

Esther Overview

Although not mentioned once, this book is all about God:

- Who goes before us, preparing in advance people and places for particular moments
He knows are coming
- Who moves behind the scenes years in advance to fulfill His purposes

“Why is this happening today?” may not be known for years...but when we look
back we will see the hand of God all over it
- Who is seen by faith and not by sight
- Who has a plan for our lives...and fingerprints all over our lives
- Who turns curses into blessings
Neh 13:2
- Who never leaves nor forsakes His people
Neh 9:31

This book is a testimony of:

- God’s preservation of His people, who are targeted for extinction by Satan
(anti-Semitism)
- The proud being humbled and the humble being exalted
- God rescuing those who seek Him and trust in Him
Rom 8:28, 31

Esther **Chapter 1**

- v1 the extent of the Persian Empire at the time
- geographically – from India to East Africa
 - politically: 127 jurisdictions
- Note: only 120 when Darius and Cyrus reigned
- v2-4 during the third year of his reign, Ahasuerus throws a banquet/”October-fest” for the ruling class
- all 127 governors
 - HQ staff
 - Power brokers
 - Beautiful people
 - Servants

6 month party

- to show off the splendor and wealth of his kingdom...and...
- to bask in the glory and honor given him by his subjects

The flesh loves to

- boast
- indulge itself...the Bible calls it lust

v5 ...plus an extra week for the people of the capital city

v6 To dress the place up, white, green, and blue curtains were hung in the luxurious court of the palace

the floors were beautiful marble mosaics...top drawer!

A stunning display of man-made beauty!

v7 an extensive variety of the finest chalices and goblets were brought out...

Notice that they are not using the vessels of God, as did Belshazzar in Dan 5,
17 years earlier

The lesson was learned and those vessels of God returned to Jerusalem with Ezra
after Cyrus' decree of Ezra 1:1-2

and the finest wine served from bottom-less vats

fermented "wine" is a corruption of the fruit of the vine.

A leavening agent is introduced, producing alcohol, which deceives and alters
man's state of mind and body, producing a counterfeit joy and peace

v8 an "orgy" of pleasure

the edict was issued that every person could drink as much as he/she wanted...
and none were compelled to

- keep drinking
- stop drinking

every person drank according to his/her own desires...no forced march, no restraints

self-indulgence: the flesh left to seek its own level of pleasure...

Any man without restraint from

- an outside enemy
- his conscience
- God

will indulge his flesh to the greatest degree possible.

Eph 5:18

v9 While the king is officiating over the royal party, she is having her own party for the
women...

because the genders did not mix publicly...men did not socialize with the women.

This society, like so many others, was stratified based on gender.

v10-11 I love some of these names!

- Me-human
- Carcas

Vashti, a very beautiful woman.

No doubt the king indulged his flesh when it came to picking his queen.

when the king was good and drunk, he commands his woman to be brought to him...
so he and all his party buddies could look at her...to lust after her

the flesh, in pursuit of pleasure, knows no boundaries

problem: it was culturally improper for a woman to appear in public without her veil...
but that is precisely what the king was asking Vashti to do so he and his buddies
could gawk at her

a drunk loses

- the natural and healthy inhibitions given us by God
- good judgment
- control of self

is this honoring your wife? (1 Peter 3:7)

To the contrary!

v12 Insulted by the command, Vashti refused to be

- Inspected like a piece of meat
- Lusted after by “strange” and intoxicated men
- Valued only for her physical beauty

is this contrary to Eph 5:22?

Absolutely not!

The wife is not a target for her husband’s self-centered, self-gratifying lust

the queen’s independence and dignity transformed the king’s burning with lust to burning
with rage...

the flesh burns with sin...and will forever burn but never be consumed if we do not
surrender to our self-will to the will of God

Amnon’s burning lust for his step sister Tamar, also a very beautiful woman, turned as
quickly to a burning rage once his flesh was satisfied (2 Sam 13)

v13-15 Shamed, embarrassed, and feeling disrespected by a woman, the king rages,
“What are we going to do about this insult, boys?”

What is worse than a drunk judge?
A drunk judge and 7 drunk lawyers

How wise are the wise men after 187 day drinking binge?
A mind fogged by alcohol is an irrational mind
Would you value the advice of a drunk lawyer?
Only if you too were drunk

Note: difficult lesson to learn – never argue with a “drunk”...
you will never win...for a drunk cannot reason

v16-18 Answer: “We’ve got huge trouble, king! Red Alert!”

his solution: make the one woman an example for all women to “nip this thing in the bud” before they are emboldened to follow the queen’s example of rebellion

“Disobedience will breed disobedience, defiance will breed chaos, unless we act swiftly and boldly.”

one woman’s response to an insult by her husband is branded as insurrection by all women...a confined issue is blown up to a general social revolution from India to East Africa

as I was saying, a drunk cannot reason...
a person living in sin (blinded and deadened by sin) cannot see the truth
...so any acceptable advice will be built on a lie/deception

what is left unsaid is more powerful than what is said –
“If you don’t do this, your kingdom will collapse, your reign ruined.”

v19-20 that it be not altered: remember the king was trapped by the unchangeable law of the
Persians in Dan 6 (Daniel and the lion's den)
i.e. this could not be reversed when the king sobered up

the advise of a drunk to another drunk:

- "Fire the queen!
- She is no good!
- Trade her in for another woman, a better woman."

better i.e. more obedient, submissive, docile, younger (?), and even more beautiful...
a trophy wife

v21 "We need to teach the women a lesson so they will not rebel against the men!"

Bad advise! But it tickled the king's ears

The advice of a drunk sounded wise to a bunch of drunks

Those in sin often take the advice of another living in the same sin...
and reject sound advise from a sound mind

beware "tickling ear syndrome", it is a path to destruction

Honor is a two-way street

how can a woman honor a man who does not honor her?

1 Peter 3:7 with Eph 5:33

v22 the decree was published in every corner of this vast kingdom

and God will use this tragedy to protect His people from extinction

God's order (1 Cor 11:3) cannot be legislated by man, it is governed by the Holy Spirit

Esther Chapter 2

v1 As the intoxication turns into a hangover, the flood of the king's wrath dissipates...

and as the fog clears, he remembers

- his beautiful queen
- her defiance (he does not remember the complete inappropriateness of his demand that she appear before him and his buddies naked)
- the law put in place as a result, which also banished his queen from his presence

and he is bummed out

the counterfeit joy of too much wine gives way to a deep sorrow in real life as he misses Vashti

“Happy Hour” only pushes the pain into the near future

v2 the servants are suddenly concerned...

“Oh no! The King is getting lonely. That's not good for any of us.”

so they concoct a plan to avert disaster...“Let's replace Vashti with a trophy!”

- kind
- beautiful
- young
- virgin

this would certainly appeal to the flesh of man, wouldn't it?

v3-4 “Let's have a Miss Persian Empire beauty contest!”

“Order all the provincial governors send all the qualified candidates to the palace, where they will be

- scrubbed
- cleansed
- perfumed...
- put into tip-top shape for you to hand pick a queen.”

“Cool! Do it! I can trade that old model in for a newer, more beautiful model!”
Our society, men in particular, thinks this way

v5 in the palace was a Jew named, Mordecai, a great-nephew of King Saul
1 Sam 9:1-3

v6 “carried”...appears 3 times I think to emphasis the humiliation suffered by the Jews...
means “to denude or strip, taken into an exile in a disgraceful sense”
the Babylonian captives were stripped and marched out of their land

if Mordecai was “carried away”, he would be about 120 years old...
so probably this means his tribe (Benjamin) was carried away captive

v7 thru Mordecai and Esther, honor is restored to the line of Kish

Mordecai was the “foster parent” of a cousin named Hadassah.
The Persian equivalent is Esther.

Esther was very beautiful,

- “in figure and in face”...
- “pleasant and agreeable to all the senses”
- quite a “vision” to behold...
- stunning...
- drop-dead-beautiful

v8 Esther was entered into the king’s beauty contest...
along with about 400 others, according to Josephus

v9 Esther took the attendant’s breath away...he gave her

- favor...she was his personal favorite
- a fast-path thru the process of purification
- seven young ladies to tend to her
- “top billing”

God grants favor to His daughter:

1. With Hegai the chamberlain
2. With every one who saw her (v15)
3. With the king (v17)

v10 under instruction from Morecai, Esther does not reveal her nationality or her tribe...
or that Mordecai is a relative

We will learn why very shortly...because the truth will be revealed at the appointed time

v11 Mordecai took his daily exercise right past the contestants' house in order to learn about
Esther's well-being and how she was faring in the contest

v12 it took 12 months of prep and polish "in the spa" to even see the king

beauty treatments included

- 6 months of oils
- 6 months of perfumes

v13 Show time! The parade begins...after 12 months in the spa to beautify the land's most
beautiful virgins

the attendant gave them whatever they wanted before the parade began...
they picked their own "gown" and fragrance and jewelry and...

v14 the beauty contestants

- went before the king at dusk...
- were examined until dawn...
- and went into the house of his concubines...
- where she would stay until the king desired her and called her out by name

result of the beauty contest:

- the king's population of concubines/mistresses rose by about 400
- the men of the Empire were "robbed" of about 400 brides/wives/mothers...
- the king was no more content – consider how happy 700 wives and 300 concubines made Solomon!

v15 When it was Esther's turn to parade, she did not want anything more than what had
already been given her.

Her beauty was natural...and deep...God-given, not man-made

and she "wow-ed" everyone in the palace!

v16 in the 7th year of his reign...Chapter 1 was in the 3rd year
so 4 years have passed between Vashti and this beauty contest

v17 the king felt a deep affection, in every sense of the word, for Esther
she knocked the most powerful man in the world off his feet!

There was an obvious distinction between Esther and all the others...
the beauty contest turned out to be “no contest”
God gave the crown to His daughter

v18 to celebrate his new queen, the king

- throws a party in her honor
- stops collecting taxes
- gives a major “tax refund”

v19 he also put all of his concubines on display

at that time, Mordecai was watching the goings-on from the gate of judgment
many scholars think he was promoted to an officer in the king’s court via Esther’s
influence
if so, God has His eyes and ears strategically placed at just the right time...

v21 ...because at that time two of the door keepers were angry with the king and conspired to
assassinate him

Acts 23:16-21

v22 the channel to the king’s ear is wide open, direct, and lightning-fast

Esther vouched for the source of the G2...without identifying it

v23 Esther 6:2

an investigation was launched and the plot uncovered.
Justice was swift and the details of the crime were recorded in the king's permanent log book...

documentation...a very important act orchestrated by the sovereign God of the universe
Who is working behind the scenes to accomplish His purposes

so...the stage is set...

- Esther is Queen of the world's kingdom
- The king is madly in love with her
- The king owes Mordecai a big favor but hasn't paid it yet

God has set His people in strategic places to be instruments in His hands at the perfect time to save many

God works a PROCESS, YEARS in advance...and that is where we lose sight of what God is doing

we have this "instant" mentality

when this "instant" is grim...even overwhelming...we complain and whine and even get angry with God

Consider the PROCESS and the YEARS God worked to put Joseph in place to save His people from the terrible famine He knew was coming

- if Joseph had never been in the pit...he would have never ended up in Egypt
- if he had not been falsely accused and put in prison...he would have never met Pharaoh

Sometimes, for the purposes of God to be worked out in our lives, we must spend some time in a pit or in prison...or lose a child like Tony and Dolores (they can see God's will now...but certainly not then)

So, regardless of how grim this "instant" is, never judge the story of your life until you read the final chapter

God is working a perfect plan with perfect timing

Wait while the perfect wisdom of God is being revealed
How ?!

By faith

Trust Him when you are in a pit
Trust Him when you are in prison
Trust Him when you lose your job
Trust Him when tragedy strikes

By faith

hold onto the fact that “it ain’t over yet!”

By faith

wait for the perfect plan to unfold

Esther Chapter 3

The Cost of Disobedience

1 Sam 15:1-23

v2 Ex 17:8-16 and Deut 25:17-19
the Amelekites attacked Israel in the rear ranks, where the old and sick and weak were

v3 now, about 400 years later...there is a score to settle...
Judgment Day...leave no life...complete annihilation

do not confuse the long-suffering of God with indifference or, worse yet, approval.
Sin will be judged

God commands the complete destruction of His enemies

When trying to understand, keep these things in mind:

- The Amelekites were vicious cruel people engaged in vile worship practices to false gods e.g. child sacrifice
- God mercifully, graciously gave the Amelekites 400+ years to repent, just as He gave the Amorites (Gen 15)
- The Amelekites were infected with a deadly disease that could infect others, including the Jews...so God had them exterminated...and is perfectly justified in doing so!
- Gal 6:7-8
Consequences of our choices may not be immediate but they are certain
Universal truth: payday someday

the Amelekites, descendents of Esau, are a type of the flesh

- The flesh hates the Spirit and the things of God
 - we have war with it our entire life...thru all generations
 - there is no truce possible
 - destroy it or be destroyed by it
- so...Rom 13:14

v7-9 disobedience – a life is spared

v10 The Lord immediately expresses His displeasure to Samuel.
The Lord speaks with those who listen to Him

v11 the reactions to Saul's disobedience: grief

- God repents i.e. grieves, "to breath strongly, to be sorry, to avenge"
- Samuel grieves - God had warned His people; why had they not listened?

God's children hate what our Father hates, are grieved by what grieves Him
God hates sin, is grieved by the sinner

v13 "Good morning, bro! I did good!"
Sounds good, huh? ala "PTL! Hallelujah!"
Christian lingo can be learned...and used to cover up the spiritual truth about
one's heart

sin blinds and deceives...distorts the truth

v14 "You did good? What is that sound I hear...the sound of life!
You did not do good.

v15 Saul doesn't see it as sin. Saul does not accept responsibility.

- rationalizes his behavior
- points to "the people" and excludes himself (v9)
- did everything for "your God" i.e. he does not have a personal relationship
with the Lord

v19 disobedience is evil (v23)
the root of disobedience is pride...

v20 "Not so, Samuel. I did obey the Lord. I killed thousands of Amelekites...
I kept only one for my self.
99.99% is pretty darned good, huh Samuel?!"

self-willed, self-centered, deceived...
"I mostly obeyed" is still disobedience

obedience to God is an all-or-nothing proposition

- v21 But:
- “The ones who disobeyed the Lord are these people He has given me.
Saul sounds like Adam...
 - “Besides, they did it for the Lord, so they could offer to Him the sacrifices He so loves!”

- v22 “What God loves so is not the sacrifices...but
- obedience...complete and immediate obedience”
 - a heart that listens to Him
 - a broken and contrite heart

God is not interested in our sacrifices...He is interested in our submission to His Lordship and authority in our life

- v23 arresting comparisons:
- rebellion = witchcraft
disobedience is a very serious offense in the eyes of the Lord...
a capital offense
 - stubbornness = sin = idolatry
It goes arm-in-arm with pride

obedience is an act of the will...a denial of my will

Esther 3

- v1 Haman is a result of Saul’s disobedience approx. 570 years earlier...
will become a threat to the entire nation
a type of the flesh...the carnal, natural man

the king promotes Haman above all the other princes, making him, essentially,
exalting him to 2nd in Command

v2 the king then forces his servants to bow down before Haman to honor him and to demonstrate their relative position compared to his.

And they all did...except Mordecai, a Jew who will bow to no man and will bow to the LORD alone

Mordecai is a type of the spiritual man...God's people.
The world kneels before Satan, but God's people don't

v3 shades of...

- Daniel and 3 buddies not eating from the king's table
- S, M, & A not bowing before the golden image of king Neb.
- God's elect refusing to bow before another God or man...
living to a higher law

v4 the other servants exhorted Mordecai every day to obey the king's command.
In the course of the exchanges Mordecai told them of his nationality and his theology...i.e. why he would not bow before a mere man

so the servant went to the 2nd in Command to see if Mordecai's insurrection was OK

Matt 10:28-33

v5 Haman now starts to pay attention and in his great swelling pride he reacts with wrath

v6 Haman is furious but, based on the presentation of the other servants, he realizes that this Jew is just the "tip of the iceberg"

he disdained the idea of punishing Mordecai alone...the entire race needed to pay for this!

he has a "Jewish problem"
a forerunner of Hitler and Stalin...and the Church!

his blood thirst would not be quenched with the blood of one man

the cost of disobedience stretches far beyond one's self...in this case Saul
disobedience affects

- many innocents
- many years down the road

anti-semitism starts in the heart of Satan and corrupts the heart
of men

Racial genocide is not a new idea...it starts in the pit of hell
and is aimed at the Jews

v7 timestamp:

- 4 years after the beauty contest
7th year + 1 year purification process
- 1st month of the Jewish religious calendar
Ex 12:2, Passover etc in Feb/Mar timeframe

Haman rolls the dice to “consult Lady Luck” as to the day to kill the Jews in the
empire...but the God of the Jews is in control of the dice too.

The “Lucky Day” is not “rolled” until a day almost a year later, in Jan/Feb, which would
allow the playing out of circumstances in God’s plan to save His people

Esther has been queen now for 4 years but the reason for God putting her there is not yet
revealed

God works years in advance in our lives...

v8 as always, the father of lies starts with a lie, falsely accusing faithful citizens of the
kingdom

“There is a cancer in your kingdom...that is fatal unless we perform radical surgery and
quickly!”

MO: truth mixed with a lie as a basis for a rebellious temptation

Truth: the Jews are diverse from all people.

They are holy, separate.

They are chosen.

They alone received the Law of God

Lie: they do not keep the law of the land:

they were law-abiding, God-fearing, faithful citizens

Temptation: extermination of “sub-human” leeches and pests...death to the Jews...
the revealed line of the Messiah

Rev 12:7-12

v9 MO continued: a bribe to “sweeten the pot” that appeals to the lust of the flesh
10,000 talents of silver = up to \$7M

blood for money

ala 30 pieces of silver

Satan has a price on the head of every Jew and Christian

v10 name a king from among those who have ever lived that would not jump at a handsome
injection into the coffers...
and eliminate a throne-threatening problem at the same time?!

The flesh simply cannot say no to Satan’s offer

To seal the deal, the king gives Haman his “ring of authority”

Situation: the sworn enemy of the Jews has been handed the entire might of the throne to
accomplish his personal agenda

v11 thinking Haman as the most loyal of his subjects, the king not only honors and empowers
him, he refuses the bribe

“Keep the money. Use it as you see fit.”

Haman will use it to finance his pogrom

v12-14 a year after v7, the royal edict is written, signed, sealed, and published throughout the
vast kingdom that all Jews were to be

- desolated
- slaughtered
- destroyed
- hunted and spoiled...

in exactly 11 months...so get ready!

Kill Jews and keep their possessions!

Prepare yourself for a kingdom cleansing and a spoil taking!

a “world-wide” proclamation of death to the Jews.

Hitler was not the first, he will not be the last

the pogrom is to occur in 11 mos, on the 13th day

v15 with his plan in motion, Haman sets down to relax and indulge the pleasures of his flesh.

But the people of the capital city were mystified and unsettled by this proclamation

“Why?

What have the Jews ever done to us?

They are peaceful, law-abiding, hard-working model citizens.

If the Jews are targeted, who is next?”

Esther Chapter 4

v1 Haman got the “mother of all promotions” but was unable to enjoy it because of the insolence of a Jew named Mordecai
His thirst for revenge went far beyond one man...he wanted all Jews exterminated
So he hatched the plot described in Ch 3
March 510 BC

Mordecai grieves for the official decree made and sent out that threatens the entire nation of Israel

imagine Mordecai's extreme anguish

- All my people will die because of my stubborn defiance
(Satan would smear him with guilt)
- God, you told us to never bend a knee to anyone but You.
Now, we are on Death Row. Help!

Middle Eastern grief is

- Expressive
- Public vs private
- loud
- unrestrained

v2 Mordecai goes to the palace so that Esther can see the intensity of his grief and the desperation of the Jews...
but no signs of mourning were allowed in the king's presence.

The king didn't want to see any mourning, only happiness.
“No raining on my parade!”

so Mordecai goes into the middle of the city to express his grief

v3 not just Mordecai but the Jews throughout the kingdom mourn

v4 Esther was not able to see her foster father/uncle but his emotional condition and his words were communicated to her.

Without knowing why he is grieving, Esther tries to comfort Mordecai.
But, he would have nothing of it...his grief could not be covered up or soothed

v5 She does not know why Mordecai is so overwhelmingly distraught...
she sends a servant out to find out what in the world is going on and why he is so
draught

it seems Esther is the last one in the Empire to hear the news

v7-8 Mordecai gives an oral report and one of the thousands of "Wanted" posters that have
been posted throughout the kingdom to be delivered to the Queen...
along with a request that she march right into her husband's presence and, on behalf of
her people, have the order nullified

"Esther, Sweetie, you MUST intercede for our people!"

after keeping her nationality a secret all these years, Mordecai pleads that it is time to
reveal her heritage to the king...to not just speak but to act

v9-10 communication is via an intermediary, it is not direct

v11 "Mordecai, do you realize what you are asking me to do?
You and everybody else in this kingdom know I can't do that.
I do not have unrestricted access to the king.
No one dares to march in unannounced to the king!
It doesn't matter who you are. You go ONLY when called.
I could be put to death for breaking protocol, if he so chooses.
The risk is too great...I will not go."

fear of man is debilitating...but fear of God is liberating
Matt 10:28

v13 “What are you thinking? That you are ‘above’ this pogrom?
Just stop and think about how easily the king got rid of Vashti!
You are no safer than the lowest Jew in the land.”

It is foolishness to think you will be spared problems or attacks of the enemy because you live in God’s house.

The Bride of Christ is not spared Satan’s wrath in this life.

v14 notice Mordecai’s faith!
God’s finger perceived by Mordecai
He knows that Esther might fail, but God will never fail

Mordecai knew that God would keep His promises to Abraham
Since the Messiah had not yet come, he knew the Jews would be preserved by God...somehow...

Abraham had the same faith when he took Isaac up the appointed mountain to sacrifice him, per God’s instruction...

he too knew that God would keep His promises...so He would resurrect Isaac if necessary to keep His Word

too often we act by sight...blinded by

- our perspective
- our perceptions
- our preconceived ideas
- our feelings...our volatile emotions

rather than by faith...by which we can see with clarity

- what we know
- what our absolutely trustworthy and faithful God has promised us
- trust in His perspective
- trust in His Word
- our God – all-knowing, all-powerful Who cannot fail

So, Mordecai KNEW the Jews would be preserved...he just did not know how
Maybe God chose Esther to be His instrument of salvation...

“But it doesn’t matter if you go into the king on our behalf or not.

- God is the King of kings and Lord of lords.
- He is on the Throne.
- He is bigger than this circumstance.
- His promises to us are unconditional.
- He is absolutely faithful.
- He is for us so who can be against us.
- We are more than conquerors.

It is just a matter of which humble, fear-full, available, and obedient servant He uses to accomplish His purposes.”

Besides...

- Have you stopped to look back and see God’s fingerprints all over you?
- Who gave you favor in everyone’s eyes?
- Who gave you the crown? If not for this situation, why are you the queen?”

v16 “You are quite right. But I am still frightened.
This situation is overwhelming.
I feel the weight of the world on my shoulders...
We need the Lord...I need the Lord.
Gather our people together for prayer and fasting.
Seek the Lord...pray for me.
Then I will break the law and risk death to speak with the king.
Hear I am, Lord. Whatever...”

Fascinating...God’s whole purpose for Esther’s life...the reason for all the preparation...is for the next 3-4 days
If she “freezes”, she will be destroyed

your situation is not exactly the same as Esther’s but your God is exactly the same.

- He has a plan...a foreordained work for you
- He is working behind the scenes...preparing you...preparing the place...
Note: our failed efforts when we “jump the gun” on the Lord are all part of the preparation
- He brings you to an ordained moment when all the preparation is accomplished...
- And you have a choice...to walk by sight or by faith
- You may fail...but He cannot fail
- Do you recognize “The Moment”?
Don’t “jump the gun”
Don’t freeze like a deer in the headlights
Be led by the Holy Spirit...walk by faith

So...

- Why did God give you the job you have?
- Why did God plant you in the neighborhood in which you live?
- Why has God put you in the school you are attending?
- What has God allowed the circumstances you are facing?
- Can you say, “Whatever...” to the Lord?

God doesn't need me. His purpose will be accomplished in spite of me.
The question is, given that God has elected to use man, who will get the blessing?

Esther Chapter 5

- v1 Esther
- is good to her word
 - puts feet to her faith in the promises of God
 - is willing to stand alone
 - enters boldly into the throne room of the king

- v2 on the 3rd day, her life is “restored”
- her fast is over
 - her life is graciously spared by the king

God is “working” His plan

God, going before His daughter, continually gave her favor in the eyes of others

the king allowed Esther to interrupt his business with her unexpected, unannounced visit rather than receiving the justifiable wrath of the king, like Vashti, Esther is given the king’s grace

- v3 not a raging, “What do you want?!”
But a loving and tender, “What can I do for you, my beloved?
I will give you more than you ask.”

A exaggerated statement intended to communicate a generous mood

Mark 6:21-23

But our king really means it!

Eph 5:20

- v4 “I’ll tell you over dinner. I desire to be in the presence of my king and my husband.
I desire to eat dinner with you.
And please bring Haman too.”

To eat a meal with someone was to be at-one with them in that culture

- v5 “Tell Haman we are leaving ASAP if not sooner!”

they hustle over to her place for the feast of food and drink
man, these guys love to party!

v6 banquet of wine = wines and desserts
no roast beef or leg of lamb, just libations and delicacies

probably after a quick drink or two, the king asks Esther,
“Now tell me, my gorgeous Queen.
What is your desire?
What can I do for you? I’ll do anything I can.”

“Crunch time” for Esther.
This is the moment for which she has been prepared...
the moment why God gave her the crown.
Will she “ask for the order”?

v7-8 “Ahhhh, what I want is...ahhhhh, that you and Haman come back tomorrow for another
feast. And then I’ll tell you.
Yeah, that’s it. Come back and I’ll tell you tomorrow.
Good night!”

I think Esther chokes here.
She “gulp”ed because her feet were so cold!
She can’t quite get it out.

She was probably apprehensive and frightened

- the king does not yet know she is a Jew
- his “main man” is anti-Jewish
- her husband signed her death sentence

Fear of man is debilitating...fear of God is liberating

A “natural” reaction to a fearful decision is to postpone it
“I’ll do it later.”

But...2 Tim 1:7

But let’s be gracious. How many of us have

- Had “dry mouth” in an important situation?
- Yipped a 2 foot putt when all eyes are on you?
- Stumbled on the “hard” questions, like “Will you buy my product?”
- Held your tongue when God put something on your heart to say to someone?
- Failed at an “appointment” orchestrated by God?

Esther is leaning on her own strength...and failing
2 Cor 12:9-10

v9 Haman is riding the crest of the wave...until he finds himself standing in front of that
JEWWW Mordecai who refused to bow before him.
Mordecai not only did not honor him, he did not even give him any respect.

The sweet joy is instantly transformed into bitter rage.
Which is why we should never make decisions based on our emotions...

On the other hand...even after the proclamation of death to the Jews, Mordecai refuses to
bend a knee to Haman
stand steadfast with the Lord in the face of persecution
John 16:33

v10 Haman desperately wanted to grab him by the throat and rip Mordecai's head off...
but he exercised self-control...
biding his time for a more glorious revenge!

Instead he goes home, gathers up all his friends and his wife...

v11-12 ...and basks in his own glory

- possessions
- prodigy
- position of preference...with both the king AND the queen
- pride

Haman is his father's (John 8:44) son!

- proud and boastful
- self-centered
- glory seeker
- power seeker
- covetous
- murderous

v13 BUT...he can enjoy none of it because of his hatred of Mordecai

An unfortunate part of the human condition is “skin irritation”

When something gets under our skin and irritates us

Gets under so easily...and irritates to no end!

That irritation causes us to forget God’s blessings

these things rob us of our joy

- sin/pride
- unforgiveness
Matt 6:14-15
- bitterness
Acts 8:20-23, Eph 4:29-32, Heb 12:14-15
- anger
Prov 14:17, Prov 16:32, James 1:19
- worry

How irritable are you?

How easy is it to “get a rise” out of you?

Don’t be so sensitive!

Let your skin “get a little thicker”

v14 “Why wait 11 months? Get your revenge NOW!

I know what you can do!

- He is breaking the law by not bowing to you.
- We can have a fair trial...and then hang him...
- hang him high...for all to see!
- Get this all done before dinner with Esther and you will have the glorious time you so richly deserve.
- You be able to eat, drink, and be merry!”

Satan’s time table:

- Things of the world and the flesh = NOW
- Things of God = LATER

Want to do something?

What?

When?

Who is prompting you?

Care to reconsider?

The inspiration of Haman's wife and friends, approved by

Haman, will backfire

Rom 8:28, 31

Esther Chapter 6

“God” is never named in this book...but this book is all about God!

- His fingerprints on the events of this life
- His perfect timing
- His foreknowledge
- His omnipotence
- His sovereignty
- His humor!

v1 a Divinely inspired insomnia

“I can’t sleep. Come read to me...about me.”

No shortage of ego in the palace!

Personally, the Lord does not wake me up at night

But He wakes up Monica with regularity

He impresses someone on her heart...He wants her to pray

her interrupted sleep is sweet time of worship and praise with the Lord!

v2 recent history is recounted...

Ch 2:21-23

v3 ...and a huge unpaid debt exposed

notice that Mordecai did not march around asking,

“Hey! What about me? What are you going to do for me since I did that for you?!”

This is a fine what to show your appreciation! I saved your life...for nothing!”

Mordecai trusts in the faithfulness of the King of kings and His reward...

not the faithfulness and the reward of man

don’t ever seek the praises and rewards of men...

only praises and rewards of the Creator of men

v4 while the king is contemplating his embarrassing oversight and how to “make it right with Mordecai”, Haman pops in with a proposal...
eager to tell the king his own plan

Notice: Haman come unannounced, thinking himself above the Law.
He does not fear the king and has contempt for the Law.
It never crosses his mind that the king would be offended by his arrogance and presumption
Haman is his father’s son (sounds like Rev 12:10)

v5 Knock, knock.
Who’s there?
Haman.
Haman who?
Haman, I’ve got a great idea!

v6 the king has pressing business on his mind...so does Haman.
But the king gets to speak first.

“Haman, help me with a problem. How do I honor the man I so strongly desire to honor?”

“Gee...who is more worthy of honor than me? The king desires to honor me again!”
No shortage of ego in the courts of the palace, either!

Haman, completely filled with himself, can only think the king is asking him what he (the king) can do for him (Haman).
His rash assumption prevented Haman from hearing the truth of the king’s request

Pride and self-centeredness is blinding and deceiving.

v7-9 Haman has an inspiration this time – of glory and honor for himself!

Haman came to sell death upon Mordecai...but the Lord uses him to sell glory and honor to him instead!

“Try this on for size, king baby!

- Dress the man up like you, the king.
- Put him on your horse.
- Put your crown on his head.
- Parade him around as you would be paraded!”

Haman could see himself dressed as the king...crowned as King...he wanted to be king!

Haman is his father’s son
Is 14:4-15

v10 a prime example of the swift roller coaster of our emotions from the highest high –
“Great idea! I love it! Do it...”
to the lowest low –
“...to Mordecai.”

“OK then! Now that that is finally taken care of, what brings you here, Haman?”

Reminds me of that beer commercial

“I need to tell you something.”

“Me too. I need to tell you something. You go first.”

“I am not ready for a serious relationship.”

“I won the Lottery...”

Haman’s response is

- silence...utter silence
how his father...and every condemned man and angel...will sound at the Great White Throne
- surprise foreshadows his father’s surprise on Calvary
1 Cor 2:7-8
Satan intended it for evil...
God intended it for good
Gen 50:20

the sovereignty of our God is an awesome thing to contemplate!

By the very words of his enemy, Mordecai is exalted on high!

The roles are instantly reversed as Mordecai's death is exchanged for life...
and Haman's life is exchanged for death

Matt 27:1-5

v11 the king's chosen one is acclaimed even by his enemies

Haman's voice was shrill...not with enthusiasm but with fear

v12 the humble are exalted...and the proud are humbled...shamed...fearful

The faithful servant, interested in the welfare of his master, is exalted.
The self-serving servant, interested in his own glory and honor, is humbled.

v13 encouraging words from his staff: "You lose."

"That bright idea did not work. In fact, it backfired.
Mordecai will never bow before you, you will bow before him!
And you will not get revenge upon Mordecai, but he will have revenge upon you!"

1 Cor 1:18-20, 25-29

v14 "Time to party with the Queen and the King, Sir Haman!"

his life has crumbled so suddenly and so unexpectedly...
sudden destruction has befallen him
the place where he was so delighted to be yesterday he now loathes to go

what a turn of events! Haman no longer feels like celebrating.
What a difference a day makes!

his will was to go to dinner light-hearted with victory, but God's will was that he went to
dinner downcast with defeat

there is no joy for the wicked...there is no peace for the wicked

Is 48:22

Is 57:21

Don't you rejoice at how God turns the tables on Satan!
Things intended to hurt, God turns around for good
The Lord is watching over us!
Our lives are ordered by Him!

We can live with confidence

We can live an adventure....every day can be an adventure

- if we surrender our will to His
- if we serve Him whole-heartedly, single-mindedly

When we say, "Whatever!" to the Lord, who knows what today will bring!
But we know God will use it for good!

Esther Chapter 7

v2 the third such generous inquiry by the king

perhaps Esther was encouraged by the honor given to Mordecai the day before remembering Mordecai's faith that God WILL deliver His people...

and seeing Mordecai's honor...

perhaps she sees God's fingerprints on the situation and now speaks with confidence...

v3-4 ...and humility. "IF I have found favor in your eyes"

(like he has every other time!)

vs the arrogance of Haman

("Who but me would the king want to honor above all men?")

"If you find favor in me and if my request would please you...

- spare my life
- rescue my people from horrific, systematic genocide

Had we been sold into slavery, I would have kept quiet.

But I cannot remain silent and watch me and my people exterminated."

the Hebrews had been

- sold ("made merchandise of" by Haman's bribe)
- to be destroyed (= "made utterly desolate, spoiled")
- to be slain (= "to be murdered, slaughtered")
- to perish (= "to be completely wiped out")

v5 the king is horrified and outraged at such a thought...

still not knowing that his queen is a Jew...

"Who would dare

- sell
- spoil
- slaughter
- wipe out

my queen?!"

"Who in their right mind...what coward would even presume to do such a thing to my wife?!"

v6 just when you think things could not possibly get worse...
Haman probably wet his pants

First, imagine Haman's shock!

He did not know the very beautiful and gracious Queen Esther was a Jew either!
I imagine his heartbeat quadruples instantly and sweat erupts from his brow!

Second, the Queen proclaims him as Public Enemy #1

Adversary:

- the champion of evil against
- an enemy filled with hatred

Haman is his father's son

Satan = "adversary"

1 Peter 5:8

the false accuser is rightly accused before the king...and is terrified
heretofore the king thought Haman was top-drawer, loyal and honorable
but the queen calls him "wicked" (evil), the chief conspirator in her murder

v7 this I don't understand – the king is so violently angry...
that he leaves his beautiful bride ALONE with the one who intends to kill her!

What could he be thinking?

- the king is angry and perhaps confused.
He had to "go clear his head" and think about this overwhelming development.
He needed to think, not just react.
- the king feels betrayed by a trusted one close to him and flees his presence in rage and disgust
- "I have a HUGE problem!
Not even I can change the Law.
That no good Haman tricked me...and now my hands are tied.
My Queen will die as a result.
What am I going to do???"

Haman, so recently humbled by the king, is now desperate for his life.
He can clearly see that pleading with the king is pointless...
he was tried and judged and about to be judged by the king...

So he turns to Esther,

- The most influential and favored woman in the kingdom
- (unknowingly) his sworn enemy

to plead for grace and protection

how the tide has turned!

The enemy who condemned and plotted murder now cries out for mercy from his intended target
some day, Satan will have a similar confrontation

the proud will be reduced to begging...the humble exalted to honor

v8 people did not sit on chairs around tables to eat...they reclined on couches

How did Haman fall onto Esther's couch?

Did he trip as he raced in desperation for her intercession?

Did the Lord "trip" him?

At any rate...Haman throws himself on the mercy of the queen...
and ends up on her couch.

Throwing himself at her feet...literally...he may have overthrown himself a bit too far!

In this book of "perfect timing", that is the precise moment when the king returns!
Haman is having a bad day!

If the king had any doubt or reservation, he no longer does.

the king goes ballistic.

"You betrayed me and would kill my queen, and now you try to rape her in my very presence!"

The servants present know that Haman is a condemned man.

Covering his face

- A sign of the sentence of a condemned man...no longer deserving to see the light of day
- So that the king would no longer look upon his face...forever separated from the presence of the king

v9 perfect knowledge given to the right person at the right time by an available and bold servant

“My king, there is already standing a gallows upon which to hang this vile and condemned man.

The very gallows he so presumptuously built in his own front yard upon which to hang your faithful and loyal servant Mordecai.”

“Perfect!”

this undoubtedly gave the king great delight...and complete vengeance
there is something very sweet about ironic justice...about the tables being turned on evil!

How glorious that God turns the tables on His enemies as He watches over them that put their trust in Him!

He uses the very instruments intended for our destruction for the destruction of His enemies

Best example: The Cross...where

- We are redeemed to God
- Our sins are forgiven
- Our penalty is paid in full
- Jesus triumphed on our behalf

v10 A terrible wrong had been committed.
Justice was swiftly executed.

The king's wrath fell upon

- one who dreamed of being king himself
- the enemy of his Bride
- the premeditated murderer of her people

the price was paid...and the king's wrath was appeased

Esther **Chapter 8**

v1 the queen's heritage is revealed...and is her relationship with Mordecai

the queen is given that which was taken away from Haman, her accuser
he was so proud of his riches...he is stripped of all
blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth

someday the Bride will inherit the earth...once the King removes the enemy

Types:

- King Xerxes = God/Christ
- Queen Esther = Church/Bride of Christ
- Mordecai = Israel
- Haman = Satan

the Church and Israel are related

v2 Esther gives Mordecai Haman's house
vacated are his wife, children, and friends!

another reversal in a long string of reversals.

Mordecai succeeds his enemy as Prime Minister
Honored that day before, Mordecai now reigns with the king

v3 "I am safe. My cousin is safe.
You have blessed us abundantly.
Our enemy is destroyed.
But his evil conspiracy is still in motion."

v4 grace is extended...
a picture of Heb 4:16

v5-6 "My business is unfinished...we still have a huge problem.
If I still find favor in your eyes, please issue a decree to reverse the deceiving plot of
Haman to exterminate my brethren the Jews.
Halt this horrible anti-Semitism that comes from the very pit of hell."

v7 “I love you, I love your people.”

vs

Haman’s hatred for the Jews

Gen 12:1-3

v8 “So let it be done. But I cannot personally do it.

Put it in your words, you seal it with my seal so that it cannot be undone.”

Rom 10:17 with Eph 1:13-14 and Eph 4:30

v9 the decree blankets the entire kingdom

v10 birth of the Pony Express...and snail mail

every messenger is given the perfect mount for the area to which he is sent...
they are empowered and perfectly equipped

v11 everything is reversed! From cursed to favored!

The previously defenseless Jews can now protect themselves and kill anyone who comes
against them

the tables are turned...even over-turned...

just as Jesus overturned the tables of the thieves in His Father’s house

v12 the appointed day of destruction...but not as planned by the enemy of God’s people

v13 the king’s people are the enemies of the queen’s people!

The king loves the queen, his bride, more than he loves his people who oppose his Bride

v16 by the sovereign hand of God and by His grace, the Jews had

1. light (John 8:12)
2. gladness (= “glee”)
3. joy (= “cheerfulness”)
4. honor

v17 sometimes fear is an effective evangelism technique...
if it leads to a reasoned change of heart
otherwise, it, like all emotions, soon fades.

The queen's people are the king's people...the king's people became the queen's people!

God our Deliverer and Savior is so good!
His preservation is absolute

Esther Chapter 9

v1 “Haman’s decree”: Kill a Jew, keep his stuff
“Mordecai’s decree”: Defend yourselves

the execution of the execution decree had its teeth pulled because the Lord completely turned the tables...

the heretofore powerless Jews suddenly had all the power over their enemies

God turns the world upside down, or should I say right side up
His will shall be accomplished.

v2 The Jews did not go on the offensive, indiscriminately killing Persians, they would fight only those who rose up to fight them

God had gone before His people, immobilizing the enemy with fear
their enemies were defeated before the appointed day.

God had secured victory for His people
2 Tim 1:7 with Is 1:18

v3-4 the power brokers knew where the power lay...with the new Prime Minister...Mordecai

in fact, fear not only debilitated the people, it motivated to government officials to help by attacking their own citizens

Rom 13:1-4

those that rose up against the Jews were lawbreakers, choosing Haman’s decree over Mordecai’s decree

Foolish choice because

- Haman is dead...but Mordecai is alive
- Haman is defeated...Mordecai is the victor

As we 2 Tim 2:15 and Matt 16:24, we 2 Peter 3:18

v5 that which their enemies determined to do to the Jews, the Jews did to their enemies
this is the fate of every one of God's enemies

our battle is spiritual: Eph 6:10-18

v7-10 10 sons of Haman are destroyed

why not spoil Haman's sons' land?
It had already been given to Esther.

v12 "Ok, my queen?"

if the Jews killed 500 in the palace alone...how many in 127 provinces?!

notice that the king was never upset with Esther for concealing her national identity

v13 the Persians had a practice of killing their enemies and then displaying them on poles for
all to see...
a crowd control measure of sorts...

"Not yet. Give us one more day and let us make a shameful spectacle of our enemy."
The 10 sons, already slain, are hung, A second death

The evil will get a double portion heaped upon them
Is 40:2
Jer 16:18
Jer 17:18
Rev 18:6

v15-16 prey = "booty, spoil"

v17-19 the days of gladness:
13th – the day of defense
14th – the day of great victory in the countryside
15th – the day of great victory in the cities

to remember their mourning that was turned into celebration...
of God's supernatural preservation

v24-25 named for the lots cast by Haman to determine his “lucky day” for vengeance

there is no such thing as luck or coincidence.

There is only the True and Living, sovereign God of the universe

v26 the inauguration of the two day Feast of Purim...

a Persian word (Pur = “lots”) + a Hebrew plural (“im”)

Purim is celebrated to this day in ~ March

Kids dress up in costumes (ala Halloween)

- Queen Esther
- Prime Minister Mordecai
- The villain Haman

They eat special cookies called “Haman’s ears”

interesting thought:

per Ezk 39:11, Israel will call the valley where Gog is defeated the
“valley of Haman-Gog.”

The Hebrew word *haman* used in Ezk 39 is the same as the name Haman in this book.

The feast of Purim celebrates the miraculous defeat of Haman and his forces allied against Israel.

Ezk 38-39 predicts a future miraculous defeat of Israel’s enemies, the forces of
“Haman-Gog.”

As Purim approaches, notice how tensions between Israel and Arab nations steadily increase.

It has happened many years!

Could this prophetic war occur soon, culminating on Purim?

(15th day of 12th month – Adar – of Jewish religious calendar...March)

v27-28 therefore, the Feast of Purim has significant spiritual meaning.

a feast to help them remember that God's promises do not fail...
He WILL deliver His people so that His Word is true

points to remember

- God is in control
- Gen 12:1-3 is unconditional and still in force
- God loves His people
- God fights for His people
- God gives victory to His people
- In God there is life

this "non-perishable" celebration must have some future significance...?

v29 an official state holiday...is Jewish!
I love the irony!

An I love the memorial of God's turning the tables of sorrow into joy...
because He has done the very same thing for me and you!
Is 61:1-3

My life was in ashes...He has turned it into something beautiful!
He has taken my sorrow and given me joy!

v30 John 17:17
Phil 4:4-7

Esther Chapter 10

Events in Esther happen 25-30 years after Dan 9 and Ezra

- v3 Mordecai was a GREAT leader!
 He was interested in
- The welfare of the people
 - The wealth of the people
- rather than
- His own well-being
 - Enriching himself

A man is not qualified to govern unless he himself is governed

e.g. King Saul...vs...King David

a man who is not governed is a tyrant...and human government fails to serve the people
the only successful government is God's government

Is 9:6

For the people of God, what a turnaround!

ala from Eph 2:1-3
 to Eph 2:4-5
 Eph 1:3-12

From 1 Cor 6:9-10
To 1 Cor 6:11

Summary

A Classic story of

- Supernatural preservation of God's people
- God "covering His people with His wings"
- God caring for those who put their trust in Him
- Walking by faith and not by sight