

Esther: God's Faithful, Providential Care

The Feast of Purim

Esther 9:20-10:3

What a relief!

The Jews faithfully keep the 14th and 15th days of Adar “as the days on which [they] got *relief* from their enemies.” Do you know what that feels like, to get **relief** from your enemy? Remember with me the great day your Great Savior gave you great relief from your great enemy, _____—both physical and spiritual. **What a relief!**

A tribute to Beulah's Savior... What a relief! Jesus saved Russell and Beulah from the great enemy, death! They fully realized the words of their Savior when He said in John 11, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, even though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die” (25-26).

The question of the day is, do you know what that feels like, **to get relief through deliverance**? *There are actually three types of deliverances that result in great relief.*

One, deliverance from physical death. When you thought you were going to die, or should've died, but didn't. And **relief** is the result.

Two, deliverance from _____ death. You were dead in your trespasses and sins, **but God**, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved you, made you alive *in Christ, by Christ, and with Christ*. The result is **eternal relief!**

Three, deliverance from the deadening _____ of sin. If you're saved, but don't know deliverance from the power of sin in your life, then you know sin's power to deaden your spiritual, emotional, and mental state, which robs you of the abiding joy and peace of God. Do you know the relief from the power of sin through progressively _____ in holiness? If you do, then **what a relief!** And what joy and peace!

We have opened **Esther** to the last page. Previously, in these inspired pages, we have seen God's covenant people go from **great grief to great relief**. Today the perpetual relief-feast is inaugurated. Even to this day, Jewish people throughout the world keep this feast as **a remembrance and celebration** that God will not allow them to be exterminated.

The Jews relief through providential deliverance:

1. The _____ (20-22).

Remember when you were born again? On our birthdays, it's our custom to receive gifts. Perhaps on our born-again-birth-days, we should give to those in need. That's what they did and still do on Purim, to *remind* them what they received from the Lord when they desperately needed it.

We, also, need a good memory, because it's so easy for the sacred to turn secular; for obligation to become "I have to," instead of "I love to"; for responsibility to become routine, going through the motions instead of "O, Lord, thank You for saving us!" When my brother was delivered from an enslaving sin-habit, he would often glory in what kept him from falling backward, declaring, "God gave me a _____! I **remember** what God delivered me *from* and what He delivered me *to*."

The phrase in verse 22, "the days on which the Jews **got relief** from their enemies," could be rendered: "The day on which they **rid themselves** of their enemies"—the enemy-ridding days! Or, "The days they **got** _____ from their enemies." The days everything **turned** their way—"the month that had been turned *from sorrow into gladness* and *from mourning into a holi-day*." God gave them a memory. How about you? Remember the **rest** you knew when God got **rid** of your enemies? Remember the spiritual, emotion, mental **relief**? *We can go back, and remember, because God in His grace gave us a memory!*

2. The _____ (23-28).

The "pur" became the symbol of God sovereignly using what was meant for evil to be used for good, to deliver His people from their sworn enemy, Haman. Starting with Haman employing the "pur," the Jews could tell **their story of sovereign relief and redemption**.

In like manner, the terrible instrument called the _____ became the symbol of God sovereignly using what was meant for evil for our everlasting good. Satan uses his unholy instruments of sin and death to gobble up people alive. But starting with the cross, we Christians can tell and retell **our own story of sovereign relief and redemption**.

3. The _____ (29-32).

The law for the Jews to practice Purim was made into an irreversible law of the pagan Medes and Persians, recorded indelibly in writing. And even more significant, **the Book of Esther** made it into the Holy-Spirit-inspired Hebrew Scriptures—it's a perpetual law of Esther, Mordecai, Persia, *and of God*. It won't go away!

Don't you suppose that after Hitler's Holocaust, Purim has broadened its significance to remember God's faithful, providential care to preserve His people during Holocaust as well as at all other times. One Jewish liturgy states, "In every generation, [enemies] rise up to destroy us, but the Holy One, blessed be He, [for He] _____ delivers us from their hands." We can relate to that. We have a great enemy: Satan, who attempts to use his weapons of sin and death to destroy our testimonies and our lives. But Satan won't win—even if we die, he won't win. So we have **this law** within that's indelibly written on our hearts, that the days of our deliverance will be perpetually celebrated!

4. The _____ (10:1-3).

What a massive difference a godly, competent leader _____! And that's the point of **Chapter 10**. God continued to providentially use Mordecai to bless God's covenant people and to **reverse** the entire attitude and atmosphere of the Persian empire! He was the exact opposite of Haman. Mordecai sought only the welfare and peace of all the people groups, especially God's people group, the Jewish community.

It's stunning to think of all **the reversals** God worked through His servant on behalf of His people: the welfare, the peace, the prosperity, the security, the healthy communities, and the good relationships between ethnic people groups. In a sense, Mordecai is a type of Christ. He's a faint _____ of the Prince of Peace who brought to all who have believed in Him spiritual peace and joy. *You remember, right? Because God has given you a memory. And you're working that memory today!*

For those of us who have found deliverance through Jesus Christ, **what a relief** to know in the core of our being the peace of God that surpasses all comprehension—**relief** from the now vain threats of Satan's great ally and our great enemy, death.

Do you know great relief?

If Jesus has saved you, you *should* have **great relief** from the fear and threat of physical death. O physical death, where is your victory? Where is your sting? For you have been swallowed up in victory (1 Cor. 15:55).

But what if you're saved, and therefore have peace *with* God, but not the peace _____ God. You don't know deliverance from the power of sin in your life. In that case, what you know is sin's power to deaden your spiritual, emotional, and mental state, which robs you of God's abiding peace and joy, and further robs you from progressively growing in holiness. If that's you, then allow God to use this final word from **Esther** to press you toward finding it in Christ through repentance.

One final word to those who don't know deliverance from spiritual death. You are still dead in your trespasses and sins. **But God**, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved you, will make you alive *in* Christ, *by* Christ, and *with* Christ. **The result will be eternal relief!** If you know only spiritual deadness today, turn to Jesus. Simply by faith ask Jesus to save your soul from sin. Do that, and you will know **great relief**, and we will greatly celebrate with you!