

Esther

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Chapter 1

Part 1: Esther 1:1-12

The book of Esther, when read from a prophetic perspective, gives us a lot of information about how we can stand faithfully in the midst of opposition. Opposition, toward both the New and Old Covenant people, is only going to increase. In the Jewish community the book of Esther is known as the 'Megillah Esther', which means 'the scroll of Esther'. The word 'scroll' alludes to something that is rolled up and hidden. The unrolling of a scroll alludes to a revelation – that which was hidden becomes revealed. This book reveals revelation to us regarding the last days. Although there is a prophetic component to this book, it is not classified as prophecy.

Verse 1: *"Now it came about in the days of Ahasuerus (this was the Ahasuerus who ruled from Hodu unto Cush, over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces)."*

Ruled: Ahasuerus was king over these regions.

Hodu: India (this region of Hodu may also possibly refer to a region extending beyond India).

Cush: Ethiopia.

From Hodu unto Cush: This area represents a very large allotment of land. Ahasuerus ruled over a vast land. However, he also ruled over people groups who were very different to one other. The people of India were very different to the people of Ethiopia. Ahasuerus learned how to exercise rule over different people of different languages, different cultures, different behaviors and vast tracts of very different and diverse lands.

Note: In the last days, the antichrist is going to establish a kingdom that rules over the world – different nations, people groups and cultures will fall under his authority.

One hundred and twenty-seven: This is a significant number. Sarah, the wife of Abraham, died when she was 127 years old (Genesis 23:1). Sarah had given birth to Isaac – who was the fulfilment of the promise that God gave to Abraham (Genesis 15:4-5). God promised Abraham that through Isaac a kingdom was going to be established. In this verse, 127 represents a counterfeit kingdom/empire. Satan, the father of lies, will empower the antichrist (Satan incarnate) to rule over a counterfeit kingdom for a period of time.

Verse 2: *"In those days when the King Ahasuerus was sitting on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan, the capital,"*

The throne...was in Shushan, the capital: The writer of Esther gives us some historical information about this king and his kingdom.

Verse 3: *“That in the third year of his reign he made a feast for all his officials and servants—the powers of Persia and Media, the nobles, and the princes of the provinces being before him.”*

Third year: The number three speaks about something being revealed. Much is going to be revealed to us about an evil empire and about her ruler – a type of antichrist.

Feast: Banquet

Powers: Referring to the military leaders and/or the wealthy people (high officials in government).

Verse 4: *“When he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the splendor of his excellent majesty for many days, one hundred and eighty days in all.”*

He showed the riches...and the splendor of his excellent majesty: This is emphasising his pride. The purpose of this festival was to show off the wealth and glory of himself and of his kingdom. He desired to show himself to be great. At this festival he had the ability to give of his wealth, like no leader before him had been able to do.

One hundred and eighty days: 6 months

Verse 5: *“And when these days were completed, the king made for all the people who were present in Shushan the capital, from great to small, a feast lasting seven days in the courtyard of the garden of the king’s palace.”*

Note: The ‘common’ and working-class people of Shushan would have been aware that this grand festival was taking place, but they were not invited to it over the 180 days. They did not benefit from this festival and nor were they able to enjoy it. However, at the end of the grand festival, the king made a special, an additional, banquet for the ‘common’ people in Shushan – rich and poor. This banquet lasted for seven days.

Verse 6: *“There were white cotton hangings fastened to ropes, and fine purple linen upon bars of silver, there were pillars of marble; and the beds were of gold and silver; on the floors there was a pavement of alabaster, turquoise, and white and black marble.”*

Note: Many of the words used in this verse are obscure and the commentators are not sure of their exact meanings. What this verse definitely alludes to though, is that the king’s courtyard was decorated in such a way as to show off the splendour of the king’s palace/courtyard. Regardless of our ability to know the exact materials used, what we can deduce is that they were materials that were used for the purpose of displaying and magnifying the king’s greatness to the people. This king was full of pride and desired to be exalted and praised (Isaiah 14:13-14).

White: Many scholars believe this is a cotton material which is a very brilliant white colour.

A pavement of alabaster: This is a possible interpretation for the word used here.

Verse 7: *“And they served drinks in golden vessels, each vessel being different from the other, with royal wine in abundance, according to the hand of the king.”*

The hand: The authority or the power of the king.

Note: The people were given an abundance of royal wine to drink. They drank this wine from golden vessels - each goblet uniquely designed – ‘handcrafted’. This again is emphasising the king’s wealth.

Verse 8: *“In accordance with the law, the drinking was not compulsory; for thus was established by the king and according to the high officials of his household, that every man could do as he desired.”*

The drinking was not compulsory: The wine was free, and every person could drink as little or as much of it as they wanted.

Every man could do as he desired: Everyone could do what was right in his own eyes. They could enjoy that party as they wanted to enjoy it - no criticism, no judgment, no rules (except the law to do what pleased themselves). This would have greatly increased the popularity of this king. The antichrist is going to behave in a very similar way. For a time, the antichrist will allow the people to worship how they want to worship and to do whatever they want, but then suddenly things are going to change.

Verse 9: *“Queen Vashti also made a banquet for the women in the royal palace which belonged to King Ahasuerus.”*

A festival for the women: When women are mentioned in the Scripture a change in context is emphasized. When women are mentioned, we should anticipate that redemption is going to take place – God is going to provide a solution to a problem (oftentimes before the problem is even known God is working to provide the solution – Revelation 13:8). Long before the need of Queen Esther’s help or activity (her being in place to bring about a change) we see how God arranged for her to be strategically placed in position within the palace. God did this before there was a threat, or before there was a need for Esther’s involvement.

Verse 10: *“On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, seven eunuchs who served in the presence of King Ahasuerus,”*

The seventh day: The Rabbinical scholars tell us that although this festival lasted for seven days the use of this term here implies that this is a reference to the Sabbath day. What we have here is a desecration of the Shabbat. Instead of using Shabbat as a way of thanking, acknowledging and submitting to God’s authority, King Ahasuerus was using it for the glory of himself.

Merry with wine: He was making decisions under the influence of alcohol – which is an improper influence.

Note: Up until this time the men and women had been separated and had enjoyed their own separate banquets. This separation between the men and women was the traditionally accepted way of social gatherings and interactions in that culture. King Ahasuerus was now going to attempt to violate this principle of separation – this acknowledgment of the difference between men and women. The king, violating what was common practice in that culture, did so because he felt he was above the law.

He felt that his words should take precedent over all the precedents, the laws and the customs that had been set in place in the generations before his reign. He didn't want to submit to these. He wanted to be the one to make the laws. He wanted to do things according to what he wanted – regardless of what was proper. The king had a God complex – wanting to be like God.

Verse 11: *“to bring Queen Vashti before the king, wearing her royal crown, in order to show the people and the cabinet officials her beauty, for she was beautiful to behold.”*

Note: The king had shown off all his possessions. Not content with that, he now desired to also show off the beauty of his wife.

Wearing her royal crown: Some commentators say that this phrase speaks of him wanting to show off every aspect of her beauty – from the crown of her head to the bottom of her feet. This would have caused Vashti to feel very exposed and vulnerable.

Verse 12: *“But Queen Vashti refused to come at the command of the king which was in the hands of his eunuchs; and the king was furious, and his wrath burned within him.”*

The king was furious, and his wrath burned: When the king did not get what he wanted, his emotions raged out of control. The word used here for ‘furious’ is a word that speaks of such rage that it is like an angry, rabid dog that froths at the mouth.

Note: The book of Esther is a paradigm of what we can expect to take place in the last days. If we rightly understand what took place then, it will give us insight to rightly understand or perceive what is going to happen in a similar way in the last days. Something very subtle is happening here. King Ahasuerus’s command, to bring Vashti into a before then socially taboo place, is chipping away at the fabric (foundations) of the socially acceptable cultural norms in that day (Psalm 11:3). In an attempt to manifest his greatness, Ahasuerus, in his pride and arrogance, wanted to break down that which was proper, firm and normal. He wanted to establish a ‘new normal’. This is what the antichrist will desire to do. He will want to change things significantly. He will want to be the one who changes the laws already in place, so that his laws become law (Daniel 7:25). When he does not get his own way, he will respond with fury (Revelation 12:12, 17). The antichrist has not yet been revealed (2 Thessalonians 2:3), but even now the spirit of the antichrist is at work in this world (1 John 4:3). We are seeing rapid changes in the world, even now. These changes are pleasing to the antichrist and are laying the foundation for him to be empowered in this world.

Chapter 1

Part 2: Esther 1:13-22

When we operate according to our pride (desiring to lift ourselves up) it causes other people to be put down or to be humiliated. Many of the sages of Israel agree that what the king had asked Vashti to do would expose her and cause her to feel humiliated. Vashti, knowing that the king was violating the norm, disobeyed the king and refused to be humiliated in this way. Because of the queen's significant position in the land, her refusal of the king's demands led to a political crisis.

Verse 13: *"Then the king said to the wise men who understood the times (for this was the king's manner toward all who knew law and justice,"*

The wise men who understood the times: These were the ones purported to have some degree of wisdom. They knew the times (they were experts on the culture they were living in), and it was their job to know how to respond in the most effective way to the culture surrounding them.

Knew law and justice: These men, with their human knowledge and understanding, were the ones who were responsible for issuing the laws and enforcing them. These were the men that the king spoke to in regard to how to respond to the violation of Queen Vashti.

Note: The king and his advisors, leading a pagan empire, did not turn to the Word of God or to prayer when they were making their decisions. They relied on the wisdom of man to make important decisions. Whenever we make decisions or respond to things based upon human intellect (when we think according to the wisdom of men) we give satan an opportunity to use the situation for his purposes rather than for that which is good.

Verse 14: *"the one close unto him being Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, who had access to the king's presence, and who ranked highest in the kingdom):"*

The one: Although this is speaking of seven cabinet officials it is written in the singular. This informs us of the unity of heart and purpose of these men. They all thought alike and wholeheartedly agreed with one another.

Seven princes...had access to the king's presence, and...ranked highest: These men (not the seven listed eunuchs) had a special responsibility. They were set in a place of prominence within the kingdom, and they were the king's advisors – seeing him and consulting with him on a regular basis. They knew the king like no other leaders in the capital and throughout the 127 provinces did.

Verse 15: *"According to law, what shall we do to Queen Vashti because she did not obey the command of King Ahasuerus brought to her by the eunuchs?"*

According to law: They were trying to establish what Vashti's punishment should be based upon the laws that were already in existence and enforced in Persia and Media.

She did not obey the command of King Ahasuerus brought to her by the eunuch: Vashti's crime is clearly summarised by them.

These men understood Vashti's crime to not only be limited to a crime against the king. They took her offense to be a crime against the entire empire. They perceived her refusal of the king's command to be an action that threatened the authority of their empire.

Verse 16: *"And Memucan answered before the king and the princes: "Queen Vashti has not only wronged the king, but also all the princes, and all the people who are in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus."*

Not only wronged the king, but also all the princes, and all the people who are in all the provinces: The Scripture is informing or teaching us that this event was huge in their minds. It was an attack on the king's authority. If it was shown that the king's authority could be undermined it had the potential to bring down the entire empire. The people had to take seriously, and be strict in their obedience to, the laws of the king.

Verse 17: *"For the word of the queen will go forth against all the officials, so that they will despise their husbands in their eyes, when they report, 'King Ahasuerus commanded Queen Vashti to be brought in before him, but she did not come.'"*

Despise: Show contempt for, to think little of.

Against all the officials: They see Vashti's refusal as an attack against the leadership. They fear that her words will spread to the cabinet officials' wives so that they, likewise, will show contempt for their husbands in regard to this matter. They see this like an infection that has to be dealt with quickly so that it does not spread and become more of a problem.

Verse 18: *"This very day the noble ladies of Persia and Media will say to all the king's officials that they have heard of the behavior of the queen. Thus, there will be excessive contempt and wrath."*

The noble ladies: The cabinet officials' wives.

There will be excessive contempt and wrath: The officials are counselling the king to handle this issue, which they perceive to be against all authority, correctly. If not handled correctly, they counsel, the women will give in to contempt, which in turn will lead to the men displaying excessive wrath towards their wives – in the same way that Ahasuerus displayed wrath toward Vashti. The officials are concerned that anger will begin to spread within the households of the provinces that they govern.

Verse 19: *"If it pleases the king, let a royal decree go out from him, and let it be recorded in the laws of the Persians and the Medes, so that it will not be altered, that Vashti shall come no more before King Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal allotment to another who is better than she."*

Note: This is the recommendation that the officials give to the king regarding Vashti's push back against his authority.

Will not be altered: They recommended that this became a law that could not be changed. This is repeated in a few different places throughout the scroll of Esther, as well as in other places within Scripture (Daniel 6:15). When a king of Persia and Media issued a royal decree that decree was binding and could not, for any reason, be changed.

The reason for this is that the king was seen as almost divine or supernatural – someone who could not make mistakes. If the king made a law, it was seen as perfect and so unable to be revoked.

Note 1: Here we see an example of how these officials took that which belongs to God (God's character and attributes, God's Word which is perfect, powerful, accurate and never returns to Him void) and placed it on the shoulders of a man. They wanted to profess and to demonstrate that the king's word was held in the same regard as the Word of God.

Her royal allotment: Her position, her status, her part of the kingdom

Note 2: What is interesting to note is that the officials held the king's ability to make decisions, and to send forth royal decrees, as on a par with the Word of God – ie perfect. How ironic, therefore, that his decision to choose Vashti as his queen fell short of this perfection.

Another who is better than she: Their choice of words exposes the king as being far from perfect. They are implying that he made the wrong choice with Vashti, and someone better needs to be found for him.

Verse 20: *"And the king's decree was heard throughout all his empire for it was great: all women will give honour to their husbands, from the great ones unto the smallest."*

It is great: The word, that the king was agreeing that a new queen be sought for himself, was heard throughout the empire. It was a word which was seen as big news – the king was getting divorced and was looking for another bride. The king and his officials truly believed that divorcing Vashti was a wonderful solution to the king's dilemma.

The great ones unto the smallest: The women who were high up in society to the women who were the lowest in society – all had to give honour to their husbands.

Verse 21: *"This matter was good in the eyes of the king and the cabinet officials, what the king had done according to the word of Memucan."*

Verse 22: *"Then he sent books to all the king's provinces, to each province in its own script, and to every people in their own language, that each man should be master in his own house and speak in the language of his own people."*

He sent books: This decree was sent out under the authority of the king. Usually, when a law would go forth, individual runners (heralds) would run from city to city, and they would announce the decree to the public in an oral way. In this way the illiterate people could also be informed and be without excuse. In this verse we see that this decree was put into writing. One of the reasons for this is to show how significant this decree was. This decree (that a new queen was being sought and that women were to give honour to their husbands) was a big deal. We are going to see that God is going to use this decree to bring about a physical salvation/deliverance to the people of God and, therefore, to all the nations of the world (represented by the 127 provinces of this empire). God uses this decree to teach us.

In its own script...in their own language: This decree was taken so seriously that it was translated into every language within the provinces and was written down in the specific scripts used within the various cultures and languages.

No one had any excuse that they had not heard this decree or that they had not understood it. This decree had implications for every tribe, every tongue, all people.

Each man should be master in his own house: This chapter concludes with a very significant proclamation which has a great spiritual implication. Men were granted the right to rule in their own homes. This meant that the women, by law, had to submit to their husbands.

Speak in the language of his own people: Language is synonymous with culture. Men were granted the liberty to speak or to command things according to their cultural norms. A man's words/desires in his home were put on a par with the laws of the land. The members of his household (in this context, specifically his wife) had to submit to his laws, in the same way that they would submit to the laws of the land. This decree elevated men to do what they wanted to do, and their households had to submit to the desires of these men.

Note: We see a similarity between this empire and the antichrist empire. In the last days, the antichrist empire is going to rise out of Europe (Daniel 8). Initially this is an empire that will bring stability out of chaos – bringing (satanic) 'order' out of chaos. Temporarily there will be peace, security and prosperity throughout much of the world. According to Revelation 13 the antichrist is going to rise up, manifest himself and become the leader of this empire (in this book, Haman is the typology of the antichrist). The antichrist will set forth laws that will bring chaos, wrath and disunity in every household (Matthew 24:10, Luke 21:16). Initially everyone will be allowed to worship according to their own desires – 'freedom' of religion – everyone allowed to do what is right in their own eyes. But suddenly there is going to be an abrupt change – rooted in the purposes of satan - and the antichrist will desire to be the one who is solely worshipped – see Revelation 13. The good news is that God is going to be victorious and triumph over the schemes of the enemy. He did this in the past (triumphing over the purposes of Haman), and He will do this again in the future – triumphing over the antichrist empire. God is able to take that which is evil and turn it into good.

Chapter 2

Part 1: Esther 2:1-11

We need to be people who see God's hand in every situation. This does not mean that God is the cause of everything. He does not cause sin or disobedience, but he can use the sin and disobedience, which are already present in this world, for His purposes – He can turn evil into good (Genesis 50:20).

Verse 1: *“After these things, when the wrath of King Ahasuerus subsided, he remembered Vashti, what she had done, and what had been decreed against her.”*

After these things: This is a phrase used frequently throughout Scripture – in the Old and New Covenants (e.g. John 21:1). The purpose of this expression is to cause the reader to remember what has just been revealed. In this context we are to remember that Queen Vashti refused to obey her husband the king and that her act of defiance (for reasons which were perhaps right and proper – reasons of modesty) was perceived as a threat to the empire. As a result, Vashti was no longer allowed into the presence of the king (Esther 1:19). Many scholars differ in their opinions as to what happened to Vashti – whether she was put to death or simply banished.

He remembered Vashti: He thought about her. This implies that he missed her.

Remembered ... what she had done, and what had been decreed against her: Many of the scholars believed that he had regret or remorse for what had happened to Vashti. Usually, the word for remembrance in the Scripture is associated with a positive outcome. Oftentimes when God 'remembers' He remembers the covenant and He responds to restore. Here we see that the king remembers Vashti. We are led to believe that he misses her and possibly desires her restoration but knows what was decreed against her.

Verse 2: *"Then the king's servants who attended him said: "Let there be sought for the king beautiful young virgins;"*

The king's servants who attended him: These servants were constantly in the king's presence. Their role was to perceive his every need and to react or respond to quickly meet his needs.

Let there be sought for the king beautiful young virgins: These servants perceived that the king was thinking about and missing Vashti and so they responded to the king's loneliness with this counsel or recommendation.

Verse 3: *"And the king commanded that there would be officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan the capital, unto the house of the women, unto the custody of Hege the king's chamberlain, keeper of the women; and let ointments be given them:"*

Officers: Captains. People with authority who could give and carry out commands. These captains would have also had resources at their disposal. They were well equipped to carry out their task.

The house of the women: This was probably similar to a dormitory of today. These women were to be gathered up and to be brought into the capital city of Shushan where they would be placed under the king's authority.

Hege: He was a eunuch who served the king. He was responsible to guard the women and to make sure that they were well kept. Hege was the keeper of the women.

Let ointments be given them: These ointments would be the equivalent to the health care products and beauty creams of today.

Verse 4: *"Then let the young woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti." This thing was good in the eyes of the king, and therefore thus it was done."*

Pleases: The literal word used here is the word 'good'. Often the word for 'good' is a word that has to do with the will of a person (in this case, this had to be a woman who was good or according to the will of the king).

Let the young woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti: There was a methodology or plan set in place to find a replacement for Vashti.

Instead of Vashti: It is again implied that the king is missing Vashti, and something needs to be done about his need for a companion or counterpart.

Note: In the scroll of Esther there is a blank space between the 4th and 5th verse of this chapter. This space is not there by chance or because of a personal decision. Any spaces found in the scrolls were placed there due to scribal laws and scribal edict. These spaces are intended to show emphasis. They show that what is going to be written down next is of utmost importance or significance.

Verse 5: *“A Jewish man whose name was Mordecai was in Shushan, the capital. He was the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite.”*

A Jewish man: This word is a word that comes from the name of the tribe of Judah (Judah is a name which means to give thanks and to give praise to God. Regardless of which tribe they were in, the people of God were all called to give Him thanks and praise). However, at this time, it seems that whether a Jewish person came from the southern tribe of Judah or from the northern tribe of Israel they were all classified as ‘Jewish’ – regardless of which tribe they came from.

Mordecai: This is not originally a name of Jewish origin. It is a name which means “follower or servant of Marduk”. Marduk was a Babylonian god.

A Benjamite: In the original this is not written in the conventional way (i.e. “son of Benjamin” – Benjamin means ‘son of my right’ – ‘right hand’ is implied) but it is uniquely and literally written ‘man of right’. This could be a play on words. It is referring to the fact that Mordecai came from the tribe of Benjamin, but it could also be alluding to the fact that Mordecai was a man of right, a man of great integrity or uprightness. People who are upright are people who are faithful to the Scripture. Integrity is rooted in the revelation of God.

Verse 6: *“Kish had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captives who had been captured with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away.”*

Kish had been carried away: Kish had been part of a group of exiles who had been exiled from the land of Israel to Babylon. Mordecai was his great grandson. A couple of generations later, Mordecai is not living in Babylon, but is living in Shushan – the capital city of the Medes and Persians (the Medes and Persians had defeated the Babylonians, so the Babylonian empire no longer existed).

Jeconiah king of Judah: Jeconiah, also known as Jehoiachin, was a very wicked king who did not reflect any commitment or sensitivity to the will, instructions or commandments of God (2 Kings 24:8-16).

Verse 7: *“And Mordecai had tutored Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle’s daughter, for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman was lovely and beautiful. When her father and mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.”*

Mordecai: Mordecai, who lived in the capital city of the Persian empire – Shushan - was an important official in the Persian king’s administration. Mordecai’s high status or position as a leader is not what is initially emphasised about him.

Tutored: A word that speaks about having authority over or training someone (particularly in the things of God) until they reach the age of responsibility (Paul uses this same word – in Greek – in Galatians 3:23-24).

She had neither father nor mother: Hadassah (also known as Esther) was an orphan, but she was a relative of Mordecai. Mordecai took responsibility for her when her parents died.

Lovely: She had a good reputation of being appropriate or fitting. She was lovely not only in appearance but also in personality.

Beautiful: She was also good in appearance.

Verse 8: *“And it came about when was heard the word of the king and his law, and when many young women were gathered at Shushan the citadel, under the hand of Hegai, that Esther also was taken to the king’s palace, into the care of Hegai the keeper of the women.”*

Under the hand: Under the authority of

Hegai: Written slightly differently to the name found in Esther 2:3

Verse 9: *“Now the young woman was good in his eyes, and she lifted up grace before him; so he readily gave beauty preparations to her, besides her allowance. Then seven choice maidservants were provided for her from the king’s palace, and he moved her and her maidservants to the best place in the house of the women.”*

The young woman: Referring to Esther.

Good in his eyes: Hegai was acquainted with the ways of women, and he also knew what kind of woman the king would find favourable or desirable.

Lifted up: This is a word of capturing or taking possession of. Hegai recognised that Esther was unique.

Grace: The word used here is not the traditional word used for finding favour. The word used is a word that speaks of unmerited favour. It is a word that speaks of something that is lacking being supplied. Hegai saw Esther as someone who was able to supply or fulfil what was lacking, what was missing.

Readily: This is a word that means Hegai hurried to give Esther her beauty preparations. He did not hesitate to give to her what she needed.

Seven choice maidservants were provided for her: These young women were fitting or appropriate servants who were, surprisingly, given to Esther to attend to her.

He moved her and her maidservants to the best place in the house: Esther completely captured Hegai’s attention. He realised she was different to the other women, and he went out of his way to make sure that she had the best of what the house of the women had to offer. Hegai treated Esther in a unique way. Mordecai had trained Esther and part of her training had involved the Word, commandments and truth of God. The outcome of this training was evident to others – it was noticeable in her life. She was different from other women.

Verse 10: *“Esther had not revealed her people or origin, for Mordecai had commanded her not to reveal it.”*

Note: Mordecai was the authority over Esther’s life. Esther had learned how to submit to his authority.

Not only did Esther submit to Mordecai, but she submitted to the instructions of Hegai. Her submissiveness to authority positioned her exactly where God wanted her to be. When we (male and female) are in submission to the authority placed over us then we are also in the place where God wants us to be. It is when we are in this place that God can use us to do great things. Esther's submission to authority caused her to find grace and favour in the eyes of others. Submissiveness to the purposes of God manifest His glory. This is seen repeatedly in the life of Queen Esther.

Origin: Her heritage

Mordecai had commanded her not to reveal it: Mordecai was a servant of God. In this instance he was like God's mouthpiece to Esther – like a prophet. Biblically Mordecai is never called a prophet, but he did receive revelation from God. When we take God's Word seriously, and we have the anointing of the Holy Spirit, God prepares us for the future. If we ignore the Word of God, do not take it literally or do not understand it properly (reinterpreting it as if it is dependant on culture and times etc) then we are living in falsehood and are going to be unprepared for what God is going to bring about in the future. God, in His mercy, revealed to Mordecai that Esther should not reveal her origin, people or heritage.

Verse 11: *"And every day and day Mordecai paced in front of the courtyard of the women's quarters, to learn of Esther's welfare and what was happening to her."*

Every day and day: This means constantly - not just every day but throughout the day Mordecai would check up on Esther.

Paced: This word for walking is uniquely constructed. Mordecai did not walk when he went to check up on Esther – he paced. Pacing means walking backwards and forwards. He was concerned about and was constantly checking on the well-being of Esther. Mordecai loved Esther like a father loves his daughter.

In front of the courtyard: The fact that Mordecai had access to this place helps to show us that he had a prominent role/position within this empire. He was a trusted advisor and therefore had access to certain places within the palace.

To learn of Esther's welfare and what was happening to her: Mordecai was exceedingly interested in Esther and interested in every aspect of her well-being.

Chapter 2

Part 2: Esther 2:12-23

We want to be used by God for something beyond ourselves – for situations beyond our households and immediate surrounds. We want to have greater influence in the lives of others. Esther was submissive. She was able to hear instructions and then implement them in her life. She was not only a hearer of the Word, but she was a doer also (James 1:22). It is only when we are both hearers and doers of the Word that we are going to experience the change that God wants us to have and, therefore, can be used as a catalyst for change in our situations and in the situations of others. As we begin to change into the people that God desires us to be (new creations in Messiah), God increases our sphere of influence in this world (we become more effective servants for Him).

Verse 12: *“Each young woman’s turn came to go in to King Ahasuerus after she had completed twelve months’ preparation, according to the laws for the women, for thus were the days of their preparation apportioned: six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with spices and preparations for beautifying women.”*

Note 1: A question we could be asked (or we could ask) in relation to this passage is this: How could it be part of the plan of a loving God to allow a young, Godly, Jewish woman to be brought into such an ungodly, secular environment/harem? When we deal with the Scriptures we need to remember a simple Biblical principle: some questions that we may have cannot be answered Biblically - as they may not be directly dealt with in the Bible. If the Word of God does not speak about or address something, then neither should we jump to our own conclusions (conjecture) or come up with our own theology in an attempt to answer the questions. When we teach the Bible to others it is not wise to give conjecture. We need to deal with the text as it is presented to us. We cannot add to the Bible, and if we attempt to do so it does not profit us spiritually and nor does it profit those whom we are teaching or discipling. All we need to know (in regard to the above question) is that God is Sovereign and only allows to be done to His people that which is ultimately for our good (Romans 8:28).

Note 2: The Bible is full of numbers. These numbers are helpful tools that aid us in digging a little deeper into the Biblical text. However, we need to remember that these numbers are ONLY relevant within the Biblical context. We should not be applying these numbers to our lives in a superstitious way today.

Twelve: Biblically the number 12 is a number associated with Israel. We should discern from this process that even though God is not the author of it (or the cause of it) He is moving to use it for His purposes. God never motivates anyone to do anything against His will, but when do people act against God’s will, He can turn it or use it for His good. God can utilise all things for His glory.

Twelve months’ preparation, according to the laws for the women: In this culture, there were laws in place that governed when a woman could go into the king presence.

Six: Biblically the number 6 is associated with grace. What we find here is that God is going to use this process to show His grace to Israel. Esther was chosen for the king, but the bigger picture here is that Esther was used, ultimately, for the purpose of Israel. God is at work in this story.

He is providing a solution to a problem before the problem is even conceived (He provided Yeshua as the answer to the problem of sin, before sin even came into existence – Revelation 13:8). When we are submissive to God and obedient to Him, He is working in our lives in a way that we maybe cannot immediately perceive. It is only often in retrospect that we can see the finger of God and evidence of His grace at work in the circumstances of our lives.

Verse 13: *“Thus prepared, each young woman went to the king, and she was given whatever she requested to take with her from the women’s quarters to the king’s palace.”*

Verse 14: *“In the evening she went, and in the morning she returned to the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king’s eunuch who kept the concubines. She would not go in to the king again unless the king desired her and called for her by name.”*

The second house of the women: The young virgins were not kept in the same house as the king’s concubines. Once a woman had spent time with the king she changed her location. *Shaashgaz:* Hegai was the eunuch who looked after the virgins. Shaashgaz was the eunuch who looked after the king’s concubines.

Called for her by name: This was one of the laws/regulations of the women. They were legally not allowed to see the king again unless he desired her and called for her – by name. The king would only have remembered the names of the concubines who made an impression on him.

Verse 15: *“Now when the turn came for Esther the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her as his daughter, to go in to the king, she requested nothing but what Hegai the king’s eunuch, the custodian of the women, advised. And **Esther lifted up grace in the eyes of all who saw her.**”*

Abihail: This name means: ‘My father is mighty/valiant’. Many scholars believe that this is an indirect reference to Father God. This is a name that reminds us of how wonderful, mighty or valiant God is. Whatever God does shows that He is faithful, always right, and always doing that which is best for us – His children. God has Esther’s situation under His kind and caring control.

She requested nothing but what Hegai the king’s eunuch, the custodian of the women, advised: Even here we see that Esther was not presumptuous. She was completely submitted to the authority that had been placed over her. She did not try to orchestrate and plan things according to her own reasoning, but she trusted in those who were caring for her – Hegai (and Father God).

Esther lifted up grace in the eyes of all who saw her: Being submissive brought about grace and favour in Esther’s life. People who met Esther saw something distinct and different in her life. Esther demonstrated what a woman is called to do, and because of that God worked mightily in her situation (Ephesians 5:21-24).

Verse 16: *“So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus, into his royal palace, in the tenth month, which is the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.”*

Tenth month: There are two interpretations to explain why Esther went in to the king in the tenth month. Biblically the number 10 is the number that speaks of completion, or entirety.

It was at this time that Esther was completely ready. It was the right time for her to meet the king. Esther was ready for this moment – physically as well as spiritually. The tenth month, Tebeth, was also the coldest month in this part of the country. Temperatures were therefore comfortable, and so people were not extremely hot and uncomfortable.

Seventh year: Biblically the number 7 is the number associated with purpose. This informs us that nothing is happening by chance. All of this is happening to Esther according to the purpose of God. His hand is in every detail of her life (and in the lives of His children). Seven is also a number that alludes to sanctification – ie there is a process in place that will lead to a Godly conclusion.

Verse 17: *“The king loved Esther more than all the other women, and she lifted up grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.”*

The king loved Esther more than all the other women: There is only one explanation for this - God was at work. The king saw something different in Esther. She was unique. Esther submitted herself to the things of God. She recognised and trusted in His authority by submitting to the authorities (Mordecai and Hegai) that God had placed over her. She did not try to manipulate things according to her own thoughts, but she listened to and obeyed those who were in authority over her.

Verse 18: *“Then the king made a great feast, the Feast of Esther, for all his officials and servants; and he proclaimed a holiday in the provinces and gave gifts according to the generosity of a king.”*

The Feast of Esther: The king gave this banquet in honour of Esther.

Holiday: There is a debate as to whether this is a word that refers to a holiday or if it refers to a day of rest. For a period of time the king lessened the work pressure on his officials and subjects as he wanted them to rejoice with him in the fact that he had found Esther – his queen.

Verse 19: *“And when were gathered up together the virgins the second time, then Mordecai sat in the king's gate.”*

Note: This is an oddly phrased and an oddly placed verse. When something is odd in the Scripture, or it doesn't make sense, it is a call for us to dig deeper and to pay special attention to what is being said.

Gathered up: This alludes to another banquet – not the banquet which was in honour of Queen Esther. Esther had just been made queen, so the question we need to ask is why were these virgins being gathered up again? Could it be possible that she was already in danger of being replaced?

Mordecai sat in the king's gate: This informs us that Mordecai was a leader in this empire. He had access to the king's gate.

Verse 20: *“Now Esther had not revealed her family and her people, just as Mordecai had commanded her, for Esther obeyed the command of Mordecai as when she was brought up by him.”*

Esther had not revealed her family and her people... Esther obeyed the command of Mordecai: This is a possible explanation as to why more virgins were being gathered up. Esther did something similar to Vashti. The implication is that the king wanted to know where Esther came from and what her heritage was and (according to Mordecai's command) she refused to reveal to him that she was Jewish and descended from the exiles who had been taken out of Israel. The king would have viewed her lack of transparency as an act of defiance. This act of defiance was not public like Vashti's had been, but it was defiance none-the-less. This gathering up of virgins would have seemed like a threat to Esther, an incentive to be upfront with the king –what had happened to Vashti could very easily happen to Esther.

Verse 21: *"In those days, while Mordecai sat within the king's gate, two of the king's eunuchs, Bigthan and Teresh, doorkeepers, became furious and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus."*

Mordecai sat within the king's gate: Repetition shows emphasis. Mordecai sat at the king's gate on a very regular basis. He sat there, primarily, so that he could always be aware of what was happening with Esther, but he also learned of many other things going on in and around the palace while he sat there.

Furious: Wrath, out of control anger.

Sought to lay hands on: These two eunuchs were involved in a plot to assassinate King Ahasuerus.

Verse 22: *"So the matter became known to Mordecai, who told Queen Esther, and Esther informed the king in Mordecai's name."*

Esther informed the king: Many scholars interpret this to mean that Esther reported this to the king's administration – not directly to the king.

Verse 23: *"And when an inquiry was made into the matter, it was confirmed, and both were hanged on a gallows; and it was written in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king."*

The book of the chronicles: These books were written and placed in the historical archives of the king. Once again, we see the hand of God at work behind the scenes. God is going to use this (seemingly insignificant act) for good in Mordecai's (and ultimately the entire Jewish nation's) future.

Chapter 3

Part 1: Esther 3:1-8

Through submission, God positions us where we need to be. Are we in the place where God wants us to be? We never stumble over the will of God or arrive there by chance. The only way to be in the will of God is through responding (ie submitting) to the truth of God's revelation to us. Submission manifests faithfulness, and it is an invitation to God to get involved in our lives.

Verse 1: *"After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and he lifted him up and set his throne above all the cabinet officials who were with him."*

After these things: This is not an isolated event. Everything written about in this book of Esther, even if they seem unimportant and unrelated, is connected. God uses everything, all things, for His purposes (Romans 8:28) so that He can manifest His faithfulness to His people.

Promoted: King Ahasuerus gave great significance to Haman. He uniquely set him above his companions – his fellow cabinet officials.

Set his throne: Commentators differ on the interpretation of this phrase. Some say Haman sat on his own throne that was placed near the king's throne, and others say that he had access to rule and make decisions sitting on the king's throne. Either way, Haman received a seat of honour and a seat of authority within this kingdom. Haman had a great deal of control within this kingdom. In the same way, in the future, the antichrist, under satan's authority, is going to rule over a vast empire.

Verse 2: *"And all the king's servants who were within the king's gate bowed and paid homage to Haman, for so the king had commanded concerning him. But Mordecai would not bow or pay homage."*

The king's servants who were within the king's gate: It has already been mentioned a few times in this book that Mordecai had positioned himself at this gate.

Bowed: The term used here is a term that is related to a type of worship. Bending the knee and bowing down demonstrates submission. All of the king's servants had to demonstrate submissiveness to Haman, in a way that borders on and fulfils this idea of worship.

The king had commanded: This became a law of the empire (Revelation 13:15). Mordecai was under the authority of the commandments of God, so this law of the empire was in conflict with the laws of God.

Mordecai would not bow or pay homage: This teaches us another Biblical principle. The Bible teaches us (in the Old and New Covenants) that we are supposed to be good, law-abiding citizens (Romans 13:1-7). However, when a government decree (or... etc) is in conflict with the Word of God (which is the higher authority) then it is obvious that we are to obey the law of God rather than the law of the government (Acts 5:29). At times, obeying God may mean that we have to disobey the civil law. God is our ultimate judge, above all human judges, and He is the One we need to give ultimate account to.

Note: When Vashti defied the order of the king she was deposed. Esther defied the king by not revealing her heritage and people – and there was a second intake of virgins. Now we see Mordecai also defying the order of the king, so we should expect that there is going to be a consequence.

Verse 3: *“Then the king’s servants who were within the king’s gate said to Mordecai, “Why do you transgress the king’s command?”*

Why do you transgress the king’s command?: The servants who were at the gate of the king understood that Mordecai was being defiant and was in disobedience to the king’s commandment.

Note: A time is coming in this world when people are going to have to submit to the antichrist in order to buy and sell (Revelation 13:16-17). Those who disobey the laws that the antichrist will lay down are going to suffer great consequences. It is at this (still future at the writing of this study) time that we will have to disobey this world leader because obedience to him would cause us to be in conflict with our faith in the God of Israel.

Verse 4: *“Now it happened, when they spoke to him daily and he would not listen to them, that they told it to Haman, to see whether Mordecai’s words would stand; for Mordecai had told them that he was a Jew.”*

They spoke to him daily: This act of obedience to the king’s command was not a difficult thing to do. It would seem like a small thing in the physical to show a sign of respect to someone or to acknowledge them (it seems like a small thing to place a mark on one’s hand or forehead). However, this “small act” has great spiritual significance (Revelation 16:2, Revelation 19:20-21). The world did not recognise the spiritual significance of what they were doing when they bowed to acknowledge (worship) Haman. Neither will they recognise the spiritual significance and harm they are placing upon themselves when they submit to the mark of the beast. We need to be people who are Scripturally literate. We need to know the truth of God so that we will only pledge allegiance, in a worshipful context, to our Lord and Saviour - God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

He would not listen to them: Mordecai did not listen to them (respond to them) because he was listening to (responding to) God. He knew that what they were urging him to do was sinful, blasphemous and idolatrous.

They told it to Haman, to see whether Mordecai’s words would stand: These officials wanted to see if Mordecai would get away with disobeying the king’s command by claiming religious exemption.

Mordecai had told them that he was a Jew: God’s commandments prohibit His people from bending the knee and bowing to other people (Exodus 20:3-5). The kind of homage being demanded from Haman was the type of respect that only belongs to the God of Israel (2 Thessalonians 2:4, Isaiah 14:13-17).

Verse 5: *“When Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow or pay him homage, Haman was filled with wrath.”*

Wrath: This is a word that speaks of a hot anger – an anger that usually manifests itself with an almost out of control physical rage.

Note: See Revelation 12:17

Verse 6: *“But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone, for they had told him of the people of Mordecai. Instead, Haman sought to destroy all the Jews who were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus—the people of Mordecai.”*

Disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone: It was not enough in Haman’s eyes to punish Mordecai alone. Haman desired to stretch out his hand and exterminate (utterly destroy, wipe out, annihilate) all of Mordecai’s people (the Jews).

The people of Mordecai: Haman was wicked through and through. His wickedness caused him to behave foolishly but that does not mean that Haman was unintelligent. Haman understood that it was Mordecai’s religion (Judaism) that was behind Mordecai’s refusal to bow down to him. He, therefore, rightly concluded that it would not be only Mordecai who would refuse to pay homage to him, but it would be all the people of like faith to Mordecai who would be in opposition to and a hinderance to him.

Verse 7: *“In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur (that is, the lot), before Haman to determine the day and the month, until it fell on the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.”*

The first month...the month of Nisan: ‘Nisan’ is the secular name given to the first month of the Jewish year. The Biblical name for Nisan is ‘Aviv’ – Exodus 12:2; Deuteronomy 16:1. It is equivalent to March/April in our calendar. For the most part, Biblically, the months were not given names but were called ‘the first month’, ‘the second month’, etc. This was also applicable to the days of the week. These days were given numbers and were not given names but were called ‘the first day of the week’, ‘the seventh day’, etc. This phrase (‘first month’) provides us with significant revelation – Passover (deliverance from captivity/redemption) is celebrated in this month. This places this verse, and the timing of it, within the context of redemption. When we read these words, we should be anticipating that a redemption is going to take place.

Twelfth: As already discussed in Esther 2:12: Biblically the number 12 is a number associated with Israel. In the first line of this verse, we are already anticipating redemption and now we anticipate that this redemption is going to be a deliverance which involves Israel. God has a plan, and He is in control.

They cast...the lot: Haman used idolatry to help him to determine when and how to carry out his future plan for the Jewish people. This lot fell on the 12th month – again alluding to the fact that it is a plan that involves the 12 tribes of Israel – the Jewish people as a whole.

The month of Adar: February/March in the Gregorian calendar (The festival known today as “Purim” – named after this Pur or lot – is celebrated in this month).

Verse 8: *“Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, “There is one people scattered and separate among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from all other peoples, and they do not keep the king’s laws. Therefore, it is not fitting for the king to let them remain.”*

One people: This term speaks of a unique people, a united people. A people who belong to One God.

Separate: The Jews were different to the people around them. Their lives were lived set apart from those in the nations. From a human perspective we could say that they had not assimilated well.

Note: It is important to note that historically there were many different (false) religions and people groups in the Persian empire. None of these other religions were seen as a threat to the empire. However, the empire perceived a threat in true religion. This will be no different with the antichrist empire. The antichrist empire will initially come on the scene championing religious pluralism (this means that everyone can do what is right in their own eyes – they can follow any religious beliefs they choose to). After a period of time this antichrist empire will begin to go after the Jewish people. Failing, they will then actively go after the Christians (Revelation 12:13-17, Matthew 24:9-10).

Not fitting ... to let them remain: Haman did not desire them to be exiled from the empire. He desired their eradication. He believed that the Jewish people no longer had the right to exist.

Chapter 3

Part 2: Esther 3:9-15

We have an enemy that hates the plans and purposes of God. He is not interested in the good things that God desires in our lives. This enemy loves suffering and pain. He knows that he has been defeated and he wants us to share that defeat with him for eternity. This is so different to what Messiah - whose resurrection speaks of victory – desires for us. Messiah was victorious over sin and death, and He desires to share this victory with us!

Verse 9: *“If it pleases the king, let a decree be written that they be destroyed, and I will weigh out ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who do the work, to bring it into the king’s treasuries.”*

Ten thousand talents of silver: A talent was a unit of measurement. According to the commentators this is an astronomical number. It speaks about a great sum of wealth that Haman (a type of antichrist) possessed. He was willing to give of his wealth for the purpose of destroying the Jewish people.

Note: This teaches us a principle: more frequently than not those who belong to the enemy are more loyal and willing to make sacrifices for what they believe in than we are in regard to the instructions/commandments of God and according to what He has called us to do. Not living in a sacrificial way reveals our selfishness and self-interest. Not living sacrificially allows the enemy a foothold in our lives. Although Haman was a wicked man, he knew how to live sacrificially for his master (satan).

Verse 10: *“So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews.”*

The king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman: When the king heard that Haman was willing to give this vast sum of money into his treasuries, he was swayed in his thinking.

Signet ring: The stamp that this ring produced was a sign that demonstrated the king's authority. It is very significant that the king handed over this seal of his authority to Haman (Revelation 13:2). Haman purchased the king's authority with 10 000 talents of silver. With this ring he could stamp into law whatever edict or law he desired to pass, and it would become an enforceable and unchangeable law. Like Haman, the antichrist is going to achieve authority and rulership over the world in order to carry out his own purposes. Initially the antichrist is going to do many seemingly good things for Israel and the Jewish people. The reason for this will be that he desires the Jewish people to worship him. He is going to go into the temple (the Holy of holies) and he is going to declare that he is God and worthy to be worshipped. This is called the 'abomination of desolation' – Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15, 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4. Matthew 23:39 tells us that Yeshua will not come again to establish His Kingdom on earth until He hears the Jewish people calling on His name. The antichrist (satan) wants to thwart this purpose of God, so will try to drag the allegiance of the Jewish people to himself. He is going to be unsuccessful – the Word of the Lord will stand and prove to be true. When the Jewish people refuse the antichrist, it is going to spark a time of trouble for the Jewish people called "Jacob's trouble" – Jeremiah 30:7.

Verse 11: *"And the king said to Haman, "The silver is given to you and the people, to do with them as seems good to you."*

The silver is given to you: The king gave Haman permission to use of the silver that Haman was going to deposit into the king's treasury. Haman was able to use it to pay for whatever he needed to in order to carry out his objective. Most scholars teach that there was no thought that all of this great sum of money would be utilized to destroy the Jews, but rather a relatively small portion. The rest of the money would be used for the Persian empire and for the king's personal profit or gain. In the last days people are going to make decisions based upon their personal financial interests – hence the reason why the mark of the beast is related to money (Revelation 13:16-17). No matter how wealthy a person is in the last days they will not be able to utilise their wealth unless they submit to the mark of the beast. Those who are motivated by finances are going to fall prey to the deceit of the antichrist. That deceit is going to cause them to pledge absolute allegiance to him. This is what this king is doing. He and his kingdom stand to gain much wealth, so he agrees to something that he does not completely understand the ramifications of.

The people...them: This could be referring to the Jewish people, or it could be referring to the people of the kingdom (eg the army etc) who could help Haman to carry out his plan.

Verse 12: *"Then the king's scribes were called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and a decree was written according to all that Haman commanded—to the king's satraps, to the governors who ruled over each province, to the officials of all people, to every province according to its script, and to every people in their language. In the name of King Ahasuerus, it was written, and sealed with the king's signet ring."*

Thirteenth: Biblically the number 13 is thought of as 12 +1. 12 represents the twelve tribes of Israel and 1 represents the triune God. The number 13, therefore, represents the unity between God and His people.

First month: Aviv or Nisan – the month of Passover (the festival of redemption). Redemption brings unity between God and His people through a covenantal relationship. Haman's objective was to destroy the Jewish people. God was going to use Haman's evil plan to bring unity between God and His people.

Satrap: Important officials of the king.

Written, and sealed with the king's signet ring: This plan to destroy the Jewish people has been put into action.

Verse 13: *"And the letters were sent by heralds into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their possessions."*

In one day: Zechariah (in Zechariah 14:7) speaks of the establishment of the Kingdom in "one day" – this is a unique day, a special day. In this account of Esther, we see that the enemy desires to bring about a unique and special change to the Jewish people (elimination) and he wants it to become a reality in "one day." The enemies plan for this "one day" is not going to be successful.

Thirteenth day of the twelfth month: The extermination of the Jews was set for this specific date. 13 speaks about intimacy between God and Israel (God and His people). The 12th month – the month of Adar - speaks about that which is splendid, special, good and glorious. Redemption, and the unity between God and His people, produces a marvelous outcome.

Plunder their possessions: Those who participated in the destruction of the Jews were allowed to take the spoil or the possessions of the Jews for their own use and financial gain. This is very reminiscent of what happened in the Holocaust, but this is going to happen again (Zechariah 14:1-2).

Verse 14: *"A copy of the document was to be issued as law in every province, being published for all peoples, that they should be ready for that day."*

Peoples: Written in the plural - meaning all the different people groups (different languages and cultures).

Published for all peoples: Here we see a parallel. The gospel is a message for every people, nation, tribe and tongue. The gospel is a Word of life. In contrast, although this is also a message for every nation, tribe and tongue, it is a message of death.

That they should be ready for that day: The gospel gets us ready for the future, ready for eternal glory. This antichrist message (or the message that defies the gospel) is a message that gets people ready for eternal shame.

Verse 15: *"The heralds went out, hastened by the king's command; and the decree was proclaimed in Shushan the capital. So, the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Shushan was perplexed."*

Heralds: Runners

Hastened: This is a word for urgency. It carries with it a sense of being alarmed or being concerned about something.

Decree: The word used here in the Hebrew is a word that has a religious connotation attached to it. It leaves us with the idea that religious significance is being attached to that which is secular. In the media today we see religious terms or images being attached to political (secular) figures (eg: 'Europe's Saviour' – Macron walking on water, 'Armageddon', etc). These religious overtones applied to human beings (political figureheads, movie titles, etc) are terms and images that are transitioning and preparing the world for the antichrist to be thought of as a god.

Sat down to drink: The king and Haman are celebrating this new law. They are joyful about it.

Perplexed: Confused. They did not understand why this law had been given. Often being confused makes it easier to be deceived. In the last days a spirit of delusion/deceit/confusion is going to be present in this world (2 Thessalonians 2:11). God is going to allow those who have rejected truth to become deceived. This word also has a degree of embarrassment attached to it. Confusion leads to that which is embarrassing. Shame and confusion will be placed upon the enemies of Israel in the last days (Zechariah 12:4).

Chapter 4

Part 1: Esther 4:1-11

Those who have taken hold of God's truth, who understand His revelation and who desire to submit to Him are those whom God positions in His will. We will never stumble into the will of God. His purpose for our lives is only realised when we are submitted to Him and when we follow Him.

Verse 1: *"When Mordecai learned all that had happened, he tore his garments and put on sackcloth and ashes and went out into the midst of the city. He cried out with a loud and bitter cry."*

All that had happened: Haman's plot, money paid into the king's treasury, the plan to exterminate the Jews put into effect, etc.

Sackcloth and ashes: Associated with repentance. Mordecai was publicly mourning, repenting, grieving and screaming out loud because of the evil plan that was now enforced.

Cry: Literally: scream. In Genesis 27:34 we see a similar instance of a bitter cry. In the Hebrew these two cries are written similarly – just the front letters are different. Mordecai was crying bitterly because these plans that he had learnt about were against the will of God. Esau was crying bitterly because the will of God (Jacob receiving the blessing that he had legitimately purchased, Genesis 25:23) was being fulfilled. Rebecca received prophetic revelation from God about her sons. Jacob was submissive and did what his mother instructed him to do (Genesis 27:8-14). Esau was rebellious (Genesis 27:46, 28:8-9; Malachi 1:2-3; Hebrews 12:16-17). Esau's tears were not tears of repentance. They were tears of frustration for not getting his own way. Esau was upset that the will of God was being fulfilled with Jacob.

Verse 2: *“He went as far as the front of the king’s gate, for no one might enter the king’s gate clothed with sackcloth.”*

Verse 3: *“And in every province where the king’s command and decree arrived, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and lamentation; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.”*

Mourning: The response of people when the death of a loved one has occurred.

Many lay in sackcloth and ashes: There was a public outcry and a physical expression of grief. When something is against the will of God the right response from us should be grief. We are called to be vocal and visible about things which are against the purposes of God. Others need to know that these things grieve us.

Verse 4: *“So Esther’s maids and eunuchs came and told her, and the queen was deeply distressed. Then she sent garments to clothe Mordecai and take his sackcloth away from him, but he would not accept them.”*

Esther’s maids and eunuchs: Esther had seven young women assigned to her (Esther 2:9). She also had eunuchs concerned with her care.

Deeply distressed: There are many different ways to interpret this word. Some interpret it to mean confused or bewildered. Esther was greatly afraid when she heard that Mordecai was publicly lamenting in sackcloth and ashes.

Garments to clothe Mordecai: Esther did not want Mordecai to be clothed in sackcloth. She did not want him to draw attention to himself. Esther, who has always been in submission to Mordecai, is not in agreement with him here. What he is doing is disturbing and confusing her.

Verse 5: *“Then Esther called Hathach, one of the king’s eunuchs whom he had appointed to attend her, and she gave him a command concerning Mordecai, to learn what and why this was.”*

One of the king’s eunuchs: Hathach was a trusted official of the king. Esther also trusted him.

To learn what and why this was: Esther did not understand why Mordecai was doing what he was doing. She trusted Hathach to find out what was going on and she trusted him to be discreet with the information he unearthed.

Verse 6: *“So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the city square that was in front of the king’s gate.”*

The city square that was in front of the king’s gate: This was the most public place in the city.

Verse 7: *“And Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king’s treasuries to destroy the Jews.”*

Mordecai told him all that had happened to him: Mordecai gave Hathach his perspective of things.

Verse 8: *“He also gave him a copy of the written decree for their destruction, which was given at Shushan, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her, and that he might command her to go in to the king to make supplication to him and plead before him for her people.”*

Their destruction: Referring to the destruction of the Jewish people.

Plead before him for her people: Mordecai had told Esther not to reveal her heritage (Esther 2:10). Mordecai is now instructing her that the time is right for her to reveal that she is Jewish.

Verse 9: *“So Hathach returned and told Esther the words of Mordecai.”*

Verse 10: *“Then Esther spoke to Hathach, and gave him a command for Mordecai:”*

Verse 11: *“All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, he has but one law: put all to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days.”*

Any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, he has but one law: put all to death, except...: Esther is in a quandary. If she goes in to the king, she is putting her life at risk. Although Esther was the queen, she was not allowed to just go into the king’s presence at any time she chose to. There were laws in place that governed when a person could go into the king’s presence (Esther 2:12,14).

Except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter: We could reasonably assume that the king would extend this golden sceptre to Esther because she was the queen and because she had found grace and favour in his eyes (Esther 2:17).

I myself have not been called to go in to the king: There are two predominant interpretations of what Esther could be saying here:

1. The king had not called Esther for a month. If someone lives in the same location but they have not seen each other for 30 days we can assume that there is a problem with the relationship – a cooling off. Many scholars believe that what Esther is saying is that the king is angry with her or is not interested in her. If she goes to the king in this condition (uncalled and uninvited) he could legitimately use the law to put her to death.
2. This view is also well known in Rabbinical circles, but it is a less persuasive view. They interpret this to mean that Esther has not been in to the king for quite a while, so she is anticipating a call from him in the very near future. They, therefore, say that Esther, instead of jeopardising her life, wants to wait to speak to the king when she is invited to see him.

Thirty days: Biblically the number 30 is a number associated with death. The period of mourning is 30 days (Numbers 20:29). Yeshua began his ministry at the age of 30 (Luke 3:23 – ‘30’ tells us that Yeshua came into this world to die). Yeshua was sold for 30 pieces of silver (Matthew 26:15). The text (by using the number 30) is hinting that Esther truly believes that she had the potential to be put to death.

Note: This is a very important Biblical principle: As servants of God, we may be called to lay down our lives.

We should never let the possibility of death, persecution or suffering in any way dissuade us from obeying God (Romans 12:1-2). Esther had a history of being submissive to Mordecai. In this circumstance she is questioning whether submission to him is wise. Esther is faced with a decision – to submit or not to submit, to lay down her life or to not lay it down. When we are living as ‘living sacrifices’ to God we never have to worry about the consequences. We need to obey God and leave the consequences to Him. Do we value our lives more than we value obedience to God?

Chapter 4

Part 2: Esther 4:12-17

We need to be people who are theologically correct – people who are loyal and faithful to the revelation of Scripture and not to the traditions of men. God has given humanity a free will. We make our own decisions and choices, and these decisions and choices have consequences. Man’s free will in no way attacks the Sovereignty of God. For God to be Sovereign it does not mean that He has to manipulate us to cause us to do His will. God’s will, in the end, will be established. It will be established through our obedience to Him, but it will also be established even if we are disobedient to Him. God is greater than our disobedience. Disobedience doesn’t cause God any problems or hinder Him from doing what He is ultimately going to do.

Verse 12: *“So they told Mordecai Esther’s words.”*

Verse 13: *“And Mordecai told them to answer Esther: “Do not imagine in your soul that you will escape in the king’s palace any more than all the other Jews.”*

Imagine in your soul: This is a Hebrew idiom that means to think about thoroughly or to meditate upon.

Note: Esther’s life is in jeopardy if she goes to the king. Mordecai, however, is reminding her that her life is also in jeopardy if she doesn’t go to the king.

Verse 14: *“For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”*

If you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place: Mordecai’s words to Esther help us to get a Biblical understanding of the Sovereignty of God. Esther had a real and a hard choice to make. She could choose to obey or to disobey. Obedience is a natural outcome of faith. When we truly believe God’s Word we will respond to Him in obedience. God’s Plan A was that Esther would be obedient. However, if Esther was disobedient God would call someone else to rise up to do what Esther refused to do.

Deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place: God was not limited to Esther’s free will – her obedience or disobedience. God’s will would be done with or without her.

However, God was giving Esther an opportunity to partner with Him, to play an active role in His plan.

You and your father's house will perish: Disobedience leads to destruction.

Verse 15: *"Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai:"*

Verse 16: *"Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; when I perish, I perish!"*

Fast for me: Fasting and prayer go hand in hand. Biblically (and culturally), a fast was always accompanied by prayer. Perhaps one of the reasons why Esther wanted this prayer support was because she knew that prayer and fasting changes reality. Prayer and fasting brings about the will of God in our lives. Not everything that happens in our lives is the will of God. Sin in our lives is not the will of God. God never wants His purposes to be advanced by sin. God is, however, able to use whatever He needs to use – including sin – for His purposes. God can take what is evil and use it for good (Genesis 50:20)

Neither eat nor drink for three days: Biblical fasting involves no eating or drinking. They were to fast for three days and three nights – no eating or drinking, anything, for 72 hours.

I will go to the king: Esther's decision shows us that Esther was a woman of faith. She trusted in God and was reliant on Him.

When: This is not the word for 'if'. 'If' throws uncertainty into a text. It is not a case of 'if' we die, but 'when' we die. Unless we are one of those who go in the rapture, we are all going to die. It is just a case of when and how. Esther truly believed that she was going to die when she went uninvited into the king's presence. Esther had always submitted to and obeyed Mordecai. She was willing to continue submitting to him, but she truly believed it was going to bring about her death. In her own mind, Esther does not see this as ending well. Nevertheless, she decided to obey God.

Verse 17: *"So Mordecai departed and did according to all that Esther commanded him."*

Did according to all that Esther commanded him: Up until this time we have seen Esther in submission to Mordecai. Here we see a change – Mordecai submits to Esther's command. Esther, through learning from and submitting to Mordecai, has reached a place of spiritual maturity in her life. Esther is making the right spiritual decisions. She is requesting people to pray and fast. She understands that God needs to be involved in her situation. We need to be people who make decisions rooted in prayer and fasting. We need to be people who are completely dependant and reliant on God in every situation we face in life.

Chapter 5

Change is coming. Although we do not see Him visibly, God is always working and present in our lives. God's name is not mentioned at all throughout the book of Esther, yet we can clearly see His hand at work behind the scenes.

Verse 1: *"Now it happened on the third day that Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, across from the king's house, while the king sat on his royal throne in the royal house, facing the entrance of the house."*

On the third day: This is very reminiscent of what we see in the gospels. Yeshua's body was in the tomb for three days. On the third day Yeshua experienced resurrection – victory over death (1 Corinthians 15:4). Jonah was also in the belly of the whale for three days (Jonah 1:17). God rescued Jonah from the belly of the whale on the third day (Jonah 2:10).

Note: Biblically the number 3 is used for the purpose of revelation. It is a number that is related to victory. These words should remind us that God is about to reveal something to us – and we can expect His revelation to have a good (victorious) outcome.

Esther put on her royal robes: God had orchestrated events so that Esther would be in the right place at the right time. What God did in Esther's life (what He does in our lives) was not solely for Esther's good. God called her so that through her behaviour and testimony she could have an impact in the lives of others.

Verse 2: *"So it was, when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, that she found favour in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther went near and touched the top of the scepter."*

She found favour in his sight: Esther was not invited into the king's presence. Potentially she could have died for not approaching the king in the correct manner. Esther went into the presence of the king expecting to die, but she went to him in obedience and in submission to Mordecai – believing in the power of prayer and fasting. Esther was operating under favour. However, the source of her favour was her submission and her obedience to Godly authority.

The king held out to Esther the golden scepter: There was only one exception to the rule that stated that those who went into the presence of the king uninvited would die – the king extending his golden sceptre would save Esther from death. He extended his sceptre to her. He acted in a way that caused her to have life, instead of experiencing death.

Verse 3: *"And the king said to her, 'What do you wish, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given to you—up to half the kingdom!'"*

What do you wish, Queen Esther: The king knew that Esther, coming to him uninvited, had a request to make. He knew that coming into his presence in this way was out of character for Esther so he realised the her request would be of the utmost significance.

It shall be given to you—up to half the kingdom: The king did not have to say this to Esther. This is an idiom in Hebrew. It can be taken literally – anything Esther asks for, if it is in the power of the king to give it, and if it does not harm the purposes of his kingdom, he will give it to her.

Note: The king's favour is the outcome of prayer and fasting. It is the outcome of God being at work in this situation. Because Esther is obeying, submitting to and recognizing Godly authority in her life, God has been brought into the situation.

Verse 4: *"So Esther answered, 'If it is good for the king, let the king and Haman come today to the banquet that I have prepared for him.'"*

If it is good: Esther is not asking for anything that is harmful for King Ahasuerus's kingdom. Esther wanted the king to realise that her request was in fact good for the king and his kingdom (Genesis 12:3). The word 'good' has to do with the fulfilment of God's will. Esther was not there for herself. She was an instrument who was submissive to the will of God.
The banquet that I have prepared: This seems to imply that this banquet had already been prepared. Before fasting, Esther was preparing to die ('when I perish, I perish'). Now, after prayer and fasting, Esther's mindset has changed. She is no longer acting in fear but, by preparing the banquet, she demonstrated faith – expecting the king to behave favourably toward her.

Verse 5: *"Then the king said, 'Bring Haman quickly, that he may do as Esther has said.' So, the king and Haman went to the banquet that Esther had prepared."*

Verse 6: *"At the banquet of wine the king said to Esther, 'What is your question? It shall be given to you. What is your request, up to half the kingdom? It shall be done!'"*

The banquet of wine: There are two possible reasons why 'wine' is alluded to here. In the Song of Songs wine is synonymous with love (Song of Songs 1:2). This may be referring to the fact that the king was speaking to Esther in a loving way. Biblically, wine is also synonymous with joy, happiness or gladness. This may be a foreshadowing of what the outcome of these banquets are going to bring about – a joy, a happiness, a rejoicing for the Jewish people.

Up to half the kingdom? It shall be done: As long as Esther's request was reasonable and not detrimental to his kingdom, the king was assuring Esther that her request was already granted.

Verse 7: *"Then Esther answered and said, 'My petition and request is this:'"*

Verse 8: *"If I have found favour in the sight of the king, and if it is good to the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, then let the king and Haman come to the banquet which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king has said."*

Note: No change for the people of Israel took place at this first banquet. It was only at the second banquet that Esther hosted for the king and Haman that a change was brought about. This is possibly reminiscent of the first time Joseph's brothers saw him in Egypt. They did not recognise him and so did not respond to him. It was only on their second visit to Egypt that Joseph revealed himself to him and they responded to him – a change happened in the sons of Israel the second time they went to Egypt (Genesis 42-45). This is also reminiscent of the coming of Messiah.

At His first coming Israel did not recognise Him and things did not change for Israel. At His second coming things are going to radically change for Israel.

Verse 9: *“So Haman went out that day joyful and with a glad heart; but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king’s gate, and that he did not stand or tremble before him, he was filled with indignation against Mordecai.”*

Haman went out: Haman left the banquet to go home.

That day: In Hebrew this is a phrase that is used throughout Scripture in regard to judgment (Judgment Day). Scripture, inspired by the Holy Spirit, does not contain any errors. It is God’s divine revelation to us. Sometimes, in Scripture, God uses literary devices to help us human beings to better understand His revelation. Used in this verse, in this context, this phrase is preparing our minds for, and foreshadowing, the judgment that is coming to Haman.

Joyful and with a glad heart: Haman is in spiritual darkness. He has no idea that the living God is using Esther as an instrument in his downfall. Haman pays no thought to the fact that God is at work.

Mordecai in the king’s gate: Gates, Biblically, speak of a place of judgment or of counsel. The elders would sit at the gates of the cities and pass judgments there (Ruth 4:1-2, Proverbs 31:23). Mordecai seemed to always be at the king’s gates. He was committed to righteousness – to giving verdicts and counsel on matters of contention within the administration of the Persian empire.

He did not stand or tremble before him: Haman was really upset that Mordecai refused to get up for him, that Mordecai refused to acknowledge him as someone special and set apart (like the law required the people to do). Haman had just had an exclusive dinner with the king and queen so his head would have been full of self-importance...and then he saw Mordecai’s rejection of the word of the king (Esther 3:2), therefore of himself, and that made him very angry.

Note: Mordecai rejected and refused to obey the word of the king that gave Haman special (God-like) status. As good citizens in the countries that we live in, we are called to obey civil laws (the laws set in place by government). However, when a government enacts a law, a rule or a policy that is in conflict with the Word of God we are to obey the Word of God and disobey the law in conflict with the Word of God. The Word of God is a higher authority than the government in a land. The governments that we are called to obey are those governments which punish evil and reward good, those governments who carry the sword to intimidate the people to do the right thing (Romans 13:1-4). We are to stand against governments who use the sword for evil. This is why Christianity, and the truth of Scripture, is so feared in places where there are dictatorial governments, where governments are exploiting people.

Verse 10: *“Nevertheless Haman restrained himself and went home, and he sent and called for his friends and his wife Zeresh.”*

Verse 11: *“Then Haman told them of his great riches, the multitude of his children, everything in which the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the officials and servants of the king.”*

Haman told them: Haman began to brag to his family and family about how great he was. Manifesting his pride (bragging about what he had and who he was) was a source of comfort for Haman. Pride, although a source of comfort for Haman in the natural, is a source of judgment before the presence of God.

His great riches: Haman found joy in the physical things around him. Many of the scholars point out that Haman was exceedingly wealthy. Haman’s wealth brought him an earthly glory and esteem among other people.

The multitude of his children: Haman had 10 sons. In this culture male children were highly regarded and seen as a sign of favour.

The king had promoted him: After the king, Haman was the greatest man in this kingdom (Esther 3:1).

Verse 12: *“Moreover Haman said, “Besides, Queen Esther invited no one but me to come in with the king to the banquet that she prepared; and tomorrow I am again invited by her, along with the king.”*

Note: Haman is reciting all of the things that he thinks make him special and different to everyone else.

Verse 13: *“Yet all this avails me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king’s gate.”*

All this: His wealth, sons, honour and position.

Mordecai the Jew: Mordecai and the Jewish people are not a threat to the king and his empire – Haman is. Haman wants to be king (Esther 7:7-9). This is his objective. This is what he is committed to, and this is his prideful intent. Haman is not for the well-being of his nation. Mordecai, sitting at the king’s gate was a symbol of righteousness. Haman stood in opposition to righteousness, and therefore Mordecai (and all those who stand for Biblical truth) was a threat to him. In the last days, like Mordecai, those who stand for righteousness, against the antichrist and his empire, will have a target on their backs. In the last days the Jewish people are not going to accept the antichrist as their Messiah. This is going to cause them to have a target on their backs.

Verse 14: *“Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, “Let them make a high tree, fifty cubits in height, and in the morning suggest to the king that Mordecai be hanged on it; then go merrily with the king to the banquet.” And the thing pleased Haman; so he had the gallows made.”*

His wife Zeresh and all his friends said: This is written in the feminine singular. This means it is the counsel of Haman’s wife, but all his friends are in agreement with her.

Them: Haman’s officials and servants.

A high tree: A gallow – a place where someone could be hung.

Fifty: Biblically, 50 is an important number. It is a number that is associated with jubilee – freedom and liberty. This gallow was built with the intention of destroying Mordecai. But

this gallows was going to be used to hang Mordecai's enemy. What was intended for evil, God turned for good and to His glory (Genesis 50:20). This principle is seen in many ways throughout Scripture (the cross, etc). God is able to turn death into life, sadness into rejoicing, curse into blessing. This is the nature of God. This is why it is so important that we submit to God, that we recognize His authority. As we do this He brings about change in our lives.

Chapter 6

Haman put his will above God's will. This is a satanic attribute/characteristic. God is not interested in our own wills (our destiny) being fulfilled. He is interested in His will being perfected. Every true believer submits to God's will - removing ourselves from the desires of our flesh.

God is at work to bring about a change in the situation that the Jewish people find themselves in. The chief catalysts to this change were:

1. Fasting and prayer (Unity in prayer and fasting within the Jewish community)
2. The sacrificial and submissive attitude and behaviour that Esther exemplified.

When we fast and pray, are led by truth and submitted to it, we begin to recognize Godly authority - allowing God to lead us and be present in our lives and situations. When God is present in our lives, and working in our situations, we will experience a change.

Verse 1: *"On that night the sleep of the king was wandering. So one was commanded to bring the book of the remembrance of the chronicles; and they were read before the king."*

Night: Night is an important term Biblically. God's work of redemption is often depicted as beginning at night (Exodus 12:29-31, Ruth 3:8-9). God, similarly, is working here to bring about a redemptive outcome for the Jewish people.

Wandering: This is a word that speaks of a nomad going to and fro but never really arriving at one primary place. On this night the king could not sleep. The text seems to allude to the fact that this was out of the ordinary for the king. God is at work. He interrupted the king's sleep.

The book of the remembrance: This was a book of memories, a book in which historical events were written down. In this empire they had a set of writings that recorded any significant events that took place each day in the kingdom (similar to how we have historical events passed down to us through books like 1 and 2 Chronicles).

They were read before the king: Most people find it boring to hear history being read aloud to them. The king was probably hoping that the monotony of the voices and the dullness of the text (the list of events) would lull him to sleep.

Verse 2: *"And it was found written that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, the doorkeepers who had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus."*

Two of the king's eunuchs: These men had been high officials in Ahasuerus's kingdom. The king had trusted them.

The doorkeepers: These two men guarded the entrance to the king. They were part of his security detail, his bodyguards. They were responsible to vet all the people who wanted to

see the king and to make sure that none were a threat to him. They were responsible for the king's life, but they betrayed their position.

Sought to lay hands on: They sought to assassinate the king.

Note: These two men were put to death for their assassination plot against Ahasuerus. All ended well. Mordecai had shown his faithfulness to the king. This event was written into the book of memories, but Mordecai had received no reward for what he had done. It appears as if the plot to assassinate the king had never reached his ears. He had no idea that Mordecai had saved his life. This was not a coincidence. This all worked into the plan of God – to be revealed at the right time for a right outcome.

Verse 3: *“Then the king said, “What precious and great was done for Mordecai concerning this?” And the king’s servants who attended him said, “Nothing has been done for him.”*

Precious: A word that can mean something that is expensive, precious or dear - something that has value (monetary value or personal/sentimental value).

What ... was done for Mordecai: The king recognized that Mordecai had acted to save his life. He knew that by rewarding those who saved his (or the queen’s) life it would encourage others to speak out if they learnt of a plot or a threat against the king or his empire.

Verse 4: *“So the king said, “Who is in the courtyard?” Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king’s palace to suggest that the king hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.”*

Note: Mordecai was faithful to God but that did not make him an enemy to Haman. In the last days, and this is happening even now but is going to get worse, faithfulness to God is going to be reviewed by others as making us their enemy. When we walk in obedience to God, we become an enemy of those who belong to the world, and they are going to desire to harm or destroy us.

“Who is in the courtyard?”: This is set within the king’s conversation which is happening at night while the king is battling to sleep. Haman had built his gallows, but he couldn’t wait to see Mordecai hang and so went to wait in the king’s courtyard (during the night) so that he could deal with his issue as soon as the court doors opened for business in the morning. He wanted to be one of those who were first in line to make his request known to the king.

Verse 5: *“The king’s servants said to him, “Haman is there, standing in the court.” And the king said, “Let him come in.”*

Standing: This is written in the present tense – a tense construction rarely used in the Hebrew. The present tense always highlights a passage and makes it emphatic. It should cause the reader to pay attention to what is going on as what is happening is of great significance.

Verse 6: *“So Haman came in, and the king asked him, “What shall be done for the man whom the king delights in with precious thoughts?” Now Haman said in his heart, “Whom would the king delight to do something precious for more than me?”*

Whom would the king delight to do something precious for more than me: This gives us a front row seat and view of Haman's pride. He was extremely self-centred, and it did not even cross his mind that the king would choose to honour a single other person. People who are full of pride are easily deceived and lack discernment. Haman's pride clouded his ability to discern or to see reality. The Bible warns us that pride goes before a fall (Proverbs 16:18).

Verse 7: *"And Haman answered the king, "Whom the king delights in, in a precious way, this is what should be done:"*

Precious: Expensive

Verse 8: *"Let a royal robe be brought which the king has worn, and a horse on which the king has ridden, let there be given a royal crown upon his head."*

Note: Haman had a satanically inspired character. Like satan wanted to set his throne above God's throne (Isaiah 14:12-14), so Haman wanted his throne set above King Ahasuerus's throne. Haman wanted to rule this Persian empire.

A royal robe: Haman, assuming the man was himself, would not be satisfied with just any of the king's clothes. He requested to wear a garment that the king wore when He presented Himself as king – a robe which King Ahasuerus wore when he presented himself in an official way.

Verse 9: *"Then let this robe and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that he may clothe the man whom the king delights in with his precious endearment. Then parade him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him: 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights in in a precious way!'"*

Note: Haman is asking for this treatment because he wanted to be king. He wanted to simulate an event whereby the noblemen would prepare him for a kingly position, like as if he was king (role play) – the king's robes, horse, crown and highest official in the land to give him honour. Haman wanted the public to get used to seeing him in a kingly position (similar to how the media twists the truth today so that the lies are seen so regularly they begin to be believed to be the truth - propaganda).

Verse 10: *"Then the king said to Haman, 'Hurry, take the robe and the horse, as you have suggested, and do so for Mordecai the Jew who sits within the king's gate! Leave nothing undone of all that you have spoken.'"*

Mordecai the Jew who sits within the king's gate: Very frequently when Mordecai is spoken of in the book of Esther this is how he is named. This was Mordecai's reputation – a Jewish man who was concerned with righteous counsel and judgment. Mordecai is consistent. He is loyal. He is unwavering.

Hurry, take the robe and the horse, as you have suggested, and do so for Mordecai the Jew who sits within the king's gate! Leave nothing undone of all that you have spoken: This is a commandment from the king and so could not be refused. At the risk of his own life, Haman was forced to do all of these things for Mordecai. Paying Mordecai this honour would have been emotionally torturous for Haman.

Verse 11: *“So Haman took the garment and the horse, and he clothed Mordecai and led him on horseback through the city square, and proclaimed before him, “Thus the king will do to the man in whom he delights greatly!”*

Note: This act of honouring Mordecai foreshadows the demise of Haman. Haman was not successful in getting Mordecai to the gallows, instead he had to pay him honour and respect. Mordecai, faithful to God, lived a life of submission and sacrifice. As a result, God exalted him (Matthew 23:12). Mordecai’s obedience to God and his being exalted says a lot about Mordecai, but it also says something about God - God defends His faithful ones (Psalm 94:21-23).

Verse 12: *“Afterward Mordecai went back to the king’s gate. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with his head covered.”*

Afterward Mordecai went back to the king’s gate: All of the attention, accolades and honour did not change Mordecai. He went right back to doing what God had called him to do, in the place where God had called him to be! Similarly, we should not allow the applause of the world to change us, but we need to be faithful to be found doing what God has called us to do.

Hurried: He did this in an urgent manner

Mourning: This was as grievous to Haman as if someone had died.

His head covered: This conveys shame. Haman did not want to show his face to the public after the public humiliation that he had just had to endure.

Note: Haman and the king were at a stage in agreement with one another. Here, however, we see a fracture. Haman did not agree with this command of the king that he had had to endure. The king is thinking in one way and Haman is thinking in another. Prayer and fasting, submission, obedience and sacrifice changed up things in the spiritual realm – which then affected the physical realm.

Verse 13: *“Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends and all whom he called everything that had happened to him, his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, “If from the seed of the Jews Mordecai is, whom you have begun to fall before him, you will not be able to prevail against him but will utterly fall before him.”*

His friends...his wise men: The friends are identified in a different way. Anytime there is a change in language we need to see it as having great significance or importance. It is a clue within the Biblical text that we would be wise to pay attention to.

Wise men: Wise men are men who know something. Surprisingly, they do respond with wisdom in their reply to Haman.

“If from the seed of the Jews Mordecai is, whom you have begun to fall before him, you will not be able to prevail against him but will utterly fall before him.”: These words are prophetic. These wise men are speaking about a future defeat of Haman (and of the final antichrist) because the remnant of the Jewish people, through Yeshua the Messiah, are going to be victorious in the last days. There is a future day of victory for Israel against her enemies.

Verse 14: *“While they were still talking with him, the king’s eunuchs came, and hastened to bring Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared.”*

While they were still talking with him: Haman did not have time to properly digest what his wise men and wife were telling him.

The banquet: This is the second banquet of Queen Esther. This was to be the banquet where Esther had promised to reveal her petition and her request before the king and Haman.

Chapter 7

Sometimes as things (God’s appointed times in our lives) are happening, we can see and immediately understand the significance of them. Sometimes we only see the significance in retrospect. We need to be prepared for God to work in our lives. Oftentimes it is our preparation, expectation or faith that allows God to move in a mighty way in our lives.

Verse 1: *“So the king and Haman went to drink with Queen Esther.”*

Went to drink with Queen Esther: The primary purpose of a banquet is to share fellowship and to build relationships. Esther’s banquet had an additional purpose.

Verse 2: *“And on the second day, at the banquet of wine, the king again said to Esther, “What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request, up to half the kingdom? It shall be done!”*

Banquet of wine: Wine can speak of love, happiness and joy.

It shall be granted you: These words from the king would have taken a lot of pressure off Esther. The king was inclined to give her what she desired.

Up to half the kingdom? It shall be done: The king wanted to make Esther happy. However, Esther’s motivation for these banquets was not joyful. She requested to have these banquets from a place of sorrow and grief - out of the fact that there was a plot underfoot to exterminate the Jewish people.

Up to half the kingdom: The king does not want to injure his kingdom. He has a responsibility that goes beyond himself and his queen. These words, however, show that he was very favorable towards her. He expects her request to be something big, something highly significant.

Verse 3: *“Then Queen Esther answered and said, “If I have found favour in your eyes, O king, and if concerning the king it is good, that it should be given to me my life as my petition, and my people as my request.”*

If I have found favour ...if...it is good: She is coming before the king in a very humble and submissive manner.

If...it is good: If it is something that he can agree is best for his kingdom.

My life as my petition, and my people as my request: Esther is asking for herself and for her people (the Jewish people) not to be exterminated.

Note: It had not even entered the mind of the king that Haman's plot would impact his own life so personally. Haman did not care about the implications of his plot or about who would be impacted. This is a Biblical principle: When we are being manipulated by the enemy we usually do not think through the implications. Usually, we will only think about how pleasing it would be for ourselves. We do not care if the decisions we make, and the consequences of those decisions, impacts or affects others in a negative way. This kind of attitude shows a lack of love for others. Loving God and loving others are foundational Biblical principles.

Verse 4: *"For we have been sold, my people and I, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. Had we been sold as servants and maidservants, I would have been silent, although the enemy could never compensate for the king's loss."*

Had we been sold as servants and maidservants, I would have been silent: This again shows Esther's humility, submissiveness and desire to be faithful and loyal to the king. Esther was not unmindful of the king. She did not only think of herself. She had thought this through from his perspective as well. She would not have imposed on the king for something which was minor in comparison to extermination.

The enemy could never compensate for the king's loss: This plan that Haman had set into motion was going to have a huge impact (physically, financially, emotionally, spiritually, etc) on the Persian empire. This empire would have taken a major hit if the workers within it had been killed – a hit that this kingdom would possibly have never recovered from.

Note: This could also be understood in this way (especially according to an end day's perspective): there has to be a change in Israel's spiritual condition for the Kingdom of God to be established (Matthew 23). If all the Jewish people were exterminated it would cause serious damage in this world because there would not be any hope of redemption, any hope of God's plan being fulfilled.

Verse 5: *"So King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, "Who is this one, and what is he, who would fill his heart to do such a thing?"*

What is he: Meaning: What type of person would do this? The king understands that there is something different about this person (Haman) that he would devise such a disastrous plan against his kingdom.

Fill his heart: There is a problem in Haman's heart. He had a deceitful and wicked heart and had purposefully chosen to allow it to be left in that state. All of us are born with wicked and deceitful hearts (Jeremiah 17:9-10). The only solution for our hearts is to plant, by faith, the Word and truth of God in it (Galatians 5:22-23). Biblically the heart is associated with our thought processes (Proverbs 23:7).

We need to think according to the truth (revelation) of God. If we do not, we will be easily deceived and manipulated by the enemy – used as an instrument in his hands.

Verse 6: *"And Esther said, "The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman!" So Haman was terrified before the king and queen."*

Adversary and enemy: These words are synonyms - words that mean almost the same thing. This double use of almost the same word shows how despicable Haman is – double trouble. *Wicked:* Evil. Haman was against the will or purposes of God. We need to be people who seek God's (good) will and not our own (evil) wills. When we are serious about the will of

God and when we, with a long-term commitment, begin to apply His Word to our lives (consistent obedience), the Holy Spirit will lead us into what the will of God for our lives is (the calling He has for us). A call of God is usually received out of a place of faith and obedience – not out of a place of emptiness.

Haman was terrified: Haman's plans and own desires were exposed for the sin that they were. If we do not have a relationship with the living God (if we are unregenerated or unsaved), being exposed for who we are is a fearful thing.

The king and queen: We do not see such an expression of unity between the king and the queen elsewhere in this book of Esther. What we see here is a coming together, an intimacy and unity of thought and purpose, between Esther and Ahasuerus. This unity is brought about because the king is going to agree with the will of God (Esther has always agreed with the will of God). This is another Biblical principle: when a husband and wife both submit to the will of God it produces intimacy, togetherness, in their marriage and in their relationship. Haman understands that the king and the queen are united, and it terrifies him as he knows that their agreement will lead to his demise.

Verse 7: *"Then the king arose in his wrath from the banquet of wine and went into the garden of the palace; but Haman stood to seek his life before Queen Esther, for he saw that evil was determined against him by the king."*

Wrath: Hot anger.

Haman stood: Haman is in a position where he is going down - like his wife and friends prophesied (Esther 6:13).

Haman stood to seek his life before Queen Esther: Esther sought her life from the king, now Haman is seeking his life from Esther. He knows the king and he knows that this is not going to end well for him.

Evil was determined against him: God's will is going to take place in Haman's life, but what God sees as good Haman interprets as 'evil' (woe to those who call good evil – Isaiah 5:20). Haman did not see things from God's perspective. He was unable to discern what God was up to.

Verse 8: *"When the king returned from the palace garden to the place of the banquet of wine, Haman was falling across the couch where Esther was. Then the king said, 'Will he also conquer the queen while I am in the house?' As the word left the king's mouth, the face of Haman was covered."*

Haman was falling: Esther 6:13. This is written in the present tense. This is a textual clue which is used infrequently in the Hebrew Bible so it reminds us to pay attention as what is to be said is highly significant.

Across the couch where Esther was: This was improper and highly disrespectful to the king. It was seen as a violation.

Conquer the queen while I am in the house: Haman's plan would have brought great shame to the king. And now the king is accusing Haman of also attempting to shame the queen. In the king's eyes Haman is adding insult to injury.

Note: If Haman had achieved his goal to be king the queen would have belonged to him. Haman had wanted the king's robes, his horse, his crown and is now being accused of also wanting his woman. Haman desired to shame, abuse and discredit the king, but Esther (as her husband's helper) helped the king to see the truth before his own eyes.

The face of Haman was covered: In Hebrew the word for 'face' is always written in the plural – whether it is referring to one face or to many faces. This, therefore, does not speak about others covering Haman's face. This is an idiom that speaks of Haman being brought to a place of shame.

Verse 9: *"Now Harbonah, one of the eunuchs, said to the king, "Behold now! The gallows, fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai, who spoke good on the king's behalf, is standing at the house of Haman." Then the king said, "Hang him on it!"*

Behold now!: These words are written in an exclamatory way – as if Harbonah is emphatically shouting this out.

Fifty: A number that reminds us of the jubilee – liberty and freedom.

The gallows...which Haman made for Mordecai: This shows us that when Haman was in the courtyard, he was already telling people what he was going to do - why he was there, why he came in the middle of the night to wait for the courtroom doors to open etc.

Who spoke good on the king's behalf: Mordecai was not a threat to the king. Mordecai acted in a way to save the king's life.

Hang him on it: The book of Esther is moving into a different phase – that of judgment. Judgment brings about a glorious change for the people of God. It is only after judgment that the Kingdom of God will be established. Judgment puts the Persian kingdom into a much better situation than it would have been in if Haman's plot had succeeded.

Verse 10: *"So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king's wrath subsided."*

They hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai: The gallows that Haman built were the instrument used for his own destruction (Live by the sword, die by the sword – Matthew 26:52). When we live in a way to accomplish our own wills then our own wills will be the source of our judgment. Our own will will condemn us and bring us shame, defeat and ultimately death.

The king's wrath subsided: After the king's wrath against Vashti had subsided a great change occurred in his kingdom. We are going to see that after the king's wrath subsides now another change is going to happen in this kingdom. It is important to note that judgment destroys that which is against God's will so that the purposes of God can be manifested and so that change can be brought about. Judgment is not a bad thing for the people of God. Judgment brings about vindication for His people!

Chapter 8

Part 1: Esther 8:1-8

Judgment comes from God. Judgment only has a positive outcome - destroying evil and putting things into Godly order. Judgment brings about vindication for the people of God. Sometimes it is appropriate for us to pray for God's judgment. God's judgment was poured out on rebellious and unrepentant Haman. The hanging of Haman was not only a symbol of judgment, but it was also a symbol of shame.

Verse 1: *"On that day King Ahasuerus gave Queen Esther the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had told how he was related to her."*

On that day: A phrase that refers to Judgment Day – in this case it is referring to Haman's day of judgment. God was going to use His judgment against Haman to manifest Himself by beginning to put things into His order, this, ultimately, ending in the vindication of His people.

Gave Queen Esther the house of Haman: Esther received all of Haman's possessions, all of his wealth. This made Queen Esther an extremely wealthy woman. Part of Haman's judgment was a Godly redistribution of his wealth and possessions. These things did not go to Haman's heirs. A time is coming when all the wealth of this world is going to be taken away from the wicked and given to God's faithful followers (the meek – those who trust God and who do not take matters into their own hands, but who submit to the will and ways of God - will inherit – Matthew 5:5).

He was related to her: Mordecai was her uncle.

Verse 2: *"So the king took off his signet ring, which he had removed from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai; and Esther appointed Mordecai over the house of Haman."*

Signet ring: This ring was a physical representation of the king's authority.

Gave it to Mordecai: Mordecai knew the Word and instructions of God. He was a faithful individual and was a blessing to the king. The king recognised this.

Esther appointed Mordecai over the house of Haman: Mordecai, because he put God first, had been hated by Haman. Now Mordecai was in charge of all that Haman had owned.

Verse 3: *"Now Esther spoke again to the king, fell down at his feet, and wept and begged him to remove the wickedness of Haman the Agagite, and his thoughts which he had thought against the Jews."*

Note: Esther and Mordecai were not about their own comfort, wealth and gaining of authority. Their financial gains did not blind them and cause them to forget about the plight of their fellow Jews. Mordecai and Esther were seeking justification for their brethren. There are two aspects of justification – the justification we receive when our sins are forgiven (this is not the justification being referred to here), or the justification/righting of things back into the order/plans/purposes of God. A justice within the society – against the attack of the enemy - needed to be brought about.

Spoke again: Esther is continuing to give revelation to the king.

Fell down at his feet: Esther speaks to the king in a very humble and submissive way.

Note: Although Haman had been put to death, the edict to put all the Jews to death was still in force and needed to be dealt with.

Verse 4: *“And the king held out the golden scepter toward Esther. So, Esther arose and stood before the king.”*

The king held out the golden scepter toward Esther: This was a sign of the king’s grace and favour toward Esther.

Verse 5: *“And she said, “If concerning the king it is good, and if I have found favour in his sight and the thing seems right to the king and I am pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to annihilate the Jews who are in all the king’s provinces.”*

Note: This is the second time that Esther is making a petition to the king. Esther is representing the people of Israel, the Jews. Esther wanted to be a force for good. She wanted to behave in a way that was a blessing, in a way that the will of God would be fulfilled through her – to her husband and to those around her (within the king’s empire).

If I have found favor: Esther wanted to use the favour, that she had found in the sight of the king, for good

Right: Kosher – that which is fitting or appropriate.

I am pleasing in his eyes: A wife is to be a help mate to her husband. Esther was good for the king. She was a blessing to him as she helped him to carry out God’s will.

Revoke: To cause to come back. Esther wanted things to be restored back to God’s will – to how things were before Haman’s edict went out. Although God is Sovereign not everything that happens is God’s will (sin is not God’s will). It was not God’s will for the Jews to be annihilated. Like sin, Haman’s edict was an attack on God’s order and plan. God moved, in this circumstance, to bring about a restoration (Israel’s survival), because Esther and Mordecai (etc) were submitted to God and were concerned that His will be done (Matthew 6:10).

Verse 6: *“For how am I able and how can I look on the evil that will come to my people? Or how can I endure to see the destruction of my countrymen?”*

Evil: That which is against the will of God. The death sentence upon the Jewish people was not a part of God’s will.

Countrymen: Kindred. Those who had the same heritage (birthright or call) as Esther. As children of Abraham, the Jewish people are a covenant people. They have a call from God to be used as instruments to bless the Gentiles (Genesis 12:3).

Verse 7: *“Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew, “Behold, the house of Haman has been given to Esther, and they have hanged him on the gallows because he tried to lay his hand on the Jews.”*

Mordecai the Jew: Mordecai is very regularly called this name. The purpose is not only to reveal his identity, but it is to remind us, the reader, that Moedecai was a man who was committed to the purpose, heritage or birthright that God had given to the Jewish people (to be a blessing to the Gentiles – Mordecai, committed to the instructions/commandments of God, was a blessing in this Persian empire).

Behold: A word that reminds us to pay attention.

Hanged him: Death by hanging brought shame on a person.

Note: The king's words (whether the king realised it or not) reveal to us that God is at work. God placed judgment on both Haman's wealth and life because Haman used both for the wrong purposes. God had begun a good work in the Persian empire. When God begins a good work, we know that He is faithful to bring it to a conclusion (Philippians 1:6).

Verse 8: *"You both write a decree concerning the Jews, as is good in your eyes, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's signet ring; for whatever is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's signet ring no one can revoke."*

You both: Referring to Esther and Mordecai. It is very significant that we see the king recognising Esther and Mordecai together in this. These two do not have a relationship similar to the king and queen's relationship, but their relationship is based on the fact that they are part of God's covenant people - they share in the same call.

Good: According to the will of God.

In the king's name: What they write will be backed up by the authority of the king.

No one can revoke: According to the law of the Medes and Persians, once the king gave a decree it could not be removed. Haman had already given an edict in the king's name. Now the king required Esther and Mordecai to give a conflicting edict which would stand in opposition to the first edict. This second edict could not erase the first edict, but it could, in a sense, go a long way in rendering it nul and void. The people in the provinces would then have a choice to make between which edict they would choose to obey – the first one being evil, the second being good. Every single person (through their conscience, which God has given as a gift to everyone who has ever lived) had the opportunity and the ability to make the right decision. [Our consciences (before we enter into a covenantal relationship with Messiah, ie when we are still sinners), although not perfect, can work well enough to give us a degree of understanding and discernment (hence the ability to choose to enter into a relationship with Messiah before we are regenerated)].

This ability to choose sides (the side of Messiah or the side of the antichrist) will be a very important decision, with very obvious consequences, that every person will be faced with in the last days. Every person who is alive at that time is going to have to make a decision as to whether they will side with the people of God or with the wicked edict of the antichrist (Revelation 13:15-17).

Chapter 8

Part 2: Esther 8:9-17

True believers (those who are in a relationship with God, based on a covenant) are always committed to the Kingdom of God. This, however, is not going to bring about that final change that we all desire. Ultimately this world is not going to be transformed by the body

of believers, it is going to be transformed by the judgment of God. God's judgment will destroy His enemy and it will usher in the establishment of His Kingdom.

Verse 9: *"So the king's scribes were called at that time, in the third month, which is the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third; and it was written, according to all that Mordecai commanded, to the Jews, the satraps, the governors, and the princes of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, one hundred and twenty-seven provinces in all, to every province in its own script, to every people in their own language, and to the Jews in their own script and language."*

At that time: The phrase used here usually speaks about a time of significance - normally a time of significance that is going to produce that which is good (a blessing) for God's people. *Third:* Biblically the number 3 relates to revealing something – a revelation. What is revealed in this chapter is a paradigm for better understanding what is going to happen in the last days.

The month of Sivan: After redemption (the Passover – which happened in the first month) the children of Israel went into the wilderness. In the third month they arrived at Mt Sinai (Exodus 19:1). It was at Mt Sinai that God instructed the people to make themselves ready, and it was there that God met with the people and gave them the 10 commandments (Exodus 19 and 20).

Twenty-third: In Biblical numbers the number '2' (20, 200, 2000, etc) speaks about two different opinions. The number '3' speaks of revelation. Two different opinions are being revealed in this text – Haman's opinion/edict (Haman is a typology for the antichrist) and Mordecai's opinion/edict (Mordecai, as will be seen, is a typology of Messiah). These two opinions/edicts are in opposition to each other. Both hold weight legally. One edict said to destroy the Jews. The other edict told the Jews to destroy their enemies. Each person had to make their own decision as to what edict they were going to embrace. This is very theologically important. Do we embrace the lies of satan, or do we embrace the truth of Messiah?

To the Jews: This word was given first to the Jews (Romans 1:16).

Satraps: Supreme leaders in each province.

From India to Ethiopia: Esther 1:1. This refers to a very large group of people – people of many different nationalities, cultures, languages and ethnic backgrounds.

Verse 10: *"And he wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus, sealed it with the king's signet ring and sent letters by couriers on horseback, riding on royal horses bred from swift steeds."*

Verse 11: *"By these letters the king permitted the Jews who were in every city to gather together and protect their lives – to destroy, kill and annihilate all the forces of any people or province that would assault them, both little children and women, and to plunder their possessions."*

Verse 12: *"On one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar."*

On one day: Many phrases, like this one, repeat themselves throughout the Biblical text. These phrases are used in sometimes very unique and important contexts. The number

'one' is a number that oftentimes relates to God – who is one (Deuteronomy 6:4, Zechariah 14:9). This phrase is referring to the day of God. This same expression is found in Zechariah 14. In Zechariah it is used to speak about the uniqueness of the Kingdom of God. A day is coming which is a unique day. It is a day when a unique light is going to characterize the establishment of the Kingdom of God. In this context this phrase gives this verse and text Kingdom context.

Thirteenth: $12 + 1 = 13$. 12 is a number that refers to the people/kingdom of God, 1 is a number alluding to God. 13 is a number that alludes to the unity between God and His people.

Twelfth: 12 is a number used to describe the Kingdom of God and its inhabitants (12 gates, twelve angels, 12 tribes, 12 foundations, 12 apostles etc – Revelation 21 and 22).

Adar: A word tht can mean something that is special, something that is glorious in a unique way.

Verse 13: *"A copy of the document was to be issued as a law in every province and published to all people, so that the Jews would be ready on that day to avenge themselves on their enemies."*

Published: The word used here is a word meaning that it was revealed. This law was given to the people in a manner of revelation. They could see it, read it and had knowledge of what it said (no man had any excuse that they did not know – Romans 1:20).

Would be ready on that day: This has a future connotation. The Jews needed to ready themselves for a day, yet future, when they would be vindicated from their enemies.

Avenge: This is also a word that can be translated 'vindicate'. Vengeance belongs to the Lord (Romans 12:19). On that day God (was) is going to bring His vengeance upon the enemies of the Jewish people. This teaches us a principle: God is on Israel's side. He works to defend His people. Because God is on Israel's side, we should be on her side too. Those who work against Israel will find themselves ultimately working against God.

Verse 14: *"Then the couriers who rode on royal horses went out, hurriedly and urgently with the word of the king. And the law was issued in Shushan the capital."*

Hurriedly and urgently: This shows us how important and urgent this command was for the people – both Jew and Gentile.

Verse 15: *"So Mordecai went forth from the presence of the king dressed in royal apparel of blue and white, with a large crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple; and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad."*

Note: The king (the supreme authority) is now, within this context, a kind of paradigm for God the Father, Mordecai – the ruler who had the signet ring as a token of the authority that he had been given by the king – is a a type of paradigm for Messiah Yeshua (Matthew 28:18, Ephesians 1:20-23).

Blue: This colour reminds us of the heavens. Mordecai displayed a Kingdom character – the things of the Kingdom of Heaven.

White: The colour of purity. Mordecai was a picture to others of the purity of the will of God.

Purple: The colour of royalty. Mordecai was the picture of the rule of God.

The city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad: When Haman's edict went out this city was confused and embarrassed (Esther 3:15). The city had a very different response when Mordecai's edict went out.

Note: In this verse we see that Mordecai received all that Haman had desired – the royal robe, the crown, the rulership (see Esther 6:7-9). Haman did not receive the desire of his heart. God hindered him from receiving it. In the same way, God is going to hinder everything that the antichrist wants. The true leadership is going to be given to the true Messiah – not to the antichrist. When this happens, there is going to be joy in Jerusalem – the capital city of the Kingdom of God (Shushan is a paradigm for Jerusalem).

Verse 16: *"The Jews had light and gladness, joy and honour."*

Light: Revelation (Zechariah 14:7). Most scholars see this light as a representation of the glory of God. When God's glory is manifested, it is going to bring about joy, gladness and honour for the Lord's people.

Verse 17: *"And in every province and city, wherever the king's command and law came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a banquet and a holiday. Then many of the people of the land became Jews, because fear of the Jews fell upon them."*

Joy and gladness: Through judgment (the hanging of Haman and a counter edict) God's people were vindicated. They were joyful because Mordecai the Jew was ruling for the king – in the same way that Yeshua the Messiah is going to rule for His Father. When Yeshua rules there is going to be great joy and gladness in the land.

Holiday: A good day. An appointed day.

Many: A word that alludes to a majority.

Land: Can also be translated 'earth'.

Became Jews: The word 'Jew' is taken from the word 'Judah' which means to praise the Lord. The majority of the people became those who thanked and praised God because of what He had done – i.e. the Gentiles in this land became like the Jewish people. They recognised and praised the only true God. This is a very important conclusion, and it foreshadows (is a typology of) what is going to happen in the last days (see Zechariah 8:23).

Fear of the Jews fell upon them: The majority of the people in Shushan saw how the Lord moved on behalf of the Jewish people, and they responded to Him in a positive way (unlike the people in Jericho – Joshua 2:9-11 – where only a minority responded to the fear of the Lord). In the last days the people are going to respond to the Lord.

Chapter 9

Part 1: Esther 9:1-14

Knowing that God is going to deliver His people and give them victory should encourage us. One of His promises to His people is that He will never leave us or forsake us (Deuteronomy 31:8). No matter how great our enemy, no matter how bad things might seem from a human perspective, we know that God's provision of salvation will ultimately be ours. Our

hope is not in a physical deliverance, but a deliverance for our souls – whereby we will overcome the plots, strategy and attacks of the enemy and we will enter, victoriously, into the Kingdom of God. Victory is a reality for those who are in a covenantal relationship with God!

Verse 1: *“Now in the twelfth month, that is, the month of Adar, on the thirteenth day, the time came for the king’s command and his decree to be executed. On the day that the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, the opposite occurred, in that the Jews themselves overpowered those who hated them.”*

Twelfth month: Repetition shows emphasis. The number 12 relates to the people of God. God is moving on behalf of His people because of His covenantal commitment to them. We cannot speak too boldly about the benefits of being in a (new) covenantal relationship with God. In the last days, only those who are in a new covenant relationship with Him (those who have accepted Yeshua as their Messiah) are going to experience deliverance. Yeshua’s second coming is for three primary reasons: firstly, to deliver Israel. Secondly, to defeat the enemies of Israel, and thirdly to establish His Kingdom. The body of believers (those who entered into that new covenant and who were a part of the ‘blessed hope’/rapture) are going to be coming back to earth with Him for these purposes (Revelation 19:14, Revelation 20:4-6).

The time came: The day arrived when the people were either for Haman’s edict or for Mordecai’s edict.

The opposite occurred: Haman’s edict did not have its desired effect. His edict came to nothing. This is what is going to ultimately happen to the antichrist’s edict in the last days.

The Jews themselves overpowered those who hated them: Their enemies were conquered and were ruled over by the people of God. In the millennial Kingdom the believers are going to rule and reign with Messiah – when His Kingdom is established on earth.

Verse 2: *“The Jews gathered together in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to stretch forth their hands against those who sought their evil. And no one could withstand them, because fear of them fell upon all people.”*

Those who sought their evil: In that day there were those who were seeking the evil of the Jewish people. This means that they did not want God’s will for the Jewish people. God’s will for the Jewish people is that they will come to faith in their Saviour. The enemies of God (who are against the establishment of His Kingdom) are going to be against this spiritual change in the Jewish people. Satan knows that in order for the Kingdom of God to be established on earth, the Jewish people need to undergo a spiritual change so that they are able to cry: ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord’ (Matthew 23:37-39). Yeshua promised that the Jewish people will not see Him again until this cry becomes a reality. Satan will try to thwart this plan of God because he knows it will be an indication of his defeat.

No one could withstand them: They were not successful in their objective to stand against the Jewish people.

Fear of them fell upon all people: This has nothing to do with the fear of the Lord or of giving Him priority. This fear does not change the enemy or his desire, but it does paralyze him (just like the people in Jericho feared to the point of paralysis). God is going to paralyze His enemy with fear and they're not going to be able to move to carry out their objectives.

Verse 3: *“And all the officials of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and all those doing the king’s work, helped the Jews, because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them.”*

The fear of Mordecai fell upon them: Mordecai is a typology for the real Messiah. In the last days those who are in authority are going to come to a realization that God's plan for the Jewish people is to deliver them, save them and bring them to a spiritual reality that focuses on their Saviour – Messiah Yeshua. At that time, a remnant is going to see the might and sovereignty of God and they are going to repent and be changed.

Note: In the last days Yeshua is going to bring victory to a remnant of the Jewish people. A remnant is going to acknowledge Yeshua and they are going to be transformed by the faithfulness of God. At the same time, a remnant of the Gentiles is going to be moved by Messiah's faithfulness to carry out God's covenantal obligations to Israel. When they see the authority and power of Messiah, they are going to fear Him and they're going to be changed.

Verse 4: *“For Mordecai was great in the king’s house, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces; for this man Mordecai became increasingly prominent.”*

The king’s house: The word used here is not a word that only refers to the king’s palace. It is a word that alludes to his empire. Mordecai was acknowledged as great within the empire. He had a position of prominence. This is exactly what we can expect when Yeshua the Messiah becomes the ruler of the Kingdom that He is going to establish on this earth.

Fame: Reputation.

Mordecai became increasingly prominent: This parallels Messiah coming forth in the last day. People are going to acknowledge His greatness and His authority.

Verse 5: *“Thus the Jews defeated all their enemies with the strike of the sword, with slaughter and destruction, and did what they desired with those who hated them.”*

Note: This verse speaks about judgment.

The strike of the sword: This usually refers to a death blow.

Did what they desired with those who hated them: The Jews’ desire was to destroy their enemies – and this is what they did.

Verse 6: *“And in Shushan the capital the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men.”*

The capital: The word used here is not the word for ‘citadel’. It is a word used for the capital city of an empire or of a country.

Five hundred: 50 x 10. 50 is the Biblical number associated with jubilee, freedom and liberty. 10 is a number associated with entirety, a fullness, a completion. This number 500 alludes to the fact that full and complete liberty, deliverance in its entirety, would be brought about.

Verse 7: *“Also Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha,”*

Verse 8: *“Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha,”*

Verse 9: *“Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vajezatha—”*

Note: Esther 9:7-9 names the 10 sons of Haman. Judgment came to the house of Haman and affected his sons – the next generation.

Verse 10: *“the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews—they killed; but they did not lay a hand on the plunder.”*

The ten sons of Haman ...they killed: This (complete and full) judgment upon Haman’s offspring shows that there’s not going to be any future for Haman – there was no continuation of his bloodline.

They did not lay a hand on the plunder: Haman’s sons were not killed for financial profit or gain. No spoils of victory were taken from them.

Verse 11: *“On that day the number of those who were killed in Shushan the capital was brought to the king.”*

On that day: A phrase that relates to judgment. This sets the text within the context of judgment day, and it teaches us about the ultimate (final) judgment day at the end of this age.

Brought to the king: Oftentimes a report to the king was for the purpose of honouring him, a way of acknowledging before him that his will was carried out.

Verse 12: *“And the king said to Queen Esther, “The Jews have killed and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the capital, and the ten sons of Haman. What has been done in the rest of the king’s provinces? Now what is your petition? It shall be granted to you. Or what is your further request? It shall be done.”*

Shushan the capital: Many of the Rabbinical scholars see Shushan as a parallel to Jerusalem. In the future there is going to be a victory in Jerusalem (like there was in Shushan). As Jerusalem goes so goes the rest of creation. Jerusalem is foundational for the purposes of God. The gospel was first delivered in Jerusalem before it went out to the ends of the earth.
And the ten sons of Haman: The destruction of the heritage of Haman is emphasised. This parallels the destruction of those who will be with the antichrist.

Verse 13: *“Then Esther said, “If it is good to the king, let it be granted to the Jews who are in Shushan to do again tomorrow according to today’s decree, and let Haman’s ten sons be hanged on the gallows.”*

If it is good to the king: Esther was concerned about the will of the king. She wanted what was good for him, something that would be for the best outcome of his empire.

Do again tomorrow according to today's decree: Esther asked for a double portion of destruction. She wanted the fullest outcome of destruction for the enemies of the Jews. This ongoing destruction parallels the ongoing punishment that is going to happen to those who do not have a covenantal relationship with God, those who did not follow the Word of God but were submissive to the deceit and falsehood of the antichrist.

Let Haman's ten sons be hanged on the gallows: Haman's ten sons were already dead. Hanging them on the gallows was to symbolise their shame in a very public way.

Verse 14: *"So the king commanded this to be done; the law was issued in Shushan, and they hanged Haman's ten sons."*

Note: What is so important here is that the king is agreeing with Esther. Esther has taken a prominent role. Whenever a woman is exalted within the Biblical text what should come to mind is redemption. Through redemption God is putting things in this kingdom into order. Redemption brings about change, and that change is always about establishing the order of God in a given situation. When we have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb (through faith in Messiah Yeshua) the outcome is not only salvation or the forgiveness of our sins. There is another aspect to redemption - through Messiah's redeeming work in our lives, God's order begins to be manifested in our lives. Faith matures into obedience, and that obedience begins to manifest God's will in our lives – putting things into Godly order. When our lives are lived according to the order and will of God, we are going to experience peace, joy and contentment – no matter what situation we find ourselves in.

Chapter 9

Part 2: Esther 9:15-28

Vindication is an important word. It is related to judgment and justice. When Yeshua comes again, He is going to vindicate His people and is going to establish His Kingdom.

Verse 15: *"And the Jews who were in Shushan gathered together again on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and killed three hundred men at Shushan; but they did not lay a hand on the plunder."*

Gathered together again...and killed: Esther secured this opportunity for the Jews to defend themselves for another day, to bring about the full measure of God's judgment against their enemies.

Killed three hundred men: On the 13th of Adar, they killed 500 men. On the 14th of Adar, they killed an extra 300 men (800 men in total). Numbers are not casually written down in the Scripture. They are given to us as part of God's revelation, as God's desire to teach us something. The number 8 (80, 800, 8000, etc) has significance. In the Bible it is a number that speaks of new beginnings.

They did not lay a hand on the plunder: None of the Jewish people wanted to profit materially or financially from this victory. One of the incentives that Haman had given to those who followed his edict was that they could take plunder (possessions, material wealth) from the Jewish people (Esther 3:13). However, it has been emphasized over and over that the Jewish people did not kill their enemies for the purpose of plundering them. Most scholars see this as a reminder that when the children of Israel took the land of Canaan, they were called to dedicate everything unto the Lord. This means that all the wealth of the nations was not to be used by the children of Israel, but it was to be completely destroyed – the plunder was to be totally devoted to the Lord (Deuteronomy 7:1-6). God was teaching the people to have a spiritual desire (purity, devoted to God, etc) rather than a material desire.

Verse 16: *“The rest of the Jews in the king’s provinces stood together and protected their lives, had rest from their enemies, and killed seventy-five thousand of their enemies; but they did not lay a hand on the plunder.”*

Rest: This is a word that is connected to the Sabbath day. The Bible does not emphasise the Sabbath Day as a day of worship, but it does emphasise that it is a day of rest/relief. It is wrong for us to link worship as unique to the Sabbath day (i.e. the “day of worship”). We need to worship God everyday. The concept of the Sabbath should cause us to think about the Kingdom (it is a foretaste, each week, of what we are going to experience in God’s Kingdom).

Seventy-five: This is another very significant number in the Bible (750, 7500, 75000, etc). Genesis 46:27 (which is based on the Masoretic text – completed around 700-1000AD) tells us that 70 people went to Egypt. Stephen (who would have based his Biblical information on the Septuagint/Dead Sea scrolls – completed 300BC-100AD, therefore more accurate than than the later Masoretic text) tells us in Acts 7:14 that 75 people went to Egypt. The genealogy of Messiah (Luke 3:23-38) lists 75 names between the name of Yeshua, and the name of God the Father. The purpose of the people going into Egypt was for the sake of redemption. The reason why Yeshua came to earth was for the sake of redemption. This number – 75 – relates to redemption. The number 75 is also alluded to in Revelation 12:6 (1260 + 75 = **1335 days**) and Daniel 12:11-12 [1260 from Revelation 12:6 + 30 days of mourning – see Zechariah 12:10-14 + 45 days = **1335 days**]. This period of time has to do with the final redemption of the Jewish people. The Jewish people are going to experience a new beginning through redemption. This is what this passage in Esther is alluding to here. In the last days there's going to be a defeat of the enemies of Israel. That defeat is going to bring about the redemption of Israel – they are going to recognise who their Redeemer is.

Verse 17: *“On the thirteenth day of the month of Adar there was rest. And on the fourteenth of the month, they made it a day of feasting and gladness.”*

Note: On the 13th day of Adar the people in the provinces fought and had victory. On the 14th Adar they thanked God and celebrated with feasting.

Verse 18: *“But the Jews who were at Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth day, as well as on the fourteenth; and on the fifteenth of the month they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.”*

Note: The people in Shushan (the capital city) behaved differently to the people in the provinces throughout the empire.

Verse 19: *“Therefore the Jews of the villages who dwelt in the unwalled towns celebrated the fourteenth day of the month of Adar with gladness and feasting, as a holiday, and for sending presents to one another.”*

Gladness...feasting...holiday...sending presents: A righteous type of worship – celebrating, praising God with eating, and also sending gifts to one another.

Feasting: Fasting brought about a change and led to a time of feasting, joy and gladness.

Bad was turned to good. A time of battle ended in a time of rest.

Sending presents to one another: Part of this celebration was to give gifts.

Verse 20: *“And Mordecai wrote these things and sent letters to all the Jews, near and far, who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus.”*

Mordecai wrote these things and sent letters: This became the practice for all Jewish communities from that time on. This edict, that Mordecai wrote down, has relevance for all Jewish people.

Verse 21: *“To establish among them that they should celebrate yearly the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar.”*

Note: People who lived in unwalled cities (Biblically and historically walls were around a city to provide safety to that city) were commanded (traditionally) to celebrate Purim (which is what this festival has come to be known as) on the 14th day of Adar.

Those who lived in walled cities celebrated Purim on the 15th day of Adar. This 15th day of Adar is called “Shushan Purim”.

Verse 22: *“as the days on which the Jews had rest from their enemies, as the month which was overturned from sorrow to joy for them, and from mourning to a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and joy, of sending gifts every man to his neighbour and gifts to the poor.”*

Overtaken from sorrow to joy: God is reminding us of the change He is able to bring about.

Sorrow: A word of suffering, exhaustion and pain.

Gifts to the poor: This was a time to remember those less fortunate.

Note: Today on the 13th day of Adar the Jewish communities around the world observe a fast called “the Fast of Esther”. Most places in the world then observe the festival of Purim on the 14th of Adar.

Verse 23: *“So the Jews accepted the custom which they had begun, as Mordecai had written to them.”*

The Jews accepted: They submitted to this. Submission is a big concept throughout the Scripture but is especially demonstrated in this book by Esther herself. Esther’s submissive nature positioned her in the king’s presence and gave her the favour to request help and to receive it. If we want to receive favour, we need to be a submissive people.

Verse 24: *“because Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to annihilate them, and had cast Pur (that is, the lot), to consume them and destroy them;”*

The enemy of all the Jews: Haman wasn't just an enemy of Mordecai; he was an enemy of the Jewish people. This spirit of Haman is going to manifest itself once more in the spirit of the antichrist (the term for ‘antichrist’ in the Hebrew is literally ‘enemy of the Messiah’). *Consume them:* This word is a word that has to do with causing chaos and an uproar. It is a word associated with confusion and with great noise.

Destroy them: A word for extermination.

Verse 25: *“but when she (Esther) came before the king, he commanded by letter that the evil thoughts which Haman had devised against the Jews should return on his own head, and they hung him and his sons on the gallows.”*

(Esther): Esther’s name does not appear in the text, but the text is written in the feminine, so it is implied that ‘she’ is referring to Esther.

Note: Sometimes the Bible withholds a person’s name as a way to dishonour the person. In Ruth 4 the unsandaled man is not named. This man is dishonoured, his name not worth mentioning (he is anonymous). Sometimes, however, as is the case here, the Bible withholds Esther’s name as a way of paying her honour. Esther’s name was so well known that she did not need to be named (e.g. when a famous person is introduced it is often said of them “She needs no introduction...”). This is what the Bible is teaching us here. Everyone knew who Esther was. She was so famous that she needed no introduction.

The evil thoughts...should return on his own head: God brought judgment upon Haman. God, in His Sovereignty, did not choose to destroy Haman in a vacuum. Judgment came upon Haman because of the choices that Haman had made, the thoughts that he had thought.

They hung him: Individuals (people) carried out God’s judgment upon Haman and his sons. Those who had been loyal to Haman and those who had bowed in his presence turned against him.

Verse 26: *“So they called these days Purim, after the name Pur. Therefore, because of all the words of this letter, what they had seen concerning this matter, and what had happened to them,”*

Purim, after the name Pur: A pur is a lot (lots were cast to help those who cast the lots to reach a decision). ‘Purim’ is the plural word for ‘lot’ – i.e. lots. God took the plans and thoughts of wicked Haman and turned them into the exact opposite. Our God can take the

thoughts and desires of the world and He, to bring about His will, can turn them into the desires of God.

Letter: This is the ancient Hebrew word for epistle. These documents, that were sent to all the provinces of the king, told of what Haman had thought of and planned and they also told about what, in reality, had happened. This was all written down as a testimony.

Verse 27: *“the Jews established and imposed it upon themselves and their descendants and all who would join them, that without fail they should celebrate these two days every year, according to the written instructions and according to the prescribed time,”*

Their descendants: Their offspring, their seed, their heritage.

All who would join them: This is referring to the Gentiles who, when seeing the faithfulness of God to deliver the Jewish people, wanted to attach themselves to the Jewish people. Those among the nations are not prohibited from joining the Jewish people in their celebrations (Isaiah 56:6-7).

Join: The root word of this word in Hebrew is the word for Levite. The Levites were the ones who assisted and served the priests. This is the same word being used in regard to the nations. Some in the nations would become like these Levites to the Jewish nation – assisting and serving them, committed to the plans and purposes God has for the Jewish nation.

Without fail they should celebrate: Every year, it was commanded, that these two days must be kept – by the Jewish people themselves, and by those who have joined with and become a part of Israel through faith – those who have been grafted in (Romans 9:6-8, Romans 11:26).

Verse 28: *“that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city, that these days of Purim should not fail to be observed among the Jews, and that the memory of them should not perish among their descendants.”*

Note: It has been important to celebrate this festival of victory and deliverance throughout the generations. Each generation has been reminded of the faithfulness of God to triumph over His enemies.

This is going to be particularly relevant for the generation of Jews who are going to be a part of the last generation alive before the second coming of Yeshua. The book of Esther gives us a glimpse and a perspective to understand what God is going to do in the last days. In the same way that God brought shame and death upon Haman, He is going to bring shame and death to the antichrist. Those who sided with the edict of Haman (those who will side with the edict of the antichrist) were destroyed. This is a promise from God concerning what He's done and what He's going to do for His people in the last days.

Chapter 9

Part 3: Esther 9:29-32

Under Mordecai's leadership, there was an opportunity for God to bless this nation and the inhabitants of this empire. When men and women (even if few in number) submit to God's truth, walk in His ways and speak His Word, Godly change happens.

Verse 29: *"Then Queen Esther, the daughter of Abihail, with Mordecai the Jew, wrote with full validity to confirm this second letter about Purim."*

Wrote: This verb is written in the third person singular feminine. Although Mordecai and Esther wrote this (under the authority of the king) the grammar only emphasises Queen Esther. Whenever a woman is emphasised or shown preference in a Biblical text, we need to remember that this is hinting at redemption. Ultimately, redemption brings a God-pleasing change into our lives – we become a new creation.

This second letter about Purim: This second letter went out to remind the people to celebrate Purim at the proper time.

Verse 30: *"And he sent letters to all the Jews, to the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth,"*

He: Mordecai's name is not in the original text, but it is implied. Esther sent a letter which had a different purpose to Mordecai's letter. Here we see unity and equality between Esther and Mordecai, but each had a different role and purpose. The principle we can learn: Men and women are equal in value but have different roles and purposes.

Peace: We only receive peace when God's will is being fulfilled in our lives.

Truth: We can only know God's will through His truth. Unless we know the truth of God, we cannot be peacemakers. It is only when we are submitted to understanding and submitting to the truth of God that we can be peacemakers – people who bring about a change which is pleasing to God, a change which manifests the fulfilment of His will.

Verse 31: *"to confirm these days of Purim in their time, as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had prescribed for them, and as they had decreed for themselves and their descendants' concerning matters of their fasting and lamenting."*

Confirm: These days of Purim had to be kept and carried out in a very specific way – according to specific instructions.

In their time: The word 'appointed' is not a word in the original, however it is understood that this time is appointed – it is not just time in a general sense but is speaking about a very specific time.

As they had decreed for themselves: Esther and Mordecai submitted themselves to properly carry out the decrees/laws surrounding Purim.

Fasting: Written in the plural.

Lamenting: Crying out.

Fasting and lamenting: Purim is not just a festival of feasting; it is also a festival accompanied by fasting. It is not only a festival of gladness, but also a festival accompanied by lamenting.

Note: This verse teaches us what God expects us to do during this observance of Purim.

Verse 32: *“So the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim, and it was written in the book.”*

These matters of Purim: Purim was not only a festival for the Jewish people. It was also a festival for the Gentiles who determined to join the Jewish community, to be like them. The revelation that God gave to the Jewish people has relevance for and brought a change upon many of the Gentiles in this empire.

Chapter 10

Verse 1: *“And King Ahasuerus imposed tribute on the land and on the islands of the sea.”*

Tribute: Taxation. This kingdom enjoyed a time of prosperity and blessing. Everyone participated in the paying of taxes. The people of the land had been blessed and the paying of taxes was an acknowledgment of the Godly and righteous leadership within the empire.

The land: The earth – over the 127 provinces that Ahasuerus ruled over (From India to Ethiopia).

The islands of the sea: This speaks of the outermost places of the earth. These are remote places which are sparsely populated. These places were far away from the capital, and because they were sparsely populated it didn't make sense for people to go and collect taxes from these individuals. However, a righteous change in this empire brought about blessing. Under the leadership of Mordecai and Esther this empire became very prosperous, and even though these islands were far away (requiring time, effort, money and resources to get there) it became worthwhile to collect taxes from these remote and sparsely populated places.

Verse 2: *“And every deed of his authority and his might, and the account of the greatness of Mordecai, to which the king promoted him, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?”*

Every deed of his authority and his might: This is referring to the king's ability (as done through Mordecai).

The account of the greatness of Mordecai: This Persian empire was blessed and prosperous because of the actions and authority of Mordecai over it (Godly leadership).

Book: Historical annals.

Written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia: These events were important enough to write down and they had significance and implications for all people – not for just the Jewish people, but for all people who fear God and who are in a covenantal relationship with Him.

Verse 3: *“For Mordecai the Jew was second to King Ahasuerus and was great among the Jews and well received by the majority of his brethren, seeking the good of his people and speaking peace to all his seed. ”*

Mordecai the Jew: Most of the time when Mordecai is mentioned in the book of Esther this is the name given to him – this was his identity. This serves to remind us that there is a

special relationship (a covenantal relationship) between the Jewish people and God. Mordecai is an example to us of how we are to respond in this covenant – we are to be Godly servants, not compromising but standing up and bearing witness, not afraid to lose our lives for our King of kings.

Great among the Jews: He was a great influence. Through his influence, his actions and his leadership he brought about great change for the Jewish people. This is what Messiah is going to do in the lives of those who believe in Him. God wants to build up His people. He wants to do great things through their lives. At the end of this age, and primarily in the millennial Kingdom, Yeshua is going to bring greatness for the Jewish people as they serve and lead in this world (believers – the raptured and glorified church - are going to be ruling and reigning with Messiah, overseeing Israel during this period of time – Revelation 3:26-27, Revelation 20:4-6), but those in Israel who come to faith in Messiah (post rapture) are going to be the leaders/influencers of the millennial kingdom in order to mediate blessing upon the Gentiles and to fulfil God's promise to Abraham – Genesis 12:3.

Received by the majority of his brethren: A minority of people rebelled against Mordecai and did not accept his leadership. This will be true of people in the millennial kingdom – there will be people in the millennial kingdom who rebel against the perfect rulership of Messiah and His saints – Revelation 20:7-8.

Seeking the good of his people and speaking peace to all his seed: This is what Yeshua will be seeking to do in the millennial kingdom.

Good: Good relates to the will of God. Yeshua is going to seek God's will for His people.

Speaking peace: Peace is the result/outcome of what we experience when we are in God's will. We can only have peace, in its fullest sense, when we are in God's will.

His people...his seed: When we believe in Yeshua we are brought into His family – we become, through faith, a part of the seed of Abraham (Galatians 3:29). As such, we are a people who are able to find God's will and live in its effect – eternal peace.