

The following are my notes for a Sunday School class that I taught a few years ago. I used several reference sources to compile these notes. Since they are my notes, there may be several “typos” throughout the text. I apologize for that and pray that doesn’t distract from the study.

THE BOOK OF ESTHER

A Study based on a series given by Chuck Missler

INTRODUCTION

This book is a very controversial book for the strangest of all reasons. It is a short book with a marvelous story. It is full of human love and intrigue in the days of the Persian Empire. A Jewish maiden is elevated to the throne of Persia as a queen at the time it was a world empire. (See Romans 13:1 (ESV) *Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.*) God uses Esther’s position to preserve His people against what we would compare to a Hitler like attack.

Once each year at the Jewish feast of Purim the Jewish people celebrate Esther and this book is read at the feast. This is an annual feast celebrating Israel's deliverance from Persia. The feast is mentioned only five times in scripture and they are all in the Book of Esther.

The question we have as a serious Bible student is: What is the Book of Esther doing in the Bible?

It is important in Jewish history. Chronologically, it falls right after Daniel and just before Ezra and Nehemiah. God is never directly mentioned in the book. There is no reference to worship or faith, there is no prediction of the Messiah, there is no mention of heaven or hell - there is nothing doctrinal or religious about the Book.

Martin Luther is on record as believing it should not be in the Cannon at all. In his perception, it had no spiritual role.

Chuck Missler did a study of the Book and what caused him to do the study was the name of the Book itself. Esther means "hidden meaning."

There are two parts to the Book:

1. The narrative part, which is fun and fascinating.
2. Both the Book and Esther's role suggest something hidden and the key to it will be in the New Testament.

Something to be sensitive to as we read this book is the idea of a role model or types. See 1 Cor. 10:11 (ESV)

Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.)

Paul is not assuming his readers are all Jewish. He is telling us the Old Testament is for our instruction and includes types and examples. See also Romans 15:4 (ESV)

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.)

May I suggest the following role models or "types" in Esther:

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|-------------|-----------------|
| 1. The King | Us (our soul) |
| 2. Haman | The flesh |
| 3. Mordecai | The Holy Spirit |
| 4. Esther | Our spirit |

In the Book we will also be sensitive to something the Holy Spirit put there for us: we are not Jewish! We are walking Books of Esther. We believe the entire Bible is a collection of sixty-six books actually written by one person with basically a single focus. We need to be sensitive to the story behind the story - a clue as to what the story is about is ourselves. The Bible has two purposes:

1. To know God.
2. To know ourselves.

God's Book is a revelation of Himself but also a revelation He has given us of ourselves.

Insight number one: The name of Jehovah is in the Book of Esther. It is there four times and the "I Am" is there once.

Look up Deut 31:16-18. (ESV)

And the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers. Then this people will rise and whore after the foreign gods among them in the land that they are entering, and they will forsake me and break my covenant that I have made with them. [17] Then my anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide my face from them, and they will be devoured. And many evils and troubles will come upon them, so that they will say in that day, 'Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?' [18] And I will surely hide my face in that day because of all the evil that they have done, because they have turned to other gods.

Here, Israel is promised, because they go after false gods, that God will hide His face from them. Esther follows Daniel - the Babylonian captivity. Why were they sent to Babylon in the first place? For their false worship. That was a part of the reason. In a sense, Babylon cured them of that. Since Babylon, Israel has had problems, but idolatry isn't one of them. The Book of Esther, in part, is a

demonstration of Deut 31 because God is not visible there. He is not an active agency there. No pillar of fire or clouds, etc.

God is providing for them, but invisibly, behind the scene. Through the events of Mordecai and Esther, He saves the whole Jewish race from extinction.

On the other hand, we will see Satan working through the character of Haman (the flesh). These are obvious. Now, scholars are finding that not only is God hidden in the plot line, God is also hidden in the letters. There is, in literature, a thing called an "acrostic." This is where you take the first letter of the words in a sentence and those letters spell out a word. There are five acrostics in the Book of Esther. The fifth is a little different. We'll get into the details as we go. Chapter 1:20 is the first one. In the Hebrew, it gives the letters that spell Jehovah - the covenant name of God.

The second is in 5:4, in the words of Esther.

The third is in 5:13 in the words of Haman.

The fourth is in chapter 7 in the words of the writer of the Book.

Twice it is a Gentile speaking, twice it is an Israelite speaking. When it is a Gentile speaking, the acrostic is backwards. From the Hebrew point of view, we write backwards. (Trivial point: All languages West of Jerusalem write from left to right. All languages East of Jerusalem go from right to left. When you think about that, all languages are written towards Jerusalem.) The acrostics are alternated: first a Gentile, then a Jew, then a Gentile, and then a Jew. In the first two cases, where the idea is introduced, it is the initial letter of each word. In the last two, which concludes a major concept, it is the last letter of each word. The first two acrostics have to do with the Queen. First spoken about the queen, and second, spoken by a queen. The third is by Haman and the fourth is about Haman.

The fifth acrostic is in 7:5. It is not the name of Jehovah, but the "I Am that I Am."

CHAPTER ONE

Esther 1:1-4 (ESV) *Now in the days of Ahasuerus, the Ahasuerus who reigned from India to Ethiopia over 127 provinces, [2] in those days when King Ahasuerus sat on his royal throne in Susa, the capital, [3] in the third year of his reign he gave a feast for all his officials and servants. The army of Persia and Media and the nobles and governors of the provinces were before him, [4] while he showed the riches of his royal glory and the splendor and pomp of his greatness for many days, 180 days.*

Here is a six month party. First, we can conclude from this, it is not a time of war. There is a time of peace and prosperity.

Depending on which translation you have, you may find the King called Ahasuerus or Xerxes. The original text does not give a proper name, but calls him "venerable father," which is the literal translation of Ahasuerus. It is a title to mean seniority and endearment. It is interesting that the Book of Esther never does give the real name of the King.

To depart a bit and lay some groundwork of where we're headed, in a broad sense, man was made to be a king. He was ordained to have dominion over the animals. (Genesis and Psalms speak of this.) If man is a king, his sphere of influence is his life. If man is a king, then life is his empire. His control of expression to that life is through his body, because through his body the senses report what is going on and through the members of his body he also executes his actions. Notice the analogy of a king and his capitol and his empire.

Man is more than just a body. Man has an immaterial part (soul and spirit). Humanism insists that man is nothing more than an animal. We will get into that more later in our study.

As a suggestion, the concept of a king is an analogy in a sense to inner man, the faculties, mind, will, etc., the part that exercises authority through the kingdom.

There is something else the king needs and that is communion. He needs an intimate private sense of communion. He can't get that through his structure and that is what the Queen is all about – the function behind the conscious life.

In Esther, there are actually two queens. Esther of course is involved as one of them. She's a source of comfort and council; she has ultimately the private intimate fellowship with the king. When a king without a queen dies, the dynasty ends. The queen implies immortality to the dynasty. As in Heb 4:12, they are so closely bound, no division can be seen. Heb 4:12

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

(Keep in mind the roles of the King and Esther in the story: The King - our soul; Esther - our spirit)

Visualize as we go through this book, that we are walking Book's of Esther. When the king is pictured, think of the soul of man - the mind, the emotions, and the will.

When we speak of the capitol (Susa) that is the body where the actions are carried out.

The empire is the sphere of influence which each of us have in our lives.

The Queen is the guiding or inner Spirit, the source of fellowship and communion.

With that background, we discover there are two characters that surface: Mordecai and Haman. Typologically, Mordecai is the Holy Spirit and Haman is the flesh. They have resources available and the whole issue is who is in control (the Holy Spirit or the flesh) and how do they apply their resources and how are they dealt with.

We will discover Esther does some strange things. She has her "trump" to play and she doesn't. She has a chance to wipe out Haman and all she does is invite him to dinner. Why? The king makes a law and condemns the Jews to death and when he wants to save them, he doesn't remove the death penalty, he simply allows them to fight back. Strange story! These questions begin to make sense if you visualize the Book of Esther as a model of the Book of Romans.

Esther 1:5-10 (ESV)

And when these days were completed, the king gave for all the people present in Susa, the citadel, both great and small, a feast lasting for seven days in the court of the garden of the king's palace. [6] There were white cotton curtains and violet hangings fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rods and marble pillars, and also couches of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl and precious stones. [7] Drinks were served in golden vessels, vessels of different kinds, and the royal wine was lavished according to the bounty of the king. [8] And drinking was according to this edict: "There is no compulsion." For the king had given orders to all the staff of his palace to do as each man desired. [9] Queen Vashti also gave a feast for the women in the palace that belonged to King Ahasuerus.

[10] On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha and Abagtha, Zethar and Carkas, the seven eunuchs who served in the presence of King Ahasu-erus,

Notice that it mentions that the king has had quite a bit to drink. It

seems that whenever scripture points out that a person is under the influence of strong drink, it also points out that the person does something really dumb. Here is no exception.

Esther 1:11 (ESV) *to bring Queen Vashti before the king with her royal crown, in order to show the peoples and the princes her beauty, for she was lovely to look at.*

Some commentaries believe that the crown was all she was supposed to bring. This helps explain why she was a little reluctant to show up. Whether that is accurate or not, we do see that clearly the king was asking her to do something that was not proper. This was not right. He is making a mistake through pride. He is showing off something that he shouldn't. (See **Proverbs 31:4 (ESV)** *It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, or for rulers to take strong drink,*)

Esther 1:12-18 (ESV)

But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command delivered by the eunuchs. At this the king became enraged, and his anger burned within him.

[13] Then the king said to the wise men who knew the times (for this was the king's procedure toward all who were versed in law and judgment, [14] the men next to him being Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, who saw the king's face, and sat first in the kingdom): [15] "According to the law, what is to be done to Queen Vashti, because she has not performed the command of King Ahasuerus delivered by the eunuchs?" [16] Then Memucan said in the presence of the king and the officials, "Not only against the king has Queen Vashti done wrong, but also against all the officials and all the peoples who are in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus. [17] For the queen's behavior will be made known to all women, causing them to look at their husbands with contempt, since they will say, 'King Ahasuerus commanded Queen Vashti to be brought before him, and

she did not come.' [18] This very day the noble women of Persia and Media who have heard of the queen's behavior will say the same to all the king's officials, and there will be contempt and wrath in plenty.

The premise here is that since she refused to embarrass herself in front of the king and his guests, all of the women of the land will be in rebellion with their husbands.

Esther 1:19-22 (ESV)

If it please the king, let a royal order go out from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes so that it may not be repealed, that Vashti is never again to come before King Ahasuerus. And let the king give her royal position to another who is better than she. [20] So when the decree made by the king is proclaimed throughout all his kingdom, for it is vast, all women will give honor to their husbands, high and low alike." [21] This advice pleased the king and the princes, and the king did as Memucan proposed. [22] He sent letters to all the royal provinces, to every province in its own script and to every people in its own language, that every man be master in his own household and speak according to the language of his people.

Through this rule, the existing king has disposed of his queen.

When did Adam fall? It was not when Eve ate the forbidden fruit, but when he chose to assert the supremacy of his emotion - that is his love for his wife - over the revelation of the Spirit. That is where God spoke to Adam: to Adam's spirit. He chose to put his soul above the Spirit. He inverted the order. His mistake was reversing the order. The asserting of the soul over the spirit is the very fallacy of humanism, which even denies the existence of the spirit. This is a "soulish" viewpoint.

The reversal of the order of mans nature to make his reason superior to the revelation has been his hallmark every since: to put reason above revelation. Revelation comes through the Spirit.

Here, the king wanted to violate the private intimate communion he had with his queen. She refuses and instead of backing away, his pride causes him to listen to the lies of foolish counselors, and then proclaim a law that he is subject too. He can't change it.

This might be an analogy to the law of sin and death. Adam chose the desire of his heart over the fellowship with God. I Timothy 2:14 clearly tells us Adam was not deceived when he ate of the tree. He knew exactly what he was doing. 1 Tim. 2:14 (ESV)

and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.

The human spirit then becomes dark and unresponsive. Man entered into that lonely restlessness that characterizes us all until we rest in Jesus. This is why when man doesn't accept Jesus, he gets into all of these bazaar alternatives. He is ruled by his mind, emotions, and will, but not his spirit and that's the problem.

He is helpless to reverse this until he finds a substitute. This example of the folly of Adams fall as is modeled here with the king explains all of the folly, injustice, sin, misery, and darkness of human life as we know it today.

Chapter two will start the unfolding of redeeming grace.

CHAPTER TWO

Esther 2:1-2 (ESV) *After these things, when the anger of King Ahasuerus had abated, he remembered Vashti and what she had done and what had been decreed against her. [2] Then the king's young men who attended him said, "Let beautiful young virgins be sought out for the king.*

The king has a vacuum he has created. By his rash act, Vashti can't be queen anymore. Now he starts a search to fill this void.

Dr. Carl Young says man suffers from the neurosis of emptiness. When God goes, goal goes; when goal goes, purpose goes; when purpose goes, meaning goes, and when meaning goes, life goes dead on our hands. This is what is happening here to the king.

Esther 2:3-7 (ESV)

And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom to gather all the beautiful young virgins to the harem in Susa the capital, under custody of Hegai, the king's eunuch, who is in charge of the women. Let their cosmetics be given them. [4] And let the young woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti." This pleased the king, and he did so.

[5] Now there was a Jew in Susa the citadel whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, son of Shimei, son of Kish, a Benjaminite, [6] who had been carried away from Jerusalem among the captives carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away. [7] He was bringing up Hadassah, that is Esther, the daughter of his uncle, for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman had a beautiful figure and was lovely to look at, and when her father and her mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.

We have in these few verses, introduced the two most important characters in the Book of Esther. Mordecai is a Jew. Look up John 4:1-

23. (ESV)

Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John

[2] (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), [3] he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. [4] And he had to pass through Samaria. [5] So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. [6] Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.

[7] There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." [8] (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) [9] The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) [10] Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." [11] The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? [12] Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." [13] Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, [14] but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." [15] The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water."

[16] Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." [17] The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; [18] for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true." [19] The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. [20] Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people

ought to worship." [21] Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. [22] You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. [23] But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.

Here is the story of Jesus and the woman by the well. She starts out a little rough, but when she realized Jesus was the Messiah and something special was going on, being a Samaritan, what is the first question she asked? Where's everybody going to worship? (John 4:20) Jesus deals with some other issues, but points out to her that salvation is of the Jews. That is a clue as to what Mordecai is all about. He is a Jew.

Mordecai means "little man." In the way he acts, he is relatively invisible, but we will see him behind the scenes maneuvering. In that role, visualize him typologically in the role of the Holy Spirit. His mission is to restore this fellowship. Restore man to the fellowship of God.

Esther is Mordecai's cousin. The Hebrew word for Hadassah is "myrtle," which is a lowly shrub sometimes used as a symbol for Israel. The Persian name comes from the verb "to hide" and the word actually means "something hidden." The Book of Esther means "something hidden" and there are all kinds of things hidden in this Book. The person of Esther, in the story, also speaks of that something in us that is hidden, that inner man - our spirit.

Notice also, even though she is related to Mordecai, he has adopted her.
Romans 8:15 (ESV)

For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

As we move on in Esther, we see the king searching for a queen and Mordecai is positioning Esther in that role. The king will chase her until

she catches him. It's like in courtship, who chose who? In our relationship with Jesus, it is the same. We need to choose this day whom ye shall serve: Jesus. But can you do that if the Holy Spirit doesn't cause you to?

Esther 2:8-10 (ESV)

So when the king's order and his edict were proclaimed, and when many young women were gathered in Susa the citadel in custody of Hegai, Esther also was taken into the king's palace and put in custody of Hegai, who had charge of the women. [9] And the young woman pleased him and won his favor. And he quickly provided her with her cosmetics and her portion of food, and with seven chosen young women from the king's palace, and advanced her and her young women to the best place in the harem. [10] Esther had not made known her people or kindred, for Mordecai had commanded her not to make it known.

The king didn't know Esther was Jewish and that becomes a big thing later, but for now, it is hidden.

Esther 2:11-18 (ESV)

And every day Mordecai walked in front of the court of the harem to learn how Esther was and what was happening to her.

[12] Now when the turn came for each young woman to go in to King Ahasu-erus, after being twelve months under the regulations for the women, since this was the regular period of their beautifying, six months with oil of myrrh and six months with spices and ointments for women— [13] when the young woman went in to the king in this way, she was given whatever she desired to take with her from the harem to the king's palace. [14] In the evening she would go in, and in the morning she would return to the second harem in custody of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch, who was in charge of the concubines. She would not go in to the king again, unless the king delighted in her and she was

summoned by name.

[15] When the turn came for Esther the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her as his own daughter, to go in to the king, she asked for nothing except what Hegai the king's eunuch, who had charge of the women, advised. Now Esther was winning favor in the eyes of all who saw her. [16] And when Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus into his royal palace in the tenth month, which is the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign, [17] the king loved Esther more than all the women, and she won grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins, so that he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti. [18] Then the king gave a great feast for all his officials and servants; it was Esther's feast. He also granted a remission of taxes to the provinces and gave gifts with royal generosity.

She is now the Queen, but this is just the beginning. In the model sense, one could guess this is his conversion. In the model sense, there is a "new spirit" in him that has been engineered by whom? Mordecai.

The king actually had no right to Esther because she was Jewish - not Persian. We also have no right to the grace of God in our lives. It is a gift.

Esther 2:19-23 (ESV)

Now when the virgins were gathered together the second time, Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate. [20] Esther had not made known her kindred or her people, as Mordecai had commanded her, for Esther obeyed Mordecai just as when she was brought up by him. [21] In those days, as Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, who guarded the threshold, became angry and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. [22] And this came to the knowledge of Mordecai, and he told it to Queen Esther, and Esther told the king in the name of

Mordecai. [23] When the affair was investigated and found to be so, the men were both hanged on the gallows. And it was recorded in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king.

Here is a plot element that will become very important later. Esther gives credit to Mordecai. He is not at the palace, but at the gate. The gate is the place of the judge - the palace is the place of control. Before the story is over, he will be at the palace in control. Right now, he is just judging - convincing.

It is believed that there is a mistranslation here. These two were not hanged, but were impaled - nailed to a tree. There is only one way to deal with sin and that is at the cross. Col. 2:13-14 (ESV)

And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, [14] by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

Notice the last part of verse 23. This is important because later on in the story, one night the king can't sleep and he gets up and reads the annals of the king and finds the passage about Mordecai. The whole plot turns on that issue. This is recorded then in a book to which the king had access. We have just such a Book. In the Book we have, "Mordecai" (symbolic of the Holy Spirit) will also be able to save our situation just as he does there.

If Christianity were nothing more than our being saved so we could go to heaven, the Book of Esther would end right here. But this is not the end. We are at the end of the beginning. See John 6:16-21 (ESV)

When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, [17] got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. [18] The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. [19] When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened. [20] But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." [21] Then they were

glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

The stage is now being set for the deliverance God intends to bring into the life of the king. He is setting a similar stage to bring deliverance into our own heart.

CHAPTER THREE

Chapter three introduces the next major character of the book.

Esther 3:1-2 (ESV) After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha, and advanced him and set his throne above all the officials who were with him. [2] And all the king's servants who were at the king's gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman, for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage.

We find an interesting view of the person Haman here. If all bow except one, who becomes the most important in Haman's life? The one who won't bend the knee.

Who is Haman? He is an Agagite. That is the key to this. Agag was the king of the Amalikites. Look at 1 Samuel 15:1-3 (ESV)

And Samuel said to Saul, "The Lord sent me to anoint you king over his people Israel; now therefore listen to the words of the Lord. [2] Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'I have noted what Amalek did to Israel in opposing them on the way when they came up out of Egypt. [3] Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.' "

What a brutal thing to ordain!

Why is God so upset with the Amalikites? Look at Exodus 17:8-14 (ESV)

Then Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim. [9] So Moses said to Joshua, "Choose for us men, and go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand." [10] So Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought with Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. [11] Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand,

Amalek prevailed. [12] But Moses' hands grew weary, so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it, while Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side. So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. [13] And Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword.

[14] Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven."

Amalek is a grandson of Esau. Jacob I loved, Esau I hated.

What we have set up here is Haman as the bad guy - the villain. The whole plot that is going to unfold is between Haman (the flesh) and Mordecai (the Spirit). Spiritually what is this thing between Haman and Mordecai? See Gal 5:17 (ESV)

For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. This is what begins to unfold in the Book of Esther. (See also Romans 8:7 (ESV) For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.

As long as Haman (the flesh) is at the seat of power, which is where he is now, the whole kingdom is effected by his evil designs. Even the communion between the king and queen will be affected.

This is the same with us. As long as Haman, a type of flesh, is in power our whole sphere of influence is affected. There will be no peace in the empire as long as Haman is on this power throne.

First of all, the king is unaware of Haman's evil character. He's elevated him to his (the king's) right hand. He thinks he is a trusted and reliable friend. That's the predicament of humanism, because it trusts in man in the sense of his flesh.

The whole issue here is to have the king's eyes opened, which is Mordecai's goal, to reveal to the king, through Esther, who Haman is.

Esther 3:3-4 (ESV)

Then the king's servants who were at the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why do you transgress the king's command?" [4] And when they spoke to him day after day and he would not listen to them, they told Haman, in order to see whether Mordecai's words would stand, for he had told them that he was a Jew.

They knew Mordecai was a Jew. That makes him a target for Satan.

Esther 3:5-6 (ESV)

And when Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage to him, Haman was filled with fury. [6] But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone. So, as they had made known to him the people of Mordecai, Haman sought to destroy all the Jews, the people of Mordecai, throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus.

This is now not just a problem between Haman and Mordecai. Typical of Satan's plans - example: the babes in Egypt at the time of Moses and the babes in Bethlehem at the time of Jesus, and the holocaust in World War II.

Esther 3:7-9 (ESV)

In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur (that is, they cast lots) before Haman day after day; and they cast it month after month till the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. [8] Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom. Their laws are different from those of every other people, and they do not keep the king's laws, so that it is not to the king's profit to tolerate them. [9] If it please the king, let it be decreed that they be destroyed, and I will pay 10,000 talents of silver into the hands of those who have charge of the king's business, that they may put it into the king's treasuries."

He pays for this. This is a bribe. In verse 8 it is not clear that the king knows Haman is talking about the Jews.

Esther 3:10-15 (ESV)

So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews. [11] And the king said to Haman, "The money is given to you, the people also, to do with them as it seems good to you."

[12] Then the king's scribes were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and an edict, according to all that Haman commanded, was written to the king's satraps and to the governors over all the provinces and to the officials of all the peoples, to every province in its own script and every people in its own language. It was written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet ring. [13] Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with instruction to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all Jews, young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods. [14] A copy of the document was to be issued as a decree in every province by proclamation to all the peoples to be ready for that day. [15] The couriers went out hurriedly by order of the king, and the decree was issued in Susa the citadel. And the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was thrown into confusion.

The battle is joined. This sets the plot. We have the king and queen. The king doesn't know she's Jewish. Haman goes after Mordecai and all of the Jewish people.

It is interesting to see how Haman attacks Mordecai. He doesn't go after Mordecai directly. He goes at the edge - the people of Mordecai. That is exactly what the flesh does to us. It doesn't attack our deep convictions first, it nibbles away at our attitudes. Satan did that in Genesis 3. Four times in Esther, Haman is referred to as the Jews enemy. No where else

in scripture does this occur.

The king gave Haman his ring. Remember, Haman is a type of the flesh. That put Haman in charge. The king was sincere in what he did. Sincerity is no defense for error.

Until the king is aware of the true power of Haman, he is powerless to fix the situation. The king is not open to someone exposing Haman because the king thinks he is a good friend.

The minute the problem occurs, Mordecai begins to act (type of Holy Spirit) and that is through Esther (our spirit).

Also, in 3:15 Haman and the king think they did good, but the people are confused. There is never any reason why Christians should be confused. The Holy Spirit is not the author of confusion.

The only hope for the king to see who Haman is, is through Mordecai - the same with us. The only hope we have for deliverance is through the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER FOUR

Esther 4:1-3 (ESV) *When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and he cried out with a loud and bitter cry. [2] He went up to the entrance of the king's gate, for no one was allowed to enter the king's gate clothed in sackcloth. [3] And in every province, wherever the king's command and his decree reached, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and many of them lay in sackcloth and ashes.*

Mordecai went as far as he could and the Jews were understandably upset over the king's order.

It is interesting that only Mordecai fully knows this will touch even the throne because Esther is Jewish.

Mordecai also knew the Jews were under the special protection of God so he grieved for the king because he knew the king was going to be in trouble if this was carried out.

Esther 4:4-5 (ESV)

When Esther's young women and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed. She sent garments to clothe Mordecai, so that he might take off his sackcloth, but he would not accept them. [5] Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what this was and why it was.

When we sense in our spirit something is wrong, we shouldn't leave it there. We inquire of the Holy Spirit and He will always tell us exactly what is bothering Him.

Esther 4:6-9 (ESV)

Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate, [7] and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. [8] Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her and command her to go to the king to beg his favor and plead with him on behalf of her people. [9] And Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said.

The suggestion here is if you inquire specifically, you will get a specific answer. This also brings up two words we see and use a lot as Christians: **conviction** and **condemnation**. What is the difference? One is from God and the other is from Satan. How do we know the difference? If our feeling brings us to the Word, it is the Holy Spirit convicting us. If it takes us away from the word, it is Satan condemning us. See Romans 8:1 (ESV)

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

If you are being drawn away from Bible Study and Christian fellowship, that is Satan having a victory, putting you on a guilt trip.

Hatach means "the truth." What causes Esther to understand what the problem is, is the word of truth.

Esther 4:10-11 (ESV)

Then Esther spoke to Hathach and commanded him to go to Mordecai and say, [11] "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter so that he may live. But as for me, I have not been called to come in to the king these thirty days."

Esther has a problem because the king hasn't summoned her and the penalty for going to him uninvited is death.

Esther 4:12-14 (ESV)

And they told Mordecai what Esther had said. [13] Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not think to yourself that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. [14] For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Visualize Esther's problem. The king isn't going to be happy to get bad news. The same is true of us if the king is a type of soul. We have moods and we have all kinds of ways we like to reject unpleasant information.

In verse 14, we see Mordecai understands God will protect the Jews another way. Esther has the opportunity to be a part of this deliverance, but if she, for any reason, would not have done this, He (God) would have found another way. She would be a casualty.

God is never hindered by man's failure. Any pretence that God needs us is missing the point. He gives us the opportunity to be a part of His plans.

What we are going to discover in this Book is that we must be crucified with Jesus.

Also in verse 14, Mordecai feels Esther is in her role as queen for this very problem.

Esther 4:15-17 (ESV)

Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, [16] "Go, gather all the

Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish.” [17] Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

Symbolic death - three days. See Romans 6:6-7 (ESV)

We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. [7] For one who has died has been set free from sin.

Here also suggests the death of self. The issue here is now with Esther. It is in the spirit - not the soul. It has to do with fact - not feeling.

You don't feel like a Christian - you either are or you're not. People say they don't come to church because they still sin and feel like hypocrites. A hypocrite is one who acts like something he isn't. You're either a Christian, or you're not. If you are and you go to church, you are acting like what you are. When you go to work and there sin, your acting like something else and that is where you are being a hypocrite, not at church.

CHAPTER FIVE

Esther 5:1-3 (ESV) *On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, in front of the king's quarters, while the king was sitting on his royal throne inside the throne room opposite the entrance to the palace. [2] And when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she won favor in his sight, and he held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter. [3] And the king said to her, "What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given you, even to the half of my kingdom."*

On the third day - a new beginning - a resurrection. He accepts her and offers her up to half of his kingdom. That was the limit the law would allow him to give away.

If we were writing the story, now we would say something like, "hey king, let me tell you about Haman." Esther doesn't do that.

Esther 5:4 (ESV)

And Esther said, "If it please the king, let the king and Haman come today to a feast that I have prepared for the king."

All she does is invite them to dinner. It's Haman's "last supper."

Esther 5:5-9a (ESV)

Then the king said, "Bring Haman quickly, so that we may do as Esther has asked." So the king and Haman came to the feast that Esther had prepared. [6] And as they were drinking wine after the feast, the king said to Esther, "What is your wish? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled." [7] Then Esther answered, "My wish and my request is: [8] If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my wish and fulfill my request, let the king and Haman come to the feast that I will

prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king has said."

[9] And Haman went out that day joyful and glad of heart.

Haman thinks things are really great. The queen has invited him to this banquet for only him and the king.

Esther 5:9b-14 (ESV)

But when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he neither rose nor trembled before him, he was filled with wrath against Mordecai. [10] Nevertheless, Haman restrained himself and went home, and he sent and brought his friends and his wife Zeresh. [11] And Haman recounted to them the splendor of his riches, the number of his sons, all the promotions with which the king had honored him, and how he had advanced him above the officials and the servants of the king. [12] Then Haman said, "Even Queen Esther let no one but me come with the king to the feast she prepared. And tomorrow also I am invited by her together with the king. [13] Yet all this is worth nothing to me, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." [14] Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Let a gallows fifty cubits high be made, and in the morning tell the king to have Mordecai hanged upon it. Then go joyfully with the king to the feast." This idea pleased Haman, and he had the gallows made.

This gallows is a mistranslation. It is not a gallows like one is hanged on, it is a tree on which one is impaled. We don't know that it was a cross, but it has the same functional purpose.

Haman now has the answer to his pride.

CHAPTER SIX

Esther 6:1 (ESV) *On that night the king could not sleep. And he gave orders to bring the book of memorable deeds, the chronicles, and they were read before the king.*

Here is Divine insomnia.

Esther 6:2-3 (ESV)

And it was found written how Mordecai had told about Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, who guarded the threshold, and who had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. [3] And the king said, "What honor or distinction has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?" The king's young men who attended him said, "Nothing has been done for him."

The king becomes aware that Mordecai saved his life and nothing was ever done for him to be repaid.

Esther 6:4-5 (ESV)

And the king said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace to speak to the king about having Mordecai hanged on the gallows that he had prepared for him. [5] And the king's young men told him, "Haman is there, standing in the court." And the king said, "Let him come in."

Here is one of the "great coincidences" in scripture.

Esther 6:6 (ESV)

So Haman came in, and the king said to him, "What should be done to the man whom the king delights to honor?" And Haman said to himself, "Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?"

See what a reliable guide pride is?

Esther 6:7-9 (ESV)

And Haman said to the king, "For the man whom the king delights to honor, [8] let royal robes be brought, which the king has worn, and the horse that the king has ridden, and on whose head a royal crown is set. [9] And let the robes and the horse be handed over to one of the king's most noble officials. Let them dress the man whom the king delights to honor, and let them lead him on the horse through the square of the city, proclaiming before him: 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor.' "

Haman is really setting this up, anticipating that this is what is going to be done for him.

Esther 6:10 (ESV)

Then the king said to Haman, "Hurry; take the robes and the horse, as you have said, and do so to Mordecai the Jew who sits at the king's gate. Leave out nothing that you have mentioned."

Can you imagine Haman's expression? It's bad enough to Haman that Mordecai has to be honored, but Haman is the one who has to lead him around like this!

Esther 6:11-13 (ESV)

So Haman took the robes and the horse, and he dressed Mordecai and led him through the square of the city, proclaiming before him, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor."

[12] Then Mordecai returned to the king's gate. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with his head covered. [13] And Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him. Then his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of the Jewish people, you will not overcome him but will surely fall before him."

Notice verse 13. How prophetic! Here in the words of the evil counselors is tough. What an interesting insight!

Esther 6:14 (ESV)

While they were yet talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hurried to bring Haman to the feast that Esther had prepared.

Now after all of this, the banquet starts. Why did Esther have a banquet? Possibly to give the king time to think. The king must be asking himself the same question. What's on Esther's mind?

In Chapter 6, the king discovers an unpaid debt and takes care of it. Jesus did the same for us. The response of Haman to the king's question in verse 6 is to give himself publicly, through someone else, honor. That is exactly what we are to do for Jesus. We are to give ourselves publicly for Jesus. See Romans 12:1 (ESV)

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

It is easy to die for Jesus, but it is hard to live for Him. The real theological issue isn't life after death, it is life after birth.

Something else about Haman. Remember that Haman is a type of the flesh. He pulled this off - the king's order. He may have been churning inside, but he still did what the king ordered. Haman will do anything (teach Sunday school, give tracts, set up trusts) except for one thing: He won't surrender. There is only one way Haman is overcome, and that is by death.

We are the same way. Our flesh must be put to death on the cross. That is what happened to Haman and this is the message of the Book of Esther.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Esther 7:1-2 (ESV) *So the king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther. [2] And on the second day, as they were drinking wine after the feast, the king again said to Esther, "What is your wish, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled."*

By now, the king is really curious and ready to commit to Esther's wish.

Esther 7:3-6 (ESV)

Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be granted me for my wish, and my people for my request. [4] For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have been silent, for our affliction is not to be compared with the loss to the king." [5] Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who has dared to do this?" [6] And Esther said, "A foe and enemy! This wicked Haman!" Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen.

This is tough because here is the guy running everything for the king.

Esther 7:7-8 (ESV)

And the king arose in his wrath from the wine-drinking and went into the palace garden, but Haman stayed to beg for his life from Queen Esther, for he saw that harm was determined against him by the king. [8] And the king returned from the palace garden to the place where they were drinking wine, as Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was. And the king said, "Will he even assault the queen in my presence, in my own house?" As the word left the mouth of the king, they covered Haman's face.

Here's where Haman really blows it. Haman didn't know Esther was Jewish! About this time the king must be wondering what he's going

to do with Haman.

Esther 7:9-10 (ESV)

Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, "Moreover, the gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, is standing at Haman's house, fifty cubits high." [10] And the king said, "Hang him on that." So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the wrath of the king abated.

This can remind us of another "last supper" - a banquet where one was aware that it was necessary to go to death on a cross. He also was to be impaled.

That cross is totally useless unless it gets translated into our experience - **EVERYDAY!** We are to take up our cross daily! When sin, self will, etc, takes over, what do we do with it? Hang it on a tree - the cross of Jesus. Haman is the flesh, not Satan. You don't end Satan by hanging him on a tree. When your flesh takes charge, put Mordecai in charge (the Holy Spirit instead of the flesh).

CHAPTER EIGHT

Esther 8:1-2 (ESV) *On that day King Ahasuerus gave to Queen Esther the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had told what he was to her. [2] And the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.*

Mordecai has been in the book from the beginning, but only now is brought before the king. The king (in our analogy) is the soul life and now he becomes aware of the right of the Spirit to rule in every way.

When Haman came to power, the king gave him his signet ring representing authority. The king transfers it to Mordecai. The battle is just starting! It is interesting that the king himself didn't recognize who Haman was. He thought Haman was a trusted friend. Only through Mordecai working through the queen does Haman get stripped of the masquerade. We are exactly the same. We trust our flesh as a friend and it is only through the Holy Spirit working through our own spirit do we become aware of the destruction of trusting the flesh.

Esther 8:3 (ESV)

Then Esther spoke again to the king. She fell at his feet and wept and pleaded with him to avert the evil plan of Haman the Agagite and the plot that he had devised against the Jews.

His demise was the law putting a bounty on the Jews.

Esther 8:4-6 (ESV)

When the king held out the golden scepter to Esther, [5] Esther rose and stood before the king. And she said, "If it please the king, and if I have found favor in his sight, and if the thing seems right before the king, and I am pleasing in his eyes, let an order be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman the Agagite, the

son of Hammedatha, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the provinces of the king. [6] For how can I bear to see the calamity that is coming to my people? Or how can I bear to see the destruction of my kindred?"

Now it is very clear the Jews are the focus of Haman's attack. As a parallel of the edict of Haman's, it can be compared with the law of sin and death. Which, incidentally, can't be repealed. That is what happens here. Esther hopes he will reverse this law and she discovered, he can't.

The same thing happened with Daniel in the lions den. The king didn't want to put Daniel in the lions den, he was tricked and couldn't change the law.

This fits the situation spiritually. You can't repeal the law of sin and death. If you are a Christian, are you still subject to the flesh? You don't have to be, but you choose to be. That is the message we'll see here and that is what Romans 7 is all about. Turn to Romans 7:9 (ESV)

I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died.

When was Paul alive once and then died spiritually? What is Paul talking about? The age of accountability. Here is one scripture we see that causes us to believe a child before the age of accountability is saved. At some point in time, he became aware of the law and sin came and he died.

Look at Romans 7:10-20 (ESV)

The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. [11] For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. [12] So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

[13] Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. [14] For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. [15] I do not understand

my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. [16] Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. [17] So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. [18] For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. [19] For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. [20] Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

Paul found the commandment brought death because he couldn't keep the law. The law manifests sin for what it is. Paul sounds like he is using double talk, but he isn't. It is the perversity in our nature that points out what the law highlights. That doesn't make the law bad, it makes the law effective. It shows us what we are. The error is in us, not the law. The highest purpose of the law is to show us our needs. The law doesn't fill the needs, only Jesus does that. We see that the flesh has no redeeming qualities and in the book of Esther, Haman fits the typology of the flesh.

Continue with Romans 7:21-24 (ESV)

So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. [22] For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, [23] but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. [24] Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

With the mind, I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin. How is Paul delivered? The flesh doesn't get cast out of this, he is subject to this all of his life. The trick is, how do we win the war? That is what Paul talks about and so does the Book of Esther.

Back to Esther. Now Esther is before the king and Mordecai (the Holy Spirit) is in charge.

Esther 8:7-8 (ESV)

Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, "Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows, because he intended to lay hands on the Jews. [8] But you may write as you please with regard to the Jews, in the name of the king, and seal it with the king's ring, for an edict written in the name of the king and sealed with the king's ring cannot be revoked."

Here is the problem: the king cannot reverse what he made law. He cannot remove the threat that the Jews face.

There are three major observations here:

1. The utter helplessness of the king (us).
2. He admits he can't change the law.
3. He identifies that all self help is useless.

If we are talking about the warfare of the flesh, the point is all effort in the flesh is useless. So what is the answer? See what the king does.

Esther 8:9-14 (ESV)

The king's scribes were summoned at that time, in the third month, which is the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day. And an edict was written, according to all that Mordecai commanded concerning the Jews, to the satraps and the governors and the officials of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, 127 provinces, to each province in its own script and to each people in its own language, and also to the Jews in their script and their language. [10] And he wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed it with the king's signet ring. Then he sent the letters by mounted couriers riding on swift horses that were used in the king's service, bred from the royal stud, [11] saying that the king allowed the Jews who were in every city to gather and defend their lives, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate any armed force of any people or province that might attack them, children and women included, and to plunder their goods, [12] on one day throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the

*thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.
[13] A copy of what was written was to be issued as a decree in every province, being publicly displayed to all peoples, and the Jews were to be ready on that day to take vengeance on their enemies.
[14] So the couriers, mounted on their swift horses that were used in the king's service, rode out hurriedly, urged by the king's command. And the decree was issued in Susa the citadel.*

The king gives Mordecai permission to do what he could and the best he could do was balance the scales. He gave the Jews permission to defend themselves and they were encouraged to do so.

Turn again to Romans. Notice Romans 8:1-2 (ESV)

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. [2] For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

This comes right after Romans 7. This idea in Romans is in Spirit as well as in order. Here is the key. Those after Jesus walk after the Spirit - not the flesh. This doesn't get rid of the law of sin and death, it makes you free of it. They are no longer subject to it. In Esther, the Jews are no longer subject to the decree of the king. Not because it was repealed, but it has been superseded by a higher law! God does not free you from the law of sin and death, He super imposes on you a higher power: the law of the Spirit of life in Jesus!

Look also at Galatians 2:20 (ESV)

It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

This summarizes the main theme of the Book of Esther.

Back to Esther. Mordecai has been present through the whole story, but now has been given authority. Now let's contrast this spirit with that

of Haman when he was in control. When Haman had this made law, there was confusion and perplexity.

Esther 8:15 (ESV)

Then Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal robes of blue and white, with a great golden crown and a robe of fine linen and purple, and the city of Susa shouted and rejoiced.

Here is a contrast. When Haman (flesh) is in control, there is contention, strife, confusion. When the Spirit is in control, there is gladness and joy. He's not the author of confusion.

Esther 8:16-17 (ESV)

The Jews had light and gladness and joy and honor. [17] And in every province and in every city, wherever the king's command and his edict reached, there was gladness and joy among the Jews, a feast and a holiday. And many from the peoples of the country declared themselves Jews, for fear of the Jews had fallen on them.

Why all the joy? The battle is yet to come. We are the same. For us, is the battle won yet? Conceptually at the cross, yes, but what about daily battles we haven't faced yet? We all have trials we haven't faced yet, so how can we be joyful? Faith! Guess who is going to win! Jesus - and we can rejoice in Him.

Here, the Jews haven't won yet. The thirteenth day of the twelfth month hasn't come yet. Still they are rejoicing and many people are becoming Jewish.

There is no more powerful testimony than to emerge through trials and tribulation with joy through faith. The tougher the trial and the more you stand in the Spirit, the more vivid your testimony will be to others.

CHAPTER NINE

Esther 9:1 (ESV) *Now in the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's command and edict were about to be carried out, on the very day when the enemies of the Jews hoped to gain the mastery over them, the reverse occurred: the Jews gained mastery over those who hated them.*

Now the enemies have a problem because not only has there been a law overruling the first decree, but they know the big boss is Jewish!

Esther 9:2-3 (ESV)

The Jews gathered in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on those who sought their harm. And no one could stand against them, for the fear of them had fallen on all peoples. [3] All the officials of the provinces and the satraps and the governors and the royal agents also helped the Jews, for the fear of Mordecai had fallen on them.

The whole circumstance has turned to help the Jews. Not just the law that helped, but Mordecai - a Jew - in a position of political power. Joseph is an example: he was sold into slavery by his brothers, but raised to prime minister of Egypt. (Gen 50:20) Paul is another example. He imprisoned Christians and after the Damascus road experience, his entire life - every detail of it - made him probably the greatest Christian that ever lived.

Esther 9:4-5 (ESV)

For Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces, for the man Mordecai grew more and more powerful. [5] The Jews struck all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying them, and did as they pleased to those who hated them.

Two things are happening:

1. The dependence on their faith
2. Reliance on the one in power.

Esther 9:6-10 (ESV)

In Susa the citadel itself the Jews killed and destroyed 500 men, [7] and also killed Parshandatha and Dalphon and Aspatha [8] and Poratha and Adalia and Aridatha [9] and Parmashta and Arisai and Aridai and Vaizatha, [10] the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews, but they laid no hand on the plunder.

Three times throughout here the Jews will kill various people but will not lay their hand on plunder.

It would seem enough just to mention that Haman's ten sons were also killed, but the Holy Spirit listed them by name. There must be a reason for that. We would suggest that in the rest of this chapter, there are four signs of walking in the Spirit. The first of these four suggestions is the slaying of the ten sons of Haman. In our text (English translations) the names are strung out horizontally. That is not the way it is in the Hebrew. In the Hebrew, they are listed in a column so they stand out in the text as a column. The names are on the left and over on the right is a Hebrew word and the same word is after each name. The word is translated "self" in English. Ray Stedman wrote a book on Esther (which is where a lot of this material comes from). The Persian names of these ten are each some idea and they are each followed by the word "self." They are listed below by their name and the English meaning of each name.

Let's look at these keeping in mind they are being slain.

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|----|--------------|--------------------|
| 1. | Parshandatha | the curious self |
| 2. | Delphon | the weeping self |
| 3. | Aspatha | the assembled self |
| 4. | Poratha | the generous self |

5.	Adalia	the weak self
6.	Aridatha	the strong self
7.	Parmashta	the preeminent self
8.	Arisai	the bold self
9.	Aridai	the dignified self
10.	Vajezatha	the pure self

1. The curious self: the busy body, meddler, that part of you that is curious.

2. The weeping self: it is not a big leap from here to self pity.

3. The assembled self: self mobilized or self sufficient.

4. The generous self: the generous self in the sense of spend thriftiness. Generous on ones self, impulsive, self indulgence.

5. The weak self: weak in the sense of self conscious, inferiority complex.

6. The strong self: assertive self, the insistence on one's own way.

7. The preeminent self: the desire for position or preeminence over others.

8. The bold self: beyond prudence.

9. The dignified self: sense of superiority.

10. The pure self: the worst of all, self righteousness.

In scripture, ten is the number of witness, ten commandments witness our weakness; there were ten witnesses at the gate and here are ten of the sons of Haman put to death. The death of the self life is the first great

evidence that you have discovered the secret of victory.

Can you put to death the self life? Death to self - service to others; service to the Lord. Here the first of the signs of walking in the Spirit is the death of the sons of Haman.

Esther 9:11-14 (ESV)

That very day the number of those killed in Susa the citadel was reported to the king. [12] And the king said to Queen Esther, "In Susa the citadel the Jews have killed and destroyed 500 men and also the ten sons of Haman. What then have they done in the rest of the king's provinces! Now what is your wish? It shall be granted you. And what further is your request? It shall be fulfilled." [13] And Esther said, "If it please the king, let the Jews who are in Susa be allowed tomorrow also to do according to this day's edict. And let the ten sons of Haman be hanged on the gallows." [14] So the king commanded this to be done. A decree was issued in Susa, and the ten sons of Haman were hanged.

First, we notice there is a doubling in the capitol city. They got an extra day. The suggestion is that when the law of the Spirit has set us free from the law of sin and death, so all "self" manifestations cease. There is a rejoicing and gladness among those around you: but none greater than that which is inside yourself.

You put to death the ten sons of Haman in your life and all those around you will breathe easier. There will be peace in the house - the peace will be doubled in the house because the strife is gone.

The third thing is public disclosure. It wasn't enough that these ten sons were slain. They are also put on public display. The death of your self-life is visible and declared: it's not some secret kept in the closet.

Esther 9:15-16 (ESV)

The Jews who were in Susa gathered also on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and they killed 300 men in Susa, but they laid no hands on the plunder.

[16] Now the rest of the Jews who were in the king's provinces also gathered to defend their lives, and got relief from their enemies and killed 75,000 of those who hated them, but they laid no hands on the plunder.

Three times they didn't take the plunder. They took no personal advantage from what they did. As you put to death the ten sons of Haman, it is from that, that advantage is gained-never personally or materially - that defeats the whole idea.

Esther 9:17-19 (ESV)

This was on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar, and on the fourteenth day they rested and made that a day of feasting and gladness. [18] But the Jews who were in Susa gathered on the thirteenth day and on the fourteenth, and rested on the fifteenth day, making that a day of feasting and gladness. [19] Therefore the Jews of the villages, who live in the rural towns, hold the fourteenth day of the month of Adar as a day for gladness and feasting, as a holiday, and as a day on which they send gifts of food to one another.

None of this was happening in Haman's (the flesh's) rule - it is associated with Mordecai (the Holy Spirit's rule).

Esther 9:20-22 (ESV)

And Mordecai recorded these things and sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far, [21] obliging them to keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar and also the fifteenth day of the same, year by year, [22] as the days on which the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month that had been turned for them from sorrow

into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, days for sending gifts of food to one another and gifts to the poor.

This is the feast of Purim and it is a two day feast the Jews still celebrate. On the first day of the feast, they read the Book of Esther. When Haman is mentioned, the people "hiss" and when Mordecai is mentioned, they cheer. It's much like an old melodrama. On the second day of the feast, they give gifts, much like we do at Christmas. That is the atmosphere of Purim.

Esther 9:23-28 (ESV)

So the Jews accepted what they had started to do, and what Mordecai had written to them. [24] For Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur (that is, cast lots), to crush and to destroy them. [25] But when it came before the king, he gave orders in writing that his evil plan that he had devised against the Jews should return on his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows. [26] Therefore they called these days Purim, after the term Pur. Therefore, because of all that was written in this letter, and of what they had faced in this matter, and of what had happened to them, [27] the Jews firmly obligated themselves and their offspring and all who joined them, that without fail they would keep these two days according to what was written and at the time appointed every year, [28] that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, in every clan, province, and city, and that these days of Purim should never fall into disuse among the Jews, nor should the commemoration of these days cease among their descendants.

There is sort of a summary here of the entire book. This summary also summarizes the "how" of walking in the Spirit.

First, they expose Haman (verse 24). The same thing is true of the flesh. That trusting in the flesh is secular humanism.

Second, the knowledge that a new decree has been issued. We have been set free from the old decree. The old decree hasn't been reversed, we have just been set free from it.

Third, leads us to hanging Haman's sons on the cross. We can't have two masters. You either serve Mordecai (the Spirit) or Haman (the flesh). Take your pick.

There is also a tradition among the Jews that of all their feasts, the only one that will survive for all eternity is the feast of Purim. To them, the others will be fulfilled and finished someday.

Esther 9:29-10:3 (ESV)

Then Queen Esther, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew gave full written authority, confirming this second letter about Purim. [30] Letters were sent to all the Jews, to the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Ahasu-erus, in words of peace and truth, [31] that these days of Purim should be observed at their appointed seasons, as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther obligated them, and as they had obligated themselves and their offspring, with regard to their fasts and their lamenting. [32] The command of Queen Esther confirmed these practices of Purim, and it was recorded in writing.

[10:1] King Ahasuerus imposed tax on the land and on the coastlands of the sea. [2] And all the acts of his power and might, and the full account of the high honor 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? [3] For Mordecai the Jew was second in rank to King Ahasuerus, and he was great among the Jews and popular with the multitude of his brothers, for he sought the welfare of his people and spoke peace to all his people.

In conclusion, God wants us to remember something here in the last few verses. It is the same king and kingdom throughout the book. There is no change of king here, but an enormous change in results.

The same king - that is you and I. We're not going to change in the sense of our personalities or styles we are still individuals, that is not the issue. But a great deal depends on whether Haman is out and Mordecai is in. The king hasn't changed - the kingdom has because of who's ruling it through the king. When the Spirit is granted control we see welfare of the people and peace is the results. Your welfare is the primary mission of the Holy Spirit. It may not be in the dimensions we perceive, but that is exactly the difference between the Spirit and the flesh.

For a New Testament wrap-up of the Book of Esther, see 2 Cor. 2:14 (ESV)

But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.