

Esther 3-4 Commentary

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[Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission
[Swindoll's Intro and Overview Chart](#)
[Van Dine's Analysis of Esther](#)
[MacArthur's Intro to Esther](#)

CHRONOLOGICAL RELATIONSHIP OF EZRA-NEHEMIAH-ESTHER				
538-515 BC	483-473 BC	457 BC	13 Year	444-425 BC
Ezra 1-6	Book of Esther	Ezra 7-10		Book of Nehemiah

First Return of Jews from Babylonian Exile	58 Year Gap	Second Return of Jews from Babylonian Exile	Gap	Third Return of Jews from Babylonian Exile
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ESTHER: THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

Esther 1 Es 1:1-22	Esther 2 Es 2:1-23	Esther 3 Es 3:1-15	Esther 4 Es 4:1-17	Esther 5 Es 5:1-14	Esther 6 Es 6:1-14	Esther 7 Es 7:1-10	Esther 8 Es 8:1-17	Esther 9 Es 9:1-32	Esther 10 Es 10:1-3
Esther's Exaltation		Haman's Cunning Plot		Haman's Humiliation			Mordecai's Exaltation		
Feast of Ashasuerus		Fast of Mordecai		Feast of Esther			Feast of Purim		
Exaltation		Persecution		Preservations			Commenoration		
Jewish Existence Threatened			Jews Spared						
Gentile Setting	Jewess Elevated	Threat to Jews	Influence of a Jewess				Deliverance of Jews		A Jew Exalted
Feast of Ahasuerus				Feast of Esther and Purim					
Location of Events: Persian									
10 Years (483-473BC)									
Timeline of Ezra-Nehemiah-Esther-See page 38 Timeline of Esther related to Ezra & Nehemiah - Parallel lines for Medo-Persian Kings & Daniel, Zechariah, Haggai and Malachi - see page 15									

Key Passages: Esther 4:14, 16, Esther 8:17, Esther 9:26, 31

Key Words: See list under "Precept Ministries Inductive Study on Esther"

The Book of Esther is unusual - God's Name is not mentioned once, yet God's "Hand" is clearly present and active throughout the book, to the extent that many see the book of Esther as a veritable "treatise" on the doctrine of Divine Providence (see separate study)

- [Purim Music Video - Purim with a beat. Give it a listen as you ponder "For such a time as this!"](#)
- Marty Goetz and Misha's song - [For Such A Time As This \(Esther's Song\)](#)

"UPS AND DOWNS OF ESTHER'S MAJOR CHARACTERS"
Source: [Bible Study Magazine - Volume 11, Issue 2, Jan/Feb, 2019](#)
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Esther 3:1-6

Mordecai's Refusal to Bow Enrages Haman

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

- **Advanced him:** Es 7:6 Ps 12:8 Pr 29:2
- **Over all the princes:** Es 1:14 Ge 41:40,55 Ezr 7:14 Da 6:2)

Spurgeon has a few words on **divine providence**...

The Lord's wisdom is seen in arranging the smallest events so as to produce great results. We frequently hear persons say of a pleasant or a great event, "What a providence!" while they are silent as to anything which appears less important, or has an unpleasant savour (taste). But the place of the gorse (evergreen shrub with yellow flowers) upon the heath (an area of open uncultivated land) is as fixed as the station of a king, and the dust which is raised by a chariot-wheel is as surely steered by providence as the planet in its orbit. There is as much providence in the creeping of an aphis (small insect of aphid genus) upon a rose leaf as in the marching of an army to ravage a continent. **Everything, the most minute, as well as the most magnificent, is ordered by the Lord Who has prepared His throne in the heavens, Whose kingdom rules over all.** The history before us furnishes proof of this. (A Good Start: A Book for Young Men and Women)

After these events ("Some time later" - NET) - Compare Esther 1:3, Esther 2:16 and Esther 3:7. About **4 years** after Esther was crowned queen. Approximately 472-473BC (remember the lot was cast for a full year and a full year followed the issuing of the edict. Cf Esther 3:12-13). **Summary of the events** - Three Persian parties, one deposed queen, one Persian beauty contest won by the beautiful Jewess Esther who had her own banquet, and whose step-father Mordecai foiled an assassination plot which was recorded in the king's chronicles.

Charles R. Swindoll asks...

Isn't it interesting how these sections tie together with these rather innocuous phrases: "after these things," "so it came about," "in those days," "after these events"? That's the way it is in life. The big events in our lives, the major turning points, don't begin with a bold, ear-splitting announcement from heaven, "Today will bring trouble—bad trouble!" No, those days begin like every other morning. You have no idea it's coming. And out of the blue it strikes! And you find yourself in the midst of this ancient struggle with sin and evil. ([Esther A Woman of Strength and Dignity](#))

Promoted ("Raised...to high rank" - NAB; "Honored" - NIV) - Literally "made great." What a strange juxtaposition with Esther 2:22-23. The one who should have been "promoted." Who allowed this promotion of the evil Haman over Mordecai?

Daniel writes...

And it is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men, and knowledge to men of understanding. (Da 2:21)

The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts. (1Samuel 2:7) **Do you believe God is in control of all things? Take a moment to prayerfully listen to Robin Mark's great song and may it cause you to worship the King. Amen - [ALL IS WELL](#)**

Haman the son of Hammedatha ("given by the moon") **the Agagite** - Haman as we shall soon see is a prototype of Hitler, who was also **the enemy of the Jews** (Esther 3:10) whose Persian name means "magnificent!" Haman character personified everything that the Lord God hates...

There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: **17 Haughty eyes**, a lying tongue, And hands that **shed innocent blood**, **18 A heart that devises wicked plans**, Feet that run rapidly to **evil**, **19 A false witness who utters lies**, And one who **spreads strife** among brothers. (Pr 6:16-19)

Comment: See Related Resources: William Arnot's discussion of [Proverbs 6:16-19 Seven Hateful Things](#); Joseph Parker - [Proverbs 6:16-19 Seven Things Hateful to God](#)

Agagite - Surely the appending of this unusual name is meant to give us a clue as to who he is and why he does what he does to the Jews! (See Stedman's comment below) And so it is notable that the book of Esther has the only mention of **Agagite** in the Bible (Esther 3:1, 10, Esther 8:3, 8:5, 9:24). It follows that we will have to look elsewhere to gain insights into the potential significance of **Agagite**. Remember that the best commentary on **Scripture is Scripture (See Compare Scripture with Scripture)**, so let's compare Scriptures that could possibly give us insight. And as an important aside, remember that all of the Scriptures quoted below would have been written **before the Book of Esther** and would have potentially been available to Mordecai.

I like the beloved pastor and expositor, **Ray Stedman's** exhortative comment...

We get a clue in the parentage that's given for this man. He was Haman, the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite. What is an Agagite? Here we will need to do a little detective work. **If you haven't learned the extreme excitement of studying your Bible as though you were [Perry Mason](#)**, (Ed: See link if you are too young to know this name) **you've missed a great deal of life**. You need to do much detective work in studying the Bible. ([The Struggle for Power in Esther 3](#))

So let's investigate the name **Agagite**. The suffix "-ite" is commonly used in Scripture to indicate a connection with the main part of the word and especially in descriptions of descendants (e.g., Ammonites from Ammon, Moabites from Moab, etc). It is therefore reasonable to propose that **Agagite** is in some way related to **Agag**.

The first use of **Agag** is by **Balaam** in his reply to **Balak** king of the Moabites in Numbers 24...

When Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he did not go as at other times to seek omens but he set his face toward the wilderness. 2 And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe; and the Spirit of God came upon him. 3 And he took up his discourse and said, "The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor, And the oracle of the man whose eye is opened; 4 The oracle of him who hears the words of God, Who sees the vision of the Almighty, Falling down, yet having his eyes uncovered, 5 How fair are your tents, O Jacob, Your dwellings, O Israel! 6 "Like valleys that stretch out, Like gardens beside the river, Like aloes planted by the LORD, Like cedars beside the waters. 7 "Water shall flow from his buckets, And his seed shall be by many waters,

**And his (Israel's) king shall be higher than Agag,
And his kingdom shall be exalted.**

God brings him (Israel) out of Egypt, He is for him like the horns of the wild ox. **He shall devour the nations who are his (Israel's) adversaries**, and shall crush their bones in pieces, and shatter them with his arrows. (Nu 24:1-8)

In First Samuel we find a man named **King Agag**, where King Saul (interestingly and ironically also a descendant of another Kish and a Benjamite as was Mordecai! - **Just an ironic coincidence??**) is given a very specific command from the prophet Samuel...

Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey." (1Sa 15:3)

And checking the **context** gives us additional insights into why Samuel might have issued such a seemingly barbaric command to King Saul...

Thus says the LORD of hosts (**Jehovah Sabaoth, LORD of armies**), 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt.' (1Sa 15:2)

Did King Saul obey Samuel (God's "mouthpiece")?

And he captured Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.⁹ But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were not willing to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.... (Samuel to Saul) 18 and the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are exterminated.' 19 "Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD, but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of the LORD?" (1Sa 15:8-9, 18-19)

How did God respond?

Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, 11 "I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not carried out My commands." And Samuel was distressed and cried out to the LORD all night. (1Sa 15:10, 11)

What is the message to King Saul and to all saints of all ages?

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice
1Samuel 15:22

Saul's failure to exterminate Agag would have led to the extermination of his own people the Jews, if it had not been for the providence of God. God is behind the scenes, keeping watch over His own.

Why did God call for utter destruction of the Amalekites?

8 Then **Amalek** came and fought against Israel at **Rephidim**.

9 So Moses said to Joshua, "Choose men for us, and go out, fight against Amalek. Tomorrow I will station myself on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand."

10 And Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought against Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and **Hur** went up to the

top of the hill.

11 So it came about when Moses held his hand up, that Israel prevailed, and when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed.

12 But Moses' hands were heavy. Then they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it; and Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other. Thus his hands were steady until the sun set.

13 **So** (Always be alert to observe and query **terms of conclusion**) Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

14 **Then** (expression of time - this one marks sequence) the LORD said to Moses, "Write this in a book as a memorial, and recite it to Joshua, that **I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven**" (cf God's command to King Saul through Moses in 1Sa 15:2-3)

15 And Moses built an altar (**What's an altar for?**), and named it The LORD is My Banner (see **Jehovah Nissi: The LORD Our Banner**); (**What is Moses saying about Who won the battle? and about Whose Name should be glorified and lifted high?** Cf David a man after God's own heart - 1Sa 17:47, See also 2Chr 20:15, 2Chr 32:8, Jn 16:33, Gal 6:14)

16 and he said, "The LORD (**Jehovah**) has sworn; **the LORD will have war against Amalek from generation to generation.**" (Exodus 17:8-16-**expository notes**; See parallel passage in Deut 25:17-19)

In summary **Derek Prime** notes that...

Haman's ancestry is, therefore, mentioned to show that he was an enemy of the Jews by birth, and that it was more than just personal hatred of Mordecai that motivated him. (Welwyn Commentary Series)

J Vernon McGee writes that...

It is not likely that either Hitler or Haman—or contemporary anti-Semites—are cognizant of or pay much attention to Isaiah 54:17. But anyone who is tinctured with anti-Semitism ought to read this:

No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper; And every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their vindication is from Me," declares the LORD.

Ray Stedman relates the preceding passages to our daily lives reminding us that...

there's such a principle of evil at work in every human heart. In the kingdom over which you reign, there is a "**Haman**" who is an "**Agagite**." Just as the solar system is a vastly expanded duplicate of what goes on in the atom, so, in effect, the history of the world is a vastly expanded duplicate of what goes on in an individual human life. In every life there is this satanic principle at work. It is called in the New Testament, "**the flesh** ." It lives for but one purpose, reflected here in the story of Esther -- **in order to exalt itself**. It never enjoys life more than when people are bowing and scraping in front of it. It is forever seeking status and position in the eyes of others. You know well this feeling, don't you? It appears to us as a trusted friend, just as Haman appeared to King Ahasuerus as one he could trust. And yet Haman's true purpose was to advance himself and to see that everyone bowed low before him. So we treat this strange invader in our lives as though he were a friend -- we promote him and advance him. Isn't it interesting that we are not ashamed of our pride? We boast of it, we trust it, we regard it as an essential to life. We think that this principle, which demands that we think of ourselves first, is the very essence of living -- if this were destroyed, we would lose all. Thus we may recognize the Haman in our lives. (Ed: **None of can identify with that can we? Click to read his full explanation of [The Struggle for Power in Esther 3](#)**)

As an aside, assuming that **Haman** was indeed related to **King Agag** whom **King Saul** willfully choose not to kill, the **book of Esther** demonstrates the potential long term ramifications of failure to obey the will of God, **a truth that should make all God's children tremble the next time we are tempted to disobey the clearly revealed will of God!**

Advanced him - Observe the ironic contrast with Mordecai's "reward" in Esther 2:21-23! Remember that in the original Masoretic (Hebrew) text there were no chapter division and this juxtaposition would server to highlight and heighten the contrasting fates of these two men. **But wait! We have not heard "the rest of the story" a phrase Paul Harvey made famous**(Listen to a [favorite Paul Harvey Rest of the Story](#))

Swindoll remarks...

Now, wait a minute! What's going on here? Mordecai's the one who saved the king's life. Right? Mordecai's the one who told Esther, who then told the king. Mordecai's the one who uncovered the plot and saved the king's life. So why is Haman getting the promotion? I forgot to tell you: Life's not only painful; it's also unfair. Perhaps you are thinking right now that you will be promoted because you have worked the hardest, you have come up with the big ideas, you are the one who's done the most for your boss; therefore, it's only right that you be given that special position you've been anticipating. Well, be prepared. It probably won't happen. I'm not trying to be pessimistic, just realistic. Wrong happens! Because life isn't fair. Why? Because of evil. When righteousness rules, justice reigns; but when evil lurks in a heart, injustice follows. And that's exactly what happens when Haman, of all people, is advanced, given authority, and promoted. ([Esther A Woman of Strength and Dignity](#))

His authority - Literally "his chair" or "his throne".

Over all the princes - In **Esther 1:14** we see a fact about the princes that clearly becomes important in Haman's subsequent interactions with King Xerxes. If Haman was over all **the seven princes of Persia** who are listed in Esther 1:14, he undoubtedly had unfettered **access to the king's presence** and **sat in** the first of the **first places in the kingdom**!

God providentially allowed Haman access to King Xerxes in order to be able to strategize his plot to annihilate the entire Jewish race.

Jobes writes that...

Haman has risen to his position of power, but both Esther and Mordecai are also now in position to be agents of the later deliverance of their people. But of course, they cannot see what is ahead. Both Esther and Mordecai have come to this place through the injustice and wickedness of others. Yet even so, they both had made decisions to live as they did in the Persian court. These unfolding events begin to show the inscrutable interplay between circumstances thrust upon us, sometimes unjustly, and those the result of our own behavior, often flawed. God's providence marvelously moves through both in his own good time. (The NIV Application Commentary)

Barry David summarizes the Esther 2 compared to Esther 3...

Life for the Jews in exile could not have been much better. One of their own was queen (although most would not have been aware of that fact, cf. 2:10, 20) and one of their own had just rescued the king and was certain to be rewarded for that heroic act. Humanly speaking, they were as secure as any exiled people possibly could be. All of that, however, would quickly change. The Jewish stock on the Susa Board of Exchange, which in chapter 2 reaches all-time highs, plummets in chapter 3 to all-time lows. Chapter 3 begins innocuously enough—a promotion of one individual and a seemingly insignificant act of defiance on the part of another. The chapter ends, however, with the shocking revelation of an entire nation of people being placed under a sentence of death. The Jews are made to pay for a crime committed by one of their own. Ironically, the same individual who in chapter 2 is instrumental in bringing about the meteoric rise in the Jewish stock now becomes the reason for its dramatic drop. (Ruth & Esther: God behind the Seen)

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

But Mordecai - "**But**" is a term on contrast which marks a change of direction and always begs the question, what is being contrasted? What is the change of direction? In this case, the change marks a contrasting attitude of Mordecai which led to the subsequent events that placed the entire Jewish race in peril!

Vashti refused to obey the king's command and it cost her her role as queen. Mordecai would have been aware of this and apparently was willing to count the cost. This helps us understand the degree of Mordecai's resolve to not bow to Haman.

NET Note...

The reason for Mordecai's refusal to bow before Haman is not clearly stated here. Certainly the Jews did not refuse to bow as a matter of principle, as though such an action somehow violated the second command of the Decalogue. Many biblical texts bear witness to their practice of falling prostrate before people of power and influence (e.g., 1 Sam 24:8; 2 Sam 14:4; 1Ki 1:16).

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

Why are you transgressing the king's command - A fact which is true, which is interesting in light of Paul's words in Romans 13:1-7.

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

For - Term of explanation. In this case it explains why the king's servants went to ask Haman if Mordecai's Jewish lineage was a legitimate reason for not bowing to Haman as commanded by King Xerxes.

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

WHAT FILLS YOU... CONTROLS YOU!

When he saw - This little detail suggest Haman had not really noticed that Mordecai had not bowed down. But once the king's servants ask if Mordecai had a valid reason for not bowing, that Haman took notice and became enraged.

Haman was filled with rage - Haman's reaction was predictable. What fills a person ultimately will control them. So if one is filled with the Spirit, he is controlled by the Spirit (Eph 5:18-note, notice the first thing Spirit filling "controls" - Eph 5:19-note = our tongue!!!). Attitude begets action. As explained in Esther 3:6, Haman's attitude led to his seeking a way to destroy all of the Jews, not just Mordecai.

The phrase "**filled with rage**" occurs only 4 times in all the Bible (Esther 3:5, Lk 4:28, Lk 6:11, Acts 19:28). The use in Luke 4 is instructive...

And all in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things (Jesus' words of compassion for a Gentile = Lk 4:24-27, note how quick they turned = Lk 4:28) 29 and they (the Jews) rose up and cast Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff (Ed: Their rage drove them to desire to kill Jesus!). 30 But passing through their midst, He went His way. (Ed: Note that God protected Him, for it was not His time to die.) (Lk 4:28-29)

Comment: Haman's hatred of Mordecai and the Jews somewhat ironically parallels the hatred of the Jews for their Messiah. Note the simple but clear dynamic -- The emotion or thought (rage) leads to action or reaction (kill). **Lesson: Be careful what you say and do when you sense you are under the control of your emotions, especially emotions such as rage and anger! What comes out may not be able to be restrained and may not be "pretty" as they say! Lord, teach us to submit to the filling/control of the Holy Spirit so that we in turn might be enabled/empowered to walk by the Spirit and thereby not fulfill the strong desires of the flesh (such as self-vindication and responding with harsh words, etc), all now possible because of the One Who indwells us by His Spirit, Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.**

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

HAMAN'S ANTI-SEMITISM STIMULATES DESIRE FOR JEWISH EXTERMINATION

NET Bible...

But the thought of striking out against Mordecai alone was repugnant to him, for he had been informed of the identity of Mordecai's people.

Holman Christian Standard Bible...

And when he learned of Mordecai's ethnic identity, Haman decided not to do away with Mordecai alone. He set out to destroy all of Mordecai's people, the Jews, throughout Ahasuerus' kingdom.

God's Word Translation...

Because the king's advisers had informed him about Mordecai's nationality, he thought it beneath himself to kill only Mordecai. So Haman planned to wipe out Mordecai's people—all the Jews in the entire kingdom of Xerxes.

NIV...

Yet having learned who Mordecai's people were, he scorned the idea of killing only Mordecai. Instead Haman looked for a way to destroy all Mordecai's people, the Jews, throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes.

New Jerusalem Bible...

And, on being told what race Mordecai belonged to, he thought it beneath him merely to get rid of Mordecai, but made up his mind to wipe out all the members of Mordecai's race, the Jews, living in Ahasuerus' entire empire.

New Living Translation...

He had learned of Mordecai's nationality, so he decided it was not enough to lay hands on Mordecai alone. Instead, he looked for a way to destroy all the Jews throughout the entire empire of Xerxes.

International Children's Bible

He had been told who the people of Mordecai were. And he thought of himself as too important to try to kill only Mordecai. So he looked for a way to destroy all of Mordecai's people, the Jews, in all of Xerxes' kingdom.

Disdained (0959)(**bazah**) is a primary root word which means basically to accord little worth to something and so to despise, to disrespect, to disdain or to hold in contempt. Our English word **disdain** implies an arrogant or supercilious aversion to what is regarded as unworthy and as that which is looked on with scorn. The idea of disdain is to treat as beneath one's dignity and in the present context undoubtedly includes Haman's feelings of contempt and scorn, especially the idea of contempt for what is beneath one. This word is used in the Book of Daniel to describe the evil "anti-Christ-like" Syrian king, Antiochus Epiphanes who was depicted as a **despicable** (bazah) person who scorned God Himself (Da 11:21).

To lay hands on - Literally "to send a hand against."

Spurgeon comments on **God's restraining hand of providence** noting that...

In another point, also, we mark the restraining hand of God: namely, that Mordecai, though he had provoked Haman to the utmost, was not put to death at once. Haman "refrained himself." Why did he do so? Proud men are usually in a mighty tiff if they consider themselves insulted, and are ready at once to take revenge; but Haman "**refrained himself**;" ("disdained himself") until that day in which his anger burned furiously, and he set up the gallows, he smothered his passion.

I marvel at this; it shows how God makes the wrath of man to praise Him (Ps 76:10), and the remainder He doth restrain. Mordecai must not die a violent death by Haman's hand. The enemies of the church of God, and of His people, can never do more than the Lord permits; they cannot go a hair's breadth beyond the divine license, and when they are permitted to do their worst there is always some weak point about all that they do, some extreme folly which renders their fury vain. The wicked carry about them the weapons of their own destruction, and when they rage most against the Most High, the Lord of all brings out of it good for His people and glory to Himself. Judge not providence in little pieces, it is a grand mosaic, and must be seen as a whole. Say not of any one hour "This is dark,"—it may be so, but that darkness will minister to the light, even as the ebon gloom of midnight makes the stars appear the more effulgent. Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength. His wisdom will undermine the mines of cunning, His skill will overtop the climbings of craft; "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong." (A Good Start: A Book for Young Men and Women)

Therefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews - First, notice the **term of conclusion**. **What is he writer concluding?** Is he not saying that in light of the fact that Mordecai is a Jew, if Haman refrained from personal vengeance on Mordecai, he would be able to expand his murderous plans to include the entire race, which by some estimates consisted of 15 million Jews in the Kingdom of Persia and Media.

Taken on face value, Haman's reaction seems a bit exaggerated to say the least! Personal affront from a single Jewish man is hardly sufficient motivation to desire to exterminate an entire race! This is where the historical background we looked at in Esther 3:1 helps us interpret this verse. This was more than a personal offense but reflected the Biblical truth that "**The LORD** (represented by His Chosen People, the Jews) **will have war against Amalek** (now represented by Haman) **from generation to generation.**" (Exodus 17:16-note).

Esther 3:7-11

Haman Deceives King to Decree Death to Jews

Esther 3:7 In the first month, which is the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, Pur, that is the lot, was cast before Haman from day to day and from month to month, until the twelfth month, that is the month Adar.: (cast lots: Es 9:24-26 Pr 16:33 Eze 21:21,22 Mt 27:35)

CASTING LOTS FOR DAY OF JEWISH EXTERMINATION

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.

NIV

In the twelfth year of King Xerxes, in the first month, the month of Nisan, they cast the pur (that is, the lot) in the presence of Haman to select a day and month. And the lot fell on the twelfth month, the month of Adar.

NLT

So in the month of April, during the twelfth year of King Xerxes' reign, lots were cast in Haman's presence (the lots were called purim) to determine the best day and month to take action. And the day selected was March 7, nearly a year later.

International Children's Bible

It was in the first month of the twelfth year of King Xerxes' rule. That is the month of Nisan. Pur (that is, the lot) was thrown before Haman. The lot was used to choose a day and a month. So the twelfth month, the month of Adar, was chosen.

New American Bible

In the first month, Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, the pur, or lot, was cast in Haman's presence to determine the day and the month **for the destruction of Mordecai's people on a single day**, and the lot fell on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, Adar.

NET note: The LXX adds the following words: "in order to destroy in one day the race of Mordecai..." The LXX reading is included by NAB.

Why is Haman casting lots? He is attempting (superstitiously) to determine a date for the extermination of the Jews!

Stedman quips...

What a strange thing to interject here! This casting of lots to determine a lucky day on which to do something was a common practice in oriental kingdoms. It was similar to the practice today of shooting dice in order to determine an appropriate, propitious day. This account does not mean that for a whole year they shook dice in front of Haman. It means that every cast they made stood for a different day. They would cast the dice out and

name the cast for a certain day of the calendar year. If it was a propitious number then that day was a lucky day. Thus they went through three hundred and sixty-five casts before this man -- a whole year's time before they found a lucky day, and when they found it, it was in the twelfth month which is the month of Adar.

This is nothing but the rankest superstition! All superstition is a form of fear, and fear is the enemy of faith. Fear is the opposite of faith. Superstition, then, is a sign of distrust of God. Why is it that whenever we acknowledge that our business has been good, or our health has been good, we like to knock on wood? We really do it to frighten away the jealous spirits which we think may take our prosperity away. We distrust the gods. It's strange, isn't it, how many Christians resort to these superstitious practices? They smile and joke when they do them, but down underneath there is a lingering suspicion that they had better do them or they might bring bad luck. This is simply fear of the jealousy of God. The tempter has planted in our hearts the feeling that God is not really interested in our welfare, that we must take care of all things ourselves. We have begun to distrust the goodness of God. ([The Struggle for Power](#))

God is behind the scenes ("seen") and controls the scenes He is behind!

Pur, that is the lot, was cast before Haman from day to day- God is clearly in control of these human events! There is no chance involved in the casting of the lot. There are no accidents! "What is chance to man, is the appointment of God" (Scott)

Swindoll...

When your life is driven by superstition, you come up with some ridiculous ideas and decisions. Stupid things. Sometimes, demonic things!

Solomon records that...

The lot is cast into the lap, **but (term of contrast)** its every decision (**how many?**) is from the LORD.

Comment: God is sovereign over the roll of every pair of dice ever rolled! Man call it "good luck" but it is really "God look" so to speak. Casting lots was a method often used to reveal God's purposes in a matter (Joshua 14:1-2 1Sa 14:38-43 1Chr 25:8-31 Jonah 1:7 Acts 1:26). The High-Priest may have carried lots in his sacred vest, along with the Urim and Thummim (Ex 28:30). In short, there is no such thing as random chance or sheer luck. God is in control! (**Related Resources:** [Charles Bridges Comments on Proverbs 16:33](#); [Charles Simeon's Sermon on Proverbs 16:33 God is the Disposer of All Events](#); [All Contingencies Under the Direction of God's Providence- R. South](#); [Grounds and Limitations of Human Responsibility- W. Peabody](#); [God's Providences Even in Trifles - W. S. Simpson](#); [The Lord's Disposing - T. L. Culyer](#)) **John George** wrote that the "Doctrine of Divine providence is full of consolation. All must be right when God controls and reigns over all."

Spurgeon comments - If the disposal of the lot is the Lord's whose is the arrangement of our whole life? If the simple casting of a lot is guided by Him, how much more the events of our entire life—especially when we are told by our blessed Saviour: "The very hairs of your head are all numbered: not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father." (Mt 10:29, cf Lk 12:6,7) **It would bring a holy calm over your mind, dear friend, if you were always to remember this. It would so relieve your mind from anxiety, that you would be the better able to walk in patience, quiet, and cheerfulness as a Christian should.** When a man is anxious he cannot pray with faith; when he is troubled about the world, he cannot serve his Master, his thoughts are serving himself. If you would "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," all things would then be added unto you. You are meddling with Christ's business, and neglecting your own when you fret about your lot and circumstances. You have been trying "providing" work and forgetting that it is yours to obey. Be wise and attend to the obeying, and let Christ manage the providing. Come and survey your Father's storehouse, and ask whether He will let you starve while He has laid up so great an abundance in his garner? Look at His heart of mercy; see if that can ever prove unkind! Look at His inscrutable wisdom; see if that will ever be at fault. Above all, look up to Jesus Christ your Intercessor, and ask yourself, while He pleads, can your Father deal ungraciously with you? If He remembers even sparrows, will he forget one of the least of His poor children? "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee. He will never suffer the righteous to be moved." (Ps 55:22-[note](#)) (**Morning and Evening**)

Our Daily Bread Devotional - "He Is In Control" - Flipping a coin, drawing straws, or taking a number out of a hat have long been ways of resolving disputes. I once read of an election in an Oklahoma town where the two leading candidates each received 140 votes. Rather than go through the expense of another election, city

officials used a chance method to decide the winner, and everyone accepted the outcome. What the writer of Proverbs said proved to be true: "Casting lots causes contentions to cease, and keeps the mighty apart" (Pr 18:18).

Many people view all of this as nothing more than a matter of chance. But the amazing thing about what the Word of God calls "casting lots" is that the Lord is ultimately the One who controls the outcome. This was true in the story of Jonah, where God showed Himself to be Lord even through the actions of superstitious, unbelieving sailors.

So, what does all of this say to us as believers? From the Christian's perspective, there is no such thing as chance. **God is either directly or indirectly involved in everything that happens to us. He can therefore be trusted and obeyed in any circumstance, because even the smallest details are under His control.**

—Mart De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Things don't just happen to those who love God,
They're planned by His own dear hand,
Then molded and shaped, and timed by His clock;
Things don't just happen--they're planned.
--Fields

While in Old Testament times and even at the birth of the Church (Acts 1:26), casting of lots was used by godly men to discern God's will, today we discern God's will primarily through His Word and obedience to His Word. In Romans 12 Paul teaches us that the Gospel that saved us, now calls us (and enables us) to resist the world and allow the Word to change us...

And **do not be conformed** (present imperative with a negative = stop allowing this to happen) to this world, but **be transformed** (present imperative = Command to make this your continual practice as enabled by the Spirit. The Passive voice indicates this occurs by power from without ourselves - this means we still have to be willing to submit to that power, the Spirit transforming us - 2Cor 3:18-note) by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (Ro 12:2-note)

And rather than relying on **lots** today, we should rely on God's **Word** for as Peter says...

And so we have the prophetic word made more sure ("And we have something more sure, the prophetic word" = ESV), to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. (2Peter 1:19-note)

Charles Bridges in his excellent commentary on the Book of Proverbs reminds us...

The book of God is given us expressly as "a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path." (Ps 119:105-note) The rule is more clear in itself, and linked with a most encouraging promise—"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Pr 3:6-note) **It is far better to exercise faith, than indolently to tamper with personal responsibility. The instructive lesson to learn, is that there is no blank in the most minute circumstances.** Things, not only apparently contingent, but depending upon a whole train of contingencies, are exactly fulfilled. The name of a King (1Kings 13:2), or of a deliverer (Isa 44:28), is declared many hundred years before their existence--before therefore it could be known to any--save the Omniscient Governor of the universe--whether such persons would exist. The falling of a hair or a sparrow is directed, no less than the birth and death of Princes, or the revolutions of empires. (Mt 10:29, 30.) Everything is a wheel of Providence. Who directed the Ishmaelites on their journey to Egypt at the very moment, that Joseph was cast into the pit? (Ge 37:25) Who guided Pharaoh's daughter to the stream, just when the ark, with its precious deposit, was committed to the waters? (Ex 2:3-5.) What gave Ahasuerus a sleepless night, that he might be amused with the records of his kingdom? (Esther 6:1) Who prepared the whale at the very time and place, that Jonah's lot was cast? (Jonah 1:17) **Who can fail to see the hand of God, most wonderful in the most apparently casual contingencies, overruling all second causes to fulfill his will, while they work their own?** 'When kingdoms are tossed up and down like a tennis-ball (Isa. 22:18); not one event can fly out of the bounds of His Providence. The smallest are not below it. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without it. Not a hair, but it is numbered by it.' (Polhill "On the Divine Will") ([Charles Bridges Comments on Proverbs 16:33](#))

Until the twelfth month, that is the month of Adar- The casting lots was all in the hands of the sovereign God! The fact that the lot fell on the 12th month gave time to address the king's edict.

Faithlife Study Bible (Logos) notes that...

Lots were commonly cast during the first month of the year to determine which dates were best for important events....Both **Herodotus** (Hdt. 3.128 "*Darius asked this and thirty men promised, each wanting to do it himself. Darius told them not argue but draw lots; they did, and the lot fell to Bagaeus, son of Artontes.*") and Xenophon (Cyrop. 1.6.46; 4.5.55) mention the Persian custom of casting lots

Spurgeon notes that...

The lots were cast for the various months, but not a single fortunate day could be found till hard by the close of the year, and then the chosen day was the thirteenth of the twelfth month. On that day the magicians told their dupe that the heavens would be propitious, and the star of Haman would be in the ascendant. Truly the lot was cast into the lap, but the disposal of it was of the Lord. See ye not that there were eleven clear months left before the Jews would be put to death, and that would give Mordecai and Esther time to turn round, and if anything could be done to reverse the cruel decree they had space to do it in.

Suppose that the lot had fallen on the second or third month, the swift dromedaries and camels and messengers would scarcely have been able to reach the extremity of the Persian dominions, certainly a second set of messengers to counteract the decree could not have done so, and, humanly speaking, the Jews must have been destroyed;

But oh, in that secret council chamber where sit the sorcerers and the man who asks counsel at the hands of the infernal powers, the Lord Himself is present, frustrating the tokens of the liars and making diviners mad. Vain were their enchantments and the multitude of their sorceries; the astrologers, the star-gazers, and the monthly prognosticators were all fools together, and led the superstitious Haman to destruction. "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, nor divination against Israel." Trust ye in the Lord ye righteous, and in patience possess your souls. Leave your adversaries in the hands of God, for He can make them fall into the snare which they have privily laid for you. (A Good Start: A Book for Young Men and Women)

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

- **scattered and dispersed abroad:** Lev 26:33 Deut 4:27 Deut 30:3 Deut 32:26 Ne 1:8 Jer 50:17 Eze 6:8 11:16 Zec 7:14 John 7:35 Jas 1:1 1Pe 1:1)
- **their laws:** Ezra 4:12-15 Acts 16:20,21 Acts 17:6,7 Acts 24:5 Acts 28:22)

HAMAN FORGOES "FULL DISCLOSURE"

Then - After he had cast lots and arrived at a date for extermination of the Jews. Now he will seek permission from the king to kill them all -- talk about presumptuous!

Scattered and dispersed - Through His prophet Moses God had prophetically stated (it was prophecy at the time it was written) that the Jews would be dispersed. And so we read...

Lev 26:33 'You (Israel), however, I will scatter among the nations (Gentiles) and will draw out a sword after you, as your land (Land Promised to Abraham and his descendants) becomes desolate and your cities become waste.

Deut 4:27 "And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you shall be left few in number among the nations, where the LORD shall drive you.

Deut 30:1-6 "So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind in all nations where the LORD your God has banished you, 2 and you return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul (**Ed: Clearly such heart obedience is impossible without the "new heart" of the New Covenant - therefore this clearly describes the yet future day when all Israel will be saved [the "all" that believe in Messiah], when the Deliverer return and remove ungodliness from Jacob [Israel] - Ro 11:26-27-note**) according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, 3 then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered

you (**Ed: While a large number of Jews have returned to Israel, there are still many Jews scattered throughout the world**). 4 "If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back. 5 "And the LORD your God will bring you into **the land** (**Ed: This phrase, "the land," is specific for the "Promised Land", the land God promised to Abraham, then to Isaac and then to Jacob and his descendants forever. This promise applies to literal Jacob/Israel - specifically those Jews who place their faith in Messiah and has NEVER been rescinded nor has the promise of the Land ever been specifically given to the Church. Even Gal 3:29 which refers to the promise to Abraham, but does not mention the promise to Isaac and the promise to Jacob, both of which include THE LAND! The point being this - God is not finished with ethnic Israel - those who in the future place their faith in Messiah will be delivered by Him at His Second Coming and will go in and finally possess the full parcel of the LAND promised to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob forever!** Cf Promise to Abraham = Ge 12:7, Ge 13:15, Ge 15:18, Ge 17:8, Promise to Isaac = Ge 26:3, 4, Promised passed to Jacob = Ge 28:4. Promise to Jacob/Israel = Ge 28:13, 14, Ge 35:12; Ge 48:3,4; Moses appeals to God's promise of the land = Ex 32:13, See also Ex 33:1, Deut 1:8,) which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. 6 "Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live. (**Related Resource: Circumcision Of the Heart**)

There is a certain people - Observe Haman's crafty omission of the name of the specific people group who were to be destroyed! And note the King's failure to be interested or involved enough to even care to ask!

They do not observe the king's laws - This same false charge was lodged against the disciples in Acts (Acts 16:20,21 Acts 17:6,7).

So it is not in the king's interest to let them remain (literally "to let them rest") - The NET is easier to understand "*It is not appropriate for the king to provide a haven for them.*" The **HCSB's** paraphrase is strictly speaking not accurate (albeit not really misleading) - "*It is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them*" This observation simply points out that it is important to remember that essentially every translation has some unavoidable elements of "**interpretation.**" Therefore it behooves the careful student to (1) seek to be familiar with the original languages (as much as possible and with modern Bible programs on computer it is possible) and (2) to always use a more literal translation when doing serious Bible studies. (**Related Resource: Bible Versions compared for how literal they translate Hebrew and Greek**)

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

A VERY BIG BRIBE!

I will pay 10,000 talents of silver - Let's do the math - As of June 21, 2012, the world market price of silver is \$432/pound. If a talent is about 75.6 pounds, then 10K of talents is about 756,000 pounds. Multiplying (#1) and (#2) gives us over **326 billion dollars!** This is quite a "chunk of change", even for a king, and undoubtedly plays a role in his unquestioning acquiescence with Haman's evil plot.

NET Bible has an interesting note...

The enormity of the monetary sum referred to here can be grasped by comparing this amount (10,000 talents of silver) to the annual income of the empire, which according to Herodotus (Histories 3.95) was 14,500 Euboic talents. In other words Haman is offering the king a bribe equal to **two-thirds of the royal income**. Doubtless this huge sum of money was to come (in large measure) from the anticipated confiscation of Jewish property and assets once the Jews had been destroyed. That such a large sum of money is mentioned may indicate something of the economic standing of the Jewish population in the empire of King Ahasuerus.

Stedman summarizes and applies Haman's approach to the king...

He suggests that the people of Mordecai are really a threat to the king's liberty, and that if he will remove them and trust Haman, Haman will make him rich.

Has Haman been talking to you recently? Has he, for instance, suggested that keeping your temper and giving a soft answer to those around you never really gets you anywhere, especially where you work? -- that it is the

fellows who tell everyone off who get the promotions? The ones who are willing to stand up for their rights and not let anyone walk over them, these are the men who get the advances!

Has he whispered to you that honesty is not really the best policy, at least when it comes to filling out your income tax? After all, what the government doesn't know won't hurt them, and you can save a lot of money by just a few shortcuts.

Has he suggested to you young people that you can't get good grades in school unless you do like everyone does and cheat a little bit, that it is the ones who are not too holy to fudge a bit that can pull down the grades?

Has he suggested that love is all right for sentimentalists, but the only way to really defend the faith and the American way of life is to picket those who don't agree with you, and hound them out of town?

Has he suggested that good manners and courteous words are needed for business and for strangers, but at home you can let your hair down and say what you like, especially to your wife and kids -- they will respect you all the more for it?

Has he been talking to you? Does it sound pretty good? Does it sound like it will work, especially when he can show you from your horoscope that this is the day to throw your weight around? ([The Struggle for Power](#))

Esther 3:10 Then the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews.:

HAMAN'S RABID ANTI-SEMITISM

His signet ring - The king's signet ring would serve as his personal identification mark with was engraved on the face of the ring and which were used to seal documents ensuring they were indeed royal writings. The signet ring would often be pressed into wet clay that was allowed to dry on a scroll, thus sealing and authenticating the contents. The imprint of the king's signet ring is tantamount to his signature on a document, even as a U.S. President might sign a law passed by Congress.

The enemy of the Jews - This word tsarar/sarar (see below) is used in Esther 3:10, 8:1, 9:10, 9:24, and every time refers to Haman as the enemy or adversary of the Jews. Haman's antipathy was not so much directed at the individual Jew Mordecai, but at all Jews. Haman was the prototypical anti-Semite!

Enemy (06887) (**tsarar/sarar**) is a verb which means to tie up, to bind up, to be distressed, to be afflicted or in distress, to be in pangs of birth. It refers to an adversary or enemy as in the present passage.

Tsarar/sarar - There are 25 uses in the **NAS** (Note the 4 uses in Esther) - Ex 23:22; Num 10:9; 25:17f; 33:55; Esther 3:10; 8:1; 9:10, 24; Ps 6:7; 7:4, 6; 8:2; 10:5; 23:5; 31:11; 42:10; 69:19; 74:4, 23; 129:1f; 143:12; Isa 11:13; Amos 5:12

Mattoon draws some interesting parallels between Haman and the future and greatest enemy of Israel, the Anti-Christ...

1. Appointed to Office—The man of sin will take control peacefully.
2. Authority was from the king—The Anti-Christ will be given power from the king of Hell, Satan. (Revelation 13:2, 4)
3. Attempts to exterminate the Jews—The Anti-Christ in the middle of the Tribulation will persecute the Jews.
4. Adoration was commanded—The Anti-Christ will compel worship and reverence of himself.
5. The Addition of his name—Haman the Wicked ("the Enemy") = 666 (Revelation 13:18)
6. The Annihilation of God's enemies—The Anti-Christ like Haman will be destroyed. The Jews have attended the funerals of every enemy that tried to exterminate them. Haman is no exception

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

Then the king told Haman, "The money and people are given to you to do with as you see fit."

NIV reads...

"Keep the money," the king said to Haman, "and do with the people as you please."

NET

The king replied to Haman, "Keep your money, and do with those people whatever you wish."

Note the order - silver before people, an insight into this wicked king's heart that he would think of money before human lives.

Esther 3:12-15

Edict Issued to Destroy All Jews

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

Then - Note how this time phrase marks a sequence or progression. Haman's evil planning is now beginning to take shape.

The king's scribes - Scribes were a class of scholars, akin to professional secretaries, who had the ability to read and write.

The first month - This is the same "first month" as in Esther 3:7, the month of Nisan. Now that Haman has the king's approval and signet ring, he proceeds to issue the edict. This extermination edict however will not actually be enforced until almost 12 months later, the month of Adar. This will give the Jews (specifically Mordecai) time to come up with a way around this irrevocable law! Do you see God's hand behind the scenes?!

The thirteenth day of the first month (April 17, 474 BC, day before Passover - cf Ex 12:5-6, Ex 12:11) - The first month is the Jewish month of [Nisan](#) (April). We know that God is providentially in control of all the events in Esther (as well as our lives!) and therefore this specific date cannot be a mere coincidence. **So what is the point, you say?** Note that the edict to kill all the Jews was issued on **Nisan 13** (even though it would not be carried out for 12 months - Esther 3:13). The "edict" to save all Jews was issued by God on Nisan 14. God's promise ("edict") is to be commemorated on **Nisan 14**, which marks the day God ordained that the death of one Lamb would deliver from eternal death all Jews and all mankind, specifically all that place their faith in the substitutionary sacrifice of the Passover Lamb (Compare Jn 1:29, 1Cor 5:7, Rev 5:6).

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

THE HAND OF PROVIDENCE ON THE DATE OF JEWISH DESTRUCTION

The thirteenth day of the twelfth month (March 7, 473BC) - In [Adar](#) (found only in Ezra 6:15 and Esther 3:7, 13; 8:12; 9:1, 15, 17, 19, 21) the edict was to be carried out, 12 months after the edict had been distributed throughout the Persian kingdom. This is evidence of the providential hand of God allowing the Jews time to prepare for this day.

Henry Morris in the excellent resource, [Defender's Study Bible](#), observes that...

Exactly eleven months earlier, on the day before the Passover, this command had been given (compare Exodus 12:6), thus giving the Jews adequate time to prepare their defense. The date for Haman's intended genocide had been set by the casting of lots. God, however, determines how the lot will fall (Proverbs 16:33), and He ordained that the date would be almost a year away. This day was adopted later by the Jews as the date for their annual feast of Purim (meaning "lots") (Esther 9:26-32). ([Defender's Study Bible](#))

To seize their possessions as plunder - **Why this detail? What might it suggest in context?** Given that many of the Jews in exile had fared rather well, they would have sufficient valuables to allow Haman to accumulate the largess of 10,000 talents of silver.

This is what Hitler did in World War II and it was Haman's modus operandi which would motivate the people to attack the Jews. Everything Haman was doing God hated (Pr 6:16-19)

Spurgeon comments...

Notice attentively that Haman selected a mode of destroying the Jews which was wonderfully overruled for their preservation. They were to be slain by any of the people among whom they lived who chose to do so, and their plunder was to reward their slayers. Now, this was a very cunning device, for greed would naturally incite the baser sort of men to murder the thrifty Jews, and no doubt there were debtors who would also be glad to see their creditors disposed of: but see the loophole for escape which this afforded! If the decree had enacted that the Jews should be slain by the soldiery of the Persian empire it must have been done, and it is not easy to see how they could have escaped, but, the matter being left in private hands, the subsequent decree that they might defend themselves, was a sufficient counteraction of the first edict. Thus the Lord arranged that the wisdom of Haman should turn out to be folly after all.

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

The edict - Literally "the writing."

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

ROYAL APATHY PUBLIC APPREHENSION

The couriers went out impelled - Proverbs 1:16 is apropos...

**For their feet run to evil,
And they hasten to shed blood**

Citadel - This describes a heavily fortified area 72 feet above the rest of the city of Susa and surrounded by an strong wall. The citadel covered an area of about 10 acres and was the site of the palace built by Darius I.

Susa - located on the Karkheh River about 150 miles north of the Persian Gulf.

Sat down to drink....Susa was in confusion - An ironic contrast! What callous lack of concern for the value of human life!

Was in confusion (perplexed, distressed) (0943)(**buk**) is actually a verb which means to be confused, to mill around, to wander aimlessly. **Buk** describes a confused state of mind and activity (Ex. 14:3) because of not knowing what to do. It describes the wandering of animals during the Lord's judgments on His people (Joel 1:18).

The Septuagint uses the verb **tarasso** (imperfect tense = over and over, incomplete action) which is used to describe a crowd in an uproar (Acts 17:8), of acute mental and/or spiritual agitation as when one is thrown into confusion (Acts 15:24). In 2Sa 22:8 tarasso describes an earthquake.

Swindoll observes that...

While Haman and Ahasuerus sat over their drinks in the palace, the general public wandered in bewilderment and confusion, especially the Jews, not unlike those in the ghetto at Warsaw and other European scenes of horror in the late '30s and early '40s. (**Ed**: When the modern day version of Haman had issued his "ethnic cleansing" decree) "What's going on here?" "Why have those in authority ordered this?" "How much worse can things get?" What terror this struck in their hearts, what fear in their minds! "How can we continue?" "How can we fight this?" This was the law of the Medes and the Persians. When an edict was set forth in that era, it was final. Nobody could change this plan, certainly no Jew. Helplessness eroded into hopelessness.

Yet, in the midst of all this, God was not sleeping In His sovereign plan, He determined one person would make the difference. Again, one individual would stand in the gap. On this occasion, her name is Esther.

Proverbs says that...

When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when a wicked man rules, people groan. (Pr 29:2)

NET Bible Note...

This final statement of Esther 3:15 is a sad commentary on the pathetic disregard of despots for the human misery and suffering that they sometimes inflict on those who are helpless to resist their power. Here, while common people braced for the reckless loss of life and property that was about to begin, the perpetrators went about their mundane activities as though nothing of importance was happening.

Ray Stedman comments that here we see...

The king is quite confident that he has taken a wise step. He's deluded. He's deceived. He thinks he is acting in his own interest. He's grateful to Haman for his obvious concern for his welfare. So, he invites him in to celebrate with a glass of wine or two. But, outside in the city, there's nothing but confusion and perplexity. No one knows what to do. This strange edict has thrown them into confusion. Have you ever had a drinking session with yourself to congratulate yourself for the clever way you solved a problem in your life? You've had to cut the corners a bit and maybe you've had to tell off a few people along the way, but you got what you wanted. It is a pretty good feeling, isn't it? (**Read the full exposition in which Stedman applies this last section to our lives - [The Struggle for Power](#)**)

ESTHER 4

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

- **Ashes:** Es 4:3 Jos 7:6 2Sa 13:19 Job 2:8 Job 42:6 Isa 58:5 Eze 27:30 Da 9:3 Jon 3:6 Mt 11:21)
- **Wailed:** Ge 27:34 Isa 15:4 22:4 Eze 21:6 27:31 Mic 1:8 Zep 1:14 Rev 18:17-19)

A C Gaebelein's outline...

1. The great lamentations of the Jews (Esther 4:1-3)
2. Esther's discovery (Esther 4:4-9)
3. Esther's helplessness (Esther 4:10-12)
4. Mordecai's answer (Esther 4:13-14)
5. Esther's decision (Esther 4:15-17)

Pastor Chuck Swindoll entitles Esther 4...

Thinking and Saying What's Right—Regardless

When Mordecai learned all that had been done - The dastardly deal sealed and the death decree sent! Death to all Jews decreed by royal irreversible edict! Why was Mordecai so distraught? Clearly he realized that he was the primary reason Haman had hatched this evil plan!

This entire scenario is just one of many specific examples highlighting the truth of God's declaration to Satan in the Garden of Eden immediately after Adam sinned and died...

And I (God) will put enmity between you (Satan) and the woman (Eve), and between your seed (offspring) and her seed (the Messiah - cf Gal 3:16); He (Messiah) shall bruise you on the head, and you (Satan) shall bruise him on the heel (As occurred in Crucifixion)." (Genesis 3:15)

Swindoll writes that...

People express their sorrow and mourn in different ways. In our Western culture, our expression of grief is

often restrained. When President John Kennedy was assassinated, his young widow wore a dark veil as her expression of mourning, hiding her tears behind it. Often, in our culture, people sob quietly, or compassionately hug those who are grieving. In the East, however, sorrow has always been expressed visibly and vocally. We have all seen pictures of great mobs as they push a casket overhead through the crowd while screaming and crying out. They cry out verses from their sacred word and they claw at the casket. They wail! And they mourn! That's what Mordecai does here. He holds nothing back. His grief knows no bounds. In sackcloth and ashes he stumbles toward the gate of the palace.

Paul Ferguson comments...

One writer observed, "Esther could be compared to a chess game. God and Satan (as invisible players) moved real kings, queens, and nobles (**Ed**: This analogy breaks down when one considers that Satan's every move must be approved by God!). When Satan put Haman into place, it was as if he announced "Check." God then positioned Esther and Mordecai in order to put Satan into Checkmate! Ever since the fall of man (Ge 3:1-19), Satan has attempted to spiritually sever God's relationship with His human creation and **disrupt God's covenant promises with Israel**. For example, Christ's line through the tribe of Judah had been murderously reduced to Joash alone, who was rescued and preserved (2Chr 22:10,11, 12). Later, Herod slaughtered the infants of Bethlehem, thinking Christ was among them (Mt 2:16). Satan tempted Christ to denounce God and worship him (Mt 4:9). Peter, at Satan's insistence, tried to block Christ's journey to Calvary (Mt 16:22). Finally, Satan entered into Judas who then betrayed Christ to the Jews and Romans (Luke 22:3-6). **While God was not mentioned in Esther, He was everywhere apparent as the One who opposed and foiled Satan's diabolical schemes by providential intervention.**"

In Esther, all of God's unconditional covenant promises to Abraham (Ge 17:1-8) and to David (2Sa 7:8-16) were jeopardized. However, God's love for Israel is nowhere more apparent than in this dramatic rescue of His people from pending elimination. Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep (Ps. 121:4).

OUTWARD EXPRESSIONS OF INTENSE INNER GRIEF

He tore his clothes - The external was a picture of internal mourning or grief. Surely Mordecai realized that it was his disobedience which had resulted in the horrible royal edict to exterminate his Jewish countrymen. As an aside, this edict would include all the Jews, even those who had returned with Ezra to Jerusalem.

When Jacob learned that he had lost Joseph, he **"tore his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins, and mourned** for his son many days." (Gen 37:34).

Sackcloth and ashes (Ge 37:34; Jer 49:3; Da 9:3; Joel 1:13; Jonah 3:6) - This is a sign of grief or mourning. Mattoon has an interesting thought regarding the ashes writing that *"This was a symbol of humility and acknowledged that we come from the dust of the earth."*

In Ge 18:27 Abraham's statement that he was but **"dust and ashes"** was a declaration of his recognition of his humble in the presence of the Lord. Job's had a similar sense of humiliation in Job 42:5-6 ("I repent in dust and ashes" cf Job 30:19) upon not just hearing but now seeing the Lord.

Sackcloth (08242) (**saq**) can refer to a sack with the component material of poor quality dark goat or camel hair--coarse, rough, and thick. Used as a dramatic way to demonstrate mourning and despair. Sackcloth was a symbol of mourning (especially for the dead), 1 Kin. 20:31, 32; Job 16:15; Isa. 15:3; Jer. 4:8; 6:26; 49:3; Lam. 2:10; Ezek. 7:18; Dan. 9:3; Joel 1:8. See [Dictionary Entries for Sackcloth](#)

Saq - 46v in OT - Gen 37:34; 42:25, 27, 35; Lev 11:32; Josh 9:4; 2 Sam 3:31; 21:10; 1 Kgs 20:31f; 21:27; 2 Kgs 6:30; 19:1f; 1 Chr 21:16; Neh 9:1; Esth 4:1ff; Job 16:15; Ps 30:11; 35:13; 69:11; Isa 3:24; 15:3; 20:2; 22:12; 37:1f; 50:3; 58:5; Jer 4:8; 6:26; 48:37; 49:3; Lam 2:10; Ezek 7:18; 27:31; Dan 9:3; Joel 1:8, 13; Amos 8:10; Jonah 3:5f, 8

See [Multiple Dictionary Entries on Ashes](#)

Naves has this note on **ashes**...

A symbol of mourning, 2 Sam. 13:19; Esther 4:1, 3.

Sitting in, Job 2:8; Isa. 58:5; Jer. 6:26; Ezek. 27:30; Jonah 3:6; Luke 10:13.

Repenting in, Job 42:6; Dan. 9:3; Jonah 3:6; Matt. 11:2 1; Luke 10:13.

Among the ancient Hebrews and other Orientals, to sprinkle with or sit in ashes was a mark or token of grief, humiliation, or penitence. Ashes on the head was one of the ordinary signs of mourning for the dead, as when "Tamar put ashes on her head and went on crying" (2 Sam 13:19 the King James Version), and of national humiliation, as when the children of Israel were assembled under Nehemiah "with fasting, and with sackcloth, and earth (ashes) upon them" (Neh 9:1), and when the people of Nineveh repented in sackcloth and ashes at the preaching of Jonah (Jon 3:5,6; compare 1 Macc 3:47). The afflicted or penitent often sat in ashes (compare Job 2:8; 42:6: "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes"), or even wallowed in ashes, as Jeremiah exhorted sinning Israel to do: "O daughter of my people wallow thyself in ashes" (Jer 6:26), or as Ezekiel in his lamentation for Tyre pictures her mariners as doing, crying bitterly and 'casting up dust upon their heads' and 'wallowing themselves in the ashes' (in their weeping for her whose head was lifted up and become corrupted because of her beauty), "in bitterness of soul with bitter mourning" (Ezek 27:30,31). However, these and various other modes of expressing grief, repentance, and humiliation among the Hebrews, such as rending the garments, tearing the hair and the like, were not of Divine appointment, but were simply the natural outbursts of the impassioned oriental temperament, and are still customary among eastern peoples.

Figurative: The term "ashes" is often used to signify worthlessness, insignificance or evanescence (Gen 18:27; Job 30:19). "Proverbs of ashes," for instance, in Job 13:12, is Job's equivalent, says one writer, for our modern "rot."

Wailed loudly and bitterly - Literally "cried—a cry loud and bitter." While prayer is reported in other Scriptures as accompanying these traditional forms of mourning (Ezra 10:1; Neh 1:4; Dan 9:3) the Esther narrative fails to mention prayers of the Jews. Western peoples tend to keep emotions under wraps so to speak, but in the ancient near east it was common to dramatically demonstrate one's grief. Mordecai was clearly demonstrating his grief.

As someone has said "'All that is required for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing." Mordecai could not remain quiet with human lives at stake. And it was indeed the news of Mordecai's dramatic public display of mourning and grief which somehow was transmitted to Queen Esther.

The Greek Septuagint (*eboa phone megale*) is translated "cry out with a great sound" where the imperfect tense pictures Mordecai as repeating this act over and over - can't you just picture this dramatic scene in the middle of the city! The Greek word for "cry" is boao which can mean shout or cry out and which is used to describe the roar of a lion! It is interesting that in the Lxx, boao is used to describe one crying out in need, as from a sense of being oppressed (Jdg 10:10), over innocent blood (Ge 4:10), of workers (Dt 24:15). So although one simply cannot be dogmatic, this word as used in other contexts, at least suggests the possibility that Mordecai may have been crying out in need to God.

It should also be noted that these types of emotional reactions were well known among the Persians, Herodotus reporting that they tore their clothes, wailed loudly, and wept bitterly on hearing of Xerxes' defeat at Salamis. Thus **Herodotus** writes...

When the first message came to Susa, saying that Xerxes had taken Athens, it gave such delight to the Persians who were left at home that they strewed all the roads with myrtle boughs and burnt incense and gave themselves up to sacrificial feasts and jollity. The second, however, coming on the heels of the first, so confounded them that they all **tore their tunics**, and **cried** and **lamented without ceasing**, holding Mardonius to blame; it was not so much in grief for their ships that they did this as because they feared for Xerxes himself. (Herodotus, The Histories 8.99).

The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge has this note...

Mordecai gave every demonstration of the most poignant grief. Nor did he hide this from the city; and the Greek (Septuagint adds words not found in Hebrew text) says that he uttered these words aloud: [*Airetai ethnos meden edikekos*,] "A people is going to be destroyed who have done no evil."

When the prophet **Jonah** announced impending destruction on **Nineveh**, the Assyrian king and his people expressed many of the same reactions as Mordecai and the Jews....

Then Jonah began to go through the city one day's walk; and he cried out and said, "**Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown.**" (**Ed**: Notice that there was a delay just as the 12 month delay in the Book of Esther) 5 Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a **fast** and **put on sackcloth** from the greatest to the least of them. 6 When the word reached the king of Nineveh, he arose from his throne, laid aside his robe from him, covered himself with **sackcloth**, and sat on the **ashes**. 7 And he issued a

proclamation and it said, "In Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let man, beast, herd, or flock taste a thing. Do not let them eat or drink water. (City Wide Fast) 8 "But both man and beast must be covered with **sackcloth**; and let men **call on God earnestly** that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands. (**Ed: An excellent definition of genuine belief - the fruit of repentance is manifested by a changed life**) 9 "Who knows (cf Esther 4:14b), God may turn and relent, and withdraw His burning anger so that we shall not **perish** (cf Esther 4:14)?" 10 When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them (**Ed: God saw the evidence of genuine repentance which testified in turn that their faith was saving faith!**). And He did not do it (**What?** = Jonah 3:4). (Jonah 4:4-10)

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

No one was to enter the king's gate clothed in sackcloth - Neh 2:1–2 reminds us that anyone who entered the king's presence was expected to have a cheerful countenance. How sad that oriental kings had to be hidden from the reality of the real world of suffering, even if it is only superficially.

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

The NET Note writes that...

Although prayer is not specifically mentioned here, it is highly unlikely that appeals to God for help were not a part of this reaction to devastating news. As elsewhere in the book of Esther, the writer seems deliberately to keep religious actions in the background.

There was great mourning among the Jews - From India to Ethiopia there was mourning, fasting, weeping and wailing among what is estimated to have been 15 million Jews.

Swindoll asks "Have you noticed how suffering brings people together? Have you watched how people respond to disasters?...Hardship forces us to grab hands with one another and pull up closer together. Suffering never ruined a nation! Hardship doesn't fracture families. Affluence does! But not suffering. Not hardship. It pushes everybody to the same level with the same goal: survival. And so we're not surprised to find these Jews weeping and wailing and fasting together."

Harry Ironside...

They believed the word of Ahasuerus. The proclamation was sealed with the royal signet. They knew they were under sentence of death, and their hearts were filled with grief and anguish. In this, how like the condition of awakened sinners! All unsaved men are under a far worse condemnation than that which darkened the sky of every Jew in the Persian dominions.

Fasting ([See Entry "Fasting"](#) or [Here](#)) - The first mention is in Jdg 20:26 in the context of sin by the sons of Israel (who also wept).

Eugene Merrill notes that...

Fasting is nowhere commanded in the Torah and, in fact, is never attested earlier than the time of the judges of Israel (cf. Judges 20:26). The fact that Jesus and the disciples sanctioned it by their own example (Mt 4:2; Acts 13:2-3), however, is sufficient justification for its practice in biblical times and, in fact, in modern times as well. ([Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#))

Whitcomb has this note on **Fasting** in the Ancient Near East...

In Mesopotamia, **fasting** was a part of mourning rituals. It was a public display of one's grief which stood in stark contrast to celebration (Scurlock, "Death and the Afterlife in Ancient Mesopotamian Thought," 1886). In the ancient Near East, fasting held social significance similar to feasting. Both could create or renew a social bond and displayed an individual's or group's current state. While feasting was often a public display of wealth and success, fasting was a display of humility and grief (Pollock, "Feasts, Funerals and Fast Food in Early Mesopotamian States," 21–22).

Fasting in the Bible - Fasting is absent from the Pentateuch, but appears throughout the rest of the Old Testament and Inter-testamental Literature. In the New Testament, it occurs primarily in the Gospels. Fasting is frequently performed along with other practices of mourning, lamentation, or penitence. At times, it also functions apotropaically—as a preventative measure—prior to engaging in dangerous activity, such as a journey or battle. It parallels the practice of prayer; the two are often conjoined.

In the Old Testament and Inter-testamental books, fasting is a means of humbling oneself before God. The motive for such humbling may include confession, repentance, or petition. The act of abstention and the physical practices which accompany it indicate submission. (Lexham Bible Dictionary)

Paul Ferguson has an interested note on the "national" camaraderie generated by the news of imminent extermination...

We see part of God's great providential plan unfolding. The exiles are not so consumed with materialism now. Suffering has a way of bringing people together whereas materialism tends to drive them apart. This is true even amongst the people of God.

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

Told her - The NET adds "**about Mordecai's behavior**" which reflects the context but is not in the original Hebrew. The point is that she was isolated from her Jewish community.

Esther's maidens and her eunuchs (See Esther 4:5, 9, 12, 13, 15) - Esther clearly trusted in them and willingly used them to relay information both to and from Mordecai. The queen was so isolated from general affairs in her harem that she knew nothing of the decree that had electrified the city.

The queen writhed in great anguish - Why? Because Mordecai was her step father and reports of his great mourning were very disturbing to her. She however does still not know why as shown in the next passage.

She sent garments to clothe Mordecai - Why? This would as a way of offering comfort to him for whatever has happened to her step father. Apparently it was the custom of Persians to send new garments to near relatives who were mourning over the death of loved ones. Perhaps, Esther assumed someone had died, but that is speculation.

But he did not accept them - Here we see that Mordecai's refusal is tantamount to saying that it was not about the outer, but about the inner (see Ironside below). His refusal indeed was another "small" providential provision of Jehovah. Why do I say that? Because had Mordecai accepted the clothing, Esther may not have sent her trusted servant Hathach. Had the eunuch returned with a report that Mordecai accepted the new wardrobe, Esther may have been content to let the matter rest. And as secluded as she was from the outside world, she might not have discovered Haman's evil plot. Instead, Mordecai's refusal prompted Esther to seek further communication, which was vital in a day when they could not simply send a text message! We must keep the gravity of the context in mind lest we miss the import of these "small details!" The fate of an entire people, the Jews, lay in the balance!

Harry Ironside applies this passage observing that Queen Esther...

would fain strip her aged cousin of the coarse and ugly garb of repentance and robe him in some beautiful court attire, as though a change of clothing would assuage his grief. But are there not many who deal in a similar manner with troubled souls today? How common is the thought that outward reformation, a change of habits, will give peace to an anxious soul! O be persuaded, dear reader: no religious ceremonies; no ordinances, however scriptural in themselves; no turning-over of new leaves will ever give a sinner peace with God. Something more than an outward change is required. Mordecai might well have cried, Take away your beautiful garments! How can they give peace to a man under the death-sentence? Does one find delight in fine raiment on the gallows? It is deliverance from condemnation I want, not a mere change of attire. And for the sinner today there is no true deliverance until he sees the blessed truth that Another has borne the wrath, endured the condemnation, exhausted the judgment of God against his sin, -then, and then only, does he find rest and peace. "Mordecai received it not;" so the queen, realizing at last that his must be a grief she has failed to fathom, sends Hathach the chamberlain to him, to learn the cause of his strange behavior.

Esther 4:5 Then Esther summoned Hathach from the king's eunuchs, whom the king had appointed to attend her, and

ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what this was and why it was.:

Then - After Mordecai refused the clothes. He needed someone to convey an important message.

As an aside what knowledge about Esther might **Hathach** (means "good" in Persian) be privy to? In conveying the message from Esther to Mordecai who was known to be Jewish, he would become aware of the fact that Esther was also a Jew (See Esther 4:8 - "her people")

Ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what this was and why it was - The exact meaning of this is somewhat difficult to discern from the NAS translation. When you encounter passages that are hard to understand, it is always worth taking a moment to examine how the passage is rendered by other translations.

Mattoon applies the Queen's use of **Hathach** in this great drama of "redemption"...

Hathach relays the message. Hathach plays an important role in this entire story. He is the good messenger and is a picture of a Christian's responsibility today. We are to be good messengers too, bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost (**Ed**: A story of a far greater "redemption" than even in the Book of Esther). Notice that God uses an obscure man (Hathach) out of the blue to accomplish the work of the Lord. The Lord uses the unknown and obscure repeatedly. Five thousand men plus women and children needed a meal. The Lord uses a willing little boy with bread and fish to bring glory to Christ. Unknown men lifted Paul over the Damascus wall in a basket. Who were these men? We don't know, but God does. It was a little girl who told General Naaman to go see a prophet of God in order to be healed. Someone said, "Great doors swing on small hinges." Are you little enough to be used of God?

NET

So Esther called for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs who had been placed at her service, and instructed him to find out the cause and reason for Mordecai's behavior.

NIV

Then Esther summoned Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs assigned to attend her, and ordered him to find out what was troubling Mordecai and why.

Warren Wiersbe writes...

I doubt that Hathach realized what an important part he was playing in God's plan to defeat Haman and save the Jews. So often in the work of the Lord, He uses obscure people to accomplish important tasks. What was the name of the lad who gave Jesus his loaves and fishes? Who were the men who rescued Paul by lifting him over that Damascus wall in a basket? What was the name of the little servant girl who told Naaman to go see the prophet? We don't know, but God used these people to accomplish His purposes. As great doors can swing upon small hinges, so great events can turn upon the deeds of "small" and sometimes anonymous people.

Spurgeon comments in his sermon on **God's providence in Esther** that...

GOD PLACES HIS AGENTS IN FITTING PLACES FOR DOING HIS WORK. The Lord was not taken by surprise by this plot of Haman; he had foreseen it and forestalled it. It was needful, in order to match this cunning, malicious design of Haman, that some one of Jewish race should possess great influence with the king. How was this to be effected? Should a Jewess become Queen of Persia, the power she would possess would be useful in counteracting the enemy's design. This had been all arranged years before Haman had concocted in his wicked heart the scheme of murdering the Jews. Esther, whose sweet name signifies myrtle, had been elevated to the position of Queen of Persia by a singular course of events. It happened that Ahasuerus, at a certain drinking bout, was so far gone with wine as to forget all the proprieties of eastern life, and send for his queen, Vashti to exhibit herself to the people and the princes. No one dreamed in those days of disobeying the tyrant's word, and therefore all stood aghast when Vashti, evidently a woman of right royal spirit, refused to degrade herself by being made a spectacle before that ribald rout of drinking princes, and refused to come. For her courage Vashti was divorced, and a new queen was sought for. We cannot commend Mordecai for putting his adopted daughter in competition for the monarch's choice; it was contrary to the law of God, and dangerous to her soul in the highest degree. It would have been better for Esther to have been the wife of the poorest man of the house of Israel than to have gone into the den of the Persian despot. The Scripture does not excuse, much less commend, the wrong doing of Esther and Mordecai in thus acting, but

simply tells us how divine wisdom brought good out of evil, even as the chemist distills healing drugs from poisonous plants. The high position of Esther, though gained contrary to the wisest of laws, was overruled for the best interests of her people. Esther in the king's house was the means of defeating the malicious adversary. But Esther alone would not suffice; she is shut up in the harem, surrounded by her chamberlains and her maids of honor, but quite secluded from the outside world. A watchman needed outside the palace to guard the people of the Lord, and to urge Esther to action when help is wanted. Mordecai, her cousin and foster-father obtained an office which placed him at the palace gate. Where could he be better posted? He is where much of the royal business will come under his eye, and he is both quick, courageous, and unflinching: never had Israel a better sentinel than Mordecai, the son of Kish, a Benjamite — a very different man from that other son of Kish, who had suffered Amalek to escape in former times. His relationship to the queen allowed him to communicate with her through Hathach, her chamberlain, and, when Haman's evil decree was published, it was not long before intelligence of it reached her ear, and she felt the danger to which Mordecai and all her people were exposed. By singular providences did the Lord place those two most efficient instruments in their places. Mordecai would have been of little use without Esther, and Esther could have rendered no aid had it not been for Mordecai. Meanwhile, there is a conspiracy hatched against the king, which Mordecai discovers, and communicates to the highest authority, and so puts the king under obligation to him, which was a needful part of the Lord's plan. ([Providence—As Seen in the Book of Esther](#))

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

The city square...king's gate - "Archaeologists have uncovered the king's gate—a large building, 131 by 92 feet, with a central room 69 feet square. The discovery that the gate opened onto a city square corroborates the accuracy of details such as that given in this verse." (Woman's Study Bible)

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

The exact amount of money (Esther 3:9) - 10, 000 talents of silver. How did Mordecai know this detail? The text and context does not give an answer, but clearly Mordecai had connections with the inner workings of the King's court.

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

NIV

He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict for their annihilation, which had been published in Susa, to show to Esther and explain it to her, and he told him to urge her to go into the king's presence to beg for mercy and plead with him for her people.

He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict - The decree in Esther 3:13. What does Mordecai's possession of a written copy suggest? That he was a person of some influence and importance in Xerxes' kingdom (cp his seat at the king's gate in Esther 2:19). Notice that Mordecai does not just give Hathach a statement of the imminent danger of the Jews, but he is very specific, substantiating his claim by explaining the "price on the head" of the Jewish race and the written decree to carry out the deadly deed. This clear evidence was provided to Esther, so that the monumental decision Mordecai called her to make would be based on a firm foundation of solid evidence regarding Haman's plot to destroy all the Jews.

THE QUEEN'S "DEADLY" DILEMMA

To order her to go in to the king to implore his favor and to plead with him for her people- In short, in this passage Mordecai relates to Hathach that Esther is a Jew ("**her people**"). We recall from chapter 2 how Esther had been submissive to her step father's commands to not divulge that she was a Jew. But this command to go into the king had serious personal implications as

Esther explains in the following text. The "ball was in her court" as the modern saying goes!

Wiersbe agrees writing that...

When Mordecai told Hathach to tell the queen to ask for mercy "for her people," he divulged to him the fact that Esther was a Jewess.

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

Paul Ferguson makes a good point emphasizing that...

This servant had an awesome responsibility even if he did not know it. Tens of thousands of lives hung on his effective delivering of the message from Mordecai.

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

It is interesting that God records the detail of this intermediary, who was responsible for transmitting conversations which dealt with the fate of the entire Jewish race!

Wiersbe makes an excellent point...

Keep in mind that Mordecai couldn't speak directly to Esther but had to send his messages to her via Hathach. Esther had no way of sensing personally how Mordecai felt, nor could Mordecai fully understand how Esther was expressing herself. What a difference it makes when we can see the faces and hear the voices of the people we communicate with! Hathach certainly had a great responsibility placed on him as the living link between two distressed people who held in their hands the salvation of the Jewish nation.

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

ESTHER'S RATIONALE FOR RELUCTANCE TO RISK HER LIFE

The golden scepter - John MacArthur notes that "In order to protect the king's life from would-be assassins, this practice prevailed. Seemingly, the king would extend the scepter (a sign of kingly authority) only to those whom he knew and from whom he welcomed a visit (cf. Esther 5:2; 8:4)."

The Greek historian Herodotus writes that Persian kings had such a law regarding the scepter, but he also noted that people could send a written message to the king requesting an audience. If this is indeed true, it is not clear why Esther did not do this.

Mattoon has an interesting thought regarding how this section applies to New Testament believers...

The throne room of the (Persian) king was 193 feet square which would make it 37,000 square feet. The roof was supported by six rows of six columns each. It was beautiful but access to the throne was limited. As Christians, we can come boldly unto Heaven's throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16, cf Ro 5:1-2). We have access to the King of all kings and Lord of all lords anytime of day wherever we are. May we not neglect this privilege. Another insight is found in the **golden scepter** of the king. It was a picture of Christ. Deliverance from death was in the scepter of the king. Salvation was in that sceptre. Without the king extending the sceptre to an intruder, the consequences would be death. The Hebrew word for **scepter** is shebit (**Ed**: Shebit is used for scepter in Balaam's remarkable prophecy in Nu 24:17 which anticipates, by over 1400 years, the coming of the Messiah Who would one day hold the scepter, symbolic of His royal rule over all men). Here in the book of Esther the **Aramaic form of shebit** is used (**Ed**: This information is from the Theological Wordbook of the OT, the TWOT. Scepter in Esther 4:11, 5:2, 8:4 is the Aramaic form sarbit) and is in the masculine gender. This word shebit was used to refer to the Messiah, the Savior, in Numbers 24:17 The sceptre was a symbol of

rulership and authority. When Christ returns He will establish His kingdom, His rule, and His authority over the earth for 1000 years.

Comment: While I think Mattoon's use of these OT facts to picture NT truth is a reasonable application, a word of caution is in order. We must always be very careful to rightly divide the Word of Truth and there can be danger in wandering too far away from the original meaning of the text in order to make a point of application. That said, Mattoon's insight on the meaning of **scepter** is most intriguing. (**Related Resource: Typology - Study of Biblical types - see especially "cautions" regarding this genre of interpretation/application**)

He has but one law, that he be put to death - As Ironside relates "It has evidently not dawned upon her that the king's proclamation, unwittingly, had included herself. She had kept her nationality a secret; therefore, unknown even to Haman, she had been included in the bloody edict so soon to take effect if a means of deliverance is not discovered. She therefore hesitates about risking her life, by going into the dread sovereign's presence uncalled."

I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days - Some have suggested that after 5 years of marriage the king's ardor for Esther had cooled but that is purely speculative. Why the mention of this time phrase? This suggests that she thinks it unlikely that she would speak to the king in the near future.

Ferguson...

Esther reminds Mordecai of the reality of life, as she has not been called into the presence of the king for 30 days. Doubtless he has not been without other company. This ungodly marriage is no partnership of equals or an eternal romance. Esther exists simply for the whims of her sensuous husband. Her first response is not outright refusal, but it is tied up more with the fear of man rather than God (Pr 29:25). The king has proven with Vashti that he is a capricious and ruthless man toward his leading lady for breaches of etiquette.

Criswell...

Such laws restricting audience with the king are confirmed by Herodotus, who claims that during the reign of Darius only the seven nobles could enter the king's presence unannounced (cf. Esther 1:14). (Believer's Study Bible)

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

A STIRRING SPEECH: A HISTORICAL "TURNING POINT"

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

MORDECAI'S REPLY TO ESTHER'S RESISTANCE

Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther - In Esther 4:11 we sense some resistance or "push back" by Queen Esther to make an uninvited entree into the capricious king's presence. From a human standpoint who could blame her? Mordecai senses her hesitancy to go into the king and risk her life. He puts a bit of pressure on her by **(1)** reminding her she will lose her life anyway, **(2)** explains that deliverance will come from some other source (Esther 4:14 - implying he understands that God has a long range plan for the Jewish people and Haman's evil plot will not foil God's plan - see discussion related to God's covenant promises to Israel under the notes for Esther 4:14) and **(3)** she may well have been crowned queen precisely for this purpose and time in history (Esther 4:14, cp Da 2:21). Mordecai's points make an excellent case and Queen Esther agrees (Esther 4:16) to Mordecai's original request (Esther 4:8)

New Jerusalem Bible...

who sent back the following reply, 'Do not suppose that, because you are in the king's palace, you are going to be the one Jew to escape.

Mordecai sent this reply to Esther: "Don't think for a moment that because you're in the palace you will escape when all other Jews are killed."

Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape - This implies that somehow it would become known that Esther was also a Jew. Certainly the fact that Mordecai's ethnicity was now known, makes it plausible that those who knew Esther was his daughter would make (or had already made) the connection. We know for example that "**Hathach** (was) **from the king's eunuchs**" and was aware of Esther's ethnicity.

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

MORDECAI'S TRUST IN GOD'S COVENANT COUNSELS

Relief and deliverance - This is a hendiadys which is defined as the use of two separate words or phrases to describe one concept.

Henry Morris comments that...

Mordecai was confident that God would preserve the Jewish people, for He had made an unconditional promise to Abraham, and also to David (Ge 22:15-18; 2Sa 7:4,16). ([Defender's Study Bible online](#))

Wiersbe writes that

God will accomplish His sovereign purposes even if His servants refuse to obey His will! Dr. A. W. Tozer compared God's sovereign purposes to an ocean liner, leaving New York City, bound for Liverpool, England. The people on board the ship are free to do as they please, but they aren't free to change the course of the ship. "The mighty liner of God's sovereign design keeps its steady course over the sea of history," wrote Dr. Tozer. "God moves undisturbed and unhindered toward the fulfillment of those eternal purposes which He purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began" (The Knowledge of the Holy, p. 118).

Relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place - This is a reference to Divine providence expresses Mordecai's confidence. Where would such confidence have been obtained? While we cannot be absolutely dogmatic, it is reasonable to consider that the books of Moses had been written and Mordecai was familiar with God's promises to guard over the Jewish people. In **Genesis 12:3** God promises Abraham that "the one who curses you I will curse." In **Genesis 13:14-16** the LORD promises Abraham that He would give all the land (that could be seen north, south, east and west) "to you and to your descendants forever." In **Jeremiah 31**, in the context of promising the New Covenant (**Jer 31:31-34**) God makes an additional promise...

Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for light by day, and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; The LORD of hosts is His name: "If this fixed order departs From before Me," declares the LORD, "Then the offspring of Israel also shall cease From being a nation before Me forever." Thus says the LORD, "If the heavens above can be measured, And the foundations of the earth searched out below, Then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel For all that they have done," declares the LORD. (Jer 31:35-37)

In **Ezekiel 37** God promises...

And say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side and **bring them into their own land**; 22 and I **will make them one nation in the land**, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them; and they will no longer be two nations, and they will no longer be divided into two kingdoms. 23 "And they will no longer defile themselves with their idols, or with their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. And they will be My people, and I will be their God. 24 "And My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances, and keep My statutes, and observe them. 25 "And they shall live on **the land** that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons, and their sons' sons, forever; and David My servant shall be their prince forever. 26 "And I

will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever. 27 "My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. 28 "And the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever."" (Ezekiel 37:21-28)

Who knows - Although this does not mention God's name, this phrase clearly is "God language" (Criswell) Some suggest this may be an allusion to Joel 2:14 which also refers to relief from judgment.

You have not attained royalty for such a time as this - How? God's providential workings behind the scenes. This statement reminds us of **Joseph's** declaration to his brothers...

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. (Ge 50:20)

Play Marty and Misha's beautiful song in honor of Esther's courage...

- For [Such a Time as This](#)

Ferguson writes that...

God works through human instruments but if they disobey, He will work through others. Man's disobedience will never defeat the settled purposes of God.

Morris comments that...

This familiar verse clearly expressed the strong confidence held by Mordecai not only in the divine calling and everlasting covenant of God with the Jews but also in His providential control of the circumstances surrounding them. In order to provide deliverance to God's people in their hour of greatest need, an obscure Jewish orphan girl had been made queen of the greatest pagan empire in the world. By the same token, each one who receives God's salvation is also called and equipped by God for some particular service, if he or she will only do it. ([Defender's Study Bible online](#))

Spurgeon comments that...

We are very much in our position as a church as Esther was to the Jews. If she did not do her part, Mordecai told her God (**Ed**: He implied that God would do it) would do it by somebody else, and put her away. And so it is with us. If we lag and loiter in work for Christ, He will put us away as a Christian church—not from His eternal love, for that He will never do—but from our position of honor and usefulness. May it please Him to remove me, His unworthy servant, and give me rest from my labors, before such a catastrophe as that should overwhelm us.

Every child of God is where God has placed him for some purpose, and the practical use of this first point is to lead you to inquire for what practical purpose has God placed each one of you where you now are? You have been wishing for another position where you could do something for Jesus: do not wish anything of the kind, but serve Him where you are. If you are sitting at the King's gate there is something for you to do there, and if you were on the queen's throne, there would be something for you to do there; do not ask to be either gate-keeper or queen, but whichever you are, serve God therein. **Are you rich? God has made you a steward, take care that you are a good steward. Are you poor? God has thrown you into a position where you will be the better able to give a word of sympathy to poor saints. Are you doing your allotted work? Do you live in a godly family? God has a motive for placing you in so happy a position. Are you in an ungodly house? You are a lamp hung up in a dark place; mind you shine there.**

Esther did well, because she acted as an Esther should, and Mordecai did well, because he acted as Mordecai should. I like to think God has put each one in the right place, even as a good captain well arranges the different parts of his army, and though we do not know his plan of battle, it will be seen during the conflict that he has placed each soldier where he should be. Our wisdom is not to desire another place, nor to judge those who are in another position, but each one being redeemed with the precious blood of Jesus, should say, "Lord, what would thou have me to do, for here I am, and by Thy grace I am ready to do it." **Forget not then the fact that God in His providence places His servants in positions where He can make use of them.** (A Good Start: A Book for Young Men and Women)

Question - [What does it mean that Esther was appointed "for such a time as this"? |](#)

Answer: [Esther](#) was a Jewish maiden who was taken into the royal court of [King Xerxes](#) and eventually chosen to be queen of Persia. She was integral in delivering the Jews from destruction, an event celebrated in the [Feast of Purim](#). The Bible makes it clear that Esther was placed in her influential position “for such a time as this”—God’s purpose was accomplished through Esther in the perilous time in which she lived.

Esther had been one of the “beautiful young virgins” from whom King Xerxes could select a new queen (Esther 2:2). Esther had been orphaned as a child, and her cousin, [Mordecai](#), cared for her. In adherence to Mordecai’s instructions, Esther did not reveal to anyone that she was a Jew. In time, Esther won the favor of King Xerxes, and he crowned her queen (Esther 2:17).

Sometime later, Xerxes gave Haman the Agagite great honor and commanded the officials at his gate to kneel in Haman’s presence and pay him homage. Mordecai, who worked in the gate, refused to do so. This so enraged Haman that he sought to destroy all of Mordecai’s people—the Jews—and obtained the king’s permission to carry out the genocide (Esther 3). When the edict against the Jews was issued, Mordecai mourned in sackcloth and ashes. Queen Esther, as yet unaware of the plot against her people, heard about her cousin’s mourning and sent a eunuch in her service, named Hathak, to inquire the reason for Mordecai’s sorrow. Mordecai gave Hathak a copy of the edict and asked him to tell Esther to go to King Xerxes and beg for mercy on behalf of her people.

Esther was reluctant to approach the king, because it was against the law to come before the king’s presence uninvited—on pain of death. The eunuch reported Esther’s response to Mordecai. Then Mordecai sent word back: “Do not think that because you are in the king’s house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:13–14).

Mordecai, in urging Esther to take action, points her to a higher purpose: “Who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14, NASB). He frames it as a possibility for her to consider: could it be that God has placed Esther in her royal position precisely because of the clear and present danger the Jews are in? It was just such a time—a time of crisis, a time of existential threat—that the Jews needed her. It was no accident that Esther became queen of Persia; she was there for a reason.

Mordecai was right. Esther was indeed on the throne “for such a time as this,” and she became God’s instrument of deliverance for the Jews in Persia. Sometimes we miss the importance of Esther’s obedience in God’s plan. Mordecai presented Esther with a choice. She could choose to recognize her providential placing in the royal court and opt to risk her own life in an effort to save her people. Or she could choose to remain silent, try to protect herself, and hope for the best. Either way, Mordecai knew that God would rescue His people. Esther chose the path of joy and blessing when she agreed to play her role in God’s plan.

We serve the God who “works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will” (Ephesians 1:11). As the experience of Esther shows, God uses people in fulfilling His purpose. No matter what the situation, God has His instruments of deliverance and victory. “For such a time as this,” God has at the ready brave, committed, obedient individuals who will step out in faith and accomplish His work. In ancient Persia, Haman was doing the devil’s work, but there was Esther to counter it. God had set the board, and He moved His queen to checkmate the enemy. “He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others” (Daniel 2:21).

We, like Esther, have meaningful choices to make. We may not have as much power and influence as Esther had, but God has still placed us where He wants us to be “for such a time as this.” We are not here by accident. We have a God-given circle of influence. We cannot stand idly by while injustice occurs. We must pay attention to what’s happening around us and seek God’s direction in how He wants to use us. He has placed us in the time, the position, and the place He wants us to be. And He invites us to confidently join in His work. In Esther’s day, the duty to save a nation fell to her, and God had given her all she needed to accomplish the task. God has done the same for us, whatever the task He assigns, and He will use us in “such a time as this.” [GotQuestions.org](#)

Related Resources:

- [Who was Mordecai in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Who was Esther in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Who was Haman the Agagite? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Who was Xerxes in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What does it mean that Esther was appointed “for such a time as this”? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Summary of the Book of Esther - Bible Survey | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why doesn’t the book of Esther mention God? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Who was Hadassah in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What does the Bible say about false accusations? | GotQuestions.org](#)

- [What is the Feast of Purim? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

Esther 4:15 Then Esther told *them* to reply to Mordecai,:

Note that "**them**" is added by the NAS and is not in the original text. Young's Literal says "And Esther speaketh to send back unto Mordecai"

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

Clearly Mordecai's speech had the intended effect on Esther's will so that we see was now prepared to die for the cause!

Ferguson adds that Esther...

acknowledges the danger, so will **I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law** but true courage acts in spite of fear. Only fools act rashly without fear. Fearfulness is understandable in this context but not cowardice or disobedience. She was willing to do her duty and leave the consequences to God.

It is interesting to note that **fasting** in this context contrasts with **feasting** later in the book.

Spurgeon comments that Esther having been encouraged by Mordecai's speech...

braced herself to the effort. She did not sit still and say, "The Lord will arrange this business, there is nothing for me to do," (Ed: Like a modern false saying "Let go and let God.") but she both...ventured her life and her all for her people's sake, and then acted very wisely and discreetly in her interviews with the king.

**So we rest confidently in providence,
but we are not idle.**

We believe that God has an elect people, and therefore do we preach in the hope that we may be the means, in the hands of His Spirit, of bringing this elect people to Christ. We believe that God has appointed for His people both holiness here and heaven hereafter; therefore do we strive against sin, and press forward to the rest which remains for the people of God.

Faith in God's providence, instead of repressing our energies, excites us to diligence. We labour as if all depended upon us, and then fall back upon the Lord with the calm faith which knows that all depends upon Him. (Ed: Our part, God's part is shown throughout the Scriptures - e.g., see Col 1:28, 29, 1Cor 15:10)

If I perish I perish - These final words echo Jacob in Genesis 43:14.

Swindoll writes that **Esther**...

has changed from fear to abandonment and faith, from hesitation to confidence and determination, from concern for her own safety to concern for her people's survival. She has reached her own personal hour of decision and has not been found wanting.

The words of **Amy Carmichael**, the famous missionary to India, remind me of Queen Esther's willingness to be a sacrifice...

Give me the Love that leads the way
The Faith that nothing can dismay
The Hope no disappointments tire
The Passion that'll burn like fire
Let me not sink to be a clod
Make me Thy fuel, Flame of God"

"O Lamb of God, deliver me..."
From subtle love of softening things,

From easy choices, weakenings,
(Not thus are spirits fortified,
Not this way went the Crucified)
From all that dims Thy Calvary
O Lamb of God, deliver me.

Edward Everett Hale wrote the following words which resonate with Esther's declaration...

I am only one,
But still I am one.
I cannot do everything;
but still I can do something;
and because I cannot do everything
I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.

Ferguson sums up this final section...

God uses frail vessels of clay like Esther and Mordecai to work out His purposes. It is the only material He has available, as there is no perfection found in man.

Am I a soldier of the cross,
a follower of the Lamb,
and shall I fear to own his cause,
or blush to speak his name?

Must I be carried to the skies
on flowery beds of ease,
while others fought to win the prize,
and sailed through bloody seas?

Sure I must fight if I would reign;
Increase my courage, Lord.
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by Thy Word.

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

Esther had commanded him - Henceforth Esther takes the lead in seeking deliverance for the Jews.

How important is one person? Clearly Esther emphasizes the impact one can make. Chuck Swindoll had a fascinating quote of the difference one person made in the following historic votes...

- In 1645, one vote gave Oliver Cromwell control of England;
- In 1649, one vote caused Charles I of England to be executed;
- In 1776, one vote gave America the English language instead of German;
- In 1839, one vote elected Marcus Morton governor of Massachusetts;
- In 1845, one vote brought Texas into the Union;
- In 1868, one vote saved President Andrew Johnson from impeachment.
- In 1875, one vote changed France from a monarchy to a republic;
- In 1876, one vote gave Rutherford B. Hayes the United States presidency;
- In 1923, one vote gave Adolph Hitler control of the Nazi party;
- In 1941, one vote saved the Selective Service System just 12 weeks before Pearl Harbor!