

## Sermon Notes

### Celebrating God's Sovereignty

Esther 9:1-10:3

#### How the Feast of Purim was Established

"Now in the twelfth month (that is, the month Adar), on the thirteenth day when the king's command and edict were about to be executed, on the day when the enemies of the Jews hoped to gain the mastery over them, it was turned to the contrary so that the Jews themselves gained the mastery over those who hated them. The Jews assembled in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on those who sought their harm; and no one could stand before them, for the dread of them had fallen on all the peoples. Even all the princes of the provinces, the satraps, the governors and those who were doing the king's business assisted the Jews, because the dread of Mordecai had fallen on them. Indeed, Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces; for the man Mordecai became greater and greater. Thus the Jews struck all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying; and they did what they pleased to those who hated them. At the citadel in Susa the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men, and Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai and Vaizatha, the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Jews' enemy; but they did not lay their hands on the plunder.

On that day the number of those who were killed at the citadel in Susa was reported to the king. The king said to Queen Esther, "The Jews have killed and destroyed five hundred men and the ten sons of Haman at the citadel in Susa. What then have they done in the rest of the king's provinces! Now what is your petition? It shall even be granted you. And what is your further request? It shall also be done." Then said Esther, "If it pleases the king, let tomorrow also be granted to the Jews who are in Susa to do according to the edict of today; and let Haman's ten sons be hanged on the gallows." So the king commanded that it should be done so; and an edict was issued in Susa, and Haman's ten sons were hanged. The Jews who were in Susa assembled also on the fourteenth day of the month Adar and killed three hundred men in Susa, but they did not lay their hands on the plunder.

Now the rest of the Jews who were in the king's provinces assembled, to defend their lives and rid themselves of their enemies, and kill 75,000 of those who hated them; but they did not lay their hands on the plunder. This was done on the thirteenth day of the month Adar, and on the fourteenth day they rested and made it a day of feasting and rejoicing. But the Jews who were in Susa assembled on the thirteenth and the fourteenth of the same month, and they rested on the fifteenth day and made it a day of feasting and rejoicing. Therefore the Jews of the rural areas, who live in the rural towns, make the fourteenth day of the month Adar a holiday for rejoicing and feasting and sending portions of food to one another. Then Mordecai recorded these events, and he sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far, obliging them to celebrate the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same month, annually, because on those days the Jews rid themselves of their enemies, and it was a month which was turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and rejoicing and sending portions of food to one another and gifts to the poor.

Thus the Jews undertook what they had started to do, and what Mordecai had written to them. For Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the adversary of all the Jews, had schemed against the Jews to destroy them and had cast Pur, that is the lot, to disturb them and destroy them. But when it came to the king's attention, he commanded by letter that his wicked scheme which he had devised against the Jews, should return on his own head and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows. Therefore they called these days Purim after the name of Pur. And because of the instructions in this letter, both what they had seen in this regard and what had happened to them, the Jews established and made a custom for themselves and for their descendants and for all those who allied themselves with them, so that they would not fail to celebrate these two days according to their regulation and according to their appointed time annually. So these days were to be remembered and celebrated

throughout every generation, every family, every province and every city; and these days of Purim were not to fail from among the Jews, or their memory fade from their descendants.

Then Queen Esther, daughter of Abihail, with Mordecai the Jew, wrote with full authority to confirm this second letter about Purim. He sent letters to all the Jews, to the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, namely, words of peace and truth, to establish these days of Purim at their appointed times, just as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had established for them, and just as they had established for themselves and for their descendants with instructions for their times of fasting and their lamentations.

The command of Esther established these customs for Purim, and it was written in the book.” - Esther 9:1-32

“Now King Ahasuerus laid a tribute on the land and on the coastlands of the sea. And all the accomplishments of his authority and strength, and the full account of the greatness of Mordecai to which 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 second {only} to King Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews and in favor with his many kinsmen, one who sought the good of his people and one who spoke for the welfare of his whole nation.” - Esther 10:1-3

### **How do Christians Celebrate God’s Sovereignty?**

If I believe that God is Sovereign, I will...

#### **A. Be Thankful Rather than Resentful**

“Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.” – 1 Thess. 5:16-18

“God has made everything for His purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble.” - Proverbs 16:4

“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to {His} purpose.” - Romans 8:28

“All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; (if it’s not hard, it’s not discipline) yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.” - Hebrews 12:11

#### **B. Be Courageous rather than Fearful**

“I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him! Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? Yet not one of them is forgotten before God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.” - Luke 12:4-7

#### **C. Expect to be Surprised**

“A man’s steps are *ordained* by the LORD; how then can a person understand his way? – Proverbs 20:24

## **For Further Thought and Discussion**

### **Getting Started**

1. What was helpful to you in this week's sermon? What didn't you understand?
2. In what situations is it hardest for you to believe that God is in control and that God is good?

### **Going Deeper**

3. Please read Esther 9:1-10:3. Why was the feast of Purim instituted? How was it instituted? What questions does this passage raise for you? What issues does this passage clarify for you?
4. "If your theology doesn't become your biography, your theology is worthless." What does this mean? Do you agree or disagree? Why is what I really believe about God most visible in my behavior?
5. Which evidence of faith in the sovereignty of God is most relevant to you? Why?

### **Application**

What is one thing you can do this week to apply this passage?