

b. It was to be a memorial.

- 1) It was a time to pass this historical fact on to their seed (v.28). Children needed to hear of the fearful events that confronted the Jews during that time. The entire contents of the book of Esther make up the Purim memorial.
- 2) Failure to pass on this information would weaken their faith in God.
- 3) We too must pass on the facts of Scripture to the next generations. The next generation needs to know more than the basic Sunday school stories of the Bible.

As I said earlier, I see Purim as a picture of salvation. Christ paid for our rest. We rejoice in that payment. We must not forget what he has done for us. It is important for us to know the details of our salvation, to review them often, and to thank the Lord for these things.

Conclusion: National holidays, but especially spiritual holidays like Christmas and Easter, are times to reflect on history and on God's gracious gift. As with Purim, holidays are a time to rest, to rejoice, and to remember.

If you know the Lord as your Saviour, you ought to begin each day by spending time with him in prayer and in His Word. That is a perfect time to rest from other activities, rejoice in the Lord's goodness and forgiveness, and to remember all that He has done for you.

With Christmas only a few weeks away, let me challenge you to make this Christmas a time of rest, rejoicing and remembering the birth of Christ. Set aside all the secular distractions of the season and place your full focus on Christ this year. Instead of giving gifts out of obligation, give gifts that come from your heart to be a genuine blessing to the recipient. Never go in debt to give a gift. Give to help, not to impress. Focus on Christ, not on materialism.

As with the Jewish Purim, be sure to pass on the true facts of Christmas (and Easter) to your children and grandchildren. Never give them reason to believe the lies about Father Christmas, Easter bunnies, etc. The better you know the Bible and pass on all those facts to the next generation, the more likely they will believe and receive it and live for God's glory.

Song: Joy to the World, 87

Purim

12 November 2023 AM – Text: Esther 9-10 – Topic: Remember – Series: Est23

Introduction: Several of our holidays are intended to be memorials.

Australia Day 26 January marks the 1788 landing of the First Fleet and raising of the Union Flag. **ANZAC Day** commemorates those who have died to protect our freedoms. **Christmas Day**, of course, commemorates the birth of Christ, and **Easter** the resurrection of Christ. The intent is that we might take time to reflect on the historical events that took place on those days. However, many times we take very little if any time to contemplate the event. Instead, we focus on ourselves and enjoy the day in rest or fellowship. It would be good if we improved our reflections on noteworthy holidays.

Transition: As we come to Esther chapters 9-10, we are introduced to the Jewish holiday of Purim that was made official by Queen Esther and Mordecai. We learn several facts about Purim that serve as excellent reminders for us.

1. Purim was a time to Rest.

a. The Jew's enemies were dead or subdued.

- 1) The Jews had gathered themselves together for defence as commanded (v.2). No one could withstand them because God put a fear of them in their enemies.
- 2) All the government officials helped them because they feared Mordecai (v.3).
- 3) The Jews executed those who hated them, as they were commanded to do (v.5).
- 4) The ten sons of Haman were among those who died.
- 5) 500 in Shushan died (v.6) plus 75,000 in other places of the kingdom (v.16).
- 6) Today, evil again seems to be prevailing, but those who choose to live evil lives, contrary to God's Word, must remember that Judgment Day is coming. God will have the final say. He will settle the score. Solomon wrote in (Proverbs 15:3) "**The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.**" Again, he wrote, (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14) "**Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments:**

for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." No one can hide from God.

b. After months of fear, the Jews could now rest.

- 1) For more than eleven months, Jews had been stressed by the news of their coming extermination. Their thoughts both day and night were occupied by that terror.
- 2) They had fasted often and prayed much. We find in verse 31 that they fasted and cried. The word "cry" speaks of a cry for help – that sounds like prayer to me!
- 3) Their human nature, like ours, is prone to worry about such issues. It appears that God used those months to drive the Jews to their knees in prayer. It must have been a time of revival.
- 4) Now that the fearful day was over, and their enemies were dead, they were able to rest (v.16-18). The word "rest" "means to free oneself from something, to get rest from." ^{CWSD} They could now sleep in peace. They could relax. They could go about their daily work without fear.

Can you see a parallel here to our salvation? We were guilty sinners, condemned by our sin to eternal hell, but Christ paid our sin debt in full. When we repent of our sin and trust Christ to save us, he gives us rest and sweet peace! Amen!

2. Purim was a time to Rejoice.

a. Their emotions were relieved.

- 1) Sorrow turned to joy; mourning turned to a good day (v.22).
- 2) Their emotions turned right side up.
- 3) God had answered prayer for them. Their lives were spared, and they were now at restful peace.
- 4) You have experienced that when you received a good grade on a difficult exam; when the news you expected to be bad turned out to be good; when you confessed a sin that has been haunting you and God forgave you; when God answered a pray for you in an amazing way.
- 5) Purim was a time of rejoicing.

b. Their inner joy produced benevolence.

- 1) They sent portions to one another (v.19). These portions were likely portions of food.
- 2) They also gave gifts to the poor (v.22). These were presents of some sort to aid those who were struggling in life.
- 3) It is sad that in our culture, birthday and Christmas gifts are often given out of obligation rather than from an overflowing joyful heart that desires to be a blessing.
- 4) The Apostle Paul wrote, (Acts 20:35) "**I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.**" There truly is a wonderful joy in giving from the heart to be a blessing to one in need. After all that Christ has done for us, we ought to give such gifts more often to others.

3. Purim was a time to Remember

a. It was to be a reminder.

- 1) They were to remember that God had caused Esther to be chosen as queen "**for such a time as this.**"
- 2) They were to recall all that God had done for them in answer to fasting and prayer (v.24-25, 31).
 - a) God gave grace to Esther to find favour with the king. She had the courage to tell the king of Haman.
 - b) Though evil Haman was the chief prince, the king hanged him.
 - c) The Lord had the king promote Mordecai.
 - d) The Lord gave grace to Esther to approach the king about reversing the Jewish extermination law.
 - e) The king granted Esther and Mordecai permission to write a new law.
 - f) God helped the Jews on the critical day and gave them victory over their enemies.
- 3) All these things were in answer to their fasting and prayer.
- 4) Purim was a holiday for them to remember these events.