

7872

ESTHER; QUEEN OF DESTINY

Speaker: Bro. John Martin

Study #5 Exhortation

Haman's plot overthrown (God is right)

Reading - Esther 7:1-8:9

My beloved brethren and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is absolutely essential, b&s, that as we go through this particular weekend, in our studies of the book of Esther, that this meeting take precedence over all the others, as it has a very special bearing upon each and everyone of us, as our bro. Peter reminded us in his opening remarks. Paul made the observation concerning this particular meeting, b&s, that the successful conclusion to such a meeting, revolved upon each and every individual baptised into Jesus Christ our Lord, and it would be possible to finish this meeting to our own condemnation, were it not for our concentration and appreciation of the glorious things that God has performed in the work of His Son, His own Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. And without any design of my own, b&s, it has fallen the lot, this morning, from the book of Esther, the very section that if I had have thought about it, would have immediately suggested itself to me, for the exhortation, for you will be I'm sure, b&s, absolutely thrilled to know the central theme of what the section of Esther that we're going to consider is, this morning, and it will bring us very powerfully, very closely, and very real, b&s, to the great issue of life concerning that man!

It would not be possible to select a more appropriate section than this one, for the exhortation that we're going to have this morning. Therefore, b&s, it is of a serious nature that we enter into our study, this morning, as we enter into all studies in a serious nature, but this time with a great depth of feeling and appreciation for the grandeur of God's work in Christ Jesus. And in that work, b&s, what was preeminently accomplished was not that the salvation of men and women from death, should be the prime factor, although that of course, is bound up with what was accomplished and cannot be divorced from it; but b&s, the thing that the Lord Jesus did and which gave Him the upmost pleasure, was to show to all men everywhere of all ages, that His Heavenly Father is right! and that whatever He does, He does in justice and in truth, and with Him there is not a shadow of turning, and that He will by no means clear the guilty. And the Lord Jesus became associated with our nature, b&s, for the supreme purpose of declaring to all the world, that God is absolutely right, and on the basis of that declaration, the salvation of men and women was accomplished. Without that declaration, b&s, the salvation of men and women could never be accomplished, and as

we leave this meeting this morning, I would sincerely hope, and this will be my purpose, b&s, with all the vigour that is possible to bring before you this morning, I want you to leave this meeting this morning not remembering Mordecai or Haman or Esther or even Jesus of Nazareth, but I want you to leave this meeting, as Jesus Himself would want us to leave this meeting, with the love of God Almighty in our hearts because He is the be-all and the end-all of existence upon this earth. And that, b&s, is the supreme message of this section of the book of Esther. Let us therefore, pick up our drama and follow very closely the principles so clearly set forth in this section; and I know b&s, by now, that we would have deeply appreciated the types and the shadows that slip across the pages of the book of Esther; not the very image of those things, not in chronological sequential order that we may, like a computer lay down the book of Esther, the types of the future because it cannot be done that way, but in little cameos that flash from those pages, we are able to see very clearly, b&s, the issues of life and the principles of truth and the shadows which bind this substance in the work of the Lord Jesus and in the glory of His Heavenly Father to flood the earth.

And one such type is before us this morning, in a most graphic fashion. And so the second banquet of wine is about to commence. And the atmosphere electrified, b&s, by the providence of God, absolutely electrified by the providence of God, and as Haman went home with his head covered, unable to look people in the eye because of the depth of the shame which swept over him and drowned him in that shame; as he went home, b&s, and recounted the misery that had been caused by leading through the streets of Shushan, that cursed Jew. He had no sooner recounted that misery, b&s, when that knock on the door, and the moment of truth had arrived, 'bring Haman quickly, for the banquet of wine is about to commence'. And Esther, b&s, had at her fingertips supreme control of the situation, not because of any ingenuity of Jewish brains, but because, b&s, there is no enchantment against Jacob nor any divination against Israel, for it shall be said, behold, what God hath wrought'. That was the message of Balaam, 'behold what God hath wrought', and Esther would have sat there at the banquet of wine knowing this, that the president of that face was Yahweh Elohim of Israel against whom, b&s, no human device can ever prevail. And she could read in Haman's face, the victory that was coming, for Haman knew as Zeresh his wife had told him, 'that Mordecai being of the seed of the Jews before whom thou hast begun to fall' and it was absolutely inevitable, and the doom hung upon him, and the defeat was written all over him, b&s, and now it only needed that queen to work in cooperation with God's providence to bring about the final doom of the Jews' enemy.

But, b&s, when he was removed they faced a greater problem than Haman, and the problem they faced was far, far more powerful than Haman could ever be! The problem they faced was the righteousness of the king, and that, b&s, was a problem that was beyond human wisdom to circumvent. And as we witness, therefore, our drama, we will see the merging out of that banquet of wine, that enormous problem around which, b&s, there was no human ingenuity or wisdom to divert the righteousness of that king. And so chapter 7 opens up with the three characters, and 'so the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther the queen', and it was a banquet of wine as the margin suggests, it was a banquet, b&s, where wine was consumed as a symbol of joy and gladness on the

one hand, but on the other hand as Isaiah the prophet had reminded them, and reminded the enemies of Israel (of which we cannot speak particularly because of the time factor this morning, but would love to turn these references up), but Isaiah pointed out that Yahweh would invite the Jews' enemies to a feast and they will drink wine, b&s, called on that day, not the cup of blessing but in the terminology of Isaiah the prophet, the cup of fury, and drink it they will! And instead of the banquet of wine following the procedure of the king's feast, where none did compel to drink the cup of blessing, they will be compelled to drink the cup of fury.

And there was the difference and when they picked up those glasses on that day for Esther, she held in her hand the liquid of life, and in the hand of Haman was the fury of Yahweh which came up in his face, and the Jews' enemy was to drink and he was to drink deeply. It was a terrific situation and the king for the third time, requests of Esther to let him know, what was her petition, and what was her request? And Esther the queen, representing as she did the bride of the king, the bride of Jesus Christ, ourselves b&s, having made herself ready, having received of the king the approbation that she did, and now in his pleasure has requested for the third time, 'ask of me and I will give the heathen for thine inheritance' as God told His holy King upon His holy hill of Zion; half of the kingdom was hers. Participation with the king, and now b&s, the time had come, the moment was opportune, Esther read the situation clearly and beautifully, and now she reveals her origin for the first time to the king. And her words are these as we read them in that 3rd verse of Esther chapter 7, she said, 'If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request'. Let that sink into our minds, b&s, Esther did not divide herself from her people, but this is what Esther was saying; and let us be clear as to what she was saying. Let my life be given at my petition and my people at my request, in other words, if my people cannot be saved, I cannot be saved, and immediately the king had a startling revelation that his wife, his beloved wife, beautiful of face and form, this fair maiden was a Jewess. What a staggering revelation! what a staggering revelation that is, and you know, b&s, that woman saw very clearly that if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall be the receiving of them be but life from the dead. And we are like Esther, b&s, in the same identical situation, and our eyes are riveted upon the Middle East, and our hearts are tied to the Middle East, b&s, and every day of our life we arise and want to know what's happening over there, because over there is the gate of our grave. And in the Middle East today, b&s, our prayer goes to God that our petition is for our life, and our request is for the life of our people, and we are inexplicitly bound up, b&s, with the people of Israel, and Romans 11 is a magnificent chapter which binds us to those people. And if Jewry be not saved, b&s, we are of all men most miserable and have no hope! We've got no hope and are without God in the world, that's what Israel means to us. God be thanked, God be praised, and we sing His praises communally and in private, that there is on the earth such a people as Israel! Never let it be heard from a Christadelphian lip, the mere suggestion that we should ever sever our connection with the hope of the promises made unto the fathers, not that we should allied ourselves, b&s, with the politics, policies, military machine or religious beliefs of those people in the Land today. Not that we should ever sever our connection however, because of all those things; because the Father's blessing is upon

them, they are beloved for the Father's sake, and all things are of God, and there will be a glorious balance and we will sing in that day of the glory of God with Israel, b&s, and we'll know what Esther was saying; my life and the life of my people, and therefore, she divided the request in two, and the king was only going to grant her one thing and therefore, she can't get one- half, she can't get the other half.

A marvellous principle emerges out of that request of Esther, and she talks about the way in which they'd been sold, her and her people, careful all along the line, b&s, to show her identity with those people. 'They had been sold, she said, in verse 4, to be destroyed and to be slain and to perish', and she quotes verbatim from Haman's edict, and you will notice as this chapter proceeds Haman's edict is quoted verbatim, in order that the horror of what that man had done might be brought before the king. And you can imagine the king looking at that woman, a beautiful girl, and beautiful character, and those harsh words, 'to be slain, to be destroyed and to perish'. And the king's horror mounting in him, but says Esther, 'not only would he damage myself and my people, king Ahasuerus he has damaged you'; 'for she said, the enemy could not countervail the king's damage'. The word 'countervail' is the word 'shavah' to equalize, to equalize, the RSV has it, 'our affliction has not to be compared with the loss of the king'; and b&s, what was it that Israel carried away captive when Ephraim, the dear son of God was taken out of the Land, followed by Judah who married the daughter of a strange god, and was taken into captivity? What was it, b&s, the loss of the ecclesia? the loss of men and women? does that really matter? Our affliction, b&s, is nothing alongside the loss to our Heavenly Father.

Have we ever considered those principles because this is what Ahasuerus stood for! After her addressing words to him, b&s, that echo down through the centuries, which we address to our God, what is the loss to God when we sin? Do we imagine, b&s, that God is robbed because our own personal righteousness is smudged by our iniquity? Do we imagine therefore, that God is robbed because we have been smeared by our sins? B&S, God is robbed when we cease to glorify Him, when we cease to work for Him, when we cease to become effective, when we cease to radio His glory unto others, God is not interested, b&s, in polished crystal in the sense of our own personal righteousness, that to God is styled in the bible, filthy rags. But what God is interested in is vessels of mercy through whom He can reflect His glory; and our affliction is not to be compared with the loss of the king. In the case of Esther it was very real, b&s, that the Jewish community contributed largely to the foundation and to the prosperity of the Persian's empire. Shushan the palace evidently was dominated by Jewish influence as we'll see later on, she spoke therefore, very truly that there was great loss to the king. It wasn't only that the Jewish people were suffering, the king himself was deprived! Having built that atmosphere up, the moment had come, and the king was aghast at these revelations.

In verse 5, aghast the king says, 'Who is he, and where is he', you know, b&s, taking the Hebrew language here according to Young's Literal and other Hebrew experts like Gesenius, they all suggest that the Hebrew language here is very broken, incoherent almost, as if this king was saying, who, he, where, what? aghast at what was being told him! he couldn't comprehend what was going on, all he wanted to know, and this is what

the climax has been building up to; he never mentions Esther's life or the loss of the Jewish people, the burning question was, who is he? and that's what Esther wanted! That's what it had all being built up to, God's providence had built up to, and the king wanted to know, who it was, and now it comes; and the king, you know, he said this, 'who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?' That durst presume in his heart to do so, and you know what the king was saying? Looking at Esther, looking at the Jewish people, Mordecai, whom he held in the greatest honour and distinction, he knew that whoever devised that scheme, the prime factor and motive could only have been envy. Who would durst presume in his heart to do so, and when Pilate brought Jesus out to the raving multitude in the streets, many of whom had felt the healing touch of the hand of the Saviour of the world, and the blind looking up at Him, seeing Him for the first time, and the lame being there, b&s, able to walk spritely and powerfully in the streets, and if they hadn't been healed themselves their relations had; that crowd had been feed by Him and as they stood there and looked at Him on that balcony with Pilate the king, Pilate said what Ahasuerus said, 'behold, your king, for he knew that for envy they had delivered Him'. What else? the character of the man suggested nothing else, they had hated Him without a cause, says the 69th Psalm, and Ahasuerus knew, who else, what else could have happened but that principle? Who would durst presume in his heart to do so? the king, b&s, is in a right frame of mind, but Esther didn't come out and say it's Haman. She dragged it on to make it absolutely certain what would happen, and Esther used three terms, powerful terms before she revealed the revelation of this wicked one. And Esther said the adversary, the enemy, this wicked one; the adversary, 'the oppressor' as the Hebrew has it; the enemy, 'the one filled with hate'; the wicked one, the one 'who is intrinsically evil' and all those terms, b&s, piled up to add to the horror in Ahasuerus' mind, and then the finger, 'is this wicked Haman'. And there he was, and God had prepared him, b&s, He had prepared him by the walk through the streets of Shushan, He prepared him by the shame, He prepared him by the recounting of the events to Zeresh his wife, the man came into the room with a sense of foreboding all over him. And as the king and queen turned to focus their attention, there was written all over his face, GUILTY; all over him and he was unable to muster the personal force of character to countervail Esther's accusation. He was unable to pull out of the fire, b&s, the necessary words that may have turned things back; he was unable to bring to bear the fact that he still was the first man in the kingdom, the prime minister. All of those things that were at his command, God had robbed him of, b&s, he stood there defenseless, stripped and naked and ashamed; 'there he is' and the king turned and saw him and Haman was afraid it says, 'because he saw the king and the queen together'. 'He was afraid before the king and the queen', the margin says, 'at the presence of the king and queen' and he saw, b&s, that the two were married in every sense of that word; not only was she his legal wife, not only did she have the legal status of queen, but they were one, b&s, and the Jewish cause, was the cause of the king as it was the cause of the queen, and Haman knew before another word was spoken, that he was doomed.

No wonder, b&s, that at the staggering revelation, with this aloof king, because of his very isolation from his subjects, he had all this hidden from him, and now he has the staggering revelation that his prime minister plotted the death of his own wife, and of the

people who had contributed largely to the empire's prosperity; and the people, b&s, that Persia had adopted a policy of conciliation towards, and whose decrees had gone from the one end of the world to the other, on their behalf, absolutely betrayed by the prime minister! No wonder the king went out of the palace to walk in the garden, to let the facts sink into him, so that he might realize the enormity of what was done!

And then we have a scene, a pathetic scene, and we read in verse 7, 'And the king arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath went into the palace garden: and Haman stood up to make request for his life', he stood up. Mordecai wouldn't do that, b&s, to make request of Haman for his life, and it grieved Haman exceedingly that Mordecai the Jew would not stand up, but he's got to, and there he is, b&s, standing before Esther the queen to make request for his life. And Esther, of course, as the custom was, reclining on the couch at the banquet of wine, Haman now prostrates himself before the queen, as a suppliant for his very life, and the words of Isaiah the prophet thunders in our ears, b&s, as Isaiah told the Jewish people, 'I will bring all them that are incensed against thee, and all them that hate thee and oppress thee, and they shall come, he said, and shall worship before thy feet and to plead for their lives'. And there they are, b&s, in the person of Haman, there they are, and our mind goes to the future when the bride of Christ (ourselves) go out into the world, b&s. And we will reveal our origins, our origins as Christadelphians and we'll tell the world that though Abraham never knew us as Isaiah said, he is our father, we are his sons and his daughters; we are Jewish people, we are Israelites indeed; we're members of the commonwealth of Israel, and they will come, b&s, and all that have been incensed against thee and all that hate thee, will come bending unto thee and to confess that God is with us; and behind us, and with us there will be Judah and Ephraim bent like the bow and arrows, mounted like the goodly horse in the day of battle, and they shall go forth, b&s, with the whirlwinds of the south, and shall encompass the whole world, and according to the divine purpose, bring them to Zion with rejoicing. And they shall come out to glorify Israel, and Edom will be there to sing 'land of hope and glory, mother of the free' and to dedicate their song to Zion, and all the rest of the nations will be there, b&s, and they shall come bending like Haman did, and to confess, once and for all, that we know that 'God is with thee, and we will go with thee'. There's a glorious picture presented at the feet of Esther, as Haman has prostrated himself there.

But the king returns, and it was obvious, b&s, that evil was determined as Haman himself knew. And the king comes in and sees the scene, and I don't think for a moment really, that the king saw Haman prostrate upon the foot of that bed before Esther, as a means of forcing the queen before him; I believe the king's mind was so filled with frustration and bitterness against the prime minister of his empire and I believe, b&s, he saw not only had Haman betrayed him but he'd put the whole empire in jeopardy by reversing the policy of the Persians, that Ahasuerus would have saw any occasion he possibly could, to get rid of that man! and seeing him in that situation, he could think nothing else but evil of him. And you know, b&s, before ever a word came out of his mouth, he didn't have to issue any command whatever, because we read at the end of verse 8, 'as the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face'. And the chamberlains, the eunuchs that were there, fully and overly subscribing to the cause of

Esther and Mordecai, seizing the opportunity, b&s, anticipating what the king would want, they covered Haman's face, indicative of the fact that he should never again look the king in the eye. The king would never have to again, look at the granite features of the Jew hater; the king would never be nauseated by the ego that just exuded from the man's countenance; 'cover his face', and they suggested the fit end for him, 'that he should be hung upon his own tree', the one that he had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good concerning the king (or as the RSV said, 'whose word saved the king'). Whose word saved the king, Haman's word, b&s, had placed the king in a most insidious position; Haman's word had jeopardized the king's righteousness, Haman had jeopardized the king's dignity; Mordecai's word had saved the king, and therefore, it was but for the king to decide, who should hang upon that tree?

And they took him out and he was hung up 75 feet high, that all the world might see the end of God's enemies. That all the world might know, b&s, that no one can brook the king's commandments and fly in the face of the righteousness of the throne and get away with it. That all the world may see that all the words we speak, the actions we take, the motives, the thoughts and the intents of our heart must never be directed to dethroning, or to the abdication of the king who sits upon the throne. And there he was placarded for all to see! And the man who had plotted Mordecai's death, and came within an ace of succeeding, on the eve that he would have secured that death, was fouled by the providence of God, now hung there writhing, b&s, that all may know that it does not pay to stand and affront the King of glory.

Need I say anymore? as to what He did for us? for as strange as it may seem to relate, there was in that man of Nazareth, both Mordecai and the nature of Haman, the Jew hater; He was at once the seed of the woman, the Son of God and He was at once, b&s, the One who came as the Son of God, that He might overcome the flesh! He bore our nature, b&s, and tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. He was a man who could feel the power of temptation, and although we argue backwards and forwards as to whether the tempter was external or internal, b&s, finally, it was internal. Finally it was internal, it matters not, the thing that really matters is, that the Son of God's righteousness repelled that tempter, because He was the root of David; He prevailed not because He was the seed of David. It was because He was the root of David He prevailed and He took with Him, b&s, to the cross all in His own body that in other people has found expression that would affront the throne of glory, and to use words to presort the harboured designs that would be all but to bring glory to the God of heaven. And they placarded Him on the tree, b&s, and gathered around Him in ripe old mirth, until the heavens went dark and the somber atmosphere settled upon the scene, and there hanging upon that tree, was a man that said to all the world in a most glorious way, my Heavenly Father is right! And He hung there, b&s, and He that hath the power of death was crucified!

And Haman had the power of death, with the king's ring on his finger that would seal the fate of Mordecai. Mordecai, b&s, escaped but our Lord didn't, because Mordecai, b&s, was but a shadow, but the Lord the substance! and therefore, hanging upon that stake,

God left Him. 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken Me'? and it wasn't, b&s, as if He didn't know; the Son of God never came to that apex of His life, to be at last left in it, 'by His knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many'; knowledge never failed, b&s, with the pain of the nails. The question was asked of the Psalmist not of the Son; all the Son did was to read the question, and then all He had to do was to meditate upon the rest of the psalm to get His answer. For the psalm went on to say, 'for Thou art holy that inhabiteth the praises of Israel'; there's His answer, why hast Thou forsaken Me? because I know that Thou art holy, and God left Him in death to be, as bro. Thomas said, a mere man. That which died upon the cross, b&s, was all that Haman ever stood for, though of course, kept in absolute check; there was within the nature of flesh He bore our sins in His own body, and the devil died so that we might be released from bondage, that was the whole principle and that God's righteousness might be upheld.

Verse 1, b&s, of chapter 8 goes on and says this, 'On that day did the king Ahasuerus give the house of Haman the Jew's enemy unto Esther the queen. And Mordecai came before the king; for Esther had told him what he was unto her'. What another startling revelation here that the king had, revelation upon revelation, here's another one for him. Esther is the foster daughter of Mordecai the Jew, what a staggering revelation! And what does the king do? 'the king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it unto Mordecai', he wears the king's ring, b&s, he is the signet of the king, 'and upon the stone was engraven seven eyes', Zechariah tells us, the all-seeing Deity, b&s, engraved upon the stone of His own making the impregnable things of God's glory and of His character, and He engraved upon the Son of righteousness the all-seeing power of the righteousness of God, and He gave Him that signet ring, that what He sealed in heaven and earth, is sealed in heaven and earth. And Mordecai received that, b&s, and along with it he was given the house of Haman. It a word, he possessed the gate of his enemies; he possessed the gate of his enemies, and so it was all over, was it?

No, b&s, it wasn't all over. The Jew hater is gone, but that impenetrable barrier remains, the immutable the unalterable law of the Medes and Persians, which had been sealed with the very ring that Mordecai now wore, which could never be reversed. And therefore, b&s, although the Jewish people had a breathing space as it were, as Mordecai had said, 'by the sacrifice of Esther'; there they had their breathing space, they must face the inevitable! the decree must go forward, there is no reversing of that decree, b&s, and Esther sets out immediately to try and get the king to change. She has a plan; she comes before the king and we read in the 8th chapter and verse 3, 'And Esther spake yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet, and besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite, and his device that he had devised against the Jews'. B&S, Esther in our story we know, represented the ecclesia, but as I said to you before and I will say again, they are not the very image of the things; Esther not only represented the ecclesia but she is pleading on behalf of Mordecai. What for? that the king's law might be repealed? No, b&s, she didn't believe it was the king's law, she saw her own way around it, it wasn't successful, she didn't succeed, but she had a scheme, she had an idea which she wanted to put before the king. But for the moment let us see her beseeching the king with tears to put away the mischief of Haman.

Can't you see Him in the garden, b&s, with His disciples falling asleep at the critical moment of His life; can't you see Him making His way into the olive grove, where they pressed out the olives, Gethsemane the olive press, crushing that olive to get the oil for the light, and there He was under enormous pressure, b&s, to produce the light of the world, and under that enormous pressure, the tears coming out of Him, like the blood of that olive, and appealing to His Heavenly Father with strong crying and tears, but He wasn't successful in averting death. Paul says that God saved Him 'not from death, out of it', and that's the story of this chapter. They weren't saved from the decree, b&s, they were saved out of that decree, for God's decree is this, that in Adam all shall die, and all the crying, b&s, and the weeping and the tears of blood that streamed down the faces of saints for centuries, being it in old age or in the arena with the lions or upon the stake, or under enormous pressure of the world, be it in whatever circumstances we find ourselves, b&s, death is an all-inspiring reality because death is God's law. And God's law will be done, and nobody will be saved from death, but many will be saved out of death. And Esther came before the king, b&s, with that plea, with strong crying and tears, that she might be able to revert and escape the device of Haman.

And she reminds the king, and this is her plea; she says 'to put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite', so she reminds the king of the motive of that decree. It was Haman the Agagite that did it, it was you, it wasn't your idea, it was mischief, it wasn't real law, it was just mischief, and it was Haman the Agagite,(and mentioning his title, b&s, she mentioned the motive which produced that decree, not your motive, his!) It was a device which he had against the Jews, the same word as we'll see a little later on, which is used in Ezekiel 38 for the evil thought of Gog against Israel. That's the idea that Haman had, and as Esther approached the king again, of course, imperiling her life, the king held out the golden sceptre towards Esther so Esther arose and stood before the king, and she said, 'if it please the king and if I have found favour in thy sight, and the thing seem right before the eyes of the king, let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews which are in all the king's provinces'. So you see what she was saying, 'let's reverse it because it's not yours, it was given by Haman, and he wasn't a Persian, he was the son of Hammedatha; he didn't belong to your family and he wasn't of your race, he was an Agagite; and you didn't write the decree, he did! and it was written, O king, against all your previous policies. Now surely, surely, we can now tear it up; it really doesn't belong to you'. But b&s, held out in front of her was a golden sceptre, and her words were, 'if it be right in the eyes of the king'. Now you look at this psalm, Psalm 45, how many times have we been here? Psalm 45, 'My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the King: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness and righteousness, and thy right hand shall teach terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre'. And that's what Esther said, as the sceptre was taken hold of by Esther she said, 'if it seem right unto

the king'; b&s, you've never seen a connection like this with the book of Esther. Here's the sceptre out and here's the words of Esther, 'if it seem right' same Hebrew word 'yashar' means 'upright, straight' the sceptre of thy kingdom is a straight sceptre. Who had sealed the edict of Haman? The king's ring had sealed that, b&s, of which the sceptre was not a symbol, and this king in Psalm 45 married to his bride was riding in glory and majesty because of truth and righteousness, and there's no way in the world that he'd be riding in victory or be associating with his bride if truth and righteousness hadn't been held up straight as a die like that sceptre.

And where would you imagine the apostle Paul would quote those words and in what context would you imagine him quoting them? Of One who would come to save His people but affronted up with the law of His own Heavenly Father as the great barrier? There's no way around that, b&s, there's only one way around it, and that's through it, and therefore, riding in glory and majesty and victory because He upheld in truth and righteousness the Word of His Heavenly Father. Now, I'll show you the context where those words are used, Hebrews chapter 1. Magnificent context, and this was the issue that was before Esther as she took hold of that sceptre and said, 'if it be right in the eyes of the king'.

Have a look at this context, b&s, and let us focus our attention upon the Son of righteousness as we read these words. Hebrews chapter 1 and verse 8, Paul quotes that psalm, 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Therefore, God thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows'. But what's the context? Look at verse 3, 'Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of God's substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself (or in Himself) purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high', and b&s, though I have read those words dramatically, they are dramatic words; there was no way around that law. That book, b&s, is the Word of God's power and when He came to ride prosperously and to be called by God 'thy God O God' and to be acknowledged as upholding the sceptre of righteousness, He upheld all things by the Word of His power, and that involved Him, b&s, in purging our sins, and therefore He had to affront that law right up, and to acknowledge that the sceptre of His Heavenly Father's kingdom, was absolutely straight up and down! And there's no way that that can be averted.

You know, b&s, in the story of Esther, the king was to bring Esther and Mordecai before him, and was to tell them straight that there was no way out of that problem, other than to honour the law of the king. So we come to verse 7, and to the final thoughts which will bring us, I believe, very close to the title of our Lord. 'That the king Ahasuerus said unto Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew' (he knew, b&s, that Esther only represented Mordecai, and what does he tell them?) He first of all reminds them, b&s, that he is not anti-semitic, that although he can't grant Esther's request, it is not because he does not love the Jewish people. He said, 'I have given Esther the house of Haman, and him they have hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews'. God, b&s, doesn't say to us, 'Ah, look, I don't care about your sins really,

you're lovely people and therefore, although I've said the wages of sins is death, let's forget that'. Ah, no, b&s, God doesn't abdicate His righteousness like that, if He did, where would be the respect that's due to Him? Where would be the honour to the King of righteousness? Our God, b&s, is not the god of the churches, a benevolent old gentlemen as they see Him, who is swayed backwards and forwards by the emotions of His people! God is not like that, God, b&s, is an awe-inspiring Majesty whose righteousness is straight up and down; He doesn't do things like that, but He's not against us! He does love His people, as Ahasuerus said, 'I'm not against the Jews'; proof? proof? Two things proved it, two things proved it, 'I have given you the house of Haman and him I've hanged upon the gallows'. B&S, the promise to us is two-fold, God had promised us through the seed of Abraham, that we would possess the gate of our enemies; He has told us that we will inherit the world; He has said that kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our LORD and His Christ, that's the promise. We are promised the house of Haman, and b&s, would you dare to say to me, or I to you, that God has not only promised but has fulfilled the promise to bruise under our feet, the Satan. Him hath God hanged upon the gallows! He's done it! and He's done it in the person of His only beloved Son, is it therefore, that the divine law of mortality should rest upon us, that God is against us? What's the good of us pleading to God that Adam did it; it wasn't our fault; it was Adam that brought death, you didn't have to impose that law? It's no good, b&s, we've got to face those issues of life and we've got to come to the realization that God has shed abroad His love upon us, in that He's promised the house of our enemies and has already crucified the devil, and trod Satan under our feet, and therefore, Ahasuerus said, 'Write ye also, for the Jews, write for them in their favour' and he says, 'and when you write it, write it in the king's name and seal it with the king's ring, for the writing which is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse'.

You know, b&s, what he was saying by inference was, I cannot change the edict obtained by Haman. But Ahasuerus didn't say it in that way, and neither does God! He put it positively and what he said was this, the irreversible law of the king, is at once your problem and your opportunity. And b&s, isn't that true of ourselves? Aren't you glad that God's law of mortality will stand? Our dear bro. Roberts once wrote, 'that if it was possible to change it, then we would be heralded a world later on, of people that would be ruled by miserable sinners'. Is that a law therefore, that should be reversed? No way, b&s, should that be reversed, and yet the same immutable law of mortality, offered by the same God, is at once, b&s, our barrier, and yet, because God has written for the Jews and has expressed His love for them, and their people and all the spiritual seed of Israel, in that He'll give them a house of their enemies, and has already bruised Satan under their feet, isn't it glorious b&s, to know that our Heavenly Father will stick by His words? And shouldn't we? And Mordecai seized the opportunity, of course, as being a type of the Messiah one would expect him to do so, and the liberty that Ahasuerus had given him, he didn't use it as a cloak of maliciousness, b&s, but using the liberty of the immutable law of his king, he wrote that people might fight their way out of death, and they succeeded.

And this particular section, b&s, finishes in verse 9 by telling us, 'Then were the king's

scribes called at that time in the third month, that is, the month Sivan, on the three and twentieth day thereof: and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded', and Mordecai, b&s, commanded that to be written in the name of the king and he upheld the king's righteousness, he wrote a decree of defense by which Jews could fight their way out of death, not in defiance of the law of the king, but in the full upholding of the law of the king, and b&s, it was written on the 23rd day of the 3rd month. A little mental arithmetic, 23 days, the second month, 30 days Haman's edict authorized on the 13th day of the 1st month, you have a period of 70 days. And from 70 days, b&s, from Haman's edict being authorized on the 13th days of the 1st month, a letter went out which enabled the Jews to be released from their captivity. An immutable law in the words of Jeremiah, 'Thus saith Yahweh', sent the Jews into captivity for 70 years at the end of which, b&s, an immutable law that said, 'Thus saith Yahweh' brought the Jews out of captivity. An immutable law, b&s, that said, 'in Adam shall all die', sent that man to the cross! An immutable law that said, 'that the wages of sin is death' brought that man out of the grave. So that when He stood before men, as He stands before you and I this morning, He says, 'in death my Father is right!' He says in life, 'my Father is right', and Him whom men crucified, because He upheld the righteousness of His Heavenly Father, God made Him both Lord and Christ. B&S, just as soon as you and I face realities and the fact that there is just no way around that book, and meet the commandments of our Heavenly Father head on, and honour them in our lives with dignity and in honour, and uphold in our lives to the best of our ability the righteousness of God; when we have failed, God will by our very acknowledgement of that principle, impute unto us, the righteousness of One who didn't fail, and we'll go into the kingdom, b&s, not only being saved from death but out of death and we will find with the Jewish people, who have faced the inevitable destiny of the divine word of Yahweh, their Heavenly Father, we will find with them, b&s, in the reviving of that nation, life from the dead, and we will have from God our petition and our request!