

Chapter Two

All The World A Stage

Esther 1:1

Someone has aptly said that, “all the world is a stage.” In the recorded history of mankind, anything that has happened, or that will happen, is performed on the stage of the world. And so it is with Esther. We will see her story unfold right before our eyes.

As we begin this account, we are at once reminded that there is an ongoing battle for the dominion of this world.

“Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, (this is Ahasuerus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces:)” Esther 1:1

If you read the above verse again, you’ll see, after writing only ten short words in her book, Esther’s Author felt compelled to break the story line to include and interpolate (add to the text) biographical information regarding Ahasuerus that He believed we needed to know. The first verse now had an addition; a parenthetical accessory, if you please. This accessory was almost *twice as big* as the introduction that preceded it.

At this point, we would expect to hear a disparaging comment from the critics, who are forever “...making the word of God of none effect...” (Mark 7:13), by their insistent unfounded judgments *against* God. Sitting “...in the seat of the scornful...” (Psalms 1:1), these Bible correctors would be

quick to point out that our addition is only parenthetical, and thus *insignificant rhetoric*-nothing more than an afterthought, written by the author.

We Bible Believers see something else. The Author's compulsion to include this tidbit of history as part of His account was NOT accidental, but decidedly INTENTIONAL! He was also fully persuaded as to its location. This accessory is not only *part of*, but essentially *parcel to*, the very first sentence written in The Book of Esther. Accordingly, it demands our full attention, and without reserve, we will gladly give it!

As we study and examine this accessory, we read, "...(*this is Ahasuerus which reigned....*)" Since Ahasuerus was *already* reigning, we may safely conclude that *even before our story begins, either he or someone before him won some battles that established a Kingdom* with "an hundred and seven and twenty provinces" in it. We, who are citizens of God's Kingdom and seeking victory over our enemies, should take note of the addition between those *sacred* brackets. The Author added those words to the text, to teach us a lesson, early on. He wanted us to grasp the idea, that VICTORY from a BATTLE produces a REIGN. This miniature morsel of delight will be our main course for the rest of this chapter. Though it be small, it will be sufficient enough to carry us through, and satisfy all who partake.

In the previous chapter, I pointed out that Ahasuerus¹ is a type of God, The Father. Twenty-five hundred years ago, this Ahasuerus had lordship and dominion over the known world of that time. One day the same will hold true for The King of Glory. He will receive the Kingdom that is rightfully His! (Please see, I Corinthians 15:27-28) King Ahasuerus reigned from India to Ethiopia (Africa). *This* King shall reign over ALL. Celestial and terrestrial, visible and invisible, the title

¹ An appellative (title/name), given to two or three Media-Persian Monarchs-meaning, "the Mighty". (See; Genesis 49:24, Psalms 50:1; 132:2 and 5)

deed is His! Yea, He, whose Throne is in “The Heaven²” and whose Footstool is the Earth, will soon reign again over that which His mighty hands once had created!

“The Lord shall *reign* for ever and ever.” Exodus 15:18

“...The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and his Christ; and he shall *reign* for ever and ever.” Revelation 11:15b

Today, the ruler of this world (the world you and I live in) is NOT God The Father, but “...the god of this world...” (II Corinthians 4:4), and “...the prince of the power of the air...” (Ephesians 2:2) This should remind the Saints of God NOT to have this world as our friend. The reason? The *right* King is not reigning over her right now!

Over the course of “...the race that is set before us...” (Hebrews 12:1), there are three main enemies that EVERY child of God encounters. These enemies are identified and exposed in The Book of Esther. The first enemy, as we shall see, has already been subdued. The other two will be discussed later on in this book. For right now though, the first enemy in our story is conquered, the right king is on the throne, and there is peace in the kingdom. Like I stated earlier, we are not told *how* Ahasuerus’ reign came about, only *that it did!* With all battles past, the King reigned supreme over all.

Let me ask you, isn’t that what mankind longs for deep down in his bosom? Don’t we seek for peace, harmony, and contentment? Don’t we long for the day that all is well in the kingdom? Jesus had it right, when he said, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation...” (don’t forget, *right now* it is the Devil’s world) “... but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33) If we seek the world to bring us peace, harmony, or contentment, we are looking in the *wrong* place. Don’t forget; this world has rejected The Prince of Peace, replacing Him with a corrupt prince who’s touting a pseudo-peace. No wonder “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ...” (James 1:1) admonishes other believers not to make this world their friend. James asks the question, “...know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?” (James 4:4) Then, in the same verse, he makes the following statement, “...whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the *ENEMY* of God.”

Those of us who have put our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour must draw some conclusions by all this. Early on, we must conclude that there is an enemy that is all around us. Every place our foot treads, in every quarter of the globe, we are confronted with this enemy. Every hour of the day and night; it haunts us. We can’t escape. Even when we perish (as in Esther 4:16), it suitably becomes the very place our corrupted bodies are sown. (I Corinthians 15:42) By the time you are done reading this chapter, it will be quite evident, that, from birth-the *new* birth, to the grave, our enemy is the WORLD!

² Genesis 1:1-NO “s” at the end of Heaven-like all the *new* Bibles have it. Even the *New King James Version* has it wrong. Imagine that; the very *FIRST* verse in it is wrong! The “*heavens*” came later! If you don’t believe me, believe *God!* “...The heavens and the earth...” weren’t even “*finished*”, until Genesis 2:1.

Choose a Battle; Crown a Hero

There are three major battles that are denoted in the word of God that every Believer, whether they choose to or not, must face. All three are found in The Book of Esther, *in the same order* that they are listed in The Book of Ezekiel. While The Book of Esther *displays* each battle, The Book of Ezekiel distinctly *crowns* each one with a chief representative *who won it*.

As we shall see, you and I are neither the first nor the last to enter into warfare with an enemy. REMEMBER; *WE ARE NOT ALONE IN THESE BATTLES!* Other Soldiers that came before us, who were fine ensamples of those who lived victorious lives, stood exactly where we are standing now. Of these, some have had their legacy documented in Scripture, furnishing us with hope, and teaching us how to emerge victorious from our enemies, as they did from theirs.

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that WE through patience and comfort of the scriptures *MIGHT HAVE HOPE.*” Romans 15:4

The first enemy that is presented in Esther *and* Ezekiel is *The World*. You’ll see why I say this as you read on. Since our first enemy is The World, we would be wise to study the only Bible character, during that time in history that overcame it.

The stage is set. The lights go dim. Music begins to play. It’s; Wagner’s, *Flight of the Valkyrie!* The curtain opens. Remember, “all the world is a stage.” Someone calls out, “action!” Like thunder and lightning, crashing cymbals echo through the theater as bright lights are flickering their way down to each seat. Oh I can’t believe what I’m viewing. It’s too horrific! I look away. It’s all so sad. Taking courage, I peer through clenched fingers. All I can see are scenes of destruction: The Judgment of God *literally* falling on the earth; a cataclysmic flood is destroying everything. Suddenly a trumpet sounds, in steps our hero. Only he and his family survive. At last, the performance ends, and the curtain abruptly falls. Accolades were handed out, as the credits were given, and we read...

“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became the heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” Hebrews 11:7

While *others* were OVERcome and OVERTaken by it, *Noah* OVER came the world. This *hero* proved to us that Christians don’t have to succumb to the world and its devices. We can rise up *over* them BOTH! DON’T FORGET THIS WORLD IS OUR ENEMY. Noah over came; so can we.

Lest I stray too far, I want you to notice something. All three enemies in The Book of Esther are listed *in the same order* that they are listed in The Book of Ezekiel.

“Though these three men, NOAH, DANIEL, and JOB were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God.” Ezekiel 14:14. See verse 20.

NOAH; DANIEL; and JOB.

NOAH, our first hero of faith, conquered the *world*: Enemy number one. DANIEL, our second hero of faith, conquered the *flesh*: Enemy number two (also found in Esther chapter one, represented by Vashti). JOB, our third and last hero of faith, conquered the *Devil*: Enemy number three (found in chapter three of Esther's Book, in the character of Haman).

THE WORLD-Esther 1:1; THE FLESH-Esther 1:9; AND THE DEVIL-Esther 3:1. *All, are enemies to the child of God; and all, need to be overcome!*

If the truth was told, many Believers today don't know that they are in a battle, *any* battle! Therefore, every dart hurled at them by the enemy can easily be launched at close range. With no knowledge on our part of an ensuing battle, anytime an enemy chooses to attack there's no question who will emerge victorious. Unless the Believer purposes in heart to *identify, expose, and fight*, the enemy will *ALWAYS* champion every contest!

Enemy #1 Please Step Forward

Forty-five hundred years ago, in Noah's day; God demonstrated to the world what He thinks about it. He destroyed it! Normally you don't destroy something you like. Apparently, God knows something about this world that we would be wise to discover for ourselves. He knows this world is *presently* His ENEMY. If it's His enemy, *isn't it also ours?*

Before I give you a Bible definition of the word *world*, I am obliged to inform the reader that, in the Book set before us, we are on resurrection ground. The power to conquer these enemies does *not* come from us. St. John put it very succinctly when he said, "...*not* of blood, *nor* of the will of the flesh, *nor* of the will of man, *but OF GOD.*" (John 1:13) In other words, any conquering that needs to be done to rid us of our enemies will NOT come from us. Like Esther of old, we have neither the resource, power, or might to do it. That being said, since she *did* ultimately get the victory, her character will gladly be obliged to show us how we can get the victory too.

If we look closely in chapter one, and verse one, of our story, the victory we are speaking of was won already for Esther. Since someone before her obtained it; she wasn't called on to fight. And, by the way, neither are we. This fight is too big for us. But it's not too big for our Hero! Jesus said, "...be of good cheer; I *have*..." (past tense) "...overcome the world." (John 16:33) Isn't that the goal-to overcome the enemy? *In Jesus*, goal accomplished! We who are truly "born of God," have *ALREADY* overcome the world. How? *In Christ Jesus* our LORD!

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" I John 5:4 and 5

Again, how do we get the victory? *JESUS!* Our faith in Jesus gives us the victory. "...*And THIS is the victory that overcometh the world, even OUR FAITH...*" (Vs. 4b) Isn't that how Noah conquered the world? Read Hebrews 11:7 again... "By FAITH...HE CONDEMNED THE WORLD..." Noah's faith got him victory over the world, and when he got victory over the world, *it was condemned!*

A preacher once said, “God has a big sign over this world with one word on it... ‘CONDEMNED!’” If we put our faith in the world or the world system, we are placing it in an enemy God has *already condemned*. Saint John was thinking along these lines, when he, through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, wrote, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away....” (I John 2:15-17a) *Did you get that?* “THE WORLD PASSETH AWAY!” That’s why we are not to love the world. It is corrupted (see I Peter 1:4), and it is CONDEMNED!

Jesus said in John 18:36, “...My kingdom is *not* of this world...but *NOW* is my kingdom *not* from hence.” Jesus not only condemned this world, but He stated specifically that *His* kingdom is not part of it NOW. And, by the way, if His Kingdom was not of this world, neither is *ours*! The truth is, those of us who have been saved *from* this world are *irritants to* it. That’s why, early in His ministry, Jesus said to his followers, “YE are the salt of the earth...”, and “YE are the light of the world...” (Matthew 5:13a and 14a) Salt irritates the palate of the unsavory, and light irritates the eyes of those in darkness. Only because of Him can we claim to be salt and light. As we continue to study Esther, she will teach us how to appropriate these very claims, by showing us how to be salt and light, and how to conquer our enemies.

You might ask me, “How did Esther conquer the world-she isn’t even *mentioned* until chapter two?!” That’s a *simple* question, with an *easy* answer. SHE MARRIES THE KING WHO DID THE CONQUERING ALREADY! Like Noah who got *inside* the ark, Esther got *inside* the kingdom, where she had protection against the *outside world*.

Christian friend, *you* cannot do anything in your own strength to conquer the enemy. All you can do is accept the King’s marriage proposal, and then *live in His Kingdom!* That’s what I did over thirty-five years ago. I accepted The King’s marriage proposal, and have been living in His Kingdom ever since! As a smart spouse, I let *Him* do all the worldly battles. I just stay in the background, *cheering him on!* That’s what St. Peter meant, when he said, “*Casting ALL your care upon him; for he careth for you.*” (I Peter 5:7)

Back in Esther’s day, if a battle suddenly erupted, she would have said to herself, “I’m His weaker vessel. I’m His Queen. It is not my job to fight *His* worldly battles! Besides, He’s better equipped to fight, than I am.”

If Esther knew to stay out of the fray, so should we. Since our Husband is bigger and stronger than the world, He will be much more successful in battling it, than we ever could. Don’t forget, “He was in the world, and THE WORLD WAS MADE BY HIM...”! (John 1:10; and see Acts 17:24) *Since the world was made by Him then there is NO battle TOO BIG for my husband, King Jesus.*

What in the World is “The World”?

Our world is a temporal, physical plane that is presently being ruled and guided by a fallen angelic being (more precisely the fifth cherub, Ezekiel 28:14) known as “...the god of this world...” (II Corinthians 4:4), and “...the prince of this world...” (John 14:30; 16:11)

Jesus said, “...I am *not of this world...*” and “...My kingdom is *not of this world...*” (John 17:16; 18:36) If the above statements are true (and they are!), then the Born Again Believer should place *little* value on this world, or at least the *minimal* value on it. The

sad fact is though the opposite is true. Believers today *maximize* their love for this “...present evil world...” (Galatians 1:4), to the embarrassment of their Holy Saviour and God.

In his letter to the Galatians, Saint Paul *intentionally inserted the cross of Christ between the Believer and the world*; when he declared, “...God forbid that I should glory, save in *the cross* of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the *WORLD* [on one side of the cross] is crucified unto me, and I [on the other side of the cross] unto the *WORLD*.” (Galatians 6:14)

When I say “the world,” I’m not necessarily talking about being “worldly.” What I am saying, is, that there are so many things in this world that are trying to distract our minds from God, and the things that are His, that it is almost impossible for a child of God to stay focused on Him and the things that please Him! Besides this, there is something else that we need to consider. King Solomon said [because we are *worldly* creatures] that God put the world in every man’s heart. (See, Ecclesiastes 3:11) That means, apart from God’s intervention and revelation, no matter how hard the *natural* man tries, he cannot find out the work of God, because of it. You talk about a BIG obstacle to overcome! THE WORLD is in our heart! *But, so (also) is The ONE who overcame it!*

Today in my mail, I received the world’s latest invention. (Ecclesiastes 1:10, Psalms 106:29a) It is called, “Satellite Radio.” It offers 170 channels for \$9.95 a month. So besides hundreds of television channels, thousands of movies that can be rented or purchased, CD’s, DVD’s, Cassettes, and current AM and FM Radio, not to mention the computer and internet, if someone still has any free time remaining, there are yet even more selections to choose from to occupy their time. Another hundred and seventy channels! (By the way, I still didn’t mention books, magazines, social clubs, newspapers, etc....) You name it; THE WORLD HAS IT! Please indulge me. So that you can see what I’m talking about, I will list about a *quarter* of these stations from my brochure: “Classic Country, Nashville Country, Progressive Country, Traditional Country, Bluegrass, Non-stop Country.” Then there are Top 20 Hits... “LA Rock, Pop Mix, Love Songs, NY lite Rock, Rock/Pop (two of them), Movie Sound tracts, Show tunes, Euro & Global Hits, Special Topics, Christian Rock, Christian Pop, Cocktail Mix, Alternative Hits, Deep Album Rock, Hard Rock, Heavy Rock, New Rock, Classic Alternative, Classic Rock Hits, Acoustic Rock, Progressive Fusion, Unsigned Artists.” This list doesn’t even include News, Sports, Dance, Kids, Variety, and “*World Music*.” (Did you get that last one?!) With such a selection of allurements from the world, coming right into our home or job environment, how could anyone that named the name of Christ ever stay focused *only* on Him?! How could anyone keep from being even just a *little bit* worldly? [It’s been four years since I wrote the above paragraph, and felt I would do my readers an injustice, if I didn’t use the following up-to-date electronics terminology, to show how the world has *progressed* (!) since then. Did someone say, “*iPod*”?! And just this week, the even *more* up-to-date, “*Zune*” made its appearance.]

God destroyed the world in Noah’s day, because men were too worldly. Genesis 6:5 says, “And God SAW that the wickedness of man was great *in the earth*, and that EVERY IMAGINATION OF THE THOUGHTS OF HIS HEART WAS ONLY EVIL *CONTINUALLY*”!!! In his effort to get away from God, there was no invention that Man could not imagine; that he didn’t try to create. By the way, nothing has changed, since the time those flood waters abated. We are still living on a cursed planet, with an unregenerate populace, governed by the Devil. No wonder we are to “... have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” (Ephesians 5:11)

In His famous chapter on the Parable of the Sower, Jesus stated that the *seeds* (the word of God) that were *sown* (planted) “*among thorns*” had a hard time growing and maturing. One reason for this crop failure, He observed, was “...the cares of this world...” (Mark 4:19) Please allow me to ask another question or two. If the word that *God* has planted deep in our heart has been choked out because *we* gave the world entrance and access, then afterward, in all honesty, can we say, we are truly pleasing Him? Hasn't the world *really* won that battle, *already*?

Do you know what a *worldly* Christian is? According to Scripture, a worldly Christian is simply a Christian in the World! The word *worldly* is found only two times in the Bible: Titus 2:12 and Hebrews 9:1. If the word *worldly* means “in the world,” then WE ARE ALL *worldly* Christians! *Aren't we ALL in the world?!* When Jesus prayed for us in John 17:15, He knew we were still in the world, and proved it, by asking the Father NOT to take us out! There is no question whether or not we are still in this world. Obviously, we are! The real question then, the question we *should be asking*, is, HOW MUCH OF THE WORLD IS IN US?! A famous preacher once said, “a boat in the water is okay, but water in the boat is no good!” Noah was in the world, but didn't let the world (get) in him. Keeping God's word, spared him and his family from “*choking*” (see, Mark 4:7 and 19!), and ultimately drowning. That's exactly what Peter was talking about, when he said, “...few, that is, eight souls were saved *by* [“*by*,” also means, *from!*] water.”

(I Peter 3:20b) This was one baptism these folks were glad to MISS!

Is it possible for a child of God to stay clean in this present evil world? With all the above distractions it can be quite a task, but according to The Lord Jesus, it *can* be done! He even prayed we would! Just hours before going to Calvary's cross; “...In...agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” (Luke 22:44) Do you see how much Jesus loved us, dear Christian?! Great bloody drops of sweat flowed from His brow, *as He pleaded with the Father to keep us clean*. “They are NOT of the world, even as I am NOT of the world. SANCTIFY THEM...” (John 17:16 and 17a-Please read the whole chapter) Jesus asked The Father to sanctify the bride He was getting ready to die for. Let me ask you a few more questions about that prayer He prayed. When Jesus pleaded with the Father to sanctify us; did God hear His prayer? (*Since you aren't right here beside me, with your permission, I'll answer that question for you. I would say, “YES!”*) Then let me ask you *this* question. Are we, or, are we not sanctified? If we are, then we can only conclude that our sanctification happened *AT* our *second* birth! As *Queen*, Esther had the full power of “...his kingdom, which was in Shushan the palace...” (Esther 1:2b), to overcome the world. And so do we! The difference is, *our* citizenship is in Heaven! The power *we* use to overcome the world comes from a King that beseeches us to live holy lives (Romans 12:1 and 2), and from “...his *heavenly* kingdom...”

(II Timothy 4:18) Those still waiting to go to the next world, are entreated here, to “...reign in life by one, JESUS CHRIST...” (Romans 5:17) They, who let Him reign *down here*, are promised that they “...shall *also* reign with him...” *up There!* (II Timothy 2:12)

Today King Jesus is reigning from *His* SPIRITUAL Kingdom-The Kingdom of God! He *personally* won every victory that established His reign. If we follow our text, (Esther 1:1); *spiritually speaking*, we Born Again Christians can say, “This is *Jesus* which reigns, and *we* are in His Kingdom.”

One day soon, Jesus Christ will reign over this world; by taking His rightful place in The Kingdom of Heaven as “...KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.” (Revelation

19:16) Today though, The *Lord Jesus is* reigning from “...the *third* heaven...” (II Corinthians 12:2), governing the hearts of those He has redeemed.

Christian friend, long ago The King did everything He *could* to keep us from our first enemy. Great drops of sweat and blood were shed, so that we *would*. The Apostle Paul reminds us that we *can* have the victory. *It's there for the taking*. “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is COMMON to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” (I Corinthians 10:13) You don't have to succumb. You don't have to give in. The King *is* reigning TODAY, and we *are* in His Kingdom!

The day she met and married the King, Esther didn't try to *take over* the kingdom. (*You might be laughing at that last statement, but I know plenty of Christians that have tried!*) She got the victory over the world, BY LETTING THE KING REIGN!

There is not one instance in the entire Book of Esther that shows her struggling with the world. Esther was totally yielded to her King, and found safety and contentment in her royal position beside him.

Remember the “miniature morsel of delight” that I said would carry us through this chapter, “...(this is Ahasuerus which reigned...)?” Well it certainly has proven itself to be *enough* to get us through.