**Typical Structure of Esther**

By Arlen Chitwood

Events in the book of Esther occurred almost a millennium after Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt (a type of the world); and these events occurred during a time when the Israelites were once again under Gentile subjection, awaiting that time when the One greater than Moses would return to lead the people out from a worldwide dispersion (i.e., awaiting that time when Christ will return at a yet future date to lead the Israelites out from that typified by the Exodus from Egypt under Moses).

Thus, events in the book of Esther occurred at a mid-point between the actions of Moses in the type and the actions of Christ in the antitype. And, at this juncture in the history of Israel and the nations, God, through bringing circumstances and events to pass among Israel and the nations over a period of centuries and millennia, could take the current events of that day and use these events to reveal great spiritual truths concerning both history and prophecy surrounding the same nations carrying out these events.

God’s sovereign control over all things throughout Man’s Day has allowed Him to take Old Testament history and, through divine design, structure this history in a manner that is highly typical in nature. Only an omniscient and omnipotent God, who possessed *perfect knowledge of* *all things* — the beginning, the end, and all that lay between — could, *within His sovereign control over all these things*, reveal His plans and purposes in this manner.

And, accordingly, *only through studying God*’*s revelation after the manner in which God has structured this revelation can man come into a proper understanding of the revealed Word*.

1) Chapters One and Two [Esther 1-2]

The whole of the story as it pertains to Israel — typified by the queen (Vashti, then Esther) — is set forth in the opening two chapters of the book. The remaining chapters (Esther 3-10) simply provide commentary for that previously revealed in the opening two chapters.

But first, the type, as it is set forth in each of these opening two chapters:

a) The Type — Chapter One [Esther 1]

Chapter onebegins with the king making *a great feast*. Mention is made of *his power* and *the riches of his kingdom*, with those in positions of power in the kingdom being invited to the feast. The feast was proclaimed “*in the third year of his reign*”; and, during this time, “*he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the splendor of his excellent majesty for many days*, *one hundred and eighty days in all* [six months]” (Esther 1:3-4).

Then the king made *a feast* to all who were present — to all the people “*from great and small*” — for “*seven days*.” And, “*on the seventh day*,” the command was given “*to bring Queen Vashti before the king*, *wearing her royal crown*.” And this was to be done in order “*to show her beauty to the people and the officials*, *for she was beautiful to behold*” (Esther 1:5, 10-11).

But, “*Queen Vashti refused to come at the king*'*s command*.” And, because the queen refused to come, after the king had commanded her to come, “*the king was furious*, *and his anger burned within him*” (Esther 1:12).

Then the remainder of the events in chapter one surround that which was to be done concerning Vashti because she had refused to come at the king’s command. The king consulted his advisors. And because the actions of the queen had wronged not only the king but everyone in the kingdom as well, a decree, in keeping with her actions, was issued.

This decree was “*a royal decree*,” which had been “*recorded in the laws of the Persians and the Medes*.” And the decree, because it was recorded among national law, could not be altered. The decree stated the matter simply and clearly:

. . . *that Vashti shall come no more before King Ahasuerus*; *and let the king give her royal position to another who is better than she*. (Esther 1:19b; *cf*. Esther 1:15-19a)

This decree, in turn, was to be published *throughout all of King Ahasuerus*’ *empire*, in the various languages of all those throughout the empire. This was done because other women in the empire might be inclined to follow Vashti’s lead.

Then, something additional was written in the decree concerning Vashti’s actions. Because that which Vashti had done reflected *negatively* on the king’s authority and brought *dishonor* to the king, it was decreed “*that each man should be master in his own house*.” This would turn matters around and result in wives *honoring*, not dishonoring, their husbands (Esther 1:17, 20-22).

b) The Type — Chapter Two [Esther 2]

Chaptertwo begins with the king’s wrath being appeased and his remembering Vashti, “*what she had done*, *and what had been decreed against her*.” Then the king’s servants suggested that a search be conducted for one to replace Vashti — a “*young woman who pleases the king*,” who would “*be queen instead of Vashti*” (Esther 2:1-4).

The search was begun; and Mordecai, whose great grandfather had been carried away in the captivity (under Nebuchadnezzar, which began about 605 B.C.), had a cousin named Hadassah, whose Persian name was Esther. And Esther was among those “*taken to the king*’*s palace*” to later appear before the king (Esther 2:5-8).

Proper preparations would be made for meeting the king over one year’s time, divided into two equal periods of six months, with different things regarding preparation being accomplished during each period. It was only at the end of this time — after complete and proper preparation had been made — that a young women would be taken in before the king (Esther 2:9-14).

When Esther’s turn finally came, she was taken in before the king “*in the tenth month* . . . *in the seventh year of his reign*.”

*The king loved Esther more than all the other women*, *and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins*; *so he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti*. (Esther 2:17)

The king then “*made a great feast*,” which was proclaimed to be the “*Feast of Esther*.” And he “*proclaimed a holiday in the provinces and gave gifts according to the generosity of a king*.” (Esther 2:18)

At the same time, “*Mordecai sat within the king’s gate*.” And, while in this position, he became aware of a plot against the king. Mordecai then made the matter known to Esther, who told the king. An inquisition was conducted. And, as a result, the two men involved in the plot were “*hanged* [impaled] *on a gallows*” (Esther 2:19-23).

c) Antitype of Chapters One and Two[Esther 1-2]

In different parts of chapters one and two, reference is made to various time-periods in connection with festivities, showing the honor of the king’s majesty, showing the riches of the kingdom, and bringing the queen before the king. In chapter one, reference is made to “*the third year*,” “*one hundred and eighty days* [six months],” “*seven days*,” and “*the seventh day*” (Esther 1:3-5, 10). And in chapter two, reference is made to “*the tenth month*” and “*the seventh year*” (Esther 2:16).

The whole of the matter has to do with different ways of viewing part or all of a single time-period in the antitype, set forth and established in an unchangeable manner in the foundational framework at the very beginning of Scripture, in Genesis 1:1-2:3. And that which is revealed in the book of Esther has to do with commentary on these opening verses in Genesis (as does all other Scripture subsequent to these opening verses), providing additional sinews and flesh necessary to clothe the skeletal, foundational framework established at the beginning (*cf*. Ezekiel 37:1ff).

(*i.e.,* the opening verses of Genesis establish the pattern for the whole of subsequent Scripture — God taking *six days* to restore a ruined creation [the earth], followed by *a day* of rest. And this points to God taking *six more days* [6,000 years] to restore a subsequent ruined creation [man], to be followed by *a day* [1,000 years] of rest [ref. [Bible One - Arlen Chitwood's The Study of Scripture, Ch. 2](http://bibleone.net/SS02.htm), “The Septenary Arrangement of Scripture”].)

Israel was called into existence to occupy a particular position before the King — before God Himself — at a time designated by the number *three*,following a time designated by the number *six*,and during a time designated by the number *seven*. All of these are seen in the first chapter of Esther. Then, in chapter two, the number *ten* is brought into the picture in connection with another reference to the number *seven*.

*Time*, through the use of numbers in the preceding respect, is dealt with different ways in Scripture. But, as previously stated, the whole of the matter must be in line with the foundational framework established at the beginning, *i.e*., in line with *six days* of restorative work, followed by *a seventh day* (a Sabbath) of rest. And in the opening two chapters of Esther, one finds various ways in which Scripture deals with time in this respect.

“*In the third year*” (Esther 1**:**3) points to *the seventh day* in the respect that Israel had been called into existence *two days* (2,000 years) before the nation was destined to be raised up to live in God’s sight *on the third day*,which, using the full reckoning of time, would be *the seventh day* (*cf*.Hosea 5:13-6:2).

Israel was called into existence after two days (after 2,000 years) of human history; and, according to Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy, the Messianic Era would be ushered in at the end of the Jewish dispensation, 2,000 years following Abraham’s birth, 4,000 years following Adam’s creation.

But the present dispensation (during which time God deals with *the one new man* “*in Christ*” another two days, another 2,000 years, with Israel set aside) must fit into the equation. The present dispensation is not seen within either Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy or Hosea’s reckoning of time, though it would relate to *the fifth and sixth days* (covering the complete six days, the complete 6,000 years) in the opening verses of Genesis. And that which occurred during and following *the complete six days* in the opening verses of Genesis is that which is in view through events occurring during and at the end of *the six months* in Esther 1:4-5.

Then the “*seven days*,” with *the crowned queen* being called into the king’s presence on “*the seventh day*” (Esther 1:5, 10-11), is self-explanatory. This, in the antitype, has to do with *the entire seven days* in Genesis 1:1-2:3, with Israel being called into existence *during the six days* in order to realize a particular position *on the seventh day — the Sabbath day*, *pointing to the seventh millennium*.

And “*the tenth month*” and “*the seventh year*” in chaptertwo (Esther 2:16), in connection with *the crown being placed on Esther*’*s head* (Esther 2:17), point to exactly the same thing. “Ten” is the number of *ordinal completion*, and *all things* will be brought *to completion* when that seen in these verses is brought to pass *on the seventh day*.

Then, Mordecai seated in the king’s gate completes the type — *the Jews one day possessing the gate of the enemy* (Genesis 22:17).

Israel in the Old Testament was called into existence to occupy *a particular position at a particular time*. Israel refused, and the nation was set aside. That’s what Esther 1 is about.

However, the day is coming when God will once again turn to Israel and complete His dealings with this nation, establishing Israel in *the position to which the nation was called*, *during a time that God has established*. That’s what Esther 2 is about.

Thus, in the preceding respect, the opening two chapters of Esther cover the complete history of Israel — from the time of the nation’s inception to the time when the nation realizes her calling, in the Messianic Kingdom.

2) Chapters Three through Ten [Esther 3-10]

These eight remaining chapters in the book of Esther provide commentary, filling in details, for the complete story that has already been told in chapters one and two. This commentary, when seen in the antitype, fits into the latter part of the time covered by chapter one and ends at the same place where chapter two ends.

The arrangement of God’s revealed Word after this fashion — a complete sequence of events, followed by commentary — is something seen quite often in Scripture. Actually, as previously seen, viewing Genesis 1:1-2:3 in connection with subsequent Scripture, the whole of Scripture has been structured in this manner (*cf*. Matthew 17:1-5; 2 Peter 1:15-18; 3:1-8).

Revelation chapter twelve (Revelation 12) would be one of the more classic examples of a section of Scripture structured after this fashion. The complete sequence of events is given in verses one through six (Revelation 12:1-6). Then verses seven through seventeen (Revelation 12:7-17) provide commentary for that which has already been stated in the opening six verses.

And this is the manner in which the book of Esther is structured — the complete story is given first, and commentary then follows. And the latter (commentary on Esther 1-2) is exactly what the last eight chapters deal with.

a) The Type — Chapters Three through Ten [Esther 3-10]

Chapter three (Esther 3) begins with the king promoting Haman to a high position of power. From information provided in the book, his position of power appeared to be second only to the king himself. And Haman (a Gentile), rather than Esther or Mordecai (both Jews), held this position of power.

Haman was placed over “*all the princes that were with him*.” And “*all the king*’*s servants who were within the king*’*s gate*” were commanded by the king to honor Haman in the position to which he had been appointed, bowing before him (Esther 3:1-2a).

But Mordecai, also at the gate, “*would not bow or pay* [Haman] *homage*.” And this infuriated Haman to the extent that he, knowing Mordecai was a Jew, sought to not only slay Mordecai but all the Jews throughout the entire kingdom (Esther 3:2b-6).

And this sets the stage for that which occurs throughout the remainder of the book.

Haman, seeking to bring about the destruction of the Jews, instead, ultimately brought about his own destruction, along with that of his house as well. Haman had built a gallows upon which he planned to have Mordecai hanged (impaled). But, through God’s providential control of all things, the tables were turned, with Haman himself subsequently being hanged (impaled) on the gallows. And not only was Haman hanged (impaled) on the very gallows that he had built for Mordecai, but his ten sons were subsequently slain and hanged (impaled) on this same gallows as well (Esther 3:8-9:14).

(Relative to the preceding, the English text in most versions refers to *being hanged on a gallows*, as the two men *were hanged on a tree* at the end of chapter two. The thought though, in all instances throughout the book, has to do with *being hanged* in the sense of *being impaled*,whether on a tree or on a gallows.)

Then, following Haman’s overthrow, instead of a Gentile continuing in power, *a Jew was promoted to the position that Haman had held*. The house of Haman was given to Esther the queen; and Esther, in turn, placed Mordecai — who had been promoted to a position of power directly under the king — over the house (Esther 8:1-7; 10:3).

b) The Antitype of Chapters Three through Ten [Esther 3-10]

The account of Haman, his love for both recognition and power, his hatred for the Jewish people, his ignominious end, and the ultimate triumph and exaltation of a Jew to the position of power previously held by a Gentile have to do with that future time when God turns back to and completes His dealings with the Jewish people. These dealings will complete the full time seen in Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy, bringing “*the times of the Gentiles*” to a close (Luke 21:20-24). And the long-awaited Messianic Era will then follow.

“*Haman*” typifies *the man of sin* (*Antichrist*), who, in the middle of the coming Tribulation (Daniel’s Seventieth Week), will find himself occupying the same position in Satan’s kingdom that Haman occupied in Ahasuerus’ kingdom. Satan (ruling the present world kingdom under God, though a rebel ruler) will give to this man *the same thing* that He offered to Christ in the temptation account (Luke 4:5-6). Satan will give to this man “*his power*, *his* throne, *and great authority*” (Revelation 13:2).

Though giving his throne to Antichrist, Satan will still hold the same regal position to which he was appointed in the beginning. *God alone* can appoint or remove rulers, and Satan will be removed from his present position *only* after Christ returns (*cf.* Daniel 4:17, 25; Revelation 19:17-20:3). But, regardless, the man of sin will still exercise power emanating from God’s throne through Satan’s throne in the same manner in which Haman exercised power emanating from Ahasuerus’ throne.

Scripture deals with matters surrounding the emergence of this man at the end of Man’s Day in a manner far more extensive than many realize. Numerous types and prophecies have to do with the day when this man will be upon the earth; and most also continue into the end of the matter, into the Messianic Era.

The book ofEsther forms a good illustration of the preceding. Note that the larger part of this book has been given over to the emergence of this man, that which he will do, and that which will resultantly occur. Then matters end with conditions that foreshadow the coming Messianic Era.

This man was on the scene in type at the time of *the inception* of the nation in the book of Exodus. There was an Assyrian Pharaoh ruling Egypt in that day (the Assyrians had conquered Egypt, and an Assyrian Pharaoh ruled Egypt). And this Assyrian Pharaoh foreshadowed the future Assyrian (the man of sin, who will arise from within the territorial boundaries of the old Assyrian kingdom, which covered parts of present day Iraq, Iran, and Turkey [*cf*. Isaiah 10:5; 14:25; 30:31; 31:8; 52:4; Daniel 8:22-25; Hosea 11:5]).

And this man will be on the scene when God *completes* His dealings with the Jewish people at the end of Man’s Day (Revelation 13:1ff). The *type* in Exodus, having to do with not only this man’s activities but his destruction in the Red Sea as well, *foreshadows* that which will occur when this man emerges in the *antitype*. And that which occurred relative to the Jewish people — beginning with the appropriation of the blood of the slain paschal lambs in chapter twelve [Exodus 12] and continuing with their departure from Egypt — foreshadows that *which will occur* in the antitype as well.

Almost the entire book of Exodusdeals with prophecy in this respect. That which is about to happen *has all been foretold* in this manner in various Old Testament books. And each part of the Old Testament where these matters are dealt with *provides another, slightly different, part to the complete word picture.*

And the book of Esther is one of these books, providing *part of the complete word picture*. This book centers on the Jewish people and the great enemy of the Jewish people in the end times. And this book relates the matter *from God*’*s standpoint*, *revealing those things that God chose to reveal*, *after the manner that He chose to use*.

[Bible One - Arlen Chitwood's Esther, Ch. 1, Typical Structure of Esther](http://bibleone.net/Esther_01.htm)