

TITLE: AN EXAMINATION OF THE THEOLOGICAL POSITION ON DIVINE  
PROVIDENCE IN THE BOOK OF ESTHER AND ITS APPLICATION TO PEOPLE  
POWER I AND II IN THE PHILIPPINES.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE	1
APPROVAL SHEET	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
TABLE OF CONTENTS	5
ABBREVIATIONS	9
ABSTRACT	11
I. INTRODUCTION	
A. A GENERAL OVERVIEW ON THE BOOK OF ESTHER	14
B. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	17
C. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	19
D. METHOD OF THE STUDY	20
E. SCOPE OF THE STUDY	21
CHAPTER I-RE-EXAMINATION OF ESTHER	23
1. Historical Review	22
A. Introduction	23
B. Outline of Content	23
C. The Origins of Esther	27
D. Original Forms of Esther	29
E. Ancient Versions	32
F. Date(s) for the Book's Composition	35
G. Canonicity of the Book of Esther	37

H. Reasons for Ancient Oppositions to the Book	41
II. Literary Review	46
A. The Setting of the Book	47
B. Content of the Book	47
C. Analysis of Genre, Syntax, Structure and Style	57
D. The Purpose and Function of the Book	62
CHAPTER II- AN EXEGETICAL EXAMINATION OF ESTHER 4:13-14 AND Esther 6:13b	
A. Critical Examination of Esther 4:10-15	64
1. Overview on Chapter 4	64
2. Comparison of Different Translations 4:10-14	66
3. Textual Analysis of Esther 4:13-14	71
3.1 Word Analysis and notes from commentaries	71
3.2 Exegetical Analysis	75
B. Critical Analysis of Esther 6:13b	82
1. Overview of Esther 6	82
2. Comparison of Translations 6:13	84
Textual Analysis	85
3.1 Word Analysis and notes from commentaries	85

3.2 Exegetical Analysis	86
C. Theological and Religious Arguments	88
1. Theological and Religious Questions	88
2. Theological and Religious Additions	90

CHAPTER III- THE THEOLOGICAL POSITION ON DIVINE PROVIDENCE IN  
THE BOOK OF ESTHER AND OTHER PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL  
PERSPECTIVES ON DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

A. Divine Providence:	
Philosophical Understanding	92
B. Divine Providence:	
Biblical Understanding	95
C. Divine Providence: In Esther	102
C.1 Theological Analysis of Esther4:13-14	102
C.2 Theological Analysis	
Of Esther Chapter 6:13b	105
D. Summary	109

CHAPTER IV- RE-EXAMINATION OF OTHER SALIENT THEMES IN THE  
BOOK OF ESTHER

A. Esther as a Heroine	114
B. Anti-Semitism, Oppression and Genocide	117

CHAPTER V-TOWARDS AN APPLICATION OF THE THEOLOGICAL POSITION  
ON DIVINE PROVIDENCE AND OTHER SALIENT THEMES IN THE BOOK OF  
ESTHER TO THE PHENOMENON OF FILIPINO PEOPLE POWER I AND II IN  
THE PHILIPPINES.

A. What is People Power?	119
B. General Outlook of People Power I and II	120
C. The Political Event Called People Power I	120
D. The Political Event Called People Power II	123
E. Towards the Relevance and Application of Divine Providence in the People Power I and II Events.	130
F. Conclusion	138
G. Bibliography	143
H. Curriculum Vitae	148

**ABSTRACT**

This paper seeks to show that the book of Esther is more than a book that introduces the reader on the origin of Purim. Accepting the arguments against the book's theological position, historicity and religiosity, this study tries to demonstrate that Esther has a profound theological position, especially on Divine Providence. Regardless of its disputable historicity and religiosity, this study seeks to discover from the selected verses (Esther 4:13-14 and 6:13b), the liberating word of God for the Filipino People. Hence Esther is studied from a Filipino feminist perspective. Combining the historical-literary examination and application, this thesis attempts to provide a clear basis as to how the book of Esther can be appropriated in the two most important historical events in this country.

This whole work is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is a re-examination of Esther through a historical and literary review of the book. This chapter reveals that the whole book of Esther has three versions, the Hebrew Text, Masoretic Text (MT) and the Septuagint(Greek version). This part also reveals the reason why both the Jews and the Christians find it hard to include the book in the canon.

Chapter II is devoted to the study and critical examination of Esther 4:13-14 and 6:13b. Chapter III focuses

on the theological analysis of these aforementioned passages. It is shown that these selected verses have words and phrases that are filled with theological significance. In the process of this exegetical endeavor, the writer tries to discern the meaning of divine providence in the book.

Despite the theological and religious questions about the book, theological analysis shows us that the words and phrases are used to echo the profound theological and religious position of the book. Phrases like, "relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another quarter" are subjected to a careful examination. The word from another "quarter" speaks of a deliverer or liberator that will come for the Jews. It does not necessarily refer to God. However, what is true is that this deliverer will come because of God's intervention. Another phrase is, "Who knows" if for a time like this you have come to the royal place?" "Who knows" are words believed to contain the profound meaning of what divine providence is.

Chapter III includes the discussion on the other salient themes in the book. These salient themes help in upholding the theological importance of Esther as a book. In particular the discussion on the salient themes show why Esther is a heroine and what makes her act heroic.

This work ends with Chapter IV. It deals with the writer's attempt to work out an application of the discovered

theological position on divine providence to the two important historical events in this country. This chapter shows that like in the book of Esther, Filipino People Power I and II are events where divine providence had been actively present.

As a whole, this work shows that the importance of the book of Esther is greater than its being the origin of Purim. Esther must also be approached with the consciousness of its being a book with a profound teaching on divine providence. Similarly, it must also be approached with sensitivity in order to see its empowering message to the Filipinos, especially the women.