

# **ESTHER AND THE GOD OF “COINCIDENCES”**

## **PART 2**

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**18.1.25**

The Jews had been in exile since Nebuchadnezzar. A minority had returned to Jerusalem ... but the majority were happy in their new land. This book is the story of how they were almost wiped out.

**It's unusual in that we have a Bible Book that makes no reference to “God” or “LORD”.**

**What we have is a “Hidden God” ... yet we see a series of remarkable coincidences ... that reveal God at work.**

Last week we left Haman planning the imminent execution of Mordecai on some gallows.

### **Esther 5:14**

14 Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, “**Let a gallows be made, fifty cubits high, and in the morning suggest to the king that Mordecai be hanged on it;** then go merrily with the king to the banquet.”

**And the thing pleased Haman; so he had the gallows made.**

Let's move on:-

### **Esther 6:1-3**

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

2 And it was found written that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, the doorkeepers who had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.

3 **Then the king said, “What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?”**

And the king's servants who attended him said, “Nothing has been done for him.”

The king can't sleep. Why? Perhaps Gabriel is standing by poking him so that he couldn't sleep.

**Why call for the Chronicles** — rather than music?

**Why did they open at the page telling of Mordecai? More coincidences?** Too many!

#### **Esther 6:4**

4 So the king said, "Who is in the court?" **Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace to suggest that the king hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.**

Mordecai's mortal enemy just happens to enter at that moment!

#### **Esther 6:5-9**

5 The king's servants said to him, "Haman is there, standing in the court."

**And the king said, "Let him come in."**

6 So Haman came in, and the king asked him, **"What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?"**

Now Haman thought in his heart, "Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?"

7 And Haman answered the king, **"For the man whom the king delights to honor,**

**8 let a royal robe be brought which the king has worn, and a horse on which the king has ridden, which has a royal crest placed on its head.**

**9 Then let this robe and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that he may array the man whom the king delights to honor.**

Then parade him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him: **"Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!"** *(Obviously thinking he is the man)*

All signs of admiration — "see how great I am". He should have read:

#### **Proverbs 16:18**

**18 Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.**

### **Esther 6:10-13**

10 Then the king said to Haman, **“Hurry, take the robe and the horse, as you have suggested, and do so for Mordecai the Jew who sits within the king’s gate! Leave nothing undone of all that you have spoken.”**

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

12 Afterward Mordecai went back to the king’s gate. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with his head covered.

13 **When Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him, his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, “If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you will not prevail against him but will surely fall before him.”**

Humiliation — publicly.

### **Esther 6:14**

14 While they were still talking with him, the king’s eunuchs came, and hastened to bring Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared.

### **Esther 7:1-4**

1 **So the king and Haman went to dine with Queen Esther.**

2 And on the second day, at the banquet of wine, the king again said to Esther, **“What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request, up to half the kingdom? It shall be done!”**

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

4 **For we have been sold, my people and I, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated.** Had we been sold as male and female slaves, I would have held my tongue, although the enemy could never compensate for the king’s loss.”

“Someone’s plotting to kill me and massacre my people — save me O king”!

### **Esther 7:5-6**

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

6 And Esther said, “**The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman!**” So Haman was terrified before the king and queen.

Haman didn't know Esther was Jewish. (“Something hidden”). His goose is cooked!

### **Esther 7:7-8**

7 Then the king arose in his wrath from the banquet of wine and went into the palace garden; **but Haman stood before Queen Esther, pleading for his life, for he saw that evil was determined against him by the king.**

8 When the king returned from the palace garden to the place of the banquet of wine, Haman had fallen across the couch where Esther was. **Then the king said, “Will he also assault the queen while I am in the house?”**

As the word left the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.

Is it just a **coincidence** that Haman fell across the couch where Esther was? There is a Jewish tradition that Gabriel pushed Haman over. **It just happened?**

### **Esther 7:9-10**

9 Now Harbonah, one of the eunuchs, said to the king, “**Look! The gallows, fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai, who spoke good on the king's behalf, is standing at the house of Haman.**”

Then the king said, “**Hang him on it!**”

10 **So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai.** Then the king's wrath subsided.

Haman was hanged/impaled.

Another lesson Haman should have learned is **not to dig pits for others:**

### **Psalms 7:14-16**

14 Behold, the wicked brings forth iniquity;  
Yes, he conceives trouble and brings forth falsehood.

15 **He made a pit and dug it out,  
And has fallen into the ditch which he made.**  
16 **His trouble shall return upon his own head,  
And his violent dealing shall come down on his own crown.**

#### **Proverbs 26:27**

27 **Whoever digs a pit will fall into it,  
And he who rolls a stone will have it roll back on him.**

If you dig a pit for someone — you will fall into it! Don't try to do evil to others!

Haman has been dealt with — but the law to annihilate all Jews still stands.

#### **Esther 8:1-17**

1 On that day King Ahasuerus gave Queen Esther the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. **And Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had told how he was related to her.**

2 **So the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai; and Esther appointed Mordecai over the house of Haman.** (*Mordecai became the most important person in the Persian Empire below the king*)

3 Now Esther spoke again to the king, fell down at his feet, and implored him with tears to counteract the evil of Haman the Agagite, and the scheme which he had devised against the Jews.

4 And the king held out the golden scepter toward Esther. So Esther arose and stood before the king,

5 and said, **"If it pleases the king, and if I have found favor in his sight and the thing seems right to the king and I am pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to annihilate the Jews who are in all the king's provinces.**

6 **For how can I endure to see the evil that will come to my people? Or how can I endure to see the destruction of my countrymen?"**

7 Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew, "Indeed, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows because he tried to lay his hand on the Jews.

8 **You yourselves write a decree concerning the Jews, as you please, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's signet ring; for**

**whatever is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's signet ring no one can revoke."**

9 So the king's scribes were called at that time, in the third month, which is the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day; and it was written, according to all that Mordecai commanded, to the Jews, the satraps, the governors, and the princes of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, one hundred and twenty-seven provinces in all, to every province in its own script, to every people in their own language, and to the Jews in their own script and language. **(NB This is the longest verse in the Bible)**

10 And he wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus, sealed it with the king's signet ring, and sent letters by couriers on horseback, riding on royal horses bred from swift steeds.

11 **By these letters the king permitted the Jews who were in every city to gather together and protect their lives—to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the forces of any people or province that would assault them, both little children and women, and to plunder their possessions, (purely self-defence)**

12 **on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.**

13 A copy of the document was to be issued as a decree in every province and published for all people, so that the Jews would be ready on that day to avenge themselves on their enemies.

14 The couriers who rode on royal horses went out, hastened and pressed on by the king's command. And the decree was issued in Shushan the citadel.

15 So Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, with a great crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple; and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad.

16 The Jews had light and gladness, joy and honor.

17 And in every province and city, wherever the king's command and decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a holiday. Then many of the people of the land became Jews, because fear of the Jews fell upon them.

The Jews are not allowed to go out and attack ... only self defence and only on one day. They could defend themselves to the death. No vigilantes.

### **Esther 9:1-10**

1 Now in the twelfth month, that is, the month of Adar, on the thirteenth day, the time came for the king's command and his decree to be executed. **On the day that the enemies of the Jews had hoped to**

**overpower them, the opposite occurred, in that the Jews themselves overpowered those who hated them.**

2 **The Jews gathered together in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on those who sought their harm.** (*Defence only*) And no one could withstand them, because fear of them fell upon all people.

3 **And all the officials of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and all those doing the king's work, helped the Jews, because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them.**

4 **For Mordecai was great in the king's palace, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces; for this man Mordecai became increasingly prominent.**

5 Thus the Jews defeated all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, with slaughter and destruction, and did what they pleased with those who hated them.

6 And in Shushan the citadel the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men.

7 Also **Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha,**

8 **Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha,**

9 **Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vajezatha—**

10 **the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews—they killed;** but they did not lay a hand on the plunder.

## **Victory!!**

### **Esther 9:11-14**

11 On that day the number of those who were killed in Shushan the citadel was brought to the king.

12 And **the king said to Queen Esther**, "The Jews have killed and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the citadel, and the ten sons of Haman. What have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? **Now what is your petition? It shall be granted to you. Or what is your further request? It shall be done.**"

13 Then Esther said, **"If it pleases the king, let it be granted to the Jews who are in Shushan to do again tomorrow according to today's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged on the gallows."**

14 So the king commanded this to be done; the decree was issued in Shushan, and they hanged Haman's ten sons.

15 And the Jews who were in Shushan gathered together again on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and killed three hundred men at Shushan; but they did not lay a hand on the plunder.

16 **The remainder of the Jews in the king's provinces gathered together and protected their lives, had rest from their enemies, and killed seventy-five thousand of their enemies;** but they did not lay a hand on the plunder.

Esther asked for one more day for Shushan ... to eradicate the deep-seated opposition from those close to Haman.

Finally the Festival of Purim is instituted.

#### **Esther 9:17-22**

17 **This was on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar. And on the fourteenth of the month they rested and made it a day of feasting and gladness.**

18 **But the Jews who were at Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth day, as well as on the fourteenth; and on the fifteenth of the month they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.**

19 Therefore the Jews of the villages who dwelt in the unwall'd towns celebrated the fourteenth day of the month of Adar with gladness and feasting, as a holiday, and for sending presents to one another.

20 And Mordecai wrote these things and sent letters to all the Jews, near and far, who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus,

21 **to establish among them that they should celebrate yearly the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar,**

22 **as the days on which the Jews had rest from their enemies, as the month which was turned from sorrow to joy for them, and from mourning to a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and joy, of sending presents to one another and gifts to the poor.**

The 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Adar.

#### **Esther 9:26-32**

26 **So they called these days Purim, after the name Pur.** Therefore, because of all the words of this letter, what they had seen concerning this matter, and what had happened to them,



27 the Jews established and imposed it upon themselves and their descendants and all who would join them, **that without fail they should celebrate these two days every year, according to the written instructions and according to the prescribed time,**

28 **that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city, that these days of Purim should not fail to be observed among the Jews, and that the memory of them should not perish among their descendants.**

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

30 And Mordecai sent letters to all the Jews, to the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth,

31 to confirm these days of Purim at their appointed time, as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had prescribed for them, and as they had decreed for themselves and their descendants concerning matters of their fasting and lamenting.

32 **So the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim, and it was written in the book.**

### **Decreed by Esther too.**

It remains a very popular festival among Jewish people.

Fun ... gifts ... dressing up in costumes — dancing — lots of special cakes.

The Book of Esther read aloud — usually with boos and hisses whenever Haman's name is read out.

This year ... 2025 ... it will be celebrated on March 15 (starting the previous evening).

As a good Jew ... Jesus would have kept it. May be the unnamed Feast in:

### **John 5:1**

1 After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

### **Esther 10:1–3**

1 And King Ahasuerus imposed tribute on the land and on the islands of the sea.

2 Now all the acts of his power and his might, and the account of the greatness of Mordecai, to which the king advanced him, **are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?**

3 **For Mordecai the Jew was second to King Ahasuerus, and was great among the Jews and well received by the multitude of his brethren, seeking the good of his people and speaking peace to all his countrymen.**

So — a great story!

It is curious to find a Book in the Bible that doesn't mention God by name?

Yet it is clear that God was involved. So many **COINCIDENCES** where things **just happened** — perfectly!

- Queen Vashti was deposed — which left a “vacancy”
- Esther — a very beautiful young woman
- Esther selected out of 300 girls — became Queen
- A Jewish girl is Queen of the Persian Empire
- Mordecai overhears a plot to kill the king
- King overlooks rewarding Mordecai
- Haman's lots (Purim) include an 11 month delay
- King accepts Esther's approach
- Esther delays her request for one day
- King suffers insomnia that night
- King wants his chronicles to be read
- Coincidentally — covers Mordecai's story
- Haman describes the reward he is to be given
- When Haman outed by Esther he coincidentally falls on her just as the King enters the room

There are probably more. Far too many **COINCIDENCES** to be just chance. (Possibly one chance in a billion). God was hidden — not named — but clearly working behind the scenes to preserve His people.

One of the lessons for us is that though we may not see God directly in our lives — as we might like — God can be working behind the scenes ... bringing deliverance and salvation by strange coincidences.

**WE CAN SEE HIS HANDIWORK — IF WE HAVE EYES TO SEE!**