



ESTHER

GOD'S PROVIDENCE IN AN EVIL DAY

The World in Crisis



Why Esther?

Paul states: “For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of Scriptures we might have hope (Rom 15:4).

Why Esther? – So that we may have hope.

The Great Paradox

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

Three Reminders

1. The author does not tell us what Esther was thinking. Any guess is just a guess. The author (Holy Spirit) does not want her motivations to be the focus of the passage. He desires that we think beyond the human action.
2. The actions of Esther cannot be justified in accordance with the OT law or the actions of others. She clearly falls short of the mark of the perfect standard.

Three Reminders

3. God in his providence:

- a. At times chooses not to issue public judgment on the short-comings of others. He hides their faults, but limits their praise.
- b. Allows for sinful choices to take place without intervention. His planned providence includes a knowledge and an allowance for man's sins.
- c. Uses the shortcomings of others to accomplish his will. He steers their weaknesses for his good.
- d. Continues to grow individuals in spite of sinful choices.

Practical Applications

1. When you make a poor decision:

- Don't discount God's ability to bring about good through it.
- Don't be paralyzed in thinking that God can never use you.
- Don't justify the action as culturally necessary.

2. When others make a poor decision:

- Be slow to judge and quick to forget motivations.
- Be encouraged that God can use it for good.
- Be challenged to learn from their mistakes.

The World Spinning out of Control

Five years has passed (3:7).

1. Queen Esther is established (2:17-18).
2. Mordecai goes unrewarded (2:19-22).
3. Haman the Agagite is praised (3:1).
4. A personal vendetta is plotted (3:2-6).
5. The holocaust is planned (3:7-11).
6. The king acts like a buffoon (3:12-15).
7. The city is confused (3:15).

Introduction of Haman

1. Lineage: Agagite (Exodus 17:8-16; Deut 25:17-19; 1 Sam 15:1-3)
2. Position: Second in command
3. Wealth: Offer is for 300 tons of silver
4. Title: “enemy of the Jews” (vs. 10)
5. Character: characterized as angry, proud, and conniving
6. His Plan: Holocaust
7. Final Scene: He is triumphant.

The Lot

1. The Practice: Purim refers to a cube-shaped dice used to determine the direction of the God(s).
2. Timing:
 - Haman cast the lot in the first month (Nisan).
 - The lot falls on the twelve month (Adar).
3. The biblical use:
 - Josh 18:6 – Joshua used the lot to define land boundaries.
 - Psalm 16:5-6 - David rejoices in the lot of the Lord.
 - Proverbs 16:33 – Proverbs encourages the lot.

Midpoint Marketplace Lessons

1. The wicked prosper.
2. Some wicked seek the destruction of the people of God.
3. Sometimes, the righteous are punished in this world.
4. All of this disappointment is mitigated by the reality that the “lot” is in the hands of God.

Midpoint Marketplace Lessons

Original readers know the final result, but the author wants them to see the path that God chose to get there.

A dark, blue-tinted photograph of a person walking away through a misty forest. The person is in the center, walking away from the viewer. The trees are dense and their leaves are visible, creating a textured background. The overall mood is somber and mysterious.

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