

# MORDECAI'S PLAN & ESTHER'S PROBLEM

## Esther 4: We need to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of spirit... to be holy!

**Theme:** Understand that the battle for true spirituality will begin with things that are wrong in your spirit.

**(Est 3.15) In chapter 3, we left King Ahasuerus out with Haman, relaxing and having a drink.**

- Ahasuerus, much like many Christians, is totally oblivious to the mess his decision has made.
- He gave Haman power and provision to do as he likes wherever he likes in the whole kingdom. And Haman wasted no time in putting his desires into a new law, a law of “sin and death”: *Kill all the Jews*.

**So, the first order of business to get this situation rectified is to open the king's eyes.**

- Ahasuerus needs to see Haman for what he really is: The enemy of all that is good in his life and kingdom.
- And Mordecai has a plan to do just that. But... he can't do it by himself. He has to do it through Esther because Esther has direct access to the king (Mordecai doesn't).
- And so all of Esther chapter 4 deals with communication between Mordecai and Esther, as Mordecai exerts his influence on Esther to move her to do his will and bidding (to go into the king and talk to him).

**What does all of this have to do with us? Well... it shows us the beginning of our spiritual victory...**

- Remember: Ahasuerus is a picture of us (our souls) and in chapter 3 we saw the bad decision made to follow Haman, a picture of the flesh (our old man).
- In chapter 4 we see an immediate response by Mordecai to this decision to satisfy the lusts and desires of Haman: (v1) Mordecai is grieved! ...and he is a picture of the Holy Spirit: **Ephesians 4.30** (grieved when we follow the desires of the flesh).
- So, Mordecai puts together a plan and puts that plan into action. But, he has to deal with one small obstacle first: (v10-12) The selfish (self-centered, self-preserving) bad attitudes in Esther.
  - ✓ (v16) Esther needs to be led to the point of separating herself from her desires and placing herself in the center of Mordecai's will, even if that leads to her discomfort... even if that means her death.
  - ✓ (2Cor 7.1) And if we hope to perfect holiness (separating from sin and self to God and His will), then we need to deal with filthiness... of the flesh (obviously! Haman!), but also of the spirit (Esther).
  - ✓ And that is what we are going to talk about in Esther chapter 4.... And that means we need to spend some time studying what the Scripture says about our spirit...

### **I. In Esther 4, Mordecai Responds Immediately**

#### **A. (v1) The king's decision (and Haman's decree) affects Mordecai immediately.**

1. As I just mentioned (and we need to keep this in mind), Mordecai's response to Haman's decree is a picture of the Holy Spirit's response to our decisions to satisfy the desires of the flesh.
  - (Eph 4.30) We grieve the Holy Spirit immediately when we follow Haman, the old man.
2. (v4a) And when the Holy Spirit (Mordecai) is grieved, the first thing that's affected in us is our spirit (pictured in Esther).

#### **B. Mordecai's grief is quickly communicated to Esther (she knows about it quickly!).**

1. (1Cor 6.17) When we were born again, our spirits were joined with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes to “live and dwell in us”—he lives and dwells in our spirits; they become one.
2. (Rom 8.16) Because of that, just like Mordecai communicates to Esther, the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirits.
3. So, as we study Esther 4, we need to keep this in mind: Esther pictures our new regenerated spirit...

## II. In Esther 4, Esther Pictures Our New Spirit

- A. If you read through Esther 4, you will notice someone who is *missing* from the interaction: *Ahasuerus*.
- Ahasuerus has no idea what is going on between Mordecai and Esther in this chapter.
- B. This is a picture of an immature (carnal) believer: Something is happening in his spirit but he (the soul, pictured in Ahasuerus), because he is following the flesh (Est 3.15b), has no idea what's going on.
- C. And we need to keep this in mind as we study Esther 4 because it implies something very important:
1. Esther 4 deals with Mordecai and Esther, *not* with king Ahasuerus.
  2. In picture and type: Esther 4 deals with our *spirit*, not with our soul (that comes later in Esther).
    - a) In Esther 4 we see *problems* that have to do with our spirit, Esther: (v10-13) Certain attitudes and values (priorities) that are not correct.
    - b) We also see in this chapter the *solution* to these problems: (v16b) Consecration and sanctification.
- D. And that would lead us to the next point of study (a key topic for this morning's message)...

## III. In Esther 4, We Need to Understand Our Three-Part Being

- A. (1Thes 5.23) **The Bible is very clear that man is a tri-part being (because he was made after the image God, who is a Trinity): Man is spirit, soul, and body.**
- B. (Luke 16.19-31) **The story of Lazarus and the rich man helps us to differentiate these three parts.**
1. The Body: (Luke 16.19-22) When a person dies, his body is buried—it's buried in the ground.
  2. The Spirit: In the Old Testament, when a man died, his spirit would return to God who gave it.
    - a) (Eccl 12.7) Dust returns to dust (the body returns to the earth) and the spirit returns to God.
    - b) (Eccl 3.21) That's why the Bible says the spirit of man “goeth upward” (returns to God).
  3. The Soul: The part that is left, then, is the soul.
    - a) (Luke 16.22-31) And that is the part of man that will either go to heaven or hell.
    - b) This is the “you” (the person) inside your body.
      - (1) (Luke 16.23) Your soul has “eyes”; it has the capacity to see and perceive.
      - (2) (Luke 16.23) Your soul has tactile feelings; it has the capacity to feel pain and torment.
      - (3) (Luke 16.23) Your soul has the capacity to remember and recognize things and people. The rich man saw Abraham and Lazarus—he remembered Lazarus and recognized Abraham.
      - (4) (Luke 16.24) Your soul has a voice; it has the capacity to speak and communicate.
      - (5) (Luke 16.24) Your soul has a tongue; it can be thirsty.
      - (6) (Luke 16.25-28) Your soul has emotions; it can feel regret, worry, anxiety, compassion.
      - (7) (Rev 6.9-11; 20.4) Your soul has the shape of a human body, and it can wear clothes.
    - c) Your soul, then, is “you” inside your body; your soul is like a “spiritual body” inside your body of flesh.
- C. **So now let's apply that understanding of man being a “tri-part being” to our salvation.**
1. (Titus 3.5) God *saved* us (*past* tense; in the moment we converted to Christ) in our *spirits*. We are born again *spiritually*; the Holy Spirit comes in to dwell in our *spirits* (we are “one spirit”).
    - (Rom 8.10) At conversion, God saved us spiritually, not physically. The body is still dead.
  2. (Rom 13.11) The *future* aspect of our salvation (God *will save us*) refers to the salvation of our bodies in the rapture of the Church.
    - a) (Phil 1.6) This is the day God completes the work He started in us when He saved us spiritually.

- b) (Phil 3.20-21) This is the day He gives us our “saved” and “living” glorified bodies.
  - c) And this reminds us of our eternal security: Even though the work is not finished yet, there is no doubt that it will be finished one day. God promised it, and God cannot lie.
  - d) So, we were saved spiritually (in our spirits) and we will be saved physically (our bodies). What part of our three-part being is left...?
3. God is currently (now, today, while we are alive, between our salvation and the rapture) “saving” (present tense) our souls. What does that mean...?
- a) First, that means our souls are a “work in progress” (i.e., we, the people inside these bodies... our character, personalities, attitudes, decisions... we are not as we should be yet).
  - b) (Rom 8.29) God is still conforming us to the image of His Son, Jesus Christ.
  - c) (Gal 4.19) God is still forming Christ in us (making us like Christ, in our souls).
  - d) (Jam 1.21) And that is why we put such an emphasis on learning and doing the Word of God.
    - You must “engraft / implant” that Word in your mind, heart, and life if you want to grow (if you want to see the salvation you have in your spirit worked out in your soul).
  - e) Your spirit was saved; your body will be saved; and your soul is being saved.
4. But, there's a problem here: All of this is a generalization that helps us understand the biblical concept of the three parts of man. But it's just a generalization. There's more to it than this...

#### **D. The spirit of man is more than just a “life force.”**

1. This is the part that is difficult to grasp, and therefore something that many often misunderstand.
  - a) There are a lot of people that teach that the spirit of man is just some sort of “life force” given by God that makes man alive.
  - b) Yes, it is this... but it also a whole lot more... it's a lot like the soul in many aspects...
2. Look what Scripture says the spirit of man can do (things we often only attribute to the soul).
  - a) (Rom 1.9) You can serve God with your spirit (an act of the will, a decision).
  - b) (Rom 12.11) You can be fervent in spirit (a mood, an attitude).
  - c) (1Cor 14.14-15a) Your spirit can pray, just as your soul can.
  - d) (1Cor 14.15b) Your spirit can sing.
  - e) (1Cor 14.16) Your spirit can give thanks and bless others.
  - f) (1Cor 16.18) Your spirit can be refreshed.
  - g) (2Cor 2.13) Your spirit can be rested... or not rested.
3. And you say... “So, what's the point of all this?” The point is this: Your spirit is much more than just a “life force” inside you. It is part of you—part of what makes you “you” (unique).
  - a) Your spirit is the innermost part of your being. It is where the Spirit of God dwells, but it is still part of you—part of what makes you the person you are.
  - b) (2Cor 7.1) And God expects us to cleanse ourselves from the filthiness of the flesh (obviously) and of the spirit.

#### **IV. In Esther 4, God Shows Us a Picture of the “filthiness of the spirit” (2Cor 7.1)**

##### **A. Esther pictures of our new regenerated spirit that replaced Vashti, our rebellious human spirit.**

1. Esther is “closely related” to Mordecai, just like our spirit is now joined with the Holy Spirit.
2. And in Esther 4, Mordecai addresses some problems that Esther has (attitude problems; problems in her values / priorities).

**B. (Mat 15.18-20) Think of it this way: The filthiness of *spirits* that we need to clean up is the filthiness that is in our *hearts* (the inner-most part of our being).**

1. The filthiness of spirit that we need to address in ourselves (and in Esther 4) has to do with our attitudes of heart, our values, our priorities, our most intimate thoughts (which are usually selfish).
2. From the heart (and from the spirit) come these thoughts, desires, values, priorities... and they are often filthy and wrong (just like we see in Esther).

**C. Remember: Ahasuerus doesn't know what's going on between Esther and Mordecai in chapter 4.**

1. You (your soul) might not even be aware that there is something wrong with your “attitudes of heart” or what you “value” (your priorities) or how you “perceive” others around you.
2. Hopefully our study of Esther 4 will help us evaluate our hearts and see if there is any filthiness of spirit we need to address like Esther does after Mordecai's gentle rebuke.

**D. Esther is a picture of our new regenerated spirit.**

1. Throughout the majority of chapter 4, we see her struggling to understand the implications of Haman's decree.
2. (v10-12) We see her selfishness and self-centered desire to avoid confrontation and discomfort.
3. (v16) But, we also see her gain the victory over that “filthiness” through consecration and sanctification (setting herself apart to be used by Mordecai, for His plan and purpose).
4. (v17) And once she does that, Mordecai sets off to put his plan in action.

**Conclusion:**

**If we want to develop true spirituality (victory over the flesh by following the Spirit), we have to begin here.**

- We have cleanse ourselves of all filthiness of the spirit (attitudes, thoughts, values, priorities, etc.).
- If we don't start here (in the spirit), then any change we make will be superficial and temporary.
- Understand that the battle for true spirituality begins by addressing things that are wrong in your spirit.

**In our next message, we'll start working our way through chapter 4, beginning with verse 1...**

- Mordecai is grieved by decisions made by Ahasuerus to satisfy the desires of Haman.
- What a great picture of how we grieve the Holy Spirit with our selfish decisions to satisfy our flesh.

**If you are here and are not sure of your salvation:**

1. (Eph 2.1) Understand that you are spiritually dead in sin (you—your spirit—are separated from God).
2. (2Cor 5.17) But, God wants to change that! He wants to give you life where now there is only death.
3. (John 1.12) He will do that (He will save you, make you born again into His family) if you will receive Christ as Lord and Savior—if you will repent of your sins and trust in Christ alone to save you.