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The Fear of Mordecai Seized Them
9: 1-4

The fear of Mordecai seized them DIG: What was so special about the thirteenth day of the twelfth month of Adar? How and why were the Jews able to triumph? Who turned the tables? Who were the Gentiles really "afraid" of? Why did all the rulers support Mordecai?

REFLECT: When might "winning the battle," mean "losing the war?" Is there a time when "going easy" on a defeated enemy might only invite troubles later on? Why or why not? How do you know the difference? When have you had the tables turned on you? How did you feel? What did you learn from that? Looking back on your life, when did God work silently behind the scenes for your benefit?

Eleven months after **Haman** had cast lots, the dreadful **day** arrived at last. **On the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, the decree commanded by the king was to be carried out.** Before the author described what happened on that historic **day**, he summarizes the significance of the events: **On this day the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, but now**, because of **the counter-decree** (**to see link click Bi – Now Write a Counter-Decree in the Kings Name on Behalf of the Jews**), **the tables were turned and the Jews got the upper hand over those who hated them (9:1).** Although the circumstances are illustrated with the passive phrase, **the tables were turned**, the sense is clearly that ADONAI had *caused* them to turn. In the book of **Esther** where God appears to be absent, He is nonetheless present. Namely, God is the hero of the story.



The Jews assembled in their cities in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to defend **themselves** from those determined to destroy **them**. **No one could stand against them, because the people of all the other nationalities were afraid of them (9:2). The fear of** God's **people** could only be explained in terms of **the fear of their** God, who vindicated **their** righteous cause by convincing **their enemies** in the whole **Persian** Empire of having backed the losing side.[103] Even with government opposition, however, the hatred that many **Persians** felt for **the Jews** resulted in **the Israelites** having to defend **themselves** nonetheless. The phrase, **no one could stand against them**, did not mean **their enemies** failed to attack. It meant that **they could** not conquer **them**. Many times in the Scriptures ADONAI causes **fear** to fall on **the enemies** of **the children of Isra'el**. Here He uses **the counter-decree**, **Mordecai's** rise to power, and the authority given to **the Jews** to defend **themselves**.

In fact, even **the government authorities helped them. And all the nobles of the provinces, the satraps, the governors and the king's administrators helped the Jews, because fear of Mordecai had seized them (9:3).** Given that **Mordecai** was then **the prime minister**, all **the rulers** wanted to please **him**. It is astounding how quickly the political winds can shift. Many times it is because ADONAI is working behind the scenes. The author is careful not to mention the LORD; however, he definitely wanted his readers to see God's hand at work.

Only by the sovereign intervention of ADONAI was **Mordecai** in a position of authority. **Mordecai was prominent in the palace; his reputation spread,** literally, *his reputation was walking* **throughout the provinces, and he became more and more powerful** in the brief months as **prime minister (9:4).** Probably part of **his** new found prominence was due to the political shrewdness of **the government officials**, part was due to genuine affection for who **Mordecai** was, but we must not discount the fact that **they feared the man who stood up to Haman and ruled in his place.**

Like Joseph, **Mordecai** had gone through difficult days and had been in danger of death (see my commentary on **Genesis Ja – Joseph in the Pit**). But as a result of God's **providence**, **Mordecai's** crisis, like Joseph's, became the means of greater influence (see my commentary on **Genesis Jv – Joseph as Prime Minister**). This fact is often times repeated in the lives of the servants of ADONAI.

Who do you **fear**? The Bible says **the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline (Proverbs 1:7). The fear of the LORD** occurs eleven times in **Proverbs** (and **fear the LORD** occurs four times). **Beginning** is the Hebrew *re'sit* and means *the start.* We cannot gain **knowledge** of spiritual things if we begin at the wrong point, refusing to **fear the LORD**. But what exactly does that mean? To have **the fear of the LORD** means to recognize God's character and respond by revering, trusting, worshiping, obeying and serving Him. *Re'sit* also means *the capstone or the essence.* Therefore, *the essence* of true **knowledge** is fearing God. Apart from Him we are ignorant of spiritual things **(Romans 1:22; Ephesians 4:18; First Peter 1:14)**.

The book of **Esther** invites us to think about the nature of faith in a world where ADONAI is unseen. Those who have placed their **faith** in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob can understand what the author of **Esther** expresses so eloquently. **Hebrews 11:1** says it this way: **Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.** In other words, the very definition of **faith** calls us to believe in the unseen reality lying behind, or beyond, the events we *do* see, even when, and perhaps especially when, He acts in unexpected ways. Therefore, on what do we base our lives, if not the visible presence of God? It is the explanation of life that ADONAI gives us in His Word. The deliverance of **the Jews** gives us the hope of God's presence and power in our lives even when He seems absent. And as seen in the book of **Esther**, the answers to our prayers are already on their way, set in motion through a chain of events that may have seemed insignificant at the time.[104]

Dear Heavenly Father, We praise You, for though You are unseen You are very powerfully moving behind the scenes to bring about Your glorious and real kingdom which will last forever! ***Messiah approached the Ancient of Days, and was brought into His presence. Dominion, glory and sovereignty were given to Him that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will never pass away, and His kingdom is one that will not be destroyed (Dani'el 7:13c-14).***

*Thank You for Your love which paid the penalty for sins****. The next day, John sees Yeshua coming to him and says, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29)!*** *We love You and worship You with a holy fear of You dear Heavenly Father. We want to please You in all we do and say and think. Praise You for your love, compassion and removing of sins for those who fear You.* ***For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His mercy for those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so Adonai has compassion on those who fear Him (Psalms 103:11-13).*** *You are Awesome and we delight in obeying and blessing You! In Yeshua's holy name and power of His resurrection. Amen*