



# ESTHER

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GOD'S PROVIDENCE IN AN EVIL DAY

# Life is Full of Irony

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“That wasn’t expected!”



# The Great Paradox

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God is omnipotently present  
even where God is most  
conspicuously absent.

# Timeless

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1. God uses external circumstances to awaken passive believers to turn to Him in repentance.
2. Regardless of path, God always places every believer in the exact time and place where he or she can make a difference for His glory.
3. God calls on all believers to make daily decisions that publicly identify them with their people.

# Irony: Chapters 5 & 6

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Irony: a state of affairs or an event that seems deliberately contrary to what one expects and is often amusing as a result.

Irony is a reminder for the reader that God shapes life's path in unusual and unexpected ways. It highlights His providence and control.

# Ironic Observations: Chapter 5:1-2

1. Vashti risked her life by refusing to come to the king when summoned.
  - 1a. Esther risked her life by appearing before the king when not summoned.
  
2. Esther approaches the king the first time having feasted and prepared for pleasure.
  - 2a. Esther approaches the king the second time having fasted and prepared for death.

# Ironic Observations: Chapter 5:3-6

3. The first time that Esther takes action, she is rewarded with life and honor.
- 3a. The last time young Jews in exile faced a pagan king and said they were willing to “perish”, they did (Dan 3:18).
- 3b. The next time that a woman is offered “half of the kingdom”, she claims John the Baptist’s head (Mark 6:23).

# Ironic Observations: Chapter 5:7-9

- 4. Esther has been portrayed as a passive pawn in the hands of powerful men.
  - 4a. Esther now has the two most powerful men in the world eating out of her hand.
  
- 5. Haman is given the highest honor in the kingdom – a personal lunch with the king and queen.
  - 5a. Haman has his lunch spoiled by one insolent Jew, whose fate is already sealed (Prov. 27:20).



# Ironic Observations: Chapter 5:10-14

- 6. Haman rejoices in his perceived position with the queen and is led by his wife to build a gallows the size of his ego.
- 6a. The two women whom powerful Haman seeks to impress will serve to demand his death and define the means of it.

# Ironic Observations: Chapter 6:1-9

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- 7. Xerxes is portrayed throughout the story as a mindless leader who cares little for details (or people).
- 7a. Xerxes now becomes a sleepless micromanager who focuses on both people and details.
- 8. Mordecai's saving of the king was a seemingly small unremarkable event when it happened.
- 8a. The king's readers *just happened* to focus on that part of the king's reign for early morning reading.

# Ironic Observations: Chapter 6:10-11

- 9. In twelve hours, Haman's pride plans both Mordecai's death and exaltation.
- 9a. Within twelve hours, Haman's exaltation will turn to his death. (Pride goes before a fall!)
- 10. Xerxes is honoring a Jew whom he does not realize that he has already condemned.
- 10a. Xerxes' honoring of Mordecai reverses the earlier slight and brings both hope and further confusion.

# Ironic Observations: Chapter 6:12-14

- 11. Haman starts the day with plans for his ultimate victory.
- 11a. Haman covers his head in grief and receives foreboding insight from his wife.
  
- 12. Haman arrived in the early morning to greet the king.
- 12a. Haman was hurried to lunch to meet the queen.

# The Structure of Feasts

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- A<sup>1</sup> Xerxes' banquet for the empire (1:2-4)
- B<sup>1</sup> Xerxes' banquet for the men of Susa (1:5-8)
- C<sup>1</sup> Esther's coronation banquet (2:18)
- D<sup>1</sup> Esther's first banquet for the king and Haman (5:1)
- E<sup>1</sup> Turning Point (6:1-2)
- D<sup>2</sup> Esther's second banquet for the king and Haman (7:1)
- C<sup>2</sup> Feasting for Mordecai's promotion (8:17)
- A<sup>2</sup> The first day of Purim feasting in the empire (9:17)
- B<sup>2</sup> The second day of Purim feasting in Susa (9:18)

# Important Lesson

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Regardless of what circumstances suggest “in the moment,” God is consistently ruling human (our) history with purposeful intent and unquestioned power.



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