

The God Behind the Seen An Overview of Esther

Introduction: The book of Esther has often been either misunderstood, or only partially understood. It is about far more than a girl who saves her people from destruction.

1. Setting the Stage

- A. God intended Israel to live in certain ways (Lev. 26; Deut 27-28)
- B. Israel failed to obey God's law
- C. God was faithful to his warning and sent other nations to remove Israel
- D. Eventually God's people were allowed to return
- E. Some chose not to return, but rather to remain in Persia

2. Main Characters

- A. Ahasuerus (Xerxes)-The king of Persia
- B. Haman-The main antagonist; viciously anti-Jew
- C. Mordechai-Esther's guardian and father figure
- D. Esther-A young girl who God used in a big way

3. The Drama Unfolds

- A. Esther replaces Vashti as queen
- B. Haman plots to destroy the Jews
- C. Haman's plot is foiled

4. Who is This Story About?

- A. Not Mordecai-His ascension to power was not his own doing
- B. Not Haman-He is completely at the mercy of "chance"
- C. Not Ahasuerus-He is often influenced by others
- D. Not Esther-She was not in control either

Conclusion: The events of Esther show the mighty hand of God. Though his name is nowhere mentioned, his fingerprints are all over the book.

Application: Just as God controlled the circumstances in Esther, He controls our lives today. We should (1) rest in His control over everything: 1a Others; 1b us. (2) Humbly recognize that anything we have in life is a gift from Him.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. Was there a truth from this week's message that stuck out to you?
2. If someone were to ask you, "What is to book of Esther about?" How might you answer them in light of this week's message?
3. Discuss the various characters in the book of Esther (Mordecai, Esther, Ahasuerus, Haman). How did each of these people reveal that they weren't really in control?
4. God's providence is on clear display in Esther. What are some of the instances in which His control was seen?
5. When Israel heard the edict that they were going to be destroyed, they could have had any number of negative reactions. What are some of those reactions, and how might they show up in our lives?
6. Haman became foolishly proud when God allowed him to ascend to power. What does God say about pride? (James 4:6; I Peter 5:6-7)
7. Based on the verses listed above, and God's dealing with Haman, how might He deal with us if we are conceited about the things He gives us?
8. Rather than being proud, what are some proper responses to God's blessing in our lives?
9. What are some specific instances you have seen this week, or foresee in the next few days where God's providence is displayed?

Thoughts for prayer:

- Pray that God would help our church to see his providential hand at work, even in seemingly mundane things.
- Ask God to show you where you've responded poorly to either his blessing or trials, and then confess that to him.