

The Providence of God

Text: Esther 2

Series: For Such A Time as This

Supplemental Texts: See below

South Orlando Baptist Church

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Context - This chapter takes place during the 7th year of King Ahasuerus (Xerxes) reign (2:16). The events of chapter one had happened in the 3rd years of his reign (1:3). In the four years between chapters one and two, the king had many failed attempts to conquer Greece. At the beginning of this chapter he has returned to his palace a defeated man.

As you investigate the Providence of God....

1. Study the people God uses (vs. 1-7)

A. God can use believers and non-believers in His unfolding plan.

God is using an erratic pagan king, and an adopted Jewish exile.

B. Concerning Esther - 2 Views:

1. That she was worldly: A. She ate the kings food (unlike Daniel) B. She was pursuing marriage to a Pagan. C. She had not returned to Jerusalem.

2. That she was honorable: A. She was obeying Mordecai's direct command to keep her Jewish identity hidden B. She was "taken" against her will into the harem. C. The text never chastises her.

2. Sense the wisdom God dispenses (vs. 10, 20, 22)

A. God gets the needed wisdom to Esther at just the right time - first through Mordecai in telling her to remain silent about her nationality, and second through the leader of Eunuchs who tells her what to take into the night with the king. God also gives Mordecai wisdom about the plot to kill the king.

B. God will give you wisdom in your time of need when you seek Him and ask for it (James 1:5)

3. See the questionable situations God works in (vs. 8-22)

A. God is at work behind every detail of this story.

B. God is not watching things from a distance, he is near.

C. God works out the intentions of his plans in our world.

Where is Jesus? This chapter highlights the providence and predestination of God - who unfolds his unified plan to reach the nations through Jesus as the Bible story plays out. See Acts 4:23-28.

Questions for Application

1. What did the king's attendants propose, and why? (2:1-4)
2. How did the king plan to find another queen for himself? (2:3-4)
3. What background information does the passage give us about Mordecai? (2:5-7)
4. What does the passage reveal about Esther and her background? (2:7)
5. What kind of treatment did Esther receive at the palace, and why? (2:9)
6. For what reason did Esther not reveal her heritage? (2:10)
7. How did Mordecai keep in contact with Esther? (2:11)
8. What events preceded a woman's turn to go to the king? (2:12-14)
9. What was the only way a woman would get a second chance to see the king? (2:14)
10. What did Esther do when it was her turn to go to the king? (2:15)
11. What did King Xerxes think of Esther? (2:17)
12. How did Esther become queen? (2:17-18)
13. How did Esther continue to show her respect for Mordecai even after she had become queen? (2:20-23)
14. What did Mordecai discover while he was sitting at the king's gate? (2:21-22)
15. How did the king find out about the plot to assassinate him? (2:21-23)
16. How would you describe Esther?
17. What kind of relationship did Esther and Mordecai have?
18. In what ways is Esther a good role model for women and men today?
19. What impact did power and status have on Esther?
20. How have you allowed wealth or power to influence your character?
21. How can we guard against the temptation to allow money, status, or power to influence our motivations and actions?
22. What do you think is the proper attitude toward wealth and prestige?
23. What qualities does God value most highly in a person?
24. How do your priorities influence the way you live every day?
25. What does this passage teach you about God's sovereignty?
26. What do you most want to remember from this story about money, status, and power?
27. What is one step you can take this week to conform your character more to that of Christ?
28. What steps can you take this week to guard against greed and materialism?
29. What does submission mean, and why is it highly valued in God's eyes? Discuss some modern-day situations that require submission to authority.
30. Though God is not specifically mentioned, can you detect the action of God in the story of Esther? What does this suggest for your own life and the times in which you live?