

## 1. Intro

- This is our 11th and final sermon in the series “Stand Strong in Troubled Times”.
- Today, we will look at the life of Queen Esther:
  - She was a young, Jewish woman who lived in Persia.
  - She lived in very undesirable circumstances in a pagan country and was subject to a pagan king. She faced an extremely difficult decision that impacted her life as well as the lives of Jewish people everywhere in the Persian Empire.
  - We'll see that she stood strong by depending on and obeying God, even with her life on the line. She believed that **God had divinely appointed her to be a part of that moment in history.**

## 2. Text: Various passages in the book of Esther

- Introduction to the main 4 characters in the book of Esther:
  - **King Xerxes:** He became king of the Persian Empire around 486BC. He ruled from the “fortress of Susa”. (He ruled sometime after King Darius, who was the Persian king who had Daniel thrown into the lion’s den).
  - **Esther:** Esther was a beautiful (inside and out), young Jewish woman. Her ancestors were part of the first group of exiles taken from Judah to Babylon in 605BC (120 years earlier). Esther was orphaned while still young.
  - **Mordecai:** Mordecai was Esther’s older cousin. When Esther’s parents died, he adopted her into his family and raised her as his own daughter. They lived in the fortress of Susa.
  - **Haman:** He was an advisor to King Xerxes and was promoted as the most powerful official under the king in the Persian Empire. He was an arrogant, evil man and the villain of this story.
- In the opening scene of the book of Esther, King Xerxes hosted a 180 day banquet followed by a 7 day banquet. He banished his queen from his presence for not obeying his command, but now wanted a new queen to take her place.
- **Esther 2:15-20** - King Xerxes chose Esther as his queen.
  - Esther was **forced** into an extremely undesirable situation, but, even as a young lady, she handled it with **humility** and **grace**.
- **Esther 2:21-23** - Mordecai was **loyal** to the king and reported an assassination attempt to the king.

- **Esther 3:1-6** - Haman schemed to have all Jews throughout the entire Persian kingdom killed.
- **Esther 4:10-14** - Mordecai advised Esther that perhaps she was made queen (by God) for just such a time as this.
  - Was she queen because of an immoral king's choice or was it God's Divine plan? Yes!?!
- **Esther 4:15-17** - Esther decided to see the king even if it meant she would die, but first, she fasted (and prayed) for 3 days.
  - Esther predetermined to obey the Lord's leading, but she also had complete dependence on Him as she was obeying Him.
- **Esther 5:1-4** - The king extended the gold scepter and welcomed Esther.
- **Esther 6:1-10** - King Xerxes ordered Haman to organize events to honor Mordecai for his past act of loyalty to the king.
- **Esther 7:1-10** - Esther humbly and courageously requested that the king spare her life and the lives of all the Jews in the Persian Empire from Haman's evil plan.
  - God was moving behind the scenes (unnoticed by most), sovereignly orchestrating the deliverance of the Jewish people from Haman's genocidal plan.
  - And both Esther and Mordecai were used by God to accomplish His will as they sincerely searched for God's will and then chose to obey Him - no matter what.

### 3. Application

- What issue in your life do you need to fast and pray to God about?
- Pause and let it sink in this week that God has divinely appointed you to live at this moment in history for a reason. Don't miss out on His purposes for you by being preoccupied with the stuff and the worries of this world!