



THE BOOK OF ESTHER

author,
HOLY SPIRIT

The Book of Esther, study outline

by Pastor Walter Lucas

Introductory Statement(s)

“Imagine yourself going to your mailbox tomorrow and finding an official government-issued document giving you permission to kill your Jewish neighbor on Adar 13th next year. There is no compulsion here – nor was there compulsion in Haman’s decree, but it put the Jews in great danger. How would you react? How would a member of the Aryan Nation react?”

“The reality is that there are those throughout the world and through the centuries who passionately hate or have hated the Jews. Do you know that nearly every country in Europe has expelled its Jews at some point: England in 1290, France 1306, Spain 1492, Portugal 1497, Germany 1348, Austria 1421, and so on. Often the expulsions meant the loss of property and sometimes life. The expulsion of the Jews by Spain was part of the Inquisition led by Torquemada and helped provide the funds for Columbus’ voyage. Those in government at the time of these expulsions showed the same spirit that drove Haman and the others in Persia. Again, the musical *Fiddler on the Roof* is about a pogrom in Russia that evacuated a Jewish community. Over 30 similar pogroms have occurred in Russia and the Soviet Union. Nazi Germany had about nine death camps for the Jews. It is well known that the Nazi regime led to the slaughter of six million Jews.

The spirit of Haman also exists in Islam:

“The Hour (the Day of Judgment) will not begin until the Muslims fight the Jews and kill them. A Jew will hide behind a rock or a tree, and the rock or tree will say, ‘O Muslim, O Slave of Allah! There is a Jew behind me, come and kill him!’ – except for the *gharaqad* (box thorn), for it is one of the trees of the Jews” (*al-Bukhari* 2926; *Muslim*, 2921-2). Anti-Semitism is alive and well in the world, and part of the life of a Jew is the knowledge that he is never safe. Esther gives us a picture of it and lets us know that God is still there with His people. “

Message delivered by Donald E. Curtis at Community Bible Chapel, on November 18, 2001. Don is an elder at Cobb Vineyard Christian Fellowship in Kennesaw, Georgia.

Verse by verse outline by Pastor Walter Lucas

Chapter 1

1. Portrait of a worldly King
2. Place of Feast #1, in the Palace
3. Provincial Princes of Persia and Media
4. Pomp and circumstance
5. Palatial People's Feast #2
6. Purple hangings, Pillars of marble, and Pavement of colors
7. Pouring of Libation
8. Pleasure enjoined
9. Presentation of the Queen's feast
10. Presentation of the chamberlains
11. Proposal to present the Queen to the princes and the people
12. Power of the Queen's convictions
13. Pow-wow with his cronies
14. Princes in his presence
15. Presentation against the Queen's poor performance
16. Problem affects all the provinces

17. Predicament for the husbands
18. Predicament for the princes
19. Power of the King's edict
20. Publishing of the King's edict
21. Pleasurable agreement of the worldly participants
22. Presentation of the King's letter to the populace

Chapter 2

1. Remembrance of his actions against the Queen
2. Recommendation to the King
3. Remedy for the displaced Queen
4. Replacement for the dismissed Queen
5. Rare individual introduced
6. Reality of his life presented
7. Rearing of Hadassah by Mordecai
8. Recruiting of God's sovereign choice
9. Reaction of the keeper of women
10. Revelation of kindred withheld
11. Reassuring activity of Mordecai
12. Raw material transformed
13. Representation of the maidens to the King
14. Reconsideration not an option at this time
15. Requirements for Esther's presentation, minimal
16. Royal decision made
17. Reigning King crowns his Queen
18. Release sent to the provinces and a holiday enacted
19. Regathering of the maidens
20. Relationship of kindred still withheld
21. Rejection of the King by two of his associates
22. Report of danger by Mordecai to the Queen
23. Response of the King to the report

Chapter 3

1. HAMAN'S PROMOTION PERFORMED
2. HAMAN'S REVERENCE COMMANDED
3. MORDECAI'S REFUSAL QUESTIONED
4. MORDECAI'S HERITAGE REVEALED
5. HAMAN'S ANGER MANIFESTED
6. HAMAN'S PLAN REVISED
7. HAMAN'S DAY DIVINED
8. HAMAN'S CONSPIRACY BEGINS
9. HAMAN'S PROPOSED PROFIT
10. HAMAN'S POSITION REVEALED
11. KING'S PERMISSION GRANTED
12. HAMAN'S PLAN ENACTED
13. HAMAN'S LETTERS SENT
14. HAMAN'S PLAN PUBLISHED

15. KINGS COMMANDMENT GIVEN

Chapter 4

1. Mordecai's raiment rent in reaction to the decree
2. Mordecai registers his response at the gate
3. The Jews receive the decree and respond
4. Raiment is sent but not received
5. Reigning queen requests reasons for Mordecai's actions
6. Hatach seeks to identify rationale behind the activity
7. Hatach receives Mordecai's remarks
8. Mordecai passes on the ruinous decree and makes request for Esther's intercession with the King
9. Hatach represents Mordecai to Queen Esther
10. Queen Esther replies to Hatach for Mordecai
11. Queen Esther's reply contains rule of law
12. Queen Esther's remarks represented
13. Mordecai's reminder of her relationship
14. a) God's response of deliverance will arise from somewhere
b) The reality of Esther being God's chosen rescuer
15. Queen Esther's plan developed and returned to Mordecai
16. Queen Esther's resolve to stand for her people
17. Mordecai's regimentation in relation to Esther's rallying cry

Chapter 5

1. Esther stood as the King sat.
2. Esther is seen and the sceptre extended.
3. The King speaks seeking Esther's request.
4. Esther's supper surprise presented.
5. The king sends for Haman to speedily respond.
6. The King seeks to meet Esther's desire.
7. Esther sets up her plan.
8. Esther serenely secures the invite.
9. Haman's exuberant until he sees Mordacai not stand.
10. Haman exercise self-control and sends for an audience.
11. Haman specializes in self-promotion.
12. Haman speaks about his special invitation.
13. Haman sadly expresses his short lived joy.
14. Haman's wife's surreptitious suggestion.

Chapter 5 (review after couple weeks interlude)

1. Esther prepares to meet the King
2. Esther obtains favor to enter
3. Esther's request requested
4. Esther's invitation to the King (part 1 of her plan)
5. Esther receives enthusiastic response
6. Esther's petition a sure thing

7. Esther humbly presents part 2 of her plan
8. “ “ “ “ “ “ “ “
9. Haman's joyful thoughts interrupted
10. Haman's need for an audience
11. Haman presents his promotion(s) above the princes
12. Hamn's personal invitation to a private banquet
13. Haman's 'joy-robbing' problem
14. Haman pleased by his wife's problem solving ability

Chapter 6

1. A sleepless night for the King
2. A story of attempted murder
3. A question of reward for faithfulness
4. A herald needed for this task (herald - A proclaimer; one who, or that which, publishes or announces)
5. A herald found
6. The herald engaged
7. The herald's response
8. The details of the response
9. “ “ “ “ “
10. The herald appointed
11. The herald's proclamation
12. The herald's embarrassment
13. The herald receives bad news
14. The herald directed to the banquet

Chapter 7

1. Banquet #2 begins
2. Request by the King for Esther's petition
3. Esther's petition is a desire to live
4. Esther's presentation reveals a problem with perishing (not really desirable)
5. The King's love is manifested
6. The culprit exposed
7. The King leaves the room to maintain his composure
8. The King returns to find insult upon insult
9. Haman's plan exposed
10. The King's wrath pacified

Chapter 8

1. Private information revealed
2. Promotion of Mordecai proclaimed
3. Esther prepares to present part three
4. Esther gains audience with the Potentate (Po'ten·tate/ (?), n. [LL.*potentatus*, fr. *potentare* to exercise power: cf. F. *potentat*. See *Potent*, a.] One who is potent; one who possesses great power or sway; a prince, sovereign, or monarch.
5. Esther's plan to reverse the plot
6. Esther's anguish for her people
7. The King presents the case thus far
8. The King prepares his response to the problem

9. The King grants 'power of attorney' for the response
10. The King's 'postmen' deliver the proclamation
11. The King gives permission for the Jews to cause to perish all who see them as prey
12. The King sets the day for this action (cf. 3:13,14 ; 3:13 w/ 8:12)
13. The King's decree published and presented for the Jews preparation of self-defense
14. The King's posts pressed for haste to task accomplishment
15. Mordecai's presence in purple pacifies people with peace
16. The Jews deliverance provided stress relief for God's people
17. The Jews deliverance provided salvation for other people

Chapter 9

1. Jewish overrule of their enemies
2. Jewish gathering for defense
3. Jewish people helped by other powerful men
4. Jewish leader has strong testimony
5. Jewish people slay their enemies
6. Jewish leaders clean house at the palace
7. - 10. Jewish people visit judgment upon Haman's sons
11. Jewish people update the King – 500 killed
12. The King requests further information plus any additional needs
13. Esther requests Haman's son's bodies to be hung on the gallows
14. Haman's son's bodies placed on the gallows
15. Jews kill 300 more at the palace
16. Provincial Jews in posture of self-defense
17. Victory celebration(s)
18. Additional day of celebration
19. Joy, food, and gifts manifest the victory
20. -22. Mordecai contacts the people with news of the setting of a holiday of remembrance
23. -24. The reason for their actions
25. Synopsis and overview of events – (synopsis - A general view, or a collection of heads or parts so arranged as to exhibit a general view of the whole)
26. - 29. Day(s) of victory named and agreed to by all Jews (and proselytes) for a yearly celebration and memorial
30. - 32. Purim becomes a lawful, annual celebration. See attached “Purim.”

Chapter 10

1. Tribute
2. History made becomes history written
3. Although God is not mentioned in the Book of Esther, His Sovereign hand is seen throughout each section. In this fitting conclusion we see how God worked through a Persian king and dynasty to elevate Mordecai in the sight of the world as well as the Jewish nation. The love of the Jewish people was his. His testimony as a leader was filled with his love, dedication, and faithfulness in seeking their welfare. He is also seen as a great encourager and comforter to all.

Bible study outline by Pastor W. Lucas, Pastor of Eastbrook Baptist Church, Reynoldsburg, Ohio

In the English Bible Esther appears adjacent to Ezra-Nehemiah and with the historical books, but in the Hebrew Bible it is one of five short books (the so-called Megillot) that appear toward the end of the biblical writings. The canonicity of the book was questioned by some in ancient Judaism and early Christianity. It is one of five OT books that were at one time regarded *asantilegomena* (i.e., books "spoken against"). The problem with Esther was the absence of any direct mention of God. Some questioned whether a book that did not mention God could be considered sacred scripture. Attempts to resolve this by discovering the tetragrammaton (YHWH) encoded in the Hebrew text (e.g., in the initial letters of four consecutive words in the Hebrew text of Esth 5:4) are unconvincing, although they do illustrate how keenly the problem was felt by some. Martin Luther also questioned the canonicity of this book, objecting to certain parts of its content. Although no copy of Esther was found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, this does not necessarily mean that the Qumran community did not regard it as canonical. It is possible that the absence of Esther from what has survived at Qumran is merely a coincidence. Although the book does not directly mention God, it would be difficult to read it without sensing the providence of God working in powerful, though at times subtle, ways to rescue his people from danger and possible extermination. The absence of mention of the name of God may be a deliberate part of the literary strategy of the writer. [*NETnotesfree*]

The Canonicity of Esther:

Of the canonicity of the book there is no question. That there was a distinct guardianship of the Canon by the Jewish priesthood has figured less in recent discussions than it should. Josephus shows that there was a Temple copy which was carried among the Temple spoils in the triumph of Vespasian. The peculiarities of the Hebrew text also prove that all our manuscripts are representatives of one standard copy. In the Jewish Canon Esther had not only a recognized, but also a distinguished, place. The statement of Junilius in the 6th century AD that the canonicity of Esther was doubted by some in his time has no bearing on the question. The high estimation of the book current among the ancient Jews is evident from its titles. It is usually headed "Megillath Esther" (the volume of Esther), and sometimes "Megillah" (the volume). Maimonides says that the wise men among the Jews affirm that the book was dictated by the Holy Spirit, and adds: "All the books of the Prophets, and all the Hagiographa shall cease in the days of the Messiah, except the volume of Esther; and, lo, that shall be as stable as the Pentateuch, and as the constitutions of the oral law which shall never cease." [*ISBE*]

pur'-rim, pur (purim, "lots"; Septuagint Phourai): The name of a Jewish festival celebrated on the 14th and 15th days of the month Adar, the final month of the Biblical year, corresponding to February-March. 1.

No reference is made to this feast in the New Testament, as it was celebrated locally, and is therefore not to be connected with any of the festal pilgrimages to Jerusalem. For this reason the supposition of some that the feast of Joh 5:1 was Purim is to be rejected, mention of it being immediately followed by the words, "And Jesus went up to Jerusalem." [*ISBE*]

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The Book of Esther,

Life applications and Food for Thought by Pastor Walter Lucas

The world system (represented by Xerxes, his court, and his kingdom), seeks for pleasure, fame, and fortune. (cf. Est. 1:1-3) Even today we find ourselves living in a "me" generation. It seems to be about what I have, what I need, what I want, and what I have done or accomplished. (cf. Est. 1:4) It supports the idea that I need to be known as someone having done a great thing or things. (John 3:30) This becomes the motivating force behind my search for personal satisfaction, self-esteem, and seeming

success in the eyes of all my peers and the world as well. (cf. Est. 1:4, 1:20 flattery--"for it is great", 2:18, 5:10-12, 6:6)

Like Mordecai and Esther, we are in the world but not to be of the world. (I John 2:15,16) There are things we **have** to do and ways we are **expected** to be, but there are also lines we do not or should not cross. (Rom. 12:2a) This requires us being guarded and guided by our relationship with God and reliance upon His Sacred Word.

The story is set in a period of Captivity for the Jews. (Babylonian captivity) The picture clearly shows a world system that holds people captive, albeit in their sins. Though God is not mentioned in our text by name, we see His mighty, Sovereign hand in each aspect of each life, good people and bad, to accomplish His purpose (Isa. 14:24, 27, Rom. 8:28, 9:17, Eph. 1:9, II Tim. 1:9,) for His glory. (Ps. 8:1, 115:1, We see the story of deliverance from certain destruction for His people. We can't help but thank Him for our deliverance from Satan, and the taskmaster of Sin. Both of these enemies, represented by the worldly King and kingdom, are bent on our destruction both physically and spirituality.

Here is but one for instance. In casual conversation with people at work, when asked what their plans are for the weekend, they often state, "I am going to go out with my friends and get totally plastered, high, wasted, and hopefully enter into a state of unconscious, drunken stupor. (OOOHHHHH, sounds like fun???) This was not uncommon even in Xerxes day. (cf. Est. 1:7,8,10, 2:1, 3:15d) It even had many of the same results of an individual doing or being coaxed to do things they would not ordinarily do when not under the influence of a drug or drugs (including alcohol, which is a drug). (cf. Est. 1:10-22, 2:1)

We do not have to do the things of the world to find peace and happiness. As humans, it is natural to want to be accepted, loved, respected, seen as a "cool" person. This however, should not be our goal(s) in life. This means there are some parties we will not be going to and some after work gatherings we will not be attending.

(cf. I Peter 4:4 - **Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with *them* to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of *you*:**

and

Joshua 24: 15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: **but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.)**