

# ESTHER 10

## VII. EPILOGUE (10:1-3)

The book ends as it began, with the focus on the prosperity and power of King Xerxes. But here, the mention of the king's greatness is intended to increase the stature of Mordecai, the king's Prime Minister.

**<sup>1</sup>King Xerxes imposed tribute throughout the empire, to its distant shores. <sup>2</sup>And all his acts of power and might, together with a full account of the greatness of Mordecai to which the king had raised him, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Media and Persia? <sup>3</sup>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.**

**10:1** The mention of an empire-wide taxation at this point may show how Xerxes prospers from the counsel of Mordecai.

**10:2** The author cites his source of information – **the book of the annals of the kings of Media and Persia** – and invites his readers to check out the veracity of the recorded account (compare with 1 Kgs 14:29; 15:7,23,31; 22:45; 2 Kgs 15:36; 1 Chr 27:24; 2 Chr 12:15; 13:22). This **book** may not be identical with the royal diary mentioned in 2:23 and 6:1.

**Media and Persia** refers to the two kingdoms in their chronological order.

**10:3** Like Joseph long before him, Mordecai rose to **second in rank** (Gen 41:43). Mordecai did not use his position to promote his advantage but the **welfare** of the Jewish community.

The book of Lamentations grieves over the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of its populace into Babylonian captivity in 587 B.C. Theologically this tragedy was God's judgment upon the sin of his people. "The LORD has brought her grief because of her many sins. Her children have gone into exile, captive before the foe" (1:5bc).

The book ends with the haunting possibility that God has rejected his people forever.

Restore us to yourself, O LORD, that we may return;  
renew our days as of old  
unless you have utterly rejected us  
and are angry with us beyond measure (5:21-22).

The book of Esther sets aside the fear expressed in Lamentations 5:21-22. Even though Israel's sin led to the forfeiture of the promised land, and even though Israel had been driven into exile, the LORD still protects and sustains his people. In short, he is still interested in their well-being. In fact, his people may find themselves in perilous circumstances throughout their exilic history, but he has already provided a means of release.

Purim, like Passover, is a celebrative reminder that God's deliverance never ends. Paul House adds,

The inclusion of Esther in the canon highlights the necessity of Israel's survival. This survival is as certain as it is sacred, for the Lord must keep all promises that require Jewish participants. All nations must still be blessed through Abraham. David must still be given an eternal kingdom. The promised land must receive Israel back, and the new covenant must still be initiated. Therefore, . . . Israel must survive for the whole program of biblical theology to be completed.<sup>1</sup>

The apostle Paul said it this way. "But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not 'Yes' and 'No.' For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not 'Yes' and 'No,' but in him it has always been 'Yes.' For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ. And so through him the 'Amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God" (2 Cor 1:18-20).

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<sup>1</sup>Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), p. 496.