Having A Drink With A King

The main theme that runs through each word and sentence of the Old Testament book of Esther is the word “providence” – God’s providence. Although this is the only book in the Word of God that does not even once have God’s name recorded on any of its pages, God’s providence is evident on every page.

The last sentence in chapter three says, “So the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Shushan was perplexed.” The “king” was the Persian king, Ahasuerus, and Haman was one of his many princes but who became the king’s “Prime Minister.” Underneath the gaudy prestige of his being the “Prime Minister” was his darkness and evil. He was a hostile enemy of the Jews who were being held in captivity to the King. Haman, in this chapter, made it his personal business to see to it that “all the Jews who were throughout all the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus” would be destroyed forever. His plan to eradicate all the Jews was prompted because of one man’s refusal to “bow or pay homage” to him. The man who refused to obey the King’s command to do so was Mordecai, the cousin of King Ahasuerus’ queen, Esther, who, unknown to the King, was a Jewess.

With the King’s blessing “a decree was written according to all that Haman commanded.” It directed the complete massacre of the Jewish race “in one day” and was then circulated throughout the King’s kingdom by his “couriers.” Being quite pleased with themselves and with the diabolical “decree” that they wrote and issued, “the king and Haman sat down to drink.” With our eye of faith we see them reveling in their self-satisfying accomplishment. Raising their wine-filled glass one to the other and proposing a celebratory toast, all they needed to do now was to sit back and wait for the day to arrive. Unbeknownst to them their plot would fail but with the help of their wine they felt good about themselves and what they had schemed to do.

Almost 2,000 years ago there was another diabolical plan laid by God’s archenemy, the devil. He too thought he could destroy not only God’s people but the entire human race by murdering the Son of God on the cross. It looked like it was going to work until three days later when the stone blocking His tomb was rolled back and the Son of God resurrected from the dead. Satan’s plan was foiled; the Godhead’s plan succeeded.

There are no similarities between King Ahasuerus and Haman and between their ungodly work with the Lord Jesus Christ and His work. There are only contrasts to be made.
Our King, King Jesus, also sat down after fulfilling His Father's will for Him to be sacrificed as the "Lamb of God" to take away the "sin of the world." Rather, it was on His everlasting throne that He sat next to His Father. Hebrews 1:3 says that He "sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." Nor did He sit at a table of wine with a wine glass in His hand to drink with the ungodly, or with His Father for that matter. To the contrary, it is written in Hebrews 1:8 that He sat down with a "scepter of righteousness" in His hand, "a scepter of [His] kingdom."

In His Kingdom He not only has a "throne" but also has a Table. It is not a common table at which is celebrated a scheme to kill others; it is the Table at which a death is commemorated — a death that can save all men and women from their eternal death in hell. There is no wine served at His Table but His subjects do drink — not to get drunk but to commune. On His Table is the unleavened "fruit of the vine." And offered with the drink is an unleavened "loaf." Both are offered as a memorial to the righteous deed of His being offered as a sinless substitute for a sinful humanity. That unleavened "loaf" is His "body" which was offered for us. The "fruit of the vine" that is in the "cup" "is the new covenant in [His] blood, which [was] shed for [us]." His subjects eat the "loaf" and drink the "cup" in memory of what their King did on their behalf — not to celebrate their own diabolical ingenuity.

Some assembled here can remember the drinking days of our previous life. We even may remember our drinking buddies and the places and the times that we had one too many and reveled in our drunkenness. We may remember the times that now would be embarrassing for us were they captured on video and shown to the church. We approach this holy Table with our heads hanging down in shame for whom we formerly were and what we did but we never, ever have to leave the Table being ashamed that we are now here. No one who comes to this Table of our Lord must hang his head in shame for drinking with the King. Our only shame is that we were not at this Table earlier in our lives.

It is written in the last sentence of Esther 3 that "the city of Shushan was perplexed." Shushan was the capitol city where the King resided. For the church that knows the refreshing taste of God's Word and God's salvation and God's Table it is perplexing that there are so many who neglect or who have no interest in drinking with the King of all the kings. To His Apostles Jesus said in Matthew 26:29, "I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until the day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." The church is the "Father's kingdom" and in the "Father's kingdom" is the Table of His Son. Thanks to both of them, the Father and the Son, we no longer find ourselves "bellying up to a bar" but by His grace we gladly join with our brethren in "coming up to the Table" to drink with our King in memory of His death, burial and resurrection from the dead knowing that He is coming back for us to take us to be with Him in that place where we will drink of "the water of life freely."
Prayer

Father in heaven, we are ashamed of our past life but revel in the thought that “while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” While we were intoxicated, while we used His name in vain, while we wallowed in every transgression possible, You loved us and provided a way for us to be forgiven at the cost of Your only begotten Son. This marvelous grace is too much for us to understand but we so very thankfully accept it. Father, as we drink of the cup and as we eat the loaf fill our hearts with such an overwhelming love for Him and a profound hatred for our sin that we will leave His Table being more committed to doing His will than we were when we came to it. We ask this in the name of the One whose blood and body are before us. Amen.