

Prayer Letter 6

Excerpts from the book "Spiritual Warfare through Intercession" (chapter 10)

Esther – the Intercessor

[All references, unless otherwise stated, are to the book of Esther]

The book of Esther is, of course, a true historical account. However, there are also a number of spiritual lessons, especially in intercession, that we can learn from it. The five main characters in the book are spiritual examples as follows:

<u>PERSON</u>	<u>EXAMPLE OF</u>
King Ahasuerus	The Lord, God the Father
Queen Vashti	The Old Testament Israelites
Mordecai	Jesus Christ
Queen Esther	The Christian intercessor, or the Church
Haman	Satan

Any human, physical examples are, of course, only illustrations of spiritual truths. The parallels are not perfect, but they illustrate spiritual truth.

Background

King Ahasuerus displayed his glory before all his princes, servants, the army, nobles and governors (1:3-4). He is a type of the Lord of glory, ruling and reigning on High.

At this banquet he requested his wife Vashti to come and show off her beauty, but she refused (1:11-12). Vashti thus not only disgraced the king and rebelled against him, but also set such a bad example of rebellion that she had to be punished. So the king banished her from the kingdom.

Vashti is an example of the Old Testament Israelites who, because of disobedience and rebellion, were cut off from God (Romans 11). Israel was God's chosen race, to be His people, but her refusal led to her losing the place of privilege that could have been hers.

The Bride (the Church and the Christian family) is to be an example to the rest of the world; rebellion against the Lord cannot be tolerated (1:16-18).

The king instead chose another bride to be queen – Esther, a beautiful maiden, a type of the Christian intercessor. "She had neither father nor mother" (2:7) but had been brought up by her older cousin Mordecai who adopted her into his family. Mordecai is a type of Christ.

Esther pleased the king and won his favour (2:9, 17), and so the king prepared a wedding feast for his bride (2:18).

Mordecai heard of a plot to overthrow the king. He warned Esther, who in turn warned the king. As a result the plot was overthrown and the rebels were hung (2:21-23).

Haman, a type of Satan, was made chief over all the princes and leaders, but Mordecai refused to bow to him (3:5. Compare with Matthew 4:8-10). Hence Haman sought to destroy Mordecai and all his people (3:9). Cf. Satan on several occasions sought to destroy Jesus (at His birth, when the people wanted to stone Him, and push Him over a cliff, and on the Cross), and throughout history has sought to destroy the Church in many devious ways.

Some principles of intercession

On the 13th day of the twelfth month Haman sought to destroy all God's people. As a result, the people **mourned, fasted and wept** (4:3). How seriously do we take the attacks of Satan upon our nation and upon our own lives? Do we weep before God, with fasting and praying?

When Esther hesitated to intervene and intercede to the king for her people, Mordecai said: **“Do not think that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's house will perish. *Who knows whether you have not come to the Kingdom for such a time as this?*”** (4:13-14). What tremendous words for an intercessor: intercede or perish!

We are part of our nation, and we will suffer with it if we fail to intercede and win through to victory (cf. Matthew 5:45b and Jeremiah 29:7 “... in its welfare you will find your welfare”)

Esther and her people all fasted, and then she went in before the king, saying, “If I perish, I perish”, but the king held out his sceptre to her, inviting her into his presence with her petition (4:16-5:3; cf. Hebrews 4:14-16. See also Exodus 32:32 and Revelation 12:11).

The king rewarded Mordecai for informing him of the plot to kill him, and he honoured Mordecai more than Haman. Haman was furious, and prepared gallows on which to hang Mordecai (chapter 6).

Esther interceded for the lives of her people (7:3-4). The king, realising what Haman had done and planned, hangs him on the very gallows he had prepared for Mordecai

(7:10). Thus the defeat intended for Mordecai became the end of Haman! (Cf. When Jesus died on the Cross, Satan was defeated but Jesus was victorious!)

Esther again interceded for her people (8:3-6). The king could not revoke his edict, but instead prepared the Jews for warfare. Cf. Christ did not annihilate Satan on the Cross – He defeated him and gave us power and authority over him. But we still have to engage in spiritual warfare against him. We must stand against the enemy and be victorious over him (Ephesians 6:10-13).

Thus the Jews defeated their enemies, and all the sons of Haman were put to death (9:5-16). Victory was won and with great rejoicing the Jews celebrated the next day as a day of feasting, gladness and rest (9:19). When the victory is won (but not before!) we can rest in faith, knowing the battle is over. More battles will have to be faced in the future, but we can be victorious in each one.

Through all this Mordecai was honoured, and his people enjoyed peace and rest (10:2-3). See Hebrews 4:1-11.

Like Esther, we too are intercessors before the throne of grace. Christians, when they are in a right relationship with the Lord (that is, they find favour in His sight), are in a unique place of having His sceptre extended towards them; they come straight into the King's presence and their requests will be heard and answered. But this is both a **privilege** (seated with Him in kingly or heavenly places, Ephesians 1:18-23) and also a **responsibility** (fighting against the powers of darkness through intercession, Ephesians 6:10-18).

QUESTIONS

1. What does the book of Esther teach us about:
 - (a) When to fast?
 - (b) The place of privilege we have as Christians?
 - (c) The need to identify with the nation in which we live?
 - (d) Spiritual warfare?
2. What are some of the consequences of not interceding?
3. Why do so few Christians really spend much time in intercession?
4. What costs are involved in becoming a true intercessor?
5. In terms of spiritual warfare and the defeat of Satan, what did Jesus actually accomplish on the Cross? (See Colossians 2:13-15).
6. When do we enter into the place of rest and rejoicing?