

Esther Pleading for Her People

by C.I. Scofield

The sermon highlights the principle of opportunity, where God's hand is at work in the lives of individuals, and the significance of the crucifixion in illustrating this principle.

Scripture: Romans 11

Topics: "Divine Providence", "Power Of Prayer"

Description

C.I. Scofield preaches on the integral lesson from the Book of Esther, emphasizing the faith and response of Esther, the power of prayer, and God's providential work behind the scenes even when His name is not mentioned. The sermon highlights the divine love and care for His people, the importance of getting right with God before seeking solutions, and the significance of recognizing divine opportunities as a call to action.

Transcript

(Esther iv:10-43.)

I. The Analysis.

1. Esther's call and her response of faith (verses 10-16). 2. The prayer of the people, and God's answer (iv:17; v:3).

II. The Heart of the Lesson.

This lesson is so integral, so completely one, that we shall best come to understand its most central teaching by considering it all. It has been urged against the inspiration and canonicity of this Book that the name of Deity does not occur in it. Perhaps nothing could better illustrate the folly of the destructive criticism. Against Israel at this time had gone forth the word, lo ammi--"not my people" (Hosea i:9, 10; ii:23). It was not the abrogation of the Abrahamic, Deuteronomic and Davidic covenants (Gen. xii:1-4; Deut. xxx:1-10; 2 Sam. vii:5-17), for these, it is repeatedly declared, shall never fail; it was the chastisement of the ancient people by the withdrawal of the divine fellowship.

But, though withholding Himself from personal communion with his people, Jehovah nevertheless worked for them behind the screen of His providences. Denied, because of their sins, the joy of the felt presence of God, they were all the more the objects of His tender love (Hos. xiv:i-6), of His ceaseless care.

How exquisitely in character, therefore, with this period in the history of the chosen people is this dealing in Esther. God's name is not mentioned, but God's hand is everywhere. It is even so through all the present church age. The "natural branches" are "broken off," but, "beloved for the fathers' sake," God, whose "gifts and calling are without repentance," "is able to graff them in again" (Rom. xi). Meantime, the true philosophy of Gentile world-history is to be found in the Divine dealing with the Jew.

Turning now to the lesson we shall have the heart of it, I think, in a certain sequence which gives to the events the relation of cause and consequence; and, supremely, in a word of Mordecai to Esther.

That order of events is: the humiliation before God of the imperilled Jews; the message to Esther; the response of Esther's faith; the preparation by fasting and prayer; the answer of God in His providential deliverance of His people. How easily it might all have been otherwise! The threatened Jews might have heaped their wealth at Haman's feet to placate his hatred. They might have sought to avert the impending doom by corrupting influential courtiers. They might have sought safety in flight. But they began by getting right with God, and all that followed had the inevitability of cause and effect. For then God begins to work, and their safety was at once assured.

But we must not pass over a word in Mordecai's message to the beautiful young Jewess who was to be God's instrument in the deliverance of her people: "And who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Who, indeed, shall say that the whole past of Esther up to the moment when she stood, unbidden, before the king had not been ordered in view of the use God meant to make of her that day? For that, she had been born a Jewess that she might be bound up with the destinies of that people; for that, she had been dowered with beauty, that she might reach the heart of a sensual pagan king through the only avenue of access to the heart of such a man--his senses; for that, she had been raised to share that king's throne.

But if it were so with Esther, there emerges a principle of wide application in the interpretation of the divine providences. Is not that principle this: that opportunity to do good is at once the divine call to do that thing, and the interpretation of the divine dealing in the past which has at last brought the person and the opportunity together?

What, fundamentally, is the meaning of the crucifixion? "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." "A lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world" (Acts ii:23; 1 Pet. i:19, 20). How many centuries it required to bring at last Christ and the cross together!

So we, in the measure of our opportunity are to find the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. For such a time--though the service may be a small one--we came to the Kingdom.

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