



METRO NEW YORK WORLD MINISTRY
ADULT SABBATH SCHOOL CONTRIBUTING NOTES
For the week of Aug 1 – Aug 7, 2015
Lesson #6: **Biblical Missionaries**

The Book of Esther

(The Desire of Ages, p. 211) In every page, whether history, or precept, or prophecy, the Old Testament Scriptures are irradiated with the glory of the Son of God.

The book of Esther is a very misunderstood book. The book of Esther is not just a historical story but it is actually a prophecy written as history. In other words the historical events that took place in the days of Esther are going to be repeated once again in the end of time.

Surely if this is the case then we can benefit tremendously from this story because we can know what is ahead of us and how we can face the final events as they come upon God's people.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The king Ahasuerus of the book of Esther is equivalent to King Xerxes. Xerxes is his name in the Greek and Ahasuerus is his Persian name. This story is happening during the period of Xerxes.

The children of Israel were taken captive to Babylon in the year 605 B.C. and remained captive until the year 539 B.C. when the kingdom of Babylon received a deadly wound by the kingdom of the Medes and Persians that came and dried up the waters of the river Euphrates and came into the city and delivered God's people from bondage.

It's interesting that Cyrus, who conquered the city of Babylon, gave a written decree guaranteeing religious liberty not only for the Jews but for all of the nations that had been captive in Babylon. This was a written decree of civil and religious liberty and this, for a while, gave the God's people freedom to believe as they wish and worship as they wish.

The book of Esther, describing events that take place in the year 483 B.C., just a few years after Cyrus' decree of religious toleration and freedom of worship had been given by the Medes and Persians, in the very same kingdom and from the very same capitol, this kingdom that had given religious liberty all of a sudden withdraws that liberty.

In the book of Esther we have several "characters."

1. King Ahasuerus – the civil ruler. He is able to make laws and enforce them.
2. Zeresh (see Esther 5:10-14) – The vile woman who the behind the plot to kill God's people. She is Haman's wife. She is actually the one who suggests to Haman that he prepare a gallows to hang Mordecai on. In other words Zeresh, the vile woman, stands behind the scenes and tries to influence Haman so Haman can use and manipulate the king to destroy Mordecai and the Jews.



Sabbath School Lesson Notes – August 8, 2015

3. Haman – The main “character” in the story. He is the enemy and he demands worship. He also demands that people break God’s law and obey the laws of the king. So both Haman and Zeresh are religious figures.
4. Mordecai – He represents the people of Israel. The death decree is given against him and then all of God’s people in the kingdom.
5. Esther – She is an intercessory figure. She is the great protector of God’s people. She stands up to defend God’s people when they are in danger of being annihilated from the earth. We will see that Esther is a type of Christ.

How do all these “characters” relate to one another? What is the conflict in the book of Esther? What is it all about?

THE CONFLICT...

(Esther 3:1) After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him.
2 And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman...

This is not a normal respect-type of bowing but this is worship. Haman is demanding worship in a religious sense. So we have the issue of worship in the book of Esther. It is talking about worshipping Haman instead of worshipping God.

Is worship connected to the observance of God’s law? Absolutely as the first four commandments have to do with worship to the Creator God. So we must conclude if Mordecai would have bowed down and worshiped Haman he would have broken the commandment against idolatry.

Worship and the commandments of God always go together. This is why we find the issue of worship and the God’s commandments at the center of the controversy in the book of Revelation. These two are closely linked and related and cannot be separated.

Why did Haman require religious worship?

(Esther 3:2) And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman: **for (because) the king had so commanded concerning him....**

Do we have a union of church and state here in this story? Yes because it is the king’s law for everyone to bow and pay homage to Haman. We have the civil ruler imposing a religious decree of worship. In other words we have a union of church and state.

What is Mordecai’s reaction to this law?

(vs. 2) ...But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence.



Sabbath School Lesson Notes – August 8, 2015

Mordecai realized that this was worship and refused to bow. He also realized that the king had no right to make a religious law of worship requiring people to worship another human being.

(Acts 5:29) We ought to obey God rather than men.

Mordecai is performing an act of civil disobedience. This is the only time we are to disobey the government. When the civil power tries to place itself in place of God and cause you to break one of God's commandments, then we can disobey the government.

The first four commandments have to do with our relationship to God and the last six our relationship to our fellow man. The civil power can enforce the last six commandments only as per Romans 13. Caesar is to have nothing to do with the first four commandments.

THE BOOK OF ESTHER DESCRIBED THE FINAL CHAPTER OF A GREAT CONTROVERSY THAT STARTED MUCH EARLIER

There are only two individuals in all the book of Esther whose names are given complete. There are many names mentioned in the book of Esther (over 200 times) but only two whose full names are given. The first name is Haman:

(Esther 3:1) After these things did king Ahasuerus promote **Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite**, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him.

The word "Agagite" shows that Haman is a direct descendant from King Agag. Early in the history of Israel King Agag's life was spared by King Saul – along with some animals. This was the first chapter in the story and here in Esther is the last chapter.

The other name found in the book of Esther in its complete form is Mordecai.

(Esther 2:5) Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was **Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite;**

This would make Mordecai a descendant of King Saul --- and Haman was descendant of Agag. This is the original controversy: Saul vs. Agag. And here in Esther we have the descendant of Saul vs. the descendant of Agag. So what we have here is the ending of a great controversy that began early in the history of Israel and it is recorded here in the book of Esther.

FULL OF WRATH

When Haman realizes that Mordecai will not worship him the Bible says he is full of rage. Mordecai insists that he will only obey God's commandments and not a man's commandment.

(Esther 3:3) Then the king's servants, which were in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgresses thou the king's commandment?



Sabbath School Lesson Notes – August 8, 2015

This is an issue of the laws of men vs. the laws of God. It's an issue of worshiping man vs. worshiping God.

(Esther 3:4, 5) Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand: for he had told them that he was a Jew.

5 And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was **Haman full of wrath.**

Haman is filled with wrath because someone will not worship him and someone will not transgress God's commandments. Once again we see that the issue is over obedience and the commandments of God.

Notice how Haman's wrath is described...

(Esther 3:13) And the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to **destroy**, to **kill**, and to **cause to perish**, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day...

"Destroy," "kill," and "cause to perish" --- This is an intense, satanic hatred.

HAMAN'S ARGUMENTS TO THE KING

What were the arguments used when Haman comes before the king?

(Esther 3:8) And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom...

In other words this is a world-wide remnant

(8) ...and their laws are diverse from all people...

Now in what sense were their laws different from the laws of every other people? Their laws do not allow them to worship any other than the true God. They obey the Ten Commandments of God. But now notice what happens of a result of having different laws...

(8) ...neither keep they the king's laws...

In other words Haman is saying these people have other laws that keep them from obeying the king's commandments.

(8) ...therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them.

He's telling the king that we have to find a final solution to these people and if all people don't obey the king's law there will be anarchy and corruption. Society is going to be fragmented so we must get rid of these people so there can be peace and harmony throughout the kingdom. Haman now proposes a death decree.

Does this story sound familiar? Does prophecy tell us of a death decree at the end of time for those who will not worship the beast (The Roman Catholic system) and break God's commandments?



THE DEATH DECREE

Let's analyze the death decree in the book of Esther. Haman says to the king...

(Esther 3:9) If it please the king, let it be **written...**

This is important – the death decree was written. Did you know that included in the written death decree there was a date? In other words it was saying that all the Jews could be killed on and after a certain date.

(Esther 3:9) If it please the king, let it be written **that they may be destroyed...**

The king at this point is worried that if they obliterate all these people – how will it will affect the economy. Haman has an answer for him.

(9) ...and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasuries.

In other words, if you do this king, it will be profitable for you to destroy these people.

(Esther 3:10) And **the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman** the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy.

The king is giving his civil power to the religious power.

Is the king here (the civil power) the real enemy of God's people? Not really because the king doesn't even really know what's going on. He is being used and manipulated. Haman is using the civil power in order to accomplish his purposes. But when the king does find out something really spectacular is going to happen.

(Esther 3:11, 12) And the king said unto Haman, The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee.

12 Then were the king's scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written **according to all that Haman had commanded...**

According to all that who commanded? Isn't the king supposed to be in control? Again, who is the dangerous power in this story? Is it the religious power or the civil power? It is no doubt the religious power.

(Esther 3:12) Then were the king's scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king's lieutenants, and **to the governors that were over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring.**

This is a universal decree as far as universal could be in that day and age. It was written in every language too.



Sabbath School Lesson Notes – August 8, 2015

Summary so far...

1. A written death decree from the same power that previously guaranteed religious liberty and freedom for all.
2. It had a date in it – when the death decree is to be implemented.
3. It's a universal decree.
4. It's a decree that supposedly will not hurt the economy.

AN IRREVOCABLE DECREE

(Esther 8:8) Write ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you, 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**.

The laws of the Medes and Persians could not be changed. In other word once the law was made it seemed as though God's people were doomed with no hope.

A RELIGIOUS DECREE CHanneled THROUGH THE POLITICAL POWER – A UNION OF CHURCH AND STATE

(Esther 3:14) The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, **that they should be ready against that day**.

In other words, in that day, when the date arrives that was in the decree, everybody was to be ready to destroy all of the Jews in the kingdom.

Was Mordecai a literal threat to Haman? Was he doing him any harm? The answer of course is no. But Haman wanted the king (the civil power) to think that was the case.

CASTING LOTS

An interesting detail in this story is Haman throws the Pur.

(Esther 3:7) In the first month, that is, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar.

How did the ancients cast lots? This will help us better understand what is happening here. They believed that the Babylonian gods were in control of human history. They believed that the gods would meet at the beginning of each year (and this is the beginning of the year because it says "the first month"), and they would determine all of the events that would take place during that year on planet earth. In other words they would choreograph the events to take place on earth for that whole year.

So what is Haman trying to do? He is trying to get the gods in whom he believes to incorporate the destruction of the Jews into their calendar of events for the year. He really asking them to tell him which day and which month would be best for me to destroy the Jews according to the calendar that you are determining.



Sabbath School Lesson Notes – August 8, 2015

Haman is trying to get the blessing of the gods in what he is trying to do, and he carries out his plot by using an earthly king (the civil power). Isn't this the same scenario at the end of time? People will persecute the remnant of God in the name of God and say that God has shown them this and that God guarantees absolute success of the endeavor. And will they use the civil power to fulfill their "God?" Of course this isn't the true God but a false "god" (Satan) posing as the true.

Eleven months would transpire in between when the decree was signed and when it would be executed.

(Esther 3:12, 13) Then were the king's scribes called on **the thirteenth day of the first month**, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that were over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring. 13 And the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon **the thirteenth day of the twelfth month**, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey.

The decree is signed on the thirteenth day of the first month and is to be executed on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month --- eleven months in between.

DRUNK WITH WINE

Now notice that once the king and the religious power have joined together and once they've decided that they are going to do this – the king not really knowing what he wants, but Haman knowing very well what he wants – notice what they do.

(Esther 3:15) The posts went out, being hastened by the king's commandment, and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. And **the king and Haman sat down to drink**; but the city Shushan was perplexed.

What were they drinking? Were they drinking water or fruit juice? No, they were drinking wine. Haman invites the king to a banquet and they both sit down and drink wine together. Now they are both in perfect harmony and agreement. In a moment we will find that there is a "wine of wrath" in this story.

A TIME OF TROUBLE FOR THE JEWS AND A FAST OF HOPE

(Esther 4:1-3) When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry;

2 And came even before the king's gate: for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth.

3 And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.



Sabbath School Lesson Notes – August 8, 2015

This is a severe time of trouble because they are doomed to destruction and it looks as if there is no hope for this situation whatsoever. And this all because they will not worship Haman and break any of God's commandments.

Verse 3 mentions they started fasting. This is what we could call a fast of hope. A similar fast was done in the days of Jonah. Nineveh was to be destroyed by God in 40 days. What did the people do when they heard this?

(Jonah 3:3-8) So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey.

4 And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

5 **So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.**

6 **For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.**

7 And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water:

8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.

The people of Nineveh also put on sackcloth and sat in ashes and cried to God to not be destroyed --- and the Lord heard them. This too was a fast of hope. Notice that they even had their animals on a fast too.

The Jews were fasting in hope that God would intervene and deliver them from their enemies.

THE OPENING OF THE BOOK

Before probation closes is Jesus going to finish the investigative judgment of the righteous? And is He going to determine what the reward of the righteous will be? The answer is yes. In the book of Esther we actually have a foreshadowing of this.

In chapter 2 it tells us that Mordecai unmasked a plot to take the king's life. But for some reason his good deed had been written in the books of the Medes and Persians but his reward had not been given yet.

Does this sound like something that God does (or is doing) today? God writes all our actions in his heavenly books. Have we been rewarded for them yet? The answer is no, and we won't really be rewarded until Jesus returns.

(Revelation 22:12) And, behold, I come quickly; and **my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.**

Jesus examines the books and determines the reward by what is recorded in those books.



Sabbath School Lesson Notes – August 8, 2015

One night the king can't sleep and he says bring me the books. And when he starts reading he turns to the page where Mordecai had delivered the life of the king. The he says this good work is written in here but what has been done to reward him? The counselors say "Nothing has been done to reward him." And the king says he needs to be rewarded.

(Esther 6:1-3) On that night could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king.

2 And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus.

3 And the king said, What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him.

MORDECAI'S REWARD

Mordecai is dressed up in the king's clothing, place a crown on his head, place him on the king's horse, and march him all across the city with Haman bowing at his feet.

Right before this happens Haman comes in to speak with the king about killing Mordecai but the king says before you tell me what you need to tell me – I have a question to ask you. Then the king explains that there is an individual that delivered the life of the king from a plot, and this guy really loves the king. Haman at this point is thinking the king is speaking of him.

The king then asks Haman "What would you do for this man?" And then Haman says you have to put him on the king's horse, dress him up as king and place the king's crown on his head and march him through the city and have everybody bow before him. Then the king says "Thank you very much – now go do that for Mordecai."

Will this same experience happen to God persecuted people at the end of time? Will they be dressed as kings and reign with Jesus for ever and ever? Absolutely!

THE DELIVERANCE OF GOD'S PEOPLE

What delivers God people is Esther's intercession. We must understand that this is not intercession for sin. This is protecting intercession after probation has closed.

Esther is the great intercessor for God's people.

(Esther 4:8) Also he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them, to shew it unto Esther, and to declare it unto her, and to charge her that she should go in unto the king, **to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people.**

Esther is making intercession and she is there to defend her people. When they are subjects of a death decree she goes before the king to defend her people. Notice how interests are totally joined with her people.

(Esther 8:6 – Esther is speaking) For how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?



Sabbath School Lesson Notes – August 8, 2015

She is so joined with her people that she doesn't even think for her life.

(Esther 4:16) Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will **I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.**

A CHANGE OF GARMENTS

Before Esther goes in to intercede for the protection of her people she changes her garments. Is this a coincidence? No, in fact she changes from her regular clothes to her royal clothes.

Have you ever read in the Spirit of Prophecy where she says that Jesus is going to change from his priestly garments to his kingly garments before he returns? Many accuse Ellen White of making things like this up. She is not because she is drawing from the book of Esther.

The books of Hebrews and Revelation have Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary dressed as a high priest and officiating as high priest (See Rev. 1:13 as an example). In Revelation 19, speaking of Jesus' second coming, says he comes dressed as King of kings and Lord of lords. At some point Jesus must have changed his garments – it's the only conclusion. This happens at the close of probation when he is no longer the high priest.

(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 house, over against the king's house: and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the gate of the house.

She changes her clothes to royal garments and then calls the king to a banquet, and then to a second banquet. At this second banquet she reveals to the king the plot that Haman has made to destroy all of the Jews in the whole kingdom – an innocent people who keep the commandments of God and worship Him only.

THE WINE OF WRATH

Notice when the king wakes up – notice the terminology used.

(Esther 7:7) And the king arising from **the banquet of wine in his wrath...**

What kind of wine is this? It's not a wine of harmony (like before) but a wine of wrath.

Now the king wakes up and realizes what's going on. He realizes what Haman and his evil wife Zeresh were doing all along. But now notice what Haman does.

(Esther 7:7) 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 to Esther the queen;** for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king.



Sabbath School Lesson Notes – August 8, 2015

Haman is pleading with Esther to intercede for him - but there is no intercession. It must mean probation is closed for Haman.

The king and Haman were cooperating in this decree previously and were drinking the wine of harmony and agreement. But when Esther unmasks the plot to the king the wine is not a wine of agreement but now is a wine of wrath. And instead of the king using his weapons at God's people he's pointing them at Haman. The Bible says that Haman dies with the very same weapons he created to destroy God's people.

(Esther 7:10) So **they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai.**
Then was the king's wrath pacified.

And his family too

(Esther 9:25) But when Esther came before the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked device, which he devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head, and **that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.**

THE IRREVOCABLE DECREE

This death decree could not be reversed according to the laws of the Medes and Persians. There had to be a way this decree could be not done away with (because it couldn't) but overridden. The king gives a new decree that says the Jews could defend themselves. The Spirit of Prophecy says that when the day came to execute the death decree angels fought and protected God's people:

(Prophets and Kings, p. 602) On the day appointed for their destruction, "the Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, to lay hand on such as sought their hurt: and no man could withstand them; for the fear of them fell upon all people." **Angels that excel in strength had been commissioned by God to protect His people while they "stood for their lives."** Esther 9:2, 16

THE FEAST OF PURIM

The feast of Purim is basically similar to a Mardi Gras type of celebration. Lots of dancing, singing and they eat – they have a jolly good time to remember the day they were delivered from the plot to destroy them.



Sabbath School Lesson Notes – August 8, 2015

THE END TIME APPLICATION OF THE BOOK OF ESTHER AND THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

Will this story in Esther be repeated again? We have all read it in the Spirit of Prophecy but many/some accuse Ellen White of having a vivid imagination. But she is not making anything up. Ellen White is making her statements based upon the book of Esther. Her theology and concepts are based upon the book of Esther.

(Review and Herald, January 23, 1908, par. 20) The trying experiences that came to God's people in the days of Esther, were not peculiar to that age alone. The Revelator, looking down the ages to the close of time, declared by inspiration, "The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." **In the near future we shall see these words fulfilled**, as the Protestant churches unite with the world and with the papal power against commandment-keepers. The same spirit that actuated those who persecuted the true church in ages past, will lead Protestants to pursue a similar course toward those who will maintain their loyalty to God. **Church and state are now making preparations for the last great conflict.**

THE CHURCH IN BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY AND THE U.S.A.

The church spent 1260 years in spiritual Babylonian captivity. It's called the Dark Ages. But in 1798 Babylon received a deadly wound.

Around this same time the United States of America gave a written decree in its Constitution (as well as the Declaration of Independence) that every man could worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience.

The very power that gave this written decree of religious toleration after the spiritual Babylonian captivity of the church for 1260 years will be the same power that will remove those guarantees and will oppress God's people just like the Roman Church did during the Dark Ages.

THE "CHARACTERS"

Will all the "characters" be the same as in the story of Esther? The answer is absolutely.

THE CIVIL POWER

There will be civil rulers who will be deceived by the religious power and will pass oppressive civil laws against the faithful remnant just as it was done in the book of Esther.

(Revelation 17:12, 13) And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.
13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

A VILE WOMAN

Revelation 17 speaks of a great whore – a harlot woman who fornicates with the kings of the earth (the civil power).



Sabbath School Lesson Notes – August 8, 2015

A VILE MAN

Haman is a wicked man who is influenced by his evil wife and then goes to the king to get God's people destroyed.

THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE OF SATAN

There is a triple alliance against the Jews of Esther's day.

1. The king
2. The vile woman (Zeresh)
3. Haman

Elijah had a triple alliance against him too.

1. King Ahab
2. Jezebel the vile woman
3. The false prophets of Baal – they are an image of Jezebel and do her biddings.

John the Baptist also had a triple alliance against him.

1. King Herod
2. Herodias the vile woman (mother of Salome)
3. Salome her daughter who does her biddings

At the end of time there will be a triple alliance against the remnant

1. The kings of the earth
2. The great whore – the mother
3. The daughters of the whore – the false prophet

The false prophet is an image of the mother and does just like mother did in the past.

WORSHIP GOD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS

Just as it was in the times of Esther the issues in Revelation are over the commandments of God and worship.

God's people are always described as keeping the commandments of God (Rev. 12:17; 14:12).

The issue at the end of time is also over worship. Notice how many times the word worship is used in Revelation 13 alone.

(vs. 4) And they **worshipped** the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they **worshipped** the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

(vs. 8) And all that dwell upon the earth shall **worship** him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

(vs. 12) And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to **worship** the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.



Sabbath School Lesson Notes – August 8, 2015

(vs. 15) And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not **worship** the image of the beast should be killed.

Will we worship God or the Roman Catholic system? Will we keep God's commandments or will we keep the Roman Catholic Church's commandments? This is the issue.

This is why it is part of the first angel's message --- to worship God.

(Revelation 14:7) Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and **worship him** that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

The issues will be the same as in the days of Esther.

HAMAN'S WRATH

Just as Haman had tremendous wrath against God's commandment-keeping people the book of Revelation says the dragon is filled with wrath towards the true church.

(Revelation 12:17) And **the dragon was wroth with the woman**, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

THE SAME ARGUMENTS WILL BE USED

The arguments used against God's people will be the same as used in the book of Esther.

(The Great Controversy, p. 592) Those who honor the Bible Sabbath will be denounced as enemies of law and order...

This is the same thing Haman said to the king.

...as breaking down the moral restraints of society, causing anarchy and corruption, and calling down the judgments of God upon the earth. Their conscientious scruples will be pronounced obstinacy, stubbornness, and contempt of authority. They will be accused of disaffection toward the government. Ministers who deny the obligation of the divine law will present from the pulpit the duty of yielding obedience to the civil authorities as ordained of God. In legislative halls and courts of justice, commandment keepers will be misrepresented and condemned. A false coloring will be given to their words; the worst construction will be put upon their motives.

(Maranatha, p. 269) The letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day. Esther 3:13.

The decree that will finally go forth against the remnant people of God will be very similar to that issued by Ahasuerus against the Jews.



Sabbath School Lesson Notes – August 8, 2015

When the protection of human laws shall be withdrawn from those who honor the law of God, there will be, in different lands, a simultaneous movement for their destruction. As the time appointed in the decree draws near, the people will conspire to root out the hated sect. It will be determined to strike in one night a decisive blow, which shall utterly silence the voice of dissent and reproof.

The decree will go forth that they must disregard the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and honor the first day, or lose their lives; but they will not yield, and trample under their feet the Sabbath of the Lord, and honor an institution of papacy. Satan's host and wicked men will surround them, and exult over them, because there will seem to be no way of escape for them.

A DATE ON THE DEATH DECREE

Just as there was a date on the written decree in which, after that time, the Jews could be killed there will also be a date – a fixed time – in which the final remnant can be obliterated from the earth.

(The Great Controversy, p. 631) The heavenly sentinels, faithful to their trust, continue their watch. Though a **general decree has fixed the time when commandment keepers may be put to death**, their enemies will in some cases anticipate the decree, and before the time specified, will endeavor to take their lives.

(The Great Controversy, p. 635) When the protection of human laws shall be withdrawn from those who honor the law of God, there will be, in different lands, a simultaneous movement for their destruction. **As the time appointed in the decree draws near**, the people will conspire to root out the hated sect. **It will be determined to strike in one night a decisive blow**, which shall utterly silence the voice of dissent and reproof.

(Maranatha, p. 268 --- also Early Writings, p. 282) I saw the leading men of the earth consulting together, and Satan and his angels busy around them. **I saw a writing, copies of which were scattered in different parts of the land, giving orders that unless the saints should yield their peculiar faith, give up the Sabbath, and observe the first day of the week, the people were at liberty after a certain time to put them to death.**

Again – Ellen white is not making anything up. In fact Revelation 13:15 and Daniel 11:44 tell us of that death decree.

THE WINE OF AGREEMENT

Just like in the book of Esther - Revelation 17 speaks of the great whore giving her wine to the kings of the earth. We know they sit down with her and drink it because they all give their power to her (Rev. 17:12, 13).

Wine in scripture represents false doctrine. This is the wine of agreement. They all will agree that Sunday is the day to keep and they will also agree that the people who won't go along with it should be killed.



Sabbath School Lesson Notes – August 8, 2015

A TIME OF TROUBLE

There will be a terrible time of trouble just as there was for the Jews in the days of Esther.

(Daniel 12:1) And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: **and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time:** and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

The context of this verse is what is happening in the previous verses. The king of the north, a symbol for the Roman Papacy, is getting ready to execute the death decree on God's people. What happens "at that time"? Michael stands up and delivers his people.

Did Esther stand up and deliver her people at the time when Haman was coming in to tell the king about killing the Jews? Absolutely!

THE WORKS OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE JUDGMENT

Are God's people's actions (works) written in books just as Mordecai's deeds were written in a book? God's people will be mistreated and trampled upon – just like Mordecai and the Jews – God will open the books and God will say these individuals deserve to be treated as kings and as priests of God.

KNEELING AT THE SAINTS FEET

Just as Haman keeled at Mordecai when he was rewarded so will the enemies of God's people keel at their feet.

(Revelation 3:9) Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, **I will make them to come and worship before thy feet**, and to know that I have loved thee.

Some may be thinking this is the church of Philadelphia (which has past) and we are the church of Laodicea and this doesn't apply to us. It does apply to us. Notice what the next verse says as it gives us a hint that it applies to much more than the church of Philadelphia alone.

(vs. 10) Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from **the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world**, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

This is speaking of the time of trouble which comes upon ALL the world. Just before Jesus returns the church of Laodicea will become the church of Philadelphia once again. In other words they will have that brotherly love Philadelphia had for each other.



Sabbath School Lesson Notes – August 8, 2015

A CHANGE OF GARMENTS

Just as Esther did, Jesus will change His clothes to kingly garments.

(The Faith I Live By, p. 215) When Jesus rises up in the most holy place, **and lays off His mediatorial garments, and clothes Himself with the garments of vengeance in place of the priestly attire**, the work for sinners will be done.... The probation of all closes when the pleading for sinners is ended **and the garments of vengeance are put on**.

As we've seen Ellen White is not making anything up. She is not inventing anything as her critics will say. She is drawing upon the book of Esther for the background of her theology.

THE TABLES ARE TURNED

God is going to expose this coalition between church and state. How is he going to do it?

(Revelation 17:16, 17) And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

The kings that helped the great whore will all of a sudden hate her. It says they will burn her with fire – meaning kill her. In other words the very power that she fornicated with and used and manipulated to kill God's end-time remnant will turn on her and kill her. And the weapons that were to destroy God's people will destroy this apostate system.

(The Great Controversy, p. 655) The swords which were to slay God's people are now employed to destroy their enemies.

WHAT ABOUT US?

As we've seen the book of Esther is a prophetic book and it shows us what God's people will go through at the end of time. But what about us and our spiritual lives?

“Church and state are now making preparations for the last great conflict.”

The satanic powers, the triple alliance, are preparing - but are we? It appears that most of God's professed people are oblivious to not only what the Bible says but as to what is going on in the world. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is in serious trouble. But it doesn't have to be any of us.

The decision is ours: will we follow God or will we follow the Pope of Rome? The decisions we are making now are and will determine who we will follow at that time. Like Peter we think we will never deny Christ. We think we'll hang in there until the end and then walk right into the kingdom.

(1 Corinthians 10:12) Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.



Sabbath School Lesson Notes – August 8, 2015

(2 Corinthians 13:5) Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

It is one thing to look at the crisis from here but it's another thing to look at it from there. It's different to look at it and say this is what we're going to go through then to actually be going through it. We really don't realize what we will be up against. What is coming will demand a preparation far in advance of what we have today.

If we are depending on our friends, our money, the church itself, our families (even our spouses), if we are depending on anything except the Lord Jesus then what happens when we don't have family, friends, money, or even a church building to lean on? We won't have that and we won't have the Lord either. The Lord must be first in our lives. There is no time to wait. Just knowing these things in the Bible is not enough in of itself. Yes it is of the utmost importance to study like never before but we have to have a bond, a spiritual connection with the Lord that cannot be broken. In order to do this we must place all – and it must be all – on the altar of sacrifice.

(The Great Controversy, p. 622) Those who exercise but little faith now, are in the greatest danger of falling under the power of satanic delusions and the decree to compel the conscience. And even if they endure the test they will be plunged into deeper distress and anguish in the time of trouble, because they have never made it a habit to trust in God. The lessons of faith which they have neglected they will be forced to learn under a terrible pressure of discouragement. **We should now acquaint ourselves with God by proving His promises.**

A PROMISE OF GOD

A favorite promise of mine:

(Isaiah 43:2) When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.