

ESTHER CHAPTER ONE

This book and the Book of Ruth are the only Old Testament books named for women. Like Song of Solomon, Obadiah, and Nahum, the New Testament does not quote from Esther. “Hadassah” meaning “myrtle,” was the Hebrew name of Esther. The name Esther mean something hidden which is very appropriate. She was the orphaned daughter of her father Abihail and grew up in Persia with her older cousin, Mordecai, who raised her as if she were his own daughter. The events of the book cover a 10-year period from 483 to 473 B.C. of the reign of Xerxes. Ahasuerus is the title. The events occurred between those recorded in the sixth and seventh chapters of Ezra. Even though the name of God is nowhere mentioned in the book, His sovereignty and providence are evident throughout. The book also explains the origin of the Feast of Purim , on the thirteenth and fourteenth days of Adar (Feb. / Mar.), when Jews celebrate the deliverance from Haman. One final nugget before we start, and I am indebted to Dr. Chuck Missler for this. If David had allowed Semei to be killed there would have been no Mordecai since he was a descendant.² Sam 16 If Saul had killed Agag as he was instructed to do, there would have been no Haman.

There is a beauty contest of sorts that places Mordecai’s young cousin, Esther, exactly where she needs to be at a crucial time for her people. Her story clearly shows that God is always present and active in the affairs of human history, even when He seems hidden. Only God could raise Esther, this female Jewish exile, to a position of unusual authority in a culture that valued neither women nor Jews. Ester is another of those unlikely people that God uses for His purpose.

Now, before we get into the chapters let's talk about types for a minute. Types, in scripture, are a picture of things to come. The Old Testament is full of these types. Two of the most famous are the rocks in the wilderness. These two rocks are a type of the Lord Jesus Christ and these rocks are one of the reasons Moses did not get to go into the promised land. Turn with me to Exodus chapter 17 vs 6. **Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water**

out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. So here we have the rock smitten and living water flows from it. Moses has done what God told him to. Now turn to Numbers chapter 20 vs 7 and following. **And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, {20:8} Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. {20:9} And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him. {20:10} And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? {20:11} And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts [also].** Notice the difference here. Moses did not do as God commanded and speak to the rock. Instead he struck it twice. This breaks the typology. The first time we smite the Rock (capital R). You do not get to smite Him again. From that point you speak to the Rock. That action, and not believing God and going into the promised land when he first had the chance, kept him from ever going in. You all remember that God took Moses up on the mountain and showed him the promised land but He did not allow him to go in.

Now for the types in the book of Esther. King Ahasuerus is a type of God the Father. I found this odd since he is a pagan king. Vashti, the queen, is a type of rebellious Israel. Esther is a type of redeemed Israel. Mordecai is a type of the Holy Spirit and Haman is a type of the Antichrist. If you are beginning to suspect that this book is about the tribulation period you are right.

1 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:)

Ahasuerus is the Hebrew form of the name Xerxes. This is the Persian king who has now been ruling for about three years. Due to their disobedience and worship of idols the Jews had been carried into captivity by the Babylonians. The Babylonians had later been conquered by the Medes and Persians.

2 That in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the palace,

Shushan was the capital of Elam which was the southwestern area of modern Iran. Modern Iran is the country formerly known as Persia. At Shushan, Darius the conquerer of Babylon, and father of Ahasuerus, built his royal palace there. Most of the events recorded in the Book of Esther took place in Shushan. Both the prophet Daniel and Nehemiah lived there at different times.

3 In the third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his princes and his servants; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, being before him:

This party was really a diplomatic dinner and may have included over 10,000 people. The governors of the various provinces had gathered for this feast. It appears from the verse above, that even his servants were included in this celebration.

4 When he shewed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty many days, even an hundred and fourscore days.

The text does not tell us the reason for this banquet, but history tells us that Ahasuerus waged war against the Greeks in the following year. This banquet was probably an attempt to get all of the princes' support in the coming war. The war did not go well and Ahasuerus' forces suffered a humiliating defeat.

5 And when these days were expired, the king made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan the palace, both unto great and small, seven days, in the court of the garden of the king's palace;

Now, near the end of the festivities, the party expands to include all of the inhabitants of the palace.

6 Where were white, green, and blue, hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble: the beds were of gold and silver, upon a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black, marble.

The New Testament application is that one day the King will put on a supper for His servants and followers. Don't miss the Marriage Supper of the Lamb which will last for the seven years while the Tribulation period is going on on the Earth. (I am aware that some commentators incorrectly place the Marriage Supper in the millennium)

7 And they gave them drink in vessels of gold, (the vessels being diverse one from another,) and royal wine in abundance, according to the state of the king.

The last part of the verse is interesting and may have either of two meanings. It may mean that the wine was the best available or, more likely, it may mean according to how drunk the king was at the time. The fact that the drinking cups were of gold, just showed the extreme wealth of the Persian king. It would have taken many barrels of wine to have enough to furnish so large a party.

8 And the drinking was according to the law; none did compel: for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man's pleasure.

Usually at these banquets everyone was expected to drink a large amount and if one did not it could be considered an insult to the host. In this case though, the king had made an exception and no one was required to drink more than they wanted. No doubt this was to make a better impression on the princes and help to insure their loyalty in the coming war.

9 Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to king Ahasuerus.

Now Vashti, the queen, comes into the story. Though Vashti is a Gentile she appears here as a type of rebellious Israel. The woman, in those days, literally took her life in her hands if she disobeyed the king. Women were property and were treated as such. Did you ever wonder why, in scripture, the woman is never told to love her husband but the husband is commanded to love his wife. The wife is commanded only to respect and honor her husband. The reason is simple. The wife had no choice in the one she married. The prospective husband took a couple of chickens and a goat and traded them to the bride's father. He had a choice, she did not.

10 On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven chamberlains that served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king,

These men were eunuchs, and such persons were made use of in the eastern countries to, wait upon women, and so were proper to be sent on the king's errand to the queen.

11 To bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to shew the people and the princes her beauty: for she was fair to look on.

There has been much speculation as to why the queen refused to come. Some say it was because she would be expected to perform before a group of drunken men. The Bible does not say why. At any rate she was taking her life in her hands. I believe the only reason he did not have her killed was because she was pregnant with his son at this time. She later gave birth to the son so it seems she was allowed to remain in the harem.

12 But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by his chamberlains: therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him.

The king's anger was aroused, because of embarrassment. The princes were gathered to decide whether or not they were going to follow him into war against Greece, and he could not even control his own wife.

13 Then the king said to the wise men, which knew the times, (for so was the king's manner toward all that knew law and judgment:

When the queen refused to obey at least the king had enough sense to call for some advice from his wise men. These men sought to help him out of an embarrassing political situation so that the people of Persia would know their king could command both his wife and his country.

14 And the next unto him was Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, which saw the king's face, and which sat the first in the kingdom;)

All of these men sat near the king at the table of the feast, and were treated with great respect. They had high offices directly under the king. We may assume that some of them were Medes, from the mention of "Persia and Media" here.

15 What shall we do unto the queen Vashti according to law, because she hath not performed the commandment of the king Ahasuerus by the chamberlains?

The king desired to know what law was provided in such a case as her's, and what to be done according to it. Notice "we" in the verse. The king did not want to make this decision himself in the heat of the moment of anger. He also wanted it to be according to the law.

16 And Memucan answered before the king and the princes, Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes, and to all the people that are in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus.

The wise men concluded that the queen had indeed wronged the king and further that once the news spread abroad the other wives would believe they could disobey their husbands.

17 For this deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, so that they shall despise their husbands in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not.

The public shame that she had brought on the king would affect the entire kingdom. A king could not expect the people to do as he commanded, unless his queen set the example of obedience. The Persians had been so sure this would never happen, that there was no specific law against it. The advisers and the king would have to decide what would be appropriate punishment.

18 Likewise shall the ladies of Persia and Media say this day unto all the king's princes, which have heard of the deed of the queen. Thus shall there arise too much contempt and wrath.

Vashti had not only disobeyed the king but had set a bad example for the rest of the wives in the kingdom. In other words, if the queen can do it we can do it.

19 If it please the king, let there go a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, That Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she.

Normally the king would have quietly divorced her but since this was a public spectacle it had to be dealt with publicly. Since she had disgraced him before the entire land, this punishment must be public as well. It was not enough to punish her. They wrote a law, so this would not happen again.

20 And when the king's decree which he shall make shall be published throughout all his empire, (for it is great,) all the wives shall give to their husbands honour, both to great and small.

All the wives shall give to their husbands honor, both to great and small": Speaking respectfully to them, yielding a ready and cheerful obedience to all their commands. Which would be done to princes and peasants, to high and low, to every rank of men. They wanted this to strike fear into their wives, so that this would not happen again. This was not just for Persia, but for all the provinces, as well.

21 And the saying pleased the king and the princes; and the king did according to the word of Memucan:

In a moment of weakness, the king was persuaded to declare a law that could not be broken, a law that also could not really be enforced. They all decided this was a good solution to a difficult problem. It would also, let all of the king's subjects know that the king did not let Vashti get away with this.

22 For he sent letters into all the king's provinces, into every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language, that every man should bear rule in his own house, and that it should be published according to the language of every people.

The women's libbers do not like the law that Ahasuerus put out but look at what Paul has to say in the New Testament. **Ephesians 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. {5:23} For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. {5:24} Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so [let] the wives [be] to their own husbands in every thing. {5:25} Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;**

ESTHER CHAPTER TWO

1 After these things, when the wrath of king Ahasuerus was appeased, he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what was decreed against her.

Some time has now passed and Ahasuerus is missing his queen. It is likely that,if he had not passed a law forbidding it,he would have reconciled with her.

2 Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, Let there be fair young virgins sought for the king:

I would bet the farm that he did not object to that suggestion. This is reinforcing the fact that women had no choice in the matter though in this case,neither did the parents. Suppose that President Obama had sent the IRS around to round up our daughters. That's why we have a second amendment to the constitution.

3 And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan the palace, to the house of the women, unto the custody of Hege the king's chamberlain, keeper of the women; and let their things for purification be given them:

Apparently it took a year to get these girls cleaned up. These young, beautiful virgins were to be gathered from the many provinces that Xerxes ruled. They would be brought to the womens' quarters at the palace, and prepared to meet the king. They would be given fine clothes,perfumes,spices and ointments.

4 And let the maiden which pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti. And the thing pleased the king; and he did so.

Don't think the girls who were not chosen got to go home. They would have been kept in the harem. You can clearly see God's hand in all of this. God gave Esther her great beauty and put both her and Mordecai in the right place at the right time.

5 Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite;

Normally the term “Jew” was applied only to those from the tribe of Judah. It's use here clearly shows that it is to be applied to all of the descendants of Israel. Just how Mordecai got to Shushan from Babylon is not told. He would have been in the same captivity as Daniel and Ezekiel.

6 Who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away.

Given the wisdom and knowledge that God had given to Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego and Ezekiel it is no great leap to suppose that Mordecai shared in these special blessings.

7 And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter.

Hadassah is the Hebrew name of Esther. She was probably given the Babylonian name Esther after the Babylonian goddess Ishtar. The story of Esther's rise from an unknown Jewish girl to queen of a mighty empire illustrates how God uses events and people to fulfill His promise to His chosen people.

8 So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was brought also unto the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women.

Again we see God's hand at work as He makes Esther a favorite of the eunuch in charge of the young women. I think we can safely assume that Esther had that special sweetness of personality to match her beauty. We are later told that everyone loved her.

9 And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness of him; and he speedily gave her her things for purification, with such things as belonged to her, and seven maidens, which were meet to be given her, out

of the king's house: and he preferred her and her maids unto the best place of the house of the women.

When Hegai saw Esther, he was pleased with her, and he wanted every advantage shown her. He assigned 7 maidservants to her and gave her the nicest of the women's apartments. We may safely assume that the LORD caused both Hegai and the king to be pleased with Esther.

10 Esther had not shewed her people nor her kindred: for Mordecai had charged her that she should not shew it.

Esther did not reveal to the king that she was a Hebrew. Mordecai did not even allow her to tell the king that he had raised her. It may well be that many of the Persians in the city had the same hatred for Jews shown by Haman.

11 And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know how Esther did, and what should become of her.

Mordecai being one of the court, and in a high post, he might walk there without being examined, and called to an account for it. We are also told that he sat in the gate. That position would be at least as good as our city council. Mordecai was very interested in Esther, since she was like a daughter to him. Not many men would be allowed to walk before the court of the women.

12 Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with other things for the purifying of the women;)

Each woman prepared herself for “twelve months”, just for one night with the king. She might never see him again. These verses highlight the inhumanity of polygamy. “Myrrh” was not only an ingredient in holy anointing oil as used in Exodus 30:22-33, it was also among the gifts presented to young Jesus by the wise men, it was offered to Jesus as He hung on the cross, and was used by Nicodemus to anoint Jesus’ body for burial.

13 Then thus came every maiden unto the king; whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house.

The chamberlain was obliged to furnish her with whatever she asked. This would have been things like perfumes, jewels or even musical instruments. This is just saying, that every one of these maidens, individually, were given whatever clothes and ornaments they wanted to wear.

14 In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, which kept the concubines: she came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and that she were called by name.

Each of these young women went in for one night then never again unless they were called for by name. From there they went into the second house and lived out their lives there.

15 Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her.

Everyone who sees Esther is impressed by her. Obviously there is more than beauty at play here since there were plenty of other beautiful girls there at the palace. You can see God's hand in this. He is moving her into a position where she can be used to save her people.

16 So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.

This is the tenth month so it would have been about four years since Vashti was put away.

17 And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti.

It was usual with the Oriental kings to put a crown on the heads of their wives at the time of marriage, and declare them queens. Esther was his choice of all the beautiful virgins of the provinces. He loved her so much, that he chose her to be his queen and crowned her immediately.

18 Then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, even Esther's feast; and he made a release to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the state of the king.

As soon as Esther was crowned queen a great feast was made for her and notices of the new queen, as well as gifts, were sent out to all the provinces.

19 And when the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai sat in the king's gate.

This may have been a rerun of the first group of virgins or perhaps a second group. There seems to have been no shortage of virgins in Shushan.

20 Esther had not yet shewed her kindred nor her people; as Mordecai had charged her: for Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him.

Esther showed great respect to Mordecai, as she would a father. She had not told the king, or anyone else, that she was a Hebrew or that she was raised by Mordecai. This did not change once she became queen. In her continual heeding of Mordecai's godly counsel, she exemplifies true submission to the ultimate will of God.

21 In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door, were wroth, and sought to lay hands on the king Ahasuerus.

The fact that Mordecai sat in the king's gate showed that he had a position of some power. You might remember that Lot also sat in the gate of Sodom. It was a position like our city council or county commissioners.

22 And the thing was known to Mordecai, who told it unto Esther the queen; and Esther certified the king thereof in Mordecai's name.

No doubt God caused this to come to Mordecai's attention. This was a wise move on the part of Esther. It would come in handy later when her own life and the lives of her people were at stake.

23 And when inquisition was made of the matter, it was found out; therefore they were both hanged on a tree: and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king.

The king had this checked out and found it to be true. He had them both hung in punishment. This is a matter of historical record. It is likely that they were the inventors of crucifixion.

ESTHER CHAPTER THREE

1 After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him.

Haman would have been a descendant of Agag, the king Saul was told to destroy. Saul disobeyed and now Agag's descendants carry a real hatred of the Jews. These are the Amalekites who have been fighting the Jews since the Jews were in the wilderness.

2 And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence.

Understanding the history, it is easy to understand why Mordecai refused to bow to an ancient enemy of his people. There is a question as to whether Esther and Mordecai were inclined to obey the Mosaic Law. Nothing in the book indicates that they were strict keepers of the Jewish law. The refusal to bow may be more grounded in the feud between the Benjamites and the Amalekites.

3 Then the king's servants, which were in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the king's commandment?

It seems the servants did not want Mordecai to get into trouble for not bowing to Haman. They asked him why he didn't just go ahead and bow, and avoid trouble.

4 Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand: for he had told them that he was a Jew.

The fact that Mordecai was a Jew seems to come as a surprise to Haman. It seems evident from Haman's fury and attempted genocide, that there were

strong anti-Semitic attitudes in Shushan, This may explain Mordecai's reluctance to reveal his true ethnic background. Have you ever stopped to consider that anti-semitism makes no sense from a logical standpoint? They,as a people,excel at everything they do. They are leaders in medicine,art,literature,music,finance and on and on. They are an asset to any nation and yet they are hated. This has to be from Satan,allowed by God ,for His purposes.

5 And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath.

Keep the type in mind. Haman is a type of the Antichrist and the Antichrist has always had a hatred of the Jews. In redneck this would be;"how dare this Jew,who is a captive,not bow down to me". Do you see the sins of of both pride and arrogance there?

6 And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had shewed him the people of Mordecai: wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai.

Haman was being satanically against the entire Jewish race in an unsuccessful attempt to change the course of God's plan for Israel. Haman would like to destroy all of the Jews in the kingdom of Persia, instead of just killing Mordecai.

7 In the first month, that is, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar.

It appears that Haman cast lots (Pur), to see what day and month he would set the massacre of the Jews. Esther married the king on the seventh year, so it appears she had been married to him over 4 years when this happened. Proverbs 16:33 states that God controlled the outcome of the lot.

8 And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them.

How arrogant is it for people like this Haman and Hitler as well as others to believe that they are more important than an entire nation of people. The king's utter indifference to the fate of millions of his subjects has found modern parallels in Hitler, Stalin, and Mao.

9 If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasuries.

The exact dollar amount is uncertain, but reportedly it would have weighed 375 tons and equaled almost 70% of the king's annual revenue. Since this sum would have been derived from the plunder of the Jews, it indicates that they had grown prosperous. So when Haman promised the greedy, recently defeated King Ahasuerus that sum if he signed a proclamation to "destroy" (literally "wipe out"), the Jews, he was promising great wealth. Do you get the feeling that this king was not the sharpest knife in the drawer.

10 And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy.

This is the signet ring of the king. Anything it was stamped on was automatically an order from the king

11 And the king said unto Haman, The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee.

Confiscation always accompanies execution in the East, and the goods of those who are put to death naturally reverts their property to the ruler, who either keeps them or makes a grant of them. Of course, the king would not allow Haman to use his own money for this purpose. Haman could have all the silver he found on these people for himself after he killed them.

12 Then were the king's scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that were over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring.

The number thirteen, in scripture, is associated with rebellion and other wickedness. This is where we get the superstition about the number thirteen. There is nothing new under the sun. These scribes would draw up the edict that would be sealed with the king's signet ring. This king did not even seem to know what the wording of the edict was. He trusted Haman with all of that. This was sent to every province, so it had to be sent to Judah, as well.

13 And the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey.

There goes the pony express again. The contents of these edicts were that all of the Hebrew people should be killed, even the women and the children. They should be killed on March 13, which was still several months away.

14 The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, that they should be ready against that day.

As a commandment from the king it would be irrevocable. Each province was to do their own killing on that particular day. It is difficult to understand why one person could have that much hate built up within him that he planned to kill all the Jews.

15 The posts went out, being hastened by the king's commandment, and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. And the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city Shushan was perplexed.

It seems that Haman and the king were drinking buddies. There was no reason to rush to get the letters out, but Haman wanted to make sure everyone knew. Until now the Persians had been good to the Jews. The scripture does not say that the king knew the exact content of these letters.



ESTHER CHAPTER FOUR

1 When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry;

Sackcloth was made from the hair of goats or camels. It was uncomfortable to wear next to the skin and provided a physical reminder of his sorrow. This display of grief was something that all Hebrews and Persians would have understood.

2 And came even before the king's gate: for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth.

No one got in unless they were properly clothed. Nothing was allowed that might upset the king. This also means that Mordecai could not get anywhere near Esther.

3 And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

There was no way for the Jews to stop this. They are forced to turn to God for deliverance. This is a clear picture of what will happen to the Jews during the tribulation. They were fasting, praying, and mourning in hope the LORD would see their problem, and come to their rescue.

4 So Esther's maids and her chamberlains came and told it her. Then was the queen exceedingly grieved; and she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai, and to take away his sackcloth from him: but he received it not.

All the Jews throughout the kingdom are following Mordecai's lead and fasting and praying. Esther still does not know what is going on. At this point her concern is for Mordecai whom she obviously loves as a father.

5 Then called Esther for Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend upon her, and gave him a commandment to Mordecai, to know what it was, and why it was.

Mordecai still can't come to the court of the women's house since he is still wearing sackcloth. Ester is determined to find out the problem so she sends Hatach. Esther wanted to hear from Mordecai exactly what this was all about, and how this edict was made.

6 So Hatach went forth to Mordecai unto the street of the city, which was before the king's gate.

Mordecai is street preaching. He is expressing his sorrow in a very public manner

7 And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him, and of the sum of the money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them.

Evidently the queen and all of her house were very sheltered from the outside world. The entire city may have been "perplexed" but no one in Esther's household had the news.

8 Also he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them, to shew it unto Esther, and to declare it unto her, and to charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people.

Esther has a problem. No one comes into the king's presence unless they are summoned. Esther is taking her life in her hands if she goes in unasked. This was a big load to put on the shoulders of Esther. If the edict was carried out, she would die the same as all of the other Jews. The king did not know that she was a Jew. Haman did not know that at this point either.

9 And Hatach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai.

Mordecai reveals his own conviction that God will not permit the extinction of His people: If Esther fails, God will have another way of saving the Jews, since God's purposes are not thwarted by the failure on one individual to respond positively to His leading; Hatach must have suspected that Esther too, was a Jew. He was her servant, so it was not likely he would tell anyone.

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 women, 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.

There was no other way of corresponding and conversing but by a eunuch. The wives of kings never being allowed visitors. Mordecai no doubt knew the law of the Medes and Persians about approaching the king. He also knew the king could be persuaded, just as he had been when he made the law that brought Esther to the palace.

12 And they told to Mordecai Esther's words.

Esther and Mordecai did not have the assurance that we have. We can approach the King directly.

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.

Mordecai reminds Esther that she is a Jew too and will suffer in spite of the fact that she is queen. It may well be that the king is still not aware of what is in Haman's decree.

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 knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

God has raised Esther to her position as queen. What may not be so apparent is that God has set this whole process in motion from the time when Esther was a small child and was placed in the care of Mordecai. In this entire book we see God constantly working behind the scenes.

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.

If nothing else works try fasting and prayer. If you really need an answer from the Lord then fasting may well help to get that answer. That last phrase is one that is similar to Mary's answer. "Be it unto me according to thy will". That is what Esther is saying, just in different words.

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

This was saying he gathered the Jews together and proclaimed a three day fast. Many of the Jews realized the seriousness of the edict, and they would have gladly fasted with him to try to get help from God.

ESTHER CHAPTER FIVE

1 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.

This was dangerous for Esther. Her life would be taken, or spared, with the wishes of her king and husband. She had fasted and prayed and now was assured the LORD was with her. She put on the garments of the queen to go to her king on his royal throne. She did not rush into the throne room unannounced but waited outside in full view of the king.

2 And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight: and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.

When he reached out his scepter to her, it showed that he was not angry with her for coming to him unannounced. She was forgiven for any error on her part in coming. He knew something of real importance was troubling her, or she would not have taken this chance.

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

It was very obvious from this statement, that he had great love for Esther. It is also obvious that he respected her. He would have to admire her courage as well. This is a type and shadow of the Christians drawing near to the throne of God. He has invited us to come. It is interesting again, that the Christians will be joint-heirs with Jesus. He has offered to share with us as well.

4 And Esther answered, If it seem good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him.

There were many people still praying for her. She had the wisdom of God guiding her every word. It would have been unusual for her to ask the king to come to dinner, but it was extremely unusual for her to ask Haman to come too. No doubt this made Haman think even more highly of himself.

5 Then the king said, Cause Haman to make haste, that he may do as Esther hath said. So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

The king gave Haman permission to come. They came to the banquet as Esther had requested. This was wisely done, to prepare for what she had to say to the king. She waited until they were well into the wine, and when she had her adversary with him alone.

6 And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed.

The king must have seen that there was something more than a mere banquet going on there. He repeated that he would give her up to half of the kingdom, if that was her desire. We may assume that Esther still did not feel sure of herself in this matter, and that the LORD was leading her in every word she uttered.

7 Then answered Esther, and said, My petition and my request is;

8 If I have found favour in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition, and to perform my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do to morrow as the king hath said.

We do not know why Esther delayed her request but whatever the reason, God used the delay to further His purposes for Mordecai, Haman, and ultimately the Jewish people. While we are waiting, God is working. She was saying, "give me one more day and I will tell you my request".

9 Then went Haman forth that day joyful and with a glad heart: but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of indignation against Mordecai.

Haman was so enraged at Mordecai's continued refusal to honor him that all the privileges he had been bestowed were as nothing. Selfishness and pride can quickly breed murderous hatred, as it did for Haman. Haman was feeling really proud of himself for being invited to the queen's banquet twice with the king. He still hated Mordecai but what did Mordecai have to lose? Haman could not kill him twice. Haman was still totally unaware that Esther was a Jew.

10 Nevertheless Haman refrained himself: and when he came home, he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife.

This reveals the smallness of Haman's character. He brags on his riches and himself but let's the matter of Mordecai's refusal to bow to him ruin it for him.

11 And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king.

At least 10 sons were fathered by Haman (ch9) , who personified sinful pride. We know from other scripture that God hates pride. Pride was the cause of Lucifer's fall.

12 Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to

morrow am I invited unto her also with the king.

What seemed to delight him most of all was to be invited by the queen, which he judged was doing him singular honor. By the joint affection of the king and queen to him, he thought himself established in his grand position forever.

13 Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.

14 Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and to morrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon: then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made.

Fifty cubits high could have been seen from all over the city. Esther is now ready to make her request and she makes the only request she can under the circumstances. She asks for her life and the lives of her people.

ESTHER CHAPTER SIX

1 On that night could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king.

This is God at work again. Does God ever wake you at 2 AM to give you some insight into a problem? Does He give you the answer to some scriptural problem at odd times of the night? Five years had intervened since Mordecai's loyal, but as yet unrewarded, act. At exactly the proper moment, God providentially intervened so that the king suffered insomnia, called for the book of records, read of Mordecai's unrewarded deeds 5 years past, and then desired to reward him. Since Mordecai's good deed in saving the king's life had been overlooked something must be done and done quickly. The prayers of those who had been fasting, and praying, have been heard. This was the only explanation for the king to suddenly want to look at the book of records, because he could not sleep.

2 And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus.

The king would certainly want to reward the man, Mordecai, who had saved his life. He found no record where that had been done and after asking the reader of the record about it, he said nothing had been done to reward him.

3 And the king said, What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him.

Be sure not to miss the timing here. God causes the chronicles to be read at the exact chapter that discusses Mordecai's telling the king of the plot against the king's life. This is done just before Haman can come in and ask for permission to hang Mordecai.

4 And the king said, Who is in the court? Now Haman was come into the outward court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

Don't ever say God does not have a sense of humor. God is about to turn Haman's evil plan against him. The fasting and praying of the Jews have worked.

5 And the king's servants said unto him, Behold, Haman standeth in the court. And the king said, Let him come in.

It was of God that Haman should be on the spot at this very time, when the king was of the mind to do honor to Mordecai. The king brought Haman in for an entirely different reason than what Haman supposed.

6 So Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour? Now Haman thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself?

This shows just how self centered Haman was. As soon as the king mentioned honoring someone, Haman assumed it was him that was to be honored. We are all that way to some degree. We are all the center of our own little universes. It is when we compare ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ that we see how really bad we are.

7 And Haman answered the king, For the man whom the king delighteth

to honour,

8 Let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head:

Haman really went to the extreme in the blessings he told the king to bestow upon this man, because he believed he was the man himself. He told the king to dress him as a king and put the king's crown upon his head, as if he were king.

9 And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

Haman is laying out what he wants most in life; to be honored like a king.

10 Then the king said to Haman, Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken.

The king had waited too long to honor Mordecai so he tells Haman to hurry. This proud Haman would have to lead the horse, through the city, carrying his worst enemy.

11 Then took Haman the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

The king commanded that nothing fail of what had been spoken.

So, Mordecai was placed on the horse: and brought on horseback through the streets of the city. Haman had to shout out and proclaim before him, thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor. Haman had no choice in this. He had to do it because the king had commanded him to. This was the most humiliating thing that could possibly happen to him. All Haman could do was to shut up and do it.

12 And Mordecai came again to the king's gate. But Haman hastened to his

house mourning, and having his head covered.

After all that bragging the day before now Haman has to go to his wife and friends and tell this story. After such royal treatment, Mordecai simply “came again to the king’s gate”. His was a far different response from Haman’s upon being invited to Esther’s dinner party. Jesus says in Luke 14:11, that people who exalt themselves will be humbled, but those who are humble will be exalted.

13 And Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his friends every thing that had befallen him. Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him, If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him.

Haman is still as self centered as he was when he thought he was the one to be honored. Now it's poor poor pitiful me. Zeresh, the wife and his wise men seem to have a suspicion of what may be coming. There is their statement, ”before whom thou hast begun to fall”.

14 And while they were yet talking with him, came the king's chamberlains, and hasted to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared.

This guy still doesn't seem to have a clue that there is worse coming. This was the second banquet that Haman and the king had been invited to attend by the queen. These chamberlains were working for Esther, and they came for Haman. Neither Esther nor the king, were aware of the embarrassment that had befallen Haman.

ESTHER CHAPTER SEVEN

1 So the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther the queen.

This was speaking of the second banquet. In the last lesson we saw the humiliation of Haman. He still did not know that Esther was a Jew. The king had granted the queen both requests to come to her banquet, but he knew that was not really her request of him since he had already offered her half of the kingdom.

2 And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee:

and what is thy request? and it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom.

Notice that there are two parts to this; a petition and a request. When Esther finally answers she asks for two parts. God always makes a way for His people in time of crisis. He has been working behind the scenes while Haman was plotting and building that tall gallows.

3 Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request:

It had to be a shock to the king, that anyone would dare to threaten the life of his queen. Until now he had not known that Esther was Hebrew. She had never told him, and he had never asked. She first asked him to save her life, and then she asked for the lives of her people.

4 For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage.

When Esther says “sold” she is referring to the ten thousand talents Haman had promised to the king. The second part of her statement is strange. I can't help but wonder why she would not have objected if they were sold as slaves.

5 Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?

In reply to Esther's request that she and her people, be spared from destruction, the outraged king asks two questions about the one behind the master plan: he asks “Who is he?” and “Where is he?” Esther's response was it is this wicked Haman!” The king accepts the disclosure of Esther's ethnicity without comment. Obviously he did not care that she was a Jew. He loved her and he wanted her to be happy.

6 And Esther said, The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen.

I'll bet he was. Haman's honor had quickly turned to humiliation, and then to horror. The king had not suspected Haman. Haman suddenly remembered what his wife and the wise men had told him would happen to him.

7 And the king arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath went into the palace garden: and Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen; for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king.

Do notice that the king controlled his rage and went into the garden to decide what to do with Haman. Remember that this was his drinking buddy. Meantime, Haman knows he has had it.

8 Then the king returned out of the palace garden into the place of the banquet of wine; and Haman was fallen upon the bed whereon Esther was. Then said the king, Will he force the queen also before me in the house? As the word went out of king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.

You could almost feel sorry for this guy; almost but not quite. Keep in mind that these people did not sit down to eat but reclined on couches. Haman has thrown himself on Esther's couch to plead for his life. That was the worst place for the enraged king to find him when he came back into the room.

9 And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king, Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then the king said, Hang him thereon.

This is ironic. If Haman had not built the gallows so high it might not have been noticed. As it was it towered above the city and became the obvious place to hang him. Haman had three capital offenses charged against him. He manipulated the king in planning to kill the queen's people. He was perceived to abuse the queen. Then, he planned to execute a man whom the king had just greatly honored for extreme loyalty to the kingdom.

10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.

Let's close out this chapter with a couple of quotes from Psalms. These are principals that still apply today.

Psalm 9:16 The LORD is known [by] the judgment [which] he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.

Psalm 7:16 His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent

dealing shall come down upon his own pate.

ESTHER CHAPTER EIGHT

1 On that day did the king Ahasuerus give the house of Haman the Jews' enemy unto Esther the queen. And Mordecai came before the king; for Esther had told what he was unto her.

According to the historian Josephus, the property of a traitor in Persia was confiscated by the state. In this case, Xerxes gave the house of Haman, to the queen, and passed on his royal “signet ring” to Mordecai as a gesture of favor and trust. Xerxes’ gift officially signaled that Mordecai had replaced Haman’s position in the kingdom.

2 And the king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it unto Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

Haman was dead. This day spoken of here, was the day of his execution. When Esther admitted that she was a Jew, she also revealed to the king that Mordecai had raised her as if he were her father. Mordecai had been honored recently for saving the life of the king. It was a logical conclusion, that he would take Haman's place as number two man in the country.

3 And Esther spake yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet, and besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite, and his device that he had devised against the Jews.

Even though Haman was dead the edict to kill all the Jews was still in effect. Notice that Esther makes no requests based on anything other than the king's affection for her. In spite of Haman’s death , the Jews were still doomed to destruction by an irreversible decree.

4 Then the king held out the golden sceptre toward Esther. So Esther arose, and stood before the king,

The king loved Esther so did not like to see his queen on her face before him. He raised his scepter for her to stand.

5 And said, If it please the king, and if I have favour in his sight, and the

thing seem right before the king, and I be pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews which are in all the king's provinces:

What she was asking was impossible, because once the seal of the king was on the letters, they were law. She somehow believed the king could rescind the orders because they were given by Haman. What they now did was what we call a work-around, a way to get around something that can not be changed.

6 For how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?

She explains the evil coming upon her people and of their utter destruction. This would not merely be an oppression, but an extermination. She makes use of the word kindred to indicate a closer relationship. Nothing would please the king more than to reverse the letters, if it were possible. Because Esther was a Jew, it would be difficult for her to see her people die, even if the king could save her.

7 Then the king Ahasuerus said unto Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew, Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and him they have hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews.

Now the king had punished Haman for contriving mischief against the Jews. Since this was publicly known, the people would be fearful of doing anything against them, lest they should also incur the king's wrath.

8 Write ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring: for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse.

The king could do nothing about the order that went forth to kill the Jews, because it had the king's seal upon it. He was now telling Mordecai to do whatever he thought would help in this situation and put the seal of the king upon it. The king had no idea how to help the situation that Haman created, but gave Mordecai permission to do whatever he could.

9 Then were the king's scribes called at that time in the third month,

that is, the month Sivan, on the three and twentieth day thereof; and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded unto the Jews, and to the lieutenants, and the deputies and rulers of the provinces which are from India unto Ethiopia, an hundred twenty and seven provinces, unto every province according to the writing thereof, and unto every people after their language, and to the Jews according to their writing, and according to their language.

Mordecai gathered the scribes and sent letters to each of the 127 provinces, in their own language, a letter sealed with the king's signet. It was just as much law as the one Haman had sent.

10 And he wrote in the king Ahasuerus' name, and sealed it with the king's ring, and sent letters by posts on horseback, and riders on mules, camels, and young dromedaries:

These letters had the king's authority behind them. In effect this gave the Jews the power to defend themselves against any attack. There is the matter of the animals used to dispatch these letters. It says camels and young dromedaries which are both camels. Dromedaries are the camels with two humps. It is said that they could run faster and cover more miles in a day.

11 Wherein the king granted the Jews which were in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, both little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey,

These people did not normally have the right to bear arms. This order would give them permission to fight back on the day that all the Jews were to be killed. They were to kill the ones who had intended to kill them in the same manner the first edict had prescribed. They could also take spoil of those they killed. This was now a law giving them the right to defend themselves.

12 Upon one day in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, namely, upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar.

The first order had set the day to kill the Jews. Now, the second order gave the Jews permission to fight back. This would be a one day war, and then both edicts would not be the law any longer.

13 The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, and that the Jews should be ready against that day to avenge themselves on their enemies.

Anywhere there were Jews, there was also permission given for them to defend themselves.

14 So the posts that rode upon mules and camels went out, being hastened and pressed on by the king's commandment. And the decree was given at Shushan the palace.

The decree was given at Shushan the palace with the king's counselors agreeing to it. These letters were sent early, so there would be time for other communications, and to give time for the Jews to make ready to defend themselves.

15 And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple: and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad.

This was a robe of royalty. Mordecai was now officially the second in power in the country. This reminds us of Joseph in Egypt. God puts people where He can use them. Mordecai's crown of gold was just a little shorter than the king's. This was the answer the LORD gave to the prayers and fasting.

16 The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour.

17 And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.

The population realized that the God of the Jews greatly exceeded anything that the Persian deities could offer, especially in light of their recent defeat by the Greeks. It was very obvious that God was with them. Some of the Persians feared when that day came, that some of the Jews would kill them. They converted and became Jews themselves, to keep that from happening.

ESTHER CHAPTER NINE

1 Now in the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put in execution, in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them, (though it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated them;)

The month Adar is the period Feb./Mar. This is still showing God's providential preservation of the Jewish race as He promised Abraham. This was speaking of that specific day that Haman had set for them to kill all of the Jews. The Jews had permission, through Mordecai's edict, to fight and protect themselves.

2 The Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, to lay hand on such as sought their hurt: and no man could withstand them; for the fear of them fell upon all people.

For the fear of them fell upon all people when they understood that Haman was hanged, and had been replaced by Mordecai the Jew, and that the queen herself was a Jew and that the Jews had the royal grant to act both defensively and offensively. There is no doubt but that the panic was of God.

3 And all the rulers of the provinces, and the lieutenants, and the deputies, and officers of the king, helped the Jews; because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them.

The nation has had a change of heart toward the Jews, knowing that the king, the queen, and Mordecai were the ranking royal officials of the land. To be pro-Jewish would put one in favor with the king and his court and put one on the side of God. It was a fearful thing in all the provinces for the second in command to be a Jew himself. The lieutenants, deputies, and officers were afraid to fight against the Jews for fear of reprisal.

4 For Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame went out throughout all the provinces: for this man Mordecai waxed greater and greater.

Mordecai was more and more in the king's favor and increased both in wealth and power. It was almost as if Mordecai was leading the country himself. It appeared the king had turned much of his authority over to Mordecai. He was not only the second in command, but was the relative of the queen. He had power in Persia, as Joseph had in Egypt.

5 Thus the Jews smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, and slaughter, and destruction, and did what they would unto those that hated them.

It's odd that the Jews did not take any of their enemies possessions. The only Jew to profit financially was Esther. She got Haman's property. There is a possibility that the Jews were aware that God had told their ancestors to destroy the Agagites and not to take the spoil but it seems a little far fetched that they are trying to make up for that national sin by Saul and his army.

6 And in Shushan the palace the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men.

This is on the first day. The next day they add 300 more to the total. These next names are the names of Haman's ten sons. This seems harsh to us in our modern society but if you kill all of the enemy they do not come back to harm you later.

7 And Parshandatha, and Dalphon, and Aspatha,

8 And Poratha, and Adalia, and Aridatha,

9 And Parmashta, and Arisai, and Aridai, and Vajezatha,

10 The ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews, slew they; but on the spoil laid they not their hand.

The ten sons of Haman were probably still a threat to Mordecai and the Jews. The fact that the Jews did not take spoil from them showed this was not done for self-gain, but to stop an enemy. This decision stands in sharp contrast to Saul's decision to plunder the Amalekites despite being instructed not to do so in 1 Sam 15:17-19. Unlike Saul, the Jews focused only on the mission at hand, that was, to preserve the Jewish race

11 On that day the number of those that were slain in Shushan the palace was brought before the king.

This pagan king served God by utterly blotting out the Amalekites in accord with God's original decree, by allowing for a second day of killing in Susa to eliminate all Jewish enemies. The leaders of the armies reported to the king the number that had been killed. The king told her of this great loss at the palace, explaining to her that the numbers in all of the provinces must be tremendous. He asked Esther if she was satisfied with this number, or what else did she want to satisfy herself and the Jews.

12 And the king said unto Esther the queen, The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the palace, and the ten sons of Haman; what have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? now what is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: or what is thy request further? and it shall be done.

The king grants Esther one more request. This time she asks for a one day extension so they can kill more of the enemies. While the Jews in the other provinces are celebrating and rejoicing, the ones at Shushan are busy killing more enemies.

13 Then said Esther, If it please the king, let it be granted to the Jews which are in Shushan to do to morrow also according unto this day's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged upon the gallows.

Now, the way I read this is ,that since the ten sons of Haman are already dead ,Esther is having them hanged up for show. Everyone is to see their bodies hanging there and know not to mess with the Jews.

14 And the king commanded it so to be done: and the decree was given at Shushan; and they hanged Haman's ten sons.

That the Jews might be able to seek out and slay the rest of their enemies in Shushan, on the fourteenth day, in like manner as they had on the thirteenth. Haman's ten sons were hanged on the same gallows, their father was hanged on. All this seems a little bloodthirsty for such a beautiful queen.

15 For the Jews that were in Shushan gathered themselves together on the fourteenth day also of the month Adar, and slew three hundred men at Shushan; but on the prey they laid not their hand.

Some of the secular writings say that these three hundred were all Amalekites but the scripture does not say that. In all likelihood it was all such as were

the enemies of the Jews, and rose up against them. So that the whole number slain in Shushan were eight hundred persons, plus the sons of Human. They did not take their valuables. The Jews were not killing them to get their possessions.

16 But the other Jews that were in the king's provinces gathered themselves together, and stood for their lives, and had rest from their enemies, and slew of their foes seventy and five thousand, but they laid not their hands on the prey,

So, I make the total killed seventy five thousand eight hundred and ten, give or take.

17 On the thirteenth day of the month Adar; and on the fourteenth day of the same rested they, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

The Jews out in the provinces celebrated on the thirteenth day of Adar (that is March). This feast has come down through the ages and is still celebrated today. Eventually Mordecai ordered that both days be celebrated as the feast of Purim.

18 But the Jews that were at Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth day thereof, and on the fourteenth thereof; and on the fifteenth day of the same they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

The feast described in the book is the feast of Purim which is sometimes called the Feast of Esther, and is still celebrated by Jews today to commemorate the deliverance of God's people at the hands of Esther and Mordecai. This section tells us why Purim would be celebrated for two days rather than one.

19 Therefore the Jews of the villages, that dwelt in the unwalled towns, made the fourteenth day of the month Adar a day of gladness and feasting, and a good day, and of sending portions one to another.

Those Jews that dwell in walled cities observe Purim on the thirteenth of Adar. Those that do not dwell in walled towns, observed the fourteenth. Because it was miraculous, each of these was kept as a day of public rejoicing for their great deliverance and freedom from their enemies. This

time that was set aside for celebration from year to year is still recognized by the Jews today. The 14th day Adar is about the same as our March.

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,

Some conclude from this verse that Mordecai was the author of the book of Esther; and so he might be, but it does not necessarily follow from this.

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

That it might be an established thing, celebrated annually in all future generations. "That they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, yearly" So, the fourteenth of Adar is called the day of Mordecai, being established by him. "

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.

Having slain all those that rose up against them, and assaulted them. At Purim they should make two days of feasting and joy: Keep both the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month as festivals. Eating and drinking, and making all tokens of joy and gladness. Sending gifts to one another and these now consist of food and drink. These gifts are sent by men to men, and by women to women, and not the contrary. Gifts are given to the poor to purchase food and drink with. This money is not to be used it to any other purpose. A man must not give less than two gifts to the poor; these are called the monies of Purim.

23 And the Jews undertook to do as they had begun, and as Mordecai had written unto them;

They engaged to keep these two days as festivals annually. This was not to be a religious celebration but a civil one. It was to be a way of commemoration of a civil benefit which they had received.

24 Because Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had devised against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur, that is, the lot, to consume them, and to destroy them;

Haman had formed a design to exterminate the Jews from the whole Persian Empire in one day. He had cast lots to find out what would be the luckiest day in the year for him to do it on, and the most unlucky and unfortunate to the Jews. According to the lot, the thirteenth of Adar was pitched upon. Don't miss the thirteen in there. "Pur" we remember, was the term for casting lots. This was established as a Jewish holiday forever. It was called Purim.

25 But when Esther came before the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked device, which he devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.

The king commanded by letters, that Haman's wicked device, which he devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head. That he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai. Not that they were ordered to be hanged together, nor were they. Haman was hanged before on the twenty third day of the month, but his sons not till the fourteenth day of the twelfth month.

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,

The Book of Esther is still read aloud during "Purim", and the congregation shouts and boos whenever Haman is mentioned in order to drown out his name. Feasting and gift-giving are part of the ceremony, as is dressing in masks or costumes. Purim is preceded by the fast of Esther, a one-day fast to commemorate the three-day fast of the Jews.

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;

During the two days of Purim all are obliged to read the book of Esther, which they always read on those days, Priests, Levites, Israelites, men, women, and proselytes, and servants, and they train up little ones to read it:"

28 And that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their seed.

On those days they read the whole book of Esther, written on a roll of parchment, and are careful that everyone reads it. Rather, they say, the reading and learning the law should be omitted, and all commands and service, than the reading this volume. So all might be acquainted with this wonderful deliverance, and keep it in mind. It appears that this was not an optional celebration.

29 Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with all authority, to confirm this second letter of Purim.

This second letter added fasting” and lamentations to the prescribed activity of Purim. Perhaps, the reason that Esther mentioned that she was the daughter of Abihail, was so that all of the people would realize that she was Hebrew also. She might be the queen of Persia, but she was Jew by birth. It was unusual for a queen to be involved in such a letter, but her authority as queen added to the authority of Mordecai as second in command.

30 And he sent the letters unto all the Jews, to the hundred twenty and seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth,

The Jews were scattered in those days. They had not all come back to their homeland when they had been given that option. The fact that they were in a foreign land did not give them the right to overlook Purim. Mordecai and Esther wanted them to know there would be peace for them during the reign of Xerxes and Esther.

31 To confirm these days of Purim in their times appointed, according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them, and as they had decreed for themselves and for their seed, the matters of the fastings and their cry.

Mordecai and Esther set the example by agreeing to keep the feast of Purim themselves and for their descendants.

32 And the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim; and it was written in the book.

This is not saying that Esther wrote this book. This was written in the record book to make sure that it would always be remembered. The book spoken of is the book of the Chronicles.

ESTHER CHAPTER TEN

These next three verses are apparently a postscript. We learn that Mordecai became “second” in the kingdom, much like Joseph in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon. Not only did his obedience gain him the favor of God and man, but he spent his years doing what every leader should do: seeking wealth for his people, and seeking peace for the nation. Mordecai held the office of first minister no longer than eight years. Secular history records that another man was in that office eight years later.

1 And the king Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land, and upon the isles of the sea.

Some understand this as his renewing the taxes and tribute, which he remitted upon his marriage with Esther.

2 And all the acts of his power and of his might, and the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai, whereunto the king advanced him, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?

It appears, that Mordecai became a very powerful second in command. This explains that Mordecai found favor with the king. Since he was second in command, the only office left if he were promoted would have been king.

3 For Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed.

Less than 10 years later Ahasuerus was assassinated. There are no further details concerning Esther and Mordecai. What Mordecai did for less than a decade on behalf of Israel, Jesus Christ will do for all eternity as the Prince of Peace

