

Esther 4:13-16 ¹³ Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. ¹⁴ For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and **who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?** ¹⁵ Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer, ¹⁶ Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

Joel 2:12-14 ¹² Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: ¹³ And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. ¹⁴ **Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?**

- There is a definite relationship between the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man.
 - **Matthew 26:24** - The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.
 - **Acts 2:23** - Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:
 - **Genesis 45:8** - So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.
 - **Genesis 50:20** - But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.
- The book of Esther tells the story of how the Jewish nation was rescued from extinction, explaining the origin of one of the Jews' most festive holidays, the Feast of Purim. The word "purim" means "lots" and refers to the casting of lots by Haman to determine the day of the slaughter of the Jews.
 - **Esther 3:7** - In the first month, that is, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar.
- On this feast day, when the book of Esther is read, the name of Mordecai is cheered but whenever Haman's name is pronounced the hearers make a terrible noise in the Synagogue, in keeping with their obligation to "blot out" his name. Some suggestions given by the Jews are: "Write Haman's name on the bottom of your shoes and then kick and stamp. Bang together rocks with his name on them. Blow a shofar. Blow a trumpet. Play appropriate organ music. Play inappropriate organ music. Beat on a drum, pots and pans, etc. Shake a tin can full of nails. There is also the custom to make a dummy Haman and beat it, hang it, and then burn it." (The Jewish Catalogue)
- Esther is a type of the church bringing deliverance to the people of God in the last days.
- Haman was an Agagite, a descendant of Amalek and Esau, with a Satanic hatred for the Jews.
- Haman and his ten sons typify the Antichrist spirit and the ten-toed / ten-horned kingdom which will arise in the last days, seeking to destroy the people of God. In 7:6, the phrase "this wicked Haman" adds up to 666 in the original Hebrew. Haman wanted all men to bow down to him!
- **Reasons why spiritual warfare is on the increase in North America (Dr. K. Neill Foster):**
 1. The erosion of Judeo-Christian ethics and cultural moorings has paved the way for other gods. The spiritual atmosphere has changed as our culture has been breached by demonic forces.
 2. Satan concentrates on individuals in North America, since he does not control the culture at large, as in other parts of the world. That spells spiritual warfare at the personal level!
 3. Evangelism is more aggressive than ever before, as is teaching on spiritual warfare.
 4. Holiness teaching has been abandoned by most denominational Christians. Abhorrence of sin and separation from the world are not just wholesome advice. They are powerful weapons.
 5. The second coming of Christ is at hand, so demonic manifestations are on the increase.
 6. Christians are more focused on authentic and fervent worship. Any increase in praise triggers spiritual warfare, because Satan desperately wants worship for himself. He goes berserk!
 7. When the enemy attempts to drive truth back with a flood of demonic assaults, the Spirit of the Lord calls His people to engage in aggressive warfare and raise up a standard against him.

- Esther's willingness to act became the catalyst that brought deliverance from Haman's schemes, even though she did not know for certain that her actions would have that result.
- **WHO KNOWS?** if you are the person? if this is the time? if this is the place? **JUST DO IT!**
- The king's decree had been issued and could not be altered, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians. The Jews would be robbed and slain in just a few months!
- However, through the advice of Mordecai, a counter-decree was given without nullifying the previous decree. The Jews would be able to stand and defend themselves and their property.
 - **Esther 8:10-11** - ¹⁰ And he wrote in the king Ahasuerus' name, and sealed it with the king's ring, and sent letters by posts on horseback, and riders on mules, camels, and young dromedaries: ¹¹ Wherein the king granted the Jews which were in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, both little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey,
- When the twelfth month arrived, the Jews were ready. They had the King on their side!
- The king did not cancel the old law; he merely gave a new law that superseded it.
- This is true in the Christian life; the law of sin and death has been overcome by the law of the Spirit.
 - **Romans 8:1-2** - ¹ There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.
 - **Romans 8:10-14** - ¹⁰ And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin (**old law still active**); but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. (**new law given without canceling old law**) ¹¹ But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. (**we have the King on our side**) ¹² Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. (**we don't have to submit to the old decree**) ¹³ For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. (**stand and fight for deliverance**) ¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.
- The decree has been issued (doctor's diagnosis, judge's verdict, counselor's opinion, banker's assessment, family's opposition, devil's boast) – BUT YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO FIGHT!
- **WHO KNOWS?** if you are the person? if this is the time? if this is the place? **JUST DO IT!**
- The Jews had to be united in obeying the "counter-decree" and fighting against evil in order to win!
 - **Psalms 133:1-3** - ¹ A Song of degrees of David. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! ² It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; ³ As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.
 - The dew of Mount Hermon is Israel's major water supply (Six Day War started over it!)
 - Unity is absolutely necessary in spiritual warfare ("in one accord" – six times in Acts)
- To the degree that we win the battle INSIDE the church, the battle OUTSIDE the church will be won!
 - **Matthew 11:12** - And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.
 - "the kingdom of Heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it."
- Satan delights in driving wedges into our relationships with Christ and with one another.
- A wedge in a block of wood starts by only slightly penetrating it, but as it is pushed forward, it gradually widens the gap in the wood, eventually splitting it in two.
- In the spiritual realm, we call that a "STRONGHOLD" or a "FOOTHOLD."
 - **Ephesians 4:27** - Neither give place ("a foothold") to the devil.
 - **2 Corinthians 10:4** - (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)
- Ed Silvano: "A stronghold is a mindset impregnated with hopelessness that causes the believer to accept as unchangeable something that he or she knows is contrary to the will of God."
- **REVIVAL IS FATAL TO FOOTHOLDS!**
- **WHO KNOWS?** if you are the person? if this is the time? if this is the place? **JUST DO IT!**