

Supplemental Notes:

*The Books
of
Ruth & Esther*

*compiled
by
Chuck Missler*

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Acknowledgments

These notes have been assembled from speaking notes and related materials which had been compiled from a number of classic and contemporary commentaries and other sources detailed in the bibliography, as well as other articles and publications of Koinonia House. While we have attempted to include relevant endnotes and other references, we apologize for any errors or oversights.

The complete recordings of the sessions, as well as supporting diagrams, maps, etc., are also available in various audiovisual formats from the publisher.

Audio Listing

Ruth 1

Introduction. A Love Story. Ruth and Naomi.

Ruth 2

Ruth and Boaz. Kinsman-Redeemer.

Ruth 3

The Threshing Floor Scene. A “Nearer Kinsman.”

Ruth 4

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Ruth: Review

Types in the Book of Ruth.

Esther 1 - 2

Introduction. Models. Ahasuerus and Vashti.

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Esther 8 - 10

The Magi. Mordecai’s Solution. Feast of Purim.

Esther: Microcodes & Macrocodes

Mnemonic Acrostics. Evidence of Design. Model/Types. Esther Overview.

The Books of Ruth and Esther Session 1

Ruth 1

Why Study This Book?

The Book of Ruth is one of the most dramatic books of *prophecy* in the Bible. The ancient Jewish Scriptures often included Ruth with the book of the prophets.

The basic theme is that these 66 books are a single message system; every book, every name, every detail is there by design. In Ruth every detail not only carries this romance along, it also carries along the romance of redemption, and it gives us hints about God's plan (e.g., Kinsman-Redeemer; Israel and Church, etc.).

Approach (For Any Scripture)

There are multiple levels of study:

- 1) Primary application (historical, an event that actually happened; it occurred in the time of the Judges);
- 2) Practical (homiletic—application to our own lives);
- 3) Prophetic revelations (mystical and prophetic insights).
- 4) *Remez*: a hint of something deeper.

Hermeneutics

- Greek Model: Prophecy = Prediction → Fulfillment;
- Hebrew Model: Prophecy = Pattern.

Critical Links in the Chain

Bethlehem → The Cross → To the Crown → To the Throne of David
Issues: The Kinsman-Redeemer; the distinction between the Church and the Nation Israel.

The Book of Ruth

"In the days the judges ruled..." The Ultimate Love Story: at the literary level and at the prophetic, personal level, the Book of Ruth is one of the most significant books for the Church: The Role of the Kinsman-Redeemer is an essential pre-requisite to Revelation.

The Tenth Man

Adam	Shem	Isaac
Seth	Arphaxad	Jacob
Enosh	Salah	Judah
Kenan	Eber	Pharez
Mahalalel	Peleg	Hezron
Jared	Reu	Ram
Enoch	Serug	Amminadab
Methuselah	Nahor	Nahshon
Lamech	Terah	Salman
Noah	Abraham	Boaz

Outline of Book

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| • Love's Resolve | Chapter 1 |
| – Ruth cleaving to Naomi | |
| • Love's Response | Chapter 2 |
| – Ruth gleaning | |
| • Love's Request | Chapter 3 |
| – The Threshing Floor Scene | |
| • Love's Reward | Chapter 4 |
| – The Redemption of both Land and Bride | |

In the Jewish liturgy, the scroll of Ruth is read on *Shavuot*, the Feast of Weeks. (This is the only feast of Moses which uses *leavened* bread. The significance of this will be reviewed later...)

[Source: Pfeiffer, Charles F.: *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: Old Testament*, Chicago, Moody Press, 1962.]

Ruth 1

- 1] Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem-Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.

This first sentence tells you *what* the incident is, *where* it took place, *when* it took place, and generally *how* it took place.

“The days when the judges ruled”: A period of time after Joshua had conquered the land, before they had a king. It describes an era between Joshua and the monarchy, when the rulership was under the judges. This was a time of scandal (e.g., Samson); not a spiritually high time, and Ruth takes place during that era.

“...famine”: (One of 13 in the Bible.) The reason why the family leaves the land; but also typically speak of a visitation of God’s judgment (Lev 26). Possibly the famine is in response to the spiritual condition of the country.

Famines took place during the lifetimes of Abraham (Gen 12:10); David (2 Sam 21:1); Elijah (1 Kgs 17:1); and, Gideon (Judg 6:2–5).

The Famine

The story is best placed historically in the period of Gideon. Drought and famine were among the judgments God said would come upon the Land as a result of failure to keep the Law (Lev 26:18-20; Deut 28:23-24). The Book of Judges provides ample evidence of their failure to keep the Law that brought about the famine in the days of Gideon. Furthermore, the drought did not affect Moab, which is very close to Israel, separated only by the Dead Sea. So this was a local famine in Israel only, which points to this being a divine judgment.

This famine had to be a very serious one, one that extended over the whole Land; otherwise, they could have just simply sojourned in another part of Israel instead of leaving the country. The famine had to last for several years to compel them to leave the Land and go to Moab. Ten years would pass before Naomi would hear that the famine had ended. The Midianites oppressed Israel for seven years, and the oppression included the destruction of the produce of the soil from this famine that would naturally follow (Judg 6:3-4).

“...Bethlehem-Judah”: vs. Zebulun (Josh 19:15). Because of the Book of Ruth, the House of David is linked to Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). Ephrath was the ancient name for Bethlehem, and was also used as the name of the region where Bethlehem was located (Gen 35:19 and 48:7; Ruth 4:11; 1 Sam 17:12; Micah 5:2).

“...sojourn”: גֵּר *ger*, which means “a resident alien.” The root meaning means “to live among people who are not blood relatives; as a foreigner.” This indicates the purpose of the trip was not permanent residency:

The *ger* did not have native civil rights but was dependent upon the hospitality of the natives.

“...country of Moab”: Moab was a son of Lot, the evil fruit of the incestuous relation of Lot with one of his daughters (Gen 19:36, 37).

Background: Moab

Moab was a son of Lot, the evil fruit of the incestuous relation of Lot with one of his daughters (Gen 19:36, 37). Moabites had hired Balaam to curse Israel, during Israel’s pilgrimage to Canaan (Num 22:1-8).

Under normal circumstances Moabites were barred from participation in the national, corporate life of Israel (Deut 23:3-6). However, there were friendly relations between some individual Israelites and Moabites. When fleeing the wrath of Saul, David found a friend in the king of Moab (1 Sam 22:3, 4).

- 2] And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem-Judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.

The names appear significant:

Names

- אֱלִיעֶלֶךְ *Elimelech*: “God is my king.” (Interesting name: during the time of the judges they had no king.)
- נָעֳמִי *Naomi*: “pleasant.”
- מַחֲלֹן *Machlon*: from the root *chalah*, “to be sick.” “unhealthy, sickly.”
- כִּלְיוֹן *Chilion*: “wasting” or “pining.”

(All these names appear in the Ugaritic Texts that were discovered, which shows them to be typical Semitic and Canaanite names.)

- 3] And Elimelech Naomi’s husband died; and she was left, and her two sons.
4] And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years.

“...wives of the women of Moab”: “Moab is my washpot” (Ps 60:8; 108:9). Gentile marriage forbidden (Deut 7:2, 3); Moabite (masc. only); Deut 23:3). Grace (Rom 8:3, 4; Jn 6:37; Eph 2:11-13, 19). Israel was without a king.

- עֲרֵפָה Orpah – “fawn,” or “gazelle.”
- רוּת Ruth – “friendship,” “desirable.”

Machlon married Ruth (Ruth 4:10); Chilion married Orpah.

Jews were forbidden to marry Gentile women, especially those from Ammon and Moab (Deut 7:1-11; 23:3-6; Neh 13:1-3; Ezra 9:1-4. In Moses’ day it was the Moabite women who seduced the Jewish men into immorality and idolatry; and as a result, 24,000 people died (Num 25). But in Deut 23:3, the Law did forbid the reception of Moabites into the congregation of the Lord until the tenth generation.

- 5] And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.

When Elimelech left Bethlehem, he lost his property (he either sold it or lost it through indebtedness). The context here is that the land was lost, and part of the story will deal with “redeeming the land.”

- 6] Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread.

“...bread”: Beth-Lechem = “House of Bread.”

- 7] Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.
- 8] And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother’s house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me.
- 9] The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept.
- 10] And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.
- 11] And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?
- 12] Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons;
- 13] Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me.

“...the Lord is gone out against me”: Naomi recognized that all that had happened to her was not pure chance, but the hand of God.

- 14] And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.

Orpah goes back, off the pages of Scripture, into oblivion.

“...clave”: דָּבַק *dabaq*, which means “to stick like glue.”

The very same cause that induced Orpah to return home is what caused Ruth to stay. The fact that Naomi will no longer have a husband or sons meant that she needed someone to take care of her.

- 15] And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law.

“...her gods”: Their national god called Chemosh (Num 21:29; 1 Kgs 11:7, 33). who accepted human sacrifices (2 Kgs 3:26-27). This was noted in the inscription of King Mesha on *the Moabitish Stone*:

The Moabite Stone

The Moabite Stone is a black basalt memorial stone discovered in Moab by a German missionary in 1868. Nearly four feet high, it contained about 34 lines in an alphabet similar to Hebrew.

The stone was probably erected about 850 B.C. by the Moabite King Mesha.

King Mesha’s story written on the stone celebrated his overthrow of the nation of Israel. Although the Biblical account makes it clear that Israel was victorious in the battle (2 Kgs 3:4-27).



The passage shows that Mesha honors his god Chemosh in terms similar to the Old Testament reverence for the Lord. The inhabitants of entire cities were apparently slaughtered to appease this deity, recalling the similar practices of the Israelites, especially as described in the Book of Joshua.

The Moabite stone has profound Biblical relevance: Historically, it confirms Old Testament accounts. It is also valuable geographically because it mentions no less than 15 sites listed in the Old Testament.

The writing on the stone also resembles Hebrew, the language in which most of the Old Testament was originally written. Some pieces of the stone are now at the Louvre Museum in Paris.

- 16] And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:

Ruth was raised in Moab, an idol-worshiping Gentile country. She was abandoning everything. not because she was married to a husband, but to follow her mother-in-law, including adopting a strange way of life.

- 17] Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.

“...LORD”: יהוה *Yehovah*. Ruth invoked the name of God in her oath and not the name of Chemosh.

Sevenfold Decision

- 1) For whither thou goest, I will go;
- 2) where thou lodgest, I will lodge:
- 3) thy people *shall be* my people,
- 4) and thy God my God:
- 5) Where thou diest, will I die,
- 6) and there will I be buried:
- 7) the LORD do so to me, and more also, *if ought* but death part thee and me.

A similar formula is used seven times in the Books of Samuel and Kings:

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| – by Eli concerning Samuel | 1 Sam 3:17 |
| – by Saul of Jonathan’s execution | 1 Sam 14:44 |
| – of Jonathan’s friendship with David | 1 Sam 20:13 |
| – by David concerning Nabal | 1 Sam 25:22 |
| – by David concerning Amasa | 2 Sam 19:13 |
| – by Ben-Hadad concerning Samaria | 1 Kgs 20:10 |
| – by the king of Israel regarding Elijah | 2 Kgs 6:31 |

An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever:

Deuteronomy 23:3

How then could Ruth enter into the congregation of the Lord? By trusting God’s grace and throwing herself completely on His mercy. Law excludes us from God’s family, but grace includes us if we put our faith in Christ.

The genealogy of Jesus Christ (Mt 4) includes the names of five women, four of whom have very questionable credentials:

- | | |
|---|------------|
| – Tamar committed incest with her father-in-law | Gen 38:3 |
| – Rahab was a Gentile harlot; | Josh 2:5 |
| – Ruth was an outcast Gentile Moabitess | Ruth 1:5 |
| – “the wife of Uriah” was an adulteress | 2 Sam 11:6 |

How did they ever become a part of the family of the Messiah? Through the sovereign grace and mercy of God! God is “long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet 3:9).

- 18] When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.
- 19] So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi?

This would make a journey of about 75 mi., and not a straight or level path. It meant they would have to descend from the Moabite highlands to the Jordan Valley, a descent of 4,500 feet, followed by an ascent to Bethlehem of 3,750 feet, walking through desert territory, through the Wilderness of Judah.

- 20] And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

“...Naomi” - means “pleasant.”

“...Mara” - means “bitter” (Ex 15:22-27).

“...Almighty”: She used the name שַׁדַּי *Shaddai*, a name for God used 48 times in the Old Testament (31 of those is found in the Book of Job).

- 21] I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?
- 22] So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

“...barley harvest”: Barley ripened before wheat, and began to be reaped sometimes as early as March, but generally in April, or Abib. The barley harvest is the first hint of something joyful.

Agricultural Calendar

- Gregorian Calendar: **March-April**
- Jewish Calendar: (1) Nisan (Early: Abib)
- Farming Calendar: Later rains; barley harvest; flax harvest
- Special Days:
 - Nisan 14 Passover (Lev 23:5)
 - Nisan 15-21 Unleavened Bread (Lev 23:6-8)
 - Nisan * Firstfruits (Lev 23:9-14)

* Sunday following Passover

- Gregorian Calendar: **April-May**
- Jewish Calendar: (2) Iyyar (early: Ziv)
- Farming Calendar: Dry season begins
- Gregorian Calendar: **May-June**
- Jewish Calendar: (3) Sivan
- Farming Calendar: Early figs ripen; vine tending
- Special Days:
 - Sivan 6 *Shavout* (Lev 23:15-22) 50 days after firstfruits

In the Jewish liturgy, the scroll of Ruth is read on *Shavout*, the Feast of Weeks.

- Gregorian Calendar: **June-July**
- Jewish Calendar: (4) Tammuz
- Farming Calendar: Wheat harvest; first ripe grapes
- Gregorian Calendar: **July-August**
- Jewish Calendar: (5) Ab
- Farming Calendar: Grape harvest*
- Special Days:
 - Ab 9 Day of mourning: Temple, et al.

* Without refrigeration, no grape juice in the spring...

- Gregorian Calendar: **August-September**
- Jewish Calendar: (6) Elul
- Farming Calendar: Dates; summer figs
- Gregorian Calendar: **September-October**
- Jewish Calendar: (7) Tishri (Early: Ethanim)
(1st month on Genesis Calendar³; 7th after Ex 12)
- Farming Calendar: Early rains
- Special Days:
 - Tishri 1 Trumpets (Lev 23:23-25)
 - Tishri 10 *Yom Kippur* (Lev 16; 23:26-32)
 - Tishri 15-21 *Succot* (Lev 23: 33-36)
Tabernacles

Summary: Ruth Cleaving in Chapter 1

- “In the days the judges ruled...”
- Famine drives family to Moab
 - Elimelech (“God is my King”)
 - Naomi (“Pleasant” (Land?))
 - Mahlon (“Unhealthy”; “to blot out”)
 - Chilion (“Puny”; “to perish”)
- Naomi deters daughters-in-law from following
 - Orpah (“Fawn”) [Ultimately returns]
 - Ruth (“Desirable”) [Remains with Naomi]

Next Session

- Study Ruth Chapter 2
- Study also the Law of Gleaning (Lev 19:9, 10; Deut 24:19, 21).

The Books of Ruth and Esther Session 2 Ruth 2

Review: Hermeneutics

- Greek Model: Prophecy = Prediction → Fulfillment
- Hebrew Model: Prophecy = Pattern

I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.

Hosea 12:10

The Book of Ruth

“In the days the judges ruled...” Thus begins the Ultimate Love Story, both at the literary level and at the prophetic, personal level. The Book of Ruth is one of the most significant books for the Church: it explains the role of the Kinsman-Redeemer, without which you will not understand Revelation.

Outline of Book

- Love’s Resolve Chapter 1
 - Ruth cleaving to Naomi
- **Love’s Response** Chapter 2
 - Ruth gleaning
- Love’s Request Chapter 3
 - The Threshing Floor Scene
- Love’s Reward Chapter 4
 - The Redemption of both Land and Bride

Ruth 2

- 1] And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband’s, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz.

“...a kinsman”: מִקְּדָּן kinsman, relative; the term also implies a history of valor, strong in strength (“mighty man”). The blood-relationship was with *Elimelech* (not with Naomi): potentially he could be a kinsman-redeemer; a sub-division of the Tribe of Judah

“...Boaz”: Name means “In him there is strength.” His name is not only important in Ruth, but his name is also chosen by Solomon for one of the two pillars of the Temple. Boaz is a kinsman. The plot thickens...

Our Kinsman

We, too, have a Kinsman; one who was made like we are, yet sinless—“holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Heb 7:26). He is the one who is able to save us to the uttermost.

The name *Boaz* means “strength.” He was “a mighty man of wealth.” You can also translate it “a mighty man of war” and “mighty man of law.” He is the hero of the piece...

- 2] And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter.

“...glean”: This was the welfare system of those days: If you were a land owner, you were allowed to make only one pass through your field. You could not go back a second time. The concept was that what the reapers missed, or what spilled, was left for the widows and the destitute.

Law of Gleaning

And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the LORD your God.

Leviticus 9:9,10

A Latin proverb says, “Providence assists not the idle.”

And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I am the LORD your God.

Leviticus 23:22

When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands. When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

Deuteronomy 24:19-22

- 3] And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.

“...hap”: מִקְרָה *miqreh* unforeseen meeting or event, accident, happening, chance, fate; “happened”; happenstance, coincidence. Remember, coincidence is not a “kosher” word! (Coincidence is when God is working undercover!)

Chaos Theory

One of the latest areas of study in advanced mathematics is known as “Chaos Theory”—based on the elusiveness of randomness. There are two mathematical concepts that cannot be found in our physical universe: infinity and true randomness.

Chaos theory describes the behavior of certain dynamical systems that are highly sensitive to initial conditions (popularly referred to as the “butterfly effect”). As a result of this sensitivity, which manifests itself as an exponential growth of perturbations in the initial conditions, the behavior of chaotic systems appears to be random.

This happens even though these systems are deterministic, meaning that their future dynamics are fully defined by their initial conditions, with no random elements involved. This behavior is known as deterministic chaos, or simply *chaos*.

The Privileged Planet

- Uniquely positioned for *life*.
- Uniquely positioned to *discover*.
 - Positioned in the galaxy.
 - Positioned for total eclipses.
 - Positioned within the visible spectrum...etc.
- Implies teleology: a *purposeful* design.

The Privileged Planet, 2004
Guillermo Gonzales & Jay W. Richards

The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.
Proverbs 16:33

Two Imputed Concepts (Elusive in Our Physical World)

- Randomness Proverbs 16:33
 - Stochastic vs. Deterministic Processes
 - Pseudo-Random Numbers
 - “Chaos Theory”
- Infinity James 1:17
 - Macrocosm: A Finite Universe
 - Microcosm: Indivisible units (“quanta”)

- 4] And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD be with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee.

Boaz = “Lord of the Harvest...”

- 5] Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this?

“...his servant”: What was the servant’s name? Ruth is introduced to Boaz by an “unnamed servant”: cf. Eleazer, Abraham’s servant (Gen 24).

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself;

John 16:13

- 6] And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab:

“...the servant that was set over the reapers”: The Hebrew word for *servant* is *naar*, who was the foreman. He was responsible to supervise the workers, supply provisions for the reapers, and pay them at the end of the day.

[Source: Fruchtenbaum, Arnold G.: *Ariel's Bible Commentary : The Books of Judges and Ruth*. 1st ed. San Antonio, Tex. : Ariel Ministries, 2006, S. 308.]

- 7] And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house.
- 8] Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearst thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens:

“...Go not to glean in another”: In other words, the invitation is extended to continue gleaning in his fields permanently. She was free to continue throughout the barley harvest, which included March and April. She was also free to continue throughout the wheat harvest, which included May and June.

- 9] Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn.

- 1) She was to stay in this field.
- 2) She was free to follow immediately after the servant girls where the pickings would be the most numerous.
- 3) His intervention and provision on her behalf.

- 10] Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?

Hebrew play on words: “You have noticed the unnoticed”: Grace is the basis.

- 11] And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore.
- 12] The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.
- 13] Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens.
- 14] And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left.

“...vinegar”: *חֶמֶץ chomets* a drink made from sour grapes.

“...reached”: *צָבַט tsabat* (with his own hands) Boaz provides bread and wine. The word *tsabat* is used only here and nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible. In the Hebrew, the verb is singular, which means that Boaz personally served her with his own hands. [Fruchtenbaum]

- 15] And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not:

The Hebrew is emphatic: “even between the sheaves she may glean.” It was unusual for a gleaner to be allowed to pick up grain this close to harvesters. They were normally permitted to glean only after the harvesters had completed all their work.

- 16] And let fall also some of the handfuls on purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not.

“...handfuls on purpose”: *זַעֲבָתִים tzevatim* means “handfuls of ears” and is used only here in the Hebrew Bible. They were to pull out a handful of stalks. This is the amount of grain that would be grasped with the left hand as the sickler cuts with his right hand. The fix was in...

- 17] So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley.

An ephah = 9 gallons: 10 ephahs = 90 gallons (Ezek 45:14) if Josephus’ computation of the *bath* or ephah as 9 gallons is right [Ant. 8:2, section 9]. It is a dry measure of about one bushel capacity. It corresponds to the bath in liquid measure and was the standard for measuring grain and similar articles.

- 18] And she took it up, and went into the city: and her mother in law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed.

“...she had reserved after she was sufficed”: 30 pounds of barley: (enough for five days for both of them); plus own her left-over provisions.

- 19] And her mother in law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to day? and where wroughtest thou? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And she shewed her mother in law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man’s name with whom I wrought to day is Boaz.
- 20] And Naomi said unto her daughter in law, Blessed be he of the LORD, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen.

“...kinsman”: *גֹּאֵל goel*. Boaz is now connected with the concept of the kinsman-redeemer.

- 21] And Ruth the Moabitess said, He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest.
- 22] And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter in law, It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field.
- 23] So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother in law.

- Barley Harvest = time of Passover.
- Wheat Harvest = about 50 days after the Barley harvest = *Shavuot*, Pentecost. (Jewish liturgy requires the reading of the Book of Ruth at *Shavuot*.)

The “end” came in two stages: first, the *barley harvest* began with the Feast of the First-Fruits (late March/early April) and ended with the Feast of Weeks, and then the *wheat harvest* began with the Feast of Weeks (late May/early June) to late June/early July (Lev 23:15–21; Deut 16:9-12; 2 Sam 21:9). [Fruchtenbaum]

Law of Redemption: Lev 25:47-55

Israel belongs to God. When Joshua entered the land, it was granted to the 12 tribes. That land was to stay in that tribe. You could “sell” your

land, which was really more of what we would consider a “lease” (you sold the rights to use the land for awhile). In the year of Jubilee the land would return to the original owners.

When you sold your land, the title deed would also include the rules for title redemption. The law required a procedure so that if your next of kin would show up there was some procedure where he could purchase back the unused years (called “redeeming the land”).

Jeremiah was instructed to buy land right before going into captivity (Jer 25). After captivity, Jeremiah’s descendants will come back and claim the land. The title deed would be a scroll, on the back of which would detail the procedure for redemption.

This whole concept becomes important when you encounter the seven-sealed book, “written within and on the backside and sealed with seven seals” (Rev 5).

Law of Levirate Marriage: Deut 25:5-10

The word *levir* is Latin for “a husband’s brother.” The Levirate marriage dealt with a situation where you had a widow with no issue (husband passed away with no children). She could go to the next of kin and put a claim on him to take her to wife to raise up children for the family.

This is called “the Levirate Marriage.” He had to meet three conditions to make it work. First, he had to be a near kinsman. Secondly, he had to be able to perform. Thirdly, he had to be willing; it was not required. If he chose not to, he had to give her his shoe, a symbol of shame; he had failed to do the kinsman’s part.

Laws of Ancient Israel

- Law of Gleaning (Chapter 2) Lev 19:9, 10; Deut 24:19, 21
- Law of Levirate Marriage (Chapter 3) Deut 25:5-10
- Law of Redemption (Chapter 4) Lev 25:47-55

Next Session

Review: The Law of Redemption (Lev 25:47-55) and The Law of Levirate Marriage (Deut 25:5-10). Study Ruth Chapter 3 (this chapter is widely misunderstood by the uninformed).

The Books of Ruth and Esther Session 3 Ruth 3

*So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean **unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest**; and dwelt with her mother in law.*

Ruth 2:23

- Barley Harvest = time of Passover.
- Wheat Harvest = about 50 days after the Barley harvest = *Shavout*, Pentecost.

Agricultural Calendar

- Gregorian Calendar: **March-April**
- Jewish Calendar: (1) Nisan (Early: Abib)
- Farming Calendar: Later rains; barley harvest; flax harvest
- Special Days:

Nisan 14	Passover (Lev 23:5)
Nisan 15-21	Unleavened Bread (Lev 23:6-8)
Nisan *	Firstfruits (Lev 23:9-14)

* Sunday following Passover

- Gregorian Calendar: **April-May**
- Jewish Calendar: (2) Iyyar (early: Ziv)
- Farming Calendar: Dry season begins
- Gregorian Calendar: **May-June**
- Jewish Calendar: (3) Sivan
- Farming Calendar: Early figs ripen; vine tending
- Special Days:

Sivan 6	<i>Shavout</i> (Lev 23:15-22) 50 days after firstfruits
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In the Jewish liturgy, the scroll of Ruth is read on *Shavout*, the Feast of Weeks.

- Gregorian Calendar: **June-July**
- Jewish Calendar: (4) Tammuz
- Farming Calendar: Wheat harvest; first ripe grapes
- Gregorian Calendar: **July-August**
- Jewish Calendar: (5) Ab

- Farming Calendar: Grape harvest*
- Special Days:
Ab 9 Day of mourning: Temple, et al.

* Without refrigeration, no grape juice in the spring...

- Gregorian Calendar: **August-September**
- Jewish Calendar: (6) Elul
- Farming Calendar: Dates; summer figs
- Gregorian Calendar: **September-October**
- Jewish Calendar: (7) Tishri (Early: Ethanim)
(1st month on Genesis Calendar; 7th after Ex 12)
- Farming Calendar: Early rains
- Special Days:
 - Tishri 1 Trumpets (Lev 23:23-25)
 - Tishri 10 *Yom Kippur* (Lev 16; 23:26-32)
 - Tishri 15-21 *Succot* (Lev 23: 33-36)
Tabernacles

Summary: Ruth Cleaving (Chapter 1)

- “In the days the judges ruled...”
- Famine drives family to Moab
 - Elimelech (“God is my King”)
 - Naomi (“Pleasant” (Land?))
 - Mahlon (“Unhealthy”; “to blot out”)
 - Chilion (“Puny”; “to perish”)
- Naomi deters daughters-in-law from following
 - Orpah (“Fawn”) [Ultimately returns]
 - Ruth (“Desirable”) [Remains with Naomi]

Background: Hems

Hems (Greek: *kraspedon*; Hebrew: *shawl*): hem, border, fringe, bottom edge of skirt or train. In ancient Mesopotamia, “to cut off the hem” was to strip one of his personality, authority, etc. A husband could divorce his wife by cutting off the hem of her robe. A nobleman would authenticate his name on a clay tablet by pressing his hem on the clay.

Examples: David’s removal of Saul’s hem (1 Sam 24); fringes on Levitical garments (Num 15:38, 39; Deut 22:12; Ex 28:33, 34).

In God’s covenant with Israel, God says of Israel “I will spread my skirt over you” (Ezek 16:8 & 39:25,26). This is God’s way of expressing His covering, His protection over the House of Israel. The Lord’s hem was sought for healing (Mt 14:36; Mk 6:56; Lk 8:44); this was the goal of the woman with issue of blood (Mt 9:20-21; Mk 5:31)... same “age” as Jairus’ daughter: 12 years. Is the Gentile woman a type of the Church?

Joseph’s coat was a seamless robe which was very prized. As was Jesus’ coat. [For the study of 100 ways Joseph was a type of Jesus Christ, see our notes on *Acts*, *Genesis*, or *Joshua*.]

Jesus’ coat was seamless and that is why the soldiers at the foot of the cross did not want to divide it, but rather cast lots for it. The Temple veil was torn, symbolizing the end of man as a High Priest; Jesus’ hem was not torn because He is our High Priest forever.

Law of Levirate Marriage: Deut 25:5-10

- 5] If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband’s brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband’s brother unto her.
- 6] And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel.
- 7] And if the man like not to take his brother’s wife, then let his brother’s wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband’s brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband’s brother.
- 8] Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and if he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her;
- 9] Then shall his brother’s wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother’s house.
- 10] And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed.

He had to meet three conditions to make it work:

- 1) He had to be a near kinsman.
- 2) He had to be able to perform.
- 3) He had to be willing; it was not required.
- 4) If he chose not to, he had to give her his shoe, a symbol of shame; he had failed to do the kinsman’s part.

Outline of Book

- Love's Resolve Chapter 1
 - Ruth cleaving to Naomi
- Love's Response Chapter 2
 - Ruth gleaning
- **Love's Request Chapter 3**
 - The Threshing Floor Scene
- Love's Reward Chapter 4
 - The Redemption of both Land and Bride

Ruth 3

- 1] Then Naomi her mother in law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?

“...rest”: The Hebrew word for *rest* is מנוח *manoach*. It may refer to a state of rest or a condition of rest; but in this context, it refers to the condition of rest and security to be attained through marriage, as was already implied back in Ruth 1:9.

Naomi was faced with three issues:

- 1) How could the name of Elimelech be maintained among the tribes of Israel since both her sons were now dead?
- 2) What steps should be taken to protect her inheritance, which Elimelech had left in Naomi's trust?
- 3) How could she provide rest and security for her faithful daughter-in-law?

A marriage between Ruth and Boaz would solve all three problems. This also meant that Naomi would renounce her own claim to Boaz as the close relative and give it to Ruth, the younger widow.

- 2] And now is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley to night in the threshingfloor.

Threshing Floor

The harvest involved harvesting the grain and preparing it for market. The threshing floor was a large, flat parcel of ground where there was a prevailing wind. After the grain had been ground, they would throw the grain up in the air and the wind would cause the grain to fall a little bit

downwind and the chaff would fall further downwind. If done properly, one would end up with two piles, the closer one being good for market, and the further one would be burned as trash.

The threshing floors were typically prominent places. David purchased the threshing floor of Arunah, which later became the site of the Temple.

This was not only a time of work, but also a time of celebration. Typically the afternoon was spent threshing the grain and that night they would have a party (Isa 41:14-16). So the owners and the seniors would sleep there to prevent theft of the grain

- 3] Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: but make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking.

These are four steps that are essential for the sinner.

Step 1: Wash Thyself

This is similar language used regarding Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11:2: The first one is this: Wash thyself. If you and I are going to come to Christ, we're told that it's "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5).

That's the reason our Lord said what He did to Nicodemus. "You may think you're a fine, religious man, and you are, but you need a bath—a spiritual bath. You need the washing of regeneration." And our Lord said to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again" (Jn 3:7).

So Naomi tells Ruth, "You've been working hard out in the field. Wash thyself therefore." Now that's the first step that she is to take.

Step 2: Anoint Thyself

John tells us, "But ye have an unction [anointing] from the Holy One, and ye know all things." (1 Jn 2:20). That is, the Spirit of God is the [only] one who can teach us all truth, and all of us need the teaching of the Spirit of God. That's the only way in the world we can ever understand the Word of God. The Spirit of God must teach us.

And that's one of the neglected facts today. Paul says, "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart

of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit. . . .” (1 Cor 2:9).

The Spirit of God is able to teach us and is able to lead us and guide us into all truth. How important it is to have the Spirit of God as our teacher. “But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” (1 Cor 2:10).

It’s mentioned again in 1 John 2:27: “But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.”

This doesn’t mean that you dispense with human learning or human teachers. You and I today are the beneficiaries of that which has been bequeathed to us by the godly men of the past whom the Spirit of God has taught.

And so Ruth’s second step was important. She was to wash herself and then to *anoint* herself.

Step 3: Put Thy Raiment Upon Thee

The Hebrew word is שְׂמִלָּה *simlah*. Being poor she probably did not have a “best dress,” and so, this might mean to exchange her clothes of mourning and widowhood for regular clothes.

Based upon an analogy with 2 Samuel 12:20, which also mentions bathing, perfume, and a *simlah* dress when David completed his mourning period for his son, it might imply that Ruth was still wearing the garments of her widowhood.

It might also refer to the outer garment or cape since the word is singular, which would protect her from the chill of the night as well as allow her to remain anonymous

When you and I come to Christ and accept Him as Savior, we are told that He becomes our righteousness. Actually, it’s spoken of as a *robe* of righteousness. “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference” (Rom 3:22).

Paul speaks of it as a garment that comes down over the sinner, covering him, so that God sees us in Christ, and His righteousness becomes our

righteousness. We stand complete in Him—“accepted in the beloved” (Eph 1:6). This is the robe of righteousness that we have today.

If all this time she had been wearing the clothes of widowhood and mourning, it would explain why Boaz had not moved to court her, for he would not impose himself on her as long as she was still in a time of mourning.

This also parallels Ezekiel 16:8-14, which deals with a bride preparing for her wedding. Naomi then told her the actions that she was to perform

Step 4: Stake Your Claim

Have you “staked your claim” with your Kinsman-Redeemer?

- 4] And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do.

“...lay thee down”: The Hebrew reads, “The place where the feet are.” She was to lie down at his feet after uncovering him. She was to take the servant’s position in which the servant lies diagonally at his master’s feet. The position was a lowly one; it represented Ruth as a petitioner.

- 5] And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do.
6] And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother in law bade her.
7] And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down.

Boaz would lie down by one heap of his grain, and his servants would be scattered in other areas of his property guarding the heaps of grain there, thus affording a measure of privacy for Boaz and Ruth.

The heaps of winnowed grain would be at the edge of the threshing floor, for the center was reserved for the threshing itself. Being at the edge of the floor with his pile and separated from the others would provide a further measure of privacy.

- 8] And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet.

“...turned himself”: The verb here is נָפַח *laphath*, the causative stem means “to grasp; to twist, grasp, turn; grasp with a twisting motion.”

It is used that way of Samson (Judg 16:29). From Semitic cognates, it could also mean “to turn over,” “to feel,” “to grope about,” perhaps groping for his mantle.

- 9] And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman.

“...handmaid”: This time she used the word אַמָּה *amah*; thus she presented herself as one who was eligible for marriage.

“...thy skirt”: כַּנָּף *kanaph* wing, extremity, edge, border, corner, shirt; skirt, corner (of garment) hem, border, fringe, bottom edge of skirt or train. This refers to the corner of the garment, and it refers to the fact that a man spreads this over his wife, as well as himself (Deut 22:30 [23:1 in the Hebrew text] and 27:20).

Do not misunderstand this passage. In our culture it would seem that she is propositioning him, but there is much more going on here. So when Ruth says this to Boaz; she is making a claim on him to put her to wife because he is obligated under the Law of the Levirate marriage. [No matter how much Boaz loved Ruth, he had to await her move! How about you?]

“...near kinsman”: But by invoking the *goel*, the kinsman-redeemer custom, on her own initiative Ruth’s subordinated her own happiness to her family duty of providing Naomi with an heir.

Goel

For you are a near kinsman. In this request, Ruth seems to depart from Naomi’s specific instructions and add something of her own. This is significant, since again it shows Ruth’s devotion to Naomi. Naomi only wanted to obtain a husband for Ruth, a concern of the older widow for the younger widow throughout the book. But by invoking the *goel*, the kinsman-redeemer custom, on her own initiative, Ruth’s subordinated her own happiness to her family duty of providing Naomi with an heir.

- 10] And he said, Blessed be thou of the LORD, my daughter: for thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich.

“...not young men”: The younger men were not *goel*im, for that would have only benefited Ruth and not Naomi. She considered her own happiness as secondary.

- 11] And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.
12] And now it is true that I am thy near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I.

“...a kinsman nearer than I”: There is someone closer who would have first right. Under the Mosaic Law, the duty fell upon the closest male relative, unless he waved his right of priority. (This may explain why he did not make his own move earlier.)

- 13] Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman’s part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the LORD liveth: lie down until the morning.

“Tarry this night”: לָן *lun* By the use of this verb, all ambiguity is removed concerning the sexual implication between the two. [The word in Hebrew is *lun* and not *shachav*: *shachav* carries sexual connotations, but *lun* does not.] When they were in the very crucible of temptation, they proved themselves righteous by choosing integrity over passion.

The plan is spelled out next, and its beginning shall be *in the morning*. Boaz promised to resolve the issue the very next day. It will not be allowed to linger indefinitely any longer, and the whole issue would be settled within a day.

“...as the Lord liveth”: Then Boaz puts himself under the oath: *as YHWH lives*. Then came his final instructions: *lie down until the morning*.

- 14] And she lay at his feet until the morning: and she rose up before one could know another. And he said, Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor.
15] Also he said, Bring the vail that thou hast upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six measures of barley, and laid it on her: and she went into the city.

The six measures of barley are a code. Boaz gave it for Naomi, not Ruth (cf. v.18).

- 16] And when she came to her mother in law, she said, Who art thou, my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done to her.
17] And she said, These six measures of barley gave he me; for he said to me, Go not empty unto thy mother in law.

Verse 17 accomplishes two things:

- 1) This verse provides a transition for Ruth’s exit from the story, and from this point on she plays a passive role.

- 2) It puts Boaz and Naomi on center stage, since from this point on, they are the active players in the story.

18] Then said she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.

“...will not be in rest”: How long did it take God to create the earth? Six days (Gen 1 and Ex 20:11). And on the seventh day He rested. When Boaz gives six measures to Naomi, she understands that he is saying that he won’t rest until the matter is resolved

Chapter 3 Summary

The situation by the end of this chapter is that Naomi’s prayer of Ruth 1:8, 9 is about to be answered: Ruth will find *manoach* or rest in marriage. The famine will no longer be a factor, since Boaz’s gift assured the woman of plenty to eat. Ruth no longer identifies herself with her lower status but with her own name—I *am Ruth*; she was no longer simply just *the Moabitess*.

Law of Redemption: Leviticus 25:47-55

Israel belongs to God. When Joshua entered the land, it was granted to the 12 tribes. That land was to stay in that tribe. You could “sell” your land, which was really more of what we would consider a “lease” (you sold the rights to use the land for awhile). In the year of Jubilee the land would return to the original owners. When you sold your land, the title deed would also include the rules for title redemption. The law required a procedure so that if your next of kin would show up there was some procedure where he could purchase back the unused years (called “redeeming the land”).

Jeremiah was instructed to buy land right before going into captivity (Jer 25). After captivity, Jeremiah’s descendants will come back and claim the land. The title deed would be a scroll, on the back of which would detail the procedure for redemption.

This whole concept becomes important when you encounter the seven-sealed book, “written within and on the backside and sealed with seven seals” (Rev 5).

Next Session

Review the Law of Redemption (Lev 25:23-28; 47-55). Read Ruth Chapter 4.

The Books of Ruth and Esther Session 4

Chapter 4

Outline of Book

- Love’s Resolve Chapter 1
 - Ruth cleaving to Naomi
- Love’s Response Chapter 2
 - Ruth gleaning
- Love’s Request Chapter 3
 - The Threshing Floor Scene
- **Love’s Reward** **Chapter 4**
 - The Redemption of both Land and Bride

Ruth 4

- 1] Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down.

“...the gate”: The city *gate* was where transactions and legal business was carried out (Deut 15:7, 8).

The Elders of the City

The gate of the city is similar to what you and I would consider City Hall. In the ancient tribal traditions, the city was protected and the people that came and went would go through the gate. The people in authority over the city would check credentials at the gate. If there was a matter of issue one would meet the elders at the gate of the city (cf. Gen 19:1).

Boaz was obviously a wealthy landowner, but he also sits at the city gate, which implies that he could have been mayor of the city. When Boaz asks this man to sit down, he does so without question. Boaz is someone who is obeyed.

The City Gate

- Abraham purchased a burial place for Sarah at the city gate (Gen 23).
- Absalom won converts by offering to settle their disputes in their favor at the city *gate* (2 Sam 15:2).

- Kings would sit at the city gate for legal business (2 Sam 19:8; Jer 38:7).
- The city gate was the place for judging the man-slayer (Josh 20:4).
- Criminal acts were judged at the city gate (Deut 21:18–21, 22:15,24).
- The city gate was a place for social intercourse (Ps 127:5).
- It was considered tragic when the elders ceased from the city gate (Lam 5:14).

“...Ho, such a one!”: *הַלְלוּ אֶלֶּמֶיךָ peloni almoni*, an idiom used in place of a proper name. It means “the anonymous one,” and has the basic meaning of “Mr. So-and-So.” It is used twice elsewhere: 2 Kgs 6:8; 1 Sam 21:2 (in the English text; or Sam 21:3 in the Hebrew text).

“...the kinsman”: Probably this other man was a brother of Elimelech, Naomi’s husband, which made him an uncle of Ruth’s first husband.

- 2] And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down.

“...ten men”: Ten elders; the rabbinical basis for the *minyan*, the ten men required by Jewish law to be present before a Jewish synagogue service could be conducted.

- 3] And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech’s:

The land needs to be redeemed for Naomi. Here Boaz is calling the attention of this man to the fact that Naomi is in need of a kinsman-redeemer to step up and redeem the land for her now that she is back in town (cf. Jer 32:6–12).

Kinsman-Redeemer

Goel: Kinsman Redeemer. There were four requirements:

- 1) near kinsman;
 - 2) able to perform;
 - 3) willing to perform.
 - 4) must assume all the obligations involved
- 4] And I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it.

“...I will redeem it”: Boaz’s heart dropped into his sock...

- 5] Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.

“...the Moabitess, the wife of the dead”: Boaz doesn’t withhold his punches... “An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord” (Deut 23:3).

The Law of Redemption: Leviticus 25

The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me. And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land. If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold. And if the man have none to redeem it, and himself be able to redeem it; Then let him count the years of the sale thereof, and restore the overplus unto the man to whom he sold it; that he may return unto his possession. But if he be not able to restore it to him, then that which is sold shall remain in the hand of him that hath bought it until the year of jubilee: and in the jubilee it shall go out, and he shall return unto his possession.

Leviticus 25:23-28

And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by him wax poor, and sell himself unto the stranger or sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the stranger’s family: After that he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him... Either his uncle, or his uncle’s son, may redeem him, or any that is nigh of kin unto him of his family may redeem him; or if he be able, he may redeem himself. And he shall reckon with him that bought him from the year that he was sold to him unto the year of jubilee: and the price of his sale shall be according unto the number of years, according to the time of an hired servant shall it be with him. If there be yet many years behind, according unto them he shall give again the price of his redemption out of the money that he was bought for. And if there remain but few years unto the year of jubilee, then he shall count with him, and according unto his years shall he give him again the price of his redemption. And as a yearly hired servant shall he be with him: and the other shall not rule with rigour over him in thy sight. And if he be not redeemed in these years, then he shall go out in the year of jubilee, both he, and his children with him. For unto me the children of Israel are servants; they are my servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

Leviticus 25:47-55

Israel belongs to God. When Joshua entered the land, it was granted to the 12 tribes. That land was to stay in that tribe. You could “sell” your land, which was really more of what we would consider a “lease” (you sold the rights to use the land for awhile). In the year of Jubilee the land would return to the original owners.

When you sold your land, the title deed would also include the rules for title redemption. The law required a procedure so that if your next of kin would show up there was some procedure where he could purchase back the unused years (called “redeeming the land”).

Jeremiah was instructed to buy land right before going into captivity (Jer 25). After captivity, Jeremiah’s descendants will come back and claim the land. The title deed would be a scroll, on the back of which would detail the procedure for redemption. This whole concept becomes important when you encounter the seven-sealed book, “written within and on the backside and sealed with seven seals” (Rev 5).

And Jeremiah said, The word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Behold, Hanameel the son of Shallum thine uncle shall come unto thee, saying, Buy thee my field that is in Anathoth: for the right of redemption is thine to buy it. So Hanameel mine uncle’s son came to me in the court of the prison according to the word of the LORD, and said unto me, Buy my field, I pray thee, that is in Anathoth, which is in the country of Benjamin: for the right of inheritance is thine, and the redemption is thine; buy it for thyself. Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD. And I bought the field of Hanameel my uncle’s son, that was in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, even seventeen shekels of silver. And I subscribed the evidence, and sealed it, and took witnesses, and weighed him the money in the balances. So I took the evidence of the purchase, both that which was sealed according to the law and custom, and that which was open: And I gave the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, in the sight of Hanameel mine uncle’s son, and in the presence of the witnesses that subscribed the book of the purchase, before all the Jews that sat in the court of the prison. And I charged Baruch before them, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open; and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days.

Jeremiah 32:6-14

Our Kinsman-Redeemer “Goel”

He had to be a kinsman. He had to be able. He had to be willing. He had to assume all the obligations of the beneficiary. He was also the “avenger of blood...”

The Seven-Sealed Scroll: Revelation 5

The Ultimate Escrow Closing...[Books were *scrolls* prior to second century A.D. A book with pages is known as a “codex.”]

A sealed book, with conditions on the exterior and sealed, suggests a title deed. Roman law required that a **Will** be sealed with seven seals (as was illustrated in the wills left by Augustus and Vespasian).

- 1] And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.
- 2] And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?”
- 3] And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.
- 4] And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

A dramatic mystery thriller! A **man** is sought: a *kinsman* of Adam, able to qualify as a *Goel*...[They reviewed the potential inventory in three places: heaven, in earth, and under the earth. Why?] We may be confused; John was not. He understood and “sobbed convulsively (Rom 8:22, 23).”

- 5] And one of the elders saith unto me, “Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.”
- 6] And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

[These are all *Jewish* titles: **Lamb** not referred to in the “seven churches” letters. Cf. Jn 1:29,36; Acts 8:32; 1 Pet 1:19.]

The Lamb = His 1st Coming; The Lion = His 2nd Coming.

(Jewish title: “Lamb” as John first introduces Him publicly.) In other places in the NT, the world is *amnos*, as in Jn 1:29, 36; 1 Pet 1:19; Acts 8:32 (Isa 53:7). Here it is the word that Jeremiah uses, “I was like a lamb or an ox that is brought to the slaughter,” Jer 11:19, *arnion*, This emphasizes, “as it had been slain.”

- 7] And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.
- 8] And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

“...he came and took the book”: That’s real access! “It is finished”: *tetelestai* (Col 2:14; Jn 19:30); “paid in full” (Heb 2:8). Incense, odors = prayers (Rev 8:3,4; Ps 141:2). These are the prayers of God’s dedicated people. We, the redeemed, actually contribute to the work of redemption through our prayers! Prayer is God’s way of enlisting you in what He is doing (1 Tim 2:1-4; cf. “Thy Kingdom come”). A Praise Chorus ensues...]

- 9] And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;
10] And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

“New Song”: very common in the Psalms (Ps 33:3; 40:3; 98:1; 96:1; 144:9; 149:1). However, this is closer to Isaiah (42:9,10).

NOTE: “us” in *24 manuscripts*, including Codex Sinaiticus; Basilianus (Vatican); Latin Coptic, Memphitic; (vs. “them”: only 1: Codex Alexandrinus). “Some churches tend to delete “by thy blood” from their hymnals (and sermons.) Perhaps that’s why the Lord isn’t going to embarrass them by taking them into heaven because they would have to sing about the blood up there.” [J. Vernon McGee] Rev 1:6 settles the identity issue!

*Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,
And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to Him be
glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

Revelation 1:5b, 6

- 11] And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;
12] Saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.”

He is worshipped for **Who He is**; **Where He is** (not in a manger, in Jerusalem, on the cross, nor in the tomb). He is in the center of the Throne; and, for **What He does**.

Harps are instruments of praise throughout the Psalms. Just as the strings of a harp vibrate in harmony, so the whole of creation will vibrate in harmonious worship. (It is interesting that the Scriptures always allude to “10 strings.” The is particularly provocative in view of current physics

which views all of creation on the basis of 10-dimensional strings! See *Beyond Perception* briefing package, or our *Genesis* Commentary.)

Redemption sealed: Cf. Dan 12:4-9; Rev 10:8-11; Ezek 2:10; Zech 5:1-4; Isa 29:11f.

- 6] And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it.

Willing, able, to redeem the land, but unable to redeem the bride.

The Nearer Kinsman Passes

He would have to invest his own money to redeem the land; however, having to marry Ruth and produce a son through her meant that son would legally be the son of Mahlon and the one to inherit the property. The kinsman would thus end up losing both the property and the investment.

Moreover, not only would the son inherit the property the kinsman redeemed, he would also inherit part of the kinsman’s own property; and since he would lose his investment, the redeemed property, and part of his own land, the kinsman would be depriving his own heirs.

The “Nearer Kinsman”?

Metaphorically, the “nearer kinsman” represents the Mosaic Law. To begin with, he’s nameless. The Law could not redeem us. It was *impossible* for the Law to redeem us. That’s made very clear in the New Testament: “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Rom 3:20).

The Law was never given to be a redeemer. The Law was given to reveal man’s true condition. Paul calls it a ministration of condemnation (2 Cor 3:9) and a ministration of death (2 Cor 3:7). The Law was never a savior. The Law actually condemned us rather than saved us.

Striving

- | | |
|---|----------|
| • “I am as good as the next guy” | Strike 1 |
| • “I am trying the best I can” | Strike 2 |
| • “I try to live by the Sermon on the Mount and the Ten Commandments” | Strike 3 |

Remember Yoda's counsel: "You do or you do not. There is no 'try'!"

- 7] Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour: and this was a testimony in Israel.

"...plucked off his shoe": to the giver, a testimony of deferral; to Boaz, a marriage license! (Although this may not be the same as the *chalitzah*, which is based upon Deut 25:5-10.)

- 8] Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe.

The custom itself arose from the fact that fixed property was taken possession of by treading upon the soil, as Abraham did in Gen 13:17 and as Joshua was told to do in Josh 1:3. Hence, taking off the shoe and handing it to another was a symbol of the transfer of a possession or the right of ownership.

Shoes

- At the Burning Bush (Ex 3:5; Acts 7:33);
 - At Joshua's confrontation (Josh 5:15);
 - Durability during 40 years of wilderness wanderings (Deut 29:5);
 - John the Baptist: "Shoe latches unworthy to unloose..." (Mt 3:11; Act 13:25).
- 9] And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi.

The Redemption: Chapter 4

Boaz confronts the "Nearer Kinsman": The nearer kinsman is willing to redeem the property; yet he is *not* willing to take Ruth as bride, so he yields his shoe to defer the obligation.

Boaz steps up: He purchases the land for Naomi and he "purchases" Ruth as his bride.

- 10] Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day.

"...I purchase": "Purchased..." cf. Acts 20:28.

- 11] And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. The LORD make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem:

"...famous in Bethlehem": cf. Micah 5:2. "House of Bread" (of life!) The shepherds in the field in Bethlehem—were they in Boaz's field?

Hermeneutics

- Greek Model: Prophecy = Prediction → Fulfillment;
- Hebrew Model: Prophecy = Pattern (types, et. al).

Boaz as a Type of Kinsman-Redeemer

This story really did happen; however, there is also a symbolic meaning. Boaz is in the role of the *Goel*, Kinsman-redeemer. Jesus Christ is our Kinsman-redeemer. It seems unusual that Boaz would take to wife a Moabitess, because that was prohibited in the Torah. But Boaz's mother was Rahab, the Amorite (the one from Jericho) [For a complete study do see our *Joshua* Commentary.]

By Boaz' act of redemption, he takes a Gentile bride, and redeems the land to Naomi.

Boaz is said to be a type of Christ, an anticipatory analog (Hosea 12:10). This does not mean that he was/is Christ, but that his role gives us a perspective about a kinsman-redeemer. If Boaz is the kinsman-redeemer type of Christ, then Ruth is a type of the Church; she is a Gentile who is taken to wife of the kinsman-redeemer. Naomi would be a type of Israel.

Types: *Goel*

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| • He had to be a kinsman | Heb 2:16 |
| • He had to be willing | Rom 3:24; Heb 12:2 |
| • He had to be able | Heb 7:25 |
| • He had to assume all obligations | Phil 2:9-11 |

Our Kinsman-Redeemer

Christ, like Boaz, is not free to move in your behalf until you claim Him as your Kinsman-Redeemer. Christ died on the cross for you; He

went through hell for you; and He even today stands at the door of your heart and knocks, saying, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” (Rev 3:20). But He won’t crash the door down. It’s *your* move.

Reflexive Observations

- In order to bring Ruth to Naomi, Naomi had to be exiled from her land.
- What the Law could not do, Grace did.
- Ruth does not *replace* Naomi.
- Ruth learns of Boaz’s ways thru Naomi.
- Naomi meets Boaz thru Ruth.
- No matter how much Boaz loved Ruth, he had to await *her* move.
- Boaz, not Ruth, confronts the “Nearer Kinsman.”

Ruth: Final Remarks

The Book of Ruth is always read at the Feast of Pentecost (*Shavuot*). You can’t really understand Revelation 5 without understanding the Book of Ruth. *You and I are also beneficiaries of a love story, that was written in blood, on a wooden cross, erected in Judea almost 2,000 years ago.*

12] And let thy house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the LORD shall give thee of this young woman.

“...house of Perez”: *Perez* was born as the result of a levirate marriage (cf. Gen 38:6-29). He was the son of Judah from whom Boaz descended. Boaz was of the Clan of Perez, a clan that had settled in Bethlehem (1 Chr. 2:5, 2:18, and 2:50–54—note the mention of Ephrathah in vv. 50, 51).

13] So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son.

Ruth’s Social Progression

Term	Meaning	Ruth
נַכְרִיָּה <i>Nochriyah</i>	Foreigner	2:10
שִׁפְחָה <i>Shipah</i>	Beneath a lower servant	2:13
אָמָה <i>Amah</i>	Maid servant	3:9
אִשָּׁה <i>Iishah</i>	Wife	4:13

- 14] And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be the LORD, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel.
- 15] And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him.
- 16] And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it.
- 17] And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

“...nurse”: אֹמֶנֶת *omenet*, from the verb that means “to be firm.” The expression denotes “a guardian” or “a nanny” in the technical sense, but does not imply a wet nurse.

- 18] Now these are the generations of Pharez: Pharez begat Hezron,
- 19] And Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab,

“...Hezron”: Immigrated to or was born in Egypt (Gen. 46:12); He was the head of the Hezron Clan (Num 26:21).

“...Ram”: He is mentioned in 1 Chr 2:9.

“...Amminadab”: He was the father-in-law of Aaron, who married his daughter Elisheba (Ex 6:23).

- 20] And Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon,
- 21] And Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed,
- 22] And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David.

“...Nahshon”: He was the prince of the Tribe of Judah at the time of Moses (Ex 6:23; Num 1:7, 2:3, 7:12, 7:17, 10:14).

“...Salmon”: Also, spelled as *Salman* and *Salma* (1 Chr 2:10–11, 2:51, 2:54). He is the one who married Rahab (Mt 1:5) and thus he participated in the conquest of the Land and settled in Bethlehem.

Chapter 4: Half-Way Point

- Part A: Summarize the role of *Goel* (Ruth 4:1-11).
- Part B: Genealogical Surprise(s) (Ruth 4:12-22; Genesis 38).
- Tenth Generation.
- Equidistant Letter Sequences.

Next Session

Read Genesis 38. How could Samuel anoint Saul (from the Tribe of Benjamin) as King when he knew that the Israel’s King was to be of the Tribe of Judah (Gen 49:10)?

The Books of Ruth and Esther Session 5

Book of Ruth: Review

Denouement

Final revelation: A final part in which everything is made clear and no questions or surprises remain (from the French, from *dénouer* “to untie,” from *nouer* “to tie,” from, ultimately, Latin *nodus* “knot”).

The Redemption: Chapter 4 Review

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Boaz steps up: He purchases the land for Naomi and he “purchases” Ruth as his bride.

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“...famous in Bethlehem”: cf. Micah 5:2. “House of Bread” (of life!) The shepherds in the field in Bethlehem—were they in Boaz’s field?

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Ruth 4:12

A strange prophecy. It depends on our understanding the events of Genesis 38.

Genesis 38: Judah's Sin With Tamar

- 1] And it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah.
- 2] And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name was Shuah; and he took her, and went in unto her.
- 3] And she conceived, and bare a son; and he called his name Er.

Judah, who had suggested that the brothers sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites (Gen 37:26-27), then left and stayed in Adullam (about 15 miles north-west of Hebron) and married a pagan Canaanite woman. This marriage to a Canaanite almost ruined Judah's family. Intermarriage with the Canaanites had been avoided earlier (Gen 34), but not here.

- 4] And she conceived again, and bare a son; and she called his name Onan.
- 5] And she yet again conceived, and bare a son; and called his name Shelah; and he was at Chezib, when she bare him.
- 6] And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name was Tamar.
- 7] And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him.

They had three sons, Er, Onan, and Shelah. Two sons, Er and Onan, died without leaving children. Judah promised Tamar, who had been the wife of the brothers, one after the other, that she should have his third son, Shelah, for a husband, when he came of the right age. The family line must not die out.

- 8] And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother.
- 9] And Onan knew that the seed should not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother.

- 10] And the thing which he did displeased the LORD: wherefore he slew him also.

Levirate marriage (from Latin *levir*; "husband's brother") was codified in the *Torah* (Deut 25:5-10). By the custom of the levirate law of marriage, the second son, Onan, was to marry Tamar, the widow of his brother, and raise up offspring for his brother. However, Onan repeatedly used that law for sexual gratification. He took advantage of the situation, but refused the responsibility that went with it. So God took his life too.

- 11] Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter in law, Remain a widow at thy father's house, till Shelah my son be grown: for he said, Lest peradventure he die also, as his brethren did. And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.
- 12] And in process of time the daughter of Shuah Judah's wife died; and Judah was comforted, and went up unto his sheepshearers to Timnath, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite.

In view of the situation, Judah refused to give his third son Shelah to Tamar, Er's widow. Shelah was not yet grown up (and even later when he was, Judah still refused; v. 14).

"...sheepshearers": Sheep shearer season, which occurs in Israel towards the end of March, was spent in more than usual hilarity, and the wealthiest masters invited their friends, as well as treated their servants, to sumptuous entertainments. Accordingly, it is said, Judah was accompanied by his friend Hirah.

"...Timnath": the mountains of Judea.

- 13] And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold thy father in law goeth up to Timnath to shear his sheep.
- 14] And she put her widow's garments off from her, and covered her with a veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place, which is by the way to Timnath; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife.
- 15] When Judah saw her, he thought her to be an harlot; because she had covered her face.

Tamar felt she would have to take matters into her own hands if she were to be granted the rights of the levirate custom. Pretending to be one of the *kedeshot* (religious prostitutes), she tricked Judah into having illicit relations with her.

- 16] And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee; (for he knew not that she was his daughter in law.) And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me?

- 17] And he said, I will send thee a kid from the flock. And she said, Wilt thou give me a pledge, till thou send it?
- 18] And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that is in thine hand. And he gave it her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him.
- 19] And she arose, and went away, and laid by her vail from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood.

For a pledge that he would send a goat for payment, he left his seal (which hung suspended from a cord around his neck) and his staff with her. Bracelets, including armlets, were worn by men as well as women among the Hebrews. But the *Hebrew* word here rendered “bracelets,” is everywhere else translated “lace” or “ribbon.”

- 20] And Judah sent the kid by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive his pledge from the woman’s hand: but he found her not.
- 21] Then he asked the men of that place, saying, Where is the harlot, that was openly by the way side? And they said, There was no harlot in this place.
- 22] And he returned to Judah, and said, I cannot find her; and also the men of the place said, that there was no harlot in this place.

When he tried to retrieve them through his friend Hirah (cf. v. 1), the girl was nowhere to be found.

- 23] And Judah said, Let her take it to her, lest we be shamed: behold, I sent this kid, and thou hast not found her.
- 24] And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot; and also, behold, she is with child by whoredom. And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt.

Again Jacob’s family experienced deception—this time by his *Canaanite* daughter-in-law!

“...let her be burnt”: The crime of adultery was anciently punished in many places by burning (Lev 21:9; Jdg 15:6; Jer 29:22).

- 25] When she was brought forth, she sent to her father in law, saying, By the man, whose these are, am I with child: and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff.
- 26] And Judah acknowledged them, and said, She hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son. And he knew her again no more.

When she proved by the seal, cord, and staff that he was the guilty partner. Tamar had won the right to be the mother of Judah’s children, though in a deceitful way. Her action was desperate and risky, but she thus appears in the Messianic family tree (Mt 1:3).

- 27] And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins were in her womb.
- 28] And it came to pass, when she travailed, that the one put out his hand: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first.
- 29] And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that, behold, his brother came out: and she said, How hast thou broken forth? this breach be upon thee: therefore his name was called Perez.

But in the birth of the boys an unusual situation occurred, *paralleling the births of Jacob and Esau*. After one twin’s hand came out the other made a breach and was born first, so he was rightly named Perez (“breach”). Then the second twin was named Zerah (“scarlet”) because of the scarlet thread the midwife tied on his wrist.

- 30] And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand: and his name was called Zerah.

God gave Tamar twins, and the line of Judah continued because of her. It is as if the oracle concerning Jacob’s ruling over his older brother (27:29) was being relived in the line of Judah.

The Strange Prophecy

A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the LORD.
Deuteronomy 23:2

- 1) Perez
- 2) Hezron
- 3) Ram
- 4) Amminadab
- 5) Nahshon
- 6) Salmon
- 7) Boaz
- 8) Obed
- 9) Jesse
- 10) David

How could Samuel anoint Saul (from the Tribe of Benjamin) as King when he knew that the King was to be of the Tribe of Judah (Gen 49)? *David was not ready yet!* He was prophesied in the time of the Judges (Ruth) in the genealogy from Perez to David!

Prophetic Undercurrents

David's lineage prophesied (in the time of the Judges) in the Book of Ruth:

- The 10th generation after Perez (Ruth 4:12,18-22)
- Bastards excluded until 10th generation (Deut 23:2)
- *But there's more...*

David's lineage is encrypted in the Hebrew text of *Genesis* 38—in 49-letter intervals! (See chart on next page.)

Comparison of Ruth and Esther

Ruth	Esther
• A Gentile woman	A Jewish woman
• Living among Jews	Living among Gentiles
• Married a Jew (Boaz)	Married a Gentile
in the royal line	who ruled an empire
• Emphasizes the	Emphasizes the
<i>sovereignty</i> of God;	<i>providence</i> of God;
• God's Name <i>is</i>	God's Name <i>is</i>
mentioned	<i>not</i> mentioned (explicitly)

Both stories demonstrate that “chance” is God working under cover [Fruchtenbaum].

Selah Moments

- In order to bring Ruth to Naomi, Naomi had to be exiled from her land.
- What the Law could not do, Grace did.
- Ruth does *not* replace Naomi.
- Ruth learns of Boaz's ways thru Naomi.
- Naomi meets Boaz thru Ruth.
- No matter how much Boaz loved Ruth, he had to await *her* move.
- Boaz, not Ruth, confronts the "Nearer Kinsman."

- In Chapter 1, Ruth doesn't even know that Boaz exists.
- In Chapter 2, Ruth is a poor laborer, gleaning in the field of Boaz and receiving his gifts. To her, Boaz is only a mighty man of wealth who shows kindness to her.
- The turning point is in Chapter 3 where Ruth yields herself at the feet of Boaz and believes his promises. The result is recorded in

Genesis 38

[illegible]

בועז	Boaz
רות	Ruth
עבד	Obed
ישי	Jesse
דוד	David

*All in 49-letter intervals; &
All in chronological order!*

Chapter 4: Ruth is no longer a poor gleaner, for now she has Boaz, *and everything he owns belongs to her.*

- Too many of God's people are content to live in Chapter 2, picking up the leftovers and doing the best they can in their difficult situation. What a difference it would make if they would only surrender themselves to the Lord and focus on the Giver instead of the gifts!

The events in the Book of Ruth occurred during the period of the Judges, a time not much different from our own day. If you focus only on the evils of our day, you'll become pessimistic and cynical; but, if you ask God what field He wants you to work in and faithfully serve Him, you'll experience His grace, love, and joy. Ponder John 14:21–23:

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

John 14:21-23

Judges is the book of “no king” (Judg 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). First Samuel is the book of “man's king,” when God gave Saul to Israel because they asked for him. Things will get so bad in our world that the nations will one day cry out for a king to feed them and protect them. *That king will appear; and we call him the Antichrist.*

But 1 Samuel isn't the end of the story. 2 Samuel is the book of *God's king!* David did appear on the scene, and he did (and will) establish the kingdom in the name of the Lord. Likewise, when man's king has done his worst, God's King will appear, judge this evil world, put away ungodliness, and then establish His glorious kingdom.

Our Coming King

—inspired by Pastor S.D. Lockridge

He is:

King of the Jews (*racial*);
King of Israel (*national*);
King of all the Ages;
King of Heaven;

King of Glory;
King of Kings;
..and Lord of Lords. [Do you know Him? *Do you really?*]

A prophet before Moses;
A priest after Melchizedek;
A champion like Joshua;
An offering in place of Isaac;
A king from the line of David;
A wise counselor above Solomon;
A beloved/rejected/exalted son like Joseph.
And yet far more...

The Heavens declare His glory...
and the firmament shows His handiwork..

He who **is**, who **was**, and who always **will be**;

The first and the last
He is the Alpha and the Omega
the Aleph and the Tau
the A and the Z;
He is the first fruits of them that slept.

He is the ἐγώ εἰμι
the אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה
the “I AM that I AM” [*the Voice of the Burning Bush!*]
He is the Captain of the Lord's Host
He was the conqueror of Jericho

He is enduringly strong;
He is entirely sincere;
He is eternally steadfast;

He is immortally graceful;
He is imperially powerful;
He is impartially merciful;

In Him dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily;
The very God of very God.
He is our Kinsman-Redeemer
and He is our Avenger of Blood;

He is our City of Refuge;
our Performing High Priest,
our Personal Prophet,
our Reigning King.

He's the Loftiest idea in Literature;
He's the highest Personality in Philosophy;
He's the Fundamental Doctrine of Theology;
He's the Supreme Problem in "higher criticism"!
He's the Miracle of the Ages
the Superlative of everything good

We are the beneficiaries of a Love Letter:
It was written in blood,
on a wooden cross
erected in Judea
2,000 years ago.

*He was crucified on a cross of wood,
yet He made the hill on which it stood.*

By Him were all things made that were made;
without Him was not anything made that was made;
By Him are all things held together!

What held Him to that cross? *It wasn't the nails!*
(At any time He could have declared, "I'm out of here!")
It was His love for you and me.

He was born of a woman
so that we could be born of God;
He humbled Himself
so that we could be lifted up;
He became a servant
so that we could be made co-heirs;
He suffered rejection
so that we could become His friends;
He denied Himself
so that we could freely receive all things;
He gave Himself
so that He could bless us in every way.

He is

*Available to the tempted and the tried;
Blesses the young;
Cleanses the lepers;
Defends the feeble;
Delivers the captives;
Discharges the debtors;
Forgives the sinners;
Franchises the meek;
Guards the besieged;
Heals the sick;
Provides strength to the weak;
Regards the aged;
Rewards the diligent;
Serves the unfortunate;
Sympathizes and He saves!*

His Offices are manifold;
His Reign is righteous;
His Promises are sure;
His Goodness is limitless;
His Light is matchless;
His Grace is sufficient;
His Love never changes;
His Mercy is everlasting;
His Word is enough;
His Yoke is easy and
His Burden is light!

He's indescribable;
He's incomprehensible;
He's irresistible;
He's invincible!

The Heaven of heavens cannot *contain* Him;
Man cannot *explain* Him

The Pharisees couldn't *stand* Him
and learned that they couldn't *stop* Him;
Pilate couldn't *find any fault* with Him;
the witnesses couldn't *agree against* Him.
Herod couldn't *kill* Him
death couldn't *handle* Him
the grave couldn't *hold* Him!

He *has always been and always will be*;
He had no predecessor and
will have no successor;
You can't impeach Him and
he isn't going to resign!

His name is above every name;
That at the name of Yeshua
Every knee shall bow
Every tongue shall confess
That Jesus Christ is Lord!

His is the kingdom, the power, and the glory... for ever, and ever.
...Amen!

* * *

The Books of Ruth and Esther Session 6

Esther 1 & 2

Introduction

Esther is an obscure book to many. It is a story of human love, palace intrigue, and the glory days of the Persian Empire. A Jewish maiden, elevated to the Throne of Persia as queen, is used by God to preserve His people against a Hitler-like annihilation... The Book of Esther commemorates the deliverance celebrated, to this day—the Feast of Purim.

Puzzles

- No mention of the name of God;
- No reference to worship or faith;
- No prediction of the Messiah;
- No mention of heaven or hell...nothing “religious” about it.
- It is a gripping tale, but why is it here in the Bible? Is it a revelation of God's providence? Martin Luther believed it should not be part of the Canon!
- Esther = means “Something Hidden”(!)
- [The name of YHWH is hidden inside the text in several ways...]

Paul reveals that the historic incidents that happened to Israel are intended as types for us:

*Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples [as a warning]:
and they are written for our admonition [instruction]...*
1 Corinthians 10:11

*For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning,
that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*
Romans 15:4

Models/Types

Examples include:

- Feasts of Israel = prophetic implications (Passover, Firstfruits, etc.);
- Days of Noah;
- Abraham's Offering of Isaac;
- Jonah, three days...

The story behind the story: *Ourselves*. Bible = To know God; to know ourselves!

Time Period

Chronologically, it antedates the Book of Nehemiah by about 30 years. Esther makes possible Nehemiah. It was Esther's marriage to the King of Persia that ultimately leads to the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

These are historical events: not just a story to highlight a moral. It deals with an escape from annihilation after their return from Babylonian captivity and enables the chain of events that led to the Messiah five centuries later.

The book takes place in the Persian period (539-331 B.C.), after many Israelites had returned from the Exile to the land of Palestine to rebuild the temple. Most Israelite captives, however, chose not to return to their homeland. They should have done so for Isaiah and Jeremiah had urged the yet-to-be-exiled nation to come out of Babylon after 70 years (Isa 48:20; Jer 29:10 50:8; 51:6) and return to the place where the Lord could bless them under the promises (Deut 28).

Then said God, Call his name Lo-Ammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God.

Hosea 1:9

The events in the Book of Esther extend over a decade:

- from 483 B.C., Xerxes' 3rd year; Esther 1:3
- to 473 B.C., the end of Xerxes' 12th year; Esther 3:7

The events in this book occurred between those recorded in Ezra 6 & 7.

Esther 1

- 1] Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, (this is Ahasuerus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces:)

“...Ahasuerus”: His Persian name was Khshayarsha, which in Hebrew becomes Ahasuerus, and in the Greek language, Xerxes. His father was Darius I, and his grandfather was Cyrus the Great.

Ahasuerus

This is a title, like Pharaoh or Caesar:

- 1) The father of Darius the Mede, mentioned in (Dan 9:1). This was probably the Cyaxares I. known by this name in profane history, the king of Media and the conqueror of Nineveh.
- 2) The king mentioned in Ezra 4:6 probably the Cambyses of profane history, the son and successor of Cyrus (529 B.C.).
- 3) The son of Darius Hystaspes, the king named in the Book of Esther. He ruled over the kingdoms of Persia, Media, and Babylonia, “from India to Ethiopia.” This was in all probability the Xerxes of profane history, who succeeded his father Darius (485-465 B.C.).

(In the LXX version of the Book of Esther, the name Artaxerxes occurs for Ahasuerus. Actually, Artaxerxes was his son, and triggers the 70 Weeks)

Ahasuerus reigned for twenty-one years (485-465 B.C.) and led his vast armies against Greece. The two countries listed are chosen as the extreme *terminals* of the Persian empire.

“...Ethiopia” [*Cush*]: A term for the upper Nile region, which included present-day southern Egypt, all of Sudan, and northern Ethiopia.

- 2] That in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the palace,

“...Shushan the palace”: 200 miles E of Babylon, capital of Elam; site of the winter residence of Persian kings. This palace was also the residence of:

- Darius, who authorized the rebuilding of the Temple;
- Xerxes, Esther’s husband;
- Artaxerxes I, who authorized Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem (and triggers the 70 Weeks).

Shushan

Loftus in 1852 found an inscription of Artaxerxes II (405-358 B.C.): “My ancestor Darius (521-485 B.C.) built this palace in former times. In the reign of my grandfather (Artaxerxes I, 465-425 B.C.) it was burned. I have restored it.” [An author from a later period probably would not have known about the palace, so it can be inferred that the author of this book was someone who was close to the events chronologically.]

Dieulafoy, a Frenchman, continued the excavations (1884-86) and located the ruins of the “king’s gate” (Esther 4:2); the “inner court” (Esther 5:1); the “outer court” (Esther 6:4); the “palace garden” (Esther 7:7); and, one of the dice (“*Pur*”) with which they cast lots (Esther 3:7).

- 3] In the third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his princes and his servants; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, being before him:

“...feast”: His drinking parties were well known. Xerxes did have an irrational temper, occasionally exhibiting fits of rage (Esther 1:12; 7:10). He did have a palace in Susa and a large harem there.

“...power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, being before him”: The vast pillared halls of the Persepolitan and Susan palaces could accommodate many hundreds, if not thousands. The presence of such persons at the great gathering at Susa preparatory to the Grecian war is witnessed to by Herodotus (Esther 7:19).

Historical Context

The Greek historian Herodotus (485–425 B.C.) refers to these banquets in his *History*, where he states that Ahasuerus was conferring with his leaders about a possible invasion of Greece.

Ahasuerus’ father, Darius I, had invaded Greece and been shamefully defeated at Marathon in 490. While preparing to return to Greece and get revenge, Darius had died (486 B.C.); and now his son felt compelled to avenge his father and expand his empire at the same time.

Herodotus claims that Ahasuerus planned to invade all of Europe and “reduce the whole earth into one empire”: “My intent is to throw a bridge over the Hellespont and march an army through Europe against Greece, that thereby I may obtain vengeance from the Athenians for the wrongs committed by them against the Persians and against my father.” [Herodotus, *The History*, Book VII, section 8.]

The king's uncle, Artabanus, strongly opposed the plan, but the king persisted and succeeded in convincing the princes and officers to follow him.

According to Herodotus it took Xerxes four years to get ready for the invasion he launched in 481 B.C. (Herodotus' four years would extend from the beginning of Xerxes' reign in 485.) No doubt the 180 days involved planning sessions in which all the provinces' leaders were being prepared for the war effort. [He will marry Esther four years later, in the 7th year of his reign; cf. Esther 2:16.]

Unfortunately, this ostentatious display of wealth couldn't guarantee the Persians a military victory. In 480 B.C., the Persian navy was destroyed at Salamis, while the king sat on a throne watching the battle; in 479 B.C., the Persian army was defeated at Plataea. Thus ended Ahasuerus' dream of a world empire.

Banquets

Along with these three banquets, at least six other feasts are recorded in this book:

- Esther's coronation banquet (Esther 2:18);
- Haman's celebration feast with the king (Esther 3:15);
- Esther's two banquets for Haman and the king (Esther 5 and 7);
- The Jews' banquets when they heard the new decree (Esther 8:17);
- The Feast of Purim (Esther 9:17-19).

- 4] When he shewed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty many days, even an hundred and fourscore days.

"...showed the riches of his glorious kingdom": Ostentation was a main feature in the character of Xerxes. The huge army with which he invaded Greece was more for display than for service. Vain parade is apparent at every step of his expedition [Herodotus 7:31, 40, 41, 44, 59, etc.]

He now exhibits "the riches of his kingdom" to his nobles and chief officers, showing them doubtless all the splendours of the palace, the walls draped with gold [Aeschyl., 'Pers.', 50:161], the marble pillars and rich hangings, the golden plane tree and the golden vine, and perhaps the ingots of gold wherewith Darius had filled the treasury [Herodotus 7:27, 3:96.]

- 5] And when these days were expired, the king made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan the palace, both unto great and small, seven days, in the court of the garden of the king's palace;

This is a space nearly 350 feet long by 250 wide, with a square of 145 feet taken out of it for the central building. The area exceeds 60,000 square feet!

- 6] Where were white, green, and blue, hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble: the beds were of gold and silver, upon a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black, marble.

"...red, and blue, and white, and black": The four words which follow "pavement" are not adjectives denoting colors, but the names of four different materials.

- 7] And they gave them drink in vessels of gold, (the vessels being diverse one from another,) and royal wine in abundance, according to the state of the king.

"...the vessels being diverse one from another": This is a minute point, which must have come from an eye-witness, or from one who had received the account of the banquet from an eye-witness.

- 8] And the drinking was according to the law; none did compel: for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man's pleasure.

It is implied that the usual custom was different—that the foolish practice prevailed of compelling men to drink. That the Persians were hard drinkers, and frequently drank to excess [Herodotus (1:133); Xenophon 'Cyrop.', 8:8, § 11].

- 9] Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to king Ahasuerus.

The name "Vashti" means "beautiful woman." (Vashti is identified as a granddaughter of Nebuchadnezzar in some Rabbinic sources.)

Amestris?

The only wife of Xerxes known to the Greeks was Amestris, the daughter of Otanes, one of the seven conspirators [Herod., 7:61]. Xerxes probably took her to wife as soon as he was of marriageable age, and before he ascended the throne had a son by her, who in his seventh year was grown up [ibid. 9:108]. It would seem to be certain that if Ahasuerus is Xerxes, Vashti must be Amestris.

Men and women did not take their meals together in Persia unless in the privacy of domestic life [Brisson, 'De Regn. Pers.', 2, pp. 273-276]. If the women, therefore, were to partake in a festivity, it was necessary that they should be entertained separately. In the royal house. In the gynaeceum or harem, which was probably on the southern side of the great pillared hall at Susa.

- 10] On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven chamberlains that served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king,
- 11] To bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to shew the people and the princes her beauty: for she was fair to look on.
- 12] But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by his chamberlains: therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him.
- 13] Then the king said to the wise men, which knew the times, (for so was the king's manner toward all that knew law and judgment:
- 14] And the next unto him was Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, which saw the king's face, and which sat the first in the kingdom;)
- 15] What shall we do unto the queen Vashti according to law, because she hath not performed the commandment of the king Ahasuerus by the chamberlains?
- 16] And Memucan answered before the king and the princes, Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes, and to all the people that are in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus.
- 17] For this deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, so that they shall despise their husbands in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not.
- 18] Likewise shall the ladies of Persia and Media say this day unto all the king's princes, which have heard of the deed of the queen. Thus shall there arise too much contempt and wrath.
- 19] If it please the king, let there go a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, That Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she.

Decrees of quite a temporary character were sometimes attached to the code for the express purpose of rendering them unalterable (Dan 6:8, 9).

- 20] And when the king's decree which he shall make shall be published throughout all his empire, (for it is great,) all the wives shall give to their husbands honour, both to great and small.
- 21] And the saying pleased the king and the princes; and the king did according to the word of Memucan:
- 22] For he sent letters into all the king's provinces, into every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language, that every man should bear rule in his own house, and that it should be published according to the language of every people.

Esther 2

- 1] After these things, when the wrath of king Ahasuerus was appeased, he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what was decreed against her.

“the wrath of king Ahasuerus”: Between chapters 1 and 2, at least four years pass, during which Xerxes went on his disastrous Greek campaign (481–479 B.C.).

Greco-Persian Battles

490 B.C.	Battle of Marathon
480 B.C.	Battle of Thermopylae
480 B.C.	Battle of Salamis
479 B.C.	Battle of Plataea

Battle of Marathon

The battle took place between the Greeks and the Persians at Marathon, a plain on Athenian territory 25 mi NE of Athens, in 490 B.C. Herodotus presents the campaign as having been initiated against the Greek cities of Athens and Eretria by Darius I in revenge for their support of a revolt within the Persian empire of the Ionian (Greek) cities of Asia Minor in 499-494 B.C.

At the same time, he portrays the Persian motive as the conquest of the whole of Greece. The Persians (90,000?) far outnumbered the Greeks (10,000?); According to Herodotus, the dead numbered 192 Athenians and 6,400 Persians.

The Battle of Thermopylae

Thermopylae (Greek, “Hot Gates”), was the name of the pass taken from hot sulfur springs in the vicinity. It was the scene of the first major battle fought during the invasion of Greece that Xerxes led between 480 and 479 B.C. Xerxes' campaign was motivated partly by the desire to avenge the Greeks' defeat of the Persians at the Battle of Marathon in 490 B.C., and partly by ambition for imperial expansion.

Even before the Battle of Thermopylae, Xerxes had already won over large parts of Greece through both a diplomatic initiative and the threat of force. The remaining Greeks, under the leadership of Sparta, abandoned the Thessalian frontier and made a stand instead at the pass of

Thermopylae. Thermopylae was the main route by which an invading army could penetrate from the north into southern Greece. In ancient times it was a narrow track about 50 ft wide passing under a cliff. [Again, in 191 B.C., the Seleucid king Antiochus III (the Great) was defeated while attempting to check the Romans at this point.]

(While regarded as an exaggeration, Herodotus indicates that the Persians numbered 2.6 million, against 7000 Greeks.) Thermopylae won eternal fame as the scene of the heroic death of Leonidas I and his 1400 men, including the fabled 300 of whom were Spartans.

The Greeks were betrayed by Ephialtes, a Thessalian, into the hands of the Persians, who, by following a path over the mountain, attacked the Greeks from the rear. The Persians went on to take Athens but, later in 480 B.C. the Greek navy defeated them at the Battle of Salamis, halting Xerxes' advance on Greece and putting an end to his imperial ambitions.

The Battle of Salamis

An important Greek naval victory in 480 B.C. which occurred in a strait near the island of Salamis, not far from Athens. The Persians under Xerxes had been advancing with great success through Greece, and in 480 B.C. had captured Athens. Both Greek and Persian supplies were running low, and there was disagreement among the Greeks as to what their next move should be.

Some advocated withdrawal to Corinth. However, the Athenian general Themistocles argued that it would be more effective to pursue an aggressive naval policy and hold their position. When he threatened to leave with the Athenian navy, the rest of the Greek force agreed to his plan.

By some accounts, Themistocles then sent a secret message to Xerxes, saying that his Athenian navy was prepared to turn against the rest of the Greeks and that the Persians had only to attack to secure a victory.

Xerxes, perhaps fooled by this ploy, attacked with his fleet of about 400 ships. When the Persian navy advanced, the fleet of about 380 Greek ships backed further into the bay, a tactical maneuver designed to draw in the Persians. Crowded in the narrow strait of Salamis, the Persian ships were rammed, sunk, or boarded by the Greeks for hand-to-hand combat.

The battle was a decisive victory for the outnumbered Greeks, who lost only about 40 ships, compared to the more than 200 lost by the Persians. That halted the advance of Xerxes and ended the Persian threat to Greek civilization.

Battle of Plataea

The final battle of the Persian Wars in which the remaining Persian forces in Greece were defeated and driven out.

All Authority Comes from God

- Pharaoh had to learn that lesson in Egypt (Ex 7:3-5);
- Nebuchadnezzar had to learn it in Babylon (Dan 3-4);
- Belshazzar learned it at his blasphemous banquet (Dan 5);
- Sennacherib learned it at the gates of Jerusalem (Isa 36-37);
- Herod Agrippa I learned it as he died, being eaten by worms (Acts 12:20-23);
- *The U.S. may be learning that lesson now* (Rom 1:18-32).

After these battles, the king came home a bitter man, and it was only natural that he should seek some kind of comfort in his own home. But then he remembered that Vashti had been dethroned and he was without a queen.

A Call for a New Queen

Xerxes invaded Greece with an army, it is said, of more than 2,000,000 soldiers, only 5,000 of whom returned with him. It was after his return from this disastrous invasion that Esther was chosen as his queen. It is 478 B.C.; he will live another 13 years. She will live into the reign of her stepson Artaxerxes and Nehemiah's request to rebuild Jerusalem (Neh 2:6). [Study *Daniel's 70 Weeks* for the profound significance of this event.]

- 2] Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, Let there be fair young virgins sought for the king:

They would be aghast at Vasti's reinstatement as she might extract ultimate vengeance for their part in her disgrace.

- 3] And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan the palace, to the house of the women, unto the custody of Hege the king's chamberlain, keeper of the women; and let their things for purification be given them:

- 4] And let the maiden which pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti. And the thing pleased the king; and he did so.

Now they certainly did not want Xerxes to reinstate her for fear that she would turn against them. The suggestion appealed to the king and he followed it.

- 5] Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite;

“...Shimei”: As also Saul, son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin. Josephus refers to Esther as of the royal family [*Ant.* vi. I].

Shimei

Shimei was the son of Gera, a Benjamite, of Saul’s house. When David, fleeing from Absalom, reached the edge of the valley, between the road and Shimei’s house, Shimei ran along the ridge over against the road, cursing and throwing stones and dust at him and his mighty men still as he went; and saying, “Come out, come out, thou bloody man and thou man of Belial the Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son, and behold thou art taken in thy mischief because thou art a bloody man” (2 Sam 16:5-13); (referring to his hanging up Saul’s sons for the Gibeonites, 2 Sam 21, which in time preceded this; also to his general engagement in wars, 1 Chr 22:8).

Abishai would have “taken off his head” then and there, as a “dead dog” presuming to “curse the king.” But David felt it was Jehovah’s doing: “Let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him; it may be that the Lord will look on shine affliction, and requite me good for his cursing.”

Shimei wisely was the “first of the house of Joseph” to meet David on his victorious return over Jordan. A thousand Benjamites, and Ziba with his 15 sons and 20 servants, were with him. He fell down before the king, confessing his sin and begging David not to “impute iniquity” to him, or remember and take to heart his perversity.

Again Abishai would have slain Shimei, but David felt his day of restoration to the kingdom was no day for avenging wrongs, and said “thou shalt not die.”

Genealogical ironies: David’s sparing of Shimei resulted in a Mordecai. Saul’s sparing of Agag resulted in a Haman.

- 6] Who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away.

The deportation under Jeconiah began some 80 years earlier.

There were at least *three* captivities of Judah:

- The first when Daniel was carried away, in the third year of Jehoiakim, which was 605 B.C. (Dan 1:1).
- The second that is here referred to, when Jehoiachin, or Jeconiah, was made prisoner, 8 years later, or 597 B.C.
- The third when Zedekiah was taken and Jerusalem burnt, in 586 B.C.

Kish belonged to the second captivity (cf. 2 Kin 24:15; 2 Chr 36:10; Jer 24:1).

- 7] And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle’s daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter.

Gesenius, one of the greatest Hebrew authorities, says that “Esther” is taken from the word, “to hide;” it means, “Something Hidden.”

Esther

She was a Jewess named *Hadas’sah* (the myrtle), but when she entered the royal harem she received the name by which she henceforth became known. She was the daughter of Abihail, a Benjamite. Her family did not avail themselves of the permission granted by Cyrus to the exiles to return to Jerusalem, and she resided with her cousin Mordecai, who held some office in the household of the Persian king at “Shushan in the palace.”

- 8] So it came to pass, when the king’s commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was brought also unto the king’s house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women.

The name *Hegai* occurs as an officer of Xerxes in the *Histories* of Herodotus ix. 34.

- 9] And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness of him; and he speedily gave her her things for purification, with such things as belonged to her, and seven maidens, which were meet to be given her, out of the king’s house: and he preferred her and her maids unto the best place of the house of the women.

- 10] Esther had not shewed her people nor her kindred: for Mordecai had charged her that she should not shew it.
- 11] And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know how Esther did, and what should become of her.
- 12] Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with other things for the purifying of the women;)
- 13] Then thus came every maiden unto the king: whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house.
- 14] In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, which kept the concubines: she came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and that she were called by name.

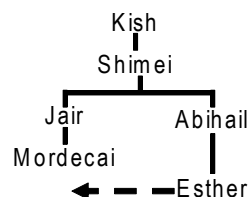
Gynaecium

The gynaecium comprised at least 3 houses: **1.** A residence for the queen, corresponding to that which Solomon built for the daughter of Pharaoh (1 Kgs 7:8). **2.** A house for the secondary wives, or concubines; and, **3.** A house for the virgins. On returning from her first visit to the king's chamber, a woman ordinarily became an inmate of the "second house." This "second house" was under the care of a eunuch called Sha'ashgaz.

- 15] Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her.

The Genealogy

Abihail, the uncle of Mordecai: Literally, "the paternal uncle," or the "father's brother." The genealogy may be thus exhibited:



- 16] So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.

"...Tebeth": (The great feast was four years earlier.) This is the only mention of the month Tebeth in Scripture. It followed Chisleu, and corresponded to the end of December and the earlier part of January.

- 17] And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti.
- 18] Then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, even Esther's feast; and he made a release to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the state of the king.

Thus the humble Jewish maiden, the orphan dependent for her living on a cousin's charity, became the first woman in all Persia—the wife of the greatest of living monarchs—the queen of an empire which comprised more than half of the known world.

- 19] And when the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai sat in the king's gate.
- 20] Esther had not yet shewed her kindred nor her people; as Mordecai had charged her: for Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him.
- 21] In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door, were wroth, and sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus.

This was a position of the highest possible trust, and gave conspirators a terrible advantage. (Xerxes later actually lost his life through a conspiracy formed by Artabanus, the captain of his guard, with Aspamitras, a eunuch and chamberlain)

- 22] And the thing was known to Mordecai, who told it unto Esther the queen; and Esther certified the king thereof in Mordecai's name.

Josephus says that a certain Pharnabazus, a slave of one of the conspirators, betrayed them to Mordecai [*Ant. Jud.*, ' 14:6, § 4].

- 23] And when inquisition was made of the matter, it was found out; therefore they were both hanged on a tree: and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king.

Crucifixion Invented

Rather than being "hanged" on a modern-type gallows, the men were probably impaled on a stake or post (cf. Ezra 6:11). This was not an unusual method of execution in the Persian Empire. Darius, Xerxes'

father, was known to have once impaled 3,000 men. A record of this assassination attempt was written in the annals, the official royal record (cf. Esther 6:1-2). This will prove to be a “plant” in the plot and of pivotal significance later in the tale...

Relevant Genealogies?

Amestris was the mother of Artaxerxes, who ruled from 464 to 425 B.C. Vashti was deposed in 482 B.C.; Artaxerxes was born in 483 B.C.; Amestris exercised great influence as the queen mother during her son’s reign. (Vashti? Esther?),

It was her son Artaxerxes who ruled during the times of Ezra (Ezra 7:1, 7, 11–12, 21; 8:1) and Nehemiah (2:1; 5:14; 13:6) and gave the decree that triggered Gabriel’s 70 Week vision to Daniel (Dan 9:24-27).

Next Session

The Wrath of the Amalekite: study Esther 3 & 4. The Introduction of the Villain of the piece—Haman’s background (1 Sam 15). But here the thread begins in Genesis, and also involves a notable ancestor of Mordecai’s family, the first king of Israel. Mordecai’s background (2 Sam 16:5-13; 19:16-23; 1 Kgs 2:36-46).

The Books of Ruth and Esther Session 7 Esther 3 & 4

Review of Esther

Esther is an obscure book *spiritually*. Why is it in the Bible? The “Name of God” doesn’t appear, but Esther means, “Something hidden.”

There is a story behind the story: The story will be *ourselves*! Also, we will discover codes hidden behind the text! But first some historical background...

Amalekites

Amalek fought with Israel at Rephidim (Ex 17:8-16). At the time of Israel’s Exodus from Egypt, the Amalekites attacked God’s weary people in the rear ranks of the marching nation (Deut 25:17-19).

God told Moses to write in a book that He had declared war on the Amalekites and would one day utterly destroy them because of what they had done to His people. “YHWH will have war with Amalek from generation to generation” (Ex 17:14-18).

Saul’s Failure

Samuel commissioned Saul to “go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not.” (1 Sam 15:1-3). But Saul failed to carry it out. He spared Agag, and so God took the kingdom from Saul (1 Sam 15:7-28). [Haman is witness that he likewise failed to exterminate the rest of the royal family. Had Saul been obedient, Haman could never have appeared on the scene.]

Samuel showed Agag no mercy; but some of his children escaped him. (It was an Amalekite who claimed he put Saul to death on the battlefield (2 Sam 1:1–10).

Six hundred years later, a royal Amalekite by the name of Haman would pursue a plot to destroy all the Jews in attempt to thwart the God’s plan of redemption! (2 Sam 16:5-13; 19:16-23; 1 Kgs 2:36-46).

Shimei

Shimei was the son of Gera, a Benjamite, of Saul’s house; When David, fleeing from Absalom, reached the edge of the valley, between the road and Shimei’s house, Shimei ran along the ridge over against the road, cursing and throwing stones and dust at him and his mighty men still as he went; and saying, “Come out, come out, thou bloody man and thou man of Belial the Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son, and behold thou art taken in thy mischief because thou art a bloody man” (2 Sam 16:5-13).

Abishai would have “taken off his head” then and there, as a “dead dog” presuming to “curse the king.” But David felt it was Jehovah’s doing: “Let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him; it may be that the Lord will look on shine affliction, and requite me good for his cursing.”

Shimei wisely was the “first of the house of Joseph” to meet David on his victorious return over Jordan. A thousand Benjamites, and Ziba with his 15 sons and 20 servants, were with him.

He fell down before the king, confessing his sin and begging David not to “impute iniquity” to him, or remember and take to heart his perversity. Again Abishai would have slain Shimei, but David felt his day of restoration to the kingdom was no day for avenging wrongs, and said “thou shalt not die.”

Genealogical ironies: *Saul’s sparing of Agag resulted in a Haman. David’s sparing of Shimei resulted in a Mordecai.*

Esther 3

A break of some years separates Chapters 2 and 3.

- 1] After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him.

“...Haman”: Haman is promoted to Grand Vizier, or prime minister. You could substitute many names for him: Pharaoh, Hitler, Arafat, Ahmadinejad...

Everything about Haman, *God hated!*

These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

Proverbs 6:16-19

- 2] And all the king’s servants, that were in the king’s gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence.

“But Mordecai bowed not”: Haman’s promotion meant that the other nobles had to kneel down to him, that is, they had to pay him special respect. (This was somewhat similar to what was commanded of the three Hebrew young men in Daniel 3:8-15.) . . . all but one unyielding old man, insignificant, and unacknowledged.

God’s Timing

This occurred after Mordecai had saved the king from the assassination and the two men were executed. It is reasonable to suppose that Mordecai expected a reward for his effort on behalf of

the king. But no reward was given then, probably because of some bureaucratic bungle. Later, this neglect will surprise and appall the king (cf. Esther 6:1-3). This discovery will come at a *better time*. God’s timing is always perfect.

- 3] Then the king’s servants, which were in the king’s gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the king’s commandment?

Why not just “go with the crowd”? Why make waves? The Jews didn’t violate the Second Commandment (Ex 20:4-6) when they bowed down before people in authority any more than Christians do today when they show respect to leaders.

- Abraham bowed down to the sons of Heth when he negotiated with them for Sarah’s grave (Gen 23:7);
- Joseph’s brothers bowed down before Joseph, thinking he was an Egyptian official (Gen 42:6);
- David even bowed down to Saul (1 Sam 24:8);
- Jacob and his family bowed before Esau (Gen 33:3, 6-7);
- The Jews even bowed to one another (2 Sam 14:4; 18:28);
- But, Haman was an Amalekite (Ex 17:16).

Civil Disobedience

- The Hebrew midwives disobeyed Pharaoh’s orders and refused to kill the Jewish babies (Ex 1:15-22).
- Daniel and his three friends refused to eat the king’s food (Dan 1).
- The three friends also refused to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar’s image (Dan 3).
- The apostles refused to stop witnessing in Jerusalem and affirmed, “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).
- Greeks occasionally refused to prostrate themselves before the Great King himself, saying that it was not their custom to worship men. [*Herod.*, 7:136; *Plut.*, ‘Vit. Artax.’, § 22; *Arrian.*, ‘Exp. Alex.’, 4:10-12, et al.]
- The Spartan ambassadors declined to bow down before Artaxerxes Longimanus [*Herod.*, 1. s. c.]
- Mordecai seems to have had the same feeling.
- Prostration was, he thought, an act of worship, and it was not proper to worship any one excepting God (cf. Rev 22:9).

- 4] Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai’s matters would stand: for he had told them that he was a Jew.

“...he was a Jew”: The judge in the gate is one of the despised captives, risking all. No longer the manipulator of Chapter 2, he takes his stand as one of God’s chosen: he no longer hides his heritage, and cannot bow to the blatant enemy of YHWH. He is, indeed, “politically incorrect.” He sided with God, who has perpetual indignation against Amalek (Ex 17:14-18).

- 5] And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath.

“...full of wrath”: A measure of his “smallness.”

When little men cast long shadows, it is a sign that the sun is setting.
Walter Savage Landor, 1775–1864

- 6] And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had shewed him the people of Mordecai: wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai.

“...destroy all the Jews”: Satan’s stratagem through Haman becomes clear: Haman enraged by Mordecai’s refusal (cf. Esther 5:9), set out to find a way to kill all the Jews, not just Mordecai. This would include those in the land of Israel. These latter Jews were faithful to the Lord, worshiping in the rebuilt temple and living according to the stipulations of the Law (cf. Ezra 1-6). All anti-Semitism stems from Satan’s schemes to thwart the plan of God.

What a mess. Couldn’t this one obstinate Jew have kept his convictions to himself and kept out of harm’s way? Couldn’t he have simply conformed and thus prevented the jeopardy of his entire people? Doesn’t he know that things are different now from what they were in the days of Moses, of the time of the Judges, and of Samuel?

No. He trusted in the Lord. This is what distinguishes the man of God in *all* generations:

- It was this spirit that sustained Noah in his testimony against the corrupt, sin-loving world that mocked him as he built his barge in his driveway.
- It was in this confidence of faith that Moses forsook Egypt.
- It was in this energy of faith that Caleb took on the Nephilim; the Amalekites and the Anakim.
- It was this *chutzpa* that led to Gideon’s war with lamps and pitchers, and David’s fight with an armored giant with a shepherd’s sling and stones.

- It was this confidence Daniel to open his Babylonian windows toward Jerusalem to pray;
- . . .and to drive Paul in his life of ordeal in devotion to his Lord.

Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth (Of whom the world was not worthy:).

Hebrews 11:33-35, 46, 37, 38

Some of us—you and me—may yet have the opportunity *they had*. . .

Satan’s Plan

The proud Agagite was but a mere puppet in the hands of Satan, who sought to make void the promises of God: that from David’s house should arise the One who was to bruise his head; the One who was to “destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb 2:14-15).

The entire Bible can be mapped as a drama in which Satan’s stratagems are repeatedly foiled:

- the death of Abel at Cain’s hand;
- the corruption of Adam’s line in Genesis 6;
- the attacks on Abraham’s seed... in Genesis 12, 20, 50;
- The destruction of the babes by Pharaoh;
- Pharaoh’s pursuit through the Red Sea;
- the populating of Canaan in anticipation of Abraham’s promised inheritance (a denial which the world continues to this day).

As God declared that He would be accomplish His program through the house of David, the intrigues continued against David’s line:

- with Saul’s javelin at youthful David;
- when Jehoram kills his brothers (2 Chr 21);
- when the Arabians kill all (but Ahazariah);
- when Athaliah kills all (but Joash);
- when Hezekiah is assaulted; etc.

Even the infanticide in Bethlehem continued Satan's attempts. . . . as will his continued attempts at Armageddon. If the Jews were killed throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes, *this would include those in the land of Israel rebuilding the Temple.*

However, God cannot be thwarted (Job 42:2). God can always overturn man's diabolical efforts, sometimes by miraculous acts, and sometimes through seeming acts of "coincidence" as in the forthcoming drama. . . . God is always working on behalf of His people. In Esther He is hidden behind the scenes (*and His Name will be discovered hidden behind the text!*).

- 7] In the first month, that is, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar.

"Nisan" was a Babylonian name for the Hebrew month "Abib," which was superseded upon the return from the captivity. "Adar" was also a Babylonian label adopted.

"...Pur": Haman used a *pur*, an Old Persian word for the lot, to decide when the Jews should be killed.

The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.
Proverbs 16:33

A little more than four years had gone by since Esther had become queen, in 478 B.C. (Esther 2:16). On the first day of the year, in Nisan (April-May) 474 B.C., at the beginning of Xerxes' 12th year, the pur was cast to select a day and month. Haman, along with many people in the Persian Empire, was extremely superstitious (cf. Esther 6:13). The Persian religious system stressed fate and chance. Haman was allowing fate, by the casting of the lot, to dictate his move against the Jewish nation.

The court diary of Persia was drawn up in the first month of each year with the help of dice which indicated the propitious dates for various events. The word *pur*, meaning "lot" has come to light on a die from the reign of Shalmaneser III of Assyria (858–824 B.C.), so confirming the detail given in v 7. Dependence on belief in fate continued over the centuries, good and bad omens determining when action could be taken

The month chosen by the lot was the 12th month (February-March)—almost a year later. The day, (stated later in Esther 3:13), was the 13th of the month (cf. Esther 8:12; 9:1). The *Pur* is the basis of the name of

the Feast of Purim (Esther 9:26), which celebrates the deliverance of the Jews—which will occur as the plot unfolds...

[Acts 1:26: some feel the selection of Matthias by lot was a mistake; and that Paul should have been chosen later. Paul was instructed to focus on the Gentiles. Cf. 12 tribes to be ruled by 12 apostles (Mt 19:28; Lk 22:30)—not Paul!]

Two Imputed Concepts (Elusive in Our Physical World)

- Infinity James 1:17
 - Macrocosm: A Finite Universe
 - Microcosm: Indivisible units ("quanta")
- Randomness Proverbs 16:33
 - Stochastic vs. Deterministic Processes
 - Pseudo-Random Numbers [RAND book of random digits; not as trivial as it sounds—its defining characteristic? *Total absence of design*
 - "Chaos Theory"

- 8] And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them.

Haman's Plan

Haman, exploiting his access and intimacy, went in to the king to present his plan. Falsely accusing all Jews of refusing to obey the king's laws, he suggested that the king would be better off if the Jews, scattered throughout the empire—including those attempting to rebuild the Temple—were exterminated. Note that Haman apparently doesn't even have to name the race of people involved. . . .

- 9] If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasuries.

The King may well have exhausted his resources with his disastrous Greek war and may have been desperate to replenish his treasury. The annual income of the entire Persian Empire was 15,000 talents of silver. [Herodotus Bk III, § 95] Silver was valued above gold. . . .

Haman said he himself was willing to bear the costs involved in carrying out this decree. Haman may have been a man of immense wealth since,

as the highest official, he undoubtedly had many opportunities to add to his personal fortune. However, he may also have factored in the wealth he would be confiscating from the Jews he planned to exterminate.

At that time Persia used silver as its monetary standard. A talent of silver contained 3,000 shekels (Ex 38:25,26) and was equal to 94 3/7 lbs. avoirdupois. The Greek talent, however, as in the LXX, was only 82 1/4 lbs. A talent of gold was double the weight of a talent of silver (2 Sam 12:30). Ex: Parable of the talents (Mt 18:24 25:15). Ten thousand talents of silver weighed over 13 million ounces (or over \$12 billion on today's market).

- 10] And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy.

By giving his signet ring to Haman, Xerxes was allowing "the enemy of the Jews," as Haman was now called, to send out a proclamation to the empire in the king's name. The signet ring, when impressed on clay, made a special imprint, which, like a signature, represented the king's authority [*Herodotus* iii. 128; cf. Esther 3:12; 8:2, 8; Gen. 41:42; Dan 6:17; Hag 2:23].

Xerxes, as before, was easily influenced by his officials (cf. Esther 1:16-22; 2:2-4). He accepted Haman's advice and acquiesced, disregarding the human lives involved (and apparently without even knowing which people would be affected!) There is probably more misery caused by irresponsibility and want of thought than by evil intention. Five times in the Book of Esther, Haman is called the Jews' enemy (cf. Esther 7:6; 8:1; 9:10, 24).

- 11] And the king said unto Haman, The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee.

The king noted that Haman could do with the people as he pleased. "The silver (of the people) is given to thee." He also granted the confiscation proceeds to Haman. Confiscation accompanied execution; the goods of those put to death naturally escheat to the crown. (Cf. The Spanish Inquisition; Nazi Germany; et al.)

In the ancient East, human life was not held in much regard, and the caprices of absolute monarchs determine the course of history. There had been a general massacre of the Magi upon the accession of Darius Hystaspis, the father of Xerxes [*Herodotus*, iii. 79] and one of the Scythians about a century before [*Ibid.* I. 106]. A later

one was the Roman massacre of Mithridates in 85 B.C. (Little did the king realize that his queen, Esther, was a Jewess and would be included in Haman's hideous plan.)

- 12] Then were the king's scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that were over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring.
- 13] And the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey.

[You can tell from the excess legal language that this may have been a quote from the edict.]

Haman's proclamation, sent out under the king's name to all the provinces and in various languages (cf. Est 1:22), called for the death of all Jewish people including women and little children. Haman intended to rid the world of God's covenant people. Also the executioners were ordered to confiscate property owned by Jews.

The Persian system of posts consisted of arrangements very similar to the famed "Pony Express," with fresh horses and riders day-distanced, with conveyance even continuing in the night, etc. This system stationed throughout the empire to ensure swift communication [*Herodotus* v. 14; viii. 98].

- 14] The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, that they should be ready against that day.

The decree was dispatched in March 474 B.C. They had almost a year to get ready...on *both* sides...

- 15] The posts went out, being hastened by the king's commandment, and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. And the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city Shushan was perplexed.

The edict *bewildered* the people in the city of Susa (cf. 8:15). Apparently such a decree had never before come from the royal court. Haman's bloodthirstiness, along with Xerxes' seeming indifference to such atrocities, appeared incredible even to a society which was used to cruel behavior.

Perhaps other minority populations wondered if they would be the next to be annihilated. Where was the outcry from the pulpits when the Waco atrocities were carried out by *our own* government? What is the world's (or the U.S.'s) concern over the PLO commitment to annihilate present-day Israel? What is the difference from Haman's plan?

Esther 4: "For Such a Time as This"

- 1] When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry;

Wearing sackcloth and ashes and crying publicly signified mourning (cf. Gen 37:34; Jer 49:3; Dan 9:3; Joel 1:13; Jonah 3:6).

Whatever had been Mordecai's reasons for not bowing to Haman, he was now in great mourning. His feud with Haman, whether legitimate or not, had caused a great crisis for his whole nation. He feared that God's Chosen People would be destroyed and God's program thwarted. He knew the amount of money Haman had agreed to spend on this vast project as he had a copy of the edict (vv. 7-8). Perhaps he was remorseful for having revealed his nationality and thus having endangered the lives of thousands of his people (Esther 3:4).

- 2] And came even before the king's gate: for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth.
- 3] And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

Everywhere Jews heard of the edict, and they knew they were under the sentence of death. Yet, meanwhile, God was working behind the scenes to deliver His people.

- 4] So Esther's maids and her chamberlains came and told it her. Then was the queen exceedingly grieved; and she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai, and to take away his sackcloth from him: but he received it not.

Though Esther had not been in the presence of the king for a month (v.11), this did not mean that she had fallen from his favor. As his queen she had many luxuries and was waited on by maids and eunuchs, who told her about Mordecai's mourning.

- 5] Then called Esther for Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend upon her, and gave him a commandment to Mordecai, to know what it was, and why it was.

She assigned Hatach to find out why Mordecai was carrying on that way in public places. She apparently was unaware of the edict about the execution of the Jews.

- 6] So Hatach went forth to Mordecai unto the street of the city, which was before the king's gate.

"...street" = the square.

- 7] And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him, and of the sum of the money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them.

Money was apparently a key motive.

- 8] Also he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them, to shew it unto Esther, and to declare it unto her, and to charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people.

The words "her people" revealed to the eunuch Hatach, if he did not know it before, that Esther was a Jewess.

- 9] And Hatach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai.
- 10] Again Esther spake unto Hatach, and gave him commandment unto Mordecai;

Without some reprieve from the king, Esther and Mordecai and all their people would die.

- 11] All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.

(She was probably not the only wife. . .) Esther reminded Mordecai that she could not simply enter the king's inner chambers unannounced or she might be put to death.

The king had the power to execute anyone who disturbed him without an appointment. For the king to extend the golden scepter to someone showed that he approved of the visit and that the person was welcome and not in danger of death (cf. Esther 5:2). Herodotus records that the law excepted six persons, but confirms the general rule [iii. 84, 118]. Since Esther had not been summoned by him for a month she did not know whether his attitude toward her would be favorable.

- 12] And they told to Mordecai Esther's words.
13] Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.

Esther's response to Mordecai was not encouraging; Haman's edict would even reach to the throne.

- 14] For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

"...enlargement": = literally "breath," or "respiration."

"...thy father's house": She apparently was not the only child of Abihail.

"...for such a time as this": A key lesson for all of us!

Mordecai's response to Esther was a confession of faith. Mordecai knew that God in some way would protect His people: deliverance would arise from another place if Esther would not approach Xerxes about the Jews' plight.

[Note: Mordecai, in alluding to Divine provision, doesn't name God, however. Some conjecture that the absence of the name of God in Esther is a deliberate design, either by the Holy Spirit, or due some local purpose.]

- 15] Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer,
16] Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

"...if I perish, I perish": Fasting also implies prayer. Esther looks to God, not man, for her deliverance. . .

Fasting

Do *you* fast? Our Lord Himself fasted forty days in the wilderness (Mt 4:2). The early Christians observed fasts (Acts 13:3; 14:23; 2 Cor 6:5). Why three days? One greater than Esther gave His life that we *all* might have life everlasting.

- 17] So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

His influence would have led to a general fasting and prayer among the Jewish community.

Next Session

A series of the most dramatic scenes in any literature: read Chapters 5, 6, 7: "The Banquet of Banquets!" (*You won't be able to put it down!*)

The Books of Ruth and Esther Session 8 Esther 5, 6 & 7

Review

Esther: An obscure book *spiritually*; Why is it in the Bible? The "Name of God doesn't appear": Esther = "Something hidden." There is a story behind the story; the story will be *ourselves!* Also, we will discover codes hidden behind the text...

- Time: Persian Empire;
- Issue: Hitler-like attempt to exterminate the Jews;
- Major Characters: Xerxes, the King; Esther, the replacement Queen; Mordecai, her uncle/guardian; Haman, the villain of the piece...

It is a proclamation of the vanity of human greatness and the greatness of human vanity. These chapters mark the climax of the book. Here the tables are turned and evil is overcome by good. God's people are preserved through an unlikely set of circumstances. "The Most High God ruleth in the kingdom of men" (Dan 4:25). Coincidence is when God is working undercover.

Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.

Esther 4:13

Esther's response to Mordecai was not encouraging...Haman's edict would even reach to the throne.

For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

Esther 4:14

A key lesson for all of us!

Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer, Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

Esther 4:15, 16

Fasting also implies prayer. Esther looks to God, not man, for her deliverance...

Esther 5: Esther's Approach to the King

- 1] Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house: and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the gate of the house.

After the days of fasting (with a garb of woe) she now dons apparel appropriate to the anticipated occasion. [This is in contrast to the liberties taken in the recent movie, *One Night with the King*, which, while a lavish production, departs in number of ways from the Biblical text.]

There is a propriety in dress as in other things. Inattention to bodily attire is no sign of virtue or religion. It may be the mark of an idle or slovenly spirit, a want of self-respect, a vanity itself, or a desire to show disrespect to others. The destiny of Israel seemed to rest on this one act of hers . . . and she positioned herself accordingly. There are short journeys—even from room to room—that can be more trying than the traversing of deserts!

- 2] And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight: and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.

(The first braving of perilous duty often scatters the fears of anticipation.) This is the pivot point: the threat of death evaporates. Her breach of etiquette was forgiven. Even though she had not been with the king in over a month (Esther 4:11), he was pleased that she came (though she had been understandably apprehensive) and he held out the gold scepter toward her (cf. Esther 4:11; 8:4).

- 3] Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, Queen Esther? and what is thy request? it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom.

He sensed her desire for a special request. The “half of the kingdom” was only a common expansive idiom (cf. Esther 5:6; 7:2; Mk 6:23).

- 4] And Esther answered, If it seem good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him.

Simple: ...and guess who's coming to dinner. [The pairing also speaks toward Haman's status.] Ordinarily the king and queen dined separately, each in their own apartment. To invite not only the king but another male guest, not a relation, was a remarkable act of ostensible favor.

- 5] Then the king said, Cause Haman to make haste, that he may do as Esther hath said. So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

It was an unusual honor to be invited to a banquet with the queen, for Persian officials were protective of their wives.

“...Esther”: The king was in a relaxed mood, addressing his wife as *Esther* (Cf. “Queen Esther” in v.3) and prepared, after being feasted, to give her anything she asked.

- 6] And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed.

The king understood that it was not for mere entertainment that Esther had ventured her very life. His curiosity continues to ripen . . .

- 7] Then answered Esther, and said, My petition and my request is;
8] If I have found favour in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition, and to perform my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do to morrow as the king hath said.

(This turns out to be a critical delaying interval...)

Why a Second Banquet?

Conjectures: Esther lost her nerve? King's mood not “perfect”? Whatever her instincts that the time was not yet fit, *the 24-hour interval will prove essential for God's purposes!* Prudence works patiently; Haman was being “set up”: vv. 8-12.

Possibilities

On the first occasion, the King was unprepared; the throne room too public; the scene might backfire. Only Haman to be present. The timing was imperfect: *a sleepless night will yield its opportunity from five years earlier.*

- 9] Then went Haman forth that day joyful and with a glad heart: but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of indignation against Mordecai.

Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

Proverbs 16:18

Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad.

—Greek Proverb

- 10] Nevertheless Haman refrained himself: and when he came home, he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife.
- 11] And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king.

“...the multitude of his children” = Haman's ten sons (cf. Est 9:7-10).

Haman was so overwrought about Mordecai that he could not enjoy his good position. His obsession poisoned the joy of his position and opportunity. On this occasion, to relieve himself of his rage and anxiety about Mordecai, he gathered his family and friends and spent time boasting about the wealth he had amassed and the family he had raised

- 12] Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to morrow am I invited unto her also with the king.

Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Matthew 6:34

God sends blindness to those whom He means to destroy (Jer 17:5-9). Haman had no perception of the influences which were working against him:

- God had given Mordecai the heroism of faith;
- God had strengthened timid Esther;
- God had Haman erect the necessary gallows.

- 13] Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.

He admits his wealth and position availed him nothing: his obsession with Mordecai poisoned his peace and exuberance.

Bulls get some; bears get some; hogs get slaughtered.

—Wall Street proverb

“...little foxes that spoil the vines...”

Song of Songs 2:15

The forces of evil underlying the facts:

- Immoderate ambition;
- Intense worship of self;
- Rankling unforgiveness;
- A greed which had grown with getting;
- An appetite that increased with feeding.

Solomon: “Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honor” (Eccl 10:1).

Selah Moment

Don't we share in the larger, bolder, blacker portrait of Haman? Aren't we also prone to share the perverse nature of Haman? Is there a larger application lurking behind this masterful tale (cf. Jer 17:9, 10; Mt 15:19)? No amount of education, culture, or religiousness will eradicate evil. It is in the nature of man. *Only the new birth!*

- 14] Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and to morrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon: then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made.

Fifty cubits = about 75 feet.

Impalement

“...gallows”: ܐܬܝܬܐ *’ets*, tree, wood, timber, stock, stick, staff, etc. More likely a staff for an impaling, not a hanging gallows. The Persians invented crucifixion, passed on to the Greeks, and later widely adopted by the Romans for extreme crimes of non-citizens. This “gallows” had to be made because God had need for it!

Esther 6

The entire course of history for the Jewish nation was changed because a pagan king, hundreds of miles from the center of God's activities in Jerusalem, could not sleep. Romans 8:28, indeed!

- 1] On that night could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king.

Book of Chronicles: Historiographers were attached to the Persian court and attended the monarch wherever he went (cf. Ezra 6:2f). We find them noting down facts for Xerxes at Doriscus [Herodotus viii. 100] and again at Salamis [*Ibid* viii. 90]...They kept a record like the acts diuran of the early Roman empire [Tacit. "Ann." xiii. 31]. Ctesias claimed to have drawn his Persian history from these chronicles [ap. Diod. Sic., ii. 32].

- 2] And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus.

Of all the texts that could have been selected by the librarian, from the records of Xerxes' 12 years of rule up to that time, the one that contained the account of Mordecai's uncovering the assassination plot (about five years before; cf. Est 2:16 with 3:7) was read to the king; cf. Est 2:21-23. What a coincidence!

[Xerxes actually later lost his life through a conspiracy formed by Artabanus, the captain of his guard, with Aspamitras, a eunuch and chamberlain.]

- 3] And the king said, What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him.

Gratitude is a duty and a virtue. Five years had passed without recognition. Furthermore, this oversight was, itself, a gross breach of Persian law. "Royal Beneficiaries" formed a distinct class and had their names inscribed on a special list [Herodotus, viii. 85].

Why did Esther ask for a delay before telling the king her request? (Est 5:7). The reason was now made clear. God was going to elevate Mordecai, and to prepare the king to react unfavorably to Haman.

When Xerxes asked what honor Mordecai had been given for saving the king's life (about five years before), the king found that he had not been rewarded. Undoubtedly a bureaucratic oversight had occurred.

Was this due to prejudice against Mordecai's Jewishness? [One cannot help but recall the notorious trial of Alfred Dreyfus in which the anti-Semitic miscarriage of justice inspired Theodore Herzl to launch the Zionist movement. See *Betrayal of the Chosen* for more background.]

However, if Mordecai had been immediately rewarded for his saving the king there would have been no opportunity for the elaborate plan which would soon be carried out by the king through the mouth of Haman (Esther 6:6-10), and which would have set the stage for the remarkable events of the next chapter! The following scene is obviously a dramatic favorite!

- 4] And the king said, Who is in the court? Now Haman was come into the outward court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

"Now Haman was come": His early morning haste to effect Mordecai's destruction led to his being deputized to do him the highest honor!

- 5] And the king's servants said unto him, Behold, Haman standeth in the court. And the king said, Let him come in.
6] So Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour? Now Haman thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself?

"He who loves himself will have no rivals."

- 7] And Haman answered the king, For the man whom the king delighteth to honour,
8] Let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head:

To wear apparel previously worn by the king was, under normal circumstances, a breach of Persian law [Plut. "Vit. Artax.," § 5], but the king could allow it [Herod. Vii. 17].

- 9] And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

Haman responded by mentioning several things that should be done for the person the king wished to honor:

- 1) Such a man should have the appearance of royalty, by wearing a kingly robe and riding a royal steed, one the king had already ridden.
- 2) The honored man should be served by one of the most noble princes.
- 3) The princes were to take the man through the city on this horse, clearing the way before him and pointing out to all who watched that this man was honored by the king (cf. Gen 41:42-43).

Haman did not need money (cf. Esther 3:9). He craved respect from his peers and from the population at large (cf. Est 5:11). Even though he was fabulously wealthy and had more power than anyone outside the royal family (Est 3:1), he wanted even *more* respect from the people of the city. Haman's lust for respect from Mordecai is what got him into trouble in the first place (cf. Est 3:2, 5; 5:9, 13).

- 10] Then the king said to Haman, Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken.

Whoops! "Make haste": the delay has already been too long . . .

"Mordecai the Jew" - apparently the very phrase of the records.

- 11] Then took Haman the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

Couldn't happen to a more deserving couple of fellows.

"Mordecai the Jew." This is the first of five times Mordecai is called "The Jew," (cf. Est 8:7; 9:29, 31; 10:3), apparently to highlight the fact that a Jew, though opposed by Haman, was given a prominent position in Susa in the Persian Empire.

What a turn of events; what irony for Haman! Mordecai, whom he hated, had to be honored by Haman, at the very time he had planned to supervise Mordecai's impalement. He who wanted respect *from* Mordecai had to give respect *to* Mordecai. Haman himself had to carry out the king's order even though it embarrassed and angered him greatly.

- 12] And Mordecai came again to the king's gate. But Haman hastened to his house mourning, and having his head covered.

"...having his head covered": The irony continues: Earlier Mordecai had publicly grieved over his people (Est 4:1); now Haman privately grieved over his own humiliation. When Haman had left his wife in the morning he had been elated. Now the bottom had fallen out from under him...and it's just beginning...

- 13] And Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his friends every thing that had befallen him. Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him, If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him. Their superstitious outlook proved prophetic...

"Wise Men"?

"Wise men": probably Magians, the hereditary priesthood of the Medes, who later rise to become the kingmakers of the succeeding Parthian Empire. [For references to the Magi's ostensible prophetic powers see Herodotus, I. 107, 120; vii. 19; et al.]

Daniel had been appointed by Darius to head this special caste, which led to the lion's den incident probably prompted by his envious subordinates. It was the priestly cabal instituted by Daniel that ultimately responded to the famed star which led them to Bethlehem. (See *The Christmas Story —What Really Happened* for more detailed discussion.)

- 14] And while they were yet talking with him, came the king's chamberlains, and hastened to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared.

Now, with his world crashing down around his head, Haman was hustled off to Esther's second banquet, which once he desired but which he now dreaded. He may have well wondered what the king would say to him at the banquet.

Haman stands as a prototype of all anti-God activists who oppose God's people. These historical figures emerge as symbols of much larger proportions. Israel's history is replete with examples when men had tried to set aside God's promises to their nation and had failed. In the future God will do the same. "Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (Ps 121:4).

In the Persian religions, much was made of omens and signs. Fate, chance, and luck were considered important in everyday life. The Book of Esther stands as a polemic against such a fatalistic view of the world.

Esther 7: Esther's Second Banquet

- 1] So the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther the queen.
2] And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? and it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom.

In Persian feasts the solid dishes were few, and the time was passed in drinking and eating desert [Herod. I. 133]. If he knew of the connection between Mordecai and Esther he may have been even more terrified at the prospect of attending this second banquet given by Esther. [Five suggests, to some, grace: this was the fifth banquet mentioned in the

Book of Esther: two were given by the king (1:3, 5), one by Queen Vashti (1:9), and two by Queen Esther (5:4, 8).]

His curiosity whetted, the king for the third time asked Esther her request, and again he promised that he would grant it to her (cf. Est 5:3, 6). Knowing the ideal timing, Esther got right to the point and gave her petition and request: life for her and her people.

- 3] Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request:
- 4] For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage.

“...let my life be given me”: It was now clear to Xerxes what her nationality was (Est cf. 2:10, 20). She explained that all her people had been sold (i.e., the king was offered a bribe by Haman; cf. Est 3:9; 4:7) into extinction (Est 3:13). Showing her subservient position to the king, she added that if they had merely been sold into slavery she certainly would not have bothered the king.

Esther's statement not only shows the unbelievable power of the king, but also the condition to which she was reduced. Esther may have been apprehensive, not knowing if the king would grant her request. It was quite possible that he would fly into a rage, as he had done with Vashti (Est 1:12).

This is powerful pleading: she heroically united herself with her people. Cf. Moses (Heb 11:24-26); Joshua (Josh 24:15); and, Christ Himself! (2 Cor 5:15, et al.).

- 5] Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?

“Who is he”: He at once makes her enemy his! Undoubtedly a look of terror was on Haman's face as he realized that he was about to be exposed before the most powerful man on the face of the earth. Haman must have known that his execution was assured now that “fate” was working against him.

- 6] And Esther said, The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen.
- 7] And the king arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath went into the palace garden: and Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen; for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king.

“...in his wrath went into the palace garden”: Now the king was filled with rage (cf. Est 1:12 and Haman's anger on two occasions; Est 3:5; 5:9); he apparently went into the garden in an effort to control his anger.

- 8] Then the king returned out of the palace garden into the place of the banquet of wine; and Haman was fallen upon the bed whereon Esther was. Then said the king, Will he force the queen also before me in the house? As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.

“...they covered Haman's face”: This was a call to attendants to seize the culprit and execute him. Their covering a condemned man was also a practice among the Romans [Liv., I. 26; Cic. Pro Rabir., iv. 13] and the Macedonians [Q. Curt., “Vit. Alex.,” vi. 8].

How sudden the contrasts: Esther's darkest hour turns to light; Haman's day, ablaze with light and confidence and boasting, is now clouded with a fatal storm; Mordecai is plucked from an ostensible sentence of death and honored throughout the kingdom... The contrasts are blessed as they are sudden.

- 9] And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king, Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then the king said, Hang him thereon.

Haman was probably hated by many people in the city of Susa, especially in government circles. Many were probably glad to see Haman killed.

“Hang him thereon”: It adds a touch of barbarity to Haman's character that he should have intended the execution of Mordecai to take place within the walls of his own house.

- 10] So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.

Reaping What's Sown

Jacob killed an animal and lied to his father, pretending to be Esau (Gen 27:1-29). Years later Jacob's sons killed an animal and lied to him, pretending that Joseph was dead (Gen 37:31-35).

Pharaoh gave orders to drown the Jewish baby boys (Ex 1). One day his army was drowned in the Red Sea (Ex 14-15).

David secretly took his neighbor's wife and committed adultery (2 Sam 11). David's own son Absalom took his father's concubines and openly

committed adultery with them (2 Sam 16:20-23). Furthermore, David's daughter Tamar was raped by her half brother, Amnon (2 Sam 13).

David killed Bathsheba's husband (2 Sam 11:14-25). Three of David's own sons were slain: Absalom, Amnon, and Adonijah (2 Sam 18, 13:23-36; 1 Kgs 2:13-25).

Saul of Tarsus encouraged the stoning of Stephen (Acts 8:1). When he became Paul the missionary, he was stoned at Lystra (Act 14:19-20).

Haman was degraded just when he thought he had reached the goal of his ambition; he perished on the very stake that he had erected for his enemy. Haman was characterized by boundless pride; boundless ambition; and, boundless cruelty.

The mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small; Though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness grinds He all.

—Friedrich von Logau

- Cf. Pharaoh perished in the Red Sea;
- The dogs licked the blood of Ahab in Samaria;
- Herod was eaten of worms upon his throne;

Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood. He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate. I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high.

Psalms 7:14-17

A worse enemy than Haman has plotted against the children of men. A worse fate than massacre awaits those who fall into the snare of the foe. God warns us to "flee from the wrath to come" (Mt 3:7; Lk 3:7).

Little did Esther dream of the opportunity that would open to her, but the hour came for her and she succeeded. Wisely use the present, and when the hour of opportunity comes, you too, will be ready to speak, to strike, to suffer, or to save...

Approaching a royal throne:

- With reverence, in proper attire, clothed with humility (1 Pet 5:5).
- By grace, not the law.

- With confidence and knowledge of what pleases Him (Heb 11:6).
- We don't need the several "if's" in our approach to our King (Est 7:3).
- As a supplicant (sinner) Heb 4:16; Ps 138:6.
- By way of appropriate mediator (1 Tim 2:5).

The Remaining Challenge

The tables had now been turned, but the Jews were still left with a major problem: The king's edict to eradicate them was still in effect. Remember, a Persian decree even bound the king that decreed it. [Cf. Daniel 6 and the Lion's Den (Dan 6:15).]

Per a Persian decree there would still be a great slaughter of many innocent people because of the wicked actions of a now-dead man. It was now the third month (Est 8:9), and there were nine months to go before the fateful day when the Jews could legally be slain (Est 3:13).

Next Session

Read Chapters 8, 9 & 10.

The Books of Ruth and Esther Session 9 Esther 8, 9, & 10

Review

Haman was degraded just when he thought he had reached the goal of his ambition; he perished on the very stake that he had erected for his enemy. Haman was characterized by boundless pride; boundless ambition; and, boundless cruelty. Haman perished on the very stake that he had erected for his enemy.

Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it. I have seen the wicked in great power; and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off. But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: he is their strength in the time of trouble. And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.

Psalms 37:34-40

A worse enemy than Haman has plotted against the children of men. A worse fate than massacre awaits those who fall into the snare of the foe. God warns us to “flee from the wrath to come” (Mt 3:7; Lk 3:7). Little did Esther dream of the opportunity that would open to her, but the hour came for her and she succeeded.

Denouement

The Predicament remains: The irreversibility of Persian edicts. Many innocent people were still under the sentence of death because of the actions of a now-dead man. There were about 15 million Jews among the estimated 100 million people in the empire.

Esther 8: Bloody Reckoning

- 1] On that day did the king Ahasuerus give the house of Haman the Jews’ enemy unto Esther the queen. And Mordecai came before the king; for Esther had told what he was unto her.

Ahasuerus knew that both Esther and Mordecai were Jews, but now he was to learn that they were also cousins: Ahasuerus and Mordecai were relatives by marriage!

Haman was considered a criminal and his property was escheat to the crown. The king gave it to Esther either as sign of favor or in compensation for the alarm and suffering Haman had caused her.

- 2] And the king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it unto Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

“...his ring”: The king’s signet ring, which had been given Haman to authorize the edict against the Jews (Est 3:10), was now given to Mordecai. Haman’s office having been vacated, Mordecai acceded to his high office as vizier, in constant attendance on the king.

Again the tables were turned against Haman, *even after his death*: Mordecai now had the power that Haman previously had. Haman, who had hoped to confiscate the Jews’ property (Est 3:13), now had his own property removed and given to, of all people, Esther, who appointed Mordecai to oversee it. “Them that honor Me, I will honor...” (1 Sam 2:30; Ps 91:15).

- 3] And Esther spake yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet, and besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite, and his device that he had devised against the Jews.

Since the edict to exterminate the Jews (Est 3:13) was still in effect, something had to be done. So Esther appeared before the king a second time without an invitation (cf. Est 5:1-2). This time she begged him to put an end to the evil plan which was in effect because of Haman.

- 4] Then the king held out the golden sceptre toward Esther. So Esther arose, and stood before the king,

She knew how to manage her husband, no mean accomplishment in a woman’s life (cf. Est 4:11; 5:2).

- 5] And said, If it please the king, and if I have found favour in his sight, and the thing seem right before the king, and I be pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews which are in all the king’s provinces:

Second Proclamation

Esther’s request was simple. She wanted a second decree written and sent out which would override the first decree. She cleverly ascribes the first decree to Haman, attempting to avoid a royal recant. Strangely, a simple reversing was not permissible under Persian law (v. 8).

- 6] For how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?

“...my people”: Her identity with her people as a Jewess is key: she spoke of “my people” and “my family.” (cf. Est 7:3)

- 7] Then the king Ahasuerus said unto Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew, Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and him they have hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews.

The king noted that Esther and Mordecai now had the power and resources that previously belonged to Haman and therefore they should use that power to their advantage. Though Haman’s decree could not be revoked, a second one could supersede it.

- 8] Write ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king’s name, and seal it with the king’s ring: for the writing which is written in the king’s name, and sealed with the king’s ring, may no man reverse.

Xerxes even gave Mordecai authority to write the decree any way he wished and to stamp it with the king’s authority by using his signet ring (cf. Est 3:10,12; 8:2).

- 9] Then were the king's scribes called at that time in the third month, that is, the month Sivan, on the three and twentieth day thereof; and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded unto the Jews, and to the lieutenants, and the deputies and rulers of the provinces which are from India unto Ethiopia, an hundred twenty and seven provinces, unto every province according to the writing thereof, and unto every people after their language, and to the Jews according to their writing, and according to their language.

The decree Mordecai wrote was sent out in the third month: Sivan (May-June) 474 B.C. [Sivan was a Babylonian name, associated with the moon god, Sin (known as *Al-Ilah*, in Arabia).]

Numerical Architecture?

Since this was a little over two months after Haman's decree (Est 3:12) the Jews had over eight months to prepare themselves for the conflict (up to the 13TH day of the 12th month, the date Haman had chosen by lot (cf. Est 3:7, 13; 9:1).

"...three and twentieth day": The 23rd is interesting: The decree was sent out on the 24th. 24 seems to be a number of the Church (Rev 4:4, 10; 5:8, 14; 11:16; 19:4). The month of Sivan is also interesting as the time Acts 2, the Feast of Pentecost, etc. (See *The Feasts of Israel*...)

- 10] And he wrote in the king Ahasuerus' name, and sealed it with the king's ring, and sent letters by posts on horseback, and riders on mules, camels, and young dromedaries:

As was the case with the previous decree, this one, too, was dispatched (cf. Esther 1:22; 3:15) by horsemen throughout the whole empire from India to Cush and was written in the appropriate languages for each province (cf. Esther 1:1).

"...young dromedaries": In the original there are neither "mules," nor "camels" nor "young dromedaries." A better translation has been suggested: "the riders on coursers of the royal stud, the offspring of thoroughbreds." [Herodotus (viii. 98) and Xenophon (Cyrop., viii.6, § 17) speak of horses as alone employed in carrying Persian dispatches.]

- 11] Wherein the king granted the Jews which were in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, both little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey,

"...the spoil of them for a prey": The Jews could take away the property of their enemies as Mordecai had "taken away" the property of Haman.

[The *KJV* gives the impression that the edict allowed the Jews to destroy the wives and children of their attackers and plunder their spoil, and the *NASB* seems to agree with this interpretation. The *NIV* connects "women and children" with the Jews being attacked and doesn't suggest that the Jews killed the women and children of their attackers.]

- 12] Upon one day in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, namely, upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar.

The edict gave the Jews the right to protect themselves and the right to annihilate and plunder any group that fought against them (cf. Est 3:13; 7:4).

The Jew has attended the funeral of every one of the nations that tried to exterminate him.

—Dr. J. Vernon McGee

- 13] The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, and that the Jews should be ready against that day to avenge themselves on their enemies.

"...avenge": "Avenge" and "vengeance": Latin *vendicare*, which has the same root as "vindicate."

Self-Control

A contrary concept is that of *self-control* (1 Cor 14:32, 40). Where there is no self-control, we have: damaged testimony and personal difficulties (Heb 12:13-17); emotional disability and unholiness; we can't see God. A loss of self control leads to troubles with immorality; defiling many; leading to lost rewards. Without self-control, we are defenseless (Prov 25:28).

What's the solution? Confession (1 Jn 1:9); repeatedly practicing obedience; persevering through your failures (Heb 5:8, 9).

Retribution vs. Retaliation?

Is there a seeming contradiction? These are very distinct words. **Retribution** is a basis of life (Mt 7:2. Ps 18:25, 26). It means "a deserved punishment; return for evil done; or sometimes good" (Isa 35:4; 59:18;

Gal 6:7, 8). **Retaliate:** [Latin, literally to “pay back”] means “to pay back a wrong or injury; return like for like, usually to return evil for evil (cf. 1 Pet. 3:9; Rom 12:19).

Retaliation (Always Negative)

- Personal
- Amoral
- Punitive
- Angry
- Bitter
- Vindictive
- Wrathful
- Human

Retribution (Sometimes Positive)

- Impersonal
- Moral
- Consequential
- Dispassionate
- Judicious
- Just
- Self-controlled
- God-like

[I am indebted to Ken Ortiz and his sermon notes for the above comments.]

- 14] So the posts that rode upon mules and camels went out, being hastened and pressed on by the king’s commandment. And the decree was given at Shushan the palace.
- 15] And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple: and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad.

The Persian royal colors (cf. Est 1:6). The king added these emblems to embellish Mordecai’s standing.

Previously under Haman’s edict the city of Susa had been “bewildered” (Est 3:15). Now under the edict of Mordecai the Susa held a joyous celebration. And obviously the Jews were elated.

- 16] The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour.
- 17] And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king’s commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.

They found peace, resting upon the word of the king [!] It is interesting that even a city—or a nation—can exhibit a character of its own. The Jews’ rise to power caused many Gentiles to become Jewish proselytes. God’s good hand was then becoming obvious to the world at large.

No longer were these events being viewed simply as happenstance; people were now beginning to realize that the God of the Jews was protecting them.

Now it was the Jews’ turn. Yet they would have to fight to retain what was theirs. They had to take part actively in their own deliverance. This is a profound principle of faith:

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Joshua 1:8

Prayers for the Jews

It was Esther’s interceding at the throne that saved the people of Israel from slaughter.

- When Israel sinned, Moses met God on the mountain and interceded for them (Ex 32). He was even willing for God to blot him out of the Book of Life if that’s what it took to rescue the nation.
- Centuries later, the Apostle Paul said he was willing to be “accursed from Christ” if it would help save unbelieving Israel (Rom 9:1-3).
- On Mount Carmel, Elijah prayed for disobedient Israel (1 Kgs 18).
- In the palace, Nehemiah prayed for the Jews in Jerusalem (Neh 1).
- Ezra wept and prayed and asked God to help His sinful people (Ezra 9).
- Daniel humbled himself and fasted and prayed that he might understand what God’s plan was for Israel (Daniel 9).

I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

Isaiah 62:6–7

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper who love thee.

Psalms 122:6

“Thy Kingdom Come” (Mt 6:10).

Esther 9: The Feast of Purim

- 1] Now in the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king’s commandment and his decree drew near to be put in execution, in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them, (though it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated them;)

When the appointed day of the battle came, the tables were now turned on the enemies of the Jews.

- 2] The Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, to lay hand on such as sought their hurt: and no man could withstand them; for the fear of them fell upon all people.

As the Jews assembled in various cities to face their attackers, the Gentiles became afraid of them.

- 3] And all the rulers of the provinces, and the lieutenants, and the deputies, and officers of the king, helped the Jews; because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them.

In fact, even the government authorities helped the Jews. The people who attacked the Jews may have seen this as an opportunity to get rich at someone else's expense. However, since they had no backing from others they were in a cause which they could not win.

- 4] For Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame went out throughout all the provinces: for this man Mordecai waxed greater and greater.

Only by God's sovereign intervention was Mordecai now in a position of authority. The very throne that had once condemned the Jews now protects them. *The very throne of God protects us today* (Rom 8:31-39).

- 5] Thus the Jews smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, and slaughter, and destruction, and did what they would unto those that hated them.
6] And in Shushan the palace the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men.

On the day of the battle (13th day of the 12th month, i.e., in March 473) in the citadel of Susa, the Jews killed 500 men plus Haman's 10 sons.

- 7] And Parshandatha, and Dalphon, and Aspatha,
8] And Poratha, and Adalia, and Aridatha,
9] And Parmashta, and Arisai, and Aridai, and Vajezatha,
10] The ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews, slew they; but on the spoil laid they not their hand.

(We will explore the significance of these names in a subsequent session.) The execution of the ten sons of Haman completed the utter destruction of Amalek. In the text of the Hebrew Scriptures, the ten names are arranged on the page to look like a gallows. On the Feast of Purim, the synagogue reader reads these ten names all in one breath because the sons of Haman all died together. (We'll defer exploring the meaning of their names until our concluding session.)

- 11] On that day the number of those that were slain in Shushan the palace was brought before the king.
12] And the king said unto Esther the queen, The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the palace, and the ten sons of Haman; what have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? Now what is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: or what is thy request further? And it shall be done.
13] Then said Esther, If it please the king, let it be granted to the Jews which are in Shushan to do to morrow also according unto this day's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged upon the gallows.

When the king asked Esther what she wanted, she requested that the Jews in Susa be given one more day to carry out the task of rooting out the ones who were trying to destroy them and that Haman's 10 slain sons be hanged on gallows (i.e., impaled). See also Esther 2:23; 7:10. On the second day the Jews killed an additional 300 men (v.15).

- 14] And the king commanded it so to be done: and the decree was given at Shushan; and they hanged Haman's ten sons.

Many have questioned why the Jews wanted to impale the already dead bodies of Haman's 10 sons. This was not an unusual practice in the ancient Middle East. It was a visual warning that others better not commit the same crime as the punished ones. "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Deut 21:23; Gal 3:13; Acts 5:30; 10:39).

- 15] For the Jews that were in Shushan gathered themselves together on the fourteenth day also of the month Adar, and slew three hundred men at Shushan; but on the prey they laid not their hand.

Herodotus, the Greek historian, records that Ahasuerus (Xerxes) returned home after his defeat in the Greek campaign, about 480 B.C. *and that his wife, Amestris [Esther], was a "cold and vindictive" queen.*

- 16] But the other Jews that were in the king's provinces gathered themselves together, and stood for their lives, and had rest from their enemies, and slew of their foes seventy and five thousand, but they laid not their hands on the prey,

Three times in the record it's stated that the Jews didn't take any of the spoil (vv. 10, 15-16). It was in taking spoil from the enemy that King Saul lost his kingdom, and the Jews didn't repeat his mistake (1 Sam 15:12-23).

The opportunity for the afflicted nation was the privilege of defending themselves; they could accept or reject it as they chose. In the outlying provinces 75,000 individuals were killed by the Jews in one day, but there, as well as in Susa, they did not take any plunder from the victims.

- 17] On the thirteenth day of the month Adar; and on the fourteenth day of the same rested they, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.
- 18] But the Jews that were at Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth day thereof, and on the fourteenth thereof; and on the fifteenth day of the same they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.
- 19] Therefore the Jews of the villages, that dwelt in the unwall'd towns, made the fourteenth day of the month Adar a day of gladness and feasting, and a good day, and of sending portions one to another.

Only in Susa did the fighting last for two days. For that reason Jews in Susa celebrated on the 15th day of the 12th month (after the slaughters on the 13th and 14th), whereas Jews in the villages celebrated on the 14th (after the slaughter on the 13th).

Feast of Purim Established

The Feast of Purim was not established by the Mosaic Law: there is little reason to believe that this was a divinely instituted ritual like the seven feasts of Leviticus 23.

It was commanded by Mordecai (vv. 20-28) and by Esther (vv. 29-32) as simply a time of grateful remembrance of their deliverance. History tells us that it was some years before it became a universal season of festivity among the Jews, and many more elapsed before a distinctively religious character was given to it.

On the morning of the 14th day of the month, the Jews again go to the synagogue, where the Esther story is read again and the congregation engages in prayer. The story about Moses and the Amalekites is also read (Ex 17:8-16). Then the celebrants go home to a festive holiday meal with gifts and special foods, and the celebrating continues on the next day. They also send gifts and food to the poor and needy so that everybody can rejoice together. (It is tragic that it has degenerated at the present time into a season of godless merrymaking, and is more patriotic than devotional in character.)

Tradition is the living faith of the dead; traditionalism is the dead faith of the living.

—Jaroslav Pelikan

Those who do not remember the past are condemned to relive it.

—George Santayana

Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.

Proverbs 22:28; 23:10; Deuteronomy 19:14; 27:17

- 20] And Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters unto all the Jews that were in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, both nigh and far,
- 21] To stablish this among them, that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, yearly,

[It is from this verse that it has been broadly concluded that Mordecai may well have been the author of this book.]

- 22] As the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day: that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor.

The two-day feast was for remembering the goodness of God working (through circumstances) to protect His people from extinction. Mordecai wrote a proclamation that the Jews were to celebrate the event annually with eating, rejoicing (cf. Est 8:17), giving food, and sharing with the poor.

- 23] And the Jews undertook to do as they had begun, and as Mordecai had written unto them;
- 24] Because Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had devised against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur, that is, the lot, to consume them, and to destroy them;

The *pur* became a symbol of God's using circumstances to deliver His own. [There is no actual randomness in the universe: the mathematical Theory of Chaos explores this. Cf. Prov 16:33.]

- 25] But when Esther came before the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked device, which he devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.
- 26] Wherefore they called these days Purim after the name of Pur. Therefore for all the words of this letter, and of that which they had seen concerning this matter, and which had come unto them,

The feast was called *Purim* because of Haman's use of the *pur* (the lot) to determine the time of the execution (cf. Est 3:7).

- 27] The Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so as it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to their writing, and according to their appointed time every year;
- 28] And that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their seed.

- 29] Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with all authority, to confirm this second letter of Purim.

Esther the queen also joined Mordecai in sending a second letter (vv. 29-32). Perhaps some of the Jews in the provinces didn't want to change from their original day of celebration (v. 19), and it was necessary for both the queen and prime minister to issue this second letter to keep peace in the nation.

- 30] And he sent the letters unto all the Jews, to the hundred twenty and seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth,
31] To confirm these days of Purim in their times appointed, according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them, and as they had decreed for themselves and for their seed, the matters of the fastings and their cry.
32] And the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim; and it was written in the book.

A copy of her letter was also included in the royal archives (cf. Est 2:23; 6:1; 10:2).

Esther 10

- 1] And the king Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land, and upon the isles of the sea.
2] And all the acts of his power and of his might, and the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai, whereunto the king advanced him, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?

“...Media and Persia”: An addendum will deal with the unique role of the Median priesthood: the *Magi*.

The Midrash states that Ahasueurus' 127 provinces consisted of 100 provinces on the mainland and 27 on islands. [The Hebrew sage, Vilna Gaon, points out that the *gematrical* (numerical) value of טז, “taxes” (which were imposed on the mainland), is 100; the numerical value of יז, “isles,” is 27.]

- 3] For Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed.

It may have been Mordecai who engineered a new system of tribute as a substitute for war and plunder as a source of kingdom wealth...

The Persian and Medo-Persian history was studded with Jewish nobles, ministers, and counselors; and in the great Achaemenid days some of the kings themselves were apparently of Jewish blood (e.g., Daniel; Dan 5:29; 6:1-2, 28).

These final passages are regarded as evidence that the Book of Esther (the “*Megillah*”) was written and published in the early days of the Great Assembly, when Persia was still powerful and all the Jews were still its subjects. Remember, too, that King Ahasueurus was of the fading glory of the world. He is now gone; and his records have perished.

It is interesting to note that God had not left Himself without His representatives at the courts of the heathen empires:

- Joseph in Egypt;
- Daniel in Babylon;
- Mordecai in Persia.
- [*What about America?*]

Remember, too, that the Church is *not* the Kingdom. The end of the Christian dispensation is *not* the end of the world. There are other periods to follow, including that period when the Jewish nation will once more be the principal vehicle for God's program (Rom 11:25).

The Book of Esther is filled with irony, with ways in which events turned out unexpectedly and in favor of God's people:

- **Queen Vashti**, a Persian, was deposed so that **Esther**, a Jewess, could become queen and save her people;
- **Haman**, once exalted, was brought low, and **Mordecai** and the Jews, once hated, were exalted and honored;

A decree that would have wiped out the Jews was overruled by one which led to the destruction of nearly 76,000 enemies of the Jews. No wonder Purim was celebrated yearly with such rejoicing: to help the Jews remember that God is in control and that people should faithfully worship and serve their great God.

Next Session

Where does the name of God appear in the Book of Esther? Introduction to Microcodes: Five Acrostics; Three Equidistant Letter Sequences (plus one diabolical one...).

The Books of Ruth and Esther Session 10

Microcodes & Macrocodes

The Book of Esther

- Name of God does not appear?
- Esther = “Something Hidden.”
- Hidden Codes: 5 Acrostics & 3 Equidistant Letter Sequences (and one chuckle...).

Microcodes

- **Acrostic:** a repetition of the same or successive letters at the beginning of words or clauses (Psalm 111, 112, 119, and others).
- **Acronym:** an acrostic, usually employed for mnemonic purposes.
- **Notarikon:** an acrostic composed of the initial letters of successive sentences; alliteration.

A number of the Psalms are acrostics of the Hebrew alphabet: Psalm 37, 111, 112, and 119. (In Psalm 119, all eight verses of each paragraph begin with the same letter; each successive paragraph begins with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet.)

Proverbs 31:10-31 includes a special emphasis with each of the 22 verses beginning with the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. In the Book of Lamentations each of the four chapters is organized around the 22 letters of the alphabet.

Mnemonic Acrostics

Another simple form of acrostic can be an abbreviation as an aid to memory. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration becomes “NASA,” for example. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization becomes “NATO.” Another from World War II was “Radio Detection and Ranging,” which became “RADAR.”

The Hebrew term for the Old Testament, the *Tanakh*, is an acrostic from the *Torah*, the *Nebhi'im*, and *Kethubhim*: the Pentateuch, the Prophets, and hagiographa. (Entire collections of “acromania” have been published: e.g., Don Hauptman, *Acronymania*, Dell Publishing, New York, 1993).

Acrostics as Hidden Messages

An acrostic can also be a mechanism for including a hidden message. In the Book of Esther we encounter some remarkable surprises. It has been noted by many commentators that Esther is the only book of the Bible in which there does not appear the name of God, or any divine title, anywhere in the book. (Martin Luther favored eliminating it from the Bible on this basis.) However, the name of God *does* appear in a number of places if one knows *how* and *where* to look! Incidentally, it is significant that the name of the book itself, Esther, means “something hidden!”

The foiling of the wicked plot of Haman to blot out the Jews is, of course, one of the more dramatic narratives in the Bible. Furthermore, beyond the surprises in the plot, there are also some surprises hidden within the text itself.

Microcodes in Esther

One of the many ways to hide things within a text is by means of an *acrostic*. An *acrostic* is a systematic sequence of letters within a text which also can have a meaning or significance of its own. It is a code of skipping letters.

The First Acrostic

The first acrostic appears at the conclusion of Memucan's counsel regarding the disposition of Queen Vashti, in verse 1:20, as is shown below:

הִיא וְכָל־הַנָּשִׁים יִתְּנוּ
הוֹדִי

(Remember, Hebrew goes from right to left.)
It is formed by *initial* letters, for the event was *initial*;
but the name is spelled *backward* because God
was *turning back* the counsels of man.

The Invisible Protector

God had declared that if His people forsook Him, He would hide His face from them (Deut 31:16-18). Here, in this very episode, that threat was fulfilled. But even though He was hidden *from* them, God still was working *for* them. *The name of God is hidden no less than eight times in acrostics in the text.*

The Second Acrostic

The second acrostic occurs when Esther invites the king and Haman to a banquet, in **verse 5:4**, and is shown next:

יְבוֹא הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהָמָן הַיּוֹם
יְהוָה

Initial letters: God was initiating the action;
Forward: God was ruling and causing Esther to act.

The Third Acrostic

The third acrostic occurs with Haman's gloating, in **verse 5:13**, and is shown below:

זֶה אֵינְנִי שׂוֹה לִי
הוּהִי

Final letters: Haman's end was approaching;
Backwards: God was overruling Haman's gladness and turning back Haman's counsel.

The Fourth Acrostic

This fourth one, in **verse 7:7**, like the third is formed by the *final* letters, for Haman's *end* had come.

כִּי־כָלְתָהּ אֵלָיו הָרָעָה
יְהוָה

But it is spelled *forward* like the first, for God was *ruling* and bringing about the end He had determined.

The Overall Design

Each of these four acrostics, revealing the YHWH, involves the utterance of a different speaker: Initial Final

1. Memucan	1:20	
2. Esther	5:4	
3. Haman		5:13
4. By the writer		7:7

The first two acrostics are a pair, having the name formed by the *initial* letters of the four words. The last two are a pair, having the name formed by the *final* letters of the four words.

It is remarkable also that in the two cases where the name is formed by the *initial* letters, the facts recorded are *initial* also; and in an occasion in which God's overruling was *initiated*. In the last two cases where the name is formed by the *final* letters, the events are *final* also, and lead quickly to the end toward which God was working.

In the two cases where the name is spelled backwards, God is seen *overruling* the counsels of the *Gentiles* for the accomplishment of His own purposes. Where the name is spelled forward, He is *ruling directly* in the interests of His *own people*, although it was unknown to them at the time.

The Overall Design

- 1) Initial
- 2) Initial
- 3) Final
- 4) Final
- 1) Backward
- 2) Forward
- 3) Backward
- 4) Forward

Initial: facts are initial

Backward: Gentiles

Final: facts are final.

Forward: Israelites

Introversion

- 1) Words spoken *concerning* a queen;
- 2) Words spoken *by* a queen;
- 3) Words spoken *by* Haman;
- 4) Words *concerning* Haman.

A Fifth Acrostic

There is still another acrostic, in *verse 7:5*, which does not spell YHWH ("Yahweh") but rather the remarkable **אֶהְיֶה** EHYH ("I AM"):

זֶה וְאֵלֶּיָּהּ הוּא
הִיָּה
"I AM"

It is formed by final letters,
and the name is spelled backward.

This appears in the dramatic moment when the king seeks the identity by asking, "Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?" (That is, to arrange for the destruction Queen Esther and her people).

Hidden in this phrase is the very name that God announced from the burning bush: the "I AM," the very name God announced when He delivered His people out of the land of Pharaoh in the past, and who has now come to deliver them again out of the hand of Haman.

New Testament Acrostic: Pilate's *Titlon* (John 19:19,20)

Pilate's official label: **τίτλον** *titlon*, the official announcement from the official representative of the ruler of the world. Written first in Hebrew, the first letter of each of the four words spelled out the tetragrammaton, the ineffable name of God, YHWH, *Yehovah*, or *Yahweh*:

And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

John 19:19-20

John tells us that Pilate personally wrote it: in Hebrew for the Jews; Greek as the common language; Latin as the official language of Rome.

Pilate's Epitaph

The Jews The King The Nazarene Jesus
HaYehudim v Melech HaNazarei Yeshua

ישוע הנצרי ומלך היהודים
ה ו ה י
H W H Y

Yeshua HaNazarei v Melech HaYehudim. Acronym on YHWH! [Remember, Hebrew goes from right to left.] If Pilate had rewritten it in the manner they had requested, it would not have spelled out the Name

of God. Did Pilate realize this? Was it deliberate? Did he do it just to upset the Jewish leadership, realizing they had delivered Him up for envy? (Mt 27:18). When they requested a special guard for the tomb, he also responded with an enigmatic remark, "Make it as sure as you can." (Mt 27:63-66.) Was he really surprised when Jesus was resurrected after three days? One wonders.

These five acrostics in Esther are well known within the Talmudic literature. However, I am indebted to a dear friend, Rabbi Yakov Rambsel, who was kind enough to point out a few additional *equidistant letter sequences*. (Yakov's discoveries regarding the *Yeshua Codes* are also explored in my book, *Cosmic Codes - Hidden Messages From the Edge of Eternity*.)

Equidistant Letter Sequence?

Rips explained that each code is a case of adding every fourth letter to form a word.

Read the code

Genesis

49 Letters: בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ
 וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תוֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ וְחָשֶׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי
 הַמָּיִם וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהי אוֹר וַיְהי־אוֹר:
 49 Letters: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאֹרֶךְ כִּי־יִשְׁבַּע וַיְהי־לַיְלָה וַיְהי־עֶרֶב וַיְהי־בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד:
 וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים לָאֹרֶךְ יוֹם וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ קָרָא לַיְלָה וַיְהי־עֶרֶב וַיְהי־בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד:

תורה = TORH

Exodus

וְאֵלֹהִים שָׁמַע בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַבָּאִים מִמִּצְרָיִם אֶת נַעֲקֵב אִישׁ וּבֵיתוֹ בָּאוּ:
 49 Letters: רָאִיוּן שְׁמֵעוּ לִנְי וְהוֹדָה:
 49 Letters: וַיִּשְׁעָר זְבוּלֹן וְהוֹנִיָּה:
דָּן וְנַפְתָּלִי גָד וְאֲשֵׁר:
 49 Letters: וַיְהִי כִלְנָשׁ וַיֵּאָרֶץ וַיִּרְדְּעֵקֶב שִׁבְעִים נָפֶשׁ וַיֹּסֶף הָיָה בְּמַעְרֵים:
וְנָתַת יוֹסֵף וְכָל־אֶחָיו וְכָל־הָרֹדֶף הָיוּ:

תורה = TORH

Numbers

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בַּמִּדְבָּר סִינִי בְּאֶהָל מוֹעֵד בְּאַחֵר לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁנִי בַּשָּׁנָה
 הַשְּׁנִית לְצֵאתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם לֵאמֹר:
 שָׂאוּ אֶת־רֹאשׁ כְּלִיעֲדָת מִי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם בְּמִסְפַּר שְׁנוֹת
 כְּלִיעֲדָתָם לְגִלְגָּלָתָם:
 מִבֶּן עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וְעַמְלָה כְּלִיעֲדָתָם בָּבֹא בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל תִּפְקְדוּ אֹתָם לְעֵבְרָתָם אִתָּהּ
 וְאַחֲרָיו:

הרות = HROT

Deuteronomy

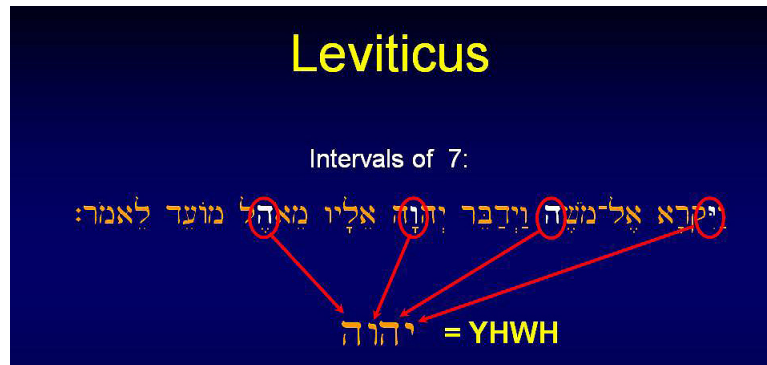
בְּעֶבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב הוֹאִיל מֹשֶׁה בָּאֹר אֶת־הַתּוֹכָה הַזֹּאת לֵאמֹר:
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ דִּבֶּר אֵלֵינוּ בְּחָרֵב לֵאמֹר רְבִילְכֶם שָׁבַת בְּתֹר הַיָּהוּ:
 פָּנוּ וּסְעוּ לָכֶם וּבֹאוּ הֵן הָאֲמָרִי וְאֶל־כָּל־שִׁכְנֵי בְּעֶרְבָה בְּהָר וּבְשִׁפְלָה וּבְנוֹגַב
 וּבְחֹף הַיָּם אֶרֶץ סַבְעִי וְהַלְבִּינוּ עֲרֵבְהָר הַיָּדֵל נְהַר פָּרָת:
 רָאָה נָתַתִּי לַפְּנִיכֶם אֶת־הָאֶרֶץ בָּאוּ וְרָשׁוּ אֶת־הָאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָשָׁבַע יְהוָה
 לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלַיָּעֶקֶב לֵאמֹר לָחֶם לָחֶם וְלִעֲרֵם אֲחֵרֵיהֶם:

הרות = HROT

Torah Codes

49 (7²) letter sequences:

Genesis	TORH
Exodus	TORH
Leviticus	?
Numbers	HROT
Deuteronomy	HROT



The Ellipsis Closes

- The Kabbalist's textual traditions.
- The Cryptology of the Renaissance.
- The Development of Mechanical Aids.
- The *Enigma* Machines.
- Wartime Computer Development.
- The (Re)Discovery of the codes.

Israel: יִשְׂרָאֵל

In the first 10,000 letters of Genesis, skip count -100 to +100, the word "Israel" occurs only twice: at intervals of 7 and 50:

#7: *Kiddush*, The Sabbath observance (Gen 1:31 - 2:3);

#50: Jubilee Year, after 7 *Shmitas* (Lev 25, 27).

The Trees in Genesis 2

And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat...

Genesis 1:29

and ending with

And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:9

Trees in Genesis 2

אשל	Tamarisk (2)	רמון	Pomegranate (8)
אלה	Terebinth, (-2)	גפר	Gopherwood or fir (8)
עבת	Thicket (or Dense forest) (-3)	סנה	Thornbush [<i>Crataegus</i>] (9)
הדר	Citron (-3)	זית	Olive (-9)
שטה	Acacia (-3)	בטן	Pistachio Nut (13)
שקד	Almond (5)	לון	Hazel (-13)
חטה	Wheat (5)	חאנה	Fig (14)
תמר	Date Palm(5)	ערבה	Willow (-15)
ארז	Cedar (-5)	אלון	Oak (17)
אהלים	Aloe (6)	נפן	Vine (-18)
ענב	Grape (-6)	שערה	Barley (-28)
אטר	Boxthorn or Bramble (7)	ערמו	Chestnut (44)
קדה	Cassia (7)	לבנה	Poplar (-85)

The Jew's catechism is his calendar.

—Samson Raphael Hirsch

The Appointed Times

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years.

Genesis 1:14

"...seasons": המועדים "the appointed times."

“Appointed Times”: Leviticus 23

- 52 sabbaths
 - + 7 days of Passover (including its related feast days)
 - + 1 *Shavout*, Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)
 - + 1 *Yom Teruah*, Feast of Trumpets
 - + 1 *Yom Kippur*, Day of Atonement
 - + 7 days of *Sukkot*, Feast of Tabernacles
 - + 1 *Shimini Atzeret*, 8th Day of Assembly
- 70

המקרים The Appointed Times: Statistical expectation is five times in the 78,064 letters of Genesis. As an *equidistant letter sequence*, it appears **only once** in Genesis; at an interval of 70; it is centered on Genesis 1:14. The odds against this by unaided chance have been estimated at greater than 70,000,000 to one!

Yeshua Frequencies

Yeshua, ישוע, appears (in intervals <100) 5,538 instances in the Old Testament: 2,919 going forward (136 with no intervals); 2,619 going backward: “*The volume of the book is written of me*” “*Search the Scriptures... they are written of me.*”

Yeshua Codes

- Genesis 1:1 *Yeshua is able.*
- Genesis 3:27 Adam and Eve covered: *Yoshiah*, “He will save.”
- Ruth opens with 5-interval sequence, *Yeshua*.
- Daniel 9, the Seventy Weeks, with a 26 letter interval, *Yeshua*.

Isaiah 53

Yeshua is my name	ישוע שמי
His Signature	מחתימו
Messiah	משיח
Nazarene	נזיר
Galilee	גליל
Shiloh	שילה
Pharisee	פרוש
Levites	לויים
Caiaphas	כיפה
Annas	ענן

Passover	פסח
The man Herod	איש הורד
Wicked Caesar perish	קיסר עמל אכזר
The Evil Roman City	רע עיר רומי
Let Him be crucified	יצלב
Moriah	הירמ
Cross	צלב
Pierce	דקר
From the Atonement Lamb	מכפר טלא
Bread	הלחם
Wine	יין
Obed	עבד
Jesse	ישי
Seed	זרע
Water	מים
Jonah	יונה

Those at the Cross

The Disciples mourn	למורים אנן
Peter	כפה
Matthew	מתתי
John	יוחנן
Andrew	אנדריו
Philip	פילף
Thomas	תומא
James	יעקב
James	יעקב
Simon	שמעון
Thaddaeus	תדי
Matthias	מתיה
Mary	מרים
Mary	מרים
Mary	מרים
Salome	שלמית
Joseph	יוסף

Even more remarkable: *no Judas!* (Despite high frequency letters...)

Tanakh Frequency Tables

	Total	Frequency (%)		Total	Frequency (%)
א	137,845	11.51663309441	ז	32,368	2.70427204469
ב	129,575	10.82569359214	ח	27,600	2.30591659767
ג	101,953	8.51793894501	ט	16,277	1.35990595871
ד	95,674	7.99334291904	י	15,729	1.31412181756
ה	88,302	7.37742925389	כ	15,240	1.27326699089
ו	68,058	5.68608955813	ל	14,002	1.16983493480
ז	65,211	5.44822924821	מ	11,687	0.97642200279
ח	63,196	5.27988062704	נ	10,076	0.84182665356
ט	58,194	4.86197501757	ס	9,099	0.76020054791
י	57,630	4.81485411319	ע	7,935	0.66295102183
כ	44,808	3.74360546770	פ	6,309	0.52710245705
ל	41,291	3.44976819690	צ	3,288	0.27470484685
מ	39,852	3.32954305255	ק	2,554	0.21338083299
נ	33,468	2.79617451778			

Esther 1:3

An Equidistant Letter Sequence, interval of 8.

בִּשְׁנַת שְׁלוֹשׁ לְמָלְכוֹ עָשָׂה מֶשֶׁחָה לְכָל־שָׂרָיו וְעַבְדָּיו חֵיל
מֶשִׁיחַ

Meshiach, Messiah

Esther 4:7

An Equidistant Letter Sequence, interval of 8.

וַיַּעֲבֵר מִרְדֵּכָי וַיַּעַשׂ כְּכָל־אֲשֶׁר־צִוְּתָהּ עָלָיו אֶסְתֵּר: ס
עוֹשִׂי

Yeshua, Jesus

Esther 4:2

An Equidistant Letter Sequence, interval of 7.

לִפְנֵי שַׁעַר־הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי אֵין לְבוֹא אֶל־שַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ בִּלְבוּשׁ שָׂק:
וְיָבוֹא עַד
וּבְכָל־מִזְדִּיגָה וּמִזְדִּיגָה מְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר דִּבְרַ־הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהָתָּה מִנִּיעַ
אֱלֹשָׁדַי

El Shaddai, The Almighty

Esther 3:11-12

An Equidistant Letter Sequence, interval of 6.

וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהָמָן הַכַּסְפָּה נָתַן לְךָ וְהָעָם לַעֲשׂוֹת בּוֹ
כַּטּוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ:
וַיִּקְרְאוּ סִפְרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ בַּחֲדָשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן בְּשָׁלוּשָׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם
הָמָן וְשַׁטָּן רִיחַ

haman v'satan ray'yach

"Haman and Satan stink."

With fond memories of Rabbi Jacob (Yacov) Rambsel...

Macrocodes: Larger Design Elements

Comparison of Ruth and Esther

<u>Ruth</u>	<u>Esther</u>
• A Gentile woman	A Jewish woman
• Living among Jews	Living among Gentiles
• Married a Jew (Boaz) in the royal line	Married a Gentile who ruled an empire
• Emphasizes the <i>sovereignty</i> of God;	Emphasizes the <i>providence</i> of God;
• God's Name <i>is</i> mentioned	God's Name <i>is not</i> mentioned (explicitly)

Both stories demonstrate that “chance” is really God working under cover! [Source: Fruchtenbaum, Arnold G.: *Ariel's Bible Commentary: The Books of Judges and Ruth*. 1st ed. San Antonio, TX, Ariel Ministries, 2006.]

Homiletics

The position of Esther's people was strikingly analogous to that of *unsaved* men and women in general: conscious of being under the judgment of God, the curse of the broken law hanging over their heads: “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Gal 3:10; Deut 27:26).

However, God can say, “Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom” (Job 33:24). The Lord Jesus has borne the sinner's judgment: “God hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor 5:21). Thus, the king can hold out the golden sceptre toward us—by grace.

Esther did not attempt to plead the good works, the benevolence, or the loyalty of the Jews. Like Paul, when entreating Philemon on behalf of Onesimus, writes: “If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself” (Philemon 17). “He hath made us accepted in the Beloved” (Eph 1:6); “...that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them even as Thou hast loved Me” (John 17:23).

Haman, the one that “had the power of death,” has been destroyed.

The commission we have been given is even more urgent: men are in danger of something far worse than temporal destruction—they are in danger of the eternal judgment of God against sin. The widespread indifference to the King's commandment is disturbing in this much “vaunted century of progress and enlightenment.”

If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?

Proverbs 24:11, 12

A Unique Passage Treatment: The Ten Sons of Haman

The words are of Persian derivation. They are uniquely positioned on the page. (On the Feast of Purim, the synagogue reader reads these ten names *all in one breath* because the sons of Haman all died together [*Buxt. Synag. Jud.* c. 24].) The reflexive usage of **נָפַל**.

Sons of Haman

In the Hebrew text, these are listed in a remarkable way: in a column, with the Hebrew word “self” is linked with each one.

- **נָפַל** the use of **נָפַל** the pronoun can at once, if required, be placed in a position of emphasis. It also sometimes enables the **reflexive sense** to be expressed; with verbs of motion (very rare); denoting the goal.
- **וְ** introduces the *predicate* or *apodosis*: when it forms with the preceding word a *pair*, whether of parallel or opposed ideas; **וְ** is used very freely and widely in Hebrew, but also with much delicacy, to express relations and shades of meaning which Western languages would usually indicate by distinct particles [Whitaker's Revised BDB Lexicon, p.85,251].

Sons of Haman

1. <i>Parshandatha</i>	Curious <i>Self</i>	Busy-body
2. <i>Dalphon</i>	Weeping <i>Self</i>	Self-pity
3. <i>Aspatha</i>	Assembled <i>Self</i>	Self-mobilized; self-sufficiency
4. <i>Poratha</i>	Generous <i>Self</i>	Spend-thriftiness; impulsive self indulgence
5. <i>Adalia</i>	Weak <i>Self</i>	Self-consciousness; inferiority

6. <i>Aridatha</i>	Strong <i>Self</i>	Assertiveness; insistence upon one's own way
7. <i>Parmashta</i>	Preeminent <i>Self</i>	Ambition; desire for preeminence over others
8. <i>Arisai</i>	Bold <i>Self</i>	Imprudence
9. <i>Aridai</i>	Dignified <i>Self</i>	Pride; haughtiness; sense of superiority
10. <i>Vaizatha</i>	Pure <i>Self</i>	Worst of all: self-righteousness

All of these were put to death. *Death of the self-life is the first great evidence of having discovered the secret of our own victory.* [Source: Stedman, Ray C., *The Queen and I*, Word Books, Waco TX, 1977.]

Mordecai's Challenge

"For such a time as this..." *So called are you!*

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

Psalm 90:12

What is *your* action plan?

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About The Cover Design

(on the tape cassette volumes)

The “Front” cover:

The Greek border: “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty (Revelation 1:8).” The center design element symbolizes the Word of God Incarnate, illuminated by the Holy Spirit.

The “Back” cover: (the “front” to the Jewish reader)

The Hebrew border: “Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might (from the Sh’ma, Deut 6:4-5).”

The center design represents the Burning Bush, made up of Hebrew letters which proclaim “the Eternal One cannot lie.”

The Spine:

The spine includes a Menorah from the Old Testament, a Maranatha Dove suggesting the New Testament, and the Koinonia House logo at the base.



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P.O. Box D

Coeur d'Alene Idaho

83816-0347

(208) 773-6310

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