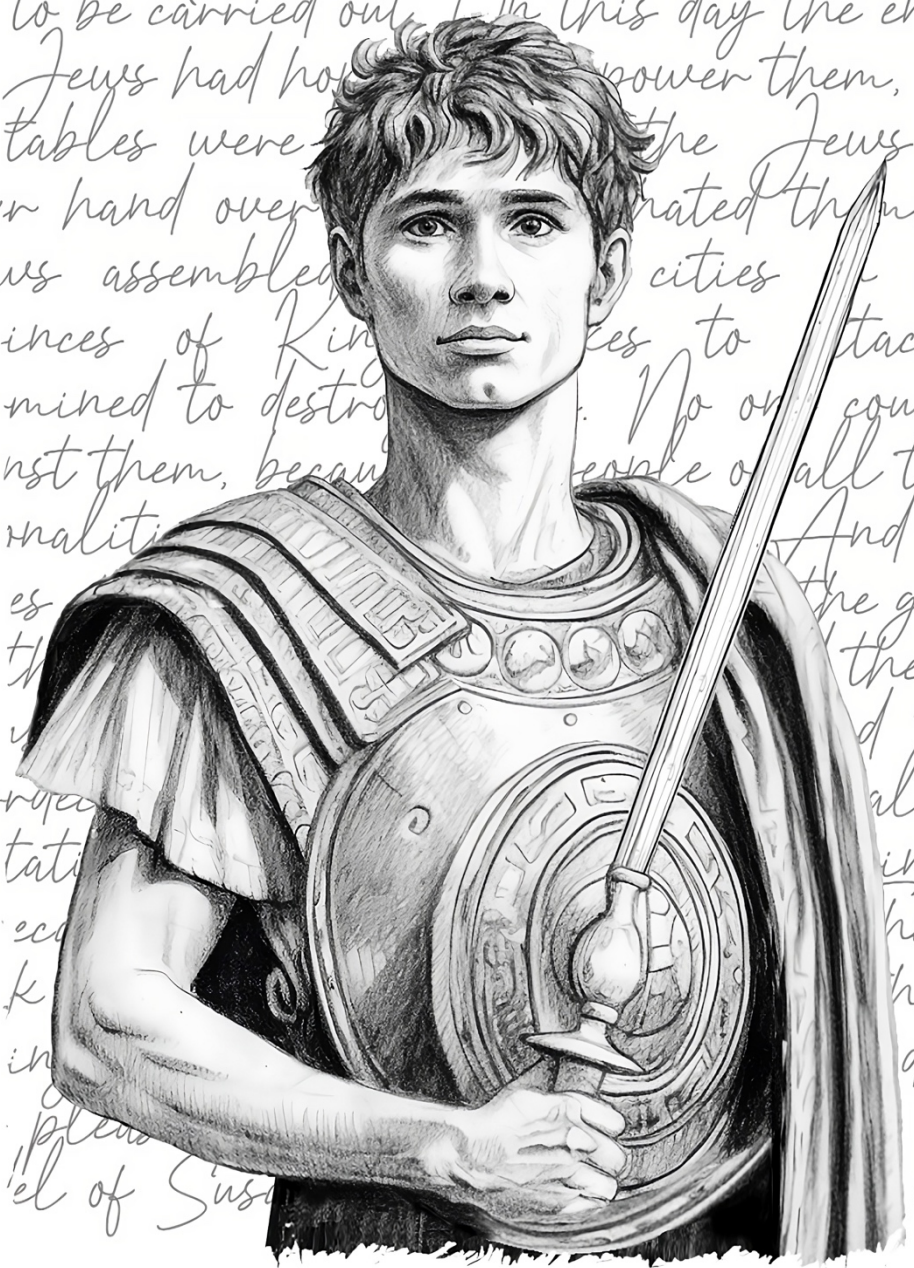


to be carried out. In this day the enemies  
Jews had hoped to power them, but  
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# The Jews' Deliverance

## Esther Chapter 9

### A DAY OF VICTORY (VERSES 1-19)

If there's one thing I know about God, it's that He always outperforms our hopes and exceeds our expectations. Maybe not in the way that we think it should go, but according to His wisdom and power. Paul writes,

*Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Eph. 3:20-21, KJV)*

In life, we look for the good, and God gives us His best. He knows our minds, He searches our souls, and provides for us in ways we could never provide for ourselves. It's a beautiful thing to have the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords working on our behalf.

Yet, it doesn't always feel that way, does it?

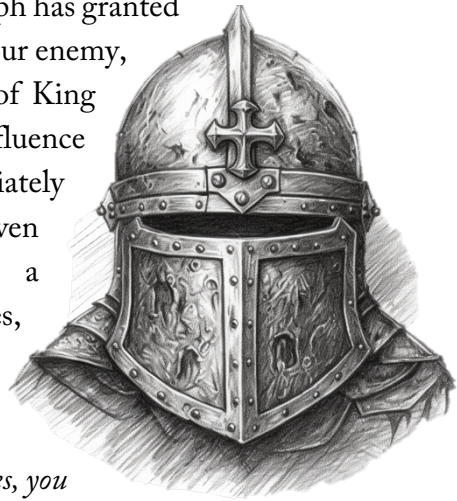
We face trials, tribulations, and temptations. We struggle, we question, and sometimes we falter. It's in these moments that we must remember that God's victory doesn't negate the battles we have to fight. And no story illustrates this better than the story of Esther.

In Esther 9, the Jews had received the king's favor and protection, essentially winning the war against their enemy Haman. The legal decree to destroy, kill, and annihilate all Jews, young and old, was reversed, and yet, a battle still remained.

Though the threat of Haman was gone, the original decree could not be revoked, only counteracted. So, the Jews were permitted to gather together, defend their lives, and destroy anyone who posed a threat against them.

This chapter of Esther reminds us of our reality as Christians today. While Christ's victory on the cross offers us salvation, our battle against sin in this world remains.

Think of it like this: Christ's triumph has granted us God's favor and protection. Satan, our enemy, is defeated, but like the first decree of King Xerxes, the presence of sin and its influence in this world cannot be immediately removed. And so, we are allowed, even encouraged, to gather together as a community, defend our spiritual lives, and resist sin. The Bible says,



*Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Ephesians 6:13-17)*

Our fight against sin, however, isn't a hopeless struggle. God has given us the strength and the tools we need to fight the good fight of faith. Like the Jews in Esther's day, we can band together, support one another, and stand firm in our faith.

Christ's victory over sin and death at the cross changes our relationship with sin—it no longer has dominion over us. Yet, the battle persists. But take heart, for in every struggle and trial, we have the blessed assurance that God is with us, working in our lives, softening hearts, and preparing the way.

As believers, we're called to live each day in the light of Christ's victory, standing firm in our faith, resisting temptation, while we eagerly wait for the day Christ will return, and the war against sin will finally end.

God's promise to us remains: "In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed." (1 Peter 1:6-7)

## **The Establishment of Purim (Verses 20-32)**

After their victory, Mordecai records these events and sends letters to all the Jews in the kingdom, instructing them to celebrate annually the 14th and 15th days of the month of Adar as days of feasting and joy, to commemorate their deliverance. This festival is known as Purim.



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## Did you know?

Purim is not only one of the most jubilant holidays in the Jewish calendar, but it also has enduring relevance, as it is still celebrated by Jews around the world today. The day is marked by public readings of the Book of Esther in synagogues, with listeners enthusiastically participating by using noisemakers, called graggers, to drown out Haman's name each time it's mentioned. Other

traditional practices include giving gifts of food and drink to friends, donating to the poor, and partaking in a festive meal. This joyous holiday serves as a yearly reminder of the deliverance of the Jewish people from extermination in ancient Persia. The continued observance of Purim underscores the enduring gratitude, communal memory, and celebratory spirit within the Jewish community.

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The establishment of Purim reminds us of the importance of commemorating God's deliverance and sharing these stories with future generations. By doing so, we can encourage one another and strengthen our faith, reminding ourselves of God's faithfulness and power.

## SOMETHING WORTH CONSIDERING

In Chapter 3, we discussed the fact that Haman was an Agagite which would suggest that he was from the lineage of King Agag, king of the Amalekites from 1 Samuel 15. We also learned that Mordecai was a descendant of King Saul. This historical connection is significant as it echoes the longstanding conflict between the Israelites and the Amalekites.

If you remember, in 1 Samuel 15, King Saul was commanded by God, through the prophet Samuel, to annihilate the Amalekites—people and possessions alike—as divine retribution for their earlier hostility towards the Israelites. However, Saul disobeyed God's command; he spared King Agag and kept the best of the livestock, the very plunder he was instructed to destroy. This disobedience cost Saul his kingship.

Fast forward to Esther Chapter 9, we find an interesting contrast. The Jews, under King Xerxes' decree, were given the right to defend

themselves against their enemies, the majority of whom were instigated by Haman the Agagite. When they won, they did not take the plunder of their defeated enemies, as is explicitly stated in Esther 9:10 and 15.

This act of not taking the plunder, despite the opportunity, may be seen as a symbolic correction of Saul's past disobedience, demonstrating that the Jews have learned from their history. It highlights a narrative of obedience and faith in God's providence, a significant difference from Saul's earlier failure. The comparison between these two events—Saul's disobedience in keeping the plunder and the Jews' obedience in the face of their enemies—serves as a stark reminder of the importance of faithfulness and obedience to God's commands.

What happened on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month?

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What protection do we have against the enemy according to Ephesians 6:13-17?

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How were Haman's ten sons killed?

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How many banquets or feasts are recorded in the book of Esther? Do you think you remember?

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Why did the nobles of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and the king's administrators help the Jews?

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Why is the celebration on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Adar called "Purim?"

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How were they instructed to celebrate?

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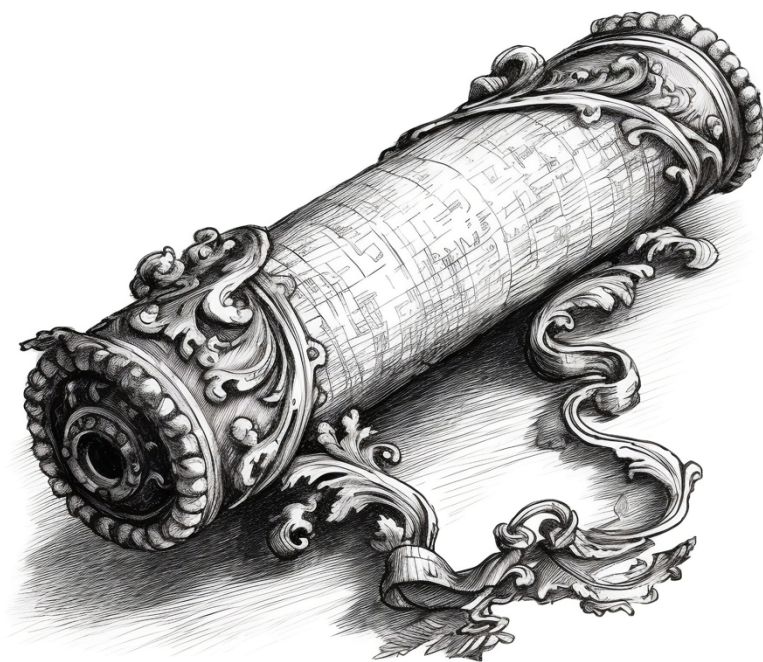
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## AS WE CLOSE THIS CHAPTER

Let's pause to remember these important lessons. Our God is a God of victory, able to turn even our darkest trials into triumphs. Additionally, this chapter reminds us of our ongoing struggle against sin. Like the Jews standing against their enemies, we are called to resist sin in our lives. Just as they rejected the temptation to claim the plunder for their gain, so too we must reject the temptations that lead us away from God's path. This is a continual battle, but we do not fight it alone. With God's help, we can overcome, moving towards righteousness and away from sin.





# Mordecai's Prominence

## Esther Chapter 10

As we conclude our study on the book of Esther, I want to remind you of two key elements that I pointed out in the introduction. The first was the reflections of Christ throughout The Book of Esther, and the second was the chiastic structure of the narrative. As we open our Bibles to Chapter 10, notice how both of these elements come to fruition.

### REFLECTIONS OF CHRIST

Throughout the book, we've seen glimpses of Christ in the characters and their actions. As we come to Chapter 10, we see Christ mirrored in Mordecai's character. Just as Mordecai, a Jew, rose to the second highest position in the Persian Empire, Christ, having humbled Himself to be a servant, was exalted to the right hand of God the Father. Mordecai's advocacy for the Jewish people also mirrors Christ's intercession for us. In Mordecai, we see a shadow of Christ's servitude, advocacy, and exaltation.

## COMING FULL CIRCLE

In our introduction, we also discussed the chiasmic structure of Esther, an 'X' shaped mirroring of events and themes. This pattern highlights crucial turning points and themes of the story, such as the dramatic reversal of fortunes.

As we reach the conclusion of our study, we find ourselves back at a royal decree, much like where we started. But this time, it's not a queen's dismissal—it's a celebration of Mordecai's elevated position. This is the climax of our chiasmic journey through the book of Esther.

At the beginning of the narrative, Queen Vashti, once held in high esteem, fell from grace when she disobeyed King Xerxes (Chapter 1). Vashti's dismissal marked a dramatic turning point in the royal court. Now, as we close the book, we find a striking mirror image in Mordecai. He, an ordinary Jew at the start, rises to a place of extraordinary honor, held in high esteem not only by King Xerxes but also by his fellow Jews (Chapter 10).

This parallel between Vashti's dismissal and Mordecai's elevation, positioned at the opposite ends of our story, not only exemplifies the chiasmic structure but also vividly illustrates the theme of reversal of fortunes in the Book of Esther.



How does Mordecai's elevation serve as a testament to God's faithfulness?

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Considering the virtues and strengths exhibited by Esther and Mordecai throughout their journey, which of their characteristics would you like to work on or grow in your own life?

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Looking back on our journey through the book of Esther, what is one significant lesson or insight that you will carry forward from this study?

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## AS WE CLOSE THIS STUDY OF ESTHER

Let's pause to reflect on the overarching message of this story, which is God's providential care and sovereignty. He lifts up the humble and orchestrates all things according to His perfect plan. It's a theme that's not only central to the Book of Esther but is interwoven throughout the entirety of Scripture.

Finally, let's take this final lesson to heart: no matter our circumstances, we can trust in God's sovereignty. He is at work in our lives, elevating, protecting, and guiding us according to His good and perfect will.

Hold these truths close, dear friend, and may they embolden you to walk in faith and trust, knowing that God is sovereignly working in your life.

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Be strong and courageous.  
Do not be afraid or terrified  
because of them, for the Lord  
your God goes with you; He will  
never leave you nor forsake you.

(Deuteronomy 31:6)

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# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

## Esther Chapter 9

**What happened on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month?**

On the 13th day of the 12th month, the Jews gathered in their cities throughout the provinces of King Xerxes to defend themselves against those determined to destroy them. (Esther 9:1-5).

**What protection do we have against the enemy according to Ephesians 6:13-17?**

According to Ephesians 6:13-17, our protection against the enemy includes the full armor of God. This includes the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, feet fitted with readiness that comes from the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

**How were Haman's ten sons killed?**

Haman's ten sons were killed by the sword by the Jews. Their bodies were then impaled on poles.

**How many banquets or feast are recorded in the book of Esther?  
Do you think you remember?**

There are six banquets or feasts recorded in the book of Esther: the initial feast by King Xerxes (Chapter 1:3), the second feast by King Xerxes (Chapter 1:5), Queen Vashti's banquet for the women (Chapter 1:9), the feast celebrating Esther as Queen (Chapter 2), and Esther's two feasts (Chapters 5 and 7).

Why did the nobles of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and the king's administrators help the Jews?

The nobles of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and the king's administrators helped the Jews because the fear of Mordecai had seized them. Mordecai had become powerful in the king's house, and his fame spread throughout the provinces (Esther 9:3-4).

**Why is the celebration on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Adar called "Purim?"**

The celebration on the 14th of Adar is called "Purim" because Haman had cast the "pur" (the lot) to destroy and annihilate the Jews, but his plan was thwarted. The Jews therefore established an annual celebration named after the "pur" (Esther 9:24-26).

**How were they instructed to celebrate?**

The Jews were instructed to celebrate by spending the day feasting and rejoicing, sending portions of food to one another, and giving gifts to the poor. This happened on the 14th and 15th days of the month of Adar (Esther 9:22).

## Esther Chapter 10

**How does Mordecai's elevation serve as a testament to God's faithfulness?**

**(This answer may vary.)**

Throughout the Book of Esther, Mordecai was consistently faithful. He raised Esther, advised her wisely, showed loyalty to the king by exposing an assassination plot, and remained steadfast in his Jewish faith. His elevation to a high rank in the kingdom serves as a testament to God's faithfulness in rewarding those who are faithful to Him.

**Considering the virtues and strengths exhibited by Esther and Mordecai throughout their journey, which of their characteristics would you like to work on or grow in your own life?**

**(This answer will be different for everybody).**

**Looking back on our journey through the book of Esther, what is one significant lesson or insight that you will carry forward from this study?**

**(This answer will be different for everybody).**