

XII. Postscript, 10:1-3

TEXT: 10:1-3

- 1 And the king Ashasuerus laid a tribute upon the land, and upon the isles of the sea.
- 2 And all the acts of his power and of his might, and the full account of the greatness of Mordecai, whereunto the king advanced him, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?
- 3 For Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the good of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed.

Today's English Version, 10:1-3

King Xerxes imposed forced labor on the people of the coastal regions of his empire as well as on those of the interior. All the great and wonderful things he did as well as the whole story of how he promoted Mordecai to high office, are recorded in the official records of the kings of Persia and Media. Mordecai the Jew was second in rank only to King Xerxes himself. He was honored and well-liked by his fellow Jews. He worked for the good of his people and for the security of all their descendants.

COMMENTS

10:1-3: The natural conclusion of the Book of Esther would be the establishment of the Feast of Purim (ch. 9). This chapter is probably added by the author out of gratitude to Mordecai's great courage and beneficence. The postscript emphasizes the power of Ahasuerus (Xerxes) in order to reflect on the power and authority of Mordecai since the Jew stood next to the emperor himself in power and authority. If Xerxes could command the service of the continent of Asia and the coast of the Mediterranean, then Mordecai's power and command was that all-encompassing too. The author cannot bring himself to lay down

his pen until he has recorded for all posterity the greatness of Mordecai. And well he should record it!

The full account of the greatness of Xerxes, and the emperor's promotion of Mordecai, was recorded in the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia. But those chronicles have perished with the dust of ancient empires. The only records we have of Xerxes are those of the Greeks and the Book of Esther. The greatest of men are soon forgotten.

The Hebrew word *mas* is translated *tribute* but means *a body of forced laborers* (cf. I Kings 5:27; Jos. 17:13; II Sam. 20:24; Ex. 1:11). In his expedition into Greece, Xerxes lost the islands of the Aegean, but he still held Asia Minor and some of the islands of the Mediterranean and all its coastland except North Africa. In all these territories he imposed forced labor on his subjects, probably to recoup some of the losses he suffered in his debacle in Greece.

It is certainly not unusual for a Jew to be promoted to a very high position in a Gentile government (cf. Gen. 41:40; Dan. 5:7; 6:3, etc.). This Jew, Mordecai, has won for himself the name of a great and good statesman. So the real measure of Mordecai's greatness after all is not power but the beneficent use of that power for the good of others. That is the measure of every man. In his high position Mordecai did not forget his kinsmen, but constantly labored for their good and their peace (*shalom*—prosperity, well-being, wholeness).

“Little children, let no one deceive you. He who does right is righteous, as he is righteous . . . he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.”
I John 3:7 and 4:20

“Whoever would be great among you must be your servant . . .”
Mt. 20:26