

Handout Esther Lesson 4

Commit your destiny to Yahweh, be confident in him, and he will act, making your uprightness clear as daylight, and the justice of your cause as the noon.

Psalm 37:5-6

God or the word Lord (referring to the God of Israel) occurs over 50 times in the Greek version of the Book of Esther while God is not mentioned once in the Hebrew text. However, the Hebrew text contains acrostics of the letters in the Divine Name (YHWH) in 1:20; 5:4, 13 (in reverse) and 7:7. Esther 7:5 contains within the sentence “is he and where is he” (in Hebrew) the notarikon EHYHE, which is the same backward and forward for “I AM,” what God told Moses was the meaning of the Divine Name (see Ex 2:23; 3:14-15).

In her prayer (Chapter 4), Esther made three petitions to God:

1. to give her courage
2. to subject the wicked author of the future massacre of her people to the same fate
3. to rescue her people from his evil plan

The year is 474 BC in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus' reign:

- Haman cast the lots for the date of the massacre in Nisan (March-April), 474 BC (Esth 3:7).
- The lots selected the date of the thirteenth of Adar (February-March), 473 BC (Esth 3:12).*
- The royal scribes sent out the edict in the thirteenth day of Nisan, 474 BC (Esth 3:12).

*The new Persian year began on the spring equinox that is March 21st in our calendar.

The three parts of the plan Haman suggests for the man the king wants to honor in verses 7-9:

1. wearing royal robes the king has worn
2. riding a horse from the king's stables wearing a crown
3. escorted by a high-ranking minister through the city square who should proclaim to the people that the king himself is honoring the man

Each act suggests a design on acquiring royal power and the only act that is missing is taking possession of the king's wife/wives and concubines (see 2 Sam 15:10; 16:20-22).

Esther's second feast with Haman and the king in Chapter 7 is the seventh banquet in the Book of Esther:

1. the banquet for the king's ministers of state, provincial governors, and army commanders (1:3-4)
2. the king's feast for the people living in the citadel of Susa (1:5-5)
3. Queen Vashti's banquet for the wives (1:5-5)
4. Esther's wedding feast (2:18)
5. the feast celebrating the sending out of the edict for the destruction of the Jews (3:15)
6. Esther's first banquet for the King and Haman (5:6-8)
7. Esther's second banquet for the King and Haman (7:1-10)

→ over

In Mordecai's dream, "two great dragons came forward" ready to fight (LXX 1:c/11:6). But then, "Light came as the sun rose, and the humble were raised" (LXX 1:1k/11:11). The humble Jews had no choice but to put their trust in the Lord God just as Psalm 37 advises: *Commit your destiny to Yahweh, be confident in him, and he will act, making your uprightness clear as daylight, and the justice of your cause as the noon* (Ps 37:5-6). The for the Jews living in Persia, the divine "Light" is shining as God intervenes on His people's behalf.

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**ISRAEL'S LITURGICAL AND
CIVIL CALENDAR YEAR**

Month	Liturgical year order	Civil year order	Modern equivalent	Feast days & Agricultural Season (+ = God-ordained annual and ++ pilgrim feasts * = national feasts)
Aviv/Abib (Nisan)	1	7	March/April	+Passover 14 th , ++Unleavened Bread 15-21 st (sacred assembly on 15 th and 21 st), +Firstfruits = day after Sabbath of Unleavened Bread holy week; “Latter rains”/flood season; beginning of barley and flax harvest
Ziv (Iyyar)	2	8	April/May	Dry season, apricots ripen
Sivan	3	9	May/June	++Weeks (Pentecost) 50 days from Firstfruits; wheat harvest, dry winds, early fig harvest, grapes ripen
Tammuz	4	10	June/July	Hot, dry season: grape harvest
Ab	5	11	July/Aug.	Hot, olive harvest
Elul	6	12	Aug./Sept.	Dates and summer figs
Ethanim (Tishri)	7	1	Sept./Oct.	+Trumpets = 1 st +Day of Atonement =10 th ++Shelters (Booths/Tabernacles) = 15-21 st & 22 nd sacred assembly; Fall equinox 15 th ; “Former (early) rains,” plowing & seed time
Bul (Heshvan)	8	2	Oct./Nov.	Rains, winter figs, sowing of wheat and barley
Chislev	9	3	Nov./Dec.	*Hanukkah (feast of dedication); winter begins
Tebeth	10	4	Dec./Jan.	Coldest month; rains and snow in mountains
Sebat	11	5	Jan./Feb.	Growing warmer; almond trees in bloom
Adar	12	6	Feb./March	*Purim; spring: “Latter rains” begin, citrus & fruit harvest

Seven annual feasts are God-ordained feasts (Ex 12:1-28; 43-51; 13:1-10; Lev 23:5-44; Num 28:16-29:39) including three pilgrim feasts (Unleavened Bread, Weeks, and Shelters). *Hanukkah and Purim are national feasts proclaimed by the people and are not God-ordained (1 Mac 4:36-61; 2 Mac 10:1-8; Esth 9:20-32). The Feasts of Unleavened Bread and Tabernacles fell respectively near the spring and fall equinoxes. Ancients counted without the concept of a zero place-value.