

Deliverance

16. The New Testament uses different images to describe the saving work of Christ but what parallels are there for example between Heb 2.14-15 and what we have seen in Esther?

17. In what different ways do we remember to give thanks to God for our deliverance? Do we actually give thanks and praise, or is it possible to just go through the motions?

18. How can we make sure that in all the festivities of Christmas we keep the “reason for the season” central?

Pray

Pray for our Christmas services, for visitors to hear the gospel and for opportunities to invite people. Pray that amongst the celebrations we would be able to explain why the fact that the Word becoming flesh is so important for the world today.

Pray for those who like Mordecai and Esther find themselves in positions of influence in national life. Pray that they would remain faithful to the Lord and have opportunity to do good and bear witness to Christ.

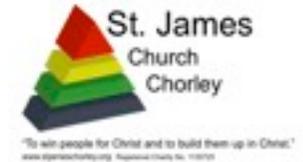
Pray for our mission weekend on 22-24 January with Roger Carswell, Steve Taylor and Billy McCurrie.

David Phillips
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Real Lives

Week 10 - Esther part 5

(Chapters 9 & 10)



Chapter 8 described how Mordecai proposed to stop the Jews being killed whilst chapter 9 describes what happened and how people were to remember this. Typical of the Old Testament there is a lot of repetition.

Turning the Tables

Read Esther 9.1-19

1. Have you read any books or seen any films where the plot involves a complete turning of the tables?

2. How does the opening verse of Esther 9 reflect this?

3. Looking back, how do you think Esther and Mordecai felt after getting rid of Haman (7.10)?

4. Esther had asked the King to revoke his decree ordering that the Jews could be killed. Why had the king not been able to do this and so why were the Jews still in trouble despite Haman's death?

5. How had the King honoured Esther and Mordecai (8.1-2)? Do you think this would have encouraged them?

6. What was the solution that Mordecai devised (8.10-12) as is described in chapter 9?

7. Genocide is when one group of people try to destroy another simply because they are different ethnically. Is it fair to use this word to describe Haman's plot and decree (3.6 & 3.13)?

8. What did Mordecai's decree tell the Jews they could do (8.11) and how did this differ from genocide? (See also 9.3.)

9. Haman's original decree (3.13) and Mordecai's had both mentioned plundering (8.11). How was what actually happened different (9.10, 15 & 16) and why do you think this was?

Enemies

Read Romans 5.8-11

10. Who are called enemies in these verses and in what other ways are they described?

11. Do you see yourself as having once been an enemy of God?

12. What is the consequence of being an enemy of God (v9)? What words does Paul use to explain how we were rescued from this?

Remembering

13. In what different ways were the people told to remember and celebrate what happened (9.17-18)?

(Jews still celebrate this feast today. It is common for people to narrate the events of Esther like a pantomime with people dressing up, audience participation and Haman as the chief baddie.)

14. How does the source of this instruction differ to the feasts mentioned in the Law (Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles). Does this explain why Purim is not seen as important as the others?

15. Because of the way the book is written this feast could become a celebration of what Esther and Mordecai had done. How have we seen that this should be a feast thanking and praising God?