

Have you ever found yourself wondering...Is God still in control? Is he still on his throne?

We've all been there. We have all found ourselves at one time or another echoing the words of David in [Psalm 13:1](#)

“1 How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?”

There are times in life when our circumstances make it look like God's no longer in control, like he left the throne. Times when it really looks like God doesn't have the upper hand.

Life has a way of making us question whether or not God is still on his throne.

This morning, we're going to find some hope in this struggle as we begin a new series in the Book of Esther. One of the most noticeable characteristics of this book is that in it's 10 chapters, it never once mentions God. On first read, God *seems* to be absent from the story. And yet, as we work our way through Esther we're going to find that God's fingerprints are ALL OVER this story. It's true throughout the book, and it's true in chapter 1 where we'll spend our time this morning.

[Esther 1:1-22](#)

It's an interesting way for a book that's in the Bible to begin. No mention of God, of his work, or even of his people. In fact, it doesn't even mention Esther!

The king of Persia throws this 180 day celebration of his greatness, his power, his wealth, his glory, his splendour. And it's followed by a 7 day feast for the people of Susa.

On the last day of the feast the king got a little tipsy, and decided he should show off his CROWN JEWEL, his most prized and beautiful possession, his wife Queen Vashti. Vashti was throwing her own banquet for the women in another part of the palace, when 7 of the King's servants showed up to bring Queen Vashti before the king wearing her crown (possibly only).

Understandably, the queen refused the king's order, and the king got MAD!

He called his advisers together to help him decide what should be done to Queen Vashti for her disobedience. They didn't want the other women in the kingdom to follow the queen's example and disobey their husbands. So the decision was made to dethrone her, Banish her from the king's presence forever, and find someone better than Vashti.

(Side note: do you know what Vashti's name means? "the best", "Desired one", "the beloved", "most desired".)

So Esther chapter 1 is a story of the wickedness and sin that prevailed in the pagan nation of Persia. It's a story of self-absorption, and selfishness, misplaced priorities, idolatry, drunkenness, abuse of power, objectification, and of anger. And we read a passage like this, and we have to wonder...why is this in the Bible? Where's God in this story? What does this add to our view of God?

You see the rampant wickedness, the unrestrained sin and evil in this story, and you have to ask the question...was God even on his throne at that time? Surely, the Israelites who had been in exile and were still living among these

people must have found themselves asking this question. Evil seems to be winning the day, sin is unrestrained, injustice is all over this situation. Where is God?

The answer we find in [Esther 1](#) is...He's where he's always been. On his throne, sovereignly ruling over everything!

God operates like a chess champion! He's not just focused on the next move. He sees the whole story before him, and as he strategizes to bring about his ultimate will...he makes moves that make it look like he's not in control, like he's no longer on the throne. But, church I've read [Revelation 22](#), and in the end, HE WINS!

[God is still on the throne when circumstances tell a different story.](#)

You need to know, even though it doesn't seem like it, God's fingerprints are all over Esther chapter 1, it's going to become more evident as we go through the book of Esther, but let me take a stab at showing you where we see God's involvement here in chapter one.

If you're unfamiliar with the story of Esther, let me just give you a very quick and incomplete summary of the story. It's the story of how a young Jewish girl named Esther saved her people. The existence of God's people is hanging in the balance, and God works through Esther, who we'll actually meet next week, to save them all. Now, to have the influence she needed in that culture, to complete God's mission for her, Esther needed to become queen. Which meant that Vashti couldn't stay the queen.

So, we actually see God was at work in this story in some of the most unexpected places...

- God's fingerprints are all over the dethronement of Queen Vashti!
 - It's strange because it seems like such an unjust, and sinful way for the king to handle his anger with the queen. And, it certainly is. And yet, for Esther to live out God's plan to save Israel Vashti couldn't remain queen.
 - God was working from his throne, leveraging the evil of king Ahasuerus for the good of his own plan
- [Romans 8:28](#)
 - ²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.
- So, the very thing that makes it seem like God wasn't on his throne actually has his fingerprints all over it!

[God is still on the throne when circumstances tell a different story.](#)

And if God's fingerprints are all over the dethronement of Vashti, wouldn't that mean they're also on...

- **King Ahasuerus' ridiculous order and subsequent anger?** His fingerprints are all over it! If the king hadn't tried to show his queen off to his guests, and if he hadn't flown off the handle when she refused...she would have stayed queen, and Esther wouldn't have risen to the position she needed in order to save her people!
 - The king's intentions were evil and sinful...But God was able to sovereignly work through the king's sin to bring about his good plan!
 - [Genesis 50:20](#) "20 As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today."

- Again, the very thing that makes us question God's presence in this story ends up having his fingerprints all over it!

God is still on the throne when circumstances tell a different story.

And if God was working in this story through the dethronement of Vashti and the king's ridiculous order and anger...Do you think it's possible that God was even working through the king's drunkenness and self-absorption?

- Again, these were sinful things the king was doing! Talk about pride! Talk about selfishness! Talk about blatant sinfulness! And we see him getting away with living in these ways, and we find ourselves wondering...God? Where are you? Are you on your throne?
- But, God was able to use the king's sinful drunkenness and self-absorption to topple the next few dominoes that need to fall in order for Esther to save her people. He worked the king's evil for Good!
 - So again, the very thing that makes us question God's presence in the story ends up having evidence of his work all over it!

God is still on the throne when circumstances tell a different story.

It was true in the book of Esther, and it's true in your life too.

When you look around at your circumstances and wonder where God is in it all...He's right where he's always been. He's sitting on his throne, playing the long game to bring about his plan and your good.. He's working all things for good for those who love him! He's taking what the enemy means for evil and working it for your good!

- in your financial problems
- Your family issues
- your struggles at work
- Your struggles with anxiety/depression/mental health issues
- Church, at times it may look like he's not there, but his fingerprints are all over your struggles!

No matter what comes our way, church, we have the hope of knowing that God is still on his throne, no matter what our circumstances would say otherwise!

God is still on the throne when circumstances tell a different story.