

Esther

Lesson 4: Pronouncing Purim

Haman's pride was his downfall. Because of his obsession with destroying the Jews, Haman sealed his own destruction. When Queen Esther exposed Haman's plot and treachery to King Xerxes, Haman was hanged on his own gallows. The threat of Haman is over but the edict that he put in place is still a very real threat.

Chapter 8

Read 8:1-6

The tables have completely turned. All the influence that Haman had has now been given to Mordecai. All the power which Haman had used to destroy the Jewish people is now being used to save them.

However, the Jewish people still have no reason to celebrate. The decree stating that the Jewish people are to be slain is still in effect even after Haman's death.

Read 8:7-17

The old edict cannot be repealed because it bore the king's seal. However, Mordecai, with his new found power and influence, has been given permission to send out a new edict in the king's name.

Q: This new edict gave the Jews permission to defend themselves and strike back at their enemies. Why would this be something to make them so joyous? Their enemies were still going to attack them.

Q: Why would so many people become Jews or at least side themselves with the Jews?

Chapter 9

Read 9:1-17

The time came for the Jews to stand up for themselves. With the help of their new found allies the Jews killed 75,000 of their enemies around the Persian Empire.

Q: Why would Esther request the king to give her people a second day in which to attack their enemies?

Read 9:18-32

From this day forward the festival of Purim joined the festivals of Passover, Weeks and Tabernacles as the major festivals of the Jewish year.

We don't know how quickly or readily that the festival of Purim was accepted by the people during the time of Esther. This festival was unique because it was instated by secular leaders and not the priestly cast. Regardless, the festival of Purim is still celebrated today as one of the major festivals of the Jewish faith.

The festival of Purim was named for the pur that Haman threw to set the day in which his slaughter of the Jews would take place. It was that pur which fell on the 13th day of the 12th month. Today Purim is celebrated one month before Passover which means it usually falls sometime in late February or early March.

The festival of Purim is a joyous holiday that celebrates victory. Children paint their faces and people celebrate with noise makers. The book of Esther is read aloud accompanied by these noise makers and shouts of praise and joy.

Chapter 10**Read 10:1-3**

The final few verses of the book of Esther are almost a postscript to the book as a whole.

Q: Why would the writer of Esther include these historical verses in his account?

The book of Esther is a beautiful account of how God protects his people and his promises. God can use history and the forces of this world to whatever end he wishes and in so doing provides for all of his children's needs.