

THE CASE OF QUEEN ESTHER: COINCIDENCE OR DIVINE PROVIDENCE?

Esther 4:14

Ed Dye

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The people involved in this most interesting story in Jewish history evidencing the non- miraculous providence of God.
 - a. Ahasuerus, the king.
 - (1) He reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over 127 provinces.
 - (2) He sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan.
 - b. Queen Vashti
 - (1) Who, when the king was merry with wine at the feast he had made in the 3rd year of his reign unto all the nobles and princes of the provinces, and had commanded her to be brought before the king with the crown royal, to show all the people her great beauty, refused to obey the king's command.
 - (2) Because she refused to do so was charged with doing wrong not only to the king but also to all the princes and to all the people in all the provinces of the king.
 - (3) Was also charged with setting a bad example which might result in the wives of the province failing to give honor to their husbands by following her example and failing to honor her's.
 - (4) As a result of her refusal, had her royal estate taken from her and given to another.
 - (5) Then the search was on for a replacement for Vashti.
 - c. Esther.
 - (1) She was a fair and beautiful young virgin, the orphan daughter of Mordecai's uncle, or Mordecai's cousin.
 - (2) Had been reared by Mordecai as his own daughter after the death of her parents.
 - (3) Was brought to the attention of the king as the possible replacement for Vashti as queen by Mordecai, who charged her not to reveal her Jewish identity.
 - (4) Was loved above all the others and obtained grace and favor in the king's sight more than all the other virgins; so he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti.
 - d. Mordecai.
 - (1) Was the great grand son of Kish, a Benjamite.
 - (2) Was among those carried away with Jeconiah, king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had carried away.

- (3) Had reared Esther as his own daughter after the death of her parents and was responsible for her being presented as a possible replacement for queen Vashti
- (4) Had uncovered a plot by two of the king's chamberlains to do the king harm, had told of this to queen Esther, who certified it to the king in Mordecai's name, which resulted in the two being hanged for their crime.
- (5) Incurred Haman's wrath by refusing to bow and do reverence to him as the king had commanded his servants to do as a means of honoring Haman, whom he had advanced and set above all the princes in his kingdom.

e. Haman.

- (1) Had been elevated to a position of authority in the kingdom over all the princes.
 - (2) Had been favored with a command from the king that all the king's citizens must bow before and reverence him.
 - (3) Because of Mordecai's refusal to do so Haman sought revenge, not simply by destroying Mordecai, but by a plot to destroy all the Jews, both men and women, young and old, throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus; in other words, all Jews were to be destroyed.
 - (4) Through misrepresentation of the Jews to the king, and the claim that it was not to the king's profit to suffer this people, plus through the pledge of blood-money (10,000 talents of silver) he would pay into the king's treasuries, he secured the king's agreement and the king's command to the people of the kingdom **“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 13th day of the 12th month, which is the month of Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey,”** which would be an unchangeable law according to “the law of the Medes and the Persians,” 3:13 (i.e., an unalterable law). Cf. Ch.1:19; 8:8; Dan.6:8-15.
2. If successful, this meant all the Jews would be wiped out, not even a remnant would be saved, no fleshly seed of Abraham would remain, none would return from Babylonian captivity as prophesied by Jeremiah.
 3. This would mean no Messiah, no Jesus Christ, the seed of Abraham, no Savior.
 4. But through the efforts of Queen Esther the Jews were saved from this destruction! Was it mere coincidence? Or, was it through Divine Providence that the Jews were saved and God's promises and prophecies protected from failure?
 5. In this case we do not have the benefit of statements like Joseph made to his brothers concerning God's providence in preserving the house of Jacob: Gen.45:5,7,8; 50:20. For God is not even mentioned in the book of Esther.

6. However, Est.4:14 suggests it's by divine providence. Let's look at the chain of events to see if the evidence will justify the claim that it was by divine providence.

II. DISCUSSION

A. WHAT MORDECAI DID WHEN HE LEARNED OF HAMAN'S PLOT TO EX-TERMINATE ALL THE JEWS.

1. He rent his clothes and mourned in sackcloth with ashes.
2. He went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud voice, and a bitter cry.
3. In every province of the kingdom there was great mourning among the Jews, in sack-cloth and ashes, with fasting, weeping, and wailing.
4. He, through one of Esther's chamberlains, was able to inform her of Haman's plot by sending her a copy of the writing of the decree.
5. At which time he charged her to go before the king and to make supplication for her people.
6. When Esther sent word to Mordecai that for one to do so without having first been called for by the king would mean death for that one, for their law so declared, **except the king shall hold out the golden scepter, that he may live.**
 - a. She further informed Mordecai with the words: "But I have not been called."
7. Upon being informed of Esther words, Mordecai commanded to answer Esther: 4:13,14 – emphasize each part of this order.
8. Esther's response: 4:15-17 – her sincere, unselfish, brave response!

B. WHAT ESTHER DID IN FULFILLING MORDECAI'S CHARGE ON BEHALF OF HER PEOPLE, THE JEWS.

1. Ch.5:1,2.
2. The king's response, 5:3.
3. Esther's request of the king, 5:4.
4. The king's acceptance, his question for and promise to Esther, 5:5,6.
5. Esther's response, 5:7,8.
6. Haman's reaction to this, 5:9-14.

C. THE EVENT THAT LED TO MORDECAI'S FORMER SERVICE TO THE KING FINALLY BEING ACKNOWLEDGED AND HONORED.

1. The king's sleepless night, and the reading of the book of records, 6:1.
2. What was discovered, 6:2,3.
3. The king's response to this and the decision he made, 6:4-6a.

4. Haman's decision to the king's request as to what should be done for such a man, not knowing, but thinking he knew who the man was, 6:6b-9.
5. To Haman's chagrin the king then identified Mordecai as the man to be so honored, 6:10-14.

D. FINALLY, ESTHER GAINED THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPOSE HAMAN WHO IS DENOUNCED AND HANGED, Ch.7.

1. Again, the king's question for and promise to Esther at the banquet she had prepared with both the king and Haman present, 7:1,2.
2. Esther's appeal to the king, 7:3,4.
3. The king's question in response and Esther's answer, 7:5,6.
4. Haman's plea for his life to Esther the queen for his fate, 7:7-10.

E. THE THREE REMAINING EVENTS IN THIS MATTER.

1. The manner in which the king's former unalterable decree to have the Jews destroyed was reversed with the Jews permitted to defend themselves, through the decree sent out by the authority of Mordecai instead of the king, but by the king's permission, Ch.8.
2. The assailants of the Jews, their enemies who sought to kill them in spite of the reversal of the king's former decree, were slain by the Jews, Ch.9.
3. Mordecai is made chief ruler in the kingdom, ruler next to king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, Ch.9.

F. NOW WE EXAMINE THE EVIDENCE EVENT BY EVENT IN THIS CHAIN OF EVENTS PROVING NON-MIRACULOUS DIVINE PROVIDENCE IN PREVENTING THE TOTAL SLAUGHTER OF THE JEWS IN BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY.

1. The decree sent out by Mordecai (Ch.8:7-14) was what averted the effects of the 1st decree sent out by the king (Ch.3) and saved the nation (Ch.8,9).
 - a. But how did Mordecai happen to be in a position to send out that decree?
 - b. Because the king extended the scepter to Esther the second time, 5:1-5. If he had not done that, the decree would not have been issued – could not have been!
 - c. And how did Mordecai happen to be the man given the opportunity to devise the plan and execute it that averted their destruction?
 - (1) He had saved the king's life and had been highly honored by him, 2:21-23; 6:1-11.
 - (2) When wicked Haman was slain Mordecai was put in his place, 8:1,2.
 - (3) Thus far all depended upon the circumstances that led to the king deciding to make Mordecai the successor of Haman.

- d. Was all this by accident? Simply coincidental? Or providential?
2. But on what did the fact that Mordecai was alive at that moment, so as to be made Prime Minister, depend?
 - a. It depended upon the fact that Haman arrived at the court that morning at the precise time that he did when he had gone there to have Mordecai hanged.
 - (1) He arrived just as the clerk had finished reading to the king about Mordecai saving the king's life, 6:1-5.
 - (2) If he had arrived 10 minutes earlier, the clerk would not have read that far in the book of records, and the king would have said, yes, go on and hang him – because the unalterable decree had already been signed to kill all the Jews!
 - b. Haman arrived a little too late to accomplish his purpose. How did that happen?
 - (1) Just an accident? Coincidence? Providence of God?
 - (2) How did it happen that the king that particular night, the night before Haman was coming to seek permission to have Mordecai hung, heard the story read about Mordecai, which resulted in saving his life?
 - (3) The king couldn't sleep, so had commanded the book of records of the chronicles to read to him, which among other things contained the record of Mordecai exposing the plot which saved the king's life, 6:1,2.
 - (4) But why couldn't the king sleep? Who knows? Why did he want to have the book of records read to him on that particular night? Who knows?
 - (a) Accident? Coincidence? Providence? When all those tremendous consequences were hanging upon it?
3. In the next place, how did it happen that the king had not already remembered Mordecai and already honored him for his life-saving deed? Surely the king would not so easily forget such a good deed!
 - a. We don't know. Accident? Coincidence? Providence?
4. Let us trace the causes in this long chain of events a little further back in time.
 - a. How did it happen that there was a young Jewess queen of all the realm at that time, who, just happened to be in a position to have the power to so influence the king, who had signed that non-reversible decree, and who managed to skillfully expose wicked Haman and bring down the wrath of the king upon him, which finally resulted in saving the Jews from destruction?
 - b. How did it happen that she was queen?
 - (1) Her predecessor, queen Vashti, had refused the king's order to come before the king, the people and the princes, and put herself on public display to show off her great beauty, Ch.1.
 - (2) She would not subject herself to such immodesty. Good for her!
 - (3) She was banished from the throne and the palace as a result of her refusal.

- (4) When the king sought her replacement from among the beautiful young virgins of the provinces, Mordecai for some reason saw an opportunity to serve his people and presented Esther, a Jewess, as a possible replacement who was selected and crowned.
- (5) If Mordecai had not, for whatever reason, seized the opportunity, Esther would never have been in a position to be queen.
- (6) And if Vashti had not been as true to herself as she was, and had been willing to compromise to maintain her place as queen, there would have been no chance for Mordecai to send Esther to the king. Thank God for her
- (7) Moreover, if Esther had not won the favor of the king, she would never have been queen.
- (8) Then, there would have been no one of Jewish lineage in position of power to influence the king, expose Haman and save the Jews.
- (9) So all the facts that serve as links in this chain of events delivering the Jews from Haman's plot to destroy them, depended, at last, upon the fidelity of queen Vashti to her great sense of womanly modesty.
- (10) Accident? Coincidence? Providence?
 - c. Finally, it all came down to and depended upon this young, beautiful, Jewish virgin's willingness to be put in a possible position to be chosen as queen, and, then, ultimately upon her willingness to risk her own life to save her people, 4:16b.

III. CONCLUSION

1. Read Ch.4:10-14. Cf. Philemon 15,16: "For perhaps (for this cause) he (Onesimus) therefore departed for a season, that thou (Philemon) shouldest receive him forever; not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?"
2. All the circumstances involved in this case, good and bad, interlocking, made a chain by which the final result was brought about, and the nation saved; God is once again proven to be not slack concerning his promises; his prophets are upheld to be true and accurate as true prophets of God always have been.
3. Did God have anything to do with the case of Esther? What do you think? How can it be explained as mere chance, accident, coincidence?
4. Though not miraculous, providential, never-the-less, is my conclusion!