


## THE BOOK OF ESTHER

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### INTRODUCTION

I have enjoyed this little masterpiece of Jewish history. It tell the story of the preservation of the people to whom we own the scriptures containing the timeless law of Moses; the most profound prophetic messages of all time and the writings of the wise who learned to live and teach how to live from the Spirit of God. This little book teaches us so much about the providence of God, who, though the Almighty Lord of hosts, yet while exercising His most genial and profound encouragements, hides Himself. In this book we find reason why we should seek the face of God in prayer and as we read we discover that behind promotion and the rise and fall of men and nations is the hand of God Himself. I commend the work to the reader with this thought. *Haman the "would be" felon died on the tree meant for the innocent Mordecai. Jesus died on the tree alongside two felons and pronounced towards one who was contrite, "Today you will be with me in paradise"* As in other commentaries please note that translation from the Hebrew is in plain text and my comments are interspersed throughout *in italics*.

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### THE BOOK OF ESTHER

The book of Esther must first have been penned by the Queen perhaps in concert with Mordecai who had access to court records and added to them (484BC) Its later provenance is unknown. The postscript may indicate scribal copies were made in or around 317 in the Seleucid period. The book was not in the canon of scripture from which our Saviour read. I think the postscript shows it was known in the Maccabean era. It came to prominence again in time of the Bar Kochba (son of the "star" -Esther's name was "the star"-a period of Jewish revolt in the years 132-135 of the second century AD when this leader forced the Romans to withdraw forces from Britain to retake Jerusalem from him) The book has been the inspiration of the Jews in every succeeding period of oppression and since the great holocaust of 1940-44 it has been read annually in every synagogue and the congregation have rejoiced again at the defeat of God's enemies and theirs.

The book itself states that "Mordecai recorded these events" and as author he speaks of himself simply as "Mordecai the Jew" which is both self-effacing and God glorifying because in the designation the abbreviated name of Yahweh appears. The 44 references to "the Jews" also contain the abbreviated reference to God. This book brings the term "the Jews" to prominence as the classic generic description of the sons of Jacob. They are named after the "Lion tribe or kingly tribe of Judah". This is in contrast with Haman's family of which at least three sons had names with the signification "Lion-like". It also contrasts with the character of the fierce king of the Persians who is called "the lion" in Esther's prayer in the LXX.

The absence of the name of God is supplied by four coded places where it is linked to the text and by being hidden in the expressions "the Jews" and "Mordecai the Jew". The postscript says, "You declared, "I will answer their Purim (stones) and hide myself" which means that God in his providence wanted a text to be written under his Spirit (of whom Mordecai shows himself conscious) which would declare his great works in answer to prayer in such a way that would bring Him praise as UNIVERSALLY SOVEREIGN as a PRAYER HEARING GOD as THE ONE FROM WHOM PROMOTION COMES and as THE JUDGE OF ALL.

### ESTHER'S PRAYER

No better introduction to the book could be afforded than the prayer of Esther recorded in Chapter 5 of the LXX. I record its petitions here and seek to capture its spirit. It allows the devout nature of the Queen of the Persians to emerge in her relationship with the Lord God of the Hebrews.

(1)"O my Lord, thou alone art our king; help me who am destitute and have no helper but thee, for my danger is near at hand. I have heard from my birth that Thou took Israel out of the nations for a perpetual heritage. We have sinned. Thou hast delivered us into the hands of our enemies because we honoured their gods. Thou art righteous O Lord. Not content with our slavery they have laid their hands on their idols to abolish the decree of thy mouth and to stop the mouth of those who praise thee and to extinguish the glory of thy house and altar.

(2)O Lord, do not resign thy sceptre to them that are not but turn their counsel against them and make an example of him who has begun to injure us.

(3) O Lord, Remember us, manifest Thyself in the time of our affliction and encourage me, O king of gods and ruler of all dominion. **Put harmonious speech in my mouth before the lion** and turn his heart to hate him who fights against us to the utter destruction of him and them that consent with him. But deliver us by Thine hand and **help me who am destitute** (*a second time Esther refers to being thrust on God as wanting father and mother*), and have none but thee O Lord

(4) O Lord, thou knowest all things, and knowest that I hate the glory of transgressors and that I abhor the couch of the uncircumcised, and of every stranger. Thou knowest my necessity, for I abhor the symbol of my proud station, which is upon my head in the days of my splendour: I abhor it as a menstruous cloth, and I wear it not in the days of my tranquillity. And thy handmaid has not eaten at the table of Haman, and I have not honoured the banquet of the king, neither have I drunk wine of libations. Neither has thy handmaid rejoiced since the day of my promotion until now, except in thee, O Lord God of Abraham.

(5)O God who hast power over all hearken to the voice of the desperate and deliver us from the hand of them that devise mischief; and deliver me from my fear.

## WHY PURIM?

Josephus, the first century Jewish historian, tells us that Purim came to be associated with the Greek verb φρουρεω "to be on one's guard" but its undoubted original meaning is in the traditional casting of "lots" (*from the Persian puru "a stone"*). A French archaeologist working at Shushan in 1884-6 actually verified the location of the kings gate and found the palace garden and even one of the dice of "pur" of the sort cast (3.7) to determine when the enemies of the Jews would strike.-namely in the month Nisan or the first month.

## ATTEMPTED GENOCIDE

The 20th century holocaust where 6 million Jewish people, dear to God, were sacrificed by the whim of a ruthless dictator is the exact counterpart of the Haman plot on Jews in the Persian Empire. This ancient plot was an under cover satanic attack on the Messianic bloodline of the house of David. The holocaust in Europe was another sinister ploy to achieve a different purpose-the end of a race that could be ruled by the returning Messiah. On this occasion the tool was the German leader Hitler and the compliant machine of his Third Reich. As a testimony to this ancient genocidal attempt on the Jewish people it right well deserves to be read in every synagogue in the world on Adar 14-15. Besides that every true Christian should appreciate the stamping of feet and hissing of voices on the mention of the name of the instigator of this plot at annual celebrations in this connection and more than that we ought to deeply thank the Creator and Redeemer LORD that this plot was foiled by **divine intervention**.

## ABSENCE OF GOD'S NAME

God is not mentioned directly in Esther. This is highly unusual in a canonical book. The writer has however hidden **the sacred name** several times in the narrative in a coded form. Such code appears also in the Torah in respect of the word Torah spelt forwards as the start of Genesis and Exodus and backwards in Numbers and Deuteronomy and pointing to the sacred Tetragrammaton at the beginning of Leviticus in the centre of the 5 books.

# CHAPTER 1: THE REALM OF AHASUERUS

## AHASUERUS OR XERXES

*This fabulously wealthy king of the Persians was the son of Darius and the grandson of Cyrus both of whom were acquaint with the God of Israel. Cyrus had read about himself in the bible (Isaiah 44.28 & 45.1) and Darius had been familiar with Daniel. The aged Daniel lived near to one of his powerful friends in the winter palace and his burial mound stood until recent time near Shushan. Xerxes is famous for whipping the Bosphorus because its winds broke his pontoon bridge between Asia and Greece. He is also known to have wept at the thought that many of his massive invasion force would not return from Greece -though another interpretation says he wept "because not one of the vast company would be alive in 100 years. He clearly felt the mortality of man Xerxes really did not want to attack Greece but was pressed by a failed general who sought revenge on the Macedonian armies that defeated him.*

## THE GLORY THAT WAS PERSIA

And it happened in the days of Ahasuerus, he who was Ahasuerus king of Hindu or India and unto African Cush-king of one hundred and twenty seven Medinas (*provinces or jurisdictions allotted to viceroys or satraps as the Persians called their governors*) In **these days** as King Ahasuerus was accustomed (*Literally "as Shabbat" since he sat and seldom moved any distance from his throne -a tincture of humour at the opening of the book.*) he sat on the throne of his kingdom which was in Susa the palace-fortress(Hebrew *הרץב*) He had taken the throne of Darius his father who had pretensions of defeating emergent Greece . That was in 486. By 484 he was being urged by a failed general Mardonios who had been defeated by the Greeks already to add Greece to his campaign target along with Egypt. Ahasuerus sometime later with diffidence summoned a council of nobles and by 482 his will to face Greece had been galvanised. The occasion of his decision may well have been the occasion of the banquet at the end of Vashti's time as queen. That being so the preparation for a new queen took one year so it would be exactly at the time when Xerxes was preparing to leave on campaign that these epic incidents took place. Thus during this critical period his marriage to Vashti ended and the story we have in scripture took place-notably in the 3rd year of Xerxes. The hope of the perilous adventure into which massive manpower and resources of food were channelled was that he would extend his kingdom to Europe and make him undisputed ruler of the world-but that was not to be. **In the third year** of his reign he gave a banquet for all his principal persons and those who served him; **military chiefs** of Persia and the Medes, the elite Persians and Governors of his provinces were before him. He caused the riches of the glory of his majesty and the preciousness of the ornament or pride of his greatness to be displayed for one hundred and eighty days. *By the lunar year this was half a year and must go down as the longest celebrations or displays in history-lasting for 6 months.*

## THE EMPIRE WIDE INVITE -A FORETASTE OF THE WORLDWIDE GOSPEL CALL

On the completion of these days the king made a banquet for all the people who could reach or find their way to Shushan the fortress from the greatest to the least -a feast seven days in duration in the green walled garden of the house of the king. *Again this was an open invitation extended through 127 provinces presumably by the governors to ordinary people who might come and enjoy the best and also the presence of the king among them. Nothing in the life of kings historically beats this for enshrining the concept of the gospel promulgation and the resultant joys of the presence of Jesus in glory-with the notable proviso that we shall of course enjoy His presence for all eternity.* There were cloths or (gazebos) of white and blue linen held with cords of white and purple on rings of silver and pillars of marble and couches of gold and silver on a tiled pavement of white marble and pearl (*commentators are sceptical of such costly stone and precious being used broadcast in tiles*) and black marble the overall impression was a pavement gleaming in black and white.

## THE INDIGNITY ASKED OF VASHTI

And they were given to drink from vessels of gold and each vessel was different from the next and wine was plentiful in accordance with the liberality of the king. And it was served in the way they were

experienced; there was no compulsion according to the decree of the king because of the whole abundance of his house each man did according to his pleasure. Also queen Vashti made a banquet for the women in the palace of the queen which belonged to king Ahasuerus. In the seventh day when the king was in good heart through wine he said to Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar and Carcas the eunuchs who ministered (to him) "You satisfy the face of king Ahasuerus". ***Bring Vashti the queen before the king in her royal crown*** that her beauty be seen by the people and princes for she is beautiful to look upon. *Whiston in Josephus refers to the Chaldee paraphrast who presents the text as if Xerxes wishes to show Vashti naked to the guests-perhaps with a crown and some simple veil thereto attached or simply in a crown. That it is so would seem clear from the fact that guests must have seen the queen beautiful in her robes and this was to be an occasion of immodesty and naked display which she abhorred and on which grounds she refused to appear and thus lost her crown.*

### **VASHTI'S REFUSAL COSTS HER THE CROWN**

And the queen refused (*Hebrew nam "to be unwilling" out of weariness and ceasing to be interested*) to come according to the word in the hand of the eunuchs and the king was provoked to anger and his anger burned into a flame against her. And the king spoke to the wise men who knew the times for action for it was regular for the king to have a word with those who knew the statutes and the rules of government. And those near to him were Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena and Memuchan; seven princes of Persia and Media who saw his face and sat as the highest ranking men in his kingdom. "According to law what is to be done to queen Vashti because she refused to do what king Ahasuerus said by the hand of his eunuchs.

### **ADVISERS PAVE THE WAY FOR THE NEW QUEEN**

And Memucan said before the king and the nobles, "Not only against the king has she set herself in wicked array but also her action is against the nobles and the people of all the provinces of king Ahasuerus. For the action of the queen will go out to all women to despise their husbands by their statement, 'King Ahasuerus asked to bring Vashti before the king and she would not come' "This day the princesses of Persia and Media who have heard the affair of the king will alike despise and provoke to anger the nobles of the king. If it pleases the king to issue a royal decree by word of mouth and write it in the statutes of the Persians and Medes which do not pass away (*Hebrew rb[ "to be overwhelmed or remitted"*) that she does not come and set herself before king Ahasuerus and the king give her royal position to a companion better than she. When the royal letter is read which shall be done in his entire kingdom for it is immense then all women great and small will show respect to their husbands. *The coded name of God Yahweh is found in this short passage. hbr wywklm l kb hc[y rva The lesson here is that though the dominion of Ahasuerus is great so the dominion of Yahweh is greater far. ***The palace of the king is greater in heaven; the wife of the king is greater in His church; the kingdom of the LORD extends over all ages and is very great.****

*How great is our God  
How great is His name  
He's the Great I AM  
For ever the same.  
He rolled back the waters  
of the mighty Red Sea  
Now listen while I tell you  
What he's done for me.  
He is my every thing He is my all  
He is my every thing both great and small  
He gave His life for me made everything new  
He is my every thing-now how about you.*

### **THE KING ACCEPTS ADVICE AND MOVES TO CONSOLIDATE THE HUSBAND'S ABSOLUTE RIGHTS IN HIS FAMILY**

And it seemed good in the eyes of the king and his nobles and the king did according to the word of Memucan. And he sent horse riding or camel riding despatch riders to every province of the kingdom-province by province according to his decree and to each people according to its language that every man should be ruler over his house and the law was(to be) in the vernacular of his people. *It would appear that law was cast in the local tongue so that from this point on there should be no mistakes made about its interpretation. The rule of each husband in his own house was affirmed worldwide under the law of Ahasuerus.*

## CHAPTER 2 ESTHER IS CROWNED. AN ATTEMPT ON THE KING'S LIFE IS FOILED

### THE PAGE BOYS SOLUTION TO THE KING'S LONELY PLIGHT 1-4

After these things the rage of king Ahasuerus abated; he remembered Vashti (beauty) and what she had done and what he had decreed over her to cut her off. Then the pages of the king who waited upon him (*The Hebrew  $\text{trV}$  suggested "who worshipped"*) said, "they will search out for the king beautiful young virgins. Let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom and gather all the young virgins of outstanding beauty to Shushan to the citadel to the house of the women which is under the supervision of Hegai the eunuch of the king to be given the cleansing creams for the skin (*Hebrew  $\text{qrm}$  "perfumed ointments", "cleansing ointments"*) Then let the young woman who will seem beautiful in the eyes of the king be made queen in place of Vashti. The statement seemed good in the eyes of the king and he did this.

### ESTHER-ORPHANED IN TRAGEDY-CARED FOR EXCEPTIONALLY 5-7

There was a Jewish man in the citadel at Shushan, Mordecai (*Hebrew transliteration of the Persian for "little man"*) by name, son of Jair, son of Shimei, son of Kish a man *of the tribe of Benjamin* there may be a play on the word Benjamin-for Mordecai in time became the king's right hand man and prime minister of Persia. Who had been exiled (Hebrew "uncovered") with the exile which had been caused with Jechoniah king of Judah whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon exiled. And he was foster father of Esther (*The word  $\text{mna}$  entails "faithfulness, covenant, allowances, education, care"*) This primary statement puts Mordecai's character in the very best light. This man even nursed Esther as a child. She was Esther (*Persian for "Star" but in Hebrew "one who concealed her own face"*) daughter of the beloved brother of Mordecai-she had neither father nor mother. This young girl was lovely in appearance and had beautiful looks and at the time of the death of her father and mother Mordecai took her as his own daughter. *This little girl was orphaned by some unmentioned tragedy of illness or accident that claimed the lives of both her parents.*

### ESTHER A RISING STAR. MORDECAI A CONCERNED UNCLE 8-11

And it happened when the word or promise of the king and his edict were heard that many virgins were gathered to the citadel at Shushan under the hand of Hegai and Esther also was taken There is no voluntary or advisory role for Esther or Mordecai here. *The verb is used of the ark being taken in 1Samuel 4.11 and of Elijah being taken to heaven in 2Kings 2.9. The term "taken" is contrasted with "gathered" in the verse we are reading. Her "being taken" was ultimately to become "taken as wife".* She was taken to the house of the king under the hand of Hegai who superintended the women. The young woman pleased him and *he raised her to favour before him* (or) made a covenant with her face to face and speeded up the skin beauty treatment and the portion of food given to her and seven of the top maids from the king's house were given her and he changed her maids (*and herself*) to the first rank in the harem. Esther had not informed about her people or her descent because Mordecai had commanded her that she should not give that information. And through every day and daily he had a few walks (*Hebrew  $\text{Jlhtm}$* ) before the village enclosure of the house of the women to observe or be aware or become acquaint with the well-being of Esther and what was happening to her.

## **HAREM PROCEDURE: THE SINGLE VISIT & SECOND HOUSE 12-14**

So in reaching her turn to come before the king Ahasuerus each girl had to complete as prescribed for women twelve months to fulfil statute to fulfil the days of their skin and body treatment; six months with oil of myrrh and six with fragrant balsam and cleansing and anointing of women. In this condition she would go to the king and anything she asked was given her to take from the house of the women to the house of the king. *By this stage a year on after 365 walks and more of Mordecai Esther had maids and ointments and servants and a whole new suite of furniture and personal effect which were moved with her to the palace.* In the evening she would go there and in the morning she would return to a **second house** of the women under the hand of Shaashgaz ("*servant of the beautiful*") the king's eunuch who kept the concubines. She would not go back to the king unless he was pleased with her and called for her by name

## **ESTHER SPURNED WORLDLY POSSESSIONS 15-16**

When Esther the daughter of Abihail (*Father of strength*) , **the object of the love** (*Hebrew dd*) of Mordecai whom he had taken to himself as his own daughter reached her turn to come to the king she asked for nothing except what Hegai ("*venerable*") the eunuch of the king and keeper of the women said. And it happened that Esther was lifted to favour by all who saw her. And Esther was taken to king Ahasuerus to the house of the king in the tenth month the month Tebet in the seventh year of his reign.

## **THE COVENANT BOND OF XERXES & ESTHER 17-18**

The king loved Esther above all women and **he offered favour and covenant love before his face** more than all the other virgins. *This is an expression specific to the book of Esther and it is used of Hegai and Ahasuerus ("excellence") both of whom saw such distinction and quality of beauty in this young lady that they made earnest agreement with her and treated her as special. Their appreciation reflects greatly on her humble but near perfect grooming for life under the care of Mordecai. If we miss the importance of this "favour" and this "covenant" of the great king we miss the ardour and solemnity of the relationship of these two-husband and wife king and queen- man of power and woman of character- and how it was to become effective in respect of Esther's plea for the Jews.* He set the royal crown on her head and made her queen in place of Vashti ("*my gift*"). And the king made a great banquet for all his nobles and his ministers-the feast of Esther and he created a public holiday (*Hebrew hjnh "The rest"- suggestive of an annual holiday*) for the provinces and he gave presents (*Hebrew tavm "liftings" or that which could be received -the opposite of tribute*) according to the generosity of the king. *Although Ahasuerus or Xerxes-possibly the richest man who ever lived-was by all accounts fierce as a lion he is time and again in this narrative represented as incredibly generous and the selflessness of Esther would not remain unnoticed by him.*

## **A PLOT AGAINST THE KING UNCOVERED 19-23**

When the virgins were gathered for a second time Mordecai was settled at the gate of the king. *He had become a gate-keeper "in the house of the gate"* Esther had explained nothing of her ancestry or her people as Mordecai her uncle had instructed her for Esther continued to act in accordance with the advice of Mordecai as when she was under his care. *The kind sayings of this wise caring little man were bound as by cords of love to her mind and soul.* In those days when Mordecai sat at the king's gate Bigthana ("*gift of fortune*") and Teresh ("*austere*"), two nobles of the king, guards of the threshold planned (his) destruction by lifting their hand against king Ahasuerus. *These men planned directly to murder the king and to effect a coup-d'etat.* The affair was known to Mordecai who informed Esther the queen and she told the king naming Mordecai as her source. The matter was investigated and uncovered and the two were hanged on a tree. It was written in a book of the historical affairs of the day in the presence of the king. *This was a vital piece of information which saved the life of the king and extended his rule. The implication of this information by Mordecai for the future well-being of the Jews was immense. The stage is now set for the greatest satanic thrust of the era against the people of God.*

## CHAPTER 3: HAMAN'S PLOT FOR JEWISH GENOCIDE

### HAMAN WOULD NOT WORSHIP MAN 1-4

After these events the king Ahasuerus honoured Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite. *In Chapter 9.24 Haman's father is called a "Macedonian" in the LXX but Josephus [Ant 11.6.5] is in agreement with the Hebrew text that his father was of Agagite ancestry, that is, he was an Amalekite, directly descended from Agag whom Saul refused to slay. It is of interest that Mordecai was also of Saul's tribe, a Benjamite.* And he raised him and set his seat above all the nobles that were his peers. And all the servants of the king who were in the gate of the king knelt and worshipped Haman for this is what the king commanded about him and Mordecai was not kneeling or worshipping. And the servants of the king in the king's gate asked Mordecai, "Why knowingly do you pass over the command of the king?" And it happened that they spoke to him day after day but he would not listen to them and they explained to Haman to see if the words of Mordecai would stand for he had told them he was a Jew.

### THE SINISTER GAME OF CHOOSING A GENOCIDE DATE

*The Hatred of Haman for the Jews is explained by the fact that his nation-the Amalakites were devoted to destruction by God-Exodus 17 14-16.*

When Haman saw that Mordecai would not kneel or venerate him Haman was filled with rage. But it was contemptible to act against Mordecai alone because he was informed about Mordecai's people and Haman sought to destroy all the people of Mordecai who were in the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus. In the first month, that is Nisan, in the 12th year of king Ahasuerus the lot is cast *The phrase is comparable to "the die is cast" in our usage in the presence of Haman for day against day and month against month; the lot was the twelfth day and the month Adar. There follows a break in the narrative at this point-as if this is a breathtakingly Satanic procedure which as the date neared had to be explained to the king and gain his approval and decree.*

### HAMAN STATES HIS CASE AGAINST THE JEWS

And Haman said to king Ahasuerus there is **one** people that is established and wealthy (*Hebrew  $hvy$  a verb which has all the undertones of "being safe"[cf Yeshu'a] and rich  $vy$  and secure  $hyvnt$  so Haman was remarking unkindly critically and in a derogatory sense on the Jewish peoples' continuance*) scattered and separated to themselves (yet) within the house of the nations within all the provinces (127 in number) of your kingdom and their rules are different from every people and they do not work with the king's customs and it is not fit that they should remain as subjects of the king (Hebrew  $l$  "belonging to the king") If it seems good by the king ("*by*" or "*near*"  $l$  [ *ironically means "by the side of" and Esther was by his side very often.*]) let it be written(or)decreed to destroy them. *This was an audacious and malignant proposal which strangely received the immediate sanction of the king. The fierce lion-like savagery of Xerxes is seen here along with his sudden bestial rage which in her LXX prayer Esther testifies to as she speaks to her sovereign LORD.* I will create ten thousand silver talents come to the king's treasury for the generosity of the king. *The Jewish people who are summarily to be slain would have possessions houses and land confiscated and the stolen trophy made available to dole out-the possible suggestion being that the takings would cover the cost of mounting the operation and give funds for benevolence if you will!* And the king removed the signet from his hand and gave it to Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, a continuing enemy of the Jewish people. *The present continuous participle associates Haman with the Amalekites of whom Moses said with divine approval, "I will have war with Amalek throughout all generations" Exodus 17.16* The king said, "The money has been given to you (and the people) to do with it as seems good in your eyes" *Haman could use the resources confiscated to pay the perpetrators or whatever else he wished. At first he seemed to be on a roll to success and to being the second richest man in Persia-but that was soon to change.*

### THE RIDERS CARRY THE DECREE TO THE PROVINCES

The king's secretaries were called in the thirteenth day of the first month and wrote all that Haman commanded to the Satraps (*Viceroy of which under Xerxes' father there were twenty*) of the king and deputies (or) governors who were set in charge province by province and to the nobles (*local chieftains*)

people by people and province by province. The writing was in the tongue of the various peoples; written in the name of Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's seal. The written despatches were sent by the hand of couriers ( *Hebrew* *xmr* "runners" or perhaps "fast riders" of horses or camels) to all the provinces of the king to completely destroy (*Hiphil* of *dmv* "completion" or "final act") to slay and to cause to perish (*Hebrew* *db[* ) every Jew from the youth to the aged; little child and women; in one day- the thirteenth day of the twelfth month- the month Adar and to loot their gain or booty. Many copies (literally "calves") of the written decree were to disseminate the law in every province making plain to all people to be ready for this day. Sharpened by the command of the king (the couriers) hastened. The decree was given in Shushan the citadel of the king and Haman and the king sat down to drink and the city of Shushan was confused. *The command was first given in the capitol and it simply caused deep confusion. Why should there suddenly be "death to the Jews" without a genuine cause? What was afoot? None was more disturbed than Mordecai and the now queen Esther. There was simply no other man who could act in the capitol but Mordecai. But could he succeed in face of a rolling disaster with the full support of a negligent king and the civil service of the state and its finance? This is why the topic of the first part of this book is so vital- "God holds true dominion" "Yahweh is sovereign"*

Ye saints, take heart your Saviour reigns...

He reigns; he reigns who then will dare

Oppose His will, reject His care

One Lord one empire all secured

And all in life and death is yours

O'er earth and heaven one song shall ring

The LORD omnipotent is king

## CHAPTER 4 MORDECAI AFFIRMS ESTHER'S ROLE UNDER GOD

### MORDECAI'S PUBLIC EXHIBITION OF GRIEF

Mordecai know all that was done and Mordecai rent or cut in pieces his outer garment and clothed himself in sacking and ashes and went into the centre of the city and wailed with a great and bitter cry. But he went only to the front of the king's gate because no-one clothed in sacking was permitted to pass the king's gate. *Clearly Mordecai was going towards the post where he worked but instead of working he was committing his time to drawing attention to the plight of his people publicly in the only way possible in what was for him a window of opportunity when the city was confused as to why the king issued the genocide legislation.* In every province and provincial area where the word of the king and his edict was made known there was great mourning among *the Jews* and fasting and wailing and lamentation and many used sackcloth and ashes.

### COMMUNICATION 1: ESTHER'S EMISSARY GOES TO SEEK A REASON

When the maids and eunuchs of Esther came and told her the queen was in great terror and pain and sent covering garments to invest Mordecai but he would not take them.

*This was not initially because Esther connected the edict which she may as yet not have heard of with his state but rather thought that he was deeply distraught about her own state.* Then Esther called Hatach one of the king's eunuchs assigned to minister to her and sent him to Mordecai to find out what this was that was going on and what it was for? *Esther was now concerned about the wellbeing of Mordecai or any threat to him and wanted the exact reason for his public exhibition which was so out of character though as she would have known was a distress signal of the first importance.* So Hatach went out to Mordecai to the square of the city which faced the gate of the king.

### COMMUNICATION 2: HATACH THE EUNUCH CONVEYS THE SHOCKING NEWS TO ESTHER

And Mordecai told him all that had befallen him (*Hebrew* *hrq* "the opposition" or "happenings") and the "distribution" or "division" of silver shekels which Haman said would belong to the treasury through the destruction of *the Jews*. *Mordecai drew attention to the motives of theft rapine and jealousy that lay behind the action of Haman.* And he gave him a transcript of the written decree which had been given



out in Shushan for the annihilation, to show to Esther and to make known to her and he commanded her to go the presence of the king and to continually look *the Hithpael suggests acting desperately when your very life is in danger* for mercy from him and to seek his face with zeal *this again enters the realm of worship and pleading which puts God Himself to move on His first moral principles* on behalf of her people.

### COMMUNICATION 3: ESTHER EXPLAINS THE MORTAL DANGER OF APPROACHING XERXES

Hatach came and reported what Mordecai had said to Esther. Esther then spoke to Hatach to go and instruct Mordecai. "All the servants of the king and people of the provinces of the king know that for any man or woman who has not been called goes to the king to the inner enclosure there is one law; the law that he be put to death, the only difference is when the king extends his golden sceptre. I have not been called to come to the king -this is the thirtieth day.

### COMMUNICATION 4: MORDECAI REJOINS WITH THE APPEAL-WE ARE ALL IN DEADLY DANGER-YOU MAY BE GOD'S INSTRUMENT AT THIS TIME

The words of Esther were reported to Mordecai. "Do you not know that you (as a remnant)from all *the Jews* will not escape with your life in the palace for if you stay silent at this time life (or) the Holy Spirit(or)action and deliverance will be ministered to *the Jews* from another place but you and your father's house will perish" *These are the words of a man with a deep faith in God and an awareness of the Holy Spirit who sees the deep mysteries of evil and acts for God's children. If the place on earth was silent the palace in Heaven would stand to minister relief. Mordecai warned that the consequence of inaction would be that Esther's grandparents and personal family would suffer with her. And who knows if you have come to the kingdom for this time of calamity? (Hebrew t[gh ta "time of stroke" or divine affliction")Mordecai reminds Esther that as the Spirit would protect so God may have placed her for the defence of his people-God would show that in her act of faith and then all would know. Here is what Mordecai sees-potential for one of the greatest testimonies in history of a reversal of fortune by God's sovereign provision.*

### COMMUNICATION 5: ESTHER'S REPLY-PRAY AND FAST!

*With equal faith in God Esther reacted in a positive and decisive vein.* Esther spoke in reply to Mordecai, "Go **wrap yourself up** with all *the Jews* who can be found in Shushan and fast for me and do not eat or drink for three days night or day and I and my maids will also fast thus and in this state I will go in to the king-which is illegal; and if I perish I perish!" Mordecai *vanished* (or) rushed away (or) passed through (Hebrew *rb[ ]*) the city and did everything that Esther commanded him! *There is humour in the solemnity. Esther says, "New clothes are needed, Mordecai"-wrap yourselves together for safety in prayer. Esther knew that only the God of Jacob and Israel could now aid her best efforts and the concerted cyclone of prayer of the city's Jews bombarding heaven with a call for divine mercy was her great weapon. She was seeking two sceptres at one and the same time-the sceptre of prayer and the sceptre of Ahasuerus. Mordecai was thrilled with the pluck and sheer courage and deep faith of his niece. She was surely proving the very instrument he believed she could be and he was gone so fast the population thought he had vanished into thin air-gone to ground-hidden from the coming fury. This Esther is surely one of the very greatest women of faith in all Jewish history-a right royal lady!*

## CHAPTER 5 ESTHER'S HISTORIC APPEAL FO THE LIFE OF HER PEOPLE

### COMMENT ON THE MAIN THEMES OF ESTHER

*Within this chapter are two coded references to the LORD of Israel ever called by His adoring people ELOHENU. The two sections read; these are to be added to that in Ch 1.20 which introduces the topic of the pre-eminence and dominion of the LORD over the whole earth*

*(a) And Esther said, "If it pleases the king let t(1)he King a(2)nd Haman c(3)ome t(4)oday to a banquet-where the numbers 1-4 are the name of God in its holiest form stands in the original Hebrew of Ch.5.4*

(b)I saw Mordecai the J(1)e(2)w sitt(3)ing at the(4) king's gate The name recurs in Ch.5.13  
 The second reference is associated with the topic: **the LORD who hears petition** and the third reference has to do with the topic: **the LORD through whom "promotion" comes**. Mordecai is the example here;-other examples are Joseph and Moses and Daniel. The fourth topic of the book is found in Ch7.7, within the phrase, "For he saw evil was prepared for him by the king. Here **the "payment for sin" or retributive justice of the LORD** is reflected

## ESTHER'S REQUEST

*It was Deioces according to Josephus, who first provided against natural approach to the MedoPersian throne. Guards with Axes stood by the throne in the early days and perhaps into this period to summarily dismiss from life any who dared approach.*

And it took place on the third day; Esther invested in her royal robes stood within the inner corridors of the house of the king, in the citadel directly in front of the house of the king and the king was sitting upon the throne of his kingdom in sight of the door of the house. And it happened when the king saw Josephus has it that Esther swooned and the king sprang from his throne and comforted her putting the sceptre in her hand. This reconstruction is rather overdone and cannot be valid within the limits of the text.

Queen Esther standing in the inner enclosure she carried or raised mercy in his eyes **Something** about the courage and dignity and grace of this wonderful woman won his heart. He "looked on her with mercy-did he know she was a Jew by now? Did he feel he had excluded her? Did he already feel he had taken a wrong path? The king extended the golden sceptre which was in his hand belonging to Esther because as his special favourite and queen He would exclude her from danger (or) towards Esther as immediate re-assurance (or) on account of Esther"(i.e. who she was) (Hebrew **l** meaning "she possessed it" or was assured of it and need not now [and perhaps ever] fear.) and Esther came near and touched the head of the sceptre.

## AN ALL TOO SIMPLE INITIAL REQUEST

And the king said to her, "What is the matter Queen Esther? **What is your request even to the half of my kingdom it will be given to you?"** And Esther said, "If it seem good to the king let the king and Haman come today to a feast which I will make for you!" And the king said, "Rush Haman (here) that we may do what Esther says. And the king and Haman came to the feast which Esther had made. *The almost sycophantic interest the king had in pleasing Esther was unusual in this leonine king. It must have thrilled Esther whose next private prayer would be one of utter thanksgiving. Already it was well nigh proved that the prayer of the Jews of Shushan had taken hold of the hand that moves the world. Josephus says that the eunuch who called Haman to supper was Sabuchadas and that one of Haman's servants told him about the gallows he had erected-so intelligence of its construction may in some such fashion have reached the palace.*

## THE SECOND REQUEST TO DINNER

Again the king said to Esther as they were drinking wine, "What is your prayer and it will be given you and what is your search (for my face all about)? Unto the half of my kingdom it will be done!" Esther replied and said, "O my prayer and my earnest seeking!" *She was doing her feminine thing to intrigue and tease the lion-king. She was keeping the king in suspense but also testing if her relationship with him had depth and power enough to support the mighty reversal of relationships in the secretariat of the mighty king. "If I have found grace in the eyes of the king and if it seem good to give me my prayer and to do what I seek let the king and Haman come to the feast which I will make for them and tomorrow I will do as the king requests." Again this is a very bold procedure. The queen is keeping the monarch in suspense but all the while she is quietly enabling him to become master of his house and to command the austere Haman once more.*

## THE OLD SORE RANCOURS AGAIN

Haman went out that day radiant and in good heart but as he saw Mordecai at the gate of the king and he did not rise and he did not even trouble himself in his presence Haman was filled with **hemah** (Hebrew **hmj** "rage" is a play on words here-the writer -perhaps Esther with her penman- is enjoying

*this story line ) Haman fought his impulse (to harm Mordecai) and went home and sent for his friends to come and for Zeresh (Persian for "gold" though one could be forgiven for saying she better deserved to be named "dross") his wife. Haman narrated to them his great wealth and his many sons and how the king had made him great and raised him above the nobles and servants of the king. And he said, "In addition Esther the queen did not invite any but me with the king to her banquet which she made and also tomorrow I am called by her with the king (to eat) But all this does not satisfy me while I watch **Mordecai the Jew** sitting at the gate of the king.*

### **MORDECAI TO DIE ON A TREE HAD HAMAN PREVAILED-JESUS DIED ON THE TREE WHEN JUDAS BETRAYED HIM**

And Zeresh his wife and all his friends said to him, "Make a tree gallows of fifty cubits (75feet) and in the morning speak to the king that he hang Mordecai upon it and go with the king to the dinner and be radiant and the matter seemed good in the eyes of Haman and he constructed the tree gallows *Mordecai was a good man. He was one who feared no man. He was back at the king's gate in clothes he may have had at home. While he read his Torah in the evening and prayed and sang the treacherous Haman was planning his instant death. There was a good man named Yeshu'a born in Bethlehem according to the prophets; taken from Egypt according to the prophets; called a Nazarene according to the prophets; who walked in the land of dim light (Zebulun and Naphtali) bringing the light of his life and teaching there according to the prophets; who died according to the prophet Isaiah's narrative in Chapter 53 and who was surrounded by unholy people calling crude remarks at his death on a gallows, who also fulfilled Messianic scriptures in the psalms 110 and 69 and rose again according to the scripture in the prophet Hosea (6.2). We know well what we think of Haman and how he deserved the "foot stamping" of ages and the "hissing" too but what do we think of Yeshu'a who is called jyv?*

### **THE EVER GROWING SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RISEN & RETURNING YESHU'A**

*Nothing eternally turns on the first question but the eternal destiny of all mankind turns on the second question. Yeshu'a said, "The Father has committed all judgement to the son (Father in the sense that God" originates" salvation and "Son" in the sense that Mesiach appears to purchase it as the "lamb of God" according to the last great prophet John the Baptist. On the tree of Mordecai a substitute was found-Haman himself. On the tree where sinners of the Jews and Gentiles should have paid for our sins against God and his law a substitute was found-the sinless Yeshu'a whose resurrection for ever stands and has been proclaimed by martyrs worldwide as the best proof of His perfect atonement as his glorious ascension is the best earnest of his return as the King of Israel with the authenticating marks of those wounds of which the prophet told. "And one shall say to Him, "What are these wounds on your body?"He will answer, "The wounds I was given in the house of my friends!"(Zechariah 13.6)*

## **CHAPTER 6: THE RISE OF MORDECAI: RECOGNITION OF HIS TRUE GREATNESS**

### **THE SLEEPLESS NIGHT OF XERXES-OF DARIUS HIS FATHER (IN DANIEL'S DAY)**

In the night the king shifted about in his sleep or wandered about sleepless. He asked the book of the annals of the words of the days of his reign to be brought and that they should be recited aloud before the king. And that which Mordecai said about Bigthana and Teresh was found written -those two nobles of the king who guarded the threshold who sought to put forth a hand against king Ahasuerus. And the king said, "What honour has been done to dignify Mordecai for this? And the pages of the king who ministered to him said, "No action has not been with him"

### **THE KING'S SHARP EAR -WHO GOES THERE?**

And the king said, "Who is in the grass enclosure?" Haman had come to the outer court of the house of the king to speak to the king about the hanging of Mordecai upon the tree gallows which he had constituted for him. And the pages of the king said, "Behold Haman stands in the court!" and the king said, "Bring him in!"

## THE KING WAS RUEFUL OF HIS EDICT

*It is impossible to believe that Xerxes had not **radically changed** his mind because he was determined in the middle of a planned pogrom in the capitol itself to honour a man **whom he himself calls a "Jew"**. We do not know if the king had got wind of the building of the gallows or if he had by now dropped to the relationship of Esther and Mordecai or if he was plainly distraught morally. One thing we know is that he acted decisively and differently. From this point events move **rtm** "fast" and the lax decision to annihilate world Jewry was imminently to be parried with a more powerful edict to enable Jews to take arms against any who would harm them. The outcome was in the lap of God but the earlier "confusion" which must have been reflected in every province showed that there was little stomach for this indefensible cruelty that demanded the slaughter of women and countenanced infanticide.*

And Haman came in and the king said to him, "What shall be done for a man whom the king is delighted to think about (or) care for? And Haman thought in his hear, "With whom would the king be pleased to give an honour but myself?" And Haman said to the king, "The man whom the king is pleased to honour ...let the royal robe be brought for his investment by the king and a horse which the king has been riding and on whose head the crest of the king is placed. Let the horse and the robe be given to the care of one of the King's chief nobles and let him invest the man whom the king delights to honour and let him ride out in the square of the city and let them call out before him, "It is done like this for the man whom the king delights to honour.

## THE KING TEACHES HAMAN A LESSON

And the king said to Haman, "Hasten, get the robe and the horse just as you have said for **Mordecai the Jew** who stands at the gate of the king, let nothing fail of the word you have spoken." And Haman took the robe and the horse and invested Mordecai and caused him to ride in the street of the city and called out before him, "This is what is done for the man whom the king delights to honour". And Mordecai continued to sit at the gate of the king but Haman hastened himself homeward with his head covered and lamenting. *The deep public shame that now vexed this creature of Satan shows how the LORD'S wheels grind slowly but they attend to every detail as He answers prayer.*

## THE TRUE POWER OF THE JEWS

*At home Haman learned from his advisers who are now called "wise" because in company with his wife they recognise the true strength of Mordecai. This little man at the king's gate was now looking good again. He had wept and sat in ashes. Out of his prayer and humility an answer came. The pagans could recognise a man of God when they saw one. This was a veritable "Saul of Tarsus" of the era-a man who could turn the world upside down by **the power of prayer**. He was the seed of Abraham Isaac and Jacob and his case was before God. The defence of **the "seed" line** was in the hands of El-Shaddai and was secure beyond the capability of Haman. This had become abundantly clear. The issue was known to these pagans to be the "seed line" of the Jews-which they desired to wipe out. The prophet has said, **"If the sun and the moon cease...only if these decrees vanish... then will Israel also cease to be a nation before me"** (Isaiah 3135-36)*

## THE POWER OF A PRAYING MAN

*We ought not to imagine that Mordecai was merely demonstrating in the city square before the palace. He was humbling himself before God and praying. He was living in this way until he became sure by the Spirit of God that there was a mighty reversal begun in the state of affairs. From confusion to concern to comprehension to contention to conclusion the unholy affair of attempted annihilation turned to the sacred testimony of a few godly Jews whose prayers moved with God's Spirit to overturn a gross evil*

And Haman recounted to his wife and friends all that had befallen him His wise ones and his wife said to him, "Because Mordecai **the seed or power of the Jews** was the start of your falling before his face you will not prevail over him because falling you will fall before his face. While they were still speaking with him the eunuchs of the king came upon them and hurried Haman out to go to the banquet which Esther had prepared. *The sheer fact is that events were moving swiftly. However fast Haman hurried to spell out the crisis it had deepened before he got his concerns fully explored. The king moved*

rapidly to keep Haman from counter-plotting and the he was off with a thoroughly downbeat message ringing in his ears, "You cannot succeed" "You will fall".

## CHAPTER 7 THE DEMISE OF HAMAN

### ESTHER'S POWERFUL INTRODUCTION

*The good queen produced a masterpiece of spoken indictment. She showed that the king was going to be bereaved of his queen in a sinister and subtle plot. The King was understandably flabbergasted and angry*

So the King and Haman went to feast with Queen Esther and the king said to Esther on the second day as they were in the house drinking wine, "Queen Esther, what is your request and it will be given you? What is it that you seek -it will be done even to the half of my kingdom. Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favour in your eyes, O king and if it seems good to the king let him grant me my own life and soul -that is my request, and the life and soul of my people; that is my quest. For I and my people are sold for destruction and slaughter and annihilation. If we were being sold for slaves and maidservants ***I would have made myself stay silent for I would not be the one to depress the king with pain into suffering loss.***

### MORDECAI'S "CROSS"(OR GALLOWS) AT THE HEART OF THE BOOK-MAY JUST HAVE SWAYED THE KING'S THINKING AS THE CROSS OF JESUS CHANGES HEARTS AND MINDS

*The queen followed her peroration with a very acute and pointed verdict, " **The man-the adversary-the enemy- is this evil Haman!**" as she pointed to the dark companion who had insinuated himself into the counsels of the king overtime. Haman trembled. As the king rose he knew his life was gone because the squad that would silence him was being called. We have to ask if the king had already planned the demise of this rogue whom he was progressively finding very distasteful. We have also to ask whether the point I made earlier in the commentary is now all but proven that the high gallows at the home of Haman which had begun to be a talking point in royal circles and was common knowledge among the king's eunuchs may indeed have come to the king's ears.*

### COMMENTS ON THE EFFECTIVE ROLE OF QUEEN ESTHER

*If the answer to both these questions is a "No" then the remarkable impact of the charms of Esther and the total justification of her gradual procedure is utterly vindicated and evidence of a splendid thinker and a woman who deserved her role as queen of the Persians. In either case her superb execution of the task of turning the king's judgement to the right is to be admired and sits well with a splendid education such as Mordecai provided. It also demonstrates the wisdom of beginning any great endeavour with due humility and a cyclone of prayer.*

### THE DUEL ARRAIGNMENT AND THE KING'S SWIFT DESPATCH OF HAMAN

And the king Ahasuerus spoke and he said to Esther the Queen, "Who is this?" "Which is this one who has filled his heart to do thus? And Esther said, "**The man the adversary the enemy is this evil Haman.** And Haman was "suddenly terrified" before the face of the King and the queen. And the king rose in his rage from drinking wine for the garden of the palace and Haman stood to beg for his life from Esther the queen for he saw that calamity from the king was facing him and the king returned from the garden to the house where they had been drinking wine and Haman was falling upon the couch where Esther was sitting and the king said, "will he also ravish the queen while I am in the house?" As soon as the words left the mouth of the king they bound Haman's mouth. Harbonah ("war-like" or "ass-driver") one of the eunuchs in the king's presence said, "Also behold the tree gallows fifty cubits high which Haman constructed for Mordecai who spoke up well on the king's behalf stands at the house of Haman. And the king said, "Hang him on it!" And they hung Haman on the tree which was set up for Mordecai and the wrath of the king abated.

### THE FOURTH TOPIC OF THE BOOK

*The name of Yahweh appears in 7.7 where we read, "F(1)or he saw evil(4) was prepared(2) for him(3) by the king"(The numbers represent the four letters of the Hebrew name of the LORD God and under*

*the text the topic or theme of divine judgement or retribution is introduced in the text itself. Thus the LORD is the executor of payment for sin-the judge of all. This theme plays out over the final chapters of the book and is joined to the previous three:*

- (a) *THE LORD Possessor of pre-eminence worldwide*
- (b) *Hearer of petition*
- (c) *Originator of promotion*
- (d) *Executor of payment for sin or judge of all.*

## **CHAPTER 8 THE SWIFT MOVE OF AHASUERUS TO SAVE THE JEWS**

### **HAMANS POSITION AND WEALTH FALLS TO MORDECAI**

On the same day the king gave to Esther the queen the house of Haman, enemy of *the Jews* and Mordecai came into the presence of the king for Esther told the king *what he was* and meant *to her*. The king took off his signet which he had removed from Haman to give to Mordecai and Esther put Mordecai in charge of the house and estate of Haman.

### **ESTHER'S SECOND EVEN BOLDER PRAYER**

*We are called to approach the throne of divine grace with boldness(Hebrews 10.19) and there can be no greater biblical example than that of Esther who having once sampled the access she had by petition through the extended sceptre was once again found before the leonine Xerxes.*

Esther also added to speak before the face of the king and fell before his feet and had kept pleading with tears with him about the evil that was transitioning (or) the evil that Haman the Agagite had made to pass (through provinces) and his scheme which he had devised against *the Jews*. Then the king held out his golden sceptre to Esther and she rose and stood before king.

### **A FURTHER POWERFUL PLEA WHICH HIGHLIGHTS THE KING'S DILEMMA IN GOING FURTHER**

And she said, "If it seem good to the king and if I have found grace before his face and the matter is right(Kosher) before the face of the king and I am ethically good in the eyes of the king let there be a (decree) written to reverse the intentions (or)plans written by Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite who wrote to annihilate *the Jews* who are in all the provinces of the king for how could I digest or enjoy while I see the evil act that has been found against my people and how shall I eat and see the annihilation of my family? *There is a space in the text here which reflects the mighty nature of this reversal that was being requested and suggests that there is pause because the king was in a considerable dilemma about changing laws-for "the laws of the Medes and Persians do not change"*

### **THE KING SHOWS HOW FAR HE HAS ALREADY GONE**

And the king Ahasuerus said to Esther and to Mordecai, "Behold the house of Haman where he erected a gallows to put forth his hand against *the Jews* is given Esther the queen and to *Mordecai the Jew* and they hung him on the tree because he put forth his hand against *the Jews*." And now write as seems good to you as one that is ethically good in my eyes another edict for *the Jews* in the name of the king and seal it with the seal of the king as not to be changed.

### **WRITERS AND RIDERS AT THE READY (NINE MONTHS TO GO)**

And the writers of the king were called at that time -the third month-the month Sivan-and the twenty third day of the month. They wrote out all the commands of Mordecai to *the Jews*; the Satraps, the governors; the nobles of the 127 provinces from India to Ethiopia. These letters were written to each people in their tongue and also to *the Jews* in their script and tongue. He (Mordecai) wrote in the name of king Ahasuerus and sealed it with the seal of the king and sent the despatches by the hand of fast couriers on horses with charioteers of king Ahasuerus-horses bred (in the king's stud) from special

mares. *There are safeguards in place-the message is properly signed; the army is involved; the kings best horses are commissioned. Riders travelled 3000miles west and 2,500 miles east in this vast empire.*

### PROVISION FOR JEWISH SELF-DEFENCE

Because it was provided by edict of the king for *the Jews* who were in every city to gather together and to make a stand for their lives; to destroy and annihilate any people of any province who would become their adversary, and their women or children and to plunder their trophy. *This was simply a quid pro quo inserting the same terms of war as governed the genocide perpetrated by Haman. It was in case of no hostilities merely a deterrent.* It was to be in the one day in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus -the 13th day of the 12th month-the month Adar.

### THE KING EXPEDITES THE WELFARE OF THE JEWS

A transcript of the written edict was to be given in law in all provinces and made known to all peoples and on behalf of the lives of the *Jews* that they might previously be prepared for this day to avenge their enemies. The riders of the swift horses of Ahasuerus went out terrified and urged by the word of the king and the command given in Shushan the (military) citadel. *Clearly the horsemen were going to ride for their lives. This was the speediest operation of decree ever undertaken in Persia and we have to say "bravo" to these men who made it in every case to the furthest extent of an empire -riding in some cases for 1000's of miles. We must not miss this event. This is a splendid case of "The king's business requires haste"-it is a spur to outreach with the word of God which is the only means by which the lives of men and women can be preserved and brought to glory. This commission had to be completed with all haste.*

### MORDECAI INVESTED AS PRIME-MINISTER

Mordecai withdrew from the King's presence invested with garments of cerulean blue (possibly of Mediterranean origin) and white and a great crown of gold and a mantle of purple byssus. And the city of Shushan shouted in celebration and was joyful. *From earlier record in the book we read "the city was confused" now the popular mood was absolutely ecstatic. When righteousness is in the ascendant the people rejoice, when sin rules the people are quiet and restive.* And for *the Jews* there was light and joy and music (or) white linen and honour. And province by province and city by city where the word of the king and the decree went there was joy and singing among *the Jews* with feasting and a good day and many people of the land became Jews because the fear of *the Jews* had fallen upon them. *This final statement is not so faithful to the text. The "fear" yes but also the wonder and joy. There was a new "reverence" born of the sovereign power of God and stemming from prayer and from the divine vindication of right which the Jews represented-in fact the principles patent in this great book of Esther.*

## CHAPTER 9 THE PEOPLE OF PRAISE TRIUMPH

In the twelfth month, the month Adar and on the 13th day of the month the word of the king was to be published (*Hebrew dgn*) and the edict was to take effect to break or destroy them in order to have dominion or mastery over them. It was changed (*Hebrew Jph meaning "turned back" "reversed"*) when *the Jews* gained mastery over those who hated them. *The Jews* congregated in all their cities in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus to put forth their hand against those who would do them harm No man stood to face them because the fear and wonder of *the Jews* had fallen on all people. And all the nobles of the provinces and satraps and governors and executives of the kingdom lifted up *the Jews* because the fear and wonder of Mordecai had fallen on them. Mordecai was prominent in the palace and his reputation had simply marched throughout all the provinces for the man Mordecai grew greater and greater. And *the Jews* struck down their enemies with the edge of the sword and did as they pleased against those who hated them. In the citadel at Shushan *the Jews* killed and destroyed 500 men.

Pareshanad<sub>th</sub>a (Interpreter of the law) small t meaning 400

Dalpon (Strenuous)

Ashpatha (Counsellor or Gatherer)

Poratha(Gift)

Adalya (Strong of heart)  
Aridatha (Lion of the law)  
Parmashtha (Strong fisted) small v meaning 300  
Arisai (lion-like)  
Aridaw (Lion's paw)  
Vajetzatha (Pure) small z meaning 7

### THE NUMBER 707 LINKS THE ANCIENT TEXT TO THE HOLOCAUST

*The Scribes attached some future historical significance to these numbers which total 707. The Purim story itself comes from 483-the third year of Xerxes It would be 1940 (Jewish year 5700) until another genocide was perpetrated by Hitler. By Jewish year 5707 (1947 all the perpetrators of that attempted genocide had been brought to task at Nuremberg and hung. One committed suicide and "ten" were executed. One of them Julius Streicher who was an anti-Semite press man in Germany credited with saying that "Jewish propagation was a curse of God" cried out as he was taken to his death, "Purim 1946". The trials ended in September of 1946 and after the October hangings the innocent had been vindicated just two months short of 1947 in the Gentile calendar but the Jewish New Year Calendar begins in October so in October 1946 the Jewish Year 5707 begins. This would seem to be the prophetic significance of the small letters in a book that reveals as much in its codes as in its text.*

### THE DECREE IS EXTENDED AN ADDITIONAL DAY-THE ENEMIES ROUTED

The ten sons of Haman son of Hammedatha the enemy of **the Jews**; but they did not put forth their hand to take plunder *The Jews did not dispossess the wives and family nor kill wives and children.* In that same day the number of those slain in the citadel at Shushan came to the king. And the king said to Esther, "**The Jews** have slain and destroyed 500 men and the ten sons of Haman in the citadel of Shushan. What will they have done in the remaining provinces? Now what is your petition? It will be granted. What is your request? It will be done. If it please the king that it be given to **the Jews** in Shushan to act tomorrow on the decree as today. And they hung the sons of Haman on the tree. And the king commanded that it be done and the decree was extended thus in Shushan and the ten sons of Haman hung. And **the Jews** assembled in Shushan also that day-the fourteenth of Adar and slew 300 men and did not put forth their hand to plunder. And the remnant of **the Jews** in the king's provinces also gathered and stood to protect their lives and get rest from their enemies and they slew seventy five thousand people and did not plunder. This happened on the thirteenth day of Adar and on the fourteenth of Adar they rested and made it a day of feasting and joy.

### THE SEQUEL-REST AND JOY IN THE CAPITOL

The Jews in Shushan however gathered (to fight) on the thirteenth and fourteenth Adar and rested on the fifteenth Adar and made it their day of feasting and joy. ***That is why Jews scattered in unwallled cities make the fourteenth day of the month of Adar their day of feasting and joy and their good day on which each man sends presents to his friend.*** Modecai wrote these events down and sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus both proximate and distant provinces to establish for them as belonging to their survival the 14th and 15th days of the month Adar in every succeeding year as days when the Jews rested from their enemies and as a month of deliverance for them from affliction to joy and from mourning to **a great day** -that they should make them days of feasting and joy sending gifts to each other and "man-sized " gifts to the poor.

### THE FIVE REASONS FOR PURIM IN DIVINE PROVIDENCE

(1)The Jews accepted to create the (celebration) they had opened according to **the writing of Mordecai** to them. For Haman the son of Hamedatha the Agagite the enemy of all the Jews had planned to annihilate the Jews and cast the Pur (lot) for their destruction and annihilation. But when the plot came to the King's attention he spoke by written edict to overturn the evil scheme which he had plotted against the Jews upon his head and hanged him and his sons upon the tree. (2)For that reason these days were called "Purim" on account of the name "**pur**"(Persian for "stone") (3) and on account of all the



words of **this letter of the king** and (4) **what they saw** (5) and **what happened to them**. *Here we have five reasons for Purim. To summarise the reasons: The lot or providence of the discovery of the plot; the providence of the casting of a lot for a day distant enough for its effects to be reversed; the lot of Mordecai's providential positioning and promotion to write; the lot of the sight of Jews once in deadly danger witnessing their joy and celebration; the lot and providence of their salvation under God.*

## THE PERPETUATION OF THIS CELEBRATION

**The Jews** rose and received (*the custom*) for themselves and their seed and all who joined them (*Hebrew חמל "adherents"*) that they should not pass over celebrating their lives (*Hebrew מן/נא*) these two days according to the writing and custom year after year. These days should be remembered and celebrated in every generation and in every family and in every province and in every city. These days of Purim should not pass or remove from the Jews and their memory should not finish with their descendants.

## THE QUEEN'S AUTHORITY AND WARM GREETINGS OF REASSURANCE

And Queen Esther daughter of Abihail and **Mordecai the Jew** wrote with all authority (*Hebrew pqt*) to confirm the Purim text of the second letter And he sent letters to all the Jews of the 127 provinces of King Ahasuerus words of peace and assurance (*Hebrew tma & ml v*) To constitute these days of Purim in their proper times as had been established for them by **Mordecai the Jew** *Every time this term occurs, four times in all, it carries the apocopated expression for the name of Yahweh why* and Esther the queen as **Mordecai the Jew** and Queen Esther had decreed for them for their souls and for their seed legal statements of their fasts and lamentation. From the word of Esther the laws of Purim were confirmed again and again and these were written in a book *Esther lived to lead and establish the custom over many years.*

## CHAPTER 10 THE RISE OF MORDECAI TRACKS THE EXPANSION OF PERSIA

King Ahasuerus established a flow of cash (*tax*) over the earth and the islands of the sea. And all his acts of prevailing power and might and a declaration of the greatness of Mordecai whom the king kept making greater (*Hebrew Piel of l dq*) are they not written in the book of the days of the kings of Media and Persia? For **Mordecai the Jew** was second to king Ahasuerus and a great man well pleasing to a host of his fellow Jews. He applied himself or consulted or promoted the good of his people and spoke peace to all their seed (*or*) legislated prosperity for all their seed.

*William Whiston is unsure who wrote what he calls the Masorite epitome of Esther that we have. He believes that it emerged after the Bar-Kochba days in the second century AD 132-5*

## ADDENDUM FOUND IN THE HEBREW TEXT

### A FIVE SENTENCE PRAYER

A short prayer breathing an extraordinary desire to God and containing a number that would seem to have been later added makes appeal for the end of captivity-Babylonian or Seleucid-thanks God for the respected aged leader of His people but seeks his glory overall while looking to the days of Messiah. The prayer gives some explanation of the "hiddenness" of God in the book of Esther. The rationale of God's secret dealing is that through providence God reveals himself as "Shield and buckler" bq as David described the LORD in Psalms 18.2;32.2 and 91.4

### THE PRAYER

"My longing is that the captivity (*end*) without delay-**Esther 167**(or 160 weeks "sevens")

"May they put my Glory (the LORD) above my ancient leader of people.

"You declared, "I will answer their Purim and hide Myself"

"Messiah and his order or Sederim (the law taught in His time))

"**SHIELD** of our prosperity or joyful festivity  
"the altar!"

### COMMENT

The word for "Defender" (*Heb bg*) is writ large as if The LORD -the Messiah of David and David's line was the trusted "shield and buckler" of the Jewish people in the writer's mind. The "sederim" may well be the readings and prophecies and truths of the Torah. The "hiddenness" of God is as the hidden afikomen in the Passover-behind it lies the deep hope and historic end of days revolution not unlike that under Mordecai.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The mention of Esther with the number 167 or 160 weeks (often used of years) suggests a time in the region of 317BC if we take the 3rd year of Ahasuerus to be 484BC. Hellenism following the conquests of Alexander had come to the former Persian Empire. Alexander the great had died in 323BC and the precise time we are looking at featured Ptolemy who had moved from his power base in Egypt and taken Jerusalem -but in 315BC which is just 2 years after this note the Seleucid king from the north took Jerusalem leading eventually to Antiochus Epiphanes and the violation of the temple by the setting up of an altar to Zeus in 175. Copies of the law (cf Sederim) were burned.

### THE MACCABEES (HAMMERERS)

The prayer is of a sort that might even have been uttered in the Maccabean context of 175- It was when a representative of Epiphanes visited Modein and a priest there ordering him to sacrifice to Zeus that resistance was born. Mattathias that priest slew the representative and Mattathias and his 5 sons fled to the hills to begin a long and ultimately successful battle against Antiochus. After guerrilla warfare in the hills Judas Maccabeus fought a successful pitched battle with Antiochus' forces and went on to **cleanse the temple and the altar**. The reference to **the altar** in the prayer is a sufficient ground for suggesting that the author of the prayer may even have lived in this later era. The victory of Judas who was succeeded by Simon -perhaps the noblest of the brothers- led in 143BC to the 31 year reign of John Hyrcanus -3rd son of Simon Maccabeus-grandson of Mattathias. His son in the third generation of the Hasmoneans was Aristobolos who took the title of "king" but in this way displeased the people. In this division of the nation the Sadducean and Pharasaic separation took place. The first sided with the "king" and the others with pure religion.

**THE END**

**Bob Coffey**  
**A Bible Companion**