

Esther 8-10

Day 1

Mordecai's Promotion, Esther's Appeal. Read Esther 8:1-9

1. How did the King honor Queen Esther? 8:1a

- What kind of access was Mortdecai given and why? 8:1b

FYI: "Queen Esther: "She is only referred to by this formal title from here onward."

for Esther had told how he was related to her (NIV) "The Hebrew is literally 'what he was to her', which potentially means more than just family relationship. Mordecai had been Esther's wise adviser, faithful protector and the one who motivates, challenges and inspires her." - Debra Reid (131)

2. What two amazing reversals took place for Mordecai? 8:2

3. Why did Esther need to approach the king again? 8:3 In what ways did Esther's second appeal to the King in 8:3-5 differ from her first (7:3,4)?

- How did the king respond? 8:4

4. List the conditions with which Esther prefaced her request. 8:5a (To what was she deferring?)

- What did she ask the king to do? 8:5b (Note: On whom did she place the blame for the edict?)

Overrule/revoke/reverse Strong's OT:7725 *shuwb*; to turn back (hence, away) transitively or intransitively, literally or figuratively (not necessarily with the idea of return to the starting point); generally to retreat

5. What reason did Esther give for her plea? 8:6 What tone do you hear in her words?

6. What do you think the King meant to convey to Esther by his words in 8:7? What tone do you hear in them?

7. What was the king's solution? 8:8 (What dilemma were they facing? See Daniel 6:15)

- How much power did the King give Mordecai and Esther? (Note: The "you" is plural.)

FYI: "Unfortunately, the decree had already gone out, as Esther and Mordecai well knew. Persian kings tried to borrow from the gods some of the mystique of infallibility. Anything written into the laws of the Medes and Persians could not be altered...The king found himself trapped in his own power. He simply couldn't undo the evil he had allowed in his name."
- Margaret Hess (117)

"Just as Haman was given permission to become the enemy of the people and the story's villain, Esther and Mordecai are given permission to secure their deliverance and become the story's heroes." - Debra Reid (134)

8. Considering all that had gone on before, what would have given King Ahasuerus reasons to think that Mordecai and Esther might be able to come up with a solution?

Applying the Word: List some things in your life that give you a feeling of security. How could the desire to hold on to those things keep you from taking a risk or making a commitment to others?

Day 2

Mordecai's Edict. Read Esther 8:9-17

9. How much time elapsed between the two decrees? 8:9a (Compare 3:12)

10. Who was the author of the second decree? 8:9

- Whose authority did it carry? 8:10a

11. To whom was the decree given? 8:9b How did this vary from Haman's letter? 3:12

12. How was the distribution of Mordecai's letter expedited? 8:10

13. Compare the decrees written by Haman and Mordecai and people’s reactions to them.

	Haman’s letter	Mordecai’s letter
The actions people were given permission to perform	3:13 to destroy, to kill and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to seize their possessions as plunder. NAS	8:11
Purpose for the decree	3:14 A copy of the edict to be issued as law in every province was published to all the peoples so that they should be ready for this day. NAS	8:13
Dispatching the decree	3:15 The couriers went out impelled by the king's command while the decree was issued at the citadel in Susa; NAS	8:14
Mordecai’s reaction	4:1 When Mordecai learned all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city and wailed loudly and bitterly. NAS	8:15a
Reaction of The people	3:15 the city of Susa was in confusion.	8:15b (See Proverbs 11:10)
Reaction of the Jews	4:3 In each and every province where the command and decree of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing; and many lay on sackcloth and ashes.	8:16,17

FYI: “In the new edict, ‘The Jews have the right to organize a defense league. They have the right to set up headquarters in every region. They have the right to purchase or make weapons. These are the kind of things they normally would not be permitted to do.’ (Clarence Stam)” - Africa Bible Commentary (567)

“Herodotus wrote: ‘Nothing mortal travels as fast as these Persian messengers...Along the whole line of roads there are men...stationed with horses...allowing a man and a horse to each day...and these men will not be hindered from accomplishing at their best speed the distance which they have to go, either by snow, or rain, or heat, or by the darkness of night’ (8:98) It was an ancient pony express.
Our post office adapted these words from Herodotus to be carved in stone on the main post office in New York. A message could go to the farthest regions of the Empire in two or three weeks. An ordinary traveler would require three months or more to cover the same distance.” - Margaret Hess (69)

14. What effect did the edict have on the people of the land? 8:17b What reasons would you give for this?

FYI: Became Jews "This is the only place in the Old Testament that this Hebrew word is used of conversion to Judaism."
- The Nelson Study Bible (821)

"To profess oneself to be a Jew was to come under the Jewish covenant...Unbelievers had seen the deliverance and favor that God had bestowed on His people, and they wanted His covenant protection too. Here, then, we have a spiritual reversal."
- The Tony Evans Study Bible (558)

Applying the Word: *Has God ever used your influence or work to turn around a destructive or hurtful situation? How did you follow or rely on Him?*

Day 3

The Jews' Victory. Read Esther 9:1-19

15. What happened on the day of the edicts? 9:1,2a,5
16. What phrases describe the enemies of the Jews in 9:1,2?
17. What reasons are given for the Jew's victory? 9:2b-3 (See Deuteronomy 11:25)

FYI: all the princes/nobles.. (8:3) "Isn't this remarkable? The very people who would have enforced the first edict against the Jews now rise up and stand with the Jews in their struggle." - Ray Stedman (122)

"Two contradictory, but irrevocable, decrees had been issued...The Persian military was thus faced with choosing which decree to help implement. Since Mordecai had now become second to the king in place of Haman (Esther 8:2; 10:3), most decided the part of wisdom was to favor Esther, Mordecai, and the Jews!" - Henry Morris

18. What happened to Mordecai? 9:4 (Compare with King David in 1 Chronicles 14:17)

19. What happened in the city of Susa? 9:6-10

FYI: "The patterns of reprisal and vengeance were so deeply ingrained in the cultures of the ancient Middle East that the survival of even one of these sons might mean trouble for the next generation of Jewish people. By listing each of the vanquished sons of their mortal enemy, the Jewish people celebrated the fact that the victory was complete."
- The Nelson Study Bible (822)

20. What part of the edict didn't the Jews follow? 9:10b,15,16 (See 8:12) Why do you think there is a 3-fold repetition of the phrase "they did not lay their hands on the plunder"?

FYI: "As far as the record goes, the Jews in defending themselves slew only the men (Esther 9:6,15) and took no prey for themselves (Esther 9:10,15-16)." - Henry Morris

"Their goal was not to enrich themselves or to impoverish the families of their enemies." - Africa Bible Commentary (568)

21. What did the king ask Esther? Why do you think he made this effort to check with her concerns? 9:11-12

22. What might Esther have recognized about the situation in Susa that made her request another day for the Jews to defend themselves? 9:13

- What purpose would be served in displaying the bodies of Haman's 10 sons?

23. What happened the second day in Susa? 9:14,15

24. What kind of destruction had happened in the rest of the provinces? 9:16 What does this say about the level of hatred held against the Jews?

25. Can you think of any other events in the Bible where God destroyed Israel's enemies and completely protected Israel?

- What had the Lord promised Abraham? Genesis 12:3; see also Matthew 1:1 How does this explain the gravity of His care for this nation?

FYI: Hebrews 10:23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. NIV

What does God's faithfulness in keeping His promises to Israel mean to you?

Day 4
The Feast of Purim. Read Esther 9:20-10:3

26. Record what you learn about the Feast of Purim:

How was the feast of Purim started? 9:20	
When was the feast to be celebrated? 9:21	
What was the cause for celebration? 9:22a	
How was Purim to be celebrated? 9:22b (Compare Nehemiah 8:10)	
How was this received? 9:23	
Why did they call these days "Purim"? 9:24-26	
Who was to celebrate Purim? 9:27	
For how long was Purim to be observed? 9:28	
Who else confirmed this observance? 9:29	

FYI: "The Jewish celebration was quite different from the feast described in chapter one. There the guests were feasting and overindulging in wine. By contrast, the Jewish celebration was one of home and family. Those who had material wealth were not to forget those who did not, but were to distribute gifts and food to them."
 - Africa Bible Commentary (568)

Purim "was to be a celebration of relief (or rest 9:16,17,18,22) and commemorates the month of reversal. By this emphasis the Purim festival is stripped of military overtones and the idea of vengeance on enemies. Instead, it is more closely associated with the positive concepts of enjoying rest and expressing community, joy and gratitude...[The name Purim] "may infer that the religious meaning of the story includes the idea that the fate of God's people is not decided by evil men throwing die, but by God alone who assigns to His people their portion."
 - Debra Reid (147,148)

27. How did Mordecai and Esther encourage the people to commemorate this event? 9:30-31

- What do you think these words of “peace and truth” (NIV “good will and assurance”) would have indicated to the Jewish community?
- Whose authority was attached to these letters? 9:32

FYI: “With words of peace and truth — Though they wrote with authority, they wrote also with *peace*, that is, with friendship, tenderness, and kindness, not in imperious and imposing language...the sense is, that he directed and endeavored to persuade them to keep both peace and truth, that is, both to live peaceably and lovingly one with another, and with all their neighbors...holding fast the true religion, in spite of all the artifices or hostilities of the Gentiles, among whom they lived.

“With Mordecai in place the Jew have a mediator; there is someone co-operating with the king with their interests at heart. For this reason their future can be viewed as a positive one...Reversals are possible. The Jewish people have a future.”
- Debra Reid (154)

28. What kind of power and dominion did King Ahasuerus seem to have after these events? 10:1,2 (How did he raise money for his empire?)

FYI: “10:2 book of the chronicles. Although this book and its records have not been found (perhaps destroyed by later emperors or conquerors), the essential historicity of the events is confirmed by the long-continued observance of the feast-days of Purim—an observance which could never have been initiated and sustained otherwise.”
- Henry Morris

29. List the things for which Mordecai was commemorated. 10:3

Food for Thought: “If only we would realize, as did Esther and Mordecai, that we have been brought to ‘His kingdom’ for such a time as this and, consequently, live accordingly. Live - fearing neither the face nor the threats of man, but fearing only to disobey the heavenly edicts of God! Can you imagine, Beloved, what an impact such consecration, such denial of self, would have on a society that is so self-absorbed?
...And from the ranks of Christendom there would be more of whom it could be said, ‘They sought the good of God’s people and spoke for the welfare of His kingdom.’”
- Kay Arthur (135)

30. Compare what the following men did for the nation:

- Joseph: Genesis 50:19-21
- Nehemiah: Nehemiah 2:10
- Paul: Romans 9:2-3; 10:1

31. What great “reversals” did you see in the book of Esther?

32. What great reversals has God done for us? Underline the before and after.

- Ephesians 2:4,5 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-- it is by grace you have been saved.
- Ephesians 5:8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light NIV
- Colossians 1:13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, NIV
- Romans 5:10 For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! NIV
- 1 Corinthians 15:54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." NIV
- Matthew 5:11-12 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, NIV
- 2 Corinthians 12:9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.
- 2 Timothy 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. (KJV)
- Colossians 1:21-22 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation- NIV

Applying the Word: What great reversal in your life has God performed? Say or write out a prayer thanking God for the change from your before to after condition.