

THE STRUCTURE OF ESTHER

Thesis

3:1
King Xerxes honoured Haman ... giving him a seat of honour higher than that of all other nobles.

3:10
So the king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman ...

3:12
Then on the thirteenth day of the first month the royal secretaries were summoned. They wrote out in the script of each province and in the language of each people all Haman's orders to the king's satraps, the governors of the various provinces and the nobles of the various peoples. These were written in the name of King Xerxes himself and sealed with his own ring.

3:13
Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with the order to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews – young and old, women and little children – on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods.

3:14
A copy of the text of the edict was to be issued as law in every province and made known to the people of every nationality so that they would be ready for that day.

3:15
Spurred on by the king's command, the couriers went out, and the edict was issued in the citadel of Susa. The king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was bewildered.

4:1
When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly.

4:3
In every province to which the edict and order of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

5:14a
His wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, 'Have a gallows built, seventy-five feet high, and ask the king in the morning to have Mordecai hanged on it. Then go with the king to the dinner and be happy.'

6:6–9
(Haman thinks he is to be honoured and designs an honouring ceremony.)

Antithesis

10:3
Mordecai the Jew was second in rank to King Xerxes, pre-eminent among the Jews ...

8:2a
The king took off his signet ring, which he had reclaimed from Haman, and presented it to Mordecai.

8:9–10a
At once the royal secretaries were summoned – on the twenty-third day of the third month, the month of Sivan. They wrote out all Mordecai's orders to the Jews, and to the satraps, governors and nobles of the 127 provinces stretching from India to Cush. These orders were written in the script of each province and the language of each people and also to the Jews in their own script and language. Mordecai wrote in the name of King Xerxes, sealed the dispatches with the king's signet ring ...

8:10b–12
... and sent them by mounted couriers, who rode fast horses especially bred for the king. The king's edict granted the Jews in every city the right to assemble and protect themselves; to destroy, kill and annihilate any armed force of any nationality or province that might attack them and their women and children; and to plunder the property of their enemies. The day appointed ... was the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar.

8:13
A copy of the text of the edict was to be issued as law in every province and made known to the people of every nationality so that the Jews would be ready on that day to avenge themselves on their enemies.

8:14, 15b
The couriers, riding the royal horses, raced out, spurred on by the king's command. And the edict was also issued in the citadel of Susa ... And the city of Susa held a joyous celebration.

8:15a
Mordecai left the king's presence wearing royal garments of blue and white, a large crown of gold and a purple robe of fine linen.

8:17a
In every province and every city, wherever the edict of the king went, there was joy and gladness among the Jews, with feasting and celebrating.

6:13b–14
His advisers and his wife Zeresh said to him, 'Since Mordecai, before whom your downfall has started, is of Jewish origin, you cannot stand against him – you will surely come to ruin!' While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hurried Haman away to the banquet Esther had prepared.

6:10
(Mordecai receives the honour Haman had designed.)