Been There Done That Handout #15

Jeremiah 25:
8 Therefore the LORD Almighty says this: “Because you have not listened to my words,
9 I will summon all the peoples of the north and my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon,” declares the LORD, “and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an everlasting ruin.
There is a bigger picture going on in the story.

Jesus was born in the land of Israel.

Jesus will come back and rule and reign as King in Israel.

A well-known theologian was once asked to prove the existence of God. He replied that he could prove God’s existence in two words: “The Jew.”

Many nations have attempted to exterminate the Jew’s - God’s chosen people.

Miraculously, the Jewish people remain as a distinct people - one of the smallest, yet most powerful, of all nations.

1948 716,000 Jews lived in Israel.
1970 2,582,000 Jews lived in Israel.
2020 Almost 7,000,000 Jews are living in Israel.

We have a Friend in the highest of places, so play nice.

The story of Esther is one of these attempts to wipe out God’s people.
Esther 1:1–9

1 This is what happened during the time of Xerxes, the Xerxes who ruled over 127 provinces stretching from India to Cush:
2 At that time King Xerxes reigned from his royal throne in the citadel of Susa, (Iran)
3 and in the third year of his reign he gave a banquet for all his nobles and officials. The military leaders of Persia and Media, the princes, and the nobles of the provinces were present.
4 For a full 180 days he displayed the vast wealth of his kingdom and the splendor and glory of his majesty.
5 When these days were over, the king gave a banquet, lasting seven days, in the enclosed garden of the king’s palace, for all the people from the least to the greatest, who were in the citadel of Susa.
6 Wine was served in goblets of gold, each one different from the other, and the royal wine was abundant, in keeping with the king’s liberality.
7 By the king’s command each guest was allowed to drink in his own way, for the king instructed all the wine stewards to serve each man what he wished.
8 Queen Vashti also gave a banquet for the women in the royal palace of King Xerxes.

Esther 1:10–12
10 On the seventh day, when King Xerxes was in high spirits from wine, he commanded the seven eunuchs who served him...
11 to bring before him Queen Vashti, wearing her royal crown, in order to display her beauty to the people and nobles, for she was lovely to look at.
It is a Midrash found in the Talmud (Megillah 12b) that suggests she is in fact asked to appear naked. A midrash is like a parable. It is a Jewish teaching tool that uses an explanation or story to give details or a modern application for an old teaching found in Jewish Scripture. Midrashim are not considered Scripture, although some are accepted as truth.

12 But when the attendants delivered the king’s command, Queen Vashti refused to come. Then the king became furious and burned with anger.

Esther 2:2–8
2 Then the king’s personal attendants proposed, “Let a search be made for beautiful young virgins for the king. 3 Let the king appoint commissioners in every province of his realm to bring all these beautiful girls into the harem at the citadel of Susa. (Iran) Let them be placed under the care of Hegai, the king’s eunuch, who is in charge of the women; and let beauty treatments be given to them.
4 Then let the girl who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti.” This advice appealed to the king, and he followed it.

5 Now 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,

6 who had been carried into exile from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, among those taken captive with Jehoiachin king of Judah.

7 Mordecai had a cousin named Hadassah, whom he had brought up because she had neither father nor mother. This girl, who was also known as Esther, was lovely in form and features, and Mordecai had taken her as his own daughter when her father and mother died.

8 When the king’s order and edict had been proclaimed, many girls were brought to the citadel of Susa and put under the care of Hegai. Esther also was taken to the king’s palace and entrusted to Hegai, who had charge of the harem.

17 Now the king was attracted to Esther more than to any of the other women, and she won his favor and approval more than any of the other virgins. So he set a royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.

18 And the king gave a great banquet, Esther’s banquet, for all his nobles and officials. He proclaimed a holiday throughout the provinces and distributed gifts with royal liberality.

19 When the virgins were assembled a second time, Mordecai was sitting at the king’s gate.

20 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.

Esther 3:6
6 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 of Xerxes.

Esther 3:8–11
8 Then Haman said to King Xerxes, “There is a certain people dispersed and scattered among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom whose customs are different from those of all other people and who do not obey the king’s laws; it is not in the king’s best interest to tolerate them.
9 If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will put ten thousand talents of silver into the royal treasury for the men who carry out this business.”
10 So the king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews.

11 “Keep the money,” the king said to Haman, “and do with the people as you please.”
Esther 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.
2 But he went only as far as the king’s gate, because no one clothed in sackcloth was allowed to enter it.
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.
4 When Esther’s maids and eunuchs 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.
5 Then Esther summoned Hathach, one of the king’s eunuchs assigned to attend her, and ordered him to find out what was troubling Mordecai and why.
6 So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king’s gate.
7 Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews.
8 He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict for their annihilation, which had been published in Susa, to show to Esther and explain it to her, and he told him to urge her to go into the king’s presence to beg for mercy and plead with him for her people.
9 Hathach went back and reported to Esther what Mordecai had said.

11 “All the king’s officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that he be put to
death. The only exception to this is for the king to extend the gold scepter to him and spare his life. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king.”

12 When Esther’s words were reported to Mordecai, 13 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. 14 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 royal position for such a time as this?”

There is a DIRECTOR to this story.
15 Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai:
16 "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 maids 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."
There is a Director that knows exactly why he has put us where He has.

For such a time as this.