

Esther

I. The Queen says “No!” (Esther 1)

A family disagreement becomes a national crisis

A. Who is this King?

1. King Ahasuerus (Xerxes) was king over the Persian empire
2. He reigned from India to Ethiopia (SW of the Red Sea)
3. Today this would encompass the modern countries of Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan, & India
4. He reigned from 486 to 465 B.C.
5. There were 127 provinces at the time

Daniel 6:1 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom;

B. The King and His boastfulness

They enjoyed having lavish banquets because it gave them an opportunity to impress their guests with their royal power and wealth

1. Banquet for the key military and political officers (180 days)
Probably brought the leaders on a rotating basis – He wanted to invade Greece (his father Darius had been defeated when trying to invade Greece)

2. Banquet for the people in Shushan the palace (seven days)

- a) Colorful drapes
- b) Pillars of marble
- c) Bed of gold and silver
- d) Marble flooring of red, blue, black and white
- e) Golden drinking vessels

Daniel 5:1-4 Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which *was* in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which *was* at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

3. Banquet for the women of Shushan the palace (seven days)
Queen Vashti was hosting this banquet

C. The King and His drunkenness

The drinking was not compelled upon anyone

He wanted his wife to display her beauty to his guests

1. A woman challenging the authority of a man
2. A wife disobeying the orders of her husband
3. A subject defying the wishes of the king

The king had no self control

- He was drunk
- He became angry

D. The King and His vindictiveness

1. Not thinking rationally
2. Getting unwise counsel
 - a) Setting a bad example to others
 - b) Okay to rebel against authority
 - c) Actually teaching the other men to treat their wives the way the king treated the queen
3. Replace the queen

His problem with pride

His problem with self control

His problem with lust

His problem with loving his wife

Anger

- **Ephesians 4:26** Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:
- **Proverbs 14:17** *He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated.*
- **Proverbs 16:32** *He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.*
- **Proverbs 25:28** He that *hath* no rule over his own spirit *is like* a city *that is* broken down, *and* without walls.
- **Romans 12:19** Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, *Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*
- **James 1:19** Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

Alcohol

The Bible emphasizes the wisdom in total abstinence from alcohol

- Israel had abstained from alcohol while in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 29:5-6)
- The priests were to abstain from alcohol while serving in the tabernacle (Leviticus 10:8-11)
- Those taking a Nazarite vow were to abstain from alcohol (Leviticus 6:1-3)

The Bible warns against drunkenness

- **Proverbs 20:1** Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.
- **Proverbs 21:17** He that loveth pleasure *shall be* a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.
- **Proverbs 23:20-21** Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe *a man* with rags.
- **Proverbs 23:29-35** Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, *when* it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, *shalt thou say, and* I was not sick; they have beaten me, *and* I felt *it* not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.
- **Isaiah 5:11** Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, *that* they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, *till* wine inflame them!
- **Romans 13:13-14** Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*.
- **1 Corinthians 5:11** But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.
- **Ephesians 5:18** And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

The Bible warns those in leadership about alcohol

- **1 Timothy 3:1-3** This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;
- **1 Timothy 3:8** Likewise *must* the deacons *be* grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;

Marriage

- **Ephesians 5:21-33** Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife *see* that she reverence *her* husband.
- **1 Peter 3:1-7** Likewise, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation *coupled* with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.
- **1 Corinthians 7:10-11** And unto the married I command, *yet* not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from *her* husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband: and let not the husband put away *his* wife.
- **Mark 10:11-12** And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.
- **Matthew 19:5-6** And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

II. The New Queen

God was preparing Esther to be the new queen

A. King Ahasuerus' sorrow

1. His anger subsided
2. He remembered his love for Vashti
3. He remembered that Vashti had refused to come before him
4. He recalled the decree made against Vashti
5. He was without a queen for four years (1:3; 2:16)

Making Decisions

- Clearly think through each decision
- Consider your own emotions – are you thinking logically?
- Wait for the right time
- Seek advice

B. The king's counselors searching

1. They wanted to please the king
2. They didn't want Vashti back – they were afraid, after all this decree was their idea
3. Let's bring in beautiful young virgins for the king to enjoy
4. They were brought in for one night and then they became property of the king (concubines)
5. This was not a beauty contest
6. Appoint officers to gather these young virgins from across the land and bring them to Shushan the palace
7. Let the virgin that pleases the king become the new queen
8. These women were given perfumes, cosmetics, special diet and royal etiquette classes (12 months of preparation)

Marriage

- There is more to marriage than just the physical relationship
- Physical lust will not bring satisfaction
- True fulfillment is found in love and companionship

C. Mordecai's support

1. He was a Jew who had been carried away from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar

2. He took Esther, his cousin, (his uncle's daughter) to raise as his own daughter
3. He walked before the women's court every day to find out how Esther was doing

God is in Control

- God was in control of the entire situation
- God knew that Esther would be an orphan
- God prepared Mordecai to raise Esther
- God is not surprised
- We must trust God that He has a perfect plan

D. Esther submitting

1. Hadassah – Jewish name (myrtle)
2. Her Persian name (Esther) means “star”
3. She was beautiful
4. She received favor from Hegai, keeper of the women
5. She was given seven maidens to care for her
6. Mordecai had told her not to reveal her nationality (Jewess)
7. She prepared herself for 12 months before seeing the king
8. She was well favored by those around her
9. She was well favored by the king and he made her the queen
10. A royal feast was given to celebrate her becoming queen

Esther's Character

- She was pleasant (2:9)
- She was self controlled (2:10)
- She was teachable (2:10)
- She was modest (not drawing attention to herself) (2:15)
- She was sensible/practical (2:15)
- She was content (2:15)
- She was cheerful/well liked (2:17)
- She respected authority (2:20)
- She trusted God

E. Mordecai's safekeeping

1. He continued to sit at the king's gate
2. He told Esther of two men who desire to harm the king

3. These two men were hanged for their evil plot

Mordecai's Character

- Doing the right thing because it is right (didn't ignore the plot)
- Doing the right thing the right way (appealed to authority)
- Doing the right thing without promise of reward

III. An Old Enemy with a New Name

Haman was a dangerous man who hated the Jewish people

A. His ancestry – Agagite

1. Israel fighting Amalek

Exodus 17:8-16 Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovahnissi: For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

Deuteronomy 25:17-19 Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, *even all that were* feeble behind thee, when thou *wast* faint and weary; and he feared not God. Therefore it shall be, when the LORD thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance to possess it, *that* thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget *it*.

2. Agag, king of the Amalekites

1 Samuel 15:2-3 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember *that* which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid *wait* for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

1 Samuel 15:8-9 And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the

oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all *that was* good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing *that was* vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

1 Samuel 15:32-33 Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past. And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

B. His authority

1. Haman is promoted to chief officer in the empire
2. His authority came from the king
3. Mordecai may have been overlooked

Life is not always fair

Suffering is a repeated theme throughout life

- Natural disasters: earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, mud slides, blizzards, droughts
- Physical afflictions: injuries, birth defects, handicaps, disabilities, diseases, burns, assaults
- Emotional traumas: abuses, phobias, depressions, phobias, obsessions, self-image struggles
- Domestic conflicts: husband and wife battles, parent-child problems, decisions about aging parents, arguments over finances
- National concerns: crime, drugs, gangs, war, pollution, economic worries

C. His vanity

1. He was not content with just his high office
2. He wanted complete public recognition and honor
3. The king had to make a special decree to direct the people to pay homage to Haman
4. He was only given reverence because it was required – he hadn't earned any respect from the people
5. Mordecai would not bow to Haman – probably because he was an Amalekite
6. The king's servants tried to convince Mordecai to comply
7. Haman became angry that this one man wouldn't show him honor

8. Instead of just having the king punish him – he devised a plan to get even – he was revengeful – he wanted to kill all of the Jewish people

D. His subtlety

- 1.** He selected the day
 - a)** They cast lots to determine the day
 - b)** The date chosen would give the Jews almost a year to prepare
- 2.** He requested the king's permission
 - a)** He didn't even name the Jews by name
 - b)** One man disobeying one law was exaggerated as all of the Jews breaking all of the laws
 - c)** Haman offered to pay the king 10,000 talents of silver to rid the empire of these dangerous people (annual income of the Persian empire was 15,000 talents)
 - d)** The king either rejected the money or encouraged Haman to keep the spoils from the Jewish people
 - e)** They made the law official quickly so as to not give the king a chance to change his mind
 - f)** They spread the word quickly

E. His apathy

- 1.** He and the king sat down to drink
- 2.** The people in the city were perplexed (confused)

IV. A Day of Decision

Counting the Cost – How one person does make a difference

A. The Response of Mordecai

1. He rent his clothes and put on sackcloth

Sackcloth

- Made of black goat's hair
- Very coarse, rough and thick
- Used for making sacks
- Worn by those in mourning

2. He cried aloud of the decree, even at the king's gate

Mourning

Genesis 37:34-35 And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.

Joshua 7:6-7 And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads. And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!

Job 1:20 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped,

Jonah 3:5-10 So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered *him* with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused *it* to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that *is* in their hands. Who can tell *if* God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did *it* not.

B. The Response of the Jews

1. There was great mourning among all of the Jewish people
2. They lay in sackcloth and ashes

C. The Reaction of Esther

1. She was grieved for her cousin
2. She sent clothing to cover Mordecai
3. She entrusted Hatach, one of the king's servants

D. The Reaction of Mordecai

1. He explained the situation in detail
2. He linked Haman to this death sentence
3. He sent a copy of the official decree from the King
4. He requested that Esther present herself before the King and appeal for her people

E. The Response of Esther

1. The law says that no one can come before the king unannounced (*Boldly before the throne of grace*)
2. The exception to this rule is if the king holds out his golden scepter

F. The Request of Mordecai

1. Once again he pleads for Esther to go before the queen
2. He reminds her that her life would not be spared just because she lived in the palace
3. This is not the time for you to remain silent, but to speak up
4. Your actions will affect all of the Jewish people
5. You must protect and fight for your family
6. God has placed you in this situation "for such a time as this"

G. The Request of Esther

1. Gather together the Jews in the palace and fast for three days and nights
2. She agreed afterward to go before the king unannounced
3. She recognized that she may be giving her life
4. She set aside her fears

God is in control of every situation

- God has divine purposes to accomplish in this world
- God accomplishes those purposes through His people
- God will accomplish His purposes even if His servants refuse to obey
- God isn't in a hurry, but will fulfill His plans in due time

***Counting the Costs of Doing Right
One Person Can Make a Difference***

V. Confidence and Overconfidence

A. Esther's position

1. She had been placed in this position for such a time as this
2. She was willing to do what was right no matter the cost (If I perish, I perish) (Counting the cost for doing right? Do right anyway)
3. She was willing to do right even though she was standing alone (One person can make a difference)

B. Esther's faith

1. She had to act upon her faith
2. **James 2:20** But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

C. Esther's preparation

1. She sought the Lord
2. **2 Chronicles 7:14** If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.
3. She didn't rush (let's think about this for a minute)
4. She prepared herself to stand before the king (prepared herself emotionally)
 - a) God was preparing her heart during the three days of waiting
 - b) God was preparing the king's heart during the three days of waiting
5. She sought wisdom from the Lord (let's pray about this for a few days)

D. Esther's actions

1. She went to the throne room with boldness
2. **Hebrews 4:16** Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.
3. She demonstrated self-control – she didn't blurt out the problem
4. She did not panic – she invites them to another banquet

E. Esther's timing

1. Right people (She wanted just Haman and the king to be present) (She also wanted them to be comfortable having eaten)
2. Right place (She did not want this to take place in the throne room)
3. Right time (She didn't speak until the second banquet, but something miraculous happened in between those two banquets)
4. Right words (She held her tongue until it was appropriate)
5. Right way (She had the right tone)

Waiting Patiently

Isaiah 40:28-31 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, *that* the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? *there is* no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to *them that have* no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, and not faint.

We are to wait on the Lord for His help

- When we wait, we will renew our strength (strength needed for the difficult time ahead)
- When we wait, we will gain a new perspective – an eagle’s eye view of our circumstances (step back and see the big picture)
- When we wait, we can set our pace for the journey (getting ready for the marathon by starting slow and steady)
- When we wait, we can set our minds to persevere even when we are weary (commitment will keep us moving forward even when we are weak)

God will help us

Isaiah 41:10-13 Fear thou not; for I *am* with thee: be not dismayed; for I *am* thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish. Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, *even* them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought. For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.

- While preparing for an unprecedented event, wait on the Lord before getting involved (wait for God’s guidance and wait patiently for God to ready you and to ready those involved)
- When dealing with an unpredictable person, count on the Lord to open the doors of opportunity (take your fear of your enemy and turn it into confidence in your God)
- When working through an unpleasant situation, trust the Lord for enduring patience (timing is important)

- When standing against an unprincipled enemy, ask the Lord for invincible courage (God will give you strength above and beyond what you think is possible)

F. Haman's pride

1. Haman was filled with pride as he recounted the fact that he was the only one called to a banquet with the king and the queen
2. **Proverbs 16:18** Pride *goeth* before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

G. Haman's malice

1. He was angry that Mordecai would not bow to him or show him respect
2. Malice/hatred drives one to seek revenge

H. Haman's family

1. He called his wife and friends together to hear his complaints about Mordecai
2. Zereseth his wife, called for the gallows to be built (75 feet high) and for Mordecai to be hanged and killed thereon

I. Haman's loss

1. Haman allowed one man to steal all of his joy (he had been promoted by the king, he was well liked etc.)
2. Haman was overconfident that he would prevail

VI. Things Aren't Always as They Seem

A. The king's insomnia

1. What was it that kept the king from sleeping?

Ecclesiastes 5:12 The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.

(1) Worried about finances, state of the kingdom?

(2) Did he eat and drink too much at Esther's banquet?

(3) Was he puzzled about Esther's actions and forthcoming request?

(4) Did God awake him? Our God never sleeps and is ready to speak to us anytime. Are you ready to listen?

Psalms 121:1-4 I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

Lamentations 3:22-23 *It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.*

2. The king's choice of entertainment

a) He could have called for a wife or a concubine

b) He could have called for his musicians

c) He could have called for humorous entertainment

d) He could have called for someone to play games with him

God surely can direct us in our choices of entertainment and use them to speak to our hearts

3. The servant's choice of books

a) The book chosen was the legal chronicles that had been recorded

b) The specific book that contained the dates of Mordecai's service to the king

Esther 2:21-23 In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door, were wroth, and sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. And the thing was known to Mordecai, who told it unto Esther the queen; and Esther certified the king thereof in Mordecai's name. And when inquisition was made of the matter, it was found out; therefore they were both hanged on a tree: and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king.

God can direct even in our choice or reading

4. The king's delay in rewarding Mordecai
 - a) Time had passed without Mordecai being recognized for his good works
 - b) Was a reward or recognition overlooked? God knew that this would be the time for this action to be rewarded
 - c) We need to do right without any expectation of being rewarded
 - d) Patiently waiting and trusting God

Genesis 40:23 Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.

Genesis 41:1 And it came to pass at the end of two full years,
 5. The timely arrival of Haman
 - a) Haman just happened to be in the outer court ready to be seen by the king – wanting approval to hang Mordecai on the gallows

Proverbs 6:18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,

 - b) Again, God's timing is perfect

Romans 8:31 What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?
- B.** The king's decree
1. Bring in Haman from the outer court
 - a) The king needed some advice
 - b) Haman is invited into see the king (maybe the bedchamber)
 - c) Haman, full of pride, thought the king wanted to show appreciation to him
 2. How can we show honor for one's achievements
 - a) Dressed in the king's apparel
 - b) Wear the king's crown
 - c) Ride on the king's horse
 - d) Be led through the city by the king's servants

Proverbs 18:12 Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility.

Proverbs 29:23 A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.
- C.** The king's command
1. Show honor unto Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king's gate
 - a) Had the king forgotten about the edict against the Jews?
 - b) Was the king trying to put the Jewish people at ease?
 2. Haman surely was shocked at the king's choice of a man to show honor

- a) Haman probably gave Mordecai the fastest tour of the city that was possible
 - b) He had to tell others to bow down to Mordecai – exactly what Haman did not receive himself from Mordecai
 - 3. Haman had been humiliated
 - a) He was so concerned about what others thought of him – he was embarrassed
 - b) He was probably made fun of by many who knew that Haman hated Mordecai
 - 4. Haman’s family tried to warn him
 - a) His wife tried to warn him to reconsider his situation
 - b) Mordecai had been honored by the king – Haman would not be able to get away with harming him after this demonstration of respect
 - 5. Haman is summoned to the second banquet with the king and queen
- When all seems lost, it isn’t
Mordecai was about to be killed, but just in time the Lord allowed a situation for him to be honored
 - When no one seems to notice, God does
Mordecai had been overlooked for his good deeds, but God remembered what he had done
Ecclesiastes 12:14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil.
Matthew 6:3-4 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.
Hebrews 6:10 For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.
 - When everything seems great for our enemies, it is not
 - When nothing seems just, it is

VII. God Answers Their Prayers

God's timing compare to our wishes

- We measure time: years, months, weeks, days, hours, minutes, seconds
- We view time as one sequence after another, observing one thing at a time
- God does not measure time
- God sees the big picture, not the play by play
- We cannot view God's silence as inattention

A. The queen's request

1. She had probably rehearsed her words ahead of time
2. She humbly appealed to the king – not wanting to lift herself up
3. She pleaded by telling the king that her life was in danger and that she needed the king to help her
4. She compare their situation to just being sold as slaves to which she would have remained silent
5. She pleaded for her people who were also in danger
6. She repeated the decree to destroy the Jews – letting the king know that she was also a Jewess
7. She pointed out Haman as the adversary and enemy

B. The king's rage

1. He had been surprised that he himself was guilty of signing the decree
2. He was looking for someone to blame and someone to punish
3. He was surprised to find out that his right hand man was at the center of this conspiracy
4. He left the room and went out to the garden – obviously anger was burning inside of him

C. Haman's plea

1. He went from being a man filled with pride demanding honor and respect to a man pleading for his life to the queen
2. He was angered that Mordecai the Jew would not bow do him and now he is on bended knee before the Jewish queen

D. Harbonah

1. He offered some unsolicited advice
2. Haman made some gallows to kill Mordecai the Jew

Esther 1:10 On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha,

and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven chamberlains that served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king,

E. Haman's reward

1. Haman's own gallows were going to be used that day, but for another purpose

2. We reap what we sow

Galatians 6:7-8 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

a) Planting seeds of sin will reap sin

b) Planting seeds of righteousness will produce righteousness

3. God has promised to protect Israel

Genesis 12:3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

How to Appeal to Your Authority

- Have the Right Motives
 - What are you trying to accomplish?
 - Are you asking for yourself or for others?
 - Have you prayed about this?
- Select the Right Time
 - Not when they are busy, bothered or burdened
 - Few distractions
- Choose the Right Words
 - Think about what you want to say ahead of time
 - Positive words
- Keep the Right Attitude
 - Thankful to have had this opportunity to appeal
 - Submissive spirit no matter the decision

VIII. Esther's Intercession

A. Haman's estate

1. Haman's estate was given to Esther
2. Esther set Mordecai over Haman's estate

Esther 8:1 On that day did the king Ahasuerus give the house of Haman the Jews' enemy unto Esther the queen. And Mordecai came before the king; for Esther had told what he was unto her.

B. Mordecai's promotion

1. Mordecai was given the king's ring (previously held by Haman)
2. It was revealed to the king that Esther and Mordecai were cousins (now the king was related to Mordecai too)

Esther 8:2 And the king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it unto Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

3. Mordecai was given the royal clothing to wear

Esther 8:15 And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple: and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad.

C. Esther's petition

1. She pleads again for her people this time with tears
2. She urged the king to reverse the decree
3. She wasn't asking for herself, but for her people
4. Examples of those who prayed for others

a) Moses

Exodus 32:11-14 And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

b) Nehemiah

Nehemiah 1:6-7 Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses.

c) Ezra

Ezra 9:5-7 And at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the LORD my God, And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens. Since the days of our fathers have we been in a great trespass unto this day; and for our iniquities have we, our kings, and our priests, been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to a spoil, and to confusion of face, as it is this day.

d) Daniel

Daniel 9:3-6 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

D. The king's proclamation

- 1.** The king could not change the decree to kill the Jews
- 2.** The king issued another decree to allow the Jews to defend themselves
- 3.** Timeline of edicts

a) April (first Jewish month) (edict to kill the Jews)

Esther 3:12 Then were the king's scribes called on the **thirteenth day of the first month**, and there was written

according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that *were* over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof, and *to* every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring.

Esther 3:7 In the first month, that *is*, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that *is*, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, *to* **the twelfth month**, that *is*, the month Adar.

b) June (third Jewish month) (edict to allow the Jews to defend themselves)

Esther 8:9-11 Then were the king's scribes called at that time in the **third month**, that *is*, the month Sivan, on the three and twentieth day thereof; and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded unto the Jews, and to the lieutenants, and the deputies and rulers of the provinces which are from India unto Ethiopia, an hundred twenty and seven provinces, unto every province according to the writing thereof, and unto every people after their language, and to the Jews according to their writing, and according to their language. And he wrote in the king Ahasuerus' name, and sealed it with the king's ring, and sent letters by posts on horseback, and riders on mules, camels, and young dromedaries: Wherein the king granted the Jews which were in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, both little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey,

c) March (twelfth Jewish month) Destruction day

Esther 3:13 And the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, *even* upon the thirteenth *day* of the **twelfth month**, which is the month Adar, and *to take* the spoil of them for a prey.

E. The Jew's Joy

- 1.** They rejoiced after hearing the edict
- 2.** They celebrated the new edict
- 3.** Many of the Gentiles began to celebrate and join with the Jews because they feared them

4. Many still were enemies of the Jews – those who would be killed because they took force against them

Esther 8:16-17 The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour. And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.

IX. God's Chosen People, the Jews

A. The Fear of the Jews

1. God had sent a fear of the Jews into the hearts of the Gentiles

Esther 8:17 And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the **fear of the Jews** fell upon them.

Esther 9:2 The Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, to lay hand on such as sought their hurt: and no man could withstand them; for the **fear of them** fell upon all people.

Deuteronomy 11:25 There shall no man be able to stand before you: *for* the LORD your God shall lay the **fear of you and the dread of you** upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as he hath said unto you.

Joshua 2:8-11 And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof; And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that **your terror** is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that *were* on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard *these things*, our **hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage** in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

2. Today, there is a lack of the fear of the Lord

Romans 3:18 There is **no fear of God** before their eyes.

Exodus 5:2 And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.

Deuteronomy 10:12 And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to **fear the LORD** thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul,

Joshua 24:14 Now therefore **fear the LORD**, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD.

Proverbs 3:7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: **fear the LORD**, and depart from evil.

3. There was a fear of Mordecai, the vice president

Esther 9:3-4 And all the rulers of the provinces, and the lieutenants, and the deputies, and officers of the king, helped the Jews; because the **fear of Mordecai** fell upon them. For Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame went out throughout all the provinces: for this man Mordecai waxed greater and greater.

4. Today, the church is afraid of the world and so imitates the world that it is difficult to distinguish between the two

2 Corinthians 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you,

2 Corinthians 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

Ephesians 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.

B. The Defense of the Jews

1. The Jews defended themselves against their enemies

Esther 9:5 Thus the Jews smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, and slaughter, and destruction, and did what they would unto those that hated them.

2. The Jews did not initiate the attack – they were not the aggressors

3. On the 13th day of the 12th month Adar the Jews killed 500 men in Shushan and the ten sons of Haman

4. On the 14th day of the 12th month Adar the Jews killed 300 men in Shushan and hanged Haman's 10 sons on the gallows

5. In the remaining provinces, there were 75,000 killed

6. The Jews defended themselves but did not take of the spoils, nor does it seem that they killed the women and children (vs. 10, 15, 16)

C. The Feast of the Jews

1. The Jews established the Feast of Purim to remind the generations to come how that God has saved Israel from destruction

2. They celebrated on the 14th and 15th day of the month Adar

3. The feast is called Purim which means "casting lots"

Esther 3:7 In the first month, that is, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, *to* the twelfth *month*, that is, the month Adar.

Esther 9:24 Because Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had devised against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur, that is, the lot, to consume them, and to destroy them;

4. Mordecai sent a letter to the Jews declaring the special day and Esther followed up with a second letter confirming this day

Purim is the most festive of Jewish holidays, a time of prizes, noisemakers, costumes and treats. The Feast of Purim commemorates a major victory over oppression and is recounted in the book of Esther. Purim takes place on the fourteenth and fifteenth days of Adar, the twelfth month of the Jewish calendar usually March. The traditional observances of Purim include public readings of the Book of Esther, feasting, gifts of charity to the poor, and gifts of food among friends.

X. Mordecai and his Humility

- A.** Mordecai served the king without regard for his personal status or position (in contrast to Haman)
- B.** Mordecai was accepted by the Jews (Haman hated the Jews)
- C.** Mordecai sought to increase the wealth of the Jews
- D.** Mordecai promoted peace (Haman demonstrated evil and corruption)

God used a willing pair to accomplish His plan, probably not who we would have chosen or expected to be chosen