

SUPPLEMENT TO THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL STATESMAN FOR THE AGES

Session Fifteen / ESTHER Wednesday, May 30, 2018

QUEEN ESTHER - WHO SAVED THE JEWS FROM ANNIHILATION

1 As noted in our study of Ezra (May 16, 2018), the Bible can be subdivided into divisions:

- 2 1. The Torah - Genesis through Deuteronomy (also called the Pentateuch - which
3 means five books)
- 4 2. The Historical Books - Joshua through Esther
- 5 3. The Poetic Books - Job through Song of Solomon
- 6 4. The Major Prophets - Isaiah through Daniel (called major because of their length)
- 7 5. The Minor Prophets - Hosea through Malachi

8
9 Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther are the final three books in the historical section and tell of
10 the Jews' return from Babylonian and Persian exile, the reconstruction of the Temple and
11 of Jerusalem itself, particularly the walls and gates. These three books cover about 100
12 years, 536-432 B.C. The Old Testament prophets at that time were Haggai, Zechariah
13 and Malachi.

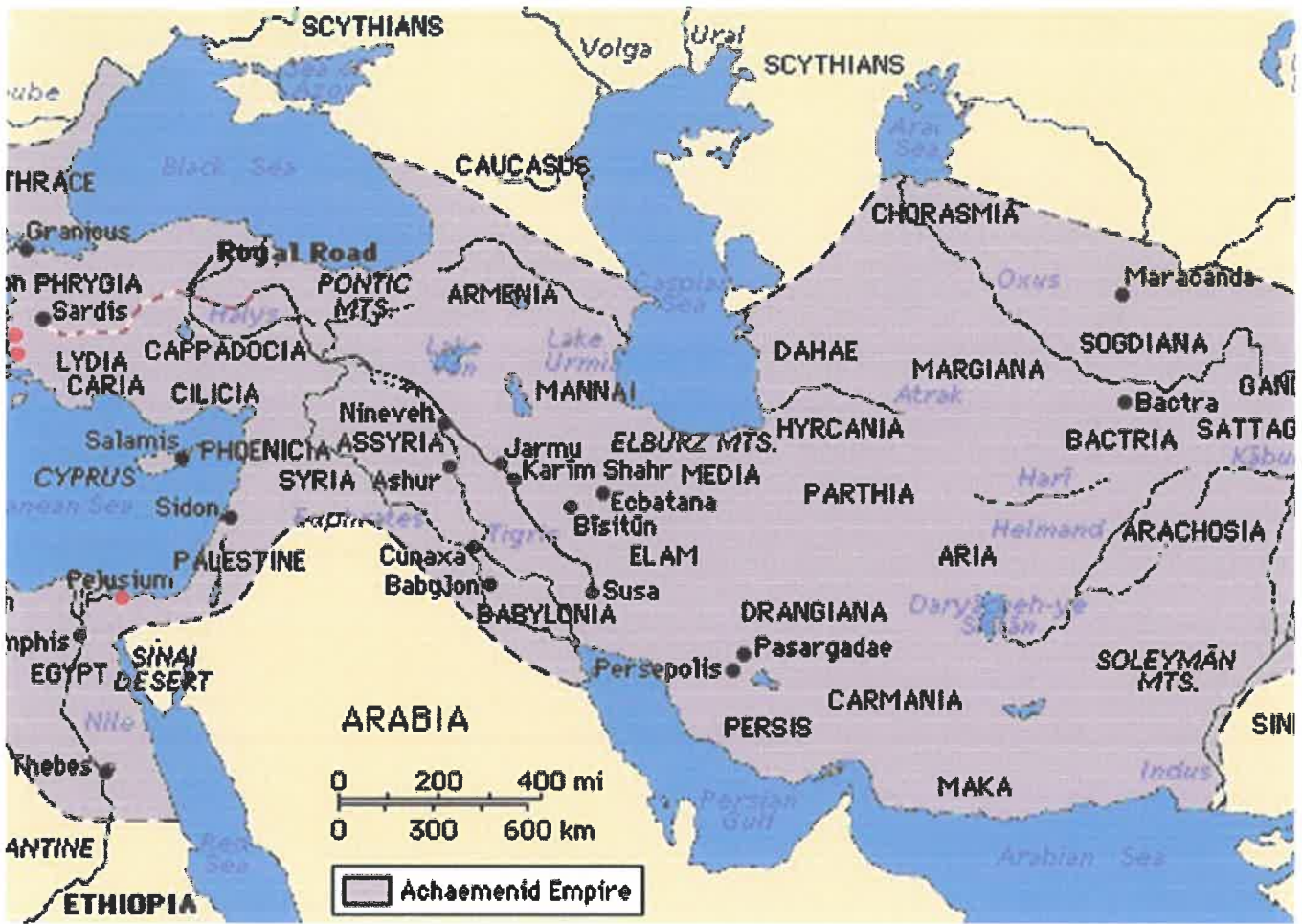
14
15 You should remember from Daniel chapter 2 the list of Gentile world powers that were to
16 come from 586 B.C. to the present:

- 17 1. Babylonian
- 18 2. Persian (which we study tonight and her illustrious Queen)
- 19 3. Greece
- 20 4. Roman
- 21 5. East and West Rome
- 22 6. Remaining nations found represented in Daniel 2 as the "toes of the statue"

THE ANCIENT PERSIAN EMPIRE

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24
25
26 This was an empire based in Western Asia, founded by Cyrus the Great. It was a
27 massive empire, ranging from the Balkans and Eastern Europe in the west to the Indus
28 Valley (present-day Pakistan and western India). It was larger at its zenith than any
29 previous empire in history, spanning 5.5 million square kilometers. It was noted for its
30 highly-developed organization of government (its bureaucratic administration under the
31 King); for building solid infrastructure such as road systems and a postal system, the use
32 of an official language across its territories and the development of civil services and a
33 large professional army.

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MAP OF ANCIENT PERSIA

Historians will remember that Persia was noted in Western history as the antagonist of the Greek city-states during the Greco-Persian Wars and for the emancipation of the Jewish exiles in Babylon. The impact of Cyrus and the Persians in this saga has major place in secular history.

From it came the great Queen, who along with her cousin Mordecai, saved Persia's Jews from extinction at the hand of Haman.

Overview of the book of Esther from Dr. J. Vernon McGee:

The Book of Esther is in one sense the most remarkable in the Bible and that is because the name of God is not mentioned at all. There is not even a divine title or pronoun that refers to God. Yet the heathen king is mentioned 192 times. Prayer is not mentioned – it wouldn't be since God is omitted. The Book of Esther is never quoted in the New Testament. There's not even a casual reference to it. But the superstition of the heathen is mentioned and we will be introduced into a pagan, heathen court of a great world monarch who ruled over the then-known world. It is unusual for another reason: it is named for a women. Ruth and Esther are the only two. And...it's a love story.

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3
4 **Chapter One - Queen Vashti Refuses To Honor The King's Command**

5
6 It is my personal opinion that mighty King Xerxes threw a big bash to try to diminish his
7 anger and grief in enduring the years-long battle against the Greeks. Upon his return to
8 his Persian summer capital of Shushan....the story begins:

9
10 Esther 1:1-8

11 **Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, (this is Ahasuerus which reigned,**
12 **from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces:)**
13 **[2] That in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom,**
14 **which was in Shushan the palace, [3] In the third year of his reign, he made a feast**
15 **unto all his princes and his servants; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and**
16 **princes of the provinces, being before him: [4] When he shewed the riches of his**
17 **glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty many days, even an**
18 **hundred and fourscore days. [5] And when these days were expired, the king made a**
19 **feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan the palace, both unto great**
20 **and small, seven days, in the court of the garden of the king's palace; [6] Where**
21 **were white, green, and blue, hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple**
22 **to silver rings and pillars of marble: the beds were of gold and silver, upon a**
23 **pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black, marble. [7] And they gave them**
24 **drink in vessels of gold, (the vessels being diverse one from another,) and royal wine**
25 **in abundance, according to the state of the king. [8] And the drinking was according**
26 **to the law; none did compel: for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his**
27 **house, that they should do according to every man's pleasure.**

28
29

It is commonly accepted by Bible scholars that Ahasuerus in the Book of Esther is the historical XERXES THE GREAT of Persia. From the British Museum, a 1907 volume of history entitled *The Sculptures and Inscriptions of Darius the Great* establishes the famed "Cyrus Cylinders" translation that Ahasuerus and Esther were the parents of the Cyrus of Isaiah 44:28: **That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid** and Isaiah 45:1 **Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut.**

30
31 There were 127 provinces in the Persian Empire and from them came well over a

1 thousand big shots for the king's feast.
2

A bit of clarification here: If we were studying the saga of Joseph in the Book of Genesis, we would note the presence of someone called Pharaoh. That was NOT his name. Through the various dynasties, Pharaohs had varying personal names such as Ramses, Tutankhamen, Merneptah, Seti, Akhenaten, and others. So the word "Pharaoh" was not a personal name but rather a title, such as Caesar. Now in the book of Esther we read of Ahasuerus. It is the feeling of most biblical scholars and historians that this "Ahasuerus" was in reality Xerxes.

3 The six-month feast described in this chapter reveals the wealth of Xerxes. He used
4 those funds to pay for a drunken orgy and to gain support for future military conquests.
5 Verses 9 and 10 tell us that the Queen, Vashti, also threw a party. While her husband
6 Xerxes had his big bash for personal reasons, it seems Vashti did not. She was merely
7 entertaining some of her women friends at a separate locale. Apparently it was a breach
8 of custom in Persia for men and women to attend the same parties.
9

10 VASHTI'S BRILLIANT REFUSAL

11
12 Xerxes commanded his seven chamberlains to bring his Queen to the feast - a violation of
13 protocol.
14

15 Esther 1:11-12

16 **...to bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to shew the**
17 **people and the princes her beauty: for she was fair to look on. [12] But the queen**
18 **Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by his chamberlains: therefore**
19 **was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him.**
20

21 By this time, Xerxes was undoubtedly drunk and his senses had left him. As apparently
22 had all sense of decency. Just another reason why we in the Assemblies of God are
23 teetotalers - we do not drink. We don't even sip!!!
24

25 Xerxes' pride was offended and he turned to his alleged wise counselors to ask: Esther
26 1:15 **What shall we do unto the queen Vashti according to law, because she hath**
27 **not performed the commandment of the king Ahasuerus by the chamberlains?**

28 Their response was so sexist and insane as verbalized by Memucan: Esther 1:16-20

29 **And Memucan answered before the king and the princes, Vashti the queen hath**
30 **not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes, and to all the people that**
31 **are in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus. [17] For this deed of the queen shall**

1 **come abroad unto all women, so that they shall despise their husbands in their eyes,**
2 **when it shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be**
3 **brought in before him, but she came not. [18] Likewise shall the ladies of Persia and**
4 **Media say this day unto all the king's princes, which have heard of the deed of the**
5 **queen. Thus shall there arise too much contempt and wrath. [19] If it please the**
6 **king, let there go a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the**
7 **laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, That Vashti come no more**
8 **before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is**
9 **better than she. [20] And when the king's decree which he shall make shall be**
10 **published throughout all his empire, (for it is great,) all the wives shall give to their**
11 **husbands honour, both to great and small.**

12
13 Xerxes was out of his mind! Many of the alleged world “leaders” had the same malady -
14 Julius Caesar, Napoleon, Hitler, Stalin, and others. As someone has observed, *Any*
15 *person today who wants to be a world leader ought to be examined by a psychiatrist!*
16

17 **Chapter Two - Xerxes Searches For A New Queen**

18
19 Esther 2:1-4

20 **After these things, when the wrath of king Ahasuerus was appeased, he**
21 **remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what was decreed against her. [2]**
22 **Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, Let there be fair young**
23 **virgins sought for the king: [3] And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces**
24 **of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto**
25 **Shushan the palace, to the house of the women unto the custody of Hege the king's**
26 **chamberlain, keeper of the women; and let their things for purification be given**
27 **them: [4] And let the maiden which pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti.**
28 **And the thing pleased the king; and he did so.**

29
30 Xerxes is now experiencing regret. He misses his Queen. His servants suggest he
31 sponsor a beauty pageant of sorts to look for anew first lady.

32 Introduction to Mordecai

33
34
35 Esther 2:5-8

36 **Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai,**
37 **the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite; [6] Who had been**
38 **carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with**
39 **Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried**
40 **away. [7] And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she**

1 **had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful; whom**
2 **Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter.**

3 **[8] So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard,**
4 **and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the**
5 **custody of Hegai, that Esther was brought also unto the king's house, to the custody**
6 **of Hegai, keeper of the women.**

7
8 God was ordering the steps of the Persian Empire in order to save Jews from genocide.
9 Esther was introduced in the great palace but no one knew of her ancestry - that she was a
10 Jew. Esther 2:10 **Esther had not shewed her people nor her kindred: for Mordecai**
11 **had charged her that she should not shew it.**

12
13 How did Mordecai a Jew from Israel end up in Persia? He was taken captive during
14 Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar's second raid on Jerusalem and was thus in the second
15 wave of captives deported to Babylon. That was during the reign of Jeconiah
16 (Jehoiachin). Remember that Daniel was taken in the first wave a few years earlier.

17
18 Now, in Xerxes' quest for a new wife and queen, the possible contenders spent basically a
19 year in preparation. After that lengthy time, the women would be paraded before the
20 King and he would make his choice.

21
22 Esther 2:16-17 **So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the**
23 **tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. [17] And**
24 **the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his**
25 **sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and**
26 **made her queen instead of Vashti.**

27
28 This event not only brought Esther into prominence, but also Mordecai. He is given a
29 position, probably that of a judge. He somehow uncovered a plot against the life of King
30 Xerxes and had the two culprits apprehended, tried, found guilty and hanged: Esther
31 2:21-23 **In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's**
32 **chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door, were wroth, and**
33 **sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. [22] And the thing was known to**
34 **Mordecai, who told it unto Esther the queen; and Esther certified the king thereof in**
35 **Mordecai's name. [23] And when inquisition was made of the matter, it was found**
36 **out; therefore they were both hanged on a tree: and it was written in the book of the**
37 **chronicles before the king.**

38
39 I explained in a recent study that a "gate" was not just an opening; it was more like city
40 hall where all kinds of business, personal and national, was conducted.



Chapter Three - A Terrifying Concept of Genocide

Pharaoh, Haman, Hitler - three of a kind, each one wanted to destroy Jews from the Earth. Haman tried it during the Persian Empire. The Book of Esther tells his vicious story:

Esther 3:1-6

After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him. [2] And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence. [3] Then the king's servants, which were in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the king's commandment? [4] Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand: for he had told them that he was a Jew. [5] And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath. [6] And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had shewed him the people of Mordecai: wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai.

Haman came from a long line of Jew-haters. He was an Agagite: 1 Samuel 15:8 And

1 **he** (Israel's first king, Saul) **took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly**
2 **destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.** At first glimpse, the novice
3 reader of Scripture might find it off-setting that God wanted the Agagites destroyed. But
4 God knew what was coming down the road - the Haman of Persia who would seek to
5 destroy all the Jews in the Empire. Esther was made Queen in God's providence, not
6 just because she was a beauty, but because as a Jew she would feel the impact of the
7 impending tragedy and be in a place to do something to stop it.

8
9 Mordecai angered Haman when he refused to bow down to him. One has to wonder
10 how history would have changed in the last century had Germans not bowed and scraped
11 to Hitler. Haman would not bow to any human because he was a Jew and had been
12 taught Deut. 6:4: **Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord:** and Exodus 20:3-4:
13 **Thou shalt have no other gods before me.** Mordecai had little fear of Haman but a
14 reverent and awed fear of God!

15
16 Haman sought Xerxes' permission to kill the Jews of the empire and paid ten thousand
17 talents of silver for the "license to kill." This king had little or no concept of the value
18 of human life. He had just come from a war against Greece in which historians estimate
19 2 million men died.

20
21 Word was sent out to the entire empire in 127 languages, we are told. Remember that
22 once a law was passed in Persia ("the laws of the Medes and Persians") it could not be
23 revoked. Even the king himself could not change it once it had been signed and posted.
24 So how would God deliver the Jews?

25 26 **Chapter 4 - "For Such A Time As This"**

27
28 The word of the coming holocaust swept across the Empire. Esther 4:3 **And in every**
29 **province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was**
30 **great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many**
31 **lay in sackcloth and ashes.**

32
33 It apparently was somewhat embarrassing for Queen Esther that her relative was just
34 outside wearing mourning clothes - sackcloth for: Esther 4:4 **So Esther's maids and**
35 **her chamberlains came and told it her. Then was the queen exceedingly grieved; and**
36 **she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai, and to take away his sackcloth from him: but**
37 **he received it not.** Is it possible that Esther didn't realize the grave danger facing her?
38 Apparently so for she sent one of her servants to ask him, in effect, "What's going on
39 with you?"

40
41 Esther 4:6-9 **So Hatach went forth to Mordecai unto the street of the city, which**

1 **was before the king's gate. [7] And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto**
2 **him, and of the sum of the money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's**
3 **treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them. [8] Also he gave him the copy of the writing**
4 **of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them, to shew it unto Esther, and**
5 **to declare it unto her, and to charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make**
6 **supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people. [9] And**
7 **Hatach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai.**

8
9 It seems like a reasonable demand of Mordecai to Esther - "Hey, cuz, tell the king we're
10 all facing death here!" But nothing is quite as simple as it seems Here is the message
11 she sent back to Mordecai:

12
13 Esther 4:11

14 **All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that**
15 **whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court,**
16 **who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom**
17 **the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been**
18 **called to come in unto the king these thirty days.**

19
20 Apparently the king felt quite proud of himself and decreed that no one could come into
21 his august presence without being summoned first. If anyone did, and he, Xerxes, did
22 not extend his royal golden scepter - well, it was "off with his head."

23
24 But Mordecai warned his cousin, "Listen...you're dead either way unless this planned
25 genocide gets stopped:" Esther 4:13-14 **Then Mordecai commanded to answer**
26 **Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than**
27 **all the Jews. [14] For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall**
28 **there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou**
29 **and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come**
30 **to the kingdom for such a time as this?**

31
32 Esther's being the queen did not exempt her from this newest law of the Medes and
33 Persians – Jews were going to be exterminated. Esther showed her courage with this
34 immortal response: Esther 4:15-17 **Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this**
35 **answer, [16] Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast**
36 **ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens**
37 **will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law:**
38 **and if I perish, I perish. [17] So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that**
39 **Esther had commanded him.**

40
41 What a line - "If I perish, I perish."

Chapter 5 - The Plot Thickens!

For three days the Jews have fasted. This is a life and death matter. What will the king do in response to his wife's entre unbidden by him?

Esther 5:1-2 Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house: and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the gate of the house. [2] And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight: and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.

It's interesting that Esther made her appearance wearing a gorgeous outfit! She didn't come in jeans and a t-shirt. It must have come as quite a shock to Xerxes when he looked up and saw his new bride there, all decked out and looking beautiful. When he extended that golden scepter, it was an act of grace! Because of Jesus, God has extended to you and me a scepter of acceptance. **Hebrews 10:19-22 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, [20] By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; [21] And having an high priest over the house of God; [22] Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.** What a marvelous passage of God's Word! The scepter has been extended because of Jesus!

The Set Up

When asked that brought her into the royal presence, Esther did not press for action against Haman right away. She perhaps could have as the king offered her anything she wanted up to half his kingdom. Instead she invited Xerxes to dinner, and asked him to bring Haman along with him. Haman was thrilled at the invitation but his anger was rekindled upon leaving when Mordecai continued to refuse to honor him. But by the time he got home, he was congratulating himself on the invitation to dinner with the royal couple: **Esther 5:10-11 Nevertheless Haman refrained himself: and when he came home, he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife. [11] And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king.**

However, he also complained to his wife about Mordecai and she apparently was cut from the same cloth as she was. Note her response:

1 Esther 5:14

2 **Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of**
3 **fifty cubits high, and to morrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be**
4 **hanged thereon: then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the**
5 **thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made.**

6
7 A cubit is basically 18 inches. Wow - she wanted everyone to see her husband's
8 nemesis dying on that gallows! 75 feet high! What hatred and resentment. So we
9 leave Haman a happy camper for tonight. When next we meet, it won't be quite as
10 joyful for this would-be Hitler.

11
12
13 NEXT WEEK: Part 2 of Esther