

Esther 8.1-9.5

- Set in Susa during reign of Ahasuerus (Xerxes I), who ruled Persia from 486-465

3.1-6-11: Haman the Amalekite's Effort to Exterminate the Jews

7 *pur* is an Akkadian (Old Persian) word for 'lot', from *pur kararu* – 'to cast a lot'. 9 this payment is 333 tons of silver!! annual revenue of the Persian Empire in that era was 10.920 talents. .

3.12-15: Haman the Agagite Orders the Extermination of the Jews

Esther 4-5: Mordecai Convinces Esther to Act /Esther Approaches the King

6.1-8.3: A Long and Eventful Day

6.1-14: Xerxes Remembers Mordecai's Help

1-3 – The king's insomnia and inspiration (remember 2.19-23, Mordecai 'the Jew'?)

7.1-10: Esther Appeals to the King

Esther's challenge: expose the culpability of Haman while not appearing to bring any charge against the king.

6 Esther is clear and direct – 'this vile Haman!' Haman's shock and terror

8 'covered Haman's face' likely means he was hooded for execution

8: Undermining the Planned Genocide

1-8: Esther and Mordecai Acquire Authority

Herodotus (3.128-129) reports that in Achaemenid Persia, a traitor's property went to the state

'all he was to her' – familial relationship/importance of the bond between Esther and Mordecai

3 'the wicked scheme of Haman the Agagite which he had devised': What is unspoken?

5 What are the four elements on Esther's list as she appeals to Xerxes?

7-8 'You write it!' The Dilemma of Scroll #2 - (Cline, *Esther Scroll* 19: 'Write what you like, says the king, as long as it doesn't overturn, revoke, or contradict anything previously written . . . as long as you realize that Haman's decree still stands. Write what you like, for I give up. Write what you like, if you can think of a way to reverse the irreversible.')

8.9-17: Mordecai issues a New Decree on Behalf of the King

Seventy days later!

Compare the edicts in 3.12-15 to 8.9-16. What is the same? What is different?

'post horses' – the team of horses used in the royal postal system, described in Xenophon

11 What does Mordecai's decree enable the Jews to do? Why might this be helpful? Horrible?

17 'many people of the land professed to be Jews' – not the Kingdom (1.14; 2.3; 3.6; 5.3; 7.2), but 'the Land'; the Land – generally means Palestine; Who is in Palestine in this period? (Ezra 4.4; 6.21; 10.2; Neh. 10.29-31)

'fear fell upon them' – Exodus 15.16; 1 Samuel 11.7; Psalm 105.38; Job 13.11)

9.1-5: Victory for the Jews

1 A summary of the day: What happened?

2 Who is attacking whom? 'those who sought to do them harm': why is this important?

'to resist, withstand' (Judges 2.14; Daniel 11.16)

3 What were the regional Persian leaders ordered to do in 3.12-15? What do they do? What were they ordered to do in 8.9-16?

4 Why do the officials respond like this? lit. 'for Mordecai was great in the house of the king'

5 lit. 'the Jews struck all their enemies dead . . . and did as they pleased with those who hated them'

What do you make of the Jews actions on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar? F. Bush argues that 'The Jews' actions are strictly defensive. They do not instigate the fighting, for they attack 'those who sought to do them harm' (*Esther* 463). Do you agree?