

- There are many reasons some people choose not to study the Book of Esther.
 - The book of Esther is one of two Old Testament (OT) books named after a woman, the other is Ruth.
 - It is one of two OT books that does not mention God directly, the other being Song of Solomon.
 - It is one of two books of the Bible that deals specifically with persecution of the Jewish people, the other being Exodus.
 - Esther is the only OT book in which the entire narrative takes place in Persia.
 - There is nothing quoted or referred to in the New Testament (NT) from the book of Esther.
 - Esther is the only OT book that was not found among the recovered Dead Sea scrolls at Qumran. This discovery was made in 1947 where a full copy of section of every OT book was found with the exception of Esther.
 - Esther contains the account of the origin of the Feast of Purim, one of two festivals celebrated in the Jewish community not found in the Mosaic law, the other being Hanukkah.
 - There appear to be moral and ethical decisions by the Jewish characters of the story that seem difficult to justify. We will discuss those as they come up in the study.
- With this impressive list of potential problems surrounding the book of Esther, why would anyone take time and effort to study this particular book?
- The Council of Hippo in A.D. 393 and the Council of Carthage in 397 both included Esther in the Canon. We study Esther because it is preserved by God in His Word and we trust He will direct us to all He has for us to learn as we are guided by the Holy Spirit. 2 Tim. 3:16-17:

2Tim. 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

2Tim. 3:17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Esth. 1:1 Now it took place in the days of Ahasuerus (A-Haus-ur-us), the Ahasuerus who reigned from India to Ethiopia over 127 provinces,

Esth. 1:2 in those days as King Ahasuerus sat on his royal throne which was at the citadel in Susa,

Esth. 1:3 in the third year of his reign he gave a banquet for all his princes and attendants, the army officers of Persia and Media, the nobles and the princes of his provinces being in his presence.

Esth. 1:4 And he displayed the riches of his royal glory and the splendor of his great majesty for many days, 180 days.

Esth. 1:5 When these days were completed, the king gave a banquet lasting seven days for all the people who were present at the citadel in Susa, from the

greatest to the least, in the court of the garden of the king's palace.

Esth. 1:6 There were hangings of fine white and violet linen held by cords of fine purple linen on silver rings and marble columns, and couches of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl and precious stones.

Esth. 1:7 Drinks were served in golden vessels of various kinds, and the royal wine was plentiful according to the king's bounty.

Esth. 1:8 The drinking was done according to the law, there was no compulsion, for so the king had given orders to each official of his household that he should do according to the desires of each person.

- Verse 1 reveals when the story took place in history by identifying it took place in the days of Ahasuerus, the Ahasuerus who reigned from India to Ethiopia over 127 provinces.
 - This was a ruler of an expansive kingdom geographically with the detail of it extending from India to Ethiopia.
 - The Persian name Khshayarsha (shay-r-ja) was translated Ahasuerus in Hebrew. The Greek translation is Xerxes.
 - It is important to know this ruler can be referred to by multiple names when reading through varied historical accounts of this king in secular history.
- How this man became king and what the circumstances were surrounding his transition to power historically are important to understand what is revealed next in the biblical narrative of Esther.
 - Ahasuerus was the son of Darius I of Persia, son of Hystaspes (Hi-stap-cees) and Atossa, daughter of Cyrus the Great. Darius I also known as Darius the Great ruled from 521- 486 B.C. about 36 years. Darius I selected Ahasuerus as his heir before preparations were made for a journey. This was the expectation of the rulers of this time, and he was to leave in (487-486 BC). His failing health prevented him from leaving, and he died in October 486 BC.
 - Ahasuerus was crowned in late 486 BC. He was about 36 years old.
- King Darius I had established his expanded kingdom through marriage alliances, great building projects, and military dominance.
 - He separated the kingdom into provinces and assigned governors to oversee them.
 - He established Aramaic as the official language, introduced a single monetary system, and connected the kingdom by building an intertwining road system.
- In biblical importance King Darius I supported the rebuilding of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem.

Ezra 6:14 And the elders of the Jews were successful in building through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they finished building according to the command of the God of Israel and the decree of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.

Ezra 6:15 This temple was completed on the third day of the month Adar; it was the sixth year of the reign of King Darius.

- The decree to allow the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem was initiated by Cyrus the Great, and it was again acknowledged to be enforced during the reign of Darius I.
 - The temple was completed during the reign of Darius I.
 - From the scripture reference the notable king missing in chronological order is King Ahasuerus, but then continues with his son Artaxerxes.
 - The building that continued under Artaxerxes was of the walls and city, as recorded in the book of Ezra and Nehemiah.
- The book of Esther provides us with the importance of King Ahasuerus in the history of the Jews.
- Verse 2 established the royal throne to be in the citadel of Susa.
 - The capital city of Elam was Susa and had been rebuilt by Darius I as one of his capital cities. The citadel at Susa was elevated above the city and heavily fortified to protect the king.
- In verse 3 the narrative begins in the third year of his reign. It is critical to understand the history of what preceded Ahasuerus's ascension to the throne and what transpired during his initial transition to power.
 - This is important in understanding what takes place during the first years of his reign and how that influences the events revealed in the book of Esther.
- King Ahasuerus dealt with revolts from two major powers that had been going on a year before he ascended to the throne in Egypt and Babylon.
- Many historians agree that the taxation for the building projects and military campaigns that took place under Darius I was a major reason for these uprisings.
 - The appointment of Ahasuerus to succeed Darius I was not welcomed in all parts of the kingdom because he was seen as one who would continue to rule as his father had, and there were many who wanted a change in leadership style to be less domineering and aggressive in expansion.
- After putting an end to the revolt in Egypt, he appointed his brother Achaemenes as governor (satrap).
 - During this same time he had to deal with the revolt ongoing in Babylon.
- In Babylon there was a custom in acceptance of the right to be considered the King of Babylon where on New Year's Day whoever was considered the rightful king would clasp the hands of the statue of Bel.
 - This would have been seen as a sign of acceptance of power from this worshipped entity. (imagine if a U.S. president had to travel to each state and do something in that state before the state would acknowledge him/her as their rightful president)
- Ahasuerus defied this tradition and instead captured the gold statue and had it melted down. This prevented anyone from practicing this tradition and subsequently challenging his rule as the King of Babylon.

- This infuriated the men of influence in Babylon, especially those who gained their power through the religious worship of Bel.
- He also did not acknowledge the title of 'King of Babylon' but instead insisted he was the King of Persia and Media, or king of all, and did not need to add king of each region to his title.
 - This was a significant insult to the subjects of Babylon.
 - This contributed to the revolts in both 484 BC and 482 BC.
- This is a very simplified description of what took place in the transition of Ahasuerus to leadership from his father Darius I in regard to these two specific revolts to his authority.
- Once these areas of immediate concerns were handled, Ahasuerus focused his attention on settling unresolved issues with the Greeks.
 - Ionia had begun a revolt to the rule of Darius I and sought support from the Greeks, which they provided.
- Working together, they burned the city of Sardis but then had to retreat suffering heavy losses.
 - This attack on Sardis could not go unpunished and Darius I swore he would punish the offenders by burning down their capital cities of Athens and Eretria.
 - This also encouraged Darius I to decide to subjugate the Greeks and add them to his vast kingdom.
 - This attempt ended in what is known as the Battle of Marathon in 490 BC. The Greeks were victorious in defeating the Persian forces' advances.
- Darius I took several years in preparation for the next attempt to deal with the Greeks and to carry out his intention of burning Athens and Eretria, however he died before he could finish this endeavor.
- As Ahasuerus was dealing with the uprisings in Egypt and Babylon he also was preparing to finish what his father had intended to do against the Greeks. The ancient historian Herodotus recorded that Ahasuerus continued the preparations begun by Darius I for another four years after he became the king.

Herodotus, The Histories

A. D. Godley, Ed.

"For full four years after the conquest of Egypt he was equipping his force and preparing all that was needed for it; before the fifth year was completed, he set forth on his march with the might of a great multitude."

- Now returning to the book of Esther.
 - We are three years after Ahasuerus's ascension to the throne (483 B.C) with one year left before the great battle is to be waged against the Greeks (484 B.C).
 - The scene is set in the city of Susa which served as one of several capitals of the Persian empire during this time; the other locations were Ecbatana, Babylon, and Persepolis.

- In verse 3 we learn Ahasuerus gave a banquet for all his princes and attendants, the army officers of Persia and Media, the nobles and the princes of his provinces being in his presence.
- The princes would be referring to those from the royal family line.
 - The sons born to Darius 1 and others in the family.
- The attendants would be those who serve the king and the royal family in close personal service.
 - It was an honor to be serving the royal family.
- Next in the list of those invited were the army officers of Persia and Media and this would clearly be talking about the military leaders of his kingdom.
- Finally the nobles and the princes of his provinces were invited.
 - The number of provinces in this kingdom was defined back in verse 1 as 127 provinces.
 - These would be those who were current leaders of the provinces and those who were connected to these leaders as successors.
- Since we have established the king was intent on waging a massive battle with the Greeks not long after his father, Darius 1 suffered a humiliating defeat and the specific makeup of the invited people it would seem logical to assume Ahasuerus would be encouraging their collective support to be successful in whatever endeavor he wants to pursue next.
- Verse 4 describes one of the ways the king intends to garner their needed support as he displayed the riches of his royal glory and the splendor of his great majesty for many days, 180 days.
- Throughout history leaders of nations have put on display their might and wealth to encourage those who support them as well as an efforts and to intimidate those who might stand in opposition.
- Picture modern nations like North Korea, China or the Soviet Union and their massive parades with scores of armed marching soldiers, lines of tanks and trucks displaying aircraft and hardware.
 - This becomes more effective as the invention of television allowed these images to be seen by larger audiences than can be gathered in a capitol city.
- King Ahasuerus brings together the leaders from the far reaches of his kingdom over 180 days or over a six month time period.
- It does not make sense to have this extensive list of people that included all the military leaders and all the governing leaders from all the 127 provinces in Susa for the full six months.
 - It is not realistic to pull everyone out of their governing responsibilities at the same time for an extended period of time as this would have left his kingdom vulnerable at a very fragile time.
- It makes more sense that all of these individuals would have been invited to Susa for some part of the six months.
 - The king's goal would be to gain political, military and financial support for a large

scale military operation.

- He would be asking for money to support this endeavor as well as soldiers from each province and physical supplies. (ships, soldiers, food, weapons, etc..)
 - These are the same people his father would have pulled support from and had recently suffered great loss.
- Verse 5 says when these days were completed, the king gave a banquet lasting seven days for all the people who were present at the citadel in Susa, from the greatest to the least, in the court of the garden of the king's palace.
- At the end of the six month political maneuvering there is a week long event held in Susa.
 - There is a declaration made that this was for all the people who were present at the citadel in Susa.
 - What is a citadel?
 - Wikipedia: 2020 – A citadel is the core fortified area of a town or city. It may be a [castle](#), [fortress](#), or fortified center. The term is a diminutive of "city" and thus means "little city", so called because it is a smaller part of the city of which it is the defensive core.
- We can ask who would have been staying at the citadel of the capital city where the king's palace was being used as his residence?
 - Most likely representatives from all parts of the kingdom would spend time here.
 - We might compare them to current day ambassadors.
 - Those left from the providences who would represent the provinces to the kings court.
- Verse 5 clarifies this invitation was from the greatest to the least.
- The group has already been defined as those present in the citadel.
 - It would appear each of the representatives would be invited no matter the size of the province they represented, or the title they held. (Like in the U.S. senate where the representatives have an equal vote no matter the population size of the state they represent)
- The seven day banquet was specifically held in the court of the garden of the king's palace.
- Verse 6 gives visual details regarding the lavishness of this banquet as there were hangings of fine white and violet linen held by cords of fine purple linen on silver rings and marble columns, and couches of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl and precious stones.
 - Each detail given is a vision of extreme opulence.
 - Hugh linens of white draped everywhere, not commonly found as we have in our day.
 - The purple linen was to highlight the royal setting, as purple was a very costly color to acquire.
 - The sparkling gold and silver couches would have been laden with comfortable

cushions.

- The mosaic floors everywhere would be reflective of any lighting provided.
- Close your eyes for a moment and picture this extravagant scene.
- This presentation was to impress all.
- These details would give a strong indication the author was actually present as an eyewitness to the events being recorded.
- Verse 7 continues to describe the lavishness poured out on those attending as drinks were served in golden vessels of various kinds, and the royal wine was plentiful according to the king's bounty.
- The Persians were known for their artistry and it was displayed in the creation of beautiful golden vessels demonstrating the spender of this King's court.
- There are some writers who like to assert these may have been vessels removed from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar but this would not lineup with historical events as these had been returned to Jerusalem by King Cyrus.

Ezra 5:13 'However, in the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon, King Cyrus issued a decree to rebuild this house of God.

Ezra 5:14 'Also the gold and silver utensils of the house of God which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, and brought them to the temple of Babylon, these King Cyrus took from the temple of Babylon and they were given to one whose name was Sheshbazzar, whom he had appointed governor.

- Verse 7 also indicates the royal wine was plentiful.
 - Not your 'table' wine but wine to impress and the volume of wine was significant.
 - All of the details describing a extravagant banquet.
- Verse 8 gives an interesting detail that the drinking was done according to the law, there was no compulsion, for so the king had given orders to each official of his household that he should do according to the desires of each person.
- According to the law there was to be no compulsion to drink.
- There are known customs of this time that compelled guests to drink according to established traditions.
 - Guest were often obliged to drink whenever the host drank.
 - This would guarantee the host would not have more than the attendees.
- The fact the scripture records specifically there was no compulsion to drink would support this was how drinking was to be practiced at this particular banquet vs. how this was practiced at other times.
- The scriptures say for this event the king had given orders to each official of his household that he should do according to the desires of each person.
 - Those serving were to honor the wishes of the guests attending.

- Keep in mind the vast reaches of this kingdom and all the cultures that would have been represented here.
 - This was done to honor each culture's tradition and not force what may have been the norm in this king's court to mandate drinking.
- In the first 8 verses of Esther we have been introduced to the historical time placement of events, 483 B.C.
 - We have identified one of the main characters of the narrative know historically as Ahasuerus or Xerxes depending on what historical records you may be reading.
 - The location of the events transpire at the citadel at Susa.
 - With these details and are able to understand with more clarity the remainder of the events that will follow as we study the book of Esther.
 - In our contextual study of the time period we know of the political intrigue happening, like the revolts to the transition of the newly appointed king, the recent history of war against the Greeks waged by Darius I.
 - We also have the benefit of hind site as we know what takes place a year from these happenings, the war that is waged again against the Greek.
 - This is the backdrop to give us the foundation for understanding the book of Esther in a historical context.
- As we continue our study of the people included in this narrative given in Esther we will have a better understanding of the events surrounding them and the impact of their decisions and actions.
 - We can glean from their responses to circumstances a model for how we might be led to respond to our own circumstances.
 - The overriding theme of the book of Esther will lead us back to a beautiful picture of the sovereignty of God throughout history.
 - How God uses world events to continue revealing His perfect plan for His purposes and to bring Him glory.

- The first eight verses in the book of Esther chapter one gave us the who, what, when and where of the narrative.
 - The who is king Ahasuerus, also referred to as Xerxes, Persian name Khshayarsha.
 - The what is reigning, specifically preparing for re-engaging the Greeks in battle.
 - The when is about 485-481 BCE.
 - The where is in the citadel of Susa the capital of the Persian Empire.
- The Persian Empire waged an ongoing war with the Greeks spanning more than four decades.
 - After the defeat of the battle at Marathon in 490 BCE, Darius I went home with plans to come back and take revenge.
- Ahasuerus intended to conquer the Greeks, something his father Darius I had failed to complete.
 - This was the focus of the gathering of the leaders in Susa described in Esther 1:1-8.

Esth. 1:9 Queen Vashti also gave a banquet for the women in the palace which belonged to King Ahasuerus.

Esth. 1:10 On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar and Carkas, the seven eunuchs who served in the presence of King Ahasuerus,

Esth. 1:11 to bring Queen Vashti before the king with her royal crown in order to display her beauty to the people and the princes, for she was beautiful.

Esth. 1:12 But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command delivered by the eunuchs. Then the king became very angry and his wrath burned within him.

- Queen Vashti is introduced and she is described as giving a banquet in the palace.
 - The banquet the king was hosting took place in the palace gardens.
- The guests at this banquet were for the women in King Ahasuerus' palace.
- There is no clear answer from secular historians as to the lineage of Queen Vashti.
 - There is no corroborating evidence from archeological evidence of this queen that has been found.
 - One of the reasons for this lack of evidence is most likely because the palace was destroyed by fire during the reign of Artaxerxes I.
- The records maintained at Susa were written in scrolls or books not clay tablets as we will see in Esth. 2:23, 6:1, 10:1.
 - The fire would have destroyed these documents.
- There are references in what began as Jewish oral traditions to identify this Queen Vashti.
 - These Jewish oral traditions moved to a written form. in what is known as Midrash.

- There is even an attempt to trace her lineage done by these Jewish story tellers.
- The term Midrash (“exposition” or “investigation”) refers to an example of biblical interpretation.
 - There are two basic types one called midrash halacha and is specific to interpretations in regards to the law or religious standards.
 - The second is midrash halacha, all other forms of biblical interpretation would fall into this category.
- Madras interpretation is largely used in the Talmudic literature,
 - The Jews have a vested interest in how this queen is displayed in the book of Esther.
 - They desire to make the Jewish Queen a heroine and Queen Vashti as a less desirable person. We will look more at this at the end of this study.
- In verse 9 the guests are women and based on earlier reference to those who were invited to the multiple banquets given by the king these were most like the women associated with these men, specifically referring back to verse 5 these were the ones present at the citadel in Susa.
- The men are in the court of the garden of the king’s palace while the women are inside the palace.
 - It is important to remember in Middle Eastern cultures women are often kept separate from the men in social gatherings.
 - It is still common today in most Middle Eastern cultures.
 - This would simply be a cultural norm practiced at this time in history as Queen Vashti is entertaining her female guests in the palace while the men are all out in the palace garden.
- The separation of women from men has its roots in Islam and was not originally part of Jewish tradition. The change seems to have made its way into Jewish practices in the 12th century. (https://blog.nli.org.il/en/ezrat_nashim/)
- In verse 10 there is another clarified time given as the narrative details the next events happen on the seventh day of this week long banquet, or the last day.
- The description used on the king as being merry with wine and is seen as a man who has too much wine. (See also Judges 19:6,9 Ruth 3:7, 1Sam. 35:36, 2 Sam. 13:28, Eccl 8:15, 10:19, Luke 12:19)
- The king in the ‘merry’ condition gives a command to Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar and Carkas, the seven eunuchs who served in the presence of King Ahasuerus.
- A eunuch is a man who has been castrated and were considered of significant value to the Persians in service to the king.
 - (IVP OT background Commentary - InterVarsity Press)
 - Eunuchs were highly valued in government service in many varied roles.
 - The great demand for eunuchs led to young boys being included in the tribute paid to Persia so that they could be castrated and trained for government service.
 - They had no families to distract them from their service.

- They were often entrusted with the care and supervision of the royal harem.
- Having been castrated, they posed no threat to the women of the harem and could not engender children by the harem women who might be mistaken for royal heirs.
- They would be less likely to become involved in conspiracies, because they would have no heirs to put on the throne.
- Assyria, Urartu and Media had all made use of eunuchs in government offices prior to the Persian period.
- Four of the names in this list have been attested in Elamite documents and can therefore be considered authentic names of the period.
- Herodotus names the chief eunuch of Xerxes Hermotimus. Herodotus describes the men surrounding Xerxes as cringing, fawning leeches who tell the king only what they think he wants to hear.
- In verse 11 The king commands the men to bring Queen Vashti before the king with her royal crown in order to display her beauty to the people and the princes, for she was beautiful.
- First, they are specifically asked to bring Queen Vashti before the king.
 - This is not an unusual requests since it was the only way to have an audience with the king. We see this later in Esther 4:11

Esth. 4:11 “All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live. And I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days.”

- This verse is speaking specifically of when the king is sitting in the inner court but it would seem to indicate it was by an invitation one would have an audience with the king.
- The king makes a special request for Queen Vashti to wear her royal crown and come to be seen by those in attendance at his banquet.
- There has been great speculation in regards to this verse with some suggesting the king is asking for the queen to come before this crown only wearing her crown but that is not found in the scriptures.
- We must remember that one of the ways Darius I had expanded his kingdom was by royal marriages.
 - This was the practice of the day. With this understanding it would be true that Queen Vashti’s marriage was arranged with a political advantage for the kingdom.
- The question would be why would the king want all those in attendance of his banquet to see her display her royal crown and how beautiful Queen Vashti is.
- In verse 4 we saw the king’s desire was to displayed the riches of his royal glory and the splendor of his great majesty for many days.

- The king's desire may have been to display his queen in front of all those present as the final statement of the display of his royal glory and great majesty.
- Depending on where Queen Vashti was from by her displaying herself wearing her royal crown could be seen as lending support for the upcoming war with the Greeks.
 - This is just my thoughts.
- Verse 12 reveals when the eunuchs bring the message of the king's command to Queen Vashti she refused to come.
- It might appear to some that this could be seen as a compliment to Queen Vashti to be so highly regarded by the king but her response would indicate otherwise.
- It would seem the people of the court had not seen Queen Vashti's face before.
 - This would make the most sense why the request is made with the emphasis made about her beauty.
 - (IVP OT background Commentary)
- One need not think that Vashti was asked to do anything immodest or morally compromising (as early rabbinic interpretation assumed).
 - In some eastern societies, the harem was carefully sequestered and the law prohibited anyone from looking on the faces of the royal women.
 - Persian women of this period went about in closed carriages so as not to be exposed to the gaze of the general public.
 - If this is the case, as Josephus reported it was, Xerxes would be requesting Vashti to do something beneath her station and demeaning to her royal personage.
 - Exposing her to the gaze of the entire citadel population would be a far greater humiliation than not bowing to an honored official, but would be a similar violation of protocol.
- It is interesting to ponder how the event would have been carried out on this day in this royal palace.
 - Would the request to the queen have been put in writing or was it a verbal request?
 - Did each eunuch address the queen or only one?
 - Would the refusal be brought back to the king by all the eunuchs or just one?
 - Would it have been a message delivered verbally to the king?
 - Would it have been done in the hearing of the crowd or privately?
- A reference by Josephus indicates that the eunuchs came back several times without the Queen. She did not say 'no' once but probably several times.
 - Each response could have been seen by all the great men of King Ahasuerus' vast kingdom.
- To be seen without a face covering in public by men would have been a disgrace to Queen Vashti.
 - To reject the command of the King was a disgrace to the King.
- This would have been a very disrespectful response to the king's command and

humiliating for the King in front of guests at the banquet, and the emotion it invoked as the king's response was to become very angry and his wrath burned within him.

- This was not a surprise as the king was dishonored and it would seem the king has a right to be angry however the level of anger is described to be intense anger leading to his wrath.
 - Wrath is defined by Merriam Webster as - strong vengeful anger or indignation.
- This is an unhealthy anger not a righteous anger and it was probably intensified by the excessive drinking of wine.
- This King had just communicated to all these men in positions of leadership that he wanted them to support him in this large war campaign.
 - They should support him because he was so powerful and he would win as he had demonstrated all his might and wealth to them.
- The king is now seen not even able to get his wife to follow his command.
 - The queen not coming as commanded brought great humiliation to the king and experiencing disrespect.
 - His reaction described as wrath shows he now was vengeful in his desire to deal with this disrespect.

Esth. 1:13 Then the king said to the wise men who understood the times — for it was the custom of the king so to speak before all who knew law and justice

Esth. 1:14 and were close to him: Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media who had access to the king's presence and sat in the first place in the kingdom —

Esth. 1:15 “According to law, what is to be done with Queen Vashti, because she did not obey the command of King Ahasuerus delivered by the eunuchs?”

Esth. 1:16 In the presence of the king and the princes, Memucan said, “Queen Vashti has wronged not only the king but also all the princes and all the peoples who are in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus.

Esth. 1:17 “For the queen's conduct will become known to all the women causing them to look with contempt on their husbands by saying, ‘King Ahasuerus commanded Queen Vashti to be brought in to his presence, but she did not come.’

Esth. 1:18 “This day the ladies of Persia and Media who have heard of the queen's conduct will speak in the same way to all the king's princes, and there will be plenty of contempt and anger.

Esth. 1:19 “If it pleases the king, let a royal edict be issued by him and let it be written in the laws of Persia and Media so that it cannot be repealed, that Vashti may no longer come into the presence of King Ahasuerus, and let the king give her royal position to another who is more worthy than she.

Esth. 1:20 “When the king's edict which he will make is heard throughout all his kingdom, great as it is, then all women will give honor to their husbands, great

and small.”

Esth. 1:21 This word pleased the king and the princes, and the king did as Memucan proposed.

Esth. 1:22 So he sent letters to all the king’s provinces, to each province according to its script and to every people according to their language, that every man should be the master in his own house and the one who speaks in the language of his own people.

- Verse 13 demonstrates the mood of the banquet has changed from a celebration to a complete distraction in dealing with this unexpected development.
- The King speaks to his advisors described as wise men who understood the times.
- The specific clarification given about their understanding delineates — for it was the custom of the king so to speak before all who knew law and justice.
- These were the experts of what laws governed the kingdom and how to carry out justice regarding the law.
- The king often turned to these men to determine what was right according to the laws of the kingdom.
 - The legal system of the Medes and Persians was extensive.
- Verse 14 includes these men were close to the king.
 - They are also specifically named in the scripture, Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena and Memucan.
- These names can be verified through historical records and give historical validation to the narrative.
- They are described as, the seven princes of Persia and Media who had access to the king’s presence and sat in the first place in the kingdom.
- They hold positions of power in the kingdom as princes and had special access to the king’s presence, which was an honor.
 - They knew what was going on in the royal court and the kingdom.
 - Finally, we hear they sat in the first place in the kingdom. They held the highest offices in the kingdom.
- As these events unfold in verse 15 it would appear that King Ahashuerus has found a clearer head to make decision from.
 - He lays out a question to these wise counselors, “According to law, what is to be done with Queen Vashti, because she did not obey the command of King Ahasuerus delivered by the eunuchs?”
- It is clear Queen Vashti did not obey a command of the king given through his eunuchs.
 - The king asks what the response should be according to the law.
- King Ahashuerus could have decided in his anger and wrath to do whatever he desired to do in regards to selecting a consequence.
 - Instead the king seeks counsel.

- We do not know if the counsel of men convened privately before they pronounced their decision to King Ahasuerus.
- Verse 16 clearly displays the counsel provided by these men was communicated, in the presence of the king and the princes,
 - This group of counselor's select Memucan to speak the decree.
- The verdict relayed to the king was, "Queen Vashti has wronged not only the king but also all the princes and all the peoples who are in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus.
- Memucan gives the pronouncement in the presence of the king AND the princes, publicly, just like the violation of the command was done. He raises the bar of her offenses to be more than just violating the king's command.
- He says she has also wronged ALL the princes and all the people, who are in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus.
- Defying the command of the king has a far reaching affect on all those who are under the kings command.
- Verse 17 elaborates on the broad impact this act of disobedience demonstrated the far reaching impact this could have had in the provinces.
 - Memucan says Queen Vashti's violation wronged more than the king, "For the queen's conduct will become known to all the women causing them to look with contempt on their husbands by saying, 'King Ahasuerus commanded Queen Vashti to be brought in to his presence, but she did not come.'
- Memucan declares this event will be known by other women in the kingdom.
- How will all the women know of the queen's conduct?
 - Many women were attending the banquet hosted by Queen Vashti.
 - It is probable the command from King Ahasuerus was known to those in attendance of his banquet as well as the answer of the queen.
 - Women would have a tendency to share this information among themselves.
 - What do you think the cultural expectations were of women to their husbands before this event?
 - Women were expected to do as asked, not a lot of rights for women of other cultures...ever.
 - Memucan suggests all the women will look with contempt on their husbands.
- Verse 18 Memucan declares, "This day the ladies of Persia and Media who have heard of the queen's conduct will speak in the same way to all the king's princes, and there will be plenty of contempt and anger.
- We are not told what Queen Vashti said only that she did not come as commanded.
 - The suggestion is that the wives of the princes will also say no to the commands of their husbands.
 - This type of reaction in the homes will cause the women to have contempt towards their husbands, like Vashti demonstrated to King Ahasuerus.
- The lack of following the husbands command will cause the men to become angry, just

like King Ahasuerus.

- Memucan relays the wise men's counsel in verse 19,
 - Memucan begins with a respectful tone with the king beginning his words "If it pleases the king.
- This would always be a way of addressing issues to the king as he may have a strong reason to want to avoid the advice of the advisor for any number of reasons.
- Then the solution is presented to let a royal edict be issued by him and let it be written in the laws of Persia and Media so that it cannot be repealed, that Vashti may no longer come into the presence of King Ahasuerus, and let the king give her royal position to another who is more worthy than she.)
 - The suggestion is for a royal edict to be issued by the king.
 - An edict is a proclamation having the force of law.
- This edict will be held to a higher standard by being written into the laws of Persia and Media.
 - One of the reasons to get King Ahasuerus to issue an edict was so that it could not be repealed.
- There is another reference to the irrevocable nature of these laws in Daniel 6:6-9:

Dan. 6:6 Then these commissioners and satraps came by agreement to the king and spoke to him as follows: "King Darius, live forever!

Dan. 6:7 "All the commissioners of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the high officials and the governors have consulted together that the king should establish a statute and enforce an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lions' den.

Dan. 6:8 "Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document so that it may not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked."

Dan. 6:9 Therefore King Darius signed the document, that is, the injunction.

- This is true in the new testament times as well:

Matt. 14:6 But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod,

Matt. 14:7 so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked.

Matt. 14:8 Having been prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist."

Matt. 14:9 Although he was grieved, the king commanded it to be given because of his oaths, and because of his dinner guests.

- A king is only as good as his word.

Esther 1:19 The recommended edict was that Vashti may no longer come into the presence of King Ahasuerus, and let the king give her royal position to another who is more worthy than she.

- First Queen Vashti is not to come before King Ahasuerus ever again.
- Second, she will lose her position in the royal court with all the personal and professional implications. There is some irony in the fact it was Queen Vashti's choice to not want to come before the king when commanded.
- The princes from Persia and Media want the edict so they have proof in writing this was the desire of the king.
 - This way the king could not change his mind and go back to this queen.
- Queen Vashti would not be coming back.
- It would be bad for these men if Queen Vashti came back to the royal court after their advice was taken to have her removed from the presence of the King Ahasuerus?
 - She would have the power to take vengeance on the 7 men of wise counsel, or any others in the royal court she felt had wrong by her.
- This is also why there is a second part of the edict which says, "and let the king give her royal position to another who is more worthy than she".
- These men did not want Queen Vashti to ever have the opportunity to reclaim the position she currently held again.
 - They would fear her retribution.
 - The king finding another queen would take away the temptation to bring back Vashti as queen.
 - This would also seem to indicate these wise men knew the power Queen Vashti held over King Ahasuerus.
- In verse 20 the wise men highlight the benefit to the kingdom the edict will have, "When the king's edict which he will make is heard throughout all his kingdom, great as it is, then all women will give honor to their husbands, great and small."
- It is probably realistic to assume not all men were given the honor they desired from their wives.
- Don't underestimate how important this is to all men then and now. This is a biblical principal taught throughout scripture.

Eph. 5:31 FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.

Eph. 5:32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

Eph. 5:33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife

even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

- Men desire respect or honor as the word is used here in Esther.
 - This is how God designed them and how God directs wives to respond to their husbands.
- It would seem there is some exaggeration of how all the women of the kingdom would react if Queen Vashti's refusal to obey the command of the king is not dealt with properly as well as how all the women will now give honor to their husbands based on the punishment of the queen.
 - There still is truth in the general understanding of what impact taking no action would create, and what impact the edict would have.
- Verse 21 highlights the response of those who heard the recommendation of the edit, 'This word pleased the king and the princes'
- The advice pleased the king and he did as Memucan proposed.
- After King Ahasuerus approves of the edit Memucan carries out the proposed plan in verse 22, 'So he sent letters to all the king's provinces, to each province according to its script and to every people according to their language, that every man should be the master in his own house and the one who speaks in the language of his own people.'
 - The written documents were sent to all the king's provinces.
 - The letters were written in a particular script, this would be the alphabet used.
 - The letters were translated into the common language of each province.
- The content of the edit is 'that every man should be the master in his own house and the one who speaks in the language of his own people.'
- The impact of, speaking in the language of his own people, is given importance in Nehemiah 13:23-24:

Neh. 13:23 In those days I also saw that the Jews had married women from Ashdod, Ammon and Moab.

Neh. 13:24 As for their children, half spoke in the language of Ashdod, and none of them was able to speak the language of Judah, but the language of his own people.

- The non-Jewish women the Jewish men were marrying were teaching the children the language they knew and most probably the culture they grew up with, including the religious practices. This gave the women more control and power in the home.
 - This was not acceptable to Nehemiah.
- The wise men of the Persian courts had come to the same conclusion that every man should be the master in his own house.
- The wives throughout the kingdom were to acknowledge the men were the master of their own homes.

- One of the best ways to insure this influence was for the language spoken in the home to be that of the husband.
 - This is clear in the wording of the letter sent to all the provinces in King Ahasuerus' kingdom.
- The description of the letter sent to the provinces appears to be different than the edicts that were proposed to the king earlier.
 - Most likely the royal edicts, concerning Queen Vashti, were recorded in the laws of the Medes and the Persians to be sure they were not repealed.
 - The letters sent to the provinces carried the tone of what the expectations were to be in the homes of the peoples in the kingdom.
- The direction of the book of Esther takes a predictable path.
 - The King has been disrespected and the wise men counsel how to resolve the immediate issue with Queen Vashti.
 - The wise men do not stop there as they take the opportunity to use this event to advance other agendas. Politics never really changes.
- God uses the hearts of men to move history down a path for His intended purposes but it is still interesting to see how circumstances unfold in real lives.
- God does the same today because He is the same God with the same sovereign power and what comfort we can have as we watch our own lives and the circumstances around us knowing God is in fact in control and doing as He has intended in our lives. Romans 8:26-31:

Rom. 8:26 In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;

Rom. 8:27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Rom. 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Rom. 8:29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

Rom. 8:30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

Rom. 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

- The beginning of the first chapter of Esther identifies the place of the narrative to be at the citadel of Susa, the capital of the Persian Empire, around 485-481 BCE being governed by king Ahasuerus as he is preparing to reengage in battle with the Greeks.
- The second part of Esther chapter 1 describes Queen Vashti's refusal of the command from King Ahasuerus to come display her royal crown and her beauty to the men gathered at the King's banquet.
 - The results of her refusal to the King's command was an edict that was brought by the 7 advisors to the King for the Queen to be removed from her royal position in the court and not to be in the King's presence again for the disgrace brought upon the King and by extension on the kingdom.
- Chapter 1 takes place in the third year of King Ahasuerus' reign. Some small details in chapter 2 will identify the events unfolding are about three years after chapter 1.
 - There is a year of what is described as beauty treatment for Esther and she will be taken as Queen for King Ahasuerus in the seventh year of his reign seen in v 16.
- There are some important historical milestones to highlight before continuing the verse by verse
 - Darius I suffered a defeat at what is know as the battle of Marathon in 490 BCE.
 - Persians should have had the advantage in numbers and the tactic of rapid fire arrows, However the Greeks had developed an bronze-armored shield that created an effective defensive shield allowing the Greeks to march into close range where their superior weapons won the day.
- Ahasuerus then was defeated at Thermopylae by the Spartans 480 BCE (the movie 300 is a depiction of this battle) The Greeks all died but they bought time for the other cities to resist the Persian attacks.
 - The land battle was halted because winter set in and the battle was taken to the seas.
 - The Persians were then routed in the battle of Salamis by a superior commander who lured the them into the narrow straights with no way of escape.
- War continued to simmer and the Persians tried to gain the upper hand in political negotiations, when they did not provide the desire outcome a final battle was engaged at Plataea in Boeotia in August 479 BCE.
 - Again as against king Darius I the superior shields and weaponry of the Greeks won out.
- Ultimately the Greeks were left to their freedom for a time and they flourished and developed culturally with what would become the foundation of Western civilizations.
- The Persians under King Ahasuerus did not seek to overtake the Greeks again and King Ahasuerus spent his time on building projects.
 - The lavish spending on his building projects and the war efforts put a great deal of strain on the monetary strength of the kingdom.
- The scriptures don't give the details of the defeats suffered by the Persian Army because the focus stays on the things unfolding in the royal court.
 - God always stays focused on what is happening for His people.

Esth. 2:1 After these things when the anger of King Ahasuerus had subsided, he remembered Vashti and what she had done and what had been decreed against her.

Esth. 2:2 Then the king's attendants, who served him, said, "Let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king.

Esth. 2:3 "Let the king appoint overseers in all the provinces of his kingdom that they may gather every beautiful young virgin to the citadel of Susa, to the harem, into the custody of Hegai, the king's eunuch, who is in charge of the women; and let their cosmetics be given them.

Esth. 2:4 "Then let the young lady who pleases the king be queen in place of Vashti." And the matter pleased the king, and he did accordingly.

- King Ahasuerus has now returned to his governance duties back in the citadel of Susa after returning from the battle fields and the significant losses endured there.
- Now that the King is home he is no longer angry about the events depicted in Esther chapter one. It appears the King Ahasuerus is remembering the events that caused a decree to be made against Vashti.
- The specific reference to the king no longer being angry and yet remembering could suggest the king is experiencing a sadness over the events and maybe longing for his beautiful wife.
- The scriptures are clear to refer to her as Vashti and not Queen Vashti as her position had been removed by the decree.
- This was most likely what the king's advisors had feared would occur and why they spent time developing a strategy to prevent Vashti from ever returning to the court.
 - Verse 2 defines what the king's attendants feel is the solution to the king's restlessness as they suggest, "Let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king."
- The names of the attendants are not listed here but they may be the same eunuchs mentioned previously.
 - Verse 3 gives the details of how these women are to be found:

"Let the king appoint overseers in all the provinces of his kingdom that they may gather every beautiful young virgin to the citadel of Susa, to the harem, into the custody of Hegai, the king's eunuch, who is in charge of the women; and let their cosmetics be given them."

- Breaking down this plan the first order of business would be for the king to find an overseer in each of the 127 provinces of the kingdom. An overseer would be someone to supervise and direct the work of others.
- The specific assignment would be to gather every beautiful young virgin to the citadel of Susa, to the harem.
- This would be like a beauty contest without comparison with the prize being the

position of Queen in the Persian Empire.

- The description includes the word ‘every’ and this should not be missed. This was a massive undertaking with no one to be missed who could meet the qualifications.
- Before we get carried away with the romance of the idea think of some of the practical implications throughout the kingdom.
 - Many of these young women may have been previously promised to another before this search is carried out.
 - The unmarried men in the kingdom seeking their own wives would be without options until the search is completed.
- This would be a sought after honor for many from the families whose daughter could be chosen as well as the province where she lived being honored as well.
 - There may have been families who did not wish for the daughters to be taken away and unable to return to them forever.
- All the women were to live in the harem under the charge of Hegai,
- The name Hegai occurs as an officer of Xerxes in the Histories of Herodotus (ix. 34)
 - While in the harem the women are to let their cosmetics be given them, we will look at this more in detail when we get to verse 12.
- Verse 4 gives the conclusion of this venture as:

“Then let the young lady who pleases the king be queen in place of Vashti.”

- To the surprise of no one,” And the matter pleased the king, and he did accordingly.”
- King Ahasuerus was reported by historians to be a womanizer so this suggestion would please him.

Esth. 2:5 Now there was at the citadel in Susa a Jew whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite,

Esth. 2:6 who had been taken into exile from Jerusalem with the captives who had been exiled with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had exiled.

Esth. 2:7 He was bringing up Hadassah, that is Esther, his uncle’s daughter, for she had no father or mother. Now the young lady was beautiful of form and face, and when her father and her mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.

Esth. 2:8 So it came about when the command and decree of the king were heard and many young ladies were gathered to the citadel of Susa into the custody of Hegai, that Esther was taken to the king’s palace into the custody of Hegai, who was in charge of the women.

Esth. 2:9 Now the young lady pleased him and found favor with him. So he quickly provided her with her cosmetics and food, gave her seven choice maids from

the king's palace and transferred her and her maids to the best place in the harem.

Esth. 2:10 Esther did not make known her people or her kindred, for Mordecai had instructed her that she should not make them known.

Esth. 2:11 Every day Mordecai walked back and forth in front of the court of the harem to learn how Esther was and how she fared.

- In verse 5 the narrative focuses in specifically at the citadel of Susa.
 - The next character of the story is revealed as, “a Jew whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite.”
- Mordecai was already living at the citadel in Susa.
 - We have already ascertained the men serving at the citadel of Susa were highly regarded men and a representative of either a province or people group in the Persian Empire.
- Mordecai's family tree is listed ending with an establishment of him being from the Jewish tribe of Benjamin.
- Verse 6 establishes Mordicai's grandfather Kish as one, “who had been taken into exile from Jerusalem with the captives who had been exiled with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had exiled.”
- The event of King Jeconiah's exiled is found in Jer. 27:19-20:

Jer. 27:19 “For thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the pillars, concerning the sea, concerning the stands and concerning the rest of the vessels that are left in this city,

Jer. 27:20 which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon did not take when he carried into exile Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, from Jerusalem to Babylon, and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem.

- Nebuchadnezzar's removal of king Jeconiah from Jerusalem was in 597 BC.
 - All the nobles of Jerusalem were included in this exile, Kish would have been in this group of people and have been from one of the noble families of Israel.
 - Mordecai was from the royal families of the Jews.
- Verse 7 tells us, “He was bringing up Hadassah, that is Esther, his uncle's daughter, for she had no father or mother.
 - Now the young lady was beautiful of form and face, and when her father and her mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.”
- The next character in the narrative of Esther is introduced as Hadassah, a Jewish name meaning ‘myrtle’ and her Persian name Esther meaning ‘star’, this could be a potential reference to the star-like flowers of the myrtle.
 - Esther is Mordecai's cousin as she is his uncle's daughter.

- Esther is without a living father or mother, however her family line is also from a royal family of Jews just as Mordecai, he adopted her and was raising her as his own daughter.
- Esther is described as, “the young lady was beautiful of form and face”
 - Verse 8 indicates what happens next and what the result is, So it came about when the command and decree of the king were heard and many young ladies were gathered to the citadel of Susa into the custody of Hegai, that Esther was taken to the king’s palace into the custody of Hegai, who was in charge of the women.”
- Notice there is a command and a decree issued.
 - A command is an order given to be carried out as a task but the decree is issued with the weight of law.
- As a result of this command, “many young ladies were gathered to the citadel of Susa into the custody of Hegai,”
- It is with this group of young women we find out, “that Esther was taken to the king’s palace into the custody of Hegai, who was in charge of the women.”
- To be clear the scriptures are giving this detailed information to explain why this Jewish girl would be found in the harem of the Persian king.
 - Mordecai and Esther were under command of the king.
 - There was no option to disobey this command.
- The narrative seems to move quickly as verse 9 says, “Now the young lady pleased him and found favor with him.”
 - So he quickly provided her with her cosmetics and food, gave her seven choice maids from the king’s palace and transferred her and her maids to the best place in the harem.”
- Esther pleased Hegai and found favor with him, we are not told how this is achieved just a fact that it was true.
 - Hegai was in charge of the harem and once he identified someone he thought would be a suitable woman for the job he moved quickly to provide her with her cosmetics and food.
- These would be the best cosmetics and food in the kingdom.
- Secondly we see Hegai, “gave her seven choice maids from the king’s palace”.
- Lastly he, “transferred her and her maids to the best place in the harem.”
- It is important to remember what the daily life would have been like at the court of the king.
 - It would be a very dangerous place, especially for a young lady.
 - There would have been intrigue by all the political rivalry that would have been taking shape in this situation.
 - Every province would have wanted the honor of providing the king with his next queen.
 - There were those most likely in the royal court who still had loyalties to Vashti.

- There were those who did not want to see King Ahasuerus succeed, as we see displayed later in the book of Esther.
- This is a world of intrigue and danger.
- Verse 10 seems to indicate this truth as, “Esther did not make known her people or her kindred, for Mordecai had instructed her that she should not make them known.”
- Esther does not tell anyone she is of Jewish decent.
 - She does not say what family she is from or who her relatives are.
 - She can honestly respond that she is an orphan.
 - She carries out the instructions given to her by Mordecai, even though she has left his home and is now residing in the palace receiving special recognition.
- It would seem being a Jew in this time would have added to the dangers Esther might face.
 - This also will bear out as a truth of this time in history as the story will continue to unfold.
- It would appear Esther would not have practiced the rituals of the Law in terms of restricted foods, or practicing of the feasts.
 - This may be something that the Jews were not practicing in their exile but we are not told here any of those details.
- Mordecai displayed his true affection for Esther as verse 11 says, "Every day Mordecai walked back and forth in front of the court of the harem to learn how Esther was and how she fared."
- There are no details given as to who would give Mordecai the updates on Ester’s well being.
 - It is possible it was one of her maids or it could have been Esther herself but we are not told.
 - It would seem Mordecai truly cared for Esther, this may also be the reason she trusted the advice that he had given to her to not reveal her lineage.

Esth. 2:12 Now when the turn of each young lady came to go in to King Ahasuerus, after the end of her twelve months under the regulations for the women — for the days of their beautification were completed as follows: six months with oil of myrrh and six months with spices and the cosmetics for women —

Esth. 2:13 the young lady would go in to the king in this way: anything that she desired was given her to take with her from the harem to the king’s palace.

Esth. 2:14 In the evening she would go in and in the morning she would return to the second harem, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king’s eunuch who was in charge of the concubines. She would not again go in to the king unless the king delighted in her and she was summoned by name.

- Verse 12 gives a lot of information as to the processes involved before a young woman

could be brought to the king's chambers.

- First we learn that each woman would go in separately to King Ahasuerus.
- This visitation would not happen until there was a completion of 12 months, called the regulations for the women.
- This would have been a common protection for the king.
 - It was through careful examination over a period of time that diseases would be detected.
 - It is often the symptoms of disease take some time to present.
 - Secondly it would be absolutely certain the young woman was not with child before being with the king.
- Next the twelve months were divided with six months beginning with oil of myrrh, this oil is recorded as popular in other royal courts so not unique to the Persian court and it does have a reputation of containing anti-inflammatory, anti-septic, and expectorant properties.
- The second six months were spices and the cosmetics for women.
 - From this time in history this may have included hair removal, lightening of skin color and perfuming the skin and hair with oils and incense.
- There may also have been time for education in life at the royal court.
- Verse 13 begins by describing, “the young lady was to go in to the king this way: anything that she desired was given her to take with her from the harem to the king's palace.”
- Each woman is given a choice to take anything she desires with her when she goes to be with the king.
 - This was something she would have giving a considerable amount of thought to as she prepared for this event.
 - Each young lady would have wanted to make a unique impression on the king.
- Verse 14 demonstrates the change in the young woman's life that happened after this evening with the king, “In the evening she would go in and in the morning she would return to the second harem, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the concubines. She would not again go in to the king unless the king delighted in her and she was summoned by name.”
- The young ladies would go to the king in the evening and after that she would leave in the morning to be moved to a new location in the harem.
 - She would enter a virgin and leave a concubine of the king.
 - She would leave the harem managed by Hegai and be moved to the harem managed by Shaashgaz.
- This harem is filled with the concubines of the king.
 - She would not be brought back in to be with the king unless he asked for her by name because the king was delighted with her.
 - She would not go back to her family, she would live in the palace and be provided for.

- She could not marry another man.
- She would most likely not have her own family to raise. If she did have a child, a male child in particular, this son would not be considered in line for the throne.

Esth. 2:15 Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai who had taken her as his daughter, came to go in to the king, she did not request anything except what Hegai, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the women, advised. And Esther found favor in the eyes of all who saw her.

Esth. 2:16 So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus to his royal palace in the tenth month which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.

Esth. 2:17 The king loved Esther more than all the women, and she found favor and kindness with him more than all the virgins, so that he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.

Esth. 2:18 Then the king gave a great banquet, Esther's banquet, for all his princes and his servants; he also made a holiday for the provinces and gave gifts according to the king's bounty.

- Verse 15 gives insight into the character of Esther as we are reminded of her family connections, her father was Abigail and that her cousin Mordecai took her as his daughter.
 - When it was the evening in which this young woman would go in to the king she only asked for what Hegai advised her to take.
- It seems Esther took counsel from those around her which would display a humble spirit.
- The scriptures say, "Esther found favor in the eyes of all who saw her."
 - She found favor with Mordecai as he took her as his daughter.
 - She found favor with Hegai as he quickly brought her into the harem and gave her advantage over all the other virgins.
- Verse 16 gives us the details of when this event takes place, "So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus to his royal palace in the tenth month which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign."
 - This is the confirmation of the historical time this narrative takes place.
 - This would have been about four years from the time the king had issued his edit concerning Vashti.
- This would be one of the area of concern for the Jews reading this narrative regarding Esther as it would display a young Jewish virgin going to be with a Gentile, married man.
 - This would be a violation of Jewish Law and could be seen as a disgrace to some.
 - This became a moral struggle for many Jews to put this in a positive light as it appears was needed in later years because Esther would come to represent a heroine of the Jews.
 - This would be why the Rabbis took care to write history to put Esther in a better

light as compared to Vashti.

- The focus should be directed to what the scriptures have to say.
- God uses all events of history to bring Himself glory even the parts that seem mired in darkness.
- Verse 17 displays the response of the king after his evening spent with Esther as we read, “The king loved Esther more than all the women, and she found favor and kindness with him more than all the virgins, so that he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti, he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti”
- Esther was compared to all the women in the king’s harem, both the concubines and the virgins and is said to have found favor and kindness with the king.
- The result was the king set the royal crown on her head.
 - She was selected to be his queen in place of Vashti.
 - This king only has one queen at a time, one wife he considers to be queen.
- Verse 18 describes what the king does next, “Then the king gave a great banquet, Esther’s banquet, for all his princes and his servants; he also made a holiday for the provinces and gave gifts according to the king’s bounty.”
- The king is happy once again and celebrates by giving a great banquet for all his princes and his servants.
 - The king also shared his joy with the kingdom by making a special holiday to mark the event in all the provinces and giving gifts.

Esth. 2:19 When the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai was sitting at the king’s gate.

Esth. 2:20 Esther had not yet made known her kindred or her people, even as Mordecai had commanded her; for Esther did what Mordecai told her as she had done when under his care.

Esth. 2:21 In those days, while Mordecai was sitting at the king’s gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king’s officials from those who guarded the door, became angry and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.

Esth. 2:22 But the plot became known to Mordecai and he told Queen Esther, and Esther informed the king in Mordecai’s name.

Esth. 2:23 Now when the plot was investigated and found to be so, they were both hanged on a gallows; and it was written in the Book of the Chronicles in the king’s presence.

- Verse 19 describes another event at the citadel of Susa, “When the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai was sitting at the king’s gate.”
- The description of gathering the virgins together the second time has been debated by many with differing opinions.
- Looking back at v 17 we know Esther found favor and kindness more than all the virgins.

- These are those who still had hoped to have the opportunity to impress the king but Esther had found the favor and kindness of the king.
- The contest was over.
- The important part of the verse is describing the time in connection with where Mordecai is at the time as he is described as sitting at the king's gate.
- The gate of a city was often where official business was conducted. See Ruth 4:1-2:

Ruth 4:1 Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there, and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz spoke was passing by, so he said, "Turn aside, friend, sit down here." And he turned aside and sat down.

Ruth 4:2 He took ten men of the elders of the city and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down.

- In this smaller community we find Boaz calling for witnesses in a legal matter in the book of Ruth.
 - In a capital city like Susa to be a man sitting at the king's gate would come with significant responsibility.
- Verse 20 reiterates that, "Esther had not yet made known her kindred or her people, even as Mordecai had commanded her; for Esther did what Mordecai told her as she had done when under his care."
- Esther is still listening to the direction of her adopted father, Mordecai, even though she is no longer under his care but has been crowned the Queen.
 - This again displays her humble character.
- Verse 21 discloses a significant incident, "In those days, while Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's officials from those who guarded the door, became angry and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus."
- The relevance of, 'in those days' is tied to the event where the virgins were gathered together a second time, which was also a time in which Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate.
- During this particular time two men, who are described as officials of the king who were to guard the door of the king's gate, become angry enough to try and kill King Ahasuerus.
- Tensions were probably running high for a lot of reasons but for the young virgins who were to be sent home their delegates would have been offended for them.
 - That is speculation but it would seem the two events are tied together here.
- The king's life would always be in danger as this is part of the risk to having so much power.
- In verse 22 we hear that the plot became known to Mordecai and he translated the message through Queen Esther.
- It was then Esther who told the king the information she had received from Mordecai.

- Finally in verse 23 the result of this revelation is that there was an investigation lauded and the report was verified with the conclusion of both men being hanged on the gallows.
- As with every important event that transpired during the king's reign this one, "was written in the Book of the Chronicles in the king's presence."
- The books containing the king's written records would have been destroyed in the fire that happened during the reign of Artaxerxes, the son of King Ahasuerus.
 - How amazing is it the events were recorded for us by God in His divine way.
- The coincidences continue to stack up in this story.
- The King is ready to carry on his duties as King now that the wars of subsided with the Greeks.
 - A Jewish princess, not identified publicly, already resides in the citadel of Susa.
 - She happens to be beautiful, humble, obedient, wise and charming.
 - She catches the attention of Hegai an important official in the king's service, one who happens to control the daily lives of all the virgins brought to the king.
 - The king happens to adore her as well and selects her to be his queen.
 - Her adopted father happens to be sitting in the king's gate when a plot to kill the king is discovered and thwarted.
- What coincidences have come together in your life?
 - Have you seen the hand of God bringing unexpected events to some amazing outcome?
 - Do you hold all things in life with an open hand toward God to use as He wills and determined to give Him full change and credit for all things?

**Prov. 3:3 Do not let kindness and truth leave you;
Bind them around your neck,
Write them on the tablet of your heart.**

**Prov. 3:4 So you will find favor and good repute
In the sight of God and man.**

**Prov. 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart
And do not lean on your own understanding.**

**Prov. 3:6 In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He will make your paths straight.**

**Prov. 3:7 Do not be wise in your own eyes;
Fear the LORD and turn away from evil.**

**Prov. 3:8 It will be healing to your body
And refreshment to your bones.**

- Chapter 1 of Esther introduces King Ahasuerus as a king over the Persian empire around 484-481 BCE ruling from the capital city of Susa.
 - This was a time the empire was preparing to go to war with the Greeks.
 - The second part of chapter 1 unveils Queen Vashti's refusal of the command from King Ahasuerus to come display her royal crown and her beauty, and how an edict was brought by the 7 advisors to the King for the disgrace brought upon the King and kingdom.
- In Chapter 2 we were introduced to Esther and Mordecai as the search for a new queen was carried out. Esther is crowned queen and Mordecai saves the life of the king.

Esth. 3:1 After these events King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him and established his authority over all the princes who were with him.

Esth. 3:2 All the king's servants who were at the king's gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman; for so the king had commanded concerning him. But Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage.

Esth. 3:3 Then the king's servants who were at the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why are you transgressing the king's command?"

Esth. 3:4 Now it was when they had spoken daily to him and he would not listen to them, that they told Haman to see whether Mordecai's reason would stand; for he had told them that he was a Jew.

Esth. 3:5 When Haman saw that Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage to him, Haman was filled with rage.

Esth. 3:6 But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone, for they had told him who the people of Mordecai were; therefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews, the people of Mordecai, who were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus.

- Verse 1 begins with the phrase, 'after these things', the events that were just revealed dealt with the selection of Esther as queen and the revelation by Mordecai of the plot to kill the king.
- The narration of Esther is focused on events happening in the Persian courts that ultimately have an impact on God's people.
 - The next event recorded is a significant elevation in the court and is detailed as, 'King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him and established his authority over all the princes who were with him.'
- The declaration that Haman was an Agagite may refer to a particular ethnic group but there is nothing known with certainty about the people designated by this name.
 - (Bible Knowledge Commentary)
- Archeologists have uncovered an inscription which indicates that Agag was also the name of a province in the Persian Empire. This probably explains why Haman was called

an Agagite.

- The Jews have a particular desire to find a moral reason that Mordecai would disobey the king. There are some who have put forth the premise that this man was a descendent from King Agag found in 1 Samuel 15.
 - There are some parallels to this narrative as it would be clear in 1 Samuel the Amalekites were sworn enemies of the Jews.
 - The conflict comes down to King Agag and King Saul, a Benjamite.
 - God had commanded the extermination of the Amalekites.

1Sam. 15:17 Samuel said, “Is it not true, though you were little in your own eyes, you were made the head of the tribes of Israel? And the LORD anointed you king over Israel,

1Sam. 15:18 and the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, ‘Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are exterminated.’

1Sam. 15:19 “Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD, but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of the LORD?”

- For the purpose of staying focused on the narrative in Esther we simply do not know the true connection of Haman to the Amalekites.
- Esther 3 verse 1 clearly says King Ahasuerus promoted Haman and specifically defines the authority he was to have over all the princes who were with him.
 - The bible does not establish what happened to bring about this promotion for Haman.
 - The authority he is given was over the princes who were with him.
 - This would demonstrate the limit of his authority, however we are not told how far that authority reached in the kingdom at this point in the narrative.
- Considering the power King Ahasuerus later gives Haman we can conclude he did fill a very prominent position in the administrative structure of the government.
- Verse 2 details it was all the king’s servants who were at the king’s gate that were to respond to Haman in a particular fashion.
 - This was a place where decisions would be made and a place of honor for all those who served there.
- All these men serving in a position of influence in the king’s gate were to specifically bow and pay homage to Haman.
 - We don’t use the word homage much in our general speech so we just need to understand it is a word that depicts showing special honor or respect to someone in a public way.
- The bowing down and giving honor to Haman publicly was because the king commanded it.
- Next we hear that Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage.

- In verse 3 the result of Mordecai's public response is that, "the king's servants who were at the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why are you transgressing the king's command?"
 - The king's servants at the gate would have been men serving alongside Mordecai at the king's gate.
 - Once the king has spoken everyone would have been expected to do as the king commands or experience the consequences when they disobey the king.
- As we have seen disobeying a command of the king could have very negatives consequences as in the case of queen Vashti.
- These men were looking for the reason Mordecai would not obey the king.
 - It would appear until this time Mordecai had been a completely loyal and obedient servant to the king.
- Verse 4 reveals the men spoke daily to Mordecai and he would not listen to them, this does not mean he did not hear them but that he would not obey then command of bowing and giving homage.
 - We are not told how many days these men spoke to Mordecai.
- When Mordecai does not obey the command the men tell Haman.
- The scriptures say the reason the men told Haman was to, "to see whether Mordecai's reason would stand; for he had told them that he was a Jew."
- When Mordecai is questioned about why he will not bowing down or giving homage to Haman his reason was because he was a Jew.
 - There is nothing given in detail about why a Jew would not be allowed to give homage to Haman it is just stated as a matter of fact.
- Mordecai would have recognized men who had authority over him as he has obviously done in service to the king.
 - Bowing to show respect to those with authority would not be a violation of Jewish law.
- This may be the first time that Mordecai has shared publicly that he was a Jew.
 - He had given counsel to Esther not to share this about herself and it may Mordecai had practiced the same protective revelation about himself in the royal court.
- The question was whether this reason of being a Jew would be a rationale accepted by Haman or the court to allow Mordecai to disobey the command given by king Ahasuerus.
- In verse 5 it is revealed, "When Haman saw that Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage to him, Haman was filled with rage."
- It appears the lack of bowing down was not evident to Haman until it was brought to his attention by the servants who were at the king's gate.
 - It does not seem that Mordecai went out of his way to be obvious about not bowing or giving homage so as to bring attention to himself.
 - Once Haman was aware of the lack of obedience then he looks for evidence of it.
- When Haman verifies that Mordecai is not bowing down or paying homage to him he is filled with rage.

- Now the result of this rage is seen in verse 6 as two things are exposed; first Haman discovered Mordecai is a Jew and secondly Haman's desire is now not to only destroy Mordecai but all the Jews in the entire kingdom of Ahasuerus.
- We do not know if Haman's reason to destroy the people of Mordecai was to make an example of him or if there was some other long running hatred of the Jews.
- The fact that Haman has a desire to destroy all the Jews might be linked to the description of him being an Agagite.

Esth. 3:7 In the first month, which is the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, Pur, that is the lot, was cast before Haman from day to day and from month to month, until the twelfth month, that is the month Adar.

Esth. 3:8 Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from those of all other people and they do not observe the king's laws, so it is not in the king's interest to let them remain.

Esth. 3:9 "If it is pleasing to the king, let it be decreed that they be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who carry on the king's business, to put into the king's treasuries."

Esth. 3:10 Then 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.

Esth. 3:11 The king said to Haman, "The silver is yours, and the people also, to do with them as you please."

- Verse 7 gives a lot of details in regards to time references beginning with a detail of the next events happening in the first month, which is the month Nisan.
 - The dates are given with the Jewish calendar in focus.
- Next the time period these events occur in the time frame of the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, which we know to be five years since Esther was made queen. Esther 2:16:

Esth. 2:16 So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus to his royal palace in the tenth month which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.

- The event described as beginning to take place is that, "Pur, that is the lot, was cast before Haman from day to day and from month to month, until the twelfth month, that is the month Adar."
 - Pur is the Babylonian word for lot.
 - A lot would be cast by the rolling of clay cubes, similar to what we use called dice.
 - The lot was cast before Haman every day until the twelfth month, the Jewish month of Adar.
- Haman had the lot cast until he received whatever form of confirmation lead to the day and month his plan against the Jews is to take place.

- Haman was waiting for the lot to be cast that would indicate he would have success in his plan.
- The Persian religious system was known to be very superstitious and stressed fate and chance. Haman was following fate, by the casting of the lot, to dictate his move against the Jews
- Haman cast the lots to receive the diviners direction before bringing this to the king.
 - His inquiry began with which day was the best day then it moved to which month of the year.
 - The month determined was the twelfth month. On the Jewish calendar this month was known as Adar.
- In verse 8 when Haman has a confirmation that the time is right to bring his request before King Ahasuerus, “Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, “There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from those of all other people and they do not observe the king’s laws, so it is not in the king’s interest to let them remain.”
- Haman begins his request before the king in identifying there is a subset of people scattered and dispersed in all the provinces of your kingdom, referred to here as a ‘certain people’.
- Haman uses flattery from the beginning by referring the kingdom as, ‘your kingdom’.
- Haman secondly emphasizes the threat to Ahasuerus’ kingdom is located in every province of the king.
 - That would be all 127 provinces of the Persian kingdom had a settlement of Jews in it.
- The final point to be made is why these people pose a threat to the kingdom in that they hold to laws that are different from those of all the other people.
- The Jews have maintained being a distinctive race of people by practicing many of the things passed to them from the Law.
 - They are to marry within the community of Jews.
- The strength of the community is maintained in practicing special observances like keeping the Sabbath and celebrating annual feasts together.
 - This is combined with daily habits that separate them from the surrounding people like sticking to strict dietary laws and other life activities as spelled out in the Law.
- Historically the Jews have not been assimilated and absorbed by other cultures.
- The final accusation Haman makes about these people is that they do not observe the king’s laws.
- There is an insinuation that all other people groups did not have a difficult time adhering to the king’s laws.
- Haman does not give specific laws of the king these people did not observe.
 - The one that has been defined in the book of Esther is that Mordecai had disobeyed the king’s command to bow down and pay homage to Haman.
- Haman does not identify who the people are or at least that is not given in the words of

scripture.

- The king does not ask Haman who these people are.
- With all the evidence Haman says he has discerned about these people he concludes, “so it is not in the king’s interest to let them remain.”
- Haman was a trusted advisor to the king and he presents his proposal as something that would be good for the king in his kingdom.
- We are not told Haman reveals what laws are not being observed, or how many people are represented in his proposal.
- The obvious insinuation is that this people keeping separate and keeping their own laws and in doing so not keeping the laws of the kingdom make them a significant threat so much so they must be removed.
- Now Haman moves to his solution for this threat in verse 9 as he says, “If it is pleasing to the king, let it be decreed that they be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who carry on the king’s business, to put into the king’s treasuries.”
- Haman endears himself to the king by beginning with, “If it is pleasing to the King”. Always the consummate politician.
 - The solution for this threat is to have a decree that they will be destroyed.
 - Remember a decree made in the Persian system of government could not be rescinded.
- All large scale government actions involve a cost and Haman takes the responsibility for the cost of this project when he tells the king he is willing to pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who carry on the king’s business, to put into the king’s treasuries.”
 - Ten thousand talents of silver weighed about 750,000 pounds.
 - A pound of silver today would be valued at about \$366.00.
 - The value of silver varies but this would represent an enormous amount worth millions of dollars in present-day currency.
 - This was a staggering sum of money which Haman was willing to pay.
 - Haman is a very wealthy man.
 - Haman promises to put the funds into the king’s treasuries. From there the funds are to be given into the hands of those who carry on the king’s business.
- Haman says he is willing to pick up the cost of this project, this means so much to Haman he is willing to personally pay for this project to be carried out.
 - Haman is ingratiating himself to the king or this could be seen as bribing the king.
- Many men of power will look the other way or not ask about details when a significant amount of money is being given to them. Greed is a powerful tool in controlling the direction of political decisions.

Prov. 11:5 The righteousness of the blameless will smooth his way,

But the wicked will fall by his own wickedness.

Prov. 11:6 The righteousness of the upright will deliver them,

But the treacherous will be caught by their own greed.

- Greed is a form of idolatry:

Col. 3:5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.

- King Ahasuerus is lured into Haman's trap by his greed.
- In verse 10 the king takes a significant action as he removes his signet ring and gives it to Haman.
- A signet ring held the official seal of the king by which he authorized the business of the kingdom. The king handed over the decisions of the kingdom to Haman.
- Haman is again described as the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews.
- Verse 11 demonstrates the outcome of Haman's generous offer as, "The king said to Haman, "The silver is yours, and the people also, to do with them as you please."
- The silver already belonged to Haman's so when the king makes this declaration he is telling Haman he does not need to put the funds in the treasury he can just enforce the decree and spend the funds needed to carry out the decree.
- The second part of what the king declares is more revealing as he literally says these people belong to Haman now and he can do as he pleases with them.
 - Haman has purchased the Jews from King Ahasuerus.

Esth. 3:12 Then the king's scribes were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and it was written just as Haman commanded to the king's satraps, to the governors who were over each province and to the princes of each people, each province according to its script, each people according to its language, being written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet ring.

Esth. 3:13 Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces to destroy, to kill and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to seize their possessions as plunder.

Esth. 3:14 A copy of the edict to be issued as law in every province was published to all the peoples so that they should be ready for this day.

Esth. 3:15 The couriers went out impelled by the king's command while the decree was issued at the citadel in Susa; and while the king and Haman sat down to drink, the city of Susa was in confusion.

- Haman wastes no time as he summons the king's scribes on the thirteenth day of the first month.
 - Haman had approached King Ahasuerus in the twelfth month, Adar as seen in verse 7.
- This was a significant day in many ways.
 - The significance of the day to the Jews must not be overlooked, the Jews would be celebrating the next day their Passover celebration.

Lev. 23:5 'In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight is the LORD'S Passover.

Num. 9:5 They observed the Passover in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, in the wilderness of Sinai; according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses, so the sons of Israel did.

- This day was a remembrance for the Jews of their deliverance from Egypt.

Ex. 12:23 "For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to smite you.

Ex. 12:24 "And you shall observe this event as an ordinance for you and your children forever.

Ex. 12:25 "When you enter the land which the LORD will give you, as He has promised, you shall observe this rite.

Ex. 12:26 "And when your children say to you, 'What does this rite mean to you?'

Ex. 12:27 you shall say, 'It is a Passover sacrifice to the LORD who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but spared our homes.'" And the people bowed low and worshiped.

- The Jews were just celebrating a remembrance of a time when when God had spared them from destruction and also destroyed their enemies as Haman continues to carry out his plan.
- Esth 3:12 details what Haman commanded:
 - It is now not commanded by king Ahasuerus but by Haman himself.
 - Haman wastes no time in carrying out his desires.
- The command goes out to the king's satraps, to the governors who were over each province and to the princes of each people, each province according to its script, each people according to its language.
- This is the same language as we found when the decree was to be issued removing

Queen Vashti in Esther 1:22.

- The scriptures clarify this is all written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet ring.
- The King is complicit in these actions as he was the one specifically making the decision to allow Haman this kind of authority and power.
 - The King also knew Haman's intentions were to wipe out a people group.
- The specifics of what is being communicated is detailed next in verse 13 "Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces to destroy, to kill and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to seize their possessions as plunder."
- The time period given for the events to begin is exactly 11 months from the issuing of the decree to the carrying out the orders of the decree.
 - The decree is issued on the thirteenth day of the first month and to be carried out the thirteenth day of the twelfth month.
- The expanse of the destruction is simply understood to kill and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, women and children.
- The term used in our modern world is known as genocide.
 - This is a deliberate and complete elimination of a people group or ethnic group.
 - Ultimately the aim is to remove that group of people from existence.
- The supplemental action of the seizing of their possession as plunder gives the added incentive that would be giving to those who participated in carrying out the commands of this decree.
- Haman had already been put in charge of the distribution of funds for this decree.
 - This may have been a military action to ensure the command is carried out.
 - The addition of plunder being available to those who assist in the fulfilling of the command would guarantee an engaged citizenry in this endeavor.
- Verse 14 indicates a copy of the edict was issued as law and was to be carried out in every province and to be carried out with the full weight of being the law of the land in every province.
- The edict was sent out quickly for, "all the peoples so that they should be ready for this day."
- All the citizenry were put on notice this was the law.
 - This would allow freedom for those carrying out the law to do it unhindered.
 - This would also alert other people and people groups that this was going to happen, so when the killing begins it would be limited to a subset of the citizenry and those not included in the edict would know they were safe.
 - This would be done to avoid expansive fear from taking over the general population.
- Verse 15 details how the decree was sent by couriers to the provinces.
 - There seems to be some urgency to get the message out even though there is time to prepare for this event to happen.

- Next the decree was specifically issued at the citadel in Susa.
 - While the decree was being delivered to the city of Susa the king and Haman sat down to drink.
 - The men seem to be celebrating the decree issued in the city of Susa.
- King Ahasuerus was a coconspirator in this wicked event.
- The result of the decree left the city of Susa in confusion.
 - The people would have been confused because there was no reason for this kind of destruction of a people group.
 - The Jews had not done anything within the empire to justify this action.
- There was no threat being made by the Jews on the kingdom of Persia
 - There was no war declared by the Jews on the Persian kingdom.
- This decree made no sense to the people and this left them in confusion.
- When there is no reason given for this grievance act the people are left with more questions than answers.
 - The question of who could the rulers turn on next would bring distrust to many.
 - When those in authority do not act in rational ways it leaves those under their authority doubting the motives of those in power.
 - This undermines the strength of a kingdom.
- Haman just happens to come along in this time in history and rise to prominence.
 - King Ahasuerus just happens to be willing to sell out a people group in his kingdom.
 - The king just happens to allow a decree to be issued in a kingdom where the decrees could not be rescinded.
 - Mordecai just happens to have stayed diligent and useful to the king and still serving in the king's gate.
- We are again confronted with God's perfect timing in the events contained in human history.
 - There are no coincidences in this world or in our lives.
 - Everything happens for a reason, even when we are not given the insight from God as to the why behind the event occurs.

Acts 17:24 “The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;

Acts 17:25 nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;

Acts 17:26 and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,

Acts 17:27 that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find

Him, though He is not far from each one of us;

Acts 17:28 for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'

- We need to remember daily our times and boundaries are determined by God.
- We need to meditate on the fact that it is in Him we now live, move and exist.
- In the midst of the circumstances of our lives do we stay focused on God's Will for us daily?

- Let's begin with a review:
- Chapter 1 of Esther introduces King Ahasuerus as a king over the Persian empire around 484-481 BCE ruling from the capital city of Susa.
 - This was a time the empire was preparing to go to war with the Greeks.
 - The second part of chapter 1 unveils Queen Vashti's refusal of the command from King Ahasuerus to come display her royal crown and her beauty, and how an edict was brought by the 7 advisors to the King for the disgrace brought upon the King and kingdom.
- In Chapter 2 we were introduced to Esther and Mordecai as the search for a new queen was carried out. Esther is crowned queen and Mordecai saves the life of the king.
- Chapter 3 introduces Haman, who is elevated by king Ahasuerus, and shunned by Mordecai, and displays he is the enemy of the Jews with intentions to exterminate them from the kingdom.

Esth. 4:1 When Mordecai learned all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city and wailed loudly and bitterly.

Esth. 4:2 He went as far as the king's gate, for no one was to enter the king's gate clothed in sackcloth.

Esth. 4:3 In each and every province where the command and decree of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing; and many lay on sackcloth and ashes.

- In verse 1 we are not told how long after the edict had been issued that Mordecai learned about the details of the edict but we can assume it did not take long.
- The tearing of clothes and replacing them with sackcloth is an outward sign of intense inward mourning demonstrated throughout the scriptures. Two examples: Genesis 37:34, Matthew 11:20-21:

Gen. 37:34 So Jacob tore his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days.

Matt. 11:20 Then He began to denounce the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent.

Matt. 11:21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

- The putting on of sackcloth and asked is a sign of intense mourning in some cases for the death of someone but also where a repented heart is displayed.
- In verse 2 Mordecai expressed his grief publicly but refrained from venturing beyond the

king's gate.

- There was a clear understanding this expression of grief was not to enter in or pass through the king's gate because it was a sign of mourning and in this culture could also be a sign of discontent. The king was not to be subjected to these displays.
- We see this was true as well in Nehemiah 2:1-4:

Neh. 2:1 And it came about in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, that wine was before him, and I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence.

Neh. 2:2 So the king said to me, "Why is your face sad though you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of heart." Then I was very much afraid.

Neh. 2:3 I said to the king, "Let the king live forever. Why should my face not be sad when the city, the place of my fathers' tombs, lies desolate and its gates have been consumed by fire?"

Neh. 2:4 Then the king said to me, "What would you request?" So I prayed to the God of heaven.

- As a servant to the king, it was not acceptable to demonstrate any negative personal emotion. The focus was to be on the service to the king alone. If there was anything dissatisfying it could potentially reflect something negative about the king.
- In Esther verse 3 the expression displayed to the command and decree from the king in the Jewish communities also brought mourning with fasting, weeping and wailing as well as many of them lay on sackcloth and ashes.
 - They did not wear the sackcloth and ashes but lay on them, again to express their intense emotions publicly displayed. Also seen in Nehemiah 1:4, Daniel 9:3:

Neh. 1:4 When I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

Dan. 9:3 So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes.

- There is no specific mention of prayer in the narrative of Esther but it would seem prayer often accompanied fasting.
 - One of the reasons the detail of praying might be missing in this narrative could be the question of who the prayer was to and the book of Esther has nothing referencing the Jews God. (more to come)

Esth. 4:4 Then Esther's maidens and her eunuchs came and told her, and the queen writhed in great anguish. And she sent garments to clothe Mordecai that he might remove his sackcloth from him, but he did not accept them.

Esth. 4:5 Then Esther summoned Hathach from the king's eunuchs, whom the king had appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what this was and why it was.

Esth. 4:6 So Hathach went out to Mordecai to the city square in front of the king's gate.

Esth. 4:7 Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact amount of money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews.

Esth. 4:8 He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict which had been issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show Esther and inform her, and to order her to go in to the king to implore his favor and to plead with him for her people.

- In Esther verse 4 we understand Esther's maidens and eunuchs tell her what Mordecai is seen doing.
 - There is no indication the maidens or the eunuchs understand why Mordecai is mourning.
 - Esther does not have understanding yet of why Mordecai is grieving publicly just that he is grieving. She does not need to know why just that he is in pain and displaying that publicly.
 - Esther responds to the news of Mordecai's public mourning as described as writhes in great anguish.
- When we know someone is in pain we often grieve with them and for them. We don't need to know all the details of someone's situation, only that they are in pain.
- Esther tries to bring comfort to Mordecai by sending him garments so he can remove the sackcloth.
 - As long as Mordecai is in sackcloth he can't come close to the citadel.
 - Esther would have no direct way to communicate with Mordecai.
 - Mordecai will not accept the garments to replace his sackcloth.
- In verse 5 since Mordecai can't come to Esther she sends some to Mordecai.
 - The person Esther chooses to send to Mordecai is Hathach and we learn he is the king's eunuch appointed to attend Esther.
 - Hathach is to learn what Mordecai was doing and why he was doing it.
 - Clearly Esther does not know about the edict and the command from the king.
- Verse 6 clarifies that Hathach finds Mordecai in the city square located in front of the king's gate.
- Verse 7 reveals Mordecai explains to Hathach all that has happened to him and how much Haman had promised to pay the king for the annihilation of the Jews.
- We do not know how Mordecai knew of these details concerning the conversation the king and Haman had. This is another reason to believe Mordecai held an important

position in the king's court.

- In verse 8 Mordecai provides Hathach a copy of the edict detailing the intent to destroy the Jews.
 - The copy of the edict was to be shown to Esther with the specific intent for Mordecai to order her to go in to the king to implore his favor and to plead with him for her people.
 - This is not a request from Mordecai to Esther but an order.
 - She is to beg for the life of her people.
- Mordecai is not making a request but gives an order to the queen, his daughter.
 - Not a small detail to be overlooked.
 - Mordecai tells Esther to go to the king and implore his favor.
 - Mordecai now asks Esther to specially ask the king to spare the Jews which are Esther's people and in so doing Esther is being told to let the king know she is a Jew.

Esth. 4:9 Hathach came back and related Mordecai's words to Esther.

Esth. 4:10 Then Esther spoke to Hathach and ordered him to reply to Mordecai:

Esth. 4:11 "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live. And I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days."

Esth. 4:12 They related Esther's words to Mordecai.

- Verse 9 simply clarifies that Hathach came back to Esther and revealed everything to her as Mordecai had directed.
- After Esther understands the circumstances she orders Hathach in verse 10 to make a reply to Mordecai.
- Verse 11 describes what Esther knew to be true and that included all the king's servant and people of the king's provinces, "that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live."
- Mordecai would also know this to be true.
- The second detail Esther gives to Mordecai may be the reason for the message she desires to give to him.
 - If Mordecai knew this to be true he may have been hoping Esther would have an audience with the king because he had been regularly summoning her to come to him.
 - Esther clarifies to Mordecai that the king had not summoned her for the past thirty days.
- Esther did not know when she would see the king under the ordinary circumstances.

- There was no regular way to request an audience with the king, the only way someone got to see the king was if he summoned them.
 - The only way forward for Esther to do as Mordecai was ordering her was to risk her life.
- In verse 12 the pronoun used to describe those who took Esther's words to Mordecai is 'they'.
- The original group assigned with communication to Mordecai were Esther's maidens and eunuchs, probably Hathach was added to the group because he was of higher rank, being the king's eunuch.
- Keep in mind the more people aware of this communication between Esther and Mordecai the higher probability the information may become known to Haman.

Esth. 4:13 Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, “Do not imagine that you in the king’s palace can escape any more than all the Jews.

Esth. 4:14 “For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?”

Esth. 4:15 Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai,

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

Esth. 4:17 So Mordecai went away and did just as Esther had commanded him.

- Verse 13 crystalizes the truth with Mordecai's bold response to Esther. He clarifies she may be the queen living in the palace but as a Jew she will be subject to the same fate as all the Jews in the kingdom.
- The edict has been signed and it cannot be amended or rescinded.
- In verse 14 Mordecai demonstrates an amazing truth he lives by and believes with all his heart and that is God will protect the Jews from extermination.
- Esther can make a decision to remain silent on this issue and not be the one to bring this to the attention of the king.
 - If Esther makes this decision Mordecai says she and her father's house will perish.
- Mordecai is Esther's uncle and he is part of Esther's father's house.
 - If Esther remains silent her immediate family will perish.
- The Jews in Susa would most likely not survive the destruction as Haman would take special effort to destroy those Jews first.
 - Secondly Haman hates Mordecai and he will make every effort to destroy him and his immediate family.
 - This would be very personal and targeted.

- There is a clear sense of urgency in Mordecai's request for Esther to take immediate action.
 - Though the enforcement of the edict is not to take place for 11 months Mordecai asks Esther to act now.
 - The longer Haman has to plan and put in place the necessary strategies to carry out his plan the more difficult it will be to stop the immense destruction.
 - The more time allowed to Haman the more ways he will find to keep information from coming before the king.
 - Haman is a very cunning and powerful man.
- Esther can choose to stay silent and there will be deadly consequences for that decision to Esther and her family but ultimately God will bring relief and deliverance to the Jewish people it will just come from another place and not Esther.
- Mordecai clearly believes God has a special plan for His people and He will protect them as a people.
 - This does not mean there will not be significant destruction brought to the Jews just they will not cease to exist as a people, God's people.
- The Jews had just celebrated the Passover, which is a recognition of what God had done in their history, providing them a miraculous deliverance for His purposes.
- Even though the word God is not formally written in the book of Esther, this would be one of the areas where a clear reference to God is being made.
- Mordecai reminds Esther she has a privileged place in this kingdom as royalty.
 - This was not a coincidence, it was God ordained.
 - Mordecai's conclusion is that her position may have been obtained for this very purpose at this precise time in history.
- Verse 15 simply states Esther tells this group to reply to Mordecai.
- Verse 16 is Esther's request for Mordecai to assemble all the Jews in Susa and to ask them to fast for her three days and nights and this fast was to be from both food and water.
- There are many unspoken elements we have discovered in this narrative of Esther but we know to be true, like the understanding Ahasuerus was preparing for the Greek campaign during the events of chapter one.
 - Here is another opportunity to know what else would be happening during this dedicated time of fasting and that would be prayers going before the throne of God.
- The purpose of fasting was to bring a total focus of the person to commune with God.
 - Remove all distractions in the person's life so they are fully devoted to speaking to the Father.

Neh. 1:4 When I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

Psa. 35:13 But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth;
I humbled my soul with fasting,
And my prayer kept returning to my bosom.

- Esther says she and her maidens will fast in the same way.
 - This might be noticed by those residing in the palace but there are ways to fast without bringing attention to oneself.
- Christ specially addresses the issue of drawing attention to oneself when fasting in Matthew 6:16-21:

Matt. 6:16 “Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

Matt. 6:17 “But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face

Matt. 6:18 so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

Matt. 6:19 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

Matt. 6:20 “But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;

Matt. 6:21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- Matthew 6 discusses giving, praying and fasting as all things to be done with a heart focused on God and not to do these things to bring attention to ourselves when we do these things.
- It will be those things done in the will of God and with sincerity of heart God will reward.
 - If our heart is about how things will be perceived by other men than God says you will receive that attention on earth but it will not receive any heavenly reward.
- In Esther 4 when the three days and nights of fasting have been completed Esther commits she will go to the king and understands this is not allowed according to the law of the kingdom. Since it is unlawful, she is willing to die if that is the outcome.
 - Esther is willing giving up her earthly life, a life lived as a queen.
 - Esther has an eternal focus on eternity as we all should maintain each day.
- Verse 17 concludes with Mordecai going away from the public square and doing what Esther had commanded him to do.
- Mordecai leaves the meeting with those who have brought him this message from his daughter Esther.
 - A daughter he has asked to risk her life for him and for the Jews.
 - He has no idea what the end of this story is going to be as he leaves. He may never see his daughter again.

- Mordecai does leave knowing one thing for sure as he said, ‘relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place’.
- He knows God will save the Jewish people as a people for Himself, he does not know how many may die when the edict is to be carried out but he knows the Jewish people will live on because he believed the word of God.

Deut. 7:6 “For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

Deut. 7:7 “The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples,

Deut. 7:8 but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

- There are many who have witnessed this miracle over the course of human history.
- In the year 1899, Mark Twain penned his famous essay Concerning the Jews, which he later described as his “gem in the ocean.” He concluded with the following passage:

The Egyptian, the Babylonian and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other people have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished. The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?

- How does understand this promise being kept to Israel speak to us today?
- Mordecai made it clear he believed the Jews would continue to exist and we know that is because God promised that and this would be known as the will of God.
 - Mordecai understood this promise but he also had an understanding of his responsibility to be called into action in the unfolding of this promise.
- Believers are to respond in the same way knowing we are saved by faith as a gift of God how are we to respond in our daily walk?

Eph. 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

Eph. 2:9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Eph. 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works,

which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Phil. 2:9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

Phil. 2:10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

Phil. 2:11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Phil. 2:12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;

Phil. 2:13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

- Verses 9-11 display the promises that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Just as Mordecai knew the Jews were God's people based on His promise of that from the scriptures.
- Mordecai knew he was still called to work out his salvation with his life.
 - Adopting Esther, bringing her to the king's harem, sitting in the king's gate, saving the king's life, standing up to Haman and now asking Esther to risk her life for His people, fasting and praying before God.
- Verses 12-13 We are to obey and work out our salvation with fear and trembling:
 - We can do this because it is God who is at work in us.
 - It is God's will for us.
 - Is God's work.
 - And it is all for His good pleasure.
- What are we being asked to do for God in our lives?
- How are we to serve Him?
- How are we to be a Mordecai or an Esther in our world?
- More in-depth understanding of fasting for believers today can be found on the [Verse by Verse Ministry International website](#).

- Review:
- Chapter 1 of Esther introduces King Ahasuerus as a king over the Persian empire around 484-481 BCE ruling from the capital city of Susa.
 - This was a time the empire was preparing to go to war with the Greeks.
 - The second part of chapter 1 unveils Queen Vashti's refusal of the command from King Ahasuerus to come display her royal crown and her beauty, and how an edict was brought by the 7 advisors to the King for the disgrace brought upon the King and kingdom.
- In Chapter 2 we were introduced to Esther and Mordecai as the search for a new queen was carried out.
 - Esther is crowned queen and Mordecai saves the life of the king.
- Chapter 3 introduces Haman, who is elevated by king Ahasuerus, and shunned by Mordecai, and displays he is the enemy of the Jews with intentions to exterminate them from the kingdom.
- Chapter 4 displays the response to Haman's edict of Jewish extermination by Mordecai and the Jews mourning and Esther's decision to approach the king.

Esth. 5:1 Now it came about on the third day that Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace in front of the king's rooms, and the king was sitting on his royal throne in the throne room, opposite the entrance to the palace.

Esth. 5:2 When the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, she obtained favor in his sight; and the king extended to Esther the golden scepter which was in his hand. So Esther came near and touched the top of the scepter.

Esth. 5:3 Then the king said to her, "What is troubling you, Queen Esther? And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be given to you."

Esth. 5:4 Esther said, "If it pleases the king, may the king and Haman come this day to the banquet that I have prepared for him."

- In verse 1 the stage is set for the dramatic climax of the previous chapter's events.
 - The time period these events take place is established on the third day.
 - To be clear this is the third day from the last events.
 - This would be the final day of the fasting for the Jews in the city of Susa and for Esther and her maidens.
- Esther begins by being arrayed in her royal robes.
 - She would be going before the king as his queen.
- She places herself in the inner court of the king's palace.
 - The setting details include the fact this is in front of the king's rooms.
- The narrator also details the location of the king as he was sitting on his royal throne in the throne room, opposite the entrance to the palace.

- The stage has been set.
 - If we can put ourselves in the moment with Esther we might imagine the array of emotions she may be experiencing.
 - She might be anxious as she stands in a public violation of a known law.
 - She does not know the outcome but she does know one of the possible scenarios would be for the king to have her executed.
 - She may also be completely at peace as she is doing what God has led her to do and she knows she and all the Jews in Susa have been fasting and praying to God for this moment.
- Imagine those who are in attendance to the king as they witness this moment.
 - It may be silent or there may be a low murmur at this shocking display from the queen.
- Verse 2 unveils the dramatic moment in beautiful detail.
 - First the king saw Esther standing in the court.
 - The king had a decision to make and it appears he makes this decision quickly, without conferring with his advisors as the scriptures say she obtained favor in his sight.
- Because Esther has found favor with the king he extended to Esther the golden scepter which was in his hand. This would have been a very dramatic moment.
 - The sense of relief for Esther would have been great.
- In response to the offering of the scepter by the king Esther came near and touched the top of the scepter.
 - The open response of the king is the beginning of what is to be accomplished by Esther.
 - She must be relying on God each moment as she precedes into some very dangerous territory.
 - Remember the palace was a dangerous place filled with intrigue and cunning and evil motives.
- Verse 3 describes the words spoken by the king to Esther as he asks, “What is troubling you, Queen Esther? And what is your request?”
- The only reason someone would approach the king would be to bring something of significance to his attention.
 - A request for his action in some way.
- The king offers to solve any problem the queen might have with an interesting phrase, “Even to half of the kingdom it shall be given to you.”
- Is the king literally offering Esther half his kingdom?
- There is another use of this exact phrase in the NT that can help us discern what is being offered here.

Mark 6:21 A strategic day came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his lords and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee;

Mark 6:22 and when the daughter of Herodias herself came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests; and the king said to the girl, “Ask me for whatever you want and I will give it to you.”

Mark 6:23 And he swore to her, “Whatever you ask of me, I will give it to you; up to half of my kingdom.”

Mark 6:24 And she went out and said to her mother, “What shall I ask for?” And she said, “The head of John the Baptist.”

Mark 6:25 Immediately she came in a hurry to the king and asked, saying, “I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.”

Mark 6:26 And although the king was very sorry, yet because of his oaths and because of his dinner guests, he was unwilling to refuse her.

- Herod is recorded as using the exact same phrase as King Ahasuerus in v 23, then in v 26 the words were clarified to be seen as Herod taking an oath before witnesses.
- It appears this phrase was used to communicate that whatever request was made would be granted, and it is a promise in front of others before the request is made known.
- In the book of Esther the king is communicating to Esther from his throne in front of witnesses that he will grant her request, even before she makes her request known.
- The king trusts Esther.
- In verse 4 Esther addresses the king with what we have seen to be a standard beginning to any address to the king, “If it pleases the king”, then she makes her request known, “may the king and Haman come this day to the banquet that I have prepared for him.”
 - Esther had already prepared the banquet before she knew what the outcome would be of her approaching the king.
 - Esther has already prepared the banquet before requesting the king to attend.
 - Esther not only invites the king but she includes an invitation to the man of power behind the throne by inviting Haman.
 - This request is being made with a high risk to her life and this may be a signal there is something of a more private yet important topic to be discussed with the king.

Esth. 5:5 Then the king said, “Bring Haman quickly that we may do as Esther desires.” So the king and Haman came to the banquet which Esther had prepared.

Esth. 5:6 As they drank their wine at the banquet, the king said to Esther, “What is your petition, for it shall be granted to you. And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be done.”

Esth. 5:7 So Esther replied, “My petition and my request is:

Esth. 5:8 if I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it pleases the king to

grant my petition and do what I request, may the king and Haman come to the banquet which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king says.”

- Verse 5 indicates the king is eager to know what Esther wants to tell him as the king asks for Haman to be brought quickly as Esther has requested his presence at the banquet.
 - First observation is Haman was not with the king.
 - Second the king does not ask Esther exactly why she has come before him without being summoned.
 - This was a big deal and one would expect there to be a question on the king's mind.
 - There is no question asked as to why Esther would want Haman at the banquet.
 - Esther including Haman would not seem out of the ordinary as Haman was the man understood to carry out work for the king.
- It is curious why Esther does not just tell the king of her concerns.
 - Keep in mind Esther was not even sure if she would have lived to make a request.
 - Esther either has an elaborate plan or Esther is going step by step looking for confirmation and direction from God in what to do next.
- It is assumed Haman will be able to attend because that is the king's desire.
- The verse confirms that both the king and Haman came to the banquet Esther had prepared.
- Verse 6 at the beginning of the banquet when the guest drink their wine the king asks Esther again, “What is your petition, for it shall be granted to you. And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be done.”
- It is clear the king is aware Esther has not put her petition, or request out to him yet.
 - The banquet was to be the place this petition would be clarified.
 - The king is still promising he will give Esther whatever her request is, and now Haman witness to the king's response.
- Verses 7 and 8 highlight Esther's response as she says her petition and request are to have the king and Haman in attendance for another banquet.
- This second request does seem a bit strange since the men are already gathered for a banquet.
 - There are no questions about why Esther can't just put forth her petition and request now.
- Esther simply says if you can come to a banquet tomorrow I will make my petition and request known.
 - I will not delay beyond tomorrow.
- We must remember Esther was not sure if the king would grant her an audience when she approached the throne without being summoned in the first place.
- There may have been things she felt led to have in place before she makes her request and petition known to the king including doing that in front of Haman.

- She may have already obtained or was seeking after counsel on how to proceed in this matter.
- Esther showed wisdom in seeking counsel in the past before preceding with the king.

Esth. 2:15 Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai who had taken her as his daughter, came to go in to the king, she did not request anything except what Hegai, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the women, advised. And Esther found favor in the eyes of all who saw her.

- There is now another eunuch of the king, Hathach, whom the king had appointed to attend Esther.
 - He had been given a copy of the edict by Mordecai and knew all that had happened to him, and the exact amount of money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries.
 - This may have been a source of guidance for Esther, however this is not confirmed in the scriptures for us.

Esth. 5:9 Then Haman went out that day glad and pleased of heart; but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate and that he did not stand up or tremble before him, Haman was filled with anger against Mordecai.

Esth. 5:10 Haman controlled himself, however, went to his house and sent for his friends and his wife Zeresh.

Esth. 5:11 Then Haman recounted to them the glory of his riches, and the number of his sons, and every instance where the king had magnified him and how he had promoted him above the princes and servants of the king.

Esth. 5:12 Haman also said, "Even Esther the queen let no one but me come with the king to the banquet which she had prepared; and tomorrow also I am invited by her with the king."

Esth. 5:13 "Yet all of this does not satisfy me every time I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

Esth. 5:14 Then Zeresh his wife and all his friends said to him, "Have a gallows fifty cubits high made and in the morning ask the king to have Mordecai hanged on it; then go joyfully with the king to the banquet." And the advice pleased Haman, so he had the gallows made.

- In verse 9 it is clear Haman was in a good mood. He felt the day had gone well being invited to a banquet with the king at a special invitation of the queen.
 - The scriptures specifically say he was 'pleased of heart', which is another way of saying he was full of himself. His pride was inflamed.
- All of this happiness and self congratulatory feelings dissipate in a moment as he witnesses Mordecai in the king's gate not standing up to acknowledge his passing by or trembling before him. It would be an obvious gesture by Mordecai as he has not given in

to obey the edict of the king.

- The other men who served in the king's gate would have been bowing down and demonstrating fear of Haman at a level to invoke trembling.
- Now that the edict to exterminate the Jews has been issued Mordecai's still does not bow down or give homage, Mordecai does not fear Haman.
- Remember this is the same day Esther went before the king as we saw in verse 1 and so he would still be participating in the three day fast, yet Moredcai is in the king's gate doing the work as he has always done.
 - Mordecai is not drawing attention to himself in his fasting.
 - His righteousness is seen by not drawing attention to himself.
 - The impact of this lack of demanded respect to Haman fills him with rage against Mordecai.
- Verse 10 begins by stating Haman controlled himself.
 - This clarification is given to describe Haman was filled with rage but he did not display that rage while he was in public.
 - That raged burned inside of him all the way home.
- Haman made a decision to go to his home and request his friends and his wife Zeresh come to him.
- Verse 11 Haman seeks to relieve his rage by finding an audience to hear about how wonderful he is, beginning with recounting for them the glory of his riches.
 - He reminds his audience of the blessing of his numerous sons.
 - Then Haman recounts each and every thing he had done where the king magnified him and how these events allowed the king to promote him above all the other princes and servants of the king.
 - Haman is displaying his grandiose pride.
- Verse 12 details how Haman felt about being uniquely invited to attend a banquet with the king and the special invitation was extended to him by the queen.
 - The words display his ecstatic joy and self satisfaction.
- Verse 13 brings Haman's heart issue into center focus when he confesses that all of these amazing achievements melt away from his heart every time he see's Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.
- The focus is not about Mordecai not bowing and paying homage here, it is simply that Mordecai is a Jew and that he is sitting in the king's gate.
 - Haman can't stand seeing a Jew in a position of authority.
 - He has a deep seeded hatred of Jews and now that is clearly identified in the scriptures.
- Haman is not satisfied knowing the edict was going to take care of his Mordecai problem in the future, he wants to be rid of Mordecai immediately.
- In verse 14 those who Haman have gathered around him continue with their enabling, ego building by fueling Haman's irrational desire to be done with Mordecai.

- They give a suggestion to Haman of how to go about getting rid of Mordecai promptly.
- The first step for Haman to begin the process of eliminating his source of anger and rage is to build a gallows fifty cubits high.
- Fifty cubits is seventy five feet (1 cubit = 1.5 feet) which is about the height of a six story building.
 - Something that would be taller than the surrounding trees.
- Once the gallows have been completed all Haman has to do is get approval from the king. There does not seem to be a concern that the king would deny Haman's request.
 - This is probably not the first time Haman had asked for something from the king and it would seem the king gives Haman everything he asks for without question.
- Hanging would be the practice of impaling a person on a pointed stake until dead with the body left for public view.
 - The gallows would be built in a place where many would see the body and be fearful of offending Haman in the future.
- Haman's wife and his friends all conclude once this horrific and brutal event is complete then Haman will be able to joyfully go with the king to the banquet.
- This is confirmation that Haman did not know about the relationship between Esther and Mordecai, for he would not plan to kill her father and then expect to share a joyous banquet with Esther later the same day.
- To no one's surprise Haman is please with this advice and has the gallows made.
- Haman has no doubt his request will be granted by the king, as he has the gallows built before approaching the king with his requests.

- Let's review:
- Chapter 1 of Esther introduces King Ahasuerus as a king over the Persian empire around 484-481 BCE ruling from the capital city of Susa.
 - This was a time the empire was preparing to go to war with the Greeks.
 - The second part of chapter 1 unveils Queen Vashti's refusal of the command from King Ahasuerus to come display her royal crown and her beauty, and how an edict was brought by the 7 advisors to the King for the disgrace brought upon the King and kingdom.
- In Chapter 2 we were introduced to Esther and Mordecai as the search for a new queen was carried out.
 - Esther is crowned queen and Mordecai saves the life of the king.
- Chapter 3 introduces Haman, who is elevated by king Ahasuerus, and shunned by Mordecai, and displays he is the enemy of the Jews with intentions to exterminate them from the kingdom.
- Chapter 4 displays the response to Haman's edict of Jewish extermination by Mordecai; the Jews' mourning, and Esther's decision to approach the king.
- Chapter 5 The king receives Esther to his court and desires to honor her wishes while Haman is focused on Mordecai's death.

Esth. 6:1 During that night the king could not sleep so he gave an order to bring the book of records, the chronicles, and they were read before the king.

Esth. 6:2 It was found written what Mordecai had reported concerning Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs who were doorkeepers, that they had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.

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

Esth. 6:4 So the king said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace in order to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows which he had prepared for him.

Esth. 6:5 The king's servants said to him, "Behold, Haman is standing in the court." And the king said, "Let him come in."

Esth. 6:6 So Haman came in and the king said to him, "What is to be done for the man whom the king desires to honor?" And Haman said to himself, "Whom would the king desire to honor more than me?"

Esth. 6:7 Then Haman said to the king, "For the man whom the king desires to honor,

Esth. 6:8 let them bring a royal robe which the king has worn, and the horse on which the king has ridden, and on whose head a royal crown has been placed;

Esth. 6:9 and let the robe and the horse be handed over to one of the king's most noble princes and let them array the man whom the king desires to honor and

lead him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him, ‘Thus it shall be done to the man whom the king desires to honor.’”

- Verse 1 describes the night after the first banquet with the queen and Haman for the king, he was unable to sleep.
 - In this sleepless state he decides to have the book of records called here the chronicles read to him.
 - Not sure if this was what his standard process was for getting back to sleep or if this is a king who does work when he can't sleep to not waste time.
 - These official records called chronicles are referred to elsewhere in the scriptures like Ezra 6-7.
- These two chapters highlight communication requested from king Darius. There were those questioning if it was lawful for the Jews to be building their temple. Darius searches for the requested records.

Ezra 6:1 Then King Darius issued a decree, and search was made in the archives, where the treasures were stored in Babylon.

Ezra 6:2 In Ecbatana in the fortress, which is in the province of Media, a scroll was found and there was written in it as follows: “Memorandum —

Ezra 6:3 “In the first year of King Cyrus, Cyrus the king issued a decree: ‘Concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, let the temple, the place where sacrifices are offered, be rebuilt and let its foundations be retained, its height being 60 cubits and its width 60 cubits;

Ezra 6:4 with three layers of huge stones and one layer of timbers. And let the cost be paid from the royal treasury.

Ezra 6:5 ‘Also let the gold and silver utensils of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, be returned and brought to their places in the temple in Jerusalem; and you shall put them in the house of God.’

- In Esther 6:2 the details of what was read to the king are highlighted as the chronicles revealed how Mordecai had reported two of the king's eunuchs who were doorkeepers, Bigthana and Teresh, and how they had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.
- King Ahasuerus is now in the twelfth year of his reign. See Esth 3:7.
 - The chronicles would now contain all the detailed records up to this point in the king's governance of the kingdom.
 - Yet the specific part of the records brought to the king that night deal with the heroic act of Mordecai given through the scriptures in Esthers 2:21-23.
- In verse 3 the logical question from the king is how was Mordecai honored for his loyalty.
 - The simple answer from the king's servants who are attending him at his early hour of the morning respond nothing was done for Mordecai.

- The time period from the event of Mordecai saving the king's life recorded in Esth. 2 would seem to have taken place close to the time Esther was crowned queen and there had been a second gathering of the virgins, though we do not have a specific time of separation of these two events.
- Mordecai was already sitting in the king's gate when he saved the king's life so we know the honor of sitting in the king's gate was not tied to the event of saving the king's life.
- This would have been an oversight on the king's part as well as for those who were in service to the king.
 - There should have been someone who made sure this faithful act of Mordecai was rewarded.
 - A display of loyalty for the king of this magnitude would be a very big deal and worthy of high praise from the king and the court.
- In verse 4 we see the king wants no more delay in publicly honoring Mordecai and he wants to remedy this immediately, the king asks, "Who is in the court?"
- We find God's providential hand at work as we discover Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace.
 - Every detail is given for us to picture the narrative unfolding.
- This is not the inner court as was defined as the court no one was to enter without being summoned, that Esther had entered.
- Haman was in the outer court and this may have been where those who desired to speak with the king would wait to see if they would be called into the inner court.
 - Haman was here because he was going to talk with the king about hanging Mordecai. This would have been an interesting conversation to hear as Mordecai was still loyally serving the king sitting in the king's gate at this moment in time.
- Haman was ready to move forward with Mordecai's destruction as we hear the gallows were prepared for this event, all Haman needed was approval from the king.
- Both the king and Haman are in a rush to accomplish what is on their minds.
- In verse 5 the servants bring their answer to the king telling him Haman is standing in the court. Then we hear the king summon Haman by exclaiming, "Let him come in".
- Verse 6 Haman is brought before the king and a question is posed to Haman, "What is to be done for the man whom the king desires to honor?"
- The heart of Haman is yet again displayed as the only thing Haman can think is, "Whom would the king desire to honor more than me?"
- The king does not begin by asking Haman why he was in the court at this time.
 - The king is focused on taking care of the business on his mind.
 - It may have been the common practice wait in the outer court for an opportunity to have an audience with the king.
- Haman is distracted by his pride thinking the king is about to honor him so the reason for his visit to the king of asking to kill Mordecai is now not the first thing on his mind.
- Haman was a very superstitious person as we saw in Chapter 3 and his casting of lots to determine the perfect time to move forward on his plans.

- Here the king just happens to usher Haman in when Haman desired to speak with the king and so Haman may be feeling like things are lining up to carry out his plans.
- The king does not reveal to Haman who he wants to honor before asking what can be done to honor. This is a parallel to Haman not revealing the people group he wanted to exterminate in his proposal to the king in Esther 3:8.
 - In verses 7-8 Haman responds to the king's request. He begins by repeating the king's words that this is to be done for the man the king desires to be honored. Missing is the repeated phrase 'if it pleases the king' that has been uttered prior to any questions or suggestions being given to the king.

Esth. 1:19 “If it pleases the king, let a royal edict be issued by him....”

Esth. 3:9 “If it is pleasing to the king, let it be decreed that they be destroyed,...

Esth. 5:4 Esther said, “If it pleases the king, may the king and Haman come this day...”

Esth. 5:8 if I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it pleases the king

- Haman does not ask why this person should be receiving honor to help him find an appropriate way to honor this person.
- Then Haman reveals the picture he has in mind.
 - The first thing is that a royal robe the king has worn should be sought out.
 - This honored man must be made to look like the king.
- Then a royal horse known to be the king's should be found and also will be arrayed in appropriate royal attire.
 - The crown on the horse's head could be affixed using the mane.
- In verse 9 everything is put together as Haman can see himself being arrayed in the robe and being lifted up on the horse and finally lead through the city square.
- An extra measure of honoring was to be established as it would not be a servant lifting the man up it would be one of the king's most noble princes.
- For the finale this noble price would proclaim for all to hear, “Thus it shall be done to the man whom the king desires to honor” as this parade moves through the public square.
 - There is no doubt in Haman's mind the king was going to honor him.
 - There is no thought the person going to be honored might need to receive some form of monetary reward or elevated position of any sort because Haman had not even entertained the thought it could be anyone other than himself.
- The song to best describe Haman could be, Carly Simon's 'Your So Vain' with the popular lyrics, “I bet you think this song is about you, don't you don't you?”

- Haman's heart could not be filled with more self aggrandizing vitriol.
 - He is relishing the thought of what is about to happen for him.
 - He began and ended his words to the king with, "the man whom the king desires to honor."

Esth. 6:10 Then the king said to Haman, "Take quickly the robes and the horse as you have said, and do so for Mordecai the Jew, who is sitting at the king's gate; do not fall short in anything of all that you have said."

Esth. 6:11 So Haman took the robe and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and led him on horseback through the city square, and proclaimed before him, "Thus it shall be done to the man whom the king desires to honor."

Esth. 6:12 Then Mordecai returned to the king's gate. But Haman hurried home, mourning, with his head covered.

Esth. 6:13 Haman recounted to Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him. Then his wise men and Zeresh his wife said to him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish origin, you will not overcome him, but will surely fall before him."

Esth. 6:14 While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hastily brought Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared.

- Verse 10 demonstrates the king likes the idea Haman has presented and he assigns Haman the role of the king's most noble prince.
 - The king begins and ends his instructions with, "as you have said" reminding Haman this is all his idea to begin with.
- The king indicates the immediate nature of what he wants done saying, 'take quickly'.
- From a literary perspective these words are used to convey the quick pace of the events unfolding.
- The king then speaks the most devastating words Haman could image hearing by telling Haman he is to do all this for Mordecai the Jew, the one sitting at the king's gate.
 - To add the salt in this wound for Haman the king clarifies he want everything carried out just as Haman had pictured for the king.
- Haman has just received a mighty blow to his ego as the king is going to honor someone other than him and on top of that is it going to be Mordecai, the Jew.
 - The last thing Haman had been thinking about Mordecai was envisioning him hanging from the gallows he just had built the night before.
 - Haman's every waking thought had been about the destruction of Mordecai and in an instant his world comes crashing in as the king is going to honor this Mordecai instead.
 - Not really a good time to ask the king about following up with a gallows hanging for the same man now, Haman is now silenced on making his request.
- The king clearly knows Mordecai is identified as a Jew.

- This would be further evidence the king had not known or made the connection of the edict Haman had issued regarding the Jews.
- In verse 11 Haman does exactly as the king has directed.
 - There was most likely not a lot of enthusiasm as he put the royal robes on Mordecai and helped him up on the horse.
 - These men were known to be enemies by those who served in the king's gate though it appears the king was unaware of this conflict.
- Haman probably did not have much fervor as he makes the necessary declaration before those in the public square.
 - The very declaration he had repeated to the king when he thought it was going to be words spoken of him now are repeated in public regarding Mordecai from Haman's lips.
- It is not stated in the scriptures but it would seem logical Mordecai would have been told why this honor was bestowed on him.
 - After all this was to make up for the oversight of not honoring him five years earlier when he had taken steps to save the king's life.
- We can only speculate on what would be going through Mordecai's mind right now.
 - He does not know all that has transpired overnight in the king's palace, but he did know he and the Jews had just spent the past three days fasting and praying for God's deliverance from this very man's evil design for their destruction and now the very next day this strange event unfolds where Haman has to give honor to Mordecai and praise him before all the people of the city square.
- In verse 12 the sense of urgency in the timing continues as when all this pomp and circumstance is completed Mordecai goes back to the king's gate to work but we hear Haman 'hurried' home.
- There is no detail given about Mordecai's reaction to this parade of honor bestowed on him.
- Haman is also described as being in mourning with his head covered for this trip home.
 - Haman is mourning for himself whereas just days earlier Mordecai had been in public mourning for his people.
- In verse 13 when Haman arrives home he gathers his wife and friends to listen to him as he repeats all that has happened to him since they had last seen him leave to ask for permission from the king for Mordecai to be hung on the gallows he had built.
- The new information put forth by Haman cause his advisors, referred to as wise men, and his wife to offer words of concern for Haman.
 - Those words clearly say if this man you have set against is of Jewish origin then you will not win over him but you will fall before him.
- Those within Haman's inner circle are as superstitious as Haman was when he cast lots to determine when he should take action against Mordecai and the Jews in the kingdom and they see the signs of the recent events as having dire meaning for Haman.
 - They believed signs have supernatural meaning.

- Secondly it is not beyond the realm of possibility that wise men were familiar with the history of the Jews.

Josh. 2:8 Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof,

Josh. 2:9 and said to the men, “I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you.

Josh. 2:10 “For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed.

Josh. 2:11 “When we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.

- This was true of God’s people and some who knew history might be familiar with this but there was a very recent event involving the Jews these advisors of Haman may have been familiar with as well.
- Remember back to the Ezra scriptures we looked at earlier where the request to know what had been decreed for the Jews had been research from the chronicles and had been reinstated, there is more to that story.

Ezra 6:6 “Now therefore, Tattenai, governor of the province beyond the River, Shethar-bozenai and your colleagues, the officials of the provinces beyond the River, keep away from there.

Ezra 6:7 “Leave this work on the house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews rebuild this house of God on its site.

Ezra 6:8 “Moreover, I issue a decree concerning what you are to do for these elders of Judah in the rebuilding of this house of God: the full cost is to be paid to these people from the royal treasury out of the taxes of the provinces beyond the River, and that without delay.

Ezra 6:9 “Whatever is needed, both young bulls, rams, and lambs for a burnt offering to the God of heaven, and wheat, salt, wine and anointing oil, as the priests in Jerusalem request, it is to be given to them daily without fail,

Ezra 6:10 that they may offer acceptable sacrifices to the God of heaven and pray for the life of the king and his sons.

Ezra 6:11 “And I issued a decree that any man who violates this edict, a timber shall be drawn from his house and he shall be impaled on it and his house shall be made a refuse heap on account of this.

Ezra 6:12 “May the God who has caused His name to dwell there overthrow any king or people who attempts to change it, so as to destroy this house of God in Jerusalem. I, Darius, have issued this decree, let it be carried out with all

diligence!”

Ezra 6:13 Then Tattenai, the governor of the province beyond the River, Shethar-bozenai and their colleagues carried out the decree with all diligence, just as King Darius had sent.

- King Darius was Ahasuerus’s father so this would not have been an event from long ago but one they could have been familiar with in current history.
- In Esther 6:14 we see there is an ongoing conversation taking place with Haman, his advisors and Zeresh when we are told there is an interruption as the king’s eunuchs arrived and hastily brought Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared.
- Haman’s head must be swimming with all the events of his night and day swirling around, trying to make sense of it all.
- Chapter 6 is the momentous turning point in the narrative.
- The events unfold quickly for Haman:
 - v1 the king could not sleep so he gave an order
 - v4 the king said, “Who is in the court?” Now Haman had just entered the outer court
 - v5 the king said, “Let him come in.”
 - v10 “Take quickly the robes and the horse
 - v12 Haman hurried home,
 - v14 While they were still talking with him
 - v14 the king’s eunuchs arrived and hastily brought Haman to the banquet
- Compare the quick pace to how Esther has been more methodical and is moving in a slow and steady pace, asking for fasting for three days prior to any action.
 - Dressing in her royal robes to be in the presence of the king.
 - Preparing a banquet for the king yet not presenting her request at the first banquet and willing to prepare a second banquet for the king.
- There are other contrasts between Chapter 5 and 6.
- Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court and Haman desired to where royal robes.
- Esther appears as a queen yet Haman is dressing Mordecai as a royal king.
- Esther has the golden scepter extended to her but Haman is summoned by the king.

- Review time:
- Chapter 1 of Esther introduces King Ahasuerus as a king over the Persian empire around 484-481 BCE ruling from the capital city of Susa.
 - This was a time the empire was preparing to go to war with the Greeks.
 - The second part of Chapter 1 unveils Queen Vashti's refusal of the command from King Ahasuerus to come display her royal crown and her beauty, and how an edict was brought by the 7 advisors to the King for the disgrace brought upon the King and kingdom.
- In Chapter 2 we were introduced to Esther and Mordecai as the search for a new queen was carried out.
 - Esther is crowned queen and Mordecai saves the life of the king.
- Chapter 3 introduces Haman, who is elevated by king Ahasuerus, and shunned by Mordecai, and displays he is the enemy of the Jews with intentions to exterminate them from the kingdom.
- Chapter 4 displays the response to Haman's edict of Jewish extermination by Mordecai; the Jews' mourning, and Esther's decision to approach the king.
- Chapter 5 The king receives Esther to his court and desires to honor her wishes while Haman is focused on Mordecai's death.
- Chapter 6 Is the beginning turning point in the narrative. Haman's plot is reversed as Mordecai is honored and not eliminated.

Esth. 7:1 Now the king and Haman came to drink wine with Esther the queen.

Esth. 7:2 And the king said to Esther on the second day also as they drank their wine at the banquet, "What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be done."

Esth. 7:3 Then Queen Esther replied, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me as my petition, and my people as my request;

Esth. 7:4 for we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed and to be annihilated. Now if we had only been sold as slaves, men and women, I would have remained silent, for the trouble would not be commensurate with the annoyance to the king."

Esth. 7:5 Then King Ahasuerus asked Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who would presume to do thus?"

Esth. 7:6 Esther said, "A foe and an enemy is this wicked Haman!" Then Haman became terrified before the king and queen.

Esth. 7:7 The king arose in his anger from drinking wine and went into the palace garden; but Haman stayed to beg for his life from Queen Esther, for he saw that harm had been determined against him by the king.

- Verse 1 demonstrates the beginning of the second banquet starts with the guests

drinking wine together as was the case in the first banquet.

- In verse 2 the king again addresses Esther early on in the second banquet as the timing is identified being as they drank their wine at the banquet.
 - The king repeats the words to Esther he had spoken to her the day before desiring to know what her petition was and assuring her he would grant her request up to half of the kingdom it shall be done.
 - This was studied in the previous chapter on how this phrase was used when the king is making a promise to the person he is speaking to and that what they request even before they make their request known will be granted.
- Now in verse 3 Queen Esther is ready to make her request known.
 - She begins with an address of respect to the king, “If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king”.
 - This was the proper way to address the king in a public setting.
 - The servants are in attendance at this banquet and Haman is present as well.
- Now the shocking request is finally revealed as Esther continues, let my life be given me as my petition, and my people as my request;”
- What is the difference between a petition and a request in the Persian court?
- Esther says, “let my life be given me as my petition,”
- Secondly, “and my people as my request;”
 - Esther desires to link her life with the life of her people.
- Esther begins with words it would appear to bring shock to the king in the moment.
- She is asking for her life.
 - Then she continues with connecting her survival with the survival of her people.
 - These words would of course generate a question as to why Esther needs to make a petition for her life.
- In verse 4 Esther continues to with the explosive language that she and her people have been sold and that is why she is coming before the king with this request, “for we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed and to be annihilated.”
 - Esther clearly identifies she and her people have been sold.
 - Then Esther quotes the same words that Haman had used in the written edict.
 - Imagine what is going through Haman’s mind as he hears his carefully crafted words from his edict being repeated by the queen to the king.
- Esther continues demonstrating her humble position before the king as she says, “Now if we had only been sold as slaves, men and women, I would have remained silent, for the trouble would not be commensurate with the annoyance to the king.”
- Esther says if she and her people were to be relegated as slaves to the king she would accept this.
 - She explains she would not bring such a small matter before the king for his consideration.

- The money that Haman had promised the king to purchase the Jews was not insignificant.
 - The large sums of money could have easily been given to the king and the Jews made into slaves to serve Haman.
 - If that had been the case Esther says she would not have brought the situation before the king for his consideration.
- Esther does not yet identify herself as a Jew.
 - Esther does not put the blame on the king for this treachery even though it was the king that agreed to the proposal put forth by Haman.
 - Esther is giving King Ahasuerus the clear path for him to draw that someone has done something very wrong.
- Verse 5 demonstrates the king makes exactly the connection he should as the scriptures record the words of a concerned King Ahasuerus and husband as he demands to know who is the person who would do such and thing and then desiring to know where this person is.
 - We know the king is constantly aware he had enemies.
 - His life was always in danger as he had just been reminded the night before when having the chronicles reviewed and remembering two of his own eunuchs had conspired to kill him.
 - Threats could come from within the palace as before.
- The king is shocked anyone would threatened the queen and he wants to know who would do such a thing.
- The king has made no connection to the edict Haman brought to him even with the exact wording repeated by Esther.
- The king asks who would presume to do such a thing to indicate it would take real treachery to propose such a deed.
- Haman is listening to these words for the first time and it is news to him that his edict would include harm to Esther as he had no idea she was a Jew.
 - This would also mean Haman had no idea of the relationship Esther had to Mordecai.
- In verse 6 the gig is up as Esther answers quickly that the person who has made this threat to her is considered a foe and an enemy ending with her assessment that he is wicked before finally divulging the name of Haman. (what was her tone of voice, sweet or accusing)
- Notice the quickness of the narrative.
- Esther identifies Haman, the man in the banquet room with them, as the enemy desiring to kill her.
 - This is a brave revelation in this moment as Esther has no idea how the king will respond nor does she know how the powerful and rich man Haman will respond.
- Esther has nothing to offer the king that can compare to what Haman has offered the king in regards to this request.

- Esther has relied on God to direct her every action and probably her words.
- Esther is good example of what Christ later spoke to His disciples to be like.

Matt. 10:16 “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.

Matt. 10:17 “But beware of men, for they will hand you over to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues;

Matt. 10:18 and you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.

Matt. 10:19 “But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say.

Matt. 10:20 “For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

- We can take comfort and also speak boldly when we know we are trusting in the Father to speak through us.
 - We do not need to have a plan ahead of time if we are walking in the Spirit and seeking His direction. However we are to shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.
- The enemy does not need to have advanced knowledge of how we are going to move out for God.
 - We are to move in innocence without room for sin.
 - This is the balance needed as Christians walk in a world that is hostile to our views and at times to our very existence.
- This was the world Esther walked in and now in this moment Haman understands why he has been invited to this banquet as he was set up by the queen.
- It is clear from all the words spoken by Esther she has uncovered the details of his plot.
 - Haman had been witness to the king speaking his words of promise to Esther before she made her request known.
 - Now that all the events of this day come to a crescendo Haman realizes his exposure and he becomes terrified before the king and queen.
- In verse 7 it is clear Haman has valid reasons to be terrified as the king stands up in his anger and leaves the banquet to go into the place garden.
- The mood has changed in the banquet room.
- The detail of the king standing should be seen as him rising up from a reclining position as this is the custom in this part of the world and during this time in history.
 - This is the same imagery seen in the gospels as the disciples reclined at the table with Christ.
- The banquet was a place to relax and enter into conversation and the mood was set with the drinking of the wine as well.
 - The king goes from this movement of relaxed enjoyment to being perplexed and

leaving the room to gather his thoughts.

- He is processing all the information Esther has just given to him. How did this happen and what is he going to do now.
- He is shocked the man he saw as his second in command and trusted as a most noble prince would want to destroy his queen.
- There is no doubt the king had not just left for some silent contemplation as Haman knows the king is determined to harm him.
- This fear of harm is not just of injury but he knows his life is in danger as he does not run after the king but stays in the banquet room to beg for his life from Queen Esther.
 - The edict still stands but that does not protect Haman from the anger of the king.
 - There will be consequences for the deception carried out on the king by Haman.
- Haman could have tried to deflect the blame away from himself by pointing out the king was the one that gave his blessing to Haman to carry out the edict.
- The fact that Haman does not speak a word in that direction might suggest the level of deceit Haman had used to get the edict signed was significant.
- It might suggest he does not think well on his feet or without input from his advisors.
- Haman must direct his attention to queen Esther as she was the one with the open invitation to ask anything of the king and it will be granted.

Esth. 7:8 Now when the king returned from the palace garden into the place where they were drinking wine, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was. Then the king said, “Will he even assault the queen with me in the house?” As the word went out of the king’s mouth, they covered Haman’s face.

Esth. 7:9 Then Harbonah, one of the eunuchs who were before the king said, “Behold indeed, the gallows standing at Haman’s house fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai who spoke good on behalf of the king!” And the king said, “Hang him on it.”

Esth. 7:10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai, and the king’s anger subsided.

- In verse 8 there is no detail on how long the king is in the palace garden but when he returns to the palace where he had previously been reclining and drinking wine he sees Haman falling on the couch where Esther is.
- The fact that Haman is ‘falling’ on Esther, a Jew, in an attempt to request mercy from her when his intentions were to ‘fall’ on all Jews for their destruction is an interesting twist to the narrative.
- Secondly the word used here for falling is the same as in Esth. 6:13:

Esth. 6:13 Haman recounted to Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him. Then his wise men and Zeresh his wife said to him, “If

Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish origin, you will not overcome him, but will surely fall before him.”

- The king sees the events taking place in the room he returns to and his assessment was it appeared Haman was assaulting the queen.
 - It would appear Haman was not on his knees begging for mercy from Esther.
- The king rises to new heights of anger as he accuses Haman not only of inappropriate behavior, seen as assault towards the queen but his indignation is magnified as the action against the queen takes place while the king was in the house.
 - Modern vernacular might be ‘are you kidding me’
- The scriptures indicate as the king spoke they covered Haman’s face.
 - First note the use of ‘word’ is in the singular but then the action is taken by a the plural ‘they’.
- There would be attendants to the king and queen at all times.
 - The attendants to the king and queen take action at the king’s word and subdue Haman and cover his face or head.
 - This was done to protect Esther and the king from further potential danger from Haman.
- Verse 9 identifies one of the attendants present was Harbonah and identify him as one of the 7 eunuchs who serve the king.

Esth. 1:10 On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar and Carkas, the seven eunuchs who served in the presence of King Ahasuerus,

- Harbonah has served the king for a long time and now Harbonah enlightens the king about information he had that there were gallows standing at Haman’s house that were fifty cubits high.
 - Harbonah adds these gallows had been made for Mordecai.
- The same Mordecai who spoke good on behalf of the king as had been brought to the attention of the king just the night before.
 - The Mordecai the king had desired to honor in the morning.
 - The Mordecai the king had instructed Haman to honor.
 - This Mordecai Haman had made fifty foot gallows to hang him on.
- Harbonah would have been aware of the important happens in the citadel and especially thing involving those who had access to the king.
 - It would be hard to keep the building of a fifty cubits high gallows a secret.
 - Haman had not felt he needed to keep anything secret as he was wealthy and had the authority to do as he pleased.

- The servant does his job of only relaying information to the king then he waits as the king takes the information and declares to hang Haman on these gallows.
- The final verse is short but has significant impact as in verse 10 the statement is simply made that Haman is hanged on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai.
- The last words are that the king's anger subsided.
 - The death of Haman brought relief to the king of this overwhelming anger.
- In literature there are three forms of irony:
 - Dramatic irony occurs when the audience knows something that the story's characters do not.
 - Situational irony describes plot events with unexpected or contradictory outcomes.
 - Verbal irony refers to the use of dialogue where one thing is spoken, but a contrasting meaning is intended.
- In the book of Esther we see the dramatic irony in several places:
 - Haman not knowing Esther is Jewish
 - Haman not knowing the king desired to honor Mordecai
 - Haman not knowing Mordecai and Esther are related
 - Haman not knowing Esther knows the details of his edict
 - Haman not knowing Harbona knows about the gallows and their intended purpose
- Situational irony is seen:
 - Mordecai honored not Haman
 - Haman hanged not Mordecai
 - Haman demanding others to fall down in homage finds himself falling down before Esther.
 - Haman determined harm to the Jews the king then determined harm to Haman
- Verbal irony seen:
 - Falling down
 - Covered face
- In spiritual terms we see the sovereignty of God at work:
 - The timing of Esther's request of a second banquet.
 - The total surprise to Haman of what Esther was going to request.
 - The knowledge of Habonah about what Haman had done by building the gallows as well as knowing the gallows were built to hang Mordecai on.
- The verses read before deserve repeating here from Psalm 10:1-3:

Psa. 10:1 Why do You stand afar off, O LORD?

Why do You hide Yourself in times of trouble?

Psa. 10:2 In pride the wicked hotly pursue the afflicted;

Let them be caught in the plots which they have devised.

**Psa. 10:3 For the wicked boasts of his heart's desire,
And the greedy man curses and spurns the LORD.**

- Many wicked men will accuse others of doing exactly what they themselves are doing or contemplating.
 - They think other process life the way they process life.
- When we become believers we have the Holy Spirit that allows us to break that sinful process by repenting and becoming more Christ like.
 - We can be more Christ like:

Rom. 8:9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

Rom. 8:10 If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.

Rom. 8:11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Rom. 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Rom. 8:29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

- Do you see the events in your life where God has been sovereign in the details?
 - Often these jewels of insight do not become clear until some time after the events have unfolded.
- Do you praise God when He delights to reveal these things to you?
- Do you share these events with others?

- Review
- Chapter 1 of Esther introduces King Ahasuerus as a king over the Persian empire around 484-481 BCE ruling from the capital city of Susa.
 - This was a time the empire was preparing to go to war with the Greeks.
 - The second part of chapter 1 unveils Queen Vashti's refusal of the command from King Ahasuerus to come display her royal crown and her beauty, and how an edict was brought by the 7 advisors to the King for the disgrace brought upon the King and kingdom.
- In Chapter 2 we were introduced to Esther and Mordecai as the search for a new queen was carried out.
 - Esther is crowned queen and Mordecai saves the life of the king.
- Chapter 3 introduces Haman, who is elevated by king Ahasuerus, and shunned by Mordecai, and displays he is the enemy of the Jews with intentions to exterminate them from the kingdom.
- Chapter 4 displays the response to Haman's edict of Jewish extermination by Mordecai; the Jews' mourning, and Esther's decision to approach the king.
- Chapter 5 The king receives Esther to his court and desires to honor her wishes while Haman is focused on Mordecai's death.
- Chapter 6 Is the beginning turning point in the narrative.
 - Haman's plot is reversed as Mordecai is honored and not eliminated.
- Chapter 7 Esther reveals to King Ahasuerus Haman's plans for the extermination of the Jews and ultimately he is hanged on the gallows he made for Mordecai.

Esth. 8:1 On that day King Ahasuerus gave the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews, to Queen Esther; and Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had disclosed what he was to her.

Esth. 8:2 The king took off his signet ring which he had taken away from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

- In verse 1 we learn on the very day of the death of Haman King Ahasuerus gave the house of Haman to Queen Esther.
 - We are reminded that Haman was an enemy of the Jews.
- These homes were usually clustered around the king's palace.
 - The house went with the station of the person like when our U.S. President resides in the White House.
- Haman is treated as a criminal and his property was taken away.
 - We see the irony continue as Haman's desire was to take everything the Jews had as plunder.
- Mordecai is summoned to come before the king as Esther has now told the king he is her blood relationship a cousin and her adopted father.

- This is where we turn to verify that this relationship had not been revealed to King Ahasuerus until this time.
- When Mordecai is before the king in verse 2 the king gives Mordecai his signet ring.
 - This is the same ring he had bestowed on Haman after he had issued the edict to annihilate the Jews.
 - The signet ring represented the power and authority of the king.
- Since the king had give the house of Haman to Esther she established Mordecai to manage the house and all the responsibilities that go with this position.
 - Mordecai is receiving honor from Esther.
 - We are not told if the wealth of Haman was given to Esther or just the house and it's operations. Some of the wealth may have very well accompanied this transfer from Haman's estate to Esther.

Esth. 8:3 Then Esther spoke again to the king, fell at his feet, wept and implored him to avert the evil scheme of Haman the Agagite and his plot which he had devised against the Jews.

Esth. 8:4 The king extended the golden scepter to Esther. So Esther arose and stood before the king.

Esth. 8:5 Then she said, “ If it pleases the king and if I have found favor before him and the matter seems proper to the king and I am pleasing in his sight, let it be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the king's provinces.

Esth. 8:6 “For how can I endure to see the calamity which will befall my people, and how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?”

Esth. 8:7 So King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, “Behold, I have given the house of Haman to Esther, and him they have hanged on the gallows because he had stretched out his hands against the Jews.

Esth. 8:8 “Now you write to the Jews as you see fit, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's signet ring; for a decree which is written in the name of the king and sealed with the king's signet ring may not be revoked.”

- Verse 3 begins with the word ‘then’ indicating the next event to focus on is Esther again speaking to the king.
- There is no indication of how long after Haman was hanged this next event occurs.
 - When Esther does approach the king to speak on this subject we read she fell at his feet and wept and implored him.
- This time it appears Esther is much more emotional as she comes before the king.
- Esther is wise to put the blame of this problem completely on Haman even though it was issued in the name of the king with his signet ring.
- The purpose of this coming before the king is to stop the plan to destroy the Jews that Haman had put in place with the edict he sent out to the provinces of the kingdom.

- Verse 4 provides an interesting detail about where Esther is when she is making this plea before the king as we see the king extended the golden scepter to her.
 - Esther must be approaching the king in the inner court again as she had done before.
 - The scepter is put forth and Esther stands before the king.
- The king has already indicated he is supportive of Esther as well as Mordecai as he gave Esther the house of Haman and Mordecai the power of the signet ring.
- In verse 5 Esther again approaches the king in a very respectful way and following protocol beginning again with, “If it pleases the king and if I have found favor before him and the matter seems proper to the king and I am pleasing in his sight”
 - Esther’s petition is to put in writing a revocation of the letters devised by Haman.
 - She again describes Haman as the son of Hammedatha the Agagite.
 - Then Esther details again the purpose Haman had with the letters to destroy the Jews who live in the king’s provinces.
- Haman had followed the court protocol in putting this plan into place.
- Esther is asking for the impossible.
- Verse 6 Esther confirms the plans of destruction are still in place and elaborates on the impact this destruction will have on her.
 - She simply asks how can she endure to see such destruction come to her kindred and people.
 - She clearly identifies herself with the Jews.
 - Esther establishes she would be living to see the destruction of her kindred and people which might mean she will survive the event.
 - There is no reason given for how or why she would survive the event.
- The clarification in verse 7 is that King Ahasuerus is speaking to both Queen Esther and to Mordecai.
 - He reminds them of their position at court as he has already given the house of Haman to Esther.
 - This would include the power and privileges associated with the position Haman once held.
- Secondly the king declared he has already removed Haman from being any a danger as he was hanged on the gallows.
 - The clarification is that Haman was hanged because he had stretched out his hands against the Jews he was not hanged for the apparent assault on Esther.
- The king’s advice is given in verse 8 for Mordecai to write to the Jews as you see fit.
- What Mordecai writes will be as from the king, his name and signed with his signet ring.
- The king is turning this matter over to Esther and Mordecai to resolve, with his blessing.
- The king reminds Esther and Mordecai he can not revoke what has been sent previously because a decree which is written in the name of the king and sealed with the king’s

signet ring may not be revoked.

- This is also described in Esther 1:19

Esth. 1:19 “If it pleases the king, let a royal edict be issued by him and let it be written in the laws of Persia and Media so that it cannot be repealed,

- The establishment of a statute that could not be revoked is seen in Daniel 6:7-15 as well:

Dan. 6:7 “All the commissioners of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the high officials and the governors have consulted together that the king should establish a statute and enforce an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lions’ den.

Dan. 6:8 “Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document so that it may not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked.”

Dan. 6:9 Therefore King Darius signed the document, that is, the injunction.

Dan. 6:10 Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously.

Dan. 6:11 Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God.

Dan. 6:12 Then they approached and spoke before the king about the king’s injunction, “Did you not sign an injunction that any man who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, is to be cast into the lions’ den?” The king replied, “The statement is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked.”

Dan. 6:13 Then they answered and spoke before the king, “Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the injunction which you signed, but keeps making his petition three times a day.”

Dan. 6:14 Then, as soon as the king heard this statement, he was deeply distressed and set his mind on delivering Daniel; and even until sunset he kept exerting himself to rescue him.

Dan. 6:15 Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, “Recognize, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or statute which the king establishes may be changed.”

- The unchangeable nature of the signed documents is according to the law of the Medes and Persians.
 - Not even the king could change or revoke the injunction or statute once he signed it.

- King Ahasuerus reminds Esther and Mordecai that any decree written can't be revoked.
 - This was Haman's plan from the beginning to have a decree approved that could not be changed or revoked.

Esth. 8:9 So the king's scribes were called at that time in the third month (that is, the month Sivan), on the twenty-third day; and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded to the Jews, the satraps, the governors and the princes of the provinces which extended from India to Ethiopia, 127 provinces, to every province according to its script, and to every people according to their language as well as to the Jews according to their script and their language.

Esth. 8:10 He wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus, and sealed it with the king's signet ring, and sent letters by couriers on horses, riding on steeds sired by the royal stud.

Esth. 8:11 In them the king granted the Jews who were in each and every city the right to assemble and to defend their lives, to destroy, to kill and to annihilate the entire army of any people or province which might attack them, including children and women, and to plunder their spoil,

Esth. 8:12 on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month (that is, the month Adar).

Esth. 8:13 A copy of the edict to be issued as law in each and every province was published to all the peoples, so that the Jews would be ready for this day to avenge themselves on their enemies.

Esth. 8:14 The couriers, hastened and impelled by the king's command, went out, riding on the royal steeds; and the decree was given out at the citadel in Susa.

- Verse 9 describes the action taken next as the king's scribes are called.
- The time of this action was in the third month (that is, the month Sivan), on the twenty-third day;
- The edict Haman wrote for the Jews destruction was done on the thirteenth day of the first month.

Esth. 3:12 Then the king's scribes were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and it was written just as Haman commanded to the king's satraps, to the governors who were over each province and to the princes of each people, each province according to its script, each people according to its language, being written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet ring.

- It has been seventy days since Haman's edict was issued.
- Mordecai is the author of the new command.
- Mordecai addresses the edict to the Jews, the satraps, the governors and the princes of

the provinces which extended from India to Ethiopia, 127 provinces.

- These are the same people who received the edict issued by Haman, however, Mordecai specifically adds the Jews to his list of those who are to receive this edict, and they are listed first.
- This edict was also issued to every province according to its script, and to every people according to their language as well as to the Jews according to their script and their language.
 - This time the edict is also specifically written in Hebrew to the Jews.
- Verse 10 confirms Mordecai wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus, and sealed it with the king's signet ring, and sent letters by couriers on horses, riding on steeds sired by the royal stud.
- Verse 11 now gives the details of what had been devised at the solution for the Jews in the face of the edict previously issued by Haman.
 - Now the king granted the Jews who were in each and every city the right to assemble and to defend their lives.
- The method of defending themselves meant they could destroy, to kill and to annihilate the entire army of any people or province which might attack them.
 - This defending included if an enemy came to attack their children and women.
 - This defending included those who would come for their plunder.
- Haman's edict made all Jews the target while Mordecai's edict only targeted the people who would send an army to attack the Jews.
- This clarifies it was to be armies of people being sent to annihilate the Jews.
- Verse 12 details the day the Jews could defend themselves as the thirteenth day of the twelfth month (that is, the month Adar).
- The day that was set for the Jews destruction is the very day they can defend themselves.
 - One would not know who the potential enemies were until they made themselves known by attacking the Jews.
- There could not be a preemptive strike made on the enemies of the Jews.
- In verse 13 the detail is given that a copy of the edict to be issued as law in each and every province was published to all the peoples.
- The reason the edict was being issued was so that the Jews would be ready for this day to avenge themselves on their enemies.
- The Jews were only free to avenge themselves on those who were clearly their enemies.
 - Those who would attack the Jews. Haman's demise did not remove the enemies of the Jews.
- In verse 14 the method of delivery of the decree is detailed as the couriers, hastened and impelled by the king's command, went out, riding on the royal steeds;
- The decree was also given out at the citadel of Susa.
 - This is important to the communication process as the citadel of Susa would be

where representatives from all the provinces would have been located.

- They would have the information necessary to communicate back to those in power in all the provinces of the kingdom.

Esth. 8:15 Then Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal robes of blue and white, with a large crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple; and the city of Susa shouted and rejoiced.

Esth. 8:16 For the Jews there was light and gladness and joy and honor.

Esth. 8:17 In each and every province and in each and every city, wherever the king's commandment and his decree arrived, there was gladness and joy for the Jews, a feast and a holiday. And many among the peoples of the land became Jews, for the dread of the Jews had fallen on them.

- Verse 15 describes Mordecai as leaving the king's presence dressed in royal robes of blue and white, with a large crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple.
 - This attire is the outward sign of what has been done for Mordecai by the king in his new official position in the kingdom.
 - The bestowing of honor to someone by clothing them in royal attire is also seen in Daniel 5:7 and Daniel 5:29:

Dan. 5:7 The king called aloud to bring in the conjurers, the Chaldeans and the diviners. The king spoke and said to the wise men of Babylon, "Any man who can read this inscription and explain its interpretation to me shall be clothed with purple and have a necklace of gold around his neck, and have authority as third ruler in the kingdom."

Dan. 5:29 Then Belshazzar gave orders, and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a necklace of gold around his neck, and issued a proclamation concerning him that he now had authority as the third ruler in the kingdom.

- In Esther chapter 6 Haman revealed one of the most significant ways a person could be honored in this time was to be adorned in royal robes and seen by the people:

Esth. 6:7 Then Haman said to the king, "For the man whom the king desires to honor,

Esth. 6:8 let them bring a royal robe which the king has worn, and the horse on which the king has ridden, and on whose head a royal crown has been placed;

Esth. 6:9 and let the robe and the horse be handed over to one of the king's most noble princes and let them array the man whom the king desires to honor and lead him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him, 'Thus it shall be done to the man whom the king desires to honor.'"

- The earlier honoring of Mordecai was prophetic of what God had in store for Mordecai's future.
 - Compare this outward display of Mordecai after this edict is issued verses the description of Mordecai after the first edict is issued:

Esth. 4:1 When Mordecai learned all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city and wailed loudly and bitterly.

- The response from the command and decree being brought to the city of Susa was of celebration.
 - There is a contrast of the response of the city of Susa after the edict was written and posted by Haman recorded in Esther 3:15:

Esth. 3:15 The couriers went out impelled by the king's command while the decree was issued at the citadel in Susa; and while the king and Haman sat down to drink, the city of Susa was in confusion.

- With darkness there is confusion and with light there is celebration.
 - In verse 16 the impact on the Jews in Susa there was indeed light and they now experienced gladness and joy and honor.
 - The Jews have been elevated to a position of honor in the citadel of Susa.
 - What Mordecai experienced individually is now felt by all the Jews in Susa.
- These would have been the same Jews that had fasted and prayed for their God to intervene for them for three days prior to Esther going before the king.
- Verse 17 highlights that in each and every province and in each and every city, wherever the king's commandment and his decree arrived, there was gladness and joy for the Jews.
- The gladness and joy is celebrated with a feast and a holiday.
- There is a comment directed about those who are among the peoples of the land becoming Jews.
 - There is not a way for someone to become a physical Jew because you can only be born one.
 - There are some who indicate this could mean there were many that converted to Judaism.
 - The context would indicate based on the topic unfolding that there were people of the land who agreed with the Jews need for defense against their enemies and they joined the Jews.
- There are those who are either for or they are against the Jews.
 - The end of the verse gives the reason for many to support the Jews was their dread

of the Jews.

- There is an interesting note that the dread of the Jews had ‘fallen’ on them.
- This word choice reminds us of what we studied last week of this tie in to the advisors of Haman who said to him in Esther 6:13:

Esth. 6:13 Haman recounted to Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him. Then his wise men and Zeresh his wife said to him, “If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish origin, you will not overcome him, but will surely fall before him.”

- Those in the land have an understanding of what it can mean to be a friend of the Jews or an enemy of the Jews.
 - The God of the Jews had a reputation feared by many, God used this to provide protection for His people.
- Leaving this chapter of Esther we are reminded about the need for special effort to be made because there was an edict made by a king that could not be revoked:

Esth. 8:8 “Now you write to the Jews as you see fit, in the king’s name, and seal it with the king’s signet ring; for a decree which is written in the name of the king and sealed with the king’s signet ring may not be revoked.”

- The concept of a king’s edict not being open to change or revocation comes from a connection between the power and discernment of god’s to be the same for a king.
 - The king did not make mistakes so there can’t be changes to what the king would declare.
- The weakness to this understanding of course is that an earthly king is still only a man and men make mistakes.
- The difference with the God of the Bible we worship is that He is not subject to change and is always perfect.
 - Nothing God declares is imperfect or will not be fulfilled:

Deut. 32:3 “For I proclaim the name of the LORD;
Ascribe greatness to our God!

Deut. 32:4 “The Rock! His work is perfect,
For all His ways are just;
A God of faithfulness and without injustice,
Righteous and upright is He.

Num. 23:18 Then he took up his discourse and said,
“Arise, O Balak, and hear;

Give ear to me, O son of Zippor!

Num. 23:19 “God is not a man, that He should lie,

Nor a son of man, that He should repent;

Has He said, and will He not do it?

Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?

Num. 23:20 “Behold, I have received a command to bless;

When He has blessed, then I cannot revoke it.

- God’s words and promises can never be revoked or reversed.
 - The reason for this is because God already has all the knowledge needed for every decision to be made in His creation:

Psa. 147:5 Great is our Lord and abundant in strength;
His understanding is infinite.

Heb. 13:5 Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, “I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,”

Heb. 13:6 so that we confidently say,

**“THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID.
WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?”**

Heb. 13:7 Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.

Heb. 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

- The comfort and joy this should bring into our lives is unending.

Rev. 1:8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

- God already knows the beginning and the end because He is in control of all of history. He is sovereign. What God determines to be, IS:

Is. 46:8 “Remember this, and be assured;
Recall it to mind, you transgressors.

Is. 46:9 “Remember the former things long past,

For I am God, and there is no other;

I am God, and there is no one like Me,

Is. 46:10 Declaring the end from the beginning,

And from ancient times things which have not been done,

Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';

- What God desires to accomplish He will accomplish.
 - The motive for what God desires to accomplish is always for His good pleasure.
- What a believer is promised from God is that when we believe in the gospel, repent of our sins and accept Jesus as our savior from sin and death we will receive the Holy Spirit.
 - We are not clothed on the outside with a royal robe to distinguish our position but with an inner guarantee of our position before God:

John 14:16 “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;

John 14:17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

John 14:18 “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

John 14:19 “After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also.

2Cor. 1:21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God,

2Cor. 1:22 who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.

2Cor. 5:1 For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2Cor. 5:2 For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven,

2Cor. 5:3 inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked.

2Cor. 5:4 For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.

Every believer receives the Holy Spirit at the moment of justification and will receive the outward manifestation of the immortal body at the moment of glorification, known as the resurrection.

- Final review:
- Chapter 1 of Esther introduces King Ahasuerus as a king over the Persian empire around 484-481 BCE ruling from the capital city of Susa.
 - This was a time the empire was preparing to go to war with the Greeks.
 - The second part of Chapter 1 unveils Queen Vashti's refusal of the command from King Ahasuerus to come display her royal crown and her beauty, and how an edict was brought by the 7 advisors to the King for the disgrace brought upon the King and kingdom.
- In Chapter 2 we were introduced to Esther and Mordecai as the search for a new queen was carried out.
 - Esther is crowned queen and Mordecai saves the life of the king.
- Chapter 3 introduces Haman, who is elevated by king Ahasuerus, and shunned by Mordecai, and displays he is the enemy of the Jews with intentions to exterminate them from the kingdom.
- Chapter 4 displays the response to Haman's edict of Jewish extermination by Mordecai; the Jews' mourning, and Esther's decision to approach the king.
- Chapter 5 The king receives Esther to his court and desires to honor her wishes while Haman is focused on Mordecai's death.
- Chapter 6 Is the beginning turning point in the narrative. Human's plot is reversed as Mordecai is honored and not eliminated.
- Chapter 7 Esther reveals to King Ahasuerus Haman's plans for the extermination of the Jews and ultimately he is hanged on the gallows he made for Mordecai.
- Chapter 8 has Mordecai replacing Haman in his position serving the king and becoming manager of the home given to Esther by the king.
 - The king can't revoke Haman's edict as Esther requests. Mordecai writes a new edict for the defense of the Jews.

Esth. 9:1 Now in the twelfth month (that is, the month Adar), on the thirteenth day when the king's command and edict were about to be executed, on the day when the enemies of the Jews hoped to gain the mastery over them, it was turned to the contrary so that the Jews themselves gained the mastery over those who hated them.

Esth. 9:2 The Jews assembled in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on those who sought their harm; and no one could stand before them, for the dread of them had fallen on all the peoples.

Esth. 9:3 Even all the princes of the provinces, the satraps, the governors and those who were doing the king's business assisted the Jews, because the dread of Mordecai had fallen on them.

Esth. 9:4 Indeed, Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces; for the man Mordecai became greater and greater.

- Verse 1 unfolds identifying the time as happening in the twelfth month called Adar, on the thirteenth day.
 - This was the day clearly defined in what is described as the king's command and edict as a day of action.
- The plan for the enemies of the Jews was to gain the mastery over them or as Haman's edict endorsed it was to kill the Jews and take their plunder.
 - The overview of verse 1 says the opposite happened and the Jews were victorious over those who hated them.
- Verse 2 details how this victory was achieved recording how the Jews assembled in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus.
 - The Jews were specifically gathering to defend themselves from those who sought to harm them.
 - This might indicate the Jews living outside the cities gathered with the Jews inside the cities to help provide support to their fellow Jews.
- As the Jews gather together the description is there was no one that could stand before them.
- The reason for the outcome for the Jews is because the dread of the Jews had fallen on all the peoples.
- Verse 3 describes support for the Jews coming from all the princes of the provinces, the satraps, the governors and those who were doing the king's business assisted the Jews.
 - These leaders supported the Jews because they were afraid not to support Mordecai as they feared him.
- Verse 4 explains why these leaders had come to fear Mordecai as he was great in the king's house, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces; for the man Mordecai became greater and greater.
 - It has been nine months since the edict was issued by Mordecai directing the defense of the Jews to occur on the thirteenth of Adar.
- Mordecai appears to have done the work of his position before the king gaining notoriety with those who are in positions of power.

Esth. 9:5 Thus the Jews struck all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying; and they did what they pleased to those who hated them.

Esth. 9:6 At the citadel in Susa the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men,

Esth. 9:7 and Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha,

Esth. 9:8 Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha,

Esth. 9:9 Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai and Vaizatha,

Esth. 9:10 the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Jews' enemy; but they did not lay their hands on the plunder.

Esth. 9:11 On that day the number of those who were killed at the citadel in Susa was reported to the king.

- Verse 5 details that on the day defined in both edicts the Jews throughout the kingdom struck all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying; and they did what they pleased to those who hated them.
- There were still those in the kingdom who had determined they would seek to attack the Jews in spite of the edict allowing the Jews to gather to defend themselves.
 - It did not end well for the enemy of the Jews.
- These would be people not represented by the leadership in the provinces as verse 3 indicated the leaders gave their support to Mordecai.
- Verse 6 clarifies specifically at the citadel in Susa the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men.
- Verses 7-9 adds 10 individuals by name who were killed; Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai and Vaizatha.
- Verse 10 informs us these were the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Jews' enemy.
 - The Jews did not lay their hands on the plunder. There would have been significant plunder as Haman had been a very wealthy individual and by extension his sons would have inherited much of his wealth when he was hanged on the gallows by king Ahasuerus.
 - There would no financial incentive to be obtained by the Jews in their action against their enemies only self preservation.
- In verse 11 the king receives a report of the number of those killed at the citadel of Susa.

Esth. 9:12 The king said to Queen Esther, “The Jews have killed and destroyed five hundred men and the ten sons of Haman at the citadel in Susa. What then have they done in the rest of the king’s provinces! Now what is your petition? It shall even be granted you. And what is your further request? It shall also be done.”

Esth. 9:13 Then said Esther, “If it pleases the king, let tomorrow also be granted to the Jews who are in Susa to do according to the edict of today; and let Haman’s ten sons be hanged on the gallows.”

Esth. 9:14 So the king commanded that it should be done so; and an edict was issued in Susa, and Haman’s ten sons were hanged.

Esth. 9:15 The Jews who were in Susa assembled also on the fourteenth day of the month Adar and killed three hundred men in Susa, but they did not lay their hands on the plunder.

Esth. 9:16 Now the rest of the Jews who were in the king’s provinces assembled, to defend their lives and rid themselves of their enemies, and kill 75,000 of those who hated them; but they did not lay their hands on the plunder.

Esth. 9:17 This was done on the thirteenth day of the month Adar, and on the fourteenth day they rested and made it a day of feasting and rejoicing.

Esth. 9:18 But the Jews who were in Susa assembled on the thirteenth and the fourteenth of the same month, and they rested on the fifteenth day and made it a day of feasting and rejoicing.

Esth. 9:19 Therefore the Jews of the rural areas, who live in the rural towns, make the fourteenth day of the month Adar a holiday for rejoicing and feasting and sending portions of food to one another.

- In verse 12 the king identifies he knew about the five hundred men killed and about the ten sons of Haman killed in the citadel of Susa and now wants to know what had happened in the rest of the kingdom.
- Before the king receives a report of the impact of Mordecai's edict in the kingdom he asks what Esther's petition would be now. King Ahasuerus adds that her petition would be granted.
- Verse 13 details Esther's request, "If it pleases the king, let tomorrow also be granted to the Jews who are in Susa to do according to the edict of today; and let Haman's ten sons be hanged on the gallows."
- Esther wishes to complete the job in the capitol of Susa of removing anyone who desired to kill the Jews.
 - This day was not a day given in the original edict from Haman to attack the Jews but Esther is requesting this additional day to finish removing the enemies of the Jews who were still in Susa.
- Esther also wants the bodies of Haman's dead sons displayed on gallows as a warning to anyone who would think to come against in the Jews in the future.
 - The second reason to have the ten son's visible may be to demonstrate those who lead the attacks against the Jews are dead.
 - When the number ten is used in the scriptures it signifies a testimony or witness of something.
 - 10 Commandments,
 - 10 plagues on Egypt,
 - 10 elders called by Boaz to witness for him at the gate
 - 10 days testing Daniel and his friends,
 - Prophetic books give 10 kings, or 10 diadems or 10 horns, Parables include 10 virgins, 10 talents, 10 silver coins, 10 slaves with 10 minas ruling 10 cities, 10 lepers healed
 - The 10 sons of Haman were killed during the thirteen of Adar and now Esther's desire is to have the bodies hanged as a testimony of what happens to those who come against the Jews.
 - Verse 14 clarifies the king commanded with an edict in Susa that Haman's ten sons were to be hanged.
- In verse 15 the Jews who were in Susa assembled also on the fourteenth day of the month Adar and killed three hundred men in Susa, but they did not lay their hands on the plunder.
 - Susa was the capital and the seat of government in the Persian empire there may have been more enemies gathered here for this event.

- This was a final power struggle.
- There is a specific reference to the Jews not laying their hands on the plunder.
- This would be an expected outcome for any victor and this would have made a positive impression on those who took notice of how the Jews were different in this situation.
- The Jews were not acting with any monetary incentive only defending themselves from their enemies.
- Verse 16 details that outside of Susa in the king's provinces the Jews had assembled to defend their lives and rid themselves of their enemies.
 - The Jews killed 75,000 of those who hated them.
 - It is repeated here that the Jews did not take any plunder.
 - The Jew's enemies were still focused on their destruction and had still gathered to attack them.
 - The influence of Haman's sons may have been the organization of these actions.
- The number 75,000 seems very large but remember the Persian kingdom was vast to include 127 provinces.
 - If there were enemies in all the provinces that would be about 600 per province though it is doubtful all the provinces were the same size or that the numbers were equally distributed.
- The Jews again did not take the plunder which would be the normal outcome in such a defeat of one's enemies.
 - This is a testimony for the Jews to those in the kingdom.
- Verse 17 identifies the 75,000 men attacked the Jews on the thirteen day of the month of Adar and that is the day the Jew's defended themselves.
 - After the day of defeat of their enemies on the fourteenth day they rested and made it a day of feasting and rejoicing.
- In verse 18 based on the king's command the Jews who were in Susa assembled on the thirteenth and the fourteenth of the same month.
 - They did not rest until the fifteenth day and made it a day of feasting and rejoicing.
- Verse 19 indicates this is why the Jews of the rural areas, who live in the rural towns, make the fourteenth day of the month Adar a holiday for rejoicing and feasting and sending portions of food to one another.
 - This day was a day of rejoicing versus what could of been a day of sorrow and mourning.
 - This day was to be celebrated with feasting versus what could have been fasting. This day there was to be sharing portions of food with each other versus having things taken away as plunder.

Esth. 9:20 Then Mordecai recorded these events, and he sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far,

Esth. 9:21 obliging them to celebrate the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same month, annually,

Esth. 9:22 because on those days the Jews rid themselves of their enemies, and it was a month which was turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and rejoicing and sending portions of food to one another and gifts to the poor.

- In verse 20 the commemoration of these events is secured by Mordecai as he sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far.
- Verse 21 clarifies what Mordecai desire the Jews to do in obliging them to celebrate the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same month, annually.
- In verse 22 the reason for the annual celebration was because on those days the Jews rid themselves of their enemies.
 - This was a time which turned for the Jews from sorrow to gladness and from mourning into a holiday.
 - Because the Jews experienced gladness they were to make these days of feasting and rejoicing and sending portions of food to one another and gifts to the poor.
 - Gifts to the poor may be a way to help everyone have the opportunity to celebrate even those who could not otherwise afford to participate in the celebration.
 - All Jews saved all Jews celebrate.

Esth. 9:23 Thus the Jews undertook what they had started to do, and what Mordecai had written to them.

Esth. 9:24 For Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the adversary of all the Jews, had schemed against the Jews to destroy them and had cast Pur, that is the lot, to disturb them and destroy them.

Esth. 9:25 But when it came to the king's attention, he commanded by letter that his wicked scheme which he had devised against the Jews, should return on his own head and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.

Esth. 9:26 Therefore they called these days Purim after the name of Pur. And because of the instructions in this letter, both what they had seen in this regard and what had happened to them,

Esth. 9:27 the Jews established and made a custom for themselves and for their descendants and for all those who allied themselves with them, so that they would not fail to celebrate these two days according to their regulation and according to their appointed time annually.

Esth. 9:28 So these days were to be remembered and celebrated throughout every generation, every family, every province and every city; and these days of Purim were not to fail from among the Jews, or their memory fade from their descendants.

Esth. 9:29 Then Queen Esther, daughter of Abihail, with Mordecai the Jew, wrote with full authority to confirm this second letter about Purim.

Esth. 9:30 He sent letters to all the Jews, to the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, namely, words of peace and truth,

Esth. 9:31 to establish these days of Purim at their appointed times, just as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had established for them, and just as they had established for themselves and for their descendants with instructions for their times of fasting and their lamentations.

Esth. 9:32 The command of Esther established these customs for Purim, and it was written in the book.

- Verse 23 is a beginning of an overview of what has taken place including answering questions for those who might not have been familiar with the details of the events.
- The first thing of importance is to establish the Jews completed what they started removing the enemies of the Jews, their actions were justified as they responded within the edict given to them by Mordecai.
- Now in verse 24 the justification for the edict to be written by Mordecai as well as the need for the destruction of the Jew's enemy is established.
 - First it is established Haman is an Agate and an adversary of the Jews.
 - Secondly he schemed against the Jews with the goal of destroying them.
 - Finally Haman had utilized the casting of lots referred to as Pur in his desire to destroy them.
 - The casting of lots was to determine the day the destruction was to be carried out.
 - This day the enemy believed was chosen with the aid of the supernatural by casting of lots.
 - The enemy does not comprehend the sovereign control of events established by God.

Prov. 16:33 The lot is cast into the lap,
But its every decision is from the LORD.

- God is in control of the outcome of every decision.
 - Verse 25 is a high level overview of what the king's part in the decisions were.
- First is the clarification the king had not been aware of what Haman was planning to carry out against the Jews.
 - The king then commanded in a letter (written by Mordecai) to reverse the intention of Haman's edict.
 - This was still at the command of the king.
 - The king was responsible for Haman being hanged on the gallows.

- The king was responsible for Hamas' sons bodies being hanged on the gallows.
- This is also a demonstration of what God has spoken to Abraham in Genesis 12:3:

**Gen. 12:3 And I will bless those who bless you,
And the one who curses you I will curse.
And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”**

- Those who would bless the Jewish nation would be blessed and those who would curse this nation would be cursed.
 - We see this fulfilled in Esther:

Esther 9:26 The name given to these days because of what happened and witnessed by the Jews of that time was Purim taken from the name Pur.

- Verse 27 establishes this custom was for the Jews who had experienced the miracle of being saved from their enemies.
 - It was also to be celebrated for two days by their descendants for future generations to be reminded of this miracle from God.
 - It was for the Gentiles who had joined with the Jews in defending them from their enemies.
 - This was a celebration that was to be remembered every year moving forward in the future. It was never to be forgotten.
- Verse 28 again established these days were to be a remembrance and a celebration for every generation so that it would not fade from their memory.
- In verse 29 the letter establishing the celebration and giving the reason for the celebration was done by Queen Esther and Mordecai.
- In verse 30 The letters are described as words of peace and truth sent to all the Jews in the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus.
 - The purpose of the letter defined in verse 31 was to first establish the days of Purim at their appointed times using what Mordecai and Esther had established, and then shared with their descendants including when they had fasted and their lamentations.
- Verse 32 The command to establish the customs for Purim is credited to Esther.
 - This was recorded in the book.
 - There is no definition of the book to know what book is being referred to here.
- Chapter 9 is the overview of the impact of these events on the Jews and the establishment of Purim.
 - This was of significant importance as this was the first time a feast to be celebrated perpetually for the Jews was being established outside of those given in the Torah.

Esth. 10:1 Now King Ahasuerus laid a tribute on the land and on the coastlands of the sea.

Esth. 10:2 And all the accomplishments of his authority and strength, and the full account of the greatness of Mordecai to which the king advanced him, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Media and Persia?

Esth. 10:3 For Mordecai the Jew was second only to King Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews and in favor with his many kinsmen, one who sought the good of his people and one who spoke for the welfare of his whole nation.

- Chapter 10 gives an overview of how the events impacted the non Jews of the kingdom.
 - In verse 1 King Ahasuerus required a tribute or tax to be collected.
 - In verse 2 King Ahasuerus receives credit for the accomplishments of Mordecai as he was the one who advanced him to a great position in the kingdom.
- The list of the accomplishments were written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Media and Persia.
 - Remember this kingdom was known for recording every noteworthy event in their archives and the scriptures confirm this narrative would have been included in these pages of their history.
- Verse 3 reminds the reader that Mordecai was second in command of the kingdom under King Ahasuerus.
 - Mordecai was seen as great among Jews and seen in good light by his kinsmen.
 - Finally the legacy of Mordecai is that he sought the good of the Jews and he cared about all the people in the entire kingdom.
- The book of Esther is the sole reason for the celebration for the Jews known as Purim.
 - One of the traditions during the celebration of Purim is to read the book of Esther in home celebrations and in some synagogues.
- The Book of Esther is one of five Scrolls contained in the Megillot found in the third section of Tanakh, the Hebrew Bible.
- Often when the reading occurs the audience is encouraged to participate by making happy noises when the hero and heroine are mentioned and likewise booing when Haman's name is mentioned.
- A second common theme in the celebration of Purim is the wearing of masks, like some folks celebrate Halloween.
 - There are some that trace this back to the role playing of the characters of the story of Esther and other who say the disguise is a picture of how God was not mentioned in the story of Esther but was clearly behind the scene the entire time. Behind "a cloak of the nature order"
- A third common feature in the celebration is delivering gifts to a friend usually food, known as mishloach manot, Hebrew for "sending portions to one another" At least two foods should be given to represents gifts in the plural sense.
- Two common foods shared during Purim are Hamantashen and kreplach.

- Hamantashen is a triangular pastry with filling, originally done with poppy seeds then moved to prunes and now it can be any type of jam or nuts or chocolate.
- The kreplach is a Jewish ravioli filled with minced meat, garlic, onion and spices.
- Gifts can also be sent to someone who is considered a poorer Jew or a person in need.
- Fourth is celebrating with a festive meal called the Seudah.
 - Jews are to eat, drink and be merry.
- For some there can be a day of fasting preceding the celebration of Purim, however there is to not be fasting on the day of Purim.
- There is an acceptance that no eulogies are to be spoken on Purim.
- Some lessons to take away from the study of Esther:
 - God initiates all things to accomplish His Will.
 - We are to be responsive to His prompting as Mordecai and Esther were.
 - God will bring about His Will because He alone is sovereign over His creation.
 - We are to be in alignment with His Will.

**Prov. 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart
And do not lean on your own understanding.**

**Prov. 3:6 In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He will make your paths straight.**

- God will acknowledge the man whom He desires to honor.
- God will protect His people His way (Jews and Christians)
- God's Word is irrevocable
- We are to be in perpetual worship of all God has done in our lives as our testimony to His goodness, as the celebration of Purim demonstrates for us.
- God is an active God in the lives of mankind. He loves us!

1John 4:15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

1John 4:16 We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

1John 4:17 By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

1John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

1John 4:19 We love, because He first loved us.

- He has not left us alone in this world and He is coming back;

Heb. 10:35 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.

Heb. 10:36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

Heb. 10:37 FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE,
HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY.

Heb. 10:38 BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH;
AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM.

- I pray that you know this God as your savior through His son Jesus and you know the Love of this God through which you will desire to honor and serve Him with every part of your life.

Luke 10:27 And he answered, “YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.”

Luke 10:28 And He said to him, “You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE.”