

Mordecai

A Loyal Courtier

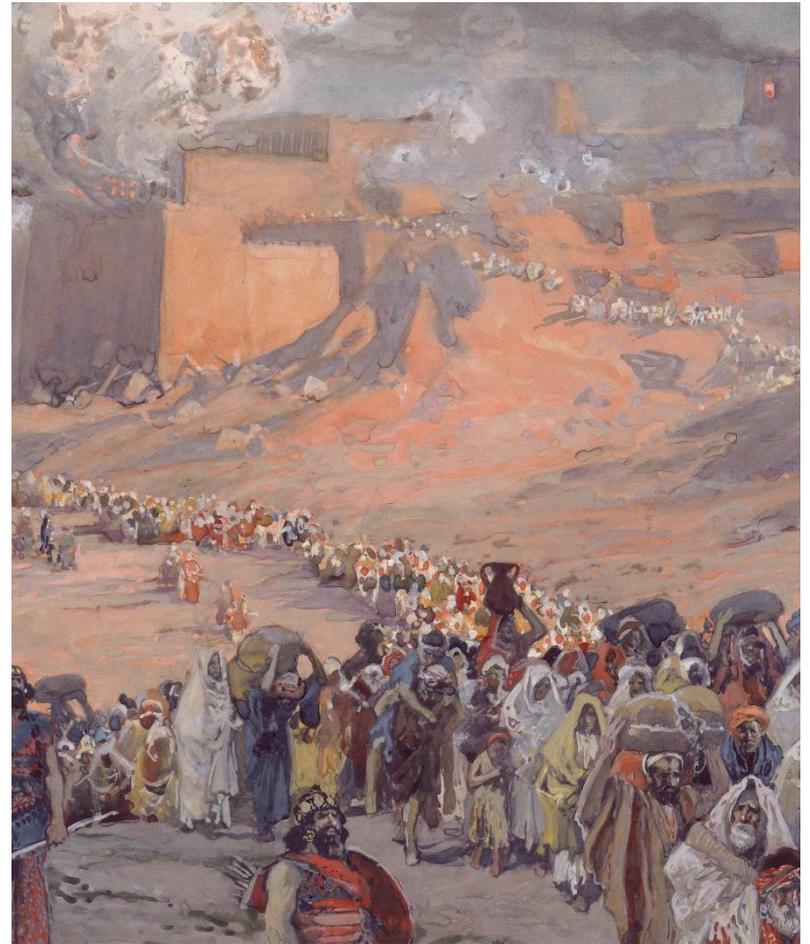


Martin's Men
8 May 2021

A Jewish Exile

There was in the citadel of Susa a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, named Mordecai son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, who had been carried into exile from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, among those taken captive with Jehoiachin king of Judah.

Esther 2:5-6



An Orphaned Cousin



Mordecai had a cousin named Hadassah, whom he had brought up because she had neither father nor mother. This young woman, who was also known as Esther, had a lovely figure and was beautiful. Mordecai had taken her as his own daughter when her father and mother died. ... Esther was taken to the king's palace and entrusted to Hegai, who had charge of the harem. She pleased him and won his favour. He provided her with her beauty treatments and special food. He assigned to her seven female attendants selected from the king's palace and moved her and her attendants into the best place in the harem. Esther had not revealed her nationality and family background, because Mordecai had forbidden her to do so. Every day he walked to and fro near the courtyard of the harem to find out how Esther was and what was happening to her.

Esther 2:7-11

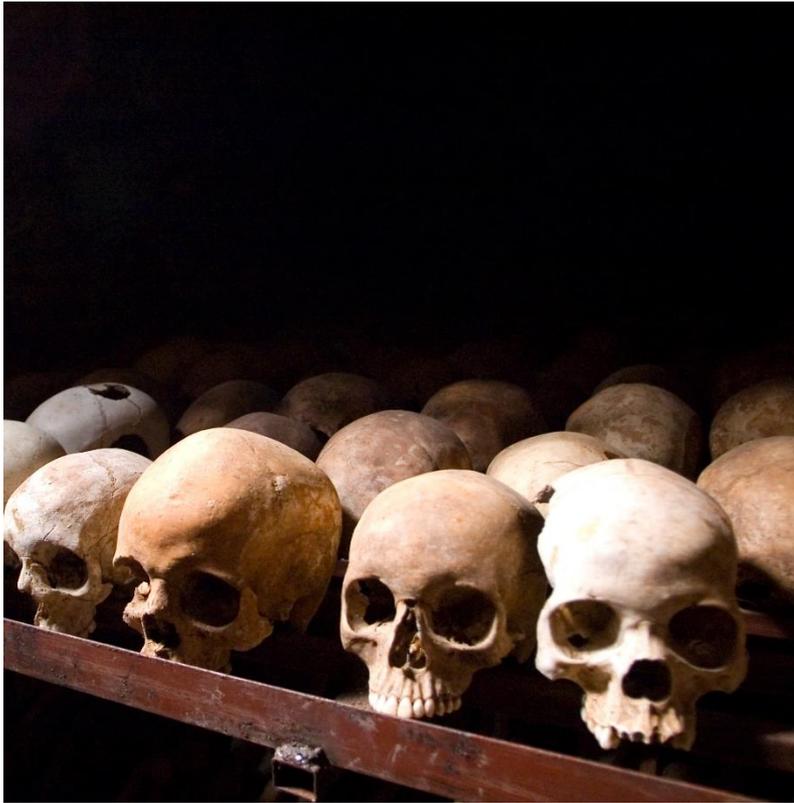
Assassination Plot

Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate. But Esther had kept secret her family background and nationality just as Mordecai had told her to do, for she continued to follow Mordecai's instructions as she had done when he was bringing her up. During the time Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway, became angry and conspired to assassinate King Xerxes. But Mordecai found out about the plot and told Queen Esther, who in turn reported it to the king, giving credit to Mordecai. And when the report was investigated and found to be true, the two officials were impaled on poles. All this was recorded in the book of the annals in the presence of the king.

Esther 2:19-23

**ASSASSINATION
PLOT**

Haman's Plan: Genocide



King Xerxes honoured Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, elevating him and giving him a seat of honour higher than that of all the other nobles. All the royal officials at the king's gate knelt down and paid honour to Haman, for the king had commanded this concerning him. But Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honour. Then the royal officials at the king's gate asked Mordecai, 'Why do you disobey the king's command?' Day after day they spoke to him but he refused to comply ... When Haman saw that Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honour, he was enraged. Yet having learned who Mordecai's people were, he scorned the idea of killing only Mordecai. Instead Haman looked for a way to destroy all Mordecai's people, the Jews, throughout the whole kingdom.

Esther 3:1-6

The First Decree

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. 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 children – on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods.

Esther 3:12-13



Weeping and Wailing

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 ... 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. When Esther's eunuchs and female attendants came and told her about Mordecai, she was in great distress. She sent clothes for him to put on instead of his sackcloth, but he would not accept them. Then Esther summoned Hathak, one of the king's eunuchs assigned to attend her, and ordered him to find out what was troubling Mordecai and why ...

Esther 4:1-6

I TURNED TO THE
LORD GOD,
TO SEEK HELP,
IN PRAYER AND
PETITION, WITH
FASTING,
SACKCLOTH,
AND ASHES.

DANIEL 9:3

#SACKCLOTHANDASHES

Mordecai's Plan

Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him ... He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict for their annihilation ... to show to Esther ... and he told him to instruct her to go into the king's presence to beg for mercy and plead with him for her people. Hathak went back and reported to Esther what Mordecai had said. Then she instructed him to say to Mordecai ... 'For any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that they be put to death unless the king extends the gold sceptre to them and spares their lives. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king.'

When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, he sent back this answer: 'Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?' Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: 'Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.' So Mordecai went away and carried out all of Esther's instructions.

Esther 4:7-17

On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the palace, in front of the king's hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne in the hall, facing the entrance. When he saw Queen Esther standing in the court, he was pleased with her and held out to her the gold sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther approached and touched the tip of the sceptre. Then the king asked, 'What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be given you.' *Esther 5:1-3*



Esther Before Ahasuerus (Xerxes) by Frans the younger Francken

Esther's First Banquet

‘If it pleases the king,’ replied Esther, ‘let the king, together with Haman, come today to a banquet I have prepared for him.’ ‘Bring Haman at once,’ the king said, ‘so that we may do what Esther asks.’ So the king and Haman went to the banquet Esther had prepared. As they were drinking wine, the king again asked Esther, ‘Now what is your petition? It will be given you. And what is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted.’ Esther replied, ‘My petition and my request is this: If the king regards me with favour and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfil my request, let the king and Haman come tomorrow to the banquet I will prepare for them. Then I will answer the king’s question.’

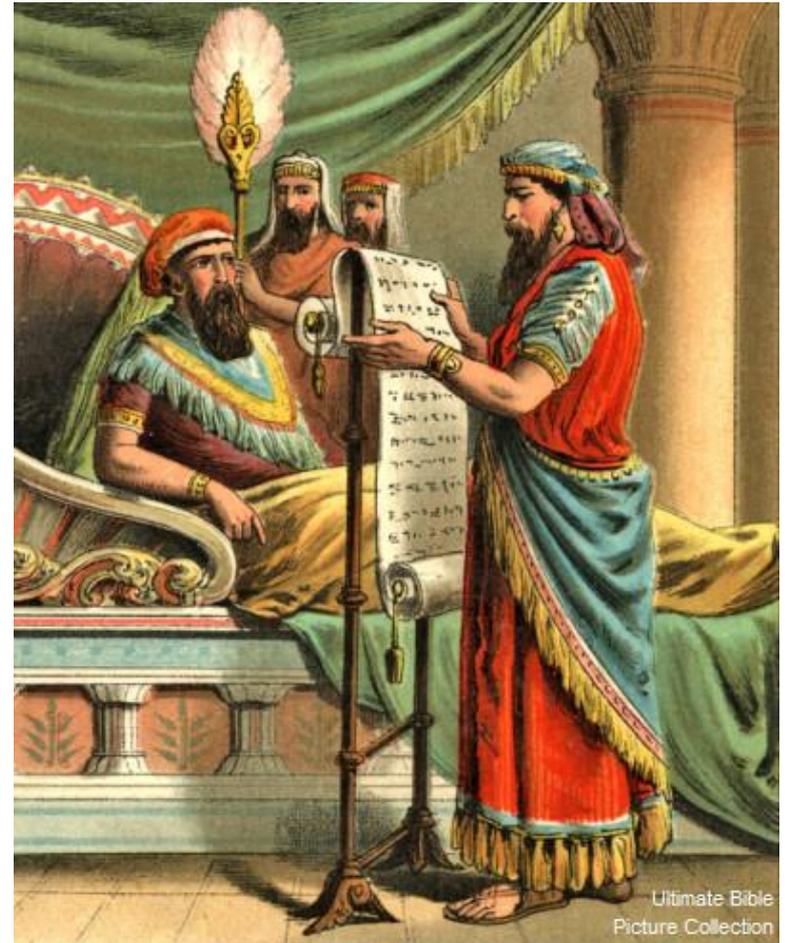
Haman went out that day happy and in high spirits. But when he saw Mordecai at the king’s gate and observed that he neither rose nor showed fear in his presence, he was filled with rage against Mordecai. ... His wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, ‘Have a pole set up, reaching to a height of fifty cubits, and ask the king in the morning to have Mordecai impaled on it. Then go with the king to the banquet and enjoy yourself.’

Esther 6:4-9, 14

Sleepless in Susa

That night the king could not sleep; so he ordered the book of the chronicles, the record of his reign, to be brought in and read to him. It was found recorded there that **Mordecai** had exposed Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway, who had conspired to assassinate King Xerxes. 'What honour and recognition has **Mordecai** received for this?' the king asked. 'Nothing has been done for him,' his attendants answered.

Esther 6:1-3



Xerxes hears of Mordecai

The Tables Turned

The king said, 'Who is in the court?' Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the palace to speak to the king about impaling Mordecai on the pole he had set up for him. His attendants answered, 'Haman is standing in the court.' 'Bring him in,' the king ordered. When Haman entered, the king asked him, 'What should be done for the man the king delights to honour?' Now Haman thought to himself, 'Who is there that the king would rather honour than me?' So he answered the king, 'For the man the king delights to honour, let them bring a royal robe the king has worn and a horse the king has ridden, one with a royal crest placed on its head. Then let the robe and horse be entrusted to one of the king's most noble princes. Let them robe the man the king delights to honour, and lead him on the horse through the city streets, proclaiming before him, "This is what is done for the man the king delights to honour!"' 'Go at once,' the king commanded Haman. 'Get the robe and the horse and do just as you have suggested for Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king's gate. Do not neglect anything you have recommended.'

Esther 6:4-10

So Haman got the robe and the horse. He robed Mordecai, and led him on horseback through the city streets, proclaiming before him, ‘This is what is done for the man the king delights to honour!’ *Esther 6:11*



The Triumph of Mordecai by Pieter Lastman (1624)

Esther's Second Banquet

The king and Haman went to Queen Esther's banquet, and as they were drinking wine on the second day, the king again asked, 'Queen Esther, what is your petition? It will be given you ...' Then Queen Esther answered, 'If I have found favour with you, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, grant me my life ... And spare my people ... For I and my people have been sold to be destroyed, killed and annihilated ...' King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, 'Who is he? Where is he – the man who has dared to do such a thing?' Esther said, 'An adversary and enemy! This vile Haman!' ... Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs attending the king, said, 'A pole reaching to a height of fifty cubits stands by Haman's house. He had it set up for Mordecai, who spoke up to help the king.' The king said, 'Impale him on it!' So they impaled Haman on the pole he had set up for Mordecai. *Esther 7:1-10*



The Second Decree

That same day King Xerxes gave Queen Esther the estate of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mordecai came into the presence of the king, for Esther had told how he was related to her. ² The king took off his signet ring, which he had reclaimed from Haman, and presented it to Mordecai. And Esther appointed him over Haman's estate.

³ Esther again pleaded with the king, falling at his feet and weeping. She begged him to put an end to the evil plan of Haman the Agagite, which he had devised against the Jews. ⁴ Then the king extended the gold sceptre to Esther and she arose and stood before him. ⁵ 'If it pleases the king,' she said, 'and if he regards me with favour and thinks it the right thing to do, and if he is pleased with me, let an order be written overruling the dispatches that Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, devised and wrote to destroy the Jews in all the king's provinces ... ⁷ King Xerxes replied to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew ... 'Now write another decree in the king's name on behalf of the Jews as seems best to you, and seal it with the king's signet ring – for no document written in the king's name and sealed with his ring can be revoked.' *Esther 8:1-8*

Obituary

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



Tomb of Esther and Mordecai in Hamadan, Iran

Mordecai in Brief

A loyal courtier:

- loyal to his family (Esther)
- loyal to his employer (King Xerxes)
- loyal to his people (the Jews)

