

# Esther #4 Ch. 8-10

by Chuck Missler

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*Esther and Mordecai work together to reverse the irreversible decree issued by Haman, using the power of the king's signet ring and the authority of the grand vizier.*

**Duration:** 1:03:23

**Scripture:** Joshua 1:8, Matthew 6:33, Galatians 3:10, 1 John 1:9

**Topics:** "Esther"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being diligent and responsible in our actions, rather than using religious excuses for laziness. He uses the examples of Joseph and Noah to illustrate the need for proactive stewardship and obedience to God's warnings. The speaker also highlights the significance of confession and God's faithfulness in forgiving our sins. Additionally, he mentions that in the next session, he will delve into the book of Esther, exploring hidden messages and lessons that can be applied to our personal lives.

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## Transcript

Tonight we're going to continue, of course, and perhaps wrap up our first pass through the Book of Esther. I say it in that way in that, even if we finish tonight, I anticipate us doing two more sessions on the Book of Esther. I've left some things out so as not to confuse the narrative of Esther.

But what we will do next time is go and we'll have computer-driven displays to assist us. We'll take a look at the hidden codes in Esther. The word, the name of Esther, the name of the book means something hidden.

And there's many things hidden. And we'll look at what we call microcodes in the Book of Esther. Acrostics and equidistant letter encryption in the Book of Esther.

Next time. Then the last time, one more session, and we'll finish the book, we will look at what I would call the possibility of macrocodes in Esther. And we'll explain that in our weirdness two weeks from tonight.

Let's jump in. We're in our fourth session on the Book of Esther. We're going to plunge into chapters 8, 9, and 10, 10 being very short ones, on the Book of Esther.

We have quite a bit of material to cover so I don't want to spend too much time doing a comprehensive review. If you are just joining us, don't worry about that because we're going to have that review time after

next anyway because we want to put, we're going to stand back and look at Esther in a more strategic way and we'll recap the book then. But clearly the book deals with the villain, Haman, who, yeah, there you go, right, right.

Orthodox, Orthodox Jews, generally, will hiss, stamp their feet, every time the name is mentioned, you know. I made the mistake of mentioning that on our first session. The good news is most of you have either forgotten or been kind not to disrupt our recording.

But anyway, Haman did get the king to issue a decree, in effect, banning to death the Jewish community and recognized the Persian Empire ruled at that time. And so we're talking, essentially, the majority of the Jewish community would have exterminated the nation. And again, in a sense of speaking, the problem wasn't just in Susa or in Persia proper.

After Persia conquered Babylon, the remnant that went back to rebuild the temple were struggling. They would have been included in that edict, you see. So you can recognize that God had his purposes here.

The most fascinating sense of ironies occurred when Haman ends up suffering on the very, they keep calling it a gallows, it really wasn't hanging gallows, it was an impaling, it was more like a crucifixion cross. But in any case, he ends up suffering that death. But at this point now, the villain is dead.

Haman is history. There still is a major predicament to be faced. And that's this peculiar law that pertains at that time in Persia, which even an edict of the king, which he signed, could not be reversed.

And that's a very strange law. In fact, maybe this is an occasion to get into a little piece of background you might find interesting. And I won't take you to the passage to save time, I'll just paraphrase and remind you of Daniel chapter 6. You may recall that the prophet Daniel, when he was in Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar, there was the issue of the fiery furnace and all that.

You remember that story in Daniel chapter 3. Daniel chapter 5, Babylon falls to the Persian Empire. In Daniel chapter 6, Daniel has found favor with Darius, the king of Persia, running things. But he gets, in effect, snookered into signing an edict, which ends up causing Daniel to be thrown into the lion's den.

And I think most of us all are familiar with the story of how Daniel was thrown into the lion's den overnight. And of course, as you all know, he came out just fine. God took care of him.

But very few of us recognize what was probably really going on. Daniel had been appointed the head of the Median priesthood. Remember, the Persian Empire was a coalition of the Medes and the Persians.

And the Medes brought to the table a very powerful priesthood, the Median priests, which were called Magi. That's where we get the term magistrate. They were court advisors.

They were magicians in the sense that they advised and they had special skills. Not magicians like we use today. The terms come to mean something a little different in that direction.

But they were the priesthood and the kingmakers. They were a very, very powerful priesthood. But they were a hereditary priesthood.

And Daniel gets appointed to head them up. You have to see the text in the Hebrew to pull this all together. He gets a title called the Rab Magi, which is the head of the Magi.

But the point is, so you can imagine how this established priesthood regarded a Jew being put in charge of their hereditary priesthood. And so they very likely contrived this way to get Daniel out of the way. But the point I wanted to make, when you read Daniel 6, you'll notice that the king was upset when he realized the results of his own edict.

He loved Daniel. He worried about Daniel. He rushed there the next morning to see how Daniel was.

He didn't want this to happen. He was stuck. Because, as it's put in Daniel chapter 6 verse 15, a deedict of the Persian, even a Persian king, could not be reversed.

Even though he signed it, he couldn't undo it. That's just their peculiar law. We're going to encounter that same thing here in the book of Esther.

Now before I leave Daniel in the lion's den, he's out. What most people don't realize is that he established a cabal, a secret sect within the medium of priesthood that preserved a prophecy that he had been given. You may recall on more than one occasion, Gabriel visits with Daniel and gives him some most profound prophecies in the scripture.

But the point is, these are the guys that four, five centuries later, come and visit the Christ child. These are the Magi, fulfilling a prophecy. And there's a whole thing, many people don't, you know, you always picture these three guys on camels coming Christmas Eve or something, you know.

No, it was within two years. When the shepherds were there, they were in the manger, in the cave with the manger and all that, like we always picture on our pageants. By the time the Magi arrive, if you read that carefully, they're in a home.

And when Herod goes to kill the babes, he gets two years and younger. So we don't know how long it was, but it was something approaching, but less than two years that the Magi finally arrived, presumably. It may not have been full two years, it might have been months, but the point is it wasn't that night kind of thing.

The point is, what you also probably don't get, unless you've studied the political scene at that time, is that Judea was a buffer state between two rival empires, Rome, the Roman Empire, and the Parthian Empire, which was the successor to the Persian Empire. Not as powerful as Rome, but Judea was contested back and forth. Pompey, Mark Antony, there's a number of times that the Romans drove them out and then got clobbered by the Parthians.

Just to touch a little bit on that, just give you a quick picture here, so I do this right. The first conqueror of Jerusalem was Pompey in 63 BC, and he attacked an Armenian outpost of the Parthian Empire in doing that. In 55 BC, Crassus led a Roman legions in sacking Jerusalem from the Parthians, and then finally attack on Parthia proper.

The Romans were decisively defeated. They lost 30,000 troops, including their commander, and the Parthians counterattacked with the invasions of Armenia, Syria, and Palestine. And finally, the nominal Roman rule was established by Antipater, the father of Herod, who in turn had to retreat in 40 BC from another Parthian invasion.

So you've got to get the picture, Judea was a contested area. Mark Antony reestablished Roman sovereignty in 37 BC, but he also got clobbered ultimately in another expedition. After his defeat, the Parthians swept all the Roman opposition completely out of Palestine, including Herod himself, who had to

flee to Alexandria and then to Rome.

So Herod was the king of Judea, but he couldn't be there. It was a war zone. You follow me? And it was, by the way, with Jewish collaboration that Parthian Empire established sovereignty again in Jerusalem.

By Herod now, Rome got the title from Augustus to be, you know, that he was king of the Jews. But it took him three years to get the place safe enough to show up, if you will. And they did a five-month siege with Roman troops, and he was finally able to occupy his own capital.

So this is the climate then that a Parthian entourage comes. Not three guys on camels. They came with cavalry and all the, with armed troops.

For all they knew, the Parthians may have been trying to create a border incident for another issue. And when the Magi come to Herod and say, where is he that's born king of the Jews? That's an insulting question, because he was not Jewish, and he was appointed by the Romans, you see. But they're saying, where is he that was born to be king of the Jews? Well, he has the scribes check Micah 5.2. He's going to be born in Bethlehem, and you know the story.

And so it's not, it's not a couple of guys that wandered in the whole city, if you read the text. The whole city is disturbed by this incredible arrival. It wasn't just three guys on camels.

Anyway, so for what it's worth. So there's a whole background. If you want to get into that, we have a briefing package on Christmas, what really happened.

But I mentioned this, I bring this up primarily to make the point that we're facing the same predicament, in a sense, that was in Daniel 6, where a king could not even reverse his own edict. And so here we are, in Esther chapter 8. Mordecai has been put in the power of Haman. Haman is a done deal.

But they've still got a problem. They've got almost a year away that the Jews are scheduled to be wiped out. And so let's jump in chapter 8, verse 1 in Esther.

On that day did King Hazarus give the house of Haman, the Jews enemy, unto Esther, the queen. See, his house, he was thus considered a criminal. So his property was as cheap to the crown.

And so they give it to Esther. And she, of course, establishes Mordecai to look over it. It says, And Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had told what he was unto her.

In other words, Esther now has declared, obviously, the king knows that she's Jewish. And Mordecai was in effect her guardian and so forth. Now the king gave the property of Haman as a gift to Esther.

She either as compensation for the alarm or just as a sign of favor and so forth. And then verse 2, The king took off his ring. Remember the signet ring? That was back in chapter 3. That was the symbol, the ability that he gave to Haman so that Haman could seal something with the signature of the king in effect.

He gives that ring now, which he'd taken from Haman, gave it to Mordecai. This makes Mordecai the grand vizier. This makes Mordecai the prime minister, as we might call him.

So Mordecai, that was so disdained by Haman, is now in his shoes. He's the most powerful guy next to the king in the empire. The king obviously doesn't trouble himself with affairs of state.

That makes his number two guy extremely, extremely powerful. And that's, of course, the situation that Mordecai is in. And Esther sent Mordecai over the house of Haman.

Now this is the same signet ring that had authorized the edict against the Jews. It's interesting to notice how throughout the scripture, God says, them that honor me, I will honor. And through all the dark days of the earlier chapters in Esther, Mordecai was faithful.

And how interesting it is, the great irony that Haman's out of the picture. Mordecai is now the most, not only is he honored, he's the most honored guy in the realm. Interesting thing.

The tables are turned against Haman, even after his death, because now Mordecai has the power that Haman had. And Haman, who had hoped to confiscate the Jews' property, now has his own property removed and given to, of all people, Mordecai, through Esther, but to Mordecai. Anyway, now we get to a second proclamation that's going to go out.

The first one is the problem one. Now we've got another one going out in the next dozen verses here. Verse 3, Esther spoke again before the king and fell down on his feet, and besaw him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite and his device that he had devised against the Jews.

Now, by the way, it's interesting, we read this so casually now, going before the king was subject to death unless he extended the golden scepter. And this happens again, and of course he does, but the point is, let's not reckon, at least she at this point has at least some basis for some confidence to go before the king, but yet need to understand this edict, the exterminate the Jews was still in effect, so she again appears before the king without an invitation, and she makes her plea. Verse 4, then the king held out the golden scepter toward Esther, which means she doesn't die, she's, you know, rise, okay, so Esther arose and stood before the king.

One thing about this gal, she's obviously very attractive, she's obviously got her, she's charming, she's everybody, you know, she's terrific, but she also knew how to manage her husband. That's a no mean accomplishment in any woman's life. I'll leave it at that, let's move on.

Verse 5, and said, if it pleased the king, and if I have found favor in his sight, and the things seem right before the king, and I be pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman the son of Hamadathah the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews which are in all the king's provinces. Her request is very simple, she wanted a second decree written to set off the first one. She cleverly describes that first decree to Haman.

Now it's done in the name of the king, but of course it was Haman's engineering. Now the simple reversing, of course, is not possible under the law, we've covered all that. For how can I endure to see the evil that shall come to my people? Or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred? Notice her whole basis for this petition is that her identity with her people is as being Jewish.

She spoke of my family and my people and so forth. I'll come back to that. It's interesting, she doesn't plead on the basis of their worth, that they're loyal and neat and all that.

No, no, no, it's very interesting. That's going to be very, very important to us as we double back on a broader picture of the book of Esther to understand what the Holy Spirit's really telling you and I. But anyway, let's just stay with the historical record for the moment. Verse 7, Then the king Ahasuerus said unto Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew, Behold, by the way, it's obvious that he's, Mordecai's with

her, you see, so I don't, I don't know quite how to stage manage this thing.

Does that mean they were both at risk of death? I don't know. Or once she's rising, he walks in. Anyway, they're both there.

Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and him they have hanged upon the gallows, because he had laid his hand upon the Jews. See, what the king is noting for both Esther and Mordecai is that they now have the power that Haman has, and they should use that power to their own advantage. Haman's decree couldn't be revoked, but a second decree could offset it or, you know, could in effect supersede it.

Verse 8, so he continues, Write ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring. For the writing which is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's ring may no man reverse. He's saying, you know, you've got the magic, you've got the blank check, you've got my credit card, run with it.

Okay, verse 9, Then were the king's scribes called at that time in the third month, that is the month of Sivan, on the three and twentieth day thereof, and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded unto the Jews, and to the lieutenants, and the deputies, and the rulers of the provinces which were from India to Ethiopia. You know, you've got to understand, this isn't, we're not talking Iran here, we're talking a empire. Okay, 127 provinces, unto every province according to the writing thereof, and unto every people after their language.

We're talking many, many languages. This was a big deal. This wasn't, you know, penned out and run on horseback.

This was a, you're dealing with a global empire, many languages, and to every people after the language, and to the Jews according to their writing, and according to their language. Now this, the decree that Mordecai wrote, was sent out on the third month, the month of Sivan. That's, we associate that with the May-June time period, and this is probably about 474 BC.

Sivan, by the way, even though it's the name of the Jewish month, is a name they got from Babylon. It's named after the moon god, whose name was Sin, okay, as an aside. Kind of interesting ellipse there, if you will.

We use the term Sin in the English language from the ancient English archery term, to miss the mark. It also is a pun of sorts that the ancient name of the moon god was Sin. That was in Mesopotamia.

In Arabia, it was called Elah. The moon god was Al-Elah, which later becomes Al. But anyway, now by the way, this was a little about, this is about two months after Haman's decree.

Remember, Haman issued his decree, but the date was set almost a year later, because he did it by casting a lot, remember? A poor. That's where you get poor, and we'll come to that in a minute. So they had, it was almost a year between the time that Haman set up the decree and the date that they were all going to be exterminated.

A couple months have gone by, so we've still got something over eight months in front of us here. So the Jews have now, when they get, when they finally get this announcement put through Empire, they have about eight months to get ready for the big event, for the big conflict that was coming. It was the 13th day of the 12th month that was the date chosen by Haman, or I should say chosen by lot for Haman, back then

in chapter 3, as you recall.

By the way, I know what the Holy Spirit tells us, it was the 23rd, particularly. It's the 23rd day. That means that was when they're putting this, that means the decree went out on the 24th.

And I think the 24 is an interesting number, because it's the number of the church. We find that in Revelation chapter 4 and 5 and elsewhere. The month of Sivan is interesting too, because that's the month that the Feast of Pentecost occurs, the Feast of Shavuot, as Hebrews would say, we would call it after the Greek, the Pentecost.

That was the Feast of the Torah that, in effect, predicted the church. And it was on that date that it was celebrated that the church started with the events of Acts chapter 2. So is there a coincidence here? I don't know. I'm stirring that up.

We'll look at more of those kinds of things in our next couple of sessions. There's far more here in Esther than would meet the casual eye. Verse 10, And he wrote in the king Ahasuerus' name, and sealed it with a king's ring, and sent letters by post on horseback, and writers on mules, camels, and young dromedaries.

That is an unfortunate translation. In the original, there are neither mules nor camels nor dromedaries. A better translation has been suggested that the writers on coursers of royal stud, the offspring of thoroughbreds.

Herodotus and other ancient authorities speak of horses alone being used in carrying Persian dispatches. There's a subtle translation problem in verse 10. Not a big deal, but I mentioned in passing.

But just like the previous decree, this one is also dispatched throughout the entire empire, from India to Kush, and was written in appropriate languages, obviously for each province. Verse 11, Wherein the king granted the Jews, which were in every city, to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish all the power of the people and province that would assault them, both the little ones and women, and to take spoil of them for a prey. And it goes on.

By the way, the language here, the experts believe the language may even have been excerpted from the decree, because it's very legalese, you know, to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, to cause to perish. That sounds like a lawyer. You follow me? And I'm not being flippant.

I mean, I obviously, I frequently am, but I mean, no, that is the kind of remarks you do find in most of the major commentaries. And, but this edict gives the Jews the right to protect themselves, giving them the right of defense. The other edict caused them to be destroyed.

You can't change that, but you can't give them the right to defend themselves, and to annihilate and plunder any group that fought against them. And the Jews could take away the property of their enemies, just as Mordecai had taken away the property of Haman, in effect. So it continues, verse 12, Upon one day in all the provinces of King Hezareth, namely the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of a copy of the writing for a commandment to be given to every province was published unto all people, and that the Jews should be ready against that day to avenge themselves on their enemies.

We're going to talk a little bit about the word avenge. I want to see, I want to make sure we use our time carefully before we get into some of these little side issues. But this whole is, what's the difference between retaliate and retribution, retaliation and retribution? They're very, they're opposites actually.

We'll look at that in a minute. But verse 14, So the posts that rode up on the mules and camels, whatever, went out and being hastened and placed on by the king's commandment, the decree was given at Shushan the palace. So now at this point, as this word goes out, the sentence of death has been lifted, right? In effect, they've got a right to defend themselves.

So the next few verses will deal with that. Verse 15, And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple. And the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad.

Part of the contrast here that's implied, I think, in the text is the contrast to Mordecai when he was fasting on behalf of his people, putting on sack cloth and bemoaning the fact that his people were under sentence of death. At this point, he goes out in royal garb, in the apparel of his office, and the whole city is rejoicing. You do get the impression that he commanded respect, and that the people were relieved at this change of destiny here.

The Persian royal colors are here described, of course, and the king added the emblems to embellish Mordecai's standing in all of this. You may recall when Haman's edict was set out in chapter 3, the city was bewildered. They're puzzled at such a strange edict from the king.

But now, under the edict of Mordecai, they have a joyous celebration, and obviously the Jews are related. So verse 16, The Jews had light and gladness and joy and honor. They found peace.

Kind of interesting, where did they find their peace? By trusting the word of the king. That's kind of interesting. I'm just making a footnote here, setting the stage later.

Moving to verse 17. In every province and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness in the feast and a good day. Many of the people of the land became Jews, for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.

Can't lick them, join them, right? There is the tone here, and you do find it amplified in the rabbinical commentaries on this book. They're quite cynical about the people that became Jews, the proselytes that proselyted Judaism. Some of the rabbis even argue that's why today, when the Jews celebrate Purim, they do it masquerading in wild costumes.

They're mimicking, if you will, these strange people that decided to become Jewish at this time. So they treat that somewhat cynically. But it does seem that there is, the scripture does tell us that many converted to Judaism.

It is interesting that even a city or a nation can exhibit a character of its own. And perhaps that's what's so disturbing about our country, is that the character that exhibits has certainly changed in the last few years, the last 10 years, quite different in the last few decades, let alone the last century or so. It's interesting, many of these converted very likely could have been cynically just looking for power, wanting to make sure they didn't get slaughtered, not knowing what was coming.

But at the same time, it's also clear, I think, to any thinking person that by now, it's pretty obvious that God's hand is upon these people. The whole events of Esther and Mordecai and Haman and all that, clearly, God's fingerprints are all over this thing. And I think more and more, these events are not looked at as a happenstance.

The people, I think, were beginning to realize that the hand of God was upon them. Very analogous to Rahab. Remember in Jericho, the word had gotten around that God was protecting these strange people that had exited Egypt some 40 years earlier and now crossing the Jordan.

And Rahab cut her deal, if you will, in recognition that God's hand was upon these strange people. Well, in any case, back to Esther, it was now the Jews' turn. But I want you to notice something.

God didn't hand them their result on a platter. What He gave them was the right to fight for it. They had to take an active part in their deliverance.

This, I believe, is a very profound principle of faith. And I would like to take you to one of my favorite verses, even as a teenager, in Joshua chapter 1, verse 8. It was somewhat, in a certain sense, one of my special verses that took me through the Naval Academy. I was given it in a special way before I left and kept it in front of me during those very, very formative years.

Joshua chapter 1, verse 8. This is the admonition that God has put there. It says, This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein. For then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

I'm sure you've all heard this verse at one time or another, and at first it sounds like it's simply a strong admonition to keep the Word of God close to you and to be obedient to it. But I want you to notice some very specific subtleties to this verse. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do.

You don't just hear it, you do it. God has called us, even as New Testament Christians, He's called us to obedience. Thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein.

Notice the promise. Notice the quid pro quo for that. If you do that, then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Now that doesn't mean your success is a result of your own efforts. No, it's because God has favored you because of the foregoing. But the foregoing is a prerequisite to your being able to enjoy success.

That's what He's saying here. But I want you to notice it's not a passive thing. Your success that He's alluding to here is not passive, it's active on your part.

And it disturbs me when I find so often people saying, well, I'm just trusting God when facing some particular issue of stewardship. Who brushes your teeth in the morning? Or to be a little more serious, how many of us have fire insurance on our house? Everybody raise your hand. Sure.

Well, why? How many of us are expecting a fire? All of us have fire insurance on our homes, I hope. And yet none of us are expecting a fire, but we understand that it's irresponsible not to take that step in anticipation of that kind of a calamity. There's no excuse for it in today's society.

I want you to go to your banker and say, I know I've got this mortgage, but I'm trusting God not to burn our house down. I don't think he'd be too impressed even if he's a Christian. So the point is, when Joseph was in Egypt, he was warned of seven good years before seven bad years and persuaded Pharaoh to respond to that.

And because of that, it changed the entire history of the nation Egypt for a lot of reasons. And Noah didn't just sit in his driveway, he built a barge. So there are issues in front of us that when God raises up a warning and calls us to stewardship, it is irresponsible to use some of those verses as an excuse for our flight from diligence.

God expects us to be I believe. Anyway, we've made it to chapter nine, we're doing well here, okay. Now the Jews get ready to defend themselves, the first 19 verses here, so let's just jump in.

Now in the twelfth month, that is the month of Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put into execution, in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them, though it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated them, when the appointed day of battle came, the tables were now turned on the enemies of the Jews. The Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the king, the king Ahasuerus, to lay hand on such as sought their hurt, and no man could withstand them, for the fear of them fell upon the people. See, as the Jews gathered in all the cities to prepare themselves against their would-be attackers, the attackers were terrified.

Verse 3, And all the rulers of the provinces, and the lieutenants, and the deputies, and the officers of the king helped the Jews. See, the government was on their side. That's a change.

Because of the fear of Mordecai fell upon them. So you've got to remember, not only were they sympathetic to the Jews' plight, I'm sure there's some of that, but also the big boss was Jewish. So, you know, they get the picture.

And so the government authorities are helping the Jews. Now, the people who attacked the Jews may have seen this as an opportunity to enrich themselves at somebody else's expense. But since they had no backing from others, they had a cause which they could not win.

So those that even had designs obviously recognized they were swimming upstream, so to speak. Verse 4, For Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame went throughout all the provinces. For this man Mordecai waxed greater and greater.

But let's remember it was only by God's sovereign intervention that Mordecai was now in a position of authority. So let's keep that in mind. Verse 5, Thus the Jews smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, and slaughter, and destruction, and did what they would unto those that hated them.

Verse 6, In Shushan the palace the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men. That's just in the palace. Don't get confused here.

See, on the day of the battle, March of 473 roughly, in the citadel of Susa, the Jews killed five hundred men plus the ten sons of Haman. And by the way, they're listed here. I can demonstrate my inability to pronounce these properly.

Parshandatha, Dalfon, Aspatha, the Paratha, and Adalia, and Eradatha, and Parmashta, and Eresai, and Eredi, and Vajesatha. Is anyone here with those names? I apologize if I offended you. We're going to talk about the meaning of those names in the session after next.

It's very interesting that in the Hebrew text these things are listed vertically. They're not concatenated, serially. It's and this one, and this one, and this one, and they're listed that way.

It stands out in the Hebrew text very strangely. Verse 10, And the ten sons of Haman, the son of Hamadatha, the enemy of the Jews, slew they, but on the spoil laid they not their hand. Very interesting, they had the authority, the Jews had the authority to take the property of those that were attacking them.

They chose not to. Very interesting, they could have. When the Jews left Egypt in the Exodus, they were told the night before, borrow everything you can from your Egyptian friends.

They really did. You know, even in the Ten Commandments movie, they played upon that. And when they left, they left with goods, you know.

Here they could have. The edict allowed them to. That was the program.

That's how Haman's house was as cheek to the crown, and so forth. And the ones that were attacking the Jews were expected to take the Jews' properties, part of the incentive. They were justified in reversing the attack.

They didn't. It says this a couple of times. I think they're trying to make the point they're not doing this for money.

So three times it's stated, I believe, in this chapter, that they did not lay hands on plunder. Now, by the way, the execution of the ten sons of Haman ends the house of Amalek. We talked about that, how he was a descendant of the one that Saul failed to kill, according to God's commandment.

And Samuel finally does, but not before Agag had had a son, or at least conceived a son. And so that's part of what's being sealed off here in the killing of the ten sons of Haman. Sobering issue.

And we're going to talk more about that in one of the subsequent sessions. Verse 11, on that day the number of those that were slain in Shushan the palace was brought before the king. Verse 12, the king said to Esther the queen, the Jews have slain and destroyed 500 men in Shushan the palace, and the ten sons of Haman.

What have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? Now what is thy petition? And it shall be granted thee. What is thy request further? And it shall be done. Okay, that's a warm-up.

What else do you need, kid? It's a done deal. Verse 13, then said Esther, if it please the king, let it be granted to the Jews which are in Shushan to do tomorrow also according unto this day's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be impaled. Well, it says hanged upon the gallows in your English translation.

Actually impaled. So they're already dead, but she wants them hung up. Okay? See, she wanted another day to root out the ones that were trying to destroy them, and on the second day, by the way, in the palace, they're going to kill another 300.

Out of the provinces, they're going to end up having killed 75,000. That may sound like a large number, but in the terms of the total Persian empire, probably not that staggering, really. Now you say, well, why this impaling business? In Deuteronomy 21-23, in Galatians 3-13, in Acts 5-30 and Acts 10-39, that's what, four times in the scripture at least, it says a principle.

Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree, and that was a classic form of ignominy. These guys were already killed, apparently, but they're impaled where all can see, and just like Haman was. And that, of course, is exemplified especially in the valentine that God has given each one of us.

You and I are beneficiaries of a love letter that was written in blood on a wooden cross almost 2,000 years ago. He suffered that ignominy, not only death, but ignominy for each one of us. Okay, verse 14, the king commanded it, so to be done, that he was given a shoe shan and they impaled or hung Haman's 10 sons.

And as I tried to emphasize, this was a standard practice in the region. It was a visual warning to others not to commit the same crime as the ones that were being punished. Verse 15, the Jews that were in the shoe shan gathered themselves together on the 14th day, also the month of Adar, and slew 300 men of shoe shan, but on the prey they laid not their hand.

In other words, they didn't take plunder. Again, they didn't take plunder. Verse 16, but the other Jews that were in the king's provinces gathered themselves together and stood for their lives and had rest from their enemies and slew of their foes seventy and five thousand, but they laid not their hands on the prey or the plunder.

It's interesting that this whole edict gave the nation that had the sentence of death until then the privilege of defending themselves. They could accept it or reject it if they chose. How interesting that is, what interesting analogy is there.

That edict would have had zero effect had they not chose to take advantage of it. You follow me? If a Jew ignored it, he was ample prey, and I think that's kind of interesting. I think there's many ways you can apply that.

Verse 17, on the 13th day of the month of Adar and the 14th day of the same rested they and made it a day of feasting and gladness, but the Jews that were in shoe shan assembled together on the 13th day thereof and on the 14th day thereof, and on the 15th day of the same they rested and made it a day of feasting and gladness. Therefore, the Jews of the villages that dwelt in the unwalled towns made the 14th day of the month of Adar a day of gladness and feasting and a good day and of sending portions one to another. Only in Susa did the fighting last for two days.

For that reason, the Jews in Susa celebrated on the 15th day of the 12th month after the slaughters on the 13th. In other words, they slaughtered on the 13th, 14th, they celebrated on the 15th. The Jews in the villages celebrated on the 14th, that is after the slaughter of the 13th.

So, this is all leading to the establishment of a feast, the Feast of Purim or Purim, Purim, whatever. Now, I want you to notice the Feast of Purim was not established as a divine establishment under Mosaic law. There are seven feasts of Israel.

There are two other important feasts, the Feast of Hanukkah, which is not the Torah, but is mentioned in the New Testament, strangely, and the Feast of Purim, which celebrates the events here in the Book of Esther. And it was not divinely instituted in the classical sense, like in the seven feasts of Leviticus 23, but it was commanded by Mordecai, as we'll shortly see, and by Esther in the verses that follow. And it's simply a time of grateful remembrance of their deliverance.

Now, history tells us that it was some years before this became a universal season for festivity among the Jews, and many more years elapsed before it obtained any kind of really religious character. It really is more of a national or patriotic kind of thing. Now, it's kind of tragic that today, the feast is degenerated into godless merrymaking, and it's more patriotic than a devotional kind of observance.

Verse 24, Mordecai wrote these things, set letters to all the Jews that were in the provinces of the kings of Ahasuerus, both near and far. And, by the way, it's from this verse and the following that most people regard this as evidence that Mordecai himself was the author of this book. And it was very likely, there's evidence in the text, in effect, that it was published, promoted, completed during the years of the Great Assembly, as they call it, when Persia was still in great power.

That may explain a lot of the stylistic aspects to this particular book. By the way, verse 21, to establish this among them, that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and the fifteenth day of the same yearly, as the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies, the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning to good day. They should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor.

So, it's a two-day feast for the remembering of the goodness of God through manipulation of circumstances to protect His people from extinction. And so, Mordecai wrote this decree, proclamation, to celebrate the event annually with eating, rejoicing, giving food, and sharing with the poor. And, of course, the Jews undertook, as they had begun, and as Mordecai had written unto them, because, verse 24, because Haman, the son of Hamadathah, the enemy of all the Jews, had devised against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast poor, that is, the lot, to consume them and destroy them.

That's why it's called Purim, which is the Feast of the Lots. They threw the lot to determine the time of execution, back in chapter 3, and thus the Purim became a symbol of God's using circumstances to deliver His own. Now, it's very interesting, if you're technically oriented, to discover that there are two concepts in mathematics that apparently don't exist in our physical universe.

One of those concepts is infinity. We use that term mathematically. It's a very useful concept, obviously.

But if you try to find an example of infinity, you can't, because we now know the universe itself is finite. That comes as a shock to many that get into astronomy and so forth. It doesn't go infinitely, and it's finite.

At the microcosmic level, you can't divide things forever. You get to a point where they no longer have position. They're no longer elements.

The field of quantum physics is a mysterious field of science, which is at the boundaries of reality. But the idea of randomness, we all assume randomness is randomness, an absolute chance. We use that statistically in many ways.

It's a useful mathematical concept. However, scientists have now discovered that randomness doesn't even exist. That's what leads to a field of study called the theory of chaos.

It's a field of mathematics. There are certain things that are very deterministic. Most of our physics and engineering is deterministic, you know, the cause and effect and so forth.

But you spill a box of tax on the floor, you would think that their distribution is random. Turns out not to be. It has some interesting properties.

The curl of smoke from a cigarette, the distribution of debris from an explosion. These are all areas of study by mathematicians and what they call the theory of chaos. It turns out that randomness is elusive.

Now they're dealing with it at the theoretical level. It's interesting, the scriptures said that all along, that the lot is in the lap of the Lord. Haman threw a lot.

They're very superstitious people. He wanted a good omen for the day. So they cast lots to pick the day that the Jews are to be exterminated.

Well, God is in control. Even Einstein made the interesting crack. He says, God does not play dice.

And somebody responded and said, if he did, he'd win. Verse 25. But when yesterday came before the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked device, which he devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head, and that he and his son should be hanged in the gallows.

Wherefore, they call these days Purim after the name of Pur, which is the Akkadian, ancient Persian word for the lot. And therefore, for all the words of this letter and of that which had been concerning matter and which had done unto them, the Jews ordained and took upon them and upon their seed and upon all such as joined themselves unto them. So as it should not fail that they would keep these two days according to the writing and according to their appointed time every year.

And that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, every city. And that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor a memorial of them perished from their seed. Then Esther, the queen, the daughter of Abahiel and Mordecai, the Jew, wrote with all authority to confirm this second letter of Purim.

And he sent letters unto all the Jews to the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Hezros and the words of peace and truth to confirm these days of Purim in their times appointed according to Mordecai, the Jew, and Esther, the queen, had enjoined them. And as they had decreed for themselves and for their seed the matters of fastings and their cry. Verse 32, the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim and was written in the book.

In other words, Mordecai wrote it. She, as queen, authorized it. And apparently a copy of her letter was included in the royal archives, which may explain the styling of this book, incidentally.

And that was ... those allusions were also made in chapters 2 and 6 earlier. Now let's just ... chapter 10 is short and then we'll step back and look at a few things. Chapter 10, verse 1, the king of Hezros laid a tribute upon the land and upon the isles of the sea.

Kind of interesting, the Hebrew authority called the Midrash states that Hezros' 127 provinces consisted of 100 provinces on the mainland and 27 on the islands. That's in the Midrash. One of the ancient Hebrew sages, a very prominent rabbi by the name of Vele-Gayon, points out that the geometrical, that is, the numerical value of the Hebrew letters in this passage, the Hebrew letters that translated taxes, which were imposed on the mainland only, is 100.

And the numerical value of the word that's translated islands is 27. So it's kind of interesting. Now this is what's called gematria.

See, the Hebrew and the Greek are unique in the alphabets in that every letter has a numerical value. They used it for numbers as well as letters. It's an alphanumeric alphabet.

The study of these numerical values, of course, is called gematria. The Hebrew word for pregnancy has a value of 271 number of days of pregnancy. The Hebrew word for year has a value of 355.

You say, well, she should be 365. No, they were on a lunar year. And so it's kind of interesting.

So people who get into this usually go off the deep end and get out into weird mysticism, what have you. So I'm not advocating that. But it is interesting.

And we obviously cover some of that in our book on Cosmic Coast. Let's move on. Verse two.

And all the acts of power and of his might and of the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai were unto the king advanced him. Are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Median Persia? For Mordecai, the Jew, was next unto the king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people and speaking peace to all his seed. By the way, I might mention about the Persian and the Medo-Persian history is studded with Jewish nobles, ministers, counselors.

And in the great days of the empire itself, the kings themselves often had Jewish blood. So there's a very strange rapport between the history of Persia and Jewishness. I won't get into all that.

Now, these final passages here are evidence to many that the book of Esther, called the Megillah, if you will, was written and published in the early days of the great assembly. I think I've mentioned that and so forth. Now, remember too that despite all this, it's interesting that the king Ahasuerus was of the fading glory of an empire that's now long gone, right? But the glory of Mordecai and Esther are still before us in the eternal word of God.

I think that's in itself interesting. It's also interesting to notice that God seems never to be absent a representative for himself. In Egypt, he had Joseph.

In Babylon, he had Daniel. In the Persian empire, he had Mordecai. He seems to always have his man.

Now, the question in your mind and mine too is what about America? I'm still looking, but anyway. Now, you should also, if you look at some of these things, you should remember too that the church is not the kingdom. The end of Christian dispensation is not the end of the world.

There's much more coming. And in the periods that follow, it's going to be a period in which the Jewish nation is going to again have primary prominence as God's vehicle for the planet Earth, as emphasized in Romans 11-25. When we sort of stand back from the book of Esther, it's interesting.

The book is fascinating because it's filled with so many ironies, with ways in which the events turned out unexpectedly in favor of God's people. Queen Vashti, a Persian, was deposed so that Esther, a Jewish, could become queen and save her people. Haman, which was once exalted, is now brought low.

And Mordecai and the Jews, once hated, are now exalted and honored. And the decree that would have wiped out the Jews was overruled by the one which was most targeted by his enemies, and of course led to the destruction finally of 76,000 of the enemies of the Jews. And it's no wonder that Purim is celebrated by the Jews, and it's no wonder that it's celebrated in the context that God uses circumstance to provide for his people.

There are reasons why God is not visible directly in the days of Esther, and we'll talk about that in more detail next time. It's interesting that despite the absence of his overt attention here, all his purposes are accomplished through circumstances. It's also interesting, as you look at the text, you can't find the name of God, but we'll show you the name of God eight times, at least, in the book next time.

But there's another aspect that we can consider as we think about the book. We're going to now stand back in the next two sections with the book of Esther as a package. We've gone through the story in detail.

Let's stand back. It's interesting that the plight of Esther's people is not different from that of unsaved men and women today in general, conscious of being under the judgment of God, the curse of a broken law hanging over their heads. Remember Galatians 3.10, cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

It's interesting that God has provided a decree for the salvation of those that are under the sentence of death, which is all of us. But we need to accept the decree. If you deny the decree or ignore it, it's of no effect.

God said to Job, deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom. You and I have had a ransom paid on our behalf. God made him who knew no sin, made him sin on our behalf.

And our king can hold out his scepter, the scepter of grace. And it's interesting, that's where I look back, and it's interesting that Esther did not plead good works before the king or the benevolence of the Jews or their loyalty to the crown. No, none of that.

She just put her own credentials on the line personally. It's sort of like Paul's letter to Philemon on the part of Onesimus. He says to Philemon, if you account me a partner, receive him as myself.

Remember? A little short letter, very, very interesting letter of intercession. That the slave Onesimus had run away and became a Christian, and Paul accounts that he had to go back and turn himself in. But he writes Philemon as master.

So he says, receive him as myself. He says, by the way, any cost you've got, put it on my account. He gave him a blank master card, as far as Onesimus is concerned.

He has made us accepted in the beloved, in the terms of Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Very analysis of what Jesus said in John 17 to the father. He says that they may be made, the being of his disciples, made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou has sent me and hast loved them, even as thou hast loved me.

In other words, describing to the disciples the love the father had for the son. You know, that's staggering. How much does the father love the son? Boy, you and I can't even imagine that.

And yet that's what is declared in the word of God as his love for us, because of the son. Interesting, interesting. Haman, the one that had the power of death, has been destroyed.

Now the commission that we had been given is far more urgent than the commission those dispatches had to save the Jews that had this penalty of death. They were just in danger of temporal destruction. The people we deal with are in danger of eternal judgment of God against sin.

And it's amazing that here in our century, of such a vaunted enlightenment of our century, that never has there been more indifference to these issues than today. Now a couple of other thoughts that Esther raises, and I'll do this briefly, but I have to tell you candidly I'm very indebted to Ken Ortiz, who made available his sermon notes on this subject, and from Esther chapter 9 incidentally. This whole issue of revenge, or to avenge oneself, this idea of retaliation or retribution.

They sound like synonyms, don't they? They're actually quite different, they're very distinct. Retribution is the basis of life. Jesus in Matthew 7 says, with what judgment you judge that you shall be judged upon you, and so forth, right? What measure you meet shall be measured to you again.

Retribution is a principle of life. You find that in Matthew 7 verse 2, you'll find it in Psalm 18. Retribution means a deserved punishment, return for evil done, or sometimes even for good.

In Galatians 6, God is not mocked, what man sows that shall he reap. And you go through passage after passage after passage, they'll be in your notes for the tape actually. The word retaliate comes from the Latin, means to retaliate, to pay back.

It means to pay back a wrong or an injury, return like for like, usually evil for evil. Yet look at 1st Peter 3.9 and Romans 12.19, that's not our job, is it? You see, vengeance is mine, says the Lord, right? I will repay, he says. Now, let's contrast retaliation, which is what we often feel when we've been wronged, in contrast to retribution.

Retaliation is always negative, retribution is sometimes positive. Retaliation is personal, retribution is impersonal. Retaliation is amoral, retribution is moral, it's the moral law.

Retaliation is punitive, retribution is consequential, derives from what we've done. Retaliation is usually done in anger, retribution is dispassionate. Retaliation is bitter, retribution is judicious.

Retaliation is vindictive, retribution is just. Retaliation is wrathful, retribution is self-controlled. Retaliation is human, retribution, truly spoken, is the hand of God.

Now, in Esther 8.13, we encountered the word avenge. Avenge and vengeance comes from the Latin vindicari, which is the same root as vindicate, strangely enough. The opposite of revenge and so forth is self-control, and the scripture has much to say about self-control, and I won't get into a whole study of self-control, but there'll be outlines in the notes.

You see, where we don't have self-control, we have damaged testimony, among other things. We also have personal difficulties. Hebrews chapter 12 deals with this in great depth.

In the interest of time, I'll let you look that up on your own. Where there's no self-control, we'll have emotional disability, we'll have unholiness, we will be unable to see God, we'll be missing out on God's grace, we'll have troubles, we'll end up defiling many, we'll end up falling into immorality and lost rewards. Without self-control, we are defenseless, and the scripture makes that very clear.

What's the remedy? Confession, repeatedly. When you have an example of lack of self-control, remember a Christian's bar of soap, 1 John 1.9. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. It's His faithfulness, not ours.

That's the key issue there. Another thing you should do is practice obedience. You don't do it perfectly.

When you stumble, what do you do? Persevere through your failures. Well, we've run out of time for tonight. What we're going to do next time is take a look at the book of Esther, so to speak, through a microscope.

We're going to look at the yachts and titles that Jesus might allude to. We're going to discover that hidden below the text are some messages that are too elegant to ignore and only available to the diligent student. And so we'll use some graphics to help get that across, and we'll explore something else that's hidden in the book of Esther and elsewhere.

In fact, one of them is really quite humorous. In the following session, since we'll probably spend the bulk of next time, if not the whole next time, we'll spend it on that aspect. The following session, we're going to step back and take a look at Esther, what I'll say, through a wide-angle lens.

We will attempt to infer some surprising communication that the Holy Spirit might use for you and I in our personal lives. We may discover that you and I, personally, are walking books of Esther. That the book of Esther, in a sense, is almost like a condensed practical copy of the book of Romans.

And we'll take a look at that as we finish our excursion into this fascinating but little-studied book. Let's stand for a closing word of prayer, and let's bow our hearts. Well, Father, we thank You for this book.

We thank You for the clear evidence that You're always there for Your people, often unseen, quietly with Your hand upon their destiny. We thank You, Father, that we also are called the people of God. We thank You, Father, that You have brought us into Your forever family.

We thank You, Father, that nothing can happen in our lives that isn't filtered by You. And we thank You, Father, for that commitment You've given us, that we know all things work together for good to them that love You, to them who are called according to Your purpose. We thank You for the encouragement of this book, Father.

We thank You, Father, for the horizon ahead. We know not what it brings. As we survey our horizon, we see a cauldron waiting to boil over on the international scene in so many ways.

And we also see troubles in our own land. And we confess before Your throne that those troubles in our land are our fault. Our lack of diligence has put the pagans in control.

And we come before Your throne, Father, in the name of our Lord and Savior, pleading only Him. We come without any plea of our own, Father. We thank You for this heritage that we've enjoyed the several centuries of a government that was prayerfully designed to provide religious freedom.

And we acknowledge before You, Father, our own indifference, presumption, and gratitude and lack of diligence that has allowed this to crumble. We thank You, Father, that Your hand is upon each of us. We pray, Father, for discernment in what You would have of us in these days.

We thank You, Father, that Your hand is on every detail. A sparrow cannot fall to the ground without Your knowing. And we thank You, Father, that every hair on our head is numbered.

We thank You, Father, for caring more than we can possibly imagine for each of us. So we do ask, Father, that You would help us to discern Your heart, that You would help us to understand what You would have of us in such a time as this, that we might be sensitive to the challenges that are facing us that are

analogous to the challenges that faced Esther in her uncertainties. So, Father, we just do ask for discernment.

We also ask, Father, to help us with resolve in our commitments. As we face the coming year, Father, we pray that You would help us to revise and adjust our priorities more appropriate to Your involvement in our lives. As we commit ourselves, Father, this night into Your hands, in the name of Yeshua, Yeshua HaMashiach, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen. God bless you.

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