

## March 8

**Scriptures:** Read Esther 7 & 8

**Key Verse:** “For how can I endure to see the evil that will come to my people?...” (Esther 8:6)

### Overview

At Esther’s second banquet for the king and Haman, the king asked Esther for the third time to tell him of her request (cf. 5:3,6). Now the Lord had prepared her, as well as the king, for the surprising news. Esther touched his heart by telling him that someone sought to harm her, as well as her people. Esther emphasized the coldblooded, evil scheme in saying that her people had been “sold... to be destroyed... killed... and... annihilated.” When Haman first proposed this extermination, he offered to pay the king (3:9). She expressed that if the king allowed this to happen, it would be for his own loss and “the enemy” (Haman) could never pay him enough to compensate (7:4). Many Jews of his kingdom were prosperous business people and Ahasuerus would lose money in the economy, as well as the taxes they paid him.

King Ahasuerus was appalled that anyone would seek to kill his queen and her people. Until this time, he was not aware of Esther’s Jewish heritage. How shocked Haman must have been to overhear this conversation between the king and queen! For if anyone attempted an attack upon the queen, it was equal to attacking the king himself. The king’s response to Esther came in answer to the desperate prayers of the Jews. When Esther saw he was against the man who would “dare...to do such a thing” (7:5), she gained confidence and accused Haman of this wickedness. Haman was naturally struck with terror as the king became his judge and Esther his prosecutor.

While the furious king went out to cool his temper and gather his thoughts, and possibly to call for the executioners, Haman pleaded with Esther to spare his life. No man, other than the king himself, was to touch or go close to the queen; so when the king returned to the room and saw Haman leaning over Esther and begging, his cutting words were not an accusation of Haman’s immorality, but they showed his contempt for the one who had once been his trusted advisor and right-hand man. If he was capable of plotting this evil, he was capable of other evils as well and was deserving of death. The executioners were at the king’s side when he gave the word to seize him. It was a common practice for the condemned man to have his face covered (7:8).

Haman’s evil deeds came back on his own head. The very gallows he had ordered to be constructed in the courtyard of his own home for Mordecai’s death was where Haman himself was hanged (7:10; Galatians 6:7; Psalm 7:14-17). The Lord delivered righteous Mordecai from the hand of the wicked enemy (Proverbs 11:8). The high and mighty Haman had a great fall and perished, but the Lord delighted to honour Mordecai and give him peace (Psalm 37:35-40; Isaiah 41:11).

Now that Esther had revealed her nationality, she was proud to introduce Mordecai as a relative — her cousin and adopted father. The trouble, however, did not end with Haman’s death. The decree was still existent for the Jews to be massacred, and it was of such a nature that it could not be altered (cf. Daniel 6:8). With desperate cries, Esther pleaded for the life of her people whom

she loved. She spoke wisely by not blaming the king, but asking him to revoke the words of the letter that Haman devised against the Jews. It appears that Haman never told the king which nationality he desired to annihilate, but since Ahasuerus trusted his judgment, he gave his signet ring to Haman (3:8-10).

The tears of a woman are often more influential than eloquent words, and they touched Ahasuerus' heart. The decree Haman wrote in the king's name could not be revoked as Esther had pleaded, but it could, however, be counteracted by another decree. The letter of death became a letter of life when, with the king's authority, Mordecai issued the new decree stating that the Jews could protect themselves, and thus all the people knew the true desire of the king. The joyful news spread throughout the whole kingdom, even to those in Jerusalem.

When the heathen saw this miraculous change of events, including the exaltation of Mordecai the Jew to the second highest position in the kingdom (replacing Haman), they knew that the almighty God of the Jews was the obvious power behind it all. Many abandoned idolatry and turned to serve the Lord God of Israel, for they were convinced that He was the only true God.

### **Prayer**

Lord, You are the Almighty One. Help us to build with our lives something beautiful for You, not as Haman who built the gallows on which he was hung.