

Study Notes: Esther 10
July 17, 2022: “Working for the Good of Others”
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Background: Esther 10 serves as an epilogue or afterword to the main story of Esther. It recounts a few more details about the reign of King Xerxes, but also serves to summarize and comment on the work and accomplishments of Mordecai.

King Xerxes imposed tribute throughout the empire, to its distant shores. And all his acts of power and might, together with a full account of the greatness of Mordecai, whom the king had promoted, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Media and Persia?

- Though Xerxes was used by God to help accomplish His purpose to save the Jewish people, Xerxes still was concerned with his own glory and greatness. Like any king, Xerxes collected tribute from people throughout his empire, and had his achievements recorded.
 - About this detail the Faithlife Study Bible explains, “It is unclear why the narrator tells us of this decision by the king. This could be the king’s way of recouping the costs of Mordecai’s defense of the Jewish people (9:1–15) or be a restoration of the reprieve granted in 2:18. It could also just be an illustration of the power of the Persian empire, in order to emphasize the powerfulness of the unexpected leader Mordecai.”
- Along with the work of Xerxes, the actions and greatness of Mordecai, who was promoted to second in command (a place once held by Haman (see Esther 3:1)), were recorded in the records of the kings.
 - The Hebrew word which is translated as “greatness” is *gadol*. The Faithlife Study Bible states, “[This word] occurs throughout the book of Esther to emphasize significant moments and symbols (2:18; 4:1, 3; 8:15; 9:4); it provides drama and intrigue. Here *gadol* is used to emphasize the reversal of the narrative.”

Mordecai the Jew was second in rank to King Xerxes, preeminent among the Jews, and held in high esteem by his many fellow Jews, because he worked for the good of his people and spoke up for the welfare of all the Jews.

- Along with his rank of second in the Kingdom of Xerxes, Mordecai also held a place of preeminence among the Jewish people. He held this position within the Jewish community, because of the actions he undertook to work and speak up for the welfare of the Jewish people. Without the work of Mordecai, the Jewish people would have been destroyed because of the edict written by their enemy, Haman.
- The Expositor's Bible Commentary explains the importance of Mordecai’s role, and how it sets the stage for later leaders, “Mordecai’s prominent position sets the stage for the historical roles of Ezra and Nehemiah, who will follow him as leaders both in the Persian court and in the struggling Jewish community in Judah. He continues as an advocate and spokesperson in the government for the Jewish community.”

- The Expositor's Bible Commentary further comments on the last line of the book of Esther, and how it points to the coming need for a Messiah, "The text closes with (lit.) 'speaking peace [šālôm; NIV 'welfare'] for all his descendants' — a poignant reminder of the necessity for Jews throughout the succeeding centuries to have someone able to intercede for their well-being. While Mordecai had expressed the confidence that help would arise from 'another place,' the grim reality is that persecution also continues to arise from 'other places' (Beal, 106). That great need for shalom for Mordecai's descendants ('his seed') lies in the shadow of the greater One of those descendants who both spoke and made shalom. The events of Esther mean that God's people, through whom blessing will come to all nations (Ge 12:3), are preserved for the coming Intercessor."
- The New American notes the importance of the book of Esther, and the work of Mordecai for us today, "There are few books of the Old Testament more relevant to life in a society hostile to the gospel. Believers are scattered throughout the world, awaiting the Lord's return. Although he is present and active now as much as ever, he is usually 'hidden' behind the events of life that he is directing for his own glory and the benefit of his children. Although unbelievers can refuse to acknowledge him, those 'who have eyes to see' are able to recognize his hand at work in the affairs of life. 'In a world in which hostility to the household of faith seems to flourish naturally, and indeed in which atheistic explanations of the universe grow more strident, 'scientific' and apparently convincing, it belongs to faith to 'hold fast' nevertheless to our hope — now specifically in Christ — 'for he who promised is faithful' (Heb. 10:23)."