

We're going to continue on in the sermon series that we've been in, *Humility & Seeing Ourselves*, of course this being *Part 6*.

There is quite a bit to cover here because of the story. It's a very inspiring story when you come to understand what God was doing with them, with Mordecai, with Esther, and with all the Jewish people at that time during the reign of King Ahasuerus who was actually Xerxes 1 in the Medi-Persian Empire. There is quite a history just in that itself, which we might touch upon in a later sermon. Been thinking about that, just going by it, because there are other things that can come out concerning this particular series.

This led into the next series anyway, which I hope to get into next Sabbath. But I hope you're keeping abreast of things happening in the world. Again, some of us, if we're just watching the news we have here in the States we're going to miss a lot. But there is so much going on out there, there really is, of things that just keep rumbling, and rumbling, and rumbling. Things are so stirred up out there. Anyway, has a lot to do with part of what we're going through even in this.

But this matter of humility and seeing ourselves, again for us on a spiritual plane, is not an easy thing to do. It's not an easy thing to embrace and to have and to dwell in humility. It's not our nature. We've had other series before this that have shown that in great part because of the way we think, our opinions, our ideas, our ways of doing things and seeing things.

But when God brings us into His Church things change and we have to begin to learn some of the most important lessons in life that God wants us to grasp, of what Elohim is going to be like, His Family. I love the way Herbert Armstrong used to explain some of this, that it was a matter that God purposed, knew there was only one who could be trusted through all time, and that's God Almighty, and so He desired, had a desire for, before anything was created, a family that was going to be of the same mind, that was going to be of the same order, if you will, in the sense of being in unity and oneness with the thinking, with the mind, with the being, with the wisdom, with the spirit of God Almighty.

And so much of that, especially when we get into human life, a simple term that we have to use, is a matter of government, of understanding how God governs in life, how He wants us to govern our lives, and then our choices along the way. It's not easy. So, always within the Church we've had to focus on things like this.

We see quite a contrast in this story here, between that of humility, humbling oneself and looking to God Almighty for deliverance, for help, and the other that is all about self, raising self up in power, wanting self to be recognized by others, wanting the pre-eminence, expecting others to treat you accordingly so. That is basic human nature. Haman was pumped up on that

many times over to the nth degree, in one respect, as far as human life is concerned, his attitude and his spirit. But it is what we need to see, the basic spirit and nature of mankind. It's ugly, exceedingly ugly.

So again, so much of the reason we fast and have fasted is so that we can see ourselves. Because we can't see ourselves the way God sees us, in those things that need to change in our being, in our mind and our thinking process. We need God's help continually to be able to do that, because this isn't a one-time thing or a particular series we go through, or it repeats maybe from year-to-year different things as far as humbling ourselves before God. This is something we're to strive to do all the time in our lives, and it's a battle. And the day you let up...? Because when you let up you give in to pride, and that's the danger. Many have gone that way, and many are not with us because of that.

So again, last Sabbath we began to cover the story of Esther where she had barely been made queen at this point, wife of King Ahasuerus. In the flow of the account, came across Haman who reared his ugly head, in that respect, because of his spirit, because of his attitude, and because of his mind.

It's an amazing thing here, what took place inside of him. Because it's so akin to the mind of Satan. He got to a point where he was so burned up inside because he wasn't receiving something from others that he thought was owed to him. That is an ugly part of human nature. Many people have been offended by things like that, thinking whatever goes on in the mind. But Haman is a great example of some of this because he developed a burning anger.

We live in a world today where people have deep-seated prejudices inside them, where they have hatreds inside of them, hatreds for other people, hatreds for other races, hatreds for other sex or something today that's somewhere in between it all. We don't know what that might be. I think you know what I'm talking about, people not knowing who they are, what they are and so forth. At a very young age even these things being put upon people, young people, young children in schools and so forth. People are so screwed up in this world today.

But again, here is an individual, a burning anger within him, a hatred within him. Sometimes we tend to dismiss some things when it comes to statements about hating someone or not liking people because we feel perhaps that we like everyone, and we don't really have any hatred toward anyone. And yet our conduct says otherwise in human life if we can see that. Again, seeing ourselves.

Because if it isn't God's love it's the opposite, which is really moving toward the direction of hatred in certain things within us. It isn't love. It isn't outgoing concern for others. It isn't a desire to help others, to see others succeed, those prejudices, those ideas, and that type of thinking.

So again here, we see that Haman had devised a plan. He so hated Mordecai that he hated the people he came from. So, this kind of thing happens in the world. People can have deep-seated

prejudices toward someone else because of a bad experience they think or a wrong experience, or an offence or something from someone. They dislike others perhaps, whether it be occupational or whatever it is in the world, and it screws up the mind.

So anyway, he had a mindset that he'd connived a plan to kill all the Jews, to have all the Jews in the Kingdom killed. They had lot's cast and they tried to find a date of when this might be able to be presented. He wanted to take this idea before the king at some point, ask when that could be, and finally came up with it of a time and means and a way and a conniving of how he could push forward the idea of killing all the Jews in the kingdom. Incredible.

So, let's pick up where we left off in last weeks sermon, Esther 4:13. We're taking the time to do this, to go through this chapter by chapter by chapter. We didn't do this before back in 2009 to the degree we are now. We're going into it a little bit more, in that respect, to cover everything that's there, to understand that the book is there for a great purpose and there is much to learn in that about humility, about humbling ourselves, about looking to God.

Then to understand God's intervention in our lives. Because if we can really see the overview of all this we can maybe begin to see how important God's Church is to God Almighty. He was dealing with a physical people. They weren't even called to be at that time a part of a process whereby God was working with them to transform their thinking in order to be in His Family. That's going to come later in the Great White Throne.

Now, some of them, we don't even know that for certain, but some of them it appears definitely were being worked with, Mordecai as an example, for sure, and Esther, those are mentioned. Perhaps there were others, but it doesn't say.

But to grasp what we can grasp, to understand how important God's Church is to Him, to see ourselves in that light and to try to grasp and comprehend some of the things done back in 2009 as far as the two-day fast rather than a three-day fast. If we can really begin to grasp some of those things?

Because I'm just going to be real candid with you, it's just something that God has to give you in your mind, to come to grasp and appreciate. There's a purpose this is being focused upon. There is a purpose why God is bringing us to address some of these things at this time. He wants us to see, He wants us to understand that this is far more important than we understood at the time, and far more important than what you can even grasp right now. But we can begin the process because within that process God is going to build upon that and we're going to learn more and more and more.

We're in the story here, **Esther 4:13—Then Mordecai instructed to answer Esther, Don't think to yourself that you will escape the king's house more than anyone else of the Jews.** So, he was encouraging her, telling her that she needed to go before the king, she's the only one that really could in the sense of seeking help that this be turned around, seeking help that the Jews not be destroyed. He's making it clear to her, "You're going to die too. You're not

going to escape this. When it's all said and done, if the rest are destroyed you are going to be destroyed as well, and everyone that you know," in essence.

For if you keep silent your peace at this time, relief and deliverance will rise from the Jews from another place. Now, how did he know that? Why did he feel so strong about that? God put it in his mind. That's a simple answer. There are simple things that God has given at different times in the past 6,000 years to individuals, and He puts it in their mind. So much of what we went through in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God put it in their minds to have answers, to know things, to speak in a manner that is unique.

The same thing is true here. He spoke with a boldness because he knew, just as much as what you know when God puts something in your mind when you were called, about the Sabbath and the Holy Days and you couldn't see it before and all of a sudden you see it. God gave it to you in the mind. We ought to marvel at that, truly, more than what we generally do.

...for if you keep silent your peace at this time... We can look at ourselves and think there are many of times in life, and especially within God's Church, we can't afford to keep silent. Because our lives and what God is doing in those whom He has called, candidly, has a far greater importance than a physical carnal nation that existed at that time. I hope you understand that. I hope you know that. I hope you see that.

And if we can begin to make that distinction, we're going to be able to see more. They were a physical people. They're going to be resurrected in the Great White Throne. That's going to be their time. Our time is now.

So, I have known of so many situations in God's Church where some have stood up and made comment and stood up for what was true and what they knew to be true and held on to that and told someone else who was saying something opposite of that, "That isn't true!" But it wasn't meant to be, and God allowed it to continue on. He let it happen for a purpose and a reason. But if more had done that, which is their duty, which is our duty to do. Every one of us has a duty to do before God, to stand for God's truth, to stand for God's way of life, regardless of what anyone thinks or does, regardless of what happens to us.

...for if you keep silent your peace at this time relief and deliverance will arise from the Jews from another place. It's kind of like what happened, has happened to quite a few, but we have kind of zeroed in on some of this, to some around 2012 and 2013 and others took or are in the process, I should say, of taking their crown that they had opportunity for. "Someone else will arise." Why? Because God's going to deliver. God's going to do what He's going to do. We know concerning the 144,000 that's exactly what it's going to be and God's going to do it, and if He calls us to be a part of that, what an awesome thing.

...relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will be destroyed. Do we see it? Sometimes because of bad decisions, individuals not standing, that's what happens to people. Sometimes entire families because someone wouldn't

stand. The tendency of human nature is to listen to someone and then to follow them out and away. You fill your mind with certain things and people leave.

That's our history. The history especially since I've been in God's Church, since 1969, seen it over and over and over again to the point it really makes me pretty sick inside to think about those kinds of things. But I understand the purpose and why God allows it, why it has to be that way. But it doesn't have to be that way with me or with any of us, but it can sure come close sometimes, knocking on the door.

"But you and your father's house will be destroyed," if you don't stand, if you just hold your peace and keep silent.

And who knows if you have been touched, is what the word means, or **placed,** talking about being made queen, **in this kingdom for this time now?** I love that verse because there is much there, there really is. I think of people's lives in the Church and recognizing the uniqueness of things that are a part of our lives and the opportunities that we have that sometimes we don't grasp the greatness of them. But there are things that happen that are unique to us.

Sometimes there are certain things that happen that are for a short moment in time that are to stand out more than the rest. There may be certain situations in a person's life where (in the Church), where there is something to happen in a specific moment in time that they're a part of helping to fulfill, by an example, by something that God is going to use to teach.

Now, our lives are like that whether you grasp that or not, and it has happened in your life because God is molding and fashioning things in us, brethren, in ways that are far beyond what happened in the book of Esther, if only we could see it. The only way we can is to cry out to God to help us to see and understand and appreciate more deeply what He's placed before us.

It's amazing to me. I just keep thinking of the next series because of how these things progress and grow and what God's delivering. The reality was, that's exactly why she was there. God had planned. Not ten years before, not twenty years before, long, long, long before this story of Mordecai and Esther. It didn't just happen and then a book was written about it.

Do we see things and grasp things of God Almighty in that light, of how incredibly powerful, almighty the Great God of the universe is? He's so far beyond of things we can't even begin to grasp! That's why Elohim is going to be able to learn and continue learning into time eternal, or everlasting, if you will - not eternal, everlasting. Because God is so great, so mighty there'll never be a time that we're not going to be able to learn and grow in the Family of God. The human mind can't grasp that fully.

Then Esther told them to return to Mordecai with her answer, Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast for me; and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day. Hmm. Why three days? Why not four? If three is really good wouldn't four be a whole lot better? That's the carnal part of it. Two days? Why more than one? It came from God

just as much as Mordecai told her what he did. This was in her mind now. This is what God had planned.

This story was going to be written. This story was going to be written because God determined it long, long, long before there was a Mordecai and Esther, long before the Jews were ever taken into captivity in Babylon. Because these are still there, people who didn't return. These are people who continued on in the Medi-Persian Empire, the Jewish people. That's why they were there. There are those who went back to the areas of Jerusalem and started to rebuild, and so forth, and there are those who stayed there. Then another kingdom came along that followed that of the Babylonian Empire.

There's incredible history involved here. They didn't just happen. God designed it! God molded and fashioned these things that are here, and I hope we begin to see they are far more important than all the planets in the universe that's out there because of what He's constructing, what He's building. It's about things that His people have been able to learn, be inspired by, moved by - everything that's written in the books. This one as well.

...three days and three nights. I also, and my maidens will fast likewise. And so will I go in before the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish! She came to that. It was in her mind. She was resolved to do it. Simple. She had the boldness to do it now. She had help because she yielded herself to the process. She listened to Mordecai. She thought about what was said. She humbled herself and God was able to give to her what she needed - which He'd prepared her for anyway.

Just like He prepares us when we're called. Just like He prepares us for different things in life. We still have to make the choices, however.

So Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther had instructed him.

Esther 5:1—Now it came to pass on the third day that Esther put on her royal apparel and stood in the inner court of the king's palace. So, here she is, probably a crown, everything to do with royalty. She presented herself as queen. ...across from the king's house, while the king sat on his royal throne in the royal house, facing the entrance of the house. So it was, when the king saw queen Esther standing in the court, that she found favor in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther went near and touched the top of the scepter. Then the king said to her, What is it you wish? What is it you desire queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given to you—even up to half the kingdom!

That is mind-boggling. A long, long way from the way he treated Vashti. He's learned something a little bit at least.

So Esther answered, If it pleases the king... I think about how she responded, how she answered over and over again in this way, in a respectful manner and in a wise manner, and she had help.

If it pleases the king, let the king and Haman come today to the banquet that I have prepared for him. Then the king said, Bring Haman quickly, that he may do as Esther has said. So the king and Haman went to the banquet that Esther had prepared. At the banquet of wine, so, here it's referring to it as a banquet of wine, because there's another banquet to follow, the king said to Esther, What is your petition? It shall be granted you. What is your request, even to half the kingdom? It shall be done!

I love the way this is all written, the way it came out. The way it was planned to be for God to inspire us. And if we see it, to recognize His greatness in doing everything He did here.

So Esther answered and said, This is my petition and request... How did she know to do things this way? Do we see it? Seriously! Or do we just read it as a story? That's what God wants us to do; He wants us to see it, to see Him, to see His power, His might, His glory, His greatness. That's what He wants us to see more and more. He's been giving us that for quite some time now, more and more to be able to do just that. Words just can't magnify it all, truly.

If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, then let the king and Haman come to the banquet which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king has spoken. Please understand, she didn't do this by her own wisdom. She didn't do this by her own planning and thinking this out. She did it because God gave it to her in her mind to do it this way.

It's like in battles that have been fought at different times when you read some of the stories in scripture and God sent them out for victory. He prepared them, He planned them, He told them in so many cases, exactly what to do and how to do it. And they did it. Other times He put it in different ones minds of exactly what they were to do, and they did it, as it's recorded. The same is true here.

A Great God that can put into your mind an understanding and all of a sudden you see Passover, you see the Days of Unleavened Bread, you see things about Pentecost. God just put it in your mind to finally see it, to grasp it, to embrace it with all of your being, to know it's true. You didn't figure it out.

That's one thing I've always kind of marveled at in one respect, in Worldwide during those days, when different individuals thought they had come to certain understanding and they want to preach certain things, they want to get up and give a sermonette or whatever it might be, or they get in a group of people of something they've been studying in the Bible, and they want others to see what they have come to understand. And you think, give me a break!

Now, if it's something you've read that came from Herbert Armstrong, I'm all ears. But if it came from you, I'm not so keen.

So, we learn through living through those things. We learn through experiencing those things. What an awesome thing, the growth that God gives us progressing forward.

Verse 7 here again, So Esther answered and said, This is my petition and request, If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, then let the king and Haman come to the banquet which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king has spoken. In other words, "Tomorrow I will tell you." "Not yet. Going to have to wait." So, the king, he's wanting to know, what is this? She's doing a banquet now? This is a banquet of wine that it's called, and now we're going to have a bigger banquet, and all this is going to take place?

So Haman went out that day happy and with a glad heart. You kind of have to laugh at human nature sometimes, of how stupid it really is. Because this pride and haughtiness so reeks and it just digs a deeper hole for someone. There is no end to where it leads. So, he went out happy with a glad heart.

And when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, and that he did not stand nor move from before him... That's what the word is about. It says "tremble," but no, he wasn't showing him respect. "You want by, walk around," basically what it's saying.

...he was filled with rage against Mordecai. Just put a whole damper on this thing. He was feeling so great and so puffed up and then this Mordecai. Again, because he really hated him with all of his being.

Nevertheless Haman restrained himself and went home, and he sent and called for his friends and his wife Zeresh. Then Haman told them of his great riches. Human nature. "Look at me. Look at where I am. Look at what the king has given to me. Look at what I have now. Look at what I have acquired in my life." Basically, "I'm great, want everyone to see that."

Now, we tend to be that way as human beings, and we can't be that way as human beings in God's Church. We have to fight against such things. Because I've seen over and over this spirit and this mind within the Church. And to me, it's exceedingly ugly. Pride. Focus on self. Wanting something. Wanting whatever it might be.

...so he told of his great riches, the multitude of his children, everything in which the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the officials and servants of the king. That's all he's saying. "I'm great! Just ask me."

Verse 12—Moreover Haman stated how Esther the queen had invited no one but me to come in with the king... "Me! The queen! And I'm to go in with the king and we're the only ones invited! It's a banquet for us!" "I'm really doing great. I want all of you to be..." well, whatever.

...to the banquet that she prepared; and tomorrow I am again invited by her, along with the king. Yet all this avails me nothing so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate. He just couldn't wait for that day to come when they would start destroying and killing the Jews.

Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, Let a gallows be made, fifty cubits high, and in the morning suggest to the king that Mordecai be hanged on it. That's a pretty big gallows. He wanted this to be a grand show. Not just a small gallows, he wanted everyone to see how bad this Mordecai, how evil he really was to have something like that done to him. Then you can go joyfully with the king to the banquet. So, the thing pleased Haman, and so he had the gallows made.

Now, I want to interject again here, whether God did it through demons, and they have charge or way to do as they please within a certain range, or whether that was just given to him in the mind or to the others there about this gallows fifty cubits high. Because, again, that's not an accident. It's part of the story.

Esther 6:1—On that night the king could not sleep, so he gave orders... Why could he not sleep? God didn't let him sleep. Do we see it? Seriously! This is the way we need to understand God Almighty, to see what He does, when something like this is being orchestrated by Him to accomplish, to reveal something, to inspire people hundreds of years later and through time, if you will. Incredible.

So, he could not sleep, so he gave orders to bring the book of the records of the chronicles; and they were read to the king. Even that! He could have done something else, sent them off to get some milk, sent them off to get some wine. "I can't sleep. My mind is racing. Give me the chronicles. Start reading it, please. That will put me to sleep."

So again, it's not an accident. We tend to so often just read things as a story. That's the way the world is, it's just a story. But to believe it, to see it, to see God in it, to see God molding and fashioning the outcome, so often we don't look at things that way. But it magnifies God more and more the more we grasp and understand how He's worked with mankind nearly 6,000 years now.

It was found written how Mordecai had told about Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs who had guarded the entryway and who had conspired to lay hands on, in other words, to kill the king, Ahasuerus. Then the king said, What honor or greatness has been bestowed on Mordecai for this? And the king's servants who attended him said, Nothing has been done for him. Then the king said, Who is in the court?

Again, I hate to keep just doing this, in one respect, but I hope you understand God is involved through every step of this. Whether He does it personally or sends others out to do it, His angelic beings, whether they're a part of this, helping to do it, but it came from God as to what was to happen and how it was to happen. That somehow Mordecai just happened to be there? Or was it by design?

Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace to speak to the king about having Mordecai hanged on the gallows that he had prepared for him. So, the king's servants told him, Haman is here, standing in the court. And the king said, Have him come

in. So Haman went in, and the king said to him, What should be done for the man whom the king wishes to honor?

Isn't that amazing how filled with pride this guy is? Because all he can see is "This has got to be about me. So, I'm going to let him finish here and I'm going to tell him what he should do."

Haman thought to himself, Whom should the king wish to honor more than me? "I'm the greatest," under the king, of course.

So Haman said to the king, For the man whom the king wishes to honor, let royal robes be brought which the king has worn, and a horse that the king has ridden, with a royal crown on its head. Let the robes and the horse be handed over to one of the king's most noble officials, let him robe the man whom the king wishes to honor, and let him lead the man on horseback through the open square of the city proclaiming before him, This is being done for the man whom the king wishes to honor!

Then the king said to Haman, Quickly... This is very good. Quickly, take the robes and the horse, as you have said, and do so to the Jew, Mordecai, who sits at the king's gate! Leave out nothing that you have mentioned. Talk about a balloon and a pin being poked there.

Again, all these things orchestrated by God to happen exactly this way because it was God's design and His purpose that this be written. It's powerful.

And what an incredible thing, just to go back here a little bit, to think about Haman. What he really wanted was more than what he already had. Isn't that amazing about human nature? Someone achieves something and then so often in human life they want more. Now, it's not wrong to want more in life. It's not wrong to pursue more in life. But when it has to do with things like the Church a person has to be very careful what that more is. Because, again, I've seen over and over how that's been so abused and misused through time, my time anyway.

So again, he said, Leave nothing out. So, Haman took the robes and the horse, and rode Mordecai, and led him through the open square of the city proclaiming, This is being done for the man whom the king wishes to honor. I doubt if his heart was a whole lot in that.

Then Mordecai returned to the king's gate. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with his head covered. And when Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him, his advisers and his wife Zeresh said to him, If Mordecai, before whom your downfall has begun, is of the Jewish people, you will not prevail against him. So, she's being very helpful. But it's true, obviously. ...but will surely fall before him. "This is your end. This has really gone way too far and there is nothing good going to come out of this."

While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hurried Haman off to the banquet which Esther had prepared.

Esther 7:1—So the king and Haman went to the feast with the queen, Esther. And on the second day, as they were drinking wine, the king again said to Esther, What is your petition,

queen Esther? It shall be granted to you. So, what is your request, even to the half of my kingdom it shall be fulfilled!

Then queen Esther answered, **If I have won your favor, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given to me. That is my petition...** Now, this had to be startling to him, what she's saying here. Because he had no idea what was going on, in that respect, as far as she was concerned and who she was.

That is my petition. Also the lives of my people. That is my request. For we have been sold. Unique word used there, in that respect, because undoubtedly it goes back to what Haman offered to pay. And so, in essence, sold to death. **I and my people to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. If only we had been sold as slaves.** Pretty good here, "If only we'd been sold as slaves. Not to be killed and destroyed. We'd have been far more valuable." That's what she's saying.

If only we'd been sold as slaves, both men and women, I would have held my peace, but no enemy can compensate for this damage to the king. Whew! Pretty powerful putting it that way. And again, how did she?

So again, she's just saying here basically that the value of being slaves would have been far greater to the king in the amount that they would receive, from what they would be able to accomplish and do than just killing them all off. No amount of money here is going to take care of that.

Then the king Ahasuerus said to queen Esther, Who is he, and where is he who has presumed to do this? Can you imagine him sitting there listening to this? Esther said, The man and enemy is this evil Haman! Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen. And the king rose from the feast in burning anger and went into the palace garden; but Haman stayed to beg for his life from queen Esther, for he saw that the king had determined to do evil to him. And when the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall, Haman had thrown himself on the couch where Esther was reclining. And the king said, Will he even assault the queen in my presence, in my own house?

And as the words left the mouth of the king, they covered Haman's face. Taking him out. Then Harbonah, one of the eunuchs who attended to the king said, Look! The very gallows that Haman had prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, stands at Haman's house, fifty cubits high. So, they knew what was happening out there. But now, hearing this, they're pretty smart. "Let's point this out."

So the king said, Hang him on it! So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the anger of the king abated. Again, when I read through the story like this how can you but see God? How can you see anything but God orchestrating everything, having planned it all ahead of time, the gallows, the timing, the events, the things that were done and how they were done? They didn't just happen by coincidence somehow and

all of a sudden this just turned into, "This is going to be a great story to write about, this that happened." It wasn't like that.

So much of all those with whom God has worked from the very beginning, Cain and Abel. No accident. Abel, no accident. God molded and fashioned his life, molded and fashioned him, things that were to be done and accomplished through him, by him. Called by God Almighty to be the first preacher of righteousness, as it were. Powerful.

God worked with him to put him where he was, to do what he did, what he accomplished in him in order to be written from the very beginning of time, the first children and what happened. The opposite that takes place when jealousy is there. It's the same old story through history. Jealousy's, jealousy's, envy, wanting something someone else has. It just has gone on and on and on, and it's so exceedingly ugly and evil.

These things are in the scriptures for us to marvel at. God having written them in different ways at different times so we can be inspired, moved, and motivated by it. The reason we are, that we haven't always seen, is because God was in it bringing it to pass so we could receive it when that time was given to us.

Esther 8:1—On that day King Ahasuerus gave queen Esther the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. So, it was obviously a great place. Haman bragged a lot about it. So, here it is, something of wealth and power, a stature was given to her now as far as property was concerned.

Then Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had declared what he is to her, the relationship, they're cousins and that he raised her, reared her. **So the king took off his signet ring...** He was very moved by all this that had happened. Again, he was moved because God moved him through the circumstances.

He wasn't being worked with in the same manner as they were, but because of things that had happened and the uniqueness of his mind and who he was. God knew how to work with him, how to bring him to this point that he would be moved by what had happened, and that he would want to give greater wealth and power than to Mordecai, someone he believed he could trust. He obviously was moved to have great trust and confidence in his queen. How did he have that?

Of all the people chosen, why her? God did it again. He moved him to be drawn to her, to see her in the light that he did, to give her the kind of favor that he did. Didn't make him do it but knew how to work with him to bring him to that point in his life. God can work with circumstances.

We still have choices to make. In God's Church we have opportunities to live this way of life, to grow and change and want to be transformed and one day be in Elohim. God doesn't make us do the things we do. We have choices to make along the way, but He gives us those opportunities to be a part of it. Incredible!

So the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai; and Esther appointed Mordecai over the house of Haman. So, now he's given more responsibility. He's to take care of all this because there's a lot to keeping a place like this. These are huge in the sense of palaces. That's what we're talking about.

Now Esther spoke again to the king, fell down at his feet, and implored him with tears to counteract the evil of Haman the Agagite and the scheme which he had devised against the Jews. So, she didn't stop, she carried it all through.

So the king held out the golden scepter toward Esther. Again! And Esther arose and stood before the king, and said, If it pleases the king, and if I have found favor in his sight and the thing seems right to the king and I am pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to annihilate the Jews who are in all the king's provinces. For how can I endure to see the evil that will come to my people? Or how can I endure to see the destruction of my countrymen?

Then King Ahasuerus said to queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew, Indeed, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows because he tried to lay his hands on the Jews. You yourselves write as you please concerning the Jews in the king's name, and seal it with the king's signet ring; for whatever is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's signet ring no one can revoke.

So, what he's saying here, as the way it was in those kingdoms before and up to this point in time, if he said it, it's law and it can't be changed. So, what Haman had written was basically law, and different ones were going to have that open day to go out and start killing the Jews. "But you can write something to counteract this."

So the king's scribes were called at that time, in the third month, which is the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day; and it was written, according to all that Mordecai commanded, to the Jews, to the lieutenants, and to the deputies and rulers of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, one hundred and twenty-seven provinces in all, to every province in their own writing, to every people in their own language, and to the Jews in their own writing and language.

So he wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus, sealed it with the king's signet ring, and sent letters by couriers on horseback, riding on royal horses bred from swift steeds. And by these letters the king permitted the Jews who were in every city to gather together and protect their lives—and to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the forces of any people or province that would assault them.

Now you can fight back; you have permission. You have permission to kill and destroy anyone who would do this, to prepare yourselves and arm yourselves.

...both little children and women, and to plunder their possessions. It's kind of an interesting story what they did as this goes on here, "and to plunder their possessions." Anyway, we'll come to it.

...on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. So, it's the same day that Haman had chosen. That was the same day they were going to come and try to destroy the Jews, those who were going to participate in that.

Verse 13—A copy of the document was issued as a decree in every province and published for all the people, so that the Jews would be ready on that day to avenge themselves of their enemies. So have to understand that anyone who would proceed after all that's happened here, and anyone who would follow what was there, they hated the Jews. They wanted to be a part. There were those that were plenty anxious, like Haman, like the mind of Haman to go after them and kill them, to get rid of them.

It's kind of been that way for a long time for them. "And to plunder them." Because there is one thing that they've always had, and that's a sense of business. There is something unique in their make up, in their thinking that they've been blessed with. A lot of people have hated them for that. Very ready in banking throughout history, very powerful in things such as that, and on and on it goes.

So, that's the reason. They were enemies because, again, they envied what they had or blamed them for various things that they didn't have. Isn't that history? Blame them because we don't have whatever we think we should have. It's their fault. Kill them and then we can have it. Insanity of the human mind.

The couriers who rode on royal horses went out quickly and hurried by the king's command. So, the decree was issued in Shushan the citadel. So Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold. He had a whole lot more than the house to be over. He was being given more by King Ahasuerus. It just grew quickly here.

So, he went out with a great crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple; and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad. So, there is something unique in the feeling, especially in Shushan. That's why it talks about earlier that they were perplexed because they didn't understand why the king would allow such a thing against the Jews. Because they weren't looked down upon, as a whole, by the area, by that particular area. Other parts of the kingdom they were but not here in the same manner. And so, the people were rejoicing that it's a matter of Mordecai, you know, not Haman anymore.

And the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad. To the Jews was light, gladness, joy, and honor. And in every province and city, wherever the king's command and decree went, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a holiday, time off. Then many of the people of the

land became Jews. They were so moved by some of this and the favor and everything. They could see, "I want to be a part of that." ...**because fear of the Jews,** as it goes on to say, **fell upon them.**

So, they see something here, favor that they have, might be a good time to consider being a Jew, being more like them. They have the king's favor and here we go. Incredible story when you go through it and see things like this unfolding. Really incredible all the way through.

Esther 9:1—Now in the twelfth month, that is the month Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to put in execution, in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power them, although that was turned to the contrary so that that Jews had rule over those who hated them.

So, because of what was written and how it was written and what was instructed they were able to have more on their side to accomplish and do. Because there's a pretty good period of time here before that day came about, and so, they had plenty of time to prepare and others swayed into being with them and helping them out. More power, more strength to accomplish.

So, it goes on to say here, "The Jews gathered themselves..." and it talks about "many became Jews, wanted to be Jews as well." That's what it's talking about here in part.

The Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hand on any seeking to do them evil. And no man could stand against them, and the fear of them fell upon all people. And all the rulers of the provinces, and the lieutenants, and the deputies, and the officers of the king helped the Jews, because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them.

So, it's understanding here the power that was given to him. They were also attracted to it. Sometimes that word "fear" doesn't mean they were just afraid of them, but they were afraid to go a different direction. That's why some thought, they were pleased to become a Jew, because they could receive favor this way. Human nature.

Verse 4—Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame went out through all the provinces; and this man Mordecai waxed greater and greater. So, he just received greater and greater favor from God.

So again here, we're reading an incredible story. We're going through something that happened and changed, and all of a sudden they had a fast, and all of a sudden things started fitting into place to give them favor, to give them help, and then it just mushroomed and got greater and greater the farther you go along here in the story. Though this happened rather quickly there was still a span of time before we actually came to this day, this thirteenth day of this particular month. Much had taken place still in there.

When we look at our lives it's over a long period of time, but we need to see ourselves in a similar light and how God works in our lives, and to try to understand step by step God is

molding and fashioning things around us in our life for us to learn. He wants us to learn. He wants us to be able to learn the things we need in order to be transformed, to take us through...to let us go through various things. Some of them are not easy. Some of them are very hard and can try you to the core of your being.

But it's all a part of a process because of God's love and because of what He's doing. That's why all trials and all fire is not bad. There is that which is very good.

Been having some conversation the last day here, talking about various things that have happened, because all of us having gotten together there at the house and sitting together and reminiscing about various things that have happened, and just thinking about some of the history of the Church, of what we've gone through, what the Church has gone through, and it's really quite incredible.

We've gone through some really hard things. We've gone through things that have tried people, that have been painful, that have been hurtful, especially in friendship and family and different things that have to do sometimes with people who have made different decisions and the battle that's there.

As I've said so many times, I wouldn't trade a one of them. I wouldn't trade a one of those battles. Some of them are mind-boggling in the sense of thinking what happened and what we went through and how hard it was... But look at where we are. And do we see that God works in our lives, that those things that are good for us, that made us what we are, that what would we be without them? Was God a part of that? Absolutely!

This is unique and different. They went through something that happened in a big way at a moment in time because of Haman and because of others on a national kind of scale. But with us it's a longer process that goes through a lot of time. But it's for our good and it's hard oftentimes.

Do you treasure it? Are you thankful for it, for everything that has brought you to this day, to this moment in time no matter how hard it was? No matter how difficult it was? Just thinking of the most difficult thing I think I ever had to do, was walk from a car behind a fence. That was the hardest thing I ever had to do in my life. Wouldn't trade it for anything. Awesome! But at the moment might have thought about it, entertained it for a moment or so if I'd have had the choice in front of me. But I wasn't given the choice.

But we go through things that sometimes just cut us to the core in the deepest part of our being. But it makes us who we are. Because God loves us because of what He's building, something far greater than what Mordecai was. We see a greatness that God gave to a queen, a greatness that God gave to her cousin. He became exceedingly great in the kingdom. God worked all those things out. But it was on a physical plane in the sense of what they were dealing with. It wasn't a matter of a Church and a calling that they had at that time as far as the people were concerned.

We're different. We're all here because of a calling. God works with us. Do we grasp the value and the presence of God Almighty in our lives, of things that happen in our life? Some things happen by chance and time, other things God has designed so that we can go through it to be molded and fashioned, and whatever happens in our lives God will use to mold and fashion us, to give us the things we need for self to be changed, for us to see certain things in our life that sometimes aren't pleasant. A lot of it has to do oftentimes with swallowing pride and crying out for God, to God for help to receive what He has for us. Because we don't always grasp that and know that at the time. We depend on God to reveal it to us.

So, all of this is designed, and all this series is about our coming to grasp more deeply, more fully God involved in our lives day in and day out because of the importance of where we are, who we are, what God is doing with us, and so forth. He's not doing this in the world, to individuals in the world. This opportunity that is the greatest opportunity ever to be given to human beings, that is ours right now; it's not theirs, the billions that are out there, nearly eight billion around the earth now. Where are they? Their time will come, it just isn't now.

How blessed are we? You can't put a value on that. All you can do is accept it and fight for it with all of your being. That's the choice.

Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame went out throughout all the provinces. And this man, Mordecai, waxed greater and greater. Thus the Jews struck down all their enemies with the striking of the sword, slaughter, and destruction, and did what they will to those who hated them. And in Shushan the palace the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men.

Verse 10—the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews—they slew; but on their spoil they did not lay their hand. Awesome! Because it's the opposite of what the others were like. Those who wanted to destroy them, they wanted their spoil. And that was a lot of their motivation for killing and destroying - there was going to be, anyway. But they were of a different mindset because it wasn't about the spoil, to be made greater.

They had humbled themselves. They'd fasted for three days. They saw God work things out, that they were so moved by on a physical plane, of seeing something that God was doing and the favor that they'd received, they were moved by that and thankful to be alive, thankful that their enemies were able to be destroyed.

Verse 11—On that day the number of those that were slain in Shushan the palace was brought before the king. Then the king said to Esther, the queen, If the Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the palace, and have the ten sons of Haman, then what have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? In other words, if they've done that here, how much more?

Now what is your petition, and it shall be granted you. And what further request do you have? And it shall be done. Then Esther said, If it please the king, let it be granted to the

Jews who are in Shushan to do tomorrow also according to this day's decree, "Let's do it again," and let Haman's ten sons be hanged upon the gallows. Then the king commanded it to be done so; and the decree was given at Shushan, and they hanged Haman's ten sons. So, that was the following day. Although it refers to them earlier here, but they hadn't been killed, it says only five hundred had been.

Verse 15—So, the Jews who were in Shushan also gathered themselves together on the fourteenth day of the month Adar and slew three hundred men. So, first it was five hundred, now it's three hundred more. They've gone searching for them. How did they know who they were? Things that people talk about, things that people know and so forth, it got around.

...but on the spoil they did not lay their hand. But the other Jews who were in the king's provinces gathered themselves together and stood for their lives, and had rest from their enemies, and slew of their foes seventy-five thousand. Basically, what the king said, "If that's happened here in Shushan, how much more in the rest of the provinces?" Well, here it tells it, 75,000. But they did not lay hands on the spoil. I love that, the way it's written. Because it's a different mindset. It's for a different purpose, a different thinking.

...and they rested and made it a day of feasting and gladness. But the Jews who were in Shushan assembled on the thirteenth, and the fourteenth, and on the fifteenth of the same they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

I'm going to go ahead and read through all this because it's kind of unique in how it was all brought together and what they did.

Verse 19—Therefore, the Jews of the villages who dwelt in the unwallied towns made the fourteenth day of the month of Adar a day of gladness, feasting, and a good day, and for sending portions one to another. So, they didn't all do the same thing.

So, Mordecai wrote these things and sent letters to all the Jews who were in the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far, to establish this among them that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same yearly. For as the days wherein which the Jews had rested from their enemies, and the month that was turned to them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning to a good day; that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another and gifts to the poor.

So, they truly celebrated in a very unique way for hundreds of years. Incredible!

So the Jews undertook to do as they had begun, and as Mordecai had written to them, because Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews, had devised against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur (that is, the lot), to trouble and to destroy them. So again, that casting that was called "p-u-r," pronounced "pur.'" And basically, because of this, that was why that day came up. And so, it turned for their favor and so now they're going to celebrate it because of the victory that God had given to them.

But when ... brought before the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked intentions, so it's going through some of the history again and adding a little bit as we go along, which he devised against the Jews should return upon his own head, and he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows. Therefore, they called these days Purim, after the name of Pur. Therefore, for all the words of this letter, and of that which they had seen concerning this matter, and which had come upon them.

So again here, very moved they were, indeed, by what they had experienced. This letter then, Mordecai was inspired to send out. Again, it isn't a holy day. It isn't something that God gave, but it is something in remembrance of something very great that God intervened and performed for them.

The Jews ordained and took upon them and upon their descendants and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, that without fail they would continue to keep two days according to their writing and according to this time every year. So, it was the two days they had the upper hand against their enemies. It's what it's about. It's about the favor and the help they'd been given.

These days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, every city, and that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their descendants. So, the story of Esther goes on in a very powerful way in their lives. Truly does.

Verse 29—Then Esther, the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with all authority to confirm this second letter about Purim. So again, he's sending it out again. That's what the second letter is about. It's going out to everyone explaining what they're doing and why they're doing it, how this is to be done, basically, forever for the Jewish people.

So he sent the letters to all the Jews, to the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, and the words of peace and truth, to confirm these days of Purim in their set times, according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen, had enjoined them, and as they had decreed for themselves and for their descendants concerning their fasts and their lamentations. They were to remember it.

So, there is a lot here in their lives on a physical plane that is still given honor amongst the Jews as they think back and what took place at this particular time and a deliverance that was given. Because it's really quite an incredible story when you take everything into account, the human nature, the mindset of Mordecai, and the Jews have always been hated by people throughout time.

They can relate to this in a very powerful way and so they celebrate this, they remember this, and it's good for them on a physical plane. It's not a spiritual thing. Again, it's not a holy time, but it's important to them, one that God gave to them to be special.

So the decree of Esther confirmed these things written about Purim. So, what do they remember? Their sorrows, their lamentations, what they went through, their fasts, and the victory. But these they focused upon in order to appreciate the victory.

Sometimes it's good for us to remember. What I've gone through this weekend in just talking about certain things? Because I see God's hand in it and how God's delivered us over and over and over and over again since the Apostasy. Over and over again. The hard times, the lamentations because it's been exceedingly painful at times, truly has. Horribly painful mentally, spiritually in thinking sometimes and going through some of these things when you go through them.

But that's what changes us. That's how we're able to become something different. These are the things that so impact us and help us to grasp and comprehend God more powerfully, more greatly in our thinking, that it helps us to magnify Him and see Him in ways that we otherwise couldn't. And so, it's good to remember some of those kinds of things and to be reminded of them. That's why some things are repeated from time to time because we're not to forget our history. There's a great lesson in that.

God wants us to remember. He wanted the Jews to remember this account generation after generation after generation after generation for hundreds and hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years now. Incredible! Something very physical. For us, it's very spiritual. Not this story, but our life with God, before God, of humbling ourselves so we can do something unique, to see ourselves, to fight the fight, to become something different.

Esther 10:1—So, the King Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land and upon the islands of the sea. All the acts of his power and his might, and the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai, where unto 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 next unto king Ahasuerus... Next in power and authority throughout the kingdom. It wasn't a small kingdom. It was the second great kingdom of that statue; the chest and the arms of silver of the statue that Nebuchadnezzar saw.

...and great among the Jews and accepted of all the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people and speaking peace to all his descendants.