



**SEEING OPPORTUNITY;  
PREPARING YOURSELF; STEPPING  
UP TO SERVE!**

**(Slide #2) Introduction:**

- A. We Live In A Time That Is Very Distressing -- Young Men And Women Who Give Their Lives To Terrorism!
  - 1. They most often come from quite affluent families.
  - 2. They claim to be religious; however, they are often very secular and immoral.
  - 3. Interestingly, many of those who kill others and themselves don't seem to have been focused on becoming jihadis until a few months or a couple of years before doing so.
  - 4. But oh what devastation they can cause!
- B. I Want To Contrast That With Three Biblical Characters Who Prepared Themselves From Their Youth, Who Saw Opportunity, Who Stepped Up To Serve, And Who Were Dynamic Servants Of The Holy God Of Heaven, Not The Jihadist Ways Of Allah And Of The Islamic Terrorists Of Our Present Age!

**I. (Slide #3) Moses.**

- A. Here Was A Young Jewish Boy Born To A Couple Who Faced The Intense Pressure Of Bondage In Egypt.
  - 1. Amram and Jochabed were believers in God.
  - 2. (►) Pharaoh commanded the Jews to kill their baby boys -- NOT THIS COUPLE! Ex. 1:7 - 2:10
    - a. They would hide him before they would kill him!
    - b. They did it because of their faith! Heb. 11:23 "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw *he* was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command."

- c. Miriam watched for his safety, suggested that she knew a nurse who could raise Moses; thus his mother raised Him and taught Him about the TRUE God of Heaven!
3. He could have enjoyed pleasure, power, and prestige all his life if he had chosen to be known as Pharaoh's son!
  - a. Ac. 7:22 "And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds."
  - b. However, he rejected that privilege!
  - c. Heb. 11:24-26 "By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, <sup>25</sup>choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, <sup>26</sup>esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward."
- B. When Moses Was 40 Years Old, He Slew An Egyptian Who Was Beating An Israelite, He Fled To Midian. Ex. 2:11-15
  1. Heb. 11:27 "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible."
  2. There he found his wife, Zipporah. Ex. 2:21
  3. There he learned the land through which he would lead Israel on their journey out of Egypt.
  4. There he got lots of wisdom from his father-in-law Jethro.
  5. It took 40 more years to prepare him for his work!
- C. Called By God, This Fearful, Hesitant, And Insecure Man Tried To Find Every Excuse To Show That He Was Not The Man For The Job. However, God Knew That He WAS The Man For The Job. Ex. 2:23-4:18
- D. **(Slide #4)** Moses Led Israel Out Of Egyptian Bondage!
  1. This was after the devastation of the 10 plagues upon the Egyptian land! Ex. 7:14 - 12:33
  2. He led these terrified people with the Egyptians stalking at their heels! 12:34 -14:31
  3. God gave them an amazing supernatural deliverance! Heb. 11:28,29 "By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them. <sup>29</sup>By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry *land*, *whereas* the Egyptians, attempting *to do* so, were drowned."

- E. **(Slide #5)** After Three Months They Came To Mt. Sinai; There Moses, Following God's Commands, Got The People Ready To Hear God Speak His Law To Them!
  - 1. God's glory was TERRIFYING to the people!
  - 2. God gave the Israelites His Law for them. Ex. 20-23
- F. **(Slide #6)** Later God Had Moses To Come To The Mountain to Receive The 10 Commandments On Tables Of Stone! Ex. 24-34
  - 1. God gave Moses more commands.
  - 2. He laid out the pattern for the Tabernacle.
  - 3. He then gave Moses the Law on 2 Tables of stone.
  - 4. When Moses returned and found the people worshipping the golden calf, he threw the 2 tables of stone down and broke them.
  - 5. God gave Him 2 new tables of stone.
- G. For 40 Years Moses Led Those Murmuring, Sinning People And Yet Never Turned Bitter Or Turned Against God!
- H. He Is In The "Hall Of Faith" Of Heb. 11!

## **II. (Slide #7) Ezra.**

- A. He Was A Dynamic Priest, Reformer, Scribe, Student Of God's Law, And Proclaimer Of That Law.
- B. He Was In Babylonian Captivity.
- C. Perhaps The Most Important Scripture Describing Ezra: Ezra 7:10 "For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do *it*, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel."
- D. During The Days Of Artaxerxes, The King Of Persia, Ezra Asked The King To Be Allowed To Return To Jerusalem.

1. (►) Artaxerxes gave Ezra a letter allowing any Jew who was so minded to return with Ezra. Ezra 7:13 (This was 58 years after the Temple was rebuilt in 516 B.C. -- 458 B.C. We are first introduced to Ezra in 536 B.C.)
2. He gave them silver and gold to buy animals for sacrifice and vessels for the rebuilt Temple. Ezra 7
3. **(Slide #8)** Ezra had such faith in and trust in God that he refused to ask the king for a band of soldiers to protect them on their journey! 8:21,22
  - a. They fasted and prayed for God's help!
  - b. His faith: "Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions. <sup>22</sup>For I was ashamed to request of the king an escort of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy on the road, because we had spoken to the king, saying, "The hand of our God *is* upon all those for good who seek Him, but His power and His wrath *are* against all those who forsake Him." Ezra 8:21,22
4. Ezra's reforms:
  - a. He condemned their sins -- living like idolaters and marrying their children. Ezra 9:1,2
  - b. He commanded them to divorce their idolatrous wives! 10
5. **(Slide #9)** Ezra Disappears From The Biblical Historical Picture; He Reappears As An Old Priest And Scribe To Read The Law Of Moses To The People. Neh. 8:1-13. This was about 458 B.C.
  - a. He brought the Law out and read it to the people. 1
  - b. He read it from morning till noon. 3
  - c. He helped them understand the Law and Its meaning! 3,8
    1. "Then he read from it in the open square that *was* in front of the Water Gate from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people *were attentive* to the Book of the Law." 3
    2. "So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped *them* to understand the reading." 8

### III. (Slide #10) Esther.

- A. She Was A Young Jewish Girl Who Was In Captivity Under The Persian King Ahasuerus.
- B. She Was A Beautiful Girl, The Daughter Of Abihail, The Benjamite. Es. 2:7,15

- C. She Was Known As Hadassah Meaning “Myrtle.” Esther 2:7
- D. (►) She Was Brought Up By Her Uncle, Mordecai. Esther 2:7
- E. **(Slide #11)** When Ahasuerus Deposed The Queen, Esther Became The Queen Of Persia. Esther 1; 2:8-23
- F. **(Slide #12)** Haman, The Chief Prince Of Ahasuerus, HATED Mordecai And Transferred That Hatred To ALL Of The Jews. He Got Permission To Make A Decree And Set A Date When All The Jews Would Be Killed. 3
- G. Mordecai, In Agony, Told Esther About The Decree And Reminded Her That She, A Jewess, Would Not Escape! 4:13 “And Mordecai told *them* to answer Esther: ‘Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews.’”
- H. He Also Suggest That Perhaps God’s Providence Was At Work -- God Might Use Her To Deliver The Jews. 4:14 “For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this?”
- I. Esther Courageously Approached The King Even Though She Was Uninvited. She Invited The King And Haman To A Banquet. 5:1-13
- J. Haman In His Seething Hate, Built Gallows On Which He Planned To Kill Mordecai. 5:14
- K. Ahasuerus, Unable To Sleep, Read His Chronicles And Realized That Mordecai Had Informed Of Two Chamberlains Plot To Kill The King; He Literally Spared The King’s Life. The King Called In Haman And Asked How A Person Should Be Honored; Haman Thought The Honor Was For Him. As Haman Left The Meeting With The King, He Passed Mordecai Who Refused To Honor Him. 6
- L. The King And Haman Attended Esther’s Banquet; She Invited them To Another Banquet The Next Day. **(Slide #13)** At The Second Banquet She Identified The Plot To Kill The Jews And Haman As Its Author! 7:1-6

- M. **(Slide #14)** The King Condemned Haman; He Was Hung On His Own Gallows.  
7:10
- N. A Second Decree Was Instituted That Gave The Jews The Right To Defend  
Themselves On The Day They Were Supposed To Be Slain. 9
- O. The Jews Established The Feast Of Purim As A Memorial Of Their Salvation.

**IV. (Slide #15) The Present-Day Application:**

- A. (►) I Want To Speak To You About A Very Important Topic That Impacts Us  
As A Whole Congregation And Many Of You Personally!
- B. (►) We MUST Address The Present And Future Of Leadership In This  
Congregation!
  - 1. Present Elders Ages:
    - a. 55
    - b. 61
    - c. 62
    - d. 63
    - e. 77
  - 2. Our congregation's present and future is precious and important!
- C. (►) An Opportunity To Address This Need -- Men's Leadership Class On  
Wednesday Nights For The Next Two Quarters.
  - 1. It begins Wednesday evening.
  - 2. It meets in the Activity Center.
- D. **(Slide #16)** Observations From Moses, Ezra, And Esther That Will Assist Us:
  - 1. (►) Young people MUST be instilled with great faith early in life!
  - 2. (►) It must be a life-long development; not just a few months or a couple  
of years response and emotional response to livid hate as in seen in the  
jihadis.
  - 3. (►) It demands intense preparation in heart and in God's Word.

4. **(Slide #17)** It requires courage to rise above self-doubt, internal and external fears.
5. (►) God can use prepared people to lead his people.
6. (►) It requires faith, prayer, and reliance upon God.
7. **(Slide #18)** Mates, parents, and brethren must be encouragers and mentors.
8. (►) It requires calling people to obey God even when they have or are rebelling against him.
9. (►) It requires perseverance in face of whatever odds you face.
10. **(Slide #18)** Women must be encouragers and plan to be mates and helpers of their husbands who become leaders.
11. (►) God will use the prepared who see opportunities and step up to serve to carry out His Will in nations and in congregations!

**(Slide #20) Conclusion:**

- A. This Message Is Critical!
- B. I Ask You Men To Seriously Consider And To Prayerfully Contemplate What You Can Do For The Lord's Cause Now And In The Future!
- C. Commit Yourself To Allow Him To Use You!