

GOD IS NEVER ABSENT.
HE IS ALWAYS AT WORK.

THE
HIDDEN
HAND
OF
PROVIDENCE

A VERSE-BY-VERSE COMMENTARY
ON THE BOOK OF ESTHER



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By Dr. Paul Crawford

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Preface

The Hidden Hand of Providence

A Verse-by-Verse Commentary on the Book of Esther

By Dr. Paul Crawford

The Book of Esther is one of the most remarkable books in the Bible. It is a story of danger, courage, political power, hatred, deliverance, and celebration. Yet beneath every event is a greater truth: **God is working even when His hand cannot be seen.**

One of the most striking features of Esther is that the name of God is not directly mentioned in the book. At first, this may seem unusual. How can a book of the Bible tell the story of God's people being delivered without openly mentioning God?

The answer is found throughout the story itself.

God does not always announce what He is doing. Sometimes He works quietly through circumstances, timing, people, decisions, and events that appear ordinary. Esther teaches us that **the silence of God does not mean the absence of God.**

That is the central message of this commentary.

The title *The Hidden Hand of Providence* reflects the great theme running through the entire book. God's hand is hidden, but His providence is unmistakable. Esther is placed in the palace before the crisis ever begins. Mordecai happens to uncover a conspiracy against the king. The king happens to be unable to sleep on the very night when Mordecai's forgotten faithfulness is discovered. Haman builds a gallows for Mordecai, only to be hanged on those very gallows himself.

What appears to be coincidence is repeatedly revealed as providence.

A Book About Courage

Esther is also a book about courage.

Esther was placed in a position she did not choose and faced a responsibility she could not avoid. When Mordecai challenged her to consider why she had become queen, he gave her words that have inspired generations of believers:

“And who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”
— Esther 4:14

These words remind us that God can place His people in specific circumstances for specific purposes.

Esther had to make a decision.

She could remain silent and protect herself, or she could risk her life to protect her people.

Eventually she declared:

“If I perish, I perish.”
— Esther 4:16

That is the language of courageous faith.

Faith does not mean that we are never afraid. Faith means that we obey God even when fear is present.

A Book About Divine Timing

Esther also teaches us about the importance of God's timing.

The events of the book did not happen randomly. Each event moved the story toward God's intended purpose.

Esther became queen before Haman's plot was revealed.

Mordecai discovered the king's assassination plot before Haman's decree was issued.

The king could not sleep on the very night when Mordecai's good deed needed to be remembered.

Haman arrived at the palace at the exact moment when the king was considering how to honor Mordecai.

The timing of these events reveals a God who is never late.

There are times in our own lives when we may wonder why something happened, why an opportunity appeared, why a door closed, or why a particular person entered our lives. We may not understand God's purposes at the moment.

Esther reminds us that **God can be arranging tomorrow through the circumstances of today.**

A Book About Pride and Judgment

Haman provides one of Scripture's clearest pictures of destructive pride.

He possessed wealth, authority, influence, and honor, yet one man who refused to bow to him consumed his thoughts.

Haman's problem was not that he lacked honor.

His problem was that he could never have enough.

His pride eventually became his destruction.

He built gallows for Mordecai, but those gallows became the instrument of his own judgment.

This reveals an important biblical principle:

Evil may appear to prosper for a season, but evil does not have the final word.

God sees what people cannot see.

God knows what people do not know.

God can overturn plans that appear unstoppable.

A Book About God's People

The Book of Esther also reminds us of God's faithfulness to His people.

Haman's plan was not merely an attack against Mordecai. It was an attempt to destroy the Jewish people throughout the Persian Empire.

Yet the enemy's plan failed.

The people who were marked for destruction were delivered.

The people who were mourning began to rejoice.

The decree of death was answered by a decree that gave God's people the opportunity to defend themselves.

The story moves from sorrow to celebration, from fear to courage, and from apparent defeat to victory.

This is one reason the Book of Esther remains so relevant.

God's people may face opposition, persecution, uncertainty, and circumstances that appear impossible. But the Lord remains sovereign.

The Purpose of This Commentary

This commentary has been written as a verse-by-verse study of Esther, with the goal of helping the reader understand both the meaning of the biblical text and its practical application to everyday Christian life.

Each chapter examines the historical events, spiritual lessons, major themes, and theological truths contained within the passage.

My desire is not simply for the reader to know what happened to Esther, Mordecai, and Haman.

My desire is for the reader to see **what God was doing through what happened to Esther, Mordecai, and Haman.**

The Book of Esther is not merely an ancient story about a Jewish queen in a Persian palace.

It is a testimony to divine providence.

It is a lesson in courage.

It is a warning against pride.

It is a reminder of God's faithfulness.

And it is an encouragement to every believer who has ever wondered whether God is working in the circumstances of life.

When God Seems Silent

Perhaps the greatest lesson of Esther is this:

God may be silent without being absent.

There will be seasons when we pray and do not immediately see an answer.

There will be moments when circumstances appear to be moving in the wrong direction.

There will be times when evil seems to have the advantage.

There will be days when we cannot understand what God is doing.

Esther teaches us not to judge God's presence by what we can see.

The Lord may be working behind the scenes, preparing circumstances that we do not yet understand.

What looks like coincidence may be providence.

What looks like delay may be preparation.

What looks like defeat may be the beginning of deliverance.

What looks like silence may be the sound of God preparing the next chapter.

The God who worked behind the scenes in Esther's day is still sovereign today.

A Challenge to the Reader

As you read this commentary, I encourage you not to read Esther merely as history.

Read it as a message.

Ask yourself:

Where is God working in my life even though I cannot see Him?

Why might God have placed me where I am today?

What responsibility has God placed before me?

Am I willing to stand for what is right when doing so is difficult?

Have pride, fear, or comfort prevented me from obeying God?

And perhaps most importantly:

What if God has placed me here “for such a time as this”?

Every believer has moments when a decision must be made.

Every generation needs men and women who are willing to stand for truth.

Every church needs believers who will refuse to remain silent when faithfulness requires courage.

And every Christian needs to remember that our lives are not governed by chance.

God is sovereign.

God is faithful.

God is working.

Even when we cannot see His hand.

That is the message of Esther.

And that is why this book is called:

The Hidden Hand of Providence.

May this commentary strengthen your faith, deepen your understanding of Scripture, increase your confidence in God's sovereignty, and encourage you to stand courageously wherever God has placed you.

And when you cannot see what God is doing, may the Book of Esther remind you:

His hand may be hidden, but His purpose is never absent.

Dr. Paul Crawford

Prologue

The Hidden Hand of Providence

A Verse-by-Verse Commentary on the Book of Esther

By Dr. Paul Crawford

There are moments in life when God seems silent.

We pray, but the answer does not come.

We look at our circumstances and wonder why God has allowed certain things to happen.

We watch evil appear to prosper while good people suffer.

We see doors close, plans change, enemies rise, and circumstances move in directions we never expected.

In those moments, it is easy to ask:

“Where is God?”

The Book of Esther answers that question in a remarkable way.

It does not answer by giving us a dramatic appearance of God.

It does not record a prophet standing before a king and declaring, “Thus says the Lord.”

It does not describe a miraculous fire falling from heaven.

Instead, Esther gives us something perhaps even more powerful:

A picture of God working behind the scenes.

God's name is not directly mentioned in the Hebrew text of Esther, yet His fingerprints are everywhere.

He is present in the circumstances.

He is present in the timing.

He is present in the decisions.

He is present in the unexpected events.

He is present in the reversal of evil.

He is present in the preservation of His people.

The God who appears silent is actually directing the story.

A Queen in a Dangerous World

The story begins in the Persian Empire during the reign of King Ahasuerus.

The king possessed enormous wealth and power. His kingdom stretched across a vast territory, and his palace represented the greatness of the Persian Empire.

But behind the gold, banquets, royal clothing, and political authority was a world filled with uncertainty.

Kings could make decisions that affected thousands of lives.

Officials could rise to positions of enormous influence.

A single decree could change the destiny of an entire people.

Into this world came a young Jewish woman named Esther.

She did not begin the story as a queen.

She was an orphan who had been raised by her cousin Mordecai.

Yet God was preparing her for a position she could not have imagined.

Esther did not know what was coming.

Mordecai did not know what was coming.

The Jewish people did not know what was coming.

But God knew.

Before the enemy's plan was revealed, God had already placed Esther in the palace.

Before the decree of destruction was written, God had already positioned the woman who would eventually stand before the king.

Before the crisis appeared, God had already begun preparing the answer.

That is providence.

The Enemy's Plan

Haman eventually entered the story.

He was promoted to a position of great authority and expected everyone to honor him.

But Mordecai refused to bow.

Haman's pride turned into hatred.

His hatred turned into a plan.

His plan turned into a decree.

And suddenly an entire people faced destruction.

From a human perspective, the situation appeared hopeless.

The king had authorized the decree.

The Persian legal system treated royal decrees as extremely difficult to reverse.

The Jewish people were scattered throughout the empire.

Their enemies were prepared to attack them.

It appeared that evil had won.

But evil had miscalculated.

Haman knew the power of the king.

He did not understand the power of providence.

“For Such a Time as This”

Mordecai eventually challenged Esther with one of the most memorable statements in Scripture:

“And who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”
— Esther 4:14

Esther had a choice.

She could remain silent.

She could protect herself.

She could pretend the crisis did not concern her.

Or she could step into the purpose for which she had been positioned.

Esther chose courage.

She asked Mordecai and the Jewish people to fast.

Then she prepared to approach the king.

She knew that entering the king's presence without being summoned could cost her life.

But Esther understood something important:

Sometimes faithfulness requires us to move forward even when we do not know how the story will end.

Her statement,

“If I perish, I perish,”

was not the voice of someone who believed death was inevitable.

It was the voice of someone who had decided that obedience was more important than personal safety.

The Night Everything Changed

Perhaps one of the most remarkable moments in Esther occurs in chapter 6.

The king could not sleep.

That sounds like an insignificant detail.

It was not.

The king ordered the royal records to be read.

There he discovered that Mordecai had previously uncovered a plot against his life.

Mordecai had never been properly rewarded.

The king suddenly wanted to know what should be done for the man he wished to honor.

At that very moment, Haman entered the palace.

Haman assumed the king wanted to honor him.

Instead, Haman was ordered to honor Mordecai.

The man Haman hated was publicly exalted.

The man Haman wanted to destroy was honored.

The man Haman expected to become great was humiliated.

And Haman's carefully constructed plan began collapsing around him.

All because a king could not sleep.

But was it really just insomnia?

Was it coincidence?

Or was there a hidden hand directing the events?

The Book of Esther invites us to see what human eyes cannot always see.

God was working.

The Reversal

The story of Esther is filled with reversals.

Vashti loses her position, and Esther becomes queen.

Mordecai is threatened, and eventually Mordecai is honored.

Haman plans to destroy Mordecai, and Haman himself is destroyed.

The Jewish people are marked for death, and they are delivered.

Mourning turns into celebration.

Fear turns into courage.

The enemy's plan becomes the instrument of his own downfall.

This is the great reversal of Esther.

The enemy thought he was writing the final chapter.

He was not.

God was.

The Hidden Hand

The title of this commentary, *The Hidden Hand of Providence*, comes from this central truth.

God does not always work through visible miracles.

Sometimes He works through ordinary events.

A person gets a job.

A door opens.

A conversation takes place.

Someone remembers something.

Someone forgets something.

A decision is delayed.

A circumstance changes.

A seemingly insignificant event becomes the turning point of an entire story.

We may call these things coincidence.

Scripture teaches us to look deeper.

God's providence means that God remains sovereign over His creation and works through circumstances to accomplish His purposes.

Esther reminds us that God's absence from the visible scene does not mean His absence from the story.

Your Story Is Not Finished

Perhaps you are reading this book during a difficult season of your own life.

Perhaps you are facing circumstances you do not understand.

Maybe you are waiting for an answer to prayer.

Maybe you are wondering why God has placed you in a particular situation.

Maybe you feel forgotten.

Mordecai knew something about being overlooked.

For a time, his good deed was forgotten.

But God had not forgotten him.

Esther knew something about fear.

She had to walk into the king's presence without knowing what would happen.

But God was already preparing the way.

The Jewish people knew something about facing impossible circumstances.

They were under a decree of destruction.

Yet God had already begun their deliverance.

And perhaps this is the message you need to hear:

Your circumstances are not the whole story.

You may only see one chapter.

God sees the entire book.

You may see the problem.

God sees the purpose.

You may see the closed door.

God sees what lies beyond it.

You may see silence.

God sees providence.

Before We Begin

As we walk verse by verse through the Book of Esther, we will examine more than the historical events.

We will look for the spiritual truths beneath those events.

We will examine the choices of Esther, Mordecai, Haman, and the king.

We will consider the consequences of pride, fear, courage, hatred, obedience, and faithfulness.

Most importantly, we will look for the hidden hand of God throughout the story.

Esther teaches us that God does not need to stand visibly in the foreground to be actively working in the background.

His hand can be hidden while His purpose remains certain.

His name may not appear on the page, but His providence is written across the story.

And that is why the Book of Esther still speaks to us today.

Because there will always be times when we cannot see what God is doing.

There will always be moments when faith must come before understanding.

There will always be opportunities to stand courageously for what is right.

And there will always be people whom God places in strategic positions **“for such a time as this.”**

So as we begin this journey through Esther, look beyond the palace.

Look beyond the politics.

Look beyond the personalities.

Look beyond the crisis.

Look beyond what human eyes can see.

Look for the hidden hand.

Because behind every circumstance, every reversal, every unexpected event, and every moment of deliverance stands the sovereign God who is never absent and never out of control.

****The hand may be hidden.**

The God who holds it is not.**

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Esther Chapter 1 — When Pride Meets Providence

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Esther Chapter 1 begins the story of a powerful Persian king, a magnificent kingdom, a beautiful queen, and a decision that will eventually change the course of an entire nation.

The name of God is not directly mentioned in the Book of Esther. Yet God's providence can be seen throughout the entire story. What appears to be a series of political decisions, personal conflicts, and royal circumstances is actually setting the stage for God's future deliverance of His people.

Esther 1 introduces us to **King Ahasuerus**, also known as Xerxes. He ruled a vast empire stretching from India to Ethiopia. He possessed enormous wealth, tremendous authority, and great political power.

But Esther 1 also reveals an important truth:

A person can possess great power and still lack great wisdom.

The king could command an empire, but he could not control his own anger. He could display enormous wealth, but he could not display equal wisdom. He could command others, but his pride eventually influenced his judgment.

Queen Vashti's refusal to appear before the king begins a chain of events that will eventually place Esther on the throne.

The great lesson of Esther 1 is this:

God can use circumstances that appear ordinary, political, or even chaotic to accomplish His sovereign purposes.

I. A KING OVER A VAST EMPIRE

Esther 1:1 — A King Who Ruled 127 Provinces

Verse 1

“This happened during the reign of King Ahasuerus, also known as Xerxes. He ruled over 127 provinces stretching from India all the way to Ethiopia.”

Esther begins by establishing the size and power of the Persian Empire.

Ahasuerus was not a minor ruler. He controlled an enormous territory.

His kingdom stretched from India in the east to Ethiopia in the west and south. His authority covered many different nations, cultures, languages, and peoples.

Cross References

Daniel 6:1

“It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps, or governors, over the kingdom, with three administrators over them. Daniel was one of those three administrators.”

This verse shows how the Persian Empire was organized into numerous provinces and governed through appointed officials.

Ezra 4:6

“At the beginning of the reign of Ahasuerus, the enemies of the Jews wrote an accusation against the people of Judah and Jerusalem.”

The reign of Ahasuerus was also a time when opposition against God's people was taking place.

Esther 8:9

“The king's secretaries were called together at that time, in the third month, the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day. They wrote everything Mordecai commanded concerning the Jews to the governors, officials, and leaders of the 127 provinces stretching from India to Ethiopia. The letters were written in the language and writing of each province and in the language of the Jewish people.”

The same 127 provinces mentioned at the beginning of Esther appear again later in the story.

Crawford Commentary

Esther begins by showing us the greatness of the empire before showing us the greatness of God's providence.

The king ruled 127 provinces, but God was not intimidated by 127 provinces.

The king had authority over nations, but God remained sovereign over the king.

Spiritual Principle

Human kingdoms may be powerful, but they are never more powerful than God.

II. THE KING IN SUSA

Esther 1:2 — The Royal Throne at Susa

Verse 2

“At that time, King Ahasuerus was sitting on his royal throne in the fortress of Susa.”

Susa was one of the important royal centers of the Persian Empire.

The king was sitting on his throne, surrounded by wealth and authority.

The throne represented earthly power.

But Scripture repeatedly reminds us that there is a throne greater than every earthly throne.

Cross References

Nehemiah 1:1

“These are the words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah. In the month of Kislev, during the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes' reign, I was in the fortress of Susa.”

Nehemiah also served in Susa during the Persian period.

Daniel 8:2

“In my vision I saw myself in the fortress of Susa, in the province of Elam. I was standing beside the Ulai River.”

Susa appears again in Daniel's prophetic vision.

Esther 9:6

“In the fortress of Susa, the Jews killed and destroyed 500 men.”

The city that appears at the beginning of Esther becomes an important location later in the story.

Crawford Commentary

The story begins in a palace, but God's purposes are not limited to palaces.

God works through kings, servants, queens, officials, and ordinary people.

Spiritual Principle

Never assume that God is absent simply because His name is not visible in the circumstances.

III. THE KING'S GREAT FEAST

Esther 1:3 — A Feast for His Officials

Verse 3

“In the third year of his reign, King Ahasuerus gave a great feast for all his officials and servants. The army of Persia and Media, the nobles, and the governors of the provinces were all there.”

This was not a small dinner.

The king invited the highest-ranking people in his empire.

He wanted them to see his wealth, power, authority, and glory.

Cross References

Daniel 5:1

“King Belshazzar gave a great feast for a thousand of his nobles, and he drank wine with them.”

The feast of Belshazzar demonstrates how royal celebrations could become occasions for excessive drinking and displays of wealth.

Genesis 40:20

“Three days later was Pharaoh's birthday, and he gave a feast for all his officials. He brought the chief cupbearer and chief baker before them.”

Royal feasts were often associated with important political and personal occasions.

Esther 2:18

“Then the king gave a great banquet for all his officials and servants to celebrate Esther. He announced a holiday throughout the provinces and gave generous gifts to the people.”

Later, Esther herself becomes the reason for another great royal celebration.

Crawford Commentary

The king was gathering the powerful people of the empire around himself.

But while the king was planning his feast, God was preparing something much greater than a celebration.

Spiritual Principle

People may gather for their own purposes while God is quietly preparing His purposes.

IV. DISPLAYING THE WEALTH OF THE KINGDOM

Esther 1:4 — 180 Days of Royal Splendor

Verse 4

“For 180 days, he displayed the enormous wealth of his kingdom and the magnificent splendor of his greatness.”

The feast lasted for an astonishing six months.

The king wanted his guests to see his wealth.

Notice the emphasis:

- His kingdom.
- His wealth.
- His greatness.
- His splendor.

The focus was largely on the king himself.

Cross References

1 Kings 10:23

“King Solomon was greater in wealth and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth.”

Solomon also possessed tremendous wealth and influence.

Ecclesiastes 2:9

“So I became greater than anyone who had lived in Jerusalem before me. In all of this, my wisdom remained with me.”

Solomon experienced greatness and abundance but eventually recognized the emptiness of pursuing earthly greatness by itself.

Proverbs 27:24

“Riches do not last forever, and a crown does not remain secure for every generation.”

Earthly wealth and political power are temporary.

Crawford Commentary

The king could display his wealth for 180 days, but he could not make that wealth permanent.

Everything earthly eventually passes away.

Key Truth

What impresses people today may be forgotten tomorrow.

V. A FEAST FOR EVERYONE

Esther 1:5 — Seven Days of Celebration

Verse 5

“When those 180 days were finished, the king gave another seven-day feast in the courtyard of the palace garden for everyone in the fortress of Susa, from the greatest officials to the ordinary people.”

The king moved from a feast for officials to a feast for everyone in Susa.

The palace garden became the setting for a tremendous celebration.

Cross References

Ecclesiastes 2:5

“I made gardens and parks for myself, and I planted every kind of fruit tree in them.”

Gardens were associated with wealth, beauty, and royal luxury.

Esther 7:7

“The king got up in anger, left his wine, and went into the palace garden. But Haman stayed behind to beg Queen Esther for his life because he realized that the king had decided to punish him.”

The palace garden becomes important again later in Esther.

Amos 6:6

“You drink wine from bowls, use the finest perfumes, and lie on beds decorated with ivory, but you do not care about the destruction of Joseph's descendants.”

Amos warns against luxury combined with indifference toward suffering.

Crawford Commentary

There is nothing inherently sinful about beauty, celebration, or wealth.

The danger comes when possessions become the center of life and when luxury makes a person insensitive to spiritual realities.

Spiritual Principle

Enjoy God's blessings without allowing His blessings to become your god.

VI. THE SPLENDOR OF THE PALACE

Esther 1:6 — A Palace Filled With Beauty

Verse 6

“The courtyard was decorated with white, green, and blue linen curtains, fastened with fine cords and purple ropes to silver rings attached to marble pillars. Gold and silver couches stood on a floor made of colorful marble and stone.”

The description emphasizes the incredible wealth of the Persian palace.

Everything was designed to communicate luxury.

Cross References

Exodus 26:1

“Make the Tabernacle with ten curtains of finely twisted linen and blue, purple, and scarlet yarn. Decorate them with artistic designs of cherubim.”

God Himself instructed Israel to use beautiful materials in the construction of the Tabernacle.

Exodus 27:10

“There are to be twenty posts and twenty bronze bases, with silver hooks and bands on the posts.”

The furnishings of the Tabernacle also demonstrated craftsmanship and beauty.

1 Chronicles 29:2

“With all my resources I have provided for the Temple of my God—gold for the gold work, silver for the silver work, bronze for the bronze work, iron for the iron work, and wood for the wooden work, along with precious stones and various other valuable materials.”

Beauty and excellence are not automatically wrong.

Crawford Commentary

The difference is not simply between something beautiful and something ugly.

The deeper issue is **what occupies the heart**.

Beauty can be used for God's glory, or beauty can become an object of pride.

VII. GOLDEN GOBLETS AND ABUNDANT WINE

Esther 1:7 — Royal Generosity

Verse 7

“Drinks were served in golden goblets, and every goblet was different. The royal wine flowed freely because the king wanted to show his great generosity.”

The king spared no expense.

Even the drinking vessels were made of gold.

Cross References

Daniel 5:2

“While Belshazzar was drinking wine, he ordered his servants to bring the gold and silver cups that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple in Jerusalem, so that the king, his nobles, his wives, and his concubines could drink from them.”

Belshazzar's feast shows how royal drinking could become connected with arrogance and disrespect toward God.

1 Kings 10:21

“All of King Solomon's drinking cups were made of gold, and all the household items in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon were made of pure gold. Nothing was made of silver, because silver was considered worthless in Solomon's days.”

Solomon's wealth was so great that silver was considered insignificant.

Ecclesiastes 2:3

“I explored the pleasures of wine while still guiding myself with wisdom. I wanted to see what was good for people to do during their short lives.”

Ecclesiastes explores the temporary pleasures of earthly life.

Crawford Commentary

The problem is not the material of the cup.

The deeper issue is the human heart.

A golden cup cannot give a person a godly heart.

Spiritual Principle

Possessions can fill your hands without ever filling your heart.

VIII. NO ONE WAS FORCED TO DRINK

Esther 1:8 — Everyone Could Choose

Verse 8

“Drinking was allowed according to the king's command, but no one was forced to drink. The king had instructed the officials of his household to let every person do what he wanted.”

The king established a rule concerning the feast.

No one was forced to drink.

Cross References

Proverbs 23:20

“Do not join those who drink too much wine or those who eat too much meat.”

Scripture warns against uncontrolled excess.

1 Peter 4:3

“In the past you spent enough time living like unbelievers—following sinful desires, drunkenness, wild parties, drinking parties, and disgusting idolatry.”

Peter reminds believers that their former way of life should not control them after coming to Christ.

Ephesians 5:18

“Do not get drunk with wine, because drunkenness leads to reckless living. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.”

The Christian life is not supposed to be controlled by alcohol or worldly excess.

Crawford Commentary

The verse describes a historical royal practice; it should not be interpreted as a command for Christians to participate in drunkenness.

The New Testament clearly teaches believers to exercise self-control.

Spiritual Principle

Christian freedom should never become an excuse for sinful excess.

IX. QUEEN VASHTI'S FEAST

Esther 1:9 — Vashti Gives Her Own Feast

Verse 9

“Queen Vashti also gave a feast for the women in the royal palace of King Ahasuerus.”

While the king was hosting the men, Vashti hosted the women.

This establishes that she was also a woman of position and influence.

Cross References

1 Timothy 5:14

“So I want younger widows to marry, have children, manage their households, and give the enemy no opportunity to accuse them.”

The New Testament recognizes important responsibilities within the household.

Titus 2:5

“They should teach younger women to love their husbands and children, to live wisely and purely, to manage their homes well, and to be kind and submissive to their husbands, so that no one will speak against God's Word.”

God's Word speaks about godly character and responsibility within marriage.

Proverbs 31:15

“She gets up while it is still night and prepares food for her household and portions for her female servants.”

The virtuous woman is active, responsible, and diligent.

Crawford Commentary

Vashti was not powerless.

She was the queen and had her own royal gathering.

Yet the conflict that follows shows how quickly pride, authority, and anger can collide.

X. WHEN THE KING'S PRIDE TAKES CONTROL

Esther 1:10 — The King Was Feeling Good From the Wine

Verse 10

“On the seventh day, when the king was feeling good from the wine, he commanded seven eunuchs who served him—Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas—to come before him.”

The seventh day became the turning point.

The king had been drinking.

His judgment was about to be influenced by his condition.

Cross References

Genesis 9:21

“He drank some of the wine, became drunk, and lay uncovered inside his tent.”

Noah's experience demonstrates that drunkenness can lead to shameful behavior.

Proverbs 20:1

“Wine makes people mock and beer causes fights. Whoever is led astray by them is not wise.”

Alcohol can affect judgment and behavior.

Daniel 1:3

“Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief official, to bring some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility.”

Daniel also describes the structure of royal service in Babylon.

Crawford Commentary

The king's condition matters.

A decision made under the influence of anger, pride, or intoxication can produce consequences that last far longer than the moment.

Spiritual Principle

Never allow temporary emotions to make permanent decisions.

XI. VASHTI'S BEAUTY

Esther 1:11 — The Queen on Display

Verse 11

“He ordered them to bring Queen Vashti before him wearing her royal crown so he could show the officials and the people her beauty. She was very beautiful.”

The king wanted to display his queen as another possession demonstrating his greatness.

He had already displayed his wealth.

Now he wanted to display his wife.

Cross References

2 Samuel 11:2

“One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful.”

David's story demonstrates how physical beauty can become connected to temptation when the heart is not governed by righteousness.

Genesis 12:14

“When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that Sarai was very beautiful.”

Sarah's physical beauty was also noticed by others.

Proverbs 31:30

“Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last, but a woman who fears the Lord will be praised.”

This gives us the proper perspective.

Physical beauty is temporary.

Godly character has lasting value.

Crawford Commentary

The king saw Vashti primarily as something to display.

Scripture reminds us that people are more than appearances.

Key Truth

God is more concerned with the condition of the heart than the appearance of the body.

XII. VASHTI REFUSES

Esther 1:12 — The Queen Says No

Verse 12

“But Queen Vashti refused to come when the king's servants delivered his command. The king became extremely angry, and his anger burned inside him.”

This is the crisis of Esther Chapter 1.

Vashti refused the command.

The text tells us that the king became furious.

Cross References

Proverbs 16:14

“A king's anger can mean death, but a wise person knows how to calm him.”

A ruler's anger can be extremely dangerous.

Daniel 3:13

“Then Nebuchadnezzar became furious and very angry, and he ordered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be brought before him.”

Nebuchadnezzar's anger also resulted in an immediate response.

Ecclesiastes 8:3

“Do not be in a hurry to leave the king's presence. Do not support a bad cause, because the king can do whatever he pleases.”

Earthly authority can be dangerous when combined with unchecked emotion.

Crawford Commentary

We should be careful not to read more into Vashti's refusal than the text tells us.

The Bible does not explain every detail of her motivation.

What it does clearly tell us is that the king became angry and that his anger set the next events into motion.

Spiritual Principle

Anger can turn a personal conflict into a life-changing crisis.

XIII. THE KING SEEKS COUNSEL

Esther 1:13 — Wise Advisers Were Consulted

Verse 13

“The king turned to his advisers, who understood the laws and customs of the kingdom. It was the king's practice to ask those who knew the law and justice.”

Instead of immediately making the decision himself, the king consulted advisers.

This was wise in principle.

But good counsel is only useful when the people giving the counsel are actually wise.

Cross References

1 Chronicles 12:32

“Men from the tribe of Issachar understood the times and knew what Israel should do. Their leaders numbered 200, and all their relatives were under their command.”

Understanding the times is a valuable leadership quality.

Daniel 2:12

“Because of this, the king became very angry and furious and ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon.”

A ruler's anger can even turn against his own advisers.

Genesis 41:8

“In the morning Pharaoh was troubled, so he called for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no one could explain them.”

Kings often depended upon advisers and wise men.

Crawford Commentary

Leadership requires counsel.

But leaders must distinguish between **wise counsel** and counsel that simply confirms their emotions.

Spiritual Principle

Do not ask for advice merely to find someone who agrees with you. Seek wisdom that will help you obey what is right.

XIV. THE SEVEN NOBLES

Esther 1:14 — Men With Access to the King

Verse 14

“The king's closest advisers were Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan. These seven nobles of Persia and Media had direct access to the king and held the highest positions in the kingdom.”

These men had tremendous influence.

They were not ordinary advisers.

They were among the highest officials in the empire.

Cross References

Ezra 7:14

“The king and his seven advisers are sending you to Judah and Jerusalem to find out whether the people are following the Law of your God, which you have in your possession.”

The Persian government used a group of prominent advisers in important decisions.

Daniel 6:2

“The king planned to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom, with three administrators over them, including Daniel, so that the king would not suffer loss.”

This demonstrates the administrative structure of the empire.

2 Kings 25:19

“From the city he took an officer who was in charge of the fighting men, five royal advisers who were still in the city, the secretary who was commander of the army, and sixty other men.”

Royal advisers could hold significant positions.

Crawford Commentary

The people closest to a leader can strongly influence the direction of that leader's decisions.

Therefore, leaders must be careful about whom they allow to shape their thinking.

XV. WHAT SHOULD WE DO ABOUT VASHTI?

Esther 1:15 — The King's Question

Verse 15

“The king asked them, ‘According to the law, what should be done to Queen Vashti? She refused to obey my command that was delivered by the eunuchs.’”

The king now wants a legal answer to a personal problem.

This is an important distinction.

The king's question was not simply:

“What is wise?”

It was:

“What does the law say we should do?”

Cross References

Deuteronomy 17:9

“Go to the Levitical priests and to the judge who is serving at that time. Ask them, and they will tell you the decision.”

God's law established proper procedures for difficult legal matters.

Ezra 7:25

“You, Ezra, according to the wisdom your God has given you, appoint judges and officials to administer justice among all the people in the region west of the Euphrates, especially those who know the laws of your God.”

Justice requires knowledgeable and qualified leadership.

Daniel 6:8

“Now, Your Majesty, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.”

Persian law was treated as binding once officially established.

Crawford Commentary

A dangerous mistake is to use legal authority to settle what is really a matter of wounded pride.

Wisdom asks:

What is right?

Pride asks:

How can I protect my authority?

XVI. MEMUCAN'S ACCUSATION

Esther 1:16 — Vashti Is Blamed for a National Crisis

Verse 16

“Memucan answered the king and the officials, ‘Queen Vashti has done wrong not only against the king, but also against all the nobles and all the people in every province of the empire.’”

Memucan dramatically expands the issue.

What began as a conflict between a husband and wife is now presented as a threat to the entire empire.

Cross References

Proverbs 11:14

“Without wise guidance, a nation falls, but victory comes when there are many wise advisers.”

Leadership requires wise counsel.

1 Kings 12:8

“But Rehoboam rejected the advice the older men gave him and asked the younger men who had grown up with him and were now serving him.”

Rehoboam demonstrates the danger of rejecting wise counsel.

Genesis 3:12

“The man said, ‘The woman you gave me gave me the fruit, and I ate it.’”

Adam attempted to shift responsibility onto someone else.

Crawford Commentary

There is a human tendency to enlarge personal problems.

A private disagreement can become:

- A family crisis.
- A church crisis.

- A community crisis.
- A national crisis.

Wisdom recognizes when a problem is personal and when it truly affects others.

XVII. THE FEAR OF OTHER WOMEN

Esther 1:17 — “They Will Hear About It”

Verse 17

“If other women hear what the queen did, they will begin to treat their husbands with contempt. They will hear that Queen Vashti refused to come when the king summoned her.”

Memucan argued that Vashti's actions could influence other women.

Cross References

Ephesians 5:33

“Each husband must love his wife as he loves himself, and each wife must respect her husband.”

Marriage requires both love and respect.

Titus 2:5

“They should live wisely and purely, manage their homes well, be kind, and respect their husbands, so that no one will dishonor God's Word.”

God's Word speaks about godly conduct and respect.

1 Peter 3:1

“In the same way, wives should submit to their husbands so that, even if some husbands do not believe God's Word, they may be won without words by the behavior of their wives.”

Peter emphasizes the influence of godly behavior.

Crawford Commentary

The Bible teaches respect within marriage.

But biblical marriage is not a one-sided arrangement where only the wife has responsibilities.

Husbands are commanded to love sacrificially, and wives are commanded to respect their husbands.

Spiritual Principle

A healthy marriage requires godly responsibility from both husband and wife.

XVIII. A KINGDOM-WIDE FEAR

Esther 1:18 — Fear of Widespread Disrespect

Verse 18

“Today the noblewomen of Persia and Media will hear about the queen's actions and speak the same way to their husbands. This will produce widespread disrespect and anger.”

Memucan predicted a national crisis.

His argument was essentially:

“If the queen can refuse the king, other women may refuse their husbands.”

Cross References

Proverbs 21:9

“It is better to live on the corner of a roof than to share a house with a quarrelsome wife.”

Constant conflict destroys peace in a home.

Proverbs 19:13

“A foolish son brings trouble to his father, and a wife who constantly argues is like water dripping without stopping.”

Constant arguing can destroy the peace of a household.

Proverbs 21:19

“It is better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and angry woman.”

Scripture repeatedly warns against destructive conflict.

Crawford Commentary

The larger principle is that conflict within the home can have consequences beyond the home.

However, Scripture also teaches that husbands must not provoke, abuse, or mistreat their wives.

Peace in the home requires humility from everyone.

XIX. THE ROYAL DECREE

Esther 1:19 — Vashti Loses Her Position

Verse 19

“If it pleases the king, let him issue a royal decree and make it part of the laws of Persia and Media so that it cannot be changed: Queen Vashti must never again appear before King Ahasuerus. Let the king give her royal position to another woman who is more worthy.”

Memucan recommended a permanent solution.

Vashti would no longer appear before the king.

Her royal position would be given to another woman.

The reader does not yet know who that woman will be.

But God does.

Cross References

1 Samuel 15:28

“Samuel said to Saul, ‘The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to someone else who is better than you.’”

Saul lost his position because of disobedience.

Daniel 6:8

“Now, Your Majesty, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians.”

Persian decrees carried great authority.

Esther 2:17

“The king loved Esther more than all the other women, and she pleased him more than all the other virgins. So he placed the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.”

This is where we see the significance of Esther 1.

Vashti's removal eventually creates the opportunity for Esther to become queen.

Crawford Commentary

What looks like a political decision is actually part of the providential preparation for God's deliverance of Israel.

God's name is not mentioned in this chapter.

But His providence is visible.

Key Truth

God can work through circumstances even when people do not realize that He is working.

XX. EVERY WIFE WILL HONOR HER HUSBAND

Esther 1:20 — The Decree Goes Throughout the Empire

Verse 20

“When this decree is announced throughout the king's vast empire, every wife will honor her husband, whether he is important or unimportant.”

The king wanted his decree to establish authority throughout the kingdom.

Cross References

Ephesians 5:22

“Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord.”

Christian marriage includes an ordered relationship under God.

Colossians 3:18

“Wives, submit to your husbands, as is appropriate in the Lord.”

The wife's responsibility is connected to obedience to Christ.

1 Peter 3:6

“Sarah obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters when you do what is right and do not give in to fear.”

Peter points to Sarah as an example of respectful conduct.

Crawford Commentary

These passages must be understood together with the husband's command to love his wife sacrificially.

Biblical authority is never permission for cruelty, abuse, selfishness, or domination.

A husband is not called to imitate the pride of Ahasuerus.

He is called to imitate Christ.

Spiritual Principle

Biblical authority is always accountable to God.

XXI. THE KING ACCEPTS THE ADVICE

Esther 1:21 — The Decision Is Made

Verse 21

“The king and his officials liked Memucan's advice, so the king did exactly what Memucan suggested.”

The king accepted the advice.

The decision was made.

Vashti would no longer be queen.

Cross References

Proverbs 21:1

“The king's heart is like a stream of water in the Lord's hand. He directs it wherever He wants.”

God remains sovereign over earthly rulers.

Proverbs 16:9

“People may make plans in their hearts, but the Lord directs their steps.”

People make decisions, but God's providence remains at work.

Proverbs 19:21

“People may make many plans in their hearts, but it is the Lord's purpose that will finally succeed.”

Human beings plan.

God remains sovereign.

Crawford Commentary

This is one of the great themes of Esther.

The king made a decision.

Memucan gave advice.

Vashti lost her position.

Yet behind the visible circumstances, God was preparing the way for Esther.

Key Truth

Human decisions do not cancel God's sovereignty.

XXII. THE DECREE IS SENT THROUGHOUT THE EMPIRE

Esther 1:22 — Every Man in His Own Household

Verse 22

“The king sent letters throughout all 127 provinces, written in the language and writing of each province, declaring that every man should be the ruler of his own household and should speak the language of his own people.”

The decree was distributed throughout the empire.

The king wanted his authority recognized not only in the palace but throughout every household.

Cross References

Genesis 3:16

“To the woman He said, ‘I will greatly increase your pain in childbirth. You will give birth to children with pain. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.’”

This verse describes the consequences of the fall and should not be treated as a permission for sinful domination.

Ephesians 5:23

“For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, His body, and He is the Savior.”

Christ is the ultimate example of godly leadership.

1 Corinthians 11:3

“I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.”

Biblical authority ultimately operates under God's authority.

Crawford Commentary

The final verse of Esther 1 establishes the cultural setting in which the story unfolds.

But there is a deeper lesson.

The king believed he could establish order throughout his kingdom through a royal decree.

Yet true order cannot be created simply through laws.

It must begin in the heart.

A marriage cannot be made healthy merely by command.

A family cannot become godly merely through authority.

God's design requires love, humility, faithfulness, sacrifice, and obedience.

XXIII. MAJOR THEMES OF ESTHER CHAPTER 1

1. PRIDE CAN CLOUD JUDGMENT

King Ahasuerus possessed tremendous wealth and authority.

But his pride became part of his downfall.

He wanted everyone to admire his greatness.

He wanted to display his queen.

When Vashti refused, his anger took control.

Spiritual Principle

The greater our position, the greater our need for humility.

2. GOD WORKS BEHIND THE SCENES

The name of God does not appear directly in Esther Chapter 1.

Yet God's providence is already moving.

Vashti is removed.

A vacancy is created.

Esther will eventually be brought into the palace.

She will become queen.

And later, God will use her position to save His people.

Crawford Commentary

What looked like a royal family dispute became part of a much larger divine plan.

Spiritual Principle

God does not have to announce His presence for His providence to be active.

3. ONE DECISION CAN AFFECT MANY PEOPLE

Ahasuerus became angry because of one event.

His advisers responded.

A decree was created.

Letters were sent throughout the empire.

A personal conflict became a national law.

Spiritual Principle

Leaders must understand that their decisions can affect people far beyond themselves.

4. BE CAREFUL WHO GIVES YOU COUNSEL

The king surrounded himself with advisers.

But having advisers does not automatically guarantee wisdom.

The quality of the decision depends partly upon the quality of the counsel.

Proverbs 15:22

“Plans fail when there is no counsel, but they succeed when there are many advisers.”

Good counsel is valuable.

But godly counsel must be consistent with God's truth.

Crawford Principle

Do not surround yourself with people who only tell you what you want to hear.

5. ANGER CAN CREATE CONSEQUENCES

The king's anger appears repeatedly in the chapter.

His emotional response to Vashti became a permanent political decision.

Crawford Commentary

Anger often tells us:

“Do something now.”

Wisdom often tells us:

“Slow down and think.”

One of the most important disciplines of spiritual maturity is learning not to make permanent decisions during temporary emotional storms.

6. BEAUTY DOES NOT LAST

Vashti was described as beautiful.

But Proverbs reminds us:

“Beauty does not last, but a woman who fears the Lord will be praised.”

Physical appearance changes.

Youth changes.

Possessions change.

Political power changes.

But character and faithfulness have eternal significance.

Spiritual Principle

Build your life around what lasts, not merely around what looks impressive.

7. GODLY MARRIAGE REQUIRES MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY

Esther 1 emphasizes the wife's responsibility to honor her husband.

But Scripture does not stop there.

Ephesians 5:25

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her.”

The husband's authority is not a license to control or mistreat his wife.

Christlike leadership is sacrificial.

1 Peter 3:7

“Husbands, live with your wives with understanding and honor them as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of God's gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.”

The husband is commanded to treat his wife with honor.

Crawford Principle

Biblical marriage is not about who can control whom. It is about two people living under the authority of God.

8. GOD CAN USE IMPERFECT CIRCUMSTANCES

Esther 1 contains:

- Pride.
- Anger.
- Alcohol.
- Political pressure.
- Human ambition.
- Poor judgment.
- A broken relationship.
- A royal decree.

Yet God is still working.

This is one of the most encouraging truths in Esther.

God's purposes are not defeated by human weakness.

Romans 8:28

“We know that God works all things together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.”

God can work through circumstances that people never intended for His purposes.

XXIV. THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD IN ESTHER 1

The reader knows something the characters do not know.

Vashti does not know what her removal will eventually accomplish.

The king does not know.

Memucan does not know.

The advisers do not know.

But the reader begins to see that a vacancy on the throne will eventually make room for Esther.

This is providence.

God is directing circumstances toward His purposes even when His hand is not immediately visible.

Crawford Bible Commentary Principle

“Just because you cannot see God's hand does not mean God is not moving.”

There may be moments in our lives when circumstances appear confusing.

Doors close.

Plans change.

People leave.

Unexpected decisions are made.

Yet God may be preparing something that we cannot see.

XXV. WHAT ESTHER 1 TEACHES US ABOUT LEADERSHIP

1. Leadership Requires Humility

Power without humility can become dangerous.

2. Leaders Need Wise Counsel

No leader knows everything.

3. Leaders Must Control Their Emotions

Anger should never become the master of decision-making.

4. Leaders Must Consider Consequences

A decision made quickly can affect thousands of people.

5. Leaders Are Still Under God's Authority

Earthly authority is temporary.

God's authority is eternal.

XXVI. WHAT ESTHER 1 TEACHES US ABOUT THE HOME

The chapter raises important questions about marriage and family.

A healthy home needs:

- Respect.
- Love.
- Communication.
- Self-control.
- Faithfulness.
- Humility.
- Forgiveness.
- Godly leadership.

A husband should never use Scripture as a weapon against his wife.

A wife should never use disrespect as a weapon against her husband.

Both husband and wife are accountable to God.

Crawford Principle

The strongest Christian home is not the home where one person dominates; it is the home where both people submit themselves to God.

XXVII. WHAT ESTHER 1 TEACHES US ABOUT PRIDE

The king spent 180 days displaying his greatness.

He wanted people to see his kingdom.

He wanted them to admire his wealth.

He wanted them to see his beautiful queen.

Yet one refusal exposed how fragile his pride really was.

Proverbs 16:18

“Pride goes before destruction, and a proud spirit comes before a fall.”

The king appeared powerful.

But his inability to control his anger revealed weakness.

Spiritual Principle

True strength is not the ability to control everyone else. True strength includes the ability to control yourself.

XXVIII. WHAT ESTHER 1 TEACHES US ABOUT GOD'S SILENCE

God's name is not mentioned in Esther.

Yet God's providence is everywhere.

This teaches us something important.

Sometimes God is working when:

- We do not hear Him.
- We do not see Him.
- We do not understand the circumstances.
- We cannot explain why a door closed.
- We cannot understand why a person left.
- We cannot see what tomorrow will bring.

Esther teaches us:

Silence does not mean absence.

God may be working in ways that are hidden from us.

XXIX. PERSONAL APPLICATION AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1 — Have I ever allowed pride to influence one of my decisions?

Answer:

Every person must examine his or her own heart because pride can influence our decisions without us recognizing it. Esther 1 shows us a king who possessed tremendous power and wealth, yet his pride was wounded when Vashti refused his command. Instead of responding with patience and wisdom, his anger led him toward a permanent decision.

The lesson for us is that we should ask God to reveal pride in our hearts before pride influences our decisions.

Application:

Before making an important decision, ask:

“Am I doing this because it is right, or because my pride has been wounded?”

Question 2 — Do I make important decisions while angry?

Answer:

Esther 1 teaches us that anger can greatly influence judgment. King Ahasuerus became extremely angry when Vashti refused to appear before him. His anger resulted in a decision that removed her from the position of queen.

The Bible repeatedly warns us about uncontrolled anger.

Proverbs 14:29

“Whoever is patient has great understanding, but whoever is quick-tempered displays foolishness.”

We should not allow anger to become the decision-maker.

Application:

When you are angry, slow down, pray, seek wise counsel, and allow time for your emotions to settle before making a permanent decision.

Question 3 — Who do I allow to influence my decisions?

Answer:

King Ahasuerus allowed seven high-ranking advisers to influence his decision concerning Vashti. This demonstrates how important the people around us can be.

The people we listen to can either encourage wisdom or strengthen foolishness.

Proverbs 13:20

“Walk with the wise and become wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.”

We should surround ourselves with people who respect God's Word and who are willing to tell us the truth.

Application:

Ask yourself:

“Do the people I listen to encourage me to obey God, or do they simply tell me what I want to hear?”

Question 4 — Do the people giving me counsel encourage me to follow God's Word?

Answer:

Not all counsel is godly counsel.

The advisers of Ahasuerus were knowledgeable about Persian law, but their advice did not necessarily represent God's wisdom.

Believers should measure counsel against Scripture.

Psalms 1:1

“Blessed is the person who does not follow the advice of the wicked, stand with sinners, or sit with those who mock.”

Godly counsel should lead us toward righteousness, truth, wisdom, and obedience to God.

Application:

Before accepting advice, ask:

“Does this advice agree with God's Word?”

Question 5 — Am I more concerned about appearance or character?

Answer:

King Ahasuerus was extremely concerned with displaying Vashti's physical beauty before his officials and guests. But Proverbs teaches that physical beauty is temporary.

Proverbs 31:30

“Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last, but a woman who fears the Lord will be praised.”

God is concerned about the heart.

A person's character, faithfulness, wisdom, kindness, humility, and relationship with God are more important than outward appearance.

Application:

We should not measure ourselves or others primarily by appearance.

Ask:

“What kind of person am I becoming on the inside?”

Question 6 — Do I treat my spouse with the love and respect Scripture commands?

Answer:

Esther 1 emphasizes respect within marriage, but the New Testament makes it clear that both husbands and wives have responsibilities.

Wives are instructed to respect and submit to their husbands as appropriate in the Lord.

Husbands are commanded to love their wives sacrificially.

Ephesians 5:25

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her.”

Therefore, biblical marriage is not about one person demanding everything from the other.

It is about both husband and wife living under the authority of Christ.

Application:

A husband should ask:

“Am I loving my wife sacrificially?”

A wife should ask:

“Am I showing my husband the respect Scripture commands?”

Both should ask:

“Am I honoring Christ in my marriage?”

Question 7 — Am I willing to trust God when I cannot see what He is doing?

Answer:

This is one of the greatest lessons of Esther.

God's name is not directly mentioned in the chapter, yet His providence is already moving.

Vashti's removal appears to be a royal decision.

But God is preparing the way for Esther.

The same principle applies to our lives.

We may not understand why something happens.

We may not know why a door closes.

We may not understand why circumstances change.

But God remains sovereign.

Proverbs 3:5–6

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not depend on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths.”

Application:

When you cannot see the whole picture, trust the One who can.

Question 8 — Could God be using a disappointing circumstance to prepare me for something else?

Answer:

Yes, Esther 1 demonstrates that God can use a disappointing or unexpected circumstance to prepare the way for something greater.

Vashti's removal appeared to be the end of her royal position.

But it also created the circumstances that eventually led to Esther becoming queen.

Esther's position would later become critical to the survival of the Jewish people.

Romans 8:28

“We know that God works all things together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.”

This does not mean that every painful event is good in itself.

It means God is capable of working through circumstances to accomplish His purposes.

Application:

Do not automatically assume that a closed door means God has abandoned you.

Sometimes God closes one door because He is preparing another.

Question 9 — Do I understand that my decisions can influence other people?

Answer:

Esther 1 clearly demonstrates that one decision can affect many people.

Ahasuerus' decision concerning Vashti began as a personal conflict.

But the decision became a royal decree.

The decree was sent throughout 127 provinces.

Therefore, the king's decision affected people far beyond the palace.

Our decisions can also affect:

- Our spouse.
- Our children.
- Our family.
- Our church.
- Our friends.
- Our coworkers.
- Our community.

Application:

Before making an important decision, ask:

“Who could be affected by what I am about to do?”

Wisdom considers consequences before acting.

Question 10 — Am I willing to surrender my plans to God's purposes?

Answer:

Esther 1 teaches us that human beings make plans, but God remains sovereign.

The king had his plans.

Memucan had his advice.

The officials had their expectations.

But God's larger purpose was moving forward.

Proverbs 19:21

“People may make many plans in their hearts, but it is the Lord's purpose that will finally succeed.”

Surrendering our plans to God does not mean that we stop planning.

It means that we recognize that God's purposes are greater than our own.

Application:

We should pray:

“Lord, I have my plans, but I surrender them to You. If my plans are not Your plans, redirect me.”

XXX. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM ESTHER CHAPTER 1

1. Pride Can Destroy Good Judgment

Ahasuerus had tremendous authority, but pride and anger influenced his decision.

Lesson: Stay humble even when God gives you influence.

2. Anger Should Not Control Decisions

The king's anger helped turn a personal conflict into a national decree.

Lesson: Pray before acting when emotions are strong.

3. Counsel Matters

The people around us can influence the decisions we make.

Lesson: Seek wise, godly, truthful counsel.

4. God Works Through Unexpected Circumstances

Vashti's removal seemed to be a political event.

But it prepared the way for Esther.

Lesson: A closed door may become part of God's larger plan.

5. God's Providence Does Not Require His Name to Be Visible

God is not mentioned directly in Esther 1.

Yet the events are moving toward His purpose.

Lesson: When you cannot see God working, continue trusting Him.

XXXI. THE SPIRITUAL PROGRESSION OF ESTHER 1

Esther 1 gives us a powerful progression:

A great king

↓

A great feast

↓

A display of wealth

↓

A demand for recognition

↓

A refusal

↓

Anger

↓

Counsel

↓

A decree

↓

Vashti removed

↓

The way prepared for Esther

The characters saw a political crisis.

God was preparing a deliverance.

XXXII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“What Looks Like the End May Be the Beginning of God's Next Move”

Vashti probably did not know that her removal would eventually lead to Esther becoming queen.

The king did not know.

The advisers did not know.

But God knew.

This is one of the great lessons of biblical providence.

Sometimes we experience something that feels like:

“Everything is falling apart.”

But God may be saying:

“I am preparing something you cannot yet see.”

A closed door does not automatically mean God's plan has failed.

A changed circumstance does not automatically mean God has abandoned you.

A disappointing event does not mean God has stopped working.

Esther 1 reminds us to trust God even when we cannot understand the circumstances.

XXXIII. FINAL APPLICATION

Esther Chapter 1 challenges every believer to examine the heart.

Are we like Ahasuerus, more concerned with being admired than being wise?

Do we allow anger to control our decisions?

Do we seek counsel from people who tell us the truth?

Do we understand the importance of godly marriage?

Do we judge people by appearance instead of character?

And perhaps most importantly:

Can we trust God when we cannot see what He is doing?

The Book of Esther begins with a king who appears to control everything.

But as the story unfolds, we discover that the king is not really the one controlling the outcome.

God is.

The king can issue decrees.

The king can remove a queen.

The king can appoint officials.

The king can rule an empire.

But God can take every one of those circumstances and use them for His purposes.

Crawford Bible Commentary Central Truth

Human beings may make plans and decisions, but God remains sovereign and can use even unexpected circumstances to accomplish His purposes.

XXXIV. CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for the lessons found in Esther Chapter 1.

Teach us to recognize that You are working even when we cannot see Your hand. Help us trust Your providence when circumstances are confusing and when life does not unfold according to our plans.

Protect us from pride.

Protect us from uncontrolled anger.

Give us wisdom when we make decisions.

Help us seek godly counsel and listen to people who will speak truth rather than simply tell us what we want to hear.

Teach husbands and wives to honor one another according to Your Word. Help husbands lead with sacrificial love and help wives respond with respect and godliness.

Remind us that beauty, wealth, power, and earthly position are temporary. Help us seek the things that have eternal value.

When a door closes, help us trust You.

When circumstances change, help us trust You.

When we cannot understand what You are doing, help us trust You.

Give us the faith to believe that You can take circumstances we do not understand and use them for Your purposes.

Help us remember that You are sovereign over kings, kingdoms, families, churches, communities, and individual lives.

May we never allow pride to take the place of wisdom.

May we never allow anger to control our decisions.

And may we always remember that even when Your name seems hidden, Your providence is still at work.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

KEY VERSE

“When this happened, King Ahasuerus was seated on his royal throne in the fortress of Susa.” — Esther 1:2

CENTRAL TRUTH

Human beings may make plans and decisions, but God remains sovereign and can use even unexpected circumstances to accomplish His purposes.

ESTHER CHAPTER 1 — THE CRAWFORD COMMENTARY SUMMARY

Esther Chapter 1 introduces us to the enormous Persian Empire, the wealthy King Ahasuerus, Queen Vashti, and the royal crisis that removes Vashti from her position.

The chapter teaches us about **pride, anger, leadership, marriage, counsel, authority, consequences, and divine providence.**

Most importantly, Esther 1 prepares the reader for something that the characters themselves cannot see.

Vashti's removal is preparing the way for Esther.

God's name is not mentioned, but God's providence is already moving.

What appears to be a human decision is becoming part of a divine plan.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Esther Chapter 2 — Esther Becomes Queen and Mordecai Uncovers a Plot

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Esther Chapter 2 continues the story immediately after Queen Vashti's removal.

King Ahasuerus has made his decree, but now the question becomes: **Who will become the new queen?**

The answer is Esther—a young Jewish woman who had been orphaned and raised by her cousin Mordecai.

From a human perspective, Esther's circumstances appear unlikely:

- She was an orphan.
- She was a Jewish exile.
- She was living under Persian authority.
- She was taken into the royal harem.
- She had no obvious political power.

Yet God was positioning her exactly where she needed to be.

At the same time, Mordecai discovers a plot against the king. His faithfulness seems insignificant at first, but the event is carefully recorded in the royal chronicles. Later, that record will become extremely important.

Esther Chapter 2 therefore teaches us a major principle:

God can position ordinary people in extraordinary places and use seemingly small acts of faithfulness for purposes far greater than they can see.

I. THE KING REMEMBERS VASHTI

Esther 2:1 — The King's Anger Has Cooled

Verse 1

“Some time later, after King Ahasuerus' anger had cooled down, he remembered what Queen Vashti had done and the decree that had been issued against her.”

The anger of the king had passed.

But now he remembered Vashti and the decree.

This demonstrates an important reality about human emotions.

Anger may be intense in the moment, but eventually the emotion passes.

The consequences of decisions made during anger, however, can remain.

Cross References

Psalms 103:9

“He will not always accuse us, and He will not remain angry forever.”

God's anger is not like uncontrolled human anger. God is patient and merciful.

Micah 7:18

“Who is a God like You, who forgives sin and forgives the rebellion of the people who belong to Him? You do not stay angry forever, because You delight in showing mercy.”

God delights in mercy.

Genesis 8:1

“But God remembered Noah and all the animals and livestock that were with him in the ark. God caused a wind to blow across the earth, and the waters began to go down.”

When Scripture says God “remembered,” it does not mean God had forgotten. It means God turned His attention toward carrying out His purpose.

Crawford Commentary

The king remembered Vashti.

But God's remembering is different.

When God remembers someone, He acts according to His covenant and purpose.

This becomes important throughout Scripture.

Spiritual Principle

Human beings may forget, but God never loses sight of His purposes.

II. THE SEARCH FOR A NEW QUEEN

Esther 2:2 — Beautiful Young Women Are Sought

Verse 2

“Then the king's personal attendants suggested, ‘Let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king.’”

The king's servants proposed a solution.

A search would be conducted throughout the empire for young women who could potentially become queen.

This was part of the culture and political structure of the Persian royal court.

Cross References

1 Kings 1:3

“So they searched throughout Israel for a beautiful young woman. They found Abishag from Shunem and brought her to the king.”

This shows that royal courts sometimes sought young women to serve the king.

Genesis 24:16

“The young woman was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had ever slept with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar, and came back up.”

Rebekah's story demonstrates that beauty and virginity were significant cultural considerations in marriage arrangements.

1 Samuel 16:12

“So Jesse sent for him and brought him in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the Lord said, ‘Rise and anoint him; this is the one.’”

David's outward appearance was noticed, but God ultimately looked at his heart.

Crawford Commentary

Esther's beauty becomes part of the circumstances that bring her into the palace.

But beauty alone does not explain Esther's significance.

Her greatest importance comes from the position God is preparing her to occupy.

Spiritual Principle

God can use natural abilities and circumstances as part of His greater purpose.

III. OFFICIALS ARE SENT THROUGHOUT THE EMPIRE

Esther 2:3 — Esther Enters the Royal Harem

Verse 3

“Let the king appoint officers in every province of the empire to gather these young women into the royal harem at the fortress of Susa. They will be placed under the care of Hegai, the king's eunuch who oversees the women, and they should be given beauty treatments.”

The search would be organized throughout the empire.

The women would be brought to Susa and placed under Hegai's supervision.

Cross References

Daniel 1:3

“Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief official, to bring some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility.”

Daniel also describes young people being brought into royal service.

Daniel 1:11

“Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.”

Daniel's experience demonstrates the structure and supervision within a royal training environment.

Genesis 41:34

“Let Pharaoh appoint officials over the land and collect a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven years of abundance.”

Joseph's story demonstrates the use of appointed officials throughout a kingdom.

Crawford Commentary

The empire had a sophisticated administrative system.

But behind that system, God was arranging circumstances that would eventually place Esther exactly where she needed to be.

IV. THE FUTURE QUEEN

Esther 2:4 — The Woman Who Pleases the King

Verse 4

“Then let the young woman who pleases the king be made queen in place of Vashti.’ This idea pleased the king, and he followed their advice.”

The king approved the plan.

Human beings were making decisions.

But God's providence was already moving.

Cross References

1 Samuel 16:1

“The Lord said to Samuel, ‘How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.’”

God had already chosen David before Samuel publicly anointed him.

Proverbs 21:1

“The king's heart is like a stream of water in the Lord's hand. He directs it wherever He wants.”

God can direct the decisions of rulers.

1 Samuel 15:28

“Samuel said to Saul, ‘The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to someone who is better than you.’”

God can remove one person and raise another according to His purposes.

Crawford Commentary

Esther was not accidentally becoming queen.

God's providence was positioning her.

The people involved did not understand the whole picture.

God did.

V. MORDECAI, A JEWISH MAN IN SUSAN

Esther 2:5 — Mordecai Is Introduced

Verse 5

“Now in the fortress of Susa lived a Jewish man named Mordecai, son of Jair, son of Shimei, son of Kish, a Benjaminite.”

The narrative now introduces one of the central figures of the book.

Mordecai was Jewish and belonged to the tribe of Benjamin.

Cross References

1 Samuel 9:1

“There was a prominent man from the tribe of Benjamin named Kish, son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah. He was the son of a Benjamite and was a wealthy and respected man.”

The tribe of Benjamin had an important place in Israel's history.

Philippians 3:5

“I was circumcised when I was eight days old. I am a pure-blooded Israelite from the tribe of Benjamin, a true Hebrew if there ever was one. I was a Pharisee.”

Paul also identified himself with the tribe of Benjamin.

1 Chronicles 8:1

“Benjamin's first son was Bela, the second was Ashbel, the third was Aharah.”

The genealogical records establish Benjamin's place among the tribes of Israel.

Crawford Commentary

Mordecai's Jewish identity becomes extremely important later in the book.

He is living in a foreign empire, but his ancestry remains part of his identity.

Spiritual Principle

Where you live does not determine whom you belong to.

VI. MORDECAI'S FAMILY HISTORY

Esther 2:6 — Exile From Jerusalem

Verse 6

“He had been taken from Jerusalem into exile by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon when King Jeconiah of Judah was taken into captivity.”

Mordecai's family history is connected to the Babylonian exile.

His people had experienced national disaster.

Jerusalem had fallen.

Many Jews had been taken into captivity.

Cross References

2 Kings 24:15

“Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin captive to Babylon. He also took the king's mother, wives, officials, and other important people of Jerusalem into exile.”

The exile was a devastating event in Israel's history.

2 Chronicles 36:10

“In the spring of the year, King Nebuchadnezzar sent for him and brought him to Babylon, along with the valuable articles from the Temple. He made Jehoiachin's relative Zedekiah king over Judah and Jerusalem.”

Babylon removed people and treasures from Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 24:1

“After King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had taken Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, captive, along with the officials, skilled workers, and craftsmen of Jerusalem and brought them to Babylon, the Lord showed me two baskets of figs placed in front of the Temple of the Lord.”

Jeremiah also describes the exile.

Crawford Commentary

Mordecai's family had experienced displacement and loss.

Yet generations later, one of his descendants would be positioned in the Persian royal court.

Spiritual Principle

A painful past does not prevent God from having a purposeful future.

VII. ESTHER'S ORIGIN

Esther 2:7 — An Orphan Raised by Mordecai

Verse 7

“Mordecai had a cousin named Hadassah, also called Esther, who had neither father nor mother. She was very beautiful and lovely in form. When her parents died, Mordecai adopted her and raised her as his own daughter.”

This verse introduces Esther.

Her Hebrew name was Hadassah.

Her Persian name was Esther.

But perhaps the most important fact about her background is that she was an orphan.

Mordecai took responsibility for her.

Cross References

Psalm 27:10

“Even if my father and mother abandon me, the Lord will take care of me.”

God cares for those who are vulnerable and alone.

James 1:27

“Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their suffering and refusing to let the world corrupt you.”

God places special importance on caring for the vulnerable.

Deuteronomy 10:18

“He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow and loves the foreigner living among you, giving them food and clothing.”

God's character includes compassion for the vulnerable.

Crawford Commentary

Esther's story begins with loss.

She had no father or mother.

But she was not abandoned.

Mordecai stepped into a parental
role.

And ultimately, God's providence was over her life.

Spiritual Principle

What people may see as weakness or disadvantage does not limit what God can accomplish through a person's life.

VIII. ESTHER IS BROUGHT INTO THE PALACE

Esther 2:8 — Esther Is Among the Young Women

Verse 8

“When the king's command was proclaimed and many young women were brought to the fortress of Susa under Hegai's care, Esther was among them.”

Esther did not enter the palace because she was seeking political power.

She was brought into the royal system as part of the king's search.

Her life was changing rapidly.

Cross References

Daniel 1:9

“Now God had caused the chief official to show favor and compassion toward Daniel.”

God's providence was also evident in Daniel's experience within a foreign royal court.

Genesis 39:4

“Joseph found favor in Potiphar's eyes and became his personal attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household and entrusted everything he owned to him.”

Joseph found favor even while living in circumstances he did not choose.

Genesis 41:37

“Joseph's plan seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his officials.”

God eventually raised Joseph from imprisonment to a position of great authority.

Crawford Commentary

Esther's circumstances were beyond her control.

Yet God was not beyond control.

Key Truth

God can work through circumstances that we did not choose.

IX. ESTHER FINDS FAVOR

Esther 2:9 — Hegai Favors Esther

Verse 9

“Esther pleased Hegai and gained his favor. He quickly provided her with beauty treatments and special food. He assigned her seven attendants selected from the palace and moved her and her maids to the best quarters in the harem.”

Esther immediately received favor from Hegai.

She was treated well.

She received special food and accommodations.

Cross References

Genesis 39:21

“But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him faithful love. He gave him favor in the eyes of the prison warden.”

God gave Joseph favor even in difficult circumstances.

Proverbs 3:4

“Then you will find favor and a good reputation in the sight of God and people.”

Favor is connected with godly character.

Nehemiah 1:11

“Lord, please hear my prayer and the prayers of Your servants who delight in honoring You. Please give me success today by making the king favorable toward me.”

Nehemiah also depended upon God to give him favor with the king.

Crawford Commentary

Favor does not always mean life will become easy.

Sometimes God gives favor because He is preparing someone for an assignment.

Esther's favor was preparing her for her future responsibility.

Spiritual Principle

Favor can be part of God's preparation for future responsibility.

X. ESTHER KEEPS HER IDENTITY SECRET

Esther 2:10 — Esther Does Not Reveal Her Jewish Identity

Verse 10

“Esther did not reveal her nationality or family background because Mordecai had instructed her not to.”

Mordecai instructed Esther to keep her Jewish identity private.

This becomes very important later in the story.

Cross References

Genesis 45:1

“Joseph could no longer control himself in front of everyone who was there, so he shouted, ‘Have everyone leave my presence!’ So no one was with Joseph when he revealed his identity to his brothers.”

Joseph also had a moment when his identity was revealed at a critical time.

Matthew 10:16

“Look, I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. So be as wise as snakes and as innocent as doves.”

Jesus instructed His followers to combine wisdom with innocence.

Proverbs 11:13

“A gossip goes around telling secrets, but a trustworthy person keeps a confidence.”

Not every fact must be revealed to everyone at every moment.

Crawford Commentary

This verse teaches us about discretion.

There is a difference between honesty and revealing every private detail to everyone.

Wisdom recognizes that some information must be handled carefully.

XI. MORDECAI WATCHES OVER ESTHER

Esther 2:11 — Mordecai Checks on Esther Every Day

Verse 11

“Every day, Mordecai walked near the courtyard of the women's quarters to find out how Esther was doing and what was happening to her.”

Mordecai continued to care for Esther.

Even though she was inside the royal complex, he wanted to know that she was safe.

Cross References

Genesis 37:14

“Jacob said to Joseph, ‘Go and see how your brothers and the flocks are doing, and then come back and tell me how things are going.’ So Jacob sent him from the Valley of Hebron, and Joseph went to Shechem.”

Joseph was sent to check on his brothers.

Philippians 2:20

“I have no one else like Timothy, who genuinely cares about your welfare.”

Timothy demonstrated genuine concern for others.

1 Samuel 17:18

“Take these ten cheeses to the commander of their unit. See how your brothers are doing and bring back some evidence that they are safe.”

David was also sent to check on his brothers.

Crawford Commentary

Mordecai did not simply raise Esther and then abandon her.

He continued watching over her.

Spiritual Principle

Godly care continues even when circumstances change.

XII. TWELVE MONTHS OF PREPARATION

Esther 2:12 — Preparation Before the King

Verse 12

“Before a young woman could go to the king, she had to complete twelve months of beauty treatments—six months with oil of myrrh and six months with perfumes and other cosmetics.”

Esther and the other young women underwent an extended period of preparation.

Cross References

Leviticus 12:4

“Then the woman must continue in purification from her bleeding for another thirty-three days. She must not touch anything holy or enter the sanctuary until her time of purification is completed.”

The Old Testament contains various periods of preparation and purification.

Ruth 3:3

“Now wash, put on perfume, and dress in your best clothes. Then go down to the threshing floor, but do not let Boaz know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking.”

Ruth prepared herself before approaching Boaz.

Ezekiel 16:9

“I bathed you with water and washed the blood from you. Then I put oil on you.”

Oil was associated with cleansing and preparation.

Crawford Commentary

Preparation can be lengthy.

God sometimes prepares people long before they understand why they are being prepared.

Spiritual Principle

Preparation may take much longer than the moment for which we are being prepared.

XIII. ESTHER'S CHOICE

Esther 2:13 — She Could Take What She Wanted

Verse 13

“When it was her turn to go to the king, she was allowed to take anything she wanted from the harem.”

The women were given the opportunity to choose what they would take with them.

Cross References

Genesis 24:58

“They called Rebekah and asked her, ‘Will you go with this man?’ She replied, ‘Yes, I will go.’”

Rebekah made a decisive choice concerning her future.

1 Kings 1:2

“So his servants said to him, ‘Let us find a young virgin for my lord the king. She can serve the king and take care of him. She can lie beside him so that my lord the king will be warm.’”

The royal court also used young women to serve the king.

Song of Solomon 1:4

“Take me away with you—let us hurry! Let the king bring me into his chambers. We will rejoice and be glad with you. We will praise your love more than wine. How right they are to love you!”

The Song of Solomon uses royal imagery to describe love and affection.

Crawford Commentary

Esther's response in the next verse becomes important.

She did not attempt to impress the king through excessive possessions.

XIV. ESTHER'S WISDOM AND HUMILITY

Esther 2:14 — A Different Part of the Harem

Verse 14

“She would go to the king in the evening and return the next morning to another part of the harem, under the care of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the concubines. She would not go to the king again unless he was especially pleased with her and called for her by name.”

The process was highly controlled.

The women did not simply return to their former lives.

They remained within the royal system.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 21:14

“If you do not want her, let her go wherever she wishes. You must not sell her or treat her as a slave, because you have humiliated her.”

The Law of Moses established protections concerning women taken in wartime.

Genesis 29:20

“So Jacob worked seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.”

Jacob's love for Rachel contrasts sharply with the impersonal royal system described in Esther.

Song of Solomon 2:16

“My beloved is mine, and I am his; he feeds his flock among the lilies.”

Biblical marriage is presented as involving mutual belonging and affection.

Crawford Commentary

Esther Chapter 2 describes a royal system very different from the covenant marriage model found throughout Scripture.

The narrative describes what happened; it does not mean everything that happened was God's ideal design for marriage.

XV. ESTHER'S HUMILITY

Esther 2:15 — She Asked for Nothing More

Verse 15

“When it was Esther's turn—the daughter of Abihail, Mordecai's uncle—she asked for nothing except what Hegai, the king's eunuch, recommended. Esther won the favor of everyone who saw her.”

Esther demonstrated humility and restraint.

She did not demand expensive possessions.

She trusted the advice of Hegai.

Cross References

Genesis 6:8

“But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.”

Favor can come through God's grace.

1 Peter 3:4

“Instead, let your beauty come from within, from the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious to God.”

God values inner character.

Proverbs 22:1

“A good reputation is more valuable than great riches; being respected is better than having silver and gold.”

Character is more valuable than wealth.

Crawford Commentary

Esther's beauty was obvious.

But her conduct also mattered.

She was not presented as arrogant or demanding.

She listened.

She showed restraint.

She demonstrated humility.

Spiritual Principle

A person's character can open doors that outward appearance alone cannot.

XVI. ESTHER IS BROUGHT BEFORE THE KING

Esther 2:16 — The Tenth Month of the Seventh Year

Verse 16

“Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus in the royal palace in the tenth month, the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.”

The long preparation finally reached its moment.

Esther was brought before the king.

Cross References

Ezra 7:9

“Ezra had left Babylon on the first day of the first month, and he arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month because the gracious hand of his God was on him.”

God's hand was involved in Ezra's journey.

Nehemiah 2:1

“In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had never been sad in his presence before.”

Nehemiah's position before the Persian king would eventually become important to God's work.

Zechariah 1:7

“On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, the month of Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Zechariah.”

The Persian period appears repeatedly in the biblical story.

Crawford Commentary

The timing is significant.

Esther did not become queen immediately after Vashti's removal.

There was a period of preparation and waiting.

Spiritual Principle

God's timing may include seasons of preparation and waiting.

XVII. ESTHER BECOMES QUEEN

Esther 2:17 — The Crown Is Placed on Esther

Verse 17

“The king loved Esther more than all the other women. She won his favor and affection more than all the other virgins. So he placed the royal crown on her head and made her queen in place of Vashti.”

This is the turning point of Esther Chapter 2.

The orphaned Jewish girl becomes queen of the Persian Empire.

From an earthly perspective, it appears to be an extraordinary rise.

From the perspective of providence, it is preparation.

Cross References

Psalms 45:11

“The king is captivated by your beauty; honor him, for he is your lord.”

Royal marriage is described in Psalm 45.

1 Samuel 16:13

“Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed David in front of his brothers. From that day on, the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David. Then Samuel returned to Ramah.”

David's elevation demonstrates God's ability to raise someone from an unexpected background.

Proverbs 31:29

“Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.”

Excellence and character bring honor.

Crawford Commentary

Esther's position is now dramatically different from where she began.

She was an orphan.

Now she is queen.

She was a Jewish exile.

Now she is in the center of the Persian royal court.

She had no apparent political influence.

Now she possesses a position that will eventually allow her to influence the fate of her people.

Key Truth

God can take someone from a place of weakness and position them for a place of influence.

XVIII. THE KING CELEBRATES ESTHER

Esther 2:18 — A Great Feast

Verse 18

“Then the king held a great feast in Esther's honor for all his officials and servants. He also declared a public holiday throughout the provinces and gave generous gifts, as was fitting for a king.”

Esther's coronation was celebrated throughout the empire.

Cross References

Genesis 21:8

“The child grew and was weaned, and Abraham held a great feast on the day Isaac was weaned.”

Feasts were occasions for celebration.

Luke 15:23

“Then bring the fattened calf and kill it. We must celebrate with a feast.”

Jesus used a feast to represent the joy of restoration.

Esther 9:22

“He told them to celebrate these days as days of feasting and joy, giving gifts of food to one another and gifts to the poor.”

Esther later becomes connected with another great celebration.

Crawford Commentary

The king celebrated Esther becoming queen.

But the greatest reason for celebration had not yet been revealed.

God had placed the right person in the right position before the crisis appeared.

XIX. MORDECAI AT THE KING'S GATE

Esther 2:19 — Mordecai Holds a Position at the Gate

Verse 19

“When the young women were gathered together a second time, Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate.”

Mordecai is now positioned near the royal court.

The gate was an important location where official business was conducted.

Cross References

Genesis 19:1

“That evening the two angels came to Sodom. Lot was sitting at the city gate. When he saw them, he stood up to meet them and bowed with his face toward the ground.”

The city gate could be a place of public business and authority.

Ruth 4:1

“Boaz went to the town gate and sat there. Just then, the family redeemer he had mentioned came by. Boaz said, ‘Come over here and sit down, my friend.’ So the man went over and sat down.”

Important legal and social matters were handled at the gate.

Esther 5:9

“Haman was a happy man as he left the banquet, but when he saw Mordecai sitting at the king's gate and noticed that Mordecai neither stood nor showed fear before him, Haman became furious with Mordecai.”

Mordecai's position at the gate becomes important later.

Crawford Commentary

Mordecai appeared to be doing ordinary work.

But ordinary faithfulness was positioning him for extraordinary usefulness.

XX. ESTHER CONTINUES TO OBEY MORDECAI

Esther 2:20 — She Keeps Her Family Background Secret

Verse 20

“Esther still had not revealed her family background or her nationality, just as Mordecai had instructed her. She continued to follow his directions, just as she had when he was raising her.”

Esther continued to honor Mordecai's instruction.

Cross References

Ephesians 6:1

“Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do.”

Proverbs 1:8

“My child, listen when your father corrects you, and do not neglect your mother's instruction.”

Proverbs 6:20

“My son, obey your father's commands, and do not neglect your mother's instruction.”

Crawford Commentary

Esther's obedience demonstrates the lasting influence Mordecai had in her life.

She had become queen, but she did not suddenly become arrogant or independent of godly counsel.

Spiritual Principle

A change in position should never produce a change in character.

XXI. MORDECAI DISCOVERS A PLOT

Esther 2:21 — Two Men Plot to Kill the King

Verse 21

“During this time, while Mordecai was at the king's gate, two of the king's eunuchs—Bigthan and Teresh, who guarded the doorway—became angry and plotted to assassinate King Ahasuerus.”

A serious threat develops.

Two men wanted to kill the king.

Cross References

2 Samuel 15:12

“While Absalom was offering sacrifices, he sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, to come from his town of Giloh. So the conspiracy grew stronger, and Absalom's followers increased.”

Political conspiracies can grow quietly before becoming public.

Psalms 41:9

“Even my close friend whom I trusted, who shared my bread, has turned against me.”

Betrayal can come from people who are close to us.

2 Kings 12:20

“Joash's officials conspired against him and murdered him at Beth Millo, on the road down to Silla.”

Kings have historically faced threats from people within their own administration.

Crawford Commentary

Mordecai was in the right place at the right time.

He did not know what God was preparing to do with the information he discovered.

He simply acted faithfully.

Spiritual Principle

Faithfulness in ordinary circumstances may prepare the way for extraordinary opportunities.

XXII. MORDECAI REPORTS THE PLOT

Esther 2:22 — Esther Tells the King

Verse 22

“But Mordecai found out about the plot and told Queen Esther, who then told the king, giving Mordecai credit as the source.”

Notice something important.

Mordecai did not seek personal glory.

He reported the danger.

Esther reported it to the king.

And Esther made sure that Mordecai received credit.

Cross References

Ecclesiastes 10:20

“Do not curse the king, even in your thoughts. Do not curse the rich, even in your bedroom, because a bird in the sky may carry your words, and some winged creature may report what you said.”

Wisdom requires discretion when dealing with authorities.

Amos 3:7

“Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing His plan to His servants the prophets.”

God sometimes reveals important information so that His purposes can be carried out.

Proverbs 11:13

“A gossip goes around telling secrets, but a trustworthy person keeps a confidence.”

Mordecai demonstrated responsible handling of information.

Crawford Commentary

Mordecai could have used the information for personal advantage.

Instead, he did what was right.

He reported the plot.

He protected the king.

He did not demand immediate recognition.

Key Truth

Do the right thing even when you do not know whether anyone will reward you for it.

XXIII. THE PLOT IS CONFIRMED

Esther 2:23 — Mordecai's Deed Is Recorded

Verse 23

“After the investigation confirmed the plot, the two men were hanged on a gallows. All of this was recorded in the Book of the Chronicles in the presence of the king.”

The plot was investigated.

It was confirmed.

The conspirators were punished.

And the entire event was officially recorded.

This detail seems small.

But it is extremely important.

Cross References

Esther 6:1

“That night the king could not sleep, so he ordered the Book of the Chronicles, the record of his reign, to be brought and read to him.”

This verse will eventually bring Mordecai's earlier faithfulness back into the story.

Ezra 4:15

“So that a search may be made in the official records of your predecessors. You will discover in these records that this city is rebellious and harmful to kings and provinces, causing trouble from ancient times. That is why this city was destroyed.”

Official records could contain information that later affected royal decisions.

Deuteronomy 19:19

“Then do to the false witness what that witness intended to do to the other person. You must remove the evil from among you.”

False accusations and testimony were taken seriously under God's law.

Crawford Commentary

Mordecai's reward did not come immediately.

The king did not appear to honor him.

Mordecai simply did what was right.

But the record remained.

Years later, the king would read that record.

And that seemingly forgotten act would become extremely important.

Spiritual Principle

Faithfulness may go unnoticed by people today, but God can preserve its significance for tomorrow.

XXIV. THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD IN ESTHER CHAPTER 2

Esther Chapter 2 contains several events that seem unrelated:

1. The king remembers Vashti.
2. A search begins for a new queen.
3. Esther is taken into the palace.
4. Esther gains favor.
5. Esther becomes queen.
6. Mordecai sits at the king's gate.
7. Mordecai discovers an assassination plot.
8. The plot is recorded in the royal

chronicles. At first, these events appear

disconnected.

But they are not.

They are pieces of a larger providential plan.

Esther is positioned near the king.

Mordecai's good deed is recorded.

Later, that record will become the instrument God uses to change the course of events.

Crawford Bible Commentary Principle

God often prepares the answer before we even know there is going to be a problem.

XXV. KEY LESSONS FROM ESTHER CHAPTER 2

1. GOD POSITIONS PEOPLE FOR HIS PURPOSES

Esther was an orphan and an exile.

Yet she became queen.

Her position was not merely about privilege.

It would become an opportunity for service.

Lesson

Where God places you may be connected to something He plans to do through you.

2. OBEDIENCE AND HUMILITY BRING FAVOR

Esther listened to Mordecai.

She listened to Hegai.

She did not demand special treatment.

Her humility distinguished her.

Lesson

Humility prepares a person for responsibility.

3. GOD USES FAITHFULNESS IN SMALL THINGS

Mordecai discovered a plot and reported it.

It may have seemed like a small act.

But it was recorded in the royal chronicles.

Later, that record became extremely important.

Lesson

Never underestimate the significance of doing the right thing when nobody seems to notice.

4. GOD'S TIMING IS PERFECT

Esther did not become queen immediately.

Mordecai did not receive immediate recognition.

But the events were being positioned at exactly the right time.

Lesson

Delayed recognition does not mean forgotten faithfulness.

XXVI. PERSONAL STUDY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question 1 — What does Esther's background teach us about God's ability to use people from difficult circumstances?

Answer:

Esther was an orphan who had lost both parents.

She was also part of a Jewish people living in exile under a foreign empire.

Yet God positioned her to become queen.

Her difficult beginning did not determine her final usefulness.

Application

Never assume that your past prevents God from using you.

God can use people who have experienced loss, hardship, rejection, disappointment, or difficult circumstances.

Question 2 — What does Mordecai's care for Esther teach us?

Answer:

Mordecai did not abandon Esther after raising her.

He continued watching over her and checking on her.

His actions demonstrate responsibility, love, and concern.

Application

When God gives us responsibility for another person, we should take that responsibility seriously.

Question 3 — Why is Esther's humility important?

Answer:

Esther did not demand whatever she wanted from the royal harem.

She accepted Hegai's recommendation.

She demonstrated wisdom and restraint.

Her beauty attracted attention, but her conduct also earned favor.

Application

Character matters more than possessions.

A person who has humility can be trusted with greater responsibility.

Question 4 — Why did Mordecai tell Esther not to reveal that she was Jewish?

Answer:

The text tells us that Mordecai instructed her to keep her nationality and family background private.

It does not give a detailed explanation for his reasoning in this verse.

Therefore, we should not claim more than the text tells us.

Later in the story, Esther's Jewish identity becomes central to the conflict.

Application

There are times when wisdom requires discretion.

Not every private matter needs to be announced publicly.

Question 5 — What does Esther becoming queen teach us about God's providence?

Answer:

Esther's rise to the throne placed a Jewish woman in the most influential position she could possibly occupy within the Persian Empire.

At the time, the reason for her position was not obvious.

Later, her position would become essential to protecting the Jewish people.

Application

God may place us somewhere long before we understand why we are there.

Question 6 — What does Mordecai's discovery of the assassination plot teach us?

Answer:

Mordecai was simply doing his responsibilities at the king's gate when he discovered the conspiracy.

He reported it instead of ignoring it.

His action was recorded.

Application

Faithfulness in ordinary circumstances matters.

We should do what is right even when nobody appears to be watching.

Question 7 — Why is it significant that Mordecai's action was written in the royal records?

Answer:

Because the event was not forgotten.

The record remained available for future use.

Later, the king would have those records read to him, and Mordecai's faithfulness would suddenly become important.

Application

You may not receive immediate recognition for doing what is right.

But your faithfulness is never meaningless.

Question 8 — What does Esther 2 teach us about God's timing?

Answer:

Esther becomes queen before the major crisis involving the Jews develops.

Mordecai's good deed is recorded before it becomes useful.

The circumstances are being arranged before the characters understand their importance.

Application

God can prepare tomorrow through what He asks you to do today.

Question 9 — Why should Christians remain faithful when nobody recognizes their work?

Answer:

Because our ultimate reward does not depend upon human recognition.

Mordecai did not immediately receive a reward for exposing the conspiracy.

Yet his action was preserved in the official record.

God sees faithfulness even when people do not.

Colossians 3:23

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not for people.”

Application

Work for God's approval rather than human applause.

Question 10 — What is the greatest lesson of Esther Chapter 2?

Answer:

The greatest lesson is that **God's providence is often working before we recognize it.**

Esther becoming queen and Mordecai exposing the plot appear to be separate events.

But both events are preparing the way for what comes next.

God is positioning people.

God is preserving information.

God is arranging circumstances.

And God is preparing deliverance.

XXVII. ESTHER 2 AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Esther Chapter 2 has several direct applications for believers today.

When you feel insignificant:

Remember Esther.

When you feel your past disqualifies you:

Remember Esther.

When you are serving without recognition:

Remember Mordecai.

When you wonder why God has placed you somewhere:

Remember Esther.

When your good work seems forgotten:

Remember the royal record.

When you cannot see God's plan:

Remember that Esther could not see the entire plan either.

XXVIII. FIVE GREAT TRUTHS FROM ESTHER CHAPTER 2

1. YOUR PAST DOES NOT HAVE TO DETERMINE YOUR FUTURE

Esther was an orphan and exile, but she became queen.

2. GOD CAN USE YOUR POSITION FOR HIS PURPOSE

Esther's position in the palace eventually became critical.

3. HUMILITY IS A GREAT STRENGTH

Esther did not demand what she wanted.

4. SMALL ACTS OF FAITHFULNESS MATTER

Mordecai's report of the assassination plot seemed small, but it was recorded.

5. GOD'S TIMING IS NEVER RANDOM

Esther was placed in the palace before the crisis arrived.

XXIX. A CRAWFORD COMMENTARY PRINCIPLE

“God May Be Preparing You Before You Know What You Are Being Prepared For”

Esther did not know why she had become queen.

Mordecai did not know why his report was recorded.

Neither knew what was coming.

But God knew.

This is often how providence works.

God may be preparing:

- A person before an opportunity.
- A relationship before a crisis.
- A position before a responsibility.
- A testimony before a trial.
- A ministry before a need.
- An answer before a prayer is fully understood.

Crawford Principle

Never despise the season of preparation simply because you cannot yet see the purpose.

XXX. CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the lessons found in Esther Chapter 2.

Thank You for reminding us that You can use people from difficult backgrounds and place them in positions of influence for Your purposes.

Help us learn from Esther's humility.

Help us learn from Mordecai's faithfulness.

Teach us to be responsible with the people You place in our lives.

Help us to serve faithfully even when nobody recognizes our efforts.

When we feel forgotten, remind us that You never forget.

When we wonder why You have placed us in a certain situation, help us trust Your providence.

When we are in a season of preparation, give us patience.

When our faithfulness seems unnoticed, remind us that You see everything.

Help us understand that You may be preparing tomorrow through what You ask us to do today.

Give us wisdom, humility, courage, and faith.

And help us remember that Your timing is always greater than our understanding.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

XXXI. CENTRAL TRUTH OF ESTHER CHAPTER 2

God can take an orphaned exile, place her in a position of influence, and use her life for a purpose far greater than she could have imagined.

And through Mordecai, we learn another important truth:

Faithfulness that appears forgotten may be the very thing God uses at the right moment.

ESTHER CHAPTER 2 — CRAWFORD COMMENTARY SUMMARY

Esther Chapter 2 moves the story from **Vashti's removal to Esther's coronation.**

Esther, an orphan raised by Mordecai, is brought into the royal palace. Through humility, wisdom, and favor, she becomes queen.

At the same time, Mordecai discovers an assassination plot against King Ahasuerus. He reports the conspiracy through Esther, and the event is recorded in the royal chronicles.

The chapter ends with two important things already in place:

Esther is in the palace.

Mordecai's faithful deed is in the royal record.

Neither event appears to have immediate significance.

But both will become critically important.

God is preparing the answer before the crisis fully appears.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY BIBLE STUDY

Esther Chapter 3 — Haman's Plot Against the Jews

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Esther Chapter 3 marks a dramatic change in the story.

In Chapter 2, Esther became queen and Mordecai uncovered a plot against King Ahasuerus. Everything appeared to be moving in a positive direction.

But now a dangerous enemy rises.

Haman is promoted.

His pride becomes offended because Mordecai refuses to bow before him. Instead of dealing with Mordecai personally, Haman decides to destroy the entire Jewish population throughout the Persian Empire.

Haman's hatred grows from **personal pride into national hatred**, and eventually into a plan of genocide.

Yet even though God's name is not mentioned in this chapter, the reader knows something Haman does not know:

Esther is already in the palace.

God has already positioned the person who will eventually stand between Haman's plan and the destruction of God's people.

I. HAMAN IS PROMOTED

Esther 3:1 — Haman Receives a Position of Honor

Verse 1

“After these events, King Ahasuerus promoted Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite and elevated him, giving him a seat of honor higher than all the other officials.”

Haman suddenly rises to a position of tremendous authority.

The king places him above the other officials.

This is important because Haman is not simply an angry man anymore.

He now possesses **political power**.

His pride has been given authority.

Cross References

1 Samuel 15:8

“He captured Agag, the king of the Amalekites, alive, but completely destroyed all the people with the sword.”

Agag was the king of the Amalekites.

Haman is identified as an **Agagite**, connecting him to the historical enemies of Israel.

Exodus 17:14

“Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely erase the memory of Amalek from under heaven.’”

The Amalekites had attacked Israel and became longtime enemies of God's people.

Proverbs 29:2

“When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice. But when the wicked are in power, the people groan.”

Leadership has consequences.

When righteous people lead, people benefit.

When wicked people gain power, people suffer.

Crawford Commentary

Haman's promotion demonstrates an uncomfortable truth:

Position does not automatically equal character.

A person can have tremendous authority and still have a corrupt heart.

Spiritual Principle

Never assume that because someone has been given authority, that person has been given righteousness.

II. MORDECAI REFUSES TO BOW

Esther 3:2 — Mordecai Will Not Honor Haman

Verse 2

“All the king's servants at the king's gate bowed down and honored Haman, as the king had commanded. But Mordecai refused to bow down or show him honor.”

Everyone else obeyed the king's command.

Mordecai refused.

This becomes the central conflict of the chapter.

Cross References

Exodus 20:5

“You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God.”

God forbids His people from worshiping idols.

Daniel 3:18

“But even if He does not save us, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up.”

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship Nebuchadnezzar's image even under threat of death.

Exodus 17:16

“Moses said, ‘Raise your hands toward the Lord's throne. The Lord will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation.’”

The Amalekites had a long history of hostility toward Israel.

Crawford Commentary

Mordecai's refusal is not presented as casual disrespect.

His Jewish identity is specifically mentioned in the surrounding verses.

He would not give Haman the honor Haman demanded.

The conflict therefore becomes a matter of **conscience and conviction**.

Spiritual Principle

There are times when obedience to God requires refusing to follow human demands.

III. MORDECAI IS QUESTIONED

Esther 3:3 — Why Will You Not Obey?

Verse 3

“Then the king's servants at the gate asked Mordecai, ‘Why do you disobey the king's command?’”

Mordecai's refusal did not go unnoticed.

The people around him wanted an explanation.

Cross References

Daniel 3:14

“Nebuchadnezzar said to them, ‘Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, is it true that you refuse to serve my gods or worship the gold statue I have set up?’”

The three Hebrew men were questioned because of their refusal to obey a command that violated their convictions.

Acts 5:29

“Peter and the other apostles replied, ‘We must obey God rather than human beings!’”

The apostles made their priority clear.

God's authority comes before human authority when the two directly conflict.

Daniel 6:13

“Then they said to the king, ‘Daniel, one of the exiles from Judah has ignored you and your law. He still prays to his God three times a day.’”

Daniel continued his practice of prayer even when the king issued a law against it.

Crawford Commentary

Mordecai was being pressured to conform.

The question was simple:

Why won't you do what everyone else is doing?

That is often how compromise begins.

People may ask why you cannot simply go along with everyone else.

Spiritual Principle

Faithfulness sometimes means standing alone.

IV. MORDECAI WILL NOT CHANGE

Esther 3:4 — Day After Day

Verse 4

“Day after day they spoke to him, but he refused to comply. So they reported it to Haman to see if Mordecai's explanation would stand, because he had told them he was a Jew.”

Mordecai was repeatedly pressured.

But he remained firm.

He did not change his position simply because people kept asking.

Cross References

Daniel 3:12

“But there are some Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up.”

These men were also accused because of their refusal to compromise.

Daniel 6:5

“Finally, these men said, ‘We will never find any reason to accuse Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God.’”

Daniel's enemies knew that his relationship with God was the area where he would refuse to compromise.

Genesis 39:14

“She called her household servants and said, ‘Look! This Hebrew has been brought here to make fun of us! He came into my room to sleep with me, but I screamed.’”

Joseph's faithfulness also brought false accusations against him.

Crawford Commentary

Mordecai's faithfulness made him different.

And being different can attract opposition.

Spiritual Principle

If your convictions are real, pressure should not automatically change them.

V. HAMAN'S FURY

Esther 3:5 — Haman Becomes Furious

Verse 5

“When Haman saw that Mordecai neither bowed nor paid him homage, he was furious.”

Haman's reaction reveals the condition of his heart.

Mordecai's refusal should have been a minor personal offense.

Instead, Haman becomes enraged.

Cross References

Daniel 3:19

“Then Nebuchadnezzar was so furious with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that his face became distorted with anger. He ordered that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than usual.”

Pride can produce extreme anger when challenged.

Proverbs 27:4

“Anger is cruel, and fury is overwhelming, but jealousy is even more dangerous.”

Unchecked anger can become destructive.

Genesis 4:5

“But He did not accept Cain and his offering. This made Cain very angry, and he was very upset.”

Cain's anger eventually led to violence against his brother.

Crawford Commentary

Haman's anger was not simply about an act of disrespect.

It exposed his pride.

He could not tolerate one person refusing to honor him.

Spiritual Principle

Pride becomes dangerous when personal honor becomes more important than righteousness.

VI. PERSONAL OFFENSE BECOMES NATIONAL HATRED

Esther 3:6 — Haman Wants to Destroy All the Jews

Verse 6

“But he thought it was too small a thing to punish only Mordecai. Since he had learned Mordecai's people were Jews, Haman looked for a way to destroy all the Jews throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus—the people of Mordecai.”

This is one of the darkest verses in the chapter.

Haman moves from:

offense → anger → hatred → genocide.

He does not want merely to punish Mordecai.

He wants to destroy an entire people.

Cross References

Psalms 83:4

“They say, ‘Come, let us wipe out Israel as a nation; we will destroy the very memory of its existence.’”

The desire to eliminate Israel had appeared repeatedly among Israel's enemies.

Exodus 1:16

“He said, ‘When you help the Hebrew women during childbirth and you see that the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live.’”

Pharaoh attempted to destroy Hebrew male children.

Exodus 1:22

“Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: ‘Throw every newborn Hebrew boy into the Nile River, but you may let all the girls live.’”

Pharaoh's policy became an attempt to eliminate Israel's future.

Crawford Commentary

Haman's hatred is now larger than the original disagreement.

This is an important warning about the progression of hatred.

A personal offense can become something much more destructive when pride refuses to forgive.

Spiritual Principle

Uncontrolled hatred can grow far beyond the original offense.

VII. HAMAN CASTS THE LOT

Esther 3:7 — Pur, or the Lot

Verse 7

“In the first month, the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, Haman had the ‘Pur’—that is, the lot—cast to determine the best day and month for the attack. The lot fell on the twelfth month, the month of Adar.”

Haman attempts to determine the date for his attack by casting lots.

The date selected was many months away.

From Haman's perspective, this provided time to prepare.

But from God's perspective, it provided time for the events of Esther 4–9 to unfold.

Cross References

Proverbs 16:33

“People may cast lots into their lap, but every decision comes from the Lord.”

Human beings may make plans, but God's sovereignty remains greater.

Jonah 1:7

“The sailors said to each other, ‘Come, let's cast lots to find out who is responsible for this trouble.’ So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah.”

The sailors used lots to determine responsibility for the storm.

Leviticus 16:8

“Aaron is to cast lots over the two goats, one lot for the Lord and the other for the scapegoat.”

Lots were used in certain Old Testament practices.

Crawford Commentary

Haman believed the lot would determine the future.

But the future was ultimately in God's hands.

The date he selected would become the date on which his own plans would be overturned.

Spiritual Principle

Human beings may make plans, but God remains sovereign over the outcome.

VIII. HAMAN DECEIVES THE KING

Esther 3:8 — Haman Accuses the Jews

Verse 8

“Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, ‘There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom. Their laws are different from those of every other people, and they do not observe the king's laws. It is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them.’”

Notice what Haman does not tell the king.

He does not explain that his hatred began because one Jewish man refused to bow before him.

Instead, he creates a political argument.

He presents the Jews as a threat to the empire.

Cross References

Ezra 4:13

“Now let it be known to the king that if this city is rebuilt and its walls are restored, the people will no longer pay taxes, tribute, or other duties, and eventually it will damage the royal treasury.”

False or misleading accusations could be used to influence Persian rulers.

Acts 16:21

“They are teaching customs that are illegal for us Romans to accept or practice.”

Paul and Silas were also accused of promoting practices their accusers claimed were unlawful.

Deuteronomy 4:8

“And what nation is so great that it has such righteous laws and regulations as this body of laws I am giving you today?”

Israel's laws were distinct because God had given them His covenant law.

Crawford Commentary

Haman manipulates the king by presenting a distorted picture.

He takes a personal grievance and turns it into a supposed national security issue.

Spiritual Principle

Hatred often looks for justification after the heart has already decided what it wants to do.

IX. HAMAN OFFERS MONEY

Esther 3:9 — Ten Thousand Talents of Silver

Verse 9

“If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will contribute ten thousand talents of silver into the royal treasury for the men who carry out the business.”

Haman attempts to make the proposal attractive financially.

He combines:

- deception,
- political influence,
- hatred,
- and money.

Cross References

Matthew 26:15

“He asked them, ‘How much will you pay me to betray Jesus to you?’ And they gave him thirty pieces of silver.”

Judas also allowed money to become part of a betrayal.

Exodus 21:32

“But if the ox kills a slave, the owner must pay the slave's master thirty pieces of silver, and the ox must be stoned.”

Silver could function as compensation in the ancient legal system.

Ezekiel 22:12

“There are people among you who take bribes to shed blood. You charge interest and make profits from others. You take advantage of your neighbors for your own gain. And you have forgotten Me, says the Sovereign Lord.”

Money can become an instrument of corruption.

Crawford Commentary

Haman is willing to finance the destruction of an entire people.

His wealth and influence have become tools of evil.

Spiritual Principle

Money is a tool; the heart determines whether it is used for good or evil.

X. THE KING GIVES HAMAN HIS SIGNET RING

Esther 3:10 — Authority Is Transferred

Verse 10

“So the king removed his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews.”

The signet ring represented royal authority.

Haman now possesses the authority to issue decrees in the king's name.

Cross References

Genesis 41:42

“Then Pharaoh removed his signet ring from his hand and placed it on Joseph's finger. He dressed Joseph in fine linen clothing and put a gold chain around his neck.”

Joseph received authority from Pharaoh.

Esther 8:2

“The king removed his signet ring, which he had taken back from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. Esther appointed Mordecai over Haman's property.”

The same symbol of authority will later be transferred from Haman to Mordecai.

Luke 15:22

“But his father said to the servants, ‘Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet.’”

The ring symbolized authority, status, and restored position.

Crawford Commentary

Haman's authority is real.

But it is temporary.

This is an important theme throughout Scripture.

People can receive tremendous power and then lose it.

Spiritual Principle

Earthly authority is temporary; God's sovereignty is permanent.

XI. THE KING GIVES HAMAN PERMISSION

Esther 3:11 — “Do With Them as You See Fit”

Verse 11

“The king said to Haman, ‘The money and the people are given to you—do with them as you see fit.’”

The king gives Haman enormous freedom.

He does not appear to investigate Haman's claims carefully.

Cross References

Matthew 27:24

“Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere and that a riot was developing. So he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. He said, ‘I am innocent of this man's blood. The responsibility is yours!’”

Pilate failed to administer justice properly despite having authority.

Mark 15:15

“Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. Then he had Jesus beaten with a whip and handed Him over to be crucified.”

Pilate surrendered justice to political pressure.

Daniel 6:9

“So King Darius signed the written law.”

The Persian kings could issue laws that carried enormous authority.

Crawford Commentary

A ruler who does not investigate truth carefully can become an instrument through which evil operates.

Spiritual Principle

Authority without discernment can become dangerous.

XII. THE DECREE IS WRITTEN

Esther 3:12 — The Royal Scribes Are Summoned

Verse 12

“On the thirteenth day of the first month, the royal scribes were summoned. They wrote out Haman's orders to the king's governors, administrators, and officials of each province, in every script and every language of the empire. It was written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet ring.”

The evil plan now becomes official government policy.

The decree is translated into every language.

It is sealed with royal authority.

Cross References

1 Kings 21:8

“So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, sealed them with his seal, and sent them to the elders and nobles living in Naboth's city.”

Royal authority could be used to carry out unjust plans.

Daniel 6:17

“A stone was brought and placed over the opening of the den. The king sealed it with his own royal seal and the seals of his nobles so that no one could rescue Daniel.”

A royal seal represented official authority.

Esther 8:8

“Now go ahead and send a message in my name in the way you think best, and seal it with the king's signet ring. A decree written in the king's name and sealed with his ring cannot be revoked.”

The authority represented by the signet ring becomes important again.

Crawford Commentary

Haman's private hatred has now become public law.

That is how dangerous evil can become when it gains political authority.

XIII. THE ORDER TO DESTROY THE JEWS

Esther 3:13 — An Order of Annihilation

Verse 13

“Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces, instructing them to destroy, kill, and annihilate all Jews—young and old, women and children—on a single day: the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar. Their property was to be taken as plunder.”

The decree is horrifying.

It targets everyone:

- men,
- women,
- children,
- young,
- old.

The goal is complete destruction.

Cross References

Psalms 37:32

“The wicked lie in wait for the righteous, looking for an opportunity to kill them.”

The righteous can face deliberate attacks from wicked people.

Esther 9:1

“On the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, the day the king's command was to be carried out, the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them. But just the opposite happened—the Jews got the upper hand over those who hated them.”

This cross-reference reveals what eventually happens.

The day intended for destruction becomes a day of victory.

Psalm 94:21

“They band together against the righteous and condemn the innocent to death.”

The wicked may unite against innocent people.

Crawford Commentary

The decree appears final.

But the reader knows that the story is not over.

Haman has selected a date.

He has issued a decree.

He has mobilized the empire.

But he has not accounted for God.

Spiritual Principle

A human decree can appear final without being the final word.

XIV. THE DECREE IS MADE PUBLIC

Esther 3:14 — Everyone Is Told to Prepare

Verse 14

“A copy of the decree was issued and made public in every province, giving instructions for the people to be ready for that day.”

The entire empire receives the order.

The danger is now public.

Cross References

Daniel 6:15

“Then the men went as a group to the king and said, ‘Remember, Your Majesty, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians, no decree or law that the king establishes can be changed.’”

The Persian legal system treated royal decrees as binding.

Esther 8:13

“A copy of the decree was to be issued as law in every province and made public to all the people. The Jews were to be ready on that day to take revenge on their enemies.”

The later decree will provide the Jews with a means of defending themselves.

Habakkuk 2:2

“Then the Lord said to me, ‘Write My answer plainly on tablets so that a runner can carry the correct message to others.’”

God also commanded that important messages be written clearly and publicly.

Crawford Commentary

Written words can carry tremendous power.

A written decree can affect nations.

But God's purposes remain greater than human documents.

XV. HAMAN DRINKS WHILE SUSA IS CONFUSED

Esther 3:15 — Haman Celebrates While Others Suffer

Verse 15

“The couriers set out, hurried by the king's command, and the decree was proclaimed in the citadel of Susa. Then the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was in confusion.”

This is one of the most striking contrasts in the chapter.

Haman is drinking.

The king is drinking.

But the city is confused and distressed.

Cross References

Amos 6:6

“You drink wine by the bowlful and use the finest lotions, but you do not care about the ruin of Joseph's descendants.”

This describes people enjoying luxury while ignoring suffering.

Proverbs 29:2

“When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice. But when the wicked are in power, the people groan.”

The condition of a nation can reveal the character of its leadership.

Esther 4:1

“When Mordecai learned about everything that had happened, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went into the city, crying loudly and bitterly.”

Mordecai's reaction contrasts sharply with Haman's celebration.

Crawford Commentary

Haman celebrates while others suffer.

That reveals the depth of his corruption.

He is not merely indifferent to suffering.

He is celebrating the suffering his own hatred has produced.

Spiritual Principle

A hardened heart can celebrate what a compassionate heart would mourn.

XVI. THE GREAT CONTRAST OF ESTHER CHAPTER 3

Esther Chapter 3 presents two very different men.

HAMAN

Haman is:

- proud,
- ambitious,
- easily offended,
- hateful,
- deceptive,
- manipulative,
- willing to destroy innocent people.

MORDECAI

Mordecai is:

- convicted,
- courageous,
- faithful,
- unwilling to compromise,
- willing to stand alone.

The conflict between them becomes much larger than a disagreement between two individuals.
It becomes a conflict between **pride and conviction**.

XVII. THE PROGRESSION OF HAMAN'S PRIDE

Haman's behavior follows a dangerous progression.

1. Haman receives honor.

He is promoted.

2. Haman demands honor.

Everyone is commanded to bow.

3. Mordecai refuses.

Haman becomes angry.

4. Haman becomes obsessed.

He cannot let the matter go.

5. Haman expands the conflict.

He moves from Mordecai to all Jews.

6. Haman manipulates authority.

He convinces the king to approve his plan.

7. Haman turns hatred into law.

The decree is issued throughout the empire.

8. Haman celebrates.

He drinks while the city is confused.

Crawford Principle

Pride that is not controlled can eventually become destructive to everyone around it.

XVIII. THE DANGER OF HATRED

Haman's hatred provides a serious warning.

He begins with one person.

But eventually he hates an entire people.

This teaches us that hatred does not naturally remain small.

If hatred is continually fed, it can grow.

Biblical Principle

James 1:20

“Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.”

Anger must be brought under God's authority.

Crawford Commentary

Mordecai's refusal was personal to Haman.

But Haman turned the issue into a racial and national attack against every Jew in the empire.

The proper response to personal offense is not collective hatred.

XIX. GOD'S PROVIDENCE IS ALREADY WORKING

God's name is not mentioned directly in Esther Chapter 3.

Yet God's providence can be seen.

Consider what has already happened:

Esther is queen.

Mordecai is near the royal court.

Mordecai has a relationship with Esther.

The king knows Esther.

The assassination plot has already been recorded.

Haman has selected a date many months in the future.

Everything necessary for the next stage of the story is already being positioned.

Crawford Principle

God can be working powerfully even when His activity is not immediately visible.

XX. KEY LESSONS FROM ESTHER

CHAPTER 3

1. PRIDE CAN LEAD TO DESTRUCTION

Haman could not tolerate one man refusing to bow.

His wounded pride eventually produced a plan to destroy an entire nation.

Lesson

Never allow pride to control your response to personal offense.

2. RIGHTEOUS CONVICTION MAY BRING CONFLICT

Mordecai refused to compromise.

His conviction brought opposition.

Lesson

Doing what is right does not guarantee that everyone will approve of you.

3. EVIL CAN GAIN POWER THROUGH DECEPTION

Haman did not tell the king the real reason he wanted the Jews destroyed.

He manipulated the king by presenting them as a political threat.

Lesson

Truth must be examined carefully before decisions are made.

4. POWER DOES NOT MAKE EVIL RIGHT

Haman had the king's authority behind him.

But the decree was still wicked.

Lesson

Human authority is never higher than God's moral authority.

5. GOD'S PEOPLE MAY FACE PERIL

The Jewish people faced a genuine threat.

Their danger was not imaginary.

Lesson

Faith does not mean believers will never experience danger.

Faith means trusting God in the middle of danger.

XXI. PERSONAL STUDY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question 1 — Why did Haman become so angry with Mordecai?

Answer:

Mordecai refused to bow down and honor Haman as the king had commanded.

Haman's pride could not tolerate Mordecai's refusal.

His anger became so extreme that he decided to destroy not only Mordecai but the entire Jewish population.

Application

A person who cannot control anger can allow a small offense to become a major destructive conflict.

Question 2 — What does Mordecai's refusal to bow teach us?

Answer:

Mordecai demonstrated strong conviction.

He would not compromise his Jewish identity and convictions simply because everyone else was doing what Haman demanded.

Application

Christians should develop convictions strong enough to withstand social pressure.

Question 3 — What is the difference between Mordecai and Haman?

Answer:

Mordecai was willing to suffer rather than compromise.

Haman was willing to destroy others because his pride had been wounded.

Mordecai's conviction produced courage.

Haman's pride produced hatred.

Question 4 — How did Haman turn a personal problem into a national crisis?

Answer:

Instead of limiting his anger to Mordecai, Haman learned that Mordecai was Jewish and decided to destroy all Jews throughout the empire.

He then presented the Jews to the king as a political threat.

Application

Hatred often expands when people stop seeing individuals as individuals and begin treating entire groups as enemies.

Question 5 — How did Haman manipulate the king?

Answer:

Haman did not tell the king that his plan began because Mordecai would not bow to him.

Instead, he described the Jews as a scattered people with different laws who supposedly refused to obey the king.

He then offered money to support the operation.

Application

We should carefully investigate claims before making major decisions.

Question 6 — What does Haman's use of money teach us?

Answer:

Haman was willing to spend enormous wealth to accomplish an evil purpose.

Money itself is not morally good or evil.

The heart determines how it is used.

Application

Christians should ask not only, “Can I afford this?” but also, “**Is this right before God?**”

Question 7 — What does the signet ring represent?

Answer:

The signet ring represented the king's authority.

By giving Haman his ring, the king authorized Haman to issue the decree in the king's name.

Application

Authority can accomplish tremendous good or tremendous harm depending upon the character of the person using it.

Question 8 — Why is the date chosen by Haman important?

Answer:

Haman cast lots and selected the twelfth month, Adar.

The delay gave time for Esther and Mordecai to respond.

What Haman considered favorable timing ultimately gave God's purposes time to unfold.

Application

What appears to be a delay may actually provide time for God to work.

Question 9 — Why is it important that the decree was written in every language?

Answer:

Because the decree applied throughout the entire Persian Empire.

The order was intended to be understood by everyone in every province.

Application

Words backed by authority can have enormous consequences.

Therefore, leaders must use their words carefully.

Question 10 — Why were the king and Haman drinking while Susa was confused?

Answer:

Their response reveals their lack of compassion.

They were celebrating and drinking while the people were confused by the decree.

Application

A godly leader should care about how decisions affect ordinary people.

Question 11 — What is the greatest warning from Haman's life in this chapter?

Answer:

The greatest warning is that **unchecked pride can become destructive hatred**.

Haman's problem began with one man's refusal to honor him.

It eventually became an attempt to destroy an entire people.

Application

Deal with pride and anger before they grow.

Question 12 — Where do we see God's providence in this chapter?

Answer:

God's providence can be seen in the fact that Esther is already queen and Mordecai is already positioned near the royal court before Haman's decree is issued.

Although God's name is not mentioned, the events are moving toward the deliverance that will come later.

Application

God may already be preparing your deliverance before you even recognize that you are in a crisis.

XXII. ESTHER CHAPTER 3 AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

This chapter teaches Christians several important lessons.

When someone mistreats you:

Do not become Haman.

When everyone pressures you to compromise:

Learn from Mordecai.

When evil seems to be winning:

Remember that God is still sovereign.

When an authority figure makes a wrong decision:

Remember that human authority is not absolute.

When circumstances look hopeless:

Remember that Esther is already in the palace.

When God's presence seems hidden:

Remember that the book of Esther demonstrates God's providence without repeatedly naming Him.

XXIII. FIVE GREAT TRUTHS FROM ESTHER CHAPTER 3

1. PRIDE CAN TURN A SMALL OFFENSE INTO A GREAT EVIL

Haman could not tolerate being denied personal honor.

2. CONVICTION REQUIRES COURAGE

Mordecai stood firm even when pressured.

3. DECEPTION CAN INFLUENCE POWERFUL PEOPLE

Haman manipulated the king through misleading information.

4. WICKED PLANS ARE NOT THE FINAL WORD

The decree looked final, but God's providence was already moving.

5. GOD MAY PREPARE DELIVERANCE BEFORE THE CRISIS ARRIVES

Esther was already queen before Haman's decree was issued.

XXIV. A CRAWFORD COMMENTARY PRINCIPLE

“The Enemy May See the Problem, But He Does Not See God's Plan”

Haman saw Mordecai.

Haman saw his own wounded pride.

Haman saw the Jewish people.

Haman saw the power of the Persian Empire.

But Haman did not see:

Esther.

He did not see what God had already positioned.

He did not know what was coming.

This is one of the great lessons of Esther.

The enemy may make plans based upon what he can see, but God is working through what the enemy cannot see.

XXV. CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the lessons found in Esther Chapter 3.

Help us guard our hearts against pride, anger, bitterness, and hatred.

Keep us from becoming like Haman, who allowed a personal offense to grow into destructive hatred.

Give us the courage of Mordecai when we are pressured to compromise our convictions.

Help us obey You even when obedience is difficult.

Give us wisdom to recognize deception and discernment to examine the claims of those who seek authority.

Help our leaders make decisions based upon truth and justice rather than manipulation and personal ambition.

When circumstances appear hopeless, remind us that You are still sovereign.

When we cannot see Your hand, help us trust Your providence.

When evil appears to have the upper hand, remind us that evil never has the final word.

Thank You that Esther was already in the palace before the crisis arrived.

Help us trust that You can prepare the way before we even understand what You are preparing us for.

Give us courage to stand, wisdom to act, and faith to trust You.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

XXVI. CENTRAL TRUTH OF ESTHER

CHAPTER 3

Haman's pride created a plan for destruction, but God's providence had already placed Esther in the palace and Mordecai near the king's court.

Esther Chapter 3 looks like a chapter about **Haman's victory**.

But it is actually a chapter about **God preparing for Haman's defeat**.

Haman has the king's authority.

Haman has money.

Haman has a written decree.

Haman has the date.

Haman appears to have the advantage.

But Haman does not have the final word.

God does.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Esther Chapter 4 — For Such a Time As This

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Esther Chapter 4 is the **turning point of the Book of Esther**.

Chapter 3 ended with Haman's decree calling for the destruction of the Jewish people. Now the consequences of that decree become clear.

Mordecai mourns.

The Jews throughout the empire mourn.

Esther learns about the crisis.

At first, Esther hesitates because approaching the king without being summoned could result in death. Mordecai then challenges her with one of the most memorable statements in Scripture:

“And who knows whether you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?”

Esther must make a decision.

She can remain silent and protect herself, or she can risk her life to stand for her people.

Before she acts, however, Esther calls for fasting.

Her response demonstrates an important biblical pattern:

Crisis → Mourning → Fasting → Courage → Action.

I. MOURNING AMONG THE JEWS

Esther 4:1 — Mordecai Mourns

Verse 1

“When Mordecai learned everything that had happened, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went into the middle of the city, crying out with a loud and bitter wail.”

Mordecai now understands the seriousness of Haman's decree.

This is not merely a political disagreement.

An entire people are facing destruction.

Mordecai responds with deep mourning.

Tearing one's clothes and wearing sackcloth and ashes were outward expressions of grief, humiliation, repentance, and distress.

Cross References

Genesis 37:34

“Jacob tore his clothes and put on sackcloth. He mourned for his son for many days.”

Jacob expressed overwhelming grief after believing Joseph had died.

Job 2:12

“When Job's three friends saw him from a distance, they could hardly recognize him. They began to cry loudly. They tore their robes and threw dust on their heads to show their grief.”

Job's friends responded to his suffering with visible mourning.

Joel 1:13

“Put on sackcloth and mourn, you priests. Cry loudly, you who serve at the altar. Come and spend the night wearing sackcloth, you servants of my God, because the offerings of grain and drink have been withheld from the house of your God.”

Joel called God's people to recognize the seriousness of their situation.

Crawford Commentary

Mordecai does not pretend everything is fine.

He does not hide his grief.

He openly acknowledges the seriousness of the crisis.

Spiritual Principle

There are times when God's people must honestly recognize the seriousness of a crisis instead of pretending that everything is fine.

II. MOURNING AT THE KING'S GATE

Esther 4:2 — Mordecai Cannot Enter the Gate in Sackcloth

Verse 2

“He came as far as the king's gate, but no one was allowed to enter the gate clothed in sackcloth.”

Mordecai approaches the place where he had previously served.

But his mourning prevents him from entering the king's gate.

The contrast is significant.

The palace represents power and comfort.

Outside the gate is a grieving man representing a threatened people.

Cross References

Genesis 41:14

“So Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and they quickly brought him out of the prison. Joseph shaved, changed his clothes, and went in to see Pharaoh.”

Joseph changed his appearance before entering Pharaoh's presence.

Matthew 22:12

“He asked, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without wedding clothes?’ The man had nothing to say.”

The appropriate clothing represented the expectations associated with entering the king's presence.

Zechariah 3:3

“Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel.”

Joshua's clothing represented his condition before God.

Crawford Commentary

Mordecai cannot enter the gate, but his mourning cannot be hidden.

Sometimes grief reaches a point where it demands attention.

III. THE JEWS MOURN TOGETHER

Esther 4:3 — A Nation in Mourning

Verse 3

“In every province where the king's decree and command had reached, there was great mourning among the Jews. They fasted, wept, and wailed, and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.”

Mordecai is not alone.

Jewish communities throughout the empire respond together.

They:

- mourn,
- fast,
- weep,
- cry out,
- and wear sackcloth and ashes.

Cross References

Joel 2:12

“Even now, says the Lord, turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, weeping, and mourning.”

Fasting and mourning were associated with turning toward God.

Nehemiah 9:1

“On the twenty-fourth day of that same month, the Israelites gathered together, fasting and wearing sackcloth and putting dust on their heads.”

The people gathered together in humility and mourning.

Jonah 3:5

“The people of Nineveh believed God. They announced a fast, and everyone, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.”

A community can respond collectively to a spiritual crisis.

Crawford Commentary

The Jewish people face a crisis that is bigger than any individual.

Their response is also collective.

They mourn together.

Spiritual Principle

When God's people face a crisis, they should not isolate themselves from one another.

IV. ESTHER HEARS ABOUT MORDECAI

Esther 4:4 — Esther Is Deeply Distressed

Verse 4

“When Esther's servants and eunuchs came and told her what Mordecai was doing, the queen was deeply distressed. She sent clothing for Mordecai so he could take off his sackcloth, but he refused to accept them.”

Esther knows something is wrong.

She does not yet understand the whole situation.

She attempts to help Mordecai by sending him clothing.

But Mordecai refuses.

He needs Esther to understand the seriousness of what is happening.

Cross References

Job 2:11

“When Job's three friends heard about all the trouble that had come upon him, they each left their homes and met together to go and comfort him. They were Eliphaz from Teman, Bildad from Shuah, and Zophar from Naamah.”

Job's friends came because they were concerned about his suffering.

Romans 12:15

“Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep.”

God's people are called to share one another's joys and sorrows.

2 Corinthians 11:29

“When someone is weak, I feel weak. When someone is led into sin, I burn with concern.”

Paul demonstrated deep concern for other believers.

Crawford Commentary

Esther is emotionally affected by Mordecai's condition.

She does not ignore his suffering.

But she still does not know what he needs to do.

V. ESTHER SEEKS AN EXPLANATION

Esther 4:5 — Esther Sends Hatach

Verse 5

“Then Esther called for Hatach, one of the king's eunuchs who had been assigned to attend her. She ordered him to find out what was troubling Mordecai and why he was acting this way.”

Esther does not simply guess.

She investigates.

She wants to know:

What is wrong?

Cross References

2 Samuel 18:29

“The king asked, ‘Is the young man Absalom safe?’ Ahimaaz answered, ‘When Joab sent me, there was a lot of confusion, my king, and I don't know what happened.’”

David wanted accurate information about what had happened.

2 Kings 5:8

“When Elisha, the man of God, heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent this message: ‘Why have you torn your clothes? Send Naaman to me, and he will know there is a prophet in Israel.’”

Information was necessary before action could be taken.

John 1:38

“Jesus turned around and saw them following Him. He asked, ‘What are you looking for?’ They said, ‘Rabbi, where are You staying?’”

Jesus asked questions that brought people to the real issue.

Crawford Commentary

Before Esther can act wisely, she needs to understand the facts.

Spiritual Principle

Wisdom begins with understanding the situation before deciding what to do.

VI. MORDECAI EXPLAINS THE CRISIS

Esther 4:6 — Hatach Meets Mordecai

Verse 6

“So Hatach went out to Mordecai in the city square in front of the king's gate.”

Hatach becomes the messenger between Esther and Mordecai.

Esther is inside the palace.

Mordecai is outside the gate.

Hatach carries the information between them.

VII. MORDECAI EXPLAINS HAMAN'S PLAN

Esther 4:7 — The Money Behind the Plot

Verse 7

“Mordecai told him everything that had happened, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews.”

Mordecai gives Esther the complete story.

He even tells her about the money Haman offered.

Cross References

Esther 3:9

“If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will contribute ten thousand talents of silver into the royal treasury for the men who carry out the business.”

This connects directly with Chapter 3.

1 Timothy 6:10

“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, because they wanted money so badly, have wandered away from the faith and brought many troubles upon themselves.”

Money can become a powerful temptation.

Proverbs 1:19

“That is what happens to everyone who is greedy for money. It robs them of life.”

Greed can ultimately destroy the person pursuing it.

Crawford Commentary

Haman's plan was not only driven by hatred.

He was also willing to use wealth and political power to accomplish his evil purpose.

VIII. ESTHER IS GIVEN THE DECREE

Esther 4:8 — Mordecai Calls Esther to Act

Verse 8

“He also gave him a copy of the decree that had been issued in Susa, ordering the annihilation of the Jews. He asked Hatach to show it to Esther and to urge her to go to the king and plead for her people.”

Now Esther sees the official document.

The danger becomes undeniable.

Mordecai does not merely tell Esther that there is a problem.

He tells her what she must do:

Go to the king.

Cross References

Esther 3:14

“A copy of the decree was issued and made public in every province, giving instructions for the people to be ready for that day.”

The decree is now placed directly before Esther.

Nehemiah 2:4

“The king asked me, ‘What do you want?’ I prayed to the God of heaven.”

Nehemiah responded to a crisis by turning to God before answering the king.

Philippians 4:6

“Do not worry about anything. Instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done.”

Prayer should accompany our concerns.

Crawford Commentary

Esther now faces a decision.

She cannot remain unaware.

She knows what is happening.

She knows what Mordecai wants her to do.

But she also knows the personal danger.

IX. ESTHER HEARS THE MESSAGE

Esther 4:9 — Hatach Reports Back

Verse 9

“Hatach returned and reported Mordecai’s message to Esther.”

The message has reached Esther.

Now the decision belongs to her.

X. ESTHER HESITATES

Esther 4:10–11 — The Danger of Approaching the King

Verses 10–11

“Then Esther sent this reply back to Mordecai through Hatach:

‘All the king’s officials and the people of the provinces know that any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned is to be put to death—unless the king extends the golden scepter to them. I haven’t been called to go to the king for thirty days.’”

Esther is afraid.

Her fear is understandable.

She is not refusing because she does not care about her people.

She knows that approaching the king could cost her life.

Cross References

Hebrews 4:16

“So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.”

Believers today have access to God through Christ.

Esther 5:2

“When the king saw Queen Esther standing in the courtyard, he was pleased with her and held out the golden scepter toward her. Esther approached and touched the top of the scepter.”

God ultimately gave Esther favor before the king.

Daniel 6:12

“So they went to the king and reminded him about his law. They said, ‘Did you not sign an official law stating that for the next thirty days anyone who prays to anyone except you will be thrown into the lions' den?’”

Persian law could carry severe consequences.

Crawford Commentary

Esther's fear is real.

Faith does not mean that danger suddenly stops being dangerous.

Faith means choosing obedience despite the danger.

XI. MORDECAI CHALLENGES ESTHER

Esther 4:13 — Do Not Think You Will Escape

Verse 13

“He sent back this message: ‘Do not think that because you are in the king's palace you alone will escape when all the other Jews are killed.’”

Mordecai challenges Esther's assumption.

Her position may give her temporary protection.

But it does not guarantee ultimate safety.

Cross References

Amos 9:1

“I saw the Lord standing beside the altar. He said, ‘Strike the tops of the pillars so that the foundations shake. Bring the roofs down on the people below. I will kill those who are left with the sword. No one will escape; no one will get away.’”

No one can ultimately hide from God's judgment.

Jeremiah 25:29

“I have already begun to punish the city that is called by My name. Do you think you will go unpunished? No, you will not go unpunished. I am calling for war against everyone who lives on the earth, says the Lord Almighty.”

Position does not make someone automatically immune from consequences.

Romans 2:3

“Do you think you will escape God's judgment when you do the same things you accuse others of doing?”

God judges impartially.

Crawford Commentary

Esther's royal position cannot guarantee her safety.

Her position gives her an opportunity.

That is different from guaranteed protection.

XII. “FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS”

Esther 4:14 — Mordecai's Great Challenge

Verse 14

“For if you remain silent at this time, deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place—but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows whether you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?”

This is the central verse of Esther Chapter 4.

Mordecai believes that deliverance will come.

Notice his confidence.

He does not say:

“If you do not act, the Jews will definitely be destroyed.”

Instead, he says:

“Deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place.”

Mordecai recognizes that God's purposes are greater than Esther.

But Esther has been given an opportunity to participate in those purposes.

Cross References

Genesis 45:5

“But don't be upset and don't be angry with yourselves for selling me. God sent me here ahead of you to save people's lives.”

Joseph recognized God's providence in his circumstances.

Jeremiah 1:5

“Before I formed you in your mother's womb, I knew you. Before you were born, I set you apart and appointed you as My prophet to the nations.”

God's purposes can exist before a person understands them.

Galatians 4:4

“But when the right time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman and born under the law.”

God's work unfolds according to His timing.

Crawford Commentary

This is one of the greatest lessons in Esther.

Esther may have thought her position was simply a result of circumstances.

Mordecai challenges her to consider something greater:

Perhaps God placed you there for this exact moment.

Spiritual Principle

God can place people in positions long before they understand why they are there.

XIII. ESTHER MAKES HER DECISION

Esther 4:15 — Esther Responds

Verse 15

“Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai.”

Esther has heard the challenge.

Now she must answer.

XIV. ESTHER CALLS FOR FASTING

Esther 4:16 — “If I Perish, I Perish”

Verse 16

“Go and gather all the Jews who are in Susa and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. My attendants and I will do the same. Then, even though it is against the law, I will go to the king. And if I perish, I perish.”

Esther has moved from hesitation to courage.

But notice something important.

She does not rush into the king's presence.

She first calls for fasting.

She understands that the situation requires more than human courage.

She needs God.

Cross References

Job 13:15

“God might kill me, but I have no other hope. I will defend my actions to His face.”

Job demonstrates determination in the midst of extreme suffering.

Joel 2:15

“Blow the trumpet in Jerusalem! Announce a time of fasting; call the people together for a solemn meeting.”

Fasting can be a corporate response to crisis.

Daniel 9:3

“So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with Him in prayer and fasting. I wore rough sackcloth and sprinkled ashes on myself.”

Daniel responded to a national crisis through prayer, fasting, confession, and dependence upon God.

Crawford Commentary

Esther's statement is one of the strongest expressions of courage in the book:

“If I perish, I perish.”

She is not saying that death does not matter.

She is saying that obedience matters more than self-preservation.

Spiritual Principle

Courage is not the absence of fear; courage is choosing obedience despite fear.

XV. MORDECAI OBEYS

Esther 4:17 — Mordecai Does What Esther Commands

Verse 17

“So Mordecai went away and did everything Esther had commanded him.”

The chapter ends with action.

Mordecai obeys Esther.

The people will fast.

Esther will approach the king.

The crisis is moving toward its climax.

Cross References

Genesis 6:22

“So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him.”

Noah responded to God's instructions through obedience.

Exodus 40:16

“Moses did everything exactly as the Lord had commanded him.”

Moses followed God's instructions.

Luke 5:5

“Simon answered, ‘Master, we worked hard all night and didn't catch anything. But if You say so, I will let the nets down again.’”

Peter obeyed Jesus even when his previous experience suggested otherwise.

Crawford Commentary

Mordecai does not merely agree with Esther.

He acts.

Biblical faith eventually produces obedience.

XVI. THE TRANSFORMATION OF ESTHER

Esther Chapter 4 shows a remarkable transformation.

At first:

Esther is afraid.

Then:

Esther receives information.

Then:

She understands the danger.

Then:

Mordecai challenges her.

Then:

She calls for fasting.

Finally:

She accepts the responsibility.

She moves from:

Fear → Faith → Fasting → Courage → Action.

XVII. THE MEANING OF “FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS”

The phrase:

“For such a time as this”

does not mean that every difficult circumstance automatically proves that God specifically caused it.

Rather, in the context of Esther, Mordecai challenges Esther to recognize that her position may provide a unique opportunity to act for the preservation of her people.

She is already queen.

She already has access to the king.

She already possesses influence.

And now her people desperately need someone who can use that position.

Crawford Principle

A position of influence carries a responsibility to use that influence for purposes greater than personal comfort.

XVIII. GOD'S PROVIDENCE IN ESTHER CHAPTER 4

God's name is still not explicitly mentioned.

Yet His providence is evident.

Consider the circumstances:

- Esther is queen.
- Mordecai has access to Esther.
- Esther has servants who can communicate with Mordecai.
- Hatach becomes the messenger.
- Mordecai knows about Haman's decree.
- Esther receives a copy of the decree.
- Mordecai challenges Esther.
- Esther calls for fasting.
- Esther prepares to approach the king.

Nothing appears accidental from the perspective of the larger story.

Crawford Principle

God can work through ordinary people, ordinary circumstances, and ordinary positions to accomplish extraordinary purposes.

XIX. KEY LESSONS FROM ESTHER CHAPTER 4

1. GOD'S PEOPLE MOURN TOGETHER

The Jewish people throughout the empire responded together.

They fasted.

They wept.

They mourned.

Lesson

Do not face every crisis alone.

2. OBEDIENCE REQUIRES COURAGE

Esther was afraid.

But she acted.

Lesson

Fear does not automatically mean that you should stop.

Sometimes fear simply means that courage is required.

3. GOD CAN USE YOUR POSITION

Esther's royal position gave her access to the king.

Lesson

Where God has placed you may provide an opportunity to serve others.

4. FASTING CAN PRECEDE BOLD ACTION

Esther did not immediately act.

She called for fasting first.

Lesson

Before making a major decision, seek God.

5. GOD'S PURPOSES ARE GREATER THAN ONE PERSON

Mordecai believed that deliverance would come even if Esther refused.

Lesson

God's plan does not depend upon one individual, but God graciously allows individuals to participate in His work.

XX. PERSONAL STUDY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question 1 — Why did Mordecai tear his clothes and wear sackcloth and ashes?

Answer:

He was expressing deep grief because Haman's decree threatened the destruction of the Jewish people. His outward mourning reflected the seriousness of the crisis.

Application

We should not ignore serious spiritual or moral crises.

Question 2 — Why did the Jews throughout the empire mourn together?

Answer:

The decree affected the entire Jewish population. They responded collectively through mourning, fasting, weeping, and sackcloth.

Application

There is strength in God's people standing together during difficult times.

Question 3 — Why was Esther distressed when she heard about Mordecai?

Answer:

She knew something was seriously wrong with Mordecai but did not initially know the reason. She wanted him to remove the sackcloth and sent clothing to him. When he refused, she sent Hatach to find out what was happening.

Question 4 — Why did Mordecai give Esther a copy of the decree?

Answer:

He wanted Esther to understand that the threat was real and official.

He also wanted her to go before the king and plead for her people.

Question 5 — Why was Esther afraid to approach the king?

Answer:

Persian law stated that anyone who entered the king's inner court without being summoned could be put to death unless the king extended the golden scepter.

Esther had not been summoned for thirty days.

Therefore, approaching the king could cost her life.

Question 6 — What did Mordecai mean when he said Esther should not think she would escape?

Answer:

Mordecai was reminding Esther that her royal position did not guarantee her safety.

If the Jews were destroyed, Esther's identity as a Jew could eventually become known.

Her position did not remove her responsibility to act.

Question 7 — What does “for such a time as this” mean?

Answer:

Mordecai challenged Esther to consider that perhaps her position as queen had placed her in the palace at exactly the time her people needed someone with access to the king.

Her position gave her an opportunity to act.

Application

God can use our circumstances and positions to serve others.

Question 8 — Why did Esther call for three days of fasting?

Answer:

She recognized that she needed help beyond herself.

Before risking her life before the king, she called the Jewish people to fast, and she and her attendants would fast as well.

Her fasting demonstrated dependence upon God.

Question 9 — What did Esther mean by “If I perish, I perish”?

Answer:

She understood the danger but decided that saving her people was worth the risk.

She was willing to sacrifice her own safety rather than remain silent.

Application

Sometimes obedience requires sacrifice.

Question 10 — What changed Esther from hesitation to courage?

Answer:

Mordecai challenged her to recognize the responsibility connected to her position.

Esther then called for fasting and prepared to act.

Her courage developed through recognizing the seriousness of the situation and seeking help through fasting.

Question 11 — What does Esther Chapter 4 teach about leadership?

Answer:

Leadership is not merely about having a position.

Leadership involves accepting responsibility when others need help.

Esther had authority and access that others did not have.

She eventually chose to use that access for the benefit of her people.

Question 12 — What does Esther Chapter 4 teach about God's timing?

Answer:

Esther's position as queen existed before the crisis reached its climax.

When the crisis arrived, she was already positioned where she could potentially make a difference.

This demonstrates the theme of providence throughout Esther.

XXI. ESTHER 4 AND CHRISTIAN LIVING

Esther Chapter 4 challenges Christians to ask several important questions.

Where has God placed me?

What responsibilities come with my position?

Am I remaining silent because I am afraid?

Am I willing to sacrifice comfort to help others?

Have I prayed before acting?

Am I willing to stand when standing is costly?

Do I believe God is working even when I cannot see His hand?

These questions move Esther Chapter 4 from history into application.

XXII. FIVE GREAT TRUTHS FROM ESTHER CHAPTER 4

1. CRISIS REVEALS CHARACTER

Mordecai mourns.

Esther initially hesitates.

Then Esther becomes courageous.

2. FEAR DOES NOT HAVE TO CONTROL US

Esther was afraid, but fear did not have the final word.

3. GOD CAN USE OUR POSITION

Esther's position as queen gave her access to the king.

4. SEEK GOD BEFORE TAKING BOLD ACTION

Esther called for fasting before approaching the king.

5. COURAGE SOMETIMES MEANS ACCEPTING PERSONAL RISK

Esther's words summarize her decision:

“If I perish, I perish.”

XXIII. A CRAWFORD COMMENTARY PRINCIPLE

“Your Position May Be Your Assignment”

Esther may have wondered why she had become queen.

She may have thought about her circumstances simply in terms of survival and royal privilege.

But Mordecai challenged her to see her position differently.

She was not merely **in the palace**.

She was **in a position of influence**.

And that position could be used to save lives.

Crawford Principle

God can place a person in a position of influence not merely for personal blessing, but also for the blessing and protection of others.

XXIV. CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the message of Esther Chapter 4.

Help us recognize the opportunities You place before us.

When we are afraid, give us courage.

When we are uncertain, give us wisdom.

When we are overwhelmed, teach us to seek You.

Help us understand that our position, our influence, our opportunities, and our resources can be used to serve others.

Give us the courage of Esther to stand when silence would be easier.

Give us the faith of Mordecai to believe that You are still working even when Your hand cannot be seen.

Teach us to seek You through prayer and fasting when we face difficult decisions.

Help us not to live only for our own comfort.

Instead, help us ask:

“Lord, why have You placed me here?”

Give us courage to answer Your call.

And when obedience is costly, give us the faith to say:

“If I perish, I perish.”

Help us trust You with the outcome.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

XXV. CENTRAL TRUTH OF ESTHER CHAPTER 4

God may place us in a position long before we understand the reason, and when the right moment comes, He may call us to use that position for the good of others.

Esther Chapter 4 begins with **mourning**.

It moves to **fear**.

Then comes **fasting**.

Then **faith**.

Then **courage**.

And finally, **action**.

Esther's greatest moment did not begin when she entered the king's court.

It began when she decided that obedience was more important than personal safety.

She was in the palace.

The crisis had arrived.

Her people needed her.

And Mordecai's question still echoes:

“Who knows whether you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?”

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Esther Chapter 5 — The Hidden Hand of Providence

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Esther Chapter 5 continues the dramatic story of Esther's courageous decision to approach King Ahasuerus.

After three days of fasting, Esther enters the king's inner court without being summoned. The king extends the golden scepter, showing her favor and allowing her to live.

But Esther does not immediately reveal Haman's plot.

Instead, she invites the king and Haman to a banquet. At the banquet, the king again asks what she wants. Esther delays her request and invites them to another banquet the following day.

Meanwhile, Haman's pride and hatred toward Mordecai continue to grow. Although Haman possesses wealth, authority, family, and the king's favor, he cannot enjoy any of it because Mordecai refuses to honor him.

Haman's wife and friends suggest building a seventy-five-foot-high gallows for Mordecai.

Haman accepts their advice.

But Haman does not know that **God is already preparing a reversal of his plan.**

I. ESTHER AND THE KING

Esther 5:1 — Esther Enters the Inner Court

Verse 1

“On the third day, Esther dressed in her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king’s palace, across from the throne room. The king was sitting on his royal throne, facing the entrance.”

Esther has completed the three-day period of fasting.

Now she acts.

She puts on her royal robes and enters the inner court.

This is a tremendous act of courage because Esther knows that approaching the king without being summoned could result in death.

Yet she does not allow fear to stop her.

Cross References

Genesis 22:4

“On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance.”

The third day marked an important point in Abraham's journey toward obedience.

Hosea 6:2

“After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will restore us, so that we may live in His presence.”

The third day is associated with restoration and renewed life.

Esther 4:16

“Go and gather all the Jews who are in Susa and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. My attendants and I will do the same. Then, even though it is against the law, I will go to the king. And if I perish, I perish.”

Esther now fulfills the commitment she made in the previous chapter.

Crawford Commentary

Esther did not merely talk about courage.

She acted courageously.

Faith eventually requires us to move from preparation to action.

Spiritual Principle

There comes a time when faith must step forward.

II. THE KING EXTENDS THE GOLDEN SCEPTER

Esther 5:2 — Esther Finds Favor

Verse 2

“When the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she found favor in his sight. He extended the golden scepter toward her, and Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter.”

This is the moment Esther feared.

The king sees her.

He could have rejected her.

Instead, he extends the golden scepter.

Esther has found favor.

She approaches and touches the tip of the scepter.

Cross References

Proverbs 21:1

“The king’s heart is like a stream of water in the hand of the Lord. He directs it wherever He chooses.”

This verse provides an important principle for understanding the providence of God.

The king has authority, but God remains sovereign.

Psalms 45:9

“Kings’ daughters are among your honored women. At your right hand stands the queen wearing gold from Ophir.”

This passage describes the honor and position associated with the queen.

Hebrews 4:16

“So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.”

Esther approached an earthly king and depended upon his favor.

Believers can approach God's throne through His grace.

Crawford Commentary

Esther's circumstances demonstrate the hidden hand of providence.

God's name is not mentioned in the Book of Esther, yet God's providential work is evident throughout the story.

Spiritual Principle

God can open a door that no human being can close.

III. THE KING ASKS ESTHER WHAT SHE WANTS

Esther 5:3 — “What Is Your Request?”

Verse 3

“The king asked her, ‘What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? Even if it is up to half the kingdom, it will be granted to you.’”

The king immediately recognizes that Esther has come for a reason.

He asks her what she wants.

The statement about half the kingdom is a royal expression of extraordinary generosity.

The king is essentially telling Esther:

“Tell me what you need.”

Cross References

Mark 6:23

“He promised her with an oath, ‘Whatever you ask, I will give you, up to half my kingdom.’”

Herod made a similar promise.

1 Kings 3:5

“That night the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream, and God said, ‘What do you want Me to give you?’”

God asked Solomon to identify his request.

Psalm 2:8

“Ask Me, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance. The ends of the earth will be your possession.”

God is sovereign over nations and kingdoms.

Crawford Commentary

Esther has an extraordinary opportunity.

Yet she does not rush.

She demonstrates wisdom by waiting for the right moment.

Spiritual Principle

An open door does not mean that we must rush through it without wisdom.

IV. ESTHER INVITES THE KING AND HAMAN

Esther 5:4 — The First Banquet

Verse 4

“Esther replied, ‘If it pleases the king, let the king and Haman come today to a banquet I have prepared for him.’”

Esther does not immediately expose Haman.

Instead, she invites both the king and Haman to a banquet.

Her approach is deliberate.

She is not acting impulsively.

Cross References

Luke 14:16

“Jesus replied, ‘A man prepared a great banquet and invited many people.’”

Genesis 43:16

“When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the manager of his house, ‘Take these men into my house. Slaughter an animal and prepare a feast, because they will eat with me at noon.’”

Proverbs 9:2

“She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table.”

Crawford Commentary

Esther is preparing the setting for the conversation that will eventually expose Haman.

She is moving carefully.

Spiritual Principle

Wisdom knows that timing can be just as important as words.

V. THE KING AND HAMAN COME TO THE BANQUET

Esther 5:5 — Haman Is Brought In

Verse 5

“The king said, ‘Bring Haman quickly, so we may do as Esther has requested.’ So the king and Haman went to the banquet Esther had prepared.”

The king immediately accepts Esther's invitation.

Haman is summoned.

Haman probably believes that being invited to a private banquet with the king and queen is another sign of his importance.

He has no idea that the banquet is part of the process that will eventually expose him.

Cross References

Luke 14:17

“At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, because everything is now ready.’”

Genesis 43:25

“They prepared the gifts for Joseph’s arrival at noon, because they had heard that they were going to eat there.”

Genesis 18:6

“Abraham hurried into the tent and said to Sarah, ‘Quick! Take three measures of fine flour, knead it, and bake some bread.’”

Crawford Commentary

Haman thinks he is walking into a celebration.

In reality, he is walking deeper into God's providential plan.

Spiritual Principle

A person can be moving confidently toward his own plans while God is moving circumstances toward an entirely different outcome.

VI. ESTHER'S MYSTERIOUS DELAY

Esther 5:6 — The King Asks Again

Verse 6

“While they were drinking wine at the banquet, the king asked Esther again, ‘What is your petition? It will be granted. What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom—it will be fulfilled.’”

The king asks Esther again.

He clearly wants to know why she has invited him.

But Esther still does not reveal everything.

She continues to wait.

Cross References

John 15:7

“If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you want, and it will be done for you.”

Prayer involves abiding in Christ and submitting our desires to Him.

Psalm 37:4

“Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.”

Matthew 7:7

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you.”

Crawford Commentary

Esther's delay should not be understood as fear.

She has already demonstrated courage by entering the king's court.

Her delay demonstrates **patience and strategic wisdom**.

Spiritual Principle

Sometimes waiting is not weakness; sometimes waiting is wisdom.

VII. ESTHER MAKES HER REQUEST

Esther 5:7 — Esther States Her Petition

Verse 7

“Esther answered, ‘This is my petition and my request.’”

Esther begins to answer.

The king has asked her repeatedly.

She is preparing to explain what she needs.

Cross References

1 Samuel 1:27

“I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted me what I asked of Him.”

Hannah recognized God's answer to her petition.

Psalms 20:4

“May He give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed.”

Philippians 4:6

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

Crawford Commentary

The biblical pattern reminds us that petitions should be brought before God.

Esther had already called for fasting.

Now she is acting upon what she had prepared to do.

VIII. ESTHER REQUESTS ANOTHER BANQUET

Esther 5:8 — Tomorrow's Banquet

Verse 8

“If I have found favor with the king, and if it pleases him to grant my request, let the king and Haman come to another banquet I will prepare for them tomorrow. Then I will answer the king's question.”

Esther delays the revelation one more time.

She asks the king and Haman to return tomorrow.

The suspense increases.

Haman does not understand what is coming.

The king does not yet know the full reason Esther has approached him.

But the reader knows that something significant is about to happen.

Cross References

Genesis 18:3

“He said, ‘My lord, if I have found favor in your sight, please do not pass your servant by.’”

Genesis 33:15

“Esau said, ‘Let me leave some of my men with you.’ But Jacob replied, ‘Why do that, my lord? Let me find favor in your sight.’”

Ruth 2:13

“She said, ‘May I continue to find favor in your sight, my lord. You have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant—even though I am not like one of your female servants.’”

Crawford Commentary

Esther continues to operate with humility.

She does not demand.

She asks.

She does not force.

She waits.

Spiritual Principle

God's timing is often worth waiting for.

IX. HAMAN LEAVES THE BANQUET JOYFUL

Esther 5:9 — Pride and Rage

Verse 9

“Haman left the banquet that day in high spirits, joyful and proud. But when he saw Mordecai at the king’s gate—still not standing or showing him any respect—Haman was filled with rage.”

Haman leaves the banquet extremely happy.

Why?

He has wealth.

He has authority.

He has royal influence.

He has been personally invited by the queen.

And he has another banquet waiting for him.

Yet one sight ruins his happiness.

He sees Mordecai.

Mordecai still refuses to bow.

Haman's joy immediately turns to rage.

Cross References

Acts 5:33

“When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put the apostles to death.”

Proverbs 29:22

“An angry person stirs up conflict, and a hot-tempered person commits many sins.”

Luke 6:11

“But they were furious and began discussing with one another what they might do to Jesus.”

Crawford Commentary

Haman possessed almost everything a worldly person could desire.

But he could not enjoy any of it.

His pride had made Mordecai's refusal more important than his own blessings.

Spiritual Principle

Pride can make one offense seem greater than a hundred blessings.

X. HAMAN CONTROLS HIMSELF

Esther 5:10 — Haman Goes Home

Verse 10

“Still, he controlled himself and went home. He called together his friends and his wife Zeresh.”

Haman is angry.

But he does not immediately attack Mordecai.

Instead, he goes home and gathers his wife and friends.

Cross References

Proverbs 25:28

“A person without self-control is like a city whose walls are broken through.”

Proverbs 16:32

“Better to be patient than powerful; better to control your temper than to capture a city.”

Proverbs 29:11

“Fools give full vent to their anger, but the wise quietly hold it back.”

Crawford Commentary

Haman's temporary self-control does not mean his heart has changed.

His anger remains.

He simply begins looking for another way to deal with Mordecai.

Spiritual Principle

Controlling outward anger is not enough if the heart continues to feed hatred.

XI. HAMAN BOASTS ABOUT HIS SUCCESS

Esther 5:11 — Haman Lists His Accomplishments

Verse 11

“Haman boasted to them about his wealth, his many sons, the honors the king had given him, and how he had been elevated above all the other officials and royal servants.”

Haman begins listing his accomplishments.

He talks about:

- His wealth.
- His sons.
- His honors.
- His position.
- His authority.

Everything about his speech is centered on himself.

Cross References

Psalm 49:16

“Do not be afraid when others become rich, when the glory of their houses increases.”

Material wealth does not provide ultimate security.

Luke 12:19

“And I will say to myself, ‘You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and enjoy yourself.’”

The rich man in Jesus' teaching trusted in his possessions.

Daniel 4:30

“The king said, ‘Is this not the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?’”

Nebuchadnezzar also became consumed with his own greatness.

Crawford Commentary

Haman's greatest problem was not that he possessed wealth or authority.

His problem was that **his identity was built around them**.

Spiritual Principle

When possessions and position become the source of our identity, they can become idols.

XII. HAMAN'S FAVORITE SUBJECT: HIMSELF

Esther 5:12 — Haman's Pride Increases

Verse 12

“He added, ‘And that’s not all—Queen Esther invited no one but me to accompany the king to the banquet she prepared. And she invited me again for tomorrow!’”

Haman believes his special invitation proves how important he is.

He cannot stop talking about it.

He sees himself as uniquely honored.

Cross References

Proverbs 16:18

“Pride goes before destruction, and a proud spirit comes before a fall.”

Proverbs 27:1

“Do not boast about tomorrow, because you do not know what a day may bring.”

Daniel 4:37

“Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and honor and glorify the King of heaven, because everything He does is right and all His ways are just. And He is able to humble those who walk in pride.”

Crawford Commentary

Haman is celebrating tomorrow before tomorrow arrives.

But he does not know what tomorrow will bring.

This is a powerful warning.

Spiritual Principle

Never become so confident in tomorrow that you forget God controls tomorrow.

XIII. ONE MAN DESTROYS HAMAN'S JOY

Esther 5:13 — Mordecai Consumes His Thoughts

Verse 13

“‘But none of this gives me any satisfaction,’ Haman continued, ‘as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the king’s gate.’”

This verse reveals how deeply Haman's hatred has affected him.

He has wealth.

He has children.

He has authority.

He has royal recognition.

He has personal invitations from the queen.

Yet none of it satisfies him.

Why?

Mordecai will not honor him.

Cross References

Job 20:5

“The joy of the wicked is brief; the happiness of the godless lasts only a moment.”

Ecclesiastes 4:4

“I saw that all labor and achievement spring from one person’s envy of another. This too is meaningless, like chasing the wind.”

Proverbs 14:30

“A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.”

Crawford Commentary

Haman's problem has moved beyond pride.

It has become obsession.

He cannot enjoy what he has because he is focused on what he cannot have.

Spiritual Principle

Envy makes people miserable by teaching them to focus on what they lack instead of being thankful for what they possess.

XIV. HAMAN'S DEADLY PLAN

Esther 5:14 — The Gallows

Verse 14

“Then Zeresh his wife and all his friends said, ‘Let a gallows seventy-five feet high be built, and in the morning ask the king to have Mordecai hanged on it. Then you can go to the banquet with the king and enjoy yourself.’ This idea pleased Haman, and he ordered the gallows to be built.”

Haman's wife and friends encourage his hatred.

They suggest constructing a huge gallows.

Haman likes the idea.

He orders it built immediately.

The irony is powerful.

Haman thinks the gallows will be Mordecai's end.

But God is preparing a reversal.

Cross References

Psalm 7:15

“The wicked dig a pit and hollow it out, but they fall into the hole they have made.”

Psalm 9:15

“The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug; their feet are caught in the net they have hidden.”

Proverbs 26:27

“Whoever digs a pit will fall into it; if someone rolls a stone, it will roll back on them.”

Crawford Commentary

The cross references reveal the great biblical principle of divine reversal.

The wicked may construct a trap for someone else, but God can turn that trap against the wicked.

Haman thinks he is preparing Mordecai's death.

He does not know that the next chapter will begin the process of Haman's downfall.

XV. PERSONAL STUDY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question 1 — Why did Esther wait until the second banquet to reveal her request?

Answer:

The passage does not explicitly state every reason Esther delayed.

However, her actions demonstrate patience, wisdom, and careful timing.

She did not act impulsively.

Question 2 — What happened when Haman saw Mordecai?

Answer:

Haman became extremely angry.

Even after experiencing great honor and privilege, Mordecai's refusal to bow caused Haman to become consumed with rage.

Question 3 — What does Haman's boasting reveal about his character?

Answer:

It reveals his pride and self-centeredness.

He focused on his wealth, children, position, honors, and special access to the king and queen.

Question 4 — Why could Haman not enjoy all his blessings?

Answer:

Because Mordecai's refusal to honor him consumed his thoughts.

Haman focused on one person who would not give him what he wanted instead of appreciating everything he already possessed.

Question 5 — What does Proverbs 16:18 teach about Haman?

Answer:

It says:

“Pride goes before destruction, and a proud spirit comes before a fall.”

Haman's pride was preparing the way for his downfall.

Question 6 — What does Haman's wife and friends teach us about counsel?

Answer:

It teaches that not every person who gives us advice gives us wise advice.

Haman's wife and friends encouraged him to pursue a deadly plan against Mordecai rather than confront his hatred and pride.

Question 7 — What was the purpose of the gallows?

Answer:

Haman intended for Mordecai to be executed on it.

The gallows represented Haman's hatred and his determination to destroy the man who refused to honor him.

Question 8 — What is ironic about the gallows?

Answer:

Haman believed the gallows would become Mordecai's place of death.

But the biblical principle expressed in the cross references is that the wicked can fall into the very trap they prepare for others.

The following chapter reveals the beginning of that reversal.

Question 9 — What does Esther's behavior teach us about patience?

Answer:

Esther demonstrates that patience can be an important part of courage.

She had the king's attention, but she waited for the appropriate moment to reveal her request.

Question 10 — What does Esther Chapter 5 teach about God's providence?

Answer:

It teaches that God can work through circumstances, timing, decisions, and seemingly ordinary events.

While Haman is making his plans, God's providential plan is already moving forward.

XVI. KEY LESSONS FROM ESTHER CHAPTER 5

1. GOD GOES BEFORE US

Esther approached the throne after three days of fasting, and the king showed her favor.

When we prepare ourselves spiritually, we can move forward with courage and trust God with the outcome.

2. WISDOM WAITS

Esther did not immediately reveal everything.

Not every battle is won through haste.

3. PRIDE BLINDS

Haman possessed wealth, power, family, and position.

Yet one man's refusal to honor him consumed him.

Pride can make a person blind to his blessings.

4. EVIL HAS A PLAN—BUT SO DOES GOD

Haman builds a gallows for Mordecai.

But Haman does not know that God is preparing a divine reversal.

The enemy may make plans, but God remains sovereign over the outcome.

XVII. CRAWFORD COMMENTARY PRINCIPLE

“Do Not Judge the Ending by What You See in the Middle.”

At the end of Esther Chapter 5, Haman appears to be winning.

He has power.

He has influence.

He has the king's confidence.

He has Esther's invitation.

He has a plan to kill Mordecai.

And he has ordered the gallows built.

From a human perspective, things look terrible.

But the reader knows something Haman does not know:

God is working behind the scenes.

The gallows that Haman built will become part of his own downfall.

XVIII. CENTRAL TRUTH OF ESTHER

CHAPTER 5

God can be working toward victory even when circumstances appear to be moving toward defeat.

Esther waits.

Haman boasts.

Esther prepares.

Haman plots.

Esther trusts.

Haman rages.

And while both are making plans, **God's providence is moving the story toward a divine reversal.**

The chapter ends with Haman believing that tomorrow will be his greatest day.

He does not know that tomorrow will begin the collapse of everything he has built.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Esther Chapter 6 — The Sleepless King and the Sovereign Hand

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Esther Chapter 6 contains one of the greatest reversals in the Book of Esther.

At the end of Chapter 5, Haman had built a seventy-five-foot gallows for Mordecai. Haman believed he was about to destroy the man who refused to honor him.

But Chapter 6 begins with a seemingly ordinary event:

The king cannot sleep.

That sleepless night becomes the turning point of the entire story.

The king orders the royal records to be read. The records remind him that Mordecai once exposed an assassination plot against him. The king discovers that Mordecai was never rewarded.

At exactly the right moment, Haman enters the palace.

The king asks Haman what should be done for a man whom the king wants to honor.

Because of his pride, Haman assumes the king is talking about him.

He describes an elaborate public ceremony.

Then comes the great reversal:

“Excellent! Do just as you have said for Mordecai the Jew.”

The man Haman intended to kill is honored.

The man who wanted honor is forced to give it.

And Haman's downfall begins.

I. THE KING'S SLEEPLESS NIGHT

Esther 6:1 — God Works in the Night

Verse 1

“That night, the king couldn’t sleep. So he ordered the book of the records—the chronicles of his reign—to be brought and read to him.”

The timing is extraordinary.

Haman has just built the gallows.

Mordecai is apparently in danger.

Yet the king cannot sleep.

Instead of sleeping, he asks for the royal records.

This seemingly insignificant event becomes the instrument through which Mordecai's forgotten service is remembered.

Cross References

Psalms 121:4

“Indeed, the Protector of Israel never slumbers or sleeps.”

God never becomes tired or unaware.

Daniel 6:18

“Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating. He refused entertainment, and he could not sleep.”

This shows another biblical example of a king experiencing a troubled and sleepless night.

Ecclesiastes 5:12

“The sleep of a working person is pleasant, whether they eat little or much, but the abundance of the rich gives them no sleep.”

Earthly wealth and power cannot guarantee peace or rest.

Crawford Commentary

The king's sleeplessness appears accidental.

But in the larger story, it is providential.

God did not need a dramatic miracle.

He simply needed a king who could not sleep.

Spiritual Principle

God can use the smallest interruption to accomplish His greatest purposes.

II. MORDECAI'S FAITHFULNESS IS REMEMBERED

Esther 6:2 — The Forgotten Deed

Verse 2

“As they read, they found the account of how Mordecai had exposed Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's guards who had conspired to assassinate King Ahasuerus.”

The royal records contain the story of Mordecai's faithfulness.

Back in Esther Chapter 2, Mordecai discovered the assassination plot and reported it through Esther.

The conspiracy had been investigated and confirmed.

Yet Mordecai apparently received no immediate reward.

Now his forgotten act is brought back to the king's attention.

Cross References

Esther 2:21

“During this time, while Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officials who guarded the entrance, became angry and plotted to assassinate King Ahasuerus.”

Esther 2:22

“But Mordecai found out about the plot and told Queen Esther, who then told the king, giving Mordecai credit for the information.”

Esther 2:23

“After the matter was investigated and confirmed to be true, the two men were executed by hanging. This was recorded in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king.”

Crawford Commentary

Mordecai's good deed had not been forgotten forever.

Human beings may overlook our faithfulness.

God does not.

Spiritual Principle

Faithfulness may go unnoticed for a season, but it is never wasted.

III. THE KING DISCOVERS THAT MORDECAI WAS NEVER REWARDED

Esther 6:3 — “Nothing Has Been Done”

Verse 3

“The king asked, ‘What honor or reward has been given to Mordecai for this?’ The king’s attendants replied, ‘Nothing has been done for him.’”

The king is surprised.

Mordecai had saved the king's life.

Yet nothing had been done for him.

The timing is extraordinary.

The king discovers this fact precisely when Haman is preparing to destroy Mordecai.

Cross References

Genesis 40:23

“The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him.”

Joseph also experienced a period when someone who could have helped him forgot him.

Malachi 3:16

“Then those who feared the Lord spoke with one another, and the Lord listened and heard them. A scroll of remembrance was written in His presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honored His name.”

God remembers those who honor Him.

Nehemiah 13:14

“Remember me for this, my God, and do not erase my faithful deeds that I have done for the house of my God and its services.”

Nehemiah asks God to remember his faithfulness.

Crawford Commentary

There is a major difference between **being forgotten by people** and **being forgotten by God**.

Mordecai may have been overlooked by the palace.

But the time had come for his faithfulness to be recognized.

Spiritual Principle

Delayed recognition does not mean forgotten faithfulness.

IV. HAMAN ENTERS THE COURTYARD

Esther 6:4 — Haman Comes to Ask for Mordecai's Death

Verse 4

“The king said, ‘Who is in the courtyard?’ Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the palace to ask the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows he had prepared.”

This is one of the great ironies of the chapter.

The king is thinking about **honoring Mordecai**.

Haman has entered the palace to ask for **Mordecai's execution**.

Both men are moving toward the same person, but with completely different intentions.

Cross References

Proverbs 16:9

“A person may plan his own course, but the Lord directs his steps.”

Proverbs 19:21

“Many plans are in a person's heart, but the Lord's purpose will prevail.”

Psalms 37:12

“The wicked plot against the righteous and grind their teeth at them.”

Crawford Commentary

Haman has a plan.

But God has a greater plan.

Haman thinks he is walking into the palace to secure Mordecai's death.

He does not realize he is walking into the beginning of his own humiliation.

Spiritual Principle

Human plans cannot overturn God's sovereign purposes.

V. HAMAN IS SUMMONED

Esther 6:5 — “Bring Him In”

Verse 5

“The attendants answered, ‘Haman is standing in the courtyard.’ ‘Bring him in,’ said the king.”

Haman is brought into the king's presence.

He probably believes the king is about to approve his request concerning Mordecai.

Instead, the king is about to ask him a question that will completely change the situation.

Cross References

Proverbs 21:1

“The king's heart is like a stream of water in the hand of the Lord. He directs it wherever He chooses.”

Psalm 33:10

“The Lord frustrates the plans of the nations and stops the purposes of the peoples.”

Job 5:12

“He frustrates the plans of the crafty, so that their hands cannot accomplish what they planned.”

Crawford Commentary

Haman believes he is entering the room to control events.

Instead, events are about to control Haman.

VI. HAMAN ASSUMES THE HONOR IS FOR HIM

Esther 6:6 — Pride Takes Over

Verse 6

“So Haman came in. And the king asked him, ‘What should be done for the man the king delights to honor?’ Haman thought to himself, ‘Whom would the king want to honor more than me?’”

This verse exposes Haman's heart.

The king does not mention Haman's name.

He simply asks what should be done for a man he wants to honor.

Haman immediately assumes:

“He must mean me.”

Cross References

Proverbs 16:18

“Pride goes before destruction, and a proud spirit comes before a fall.”

Proverbs 18:12

“Before a downfall the heart is proud, but humility comes before honor.”

Obadiah 1:3

“The pride of your heart has deceived you. You live in the clefts of the rocks and make your home on the heights. You say to yourself, ‘Who can bring me down to the ground?’”

Crawford Commentary

Haman's greatest enemy is not Mordecai.

It is his own pride.

His pride has distorted his understanding of reality.

He assumes that everyone sees him as highly as he sees himself.

Spiritual Principle

Pride can deceive us into believing that we deserve honor that God never promised us.

VII. HAMAN DESCRIBES ROYAL HONOR

Esther 6:7 — Haman Gives His Advice

Verse 7

“So he replied, ‘For the man the king delights to honor—’”

Haman now begins describing the honor he believes he deserves.

Cross References

Genesis 41:42

“Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph’s finger. He dressed him in fine linen and placed a gold chain around his neck.”

1 Kings 1:33

“The king said to them, ‘Take your lord’s servants with you and have my son Solomon ride on my own mule and take him down to Gihon.’”

Daniel 5:29

“Then Belshazzar commanded that they dress Daniel in purple, place a gold chain around his neck, and proclaim that he would be the third highest ruler in the kingdom.”

Crawford Commentary

Haman's suggestions reveal how deeply he craves recognition.

He wants the king's robe.

He wants the king's horse.

He wants public recognition.

He wants everyone to know how important he is.

VIII. THE KING'S ROBE AND HORSE

Esther 6:8 — Royal Symbols

Verse 8

“Let the royal robe the king has worn be brought, and the horse the king himself has ridden, with the royal crown placed on its head.”

Haman's proposed honor is extravagant.

He wants the honored man to be publicly associated with the king.

Cross References

Genesis 41:43

“He had Joseph ride in a chariot as his second-in-command, and people shouted before him, ‘Make way!’ So Pharaoh placed Joseph over the whole land of Egypt.”

2 Kings 9:13

“They quickly took their cloaks and spread them under Jehu on the bare steps. Then they blew the trumpet and shouted, ‘Jehu is king!’”

Zechariah 3:4

“The angel said to those standing before him, ‘Take off his filthy clothes.’ Then he said to Joshua, ‘See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put fine garments on you.’”

Crawford Commentary

The irony becomes increasingly powerful.

Haman is designing a ceremony that will soon be performed on the very man he hates.

IX. PUBLIC HONOR

Esther 6:9 — Proclaiming His Honor

Verse 9

“Then let one of the king’s most noble princes dress the man in these garments and lead him on horseback through the city square, proclaiming before him, ‘This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!’”

Haman wants public recognition.

He wants everyone to hear the announcement.

But God is about to give this exact honor to Mordecai.

Cross References

Genesis 41:43

“He had Joseph ride in a chariot as his second-in-command, and people shouted before him, ‘Make way!’ So Pharaoh placed Joseph over the whole land of Egypt.”

Zechariah 3:5

“Then I said, ‘Put a clean turban on his head.’ So they put a clean turban on his head and dressed him in clean clothes while the angel of the Lord stood by.”

1 Kings 1:38

“So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and the Kerethites and Pelethites went down and had Solomon ride on King David’s mule and escorted him to Gihon.”

Crawford Commentary

Haman has unknowingly written the instructions for Mordecai's honor.

This is divine irony.

Spiritual Principle

God can turn the plans of the proud into instruments of their own humiliation.

X. THE GREAT REVERSAL

Esther 6:10 — “Do It for Mordecai”

Verse 10

“‘Excellent!’ said the king to Haman. ‘Hurry and do just as you have said for Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king’s gate. Do not leave out a single detail of all you’ve suggested.’”

This is the great reversal.

Haman probably expected the king to tell him to carry out this ceremony for himself.

Instead, the king tells him to do it for **Mordecai**.

The very man Haman wanted to kill will receive the honor Haman imagined for himself.

Cross References

Psalms 7:15

“The wicked dig a pit and hollow it out, but they fall into the hole they have made.”

Proverbs 26:27

“Whoever digs a pit will fall into it; if someone rolls a stone, it will roll back on them.”

Psalms 9:15

“The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug; their feet are caught in the net they have hidden.”

Crawford Commentary

This is the fulfillment of the principle introduced in Chapter 5.

Haman built a gallows for Mordecai.

Now Haman must honor Mordecai.

The enemy's plan is beginning to collapse.

Spiritual Principle

God can reverse a situation so completely that the very plan designed to destroy you becomes part of your deliverance.

XI. HAMAN HONORS MORDECAI

Esther 6:11 — The Proud Man Serves the Man He Hates

Verse 11

“So Haman took the robe and the horse, dressed Mordecai, and led him on horseback through the city square, proclaiming, ‘This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!’”

Imagine Haman's humiliation.

He must personally carry out the king's command.

He must dress Mordecai.

He must lead Mordecai through the city.

He must proclaim Mordecai's honor.

And he must say the very words Haman wanted others to hear about himself.

Cross References

Isaiah 60:14

“The children of your oppressors will come and bow down before you; all who despised you will bow at your feet and will call you the City of the Lord, Zion of the Holy One of Israel.”

Proverbs 14:19

“Evil people will bow down before the good, and the wicked will bow at the gates of the righteous.”

Psalms 37:34

“Hope in the Lord and keep His way. He will lift you up to inherit the land; when the wicked are destroyed, you will see it.”

Crawford Commentary

Mordecai does not have to fight Haman.

He does not have to defend himself.

He does not have to demand recognition.

The king's command takes care of the matter.

Spiritual Principle

God can defend His people without requiring them to manipulate their circumstances.

XII. HAMAN RETURNS HOME IN SHAME

Esther 6:12 — From Pride to Grief

Verse 12

“Afterward, Mordecai returned to his place at the king’s gate. But Haman hurried home, griefstricken and with his head covered in shame.”

Notice the contrast.

Mordecai:

- Receives honor.
- Returns to the king's gate.
- Remains steady.

Haman:

- Receives humiliation.
- Hurries home.
- Covers his head in shame.

The reversal is dramatic.

Cross References

Esther 4:1

“When Mordecai learned everything that had happened, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went into the middle of the city, crying out with a loud and bitter wail.”

Earlier, Mordecai was mourning.

Now Haman is the one experiencing grief and shame.

2 Samuel 15:30

“David continued up the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went. His head was covered, and he walked barefoot. All the people with him also covered their heads and were weeping as they went.”

Jeremiah 14:3

“The nobles send their servants for water. They go to the cisterns but find no water. They return with empty jars; they cover their heads in shame and despair.”

Crawford Commentary

God's providential reversal is becoming visible.

XIII. HAMAN'S WIFE AND FRIENDS RECOGNIZE THE DANGER

Esther 6:13 — “You Will Surely Fall”

Verse 13

“Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened. His wise men and Zeresh said, ‘If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you will not stand against him—you will surely fall before him.’”

Haman's own household recognizes that something has changed.

They realize that Mordecai's Jewish identity is significant.

Their statement is essentially a warning:

“You have begun to fall, and you will not be able to overcome him.”

Cross References

Exodus 17:16

“He said, ‘Because hands were lifted up against the throne of the Lord, the Lord will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation.’”

The Amalekites were historic enemies of Israel.

Numbers 24:9

“Like a lion they crouch and lie down; like a lion, who dares to rouse them? May those who bless you be blessed, and those who curse you be cursed.”

Genesis 12:3

“I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

Crawford Commentary

Haman's family recognizes that his conflict with Mordecai is not merely a personal disagreement.

Haman has placed himself against God's covenant people.

The story is moving toward his complete downfall.

Spiritual Principle

Those who oppose God's purposes should never assume that power and position guarantee victory.

XIV. HAMAN IS TAKEN TO ESTHER'S BANQUET

Esther 6:14 — No Time to Recover

Verse 14

“While they were still speaking, the king’s eunuchs arrived and quickly brought Haman to the banquet Esther had prepared.”

Haman barely has time to process what has happened.

He has just suffered tremendous humiliation.

His wife and friends have warned him about his coming downfall.

Then the king's servants arrive.

Haman must go immediately to Esther's banquet.

Cross References

Proverbs 27:1

“Do not boast about tomorrow, because you do not know what a day may bring.”

Haman had been boasting about tomorrow.

Now tomorrow has arrived, and it is not what he expected.

Ecclesiastes 9:12

“No one knows when their time will come. Like fish caught in a net or birds caught in a trap, people are suddenly caught by disaster when they least expect it.”

Luke 12:20

“But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’”

Crawford Commentary

Haman thought he controlled tomorrow.

He did not.

He thought he controlled Mordecai's future.

He did not.

He thought he knew where his plans were going.

He did not.

Spiritual Principle

Tomorrow belongs to God, not to us.

XV. PERSONAL STUDY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question 1 — Why couldn't the king sleep?

Answer:

The passage simply says that the king could not sleep.

It does not give a specific natural or spiritual reason.

However, within the story, his sleeplessness becomes the circumstance God uses to bring Mordecai's forgotten deed back to the king's attention.

Question 2 — What did the king have read to him?

Answer:

He had the book of the records, or chronicles of his reign, read to him.

Question 3 — What did the records reveal?

Answer:

They revealed that Mordecai had exposed the assassination plot of Bigthana and Teresh against King Ahasuerus.

Question 4 — Had Mordecai received a reward?

Answer:

No.

The king's attendants said:

“Nothing has been done for him.”

Question 5 — Why is this important?

Answer:

Because Mordecai's forgotten faithfulness is remembered at precisely the right moment.

Haman is simultaneously preparing to ask for Mordecai's execution.

God's timing is perfect.

Question 6 — What did Haman assume when the king asked about honoring someone?

Answer:

Haman assumed the king was talking about him.

This reveals the depth of his pride.

Question 7 — What did Haman recommend doing for the man the king wanted to honor?

Answer:

He recommended:

- Bringing the king's royal robe.
 - Bringing the king's horse.
 - Placing the royal crown on the horse.
 - Having a noble official dress the man.
 - Leading him through the city.
 - Publicly proclaiming that this was done for the man the king delighted to honor.
-

Question 8 — Who actually received this honor?

Answer:

Mordecai received the honor.

The king commanded Haman to carry out everything Haman had suggested.

Question 9 — Why is this one of the greatest reversals in Esther?

Answer:

Haman had planned to kill Mordecai.

Instead, Haman was forced to publicly honor Mordecai.

The man who wanted to destroy Mordecai became the instrument through which Mordecai was honored.

Question 10 — What happened to Haman afterward?

Answer:

He returned home grieving and humiliated, with his head covered in shame.

Question 11 — What did Haman's wife and friends tell him?

Answer:

They told him that if Mordecai was Jewish, Haman would not be able to stand against him.

They recognized that Haman was beginning to fall.

Question 12 — What does Esther 6 teach about pride?

Answer:

It teaches that pride can lead a person to make false assumptions about his own importance.

Haman believed the king wanted to honor him.

Instead, Haman was forced to honor the man he hated.

XVI. KEY LESSONS FROM ESTHER CHAPTER 6

1. GOD WORKS IN THE NIGHT

While the king could not sleep, God was working through circumstances.

Divine intervention can begin with what appears to be an ordinary interruption.

2. DELAYED HONOR IS NOT FORGOTTEN

Mordecai's service had apparently gone unrewarded.

But the right moment eventually came.

Faithfulness is never wasted.

3. PRIDE COMES BEFORE THE FALL

Haman assumed the king wanted to honor him.

His pride caused him to misunderstand the entire situation.

Pride blinds; humility sees reality more clearly.

4. GOD CAN REVERSE THE PLANS OF THE WICKED

Haman built a gallows for Mordecai.

Instead, Haman was forced to honor Mordecai.

God can turn an intended weapon into an instrument of deliverance.

5. GOD'S TIMING IS PERFECT

The king's sleeplessness happened at precisely the right time.

Haman arrived at precisely the right time.

The records were read at precisely the right time.

Mordecai's forgotten deed was remembered at precisely the right time.

Crawford Principle

What appears to be coincidence may be providence working through ordinary circumstances.

XVII. CRAWFORD COMMENTARY PRINCIPLE

“The God Who Never Sleeps Can Work While We Wait.”

The king could not sleep.

But God never sleeps.

Mordecai had been forgotten.

But God had not forgotten him.

Haman had built his gallows.

But God was already preparing the reversal.

The lesson is powerful:

You may not see God working, but that does not mean God is not working.

Sometimes the greatest changes begin quietly.

A sleepless night.

A forgotten record.

A question from a king.

A proud man's assumption.

And suddenly, everything changes.

XVIII. CENTRAL TRUTH OF ESTHER

CHAPTER 6

God is sovereign over timing, circumstances, rulers, and outcomes, and He can reverse the plans of the proud while bringing honor to those who remain faithful.

Haman thought he was approaching the king to destroy Mordecai.

Instead, he was commanded to honor him.

Mordecai's faithfulness had been overlooked.

But it had not been forgotten.

Haman's plans seemed powerful.

But God's providence was greater.

And the man who built the gallows for Mordecai was now beginning to walk toward his own downfall.

The reversal has begun.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Esther Chapter 7 — The Queen’s Courage and the Villain’s Fall

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Esther Chapter 7 is the dramatic climax of Esther's courageous appeal.

For two banquets, Esther has carefully waited for the right moment to reveal Haman's evil plan. Now the moment has arrived.

The king asks Esther once again what she wants.

This time, Esther does not delay.

She asks for her life and the lives of her people.

Then she identifies the enemy:

“The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman!”

Everything changes.

The king becomes furious.

Haman becomes terrified.

The man who intended to destroy the Jews now begs Esther for his own life.

Then the king learns about the gallows Haman had prepared for Mordecai.

The king gives the order:

“Hang him on it!”

The chapter ends with Haman hanging on the very gallows he built for another man.

This is one of the clearest examples in Scripture of **divine reversal**.

I. ESTHER AND HAMAN COME BEFORE THE KING

Esther 7:1 — The Second Banquet

Verse 1

“So the king and Haman went to dine with Queen Esther.”

This is the continuation of the banquet Esther had prepared.

The atmosphere may appear peaceful, but Esther knows that a life-and-death matter is about to be revealed.

Haman also comes to the banquet, apparently unaware that he is about to be exposed.

Cross References

Esther 5:4

“Esther answered, ‘If it pleases the king, let the king and Haman come today to a banquet I have prepared for him.’”

Esther 5:8

“If I have found favor in the king’s eyes, and if it pleases the king to grant my request, let the king and Haman come tomorrow to the banquet I will prepare for them. Then I will answer the king’s question.”

Proverbs 15:17

“It is better to have a meal of vegetables where there is love than to have a fattened calf where there is hatred.”

Crawford Commentary

Esther has patiently prepared for this moment.

She did not rush into the king's presence without preparation.

She waited, prayed, fasted, and then spoke.

Spiritual Principle

Wisdom knows that the right message must sometimes wait for the right moment.

II. THE KING ASKS ESTHER FOR HER REQUEST

Esther 7:2 — The King Asks Again

Verse 2

“On the second day of the banquet of wine, the king again asked Esther, ‘What is your request, Queen Esther? It will be granted to you. What is your petition? Even up to half of the kingdom—it will be done.’”

The king asks Esther the same basic question he asked at the previous banquet.

But now Esther is ready.

The time has come for her to reveal the truth.

Cross References

Esther 5:3

“The king asked her, ‘What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? Even if it is up to half the kingdom, it will be granted to you.’”

Esther 5:6

“While they were drinking wine at the banquet, the king asked Esther again, ‘What is your petition? It will be granted. What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom—it will be fulfilled.’”

Mark 6:23

“He promised her with an oath, ‘Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even up to half my kingdom.’”

Crawford Commentary

The king has given Esther an opportunity to speak.

She now has to decide whether to remain silent or risk everything by telling the truth.

She chooses courage.

III. ESTHER ASKS FOR HER LIFE

Esther 7:3 — “Grant Me My Life”

Verse 3

“Then Queen Esther replied, ‘If I have found favor in your eyes, O king, and if it pleases the king, grant me my life—this is my request. And spare my people—this is my petition.’”

Esther does not begin by asking for riches.

She does not ask for political power.

She asks for **life**.

She identifies herself with her people.

Her request is:

Save me. Save my people.

Cross References

Exodus 32:32

“But now, please forgive their sin—but if you will not, then erase my name from the book you have written.”

Nehemiah 1:11

“Lord, please hear the prayer of your servant and the prayers of your servants who delight in honoring your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man.”

Romans 9:3

“I could wish that I myself were cursed and separated from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race.”

Crawford Commentary

Esther demonstrates sacrificial concern.

She does not separate herself from the people in danger.

Although she is queen, she identifies herself with those who are threatened.

Spiritual Principle

True leadership does not abandon people in danger; it stands with them.

IV. ESTHER REVEALS THE DEATH SENTENCE

Esther 7:4 — “My People Have Been Sold”

Verse 4

“For my people and I have been sold to be destroyed, killed, and annihilated. If we had merely been sold as slaves, I would have remained silent, because such a distress would not justify disturbing the king.”

Esther finally reveals the truth.

The decree was not merely about taxation.

It was not merely about political disagreement.

It was a plan to destroy an entire people.

Esther tells the king:

“My people and I have been sold to be destroyed.”

Cross References

Esther 3:13

“Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king’s provinces, instructing them to destroy, kill, and annihilate all Jews—young and old, women and children—on a single day: the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar. Their property was to be taken as plunder.”

Esther 4:7

“Mordecai told him everything that had happened, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews.”

Psalms 44:12

“You sold your people for nothing; you gained nothing from their sale.”

Crawford Commentary

Esther's words force the king to confront the reality of the decree.

What Haman had presented as a political matter was actually a murderous conspiracy.

V. THE KING DEMANDS TO KNOW THE ENEMY

Esther 7:5 — “Who Is He?”

Verse 5

“King Ahasuerus asked Queen Esther, ‘Who is he? Where is this man who dared to do such a thing?’”

The king is shocked.

He now understands that someone has plotted against Esther and her people.

He wants a name.

Cross References

Genesis 3:13

“Then the Lord God asked the woman, ‘What have you done?’ The woman answered, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate.’”

2 Samuel 12:7

“Then Nathan said to David, ‘You are the man!’”

Proverbs 20:2

“A king’s anger is like the roar of a lion; anyone who provokes him risks his life.”

Crawford Commentary

The king asks the question that Haman has feared:

Who is responsible?

Esther is now ready to identify him.

VI. ESTHER EXPOSES HAMAN

Esther 7:6 — “The Adversary and Enemy”

Verse 6

“Esther answered, ‘The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman!’ Then Haman was terrified before the king and queen.”

This is the turning point of the chapter.

Esther does not hide the truth.

She names the enemy.

Haman is exposed.

The man who once held tremendous authority is now terrified.

Cross References

2 Samuel 12:7

“Then Nathan said to David, ‘You are the man!’”

Nathan exposed David's sin directly.

Esther 3:10

“So the king removed his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews.”

Revelation 12:10

“Then I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, ‘Now salvation and power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, because the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accused them before our God day and night, has been thrown down.’”

Crawford Commentary

Haman's title is now revealed:

Adversary. Enemy. Wicked man.

His public position cannot protect him from the consequences of his actions.

Spiritual Principle

Sin may hide behind position, wealth, and influence for a time, but God can bring hidden evil into the light.

VII. THE KING BECOMES ANGRY

Esther 7:7 — Haman Begg for His Life

Verse 7

“The king, enraged, got up from the banquet and went into the palace garden. But Haman stayed behind to beg Queen Esther for his life, for he saw that the king had already decided his doom.”

The king's anger is intense.

Haman immediately understands that his situation has changed.

He is no longer the powerful official who controlled the situation.

Now he is the condemned man begging for his life.

Cross References

Proverbs 16:14

“A king’s anger is a messenger of death, but a wise person will try to calm it.”

Genesis 44:16

“Judah replied, ‘What can we say to my lord? What can we speak? How can we prove our innocence? God has exposed your servants’ guilt. Here we are; we are my lord’s slaves—we and the one who was found with the cup.’”

Job 27:22

“God will attack the wicked without mercy; they will try to escape from His power.”

Crawford Commentary

Haman once had authority over others.

Now he is begging for mercy.

His pride has been completely reversed.

VIII. HAMAN FALLS BEFORE ESTHER

Esther 7:8 — Haman's Final Humiliation

Verse 8

“Just as the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall, Haman had fallen on the couch where Esther was reclining. The king exclaimed, ‘Will he even assault the queen while I am in the house?’ As soon as the king spoke, they covered Haman’s face.”

The situation becomes even worse for Haman.

He is pleading with Esther, but the king interprets his position beside Esther as another offense.

Haman has lost control of the situation completely.

Cross References

Job 9:24

“When a land falls into the hands of the wicked, God covers the eyes of its judges. If it is not God, then who is responsible?”

Jeremiah 13:26

“I will pull your skirts up over your face so that your shame will be exposed.”

Psalms 35:26

“May all who rejoice at my troubles be ashamed and disgraced; may all who exalt themselves over me be clothed with shame and disgrace.”

Crawford Commentary

Haman's downfall is now complete.

He entered the story as the man whom everyone was commanded to honor.

Now he stands before the king as a condemned enemy.

IX. THE GALLOWS ARE DISCOVERED

Esther 7:9 — “The Gallows He Prepared”

Verse 9

“Then Harbonah, one of the king’s attendants, said, ‘There’s a gallows seventy-five feet tall standing at Haman’s house—the one he prepared for Mordecai, who spoke up to help the king.’ The king said, ‘Hang him on it!’”

The king now learns something extremely important.

Haman had not only plotted against the Jews.

He had personally prepared a gallows for Mordecai.

And Mordecai was the man who had previously saved the king's life.

Cross References

Psalm 7:15

“The wicked dig a pit and hollow it out, but they fall into the hole they have made.”

Proverbs 26:27

“Whoever digs a pit will fall into it; if someone rolls a stone, it will roll back on them.”

Psalm 9:15

“The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug; their feet are caught in the net they have hidden.”

Crawford Commentary

The symbolism is unmistakable.

Haman built the gallows for Mordecai.

But the gallows becomes Haman's.

The trap he prepared for another becomes his own judgment.

Spiritual Principle

The evil we deliberately prepare against others can become the instrument of our own downfall.

X. HAMAN IS HANGED

Esther 7:10 — The End of the Enemy

Verse 10

“So they hanged Haman on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. And the king’s anger subsided.”

The chapter ends with Haman dead.

The man who planned genocide has been judged.

The man who built the gallows for Mordecai dies on those very gallows.

Cross References

Proverbs 11:8

“The righteous person is rescued from trouble, and it falls on the wicked instead.”

Psalms 37:35

“I have seen a wicked and ruthless person flourishing like a green tree in its native soil.”

Proverbs 21:30

“There is no wisdom, understanding, or counsel that can succeed against the Lord.”

Crawford Commentary

Haman's death demonstrates a major biblical principle:

No human plan can ultimately defeat the purposes of God.

Haman possessed:

- Position.
- Wealth.
- Political influence.
- Access to the king.
- Authority.
- A powerful network.

But none of those things could save him from the consequences of his wickedness.

XI. PERSONAL STUDY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question 1 — What did Esther ask the king to grant her?

Answer:

Esther asked the king to spare her life and the lives of her people.

She said:

“Grant me my life—and spare my people.”

Question 2 — Why had Esther waited before revealing her request?

Answer:

Esther had demonstrated wisdom and patience. She had prepared carefully and waited until the proper moment to make her appeal.

The story shows that courage does not always mean acting immediately.

Sometimes courage means **waiting, preparing, and then speaking when the opportunity comes.**

Question 3 — What did Esther reveal about Haman?

Answer:

She revealed that Haman was the person responsible for the plan to destroy her and her people.

She called him:

“The adversary and enemy.”

Question 4 — How did Haman react when Esther exposed him?

Answer:

He was terrified.

The man who had previously acted powerful and confident suddenly realized that his own life was in danger.

Question 5 — Why did the king become angry?

Answer:

The king discovered that Haman had arranged for Esther and her people to be destroyed.

The king was furious that someone had plotted such an evil act against the queen and her people.

Question 6 — What did Haman do when he realized his doom?

Answer:

He stayed behind and begged Queen Esther for his life.

Question 7 — What did Harbonah tell the king?

Answer:

Harbonah told the king that there was a seventy-five-foot gallows at Haman's house.

It had been prepared for Mordecai, the man who had previously helped save the king's life.

Question 8 — What did the king command?

Answer:

The king commanded that Haman be hanged on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai.

Question 9 — What is the great reversal in Esther Chapter 7?

Answer:

Haman intended to destroy Mordecai and the Jewish people.

Instead:

- Esther exposed Haman.
 - Haman lost the king's favor.
 - Haman was condemned.
 - Haman was executed.
 - Haman died on the gallows he had built for Mordecai.
-

Question 10 — What does Esther teach us about speaking up for others?

Answer:

Esther demonstrates the importance of courageous advocacy.

She could have remained silent and protected herself.

Instead, she risked her position and possibly her life to speak for people who could not defend themselves.

Question 11 — What does Esther 7 teach about hidden evil?

Answer:

It teaches that hidden evil may succeed temporarily, but it cannot remain hidden forever.

Haman's conspiracy eventually came into the light.

Question 12 — What does Esther 7 teach about God's providence?

Answer:

It shows that God can work through a series of ordinary circumstances to accomplish His purposes.

Although God's name is not directly mentioned in the chapter, the events reveal a powerful pattern of providence:

Esther is positioned to speak.

Haman is exposed.

The king becomes angry.

The gallows are discovered.

Haman is judged.

The circumstances have been moving toward this moment.

XII. KEY LESSONS FROM ESTHER CHAPTER 7

1. GOD HONORS BOLD FAITH

Esther risked her life to speak for her people.

Her courage became the means through which the situation changed.

Faith sometimes requires us to speak when silence would be easier.

2. GOD EXPOSES THE WICKED

Haman's plans had been hidden behind political authority.

But his evil was eventually exposed.

What people hide from others is never hidden from God.

3. DIVINE REVERSALS ARE REAL

Haman built the gallows for Mordecai.

Haman died on those gallows.

The trap changed direction.

God can turn an enemy's plan completely upside down.

4. ONE COURAGEOUS VOICE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Esther stood before the king and spoke.

Her words affected an entire nation.

Never underestimate what God can accomplish through one person who is willing to stand for what is right.

5. GOD ORCHESTRATES THE DETAILS

The story contains many apparently ordinary events:

- Banquets.
- Conversations.
- A sleepless night.
- Historical records.
- Mordecai's forgotten service.
- Haman's pride.
- Esther's courage.
- The discovery of the gallows.

Yet these events work together toward God's purpose.

XIII. CRAWFORD COMMENTARY PRINCIPLE

“When God Is Working Behind the Scenes, the Enemy May Not Realize That His Defeat Has Already Begun.”

Haman believed he was winning.

He had authority.

He had influence.

He had the king's signet ring.

He had a plan.

He had built the gallows.

But he did not know that God had already begun turning the situation around.

Esther's courage exposed him.

The king's anger condemned him.

The gallows he built became his own judgment.

The great lesson is this:

The wicked may appear powerful for a season, but God's purposes are greater than human schemes.

XIV. CENTRAL TRUTH OF ESTHER CHAPTER 7

God can use courageous obedience to expose evil, protect His people, and bring about a divine reversal at exactly the right time.

Esther spoke.

Haman was exposed.

Mordecai was protected.

The enemy fell.

And the sovereign hand of Providence continued to work.

The gallows built for Mordecai became the instrument of Haman's judgment.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Esther Chapter 8 — The Enemy's House, the King's Ring, and a Nation's Deliverance

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Esther Chapter 8 begins immediately after the dramatic fall of Haman.

Haman is dead, but the danger facing the Jewish people has **not yet disappeared**.

The original decree ordering the destruction of the Jews is still in effect. Haman has been removed, but the law he created cannot simply be erased.

This creates another crisis.

Esther must once again approach the king.

Mordecai, who was once sitting at the king's gate in mourning, is now elevated to a position of authority. Haman's property is given to Esther, and Haman's signet ring is transferred to Mordecai.

Then a new decree is written.

The Jews are given the legal right to assemble and defend themselves.

The chapter moves from **mourning to joy, danger to hope, and apparent defeat to deliverance**.

I. ESTHER AND MORDECAI ARE REWARDED

Esther 8:1 — Haman's Estate Given to Esther

Verse 1

“That same day, King Ahasuerus gave Queen Esther the estate of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mordecai was brought before the king, for Esther had told the king how Mordecai was related to her.”

Haman had once possessed tremendous wealth and influence.

Now his estate belongs to Esther.

The king also learns that Mordecai is Esther's relative.

The man Haman wanted destroyed is now being brought before the king.

Cross References

Proverbs 13:22

“A good person leaves an inheritance for his grandchildren, but the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous.”

Job 27:17

“They may pile up silver like dust and store up clothing like clay, but the innocent will eventually receive it.”

Psalms 37:16

“The little that a righteous person has is better than the wealth of many wicked people.”

Crawford Commentary

Haman's wealth could not save him.

His property could not protect him.

His position could not preserve him.

What he accumulated was eventually placed into the hands of Esther.

Spiritual Principle

Earthly wealth is temporary, but God's purposes endure.

II. MORDECAI RECEIVES HAMAN'S AUTHORITY

Esther 8:2 — The Signet Ring Is Given to Mordecai

Verse 2

“The king took off the signet ring he had taken from Haman and gave it to Mordecai. Esther appointed Mordecai over Haman’s estate.”

The signet ring represented royal authority.

Earlier, the king had given this ring to Haman.

Haman used that authority to create a decree against the Jews.

Now the same authority is placed into Mordecai's hands.

This is another dramatic reversal.

Cross References

Esther 3:10

“So the king removed his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews.”

Genesis 41:42

“Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph’s finger. He dressed him in fine linen and placed a gold chain around his neck.”

Daniel 6:3

“Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.”

Crawford Commentary

The same symbol of authority that had been used to advance evil is now placed in the hands of someone who will work for the protection of God's people.

Spiritual Principle

God can take what was used against His people and turn it toward their protection.

III. ESTHER RETURNS TO THE KING

Esther 8:3 — Esther Continues to Intercede

Verse 3

“Once again, Esther went before the king. Falling at his feet, she wept and pleaded with him to cancel the evil plot that Haman the Agagite had devised against the Jews.”

Esther could have stopped after Haman's death.

But she did not.

She understood that Haman's death did not automatically cancel the decree.

She continued to intercede.

Cross References

Esther 4:16

“Go and gather all the Jews who are in Susa and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. My attendants and I will do the same. Then, even though it is against the law, I will go to the king. And if I perish, I perish.”

Ezra 9:5

“At the evening sacrifice, I got up from my humiliation, with my clothes and robe torn, and I fell on my knees with my hands spread out to the Lord my God.”

Luke 7:38

“She stood behind Jesus at His feet, crying, and began to wet His feet with her tears. Then she wiped His feet with her hair, kissed them, and poured perfume on them.”

Crawford Commentary

Esther demonstrates **persistent intercession**.

One victory does not mean every battle is finished.

Haman is gone, but the decree remains.

Therefore Esther goes back to the king.

Spiritual Principle

Do not stop praying simply because one part of the problem has been solved.

IV. THE KING EXTENDS THE SCEPTER

Esther 8:4 — Esther Finds Favor Again

Verse 4

“The king held out the golden scepter to Esther, and she rose and stood before him.”

Once again Esther approaches the king.

Once again the golden scepter is extended.

She is being granted access and favor.

Cross References

Esther 4:11

“All the king’s officials and the people of the provinces know that any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned is to be put to death—unless the king extends the golden scepter to them. I haven’t been called to go to the king for thirty days.”

Esther 5:2

“When the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she found favor in his sight. He extended the golden scepter toward her, and Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter.”

Hebrews 4:16

“Therefore, let us come boldly to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us when we need it.”

Crawford Commentary

Esther had once approached a throne that could have meant death.

Now she approaches and receives favor.

For the Christian, Hebrews 4:16 gives us an even greater privilege: we are invited to approach God’s throne with confidence through Christ.

V. ESTHER PLEADS FOR A NEW DECREE

Esther 8:5 — “Write Another Order”

Verse 5

“She said, ‘If it pleases the king, and if I have found favor in your eyes, and if what I say seems right to you, let an order be written to revoke the letters Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite wrote—letters that commanded the destruction of the Jews in all the king’s provinces.’”

Esther asks the king to reverse Haman's decree.

The problem is that the previous decree cannot simply be erased.

Therefore another legal decree must be created.

Cross References

Daniel 6:8

“Now, Your Majesty, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.”

Esther 1:19

“If it pleases the king, issue a royal decree, and let it be written into the laws of Persia and Media, which cannot be revoked: Queen Vashti is never again to appear before King Ahasuerus. Let the king give her royal position to someone more worthy than she.”

Esther 3:13

“Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king’s provinces, instructing them to destroy, kill, and annihilate all Jews—young and old, women and children—on a single day: the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar. Their property was to be taken as plunder.”

Crawford Commentary

The original decree had created a legal problem.

Haman was dead, but the law remained.

Therefore Esther needed another decree to provide protection.

This demonstrates an important truth:

Removing the person behind an evil plan does not necessarily remove all the consequences of that plan.

VI. ESTHER CANNOT BEAR TO SEE HER PEOPLE DESTROYED

Esther 8:6 — A Heart of Compassion

Verse 6

“For how could I bear to see the disaster that will come upon my people? How could I watch the destruction of my relatives?”

Esther's concern is deeply personal.

She cannot sit safely in the palace while her people face destruction.

Cross References

Nehemiah 2:3

“But I said to the king, ‘May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins and its gates have been destroyed by fire?’”

Lamentations 3:48

“Streams of tears flow from my eyes because my people have been destroyed.”

Romans 9:3

“I could wish that I myself were cursed and separated from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race.”

Crawford Commentary

Esther's heart is connected to the suffering of her people.

She is not motivated by personal comfort.

She is motivated by compassion.

Spiritual Principle

Godly leadership sees the suffering of others and refuses to remain indifferent.

VII. THE KING REMINDS ESTHER OF HAMAN'S JUDGMENT

Esther 8:7 — Haman Has Been Judged

Verse 7

“Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew, ‘I have already given Esther Haman’s estate, and he has been hanged for attacking the Jews.’”

The king reminds Esther that Haman has already been judged.

But Esther understands that judgment against Haman is not enough.

The people still need protection.

Cross References

Esther 8:1

“That same day, King Ahasuerus gave Queen Esther the estate of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mordecai was brought before the king, for Esther had told the king how Mordecai was related to her.”

Esther 7:10

“So they hanged Haman on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. And the king’s anger subsided.”

Psalms 52:5

“Surely God will bring you to everlasting ruin; He will snatch you up and tear you from your tent; He will uproot you from the land of the living.”

Crawford Commentary

Haman has fallen, but Esther is still concerned about the people.

This shows that true intercession continues until the danger has been addressed.

VIII. A NEW DECREE IS AUTHORIZED

Esther 8:8 — A New Law

Verse 8

“Now, you may write another decree concerning the Jews as you see fit, in the king’s name and sealed with the king’s ring—for anything written in the king’s name and sealed with his ring cannot be revoked.”

The king gives Mordecai authority to write a new decree.

The signet ring once belonged to Haman.

Now it belongs to Mordecai.

Cross References

Daniel 6:8

“Now, Your Majesty, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.”

Daniel 6:12

“Then they went to the king and reminded him about the royal decree: ‘Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or human being except

to you, Your Majesty, would be thrown into the lions' den?' The king answered, 'The decree stands, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.'"

Esther 1:19

"If it pleases the king, issue a royal decree, and let it be written into the laws of Persia and Media, which cannot be revoked: Queen Vashti is never again to appear before King Ahasuerus."

Crawford Commentary

The first decree cannot simply be canceled.

But another decree can be issued that changes the situation.

This becomes the legal mechanism through which deliverance comes.

IX. MORDECAI WRITES TO THE EMPIRE

Esther 8:9 — The New Decree Is Written

Verse 9

"So the king's secretaries were summoned on the twenty-third day of the third month (the month of Sivan). They wrote out Mordecai's orders to the Jews, to the satraps, governors, and officials of the 127 provinces stretching from India to Ethiopia. It was written in every script and language of the peoples, including the Jews in their own language and script."

The message is sent throughout the entire empire.

No province is excluded.

No language is overlooked.

The Jewish people are informed of the new decree.

Cross References

Esther 3:12

"On the thirteenth day of the first month, the royal scribes were summoned. They wrote out Haman's orders to the king's governors, administrators, and officials of each province, in every script and every language of the empire. It was written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet ring."

Ezra 1:1

"In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, to fulfill the word of the Lord spoken through Jeremiah, the Lord moved the heart of King Cyrus to make a proclamation throughout his kingdom and to put it in writing."

Daniel 6:25

“Then King Darius wrote to all the nations and peoples of every language throughout the whole world: ‘May you prosper greatly!’”

Crawford Commentary

The first decree had carried a message of death.

Now a new decree carries a message of protection.

The same empire that had been used to spread Haman's evil plan is now being used to spread Mordecai's counter-decree.

X. THE DECREE IS SENT WITH URGENCY

Esther 8:10 — Swift Messengers

Verse 10

“Mordecai wrote in King Ahasuerus’s name, sealed the dispatches with the king’s signet ring, and sent them by couriers on horseback—riding fast horses, mules, camels, and young dromedaries.”

The message must travel quickly.

The Jews must have time to prepare.

Cross References

Esther 3:13

“Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king’s provinces, instructing them to destroy, kill, and annihilate all Jews—young and old, women and children, on a single day: the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar. Their property was to be taken as plunder.”

2 Chronicles 30:6

“At the king’s command, the couriers went throughout Israel and Judah with letters from the king and his officials, saying: ‘People of Israel, return to the Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, so that He may return to you who are left and have escaped from the kings of Assyria.’”

Job 9:25

“My days pass more quickly than a runner; they fly away without seeing any good.”

Crawford Commentary

The speed of the messengers demonstrates the urgency of the situation.

When lives are at stake, the message cannot be delayed.

XI. THE JEWS ARE GIVEN THE RIGHT TO DEFEND THEMSELVES

Esther 8:11 — Permission to Defend Their Lives

Verse 11

“The new decree gave the Jews in every city the right to assemble and protect themselves—to destroy, kill, and annihilate any armed group of people or province that attacked them, including women and children—and to take their enemies’ goods as plunder.”

The new decree changes the legal situation.

The Jews are no longer helpless.

They are authorized to assemble and defend themselves.

Cross References

Exodus 17:9

“Moses said to Joshua, ‘Choose some men and go out and fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands.’”

Genesis 14:14

“When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan.”

Nehemiah 4:14

“Then I looked things over and stood up and said to the nobles, the officials, and the rest of the people, ‘Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and daughters, your wives and your homes.’”

Crawford Commentary

The Jews are given the ability to protect themselves from the attack that had been legally authorized against them.

The new decree does not erase the original threat.

It provides a means of overcoming it.

XII. THE DAY OF BATTLE IS SET

Esther 8:12 — The Same Date

Verse 12

“This was to happen on a single day throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus—on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar.”

The date is significant.

It is the same day Haman had chosen for the destruction of the Jews.

But now the Jews have been given an opportunity to defend themselves.

Cross References

Esther 3:13

“Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king’s provinces, instructing them to destroy, kill, and annihilate all Jews—young and old, women and children, on a single day: the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar.”

Esther 3:7

“In the first month, the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, Haman had the Pur—that is, the lot—cast to determine the best day and month for the attack. The lot fell on the twelfth month, the month of Adar.”

Ecclesiastes 3:3

“There is a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build.”

Crawford Commentary

The date that once represented fear now becomes the date on which the Jews will stand against their enemies.

The enemy's timetable becomes part of God's larger providential plan.

XIII. THE DECREE IS PUBLICIZED

Esther 8:13 — The Jews Are Prepared

Verse 13

“A copy of the decree was issued as a law in every province and made known to all the peoples, so the Jews would be ready to take vengeance on their enemies.”

The decree must be publicly known.

The Jews must have time to prepare.

Cross References

Esther 3:14

“A copy of the decree was issued and made public in every province, giving instructions for the people to be ready for that day.”

Deuteronomy 25:19

“When the Lord your God gives you rest from all the enemies around you in the land He is giving you as an inheritance, you must erase the memory of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget.”

Deuteronomy 32:35

“It is Mine to avenge; I will repay. In due time their foot will slip; their day of disaster is near, and their doom is coming quickly.”

Crawford Commentary

The Jews now know what is coming.

They are no longer surprised or defenseless.

Preparation becomes an important part of their deliverance.

XIV. THE MESSENGERS RUSH OUT

Esther 8:14 — The Message Goes Forward

Verse 14

“The couriers, riding the swift royal horses, hurried out, pressed by the king’s command. The new decree was also proclaimed in the fortress of Susa.”

The messengers move quickly.

The new decree must reach every province.

Cross References

Esther 3:15

“The couriers set out, hurried by the king’s command, and the decree was proclaimed in the citadel of Susa. Then the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was in confusion.”

2 Chronicles 30:6

“At the king’s command, the couriers went throughout Israel and Judah with letters from the king and his officials, saying: ‘People of Israel, return to the Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, so that He may return to you who are left and have escaped from the kings of Assyria.’”

Jeremiah 51:31

“One courier will meet another and one messenger will meet another, to announce to the king of Babylon that his entire city has been captured.”

Crawford Commentary

Compare Esther 3:15 and Esther 8:14.

In Chapter 3, the messengers carried a message of death.

In Chapter 8, the messengers carry a message of deliverance.

The situation has been dramatically reversed.

XV. MORDECAI IS HONORED

Esther 8:15 — From Mourning to Royal Honor

Verse 15

“Mordecai left the king’s presence wearing royal garments of blue and white, a large gold crown, and a robe of fine linen and purple. And the city of Susa celebrated with joy.”

Mordecai's appearance now reflects his new position.

Earlier he wore sackcloth and ashes.

Now he wears royal clothing.

Cross References

Genesis 41:42

“Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph’s finger. He dressed him in fine linen and placed a gold chain around his neck.”

Daniel 5:29

“Then at Belshazzar’s command, Daniel was clothed in purple, a gold chain was placed around his neck, and a proclamation was made that he was now the third-highest ruler in the kingdom.”

Luke 15:22

“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.’”

Crawford Commentary

The change in Mordecai's clothing illustrates the dramatic reversal taking place.

He went from:

Sackcloth → Royal garments

Mourning → Celebration

Threatened → Honored

Powerless → Authority

XVI. THE JEWS RECEIVE JOY

Esther 8:16 — Light, Happiness, Joy, and Honor

Verse 16

“The Jews were filled with light, happiness, joy, and honor.”

This is one of the great emotional reversals of Esther.

Earlier:

- They mourned.
- They fasted.
- They wept.
- They wore sackcloth.
- They feared destruction.

Now:

- They have light.
- They have happiness.
- They have joy.
- They have honor.

Cross References

Psalm 97:11

“Light shines on the righteous, and joy fills those who do what is right.”

Isaiah 60:1

“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.”

Psalm 30:11

“You turned my mourning into dancing; You removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy.”

Crawford Commentary

God can transform the emotional landscape of His people.

Their mourning is not the end of their story.

Spiritual Principle

A season of sorrow does not mean that joy will never come.

XVII. JOY SPREADS THROUGHOUT THE EMPIRE

Esther 8:17 — Celebration and Fear

Verse 17

“In every province and every city where the king’s edict reached, there was joy and gladness among the Jews—a time of feasting and celebration. And many of the people of the land became Jews, because fear of the Jews had come upon them.”

The decree produces widespread celebration among the Jews.

People who had once feared the Jews now recognize their changed circumstances.

Cross References

Ruth 1:16

“But Ruth replied, ‘Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God will be my God.’”

Isaiah 56:6

“And foreigners who commit themselves to the Lord, who serve Him, who love the name of the Lord, and who worship Him—all who keep the Sabbath and do not profane it, and who hold firmly to My covenant—”

Zechariah 8:19

“The fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth months will become joyful and glad occasions and happy festivals for Judah. Therefore love truth and peace.”

Crawford Commentary

The chapter closes with celebration.

The Jews were once facing annihilation.

Now they are experiencing joy and honor.

The hand of Providence has turned the situation around.

XVIII. PERSONAL STUDY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question 1 — What happened to Haman's estate?

Answer:

King Ahasuerus gave Haman's estate to Queen Esther.

The wealth of the man who plotted against God's people was transferred to Esther.

Question 2 — What happened to Haman's signet ring?

Answer:

The king took the signet ring from Haman and gave it to Mordecai.

This represented a major transfer of authority.

Question 3 — Why did Esther go before the king again?

Answer:

Esther understood that Haman's death had not automatically removed the decree against the Jews.

She continued pleading with the king for the protection and deliverance of her people.

Question 4 — What did Esther ask the king to do?

Answer:

She asked that an order be written to address the letters Haman had issued ordering the destruction of the Jews.

Question 5 — Why was Esther so concerned?

Answer:

She could not bear to watch her people and relatives be destroyed.

Her position as queen did not make her indifferent to their suffering.

Question 6 — Could the original decree simply be revoked?

Answer:

According to the chapter, the laws of the Medes and Persians could not be revoked.

Therefore, the king authorized a **new decree** concerning the Jews.

Question 7 — What authority did the new decree give the Jews?

Answer:

It gave the Jews the right to assemble and defend themselves against anyone who attacked them.

Question 8 — What happened to Mordecai?

Answer:

Mordecai was elevated to a position of great honor.

He received:

- The king's signet ring.
 - Authority over Haman's estate.
 - Royal clothing.
 - A large gold crown.
 - A robe of fine linen and purple.
-

Question 9 — How did the Jews respond to the new decree?

Answer:

They were filled with:

- Light.
- Happiness.
- Joy.
- Honor.

They celebrated throughout the provinces.

Question 10 — What is the major reversal in Esther Chapter 8?

Answer:

The major reversal is that the people who were marked for destruction are now given legal authority to defend themselves.

Mordecai, who had been threatened by Haman, now receives Haman's authority.

Esther, who once approached the king in fear, now has influence before the king.

The Jews, who had been mourning, are now celebrating.

XIX. KEY LESSONS FROM ESTHER CHAPTER 8

1. GOD CAN RAISE THE HUMBLE

Mordecai went from sitting at the king's gate in mourning to wearing royal clothing and carrying the king's authority.

God is able to change circumstances in ways that people cannot predict.

2. PERSISTENT INTERCESSION MATTERS

Esther did not stop after Haman was defeated.

She continued pleading for her people.

One answered prayer should not cause us to stop praying about the remaining need.

3. GOD CAN WRITE A NEW STORY

The original decree could not simply be erased.

But another decree could be issued that changed the situation.

The Jews went from facing destruction to having the right to defend themselves.

A hopeless situation can change when God opens a way that was not previously visible.

4. GOD CAN TURN MOURNING INTO JOY

The Jews had been fasting and mourning.

Now they were celebrating.

Psalm 30:11 summarizes the principle:

“You turned my mourning into dancing.”

5. GOD CAN REVERSE THE ENEMY'S ADVANTAGE

Haman had used the king's authority against the Jews.

Now Mordecai uses the king's authority to protect them.

The enemy's advantage becomes the means through which God's people receive protection.

XX. CRAWFORD COMMENTARY PRINCIPLE

“God Can Turn the Authority Used Against His People Into an Instrument for Their Deliverance.”

Haman had possessed the signet ring.

Mordecai receives it.

Haman had possessed influence.

Mordecai receives authority.

Haman's decree had brought fear.

Mordecai's decree brings hope.

Haman's name represented destruction.

Mordecai's leadership represents protection.

This is the hidden hand of Providence throughout Esther.

XXI. CENTRAL TRUTH OF ESTHER CHAPTER 8

When God's people face circumstances that appear impossible, God can provide a way of deliverance that they could not have created for themselves.

Esther continued to intercede.

Mordecai received authority.

A new decree was written.

The Jews were given a means of defense.

Mourning became joy.

Fear became celebration.

And the people who appeared destined for destruction discovered that **their story was not over**.

The great lesson is this:

**The enemy may write a decree against you, but the enemy does not have the final word.
God is still able to turn the situation around.**

Esther Chapter 9 — Crawford Standard Bible

Victory, Vengeance, and the Birth of Purim

Introduction

Esther Chapter 9 is the great **turning point** of the book. The Jews had once been marked for destruction, but the day that was intended to destroy them became a day of victory.

Haman had cast the **Pur**, or lot, to determine the date when the Jews would be destroyed. Yet what appeared to be a fixed date of death became a day of deliverance.

The chapter teaches several important truths:

- God can **turn an evil plan around**.
- God's people must sometimes **stand together in courage**.
- Victory should not produce **greed or selfishness**.
- God's deliverance should be **remembered and passed to future generations**.
- The celebration of **Purim** became a permanent reminder of God's preservation of His people.

Although God's name is not directly mentioned in Esther, His providence is clearly seen throughout the chapter.

I. THE JEWS DEFEND THEMSELVES

Esther 9:1

“In the twelfth month, the month of Adar, on the thirteenth day—the day when the king’s command and decree were to be carried out—the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them. But the tables were turned, and the Jews overpowered those who hated them.”

Cross References

Esther 3:7 — Haman cast the lot, called Pur, to determine the month and day when his plan would take place.

Esther 3:13 — The king's decree ordered the Jews to be killed, including men, women, and children, on the thirteenth day of Adar, with their possessions taken.

Psalms 30:11 — God can turn mourning into dancing, remove sorrow, and replace it with joy.

Bible Study

The enemy thought the outcome had already been decided.

The date was established.

The decree had been written.

The armies were prepared.

But the enemy had forgotten one important fact:

God is greater than the plans of men.

The very day designed for Jewish destruction became a day of Jewish victory.

Spiritual Lesson

Sometimes circumstances appear to have already been decided against us. But God can change the outcome.

The enemy may write a plan, but God has the final word.

II. THE JEWS STAND TOGETHER

Esther 9:2

“The Jews assembled in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to attack those who sought their destruction. No one could stand against them, because fear of them had fallen on all the people.”

Cross References

Exodus 15:16 — Fear and dread fell upon Israel's enemies because of God's mighty power, and they became still as Israel passed through.

Deuteronomy 2:25 — God told Israel that He would cause the nations to fear and tremble because of Israel.

Joshua 2:9 — Rahab told the Israelite spies that fear of Israel had fallen upon the people and that the inhabitants were afraid because they had heard what God had done.

Bible Study

The Jews did not sit passively waiting for their enemies to attack.

They assembled together and defended themselves.

Their strength was found in unity.

There is an important spiritual principle here:

God's people should not allow fear to scatter them when trouble comes.

III. GOD ELEVATES MORDECAI

Esther 9:3

“All the provincial officials—the satraps, governors, and royal administrators—helped the Jews, because they were afraid of Mordecai.”

Cross References

Genesis 35:5 — As Jacob and his family traveled, the surrounding cities were afraid of them, and God prevented their enemies from pursuing them.

Exodus 23:27 — God promised to send His fear ahead of Israel and cause their enemies to turn away.

Esther 9:4 — Mordecai had become powerful in the king's palace, and his reputation was spreading throughout the provinces.

Bible Study

Mordecai had gone from sitting at the king's gate in humility to becoming one of the most influential men in the kingdom.

This is another reversal in Esther.

Haman had been promoted above everyone.

Haman wanted Mordecai destroyed.

But now Mordecai had authority, while Haman was dead.

Spiritual Lesson

God can change a person's position without changing the person's character.

Mordecai did not have to destroy Haman's reputation himself. God allowed circumstances to reveal the truth.

IV. MORDECAI'S INFLUENCE GROWS

Esther 9:4

“Mordecai had become powerful in the king's palace. His reputation spread throughout the provinces, and he became more and more influential.”

Cross References

Genesis 41:40 — Pharaoh placed Joseph over his entire house and made him ruler over Egypt, second only to Pharaoh himself.

2 Samuel 5:10 — David became greater and greater because the LORD God was with him.

Daniel 6:3 — Daniel distinguished himself above the other administrators because an excellent spirit was in him, and the king planned to place him over the entire kingdom.

Bible Study

Mordecai's advancement was not merely political.

It became part of God's providential plan for protecting His people.

Mordecai's position gave him influence at exactly the time it was needed.

Spiritual Lesson

God may be preparing you for a future assignment long before you understand why He has placed you where you are.

V. THE JEWS DEFEAT THEIR ENEMIES

Esther 9:5

“The Jews struck down all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying them. They did whatever they pleased to those who hated them.”

Cross References

Exodus 17:13 — Joshua and the Israelites defeated Amalek and his army with the sword.

1 Samuel 15:3 — God commanded Saul to completely destroy the Amalekites because of their longstanding opposition to Israel.

Esther 9:1 — The enemies had expected to overpower the Jews, but the Jews gained the victory instead.

Bible Study

This was not simply an offensive campaign motivated by greed. The Jews were responding to an existing decree that had authorized their destruction.

The important detail comes later:

They did not take the possessions of their enemies.

That demonstrated that their purpose was not personal enrichment.

VI. VICTORY IN SUSA

Esther 9:6

“In the citadel of Susa, the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men.”

Cross References

1 Samuel 15:8 — Saul captured Agag, the king of the Amalekites, but destroyed the rest of the people with the sword.

Exodus 32:28 — The Levites obeyed Moses' command, and about three thousand people died because of their rebellion.

Esther 9:5 — Throughout the empire, the Jews defeated those who sought their destruction.

Bible Study

The battle was widespread, but Susa was especially important because it was the center of the Persian government.

The victory there demonstrated that the Jews were no longer helpless victims of Haman's decree.

VII. HAMAN'S TEN SONS ARE DEFEATED

Esther 9:7–10

“They also killed the ten sons of Haman son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews— Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vajezatha. But they did not lay hands on the plunder.”

Cross References

1 Samuel 15:33 — Samuel killed Agag, the Amalekite king, because of the violence and destruction he had committed.

Exodus 17:14 — God declared that the memory of Amalek would eventually be completely removed.

Deuteronomy 25:19 — Israel was commanded to remember Amalek and, when God gave them rest, to remove Amalek's memory from the land.

Bible Study

The ten sons of Haman represented the continuation of his opposition to the Jews.

But notice an important statement:

“They did not lay hands on the plunder.”

That statement is repeated because the Jews were not fighting merely to become wealthy.

They were defending themselves from those who had been authorized to destroy them.

VIII. ESTHER IS GIVEN ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK

Esther 9:11–12

“That day, the number of people killed in the citadel of Susa was reported to the king. The king said to Queen Esther, ‘The Jews have killed five hundred men and Haman’s ten sons in Susa. What must they have done in the rest of my provinces! Now what is your petition? It will be granted to you. What is your further request? It will be done.’”

Cross References

Esther 5:3 — The king asked Esther what her request was and promised to grant it.

Esther 7:2 — The king again asked Esther for her petition and promised to fulfill her request.

1 Kings 3:5 — God appeared to Solomon and said, “Ask what you want Me to give you.”

Bible Study

The king continued to give Esther an opportunity to make requests.

This demonstrates how Esther's courage had transformed her relationship with the king.

She had once been afraid to approach him.

Now the king repeatedly invited her to speak.

IX. ESTHER REQUESTS AN EXTENSION

Esther 9:13

“Esther replied, ‘If it pleases the king, let the Jews in Susa be allowed to do again tomorrow as they have done today. And let Haman’s ten sons be hanged on the gallows.’”

Cross References

Esther 7:9 — Harbonah pointed out the gallows Haman had built for Mordecai, and the king ordered Haman to be hanged on it.

Numbers 25:4 — God commanded Moses to publicly execute the leaders responsible for Israel's rebellion so that His anger would turn away from Israel.

Deuteronomy 21:22 — When a person committed a crime deserving death and was executed, his body could be displayed on a tree.

Bible Study

Esther asked for additional protection because the original threat had been extensive.

The Jews were not simply dealing with one enemy. The decree had spread throughout the entire empire.

X. HAMAN'S SONS ARE HANGED

Esther 9:14

“The king agreed, and the edict was issued in Susa. Haman’s ten sons were hanged.”

Cross References

Esther 9:13 — Esther requested that Haman's sons be hanged.

2 Samuel 21:9 — Several descendants of Saul were publicly executed as judgment for a serious offense.

Joshua 8:29 — The king of Ai was executed and his body was displayed until evening.

Bible Study

The fate of Haman's sons demonstrates that evil can have consequences that extend beyond the individual who begins it.

Haman's hatred had become a family legacy.

But the greater principle is that **wickedness eventually brings judgment**.

XI. THE JEWS REFUSE TO TAKE PLUNDER

Esther 9:15–16

“On the fourteenth day of Adar, the Jews in Susa assembled again and killed three hundred men. But again, they took no plunder.”

“Meanwhile, the rest of the Jews in the king’s provinces also assembled to protect themselves and gain relief from their enemies. They killed seventy-five thousand of their enemies, but they did not seize their possessions.”

Cross References

1 Samuel 15:9 — Saul and the people spared what they considered valuable instead of completely obeying God's command.

1 Samuel 15:19 — Samuel confronted Saul for taking spoil when God had commanded otherwise.

Genesis 14:23 — Abraham refused to take the possessions of Sodom's king because he did not want anyone to say that the king had made Abraham wealthy.

Bible Study

The repeated statement that the Jews **did not take the plunder** is extremely important.

Their victory was not about becoming rich.

Their objective was survival and protection from those who had been authorized to destroy them.

Spiritual Lesson

Victory should never become an excuse for greed.

XII. SORROW BECOMES JOY

Esther 9:17

“This happened on the thirteenth day of Adar, and on the fourteenth day they rested and made it a day of feasting and joy.”

Cross References

Joshua 11:23 — After Israel's battles, the land had rest from war.

Deuteronomy 25:19 — Israel would receive rest from its enemies when God gave them victory.

Exodus 17:13 — Joshua defeated the Amalekites in battle.

Bible Study

The thirteenth day was a day of conflict.

The fourteenth became a day of rest and celebration.

This is a picture of God's ability to bring **rest after conflict**.

XIII. THE JEWS IN SUSAN CELEBRATE

Esther 9:18

“But the Jews in Susa had assembled on the thirteenth and fourteenth days. So on the fifteenth day, they rested and made it a day of feasting and joy.”

Cross References

Esther 9:17 — Jews outside Susa rested and celebrated on the fourteenth day.

Leviticus 23:5 — The Passover was observed at the appointed time.

Leviticus 23:6 — The Feast of Unleavened Bread began immediately after Passover.

Bible Study

The timing differed between the Jews in the villages and those in Susa because the battles lasted different lengths of time.

This explains why Purim eventually involved both the **fourteenth and fifteenth days of Adar**.

XIV. THE ORIGIN OF PURIM

Esther 9:19

“That is why rural Jews—those living in villages—observe the fourteenth day of Adar as a day of joy and feasting, a festive day of giving food to one another.”

Cross References

Nehemiah 8:10 — The people were told to celebrate, eat good food, drink, and share with those who had nothing prepared, because the joy of the LORD was their strength.

Deuteronomy 16:11 — Israel was to rejoice before the LORD together with family, servants, Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows.

Esther 9:22 — These days were to remember the Jews' relief from their enemies and the turning of sorrow into joy.

Bible Study

Purim was not simply a party.

It was a **memorial of deliverance**.

The Jewish people were instructed to remember the time when their sorrow became joy.

XV. MORDECAI RECORDS THE DELIVERANCE

Esther 9:20

“Mordecai recorded these events and sent letters to all the Jews throughout the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far.”

Cross References

Esther 9:29 — Esther and Mordecai later wrote another letter confirming the observance of Purim.

Exodus 17:14 — God commanded Moses to write the account of Amalek as a permanent memorial.

Jeremiah 30:2 — God instructed Jeremiah to write His words in a book so they could be remembered.

Bible Study

Mordecai understood the importance of recording what God had done.

A testimony that is remembered can become a testimony that is passed down.

Spiritual Lesson

Never forget what God has brought you through.

XVI. THE DAYS OF PURIM ARE ESTABLISHED

Esther 9:21–22

“He urged them to celebrate annually the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar as the days when the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month when their sorrow was turned into joy, and their mourning into celebration. These were to be days of feasting and joy, giving food to one another, and gifts to the poor.”

Cross References

Exodus 12:14 — God commanded Israel to remember Passover as a permanent memorial throughout their generations.

Leviticus 23:41 — Israel was commanded to celebrate God's appointed feast from generation to generation.

Psalms 30:11 — God can turn mourning into dancing and remove sorrow.

Isaiah 61:3 — God gives beauty instead of ashes, joy instead of mourning, and praise instead of despair.

Nehemiah 8:10 — The people were told to celebrate and share food with those who had nothing because the joy of the LORD was their strength.

Bible Study

The words are powerful:

Sorrow was turned into joy.

Mourning was turned into celebration.

The people were not simply told to remember their victory.

They were told to **share their blessings with others**, including the poor.

Spiritual Lesson

A genuine testimony of God's deliverance should produce **gratitude, generosity, and remembrance**.

XVII. THE PEOPLE ACCEPT THE CELEBRATION

Esther 9:23

“So the Jews agreed to continue the celebration, as Mordecai had written to them.”

Cross References

Esther 9:27 — The Jews established the observance for themselves, their descendants, and everyone who joined them.

Nehemiah 10:29 — The people committed themselves to follow God's law and His commands.

Joshua 24:25 — Joshua made a covenant with the people that day and established a commitment for Israel.

Bible Study

The people accepted the responsibility of preserving the memory of their deliverance.

A generation that remembers God's faithfulness can teach the next generation to trust Him.

XVIII. HAMAN'S PLAN IS REMEMBERED

Esther 9:24

“For Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted to destroy them and had cast the lot, called Pur, to crush and annihilate them.”

Cross References

Esther 3:1 — Haman the Agagite was promoted above the other officials.

Esther 3:7 — Haman cast the Pur, or lot, to determine the day for attacking the Jews.

Psalms 83:4 — Israel's enemies plotted to destroy God's people and wanted Israel's name to disappear.

Bible Study

The Jews remembered both the **danger** and the **deliverance**.

We should remember both as well.

When we remember what God brought us through, we become more aware of His faithfulness.

XIX. HAMAN'S EVIL RETURNS UPON HIM

Esther 9:25

“But when the matter came before the king, he issued orders in writing that the evil plan Haman had devised against the Jews should come back upon his own head—and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.”

Cross References

Psalms 7:16 — The trouble a wicked person causes returns upon his own head, and his violence falls back on him.

Psalms 9:15 — The nations can fall into the pit they themselves have made, and their own traps catch them.

Proverbs 26:27 — Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, and whoever rolls a stone may have it roll back on him.

Bible Study

This is one of the clearest themes in Esther:

The trap Haman prepared for someone else became his own trap.

Haman built the gallows for Mordecai.

Haman died on the gallows.

He planned destruction for the Jews.

His own plan brought destruction upon him.

Spiritual Lesson

Sin often contains the seeds of its own destruction.

XX. WHY IT WAS CALLED PURIM

Esther 9:26

“Therefore these days were called Purim, from the word Pur. Because of all that was written in this letter, and what they had seen and experienced...”

Cross References

Esther 3:7 — The word Pur referred to the lot Haman cast.

Exodus 17:15 — Moses built an altar and named it “The LORD Is My Banner” as a memorial of God's victory.

Joshua 5:9 — God said that He had removed the shame of Egypt from Israel, and that place was called Gilgal.

Bible Study

Names often became reminders of important events.

Purim reminded the Jewish people of a time when an enemy had attempted to destroy them, but God turned the situation around.

XXI. PURIM BECOMES A PERMANENT TRADITION

Esther 9:27–28

“The Jews established and made it a custom for themselves, their descendants, and all who joined them, to observe these two days every year in the appointed way and at the appointed time. These days should be remembered and observed in every generation, by every family, in every province and city. And these days of Purim should never fail among the Jews, nor fade from their memory or their descendants.”

Cross References

Esther 9:23 — The Jews agreed to continue the celebration.

Exodus 12:24 — Israel was commanded to observe God's instructions concerning Passover as a lasting practice.

Joshua 4:7 — The stones taken from the Jordan were to serve as a memorial for future generations.

Bible Study

God's people were commanded to remember.

Why?

Because people forget.

A generation can experience God's faithfulness and the next generation may only hear about it.

That is why testimony must be preserved.

Spiritual Lesson

Tell your children what God has done.

Tell them about the prayers God answered.

Tell them about the doors God opened.

Tell them about the battles God brought you through.

Tell them about the times God made a way when there seemed to be no way.

XXII. ESTHER AND MORDECAI CONFIRM PURIM

Esther 9:29

“Then Queen Esther, daughter of Abihail, along with Mordecai the Jew, wrote a second letter with full authority to confirm the celebration of Purim.”

Cross References

Esther 9:20 — Mordecai originally recorded the events and sent letters to the Jews.

Esther 9:31 — The letter confirmed the appointed times of Purim and the associated fasting and mourning.

2 Chronicles 30:1 — Hezekiah sent letters throughout Israel and Judah calling the people to observe Passover.

Bible Study

Esther and Mordecai worked together.

Their roles were different, but their purpose was united.

Esther had access to the king.

Mordecai had influence in the kingdom.

God used both.

XXIII. WORDS OF PEACE AND TRUTH

Esther 9:30

“Letters were sent to all the Jews in the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth.”

Cross References

Esther 1:1 — Ahasuerus ruled 127 provinces from India to Ethiopia.

Zechariah 8:19 — God promised that former times of fasting would become occasions of joy, gladness, and celebration, and He commanded His people to love truth and peace.

Jeremiah 29:11 — God declared that His plans for His people were plans for peace and a future filled with hope.

Bible Study

The chapter began with a death decree.

It ends with **peace and truth**.

That is another dramatic reversal.

The people who were facing annihilation were now receiving messages of peace.

XXIV. FASTING AND MOURNING ARE REMEMBERED

Esther 9:31

“The observance of Purim was confirmed at the appointed times, as Mordecai and Queen Esther had established it for themselves and their descendants, including the times of fasting and mourning.”

Cross References

Esther 4:16 — Esther called the Jews to fast for three days while she prepared to approach the king.

Esther 4:3 — The Jews fasted, wept, mourned, and wore sackcloth because of the decree against them.

Joel 2:15 — God called His people to declare a fast, gather together, and seek Him.

Bible Study

The celebration did not erase the memory of the suffering.

The people remembered both:

the mourning before deliverance

and

the joy after deliverance.

That is spiritually important.

We appreciate deliverance more when we remember what we were delivered from.

XXV. THE DECREE IS WRITTEN DOWN

Esther 9:32

“Esther’s decree confirmed these regulations about Purim, and it was written down in the records.”

Cross References

Esther 2:23 — Mordecai's discovery of the assassination plot was recorded in the official chronicles.

Deuteronomy 31:24 — Moses finished writing the words of God's law in a book.

Jeremiah 30:2 — God instructed Jeremiah to write His words in a book.

Bible Study

The story was written down so that it would not be forgotten.

The preservation of the record demonstrates the importance of remembering God's acts of deliverance.

KEY LESSONS FROM ESTHER CHAPTER 9

1. God Can Turn the Tables

The Jews were supposed to be destroyed.

Instead, they defeated those who sought their destruction.

What the enemy intended for evil can be turned by God's providence.

2. Victory Does Not Mean Greed

The Jews repeatedly refused to take the possessions of their enemies.

Their purpose was protection, not personal enrichment.

Godly victory should not produce selfishness.

3. God Can Turn Mourning Into Joy

The Jews went from:

weeping → rejoicing

mourning → celebration

fear → courage

danger → deliverance

death sentence → victory

God is able to transform circumstances that appear hopeless.

4. God's Deliverance Should Be Remembered

Purim became a permanent memorial.

The people were instructed to tell future generations what had happened.

Never forget what God has done for you.

5. God Uses People Together

Esther and Mordecai had different positions, personalities, and responsibilities.

Yet God used them together.

One person may have influence in one place while another has influence somewhere else.

God can bring those abilities together for His purpose.

6. Evil Can Fall Into Its Own Trap

Haman built the gallows for Mordecai.

Haman was hanged on those gallows.

This illustrates the principle found in Psalm 7:16:

The evil a person plans against others can eventually return upon himself.

XXXVI. QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What happened on the thirteenth day of Adar?

Answer:

The enemies of the Jews had planned to destroy them, but the Jews were given the right to defend themselves. The situation was completely reversed, and the Jews defeated those who sought their destruction.

Question 2

Why were the provincial officials willing to help the Jews?

Answer:

They were afraid of Mordecai because his influence and authority had become great throughout the empire.

Question 3

What does Mordecai's rise in power teach us?

Answer:

It teaches us that God can raise a person from a position of weakness to a position of influence when that position is needed for His purposes.

Question 4

Why is it significant that the Jews did not take the plunder?

Answer:

It shows that their purpose was not greed or personal enrichment. They were defending themselves against those who had been authorized to destroy them.

Question 5

What happened to Haman's ten sons?

Answer:

The ten sons of Haman were killed, and afterward they were publicly hanged according to the king's decree.

Question 6

Why did Esther ask for another day of fighting in Susa?

Answer:

Because the threat against the Jews was widespread, Esther requested additional time for the Jews in Susa to defend themselves against their enemies.

Question 7

What happened to the Jews after their enemies were defeated?

Answer:

They rested, celebrated, feasted, experienced joy, and shared food with one another and with the poor.

Question 8

What does Purim commemorate?

Answer:

Purim commemorates the deliverance of the Jews from the destruction planned by Haman. It remembers how their sorrow was turned into joy and their mourning into celebration.

Question 9

Why was it important for Mordecai to write down what had happened?

Answer:

It preserved the story of God's deliverance so that future generations would remember what had happened and continue celebrating the deliverance.

Question 10

What does Esther 9 teach us about remembering God's faithfulness?

Answer:

It teaches us that God's people should deliberately remember His acts of deliverance and teach those events to future generations.

XXXVII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Question 1

Have you ever experienced a situation that seemed hopeless but eventually turned around?

Answer:

The lesson of Esther encourages us to remember that circumstances are not always as permanent as they appear. God can work through circumstances, people, authorities, and unexpected events to bring about His purposes.

Question 2

What should we do when God gives us victory?

Answer:

We should give thanks, remain humble, refuse greed, help others, and remember what God has done.

Question 3

Why should Christians remember past deliverances?

Answer:

Remembering God's faithfulness strengthens our faith when new difficulties arise. If God has helped us before, His past faithfulness becomes a testimony that encourages us to trust Him again.

Question 4

What can we learn from the fact that Esther and Mordecai worked together?

Answer:

God does not require every person to perform the same assignment. He can use different people with different positions and abilities to accomplish one purpose.

Question 5

What does Haman's downfall teach us about pride?

Answer:

Pride can cause a person to become consumed with power, recognition, and revenge. Haman's pride eventually destroyed the very man who believed he was untouchable.

Question 6

How can we preserve God's work for the next generation?

Answer:

We can tell our children and grandchildren what God has done, record testimonies, teach Scripture, pray together, and make God's faithfulness part of our family's history.

CONCLUSION

Esther Chapter 9 is a chapter of **divine reversal**.

The Jews were supposed to die.

They lived.

They were supposed to be defeated.

They won.

They were supposed to mourn.

They celebrated.

Haman expected to become more powerful.

He was destroyed.

Mordecai had been threatened with death.

He became a powerful leader.

The people who were facing annihilation received **peace, joy, honor, and deliverance**.

The greatest lesson of Esther 9 is that **God can work behind the scenes even when His name is not visible in the circumstances**.

The Jews did not see every move God was making, but when the story was finished, they could look backward and see that God had been working all along.

The enemy had a plan.

Haman had a plan.

The king had a plan.

But God had the final word.

And that is why the story of Esther continues to remind God's people:

What looks like the end may only be the beginning of God's reversal.

Esther Chapter 10 — Crawford Standard Bible

The Legacy of Mordecai

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study in Simple American English

Introduction

Esther Chapter 10 is the shortest chapter in the Book of Esther, but it provides a powerful conclusion to the entire story.

The book began with **King Ahasuerus possessing enormous power**, Queen Vashti being removed, Esther becoming queen, and Mordecai sitting at the king's gate. It then moved through Haman's hatred, the threat against the Jews, Esther's courage, Haman's downfall, and the deliverance of God's people.

Now the story ends with **Mordecai in a position of great authority**.

The remarkable thing about Mordecai's rise is that he did not begin by seeking power. He remained faithful in difficult circumstances, protected Esther, exposed a murder plot, refused to compromise his convictions, and ultimately used his position to help his people.

Although God's name is never directly mentioned in the Book of Esther, His providence can be seen throughout the story. Esther 10 reminds us that **God can take a person who appears insignificant and place that person in a position where he can accomplish great good**.

Mordecai's Rise to Power

Esther 10:1

“King Ahasuerus imposed a tax on the land and on the islands of the sea.”

Cross References

Esther 1:1 — King Ahasuerus ruled over 127 provinces, stretching from India to Ethiopia.

1 Kings 4:21 — Solomon ruled over the kingdoms from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistines and the border of Egypt. These nations brought tribute and served Solomon throughout his reign.

Psalms 72:10 — Kings from distant lands would bring gifts and tribute, and rulers from faraway places would come before the king.

Bible Study

The first verse reminds us that the Persian Empire was enormous. Ahasuerus controlled extensive territory and had the authority to impose taxes throughout his kingdom.

The Bible does not present earthly government as something insignificant. Kings, governments, laws, taxes, armies, and nations all exist within God's sovereign oversight.

The important point is that **God's purposes were being worked out within a massive earthly empire.**

Esther did not live in a small isolated community. She lived in the center of one of the most powerful empires of her time.

Yet God was able to protect His people even there.

Spiritual Lesson

God is not limited by the size or power of human governments.

A believer may sometimes look at the world and think that powerful people control everything. Esther reminds us that human authority is never greater than God's sovereignty.

The Greatness of Mordecai Is Recorded

Esther 10:2

“All the powerful acts of his rule, along with a full account of Mordecai’s greatness—how the king promoted him—are recorded in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Media and Persia.”

Cross References

- **Kings 11:41** — The other events of Solomon's reign, everything he did and all his wisdom, were recorded in the official records of Solomon's reign.
- **Kings 10:34** — The other events of Jehu's reign and everything he did are recorded in the official history of the kings of Israel.

Nehemiah 12:23 — The heads of the Levite families were recorded in the official historical records.

Bible Study

Mordecai's life had changed dramatically.

Earlier in the story, he was simply known as the man who sat at the king's gate. He had no great title. He was not seeking public recognition.

But God used his faithfulness.

Mordecai eventually became second in command to the king.

His story was important enough that his accomplishments were recorded in the official records of the Persian kingdom.

This is an important principle:

Faithfulness may be unnoticed for a season, but it is never wasted.

Mordecai's reward did not happen immediately.

He had faithfully protected Esther.

He had faithfully exposed the assassination plot.

He had faithfully refused to bow to Haman.

He had faithfully mourned when his people were threatened.

And eventually his faithfulness was publicly recognized.

Spiritual Lesson

Do not measure the value of your obedience by how quickly you receive recognition.

God sees what people overlook.

Mordecai Becomes Second in Command

Esther 10:3

“Mordecai the Jew became second in command to King Ahasuerus. He was highly respected among the Jews and admired by the multitudes of his people. He worked for the good of his people and spoke peace and well-being to all his descendants.”

Cross References

Genesis 41:40 — Pharaoh told Joseph that he would be second in authority over Egypt. Only Pharaoh himself would have greater authority.

Daniel 6:3 — Daniel distinguished himself above the other officials because he had an excellent spirit within him, and the king planned to place him over the entire kingdom.

Jeremiah 29:7 — God told His people who were living in exile to seek the peace and prosperity of the city where they lived and to pray for it, because their well-being was connected to the well-being of that city.

Bible Study

This is the great conclusion of Mordecai's story.

He became **second in command**.

But notice what the Bible emphasizes.

It does not simply say that Mordecai became powerful.

It says:

“He worked for the good of his people.”

That is the difference between selfish leadership and godly leadership.

Mordecai had authority, but he did not use authority merely for himself.

He used his position to benefit others.

His leadership was characterized by:

XXXII. responsibility,

XXXIII. protection,

XXXIV. peace,

XXXV. concern for others,

XXXVI. wisdom,

XXXVII. faithfulness,

XXXVIII. and service.

Mordecai's greatest achievement was not simply obtaining power.

His greatest achievement was **using power for the good of others**.

Spiritual Lesson

Godly leadership is not about asking:

“What can people do for me?”

It asks:

“What can I do for the people God has placed under my influence?”

The Providence of God Throughout Esther

Although the Book of Esther never directly names God, His providence can be seen throughout the entire story.

Consider the sequence:

- Vashti was removed as queen.
- Esther was chosen as queen.
- Mordecai was positioned at the king's gate.
- Mordecai discovered the assassination plot.
- Haman was promoted.
- Haman developed hatred for Mordecai.
- Haman plotted against the Jews.

- Esther was positioned to intervene.
- Esther called for fasting.
- Esther approached the king.
- The king showed her favor.

- Esther delayed making her request.
- The king could not sleep.
- The royal records were read.
- Mordecai's previous faithfulness was discovered.
- Haman was forced to honor Mordecai.
- Haman was exposed.
- Haman was executed.
- A new decree allowed the Jews to defend themselves.
- The Jews were delivered.
- Purim was established.
- Mordecai became second in command.

From the human perspective, these events could appear to be a series of coincidences.

From the perspective of biblical faith, however, we see **divine providence at work behind the scenes.**

Key Thought

God does not have to announce Himself in every circumstance for Him to be working in that circumstance.

Key Lessons from Esther Chapter 10

1. God Honors Faithfulness

Mordecai did not begin as a powerful man.

He began as a faithful man.

His faithfulness eventually opened the door to greater responsibility.

Lesson: Be faithful where God has placed you now.

2. Position Is a Responsibility

Mordecai became second in command, but he did not use his authority selfishly.

He worked for the good of his people.

Lesson: The greater the position, the greater the responsibility to serve others.

3. God Can Reverse a Person's Circumstances

Mordecai went from sitting at the king's gate to becoming second in command.

His circumstances changed dramatically.

Lesson: Never assume that your present circumstances are the final chapter of your life.

4. God Uses Ordinary People

Mordecai was not introduced as a king or military commander.

He was simply a Jewish man living in exile.

Yet God used him in a significant way.

Lesson: You do not have to be famous or powerful for God to use you.

5. Great Leadership Seeks the Good of Others

Mordecai's leadership was measured by the good he brought to his people.

Lesson: Biblical leadership is service, not self-promotion.

6. A Good Legacy Is Built Through Faithfulness

Mordecai's name became associated with courage, leadership, protection, and peace.

His legacy continued beyond his own lifetime.

Lesson: The way we live today can affect generations that come after us.

7. God Writes the Final Chapter

Haman intended to destroy Mordecai and the Jewish people.

Instead, Haman was destroyed, Mordecai was elevated, and the Jews were delivered.

Lesson: What looks like the end of the story may actually be the beginning of God's greatest reversal.

XXXVI. Questions for Personal Study

Question 1

What happened to King Ahasuerus in Esther 10:1?

Answer:

King Ahasuerus imposed a tax on the land and the islands of his empire. This demonstrates the tremendous size and governmental authority of the Persian Empire.

Question 2

Where were the events of Mordecai's greatness recorded?

Answer:

They were recorded in the official chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia.

Question 3

What does this teach us about Mordecai's accomplishments?

Answer:

It shows that Mordecai's rise to power and his accomplishments became officially recognized. His faithfulness eventually became known publicly.

Question 4

What position did Mordecai receive?

Answer:

Mordecai became **second in command to King Ahasuerus**.

He became one of the most powerful people in the Persian Empire.

Question 5

What is significant about Mordecai becoming second in command?

Answer:

It shows the dramatic reversal God brought about in his circumstances.

Mordecai had once been an ordinary man sitting at the king's gate. He eventually became second in command.

Question 6

How did Mordecai use his authority?

Answer:

He used his authority for the good of his people.

The verse specifically says that he **“worked for the good of his people and spoke peace and well-being”** to them.

Question 7

What is the difference between selfish leadership and godly leadership?

Answer:

Selfish leadership uses authority for personal benefit.

Godly leadership uses authority to serve, protect, help, and bless others.

Mordecai provides an example of leadership that sought the welfare of his people.

Question 8

What does Genesis 41:40 teach us that relates to Mordecai?

Answer:

Genesis 41:40 shows Joseph being placed in a position second only to Pharaoh.

Like Joseph, Mordecai was elevated to a position of great authority and influence.

Both examples demonstrate how God can raise faithful people to positions where they can help others.

Question 9

What does Daniel 6:3 teach us about leadership?

Answer:

Daniel distinguished himself because of his excellent character and spirit.

This reminds us that character matters when God gives someone responsibility.

Mordecai likewise became respected because of his faithfulness and concern for his people.

Question 10

What does Jeremiah 29:7 teach us about seeking the good of others?

Answer:

God instructed His people to seek the peace and prosperity of the city where they lived and to pray for it.

Mordecai demonstrated a similar principle by using his position to seek the welfare of his people.

Question 11

Why is Mordecai's character more important than his position?

Answer:

Because a person's position tells us how much authority he has, but his character tells us how he will use that authority.

Mordecai did not allow power to make him selfish.

He used his authority for the benefit of others.

Question 12

What does Esther Chapter 10 teach about God's timing?

Answer:

It teaches that God's timing may involve a long period of waiting.

Mordecai's faithfulness did not immediately result in promotion.

But eventually the circumstances came together, and he was elevated to a position where he could help his people.

Question 13

What does the entire Book of Esther teach us about divine providence?

Answer:

It teaches us that God can work through ordinary circumstances, human decisions, unexpected events, and difficult situations to accomplish His purposes.

Even when God is not visibly mentioned, His providential hand can still be recognized.

Question 14

What kind of legacy did Mordecai leave?

Answer:

Mordecai left a legacy of faithfulness, courage, leadership, protection, peace, and concern for his people.

His legacy was not simply that he became powerful.

His legacy was that he **used his power to help others.**

Question 15

What is the final message of Esther Chapter 10?

Answer:

The final message is that **God can take a faithful person from an apparently insignificant position and place that person where he or she can accomplish great good.**

Mordecai's story ends with him serving his people and speaking peace to them.

The Book of Esther therefore ends with **deliverance, leadership, peace, and hope**.

XXXVII. Personal Application

1. Am I Being Faithful Where I Am?

Mordecai did not know how his story would end.

He simply remained faithful.

Application: Do not wait for a bigger position before becoming faithful. Faithfulness in small things prepares us for greater responsibility.

2. How Do I Use the Influence God Has Given Me?

Every person has some sphere of influence.

It may be a family, church, workplace, ministry, friendship, or community.

Mordecai used his influence to help his people.

Application: Ask yourself:

“Who can I help because God has placed me where I am?”

3. Am I Seeking Power or Seeking to Serve?

Mordecai's authority was not the end goal.

Serving his people was.

Application: Christian leadership should never be primarily about status, recognition, or control.

4. Can God Use My Current Circumstances?

Mordecai's circumstances appeared unfavorable for much of the story.

Yet God used those very circumstances to position him for a future purpose.

Application: Do not assume that difficult circumstances mean God has abandoned you.

5. **What Kind of Legacy Am I Building?**

Mordecai's story continued after the crisis was over.

His legacy was connected to the good he had done for others.

Application: Consider what people will remember about your life.

Will they remember your possessions?

Your accomplishments?

Your position?

Or will they remember that you helped people, encouraged people, protected people, and pointed people toward God?

Final Thought — The Hidden Hand of Providence

Esther Chapter 10 is short, but it provides a fitting conclusion to one of the Bible's greatest stories of divine providence.

Mordecai began as a Jewish exile living under Persian rule.

He ended as **second in command of the Persian Empire**.

Haman planned his destruction.

God brought Haman down.

Haman wanted Mordecai humiliated.

God honored Mordecai.

Haman wanted the Jewish people destroyed.

God delivered them.

And Mordecai ultimately used his authority **“for the good of his people”** and spoke peace to them.

The Book of Esther teaches us that **God can be working even when we cannot see Him working**.

Sometimes the greatest evidence of God's providence is found not in a spectacular miracle, but in a series of circumstances that come together at exactly the right time.

Esther became queen.

Mordecai discovered the plot.

Haman was promoted.

**Esther was positioned to
speak. The king could not
sleep.**

The records were opened.

Mordecai was remembered.

Haman was exposed.

The Jews were delivered.

And finally:

Mordecai was elevated to leadership so that he could seek the peace and welfare of his people.

The great lesson of Esther is this:

God may be hidden from our sight, but He is never absent from our circumstances.

Crawford Standard Bible Study Summary

Faithfulness prepares us.

Prayer strengthens us.

Courage moves us.

Providence positions us.

God's timing vindicates us.

And godly leadership blesses others.

Esther ends with a man who was once sitting at the king's gate becoming a man who stood in the king's palace—and using his influence not for himself, but for the good of God's people.

Epilogue

The Hidden Hand of Providence

A Verse-by-Verse Commentary on the Book of Esther

By Dr. Paul Crawford

The story of Esther ends with victory.

The threat against God's people has been defeated. Haman is dead. Mordecai has been elevated to a position of great authority. Esther remains queen. The Jewish people have been delivered from destruction, and what began with fear and mourning ends with joy and celebration.

But the greatest lesson of Esther is not simply that Esther survived.

It is that **God was faithful throughout the entire story.**

Even when His name was not openly spoken, His providence was evident.

Even when His presence was not visibly displayed, His hand was moving.

Even when His people could not see the outcome, God already knew the ending.

God Was Working All Along

When we look back over the story, we can see how God used events that initially appeared unrelated.

Esther became queen.

Mordecai discovered the assassination plot.

Haman was promoted.

Haman became angry with Mordecai.

The decree against the Jews was written.

Esther was placed in a position to intervene.

The king could not sleep.

The royal records were read.

Mordecai's forgotten good deed was remembered.

Haman entered the palace at the precise moment he was needed for the story to turn.

None of these events appeared miraculous by themselves.

Yet together they formed a remarkable demonstration of divine providence.

What looked like coincidence was part of a larger purpose.

That should encourage every believer.

We often understand God's work more clearly **after** we have walked through the situation than while we are in the middle of it.

Looking backward, we may see what we could not see looking forward.

When You Cannot See God

There are seasons when God seems silent.

There are prayers that appear unanswered.

There are circumstances that seem unfair.

There are situations that make us wonder whether God has forgotten us.

Esther reminds us that God's silence should never be confused with God's absence.

The fact that we cannot see God working does not mean He is not working.

The fact that we cannot understand His plan does not mean He does not have a plan.

The fact that we cannot see the way forward does not mean there is no way forward.

God's providence often operates beneath the surface.

He may be arranging circumstances that we will not understand until much later.

That is why faith is necessary.

Faith trusts God not only when the answer is visible but also when the answer is still hidden.

For Such a Time as This

Esther's story also leaves us with a personal challenge.

Mordecai's question still speaks to us:

“And who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”
— Esther 4:14

Every generation has its challenges.

Every generation has moments when courage is required.

Every generation has opportunities to stand for truth.

And every believer has a place of influence.

You may not be a queen in a Persian palace.

You may not possess political authority.

You may not have great wealth or public recognition.

But you are where you are for a reason.

God can use ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances.

He can use your testimony.

He can use your faithfulness.

He can use your words.

He can use your service.

He can use your willingness to stand when others refuse.

The question is not always, **“Why am I here?”**

Sometimes the better question is:

“What does God want me to do while I am here?”

The Danger of Pride

Haman's story provides another lasting warning.

Haman had power, wealth, status, and influence.

Yet none of it satisfied him because his heart was controlled by pride.

One man refused to bow to him, and that single refusal consumed his thoughts.

His pride eventually became his downfall.

The gallows he prepared for Mordecai became the instrument of his own judgment.

Haman's story reminds us that pride can turn blessings into idols.

A person can have everything the world considers successful and still possess a deeply troubled heart.
True greatness is not measured by position.
It is measured by character.
Mordecai and Haman demonstrate two very different approaches to influence.
Haman used authority to elevate himself.
Mordecai ultimately used authority to seek the good of his people.
One sought personal glory.
The other sought the welfare of others.
The contrast is powerful.

From Mourning to Joy

The Book of Esther begins with uncertainty and ends with celebration.
The Jewish people went from mourning to rejoicing.
Their circumstances changed because God provided a way of deliverance.
This transformation became the foundation for the Feast of Purim, a lasting memorial of God's preservation of His people.
The lesson is important:

Never forget what God has done.

When God brings you through a difficult season, remember it.
When He answers a prayer, remember it.
When He opens a door, remember it.
When He protects you from something you did not even know was coming, remember it.
When He turns sorrow into joy, remember it.
Memory strengthens faith.
What God has done in the past becomes a testimony for what He can do in the future.

Providence Does Not Mean Passivity

There is another important lesson in Esther.
Trusting God's providence does not mean sitting back and doing nothing.
Esther acted.
Mordecai acted.
The Jewish people fasted.
Esther approached the king.

She spoke when she needed to speak.

She took a risk when obedience required it.

God's sovereignty does not eliminate human responsibility.

Instead, God's providence gives us confidence to act faithfully.

We do not need to control the outcome.

We are responsible for being faithful with the opportunity God has placed before us.

Esther did not know exactly how the king would respond.

She simply knew what she needed to do.

Sometimes faith means taking the next step without knowing the entire journey.

The Hidden Hand Is Still Working

The Book of Esther may have ended, but the truth of Esther continues.

God is still sovereign.

God is still faithful.

God is still working through circumstances.

God is still placing people in strategic positions.

God is still turning situations around.

God is still able to bring good out of circumstances that appear hopeless.

And God is still working even when His hand is hidden.

Perhaps that is the greatest reason this book matters.

We live in a world where uncertainty is everywhere.

People wonder about the future.

Families face difficulties.

Communities face challenges.

Individuals face circumstances they never expected.

Sometimes we look at the world and wonder where God is.

Esther gives us an answer.

Look closer.

God may not always work through the dramatic.

Sometimes He works through the ordinary.

Sometimes He works through a conversation.

Sometimes He works through a delay.

Sometimes He works through an unexpected opportunity.

Sometimes He works through a person who is willing to say, “Yes.”

Sometimes He works through a door that opens at exactly the right moment.

And sometimes He works through events that seem completely unrelated until, years later, we look back and realize:

God was working all along.

The Final Lesson

The Book of Esther does not promise that God's people will never face trouble.

It does not promise that evil will never rise.

It does not promise that we will always understand God's plan.

But it does teach us that evil does not have the final word.

God does.

Fear does not have the final word.

God does.

Haman does not have the final word.

God does.

The enemy's plans do not have the final word.

God does.

That is the hope found throughout Esther.

The story began with a queen losing her position.

It continued with an orphan becoming queen.

It moved through a conspiracy, a wicked plot, a death decree, fasting, courage, danger, and deliverance.

And it ended with God's people celebrating.

The circumstances changed.

The people changed.

The outcome changed.

But God never changed.

A Final Word to the Reader

As you close this commentary, do not close the Book of Esther in your heart.

Carry its message with you.

When you feel forgotten, remember Mordecai.

When you are afraid, remember Esther.

When you are tempted by pride, remember Haman.

When circumstances seem impossible, remember the deliverance of God's people.

When God seems silent, remember His hidden hand.

And when you wonder why you are where you are, remember Esther 4:14:

“And who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

Perhaps the circumstances surrounding your life are preparing you for something you cannot yet see.

Perhaps the opportunity you have been given is more important than you realize.

Perhaps the difficult season you are experiencing is developing the faith and courage you will need for tomorrow.

Perhaps God is arranging pieces of your life that will eventually make sense.

You may not see the entire picture.

But you do not have to.

God does.

You may not know what tomorrow holds.

But you can trust the One who holds tomorrow.

You may not understand what God is doing.

But you can trust that He is working.

The story of Esther teaches us one final, unforgettable truth:

God does not have to be visible for His presence to be real.

His name does not have to be written across every page for His hand to be upon the story.

His hand may be hidden, but His providence is certain.

And when you cannot see Him working—

trust Him anyway.

Because the God of Esther is still the God of today.

The hidden hand is still at work.

A Note from the Author

The Hidden Hand of Providence

A Verse-by-Verse Commentary on the Book of Esther

By Dr. Paul Crawford

The Book of Esther has always fascinated me because of one extraordinary truth: **God is everywhere in the story, even though His name is never directly mentioned.**

That truth is what inspired the title of this commentary, *The Hidden Hand of Providence*.

As I have studied Esther, I have been reminded again and again that God does not always work in ways that are obvious to us. Sometimes His work is dramatic and unmistakable. At other times, He works quietly through ordinary circumstances, unexpected events, human decisions, and perfect timing.

Esther is a powerful reminder that **God can be working behind the scenes even when we cannot see what He is doing.**

There are times in our own lives when we may wonder where God is.

We pray, but the answer seems delayed.

We face circumstances we do not understand.

We watch situations develop in ways we never expected.

We may even wonder whether God has forgotten us.

The Book of Esther reminds us that God has not forgotten His people.

He was working when Esther was taken into the palace.

He was working when Mordecai uncovered the conspiracy against the king.

He was working when Haman's hatred began to grow.

He was working when the decree against the Jewish people was written.

He was working when Esther was challenged to risk her life.

He was working when the king could not sleep.

He was working when the royal records were read.

He was working when Mordecai's forgotten good deed was remembered.

And He was working when Haman's plan ultimately collapsed upon himself.

Looking at these events individually, some may appear to be coincidences.

Looking at them together, we see providence.

Why Esther Matters Today

I believe the message of Esther is desperately needed today.

We live in a world filled with uncertainty. People face fear, discouragement, opposition, financial difficulties, family problems, cultural confusion, and an uncertain future.

Sometimes God's people can become discouraged because they cannot see what God is doing.

Esther teaches us not to measure God's activity by what our eyes can see.

God can be silent without being absent.

That principle has encouraged me personally, and it is one of the reasons I wanted to write this commentary.

My prayer is that as you study Esther, you will begin to see your own circumstances differently.

Perhaps the situation that frustrates you today is preparing you for something tomorrow.

Perhaps the position you are in is not an accident.

Perhaps the people God has placed around you are part of His purpose.

Perhaps the door that closed is protecting you from something you cannot see.

Perhaps the door that opened is giving you an opportunity to serve Him.

And perhaps God has placed you exactly where you are **“for such a time as this.”**

A Word About Courage

Esther's courage is one of the great themes of this book.

She did not know what would happen when she entered the king's presence.

She knew the danger.

She knew the law.

She knew that approaching the king without being summoned could cost her life.

Yet she chose to act.

Her words,

“If I perish, I perish.”

have challenged generations of believers.

Esther reminds us that courage is not the absence of fear.

Courage is doing what is right despite fear.

There will be moments when every Christian must decide whether to remain silent or stand for truth.

There will be moments when comfort must be sacrificed for faithfulness.

There will be moments when obedience requires courage.

My prayer is that this commentary will encourage you to stand faithfully when those moments come.

A Warning About Pride

The story of Haman also carries a powerful warning.

Haman had position, authority, wealth, and influence, but pride destroyed him.

He became so consumed with one man's refusal to honor him that he eventually plotted the destruction of an entire people.

His story reminds us that unchecked pride can turn a blessing into a curse.

The world often teaches us to seek recognition, power, and personal advancement.

Scripture teaches us something different.

True greatness is found in humility, service, faithfulness, and obedience to God.

Haman wanted everyone to honor him.

Mordecai ultimately sought the good of his people.

The contrast between these two men provides an important lesson for every generation.

My Prayer for This Book

My prayer is that this commentary will accomplish more than simply giving you information about Esther.

I pray that it will strengthen your faith.

I pray that it will encourage you when God seems silent.

I pray that it will challenge you when courage is required.

I pray that it will warn you against pride.

I pray that it will remind you of God's sovereignty.

And I pray that it will help you recognize God's providence in your own life.

As you read each chapter, do not simply ask:

“What happened to Esther?”

Ask:

“What was God doing?”

Then ask:

“What does this teach me about God?”

And finally:

“How should this truth change the way I live?”

Those questions can transform Bible study from simply gathering information into an encounter with the truth of God's Word.

For Such a Time as This

Perhaps the greatest personal lesson I take from Esther is that God places people where He wants them.

Esther did not know the reason she became queen.

She could not see the future.

She could not understand why God had allowed certain events to happen.

But when the moment came, she discovered that her position had a purpose.

The same can be true for us.

You may wonder why God has placed you in your particular family, church, workplace, community, or ministry.

You may not understand your circumstances.

But never assume that your position is meaningless.

God can use one faithful person to influence an entire family.

He can use one courageous believer to encourage an entire church.

He can use one testimony to change a life.

He can use one act of obedience to accomplish something far greater than we can imagine.

So when your moment comes, be ready.

Stand firm.

Speak truth.

Trust God.

And remember:

You may be where you are for such a time as this.

Thank You for Reading

Thank you for taking the time to study the Book of Esther with me.

It is my sincere hope that the pages that follow will help you understand this remarkable book of Scripture and, more importantly, help you know the God behind the story.

May you learn to recognize His providence when His hand is hidden.

May you trust Him when the answer has not yet come.

May you remain faithful when circumstances are difficult.

May you have courage when fear tells you to remain silent.

And may you never forget that God is still sovereign over every chapter of your life.

The story of Esther ends with celebration, but its message continues.

God is faithful.

God is sovereign.

God is working.

And even when we cannot see His hand—

we can trust His heart.

With sincere gratitude and prayer,

WHEN STORIES SEEM SILENT, GOD IS STILL SPEAKING.



THE BOOK OF ESTHER is one of the most remarkable books in all of Scripture. God's name is never mentioned, yet His hand is seen on every page.

In the political intrigue of a foreign empire, God quietly moves people, opens doors, closes threats, and uses unlikely heroes to accomplish His sovereign will. Esther's story reminds us that God is never absent—He is always working, even when we cannot see Him.

The Hidden Hand of Providence is a verse-by-verse commentary that brings the Book of Esther to life with clarity, depth, and practical application for today.

IN THIS COMMENTARY, YOU WILL DISCOVER:

-  Verse-by-verse insights that explain the text clearly
-  Historical and cultural background that brings Esther's world to life
-  Key themes of faith, courage, obedience, and God's hidden providence
-  Practical lessons for everyday living
-  A deeper understanding of how God works behind the scenes in both personal and national events



“For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish.”

— ESTHER 4:14

Whether you are facing your own trial, seeking God's direction, or simply longing to trust Him more, this study will strengthen your faith and remind you of this eternal truth:

**THE SAME GOD WHO GUIDED ESTHER
IS GUIDING YOU TODAY.**

DR. PAUL CRAWFORD



Dr. Paul Crawford