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The End of God's Providence

Esther 7:9:15

In Matthew 13, we read the parable of the Wheat and Tares. Recall the story. A farmer and his workers planted his field with wheat. Shortly after that an enemy overseeded the field with the seeds from the darnel weed grass — what in Bible times was known as “tares”.

This was a horrible thing to do as the darnel weed grass looks almost identical to wheat. That meant that the farmer of the sabotaged field would spend almost an entire season caring for a field full of weeds! Yet such a realization would NOT be made until the

plants entered the flower stage in its reproductive cycle. It was then that the farmer would surmise that his field had been sabotaged.¹

In response the farm hands asked, “Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?” (v. 28) In other words, do you want us to begin weeding the field? The answer was this:

Matthew 13:29-30, “No; lest while you are gathering up the tares, you may root up the wheat with them. Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, ‘First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.’”

Among other things, this parable speaks of the end of evil men and women. They are to be “gathered up and burned”! We see this consistently taught throughout Scripture. Christ spoke of the end of the wicked when He spoke of the Last Day:

Matthew 13:41-42, “The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

When Christ returns, we read this:

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9, “Deal... out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.”

=Revelation 20:15: “And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

This is such a sobering message previewed in Esther 7. The book of Esther was written to demonstrate the intimacy, glory, and greatness of God’s sovereign care when it comes to this world. See, it is easy to think that on account of the nature of the age in which we live that God is NOT involved in our lives. Hence, we hear these questions:

- Where is God?
- What is He doing in our lives and in the world today?
- Why does He allow bad things to happen?
- Why does He seem so far removed at times?

These are common questions answered in the book of Esther. Even though God hides Himself in and throughout the things of life, NEVERTHELESS He is intimately present, ever and always working His will unto our good and His glory!

Esther 7 speaks to the end or purpose of God's Providence as it relates to the wicked.

The Revealing of Haman's Wickedness, vv. 1-6.

Esther 7:1, "Now the king and Haman came to drink *wine* with Esther the queen."

This is an interesting statement for in fact the king and Haman assembled in order to attend Esther's second banquet.²

So, why does this verse read like this? It is stating the obvious.

While Haman no doubt is there enjoying the entire ordeal (as the fact of his presence at this meal no doubt was a relief to what just happened), nevertheless the king and queen are there NOT to eat or to enjoy the finery, BUT to address the burden that has been on Esther's hear for which she risked her life to divulge!³

Furthermore, the reference to their drinking has the effect of speeding up the narrative. This gives the sense that the downfall of the wicked is coming quickly! This world is hurling toward that day! Speaking of the destruction of the wicked Paul writes:

1 Thessalonians 5:3, "While they are saying, 'Peace and safety!' then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."

And so, with the meal over and the king, queen, and Haman now seated on the couches where they sipped their wine, the king is in a place to pose his question.

Esther 7:2, "And the king said to Esther on the second day also as they drank their wine at the banquet, 'What is your petition, Queen⁴ Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be done.'"

This is the third time Ahasuerus gave this promise to Esther (cf. Esther 5:3, 5:6 & 7:2). As we've seen, through it all Esther masterfully played her hand such that the king now was obligated to respond positively to her request. Any other response would bring public dishonor upon Ahasuerus. Recall, Iain Duguid's assessment:

Yet if the king came to her second feast, he was implicitly agreeing in advance to grant her wish and fulfill her request, whatever it was (Esth. 5:8). If he tried to back out at that point, there would have been three public strikes against him. He would lose a great deal of face if he went back on such a public and repeated promise. (Duguid, 2005, p. 64)

And so, the text lays emphasis on the fact that this is “the second day also” — the Second Feast — and so the third time Ahasuerus assured Esther of His kind intentions toward her.

Esther 7:3-4, “Then Queen Esther answered and said, ‘If I have found favor in your sight, O king,⁵ and if it please the king, let my life be given me as my petition, and my people⁶ as my request; for we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed and to be annihilated. Now if we had only been sold as slaves, men and women, I would have remained silent, for the trouble would not be commensurate with the annoyance to the king.’”

What Esther said here no doubt was heavily weighed and calculated.^{7,8,9,10} As we’ve seen, unlike Haman, Esther was NOT one given to impulse.

When Esther says, “if I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me as my petition, and my people as my request” Esther led with the revelation that there was an imminent threat to her life. This would have been viewed as nothing less than an imminent threat on the crown itself! And so, if “her people” were attacked, so would Ahasuerus be attacked!¹¹ That’s the implication; it is masterful!

Obviously, Haman did NOT realize in making the request of Esther 3:8-9 that he actually was attacking Ahasuerus’ household. YET that is exactly what he had done! Now the way Esther frames the issue, it gets even worse.

Esther continues: “we have been sold, I and my people: this was a true statement as Haman purchased the right to kill the Jews for “10,000 talents of silver.” Yet, on the surface out of context, the accusation implies that the one betraying Ahasuerus’ household was driven by money! Was this purposed on the part of Esther? Most likely! The narrative she wanted the king to adopt was that her betrayal was simply about greed — which brings us to the next bullet point.

Esther declares “we have been sold, I and my people, ‘to be destroyed, to be killed and to be annihilated.’” Esther here quotes the edict word for word. Yet, with all the daily duties and laws to which Ahasuerus had to sign off on in order for his kingdom to function, most certainly Ahasuerus would NOT have recognized the language (not yet) ... BUT HAMAN WOULD HAVE! If you got a close-up on Haman’s face at this point it most likely would have turned ashen white!

She continues: “now if we had only been sold as slaves,¹² men and women, I would have remained silent,¹³ for the trouble would not be commensurate with the annoyance to the king.” This is the final nail in Haman’s coffin. Recall the problem Ahasuerus had with his previous bride because she was incredibly strong and opinionated! Esther clearly understood this for in her interactions with Ahasuerus

throughout this book, she makes sure she leaves Ahasuerus with the impression that he was in charge, and that she was nothing more than his submissive bride.

That is the effect here, *“Listen, O great king, if it was about me and my people being sold into slavery, I would never have dared disturbed your peace. Your daily pleasure is much more important to me! Yet unfortunately, the threat against me and my people is a matter of life and death!”*

Esther 7:5, “Then King Ahasuerus asked^{14,15} Queen Esther, ‘Who is he, and where is he, who would presume¹⁶ to do thus?’”

Clearly the king is moved... personally! And is he ever mad! Gone are the formalities of etiquette, who cares about “one half the kingdom”? A man is going to die soon. A man so treacherous that he dared to threaten the very household of the King, for money! The king just needed to know who he was!

Esther 7:6, “And Esther said, ‘A foe and an enemy, is this wicked Haman!’ Then Haman became terrified before the king and queen.”

The language is dramatic as we can just see Esther calmly mouthing the words as she slowly turns her head toward Haman, “A foe and an enemy, is this wicked Haman!”¹⁷

Haman would have known he was in trouble the moment he heard Esther’s quote using the language of the edict. Accordingly, he had that much time to squirm and think of a response before his name was mentioned. Yet thinking on his feet clearly was NOT one of his strengths. And so, he did what so many had done before him — no doubt what he wished Mordecai had done in response to the decree — he begged for his life.

The Cry of Desperation: Mercy from a Merciless Heart, vv. 7-8.¹⁸

Esther 7:7, “And the king arose in his anger from drinking wine *and went* into the palace garden;¹⁹ but Haman stayed to beg for his life from Queen Esther [she clearly was the perceived power at this point], for he saw that harm had been determined against him by the king.”

This is somewhat surprising. You’d think that on the spot the King would have executed Haman. Or at least he would have called upon the royal guard who would have been present to dispose of Haman. Instead, Ahasuerus walked out of the room! Why? The king actually is caught in a pickle! Iain Duguid put it this way:

Why did the king need to take a walk at this point? Not because he needed time to think or because he wanted to cool down. Haman, at least, was in no doubt what the king’s verdict would be when he returned. Already as the king went out, Haman could see that Ahasuerus had determined to do him harm. Nor did

that prospect particularly trouble the king. He was unlikely to lose any sleep over Haman's fate. What was troubling the king was more likely the issue of his own reputation. He had authorized Haman's edict, and his royal seal had ratified it. So how could he now, without losing face, punish Haman for promulgating a decree that he had approved personally? That was his tricky dilemma. (Duguid, 2005, pp. 89-90)

Yet, Haman's impulsivity made it easy for the king (Haman was his own worst enemy)...

Esther 7:8, "Now when the king returned from the palace garden into the place where they were drinking wine, Haman was falling on the couch²⁰ where Esther was. [in Near Eastern fashion, he most likely was kissing her feet!^{21,22}] Then the king said, 'Will he even assault [rape] the queen with me in the house²³?' As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face."

Once again, this is irony! The very one who wanted to kill a Jew for not falling down before him ultimately was executed because he fell down inappropriately before a Jew!^{24,25}

Haman would have been better off had he just closed his mouth (cf. Job 40:4). Instead, he played right into the hands of Xerxes by condemning himself. Joyce Baldwin put it this way:

Etiquette with regard to the harem was so strict that it would have been difficult for Haman to converse with the queen without causing offence. Had he not been so desperate he would no doubt have left with the king, so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of his remaining behind with the queen. In approaching her as she continued to recline on her couch, as was customary at Persian feasts, Haman was going too far, and by falling on the couch he set the seal on his execution. Even had she wished to help there was nothing Esther could have done to save him. (Baldwin, 1985, p. 93)

And so, some of the royal guards present most likely were the ones who arrested Haman and then "covered his head" which was an act of shame.²⁶ It silenced the prisoner, giving him no opportunity to respond or defend himself.

[The Justness of God's Justice: If in Doubt, Consider the Staff, vv. 9-10.](#)

Esther 7:9-10, "Then Harbonah, one of the eunuchs who *were* before the king said, 'Behold indeed, the gallows standing at Haman's house fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai who spoke good on behalf of the king!^{27,28} And the king said, 'Hang him on it.' So they hanged Haman on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai, and the king's anger subsided."

This is an interesting close to this scene.²⁹ Commentators are quick to point out how it was amongst the staff of Ahasuerus that the suggestion came that Haman be hung on the gallows which he had made for Mordecai.

How is that? Because they were privy to almost everything that went on in the Palace, they knew clearly who the good guy was and who the bad guy was.³⁰ So, lest you think that Haman here got a bum rap, from the staff's perspective who saw it all, there was a level of enthusiasm for Haman's execution!

And so, we catch of glimpse at God's Providence when it comes to the end of the wicked! And what is that end? They are destroyed by that which they did in their life!

Galatians 6:7, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap."

Proverbs 5:22, "His own iniquities will capture the wicked, and he will be held with the cords of his sin."

Speaking of the religiously wicked — people who go to church, do the right things, etc. — Paul wrote this:

Romans 2:3-6, "And do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment upon those who practice such things and do the same *yourself*, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are **STORING UP** wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds."

The expression, "storing up" [θησαυρίζω (*thēsaurizō*)] is an interesting word. It almost always is used positively in the context of saving up for the future.

The wicked and rebellious are "storing up" and so amassing treasure for the future... BUT the treasure is NOT in the form of wealth BUT wrath! It is NOT commendation BUT condemnation! And the fact that they are "storing it up" indicates that they are going to receive exactly what they earned! John speaking of the apostate church declared:

Revelation 18:4-5, "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, 'Come out of her, my people, that you may not participate in her sins and that you may not receive of her plagues; for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.'" (cf. Revelation 20:11-15).

And so it was in Haman's life! No one reading this book would think that Haman was a

tragic figure in the story. He was the antagonist from start to finish whom God raised up and used NOT to get even with His people, BUT to temper them and bring them to the point of “undistracted devotion to the Lord” (2 Corinthians 7:9-10)!

We need to hear this because in our cause/effect, performance way of thinking, we easily can find ourselves looking with envy upon the wicked! How we must NOT do this!

So, how do we squelch the desire? The answer is found in one of the Psalms which was written on account of Asaph’s envy of the wicked.

Psalm 73:2-12, “But as for me, my feet came close to stumbling; my steps had almost slipped. For I was envious of the arrogant, *as* I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no pains in their death; and their body is fat. They are not in trouble *as other* men; nor are they plagued like mankind. Therefore pride is their necklace; the garment of violence covers them. Their eye bulges from fatness; the imaginations of *their* heart run riot. They mock, and wickedly speak of oppression [seemingly free of any recourse]; they speak from on high. They have set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue parades through the earth. Therefore his people return to this place; and waters of abundance are drunk by them. [Their death seems easy!!] And they say, ‘How does God know? And is there knowledge with the Most High?’ Behold, these are the wicked; and always at ease, they have increased *in* wealth.”

How easy would it have been in Esther’s day to find yourself envious of Haman: His success? His position? His wealth? His family? His servants? His friends? THIS WAS ASAPH.

Psalm 73:13-14, “Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure, and washed my hands in innocence; for I have been stricken all day long, and chastened every morning.”

Yet God wants everyone of us to understand that earthly power, glory, and honor are NO indication of divine approval or Kingdom success. BUT are in fact incredibly fleeting!

This is what shook Asaph awake:

Psalm 73:16-20, “When I pondered to understand this, it was troublesome in my sight until I came into the sanctuary of God; *then* I perceived their end. [And what is that end?] Surely Thou dost set them in slippery places; Thou dost cast them down to destruction. How they are destroyed in a moment! They are utterly swept away by sudden terrors! Like a dream when one awakes, O Lord, when aroused, Thou wilt despise their form.”

Accordingly, as Christians, where ought our focus to be? If NOT on the easy life of the wicked; OR on our own performance? Then what? On Him who is the reward of His people!

It is that which you will recall made the difference in Mordecai and Esther's life. And it was that which strengthened and encouraged Asaph:

Psalms 73:25-28, "Whom have I in heaven *but Thee*? And besides Thee, I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. For, behold, those who are far from Thee [the wicked] will perish; Thou hast destroyed all those who are unfaithful to Thee. But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord God my refuge [NOT money, power, success, the praises of men, our moral conduct, etc], that I may tell of all Thy works."

May God become and remain that which is our highest glory and end in this life!

Some of the Redemptive Principles Revealed in this Chapter, Select.

- In Esther 7:3, Esther approaches her husband/King hoping that she has found favor in His eyes. The glory of the gospel is that we approach God because we have found favor in His eyes in Christ (John 1:12-13)!³¹
- In Esther 7:4, Esther is concerned about annoying her husband-king. Family of God, if you are in Christ, you never need concern yourself with that. Christ/God will always welcome you to Himself for fellowship/communion (cf. Isaiah 53:4a; James 1:5).³²
- Just as Haman was terrified when his sin was unmasked before Ahasuerus (Esther 7:6), so it is with ALL MEN before God- regardless of there sin (cf. Exodus 33:18-20; Luke 5:8; Is. 6:5; Daniel 10:8-9).³³
- Unlike Ahasuerus when it came to Haman (Esther 7:7), God is never hesitant nor indecisive when it comes to man's judgment. Again, it is handed out according to what is owed (cf. Romans 2:5-6; 6:23)
- Unlike the assault that Haman perpetrated against Esther (Esther 7:8), Satan cannot "invade our space." Because of Christ, we remain impervious Satanic attack. (cf. 1 John 5:8; Ephesians 6:10-18)
- Unlike Ahasuerus who had to be manipulated in order to do what was right (cf. Esther 5:3, 5:6 & 7:2), our God does what is right because He Himself is righteous (1 Corinthians 1:30)!³⁴

- Unlike the child of God who is NOT paid back according to his deeds (cf. Psalms 51), when it comes to the wicked, they will be captured by their own iniquity (cf. Esther 7:9-10; Proverbs 5:21, 22).

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End Note(s)

¹ In the ancient world- as in our own- there was no such thing as a bag of pure seed. Go to Lowes and look at a bag of grass seed. The “contents” will indicate that the bag itself contains dandelion seeds and other such weeds. So it was in the ancient world with a bag of wheat seed. When the farmer planted the wheat, he knew that a percentage of the seed was weed seed. But it would have been a low percentage. Yet in the parable, clearly there was a problem as the field was overrun with the darnel weed! The only explanation was that “An enemy has done this!” (Matthew 13:28)

² “In a rather different turn of phrase, this verse does not say that the king and Haman went ‘to banquet’ with Esther, but literally ‘to drink’ with her. Though the verb שָׁתָה (šātâ, ‘drink’) is, in fact, the root of the noun ‘banquet’ (מִשְׁתֶּה, mišteh), the verb is never used elsewhere in the Heb. Bible with the meaning of ‘feasting,’ but only of drinking. Paton (257) suggests the verb here may be denominative from the noun. While it is certain that Esther’s banquet involved both food and drink, the verb used here certainly highlights the activity of imbibing (cf. Bechtel, 62).” (Tomasino, 2016, p. 290)

³ “The pace of the narrative quickens as we approach the climax. The narrative exhibits a masterful job of maintaining suspense and keeping the action moving without using superfluous details.” (Breneman, 1993, p. 347)

⁴ “On the second day, as on the first (5:6), while relaxing over the wine at the end of the meal, the king repeated his invitation to Esther, but this time using her title Queen Esther, as in 5:3. The courtesy was encouraging in so tricky a situation.” (Baldwin, 1985, p. 91)

⁵ “For her part Queen Esther returned the courtesy, using the deferential address appropriate, but omitted by Haman in 6:7, when putting a suggestion before the king.” (Baldwin, 1985, p. 92)

⁶ “[Esther] had followed Mordecai’s advice to hide her ethnicity so faithfully, even when elevated to the level of queen, that five years later no one knew who her people were or her connection to Mordecai. Think about that. Everyone knew that Mordecai was Jewish: that is what triggered Haman’s scheme to annihilate the Jews in

the first place. But Esther had been under such deep cover that no one (with the possible exception of the odd household eunuch or two) had a clue. To hide her nationality that successfully while living so intimately among pagans, she must have broken virtually every law in the books of Moses. She certainly couldn't have observed the laws of ritual cleanliness, or of kosher food, or of special times and seasons of thanksgiving and fasting. She couldn't even have prayed to God publicly. She had blended in completely with the pagan colors of the empire." (Duguid, 2005, pp. 85-86)

⁷ "Haman's edict threatened the whole Jewish community and, for the sake of her people, [Esther] had agreed to go before the king to intercede with him for their lives. That was going to be a tricky proposition, for king Ahasuerus was a dangerously unstable individual. One day, a person might be his best friend; the next day it would be 'Off with his head!- and while you're at it, impale his body on a pole.' ¶ It was all the more tricky for Esther to intercede on behalf of the Jews since the edict she needed to have revoked had been put forward by Haman, who next to the king was the most powerful man in the empire. It was signed by him in the king's name and stood to benefit the royal treasury to the tune of half a year's taxes for the empire. This was not simply 'Mission Difficult'; it was truly 'Mission Impossible.' All Esther had to offer in exchange was a pretty face—and behind it, a smart brain that had been working overtime. Thus, ever since she had agreed to intercede for her people back in chapter 4, she had been pursuing an intricate strategy with the king, inviting him and Haman to banquet after banquet. By almost revealing her request and then backing off, she persuaded the king three times to commit publicly in advance to give her whatever she wished, up to half his kingdom." (Duguid, 2005, p. 86)

⁸ "Notice how subtly Esther made her points. She skillfully used the passive mood in describing the edict. She simply said, 'We have been sold, I and my people,' so as to avoid having to identify the guilty party (Esther 7:4). First she wanted to make the king angry, and only then to unveil a target for his wrath, in the hopes that he would act before reflecting whether it was harder to find a new vizier or a new favorite wife. She was also softening the way for the realization that doing the right thing would hit the king in the treasury, yet at the same time affirming ahead of time (i.e., before he found out exactly how much it would cost him) that the good he could do would more than compensate for the personal loss he would suffer." (Duguid, 2005, p. 88)

⁹ "The ingenuity of Esther's tactics becomes evident here. By using the pass. form of the verb, Esther cleverly avoids casting any blame on the king in this matter. Indeed, it would be possible for the king to imagine that Esther's distress has nothing to do with him at all." (Tomasino, 2016, p. 291)

¹⁰ "The impression is that Esther has planned her every move very carefully. Taking her cues from Xerxes, in this way she implies her attentive respect for him." (Reid, 2008, p. 124)

¹¹ In v. 6 the text reads, "Haman was terrified." Mervin Breneman, commenting on this, wrote, "'Haman was terrified,' and he had every right to be afraid for his life. His plots and lies had now been uncovered by the one who had more power than he, the king." (Breneman, 1993, p. 349)

¹² "Another cunning aspect of Esther's plea is that it invites the king to consider the question of whether the Jews really deserved to be enslaved. According to Herodotus (Hist. 6.32), rebellious vassals could indeed be sold as slaves. But how could Xerxes brand the Jews as rebels on the very day when he had ordered Mordecai to be honored for saving the king's life? If the Jews could not reasonably be painted as insurrectionists and sold as slaves, then they would surely not be deserving of the much harsher penalty of genocide." (Tomasino, 2016, p. 295)

¹³ "There was no constitutional right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in the Persian Empire. Indeed, there is a sharp irony in this sentence, since in a manner of speaking being sold as a female slave was precisely what had happened to her personally. She herself had been enslaved as the personal toy of the king." (Duguid, 2005, p. 88)

¹⁴ "'King Xerxes asked Queen Esther' is literally, 'Then King Xerxes spoke and he said to

Esther the queen.’ Some think the repetition of the verb ‘spoke’ or ‘he said’ is a dittography (accidental scribal repetition of the same word), but it may well have been the purpose of the narrator to heighten the suspense.” (Breneman, 1993, pp. 348-349)

¹⁵ “Although sometimes taken as a dittograph, a double appearance of this verb features in other OT passages (e.g. Gen. 22:7; 2 Sam. 24:17; Neh. 4:2 [MT, 3:34]; Ezek. 10:2), where it implies either solemnity or hesitation on the part of the speaker.” (Reid, 2008, p. 126)

¹⁶ “Though Esther has been careful to avoid any reference to Haman, the king wants to know who is responsible for the plot to destroy his queen, and agitatedly asks where the man is who has the audacity (lit. ‘fills his heart’) to do such a thing.” (Baldwin, 1985, pp. 92-93)

¹⁷ “As she points to this wicked Haman she senses her triumph and notes the terror of Haman. He might well be terrified. Esther’s words to the king had been an eye-opener for him also, because he had not known Esther’s nationality. The realization that he had inadvertently threatened the queen’s life was a knock-out blow on top of his earlier humiliation.” (Baldwin, 1985, p. 93)

¹⁸ “In this verse the character of the three protagonists is brought out. Haman was a prideful man with a cowardly heart. The king was easily influenced and weak in spite of his appearance of power. Esther was courageous and steadfast. She is not to be considered hard and calloused because she would not listen to Haman’s pleas. She could not have helped even if she had wished to do so.” (Breneman, 1993, p. 350)

¹⁹ “Clines notes that the king’s first instinct when faced with the dilemma is to flee. He is not a decisive man and does not commit himself to a course of action without input from his advisers. But now, it is his chief adviser who stands accused. From whom can he seek counsel?” (Tomasino, 2016, p. 297)

²⁰ “Haman had fallen down before her, thus neatly fulfilling the prediction of his wife that he would certainly fall to his ruin before the seed of the Jews (see Esther 6:13).” (Duguid, 2005, p. 90)

²¹ “Haman was falling on the couch’ just as the king returned. The heightening of the tension in the narrative is superb. The Orientals reclined on couches at their feasts (Amos 6:4–7). Haman, in typical Near Eastern form, probably grabbed the feet of Esther, kissed them, and begged for forgiveness. Such action would explain why the king interprets Haman as about to ‘molest’ Esther.” (Breneman, 1993, p. 350)

²² “According to Plutarch (Artaxerxes 27.1), touching the Persian king’s wife was a capital offense. In Assyrian law, no man was allowed to draw within more than seven paces of a member of the king’s harem (see Clines, 312). Haman must surely have been out of his mind to have made such an error.” (Tomasino, 2016, p. 298)

²³ “Levenson (104) considers this scene to be the funniest in the book of Esther. It is likely that his images of the scene have been shaped by Purim plays that he has seen, but anyone can appreciate its irony. The king has returned from his walk to find Haman sprawled atop the queen. The vizier is begging for his life; the king accuses him instead of trying to force the queen. But the attack is not the real issue for the king: it is that it occurs in his presence, ‘with me in the house.’ It is not the insult to the queen, but the insult to the king that really matters here.” (Tomasino, 2016, p. 298)

²⁴ “Mordecai would not bow (3:2), nor would he stand (5:9), nor would he tremble (5:9); Haman is forced to tremble (7:6), then to stand (7:7), then to bow (7:8). The Jew could not be forced to humiliate himself before the Amalekite, even by the order of the king; but the Amalekite humiliates himself before a Jew without compulsion.” (Tomasino, 2016, p. 298)

²⁵ “So the final blow to Haman’s life comes by way of a false accusation, not dissimilar to the injustice of false accusation that the Jewish people themselves have suffered at Haman’s hands. Laniak (1998: 115) suggests that the whole incident is based around the king’s concern for his own honour.” (Reid, 2008, p. 127)

²⁶ “The covering of Haman’s face is a troubling detail, historically speaking. While it may have been customary in ancient Greece and Rome to cover the head of condemned prisoners (Moore 1971, 72), there is no evidence for such a practice among the

Persians.” My Note: That doesn’t mean it was not practiced in Persia. (Tomasino, 2016, p. 299)

²⁷ “Once again the king needs to be told what is common knowledge among the palace staff, and Harbona reveals the candid opinion of Haman current among the king’s eunuchs, when he draws attention to the gallows prepared for the execution of the man responsible for saving the king’s life.” (Baldwin, 1985, p. 94)

²⁸ “It is not surprising that the eunuch knew of the pike and its purpose. It was not the kind of thing that Haman would have kept secret. The reason the eunuch brings up the matter is apparently that he has little love for Haman. Such self-important figures are often unpopular with servants. This Harbona not only suggests the means for the execution, but he provides further justification for why it should be done. He points out to the king that Haman intended to kill the man whom he had just honored for saving his life. Haman thus appears to be a traitor to the king’s interests. He would murder the king’s rescuer and attack the king’s wife on the same day.” (Tomasino, 2016, p. 300)

²⁹ “For the second time, Haman exchanges places with Mordecai, but whereas the first time was all about not receiving expected honour (ch. 6), now it is about receiving expected and ultimate shaming by being impaled on poles (see comments on 5:14). Again the irony of reversal is dramatic: Haman had intended that Xerxes should utter the final words of condemnation, ‘impale him on it’, but had intended that Mordecai should be the subject!” (Reid, 2008, p. 128)

³⁰ “The ‘Harbona’ here probably is the same one as in 1:10. Apparently Haman had no friends there.” (Breneman, 1993, p. 350)

³¹ “...the basis for our appearing before the Father is not ‘if I have found favor in your sight,’ but rather, ‘if Christ has found favor in your sight.’ Our destiny is bound up in Christ’s, if we are Christians. Having loved us and given his Son for us, while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8), will God the Father give us up now that we are justified by the blood of his Son (see Romans 5:9)? Can his enemies snatch us out of his hand? Can Satan’s accusations remove us from his care? Can death itself drag us out of his presence? Not with a King like the one we serve. No one and nothing can take us away from his great love. There is no condemnation for us, if we are in Christ Jesus, if our faith and trust are placed in him as Savior and Lord (see Romans 8:1).” (Duguid, 2005, p. 96)

³² Consider...

Isaiah 53:4a, “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows...”- In other words, Christ didn’t reject us for our sin. Rather, He saw us in our weakness and loved us nevertheless!

James 1:5, “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach [denouncing or insulting] and it will be given to him.”- In other words, we need not be embarrassed to make requests of God.

³³ Consider...

Exodus 33:18-20, “Then Moses said, ‘I pray Thee, show me Thy glory!’ And He said, ‘I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion.’ But He said, ‘You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!’”

There was a time in Christ’s first year of ministry that Peter got a small glimpse of Christ’s true identity, Luke 5:8, “But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus’ feet, saying, ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!’”

Recall the words of Isaiah when he saw not the Lord but a theophany, Isaiah 6:5, “Then I said, ‘Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.’”

After Daniel beheld the Lord, he testified: Daniel 10:8-9, “So I was left alone and saw this great vision; yet no strength was left in me, for my natural color turned to a deathly pallor, and I retained no strength. But I heard the sound of his words; and as soon as I heard the sound of his words, I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face

to the ground.”

³⁴ “God’s people are those who have built their lives around the only truth that will last, the truth of a King who is utterly different from Ahasuerus. We have a King who doesn’t need to be manipulated and cajoled to do what is right. Our King does what is right because he himself is righteous—he cannot do anything other than the right. We have a King who instead of being consumed with himself and his own interests has staked his name and reputation upon a people whom he would always call his own, even when it was costly for him to do so. We have a King who, far from inventing charges against us, took the charges that we had deservedly incurred for failing to serve him as we ought and laid them upon his dearly beloved Son. It was our King’s own Son who was taken and impaled on a tree, bearing our curse all the way to death (see 2 Corinthians 5:21). Our King’s wrath was poured out in full upon his own Son on the cross.” (Duguid, 2005, pp. 95-96)