

Week 54, Lecture 170.¹ Haman's Defeat, Chapters 6-7.

Translation note: I am using the RSV for the Hebrew of chapters 6-7.

6:1-11, Haman's Humiliation. On that night the king could not sleep; and he gave orders to bring the book of memorable deeds, the chronicles, and they were read before the king.² And it was found written how Mordecai had told about Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, who guarded the threshold, and who had sought to lay hands upon King Ahasuerus.

³ And the king said, "What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?" The king's servants who attended him said,

"Nothing has been done for him."

⁴ And the king said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace to speak to the king about having Mordecai hanged on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

⁵ So the king's servants told him, "Haman is there, standing in the court."

And the king said, "Let him come in."

⁶ So Haman came in, and the king said to him, "What shall be done to the man whom the king delights to honor?"

And Haman said to himself, "Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?"⁷ and Haman said to the king, "For the man whom the king delights to honor,⁸ let royal robes be brought, which the king has worn, and the horse which the king has ridden, and on whose head a royal crown is set;⁹ and let the robes and the horse be handed over to one of the king's most noble princes; let him array the man whom the king delights to honor, and let him conduct the man on horseback through the open square of the city, proclaiming before him: `Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor.'"

¹⁰ Then the king said to Haman, "Make haste, take the robes and the horse, as you have said, and do so to **Mordecai the Jew** who sits at the king's gate. Leave out nothing that you have mentioned."

¹¹ So Haman took the robes and the horse, and he arrayed Mordecai and made him ride through the open square of the city, proclaiming, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor."

V. 3, Nothing has been done for him

Greek Addition A:16 [= 12:5] contradicts this -- it reports that Mordecai was in fact rewarded!

And the king ordered Mordecai to serve in the court, and rewarded him for these things.

End of Addition A²

Verses 7-9, Haman's Proposal. Haman, of course is thinking of himself.

These honors are modeled on the story of Joseph in Genesis, who became second only to Pharaoh.

Commentators point out that anyone who did these things without permission would be convicted of treason.

Wearing the king's clothes was forbidden.

Many thought of the king's horse as a "portable throne."³

V. 10, "Mordecai the Jew." The King has no knowledge that the decree he approved is against the Jews!

This also is doubly-difficult for Haman to swallow.

Not only is he **not** the one honored. He himself must honor the man he hates!

Warnings to Haman, 6:12-14.¹² Then Mordecai **returned to the king's gate**. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with his head covered.¹³ And Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had befallen him.

Then his wise men and his wife **Zeresh** said to him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of the Jewish people, you will not prevail against him but will surely fall before him."

¹ Lectures numbered consecutively. This is this week's 1st lecture, but its number reflects its place in the **total** sequence.

² Greek Esther 12:5, NRSV, accessed via *BibleWorks*

³ Sidnie White Crawford, "The Book of Esther," in *New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 3 (Abingdon Press, 1999), 914.

¹⁴ While they were yet talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and brought Haman in haste to the banquet that Esther had prepared. (RSV)

Verse 12: Mordecai Un-phased!

No comment is made on how these remarkable events affected Mordecai. He simply goes back to his job!

Verse 13: Prediction by Zeresh

While God is not mentioned in Hebrew Esther, this prediction assumes that they have divine protection.

Esther's Second Banquet, 7:1-10. So the king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther. ² And on the second day, as they were drinking wine, the king again said to Esther, "What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled."

³ Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it please the king, let **my life** be given me at my petition, and **my people** at my request. ⁴ For we are sold, I and my people, to be **destroyed**, to be **slain**, and to be **annihilated**. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have held my peace; for our affliction is not to be compared with the loss to the king."

⁵ Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, that would presume to do this?"

⁶ And Esther said, "A foe and enemy! This wicked Haman!" Then Haman was in terror before the king and the queen.

Esther Springs Her Trap!

To the astonishment of the king -- and Haman! -- Esther pleads for her life, and the life of her people!

"**Destroyed, slain, annihilated,**" are the 3 verbs found in the decree issued by Haman in the king's name in 3:13.

At this point Haman realizes he is in deep trouble!

Even if the king has not yet made the connection, Haman must know that Queen Esther is a Jew.

Aside: Annihilate vs. Decimate!

Nihil is the Latin word for "nothing." To annihilate is to "reduce to nothing."

Decem is the Latin word for "ten." To "decimate" a population is to reduce it by 10%.

"Decimation" was a punishment for cowardice in the Roman army.

The actions of the King. ⁷ And the king rose from the feast in wrath and went into the palace garden; but Haman stayed to beg his life from Queen Esther, for he saw that evil was determined against him by the king.

⁸ And the king returned from the palace garden to the place where they were drinking wine, as Haman was **falling on the couch** where Esther was; and the king said, "Will he even assault the queen in my presence, in my own house?"

As the words left the mouth of the king, they covered Haman's face. ⁹ Then said Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, "Moreover, the gallows which Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, is standing in Haman's house, fifty cubits high."

¹⁰ And the king said, "Hang him on that." So they **hanged Haman** on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the anger of the king abated.

Verse 8, "Falling On" the Couch. "Falling down" is the position of a suppliant.

Part of the comic farce is that the king now interprets this as an attempt to rape the queen! Haman's fate is now sealed.

The King could not execute him for something that he had given permission to do (write the decree).

So, in this farce, Haman is executed for a crime he did not commit!

Verse 10, Haman "Hanged."

This probably means his corpse was impaled on a stake **after** he was killed by some other form of execution.

Public display of a corpse was the “ultimate punishment,” extremely abhorrent to Jews.

English Idiom: “Hang someone as high as Haman.”

This comes from a time when the general populace was more familiar with biblical stories!

Week 54, Lecture 171. The Jews Are Victorious, Esther 8.

Originally I attempted to cover Chapter 8 and Addition E in one Lecture. I have broken it in two.

Structure of Catholic Bibles, Structure of my Lectures

Many Catholic Bibles, following the Greek, insert Greek Addition E between Hebrew 8:12 and 8:13

For lecture purposes, I will treat all of Hebrew chapter 8 first; then Greek Addition E.

Queen Esther Triumphs, 8:1-2. On that day King Ahasuerus gave to Queen Esther the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had told what he was to her;² and the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

V 1: Esther receives ‘the house of Haman,’ i.e., all his property. As queen, she bestows it on Mordecai.

Esther Reveals her Judaism. Interestingly, this potentially dramatic scene is never narrated!

It is told in a narrative aside: “for Esther had told [the king] what he was to her.”

Mordecai receives the king’s ring! Presumably it has been removed from Haman’s finger before execution.

If this were a fairy tale, it could now end, and they would live “happily ever after.”

But, in fact, the danger is not over!

Esther’s Petition, 8:3-8.³ Then Esther spoke again to the king; she fell at his feet and besought him with tears to avert the evil design of Haman the Agagite and the plot which he had devised against the Jews.⁴ And the king held out the golden scepter to Esther,⁵ and Esther rose and stood before the king.

And she said, "If it please the king, and if I have found favor in his sight, and if the thing seem right before the king, and I be pleasing in his eyes, let an order be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the provinces of the king.⁶ For how can I endure to see the calamity that is coming to my people? Or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?"

⁷ Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, "Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows, because he would lay hands on the Jews.⁸ And you may write as you please with regard to the Jews, in the name of the king, and seal it with the king's ring; for an edict written in the name of the king and sealed with the king's ring cannot be revoked."

Verse 3, Esther Falls at the King’s Feet

This is in accord with the behavior of biblical Jews who have no trouble honoring human beings.

This indicates that (in Hebrew Esther) Mordecai’s problem with bowing to Haman was ethnic, not theological!

Esther’s Tears. “She weeps, which is the first sign of emotion she has shown in the Hebrew text (. . . one suspects a bit of playacting here, since Esther has been so cool and collected until now),”⁴

⁴ White Crawford, “Esther,” *NIB*, 3. 923.

NABRE Note

A decree written ... cannot be revoked: the king cannot directly grant Esther's request (v. 5) to revoke the previous decree against the Jews because of the irrevocable character of the laws of the Medes and Persians (see 1:19 and note). He can, however, empower Esther to issue another decree in his name to counteract the earlier one. **The second decree authorizes the Jews to defend themselves against those who would kill them, which is what they do in 9:2. This is why the outcome of the two decrees is that the attackers are killed instead of the Jews, rather than a simple cancellation of all hostilities.**⁵

Mordecai's Edict, 8:9-14.

Preparations, 9-10. ⁹ The king's secretaries were summoned at that time, in the **third month**, which is the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day; and an edict was written according to all that Mordecai commanded concerning the Jews to the satraps and the governors and the princes of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, a hundred and twenty-seven provinces, to every province in its own script and to every people in its own language, and also to the Jews in their script and their language. ¹⁰ The writing was in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's ring, and letters were sent by mounted couriers riding on swift horses that were used in the king's service, bred from the royal stud.

Third Month

The 12th month, the month of Adar, is now approximately 9 months into the future.

The passage emphasizes that now Mordecai, a Jew, has official power in the Persian Empire.

There is no historical record of this.

The narrator is having fun imagining what the world would be like if his people were in charge.

Content of the Edict, 11-13. ¹¹ By these the king allowed the Jews who were in every city to gather and defend their lives, to **destroy**, to **slay**, and to **annihilate** any armed force of any people or province that might attack them, with their children and women, and to plunder their goods, ¹² upon one day throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. ¹³ A copy of what was written was to be issued as a decree in every province, and by proclamation to all peoples, and the Jews were to be ready on that day to avenge themselves upon their enemies.

Observations by Sidnie White Crawford.

The edict assumes that there would be many people, enough to form "forces," willing to attack the Jews; thus the Jews must gather together to repel them. **This decree effectively neutralizes Haman's decree without revoking it, which is not allowed; it will now be a fair fight between two opposing forces.**⁶

My Remarks. The verbs "destroy, slay, annihilate" are the same ones used by Haman in his letter.

Because this is 9 months in the future, both sides have time to prepare for battle.

The Edict Is Issued, v. 14. So the couriers, mounted on their swift horses that were used in the king's service, rode out in haste, urged by the king's command; and the decree was issued in Susa the capital.

Mordecai Triumphant, 8:15-17. ¹⁵ Then Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal robes of blue and white, with a great golden crown and a mantle of fine linen and purple, while the city of Susa shouted and rejoiced. ¹⁶ The Jews had light and gladness and joy and honor. ¹⁷ And in every province and in every city, wherever the king's command and his edict came, there was gladness and joy among the Jews, a feast and a holiday. And many from the peoples of the country declared themselves Jews, for the fear of the Jews had fallen upon them. (RSV)

⁵ NABRE, note to Esther 8:8, accessed via *Logos*, emphasis added.

⁶ White Crawford, "Esther," *NIB* 3. 925.

8:17, Original Ending of the Hebrew Story?

David Clines argues persuasively that the original Hebrew Story ended here (8:15-17) and that 9:1-10:3, with its Persian anti-Semitism and concern for Purim, is secondary.⁷ [Lecture divided at this point.]

Week 54, Lecture 172. Mordecai's Letter, Greek Addition E.

Greek Addition E (= Vulgate, Esther 16) purports to be a copy of the letter mentioned in Hebrew Esther 8. There are several possibilities for paragramming. I am following White Crawford's from the *NIB*.

My Translation

It is actually "half" of a document I prepared for Rabbi David Kline, who is also studying Greek Esther. The colors and underlining tie the English to the Greek original (originally these were two parallel columns).

Concerning which [message(s), vs. 10], what-is-written-below is a copy of-the letter:

Salutation

The great King Ahasuerus
to the governors of-the-districts from India to Ethiopia to one hundred and twenty-seven satrapies,
and to those thinking our things [= to those loyal to us]

Greetings!

Power Corrupts, E:2-6

We begin with some platitudes, phrased pompously

² "Many frequently being-honored through the most-bountiful generosity of their patrons
have become more ambitious,³ and not only the-ones subject to-us do they seek to--harm
but, being-unable to-manage the success, even against-their-own benefactors they-attempt to-plot;

⁴ and not only removing gratitude from among humankind
but also, lifted-up with the boasting of strangers-to-goodness,
[the] evil-detesting judgment of-God, who eternally gazes-down-upon all -- they imagine to-escape!

⁵ "And often even many of-the ones-placed in authority, those trusted to-administer the affairs of friends,
smooth-talk, having-made-them accessories to innocent blood, has-involved-them in irreparable evils

⁶ by-the lying deception of the malice of-those-deceiving the sincere good-will of the rulers.

Contemporary Events, 7-11

⁷ It is possible to see such-great-things not from the ancient stories that we have handed down;
things-as-great, right-by [your] feet! -- you who-are-investigating -- [such great things] are wickedly perpetrated
by the pestilence of-the ones-ruling unworthily,

⁸ and [as for] being-on-guard for the future, [lit. "unto the after these-things"]
so that the kingdom [will be] undisturbed with peace for all the people, we will continue [doing that]

⁹ taking-advantage-of changing conditions and deciding the-matters coming to our attention
always with a more-than-considerate response.

⁷ Demetrius Dumm, "Esther," *NJBC*, 579. White Crawford ("Esther," *NIB*, 3. 928-929) expresses a similar suspicion.

Verse 8 “Being on guard for the future.”

[This verse], with its hint that the king did not do his job properly, is an indication that this is not a genuine royal edict—an ancient Near Eastern monarch would not have admitted weakness to his subjects!⁸

Haman’s Deception of the King, 10-15

¹⁰ For whereas Haman son of Hamadathos, a Macedonian
(in truth a foreigner to the blood of the Persians and quite devoid of our kindness),
¹¹ while-being-entertained-as-a-guest by us;
[12] obtained [the] goodwill that we have for every nation to such an extent
that he-was-publicly-proclaimed our Father and was-continually being-shown-obeisance by all
[as] the person second to the royal throne;
[13] but not restraining his arrogance, he-attempted to-deprive us of our rule and our breath
[14] and Mordecai, our savior and constant benefactor,
and Esther, the innocent companion of our kingdom,
together with their whole nation -- by-[the] crafty deceit of-ruses he-was-asking to destroy
[15] for by these methods having-caught us un-defended he-thought
to-transfer the power of-the Persians to the Macedonians.

The King Excuses Himself

The king insists he was deceived. -- He omits the fact that he was so negligent he deserved to be deceived!
Of course all of this is written -- diplomatically! -- by Mordecai, in the king’s name.

Mordecai takes the opportunity to “pat himself on the back!” -- and Queen Esther too!

He refers to himself as “savior.” In Christianity, this would be “churchy” talk.

However, before we claimed it for Jesus, the word was a common title of Hellenistic kings.

Macedonian. In Hebrew Esther, Haman is portrayed as an Agagite, a historical enemy of the tribe of Benjamin.

In Greek Esther, he is portrayed as a “Macedonian.”

Recall that it was Alexander of Macedon who ultimately conquered the Persians.

Haman is thus being portrayed as a **subversive foreigner**.

Credit Given to God and to the Jews, 16-17

¹⁶ But as for us -- the Jews, who were doomed to extinction by the triple-sinner,
we-have-found [them] not being evildoers, but-rather being-governed by very-just laws
¹⁷ and being the children of-the Most-High, the living God of-majesty,
the-one having-maintained the kingdom in a flourishing condition for-us and for our forebears.

NJBC Comment on verse 17.

E:17 “Just as the Hebrew version ignores God completely, so does the Greek author overstate the matter.”⁹
Here the Persian King is portrayed as giving credit to the Jewish God.
This type of fanciful thought is also found in the Book of Daniel.

⁸ Sidnie White Crawford, “The Additions to Esther,” in *New Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck, vol. 3 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994–2004), 966.

⁹ Demetrius Dumm, “Esther,” *NJBC*, 579.

We have seen that Maccabees II portrays Antiochus IV as converting to Judaism on his deathbed! All these fantasies are “the way it should have been,” according to the narrator.

Main Point of the Letter, 18-20.

(18) Therefore **you-will-do** well not **to-carry-out** the letters sent by Haman son of Hamadathos, because he, the-one having-worked-out these things **has been crucified** at the gates of Susa with his whole household,

the God ruling-over all things **having-recompensed** him quickly with the well-deserved judgment.

(19) "[And you will do well] **having-posted** a copy of this letter publicly in every place

to-allow the Judeans **to-make-use-of** their own laws and

to-join-in-helping **them** so-that **the-ones attacking** **them** in the time of oppression **they-might-repel**

on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, Adar, **on-that very-same day**.

For **this** [day], **the God** who rules over all things -- instead of destruction for his chosen race – **has made** for them **joy**.

Comment on 18-19

The point of the letter is reached in these verses, which essentially **annul Haman's edict**. This is **contrary to what happens in MT Esther**, where the Jews are given permission to defend themselves against the law of the Medes and the Persians, **which cannot be revoked**.

Verse 18 also contains contradictions to MT chap. 9 [next lecture!] . . . Haman is hanged at the gates of Susa, rather than at his own home. His whole family is hanged with him, contrary to the MT, which places the deaths of his sons months later. These differences might imply different sources or simply the work of a careless redactor.¹⁰

Purim, a Celebration for All Persians! 21-23a

²² **You** too, therefore, [this] **memorable day** among your **designated feasts** with **all rejoicing** – **celebrate!**

²³ so that both now and in the future, it may be [a celebration of] deliverance for us and for Persians of good will,

Royal Threats, 23-24

but for those who plot against us a reminder of destruction.

²⁴ "Every **city** or **province** without exception that does not observe this decree

by-spear and **by-fire** **shall-be-destroyed** with **wrath--**

not merely inaccessible to-humans,

but even to wild beasts and to birds for all time as-most-hateful **shall-it-be-rendered**."

¹³ And **the copies** [of this edict] – **let-them-be-posted** in-plain-visibility throughout **the entire kingdom**

And [alert] all the Jews to be prepared for this day **to-make-war** on their enemies.

Colophon (Appendix)

In the **fourth year** of the reign of **Ptolemy and Cleopatra**, Dositheus, who said that he was a priest and a Levite, and his son Ptolemy brought to Egypt the preceding Letter about Purim, which they said was authentic and had been translated by Lysimachus son of Ptolemy, one of the residents of Jerusalem. (Greek Esther 11:1 NRSV, accessed via *BibleWorks*)

Comment by White Crawford

All the emperors of Ptolemaic Egypt were named **Ptolemy**, so the search must be narrowed to one who reigned at least **four years** and had a wife named **Cleopatra**. **There are three possibilities:**

¹⁰ Sidnie White Crawford, "[The Additions to Esther.](#)" in *NIB*, vol. 3 (Abingdon, 1999), 996-967.

Ptolemy VIII, Soter II, in 114 BCE

Ptolemy XII, in 77 BCE

Ptolemy XIV, in 48 BCE

The **most likely** possibility seems to be Ptolemy XII, bringing the Greek Esther into Egypt in 77 BCE and putting its composition sometime in the late second century BCE,¹¹

Week 54, Lecture 173. The Conclusion of Esther, Chapters 9-10 and F.

The First Battle, 9:1-5. Now in the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's command and edict were about to be executed, on the very day when the enemies of the Jews hoped to get the mastery over them, but which **had been changed** to a day when the Jews should get the mastery over their foes,² the Jews gathered in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on such as sought their hurt. **And no one could make a stand against them**, for the fear of them had fallen upon all peoples.³ All the princes of the provinces and the satraps and the governors and the royal officials also helped the Jews, for the fear of Mordecai had fallen upon them.⁴ For Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces; for the man Mordecai grew more and more powerful.⁵ So the Jews smote all their enemies with the sword, slaughtering, and destroying them, and did as they pleased to those who hated them.

The Day “**Had Been Changed**”

Note the studious avoidance of the mention of God! NOT: “God had changed the day . . .”

Verse 9:2 “No One Could Make a Stand.” The Septuagint translates: “**No one resisted them.**”

This makes it sound as though the Jews conducted a slaughter of non-resisting victims.

Contemporary translations of the Hebrew probably capture the nuance better.

White Crawford describes the victory as “inevitable, but not effortless.”¹²

The Battle in Susa, 9:6-10.⁶ In Susa the capital itself the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men,⁷ and also slew **Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha,**⁸ **Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha,**⁹ **Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vaizatha,**¹⁰ the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews; but they laid no hand on the plunder.

Comment from Adele Berlin

The list of foreign-sounding names is amusing, . . . ; and the tradition of **reading them all out in one breath** when the megillah [scroll] is read publicly on Purim . . . adds to the amusement. The killing of Haman's sons is one more way that Haman's glory is diminished. It also brings his line to an end; no future threat to the Jews will come from him. Amalek is at last wiped out.¹³

V. 10, Took No Plunder

This had been the sin of Saul, taking plunder after the battle with Agag (and not executing the enemy king)

The Jews are not going to commit the same errors again.

They are following the rules for “holy war” (Deuteronomy).

White Crawford sees them as following the example of Abraham, who took no plunder in Gen 14:22-24.¹⁴

¹¹ Sidnie White Crawford, “The Additions to Esther,” in *New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 3 (Abingdon, 1999), 970–971.

¹² White Crawford, “Esther,” 3. 930.

¹³ Adele Berlin “Esther,” *The Jewish Study Bible*, note to Esther 9:7-10.

¹⁴ White Crawford, “Esther,” *NIB*, 3. 932.

The 14th of Adar, 9:11-15. ¹¹ That very day the number of those slain in Susa the capital was reported to the king. ¹² And the king said to Queen Esther, "In Susa the capital the Jews have slain five hundred men **and also the ten sons of Haman**. [narrator gives no clue as to the emotion that accompanies this statement!] What then have they done in the rest of the king's provinces! Now what is your petition? It shall be granted you. And what further is your request? It shall be fulfilled." ¹³ And Esther said, "If it please the king, **let the Jews who are in Susa be allowed tomorrow also to do according to this day's edict**. And let the ten sons of Haman be hanged on the gallows." ¹⁴ So the king commanded this to be done; a decree was issued in Susa, and **the ten sons of Haman were hanged**. ¹⁵ The Jews who were in Susa gathered also on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and they slew three hundred men in Susa; but they laid no hands on the plunder.

Another Day of Fighting in Susa. This is not a historical report.

The reason for this is to explain why Purim is a **two-day festival**.

Originally Purim was probably a pagan spring carnival, celebrated on different days in different places.

Jews in the Persian Empire had begun to celebrate this feast day.

Jewish leaders decided to give them a Jewish reason to celebrate.

The feast of Purim was "historicized" by being connected to the story of Esther.

Consider the Christian example of Christmas! Nobody knows when Jesus was born.

If "shepherds were in the fields" (Luke) it was probably Spring.

Originally the winter solstice as the excuse for a big pagan bash, *Sol Invictus* ("Unconquered Sun") in Rome.

In the 4th century, the Church, realizing it could not stamp out the party, decided to give it a Christian meaning.

Ten Sons of Haman "Hanged on the Gallows"

Recall that the Greek Addition reports that these were killed on the same day that Haman was executed.

The Hebrew text places their deaths many months later.

Although the NRSV [like the RSV] and the NIV have "hanged on the gallows," it is clear that a corpse's **impalement** on a stake is meant, since the ten sons of Haman are **already dead**, as reported in vv. 7–10. The use of the same phrase in 2:23; 5:14; and 6:9–10 may indicate that public impalement is meant there as well. Public exposure of a corpse is the ultimate degradation in the Hebrew tradition ¹⁵

The Jews Celebrate, 9:16-17a. ¹⁶ Now the other Jews who were in the king's provinces also gathered to **defend** their lives, and got relief from their enemies, and **slew seventy-five thousand** of those who hated them; but they laid no hands on the plunder. ¹⁷ This was on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar, and on the fourteenth day they rested and made that a day of feasting and gladness. (RSV)

75,000 Slain. Some take comfort that the number is not historical.

There is no historical record of such a massacre conducted by Jews in the Persian empire.

However, even non-historical stories can have consequences in later history!

E.g., 90% of the slaughters attributed to Joshua are probably not historical.

It is what they "**should have done**" according to the **editorial opinion** of the **Deuteronomistic Historian**.

Many ignorant people today use passages from the Quran to slander Islam as a "religion of violence."

Jews -- and Christians -- need to be honest about the "dark passages" in our scriptures.

The author of Revelation takes delight in the blood of the wicked being as deep "as a horse's bridle" (14:19-20).

Summary of 9:17b-23

Details on why Purim is celebrated in different ways by Jews in cities and in rural communities.

¹⁵ White Crawford, "Esther," *NIB*, 3. 934.

White-Crawford Contemporary Jewish Practice

Purim has proved to be a festival of enduring popularity, sometimes compared to the Christian celebration of Mardi Gras, which it resembled in its emphasis on feasting and hilarity . . . Purim begins on the fourteenth of Adar (usually sometime in March . . .), but is preceded by a minor fast, the Fast of Esther, on the thirteenth of Adar, during which observant Jews fast from sunup until sundown . . . On the fourteenth of Adar, the Scroll (*mēgillat*) of Esther is read publicly in the congregation. In some traditions, this reading is accompanied by sound effects from the congregation. For example, there will be shouting and stamping of feet whenever Haman's name is mentioned.¹⁶

Summary of 9:24-32. These verses provide a summary of the entire book. They portray Esther and Mordecai acting in concert to officially establish the Feast of Purim.

Chapter 10, Only 3 Verses

Appendix About Mordecai, 10:1-3. King Ahasuerus laid tribute on the land and on the coastlands of the sea.² And all the acts of his power and might, and the full account of the high honor of Mordecai, to which the king advanced him, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?³ For Mordecai the Jew was next in rank to King Ahasuerus, and he was great among the Jews and popular with the multitude of his brethren, for he sought the welfare of his people and spoke peace to all his people. **End of Hebrew Esther**

Comments. This passage imitates the summaries found in 1 & 2 Kings. He is portrayed as exercising his power in a wise and compassionate manner. Feminists note that the focus is on Mordecai, not on Esther.

Greek Addition F (= Vulgate 10:4-13; 11:1)¹⁷

This forms an "inclusion" ("sandwich") with Greek Addition A. Greek Addition A was Mordecai's Dream, a preface to the book. Greek Addition F interprets this dream.

The Interpretation of the Dream (before chapter 1).⁴ Then Mordecai said: God has done these things.⁵ I remember a dream that I saw, which signified these same things, and nothing of that dream has been unfulfilled.⁶ The little fountain which grew into a river, and was turned into a light, and into the sun, and abounded into many waters, is Esther, whom the king married, and made queen.⁷ But the two dragons are Haman and I.⁸ The nations that were assembled are they that endeavored to destroy the name of the Jews.⁹ And my nation is Israel, who cried to the Lord, and the Lord saved his people.

He delivered us from all evils, and has performed great signs and wonders among the nations.¹⁰ And he commanded that there should be two lots, one for the people of God, and the other for all the nations.¹¹ And both lots came to the day appointed already from that time before God to all nations.¹² And the Lord remembered his people, and had mercy on his inheritance.

V. 11, "Both Lots." In Hebrew the two lots were: 1) a lot to pick the month; 2) a lot to pick the day. Here in the Greek there are two lots: 1) for God's people; 2) one for the "bad guys"

Verse F:13. And these days shall be observed in the month of Adar on the fourteenth, and fifteenth day of the same month with all diligence, and joy of the people gathered into one assembly, throughout all the generations of the people of Israel hereafter. (Douay, modified)

¹⁶ White Crawford, "Esther," *NIB*, 3. 938.

¹⁷ I am following the Douay translation, considerably modified, for the Greek Additions.

Emphasis on God. Like all the Greek Additions, this one places the action of **God, the real hero of Greek Esther.**

Week 54, Lecture 174. Appendix: Building a Greek Sentence

The purpose of this appendix is to illustrate the style of a Greek “periodic sentence.”

It is not possible that a sentence this intricate was composed in a Semitic language.

Semitic style is generally paratactic: “and . . . and . . . and . . .”

Greek style generally is full of **subordinate clauses and phrases.**

The Prayers of Addition C could have been originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic.

This **one sentence** from Greek Addition B has to have been **composed in Greek.**

The Verb: The Main Idea

ἐβουλήθην

I have determined.

ἐβουλήθην καταστήσαι βίους.

I have determined to secure lives.

The Basic Sentence

ἐβουλήθην καταστήσαι βίους ἀνανεώσασθαι τε τὴν εἰρήνην.

I have determined to secure lives and to restore the peace.

Now We Start Expanding (at first Greek & English word order is similar)

ἐβουλήθην καταστήσαι ἀκυμάτους βίους, ἀνανεώσασθαι τε τὴν ποθουμένην εἰρήνην.

I have determined to secure untroubled lives, and to restore the desired peace.

English Word Order No Longer Follows the Greek (look at the color coding)

ἐβουλήθην ἀκυμάτους καταστήσαι βίους, ἀνανεώσασθαι τε τὴν τοῖς πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ποθουμένην εἰρήνην.

I have determined to secure untroubled lives, and to restore the peace desired by all people.

Getting More Complicated!

ἐβουλήθην ἀκυμάτους καταστήσαι βίους, τὴν τε βασιλείαν ἡμερον καὶ πορευτὴν μέχρι περάτων παρεξόμενος, ἀνανεώσασθαι τε τὴν τοῖς πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ποθουμένην εἰρήνην.

I have determined to secure untroubled lives, and for-the-purpose-of-rendering the kingdom tranquil, to restore the peace desired by all people.

ἐβουλήθην τοὺς τῶν ὑποτεταγμένων ἀκυμάτους διὰ παντὸς καταστήσαι βίους, τὴν τε βασιλείαν ἡμερον καὶ πορευτὴν μέχρι περάτων παρεξόμενος, ἀνανεώσασθαι τε τὴν τοῖς πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ποθουμένην εἰρήνην.

I have determined to secure the untroubled lives of my subjects for all time, and for-the-purpose-of-rendering the kingdom tranquil and open-to-travel throughout its borders, to restore the peace desired by all people.

Hang On!

ἐβουλήθην, μὴ τῷ θράσει τῆς ἐξουσίας ἐπαιρόμενος, τοὺς τῶν ὑποτεταγμένων ἀκυμάτους διὰ παντὸς καταστήσαι βίους, τὴν τε βασιλείαν ἡμερον καὶ πορευτὴν μέχρι περάτων παρεξόμενος, ἀνανεώσασθαι τε τὴν τοῖς πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ποθουμένην εἰρήνην.

I have determined, not being-lifted-up by the arrogance of power, to secure **the untroubled lives** of my subjects for all time, and **for-the-purpose-of-rendering the kingdom tranquil and open-to-travel** throughout its borders, to restore **the peace desired** by all people.

ἐβουλήθην, μὴ τῷ θράσει τῆς ἐξουσίας ἐπαιρόμενος, ἐπιεικέστερον δὲ καὶ μετὰ ἡπιότητος αἰεὶ διεξάγων, τοὺς τῶν ὑποτεταγμένων ἀκυμάτους διὰ παντὸς καταστήσαι βίους, τὴν τε βασιλείαν ἡμερον καὶ πορευτὴν μέχρι περάτων παρεξόμενος, ἀνανεώσασθαι τε τὴν τοῖς πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ποθουμένην εἰρήνην.

I have determined, not being-lifted-up by the arrogance of power, but **conducting-affairs** with considerable-moderation and even kindness, to secure **the untroubled lives** of my subjects for all time, and **for-the-purpose-of-rendering the kingdom tranquil and open-to-travel** throughout its borders, to restore **the peace desired** by all people.

πολλῶν ἐπάρξας ἐθνῶν ἐβουλήθην, μὴ τῷ θράσει τῆς ἐξουσίας ἐπαιρόμενος, ἐπιεικέστερον δὲ καὶ μετὰ ἡπιότητος αἰεὶ διεξάγων, τοὺς τῶν ὑποτεταγμένων ἀκυμάτους διὰ παντὸς καταστήσαι βίους, τὴν τε βασιλείαν ἡμερον καὶ πορευτὴν μέχρι περάτων παρεξόμενος, ἀνανεώσασθαι τε τὴν τοῖς πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ποθουμένην εἰρήνην.

Ruling-over many nations **I have determined, not being-lifted-up** by the arrogance of power, but **conducting-affairs** with considerable-moderation and even kindness, to secure **the untroubled lives** of my subjects for all time, and **for-the-purpose-of-rendering the kingdom tranquil and open-to-travel** throughout its borders, to restore **the peace desired** by all people.

Last One!

πολλῶν ἐπάρξας ἐθνῶν καὶ πάσης ἐπικρατήσας οἰκουμένης ἐβουλήθην, μὴ τῷ θράσει τῆς ἐξουσίας ἐπαιρόμενος, ἐπιεικέστερον δὲ καὶ μετὰ ἡπιότητος αἰεὶ διεξάγων, τοὺς τῶν ὑποτεταγμένων ἀκυμάτους διὰ παντὸς καταστήσαι βίους, τὴν τε βασιλείαν ἡμερον καὶ πορευτὴν μέχρι περάτων παρεξόμενος, ἀνανεώσασθαι τε τὴν τοῖς πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ποθουμένην εἰρήνην.

Ruling-over many nations and **holding-power-over** the whole world **I have determined, not being-lifted-up** by the arrogance of power, but **conducting-affairs** with considerable-moderation and even kindness, to secure **the untroubled lives** of my subjects for all time, and **for-the-purpose-of-rendering the kingdom tranquil and open-to-travel** throughout its borders, to restore **the peace desired** by all people.

Main Point: There is no way that this complex sentence could have been composed in Hebrew or Aramaic. If there was a “Semitic original” for Greek Addition B (or E) it has been so transformed here that the word “translation” would not be an adequate description of what would have happened -- i.e., a **total** rewriting!