

The Mordecai Theory

Living Behind Enemy Lines

Introduction

Happy Sabbath everyone, I would first like to welcome you all here on my favorite day of the week. What a blessing it is to come together and worship the Lord. Before we begin today, I would just like to see a show of hands, who here lives on earth? Your regular place of residence is this planet, from week to week you can typically be found somewhere between the north and the south pole, can I see your hands?

Now can I also see a show of hands for those of you not planning on being lost a show of hands of the people who follow Jesus and accept his free gift of salvation.

If you just responded in the affirmative to both of those questions, today's message is for you. The title of which is "The Mordecai Theory: Living Behind Enemy Lines"

As Christians we believe that this world is not our home, we are just passing through. We are sojourners, travelers longing for our real home in peace and eternal safety with Jesus.

If that is the case what do we make of this world as it is today? It is enemy occupied territory my friends, enemy occupied territory, we are in a hostile place, what we believe, is an affront, it is offensive to the world around us today, through the example set by a Jew called Mordecai we are going to better understand how to live here, behind enemy lines until we rest in the kingdom of God.

Please join me in prayer before we Begin—

Background

Mordecai lived in Susa, the capital of the Persian kingdom at that time, during the reign of king Ahasuerus who is also known as king Xerxes, the reason he is not in Jerusalem, in the Jewish homeland of Palestine is the fact that years prior, his family, along with many other Jews were taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian ruler. The Babylonian empire was later taken over by the Medo-Persian empire. Thus, by Mordecai's time he was living under Persian rule.

His uncle and aunt had passed away years before, leaving his young cousin Esther an orphan, having a good heart, Mordecai took Esther as his own child and brought her up, there in Susa.

We pick up our story when Xerxes the king dethrones Vashti, his queen, because she refused to come before him at a royal banquet, publicly defying his command. His servants then suggest that another queen be installed, so they sought out all the beautiful young women (of which Esther was one) and essentially created a shortlist for the king to choose from.

Open your Bible's with me to the book of Esther, you will find that in the Old Testament right after Nehemiah and just before Job and Psalms, the book of Esther chapter 2 and verse 17

And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti.

Now, before you get the wrong idea, Mordecai did not have special privileges thanks to his connection with Esther, on the contrary, he charged her not to tell anyone of her heritage.

The Jewish faith was quite different to the religion of the Persians and as you could imagine, things that are different often create ugly prejudice on behalf of the majority.

That sets the scene for our message today; "The Mordecai Theory: Living Behind Enemy Lines" our message today is going to consist of 4 parts, how many parts? Four. Good.

The first of which is [slide]

Wait Diligently

Whilst we are on this world, waiting to be rescued from behind enemy lines, it is important for us to be diligent and upright just like Mordecai was. Doing what is right, because it is right and not for personal gain. As we are instructed in Galatians 6:9

And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

This is a classic teaching of you will reap what you sow but there is a modifier at the end, an "if" statement . If we do not what? Lose heart the Greek behind loose heart is eklu'o may which means to not loosen or relax our position. Do good, yes, but hold on do not be disheartened and let go of what you know to be right.

Look with me at what Mordecai did just a few verses further in Esther 2:21-23

21 In those days, while Mordecai sat within the king's gate, two of the king's eunuchs, Bigthan and Teresh, doorkeepers, became furious and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. 22 So the matter became known to Mordecai, who told Queen Esther, and Esther informed the king in Mordecai's name. 23 And when an inquiry was made into the matter, it was confirmed, and both were hanged on a gallows; and it was written in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king.

Surely it would have been more convenient to act as if he heard nothing. After all, Mordecai was not the king's bodyguard, surely they would thwart any such plot before it was carried out... But no, Mordecai did not think that way, he followed God's plans and not his own.

As we will see later in the story, this action on the part of Mordecai was essential to God's plans being worked out. It is like when you play a game of chess, and you are waiting for that opportunity that one lapse of judgement moving the queen away from the king and then you can put your master plan into action.

Satan may well have motivated the actions of Bigthan and Teresh, but in that lapse of judgement God saw to it that a crucial event in this story took place.

It is easy to go through life with blinkers on, just living out mediocrity and not getting to involved in the world around you, but if you plan to make it out alive from behind enemy lines, we need to wait diligently, doing right whenever the opportunity presents itself.

Point two.

Do not Compromise

There are important matters on which God's people should never compromise. Mordecai understood this fact, not only that, but we have to be prepared for the fact there will be **consequences for our decisions**. Let us read on, starting in chapter 3 and verse 1.

After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him and set his seat above all the princes who were with him. 2 And all the king's servants who were within the king's gate bowed and paid homage to Haman, for so the king had commanded concerning him. But Mordecai would not bow or pay homage. 3 Then the king's servants who were within the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why do you transgress the king's command?" 4 Now it happened, when they spoke to him daily and he would not listen to them, that they told it to Haman, to see whether Mordecai's words would stand; for Mordecai had told them that he was a Jew. 5 When Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow or pay him homage, Haman was filled with wrath. 6 But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone, for they had told him of the people of Mordecai. Instead, Haman sought to destroy all the Jews who were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus—the people of Mordecai.

So, here we have Mordecai who is convicted that he should bow before nobody but God, commanded to go against that and pay homage to Haman, those around him encouraged him to conform to the command but Mordecai not only refused the request, but refused to even listen to them, he made no secret of the fact he himself was a Jew and he would not bow.

When word got back to Haman he was clearly enraged, so much so that he sought not only the destruction of Mordecai but the whole Jewish nation. These are the consequences I was referring to.

If you want to follow God it is rare, actually no, make that impossible to do it without at least some unpleasant results.

I remember I lost my first job because of the Sabbath. Like Mordecai I was and am convicted that God means what he says. Amen? So after working at this shop for a couple of years the manager was leaving to start his own business so he began training me to do his job I was the eager learner and was at the time casual but very much wanted to be on full time, then to my and everyone else's surprise, the owners installed a new manager and told me that they would make me permanent but there was a catch...I had to work Saturdays, I reflexively said no, and explained why.

My boss refused to take my answer and asked me to think it over for the week, I told him that was unnecessary but he insisted so I left. My colleagues told me I was crazy and I should just take the offer, that I would never get anywhere in life with the mindset that I had etc.

I returned a week later, my boss asked "so, what is your decision", I said "same as it was when I told you I didn't need a week to think about it." He told me I would then be training my replacement. And eventually they would have to let me go. The life of a Christian is never without consequences, but it is never without a Saviour either. Within a week, praise the Lord I had another job to walk into.

Mordecai, clearly was in deeper trouble than I was, but his resolve was strong, and built on the same principle of not compromising when it comes to the word of God.

What can we base this on? Why is it important to act on our convictions rather than let it pass "just this once" Well there are many places in scripture where the Bible teaches that we cannot afford to compromise, because it leads us down a very steep and slippery slope. Once we know the truth, it is our responsibility to act on it. Come with me briefly to the book of Hebrews chapter 10 and verse 26

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins

In other words, Jesus died to save us from our sins if we come to that knowledge and then discover that Jesus prohibits adultery and calls it a sin, if we disregard that and continue to commit adultery, the Bible says there is no longer a sacrifice for your sins because you are choosing to walk away from the grace and power that is available through Jesus Christ.

Though the book of Hebrews was not written at the time of Mordecai the same rule applied and Mordecai knew it, he knew what was right and did not compromise even when it was not convenient to do so.

Point three.

Let the Spirit use You

The story now starts to take shape, Haman goes to the king and says hey, there is this group of people scattered through your kingdom and to be honest, they are a security risk they have their own laws and disregard yours we are really left with no choice but to get rid of them, give me your approval and I'll sort out the details.

The king trusted Haman as he was the chief of the princes second only to the king, thus he felt no need to question his counsel on the topic. So He approved the execution of the Jews, including Mordecai.

Haman wasted no time in dispatching riders to carry the orders to the whole empire that in a few months time, on the 13th day of the month Adar the Jews were to be annihilated.

As they were living in the capital, Susa, Mordecai was among the first to hear the news. Let's look at the first thing he did. Esther 4:1

When Mordecai learned all that had happened, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city. He cried out with a loud and bitter cry.

I don't know about you but if that was me... I think my first plan would involve going down to the local market buying some very Persian clothes, getting rid of anything the was even

Written by: Luke Farrugia – www.lukefarrugia.com.au

remotely Jewish try to blend in until I could catch the next caravan out of the Persian empire, but not Mordecai, the first thing he does is identify himself with the people of God and mourn of their plight before The father in heaven.

It is easy to be identified with God's people when it is fashionable or somehow trendy, It is another thing entirely to do so when that very action means the difference between life and death.

Mordecai was allowing the spirit to use him. He was not running he was putting his life on the line to help the children of God in this hour of need.

Queen Esther, did not know of the decree at this time but Mordecai's mourning was made known to her and when she enquired of him, he sent word to her about the conspiracy. And asked her to help by personally petitioning the king. She declined as it was against the law for her to go before the king un-called for. And in his final communication to her for some time he makes a prophetic, faith-filled statement, which will blow your mind. Chapter 4 and verse 12

So they told Mordecai Esther's words. 13 And Mordecai told them to answer Esther: "Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. 14 For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

What a bombshell, can you imagine being in Esther's position? Mordecai gives her two options;

- 1: Step into the hand of God and live or
- 2: Try to save yourself and die.

Was Mordecai letting the Holy spirit use him? Most definitely. He has been in heart rending sorrow, seeking God for the solution and God points to the young woman whom Mordecai raised who is now the queen, as his instrument of choice. Mordecai then goes to work to set the instrument in motion and when she refuses, he delivers the tough truth, you can choose to remain silent and that is ok, God will raise up another method of deliverance, but you will perish

There is a lesson here for us...

Tell me, did God need Esther to save the people? No

Then why did he use her?

God uses his people for His own Purposes but for their own good, because he loves us, he bestows upon us the honor of being a co-laborer not because God is incapable but out of love for us.

The message that Mordecai gives Esther is the same we are given today. We are invited to be partakers with him to accomplish our part in this epic story while we are behind

enemy lines. Like Esther, we do not have to take part. If we choose not to, the story will be finished by another, but we will be lost, that is as true for you and I as it was for Esther.

Hopefully we will make the same choice that Esther made. After receiving that message she sent word back to Mordecai to gather the church together to fast and pray three days, and she would do the same with her small group in the palace, then go before the king.

There is just one more thing for us to do, or maybe that should be one more thing for us to *not* do.

Point four.

Leave it with God

This is The final responsibility we have. We do what the spirit tells us to, then we wait for the deliverance. We need to have faith that since we have done the will of God we can leave the consequences to him.

Mordecai prayed, fasted and waited on the Lord. In the mean time, Haman had set up a gallows to hang Mordecai and went to the king for permission to hang him.

Haman had one major problem he was not aware of. the night before. (you can read about it In Esther chapter 6.)

The king couldn't sleep at all, he was troubled, so he called someone in to read the chronicles to him, surely hoping they would be boring enough to put anyone to sleep, God, however, had other plans.

The story that was recounted to him was the conspiracy against him by Bigthan and Teresh which was foiled by the testimony of one Mordecai the Jew. The king's sense of justice was aroused... Has anything been done to honor this man who saved my life? His attendants had no choice but to say "no my king, nothing has been done for him"

Highly motivated to rectify this, the king sought counsel on how best to honor this man, it turned out that Haman was in his office so the king called his right hand man in to get this matter straight.

Haman came in basically brimming with joy as this was going to be the day, when at long last he would be rid of Mordecai but the king had business to attend to first.

The King asked Haman, "If the king wanted to honor somebody, what would he do?" Haman, never a most humble man, thought the king was referring to him, so he really laid it on thick, well first you want to give him one of your own royal robes, and one of the finest horses bearing the royal crest have them delivered by one of the most noble of your princes and have the prince parade the man on horseback through the city square proclaiming that this is what happens to man in which the king delights to honor!

Haman was thoroughly pleased with himself, not only was today the day he would be rid of Mordecai it was the day the king was going to bestow these great honors upon him.

The king was impressed, this is obviously why I pay you such a great salary package, you are really an ideas man. Excellent, here, take the robe, the horse and do everything you have said for Mordecai the jew who sits within the kings gate!

I have said it before, and I will say it again, humble yourself. Do not wait for God to humble you, because as Haman discovered, it ALWAYS hurts.

Can you imagine the utter confusion on the face of Haman, in that one statement the king had unknowing stopped the assassination, honored the very man who was the target, and totally humiliated the one who was the instigator. This is none other than God's providential care for his people.

And what made it possible? Point 1 wait diligently. Mordecai did not have to report what he heard, and he didn't know it at the time but his life would eventually depend on it. We should remember that when we are tempted to reject our conscience, one day our life may depend on that choice we are about to make.

Things are unraveling faster now because Esther, over lunch with Haman and the king reveals her true identity and heritage and petitions the king for mercy, let us read the closing verses of chapter 7, from verse 5

So King Ahasuerus answered and said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who would dare presume in his heart to do such a thing?"

6 And Esther said, "The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman!"

So Haman was terrified before the king and queen.

7 Then the king arose in his wrath from the banquet of wine and went into the palace garden; but Haman stood before Queen Esther, pleading for his life, for he saw that evil was determined against him by the king. 8 When the king returned from the palace garden to the place of the banquet of wine, Haman had fallen across the couch where Esther was. Then the king said, "Will he also assault the queen while I am in the house?"

As the word left the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. 9 Now Harbonah, one of the eunuchs, said to the king, "Look! The gallows, fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai, who spoke good on the king's behalf, is standing at the house of Haman."

Then the king said, "Hang him on it!"

10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai.

Then the king's wrath subsided.

The final irony in the life of Haman the Agagite was the fact he was hung on the same gallows that was meant for Mordecai.

That day, God accomplished the salvation of his people, and not only that, the exultation of his faithful child Mordecai, who did the Lord's will and awaited deliverance. The final chapter of the book of Esther records the ascent of Mordecai to the office of prime minister of the Persian empire.

His Fame went all over the country. but none of it would have been possible if he was not faithful while behind enemy lines, we saw the four qualities he demonstrated... He:

- Waited Diligently
- Did not compromise
- Let the Spirit use him
- Then he Left it with God.

Written by: Luke Farrugia – www.lukefarrugia.com.au

We need the exact same qualities today if we plan to get out alive from behind enemy lines. This applies to every person here today.

Conclusion

Before we close today. I feel that it is my duty to point out one final, beautiful feature of this story.

If you think this historic record is powerful and a wonderful story of mercy, love and justice. It is. But it is not the only one... It points to the great controversy.

Esther was a type of the church, and Mordecai a type of Christ, What part did Haman play? Satan.

Satan worked hard to kill Christ, he tried every trick in the book until he found one that worked.

The tree on which Satan planned to kill Jesus, like Haman's gallows, ended up being the final nail in his own coffin, sealing his fate as the defeated general of the demonic host after which Jesus, like Mordecai ascended to receive a kingdom.

Satan is defeated, the tide has turned and victory is sure, it just takes time for all the occupied territories to be liberated.

Haman himself is long gone, but the power and person that actuated his hate is still very much alive. Like Haman did, satan is "Going around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." this should be no surprise to anyone who has ever seen the news.

Mordecai is also long gone, but Jesus is still there, showing us the way of escape to the homeland, one step at a time, just as Mordecai encouraged Esther.

Esther is no longer with us but the Church is. As believers we are greatly beloved, and just like Esther trusted Mordecai, we should trust our Saviour, Jesus.

Jesus is our great example, so the Mordecai theory that we started with, is really the Jesus reality. He was our ultimate example and all scripture points to it. Even Mordecai in the book of Esther.

Appeal

If you want to submit yourself to the Jesus reality and follow his example while we live behind enemy lines please stand with me now as we pray.