

ESTHER

Chapter 10

The Greatness of Mordecai

King Xerxes imposed tribute throughout the empire, to its distant shores.² And all his acts of power and might, together with a full account of the greatness of Mordecai to which the king had raised him, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Media and Persia?³ Mordecai the Jew was second in rank to King Xerxes, preeminent 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.

10:1–2 The reference to this taxation may represent material in the author’s source, to which he directs the reader for additional information and confirmation (see note on 2:23). (CSB)

10:1 *imposed tax.* One function of government is to levy and collect taxes. During the chaotic period surrounding the events of the 13th of Adar, it is likely that this activity was disrupted. King Ahasuerus then reasserted his authority and imposed tax on the entire land, including the coastland of Asia Minor, which the Persians controlled. Cf 2:18, where the king “granted a remission of taxes.” (TLSB)

10:2 *written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?* This statement, patterned after those made about the kings of Israel (1Ki 14:29; 16:14, 20), is meant to authenticate the accuracy of Est. The official history of this period in the Persian archives recounted the acts of Ahasuerus and the high honor of Mordecai (see note, 2:23). The two kingdoms, Media and Persia, are mentioned in chronological order, suggesting that this official history covered several centuries. These particular chronicles have not been preserved by history. (TLSB)

The main purpose of this short chapter is to assure the readers of the historical accuracy of the account, by referring them to the Persian records in which they can find verification of the story and more information about Mordecai. (PBC)

10:3 *second in rank.* Mordecai was second only to the king in authority and probably functioned something like a prime minister (note how the Lord raised up Joseph in Gn 41). (TLSB)

he sought the welfare of his people. Mordecai was concerned not about increasing his own power in the empire but in promoting the best interests of his fellow Judeans. (TLSB)

peace. Hbr *shalom* has the broad sense of prosperity, health, security, and good of every kind. By securing the welfare of his own people throughout the empire, Mordecai would secure the welfare of others as well. He would be great and popular, not only among Judeans, but also among other nations and tribes. (TLSB)

Ch 10 This postscript to Est praises Ahasuerus and Mordecai for providing the people with good government and for seeking their welfare. Martin Luther included “pious pious and faithful rulers” and “good government” among the blessings for which we pray in the Fourth Petition of the Lord’s Prayer (p xxxviii). Sometimes we fail to appreciate this gift from God but rather murmur and complain about our leaders. St Paul reminds believers that God instituted earthly authority (Rm 13:1), and Christians humbly accept their leaders as evidence of God’s providential care for us and others. • Almighty Father, forgive my grumbling about persons in positions of leadership, and move me to give thanks for the blessings You give through them. Amen. (TLSB)