The Day of Jubilee

Esther 8:1-10:3

Key Verse: 8:16 “For the Jews it was a time of happiness and joy, gladness and honor.”

Thus far we have studied how God prepared Esther to become a queen through Mordecai and how God frustrated Haman’s plan and honored Mordecai through Esther. Today’s passage in chapter 8-10 is the conclusion of Esther’s story. Like the story of Ruth, the story of Esther also finishes with a happy ending. May God give us wisdom and inspiration to find treasures hidden behind her story.

First, the king’s new edict in behalf of the Jews (1-14) Now, Haman, the enemy of the Jews, was impaled on the pole which he had set up for Mordecai and died (7:10). Peace came to all the Jews who lived in the whole land of Persia. The same day Haman was impaled, King Xerxes gave Queen Esther the estate of Haman. (1) The king also took off his signet ring, which he had reclaimed from Haman, and presented it to Mordecai. And Esther appointed Mordecai over Haman’s estate. (2-3) As soon as Haman was killed, the situation was turned over rapidly. All the possessions which Haman had accumulated for himself now belonged to Esther and Mordecai.

Here, we learn an important message for all of us who are engaging in a spiritual battle against Satan, our enemy. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the power of darkness and evil spirits. (Eph 6:12) So, when we finish this spiritual battle, God will give us estate as he did to Esther and Mordecai. We will inherit the kingdom of God as our estate and receive the king’s signet ring as children of God. Paul said in Romans that through faith in Jesus we become heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ Jesus. (Ro 8:17) When we finish this spiritual battle, we will receive back all the possessions which were taken away from Satan. That day we will repossess our fortune. That day our children will return. The students who left us will come back. Those who were held with slavery of Satan will be released. Our vision for the world and our passion for God will be restored. The Psalmist says about that day in this, “*When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dreamed. Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, “The LORD has done great things for them*.” (Ps 126:1-2) According to the Psalmist at that time we all will be like those who are dreaming! What a day of blessing and what an hour of jubilee when we repossess our estate in heaven and receive the victor’s crown from our Lord Jesus Christ! (Rev 2:10) Amen.

In verses 3-8 Esther requests the king for a new edict for her people. She pleaded with the king, falling at his feet and weeping. She begged him to put an end to the evil plan of Haman and to issue a new edict for her people Israel. She said in verse 6. “***How can I bear to see disaster fall on my people? How can I bear to see the destruction of my family***?” How did the king respond? The king agreed with her saying in verse 8. “***Now write another decree in the king’s name in behalf of the Jews as seems best to you, and seal it with the king’s signet ring—for no document written in the king’s name and sealed with his ring can be revoked***.” (8) The king issued a new edict on behalf of the Jews and sealed it officially with his signet ring. Those who carried the king’s new edict dispatched it to every corner of the world where the Jews lived in his kingdom. Verse 14 says that the couriers, riding the royal horses, went out, spurred on by the king’s command, and the edict was issued in the citadel of Susa. (14)

Second, the day of jubilee (8:15-9:19) The good news of great joy for all of the scattered Jews was delivered to them rapidly. In the city of Susa, a joyous celebration was held under the supervision of Mordecai. Look at verses 16-17. “***For the Jews it was a time of happiness and joy, gladness and honor. In every province and in every city to which the edict of the king came, there was joy and gladness among the Jews, with feasting and celebrating. And many people of other nationalities became Jews because fear of the Jews had seized them.***” Before the new king’s edict was delivered, all the Jews in the city of Susa and those who were scattered around the kingdom had lived with great fear and sorrow. No one could escape from the king’s order of execution. But now the table had turned. The new edict has arrived! The new order is proclaimed. The new order is to save all the Jews and to kill all their enemies. This is the same as those who are in Christ Jesus. 1 Corinthians 5:17 says, “*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ Jesus, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here*!” The old edict is gone and the new edict has come! Those who heard the new edict were saved. Jesus said, “*Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live*.” (Jn 5:25) Amen! Those who hear the message of Jesus will be saved. They will cross over from death to life. (Jn 5:24) 8:17 says that many people of other nationalities became Jews because of the fear of the Jews having seized them. It is the day of salvation for all the gentiles and the day of jubilee for those who are in Christ Jesus. Amen! All the Jews in the city and in the rural area celebrated with feasting. In the past they mourned fasting. But now they celebrate feasting. This is the conclusion of the story of Esther! This is the picture of our future, too. Amen!

Paul said in Romans 8:18, “*I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us*.” Some of us suffer much from sickness. Others suffer from financial difficulties or children's education. Still others are struggling from broken relationships and so on. When I visited New Jersey UBF a few weeks ago, I heard about some missionary families’ suffering from the same kinds of problems which we have now. Their situation seemed to be worse than ours from my viewpoint. As I mentioned last week, we are all going through the wilderness on the way to the Promised Land. Our journey from the land of Egypt, via the wilderness, to the Promised Land is not easy. We had to cross the Red Sea. On our way we had to overcome hunger, thirst, coldness, heat, wild beasts, hostile people and so on. But we cannot stop our journey on the way. We must keep marching on until we reach the Promised Land. This is because we believe that the glory which we will receive in heaven is not worth comparing with our present sufferings. We shall overcome and we shall keep marching until we arrive the Promised Land. Amen!

Third, Purim established (9:1-10:3) The day of judgment came. It was the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar in the Jewish calendar. On this day the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, but now the table had turned and the Jews got the upper hand over those who hated them. (1) The Jews assembled in their cities in all the provinces and attacked their enemies and destroyed them. In the city of Susa the Jews killed 500 men in a day. (10:6) In all the provinces of King Xerxes the Jews killed 75,000 enamines on that day. Esther asked the king to impale the ten sons of Haman on the pole and the king allowed. So, like their father Haman, his ten sons were also impaled on the pole on that day. All the enemies of the Jews were killed and destroyed for two days in the city of Susa and for three days in other provinces. So, the Jews celebrated from the fourteenth day to fifteenth day of the month of Adar as Purim.

The word “*Purim*” means ‘lot.’ Haman cast a lot to find the best day for annihilating all the Jews. The lot fell on the twelfth month, the month of Adar. (3:7) But Haman did not know that the thirteenth day of Adar was the day of destruction. Here we do not know what will happen to us in the future. God is able to turn the table for his people. Who knew that the thirteenth day of Adar became the day of funeral to Haman’s ten sons and all his followers? Mordecai sent letters to all the Jews throughout the provinces of King Xerxes to have them celebrate annually the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar. (20-21) Look at verse 22. “***As the time when the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month when their sorrow was turned into joy and their mourning into a day of celebration. He wrote them to observe the days as days of feasting and joy and giving presents of food to one another and gifts to the poor.”*** All the Jews around the world agreed with Mordecai to continue the celebration. Look at verse 28. “***These days should be remembered and observed in every generation by every family, and in every province and in every city. And these days of Purim should never fail to be celebrated by the Jews—nor should the memory of these days die out among their descendants***.” For this reason, even today all the Jews celebrate Purim according to their calendar to commemorate what God had done for his people through Esther and Mordecai. March 16 and 17 is the feast of Purim for this year.

Through the whole story in the book of Esther we learn that God gives us final victory. Haman intended to harm Mordecai and all the Jews. But God frustrated his plan through Esther and Mordecai, and punished Haman and his sons. Our God is just. He punishes the evil and blesses the righteous. No matter how evil tries to harm God’s people, God will protect his people. Without God’s permission the evil cannot touch even a lay of hair from the righteous. As God finished the story of Ruth with a happy ending, so too does God finish the story of Esther with a happy ending. God will finish our life with a happy ending, too. I ask all of you to have a dream; dream the day when our fortune is restored; dream the day when our children return; dream when the glory of the Lord is revealed! Amen!