



ESTHER

GOD'S PROVIDENCE IN AN EVIL DAY



Decision Point

Between a Rock and a Hard Place

The Great Paradox

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

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 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).

Midpoint Marketplace Lessons

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

Decision Point (Chap 4)

1. The Jewish nation weeps (vs. 1-3).
2. Esther vacillates (vs. 4-11).
 - First Response: “Mordecai, don’t act shamefully in public.”
 - Second Response: “The personal risk is too great.”
3. Mordecai forces a decision (vs. 12-14).
 - “If the decree is enforced, then the King will kill you.”
 - “If the Jews are saved from another source, then you will perish.” (Veiled ambiguous reference)
4. Esther makes a choice (vs. 15-17).

Lessons for the Reader

Timebound: The pressure of the decree forces the exiled Jews to respond to God in repentance.

- The language used is that of Joel 2:12 – 17.
- OT covenantal promises are finally remembered.

Timeless: God uses external circumstances to awaken passive believers to turn to Him in repentance.

- It seems to be human nature that sometimes we will do the right thing only when it becomes too painful to continue to do the wrong thing. The motives are not always pure, but God uses various means to capture hearts.

Lessons for the Reader

Timebound: God providentially placed Esther, even through a questionable path, into the exact time and place in which she can make a difference for His glory.

- Esther has seemingly been controlled by the people and events around her, yet she ended up as a beautiful orphan in the city of Susa in the bedroom of Xerxes at a specific historic time.

Timeless: 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.

Lessons for the Reader

Timebound: Esther must make a decision to actively identify with her people or passively camouflage like a pagan.

- That point of decision will be excruciating. It must be open. It can be costly. It will take faith.
- Esther changes after the decision is made.

Timeless: God calls on all believers to make daily decisions that publicly identify them with their people.

- These decisions define you, change you, and can change the world around you.
- Clarity is achieved when death is not feared.

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