

Esther 5-7 Surprised by God

President Theodore Roosevelt was not a big fan of the gala's Balls he would sometimes have to attend as president

A) A bunch of dressed up people all - donning fake smiles and endless pleasantries -

B) Honored to see you Mr. President - etc

C) He was at one such event where everyone who came up to him said the same thing,

1) smiled the same tired smile, repeating the same greetings by rote,

Tired of shaking hands and smiling his big smile and responding with the usual pleasantries used at such occasions,

A) Roosevelt did something absolutely outrageous.

B) Convinced that no one was listening anyway, he began to greet the rest of his guests by saying with a smile, "I murdered my grandmother this morning."

C) His guest smiled back and said things like: "Wonderful!" "Lovely!" "Keep up the good work!"

D) One diplomat however, was listening, He leaned over and whispered in Roosevelt's ear, "I'm sure she had it coming to her!"

There is one thing that I think the Lord - loathes in his people. - Just going through the motions

A) These people honor me with their lips but their hearts are far from me.

B) Why the first and greatest commandment - to love the Lord with all of your heart, soul, mind, strength

C) The 2nd flows from the first - Love your neighbor as yourself

For the last 5 years in our story of the book of Esther - Esther has been sort going through the motions

A) The Jewish orphaned girl who became Queen in the Pagan country of Persia - (Iran)

B) She has no idea why she is in that position

C) But suddenly in a moment everything changes - A wicked Persia leader Haman - invokes a plan

1) Annihilate all the Jews from the Persian Kingdom

3 million people - are going to be killed - 11 months

The reason for this plan is because Haman - is so mad at a particular Jewish man - Mordecai

A) Mordecai - also works for the King - but Mordecai is no dignitary like Haman - unimportant

B) But Mordecai - because he was Jewish refused to bow and pay homage to Haman -

C) Haman is so prejudice and bitter - his families long history against the Jewish people

1) He seeks to not just do away with Mordecai -

D) But he thinks all the Jews are a nuisance and should be eradicated

1) And through his persuasion and promises of much wealth - he gets the king to sign off on the idea.

Well Mordecai - cousin/father gets word to Esther - that she needs to intervene - This is her Purpose

A) Clear - You have been put into this position for such a time as this. - DO SOMETHING

B) Esther responds by asking Mordecai to get all the Jews in the Kingdom to fast and pray for 3 days

C) At the end of the 3 days - Esther is going to take a risk and see if you might be granted an audience with the King

D) Didn't live together - same house - didn't have dinner - She had to be summoned

1) It had been 30 days

E) If you showed up and the King didn't request your presence you could lose your head

1) Esther is ready to take that risk -

F) That is where we left off last time pickup ch.5 Chapters 5-7 3 Act Play -

Ch. 5 - Act I Divine Providence

A) Title of the message today is Surprised by God - we are going to see our 4 main characters - surprised in different ways

5 Now it happened on the third day that Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, across from the king's house, while the king sat on his royal throne in the royal house, facing the entrance of the house. ² So it was, when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, that she found favor in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther went near and touched the top of the scepter.

Isaiah 40:31 **“But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.”**

3 Benefits to fasting and waiting on the Lord First, Strength renewed

A) We may feel weak, even intimidated, But when we turn to our Lord - wait on him - something happens

B) Our strength and boldness is renewed - we exchange our weakness for His strength.

C) We see that Esther/ the fear that we saw in her in ch.4 is replaced by a boldness
1) after 3 days of prayer, fasting and waiting on the Lord.

Second, benefit we gain a better perspective.

A) The passage says **we will mount up with wings like eagles.**

B) **Eagles soar, eagles fly above the normal terrain.**
1) Eagles see things from a higher vantage point, they can spot a fish in a lake several miles away on a clear day.

C) As we wait on the Lord - we gain his perspective on the situation -
1) We will see that play out in the way that Esther interacts with the King

Third benefit, we will deepen our determination to persevere.

A) **“We will run and not get weary, we will walk and not faint**

B) There is a greater resolve - a greater sense of confidence to take step of faith

C) We see all of this unfold in the life of Esther - after these 3 days of prayer and fasting -
1) She literally becomes A NEW WOMAN

So Esther goes into the palace and puts herself in the place - where the king can see her.

A) She is hoping that he is in a good mood - and he will summon her -

B) A bad mood could mean - she could lose her head

C) Makes me wonder if they had little signals - like most couples - that look

1) My wife has certain looks - I am in trouble
She loves me and is happy right now

D) My wife - the tap under the table {**First time - Frisky**} - One of two things

1) Either She is ready to go - or I need to watch what I am about to say.

I wonder if Esther and the king had their signals - Did she wave - play with her hair?

A) Whatever she did - it worked - she is summoned - he lowered the scepter

B) She came into his presence!

3 And the king said to her, “What do you wish, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given to you—up to half the kingdom!” {Figure of speech - we might say - ask anything}

So Esther answered, “If it pleases the king, let the king and Haman come today to the banquet that I have prepared for him.”

Interesting why didn't she just say - I want you to kill Haman -

A) Or do something to counteract your decree I am Jewish.

B) Esther is wise - she realizes there is a sense of timing involved here.

C) Perhaps all the Lord told her was plan a Banquet or a dinner.

1) God often only gives us one step at a time.

D) So She says Come to my Banquet today you and Haman.

5 Then the king said, "Bring Haman quickly, that he may do as Esther has said." So the king and Haman went to the banquet that Esther had prepared. 6 At the banquet of wine the king said to Esther, "What is your petition? It shall be granted you. What is your request, up to half the kingdom? It shall be done!"

7 Then Esther answered and said, "My petition and request is this: 8 If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, then let the king and Haman come to the banquet which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king has said."

A) So she says - I want to have another banquet for you two tomorrow - Why the delay?

B) Commentators have mixed opinions on this - some think Esther lost her confidence - delayed
1) Be patient

C) Others believe that God was directing Esther - this was all a part of the Providence & Sovereignty of God

WW At the banquet, we see three evidences of the sovereignty of God in action.

A) First, the Lord restrained Esther from telling Ahasuerus the truth about Haman.

B) While there may have been fear in her heart,
1) The Lord was working in her life and directing what she said, 1) even though she wasn't aware of it.

C) A lot was going to happen in those 24hrs

D) God was delaying the great exposure until after the king had honored Mordecai.

We also see the sovereign hand of God at work in the way the king accepted the delay and agreed to come to the second banquet.

A) Monarchs like Ahasuerus aren't accustomed to being told to wait.

The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.

Proverbs 21:1

"To man belong the plans of the heart, but from the Lord comes the reply of the tongue" Proverbs 16:1

B) Whatever plans Ahasuerus had made for the next evening were canceled

1) to make time for the queen's second feast.

C) God was working

"Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails." Proverbs 19:21 NIV

A third evidence of God's sovereignty is that although Esther's attendants knew she was Jewish

A) None of them conveyed this important information to Haman

B) Had Haman known the queen's nationality,

1) he no doubt would have immediately devised some plan to prevent her from interfering.

Consider Haman - what is he thinking?

A) All of this is no doubt stroking Haman's ego

B) Personal lunch with the King and Queen today and he is asked to come back tomorrow.

9 So Haman went out that day joyful and with a glad heart; but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, and that he did not stand or tremble before him, he was filled with indignation against Mordecai. 10 Nevertheless Haman restrained himself and went home, and he sent and called for his friends and his wife Zeresh. 11 Then Haman told them of his great riches, - the multitude of his children, everything in which the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the officials and servants of the king.

PERSIAN BRAGFEST

A) I just want to invite you all over - tell you how great I am - My wealth - my kids

B) (Ch.9:10 records - he had ten children - sign of masculinity he was Fertile - was esteemed in that culture

12 Moreover (oh great there is more) Haman said, "Besides, Queen Esther invited no one but me! to

come in with the king to the banquet that she prepared; and tomorrow I am again invited by her, along with the king.

C)I had lunch today with King and Queen - just me and I am going back tomorrow- special PRIVATE banquet
1)WOW!!! AMAZING

13 Yet all this avails me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate

Mordecai has everything that he could ever want!

A)Power - prestige - wealth - a great position

B)But there is one Jewish man who will not bow to him and pay him the respect he thinks he deserves

C)And he is miserable because of it!

Here is something that I have noticed: People who understand grace

A)People who understand that they have received way more from God than they deserve

B)They Are people who are full of gratitude.

1)They are Joyful pp

C)Those kind of people are not bothered by little things

However – those who are full of themselves are usually not very thankful for what they have

A)They are always wanting more – because they somehow think that they deserve more

B)Those types of pp can be easily bothered by the littlest things.

C)Always focused on what they don't have - that is Haman -

1)His joy is being robbed by this one Jewish man Mordecai -

D)Who is not giving him the respect he thinks he deserves

14 Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him,(look honey) “Let a gallows be made, fifty cubits high, (75 feet high) and in the morning suggest to the king that Mordecai be hanged on it; then go merrily with the king to the banquet.”

;(Haman is like – that is what I like about you honey – girl after my own heart)

Persians didn't hang you with a rope they impaled you –

A)His wife is suggesting – make a gallows build it in your front yard impale Mordecai on it –

B)And every day when you wake up – look at him. After that you can go and eat merrily

And the thing pleased Haman so he had the gallows made. Tension builds

Ch. 6 Act 2 - Divine Insomnia

That night the king could not sleep. So one was commanded to bring the book of the records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king.

A)This is the hand of God at work -

B)He could have asked for wine, he could have asked for one of his many concubines, -hot bath –

1)poetry – and host of other things –

C)He asks for a History book.) I get that – hated history in School – love it now – HIS STORY)

1)The Persians were Meticulous about how they kept records.

2 And it was found written that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, the doorkeepers who had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.

NOW don't miss this – 5 yrs have passed from the time that Mordecai saved the king,

A)There are lots of things have been written in these History books.)

B)So don't think it is merely a coincidence that the King turned to this particular story to read. –

C)Another example of the Providence of God.

1)The history of the Jewish pp is going to be a part of the reading of these chronicles this night –

3 Then the king said, “What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?” And the king's servants who attended him said, “Nothing has been done for him.

Now that was unusual because the Persians made a practice of publically promoting and elevating and

recognizing someone who showed great loyalty toward the king –

A) Because it sent a message that Loyalty will be rewarded.

B) But for some reason – what Mordecai did is overlooked.

C) Again this is Divine. It wasn't the time for Mordecai to be honored and then forgotten.

1) So the servants of the king tell him that nothing has been done.

D) I wonder if Mordecai thought – “what a bummer – I thwart the plot to assassinate the King and nothing happens”

E) And then the King promotes that buffon – Haman – life is not fair!” Ever feel that way?

Hebrews 6:10 “For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, *in that* you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.”

Matthew 6:4 “What is done in Secret will be rewarded openly.”

This is about to happen to Mordecai

So the servants say: Nothing is done - The king is pondering this – the rest of the night.

Morning comes

4 So the king said, “Who is in the court?” (Who is here early that I can bounce this off of) -

Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace to suggest that the king hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

A) Another coincidence right? – Haman just so happened to be there early)

B) Haman is there early to ask the King's permission to hang Mordecai on the gallows - before lunch

1) Haman is in for a big surprise

5 The king's servants said to him, “Haman is there, standing in the court.” And the king said, “Let him come in.”

6 So Haman came in, and the king asked him, “What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?”

Now Haman thought in his heart, “Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?”

Thinking This is great – He is wants to honor me?

A) He is so Arrogant – Haman is probably thinking – can it get any better?

B) I am going to hang Mordecai today – then have lunch with the King and Queen –

1) and now the King wants to honor me even more. **Life is fantastic!**)

7 And Haman answered the king, “For the man whom the king delights to honor, 8 let a royal robe be brought which the king has worn, and a horse on which the king has ridden, which has a royal crest placed on its head. 9 Then let this robe and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that he may array the man whom the king delights to honor. Then parade him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him: ‘Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!’ ”

Rank was recognized in the Persian Empire by the robe that was worn.

A) What better way to honor someone than to dress them in the Robe the King used to wear,

B) and parade them around the city on the back of the King's Horse with his Royal Crest on the horse.

C) Interesting to me that everything that Haman mentions has to do with Status –

1) how this person will be seen in the light of others.

D) **Haman thinks this is happening to him** – shows his heart – all about status –

1) The flesh loves to be seen by men.

He doesn't say: Make it so he doesn't have to pay taxes for the rest of his life

A) Or Promise to take care of his family for ever! –

B) No Haman says – Dress him up like the king and parade him around the city of the royal horse

C) This will let everyone know this is someone the King esteems very high.)

1) All about being seen by Men!

10 Then the king said to Haman, (Great idea!) “Hurry, take the robe and the horse, as you have suggested, and do so for Mordecai the Jew (bomb dropped bursting his prideful bubble) who sits within the king’s gate! Leave nothing undone of all that you have spoken.” Imagine the look on his face- white as a ghost

11 So Haman took the robe and the horse, arrayed Mordecai (this is comical) –

D) Haman goes to the guy who would never stand when he passed by and now he has to ask him to stand so he can put the robe on him –

Don’t tell me God doesn’t have a sense of humor.

“Never once in all of Haman’s peacock strutting and evil plotting had God ignored him or his plan to murder Mordecai and the Jews. God had not missed his statements, the pride of his heart, the violent and prejudicial motives behind his decisions. God was invisible, but He was not out of touch or passive. He had not forgotten His people or His promises to them—and to their enemies.” Chuck Swindoll

11 So Haman took the robe and the horse, arrayed Mordecai And Haman led him on horseback through the city square, and proclaimed before him, “Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!” Sure he is real excited- ALL MONITONE

Who saw this coming? Who could have envisioned such a hairpin U-turn? The answer? God could! God orchestrated all the details. The sleepless king. The detailed reading. The entry about Mordecai in the book. The entrance of Haman in the castle court. Who could do this but the blessed Controller of all things? “[God] makes everything work out according to his plan” (Eph. 1:11 NLT). Max Lucado

12 Afterward Mordecai went back to the king’s gate. I want you to notice that - easy to pass over.

A) Mordecai – is honored – exalted – he returned to the Kings gate.

B) I love this about this guy - He is not looking for a promotion. There is no sense of entitlement.

C) Nothing like that at all. He just humble goes back to his normal spot. - Awesome.

But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with his head covered. His day is not turning out the way that he thought it would in the morning

13 When Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him, his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, “If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you will not prevail against him but will surely fall before him.” This is not going to end well for you

Thanks honey – you were a little different this morning – Put him on a stake and impale him.

14 While they were still talking with him, the king’s eunuchs came, and hastened to bring Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared

Haman has no doubt lost his appetite.

Ch. 7 Act 3 Divine Justice

So the king and Haman went to dine with Queen Esther. (It seems that neither the King nor Haman still don’t know that Esther is Jewish)

2 And on the second day, at the banquet of wine, the king again said to Esther, “What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request, up to half the kingdom? It shall be done!” (He is curious by now) 3 Then Queen Esther answered and said, “If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request. 4 For we have been sold, (Haman said he would pay for it all) my people and I, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. Had we been sold as male and female slaves, I would have held my tongue, although the enemy could never compensate for the king’s loss.”

(You have no idea what you are losing – we are loyal subjects in the kingdom – that is the idea.)

5 So King Ahasuerus answered and said to Queen Esther, “Who is he, and where is he, who would dare presume in his heart to do such a thing?”

6 And Esther said, “The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman!”

Suddenly the king and Haman connect the dots

A) Esther is Jewish – in danger of being annihilated

B) Remember in Persia law - the King couldn't just change his mind - once written into law

V6b So Haman was terrified before the king and queen.

7 Then the king arose in his wrath from the banquet of wine and went into the palace garden; but Haman stood before Queen Esther, pleading for his life, for he saw that evil was determined against him by the king. 8 When the king returned from the palace garden to the place of the banquet of wine, Haman had fallen across the couch where Esther was.

They didn't dine at a table like us – but they reclined on these little couches at the table. –

A) The king leaves – because now he has a dilemma once a decree has been made by the king it cannot be reversed.

B) But when he comes back in and sees Haman draped across the queen's couch - **Then the king said, "Will he also assault the queen while I am in the house?"**

C) Here the King is given a way to take care of Haman at least. – are you trying to assault my queen – that was a crime punishable by death!

As the word left the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. 9 Now Harbonah, one of the eunuchs, said to the king, "Look! The gallows, fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai, who spoke good on the king's behalf, is standing **at the house of Haman.**"

Then the king said, **REALLY - "Hang him on it!"**
10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king's wrath subsided.

LOVE THE BIBLE!

THE BOOK OF ESTHER REVERED BY THE JEWS – 2ND TO THE TORAH

A) Picture of the Divine Providence of God in protecting the Pp of Israel

B) READ YEARLY EVEN TO THIS DAY

Ch. 8:1-2 The Tables are turned

V.1 On that day King Ahasuerus gave Queen Esther the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews

A) This means what Haman did – Queen – couch – was Depicted a Criminal act –

B) the **normal Persian policy was** the house would go to the remaining family members unless the person who died was a criminal –

1) then their possessions went to the state.

C) This house was no doubt a Palace since Haman was the 2nd richest man in the Kingdom

And Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had told how he was related to her. {He is related to me and he is related to you by marriage

2 So the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai; and Esther appointed Mordecai over the house of Haman. {

So Mordecai is elevated to the role of Prime Minister

A Chapter full of surprises

A) So the King is surprised that his queen is Jewish - and his prime minister almost had her killed

B) The Prime Minister Haman is surprised because everything in his life gets flipped on its head in 24hrs

C) Esther is surprised that she becomes God's instrument to save Mordecai and her people

D) Mordecai is surprised - he goes from being a lowly servant to 2nd in command over night

God loves to surprise his people when we stop going through the motions and trust him enough

A) To step out in faith - allow him to lead us

B) This week - God wants to surprise you - if you will let him

Biggest Surprise - He saved us !

As we close our time today and head toward the communion table -

A) I want you to consider - Our mediator

For *there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,* ⁶ who gave Himself a ransom for all. 1 Timothy 2:5

B) In our story - Esther is a type of Christ - She plays the role of the mediator.

C) Her people the Jews are under the Judgment of this man Haman.

**D) Esther is the only one who can mediate - She is Royalty - and she has access to the King/ throne
1) And she is Jewish**

Esther risked her life to intercede on behalf of her people. - She remained the Queen.

A) She could have died - but she didn't

B) God used Esther to save her people the Jews from being annihilated in Persia

Now Consider the mediation of Jesus

A) Mankind was under the Judgment of God because of our sin.

B) Jesus left the throne, he left heaven - to become one of us - so he could be our mediator

C) He didn't just risk death - he did die - Brutal death of the cross - A CURSE

1) He who knew no sin literally became sin for us

He wasn't just the mediator - he became the propitiation of our sins

A) Satisfaction - He satisfied the righteous requirement of the law

B) The Soul that sins shall surely die -

1) Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin

C) Now Jesus Mediates as our advocate - our defense attorney -

1) Guilty Yes! - Paid in Full - Yes

D) Forgiven and Forgotten - Yes

1) Declared Righteous - Yes

Jesus is a better mediator - He made a way for a complete salvation!