

*Analysis of*  
**ESTHER**

**"GOD'S SOVEREIGN PROTECTION OF HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE"**

Mordecai to Esther: "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?"

Esther to Mordecai: "Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish."  
Esther 4:14, 16

Expanded Analytical Outline of ESTHER

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# ESTHER

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### A 1 JEWISH ASCENDANCY 1 - 2

#### B 1 The King's Deposing of the Reluctant Queen Vashti 1

##### C 1 The Open House and Banquet of King Ahasuerus 1:1-9

D 1 The identification of the king: Now it took place in the days of Ahasuerus, <sup>1</sup> the Ahasuerus who reigned from India to Ethiopia over 127 provinces, 1:1

##### D 2 The opening banquet of the King

E 1 The place of the banquet 1:2: {2} in those days as King Ahasuerus sat on his royal throne which *was* at the citadel <sup>2</sup> in Susa,

E 2 The time of the banquet 1:3: {3} in the third year of his reign he gave a banquet

E 3 The guests at the banquet: for all his princes and attendants, the army *officers* of Persia and Media, the nobles and the princes of his provinces being in his presence.

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<sup>1</sup> 1:1 - Ahasuerus: He is the Persian king better known in secular literature by the name Xerxes.

<sup>2</sup> 1:2 - citadel: The citadel at Susa was a strongly-fortified palace complex. The citadel is mentioned in 1:2, 5; 2:3, 5, 8; 3:15; 8:14; 9:6, 11, 12. Ahasuerus' throne was in the citadel (1:2); there was a huge area in a court inside the garden of the king's palace within the citadel that was suitable for dining for huge crowds (1:3-5); there was a harem inside the citadel (2:3, 8); affairs of state were conducted there by a variety of officials (2:5); the king had his own dwelling place inside the citadel (2:8); legislation was crafted there and issued from there (3:15; 8:14); certain protocols had to be observed there (4:1-2). On the 13th day of the month Adar, when enemies of the Jews were permitted by law to attack the Jews, many of them, including Haman's ten sons, apparently gathered within the citadel and a bloody battle ensued, which the Jewish people won decisively, killing 500 of their enemies (9:6, 11, 12). Evidently those 300 additionally killed on the 14th day of the month were in the city of Susa, but not within the citadel complex (9:15).

- D 3 The conference of the King 1:4
  - E 1 The display of the King: {4} And he displayed the riches of his royal glory and the splendor of his great majesty
  - E 2 The time involved: for many days, 180 days.
- D 4 The concluding banquet of the King 1:5-8
  - E 1 The length of the banquet 1:5: {5} When these days were completed, the king gave a banquet lasting seven days
  - E 2 The guests at the banquet: for all the people who were present at the citadel in Susa, from the greatest to the least,
  - E 3 The venue of the banquet: in the court of the garden of the king's palace.
  - E 4 The furnishings for the banquet 1:6
    - G 1 The hangings: {6} *There were hangings of fine white and violet linen held by cords of fine purple linen on silver rings and marble columns,*
    - G 2 The couches: *and couches of gold and silver*
    - G 3 The flooring: on a mosaic pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl and precious stones.
  - E 5 The drinks at the banquet 1:7-8
    - G 1 The elegance of the goblets 1:7: {7} Drinks were served in golden vessels of various kinds,
    - G 2 The plentitude of the wine: and the royal wine was plentiful according to the king's bounty.
    - G 3 The freedom in drinking 1:8: {8} The drinking was *done* according to the law, there was no compulsion, for so the king had given orders to each official of his household that he should do according to the desires of each person.
- D 5 The concurrent banquet of the Queen 1:9
  - E 1 The hostess: {9} Queen Vashti also gave a banquet for
  - E 2 The female guests: the women in the palace which belonged to King Ahasuerus.

- C 2 Queen Vashti's Refusal to be Displayed at the King's Banquet 1:10-12
  - D 1 The condition of the King 1:10: {10} On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine,
  - D 2 The eunuch emissaries of the King: he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar and Carkas, the seven eunuchs who served in the presence of King Ahasuerus,
  - D 3 The command of the King 1:11: {11} to bring Queen Vashti before the king with *her* royal crown
  - D 4 The purpose of the King: in order to display her beauty to the people and the princes, for she was beautiful.
  - D 5 The refusal of the Queen 1:12: {12} But Queen Vashti refused<sup>3</sup> to come at the king's command delivered by the eunuchs.
  - D 6 The wrath of the King: Then the king became very angry and his wrath burned within him.
- C 3 The King's Deposing of the Queen 1:13-22
  - D 1 The king's consultation with the seven princes of Persia and Media 1:13-15
    - E 1 The qualifications of the consultants 1:13-14a
      - G 1 They were wise men 1:13: {13} Then the king said to the wise men
      - G 2 They understood the times: who understood the times--
      - G 3 They knew the law and justice: for it was the custom of the king so *to speak* before all who knew law and justice
      - G 4 They were close to the king 1:14a: {14} and were close to him:
    - E 2 The identity of the consultants 1:14b: Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media
    - E 3 The influence of the consultants: who had access to the

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<sup>3</sup> 1:12 -Vashti refused: It may well be that Vashti had good reasons for refusing to attend the King's Banquet, though none of them are given. It is possible she knew only too well what it would be like to be paraded in front of a vast hall full of drunken men. And yet it is beyond comprehension that, knowing the character flaws of the King, she would defy him and not attend. The only explanation is that the Sovereign God had plans to install one of His daughters as Queen of the most powerful or second most powerful men on earth. Why? In order to protect His people, Israel. This is one of many incidents in the book of Esther that bear the mark of a Sovereign God, quietly working behind the scenes to influence human history.

king's presence and sat in the first place in the kingdom--

- E 4 The question of the King 1:15: {15} "According to law, what is to be done with Queen Vashti, because she did not obey the command of King Ahasuerus *delivered* by the eunuchs?"
- D 2 Memucan's advice that the king depose Vashti to promote wifely respect for husbands throughout the realm 1:16-20
  - E 1 His thesis: Queen Vashti has wronged the whole nation 1:16
    - G 1 The King: {16} In the presence of the king and the princes, Memucan said, "Queen Vashti has wronged not only the king
    - G 2 The princes: but *also* all the princes
    - G 3 The peoples of the provinces: and all the peoples who are in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus.
  - E 2 His reasoning 1:17-18
    - G 1 The Queen's bad example will engender contempt among the common women of the empire toward their husbands 1:17: {17} "For the queen's conduct will become known to all the women causing them to look with contempt on their husbands by saying, 'King Ahasuerus commanded Queen Vashti to be brought in to his presence, but she did not come.'
    - G 2 The Queen's bad example will engender contempt among the ladies of Persia and Media toward the King's Princes 1:18: {18} "This day the ladies of Persia and Media who have heard of the queen's conduct will speak in *the same way* to all the king's princes, and there will be plenty of contempt and anger.
  - E 3 His counsel -- let the King make a Law 1:19: {19} "If it pleases the king, let a royal edict be issued by him and let it be written in the laws of Persia and Media so that it cannot be repealed,
    - G 1 That Vashti be deposed: that Vashti may no longer come into the presence of King Ahasuerus,
    - G 2 That the King choose another to be Queen: and let

the king give her royal position to another<sup>4</sup> who is more worthy than she.

- E 4 His rationale -- the King's edict will cause all women throughout the kingdom to honor their husbands 1:20: {20}  
"When the king's edict which he will make is heard throughout all his kingdom, great as it is, then all women will give honor to their husbands, great and small."
- D 3 The king's edict deposing Vashti 1:21-22
  - E 1 The agreement of the King and his royal advisors 1:21: {21} This word pleased the king and the princes,<sup>5</sup> and the king did as Memucan proposed.
  - E 2 The King's kingdom wide edict 1:22
    - G 1 The extent of the edict
      - H 1 To every province: {22} So he sent letters to all the king's provinces, to each province according to its script
      - H 2 To every people: and to every people according to their language,
    - G 2 The content of the edict
      - H 1 Every man should be the master of his own house: that every man should be the master in his own house
      - H 2 The language of the husband should be the prevailing language of the house: and the one who speaks in the language of his own people.

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<sup>4</sup> 1:19 - give her royal position to another: On a human level, who knows what motivated Memucan to offer this counsel? On a Divine level, God motivated Memucan to propose that the Queen be deposed and another take her place. God's reason? He wanted to place into office a Jewish Queen who would help save His chosen people, Israel. God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform.

<sup>5</sup> 1:21 - (Memucan's) word pleased the king and the princes: God was ensuring His plan by motivating all involved to give unanimous consent to the plan. Man proposes because God motivates.

## **B 2 Esther's Selection as Queen from the King's Expanded Harem 2:1-20**

### **C 1 King Ahasuerus' Reflection upon His Deposed Queen 2:1**

D 1 The King's anger subsides: {1} After these things <sup>6</sup> when the anger of King Ahasuerus had subsided,

D 2 The King's memory of Vashti

E 1 Her actions: he remembered Vashti <sup>7</sup> and what she had done

E 2 The legislation deposing her: and what had been decreed against her.

### **C 2 The Initiation of Efforts to Select a New Queen 2:2-4**

D 1 The advice to conduct Operation Virgin Search: {2} Then the king's attendants, who served him, said, "Let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king. 2:2

D 2 The details of Operation Virgin Search 2:3

E 1 The appointment of overseers for the Search: {3} "Let the king appoint overseers

E 2 The extent of the Search: in all the provinces of his kingdom

E 3 The objects of the Search: that they may gather every beautiful young virgin

E 4 The repository for the Search

G 1 The citadel: to the citadel of Susa,

G 2 The harem: to the harem,

E 5 The trustee of the Search

G 1 into the custody of Hegai,<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> 2:1 - After these things: It is not the Biblical writer's intent to give unnecessary historical and military detail. However, we know from history that four years have elapsed while King Ahasuerus has been preoccupied with fighting (and losing) great military battles. His anger at Vashti has subsided, but he still does not have a queen.

<sup>7</sup> 2:1 - Vashti: After Ahasuerus returns to the citadel in Susa, his mind has opportunity to reflect on his own personal loss. Though he can have a woman any night he chooses, he no longer has a queen. His thoughts begin to turn in that direction, imperceptibly but inevitably prodded by God!

<sup>8</sup> 2:3 - Hegai: Hegai, a eunuch (emasculated so he could formulate no amorous liaisons with the harem), had a responsible and unenviable position. He was in charge of the virgins who were in the King's harem but had never yet slept with the King. Imagine the female hormones and barely-disguised envy and suspicion and competition! Hegai must have been an amazing man to be able to keep peace in the dormitory! He must have had to develop nerves of steel and an ability to distance himself emotionally and relationally from all these girls whose best hope for any

- G 2 the king's eunuch, who is in charge of the women;
- E 6 The provision for the candidates: and let their cosmetics be given *them*.
- D 3 The conclusion of the Search: {4} "Then let the young lady who pleases the king be queen in place of Vashti." 2:4a
- D 4 The approval of the King 2:4b
  - E 1 Reaction: And the matter pleased the king,<sup>9</sup>
  - E 2 Action: and he did accordingly.
- C 3 The Introduction of Mordecai, Uncle and Foster Parent of Beautiful Esther 2:5-7
  - D 1 The introduction of Mordecai 2:5-6
    - E 1 His connection with the with the administration: {5} *Now* there was at the citadel in Susa 2:5
    - E 2 His nationality: a Jew whose
    - E 3 His name: name was Mordecai,
    - E 4 His ancestry:<sup>10</sup> the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite,
    - E 5 His exilic history 2:6
      - G 1 His removal from Jerusalem: {6} who had been taken into exile from Jerusalem
      - G 2 His fellow exiles: with the captives who had been exiled

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meaningful future was to acquire the power and authority of being The Queen! Can you imagine how Hegai must have been utterly repulsed by the name-calling, gossipy, suspicious, agenda-driven females he had to endure every day? And ye this was the man that God had picked to be enchanted with a beautiful, charming, and discreet Jewess. God had His people in position to do His will!

<sup>9</sup> 2:4 - pleased the king: As God's silent conspiracy unfolds, the humans involved acquiesce at every turn. They are doing what they want to do, yet God is doing what He wants to do! What an inscrutable and powerful God we have!

<sup>10</sup> 2:5 subtitle - ancestry: "Verse 6 may mean that Mordecai was deported by Nebuchadnezzar along with Jehoiachin (597 B.C.). but this would mean that Mordecai would have been about 115 years old by the time of Xerxes' third year and Esther would have been 80. It is better to understand that Kish, Mordecai's great-grandfather, was the one who was carried away in the 597 deportation. (John A. Martin, "Esther," *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, OT vol., p. 703.)

- G 3 The conquered Jewish King: with Jeconiah king of Judah,
- G 4 The conquering King: whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had exiled.
- D 2 The introduction of Esther 2:7
  - E 1 Her name: {7} He was bringing up Hadassah, that is Esther,
  - E 2 Her relationship: his uncle's daughter,
  - E 3 Her plight: for she had no father or mother.
  - E 4 Her beauty: Now the young lady was beautiful of form and face,<sup>11</sup>
  - E 5 The circumstances of her adoption: and when her father and her mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.
- C 4 The Taking of Esther into the King's Harem of Virgins 2:8-11
  - D 1 The gathering of many young ladies to the citadel: {8} So it came about when the command and decree of the king were heard and many young ladies were gathered to the citadel of Susa into the custody of Hegai, 2:8
  - D 2 The expropriation of Esther into the custody of Hegai: that Esther was taken<sup>12</sup> to the king's palace into the custody of Hegai, who was in charge of the women.
  - D 3 The favored position of Esther in regard to Hegai 2:9
    - E 1 She pleased him: {9} Now the young lady pleased him<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> 2:7 - beautiful of form and face: We all appreciate beautiful women, but truly beautiful women are few and far between. God had a plan for Esther. His plan included making Esther so beautiful she was nothing short of irresistible. Are you beautiful or plain? Handsome or homely? Never mind - God made you the way you are for a specific purpose. Your job is to fulfill God's master plan to use you, a plan which includes just the degree of attractiveness you possess (or don't possess).

<sup>12</sup> 2:8 - Esther was taken: The ladies "were gathered" and Esther "was taken." In both cases the verbs are passive. There is no hint that any of these young ladies volunteered to be queen candidates. Their misfortune was that they were beautiful. They evidently had no choice in the matter. Would Esther and her cousin Mordecai ever have volunteered to enter the harem of Gentile king? It seems unthinkable. But sometimes God places us in situations in which we have no choice.

<sup>13</sup> 2:9 - pleased him: The text says, lit., "And pleased the young woman in his eyes. It seems to be the character of Esther that she makes it her practice in life to please others. So Esther was not a selfish woman, but one who genuinely sought to serve others. Here again, we see the subtle but evident hand of God. Out of what could have been hundreds of damsels, this one, Esther, was the one that, in the viewpoint of Hegai, he found most pleasing. One would think that being conscripted into a harem would be terribly off-putting. One would think that Esther would have been plunged into depression. But there was nothing sullen, nothing artificial, nothing manipulative, nothing self-serving in her demeanor. God had evidently put it in her heart to live to please others. And in so doing, He had

- E 2 She obtained his loyal love: and found favor with him.<sup>14</sup>
- E 3 Hegai's provisions for Esther
  - G 1 Cosmetics: So he quickly provided<sup>15</sup> her with her cosmetics
  - G 2 Food: and food,
  - G 3 Seven choice maids: gave her seven choice maids from the king's palace
  - G 4 Best living quarters: and transferred her and her maids to the best place in the harem.
- D 4 Esther's concealment of her ethnicity 2:10
  - E 1 Her secretiveness: {10} Esther did not make known<sup>16</sup> her people or her kindred,
  - E 2 Her obedience: for Mordecai had instructed her that she should not make *them* known.

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given her a personality that made people respond positively and warmly to her, because she it was a pleasure being around her. But God not only influenced Esther's personality, He also influenced Hegai's *perception* of her personality.

<sup>14</sup> 12:9 - found favor: Not only did Esther please the hen-pecked Hegai, she somehow, because of her winsomeness and interest in the welfare of others, engendered an even deeper positive reaction from Hegai. Though the other girls may have been desperately manipulative, trying to find some meaningful escape from the tight controls of the harem by winning the relative freedom of at least having some prestige and a modicum of power, Esther was not that way. Hegai was so taken with her others orientation that he spontaneously resolved to be loyal to this lady. The word *chesed* means "loyal love." In the KJV it is usually translated mercy. NASB translates it lovingkindness. Dr. Bruce Waltke in Dallas Seminary instructed us to translate it "loyal love." Just as Psalm 136 tells us over and over that God's mercy or lovingkindness or loyal love endures forever, so God put it in the heart of Hegai to have mercy or lovingkindness or loyal love toward Esther! Was God influencing the outcome of this beauty contest? He most certainly was!

<sup>15</sup> 2:9 - quickly provided: Because God had placed a loyal love in the heart of Hegai toward Esther, he quickly did everything in his power to influence the outcome of the Beauty Contest in her favor. The words "quickly provided" include the concept of being terrified. One could almost say that Hegai became so terrified that Esther would not succeed that he quickly stacked the scales in her favor as much as possible. Consequently he made it his goal to provide her with everything he could: 1) cosmetics (this came first!), 2) food, 3) seven maids from the King's house (these could give her needed information), and 4) he transferred her and her seven maids into the best suite of rooms in the house of the women (meaning the harem). Esther and her maids were headquartering in the Presidential Suite. This not only gave her the best living quarters but also the #1 ranking!

<sup>16</sup> 2:10 - make known: Esther's proclivity of pleasing those in authority over her is seen here. Mordecai had instructed her not to reveal that she was a Jewess, and she cooperated. It is not known why Mordecai did so. Perhaps it was because he had personally witnessed anti-Semitism or knew of it. In any event he felt the most prudent action was for both he and Esther to keep their Jewishness a secret. Esther's Hebrew name was Hadassah, meaning "Myrtle," a fragrant tree, but her Persian name was Esther, close to Ishtar (Babylonian), meaning "Star." Mordecai's name is strictly Persian and is related to the god Marduk. God influenced Mordecai to be super-cautious because God had a reason - He wanted to protect the identity of His servants until the right time came!

D 5 Mordecai's solicitous surveillance: {11} Every day Mordecai walked back and forth in front of the court of the harem to learn how Esther was and how she fared. 2:11

C 5 The Procedure for the King's Evaluation of Each Virgin 2:12-14

D 1 The preparation of the young ladies 2:12

E 1 Each would get a turn: {12} Now when the turn of each young lady came to go in to King Ahasuerus,

E 2 The year-long preparation period: after the end of her twelve months under the regulations for the women--for the days of their beautification were completed as follows:

G 1 The first six months: six months with oil of myrrh

G 2 The second six months: and six months with spices and the cosmetics for women--

D 2 The tryst of a particular young lady 2:13-14a

E 1 She could take anything with her: {13} the young lady would go in to the king in this way: anything that she desired was given her to take with her from the harem to the king's palace. 2:13

E 2 Her evening appointment with the King: {14} In the evening she would go in 2:14

E 3 Her morning departure to the second harem: and in the morning she would return to the second harem,

G 1 The custodianship of Shaashgaz: to the custody of Shaashgaz,

G 2 The duty of Shaashgaz: the king's eunuch who was in charge of the concubines.

D 3 The fate of the young lady 2:14b

E 1 She would never see the king again: She would not again go in to the king

E 2 Unless the king called for her by name: unless the king delighted in her and she was summoned by name.

## C 6 The King's Selection of Esther as His Queen 2:15-18

- D 1 The turn of Esther: {15} Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai who had taken her as his daughter, came to go in to the king, 2:15
- D 2 Her adherence to Hegai's advice: she did not request anything except what Hegai, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the women, advised.
- D 3 Her winsome charm: And Esther found favor <sup>17</sup> in the eyes of all who saw her.
- D 4 The time of Esther's appointment with the King: {16} So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus to his royal palace in the tenth month which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. 2:16
- D 5 The reaction of the King 2:17
  - E 1 His personal response
    - G 1 His exceptional love for Esther: {17} The king loved Esther <sup>18</sup> more than all the women,
    - G 2 His greater appreciation: and she found favor
    - G 3 His greater loyal love toward her: and kindness with him more than all the virgins,
  - E 2 His official response
    - G 1 His crowning of her: so that he set the royal crown on her head

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<sup>17</sup> 2:15 - favor (2580 *chen*): Esther was so pleasing to look upon and had such an agreeable personality that all looked favorably upon her. This word is first used in regard to Noah in Genesis 6:8, "But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD." This is yet another instance of Divine appointment predestining Esther to a position of prominence in accomplishing God's will. Esther had found favor in the eyes of Hegai (12:9). Now she found favor in the eyes of all! This is nothing but the hand of God accomplishing His will in the lives of people on earth!

<sup>18</sup> 2:17 - the king loved Esther: Here is the ultimate outcome of the quiet working of the hand of God. Nothing would have mattered had not the King had a pleasurable response! Three things are said of him: 1) He loved Esther above all the other women. The word "loved" is placed first in the sentence for emphasis: Loved - the King - Esther more than all the women. This means of all the women in his harem, King Ahasuerus loved Esther the most. 2) Just as Esther had produced a reaction of favor in Hegai, so she did in King Ahasuerus. He found her more pleasing in his presence than all the other virgins. 3) Just as Esther had caused a reaction of loyal love to spring up in the heart of Hegai, so she produced the same reaction in King Ahasuerus. His heart welled up with loyal love toward her more than all the other virgins! 4) The last act of Ahasuerus was inevitable, yet oh so necessary: He placed on Esther's head the high turban (crown) of dominion and he caused her to become Queen instead of Vashti! God's hand has been at work this whole time, and we have not yet begun to see why. We have seen what, but not yet why.

- G 2 His making her queen: and made her queen <sup>19</sup> instead of Vashti.
- D 6 The banquet of the King 2:18
- E 1 In honor of Esther: {18} Then the king gave a great banquet, Esther's banquet,
- E 2 For all the administration: for all his princes and his servants;
- D 7 The holiday declared by the King: he also made a holiday <sup>20</sup> for the provinces and gave gifts <sup>21</sup> according to the king's bounty.
- C 7 Esther's Care in not Revealing Her Jewish Ancestry 2:19-20
- D 1 The reconvening of the virgins: {19} When the virgins were gathered together the second time,<sup>22</sup> 2:19
- D 2 The promotion of Mordecai: then Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate.<sup>23</sup>
- D 3 Esther's continued concealment of her ethnicity: {20} Esther had not yet made known her kindred or her people, 2:20
- D 4 Her continued obedience to Mordecai: even as Mordecai had commanded her; for Esther did what Mordecai told her <sup>24</sup> as she had

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<sup>19</sup> 2:17 - queen: "Esther became queen in the winter of 479-478 B.C., four years after Vashti's deposition (v. 16). During that four-year period the Greeks defeated Ahasuerus in battle." *Notes on Esther*, 2006 Edition, Dr. Thomas L. Constable, p. 13. <http://www.sonlight.com/constable/notes/pdf/esther.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> 2:18 - holiday: This was a holiday from paying taxes! For a period of time all the Persian subjects were freed of paying taxes. This was an unbelievably expensive wedding gift which the King paid to all his subjects. He was in a generous mood indeed!

<sup>21</sup> 2:18 - gave gifts: Apparently he also distributed tax revenues as gifts!

<sup>22</sup> 2:19 - virgins gathered ... second time: This may be "part of a procession the King designed to show off Esther's beauty compared with the other contestants in his beauty contest." (Constable, *Notes on Esther*, p. 13, quoting Robert Gordis, "Studies in the Esther Narrative," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 95:1 (March, 1976), p. 47.

<sup>23</sup> 2:20 - king's gate: Perhaps because of Esther's influence, Mordecai had been granted a governmental position, possibly as a magistrate or judge (Constable, *Notes on Esther*, p. 13). This is another link in God's Sovereign, yet silent plan to protect His people.

<sup>24</sup> 2:20 - did what Mordecai told her: For the second time it is recorded that Esther did not reveal her Jewish identity. For the second time it is said that she continued to obey Mordecai's instructions. She follows the instructions of Mordecai, but does she follow the instructions of God? Tom Constable thinks not: "Esther cooperated in practices contrary to the Mosaic Law. These included having sex with a man not her husband (Exod. 20:14), marrying a pagan (Deut. 7:1-4), and eating unclean food (Lev. 11:46-47). This sets Esther in contrast to Daniel who purposed not to defile himself (Dan. 1:5, 8). God used her as Israel's deliverer even though she disregarded His will at least partially (cf. Samson)." (Constable, *Notes on Esther*, p. 11.) In spite of our imperfections, if we are available to God to work through us, He will do so!

done when under his care.

**B 3 Mordecai's Prevention of the King's Assassination 2:21-23**

C 1 The Background of the Conspiracy 2:21

D 1 The setting of the event: {21} In those days, while Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate,

D 2 The identity of the perpetrators: Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's officials from those who guarded the door,

D 3 The motivation of the conspirators: became angry and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.

C 2 The Reporting of the Conspiracy 2:22

D 1 The discovery of Mordecai: {22} But the plot became known to Mordecai<sup>25</sup>

D 2 Mordecai's report to Esther: and he told Queen Esther,

D 3 Esther's report to the King: and Esther informed the king in Mordecai's name.

C 3 The Outcome of the Conspiracy 2:23

D 1 The investigation of the plot: {23} Now when the plot was investigated and found *to be so*,

D 2 The execution of the conspirators: they were both hanged on a gallows,<sup>26</sup>

D 3 The recording of the event: and it was written in the Book of the Chronicles in the king's presence.

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<sup>25</sup> 2:22 - plot became known to Mordecai: In the providence of God, as a consequence of Mordecai's being appointed to a position in the gate, he was evidently able to overhear rumors of a conspiracy to assassinate the King. He reported to Esther, who in turn reported to the King. After investigating, the King found the conspiracy to be true and the would-be assassins were executed.

<sup>26</sup> 2:23 - gallows: Evidently these men were impaled on a pole (see Ezra 6:11). Darius, Xerxes' father, once impaled 3,000 men (John A. Martin, *Esther*, pp. 704, 705).

**A 2 JEWISH DANGER 3 - 7****B 1 Haman's Retaliatory Plan to Exterminate Mordecai and All Other Jews 3****C 1 The Historical Background Behind Haman's Plot to Destroy the Jews 3:1-6****D 1 The promotion of Haman 3:1-2a**

E 1 The promotion of Haman: *{1}* After these events King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite,<sup>27</sup> 3:1a

E 2 The supremacy of Haman: and advanced him and established his authority over all the princes who *were* with him. 3:1b

E 3 The honor for Haman 3:2a

G 1 The completeness of the homage: *{2}* All the king's servants who were at the king's gate bowed down<sup>28</sup> and paid homage<sup>29</sup> to Haman;

G 2 The reason for the homage: for so the king had commanded concerning him.

**D 2 The refusal of Mordecai to bow down to Haman 3:2b-4**

E 1 Mordecai's refusal to honor Haman: But Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage. 3:2b

E 2 The questions of the King's servants: *{3}* Then the king's servants who were at the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why are you transgressing the king's command?" 3:3

E 3 Mordecai's persistent refusal: *{4}* Now it was when they had spoken daily to him and he would not listen to them, 3:4a

E 4 The report of the controversy to Haman: that they told Haman to see whether Mordecai's reason would stand; 3:4b

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<sup>27</sup> 3:1 - Agagite: Some take the view that since there is a province in Media called Agag is a province in Media, there is nothing particularly significant about the information. But why would the writer add superfluous information that would fail to advance the plot? If, on the other hand, Haman is a descendant of Agag the Amalekite (1 Sam. 15:8), and since it is mentioned that Mordecai is a descendant of Kish (Esther 2:5), which conjures up memories of King Saul's father, this added information about Haman provides a credible background for the animosity that develops between Mordecai and Haman (Constable, p. 14). Against this view is the argument that "it seems unlikely that a high-ranking Persian official would be related to a west Semite who lived 600 years earlier" (Martin, p. 705). But that argument still leaves unexplained why the writer would include Haman's background. It makes more sense that the writer was tapping into ancient hostilities as he records the historical events.

<sup>28</sup> 3:2 - bowed down: Means "to bend the knee."

<sup>29</sup> 3:2 - paid homage: To bow down deeply.

- E 5 The motivation of Mordecai: for he had told them that he was a Jew.<sup>30</sup> 3:4c
- D 3 Haman's determination to exterminate both Mordecai and all the Jews 3:5-6
  - E 1 His rage: {5} When Haman saw that Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage to him, Haman was filled with rage. 3:5
  - E 2 His disdain to apprehend Mordecai alone: {6} But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone, 3:6a
  - E 3 His knowledge of Mordecai's ethnicity: for they had told him *who* the people of Mordecai *were*; 3:6b
  - E 4 His intention to exterminate all the Jews: therefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews, the people of Mordecai, who *were* throughout the whole kingdom<sup>31</sup> of Ahasuerus. 3:6c
- C 2 Haman's Enactment of Legislation Authorizing Extermination of the Jews 3:7-15
  - D 1 His preparation: Haman's casting of lots (Purim) to determine the most propitious date for executing his plan 3:7
    - E 1 The month of lot-casting: {7} In the first month, which is the month Nisan,<sup>32</sup>
    - E 2 The year of the lot-casting: in the twelfth year of King

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<sup>30</sup> 3:4 - Jew: Why did Mordecai refuse to honor Haman? Some believe there was nothing preventing Mordecai as a Jew from giving honor to a Persian official, since it was not worship being requested. "Probably this persistent (day after day) refusal stemmed more from pride than from religious scruples. For several years Mordecai had not let Esther tell the king she was a Jewess (2:10, 20), but now Mordecai was using their national heritage as an excuse for not giving honor to a high Persian official" (John Martin, p. 705).

That, however, is not what the Bible text states. The text cites Mordecai's Jewishness as his reason for refusing to honor Haman. In 3:10 the author again spells out Haman's ethnic background (see 3:1) and labels him "the enemy of the Jews." It makes more sense, therefore, to understand that Mordecai saw in Haman, a descendant of Agag, King of Amalek, a remnant of the nation that had been an ancient enemy of Israel's (Exodus 17). As it will turn out, when Haman discovers that Mordecai is a Jew, he endeavors to destroy not only Mordecai, but the whole nation of Israel! But even from the days of Moses and Joshua, it was Yahweh's plan to exterminate Amalek (Exod 17:14-16; cf. 1 Sam. 15), and it was unthinkable that He would ever permit Haman to destroy Israel!

Why did Mordecai reveal he was a Jew when he had forbidden Esther to reveal her Jewish identity (2:10, 20)? It is probably because, after daily, persistent harassment by his questioners (3:4), Mordecai finally had to come up with a reason for his unusual and politically dangerous actions.

<sup>31</sup> 3:6 - whole kingdom: This would even have included the destruction of all the Jews who had returned from exile and were living in obedience back in the land of Israel! God had decreed long ago to Abraham, "I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse" (Gen. 12:3). Though Haman did not know it, the people who would circumvent his attempts to destroy Israel had already been in Persian office for four years!

<sup>32</sup> 3:7 - Nisan: Esther had become Queen in 478 B. C. (2:16). This was now April-May of 474 B. C., four years after her coronation (Martin, p. 705). "The official casting of lots happened during the first month of each year to determine the most opportune days for important events" (Constable, p. 15, citing W. W. Hallo, "The First Purim," *Biblical Archaeologist* 46:1 (1983):19-27).

- Ahasuerus, Pur,<sup>33</sup> that is the lot,
- E 3 The options of the lot-casting: was cast before Haman from day to day and from month *to month*,
- E 4 The final result of the lot-casting: until the twelfth month, that is the month Adar.<sup>34</sup>
- D 2 His lobbying of the king for legislation 3:8-9
- E 1 His maligning the Jewish people 3:8
- G 1 His introduction of the Jewish people: {8} Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom;
- G 2 The nonconformity of the Jewish people: their laws are different from *those* of all *other* people
- G 3 The rebellion of the Jewish people: and they do not observe the king's laws,
- G 4 The recommendation for the extermination of the Jewish people: so it is not in the king's interest to let them remain.
- E 2 His recommendation of their destruction: {9} "If it is pleasing to the king, let it be decreed that they be destroyed," 3:9a
- E 3 His offer to finance their destruction: "and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver<sup>35</sup> into the hands of those who carry on the *king's* business, to put into the king's treasuries." 3:9b

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<sup>33</sup> 3:7 - Pur: Pur is the Persian word for lot. The Jewish feast of Purim (the plural of Pur) would later be celebrated in memory of the Jewish victory (Esther 9:26-32).

<sup>34</sup> 3:7 - Adar: Using Haman's superstitious casting of lots to determine the best time to kill the Jews, God ordained that the Jewish people would ultimately have nearly a year to prepare to defend themselves! Man rolls the dice, but God decrees how the dice roll (Prov. 16:33; Jonah 1:7).

<sup>35</sup> 3:9 - ten thousand talents of silver: Haman would pay the King for the cost of exterminating the Jews. Ten thousand talents weighed about 750,000 pounds. With 16 ounces per pound, that would amount to 12 million ounces of silver. As of Oct 20, 2006 the New York Spot Price of silver was \$11.88 per ounce. Haman, in today's terms, was willing to pay \$143,400,000 to exterminate the Jews. The money he proposed amounted to two-thirds of the entire empire's income (Constable, p. 15, citing Herodotus, 3:95). He planned to reimburse the Crown's expenses with the plunder he would take from the Jews (3:13). Undoubtedly he expected to become very wealthy himself in the process!

It should be noted that in Haman's day, silver was the second most precious metal, and that the amount under consideration, adjusted for inflation would have been far higher then. Consider that with today's technology, silver is worth a mere pittance. As of 10/20/06 palladium was worth \$324 per ounce, gold, \$592.80 per ounce, and platinum, \$1077 per ounce. As of 10/18/06 rhodium was worth \$4,960 per ounce.

- D 3 The king's authorization of legislation 3:10-11
  - E 1 The King's symbol of the authorization: {10} Then the king took his signet ring<sup>36</sup> from his hand
  - E 2 The identification of the recipient: and gave it to
    - G 1 Haman,
    - G 2 the son of Hammedatha
    - G 3 the Agagite,
    - G 4 the enemy of the Jews.<sup>37</sup>
  - E 3 The king's funding of the legislation 3:11
    - G 1 With access to the royal treasury: {11} The king said to Haman, "The silver is yours,
    - G 2 With access to personnel: and the people *also*,
    - G 3 With carte blanche control: to do with them as you please."
- D 4 The writing of the legislation 3:12
  - E 1 The summons of the scribes: {12} Then the king's scribes were summoned
  - E 2 The date of the enactment: on the thirteenth day of the first month,
  - E 3 The wording of the enactment: and it was written just as Haman commanded
  - E 4 The recipients of the enactment
    - G 1 to the king's satraps,
    - G 2 to the governors who were over each province and
    - G 3 to the princes of each people,

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<sup>36</sup> 3:10 - signet ring: This was today's equivalent of a signature. The signet ring would be stamped in the legal document inscribed in soft clay, which would then be fired and placed in the royal archives.

<sup>37</sup> 3:10 - the enemy of the Jews: God's people appear in an extremely perilous position. Carte blanche authority has been given to "the enemy of the Jews" to destroy them! From God's perspective, however, it is Haman who has placed himself in a perilous position. How would you like God to describe you as "the enemy of the Jews?" What hope of long-term survival would you have?

- E 5 The language of the enactment
  - G 1 The appropriate script: each province according to its script,
  - G 2 The appropriate language: each people according to its language,
- E 6 The official nature of the enactment
  - G 1 In the King's name: being written in the name of King Ahasuerus
  - G 2 With the King's seal: and sealed with the king's signet ring.
- D 5 The empire-wide posting of the legislation 3:13-15
  - E 1 The media of the legislation: {13} Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces 3:13a
  - E 2 The terms of the legislation 3:13b
    - G 1 The action authorized
      - H 1 to destroy,
      - H 2 to kill
      - H 3 and to annihilate
    - G 2 The people affected
      - H 1 all the Jews,
      - H 2 both young and old,
      - H 3 women and children,
    - G 3 The date of the extermination: in one day, the thirteenth *day* of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar,
    - G 4 The funding of the legislation: and to seize their possessions as plunder.
  - E 3 The publishing of the legislation 3:14a
    - G 1 To every province: {14} A copy of the edict to be issued as law in every province
    - G 2 To all the peoples: was published to all the peoples

- E 4 The purpose of the legislation: so that they should be ready for this day. 3:14b
- E 5 The spread of the legislation 3:15a
  - G 1 The departure of the couriers: {15} The couriers went out impelled by the king's command
  - G 2 The issuing of the decree at Susa: while the decree was issued at the citadel in Susa;
- E 6 The effect of the legislation 3:15b
  - G 1 The celebration of the King and Haman: and while the king and Haman sat down to drink,
  - G 2 The bewilderment of Susa: the city of Susa was in confusion.

## **B 2 Mordecai and Esther's Plan to Save the Jews 4**

- C 1 The Mourning of Mordecai and the Jews 4:1-3
  - D 1 Mordecai's awareness: {1} When Mordecai learned all that had been done, 4:1a
  - D 2 Mordecai's reaction 4:1b
    - E 1 he tore his clothes,
    - E 2 put on sackcloth <sup>38</sup> and ashes,
    - E 3 and went out into the midst of the city
    - E 4 and wailed loudly and bitterly.
  - D 3 Mordecai's public demonstration: {2} He went as far as the king's gate, for no one was to enter the king's gate clothed in sackcloth. 4:2

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<sup>38</sup> 4:1, 3 - sackcloth: Sackcloth (a hairy garment), ashes, weeping, wailing, and fasting (v. 3) are signs of great grief and agony of soul. It is never stated that either Mordecai or the Jewish people prayed. On other occasions, it is expressly stated that Jewish people did incorporate prayer also: King Hezekiah, dressed in sackcloth, asked Isaiah to offer a prayer when encountering the Assyrian siege and propaganda (2 Kings 19:1-4). Joel calls for fasting, sackcloth and prayer (Joel 1:14). To state, however, that the Jewish people in Persia did not pray goes beyond the text, and is a dogmatic argument from silence, never a conclusive argument. John A. Martin, *Esther, The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, I, p. 706, suggests that perhaps Mordecai was remorseful for having revealed his nationality, but the text gives no indication of that motive whatever. The text presents Mordecai's refusal to bow down to Haman as a Jewish necessity, and his great grief as a natural reaction against the great injustice imposed upon the Jewish people.

- D 4 The mourning of the Jews 4:3
  - E 1 The extremity of the mourning: {3} In each and every province where the command and decree of the king came,
  - E 2 The description of the mourning: there was great mourning among the Jews,
  - E 3 The accompaniments of the mourning
    - G 1 with fasting,
    - G 2 weeping
    - G 3 and wailing;
    - G 4 and many lay on sackcloth and ashes.
- C 2 Esther's Attempts to Ascertain Mordecai's Grief 4:4-6
  - D 1 Her learning of Mordecai's grief 4:4a
    - E 1 Her informants: {4} Then Esther's maidens and her eunuchs came and told her,
    - E 2 Her reaction: and the queen writhed in great anguish.<sup>39</sup>
  - D 2 Her unsuccessful attempt to provide suitable clothing for Mordecai 4:4b
    - E 1 Esther's attempt: And she sent garments to clothe Mordecai that he might remove his sackcloth from him,<sup>40</sup>
    - E 2 Mordecai's refusal: but he did not accept *them*.
  - D 3 Her sending Hathach to learn of Mordecai's plight 4:5-6
    - E 1 Esther's assignment of Hathach 4:5
      - G 1 Her summons: {5} Then Esther summoned Hathach from the king's eunuchs, whom the king had appointed to attend her,
      - G 2 Her order: and ordered him *to go* to Mordecai to

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<sup>39</sup> 1:4 - anguish: Esther's anguish is centered completely on Mordecai's obvious distress. At this point she is completely in the dark, cut off from any knowledge of the reason for his public grief. She is concerned about his well-being.

<sup>40</sup> 4:4 - remove his sackcloth: Perhaps Esther wanted somehow to alleviate Mordecai's great grief by providing proper clothing. In addition, perhaps she was thinking that if were properly clothed, he could come tell her the reason for his great sorrow. He refused the gesture.

learn what this *was* and why it *was*.

- E 2 Hathach's compliance: {6} So Hathach went out to Mordecai to the city square in front of the king's gate. 4:6
- C 3 Mordecai's Informing Esther of the Plot against the Jews 4:7-9
  - D 1 His relating to Hathach the planned destruction of the Jews: {7} Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, 4:7a
  - D 2 His informing of the finances involved: and the exact amount of money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. 4:7b
  - D 3 His providing a copy of the text of the law: {8} He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict which had been issued in Susa for their destruction, 4:8a
  - D 4 His asking Esther to plead with the king on behalf of her people 4:8b
    - E 1 For the purpose of information: that he might show Esther and inform her,
    - E 2 For the purpose of pleading: and to order her to go in to the king to implore his favor and to plead with him for her people.
  - D 5 Hathach's return to Esther: {9} Hathach came back and related Mordecai's words to Esther. 4:9
- C 4 Esther's Reminding Mordecai of Her Personal Danger in Visiting the King without a Royal Summons 4:10-12
  - D 1 Her reply through Hathach: {10} Then Esther spoke to Hathach and ordered him *to reply* to Mordecai: 4:10
  - D 2 Her protesting to Mordecai of her inability to speak to the king uninvited 4:11
    - E 1 Her informing of the law of the death penalty for an uninvited visitor to the royal court unless the king extended his scepter
      - G 1 The inevitable decree of death to the uninvited approacher to the throne: {11} "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death,
      - G 2 The gracious exception: unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live.

- E 2 Her informing of her not having been summoned to the king for the past 30 days: "And I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days."<sup>41</sup>
- D 3 The communication of Esther's words to Mordecai: {12} They related Esther's words to Mordecai. 4:12
- C 5 Mordecai's Reminding Esther of Her Jeopardy in Any Case 4:13-14
  - D 1 His stating that she in the palace would not be exempt from the law of Jewish extermination: {13} Then Mordecai told *them* to reply to Esther, "Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape any more than all the Jews. 4:13
  - D 2 His belief that, if she remained silent, help for the Jews would arise from another source 4:14
    - E 1 Her hypothetical silence: {14} "For if you remain silent at this time,
    - E 2 [God's] sovereign deliverance: relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place<sup>42</sup>
  - D 3 His prediction that she and her father's house would perish: and you and your father's house will perish.<sup>43</sup> 4:14
  - D 4 His suggestion that her position as queen had been providentially arranged: "And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?"<sup>44</sup> 4:14

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<sup>41</sup> 4:11 - thirty days: Had Esther fallen out of favor with the King? One might wonder, except that his reaction to her in the next chapter belies that. It would seem rather that what had begun as an amorous honeymoon at the beginning of their relationship (Esther 2:17) had settled into a marriage in which, unfortunately, like so many marriages, the husband is more married to his work than his wife. The situation seems more like one of benign neglect rather than outright disfavor. Apparently Esther could have requested a hearing from the King, and would have been afforded the opportunity. But undoubtedly in that case, it would have required her stating her purpose. As her subsequent actions show, prematurely revealing her purpose would have jeopardized her influence upon the King, whose second in command, Haman, was always nearby as the most trusted advisor (see C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol 3 of 10, "Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther," p. 352).

<sup>42</sup> 4:14 - another place: Though Mordecai never overtly mentioned the name of God or prayer, he obviously was aware that God had a covenant relationship with the Jewish people (Gen. 12:1-3), and that God would provide help from some source other than Esther if she did not intervene.

<sup>43</sup> 4:14 - you ... will perish: Despite the fact that God would ultimately intervene if Esther did not, Mordecai warns her that she will not be exempt from the edict even though she lives in the King's palace. Whether she dies attempting to see the King or dies at the hands of Haman, she will die in either case. It would be better for her to make a valiant effort.

<sup>44</sup> 4:14 - such a time as this: In the course of the sovereign control of the God whom he does not mention by name, Haman wonders aloud if this is not the reason for which she has come to royalty! There are times in life when we can more clearly see God's plan for our role in life. This was one of those moments for Esther and Mordecai! To my mind 4:14-16 marks the focal idea in the book of Esther.

- C 6 Esther's Instructions to Mordecai to Organize Fasting Support Preparatory to Her Visiting the King 4:15-17
  - D 1 Her instructing her couriers: *{15}* Then Esther told *them* to reply to Mordecai, 4:15
  - D 2 Her instructions to Mordecai to organize fasting on her behalf: "Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast <sup>45</sup> for me; do not eat or drink for three days,<sup>46</sup> night or day. 4:16
  - D 3 Her plans to fast also: "I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. 4:16
  - D 4 Her resolve to visit the king at all costs 4:16
    - E 1 Her resolve: "And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law;
    - E 2 Her fatalism: "And if I perish, I perish." <sup>47</sup>
  - D 5 Mordecai's departure to follow Esther's instructions: *{17}* So Mordecai went away and did just as Esther had commanded him. 4:17

### **B 3 Esther's Holding of a Banquet for the King and Haman 5:1-8**

- C 1 Esther's Invitation to Her Banquet 5:1-4
  - D 1 Esther's unauthorized presenting of herself to the King 5:1
    - E 1 The time of the presentation: Now it came about on the third day
    - E 2 The apparel of Esther: that Esther put on her royal robes

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<sup>45</sup> 4:16 - fast: Esther does not request prayer. One would think that the Jewish people would pray, but as the text presents itself, neither Mordecai nor Esther specifically mention prayer. Perhaps the significance of the Book of Esther is that, even when God's people are dispersed around the world in judgment, and they are not overtly expressing faith in Him, He nonetheless Sovereignly protects them and guides them to the destination for which He has ultimately chosen them.

<sup>46</sup> 4:16 - three days: Her intention was that the fast would begin on the first day and end on the third, the same day on which she would attempt to enter the presence of the King (5:1). This is reminiscent of Jesus' prediction of His stay in the tomb (Matt. 12:40). In Jewish reckoning, part of a day is counted as a full day (Martin, p. 708).

<sup>47</sup> 4:16 - perish: Esther seems fatalistic here, but she also demonstrates great courage and resolve. Her habitual obedience to Mordecai help impel her to bravery in a moment of great crisis. Her insistence upon corporate fasting reveals her understanding that without [Divine] intervention, success through human effort alone will not be achieved.

- E 3 The position of Esther
  - G 1 and stood in the inner court <sup>48</sup> of the king's palace
  - G 2 in front of the king's rooms,
- E 4 The position of the King
  - G 1 On his throne: and the king was sitting on his royal throne in the throne room,
  - G 2 Opposite the entrance: opposite the entrance to the palace.
- D 2 The King's acceptance of Esther 5:2
  - E 1 The King's awareness of Esther: {2} When the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court,
  - E 2 The King's acceptance of Esther: she obtained favor <sup>49</sup> in his sight;
  - E 3 The King's extension of his scepter to Esther: and the king extended to Esther the golden scepter which *was* in his hand.
  - E 4 The approach of Esther to the King: So Esther came near and touched the top of the scepter.
- D 3 The King's asking for Esther's request 5:3
  - E 1 The King's solicitous inquiry: {3} Then the king said to her, "What is *troubling* you,<sup>50</sup> Queen Esther?

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<sup>48</sup> 5:1 - inner court: The detailed descriptions of Esther's entrance into the throne room and the position of the king could only have been given by an eyewitness, Esther herself.

<sup>49</sup> 5:2 - favor (2580 *chen*): This was the acceptance and approval for which Esther and Mordecai and Jewish people across the land had been fasting for three days! This is another indication of the Sovereignty of God in bringing about His plans for His people. The references to *chen* in the book of Esther are six in all: **2:5** (Esther's finding favor of all who saw her when it was her turn to go to the King); **2:17** (Esther found favor (acceptance) and loyal love in the presence of the king more than all the (other) virgins); **5:2** (the present instance - Esther found acceptance when she appeared, uninvited, before the King); **5:8** (Esther requests another banquet if she has found favor before the King); **7:3** (Esther pleads for help for herself and her people if she has found favor before the King); and **8:5** (Esther asks the king to countermand the order of Haman to destroy the Jews if she has found favor before the King).

<sup>50</sup> 5:3 - What is *troubling* you, Queen Esther? A literal, modern rendering: "What is it with you, Esther, the Queen!?!?" This was said by the King with instant approval at her visual impression (that's how God made us men), but also with shock that she would come, uninvited, into his presence! Esther did not come merely in nice clothing, but in her royal apparel, so he knew she was coming on an official level. That is why he addressed her as "Esther, the Queen." Under the circumstance, he ascertained that this was not a request for companionship. She obviously had something of grave import on her mind to take the risk she had just taken, so he immediately followed up with his next question, followed by an extravagant commitment that was not, of course, to be taken literally, but presupposed a generous response on his part, "And what is your request? To half the kingdom, it shall be given you!" This is the best possible answer that Esther could have received, and God in His Sovereignty obtained this response for her and her people - His people! The King will repeat his offer on the occasion of the second banquet (7:2). King Herod made the same offer to his step-daughter after she had danced so well in front of him and his court (Mark 6:22-23).

- E 2 The King's generous offer: And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be given to you."
- D 4 Esther's invitation of the King and Haman to her banquet 5:4
  - E 1 The deference of Esther: {4} Esther said, "If it pleases the king,<sup>51</sup>
  - E 2 The invitation of Esther: may the king and Haman come this day to the banquet
  - E 3 The personal investment of Esther: that I have prepared for him."
- C 2 Esther's Invitation to Another Banquet 5:5-8
  - D 1 The prompt arrival of the King and Haman at Esther's banquet 5:5
    - E 1 The prompt approval of the King: {5} Then the king said, "Bring Haman quickly<sup>52</sup> that we may do as Esther desires."
    - E 2 The arrival of the King and Haman: So the king and Haman came to the banquet which Esther had prepared.
  - D 2 The King's asking of Esther, again, for her request 5:6
    - E 1 The progress of the banquet: {6} As they drank their wine at the banquet,
    - E 2 The King's offer to grant Esther her request: the king said to Esther, "What is your petition, for it shall be granted to you.
    - E 3 The King's generous limitation of his offer: And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be done."
  - D 3 Esther's promise to give the King her request at a second banquet to be held the next day 5:7-8
    - E 1 Esther's official response: {7} So Esther replied, "My petition and my request is: 5:7

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<sup>51</sup> 5:4 - If it pleases the king: Esther was exceedingly deferential. She says, "If to the king (it is) good, let him come, the King and Haman this day to the banquet which I have prepared for him." She is very formal throughout, never using the second person (you), but always addressing Ahasuerus in the third person either as "the king" or "him." He would be pleased that it was to a banquet she was requesting his presence. He would be even more impressed that the banquet was prepared personally by her. He would also understand that this was not her ultimate request, but was only leading to it. From Esther's point of view, there was no point in asking the King her real request on the spur of the moment. She had to prepare him psychologically for the importance of her request. She chose to do so on her turf. Of course, it was important for Haman to be present, and, under the circumstances, was perfectly appropriate and natural. He was, after all, the second in command in the whole empire.

<sup>52</sup> 5:5 - bring Haman quickly: Evidently Haman was not present when Esther approached the King. The King responds with alacrity. Esther definitely has his attention.

- E 2 Esther's deference to the King 5:8
  - G 1 {8} if I have found favor in the sight of the king,
  - G 2 and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and do what I request,
- E 3 Esther's invitation to a second banquet
  - G 1 Her invitation: may the king and Haman come to the banquet
  - G 2 Her personal involvement: which I will prepare for them,
- E 4 Her promise to reveal her real request: and tomorrow <sup>53</sup> I will do as the king says."

#### **B 4 Haman's renewed anger at Mordecai 5:9-14**

- C 1 Haman's Pleasure at His Status Before the King and Queen: {9} Then Haman went out that day glad and pleased of heart;<sup>54</sup> 5:9a
- C 2 Haman's Anger at Mordecai's Lack of Respect Toward Him 5:9b
  - D 1 The indifference of Mordecai: but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate and that he did not stand up or tremble before him,
  - D 2 The anger of Haman: Haman was filled with anger against Mordecai.
- C 3 Haman's Report to His Friends and Wife 5:10-13
  - D 1 His calling for his friends and wife: {10} Haman controlled himself, however, went to his house and sent for his friends and his wife Zeresh. 5:10
  - D 2 His recounting his glorious status in life 5:11
    - E 1 His own wealth: {11} Then Haman recounted <sup>55</sup> to them the glory of his riches,

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<sup>53</sup> 5:8 - tomorrow: One can understand why Esther did not immediately reveal her request to King Ahasuerus when she first approached his throne. But why did she not reveal it at the banquet that evening? Evidently she felt the timing was not right. Whatever the case, if she had the King's attention before, she really had his attention now! Whatever her request was, it was worth a day's wait and another banquet. He would have 24 hours to ponder what it was that drove her to such great lengths to delay her revelation another day.

<sup>54</sup> 5:9 - glad, pleased: Haman exulted that he had been asked to yet another banquet. Little did he know that his charming hostess was plotting to expose him for the anti-Semite that he was!

<sup>55</sup> 5:11 - Haman recounted: This man was utterly full of himself. He was proud, arrogant, self-centered, and on a perpetual ego trip. He was so full of himself he was dangerous. In fact he was murderously self-absorbed. The words of Proverbs 16:18 have never been truer: "Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before stumbling."

- E 2 His numerous male heirs: and the number of his sons,
- E 3 His privileged status before the King of the Persian Empire
  - G 1 His honors: and every *instance* where the king had magnified him
  - G 2 His promotion: and how he had promoted him above the princes and servants of the king.
- D 3 His report of his invitations from the queen to two banquets 5:12
  - E 1 His exclusive presence at the Queen's banquet: {12} Haman also said, "Even Esther the queen let no one but me come with the king to the banquet which she had prepared;
  - E 2 His invitation on the morrow: and tomorrow also I am invited by her with the king.
- D 4 His dissatisfaction at seeing Mordecai sitting at the king's gate: {13} "Yet all of this does not satisfy me every time I see Mordecai the Jew <sup>56</sup> sitting at the king's gate." 5:13
- C 4 Haman's Preparation of a Gallows for Mordecai 5:14
  - D 1 The recommendation of the gallows: {14} Then Zeresh his wife and all his friends said to him, "Have a gallows fifty cubits high made
  - D 2 The proposed execution of Mordecai: and in the morning ask the king to have Mordecai hanged on it;
  - D 3 The anticipated banquet: then go joyfully with the king to the banquet."
  - D 4 The pleasurable response: And the advice pleased Haman, so he had the gallows made.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> 5:13 - Mordecai the Jew: Haman had everything going for him, except for one thing - Mordecai and his unwillingness to defer to Haman. Yet that one thing so utterly consumed him that it became his downfall. Bitterness and resentment are a terrible cancer which eats away at our insides and defiles other people. "See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled" (Heb. 12:15). Not only would Haman himself be eliminated and humiliated (Esther 7:9-10), but his ten sons would be also (Esther 9:7-10, 13-14).

<sup>57</sup> 5:14 - he had the gallows made: There are masterful twists and turns in this historical account. Enraged at what he perceived as Mordecai's impudence, Haman, at the advice of his wife and friends, was preparing to have Mordecai's insolence forever silenced on the very next morning. Esther's banquet was not until evening. Her biggest ally in the battle to protect all Jewish people in the empire would be executed before he could help her rally support. What would happen to the Jewish people then? While Esther is plotting Haman's demise, he is plotting her foster father's demise, and his plan would be implemented first!

**B 5 The King's Exalting of Mordecai 6**

- C 1 The King's Discovery of an Official Lapse of Etiquette Toward Mordecai 6:1-3
- D 1 The reason for the king's discovery -- insomnia! During that night the king could not sleep<sup>58</sup> 6:1a
- D 2 The king's listening to the official chronicles of the kingdom 6:1b
- E 1 The order: so he gave an order to bring the book of records, the chronicles,
- E 2 The compliance: and they were read before the king.
- D 3 His listening to the account of Mordecai's report of the plot of Bigthana and Teresh to assassinate the king 6:2
- E 1 The identity of the reporter: {2} It was found written what Mordecai had reported
- E 2 The identity of the conspirators
- G 1 Their names: concerning Bigthana and Teresh,
- G 2 Their positions: two of the king's eunuchs who were doorkeepers,
- E 3 The object of their conspiracy: that they had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.
- D 4 The first question of the King: His discovery that nothing had been done to honor Mordecai 6:3
- E 1 The content of his question: {3} The king said, "What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?"
- E 2 The reply of the King's attendants: Then the king's servants who attended him said, "Nothing has been done for him."

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<sup>58</sup> 6:1 - could not sleep: God's sovereign, yet subtle working is amazing to behold. 1) Here is the greatest human being in the world of the Biblical record, the King of the Persian Empire. 2) Yet he cannot sleep. a) We cannot even control our own sleep destiny. b) Why of all nights to have insomnia -- why this night? c) Answer -- because God wouldn't let him sleep! God engineered his body chemistry so that he was wide awake! 3) So what do you do when you can't sleep? You try to get sleepy. So he had his attendants bring him the most boring, sleep-inducing material he could think of, the Book of the Chronicles. Why? to put himself asleep! 4) How long did they read to him? We don't know, but as long as they read, he never got sleepy and never got back to bed! 5) What did they read to him? Where in the mass of bureaucratic records in the Library of Persia did they read? The records of King Ahasuerus' reign covered twelve years! The records actually read were about four - five years old. This was in the first month of the 12th year of the king (Esther 3:7, 12, 13). Esther had first gone to visit the king in the 10th month of his 7th year (2:16). So this event could have been as much as four years earlier - see "in those days" (2:21). God completely controlled all these events down to minute details.

## C 2 The King's Seeking Advice on Honoring Mordecai 6:4-9

## D 1 The arrival of Haman 6:4-6a

E 1 The second question of the King: Haman's arrival in the outer court to request the hanging of Mordecai 6:4

G 1 The content of the question: {4} So the king said, "Who is in the court?"<sup>59</sup>

G 2 The arrival of Haman: Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace

G 3 The purpose of Haman: in order to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows which he had prepared for him.

E 2 The response of the King's servants: {5} The king's servants said to him, "Behold, Haman is standing in the court."<sup>60</sup> 6:5a

E 3 The command of the King: And the king said, "Let him come in." 6:5b

E 4 The entrance of Haman: {6} So Haman came in 6:6a

E 5 The third question of the King: and the king said to him,<sup>61</sup> "What is to be done for the man whom the king desires to honor?" 6:6a

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<sup>59</sup> 6:4 - "Who is in the court?" This moment frozen in time is a remarkable tribute to the Sovereignty of God. Think of the things that God controlled: 1) The sleeplessness of the king; 2) the particular day [or night] of his sleeplessness; 3) the solution to his sleeplessness -- read the chronicles of the empire; 4) the particular selection of the chronicles from a particular era 4-5 years earlier; 5) the prior record of the Book of the Chronicles (2:23), in which the record of Mordecai's action was recorded; 6) the fact that nothing had been done to honor Mordecai at that time. Herodotus records that King Ahasuerus kept especially clear records of those who served him well (John A. Martin, *Esther, The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p. 709); 7) the determination of the king to honor Mordecai at just that time; 8) the timing of Haman's arrival in the court of the king (it was now morning).

Momentum / Turning Point. Football games have turning points at which momentum shifts from one team to another. Freeze your Tivo at this point. Haman is in the next room, ready to ask the king for permission to put Mordecai to death. The king, after a sleepless night, has just determined in his mind to reward an unrewarded government official for informing him of an assassination attempt. Some official may have alerted the king of the presence of someone in the outer court. Or perhaps the king didn't know if anyone was there, but whoever was there would be instrumental in rewarding the unrewarded Mordecai. In any event, the king's question hangs in the air, suspended in time. Time stands still. Which way will this drama go? Will Haman be allowed to speak first and ask the king for permission to put Mordecai to death on the gallows? Will the king convince Haman to honor Mordecai? How will it go?

Psalm 31:15a "My times are in Your hand." "The LORD nullifies the counsel of the nations; He frustrates the plans of the peoples. {11} The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart from generation to generation" (Psa. 33:10-11). "There is no wisdom and no understanding And no counsel against the LORD" (Prov. 21:30).

<sup>60</sup> 6:5 - Haman is standing in the court: "Suppose Haman had arrived two hours later? The king would have consulted with other advisers, and haman would have been left out of the celebration for Mordecai. God wanted Haman to spend the day honoring Mordecai and not gloating over Mordecai's corpse on the gallows" (Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Old Testament History, pp. 734, 735).

<sup>61</sup> 6:6 - the king said to him: In the providence of God, the king is intent, not on finding out what brings Haman in so early in the morning, but on ascertaining from his prime minister how he could advise the proper recognition of a low-level government official who had faithfully protected the king.

## D 2 The advice of Haman 6:6b-9

- E 1 His vain assumption that the king meant to honor him: And Haman said to himself, "Whom would the king desire to honor more than me?"<sup>62</sup> 6:6b
- E 2 His reply to the king: {7} Then Haman said to the king, "For the man whom the king desires to honor, [Provision for the honoree of] (6:7) 6:7-9
- G 1 A royal robe from the king: {8} let them bring a royal robe which the king has worn, 6:8
- G 2 A royal horse: and the horse on which the king has ridden,
- G 3 A royal crown: and on whose head a royal crown has been placed;
- G 4 A noble attendant: {9} and let the robe and the horse be handed over to one of the king's most noble princes 6:9
- G 5 The royal protocol
- H 1 Assisted array: and let them array the man whom the king desires to honor
- H 2 Official escort: and lead him on horseback through the city square,
- G 6 Royal proclamation: and proclaim before him, 'Thus it shall be done to the man whom the king desires to honor.'

## C 3 The King's Commanding Haman so to Honor Mordecai! 6:10-12

## D 1 The king's command to Haman 6:10

- E 1 Complete accouterment: "Take quickly the robes and the horse as you have said, and do so for Mordecai the Jew, who is sitting at the king's gate;
- E 2 Complete protocol: do not fall short in anything of all that you have said!"

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<sup>62</sup> 6:6 - more than me? Here the vanity of Haman takes over. Wiersbe (p. 735) speculates that Haman had designs on the position of king. Assuming he was the one to be honored, Haman sets up an almost coronation-like celebration. He advises the honoree should be arrayed in the king's own royal garb and be seated upon the king's own horse decorated on the head with the royal Persian crest, and that he would be led about the streets by a trusted official commanding all to honor the official and proclaiming, "Here is what happens to the person the King delights to honor!" Full of himself, Haman is setting himself up for the most humiliating day of his life!

- D 2 The obedience of Haman 6:11
  - E 1 Royal accouterments: So Haman took the robe and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai,
  - E 2 Royal protocol: and led him *on horseback* through the city square,
  - E 3 Royal proclamation: and proclaimed before him, "Thus it shall be done to the man whom the king desires to honor." 6:11
- D 3 The return of Mordecai: {12} Then Mordecai returned to the king's gate. 6:12a
- D 4 The humiliation of Haman: But Haman hurried home, mourning, with *his* head covered.<sup>63</sup> 6:12b
- C 4 The Somber Prediction of Haman's Wife and Friends 6:13
  - D 1 Haman's recounting his story: {13} Haman recounted to Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him.
  - D 2 The reply of his wife and wise men: Then his wise men and Zeresh his wife said to him,
    - E 1 Condition: "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish origin,
    - E 2 Non success: you will not overcome him,
    - E 3 Devastation: but will surely fall before him."<sup>64</sup>
- C 5 The Arrival of Messengers to bring Haman to the Queen's Banquet: {14} While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hastily brought Haman<sup>65</sup> to the banquet which Esther had prepared. 6:14

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<sup>63</sup> 6:12 - head covered: "A man's pride will bring him low. But a humble spirit will obtain honor" (Prov. 29:23). "Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before stumbling" (Prov. 16:18).

<sup>64</sup> 6:13 - will surely fall before him: "Exactly what they meant by that statement is difficult to determine. It is known that in the Persian religions much was made of omens and signs. Fate, chance, and luck were considered important in everyday life. The Book of Esther stands as a polemic against such a fatalistic view of the world. To many who are not of the covenant community, Israel, the world's events appear to be fatalistic and to happen by chance. But those who are the people of God's covenant knows that God overrules fate. He moves events and circumstances for His good pleasure. Pagan advisers and the pagan wife of an evil man unknowingly stated the central thrust of this book: neither Haman nor any other human can possibly stand against God's Chosen People, the Jewish nation" (Martin, p. 710).

<sup>65</sup> 6:14 - Haman: Haman stands as a prototype of all anti-God activists who oppose God's people. Like authors of many short stories, God led the author of the Book of Esther to make his historical figures into symbols of much larger proportions.... Even though God's people often disobeyed Him, even though they were often not spiritually or even physically where God wanted them to be, deliverance would come. God would so work in history that He

**B 6 The Debasing of Haman 7**

**C 1 Exposure:** The Expose' of Haman 7:1-6

**D 1** The scene at the banquet 7:1-2

**E 1** The arrival of the king and Haman to drink wine with Queen Esther: Now the king and Haman came to drink *wine* with Esther the queen. 7:1

**E 2** The king's asking Esther her request 7:2

**G 1** The setting of the question / offer: {2} And the king said to Esther on the second day also as they drank their wine at the banquet,

**G 2** The content of the question / offer

**H 1** Petition granted; "What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you.

**H 2** Request performed: And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be done."

**D 2** The impassioned speech of Esther 7:3-4

**E 1** Her plea for the saving of her life and that of her people 7:3

**G 1** The condition of favor: {3} Then Queen Esther replied, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king,

**G 2** The condition of pleasure: and if it pleases the king,

**G 3** The content of her petition: let my life be given me as my petition,

**G 4** The content of her request: and my people as my request;

**E 2** Her explanation of the bribe for Jewish extermination: {4} for we have been sold, I and my people, 7:4a

**G 1** to be destroyed,

**G 2** to be killed

**G 3** and to be annihilated.

- E 3 Her statement that she would have remained silent had the issue been merely one of slavery 7:4b
  - G 1 Condition: Now if we had only been sold as slaves, men and women,
  - G 2 Response: I would have remained silent,
  - G 3 Reason: for the trouble would not be commensurate with the annoyance to the king."
- D 3 The incredulous query of the king: {5} Then King Ahasuerus asked Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who would presume to do thus?" 7:5
- D 4 The startling revelation of Esther: {6} Esther said, "A foe and an enemy, is this wicked Haman!" 7:6a
- D 5 The terror of Haman: Then Haman became terrified<sup>66</sup> before the king and queen. 7:6b
- C 2 **Judgment:** The Execution of Haman 7:7-10
  - D 1 The shocked anger of the king: {7} The king arose in his anger from drinking wine *and went* into the palace garden; 7:7a
  - D 2 Haman's begging for his life 7:7b
    - E 1 The plea of Haman: but Haman stayed to beg for his life from Queen Esther,
    - E 2 The observation of Haman: for he saw that harm had been determined<sup>67</sup> against him by the king.
  - D 3 The king's misinterpretation of Haman's plea for clemency 7:8
    - E 1 The return of the king to the banquet area: {8} Now when the king returned from the palace garden into the place where they were drinking wine,

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<sup>66</sup> 7:6 - terrified: One is reminded that all of us must one day stand in judgment before Jesus of Nazareth, designated by God as His Judge of the human race (John 5:22; 27-29). Jesus, as Judge, "will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear; But with righteousness He will judge ... And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked" (Isa 11:3, 4). With His words He will discern "the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). Haman had accurately portrayed his desire to have the Jewish people exterminated. But he had not told the truth about his motives. He had pretended to secure the King's best interests, but as the truth unfolds, he is exposed as a liar. Mordecai, prominent representative of the Jewish people, had actually acted in the king's best interests (Esther 2:21-23). Haman ends up being exposed as one who wanted to exterminate the Jewish people for personal reasons. The truth was that the two Jewish people Ahasuerus knew best -- Esther and Mordecai -- were intent on serving the King and protecting his interests, not endangering them as Haman had charged. We humans must live in the reality that the truth will ALWAYS come out, if not in this life, then in the next. We need to live our lives in truth, for only truth will triumph! "But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be made known" (Luke 12:2).

<sup>67</sup> 7:7 - harm ... determined: Haman could read the King's body language!

- E 2 The pleading of Haman: Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was.
- E 3 The fury of the king: Then the king said, "Will he even assault the queen <sup>68</sup> with me in the house?"
- E 4 The fate of Haman: As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.
- D 4 The information from Harbonah 7:9a
  - E 1 The identity of the informant: {9} Then Harbonah, one of the eunuchs who *were* before the king said,
  - E 2 The description of the gallows: "Behold indeed, the gallows standing at Haman's house fifty cubits high,
  - E 3 The purpose of the gallows: which Haman made for Mordecai
  - E 4 The irrationality of the gallows: who spoke good on behalf of the king!" 7:9
- D 5 The order from the King: And the king said, "Hang him on it!" 7:9b
- D 6 The execution of Haman: {10} So they hanged Haman on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai,<sup>69</sup> 7:10a
- D 7 The placation of the King: and the king's anger subsided.<sup>70</sup> 7:10b

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<sup>68</sup> 7:8 - assault the queen: As good a reader of body language as Haman was, Ahasuerus was terrible. But his misreading served God's purpose!

<sup>69</sup> 7:10 - gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai: This is poetic justice! There are a number of lessons to be learned. 1) We reap what we sow (Gal. 6:7-8). Haman was galled that Mordecai the Jew would not bow before him and attempted to destroy him and his people. Instead, Haman was forced to bow and plead for his life before a Jewish woman! Haman prepared a gallows to destroy Mordecai. He was destroyed upon his own gallows! (See Wiersbe, p. 740 for a list of those who were forced to reap what they sowed.) 2) An enemy of Israel is an enemy of God (Wiersbe, p. 741). (See Gen. 12:1-3; Isa. 60:11-12; Zech. 2:7-8; Matt. 25:31-46.) 3) The truth will always be revealed in the end. Haman disguised his true intentions when he talked the King into exterminating the Jewish people, but Haman's real reasons were revealed. There is a final judgment and all the truth about each person will be revealed. There will be no way to hide the truth (John 5:22; 27-29; Rev. 20:11-15). 4) Justice is coming! Though evil people may persecute believers and oppose God, justice is coming. The righteous will be protected and honored, the wicked humiliated and destroyed (2 Thess. 1:4-10; Rev. 19:11-21; 20:7-10; 20:11-15). 5) God does not enjoy judgment. He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. For this reason He is mercifully slow in judgment (Ezek. 18:23, 32; 33:11; 2 Pet 3:9).

<sup>70</sup> 7:10 - king's anger subsided: One is reminded of the New Testament doctrine of propitiation. God is unremittently angry at sin. Only the death of the sinner can placate his anger. But the beauty of God's character is that, in a loving and sacrificial act, He and His Son mutually agreed that the latter, as representative of the human race (Son of Man), would Himself bear all of God's infinite anger at human sin and thereby placate God's fury. Jesus' death is sufficient to pay for the sin of the whole world (1 John 2:2). If humanity rejects that sacrifice, "there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH

**A 3 JEWISH POWER 8 - 10**

**B 1 National Self-Preservation 8 - 9**

C 1 The King's Authorizing of the Jews to Defend Themselves on "Extermination Day" 8

D 1 The elevation of Mordecai to power 8:1-2

E 1 King Ahasuerus' gift of the house of Haman to Queen Esther: On that day King Ahasuerus gave the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews, to Queen Esther; 8:1

E 2 The king's elevation of Mordecai to the position of the late Haman 8:1-2

G 1 Mordecai's coming before the king 8:1.

H 1 The fact of his elevation: and Mordecai came before the king,

H 2 The reason for his elevation: for Esther had disclosed what he was to her.

G 2 The king's empowering of Mordecai {2} The king took off his signet ring which he had taken away from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai.<sup>71</sup> 8:2a

E 3 Esther's appointment of Mordecai over the house of Haman: And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman. 8:2b

D 2 Esther's beseeching of the king to protect the Jewish people 8:3-8

E 1 The graphic nature of her plea 8:3.

G 1 The statement: {3} Then Esther spoke again to the king,

G 2 Her subservience: fell at his feet,

G 3 Her emotion: wept

G 4 Her passion: and implored him

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WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES" (Heb. 10:26b-27).

One is also reminded that the implacable hatred of many people against the Jewish people will eventuate in their own destruction. "For the nation and the kingdom which will not serve you [Israel] will perish, And the nations will be utterly ruined" (Isa. 60:12).

<sup>71</sup> 8:2 - gave it to Mordecai: What a complete reversal of roles! The believer in Christ today is often the brunt of jokes and great displeasure, and in many countries robbed, displaced, persecuted, and killed. But one day believers in Jesus will rule the entire earth (Matt. 5:5; Rev. 5:10; 20:4, 6; 22:5)!

- E 2 The summary of her plea: to avert
  - G 1 The evil: the evil *scheme* of Haman the Agagite
  - G 2 The anti-Semitic plot: and his plot which he had devised against the Jews.
- E 3 Her acceptance by the king 8:4.
  - G 1 The King's acceptance: {4} The king extended the golden scepter to Esther.
  - G 2 Esther's stance: So Esther arose and stood before the king.
- E 4 Her speech 8:5-6
  - G 1 Her request to the king to revoke the laws of Haman to destroy the Jews 8:5.
    - H 1 Her delicate pre-conditions: {5} Then she said,
      - J 1 Pleasure: "If it pleases the king
      - J 2 Favor: and if I have found favor before him
      - J 3 Propriety: and the matter *seems* proper to the king
      - J 4 Attraction: and I am pleasing in his sight,
    - H 2 Her request
      - J 1 Revocation: let it be written to revoke the letters
      - J 2 Identification: devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite,
      - J 3 Target: which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the king's provinces.
  - G 2 Her personal distress at the prospect of watching her people destroyed 8:6.
    - H 1 Her inability to witness their calamity: {6} "For how can I endure to see the calamity which will befall my people,

- H 2 Her inability to witness their destruction: and how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?"
- E 5 The king's response 8:7-8
  - G 1 His review to Mordecai and Esther of having hanged Haman 8:7.
    - H 1 The King's audience: {7} So King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew,
    - H 2 The King's review of his benevolence
      - J 1 Giving to Esther Haman's house: "Behold, I have given the house of Haman to Esther,
      - J 2 Execution of Haman: and him they have hanged on the gallows because he had stretched out his hands against the Jews.
  - G 2 His authorizing Mordecai and Esther to draft legislation protecting the Jews 8:8.
    - H 1 Draft legislation: {8} "Now you write to the Jews as you see fit, in the king's name,
    - H 2 Authorized legislation: and seal *it* with the king's signet ring;
    - H 3 Irrevocable legislation: for a decree which is written in the name of the king and sealed with the king's signet ring may not be revoked."
- D 3 The description of the legislation 8:9-14
  - E 1 The calling of the king's scribes 8:9.
    - G 1 The date of the summons: {9} So the king's scribes were called at that time in the third month (that is, the month Sivan), on the twenty-third day;
    - G 2 The author of the decree: and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded

- G 3 The recipients of the legislation
  - H 1 The officials
    - J 1 to the Jews,
    - J 2 the satraps,
    - J 3 the governors
    - J 4 and the princes of the provinces
  - H 2 The provinces
    - J 1 The extent of the provinces: which *extended* from India to Ethiopia,
    - J 2 The number of the provinces: 127 provinces,
    - J 3 The script of the provinces: to every province according to its script,
  - H 3 The people
    - J 1 The ethnic groups: and to every people
    - J 2 The language: according to their language
    - J 3 The Jewish people: as well as to the Jews
    - J 4 The Jewish script and language: according to their script and their language.
- E 2 The official nature of the legislation 8:10a
  - G 1 His authority: {10} He <sup>72</sup> wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus,
  - G 2 His authentication: and sealed it with the king's signet ring,
- E 3 The distribution of the legislation by couriers: and sent letters by couriers 8:10b
  - G 1 Equine mail: on horses,
  - G 2 Royal steeds: riding on steeds sired by the royal stud.

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<sup>72</sup> 8:10 - He wrote: i.e., Mordecai

- E 4 The terms of the legislation 8:11-12
  - G 1 The authorization for self defense
    - H 1 The extent of the authorization: *{11}* In them the king granted the Jews who were in each and every city
    - H 2 The terms of the authorization
      - J 1 The right of assembly: *the right to assemble*
      - J 2 The right of self defense: and to defend their lives,
      - J 3 The right to use lethal force: to destroy, to kill and to annihilate
    - H 3 The targets of the authorization
      - J 1 The army: the entire army of any
      - J 2 The entity: people or province which might attack them,<sup>73</sup>
      - J 3 The entire population: including children and women,
      - J 4 The material resources: and to plunder their spoil,
  - G 2 The time framework: *{12}* on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, the thirteenth *day* of the twelfth month (that is, the month Adar). 8:12.
- E 5 The publishing of the legislation in each province *{13}* A copy of the edict to be issued as law in each and every province was published to all the peoples, 8:13.
- E 6 The purpose of the legislation: so that the Jews would be ready for this day to avenge themselves on their enemies. 8:13.

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<sup>73</sup> 8:11 - which might attack them: The laws of the Persians were irreversible. The enemies of Jewry retained the right to attack, but now the Israelis had the right to defend! So it is in the kingdom of God. While we are alive in this world, the devil and his minions, both spiritual and human, retain the authority to attack. But in Christ we are granted the right to defend ourselves.

There are so many avenues we have with which to defend ourselves against Satan: prayer, Bible study, Christian fellowship and mutual accountability (Heb. 10:23-25), and reciprocal admonition, exhortation, and edification (Rom. 15:14; Col. 3:16; 1 Thess. 5:11; Heb. 3:13). In Ephesians 6:10-18 we have the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of gospel readiness, the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit -- God's Word, and prayer.

- E 7 The departure of the couriers 8:14.
  - G 1 Their speed: {14} The couriers, hastened and impelled
  - G 2 Their authorization: by the king's command, went out,
  - G 3 Their transportation: riding on the royal steeds;
- E 8 The publication of the decree in Susa 8:14. and the decree was given out at the citadel in Susa.
- D 4 The reaction to the legislation 8:15-17
  - E 1 The splendor of Mordecai 8:15a
    - G 1 The departure of Mordecai: {15} Then Mordecai went out from the presence of the king
    - G 2 The apparel of Mordecai
      - H 1 His robes: in royal robes of blue and white,
      - H 2 His crown: with a large crown of gold
      - H 3 His garment: and a garment of fine linen and purple;
  - E 2 The joy in the city of Susa and the city of Susa shouted and rejoiced. 8:15b
  - E 3 The gladness of the Jews 8:16. {16} For the Jews there was light and gladness and joy and honor.
  - E 4 The reaction in the provinces 8:17.
    - G 1 The breadth of the reaction
      - H 1 In each province: {17} In each and every province
      - H 2 In each city: and in each and every city,
    - G 2 The cause of the reaction: wherever the king's commandment and his decree arrived,
    - G 3 The emotions of the reaction
      - H 1 Joy in Jewry: there was gladness and joy for the Jews,
      - H 2 Celebrations in Jewry

- J 1 a feast
- J 2 and a holiday.
- G 4 The ethnic reaction: Conversion to Judaism
  - H 1 The extent of conversion: And many among the peoples of the land became Jews,<sup>74</sup>
  - H 2 The motivation for conversion: for the dread of the Jews <sup>75</sup> had fallen on them.
- C 2 The Jews' Defense of Themselves 9:1-16
  - D 1 The summary of the Jewish victory 9:1
    - E 1 The date: Now in the twelfth month (that is, the month Adar), on the thirteenth day
    - E 2 The event: when the king's command and edict were about to be executed,
    - E 3 The hoped for result: on the day when the enemies of the Jews hoped to gain the mastery over them,
    - E 4 The actual result: it was turned to the contrary so that the Jews themselves gained the mastery over those who hated them.
  - D 2 The invincibility of the Jews 9:2
    - E 1 Their preparation: {2} The Jews assembled in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on those who sought their harm; 9:2a
    - E 2 Their invincibility: and no one could stand before them, 9:2b

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<sup>74</sup> 8:17 - became Jews: I take it that conversion to Judaism included, at least for some, a genuine faith in Israel's God.

<sup>75</sup> 8:17 - dread of the Jews: This fear comes from God. Other examples of the fear of God affecting the surrounding nations: Deut 2:25; 11:25. See also Zech. 8:20-23.

Fear can certainly be a healthy motivator for conversion. As a four-year old child I attended a Child Evangelism after school club in our own basement. The teacher taught us about heaven and hell. I was riveted: When she asked if any of us wished to make sure we were going to heaven instead of hell, I raised my hand. There was no way I wanted to go to hell! My faith in Jesus began that evening and I am still a believer!

- E 3 Their psychological superiority: for the dread <sup>76</sup> of them had fallen on all the peoples. 9:2c
- D 3 The governmental support for the Jews 9:3-4
  - E 1 The itemization of support: {3} Even all the princes of the provinces, the satraps, the governors and those who were doing the king's business assisted the Jews,
  - E 2 The motivation for support: because the dread of Mordecai had fallen on them.
- D 4 The greatness of Mordecai 9:4
  - E 1 In the king's house: {4} Indeed, Mordecai was great in the king's house, 9:4
  - E 2 In the provinces: and his fame spread throughout all the provinces; 9:4
  - E 3 The reason: for the man Mordecai became greater and greater.
- D 5 The Jews' victory in Susa 9:5-15
  - E 1 The summary of their victory 9:5
    - G 1 Destruction: {5} Thus the Jews struck all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying;
    - G 2 Invincibility: and they did what they pleased to those who hated them.
  - E 2 The number of enemies killed in Susa: {6} At the citadel in Susa the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men,<sup>77</sup> 9:6
  - E 3 The identity of the ten sons of Haman killed; the foregoing of any plunder 9:7-10

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<sup>76</sup> 9:2 - dread: The dread of the Jews (8:17) and of Mordecai (9:3) was something God placed in the hearts of the broader Persian community. This brought about resounding military success as Jewish people endeavored to defend themselves across the 127 Persian province. We see again the Sovereignty of God in defending His people! Many times, beginning in 1948 we have witnessed the superiority of Israeli military exercises, dwarfed as she is in a sea of Arab neighbors. Israel's military superiority can only be attributed to the hand of God even though now, as in the days of Esther and Mordecai, the name of God is not mentioned.

<sup>77</sup> 9:6 - At the citadel ... Jews ... destroyed 500 men. The citadel was a large fortified structure. The fact that a fixed battle took place inside the citadel is significant. It means that the anti-Semites were the aggressors. A number of Jewish people had taken refuge inside the fortress, and the anti-Semites entered the fortress to kill them. The Jews acted in self-defense and slaughtered 500 attackers. No doubt this sort of scene played itself over and over again throughout the scores of provinces. Anti-Semitism is a Satanically inspired hatred of the Jewish people solely because they are God's people, regardless of whether or not anti-Semites know fully why they hate Jews.

- G 1 Their names
  - H 1 {7} and Parshandatha,
  - H 2 Dalphon,
  - H 3 Aspatha,
  - H 4 {8} Poratha,
  - H 5 Adalia,
  - H 6 Aridatha,
  - H 7 {9} Parmashta,
  - H 8 Arisai,
  - H 9 Aridai
  - H 10 and Vaizatha,
- G 2 Their identity: {10} the ten sons of Haman <sup>78</sup> the son of Hammedatha, the Jews' enemy;
- G 3 The Jewish restraint: but they did not lay their hands on the plunder.<sup>79</sup>
- E 4 The extension of the engagement in Susa 9:11-15
  - G 1 The report to the king of the number killed by Jews in Susa: {11} On that day the number of those who were killed at the citadel in Susa was reported to the king. 9:11
  - G 2 The king's report to Esther 9:12
    - H 1 On the victory within the citadel: {12} The king said to Queen Esther, "The Jews have killed and destroyed five hundred men and the ten sons of Haman at the citadel in Susa.
    - H 2 His query about the rest of the empire: What then have they done in the rest of the king's provinces!

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<sup>78</sup> 9:10 - the ten sons of Haman: No doubt the sons of Haman collaborated with the 500 who attacked the citadel itself, presumably in an attempt to kill both Mordecai in retaliation for his having brought about, indirectly, the death of their father, as well as other Jews there assembled for safety.

<sup>79</sup> 9:10 - plunder: Though they had authority to do so (8:11), three times it is stated in the account that the Jewish people did not take the plunder of their enemies for themselves. This demonstrated that their resistance to Haman's decree was not motivated by profit, but simply by self preservation.

- G 3 His request of Esther 9:12
  - H 1 For her petition: Now what is your petition? It shall even be granted you.
  - H 2 For her further request: And what is your further request? It shall also be done."
- G 4 Esther's request 9:13
  - H 1 For a one-day extension for Jews in Susa: {13} Then said Esther, "If it pleases the king, let tomorrow also be granted<sup>80</sup> to the Jews who are in Susa to do according to the edict of today;
  - H 2 For Haman's ten sons to be displayed on the gallows: and let Haman's ten sons be hanged on the gallows."<sup>81</sup>
- G 5 The king's compliance 9:14
  - H 1 His commandment: {14} So the king commanded that it should be done so;
  - H 2 The legislation: and an edict was issued in Susa,
  - H 3 The compliance: and Haman's ten sons were hanged.
- G 6 The results of the extension (on the fourteenth of Adar) 9:15
  - H 1 The assembly of the Jews in Susa: {15} The Jews who were in Susa assembled also on the fourteenth day of the month Adar
  - H 2 The killing of 300 additional men: and killed three hundred men in Susa,
  - H 3 The foregoing of any plunder: but they did not lay their hands on the plunder.

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<sup>80</sup> 9:13 - let tomorrow also be granted: The anti-Semites were unsuccessful in their frontal attack at the fortress on the 13th. Had the Israeli underground (forerunners of the Mossad) run across a plot by anti-Semites to strike the Jews on the 14th in the city proper? It seems likely. If so, they informed Esther, who requested, and was granted, a one day extension.

<sup>81</sup> 9:13 - Haman's ten sons be hanged on the gallows: This was not sheer vindictiveness on Esther's part. It was a powerful symbol designed to persuade other anti-Semites in the city of Susa that it was futile to attack the Jews.

- D 6 The Jews' victory in the provinces 9:16
  - E 1 Their killing of 75,000 of those who hated them: *{16}* Now the rest of the Jews who *were* in the king's provinces assembled, to defend their lives and rid themselves of their enemies, and kill 75,000<sup>82</sup> of those who hated them;
  - E 2 Their foregoing of plunder: but they did not lay their hands on the plunder.
- C 3 The Institution of the Feast of Purim 9:17-32
  - D 1 The origins of the celebration of the victory 9:17-19
    - E 1 In the rural areas 9:17
      - G 1 Victory on the 13th of Adar: *{17}* *This was done on the thirteenth day of the month Adar,*
      - G 2 Rest and celebration on the 14th of Adar: and on the fourteenth day they rested and made it a day of feasting and rejoicing.
    - E 2 In Susa 9:18
      - G 1 Assembly (to fight) on the 13th and 14th of Adar: *{18}* But the Jews who were in Susa assembled on the thirteenth and the fourteenth of the same month,
      - G 2 Rest and celebration on the 15th of Adar: and they rested on the fifteenth day and made it a day of feasting and rejoicing.
    - E 3 The description of the Jewish rural celebration *{19}* Therefore the Jews of the rural areas, who live in the rural towns, make the fourteenth day of the month Adar *a* holiday 9:19
      - G 1 for rejoicing
      - G 2 and feasting
      - G 3 and sending portions *of food* to one another.

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<sup>82</sup> 9:16 - kill 75,000: This seems like a staggering number, but it averages out to 590 per province. The Persian Empire was laced with anti-Semitism. The same holds true in our world. Many around the world, including some Americans, believe that Israel is to blame for the absence of peace throughout the Middle East. Their error will persist and grow until the whole world sends troops to Israel for the Final Solution (Joel 3:2, 12; Zechariah 12:3; 14:1-3; Revelation 16:16; 19:19). But it will be a trap set by God so He Himself can destroy Israel's enemies! Fight against Israel, fight against God!

By way of application, there is a lesson to be learned. Though God has promised us Christians victory, we still have to go out and fight the battles. Victory promised is victory unclaimed if we do not go out to battle!

- D 2 The institutionalizing of the Feast of Purim <sup>83</sup> 9:20-32
  - E 1 The first letter: From Mordecai 9:20-28
    - G 1 The summary of the letter 9:20-21
      - H 1 His recording of the events: {20} Then Mordecai recorded these events, 9:20a
      - H 2 His sending letters to all the Jews in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus: and he sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far, 9:20b
      - H 3 His obligating them to celebrate the 14th and 15th of Adar annually: {21} obliging them to celebrate the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same month, annually, 9:21
    - G 2 The purpose of the celebration 9:22
      - H 1 The memorializing of victory: {22} because on those days the Jews rid themselves of their enemies,
      - H 2 The memorializing of national joy: and *it was* a month which was turned for them
        - J 1 from sorrow into gladness
        - J 2 and from mourning into a holiday;
    - G 3 The procedure of the celebration: that they should make them days 9:22
      - H 1 of feasting and rejoicing
      - H 2 and sending portions *of food* to one another
      - H 3 and gifts to the poor.
    - G 4 The Jewish compliance with the decree concerning celebration: {23} Thus the Jews undertook what they had started to do, and what Mordecai had written to them. 9:23
    - G 5 The history behind the celebration 9:24-25

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<sup>83</sup> 9:20-32 title - Feast of Purim: Mordecai and Esther sent out letters to all Jewish citizens of the Persian Empire, requesting them to celebrate the two days of Jewish combat and victory, Adar 13 and 14 in one Jewish holiday. There may have been some resistance to establishing yet another national festival in addition to those prescribed in the Torah. Mordecai and Esther were institutionalizing this holiday. Modern Jews celebrate Purim on the evening of Adar 14 (March 8) (Constable, p. 24).

- H 1 Haman's scheme to destroy the Jews: {24} For Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the adversary of all the Jews, had schemed against the Jews to destroy them 9:24
- H 2 Haman's casting the lot (Pur) to destroy the Jews: and had cast Pur, that is the lot, to disturb them and destroy them. 9:24
- H 3 The king's decree to reverse the fortunes of Haman and his sons: {25} But when it came to the king's attention, he commanded by letter that his wicked scheme which he had devised against the Jews, should return on his own head and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows. 9:25
- G 6 The naming of the celebration: Purim (plural of Pur): {26} Therefore they called these days Purim after the name of Pur. 9:26a
- G 7 The perpetuation of the celebration 9:26b-
  - H 1 The impetus for the celebration 9:26b
    - J 1 The instructions of the letter: And because of the instructions in this letter,
    - J 2 Their own experiences: both what they had seen in this regard and what had happened to them,
  - H 2 The establishment of the custom of celebrating the two days annually
    - J 1 The establishment of the custom: {27} the Jews established and made a custom for themselves and for their descendants and for all those who allied themselves with them,
    - J 2 The annual observance of the custom: so that they would not fail to celebrate these two days according to their regulation and according to their appointed time annually. 9:27
  - H 3 The plan for the celebration: {28} So these days were to be remembered and celebrated 9:28
    - J 1 The extent of the celebration: throughout every generation, every family, every province and every city;

J 2 The duration of the celebration: and these days of Purim were not to fail from among the Jews, or their memory fade from their descendants.

E 2 The second letter: From Esther and Mordecai 9:29-32

G 1 The authors of the second letter about Purim: {29} Then Queen Esther, daughter of Abihail, with Mordecai the Jew, wrote with full authority to confirm this second letter about Purim. 9:29

G 2 The addressees: {30} He sent letters to all the Jews, to the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, *namely*, words of peace and truth, 9:30

G 3 The addition to the previous customs -- instructions for their times of fasting and their lamentations: {31} to establish these days of Purim at their appointed times, just as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had established for them, and just as they had established for themselves and for their descendants with instructions for their times of fasting and their lamentations. 9:31

G 4 The results of the second letter: {32} The command of Esther established these customs for Purim, and it was written in the book. 9:32

## **B 2 International Prominence: Mordecai's Supremacy in Power 10**

C 1 The Taxation Levied by King Ahasuerus: Now King Ahasuerus laid a tribute on the land and on the coastlands of the sea. 10:1

C 2 The Annals of the King 10:2

D 1 The subject of the annals

E 1 The king's accomplishments: {2} And all the accomplishments of his authority and strength,

E 2 Mordecai's greatness: and the full account of the greatness of Mordecai to which the king advanced him,

D 2 The record of the annals: are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Media and Persia?

- C 3 The Greatness of Mordecai 10:3
  - D 1 In relation to the king: {3} For Mordecai the Jew was second *only* to King Ahasuerus,
  - D 2 In relation to the Jews: and great among the Jews,
    - E 1 and in favor with many of his kinsmen,
    - E 2 one who sought the good of his people
    - E 3 and one who spoke for the welfare of his whole nation.<sup>84</sup>

Expanded Analytical Outline of ESTHER

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<sup>84</sup> 10:3 - welfare of his nation: Mordecai is lauded for his defense and protection of the Jewish people, but the absence of any specific reference to Yahweh is saddening, to say the least. This book graphically illustrates God's Sovereign Protection of His People, even though His people do not necessarily acknowledge Him. God will keep His promises even though His people, at times, are not deserving. What a great and faithful God we have!