life was saved and the chamberlains were hanged. The hanging represents the believer's sins, which were judged in Jesus Christ upon the cross of Calvary, because *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree* (Galatians 3:13).

These historical events have portrayed, allegorically, the salvation of Ahasuerus. From this time on, many of the historical events which transpired in his kingdom were instigated by Haman (who represents the flesh), or by Mordecai (who represents the Spirit of God). Haman

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acted directly upon Ahasuerus, by his counsel and by his deeds, but Mordecai acted upon Ahasuerus through Esther (who represents his regenerated spirit). Even though in this allegory Ahasuerus has been saved, true to the new believer's experiences, we find the flesh (Haman) still very much in control:

After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him. And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence. Then the king's servants, which were in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the king's commandment?

Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand: for he had told them that he was a Jew. And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath. And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had shewed him the people of Mordecai: wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai. (Esther 3:1-6)

Some might be tempted to believe the order of events and conditions in Shushan does not agree with their experiences as a believer, but lest they idealize their experiences, Paul wrote, *I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ* and he also wrote, *...that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.* Thus, in order to change the fleshly condition of the new believer into a dependence upon the Word of God and the Spirit of God, the apostle Peter wrote, *But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...* (II Peter 3:18). If the new believer is nurtured in the things of the Lord, conditions can rapidly change from carnality to spirituality, but only by the Word and Spirit of God.

The Bible says that Haman was the son of Hammedatha the Agagite. The Agagites were

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the sons of Agag, king of the Amalekites. Amalek was the great grandson of Esau, who, in Scripture, is also presented as a representative of the flesh. Esau swore that he would kill Jacob, and this threat against Jacob was attempted through Amalek and Edom, Esau's posterity. Because Haman was an Amalekite, the Scripture says of him, ... *the LORD hath sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation* (Exodus 17:16).

Our studies have indicated that there are two primary influences in the life of a believer, the flesh and the Spirit. The flesh is an expression of man's human nature and was introduced into this world by the serpent's deception of Eve and Adam's willful sin. The flesh is the product of a knowledge of good and evil, obtained independently of and in rebellion against God. In contrast to the flesh, when the believer walks in the Spirit, he walks according to the Word of God. Since *faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God*, the walk in the Spirit is a walk of faith. Thus the apostle Paul admonished, *Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh*. Conversely if the believer fails to walk in the Spirit, according to the truth of the Word of God, he will fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

Haman, who represents the flesh, acted much as the Persian princes had acted in their jealousy against the prophet Daniel. They desired to be rid of him, so they deceived Darius the Mede into signing a decree which would prohibit prayer to any God but the Persians' gods for one month. They knew enough about Daniel to know he would not neglect his prayers to the true and living God. Thus they used his faithfulness to bring him into disfavor with the king. And as with the Persian princes and the prophet Daniel, Haman sought to destroy Mordecai and his people:

In the first month, that is, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month,

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to the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar. And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them. If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasuries. And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jew's enemy. And the king said unto Haman, The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee.

Then were the king's scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that were over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring. And the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey. The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, that they should be ready against that day. The posts went out, being hastened by the king's commandment, and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. And the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city Shushan was perplexed. (Esther 3:7-15, emphasis mine)

The cunning of the flesh is revealed in Haman. He wished to be rid of Mordecai, but he thought it not wise to attack him directly, because it had not been long since Mordecai had saved the king's life. Rather than attacking Mordecai directly, Haman sought a cause to bring a charge against the people of Mordecai, whom he would label *an unprofitable people*, and he found this cause in their worship of the true and living God.

History reveals that Darius Hystaspes could be swayed by money. Haman offered him ten thousand talents of silver for his treasury to destroy the *unprofitable people* in his kingdom. Ten thousand talents is one million pounds of silver! The silver was to be delivered to the treasury in the last month of the Jewish year, on the thirteenth day of Adar, after the *unprofitable people* were destroyed. In order for his plan to go smoothly, Haman did not identify the people to the king,

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and it is evident he did not know Esther was one of the *unprofitable people*.

The Scriptures teach the believer not to quench, or grieve the Holy Spirit. Thus the spiritual man is dependent upon the Word of God and the Spirit of God to perform the will of God. If the believer is not dependent upon these sources of spiritual strength, then he will revert to his natural abilities and views. It is in this mode that the flesh, portrayed allegorically by Haman, is in control. When the flesh is in control, the Spirit of God and the Word of God are quenched. Thus in the city of Shushan, with the ring of power upon the finger of Haman, the Jews (who represent that which is spiritual) were under the sentence of death, and the inhabitants of the city were perplexed.

Ahasuerus' kingdom covered the entire Mediterranean world, so it would take time to bring word of Haman's decree to the outlying areas. Haman wanted to accomplish his plan against the Jews on a grand scale. He wanted all of them to die in one day. The decree of Haman was made on the thirteenth day of the first month of the year, with the execution of the decree to take place on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month. Thus adequate time was given for all of the machinations of the scheme to come into place. Further Haman was pleased with the power that had come into his hands, which to his mind would enable him to destroy his enemy Mordecai.

As believers we make choices to operate in the flesh or in the Spirit. We can either operate in faith, or we can operate in unbelief. When the flesh is in control in the life of a believer, the believer is perplexed. Thus with Haman and the king on friendly terms and the decree of death pronounced upon the people of God, *the city of Shushan was perplexed*. Whether we wish to acknowledge it or not, the believer has a constant warfare between his own desires seated in the

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flesh, and the desires of God seated in the Spirit and Word of God. Haman, who represents the flesh of Ahasuerus, in a larger sense represents the fleshly desires of all believers, which given the right set of circumstances might seek to destroy the spiritual lives of themselves for a few moments of pleasure, or self-aggrandizement. Despite the fleshly desires of a believer, the Spirit of God is present to help:

When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry; and came even before the king's gate: for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes. (Esther 4:1-3)

This pitiful condition portrays the lamentable condition of a believer who has little or no spiritual input in his life. Consequently the Jews, who represent that which is spiritual in the realm of Ahasuerus (the life of a believer), are clothed in sackcloth and ashes and mourn, because they are under the sentence of death, imposed by Haman (who represents the flesh). These conditions should never arise in the life of a believer; but given the right set of circumstances, they do arise. Thus the believer is admonished *grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption* (Ephesians 4:30). And the Scriptures further admonish the believer: *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings [preaching]. Prove all things [by the Word of God]; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil [the evil one]* (I Thessalonians 5:18-22).

It was not long, then, before the conditions in Shushan came to the attention of Esther; because the Spirit of God, Who indwells the believer, cannot be grieved by the conduct of the

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believer without producing grief and conviction in the regenerated spirit of the believer:

So Esther's maids and her chamberlains came and told it her. Then was the queen exceedingly grieved; and she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai, and to take away his sackcloth from him: but he received it not. Then called Esther for Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend upon her, and gave him a commandment to Mordecai, to know what it was, and why it was.

So Hatach went forth to Mordecai unto the street of the city, which was before the king's gate. And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him, and of the sum of the money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them. Also he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them, to show it unto Esther, and to declare it unto her, and to charge her that she should go in unto the king to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people. (Esther 4:4-8)

The communications that transpired between Esther and Hatach and Hatach and Mordecai and visa versa can be likened to the communications between the believer and God: by prayer; by reading the Word of God; by hearing the Word of God preached; and by conviction of the Holy Spirit, etc. So that, in any given set of circumstances, the Holy Spirit may speak to the heart of the believer to persuade him of the action to be taken. Now that this had been done, it was left to Esther to communicate the conditions of the kingdom to Ahasuerus. She knew what she should do, but she did not do it. She sought first to placate Mordecai with a change of apparel.

And Hatach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai. Again Esther spake unto Hatach, and gave him commandment unto Mordecai; all the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.

And they told to Mordecai Esther's words. Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. 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? (Esther 4:9-14)

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Esther's responses to Mordecai revealed her fears, which produced excuses why she could not do what Mordecai had revealed she should do. He then revealed that her supposed fears were nothing compared to the real danger she would face by the decree of Haman. Under Haman's decree all of the Jews, without regard to their station in the kingdom of Ahasuerus, were under the sentence of death.

Then Esther and her servants requested prayer for three days and three nights: the period of time our Lord was in the tomb. This, in the typology of Scripture, would place Esther on resurrection ground. This ground was secured by our Lord for Esther and for all who have their trust in Him:

Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer, Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish. So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him. (Esther 4:15-17, emphasis mine)

Buoyed up by her relationship with the Lord, Esther was determined to do the will of the Lord which had been revealed to her by Mordecai. She and her servants prayed according to their covenant relationship with the Lord. This is the key to success in prayer, and it can be observed in Elijah, who prayed for God to cause the rains in Israel to cease; and it ceased to rain for three and one-half years. Elijah's power in prayer was not because of any special power or holiness of his own, for James tells us:

Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. (James 5:17-18)

It was not Elijah's personal qualifications that gave him the power to pray and have the

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heavens closed for three and one-half years; it was the promise of God contained in the covenant He made with Israel before they entered the land of Canaan: *But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee* (Deuteronomy 28:15). And again: *The LORD shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed* (Deuteronomy 28:24).

Elijah simply observed that Israel had failed in her covenant relationship with God and was thus subject to the conditions of her failure. After the three and one-half years of drought, Elijah called for a meeting between himself, Ahab king of Israel, and the eight hundred and fifty false prophets of Baal and of the groves to determine if Jehovah or Baal was God. When it was proved that Jehovah was God, Elijah and Israel killed the false prophets.

And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: and all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. (Deuteronomy 28:1-2)

Just as a failure under the covenant had produced the removal of the rains at the prayer of Elijah, so the return to the terms of the covenant allowed God to restore the blessing of the early and the latter rains by the prayer of Elijah, because God had promised:

The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. (Deuteronomy 28:12)

In a manner similar to Elijah, Esther came to the place where she prayed on the basis of the word of Mordecai (which represents the Word of God). Once Esther was in agreement with

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Mordecai, Mordecai went into action in her behalf: much the way the Lord had done in behalf of Elijah. Prayer is a wonderful privilege of the believer, but sometimes believers halt and stutter in prayer, not knowing what we should pray for as we ought. Despite this the Spirit of God conveys our prayers unto the Father in clear and precise terms, according to His will:

Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house: and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the gate of the house. And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight: and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.

Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? And what is thy request? It shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom. And Esther answered, If it seem good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him. The king said, Cause Haman to make haste, that he may do as Esther hath said.

So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared. And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition? And it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? Even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed. Then answered Esther, and said, My petition and my request is; if I have found favour in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition, and to perform my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do tomorrow as the king hath said. (Esther 5:1-8)

Haman was ecstatic and his chest must have swelled with pride. He alone had been the guest of the queen and king. Besides this, he had been invited to a second banquet, a special banquet on the next day. Of course with his inflated ego, he presumed the banquet was to honor him. He was anxious to boast before family and friends of his accomplishments and savor the events of the day:

Then went Haman forth that day joyful and with a glad heart: but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of indignation against Mordecai. Nevertheless Haman refrained himself: and when he came home, he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife. And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the

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king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and tomorrow am I invited unto her also with the king. (Esther 5:9-12).

It had not been easy for Haman to refrain himself over Mordecai's impudence, if the *Spirit's* refusal to bow to the *flesh* can be called impudence; but the thought of being able to boast himself before family and friends gave him a temporary respite. Upon arriving home, he called his family and his friends about him, and his joy was unabated until he had finished telling them of his glories and of all that would transpire on the morrow. Then, he said:

Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate. Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and tomorrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon: then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made. (Esther 5:13-14)

Fifty cubits is about seventy-five feet. The unusual height of the gallows seems to have conveyed Haman's thoughts -- that all might see the consequences of anyone failing to do him honor. He was sure, because he alone had been invited to the queen's banquet, it would not be difficult to gain permission from the king to hang Mordecai. After the hanging, he could go merrily into the banquet with the king and queen. Zeresh's plan had changed Haman's depression into elation. He ordered the immediate construction of the gallows and comforted himself with the thought of hanging his enemy, but:

On that night could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king. And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. And the king said, What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him. (Esther 6:1-3)

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Sometimes in our affairs as believers in Jesus Christ we find ourselves unable to sleep because the Spirit of God makes us aware of conditions and events that are taking place in our lives. We are weary and desire to sleep, but we cannot. There is a definite parallel between the conditions in the life of Ahasuerus and those in the life of a believer. Ahasuerus may have thought he could get back to sleep if he had the chronicles read to him. But rather than inducing sleep, the record of the chronicles of his kingdom made him aware of his neglect of Mordecai, who had provided his salvation.

About that time, Haman arose early to be able to petition the king for permission to hang his enemy. Of course he could not know of the king's discovery from the chronicles during the night and hurried to arrive at court:

And the king said, Who is in the court? Now Haman was come into the outward court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him. And the king's servants said unto him, Behold, Haman standeth in the court. And the king said, Let him come in. So Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?

Now Haman thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself? And Haman answered the king, For the man whom the king delighteth to honour, let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head: and let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour. (Esther 6:4-9, emphasis mine)

The flesh is an insidious blight upon the believer and should be a constant reminder of our relationship to the fall of Adam. Nevertheless the flesh seeks to credit itself for any spiritual accomplishments, while at the same time requiring the believer to satisfy his other fleshly appetites. Unless the flesh is suppressed through growth *in grace and in the knowledge of our*

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Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, it will magnify itself more and more. It is through the preaching and teaching of the Word of God and the convicting power of the Spirit of God that real spiritual growth occurs in the life of a believer. This makes Mordecai (who represents the Spirit of God) the archenemy of Haman (who represents the flesh).

Then the king said to Haman, Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken. Then took Haman the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour. And Mordecai came again to the king's gate. But Haman hastened to his house mourning, and having his head covered.

And Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his friends every thing that had befallen him. Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him, If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him. And while they were yet talking with him, came the king's chamberlains, and hastened to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared. (Esther 6:10-14)

Sometimes it is remarkable to see how rapidly circumstances can change. On the previous night Haman was revelling in the prospect of hanging Mordecai. This very morning he had come to the court of the king hoping to gain permission to do just that, but the insomnia of the king had changed everything. The king now wished to honor Mordecai. Only a blatant fool would try to gain permission to hang *the man whom the king delighteth to honor*. Haman was no fool. He carried out the plan of Ahasuerus to honor Mordecai, even though it galled him.

Throughout the lifetime of the believer there are occasions when the believer will gain the victory over the flesh by faith in the Word of God. What the believer must come to realize is: a victory gained today does not assure the same victory tomorrow. Each occasion requires the same tactics as those revealed in the book of Esther. The victory over the flesh is gained by faith in,

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and dependence upon, the Word and Spirit of God. The believer's strength is not in himself, but in the Lord. The apostle Paul wrote:

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. (Ephesians 6:10-18)

The battle against the world, the flesh, and the Devil, is a perpetual battle for the believer. It is a battle which shall be fought every day of the believer's life. The battle shall not end until all believers are in the presence of the Lord. The believer should never presume to have the world, the flesh, or the Devil completely defeated. The apostle Peter said:

... Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all of your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. (I Peter 5:5-10)

The Devil is a defeated enemy. He has no claim on the souls of believers because of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary, yet he is still active in the world (cosmos) through the fallen angels and demons. Thus in the book of Hebrews we read:

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself

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likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (Hebrews 2:14-15, emphasis mine)

Esther appropriated the promise of God and stood on resurrection ground when she said, *If I perish, I perish*. She committed herself to the word of Mordecai, which allegorically represents the Word of God. She stood where all believers should stand and her stand for the truth was about to produce the defeat of Haman.

So the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther the queen. And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? and it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom. Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request: for we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage. Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so? And Esther said, The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen. (Esther 7:1-6)

The allegorical relationship between all of the characters in the book of Esther have portrayed events and circumstances which every believer in Jesus Christ shall experience: the battle between the flesh and the Spirit. These events have brought the spiritual consciousness of the child of God (Ahasuerus) to recognize the evil and corrupt nature of the flesh (Haman) by the preaching of the Word of God and the ministry of the Spirit of God (Mordecai) through his regenerated spirit (Esther) to recognize that there is no good thing in his human nature (Haman and Vashti). There is absolutely nothing in the flesh which can bring honor to God, because the flesh, or *carnal mind, is at enmity with God*.

And the king arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath went into the palace garden: and Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen; for he saw

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that there was evil determined against him by the king. Then the king returned out of the palace garden into the place of the banquet of wine; and Haman was fallen upon the bed whereon Esther was. Then said the king, Will he force the queen also before me in the house? As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king, Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then the king said, Hang him thereon. So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified. (Esther 7:7-10)

The treacherous Haman was finally revealed for what he was. Thus:

On that day did the king Ahasuerus give the house of Haman the Jews' enemy unto Esther the queen. And Mordecai came before the king; for Esther had told what he was unto her. And the king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it unto Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

And Esther spake yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet, and besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite, and his device that he had devised against the Jews. Then the king held out the golden sceptre toward Esther. So Esther arose, and stood before the king, and said, If it please the king, and if I have found favour in his sight, and the thing seem right before the king, and I be pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews which are in all the king's provinces: for how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?

Then the king Ahasuerus said unto Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew, Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and him they have hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews. Write ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring: for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse.

Then were the king's scribes called at that time in the third month, that is, the month Sivan, on the three and twentieth day thereof; and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded unto the Jews, and to the lieutenants, and the deputies and rulers of the provinces which are from India unto Ethiopia, an hundred twenty and seven provinces, according to their language. And he wrote in the king Ahasuerus' name, and sealed it with the king's ring, and sent letters by posts on horseback, and riders on mules, camels, and young dromedaries: wherein the king granted the Jews which were in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, both little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey, upon one day in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, namely, upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar.

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The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, and that the Jews should be ready against that day to avenge themselves on their enemies. So the posts that rode upon mules and camels went out, being hastened and pressed on by the king's commandment. And the decree was given at Shushan the palace. And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple: and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad. The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour. And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them. (Esther 8:1-17)

What a marvelous reversal! All that Haman had devised against Mordecai had fallen upon Haman. Haman had been second only to king Ahasuerus. The king's ring had been upon his finger. All that he devised against the Jews was sealed with the king's ring and had become law, as if the king had decreed it himself. Nevertheless *the powers that be are ordained of God* (Romans 13:1). God sets up one authority and puts down another, and Haman had gone too far in his attempt to destroy the people of God.

So, too, it is with the believer. The believer can choose to empower the flesh to do all kinds of things contrary to the Word of God, or he can operate through his regenerated spirit by the gifts and power of the Spirit of God to perform the will of God. If the believer chooses to live his life in the flesh, the Spirit of God will only allow the believer to go so far before He speaks to his heart through his regenerated spirit by the Word of God and the convicting power of the Spirit of God. If the believer persists in living only for the flesh, the Scripture says, *There is a sin unto death, I do not say that ye shall pray for it.*

After his death, all that was Haman's was given to Esther. What was true of Esther is true of the believer. All of the natural talents and possessions of the flesh should come under the

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jurisdiction of the spiritual consciousness of the believer as that consciousness is controlled by the Word and Spirit of God. As Haman had been second to Ahasuerus, Mordecai came to be second in command in the realm of Shushan. From these relationships we learn that the controlling factor in the life of a believer, whether it is the flesh or the Spirit, is the choice of the believer. For this reason, the apostle Paul said, *Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.* Conversely, as we have seen at Shushan, if we do not walk in the Spirit, we shall fulfill the lust of the flesh. Of course, the walk in the Spirit brings the believer his greatest happiness, joy and contentment.

With Mordecai's rise to second in command in the realm of Ahasuerus, the Jews were no longer the prey of their enemies. In fact many Gentiles converted and became Jews because of Mordecai's rise to power, and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad. With Mordecai's rise to power there was a new outlook in Shushan:

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: in the which ye also walked sometime, when ye lived in them.

But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. (Colossians 3:1-11)

In Ahasuerus' realm there were enemies of the Jews throughout the whole realm. In fact they were the ones who were to carry out the decree of Haman. Haman's decree was still in

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effect. However when Mordecai came to power, he enacted a decree which would allow the Jews to defend themselves, when their enemies would seek to destroy them on the 13th of Adar. So, too, shall the believer, clad in *the whole armor of God*, be able to defeat his enemies: *the world, the flesh, and the Devil*. When the 13th of Adar arrived, there were some wonderful victories gained by the Jews throughout the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, which made up the realm of Ahasuerus:

Now in the twelfth month, that is the month Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put in execution, in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them, (though it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated them;) the Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, to lay hand on such as sought their hurt: and no man could withstand them; for the fear of them fell upon all people.

And all the rulers of the provinces, and the lieutenants, and the deputies, and officers of the king, helped the Jews; because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them. For Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame went out throughout all the provinces: for this man Mordecai waxed greater and greater. The Jews smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, and slaughter, and destruction, and did what they would unto those that hated them. (Esther 9:1-5)

The destruction of the Jews' enemies throughout the one-hundred and twenty-seven provinces of Ahasuerus' realm is a literal part of history. Haman, Ahasuerus, Mordecai, and Esther were real people and the city of Shushan was a real place. Yet the spiritual significance of the people and the events cannot be overlooked. If they are overlooked it will be to the detriment of Christian people everywhere, because the allegorical significance of the people and the events portrays the information which the believer needs to live his life by faith in this present evil age.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;

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casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? (II Corinthians 10:3-7a)

In respect to the Christian's spiritual warfare the apostle Paul asked an important question:

Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? Obviously, Paul's enemies at Corinth did view things on the basis of outward appearance because Paul said to them:

For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. But we will not boast of things without our measure [i.e: the Word of God], but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you. (II Corinthians 10:12-13)

Haman was like the men at Corinth of whom Paul spoke: he measured himself by himself and compared himself with his friends, who were of the same nature. He exalted himself. Haman and his kind did not all die by the decree of Mordecai. There were many of them around in the apostle Paul's day, and there is a great proliferation of them in this present age. They judge outwardly, according to the flesh. They have no spiritual discernment, and they are the enemies of the truth.

One victory wrought by the Holy Spirit does not make the spiritual man safe from the effects of the flesh. Even though Haman was dead, Haman had ten sons to continue his nefarious work.

And the king said unto Esther the queen, The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the palace, and the ten sons of Haman; what have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? now what is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: or what is thy request further? and it shall be done. Then said Esther, If it please the king, let it be granted to the Jews which are in Shushan to do to morrow also according unto this day's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged upon the gallows. And the king commanded it so to be done: and the decree was given at Shushan; and they hanged

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Haman's ten sons. (Esther 9:12-14)

Totally, on the two days of Purim, there were seventy-five thousand enemies of the Jews slain throughout the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the kingdom. The flesh is a mighty force. It does not go away with a single victory. In fact, the battle is *from generation to generation*. The only way that victory can be obtained in any confrontation with the flesh is when the believer's trust is in the Word and Spirit of God. Self-effort will always fail. The battle is the Lord's.

As we come to the end of the book of Esther, we find that great victories have been wrought by Mordecai. The city of Shushan is at peace and there is joy and gladness. Would to God this were the perpetual condition of the believer in Jesus Christ, but it is not. It is a temporary condition. There will be other Hamans with which to contend. The believer's life is characterized by a continual battle with the world, the flesh, and the Devil. This battle will continue until that day when the dead in Christ rise first and those of us that are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air. Then shall we ever be with the Lord. Then shall we be changed through resurrection and glorification and shall be like our wonderful Lord.

Until then, with faith there is also failure, but the failures have been covered by the blood of Christ, so that believers are always accepted of God in Christ. We have the promise of our wonderful Lord that He shall be with us and that He shall be in us. He said, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*. Thus Mordecai, who represents the Spirit of God, is present to counsel us by the Word of God each step of our Christian sojourn.

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And the king Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land, and upon the isles of the sea. And all the acts of his power and of his might, and the declaration of his power and of his might, and the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai, whereunto the king advanced him, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia? For Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed. (Esther 10:1-3)