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The Redemption of God's People

Esther 9:1-15

The word "Redemption" brings to mind such things as these:

- The cross of Christ.
- The forgiveness of sin.
- Reconciliation.
- Being fully justified of all sin.

And you would NOT be wrong. Yet, you ALSO would NOT be complete right. For, redemption was used in Bible times in the context of slavery. When someone was purchased out of slavery they were “redeemed.” When it comes to the child of God, it has an eschatological focus which has as its intent NOT simply our reconciliation to God as sinners in this life, BUT the restoration of God’s people to their original position of fellowship with God in glory. Truly at its heart, redemption speaks of restoration!

And that is where Esther 9 brings us this morning. The second to the last major section of this book — Esther 7-9:15 — details the end or telos of God’s providential care for His people. Everything that occurred in Esther 1-6 was leading up to this important section. And so:

- As it relates to the wicked, we see their destruction in Haman, Esther 7.
- As it relates to the child of God, we see their exaltation in Mordecai and Esther, Esther 8.
- And as it relates to God’s aim/end/telos when it comes to His people, we learn that it involves NOT ONLY our protection BUT ALSO our full restoration.

[An Overview of God’s Redeeming Grace, v. 1.](#)

Esther 9:1, “Now in the twelfth month (that is, the month Adar), on the thirteenth day when the king’s command and edict were about to be executed [this would have been March 15th of this year,¹ yet as we read this verse, think of the Last Judgment...], on the day when the enemies of the Jews hoped to gain the mastery over them, it was turned to the contrary so that the Jews themselves gained the mastery² over those who hated them.”³

On account of his hatred of the Jews, Haman sought to kill every last one of them.

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

When we originally considered this text, we looked NOT ONLY at the immediate cause of the hatred of Haman (recall he was in the line of the Amalekite King Agag who was executed by Samuel in 1 Samuel 15) BUT we also looked at the ultimate cause which involves the hostility that Satan has toward Christ and His people.

=Revelation 12:3-4, 13: “And another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon [Satan, v. 9] having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads *were* seven diadems. And his tail swept away a third of the stars of

heaven, and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman [the people of God] who was about to give birth ['to the Messiah'], so that when she gave birth he might devour her Child... And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male *Child*."

Again, this conflict has raged throughout Redemptive and world history in which Satan and his forces have attacked and continue to attack Christ and His people, endeavoring to wipe them out.

As such, as we consider Esther 9:1, we Look at it from two perspectives. The first being the conflict which occurred between Haman and the Jews which culminated in the description before us. In this regard, what happened? What did God do?

Esther 9:1b, "...on the day when the enemies of the Jews hoped to gain the mastery over them, it was turned to the contrary so that the Jews themselves gained the mastery over those who hated them."

What a glorious turnaround which would have been unthinkable when Haman was in power. Yet here God snatched His people out of the jaws of death, we'll see the specifics of this in a moment.

Yet there is another perspective we need to consider here — and that is the perspective of the hostility which at this time was raging between Christ/His people and Satan! As Satan once again attempted to wipe out God's people and thus the Messiah, the Lord snatched His people out of the jaws of death and so brought about victory for His people! We've seen this same pattern throughout Redemptive History. And we see this culminating at the cross where Satan once again believed he had gained the victory over Christ — having...

- Possessed one of Jesus' disciples.
- Led the Jewish leaders in their treacherous attack on Christ.
- Incited the crowds and so nailed Christ to a cross that He might die a miserable death.

At one moment, it looked like Satan had won! Yet what did God do? He used the treachery of Satan — and so the acts of wicked men and demons — to bring about the redemption of His people! Speaking ultimately of His victory over Satan at the cross, Jesus said this:

Matthew 12:29, "...how can anyone enter the strong man's house [Satan] and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong *man*? And then he will plunder his house."

Christ did this and much more by dying on the cross! Speaking from the starting point of Christ's grave, Paul wrote this:

Ephesians 4:8a, "Therefore it says, 'When He [Christ] ascended on high [out of the grave up into glory], He led captive a host of captives...'"

This is the way of God's redeeming grace! He takes the worst that man, this world, and Satan can offer, and then He transforms it unto the restoration of God's people to Christ!

Accordingly, Esther 9 is a picture and a foretaste of what God is doing this very moment in the world as it relates to His people! Well, how did God bring this about in Esther's day? The next section explains it in detail.

The Redemption of God's People, vv. 2-10.

Esther 9:2, "The Jews assembled in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on those who sought their harm; and no one could stand before them,⁴ for the dread of them had fallen on all the peoples."

Though Haman's decree meant the certain death of God's people, recall the Lord in His providence ordained a second decree- the Decree of Mordecai- which muted the threat housed in the first decree. How did Mordecai's decree do that? Recall, it "deputized" God's people and so gave them the legal right to defend themselves against any and all who sought their death. It made all the difference in the world. Consider that in 1908, Paul Haupt wrote speaking of a time of Jewish persecution where the right to self-protection was NOT granted:

If the authorities had allowed the Jews to organize armed resistance, the numerous massacres in Russia during the past few years would have been nipped in the bud... But, as a rule, the assailants of the Russian Jews were supported by the governors, military commanders, officers of the police. (Baldwin, 1985, p. 104)

Such was NOT the case in the text before. God's people were allowed to fight back!

With that, it is interesting to see HOW this provision was applied by the people of God at this time. You will note they did NOT as separate households wait for the attack. RATHER, as a community they came together in every city to form one large "militia" of sorts by which they jointly defended any and all property and persons. In other words, God brought about the redemption of His people here via community!

This is so important as you think about how God has deigned in Scripture to bring about the full restoration of His people to Himself in glory. Paul exhorted the Ephesians:

Ephesians 4:14-16, “As a result, we are no longer to be children, [who by themselves are] tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but [now speaking of the corporate body, banded together] speaking the truth [to one another] in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him, who is the head, *even* Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.” For perfecting itself in love!⁵

This is how God designed His kingdom to work. While salvation occurs at the *individual level*, God intends that the working out of our salvation be done at the *corporate level* — which is what we see in Esther!

With this in mind, I appreciate the words of Landon Dowden:

When people ask me how our church is doing, one of my responses is that we are not fighting one another but are fighting for one another. Indeed, one of the greatest ways we can serve those in our faith family is to help them fight for joy in the Lord while the battle with the flesh, the world, and the devil rages. (Dowden, 2019, pp. 9:1-15)

And yet, God’s people were aided by Gentiles as these pagan leaders were confronted by the glory and greatness of God.

Esther 9:3-4, “Even all the princes of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and those who were doing the king’s business assisted⁶ the Jews, because the dread of Mordecai had fallen on them.^{7,8} Indeed, Mordecai was great⁹ in the king’s house, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces; for the man Mordecai became greater and greater.”

Recall, the language here reflects the working of God in and through Mordecai. Think of it: what possibly could be meant by “the dread of Mordecai”?

- Was he an evil man?
- Did he take delight in the sufferings of people? Torture? Executions?
- Was he a Stalin? Was the main thrust of his administration terror?

Absolutely not! What then was it about him that brought “dread,” heaviness, a sense of wonder and awe? It was the God who raised up this humble Jew to the highest civilian position in Persia. It is akin to the “dread” which came upon Nebuchadnezzar in his relationship with Daniel.

Daniel 2:46-47a, “Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and did homage to Daniel [kings don’t do this, so this is amazing], and gave orders to present to him an offering and fragrant incense. [Such was ‘the dread of Daniel’! Yet, what was behind this dread?...] The king answered Daniel and said, ‘Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings...’”

That is what is meant here by “the dread of Mordecai.” When the leadership of each Persian region and city got a fuller glimpse of the God of Mordecai, they were moved having a sense of the power, glory, and weightiness of the Lord.

But once again, we see that this text is layered. Like the previous events, it foreshadows the sense of awe that someday will be associated with Christ and His people.

Philippians 2:9-11, “Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

On the Last Day, every man, woman, and child that has ever lived will bow their knee before Christ. In this regard, Mordecai is a type of Christ. Yet don’t miss a glorious truth: he also is a type of Christian here. On the last day after Christ has been exalted, what is going to occur?

Colossians 3:4: “When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.”

Upon “the Restoration of all things” (Acts 3:21), the relationship we have with Christ will be fully revealed before a world which in this life ignored, disdained, attacked, and hated us! Incredible!!

Esther 9:5-10, “Thus the Jews struck all their enemies [which you will recall, ‘an enemy’ refers to any actively engaged in hostile activities against God’s people] with the sword, killing and destroying; and they did what they pleased¹⁰ to those who hated them.¹¹ And in Susa the capital [lit., ‘the citadel’¹²] the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men,^{13,14} and Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vaizatha,¹⁵ the ten sons^{16,17} of Haman¹⁸ the son of Hammedatha, the Jews’ enemy; but they did not lay their hands on the plunder.”^{19,20,21,22}

This is reminiscent of the time when Israel was called to execute God’s judgment against the Amalekites. Recall, all the people and possession of the Amalekites were placed under “the ban” and so devoted to the Lord (1 Samuel 15:3, 9-10). As such, God’s

people were NOT free to take any of “the plunder.”

That God’s people did that here tells us something of their mindset.^{23,24} In their mind this was NOT personal vengeance. Rather, they understood the big picture. What was going on was NOT merely an attack on them personally. But just as in Saul’s day, it was an attack ultimately against God. Accordingly, the Jews of Esther’s day did NOT take the plunder for it belonged to God! This was a continuation of the Holy War of 1 Samuel 15! And so it will be on the Last Day. All will be given to the Lord, speaking of the eternal state and the New Jerusalem from the perspective of the present.

Isaiah 60:11, “And your gates will be open continually; they will not be closed day or night, so that *men* may bring to you the wealth of the nations, with their kings led in procession.”

So, before us is a description of the protection which God in His providence afforded His people. Yet we also see in this account a glorious foretaste of the Restoration/Redemption that will occur when Christ brings His people out of the last battle to the Lord where He and His people will co-reign as joint heirs. How incredible!

Yet, the passage does NOT end with this. It goes on to demonstrate the glory housed in the redemption/restoration/protection of God’s people at this time. Lastly notice, the glory of God’s redemption.

The Glory of God’s Redemption, vv. 11-15.

Esther 9:11-12a, “On that day the number of those who were killed in Susa the capital was reported to the king. And the king said to Queen Esther,²⁵ ‘The Jews have killed and destroyed five hundred men and the ten sons of Haman in Susa the capital.²⁶ What then have they done in the rest of the king’s provinces!...’”

Ahasuerus here was NOT looking for a status report on the rest of the kingdom. RATHER, he was pointing out to Esther the grace that was afforded her and her people:

- Mordecai’s decree worked!
- God’s people were safe.
- Any and all who lifted their hand against them now were deceased.

How grateful ought Esther to be?! And yet, in an effort to honor Esther even more, Ahasuerus made another generous offer:

Esther 9:12b-14, “‘Now what is your petition? It shall even be granted you. And what is your further request? It shall also be done.’ [notice, there is NO

qualification here as before, 'up to half the kingdom'! In contrast, the king set NO boundary to what Esther could request.] Then said Esther, 'If it pleases the king, let tomorrow also be granted to the Jews who are in Susa to do according to the edict of today; and let Haman's ten sons be hanged on the gallows.' So the king commanded that it should be done so; and an edict was issued in Susa, and Haman's ten sons were hanged."

This is interesting! We'll read next time that Purim was a festival that lasted two days in Judaism. And the reason it lasts two days is because it took two days to protect God's people fully.

With that, you must see that the initial triumph of God's people was not enough in the eyes of Ahasuerus. Accordingly, he went further in honoring Esther and her people, going way beyond anything they could have asked for or dreamt! And so, it is with God as Paul wrote:

Ephesians 3:20-21, "Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen."

Truly, to God belongs all the glory. And yet, in His providence, God gives us above and beyond "all that we could ask or think"! He says the same thing as Ahasuerus, "Ask whatever you wish and it shall be granted you"!

We'll return to this in a moment. For there are two questions that we need to answer in this context. The first is: "Of all things Esther could have requested, why did she request a second day?" Was she blood thirsty? Had her power gone to her head? No! \

Participating in the Punishment of Older Brother

When I was a child my three older brothers thought it was funny to make me scared- which wasn't hard to do since I was younger than they AND my bedroom was in the basement. All they had to do was describe how vulnerable I was to "bad guys" or "monsters," and I wouldn't sleep for a week.

One day, one of my brothers went too far and got me so frightened that when it came to bedtime, I refused to go into the basement alone. This necessarily involved my dad who then issued a punishment that fit the crime.

The next evening, the brother who had scared me had to go into my bedroom, turn all the lights off, shut the door, and then let me say or do whatever I wanted to scare him. Yet, this put me in a rather awkward position. For I knew whatever I did to my brother at the time would come back on me five-fold the next day when my dad was at work.

So, I refused to participate in my dad's plan. And so, he had my oldest brother do the honors!

That is what is going on in this text. Yes, the Jews were "deputized" and so defended themselves quite effectively on the day of Haman's decree. But what about tomorrow? When those Persian who had been harmed by Mordecai's decree sought justice against the Jews that attacked them? That is why Esther issued this third decree! Anthony Tomasino put it this way:

Given the carnage that the Jews had just visited on their enemies, it seems reasonable that survivors might well seek revenge, whatever the law would normally allow. Indeed, in an honor-driven culture, it would be their responsibility to do so. A royal edict allowing a second day of violent self-defense would serve as a deterrent against any such reprisals. (Tomasino, 2016, p. 337)

O.K... What about Esther's request to have "the 10 dead bodies of Haman's sons impaled"? What's going on here? This would address the days following Esther's decree. Recall...

The Gibeonites Revenge

Because of Saul's attempt to annihilate the Gibeonites, years later the Gibeonites sought justice in the form of hanging seven male descendants of Saul, which was granted in 2 Samuel 21:9. While this sounds barbaric, at the time it NOT ONLY satisfied honor BUT it served as a deterrent in the case of future reprisals.²⁷

And so it was with Haman's sons. By impaling their dead bodies and so displaying them in the capital city for all to see, it served as a statement of the danger of opposing God and/or His people, "*Such could be you or your children if you attack God's people!*"²⁸ And the result? Verse 15 tells us that this third decree- Esther's decree- further protected God's people.

Esther 9:15, "And the Jews who were in Susa assembled also on the fourteenth day of the month Adar and killed three hundred men in Susa, but they did not lay their hands on the plunder."

All of this because Ahasuerus endeavored to honor Esther beyond the second decree!

This text- intended for the people of God in the Intertestamental Period- answers a very important question: Does God really care about you? Are His Redemptive promises- all of them — true and something to stake your life upon?

I hope you see, based on this passage, the answer is an emphatic, "Yes!"

You say, “But I’ve NOT been the best Christian. The things I want to do, I don’t. And the things I don’t want to do, I seem always to do! How can I expect anything good from God?”

Yet, this is where this book found God’s people. As reflected in this book (again Esther does NOT contain the name of God), the Lord seemed far removed from His people! As such, they had come to expect little from God on account of their sin. Yet, what did God do for these sinful people? He gave them that which was beyond “all that they could have asked or thought” He preserved them, protected them, vindicated them, and so restored them to Himself!

Exactly what He is doing in your life in everything He has ordained- be it pleasant or unpleasant!

Accordingly, I close with an important question: Will you take your eyes off of the waves, place them upon the Lord, and trust Him? May God bring us all to the place where He brought Jeremiah Day — who wrote these words, “The longer I live, the more faith I have in providence, and the less faith in my interpretation of providence.”²⁹

May God work in us childlike faith in God!

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End Note(s)

- ¹ “The month of Adar would correspond to February or March, 473 BC.” (Tomasino, 2016, p. 330)

² “The verb ‘have power’ or ‘rule’ (שָׁלַט, *šālat*) is not used of royal power, and often has the sense of ‘domineering’ (cf. Nehemiah 5:15). As Fox notes, the ability to exert one’s will over others is one of the central themes of Esther. In chapter 1, the issue was Xerxes’ ability to exert his will over Vashti, culminating in the broader issue of men being able to exert authority over their wives. In chapter 2, it is a matter of Esther gaining dominion over the other women taken into Xerxes’ harem. In chapter 3, the matter of Haman’s ability to exert authority over Mordecai comes to the forefront when Mordecai refuses to bow before the vizier. At the end of that chapter and through chapter 7, the issue at stake is Haman’s ability to exert control over the Jews, forcing them to capitulate to his will by exterminating them. Here, it is the matter of the Jews taking mastery over those who had sought to have mastery over them.” (Tomasino, 2016, p. 331)

³ “The first verse of this chapter consists of a single long, complex sentence, very similar to the syntactic constructions found in Esth 1. This kind of construction is not especially unusual in biblical Heb., but it does have a tendency to slow the pace of the narrative down and focus the reader’s attention. In this case, it is likely that the focus here is intentional, since this verse essentially summarizes the message of the book of Esther: ‘it was reversed.’” (Tomasino, 2016, p. 330)

⁴ “The language here shows a clear parallel to that of the conquest narratives: ‘No one can take a stand against you; your dread and your fear Yahweh your God will put on the surface of all the land where you tread, just as he promised to you’ (Deut 11:25). As in the case of the Israel’s conquest of the Canaanites, terror of the Jews rendered the attacks ineffective. We might also see here an echo of the Israel-Amalek animosity: according to Deuteronomy 25:17–19, the Amalekites would attack the weak and stragglers among the Israelites because Amalek ‘did not fear God.’ Now, their fear made them powerless to stand against Israel.” (Tomasino, 2016, p. 331)

⁵ John MacArthur wrote of this, “The Body receives its authority, direction, and power as it grows ‘up in all aspects into ... Christ,’ from whom the whole body [is] fitted and held together. The two present passive participles that these phrases translate are synonymous and are meant to express that the close, tight, compacted correlation of function in the Body as an organism is the result of Christ’s power. That does not negate the efforts of believers, as proved by the phrases by that which every joint supplies and according to the proper working of each individual part. Each of these phrases is extremely significant in conveying truth about the function of the Body. Christ holds the Body together and makes it function by that which every joint supplies. That is to say, the joints are points of contrast, the joining together or union where the spiritual supply, resources, and gifts of the Holy Spirit pass from one member to another, providing the flow of ministry that produces growth.” (MacArthur, 1986, p. 161)

⁶ “The verb here translated ‘assisting’ (נָסָא, *nāsā*) is literally ‘lift, bear, carry.’ The same verb is used in Esth 3:1 for the promotion of Haman. Once again, we see an illustration of the reversal of circumstances: previously it was Haman who was lifted up, but now it is the Jews.” (Tomasino, 2016, p. 332)

⁷ “Almost as mysterious as the fear of the Jews was the popularity of the new prime minister. Why should he have risen swiftly to such a powerful position in world politics, and why was it that people were prepared to trust him as their leader and champion his cause? A supernatural influence seems to be implied, enhancing natural tendencies to hero worship, and reinforcing self-interest.” (Joyce G. Baldwin, *Esther*, TOTC, p. 103)

⁸ “The author here was careful not to mention God, but certainly he wanted his readers to see God’s hand in the matter.” (Breneman, 1993, p. 358)

⁹ “Gerleman (132) is almost certainly correct in drawing attention to the similarities between this phrase and Exodus 11:3, ‘The man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt.’ The narrator has certainly made a deliberate allusion to Exodus 11, drawing yet another parallel between the deliverers Moses and Mordecai. Also, it implies a parallel between the commemoration of Purim and that of Passover, which is the subject of Exod 11. The narrator draws a connection between the two great acts of national

deliverance, just as the later rabbis would do (see y. Meg. 1.5).” (Tomasino, 2016, pp. 332-333)

¹⁰ “Perhaps the words **did as they pleased to those who hated them** suggests an orgy of indulgence in elemental vengeance because of the juxtaposition of the verbs. In the wider context, however, the inference is that the Jews were given a free hand without official interference. Human nature being what it is, to do one’s pleasure often has grim overtones, as it does in Daniel 8:4; 11:3, 16, 36; but in Esther 1:8 it is morally neutral...” (Breneman, 1993, p. 104)

¹¹ “When Helen Roseveare, who served as a medical missionary in Africa, was beaten and abused by rebel soldiers, she said the Lord brought to her mind that those were his beatings. What they were doing to her, they were really doing to him. She counted it a privilege, then, to suffer for the cause of Christ. The soldiers had no idea Christ was identifying with Helen’s suffering, just as Saul had no clue his persecution of the church was really a persecution of Christ.” (Dowden, 2019, pp. Esther 9:6-16)

¹² “‘In the citadel of Susa’ the Jews must have had many enemies. Perhaps Haman had influenced them. Although five hundred sounds excessive, it was not a high percentage of the population. This indicates that most people in Susa were in support of the Jews.” (Breneman, 1993, p. 360)

¹³ “It is impossible to know what the death toll would have been if Haman’s edict had been carried out, but there must have been ten times that number of Jews scattered throughout the Persian empire if the relatively small number who went back to Judah in the various waves of repatriation came to something like the figure of 42,360 (Ezra 2:64; Nehemiah 7:66).” (Baldwin, 1985, p. 104)

¹⁴ “In the acropolis of Susa, the center of power in the empire, they killed five hundred men in one day. The large number slain within the acropolis itself highlights the extent of the opposition to the Jews in positions of influence and power.” (Duguid, 2005, p. 114)

¹⁵ “Radday argues that these names would have sounded funny to the hearers, but they might have also suggested humorous imagery. I have noted earlier that the names of Xerxes (Ahashuerus; see commentary on Esther 1:1) and Haman (see commentary on Esth 3:1) may be designed to sound humorous. At least some of the names listed here also sound very similar to Heb. words that would have elicited smiles from the audience. The first name, Parshandatha (פַּרְשַׁנְדָּתָה, *paršandātā*), sets the tone: it looks and sounds very similar to the noun פֶּרֶשְׂדֹנָה (*paršedōnā*), which occurs only in Judges 3:22, where it apparently means “excrement.” The name Dalphon looks similar to the Heb. word דֶּלֶף (*delep*), which means an annoying dripping (Proverbs 19:13; 27:15). פֹּרְתָה (*pôrātā*) sounds very similar to the Aramaic word פִּרְתָּה (*partā*), “dung.” Aridatha and Aridai could both be plays on אֲרֹד (*’arôd*), ‘mule.’ The name Parmashta (פַּרְמֶשְׁתָּה, *parmaštā*) might well be a play on the Aramaic פַּרְמֶשְׁתָּק (*parmaštaq*, a Persian loanword), ‘penis.’ There may be a number of ‘inside jokes’ in these names that the original audience would have recognized far better than we can, with our limited knowledge of the ancient vocabulary and our inability to hear the tone of voice that was used when the names were pronounced.” (Tomasino, 2016, p. 335)

¹⁶ “The destruction of Haman’s ten sons would have been a prudent political action, in order to prevent Haman’s descendants from taking vengeance against the Jews (so Jobes, 198). Nonetheless, it serves here as an important literary device, demonstrating Haman’s total defeat. In Esth 5:11, Haman bragged to his wife and friends about ‘his riches, his many sons, and all the ways the king had promoted him.’ Each of these sources of pride has now been stripped away and given over to the Jews: his riches were given to Esther in 8:1; his promotions given to Mordecai in 8:2; and now his sons, too, have fallen into the hands of his enemies. With the death of his sons, Haman’s downfall is complete.” (Tomasino, 2016, p. 334)

¹⁷ “In ancient times, it was common practice in many lands for parents to give their children names that incorporated the name of a deity: i.e., ‘Nathaniel’ means ‘gift of God’; ‘Joshua’ means ‘Yah(weh) saves.’ According to Yamauchi, Haman’s sons bear names that incorporate names of Persian *daiva*, or spirits. The *daiva* were still

worshiped as gods by some Persians in the time of Xerxes, but as Zoroastrianism took hold in the realm (during the days of Xerxes' successor Artaxerxes I), the *daiva* came to be regarded as demons. Yamauchi notes especially that the name Vaizatha (9:9) appears authentic, since the ai diphthong shifted to e in the Persian language between the reigns of Xerxes and Artaxerxes. Thus, he argues, these names reflect the language of the era of Xerxes rather than that of his successors." (Tomasino, 2016, pp. 334-335)

¹⁸ "In all Hebrew manuscripts of the book of Esther, the names of Haman's sons are written in a column, one on top of the next, with the direct-obj. marker in a second column. This orthographic tradition is found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, especially in poetry, but sometimes also in lists. Berlin (84) suggests that this arrangement is patterned after Joshua 12:9–24, where the thirty-one kings defeated by Joshua are arranged in similar fashion. According to rabbinic tradition, however, the 'stacking' of these names forms a graphic illustration of the way the ten bodies were impaled, all in a line (see Paton, 284). At the reading of the Esther scroll on Purim, the names are recited in a single breath, to illustrate the contempt in which Haman and his lineage was held among the Jews (b. Meg. 16b). Also, the empty space between the names and the direct-obj. marker was said to remind the Jews that there would be no resurrection for Haman's sons (Moore 1971, 87)." (Tomasino, 2016, p. 335)

¹⁹ "In Israel's past there had been several incidents concerning spoils of war, and since the author makes this comment twice more (15 and 16) he clearly wants to make a point. This is especially likely in view of the express permission given to them in 8:11 to plunder the goods of their enemies. Abraham had refused to accept the spoil offered him by the king of Sodom (Genesis 14:21–23), so establishing a principle, and Saul had blatantly selected choice animals for himself while protesting his innocence, so providing a classic example of 'rationalization' and of the disaster that follows disobedience (1 Samuel 15:17–23). With the memory of this incident in mind the author seeks to reverse the curse on King Saul and ensure blessing for Mordecai and his contemporaries." (Baldwin, 1985, p. 105)

²⁰ "The author considered it important that they "did not lay their hands on the plunder," for he said it three times (vv. 10, 15–16)." (Breneman, 1993, p. 360)

²¹ "...it is virtually certain that the book of Esther is linking the Jews' battle against their enemies to the 'holy war' motif of the Pentateuch, Joshua, and Judges, fulfilling the command to destroy the Amalekites and other peoples of the land of Canaan as they had failed to do so long before." (Tomasino, 2016, p. 333)

²² "Strain notes, 'We do need to understand that in conducting holy war, the people of God were engaged in something quite different than a modern program of ethnic cleansing or geopolitical land grabbing. They were prosecuting the judicial decree of God in his wrath upon his enemies. It was, in fact, a graphic picture and expression of a deeper conflict, we've seen this before, that has raged, really, since Genesis 3:15 when God declared that the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent would live in perpetual enmity, one with another, 'til one would come who'd crush the serpent's head. ('Holy War')' Had they lost, the Jews would have certainly been plundered. As a matter of fact, it was the main motivation Haman provided in his edict. But God's people exercised restraint. Their primary aim was life, not loot." (Dowden, 2019, pp. Esther 9:10-28)

²³ "Even though Mordecai's edict had permitted the taking of plunder, which was merely normal practice in warfare, the Jews refrained from enriching themselves through this conflict because it was holy war, so the spoils were not theirs to take. The same reserve was shown by the Jews in the countryside around the empire, who likewise took part in the war against God's enemies but kept themselves from the spoil..." (Duguid, 2005, p. 115)

²⁴ "That the Jews had been given permission to take plunder but refused to do so has two important effects. First, it eliminates any appearance that the Jews were driven by greed. Thus, it makes it look like they have the moral high ground. But even more important, it demonstrates that they are carrying out the requirements of *herem*, the ban. When Saul was given orders to destroy the Amalekites utterly, he was also

forbidden to take any of their property as spoil (1 Samuel 15:3). All their goods were to be placed under the ban, destroyed completely.” (Tomasino, 2016, p. 336)

²⁵ “A detail that seems to have escaped commentators is why Esther is with the king in the first place. The queen was not in the habit of lingering in the king’s presence, and the king was not in the habit of summoning her. Evidently, the reason Esther is with the king now is because she has come before him once again as a suppliant. Certainly, that is how Xerxes interprets her presence, because he asks her to present a request.” (Tomasino, 2016, pp. 336-337)

²⁶ “Since the numbers seem large, some suggest they were exaggerated. Sometimes large numbers apparently were used in a hyperbolic way to show the importance of an event. At any rate this constituted a loss for the king; it is also true that the loss would have been greater if Haman’s edict alone had been obeyed.” (Breneman, 1993, p. 360)

²⁷ cf. Genesis 4:10 & Hebrews 12:24.

²⁸ “This ignominious treatment of the dead, so barbaric to our sensibilities, was common in the ancient world. The Assyrian kings gloried in such treatment of their enemies. The inscription of Ashurnasirpal II is typical, where he is described as the one who ‘defeated all his enemies and hung the corpses of his enemies on posts.’ But impalement was not just an Assyrian practice. Xerxes’ father, Darius, bragged of having impaled the rebel Babylonians when he reconquered the city (Behistun inscription 3.50). Impalement was a particularly graphic public spectacle, designed to sap the will to resist from any enemies. One could say that Esther’s request, cruel as it seemed, could be designed to quell further violence.” (Tomasino, 2016, p. 38)

²⁹ Some of the Redemptive Principles Revealed in this Chapter: (1) Verse 2 reflects what I call “The 50/20 rule” found in Genesis 50:20. Man/Satan means it for evil, but God means it for good! (2) Verses 2-3 reflect the Covenant promise of “blessing and cursing” housed in the gospel (cf. Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:8). Truly, God is a covenant keeping God! (3) In verse 4 Mordecai serves as a type of Christ, Philippians 2:9-11. (4) Verses 5-6 serve as a visible picture of what we all deserve: death (Romans 6:23a) (5) Verses 7-9 demonstrate what truly is at stake in parenting. Haman’s sons followed in their father’s footsteps unto their ultimate peril. (6) Verses 5-10, 15- rather than being destroyed, God’s people destroy (cf. Exodus 14:14; Joshua 1:5). (7) Verse 15 serves as a prime example of how sin blinds us. We see its consequences one day yet assume that dabbling in it will lead to benign consequences the next.