

An Audience with the King

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[0:00] To me, one of my favorite passages of Scripture is the book of Esther and the story and the account that we find there.

You know, the story of King Ahasuerus and Vashti that failed to come at his bidding, and so as a result, she no longer was queen.

And so he searched for a new queen, and a young lady by the name of Esther is the one that caught his favor, and she became the new queen.

There was a, I guess you could consider him the king's right-hand man, a man by the name of Haman, that despised the Jews and persuaded the king to render an edict, declare an edict, that all the Jews of the land would be exterminated because he despised, Haman despised the Jews because Mordecai, the one that raised Esther, would not bow to him as was declared in the kingdom.

And so it was a particularly gruesome time for the people of Israel. They were about to face extermination.

[1:42] They're going to die. Mordecai hears of that and comes in sackcloth and ashes to the king's gate, which was illegal, and there mourns for his people and has word sent to Esther now, the one whom he raised, who is now queen, to make her understand and know what's going on with this edict, that all the people are going to die.

And so she gets word of that. And, you know, Mordecai had told her, if you think because you're queen, you and your father's house are going to get by without being put to death, you think wrong. Everybody is going to be exterminated. And he said, it's your responsibility to take this opportunity to go into the king and explain what's going on here.

And we find in chapter number four, Esther responds to what Mordecai had to say.

In verse 11 of Esther chapter 4, all the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces do know that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden scepter, that he may live, but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.

[3:27] They told that to Mordecai. And then in verse 13, Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house more than all the Jews.

For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall their enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place. But thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed.

And who knoweth, this is the familiar passage, who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this. Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer.

Go and gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day.

I also and my maidens will fast likewise, and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law. And if I perish, I perish.

[4:32] What boldness. Amen. What courage. So Mordecai went his way, did everything that Esther commanded. Chapter 5 starts by saying, Now it came to pass on the third day that Esther put on her royal apparel and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house.

And the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house over against the gate of the house. Now recognize something with me, how courageous this had to be and how dangerous for Esther. Because Vashti, the previous queen, failed to come when she was bidden. And he just took her away from the court.

No longer queen. Banished her, I guess. So now, here she comes, just kind of the opposite threshold of that. Comes without being bidden.

Doesn't know what he's feeling since the episode with Vashti. But there, dressed in her royal apparel, she stands before the king.

[5:47] Now take note. Verse 2. It was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favor in his sight.

That's good news. Amen. And the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. So Esther drew near and touched the top of the scepter.

Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? And what is thy request? It shall be given to thee to the half of the kingdom.

Wow. What a story. Amen. Amen. I love the stories where the guy gets the girl at the end. Amen. And they ride off into the sunset happily ever after.

That's kind of what happens here. God works everything out, of course. But what a beautiful picture. Not just for the sake of the story, but there's something else here that I think we can recognize.

[6:57] To me, it's a beautiful picture of what we find spoken of in Romans chapter 5. Turn there with me, if you will. Romans chapter 5.

Just the first two verses we'll do for now. Romans chapter 5. The writer says, Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

By whom also, now look at this, we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

by whom we have access. That word access in the original is used in times to speak of a friend or a person that secures for his friend an audience with the king.

All right? So in order to come into the presence of the king, the person has to be dressed in proper attires. dressed in proper attire in order to be able to be brought into the presence of the king.

[8:19] So they dress him in the proper attire. He finds an audience with the king. He brings him in and presents him to the king favorably.

The king finds, or he finds favor from the king. That's access. The French have a word called entree. All right?

Same thing. Same idea. We have entree. We have access, if you will, to the grace that God provides through his son.

That entree, or that grace rather, provides for us everything. I guess we could say it adorns us in the robes that we need or the clothing that we need to stand in the presence of royalty.

To stand in the presence of God. God clothes the believing sinner with himself in his own righteousness, in God's righteousness, cleanses him by his precious blood, and thus brings him into full favor with himself.

[9:29] That's entree. That's access. And that's what the writer here is speaking of. We, as Esther has had, gained favor and was granted entrance into the king's presence, God has given you and me the privilege of entrance into his presence.

For how long? The text speaks of the fact and is constructed in such a way that it presents to us the reality that that is a permanent reality. We have permanent entree, permanent access into that grace, into the favor of God that brings us into his presence.

Now, just as Esther was granted that access to the king, we now have access. Entree.

Not only into the presence of God, but I want you to notice what the scripture speaks of. Hebrews chapter 10. Turn there just a moment. Hebrews chapter 10.

I'm going to read that to you out of the Amplified Version. And here's what it says. Here's how it reads. Therefore, brethren, since we have full freedom, King James renders that boldness, since we have full freedom and confidence to enter into the Holy of Holies by the power and virtue in the blood of Jesus, by his fresh, new, and living way, which he initiated and dedicated and opened for us through the separating curtain, the veil of the Holy of Holies, that is, through his flesh, and since we have such a great and wonderful and noble priest who rules over the house of God, let us all come forward and draw near with true, that's honest and sincere, hearts in unqualified assurance and absolute conviction gendered by faith, having our hearts sprinkled and purified from a guilty or an evil conscience and our bodies cleansed with pure water.

[11:55] Because we have boldness, because we have that freedom, that confidence, given through our relationship with God through Christ, that access, that entree, has now been granted to us into, notice how the writer puts it, into the holiest, into the holiest, into the Holy of Holies.

Remember, the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle and later in the temple was the place of the divine presence. That's the place where the presence of God dwelt with his people, Israel.

We have been granted access into that. Now, that privilege of coming into the presence of the holy and righteous God should never, ever be taken lightly.

Never. Never. It's not something that we merit, nor do we deserve it, but that access is something that was provided for us through the love of our Heavenly Father and procured for us through the death, burial, and resurrection of the sinless Son of God.

I say that to say this. In our, we've enjoyed and are grateful, my wife and I, for the opportunity of visiting various churches, as I've mentioned last time we were here.

[13:24] But I'm an observer. I observe things. And my concern is that in much of the worship and even in much of the believers living, we have lost sight of who it is that we worship.

We've lost sight of some things about Him. I appreciate it. I'm glad for the fact, looking at your bulletin, how many times it speaks about worshiping.

Worship through singing. Worship through Scripture reading. Worship through prayer. Through tithes and offering. Worship through the Word of God being presented. To many, it's the idea, and psychologically, it's played into our mind that on Sunday morning, we're going to church.

We're going to do the church thing. But in reality, what we should be doing is coming to worship God. Amen? We come to worship the Heavenly Father.

The God that loved us. The God that sent His Son to die for us. The God that sustains us. The God that provides for us daily. We come to worship Him in lieu of what He has been to us this week.

[14:49] Now, I think the thing that we lose sight of most of all, whether it be in our worship of God, or whether it be in our daily walk with Him, is the holiness of God.

The fact that God is holy. Now, take note with me, if you will, of the scriptural declaration of God's holiness and the mandate that He gives us to approach Him in His holiness.

You don't need to turn to these. I'll just read them to you. In Exodus chapter 15, verse 11, it says, Who is like unto thee, O Lord among the gods?

Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? In 1 Chronicles 16, 29, it says, Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name.

Bring an offering and come before Him. Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Now, I'm going to, can I chase a rabbit here just a moment? Because, Tom, I'm old school.

[16:05] And nothing wrong with old school. Amen? That's where you learned how to, that two and two is five. Yeah. Come, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

I think Psalm 29, 2 might say, Come before His presence in the beauty of holiness. Anyway, come in the beauty of holiness. You know what that literal rendering of that phrase is?

Literally, come, worship the Lord in the garments of beauty. Or the beautiful garments of holiness.

The priests in the Levites were to come in their best array, their cleanest array, because they've come to worship God in His holiness.

All the service of God was to be done in such a way that, that, that no dishonor to the divine majesty of God was ever brought forth.

[17:17] It was to be done in light of the fact that this is the holy God that we've come to worship. Now, that external clothing of the priests was to be an emblem of the inward condition of the heart, pure and righteous, holy before God.

Now, Psalm 30, Psalm 30, verse 4 says, Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of His, give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.

Psalm 47, verse 8, God reigneth over the heathen, God sitteth upon the throne of His holiness.

Psalm 48, 1, Great is the Lord, greatly to be praised in the city of our God in the mountain of His holiness.

In Psalm 93, 5, Thy testimonies are very sure. Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, forever.

And then the prophets even caught a view of the holiness of God in the kingdom come, in the future kingdom that is to come. Isaiah writes of it in chapter 35, verse 8 of his prophecy, And a highway shall be there and away, and it shall be called the way of holiness.

[18:46] The unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those, the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. Zechariah states, In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses holiness unto the Lord.

And pots in the house of the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. At every turn we see the holiness of God.

That seems to be the identifying character in Scripture when we look at God. God as the holy God, holy and righteousness.

So if that's the case, let's find a definition for this term holiness. Theological workbook of the Old Testament gives us this definition. Holiness is defined as the essential nature of that which belongs to the sphere of the sacred and which is thus distinct from the common and profane.

I want you to pick up on that. Read it again. The essential nature of that which belongs to the sphere of the sacred and which is thus distinct from the common or profane.

[20:06] It speaks of the mystery of his power as well as his character that is totally good and entirely without evil because the idea of being clean, pure, consecrated.

And then it speaks of God with a measure of awe. I like that. Speaks of God with a measure of awe. In other words, when you see him in his holiness, you stand in awe of what you see. Now, turn with me if you will.

God gives us or Isaiah gives us a glimpse of the holiness of God in Isaiah chapter 6. Turn there with me. Isaiah chapter 6. He starts in verse 1 by saying, In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord high and lifted, or excuse me, seated upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

Above it stood two seraphims, each one had six wings, with twain he covered his face, with twain he covered his feet, with twain he did fly.

[21:24] And one cried unto another and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory.

And the post of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Notice with me what Isaiah sees.

He says, I saw the Lord. Hebrew, I saw Adonai. I saw the Master, the Sovereign Ruler, the Lord of all.

John in his gospel declares that at this point, when Isaiah sees God in his glory, he sees him in the person of Christ Jesus. Now, I saw the Lord.

I saw Adonai, high and lifted up. Seated high, lifted up on a throne that's lifted high. It's the throne that's lifted high is the idea here.

[22:28] All right? Adonai, seated on a high and lifted up throne, seated there as a king, clothed in a large, loose, flowing robe whose ends, train, fills the entire temple.

mostly the idea here is filling the entire temple. That train fills the most holy place as well. The most holy place, again, the place of the divine presence.

That's what Isaiah sees. Hovering above the robe, we find the ministers of God, the seraphim. We'll not worry about them.

We don't have time to get into all of that right now as to what they specifically are. But he sees the seraphim. I want you to take notice. Those seraphim are held up, extended above his robe with two wings, and then covering their faces are two other wings.

They're in awe of the divine glory in which they are present. With the remaining two, they cover their feet. Picture the fact of concealment.

[23:42] They're concealing themselves as to who they are, recognizing what they are in themselves in the presence of such holiness.

Now, in such presence, in such a presence, the only plausible response to that is seen in verse number three.

I love this. Get the picture, picture in your mind. The seraphim in the presence of the manifest holiness of God in the person of Jesus, hovering behind him, around him, above his robe, and they begin to sing.

And this is kind of a responsive chorus, if you will. Don't know how many seraphim are there, but they begin to sing, holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of hosts.

The whole earth is full of his glory. One would sing, holy. Maybe another one would sing, holy, holy.

[24:53] Or, one would sing, holy, holy, holy. Another would respond, is Jehovah of hosts. Others respond by saying, the whole earth is full of his glory.

you get the picture there, of what they're doing, because they recognize the manifest holiness of God, and they can't help but respond through chorus of song.

Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of hosts. Now, holy, holy, holy, the separate one, beyond or above all else, spotless, pure, the perfect one.

They're in the presence of. Now, the whole earth is full of his glory. The manifestation of his holiness is his glory.

Now, I want you to notice, look at something with me here. Notice the response of sinful Isaiah, mortal man, verse 5, then said I, woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the king.

[26:29] Jehovah of hosts is who he is. I've seen him. Now, I want you to notice, my friends, the only response that is possible when mortal man catches a glimpse of the manifest holiness of God is to fall on their face and cry out, woe is me, I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a bunch of sinful people.

Now, but notice what happens here. then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar, and laid it upon my mouth and said, Lo, this has touched thy lips, and thy iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

That's good news, amen? Nothing like redemption. Also, I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?

Then said, I, here am I, send me. What a difference, yeah? Mortal man says, woe is me.

Cleansed, redeemed man says, here I am, send me. A positive response to the work of the holy and righteous God.

[28:12] Now, God, because his holiness stands above all of humanity, he then has the ability to redeem us from the power of sin.

And then he gives us that standard by which we can live and maintain that holiness in our own lives. and gives us that ability. Our call to holiness is based on the fact that we have become God's position through the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

Paul, when he writes to the church at Corinth, says, you are bought with a price. You are not your own. to say you are God's possession.

He has a right to do with you what he wants to do. Maintain the holiness of God. Now, well, preacher, that's all well and good, but that's all Old Testament.

[29:23] I want you to notice, when Jesus came, in that holiness, the holy one, all right, came, he speaks to a woman at Samaria, in John chapter 4, and he tells her something here.

There's a question as to where are we supposed to go to worship? Samaritans say one place, the Jews say another, where are we to go? Jesus says in verse 21, woman, believe me, the hour cometh, we shall neither enter in this mountain, nor yet Jerusalem worship the father.

You worship, here's the key, you worship, you worship, you know not what, you don't know who you worship, we know what we worship for salvation as the Jews, we have that personal relationship, we have that identity with, we have an understanding and a knowledge of who we worship, but the hour cometh and now is when true worshipers shall worship the father in spirit and in truth, for the father seeketh such who would worship him, in spirit, as opposed to ceremony and circumstances and pomp,!

worship and spirit to the inner us, that part that has connection with God and truth, the truth here is a true experiential knowledge of God, having a true proper concept of who and what God is and a knowledge and understanding of who he is, that's how we're to worship in the day of grace.

Now, over in Ephesians chapter 3 quickly, Ephesians chapter 3, verse 10, I like this, to the intent that now under the principalities and power in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ and Christ Jesus our Lord in whom we have boldness, there's that confidence again, boldness and access with confidence by faith of him.

[31:53] Remind you again in Hebrews chapter 10 which we looked at a moment ago. Hebrews chapter 10 in verse 19, having therefore brethren boldness to enter into the holiness by the blood of Jesus by new and living way which he consecrated for us through the veil that is to say his flesh and heaven and high priest over the house of God let us draw near with a true heart in full

assurance of faith having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience our bodies washed with water we have that access entree as we said but I want you to notice something even here even in this new covenant day and method of grace the place we come to is still called the holiest it's still the holiest my concern is we have gotten so familiar with God if you will in particular are so familiar with his son that we've lost contact with the idea that he's holy he's sacred he's above all yeah yeah we were in a worship service and this is kind of what got my goat we were in a worship service here not too long ago just a few weeks ago standing there singing praises to

God and who he is and what he is and I look over here here's a man standing with a cup of coffee in his hand singing about the holiness of God how do you do that how do you do that he's holy he's above all he's pure he's perfect Isaiah fell on his face and said woe is me I've seen him I think think our problem lies in the fact that we have not seen him or we don't continually see him in his holiness yes living living under grace Romans 6 19 through 20 some summarizes it by saying even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness you see we're supposed to live the same way we worship we worship him in holiness we should live in holiness 2nd

Corinthians 7 1 having therefore these promises dearly beloved let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit perfecting holiness in the fear in the reverential fear of God

Ephesians 4 23 24 be renewed in the spirit of your mind and that you put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness now the revelation gives us a picture we'll not take the time to look there but the revelation gives us a picture of the future holiness that we see in there I want you to notice the heavenly beings falling on their face before the throne of God giving praise to God in the person of the

Lamb Christ Jesus holy holy holy you are worthy of honor and glory and power yeah that's worship worship because we've been granted entree access we are to worship in his holiness we are to live in his holiness let's do so that is character as totally good without evil clean pure consecrated and here you go distinct from the common or profane amen that's what

God's people are to be distinct from the common and profane distinct from the world let's be that through the power and the grace of the spirit of God