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National Museum of African American History and Culture

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Lights on the Lesson
by REV. BERNARD O. BYRD, D. D.

LIGHT NO. 1—Inasmuch as nations adopted their own national gods and often held mass worship services honoring their gods, it is not strange that the king of Babylon should have constructed an image and order such a service. It was not uncommon that decrees of death to persons who refused to worship their national gods he issued.

LIGHT NO. 2—Just as determined as were idolaters to show high honor to their idols, so determined were the truly religious Hebrew worshipers of Jehovah to worship no other god but Jehovah. The three Hebrew boys mentioned in the first part of this lesson, though being unaware of the outcome of their stand, were positive that if he desired, God could save them from the fire.

LIGHT NO. 3—Since Daniel because of his faithfulness and dependability became highly favored of the king, other sub-leaders sought to bring this Hebrew into ill favor with their leader. Since the king was basing his respect and consideration upon results rather than racial birth, the jealous opponents of Daniel seeing his record decided to intrigue him in religious affairs.

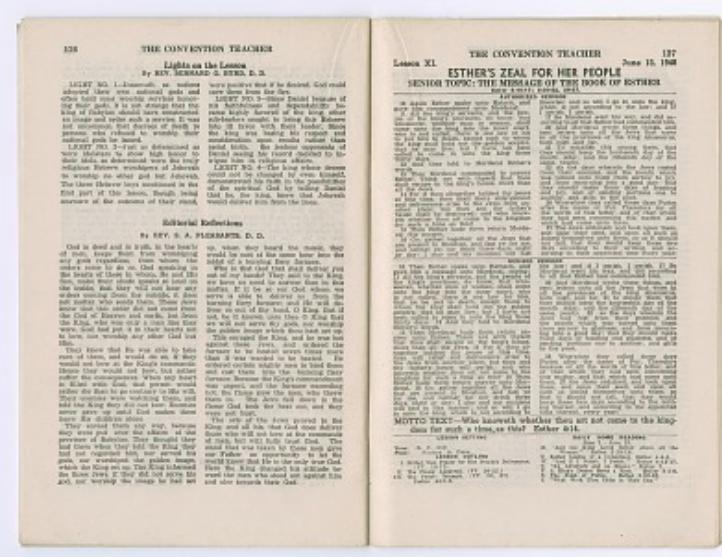
LIGHT NO. 4—The king whose decree could not be changed by even himself, demonstrated his faith in the possibilities of the spiritual God by telling Daniel that he, the king, knew that Jehovah would deliver him from the lions.

Editorial Reflections
by REV. S. A. PLEASANTS, D. D.

God in deed and in truth, in the hearts of men, keeps them from worshiping any gods regardless, from whom the orders come to do so. God speaking in the hearts of those in whom, He and His Son, make their abode speaks so loud on the inside, that they will not hear any orders coming from the outside, it does not matter who sends them. These Jews know that this order did not come from the God of Heaven and earth; but from the King, who was only a man like they were. God had put it in their hearts not to bow, nor worship any other God but Him.

They knew that He was able to take care of them, and would do so, if they would not bow at the King's commands: Hence they would not bow, but rather suffer the consequences. When any heart is filled with God, that person would rather die than to go contrary to His will. Their enemies were watching them, and told the King they did not bow. Enemies never gave up until God makes them leave His children alone.

They envied them any way, because they were put over the affairs of the province of Babylon. They thought they had them when they told the King they had not regarded him, nor served his gods, nor worshiped the golden image, which the King set up. The King informed the three Jews, if they did not serve his god, nor worship the image he had set up, when they heard the music, they would be cast at the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.



Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands? They said to the King, we have no need to answer thee in this matter. If it be so our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and He will deliver us out of thy hand, O King. But if not, be it known unto thee O King that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

This enraged the King, and he was hot against these Jews, and ordered the furnace to be heated seven times more than it was wanted to be heated. He ordered certain mighty men to bind them and cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Because the King's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame slew the men, who threw them in. The Jews fell down in the flame God took the heat out, and they were not hurt.

The acts of the Jews proved to the King, and all his, that God does deliver those who will not bow at the commands of men, but will fully trust God. The stand that was taken by these men gave our Father an opportunity to let the world know that He is the only true God. Here the King changed his attitude toward the men who stood out against him and also towards their God.

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THE CONVENTION TEACHER 127

Lesson XI.
June 13, 1948

ESTHER'S ZEAL FOR HER PEOPLE

SENIOR TOPIC: THE MESSAGE OF THE BOOK OF ESTHER
Esther 4:10-17; 9:20-22, 26-27.

[[line]]

AUTHORIZED VERSION

10 Again Esther spake unto Hatach, and gave him commandment unto Mordecai;

11 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 sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.

12 And they told to Mordecai Esther's words.

13 Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.

14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knowest whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

15 Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer,

16 Go, 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.

17 So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

20 And Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters unto all the Jews that were in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, both nigh and far,

21 To establish this among them, that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, yearly,

22 As the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day: that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor.

26 Wherefore they called these days Purim after the name of Pur. Therefore for all the words of this letter, and of that which they had seen concerning this matter, and which had come unto them.

27 The Jews ordained and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so as it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to their writing, and according to their appointed time every year;

[[line]]

REVISED VERSION

10 Then Esther spake unto Hathach, and gave him a message unto Mordecai, saying: 11 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 for him, that he be put to death, except those 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. 12 And they told to Mordecai Esther's words.

13 Then Mordecai bade them return answer unto Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. 14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then will relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's house will perish: and who knowest whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this? 15 Then Esther bade them

return answer unto Mordecai, 16 Go, 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 in like manner: and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish. 17 So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

20 And Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters unto all the Jews that were in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, both nigh and far, 21 to enjoin them that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, yearly, 22 as the days wherein the Jews had rest from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to gladness, and from mourning into a good day; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor.

26 Wherefore they called these days Purim after the name of Pur. Therefore because of all the words of this letter, and of that which they had seen concerning this matter, and that which had come unto them, 27 the Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so that it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to the writing thereof, and according to the appointed time thereof, every year;

[[line]]

MOTTO TEXT – Who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this? Esther 4:14.

[[line]]

LESSON SETTING

Time: B. C. 519
Place: Shushan in Perea.

LESSON OUTLINE

- I. Esther Uses Prayer for Her People's Deliverance. (VV. 10-17)
- II. The Prayer Answered (VV. 20-22.)
- III. The People Triumph (VV. 26, 27) Psalms 44:1-8.

DAILY HOME READING

- June 7 - June 13.
M. "And the King Loved Esther Above all the Women." Esther 2:15-18.
T. Esther Learns of a Conspiracy. Esther 4:4-8.
W. "And If I Perish, I Perish." Esther 4:13-17.
T. "An Adversary and an Enemy." Esther 7.
F. A King's Decree Saves a Race. Esther 8:1-8.
S. The Feast of Purim. Esther 9:26-32.
S. "What Work Thou Didst in Their Day."

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