

The Book of Esther – Part Ten

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Adapted from John Herbert's Notes; Presented by Jeanne Alley

1). Esther 9:23

So the Jews accepted the custom which they had begun, as Mordecai had written to them, 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; 25 but when Esther came before the king, he commanded by letter that this wicked plot which Haman had devised against the Jews should return on his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.

a). The last few weeks we have been studying Haman at length, and seeing the picture he presents to us concerning the last days of the nation of Israel. We saw that Haman rose to the position of second-in-command within the kingdom of Ahasuerus –

Esther 3:1

After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him and set his seat above all the princes who were with him.

b). And within the historical context, Haman's elevation attributed to him the status of deity, as was typical within some pagan cultures. We read that Mordecai's refusal to worship him as a god (his behavior being indicative of the attitude of the entire Jewish nation), set Haman's hands against the Jews for the purpose of exterminating them –

Esther 3:5

When Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow or pay him homage, Haman was filled with wrath. 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

c). That is essentially the subject and the content of Esther Chapter 3.

2). What Haman didn't know at this point is that he had made a fatal mistake. Not knowing or understanding the promises that God had made to His people he was ignorant of the fact that his fate was already sealed. From Haman's perspective it didn't seem so, but from God's perspective it was already a done deal.

a). In the same way the outcome of the second world war was already determined before it began. Now this in no way minimizes the enormous sacrifices that were made in the winning of it – but from the moment the Third Reich set its hand against the Jewish people, the ‘final solution’ would return on its own head – they had sown the wind and would now reap the whirlwind, because God will always act in complete accord with His Word.

b). God had said –

Genesis 12:3

I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you;

c). And -

2Chronicles 7:14

"...if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

d). These are promises that have played out time and time again within Jewish history in partial fulfillment – all pointing to and looking forward to the application of the promises in their fullness – that which still awaits the conclusion of the sixth day, in anticipation of the Seventh.

e). The Book of Judges is filled with such examples –

Judges 3:7

So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God, and served the Baals and Asherahs. 8 ¶ Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the children of Israel served Cushan-Rishathaim eight years. 9 When the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the children of Israel, who delivered them: Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.

f). What did Israel do? They did evil in the sight of the Lord, forgot the Lord their God, and served idols.

What was God’s reaction? His anger was hot against Israel and He sold them into the hand of their enemy.

What did the Gentile nation do? Became their master.

What did Israel do then? Cried out to the Lord.

How did God react? He sent a deliverer to them.

3). The Book of Esther does not deal with Israel's disobedience, per se, but rather it has Israel's *deliverance* as its focus. And although Esther is a great picture to show us the history of God's people, we still have to go to related scripture in order to see the picture in its entirety. This is how God has structured His word and it is incumbent upon us to study it after the fashion in which God has put it together. (This may not be the easiest thing to do, but it is the only thing to do.)

4). At the conclusion of Esther Chapter 3 we see the impending annihilation of the Jews set to take place on a single day -

Esther 3:13

And the letters were sent by couriers 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.

a). And as a consequence of this impending action, Chapters 4 and 5 deal with the actions of the Jews in anticipation of the coming event. Action that sees Mordecai in sackcloth and ashes and Esther appearing before the king.

b). Esther 4:1

When Mordecai learned all that had happened, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city. He cried out with a loud and bitter cry.....³ And in every province where the king's command and decree arrived, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

c). Esther 5:1

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. ² So it was, when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, that she found favor 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. 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!"

d). So then, the hand of a Gentile world power, in the person of Haman, has been raised against the Jewish people, automatically bringing that stated in Genesis 12:3 into play.

e). The Jewish people, in the persons of Mordecai and Esther, cry out to their God with repentance (this being implicit in the "sackcloth and ashes").

f). And this of course brings into effect that which God has said in 2 Chronicles 7:14.

g). Events with respect to God and His people are now in motion, but Haman is oblivious to the higher power, the power greater than Ahasuerus, that is in sovereign control of all things.

h). Perhaps we should pause here to say that the events we read about in Esther are real historical events, that involved real people – this is not a story. It is an indication of the awesomeness of God that He takes historical events, records them in His word and presents them there in a type/antitype structure to reveal to us, with absolute certainty, things that are yet to take place.

5). In the life of the actual character presented here, we find Haman perceiving himself to be at the very height of his power –

Esther 5:9

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. 10 Nevertheless Haman restrained himself and went home, and he sent and called for his friends and his wife Zeresh. 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. 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."

a). Yet despite the position that Haman holds within the kingdom, it is for him bittersweet because of Mordecai –

Esther 5:13

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

b). It is Mordecai, 'sitting at the king's gate' portending a position of rulership that is the real issue for Haman. And to deal with this specific problem, his wife Zeresh and all his friends have a proposal –

Esther 5:14

Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Let a gallows be made, fifty cubits high, 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.

c). And here is the very crux of the matter – God has from the very outset of scripture made clear that Man has been created to rule over the earth, and that this rulership would take place through one specific group of people – the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob and Jacob's twelve sons. As Haman seeks to change that which God has set in place he not only sets himself against God and His word, but he in effect attempts to exalt himself above God.

d). This of course is a situation we have seen before with respect to Satan, something we will look at later, but we have also seen this in other types.

6). Let's take a look at something similar in the Book of Daniel, with the King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar –

Daniel 4:29

At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon. 30 The king spoke, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?" 31 While the word was still in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven: "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you! 32 And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses." 33 That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.

a). Here in a companion type to Haman, we have Nebuchadnezzar's self exultation, with complete indifference to the God of the universe whose plans and purposes have been set before the foundation of the world.

b). We see, almost instantly, the kingdom being taken from him because of this, until he would come to understand, 'that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses'.

c). And ultimately, God has chosen to give the kingdom of men into the hands of His people Israel – and nothing can change this.

d). The Assyrian Pharaoh couldn't change it, Nebuchadnezzar couldn't change it, Haman couldn't change it, Adolf Hitler couldn't change it, the president of Iran can't change it and nor will Antichrist.

e). To go against what God has said in His Word is to go against God Himself, and what we see here with Nebuchadnezzar doing just that is a swift recompense.

7). The same is also true of Nebuchadnezzar's son –

Daniel 5:20

"But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him. 21 "Then he was driven from the sons of men, his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till he knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses. 22 "But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this. 23 "And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven. They have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives and your concubines, have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know; and the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified. 24 "Then the fingers of the hand were sent from Him, and this writing was written. 25 "And this is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. 26 "This is the interpretation of each word. MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it; 27 "TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting; 28 "PERES: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." 29 Then Belshazzar gave the command, and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a chain of gold around his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. 30 That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain.

a). Firstly notice scripture's own commentary on Nebuchadnezzar, 'his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened in pride'.

b). Belshazzar his son had done exactly the same, 'you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven' – and the consequence is the same - his kingdom was given, by God, to another. (The only difference being Nebuchadnezzar repented and received back his kingdom, but his son was slain, thereby having no hope of repentance and receiving his kingdom back.)

8). And such is the situation with Haman. He has lifted himself up against the Lord of heaven, by setting his hand against God's people and exalting himself in the eyes of his family and friends. Filled with pride and the accompanying arrogance that goes with it, he builds a gallows for Mordecai.

a). This gallows is not as we would understand the word today, the construction upon which a person would be hung by the neck until dead, rather it would be a wooden structure upon which a dead body would be impaled, thereby bringing about their ultimate humiliation, even in death.

c). Haman then spends the night in anticipation of the destruction of his enemy, waiting for the opportunity, as the new day dawns, to go before the king to turn his dream into reality.

d). The plotting of the death of Mordecai would have its place in the darkness of night, but the darkness of night is not a time when the God of Israel sleeps –

Psalm 121:1

I will lift up my eyes to the hills-From whence comes my help? 2 My help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth. 3 He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber. 4 Behold, He who keeps Israel Shall neither slumber nor sleep. 5 The LORD is your keeper; The LORD is your shade at your right hand. 6 The sun shall not strike you by day, Nor the moon by night. 7 The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul. 8 The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in From this time forth, and even forevermore.

9). In the antitype of that seen in verse 4 of Psalm 121, we find this –

Esther 6:1

That night the king could not sleep. So one was commanded to bring the book of the records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king. 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.

a). Please keep in mind the sequence of events - Mordecai has arrayed himself in sackcloth and ashes, Esther has gone in before the king, and the king has promised to grant her request, 'up to half the kingdom'.

b). Then in a sleepless night, as the book of the records of the chronicles are read, the king remembers Mordecai.

c). Genesis 8:1
Then God remembered Noah...

d). Genesis 19:29
And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham...

e). Genesis 30:22
Then God remembered Rachel...

f). Exodus 6:5
"And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant.

g). Leviticus 26:42
...then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember; I will remember the land.

h). Ezekiel 16:60
"Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you.

i). Psalm 98:3
He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel;

j). Remembering what Mordecai has done, the king asks the question -

Esther 6:3
Then the king said, "What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?" And the king's servants who attended him said, "Nothing has been done for him."

10). At this point the person that is uppermost in the king's mind is Mordecai, the Jew - and the thing that is uppermost in the king's mind is bestowing honor on Mordecai.

a). Esther 6:4

So the king said, "Who is in the court?" 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. 5 The king's servants said to him, "Haman is there, standing in the court." And the king said, "Let him come in."

b). Haman has just arrived in the outer court, also with Mordecai uppermost in his mind – not though with a view to honor, but with a view to Mordecai's death and his being impaled on the gallows Haman had built for him.

c). We have a delicious dramatic irony at this point with both men focused in exactly the same direction, but with diametrically opposed agendas – and we will of course realize that in this relationship only one of them holds the scepter of power, and it's not Haman.

d). As rapidly as God acted in respect of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, so with Haman, and events now rapidly spiral out of his control.

11). Esther 6:6

So Haman came in, and the king asked him, "What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?" Now Haman thought in his heart, "Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?"

a). Here is Haman's pride and his arrogance – he cannot conceive that there could be anyone that the king would want to honor more than him.

b). And what he proposes, with himself in mind, is not just the bestowing of honor, but a declaration of regal majesty –

Esther 6:7

And Haman answered the king, "For the man whom the king delights to honor, 8 "let a royal robe be brought which the king has worn, and a horse on which the king has ridden, which has a royal crest placed on its head. 9 "Then let this robe and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that he may array the man whom the king delights to honor. 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 to honor!'"

c). He sees himself wearing the king's own royal robe, riding on the king's own horse and being paraded through the city square by one of the king's most noble princes.

d). Just picture the scene – Haman sees his plans coming to fruition, he is ready to have Mordecai executed and he sees himself paraded as a king.

e). Again we cannot help but see Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar and Satan in this picture.

f). Then, instantly, he is plunged from the heights to the depths and his destruction has begun –

Esther 6:10

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." 11 So Haman took the robe and the horse, arrayed Mordecai and led him on horseback through the city square, and proclaimed before him, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!"

g). Here is Haman from exaltation to humiliation, and all because of a Jew. The very one he had determined to kill is now being paraded, by Haman in regal splendor, prefiguring that which is to come, and he is powerless to do anything about it – Ahasuerus, and not he, is in control.

h). Again we hear the echo of Daniel 4:32.... the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.

12). The final verses of Esther Chapter 6 bring the whole matter to conclusion –

a). Esther 6:12

Afterward Mordecai went back to the king's gate. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with his head covered. 13 When Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him, his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you will not prevail against him but will surely fall before him." 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.

b). In verse 12 we see that Mordecai returns to the king's gate, the position that portends rulership, the very role for which he has just been publically displayed, with the proclamation being made by Haman himself. Whereas Haman returns to his house, mourning and with his head covered in an attempt to conceal his shame.

c). Then in verse 13 Zeresh and all his friends present him with an irrevocable truth - "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you will not prevail against him but will surely fall before him."

d). And while these words are still being spoken, the king's eunuchs appear to take Haman hastily to the banquet Esther had prepared - the very banquet at which she has promised to make her request known to the king.

e). As the day breaks Haman goes from exaltation to humiliation to impending destruction and ultimately death within a few short hours.

13). Esther 7:1

So the king and Haman went to dine with Queen Esther. 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!"

a). We will see of course that this happens on the second day in perfect keeping with God's time frame for His people.

b). The first day would be that period of time that begins with Abraham and it is to Abraham that God makes the promise that secures regality in the 3rd Day for Israel -

Genesis 22:17

"...blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.

c). And we have already seen Esther in Chapter 5 appearing before the king with the 3rd day in view to make her petition, which she does not make at the banquet of wine that same day, the first day, but saves until the 2nd day.

d). And God of course has already promised to hear and grant Israel's petition, with the 3rd Day in view, a promise made in the first day - recorded in 2 Chronicles 7:14 - a petition that will be granted and answered at the end of the 2nd day - just as we see in Esther.

e). Esther 7:3

Then Queen Esther answered and said, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request. 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 male and

female slaves, I would have held my tongue, although the enemy could never compensate for the king's loss."

f). Needless to say the king is angry – he discovers that someone is attempting to kill the one he has chosen from amongst all the other virgins to be his queen, her and her people also.

g). Esther 7:5

So King Ahasuerus answered and said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who would dare presume in his heart to do such a thing?"

h). Haman's day has gone from bad to worse – not only has he received total humiliation because of a Jew, he is now about to be killed because of a Jew. And because all these events have been set in motion by the king, he is completely powerless to do anything about them –

Esther 7:6

And Esther said, "The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman!" So Haman was terrified before the king and queen. 7 ¶ Then the king arose in his wrath from the banquet of wine and went into the palace garden; but Haman stood before Queen Esther, pleading for his life, for he saw that evil was determined against him by the king.

i). Within the eastern custom of the day, the king's action recorded here can mean only one thing – certain death for the one who has caused the king's wrath.

j). Esther 7:8

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

k). Haman, the one given power over the kingdom by the king himself, the one who held all the Jews in his hand, is now lying prostrate before a Jew pleading for his life.

l). The king returns and seeing Haman assumes he is trying to assault the queen – and before the king finishes speaking Haman's face is covered – he is executed. And finally, even in his death he receives the ultimate humiliation –

Esther 7:9

Now Harbonah, one of the eunuchs, said to the king, "Look! 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!"
10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai.
Then the king's wrath subsided.

m). Haman is impaled on the very gallows he had erected for Mordecai.

n). Haman's 10 sons, typifying Antichrist's 10 nation confederacy, are also killed –

Esther 9:7

Also Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, 8 Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, 9 Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vajezatha- 10 the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews-they killed;

o). And so within the space of less than 24 hours Haman, the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews is swept aside and his lineage destroyed; leaving the stage set for the appointment of a new ruler within the kingdom. An appointment entirely in the hands of the king.

p). Daniel 4:17

'This decision is by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.'