

12417

## ESTHER: QUEEN OF DESTINY

Speaker: Bro. John Martin

Study #3

Haman the Jews' Enemy

Reading: Esther 3 and 4

My beloved brethren and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ and our dear young people.

So far in our studies, just covering the ground that we've been over, to summarize and bring us to this point of time; we've seen in the first chapter, b&s, a picture of the aloof king Ahasuerus in all his pomp and glory and the wonder of his kingdom. And as the writer described those things for us, in the record of God's word, with deliberate intent, we have a picture of the kingdom of God, and of the glories that will flood this earth, when the greater majesty of the heavens will set His kingdom and His throne upon this earth.

We saw, b&s, the people related to that kingdom in the great feast of the empire, and the feast of the palace; we saw how Vashti called to glory and honour and immortality in type that is, refused to reflect the king's glory. A vain woman, an independent woman, and we saw her deposed, b&s, and dethroned and sent away from the king's presence. And we saw the great message, the decree of the king go forth into all the world, to call fair young virgins, that they might come into the house of the women, and there to undergo a period of purification, that they might be chosen, one of them, to be the queen of the world. We saw the gracious maid in Esther, b&s, Hadassah the myrtle tree, come before the king having, of course, very wonderfully purified herself according to the instructions given her, and in faithful, simple obedience to the commandments of her foster father and of the keeper of the women. She did no more than what she was told, b&s, and in that obedience, she came swiftly and gloriously before the king to be accepted of him.

And we finished that study, did we not, b&s, seeing her installed in that position of Vashti, and the whole picture is one of glory and beauty and honour and it gives off a cameo as it were, of the kingdom of God and of our call to the gospel and of our purification and our selection as being the bride of Christ, and we'll sit down with Him in the kingdom, b&s, and all the world will be at rest. But as our bro. Stan has truly said, chapter 3 introduces us to the real drama of the book, for before any of those things can happen, b&s, the time of Jacob's trouble must come and pass. And now the book introduces us, therefore, to Haman the Jew's enemy and another character, b&s, steps

upon the stage of divine writ, that we might examine him and see in him the lessons of life, and to understand what it is and who it is that opposes the people of God, and what our attitude should be to such people.

You know, b&s, when men, authors of books, take upon themselves to write stories, fictitious stories, they of course, embellish their stories with outlandish characters, sometimes exaggerating those characters in order that we may see, in the exaggeration of that character, the enormity of certain characteristics of human nature; Dickens was classic in that regard. It scares me, b&s, possible even in fictitious writings, to depict characters as this true story depicts them. And one, of course, could almost be blind and if you didn't know anything about the bible, but believing that this is nothing more than a fictitious story; because it seems almost to be written to impress one with the enormity of the weaknesses and hatreds that exist in the human breast!

Haman, b&s, Haman the Jews' enemy was an egotist plus; he was an incredible character and headed up in him one individual, with all the hatred of all history, of all nations, in one man! and he was as it were, an epitome of all God's enemies, from the time when Israel first came out of Egypt until the Russian host will come into the Holy Land, and we'll see, b&s, in a subsequent chapter, that language is taken from the book of Esther and is used in Ezekiel chapter 38, and there wouldn't be a Christadelphian here, who doesn't know what Ezekiel 38 talks about. We've heard it so often from our lecture platform, and language from this story is taken into Ezekiel 38, so that we might understand that when the great Russian gog, in the plenitude of his power, takes it into his mind to think an evil thought and to make a grand move, to the building up of his image empire and to curse the people of God, there and then only, b&s, will we see the great anti-type of Haman, the Jews' enemy, and will come to do the impossible, to destroy every Jew that breathes. An utter impossibility!

And you know, every talk about this, b&s, (I want to stress before we plunge into this story, I want to stress to you), and I don't think I have to stress this, but let's express to our Heavenly Father together, the thoughts of our heart when we tell Him what Israel means to us; what does it mean to a Christadelphian? You know, b&s, when faith is shaken, when we have eclipses in our lives when all things go dark, and when we seem to doubt the veracity of God's Word and we wonder sometimes in the unbelief of our hearts, as to whether we have the truth, where is the Rock of our salvation? but in Israel! b&s, and time and time again, we've been pulled out of the clouds of despair and out of the depths of unbelief by Israel, the prince with God! Who hasn't thrilled time and time again, to see Israel, and to be pulled up and to know we've got the truth? Just recently, even the fighting in Lebanon, again it's stirred our faith, and every time it happens, b&s, in the Middle East, Jews suffer and Jews die, but Christadelphians live, when Jews come out of their suffering. What do we owe Israel? b&s, we owe them a great debt of gratitude, not because they've done anything for us, but because God has loved them because of their fathers' sakes, and none of us can stand and curse Israel; we bless them, and we bless them, b&s, with our voice and with our material possessions. We give, and give to Youth Aliyah, youth growing up, because it means so much to Christadelphians; and when you read a story like that, we are reading not only ancient history but modern history. I was only talking before this meeting and was told

this little story; again a story that buoys the heart up, b&s. A brother rang through to Israel last week, he was telling me to get the news of what was going on in the Holy Land, because they were in fear! of their brethren and sisters going over there in these times of danger and stress. The fellows in Israel said to them, 'oh, we feel sorry for you in Australia, you've got the trouble of the Hilton Hotel being blown up, you've got a postal strike, the whole country's in chaos; he said you know, it's remarkably quiet here since we've gone into southern Lebanon. He said, you'll be glad to come over here, to get a bit of peace!' It's incredible isn't it, b&s? but we laugh, because we know that God Almighty is looking down upon that Land, and though they be surrounded with enemies, there is no nation more secure than Israel.

But you know, it didn't always look like that! and in this story it didn't always look like that! and bro. Stan is perfectly correct, the real drama begins with the introduction of Haman the Jews' enemy. 'After these things', Esther chapter 3 opens up with, b&s, and we believe that phrase, 'after these things' indicates a period of about five years. These things happened within and over a five year period, because Esther was married in the seventh year of the king, and it was in the twelfth year of the king, that these things came to their climax that Haman had put into operation. So over this period of five years this drama developed, having seen as I said, the picture of the kingdom, now we're taken back as it were, in the type, to a point in time, the time of Jacob's great trouble but he shall be delivered out of it. And we are introduced to Haman, the Jews' enemy. Now I haven't made a lot of use, b&s, of the meaning of names in this book, as I indicated to you, that most of them are of Persian origin, and they don't have a great deal of significance to us, (but if we knew the Persian better, they would have, I don't doubt they would have), but we don't know it; but Gesenius does tell us that 'Haman' means 'to be well disposed', 'to be illustrious' and if that's the meaning of his name, it certainly fits his character.

And he was everything that Mordecai was not! Mordecai as Gesenius indicated was 'a little man', but here's a big man in his own opinion; he was well-disposed, he was illustrious. And you know, the writer introduces him in his full title. 'Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite' and in that phrase, b&s, there we have the motive for his hatred of the Jewish people. He was an Agagite; now the Agagites were descendants from the Amalekites. And Amalek, b&s, was the grandson of Esau; the hatred, b&s, of that man commenced in the womb. They were at war before they were born, those two boys. Here's a hatred, b&s, that was born indigenous of two boys, of the same mother and father, and they could never get on. And there was the grandson of Esau, Amalek, b&s, his grandmother was Adah; it was from that wife that this boy eventually came, the wife of Esau called 'Adah' whose name means 'decorated or painted up'. And Paul says, 'Esau was a fornicator' because his two wives, Adah and Aholibamah being the other, one means decorated or painted up and the other means a 'harlot's tent'; that was the type of women he was associated with, and it was from such an association that Amalek came, b&s, and here's one of his descendants. And what's more, he should never be there! If Saul had done his job, he would never have been there; but here's a thorn in Israel's side, b&s, which the myrtle tree is going to replace, but at the moment he's here and he's going to cause untold harm and damage if he can get away with his

scheme; he has an inveterate hatred of the Jewish people.

Why don't I run through for those that don't know a lot about Amalek, what Amalek stands for in the scriptures. This bible, b&s, is written by God, no question of that; now in this bible, therefore, there are certain ideas presented to us that we should remember. Never forget who Amalek is! In Numbers chapter 24, (when we go to Numbers 24 put a piece of paper in there, b&s, because we're going to come back here three or four times this morning, to the region of the prophecies of Balaam) In Numbers 24, the Amalekites were given a distinction, it's an unholy distinction and it's found in Numbers 24 and verse 20, and among the words of Baalim were these, 'And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever'. Now you'll see in the margin, b&s, for the words 'first of the nations' your marginal alternative says, the first of the nations that warred against Israel, and that's true! They were not the first of the nations, but they were the first nation that ever went to war against Israel; and that's true! because Israel was called out of Egypt, you remember, they came to the wilderness of Sinai, and they came down to Rephidim and there they met for the first time of their national history, an enemy headed up by Amalek. You'll notice, b&s, that back in verse 7, that the king of Amalek is known as Agag, and there, of course, we have an identity with Haman, the Agagite; he was always an Agagite or Agag was a title of the kings of Amalek. Remember Agag of 1 Samuel 15, that Saul was told to destroy, Agag king of the Amalekites? well, here he is in the 24th chapter of Numbers. And if you come back to Exodus chapter 17, b&s, to the occasion when they met Israel, here's the first war that Israel was ever involved in; you know how that Joshua smote them until the sun went down, and that Moses held his hand aloft and Joshua prevailed. And we read in verse 14 of Exodus 17, 'And Yahweh said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar and called the name of it Yahweh is my banner: For he said, because Yahweh hath sworn that Yahweh will have war with Amalek from generation to generation'. And in those words, b&s, there are two guarantees; there is a guarantee that Yahweh will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven, and there is a guarantee that will not happen until Christ comes, from generation to generation, and Amalek became the symbol of the opposition headed up by Agag against the people of God, be they Israelite or Christadelphian and you can rest assured of this, b&s, that in accordance with God's word that Amalek is alive and well today! (from generation to generation) And they may not be known today as Amalekites, they may bear other titles; for Israel they bear the title of Syrians, Lebanese, Jordanians, Libyans, Iraqis, Russians. For us, b&s, they bear the names of the world, and all that the world stands for, who hate Israel and who hate the things that Israel stands for and hate the people who support Israel. And don't make any mistake about it, b&s, because we live in a land of plenty, and luxury, where people lack for nothing, and apathy prevails, don't make any mistake about it, if things were different and people wanted and people sought for and people saw in the people of Israel, a symbol of money has they've always had, they'd hate them with a hatred beyond belief, and they'd hate you for your beliefs in Israel; make no mistake about that! We live by God's grace in this land; it wasn't always so! And so here we have in the

book of Joshua, that Yahweh will have war not Joshua. No, says God, I will fight them from generation to generation; and so He has, b&s.

Amalek warfare has ever been conducted in the same way; Deut.25, He knows only one way to fight, b&s, if we can't see the issues that are here before us, we must be blind, this is the way Amalek fights. Deut.25 and verse 17 to 18, Moses said, 'Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt. How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God'. That's the warfare of Amalek, b&s, he's got no fear of God and he's waiting in the dark for each single one of them, and he gets them one after another, b&s, those that straggle behind the main group of the Christadelphian camp; he loves to attack them! He's everywhere; he's in dance halls, picture theatres, in all those places of entertainment, he's in television sets, he's everywhere where weak and stragglers find their place, b&s, and he strangles the life out of them, and Yahweh says 'I'll fight him tooth and nail from generation to generation. And that's what we've got to fight, b&s, and it's a warfare of faith, and the one that Amalek hated, hated with a hatred beyond belief, was Mordecai. Why? because he feared him, because Mordecai would not bow, and that's the one the Agagite hated, he just detested him! and he's always detested those who stand up for their belief; he doesn't know how to answer them, he can't handle them, he doesn't know what to do, and he can only devise means to give him a cowardly way to bring him to the ground; but he can't get to them, he hates that sort, b&s, and Mordecai and Haman were at the opposite ends of the scale.

And now we come to the story with that little bit of a background, and we'll have to slip through these two chapters picking out the main issues, b&s, and they're wonderful issues. And we know the story, how that Haman was advanced by king Ahasuerus for whatever reason we don't know, but he had, of course, got himself in with the king and he was advanced; and you know, the pride of this man, b&s, is almost beyond description. We'll come to that in a latter chapter, to see the pride of this man, he just went mad and crazy with pride, so proud was this man that his hatred overcame his own ambitions. You know, a man is terribly beaten by himself when he can't enjoy life while anyone stands above the gravity that he can't stand. A man whose hatred, b&s, exceeds his ambition, is a man whose pride is just impossible. And that's what this man was! He had the world at his feet, he had everything but the kingship and he had a try at that even, but he had everything that mortal man could want, and he could hardly bear to live because Mordecai was above the earth. That man is eaten out like a skeleton, b&s, with hatred. That's the sort of man that Haman was, and he's introduced to us, as the Jews' enemy, and Mordecai would not bow and reverence him, and every time he passed through the king's gate, the servants would stand up and bow and reverence him, and he never even noticed Mordecai failing to bow.

You often wonder about that, b&s, you know, I believe that the reason he never noticed it was because he went through the gate with his nose in the air! He never even saw him, until they went and told him that he wasn't bowing, and then he looked. Then he looked, and you know, b&s, there was a great discussion went on in that king's gate,

verse 3, 'the king's servants, which were in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the king's commandment?' Three times we're told that things relate to the king, so the issue between them and Mordecai was, not as whether they believed what Mordecai believed, but they wondered as to who would win the fight. They said, 'Listen, Mordecai, you are defying the king, never mind about Haman, we're the king's servants, this is the king's gate, and that's the king's commandment'; and they told Haman, b&s, not because they agreed with Haman or wanted Haman to win, or they were on Mordecai's side, but they wanted to know it says in verse 4, 'whether Mordecai's matters or words would stand'. And you can just see these servants, you know, 'this is going to be interesting, fellas, look at Haman, his nose up in the air, and this fellow Mordecai ruthlessly determined not to worship him; I wonder which one of those chaps have got the greater force and willpower; let's tell Haman and see what happens!'

And you know, b&s, when they remonstrated with Mordecai over the matter, he gave them the reason why he would not bow. For he told them he was a Jew. Now there's courage, there is raw courage; what would you do in those circumstances, b&s, would you bow perhaps? or if that was too much for your conscience and you wouldn't bow, what if you were challenged on the matter, and you affronted up in those days, not in these days when we've got such civil liberties which if you murder a person you get charged 25 cents via 10 cents cost; in those days, b&s, when you've got a king on the throne that you're liable to get your throat cut on the spot, what would you do if they said to you, 'now listen here, he's the king's representative, you better bow', what would you do? Well, as I said, if you couldn't bow, maybe you'd say something or just not be there when Haman went through the gate; but he told them he was a Jew. 'That's why I don't bow, don't you understand, I am a Jew, and I hate him as much as he hates me'; but with this difference, Mordecai's hatred, b&s, was not such that it dominated him. Mordecai's hatred was based on his understanding of God's law, but he didn't hate him to the extent, that the ambitions that Mordecai had in life to represent God, were far greater and above all the hatred that Haman could have summoned up against him. But nonetheless, the hatred was mutual and he told them blandly the basis of his objection.

Now you know what it is, of course, he couldn't bow for several reasons, 1. because as a Jew he was told the first commandment was, that he was to worship none, and to bow and reverence a man is an act of worship. Peter wouldn't have it from Cornelius, would he? 'Stand up, he said, I'm a man'; when Cornelius wanted to bow before Peter, Peter wouldn't have it. Being a Jew he understood the first commandment, you don't worship anyone except Yahweh; that's the first reason he wouldn't worship him. The second one was, b&s, because, of course, he was an Agagite. He was the Jews' enemy; Mordecai would not bow and reverence such a man and there were those two reasons, and the third reason was because God had cursed the Amalekites. So here was a man of God's curse, he was the Jews' enemy and he was a man and not God, and therefore, being a Jew he had sound religious reasons why he would not bow to that man.

And, of course, when they told Haman that not only was Mordecai refusing to bow, but he was a Jew, all the old animosities embedded in Haman, stormed to the top, b&s, and

we read these in verse 6, 'that he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had showed him the people of Mordecai: wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews'. Now you imagine the words 'he thought scorn to lay hands on him alone', in actual fact, the RSV says, 'he even disdained to lay hands on him alone'; as much as he hated Mordecai, he hated the thought, b&s, that if he strangled the life out of Mordecai so that he would die, there still would be his kind around and it made his flesh creep, so he disdained to think that he could kill him unless he killed every man, woman and child that was related to him! Now you imagine the hatred in that man's breast; you go to Israel today, it's unbelievable, b&s, the hatred. You can't believe it, but you can believe it when you read those words; you know, we've got the modern equivalent to this, it's not as if God's revealed something that's so strange to us; I remember the time that I was in Lebanon where they're fighting today, up in Sidon only 12 miles from Tyre where they're fighting today. We were up in Sidon and we went to a refugee camp and they drove us in to have a quick look at the place, and as we were going around the corner, b&s, with a big high wall we're looking into a schoolyard where they taught the refugee's children, and there on the wall, not written in chalk but painted professionally, in Arabic and English was a song which the children learnt at play at recess time. It went like this,

kill the Jews, kill, kill, kill,  
the Jews have our land, kill, kill, kill,  
kill the Jews, kill, kill, kill.

that's the song they sung at playtime, small children. They hate them, and they hate everyone relating to them! That's the hatred of God's enemies, b&s; why do people hate Jews like that? Why do people hate anyone? You can always search for a reason but it will come back generally speaking to one thing, envy! Envy is at the root of all hatred in nearly all cases; why did they come before Pilate, and Pilate says, 'behold, your king', why did people in the streets, b&s, many of whom had been healed by Him, or if they hadn't been healed by Him, had relations who had been healed by Him. He'd done nobody any wrong, they hated Him without a cause; they must have had a cause but there was no legitimate cause, well, what was the cause? FOR ENVY THEY HAD DELIVERED HIM! and Haman hated that man, because he was a man of principle. And there's the reason today for the hatred of the Jew, b&s; the Jew may not have many principles or scruples, but he's clever; he's got initiative, he's got drive, he's a dynamic individual. He runs his nation like clockwork, they know how to deal with terrorists! You shoot them! They know how to deal with a lot of problems, b&s, they lead the world in these matters; they can go into Entebbe and pluck up people underneath the nose of a black monster. The Egyptians lost the same and lost 15 men trying to get out of the plane, and things like that; they hate them because they're able to do everything better than everybody else, and it's envy at the root of it all, b&s, and that was the root of this man's problem, and he couldn't stand to think that such people were on the face of the earth when he, Haman, was god among men, should be supreme. That's what he couldn't stand, and he made a fatal mistake.

He sought to destroy all the Jews! Or what a terrible mistake; you know, b&s, there's a reason why he sought to destroy them, because he says, 'they showed him the people

of Mordecai'. You know, they were not the people of Mordecai; we learn in the scriptures that Israel is called the people of God's inheritance. Now just for a moment, just think what that means. We don't say that they were people who were going to have an inheritance, but they were the people of God's inheritance. If we're going to inherit the Land, and Israel's going to be the first nation among nations, that's their inheritance, Israel themselves, are God's inheritance. Ever tried to take something away from God? That's who they were, b&s, they were not the people of Mordecai at all. Now you come with me to Deuteronomy 32 and I'll show you something interesting about God's attitude towards Israel; in Deuteronomy 32 and verses 9 and 10, you know these words, 'For Yahweh's portion or inheritance is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye'. Now we know, b&s, that God wants to dwell among men upon the face of the earth, He has chosen therefore, as a focal centre of His rulership, to be in Israel; they are His inheritance. You never take anything away from God, it's a very dangerous practice to try and snatch things out of God's hands; a very dangerous practice. In order to emphasize that, Moses said they're the apple of His eye; we understand, of course, that the apple of the eye is the pupil. Do you want to go home and test God's reaction to Israel? stand in front of a mirror and try and poke your eye with your finger, try and do it. See if you can keep your eye open and poke your finger sharply into your own eye; you try it, but the interesting part about it is this, that the word 'apple' in the Hebrew is 'little man', they are the 'little man' of God's eye, in other words b&s, the eyes of Yahweh run to and fro upon the earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those who love and fear Him; Israel happened to be in God's eye, as the little man of His eye, Mordecai, b&s, was the apple of God's eye; he's a little man and Haman's going to prick, is he? Let him put his finger on Mordecai, and see the reaction of God immediately and swiftly in protection of that man! Haman had no idea of what he was trying to do when he was going to destroy the Jews; he couldn't possibly do that, b&s.

But he set about his task nonetheless, and so we read from verse 7 onwards, the way that Haman planned a scheme. A rather, I suppose to him, an amusing scheme, b&s, because we read 'that in the first month, in 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, the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar'. Now I don't believe that they cast the lot for 12 months; what they did, they did this before Haman. Now can you picture the scene, as Haman full of hatred, just boiling in him, and this man he wouldn't bow to me, he wouldn't bow to me, 'bring that lot in!' Now the word 'lot' or 'Pur' means to 'break in pieces, to be small'; now we don't know what it was, but it would be the nearest equivalent to what we would understand to be a dice of some sort. What they did we don't know the exact manner of the lot, but in a way they gambled, they gambled, b&s, to see which would be a lucky day to destroy the Jews, and they did it before Haman, and so they took every day, day after day after day, and they threw the lot for every day of the year; from day to day, and month to month. B&S, you think of this, they finished that little game on the thirteenth day of Nisan. Can anyone tell me what that was? It was the eve of the Passover, and there was nothing lucky about Israel's deliverance out of Egypt! You come to Numbers 24, b&s, again back to the words of Baalim.

They finished that little game on the very eve of the Passover! Incredible, in Number 24 we read in verses 8 and 9, 'God brought him forth out of Egypt' (the title used there of God is EL) 'the great power brought him forth out of Egypt; He hath as it were the strength of an ox (as that word should be understood) 'He shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with His arrows. He couched, He lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee', and you know, b&s, Egypt was a memorial of that! and on the eve of the Passover, there was nothing lucky about God's decision to pass through the land of Egypt and to smite the Egyptians. And as chapter 23 and verse 23 says and we repeat it again, 'there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel'.

None, whatever can prevail, b&s, and so on the eve of the Passover, Haman mucks around with his lucky charm, to determine a lucky day, and the lucky day was the 13th day. That 13, b&s, the number 13, the unlucky number, has a scriptural base, because I'm going to show you later on it was the most unlucky day that Haman could ever imagine! A very unlucky day was the 13th of Adar. Now they cast that lot and we read, of course, in verse 12, 'that it was on the 13th day of the first month, the eve of the Passover, that Haman sent out that decree', the lot b&s, the dice turned up day after day; imagine Haman tossing this dice. It's the first month of the year, and every day's coming up, no, not that day, not the next day, not the next and it goes on and on through the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh month; Haman's probably thinking to himself, 'how many months are there in a year?' the dice is being thrown, ah, the thirteenth day of the last month of the year, who do you reckon turned that up? to give the maximum time for the Jews to prepare their defence? The last month! For Proverbs 16 and verse 33 says, 'the lot is cast into the lap, but the hole disposing thereof is of Yahweh'. And Yahweh, b&s, turned up not a lucky day but a tragic day for Haman, and He gave the Jews ample time to prepare and advert the tragedy which would have come upon the people, and we therefore believe, that this was God's doing and it was marvellous in our yes, giving them the opportunity.

Now, Haman goes before the king; he knows the weakness of the king, in verse 9, 'If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed and I will pay 10,000 talents of silver to the hands of those who have the charge of the business, to bring it unto the king's treasury'. Now he offers the king money! Now what was the basis of his hatred? Well, because there were a certain people (he didn't name who they were in verse 8, there were a certain people scattered abroad among the nations, or the provinces of the kingdom, and they are diverse from all people. They won't keep the king's laws, they've got their own laws. Why don't people like you at work, b&s? Maybe they do like you at work, if you have people that respect your opinions and your beliefs, you're very very fortunate! I'm in that fortunate position, I don't think people dislike me at work, we work among a fairly decent group of people as far as world standards are concerned. But I know a lot of b&s don't enjoy that. Why don't they enjoy that? because they cannot stand that you're different. You don't talk about television, you don't know what went on on television, you're not in that conversation. You don't know who won the 40 . You

don't know all the sports that's going on, you can't enter into that type of conversation, the smutty jokes you turn a deaf ear and walk away, and they can't stand to see that you're different; you're diverse from all the people. And although you're a good citizen of the country and obey the laws of the Land, because that's God law, it is a law that happens to contradict their conscience, like voting, you won't vote; and they can't stand to think that you won't vote! because they do and it irks them and worries them and gets to them that you're different. Never let that worry you, b&s, for we ought to obey God and not men, that's why Haman hated those people; they were different and that's why the world hates the Jews, they're different! They're not like us, they don't do things like us, they're against all human dignity, all human rights, all human thinking, but the confounded, annoying thing is that they succeed: darn it! and that's what they don't like about the Jews, and they just cannot stand why the Jews stand in defiance of all the world's principles in effect, but they succeed. And this is what they can't stand, and Haman couldn't stand it; they were diverse and he offered the king silver, 10,000 talents.

Harold Dodge, b&s, for what he knows I don't know, but Harold Dodge the historian notes that 10,000 talents of silver, would have been 2/3rds of the yearly revenue of the kingdom of Persia. That was the measure of Haman's hatred of that people, 2/3rds of the king's revenue for one year in the whole of his provinces! He was prepared to pay an enormous price for their destruction. Numbers chapter 22 and verse 18, Baalim again, 'Baalim answered and said unto the servants of Balak, if Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of Yahweh my God, to do less or more', and Haman was prepared to give the king a house full of silver to buy, b&s, the destruction of the Jews. Now you imagine the irony of this, he was going to pay an enormous sum in silver to destroy the Jews, and you know, b&s, God had memorialized in the Law of Moses, that silver was the price of redemption, and when you work it out it's ironic. Here's Haman the Jews' enemy who says, 'I'll give you 2/3rds of the total of the revenue of your kingdom in one year, to destroy those people'. It was a fortune and when Yahweh, b&s, set forth the principle that silver would be the price of redemption, He estimated the value of all the fighting men in Israel, at the ½ shekel of the shekel of the sanctuary which, to give a modern equivalent would be the price of a big bottle of coke, and that was Yahweh's estimation of the fighting man in Israel, a bottle of fizz! and that's the sum total of God's estimation of flesh; but that redeemed him b&s, and the ridiculously low price that Yahweh put, of course, was to stress that there is no price that can be paid, for 'who, says the Psalmist, can redeem his brother? or who can give to God a ransom for him?' Nobody can! so God says, 'there's no good putting a big value on it, because it's beyond value, so it's the smallest value because that's what you're worth! So Israel was saved by the grace of God when an enemy couldn't get their destruction by promising an absolute vast fortune; silver of all things to offer the king to kill Jews. Ah! there was a terrible irony in that, b&s, but Haman wouldn't know anything about that!

And so, of course, the man went ahead with his plans, and of course, he knew, b&s, Haman was a clever man, because he hid the identity of those people; imagine you know, if as we have suggested according to bro. Perc's chronology which I believe is a

very, very good one, if as we suggested this is the era when the Jews were returning to the Land under the jurisdiction of the Persian kings, well, the kingdom of Persia had a policy towards them, which Haman was going to reverse. Had the king known those people, b&s, it's extremely doubtful if they would ever had gotten the approval of the king! So he said 'a certain people', and the king didn't know the people until the very last day, and Haman hid that skillfully, a certain people! And so the king took off his ring (now this is what Haman wanted, because all he needed was the laws of the Medes and Persians sealed with the king's ring, and that became an immutable law of that kingdom, and that's what he wanted and the king took off his ring, and he sealed that decree, that the Jews should perish!)

And in verse 10, 'the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy', and there was, b&s, the decree of the king, that the Jews' should be delivered into the hand of their enemies. You know, b&s, Yahweh gave two great decrees amongst others, in relation to the Jewish people; He decreed that they should serve the king of Babylon for 70 years (they've done that) He had decreed in the book of Moses right back in Deuteronomy 28 that they would go on from time memorial to the coming of Messiah among the nations, a curse and a by-word. That was heaven's decree, b&s, and there's no reversing of that. But it wasn't a decree that consigned them to death for all eternity, it consigned them to a period of servitude over centuries of time, it can't be reversed; Jacob's trouble must come and go. How often do you hear brethren pray in their prayers for Israel and quite often they'll say 'bring the time of Jacob's troubles and let it pass', because we know it's got to come; it's heaven's decree. That was the king's decree, but this decree, b&s, was a decree that would destroy them! and there was another decree of God in relation to the Jews which he sealed with the king's ring. (We won't turn this passage up because you know it so well), but in the 33rd chapter of Jeremiah, Yahweh sealed the eternal destiny of Israel by the constellations of the heavens. You have a look at them, b&s, look at that sun up there! when you can go up there on a ladder, take a hold of the edge of it and push it down below the horizon, and stand on it that it doesn't come up all day, God will cast Israel away. There is the eternal seal upon Israel's indestructibility; so much for king Ahasuerus' ring, no way in the world could he possibly have that purpose effected.

And so we read through the various verses, which I must virtually skip through to the end of the chapter, that in verse 13, 'And they sent the letters into the provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews', you see, Haman wanted to make sure that no one misunderstood him. When I mean 'kill', I mean to destroy, when I mean to destroy, I mean to cause to perish, don't misunderstand me, 'kill them'! You know, you can see the hatred in that, and all of this was to be done in one day. In one day, 'and it shall come to pass in that day, said Zechariah 12 and verse 9, 'that I will seek to defend all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saith God', and the enemies of Israel, b&s, have a great day planned. Ezekiel 38 says, 'this is the day whereof I have spoken' and Russia doesn't know it! Russia comes into the Holy Land with the avowed purpose to destroy, to kill and to cause to perish all Jews, in one day, and Yahweh says, 'this is the day that I have spoken of, and in that day I will seek to defend all the inhabitants of Jerusalem'. What a wonderful day that will be, b&s!

Have you ever laid on your bed at night and thought about the kingdom, in order that the vision might glow in your mind and get the order of all the events in your mind; have you seen yourself gathered at Sinai being prepared as the bride of Christ, and then as the armies of heaven to go forth with Him who drives the white horse to make war in righteousness with the King of kings and Lord of lords? and have seen the Russian horde come down and the city of Jerusalem besieged by the might of the steel of Russia and the red sickle around the city, ready to reap it as the harvest of the earth? and the Russian raucous cry ringing in the hills of Judeah and the Kremlin, b&s, about to cry a triumph with the destruction of God's city, and the Jews upon their knees, women and children bleeding to death, crying unto their God, and in the very last moment, when all seems lost, the Mount of Olives splits in two, 'behold, your God'. And the tents of Judah are saved, b&s, a remarkable thing and in one day Yahweh will go forth as when He fought in the day of battle, and He will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and all the enemies will be turned back, in one day, God says, 'I will remove the iniquity of that Land'. Incredible isn't it, b&s?

And they planned that great day, for they knew not the thoughts of Yahweh; they knew not the thoughts of Yahweh! And the posts went out, and in the end of verse 14, they were told, 'to be ready against that day'. They were already against that day, alright; they were to ready against that day. And the king and Haman sat down to drink and the city of Shushan was perplexed', as well they might be, b&s, for this was a reversal of Persian policy. A reversal of Persian policy; 'and when Mordecai perceived in chapter 4, what was done, he rent his clothes, he put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the middle of the city, and cried with a loud and bitter cry'. You see the contest that was on, b&s, we don't understand it unless we get behind that record, and understand the tension that was there. You see, there's the king on his throne, no one has access to him! Later on we'll describe that king on his throne. They had a policy in Persia, the policy of privacy in the kingship was like a sacred thing, it was the elevation of the god-king, that he should be left in privacy; no one dare enter his secret chamber. Mordecai couldn't get there, Haman had access, of course, being first man in the kingdom; the 7 princes had access, but nobody else did. Now Haman's been in there, he's told them about these people, Mordecai knows the king doesn't know who the people are! He doesn't know how to tell him; he can't get to the king, so what does he do? everyone knows he's a Jew! so he puts sackcloth and ashes on and he goes out into the middle of the city, and he walks around in Shushan, wailing and weeping that the attention of the people might be drawn to, I'm a Jew! they're the people that Haman's cursed, and he tried, b&s, in that indirect way to penetrate into the throne of the king, by getting in the middle of the city. But Haman would have closed all the doors, and Mordecai's cries, b&s, would have never penetrated into the presence of that king, but I'll tell you something, they would have penetrated into the presence of that King! (God) and that was all that mattered, and Mordecai's vain cries in that city, to draw attention to the aloof king of Persia, went unheeded, b&s; but it didn't really matter, because he was a good fig, a good fig that was carried away captive and Yahweh would do him good. And there was an absolute guarantee from heaven, that he would come before the presence of God, and he'd find what he was looking for!

And so we find, b&s, in verse 2 of that 4th chapter, 'that he came even before the king's gate, for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth', and you see Mordecai coming back to the gate, he can't go inside the gate, so he's before the gate of the king. He's not allowed inside because you can't get into the king of Persia's presence clothed in sackcloth. B&S, let me tell you something, you'll never get into the heaven's kingdom, into the gate of God, unless you're clothed in sackcloth! 'To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word', and whereas that sackcloth deprived him of the Persian king, b&s, if we do not wear sackcloth, we will never, ever get into the presence of our King! Now there's a terrific contrast, and imagine Mordecai sitting just outside that gate (you can't get in there) but in that frame of mind, b&s, he was well and truly in the courts of Yahweh! And so will we be if we wear sackcloth and ashes, the symbols of mourning and humility that prostrate us before the majesty of our God; and He is pleased, b&s, in the portals of heaven itself, where He is surrounded by an innumerable company of angels and with the presence of His illustrious and glorious Son alongside of Him, He's pleased to introduce into His court, in the spirit, I believe, of our words, to bring us by our words into His presence, there in that majestic throne, clothed in the clothing of mourning and sorrow and humility, and the King of heaven, b&s, is glorified by such presence.

But not the king of Persia; and there was the difference, and Esther knew there was a problem, but she didn't know what it was, and she knew this, that clothed like that, Mordecai was not allowed before the king, for no one was allowed to be sad in the presence of the king. Remember Nehemiah when he held out the wine to the king and he was sad in his presence? and the king noticed it; there was death for that, b&s, and had it not been for the respect of the king to Nehemiah, he might have killed him! but because he had respect, he allowed that sadness and asked him the reason for it. But Nehemiah dare show that, and any lesser might have lost his life. Mordecai knew that, and he sat before that gate, now you know, b&s, Mordecai's religious feelings took precedence above all else, because you see, when he did that, he lost access to Esther, and he knew that, he knew now that it would be difficult to get access to Esther, but because the mourning had been made public and because the news filtered back through the courts and got to Esther's ears, she knew if nothing else, that her foster father was down there in abject sorrow. And it says, the queen was greatly distressed; it says in verse 4, 'So Esther's maids and her chamberlains came and told it her. Then was the queen exceedingly grieved', not because she understood what the grief was about, but she knew her foster father, b&s, and she knew there must be a powerful reason for him to be like he was.

So what did she do? Well, naturally she sends down there, b&s, the clothing that he might get rid of the sackcloth and have access to her; so she sent away to take away his sackcloth. But he sent a message back to her, 'to keep her clothes' because there's only one way that sackcloth could be removed, b&s, and that's by the solution to the problem. Christadelphians this side of the kingdom of God must bear their burdens whatever they might be, personal, family or ecclesial; they've got to be born, b&s, our own weaknesses and the weaknesses of our brethren and sisters that annoy us so

much, there's so many burdens to be born, and are born cheerfully and manfully and we understand that we're all so pitifully weak before our heavenly Father and no way in the world can our sackcloth be removed until the cause of the problem is removed, until Yahweh says, 'I will give them, the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness, beauty for ashes and the oil of joy for mourning', only then, b&s, will the clothing be changed. And no way could Esther change that clothing until the problem was solved; and Mordecai refused it, 'he received it not', and so Esther had no access to him.

And she wanted to know why it was and what it was? And so in verse 6, she sent Hatach and 'he went forth to Mordecai unto the street of the city, which was before the king's gate'. And there Mordecai, chapter 4 verse 6, 'was in the street of the city which was before the king's gate', and you know, there's an interesting parallel here, as Hatach that trusted chamberlain of Esther goes down to the gate of the city; there was the street that was before the king's gate. Now the word 'street' of course, doesn't mean what we understand by a street, in the Hebrew it means 'an open square', it was a great open square, b&s, before the king's palace, much the same as you have before Buckingham palace, where people gather to watch the changing of the guards. And it's a great open square that men might congregate there to look at the king's gate and imagine the majesty that's behind it, even though it's impenetrable, and there in that great square of the king, Mordecai hung his head in sorrow and abject humility before His God. There's an interesting parallel here, you know, b&s, it wasn't many years before that, around about the same time that down in Jerusalem, another great man, an enormous man, Ezra, the aged scribe, sat in the street before the gate of the guards' house, and he was in a similar condition as Mordecai. And he mourned and wailed, b&s, for a similar reason and that is, that the Jews were being destroyed. The difference was this, that Mordecai mourned and wailed, b&s, because the Jews were being destroyed by their enemies; Ezra broke his heart because the Jews were being destroyed by themselves. And the tragedy was that they'd taken to themselves, strange wives; there was a picture of two great men in this era of time, both before a broad place, both before the gate of a king, one the king of Persia and one the King of heaven. One because Jews were being destroyed by their enemies and one because the Jews were being destroyed by themselves, and the greater enemy of all, was Ezra's enemy, their own selves, when they took unto themselves the wives of the nations of whom they chose, and brought them into Israel, a destructive means to bring the nation to an end, b&s, and to change Jews to a mongrel race, and to obliterate Hebrew to a babble of tongues that no one could understand, and to change the character of the people to the character of mongrels, and to destroy God's purpose among men, if they could! And all of this because of their own stupidity and their own lust; and two men's heads hung in shame and sorrow and humility, because of what was going on in those places! And God's purpose was being challenged both from within and without the ecclesia, as it is today, b&s. There would be people outside who would destroy us, they would change us to Mormons, worshippers of Joseph Smith and his dreams, or they would change us to Seventh Day Adventists, Judaizers and sabbath keepers, change us to Jehovah Witnesses and they are Jehovah's witnesses to change us to a mongrel religion and that word is a mongrel word. They would change us, all of us, if they could, but they're not the danger! we know their doctrines are false, we know the truth, the biggest danger

of all, b&s, is our own body, and our own enemy, and we'll destroy ourselves far quicker than they can destroy us, and when we get to the doctrine that it doesn't matter what we believe, or we can marry outside the truth, and publish in the paper that we're pleased to announce the engagement of our sons and daughters to Gentiles, as it's being done. And when we do that, b&s, we bring into our meeting, the mongrel religions and the mongrel ideas and the hybrid ideas of the nations, and the separateness and the distinctiveness of Christadelphians will be lost, b&s; we'll dress like them and talk like them and we act like them. We're lost and gone and destroyed and there's the time to sit before God's house and weep and mourn in sackcloth and ashes; but God be thanked that it isn't so, because we determine like Mordecai's determined, to maintain our belief! And as long as there are men upon the earth like him, all is not lost.

And down in the street of that city he was, and there he wept and he mourned. And Mordecai wrote to Esther and he told Hatach 'to carry this message to Esther, all that 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', and you note that, he knew everything! How did he know that? I don't know, I've got no idea how he knew that, but he knew exactly the sum of the money. Now why am I saying 'exactly'? I mean that, because that word, now you just listen to this, God's word and how it is written! You take that word 'sum', the sum of the money, the word in the Hebrew means 'to be exact'; it's used in the idea of an exposition, he knew the exact sum of money that Haman had offered the king, and he told Esther to impress her with the danger of the situation. Now the interesting thing about this word is this, one other time in the bible, one other time is that word found in the bible, just turn to the last chapter of the book of Esther. Now you imagine this, in the last chapter of the book of Esther, chapter 10, we read in verse 2 concerning the greatness of Mordecai, 'All the acts of his power and of his might, and the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai', the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai, the word 'declaration' is the only other rendition of that Hebrew word, 'the exact greatness of Mordecai' and you know, b&s, what poetic justice is in that; the sum of the money was the measure or the price of Haman's hatred, he had a fortune of hatred against Israel; and the measure of Mordecai's greatness was the measure of Haman's hatred. And if Haman's hatred, b&s, took precedence above all else in his life, even to overcome his own personal, proud ambitions, his hatred was a pinnacle above that; there is the measure of the opposite grandeur of Mordecai, the only other place in the bible where that word is found. Isn't that incredible? as if God deliberately choosing that word to show the measure of wickedness and measure of greatness against it! as if they were at opposite ends of the divine scale in the estimation of the king's treasury. An incredible fact of history, b&s, is that fact!

And so what happens? He sends Esther the copy of the writing; he wasn't prepared to let Hatach just tell Esther, he said, 'you give her this decree'; he had got a copy, b&s. He'd found a copy alright and he'd got one, he had his ways and means, and he gave this copy and he said to Hatach, 'you show it unto Esther and declare to Esther and you charge Esther; three words, show it, declare it and charge it unto her, and he impresses this woman, b&s, with the urgency of the situation. She'd got to act, he's putting his own daughter, his foster daughter, in terrible danger. He knows what it's all about, b&s, this

man has acted wisely, he puts her in awful danger; he knew the danger and she reminds him of the danger. Esther halts, she's fearful and she sends a message back to the Mordecai, 'all the king's servants know that whosoever whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court', and the word 'man or woman' b&s, is ish and isha, not any ordinary man or woman, but even great men and women can't penetrate the court as the words 'ish' and 'isha' indicate great men and women. 'None can come into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his', in other words, they're all treated alike says the RSV; everyone is treated alike, he's got no favourites. Not even me and I'm his wife, there's no favourites with the king, you all know that, she said, 'except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre'; there's a chance, b&s, that he'd hold out the golden sceptre.

Number 24, Balaam's prophecy, the golden sceptre will be held out alright on behalf of Israel, listen to this! Numbers 24 verse 17, 'I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly'. There shall come a sceptre, alright, the golden sceptre shall truly be held out, b&s, the sceptre of his kingdom is a right sceptre, says Psalm 45 and He will do valiantly alright, and He will destroy Israel's enemies; there'll be a golden sceptre, alright, no doubt about that whatever; but Esther was in doubt, b&s, she was in doubt and she wondered. She said, 'the king's got no favourites and furthermore, she said, 'I haven't been called before the king for 30 days', and I believe even in that, b&s, there was providence! And so this pathetic plea came back from his daughter, can you imagine the traumatic experience of that man? You bear in mind this, b&s, who was it that got the Jews in trouble? Mordecai. Who's stand was it that caused Haman to act like he did? Mordecai's stand. Why were the people under threat of death? because of his belief; he was the prime cause of it all, shouldn't he therefore, withdraw his stand and cause the Jews to be more acceptable? Why not bow to the king? no way in the world! and Mordecai, b&s, wanted above all else to save his people, but not at the expense of compromise, and he was prepared to endanger the life of every man, woman and child and his own foster daughter, to stand up to his principles. And now he's going to put his foster daughter into the most dire peril of her life, because the king was an awful majesty, and she was to go in and disturb his privacy, which in other circumstances was treated as an act of absolute sacrilege against the god of the earth. And this is what he was asking her to do, 'that he could accept such as to whom he held out the golden sceptre', and his faith was such, b&s, that he knew the golden sceptre would be held out.

And he went and reminded Esther in verse 13, 'Think not within thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews'; words which were calculated to stir her remembrance up of the principles of God. Carefully chosen words, 'think not within thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house. The king's house, b&s? what would that stir up in Esther's mind? The house of Jacob is the lot of his inheritance; I will make thee an house, He told David, He had promised, b&s, that there would come forth a seed, who would inherit His mountain and He would be the King in His house. We are

told that Christ was that seed, He was God's Son over God's house; there's a King's house, b&s, which might protect Esther, but there's another king who's got a family and if Esther thinks she can relate herself to that family and escape, she will never escape if she fails in her duty to preserve God's family. Do you want a modern equivalent to that principle? Do you ever imagine, b&s, that your immediate circle of friends, your immediate ecclesia constitutes all of God's house; could you imagine that? The Corinthians did; and they thought, b&s, that they were a people above other people, Christadelphian people, and they didn't know that there was one God and Father of all. You imagine, b&s, that in building up our own little circle to the exclusion of all else, that God will bless that; I tell you nay! if in this place we've got people all over this country, we represent many ecclesias here, b&s, and yet we represent one! There is not one brother or sister here, that doesn't claim God as his Father and rightly so, if they're related to His Son; not one can claim that relationship and claim it unjustly if they're related to His Son, and God loves us all, b&s. If we want to strengthen our ecclesia, then strengthen every ecclesia; it is a fundamental rule of defence in any country, that if you're going to fight a battle, it's best to fight it in someone else's land, so that your's is protected. And by that we suggest, b&s, that if we want to save our ecclesia from the doom of this world, then make sure that surrounding ecclesias are strong; that the outer defences are strong, that the perimeters are strong that all of us might dwell safely; for the day may come, b&s, when in all our peripheral outlook, in defending our own, that we will find ourselves besieged beyond our means, and brought to our knees crying definitely for the help of b&s who are no longer there because of our stupidity.

If you think that you can escape in the king's house, you'll never succeed, because God's house is important! There is a tremendous issue in those words, b&s, a tremendous issue! 'And who knows, said Mordecai, as to whether you haven't been brought to the kingdom for such a time as this?' Because he said, 'If thou altogether holdeth thy peace at this time, then there shall come an enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place'. What faith! Where would it come from? Ask Mordecai, what do you mean? where'll it come from? And I don't doubt Mordecai would say to you, 'I wouldn't have any idea'. Who better than Esther? I don't know! Who else could get into the king? I wouldn't have a clue, but I'm telling you this, it will come! It will come, b&s, out of the blue; but who knows where it will come from, but it will come! and if you don't play the part, God will get someone else to do it. That is a tremendous exhortation! You don't really think, b&s, that you're indispensable to your meeting? I know some people may not say that but by their very actions they indicate that; none of us are indispensable. Do you really believe that the Creator of heaven and earth, who made us out of the dust of the ground, like a potter who moulds his clay, needs me or you as imperative to His purpose? Do you really believe that? b&s, He could obliterate me from the face of the earth and these meetings of Christadelphians would go exactly the same; and you're in exactly the same position! And Mordecai said, 'I haven't got a clue where it will come from, but it'll come' and come it will, b&s.

And there will be a breathing space. Here's an interesting thing, enlargement, literally means 'to breathe'; ever been in a situation where all you want is to have some 'breathing space'? Tell you what we have, we just seek to put it as we are, ah, now let's

think about where we're going next? Now here is something very interesting, and this is really interesting, I know you're going to point a finger at me because it is, it really is interesting, one other place that word is found? do you know where it is? Well, remember a man by the name of Jacob, grandson of Abraham, he's coming back from Padan-aram and he's going to meet Esau, who is Amalekite really, he's Agag as far as Jacob is concerned, so Mordecai in the person of Jacob is going to meet Esau in the person of Haman. The story's told all over again in the two brothers, and when he realized there was one stronger than he waiting to destroy him, he sent five droves of animals with a space in between each drove, and that's the same Hebrew word, a breathing space. The only other occurrence and it's used, b&s, at the time of Jacob's trouble, isn't that incredible! And there were five breathing spaces and five is the number of grace, and God gave Jacob 'breathing spaces' between each of the droves of animals, and he found favour in the eyes of his brother, and the day was saved. The only other occurrence of that word, isn't that incredible? and Mordecai's faith was equal to the situation and then we have this last couple of verses, b&s, which are really interesting as Esther, in verse 15, 'bade them return Mordecai this answer'.

Now I want to show you something in this chapter that's interesting in this regard; on two occasions in verse 5 and in verse 10, Esther sends Mordecai a commandment. She sent him a commandment to find out what the problem was, in verse 10, again Esther spake unto Hatach, and gave him commandment unto Mordecai', and in both cases, Mordecai sends back to Esther and virtually says, 'Listen Esther, I'm your father; don't you be telling me what I'm going to be doing in the situation. I'm telling you'. And the woman, b&s, not because she was disobedient, but because like all of us, fearful of our lives, hesitated for the moment, to obey her father. Finally she returns him this answer, no longer any commandments, she realizes who the real king is, and she bowed to the wishes of Mordecai. Beautiful, beautiful, b&s, and she submitted herself to the will of God through her foster father. A marvellous person was Esther; and she knows the danger and that a fast for her three days and three nights is very significant as you'll see later. And her attitude is 'if I perish, I perish', 'I could wish myself accursed for my kinsmen who are Israelites according to the flesh, in other words, she was prepared to die for her people!

Do you know what Mordecai did? Ah, this is glorious the way this chapter ends, it's glorious! It says that 'Mordecai went his way', went his way. You know, where is his way? to the king's gate. So he didn't go anywhere, but you know what, look at the margin? he passed. Do you know what that word is in the Hebrew, it's the word for 'passed over'; he passed over, in other words, when Esther bowed to the will of heaven, that she would accept the commandments of her foster father on behalf of the will of heaven, b&s, that she might submit herself in sacrifice for her people, like the angel of death, Mordecai who had the issues of life and death (not Haman or Ahasuerus) he passed over! and went his way 'and he did as Esther commanded'. What did he do? He wouldn't wear her clothing, he wouldn't give in to her plea, he refused her commandment, but when she bowed, b&s, to the will of her foster father, he passed over; and he did as she commanded, and that commandment was, 'that he should conduct himself in a religious exercise, to bring down the grace of heaven upon her, that

she might be saved; and in that, b&s, he bowed to her will, and in nothing else.

Mordecai, truly, in this story is the great, great power behind the throne and the great father of Esther, b&s, and a great salvation of Israel. He's a wonderful man, and like the Lord Jesus Christ, if we bow to the will of heaven, b&s, if we say, 'well, for the sake of the truth, I perish, I perish, even if it not be, b&s, in physical death, if we give up the pleasures of this life, if we give up our own time, if we give up doing our own thing, if we give up building our own homes for the cause of God, and study His Word to help our b&s, if in this life we perish, we perish! the angel of death will pass over. And there will be no one dead in our house, b&s, we will save ourselves and our house; we will go our way with the Lord Jesus Christ, it will be a great day, b&s, and there will be a time for us of great joy, when all God's enemies are destroyed.