

RUSSELL SANDERS

11-8-2021

WOMAN'S GOD GIVEN VALUE – LESSON 4

HADASSAH

Yesterday we saw how God valued a woman named Deborah so highly that He placed her as Judge over all the men of Israel. He then used Deborah and Jael, two women, to deliver Israel from the Canaanite oppressors.

Today we will look at another woman God used to deliver Jews from being extinguished as a nation. She was a young Jewess born with the name Hadassah. She was orphaned as an infant or toddler and raised by her uncle Mordecai.

Hadassah is better known to us as Esther. She and her uncle resided in Babylon during the reign of King Ahasuerus. The story recorded in the Book of Esther covers a period of about twelve years. The previous kings of Babylon, Cyrus, and Darius, had set the Israelite captives free in 536 B.C. While some returned to Judea and Jerusalem, many of them remained throughout the many provinces of the Babylonian Empire. Babylon had ruled kindly and favorably with them. Seeing as they had established homes and families there, they chose to remain.

Hadassah's Jewish name was "hidden" as she had been given the Babylonian name of Esther. You can read in chapters one and two how she was selected by Ahasuerus to be his queen. He had no idea she was a Jew. The king loved her above all women.

As time went by, the king's chief ruler Haman came to hate Mordecai. Her uncle, however, had gained the king's favor by exposing a plot to assassinate him. Haman's hatred of Mordecai then extended into hatred of all Jews. This led him to convince the king to set a certain day when all people in all the Babylonian provinces (which included Judea) to rise up and kill all Jews wherever they could be found, men, women, and children. This was to be done on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month of the Jewish religious calendar (Adar). The order was dispatched to all one hundred twenty-seven provinces (India to North Africa).

Mordecai proclaimed a fast for all Jews. He implored Esther to appeal to the king to rescind the proclamation. He indicated to her that she was called "for such a time as this." Her ordeal was lengthy and complicated as she literally put her life on the line in her appeal to the king. The king was forbidden by law to cancel his order however, he came up with a solution as he learned his queen was a Jew and her uncle had saved his life.

He sent a new order instructing Jews to arm themselves and was authorized on that day (of the earlier order), to kill anyone who thought to do them harm. All the provincial rulers, military officers, law officers and the king's officials helped defend the Jews. Thus, through Esther's intervention, the Jews were saved from extermination.

Mordecai then sent letters to the Jews in all 127 provinces establishing the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of Adar as a holiday of joy and feasting every year to remember their deliverance. Today, more than 2,500 years later, it is a holiday that is still commemorated. It is called the Feast of Purim.

Yes, God once again used a woman to deliver his people.