

## God's Providence in the Little Things

Esther 5 - 7 – March 28, 2010

Ezekiel 18:20

We often hear, "*It's the little things that count.*" This is especially true in the workings of God's providence. We see this in several ways in today's study.

- **A King's Good** \_\_\_\_\_  
Esther 5:1-2
  
- **A King's Big** \_\_\_\_\_  
Esther 5:3-7  
  
Proverbs 21:1
  
- **An Unexplained** \_\_\_\_\_  
Esther 5:8
  
- **A Hasty** \_\_\_\_\_  
Esther 5:9-14
  
- **One** \_\_\_\_\_ **Night**  
Esther 6:1-2
  
- **A Neglected** \_\_\_\_\_  
Esther 6:3  
  
God is in charge of \_\_\_\_\_  
  
Galatians 4:4  
Psalm 31:15
  
- **A Perfectly Timed** \_\_\_\_\_  
Esther 6:4-14

Psalm 37:12-13  
Psalm 33:10-11  
Proverbs 21:30  
Romans 8:31  
Ephesians 1:11  
Proverbs 11:5-8  
Proverbs 16:18  
Proverbs 28:10

- **A Perfect Place for an** \_\_\_\_\_  
Esther 7:1-10

Psalm 103:19

*The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, and His sovereignty rules over all.*

### My NEXT STEP for This Week

- If you wake up in the night, read Romans 11:33-36 before going back to sleep. If you still can't sleep, memorize it!
- Pray that Israel would HAVE peace and KNOW the Prince of Peace.
- If you know a 'Haman' - meditate on Ps. 37:1-11.
- Do something kind for a 'Haman.'

## God's Providence in the Little Things

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**Intro:** We come again to the story of Esther – an inspired book of the Bible that does not mention the name of God. Not even one time do we find God's name appear. And this was God's plan. He would veil His presence in the story – but to the believer He's seen in every sentence and every paragraph.

God gives us a glimpse of how He orders things in His universe by clearly showing how little things fit to make a huge impact. From this God is shouting ... I'm working through the small things to bring about a huge result! Trust Me! Walk in obedience. Know that every time that I cause one thing to work together for good ... I secretly and invisibly made a million things happen so you could see one thing happen.

### Application

God is actively at work in the lives of every one of His children – but active silently, invisibly. It takes the eyes of faith to see this. God is invisibly-visible to those who walk by faith not by sight.

For those struggling with doubt ... asking

*I don't see God. Where is He? What is He up to? I see no purpose or meaning in my life.*

Listen well to the story of Esther.

### **Background on the Book ...**

- ✓ The nation of Israel is experiencing the chastening of God for her idolatry and abandonment of God
- ✓ Jews are in captivity in Persia ... present day Iran ...
- ✓ King Ahasuerus has a celebration for 180 days to show off his accomplishments as king.
- ✓ Following the 180 days ... he throws a party for 7 days ... where wine was abundant.
- ✓ At the end of the week he wants to show off his wife to the men who have had way too much to drink ... and Queen Vashti refuses ...
- ✓ The king takes it as the ultimate insult ... and listens to his advisors ... leading to a hurtful decision ... God has put a Jewess in the Royal Court – made her a queen, but no one in the palace knows she is a Jew.
- ✓ Vashti is removed as queen ...
- ✓ A *MISS PERSIA BEAUTY CONTEST* is held ... God gives Esther a striking-beauty. She's gorgeous! Stunning! She wins the beauty contest and is made the new queen.

Step by step we see God's providence – His silent, invisible but supernatural work to get His people in the right place at the right time. After Esther is made queen ... she obeys her adopted father, Mordecai, and does not tell anyone she is a Jew ... for Jews in general were hated people

In chapter 3, we're introduced to wicked Haman.

- ✓ He's made Prime Minister – second in command
- ✓ Haman meets Mordecai, Esther's father, at the king's gate.
- ✓ Mordecai, being a Jew, would not bow down to someone who was made into a deity – Haman.
- ✓ Haman cannot handle this kind of conviction and makes murder his option.

- ✓ But when he hears that Mordecai is a Jew ... he chooses to not only murder Mordecai but Mordecai and all his people the Jews.

In chapter 4 ... word gets out. A holocaust is planned. Godly Mordecai gets word to Esther ... she must talk with the king! But it's not that simple. There is a huge danger involved even for the queen!

**Esther 4:11**

“All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live. And I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days.”

Mordecai responds ...

**Esther 4:14**

“... if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?”

Esther accepts the challenge ... with a condition ...

**Esther 4:16**

“Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish.”

Fasting is always coupled with prayer though prayer is not mentioned in the text.

**Transition:** Let’s remember the rule of law of that land. It is called the **Law of the Medes and Persians**. This kind of law is an irrevocable law. Once a law is made – it cannot be ignored.

**PARALLEL: There is a similar type of law in the Bible**

**Ezekiel 18:20**

The person who sins will die ...

This law is a law God never changed. It is the same today as it was in the time of Adam and Eve. God would have to change His character to change this law ... and He is immutable – He never changes.

In our story today ... King Ahasuerus holds out his golden scepter to Esther which spares her life. In Christ Jesus ... God holds out His golden scepter, the scepter of grace ... that if we believe in Him ... see our sin and the consequences facing us ... and trust in Him ... we touch the golden scepter of God’s salvation and we’re granted forgiveness and eternal life. My friends, God’s scepter is His grace. He holds it out to sinners ... and by receiving His grace we discover that our sins caused the death of His Son. O what a glorious thought! Christ’s death on my behalf – Christ being my substitute takes the death penalty I deserve ... I earned ... that I might have forgiveness and eternal life.

**Turn to chapter 5 ...** The *day of courage* has arrived ... and Esther is bold. But God has prepared the way. The providence of God in little things. Let's observe a list of little things that God perfectly ordered ... in the right order.

## ➤ A King's Good MOOD

### Esther 5:1-2

Now it came about on the third day that Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace in front of the king's rooms, and the king was sitting on his royal throne in the throne room, opposite the entrance to the palace.

5:2 When the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, she obtained favor in his sight; and the king extended to Esther the golden scepter which was in his hand. So Esther came near and touched the top of the scepter.

### Observations

Esther was beautiful without having to put on her royal robes ... but she wisely decked herself out in her finest. She must have stood there with an upset stomach – nervous that her husband might be in one of his manic-depressive moods. She must have been a nervous wreck! The king's guards knew the law ... no one interrupts the king ... absolutely no one including the queen unless the king extends his golden scepter. So they stand ready to slaughter any uninvited guest.

**Transition:** What relief will follow ... one little thing ... for we see next;

## ➤ A King's Big HEART

### Esther 5:3-6

Then the king said to her, "What is troubling you, Queen Esther? And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be given to you."

5:4 Esther said, "If it pleases the king, may the king and Haman come this day to the banquet that I have prepared for him."

5:5 Then the king said, "Bring Haman quickly that we may do as Esther desires." So the king and Haman came to the banquet which Esther had prepared.

5:6 As they drank their wine at the banquet, the king said to Esther, "What is your petition, for it shall be granted to you. And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be done."

The king offers Esther a blank check. He's saying, *ask for something big and even expensive and you've got it! I'm here to make your wish come true.*

Ahasuerus – King Xerxes – is known for his cruelty

*Why is this cruel king being so gracious?*

### Proverbs 21:1

The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes.

The king offers Esther the world. So she responds ...

### Esther 5:7

So Esther replied, “My petition and my request is:

**Transition:** Another little thing follows in verse 8 ...

## ➤ **An Unexplained DELAY**

### **Esther 5:8**

if I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and do what I request, may the king and Haman come to the banquet which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king says.”

The big question:

*Why didn't she ask the king for Haman's head then and there? Why did she delay the request? Was she nervous? Did she lose courage? Did she wimp out? We don't know. But God was in charge here. There had to be a delay for a perfect result to follow! Esther did not know what would happen that night ... but God did. For God orchestrated it.*

Observe the sovereignty of God ...

**1<sup>st</sup>** – God kept Esther from making the request at what looked like a perfect time ... with the king being in a great mood

**2<sup>nd</sup>** – The king accepted the delay. I don't picture the king being a very patient man. But he was that day

**3<sup>rd</sup>** – None of Esther's attendants knew she was a Jew ... the secret remained a secret

It is clear

God planned everything and it wasn't the right time and it wasn't the right place! Before the time would be right ... a few more little things had to be put into place. And sure enough they would come. One of those little things was ...

## ➤ **A Hasty PROJECT**

### **Esther 5:9**

Then Haman went out that day glad and pleased of heart; but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate and that he did not stand up or tremble before him, Haman was filled with anger against Mordecai.

- ✓ This infuriated Haman ...
- ✓ So he threw himself a pity party ... and made it a bragging party too.

He got his friends together and his wife

He bragged about how wealthy he was

He bragged about his 10 sons

He let them know all the times the king had honored him

He boasted about being second in command ...

He even included the Queen Esther in his boasts

**Esther 5:12**

“... Even Esther the queen let no one but me come with the king to the banquet which she had prepared; and tomorrow also I am invited by her with the king.

Haman took a little ego trip in his living room.

But one thing really, really bugged him! It was that guy, Mordecai – that Jew! His wife had a brilliant plan! The plan was for a hasty construction project. It was a one night project to build a place to hang people – a gallows. Gallows that would stand 75’ high. And Haman loved the idea and the project was hastily built.

Well said

*“You can always tell the size of a man by the things that irritate him. If little things irritate him, he is a little man. If it takes big things to irritate him, he is a big man.”*  
(McGee)

**Transition:** O how I enjoy insights into God’s marvelous ways. For we see a little thing that changed the course of history! Shakespeare wrote, *“Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.”*

What was that one little thing?

## ➤ **One SLEEPLESS Night**

God caused the king to have **insomnia**. This did not happen by chance. God caused the king to have a night without sleep. God wanted the king to stay awake. Who would have thought this would play a part in history?

### **Esther 6:1-2**

During that night the king could not sleep so he gave an order to bring the book of records, the chronicles, and they were read before the king.

6:2 It was found written what Mordecai had reported concerning Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king’s eunuchs who were doorkeepers, that they had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.

How to put yourself to sleep ...

Read a **boring** book!

But what book would bore the king best?

It is the official minutes of palace happenings ... entries of facts without emotion, without embellishment. Minutia that couldn’t possibly be of interest.

Again we see the sovereign hand of God

The servant appears to have randomly chose some records ... but God had divinely directed him to the right ones!

God still does this kind of thing.

**Story:** C.S. Lewis

*In 1916, a British student bought a book at a used-book store in a train station. He had seen the book before but never took an interest in it until that day. It was a Christian book. And God used that to lead this young man to conversion. Who was this student? It*

was C. S. Lewis. C. S. Lewis later told a friend that he had picked up the book “by hazard” ... but clearly God directed his choice.

The king who tried to doze ... suddenly sits up when he hears what Mordecai did for him ... something he apparently didn't remember. But he should have remembered ... for years earlier we see ...

**Esther 2:23**

“... it was written in the Book of the Chronicles in the king's presence.

ANY POSSIBILITY FOR SLEEP IS PROBABLY GONE ... FOR THE KING'S ADRENALINE IS PUMPING IN APPRECIATION FOR MORDECAI.

Undoubtedly the king is saying, *WHAT? SOMEONE SAVED MY LIFE AND I DIDN'T ACKNOWLEDGE IT?*

*The bigger question: WHAT DID WE DO FOR THIS GUY?* A sleepless night ... and insomniac king realizes another little thing. Mordecai is ...

➤ **A Neglected HERO**

**Esther 6:3**

The king said, “What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?” Then the king's servants who attended him said, “Nothing has been done for him.”

It appears this happened 5 years earlier.

Why was this forgotten?

It was forgotten because God wanted it forgotten for a while, and remembered at the perfect time.

A good thing to remember

God is in charge of **SCHEDULES**

**Galatians 4:4**

But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law

King David said ...

**Psalms 31:15**

My times are in Your hand ...

**Compare:** Joseph ...

He became a friend to Pharaoh's butler in prison ... interpreted a dream that came true ... and thought he'd get out of prison for it. But Joseph stayed in that prison two more years. For God was in charge of Joseph's schedule. And God is never in a hurry!

**Transition:** Every spoke in the wheel is being put into place. A divine order becomes so clear in this story that we marvel at its intricacy ... not hearing the name of God mentioned ... but seeing the hand of God over and over again!

For another little thing ... another little piece of the puzzle, another spoke in the wheel is added into place. What was it? It was ...

## ➤ A Perfectly Timed ARRIVAL

### Esther 6:4, 6

“... Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king’s palace in order to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows which he had prepared for him.

6:6 So Haman came in and the king said to him, “What is to be done for the man whom the king desires to honor?” And Haman said to himself, “Whom would the king desire to honor more than me?”

### Fascinating revelation

Haman is convinced the king wants to honor him. But don’t miss the honor he devises.

### Esther 6:8-9

let them bring a royal robe which the king has worn, and the horse on which the king has ridden, and on whose head a royal crown has been placed;

6:9 and let the robe and the horse be handed over to one of the king’s most noble princes and let them array the man whom the king desires to honor and lead him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him, ‘Thus it shall be done to the man whom the king desires to honor.

### Notice what Haman has devised

Thinking that he’s the one to be honored ...

- ✓ He’s got his eyes set on being the next king
- ✓ He wants to wear the king’s robe ... and ride the king’s horse ... so the people think of him as the successor to King Ahasuerus
- ✓ Looks like he’s craving the king’s throne!

### In the midst of Haman’s pride and sedition ...

I see God’s sense of humor here.

For if Haman had arrived a few hours later – he would have missed the celebration.

God wanted Haman to spend the day **HONORING** Mordecai.

### Psalm 37:12-13

The wicked plots against the righteous and gnashes at him with his teeth.

37:13 The Lord laughs at him, For He sees his day is coming.

### What a praise!

I found myself rubbing my hands together in delight when I got to this part of the story. It is a good time to declare, “**GOD, YOU ARE SO GREAT ... SO WORTHY OF PRAISE. YOU ARE SOVEREIGN.**”

### Psalm 33:10-11

The Lord nullifies the counsel of the nations; He frustrates the plans of the peoples.  
33:11 The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of His heart from generation to generation.

**Proverbs 21:30**

There is no wisdom and no understanding And no counsel against the Lord.

**Romans 8:31**

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

The king absolutely loves the idea ... and tells Haman he gets to be the person walking the horse!

But don't miss what the king knew or discovered about Mordecai ... verse 10

“... do so for Mordecai *the Jew*”

Don't be tempted to conclude ... what an amazing combination of coincidences! My friends, our God is not the God of coincidence. He's the sovereign God ruling and over-ruling all events according to His will. Ordinary details and circumstances of life are weaved together to fulfill His plans.

**Ephesians 1:11**

“{God}... works all things after the counsel of His will”

**Transition:** There is something Haman was clueless about. He was clueless about biblical principles!

**Proverbs 11:5-8**

The righteousness of the blameless will smooth his way, But the wicked will fall by his own wickedness.

11:6 The righteousness of the upright will deliver them, But the treacherous will be caught by their own greed.

11:7 When a wicked man dies, his expectation will perish, And the hope of strong men perishes.

11:8 The righteous is delivered from trouble, But the wicked takes his place.

**Proverbs 16:18**

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling.

**Proverbs 28:10**

He who leads the upright astray in an evil way Will himself fall into his own pit, But the blameless will inherit good.

**Transition:** Haman does what he's told ... and rushes home in humiliation when he's finished. He tells his wife ... and she says ... oh, oh! This does not look good! But before Haman can figure what to do next ...

**Esther 6:14**

While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hastily brought Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared.

## CHAPTER 7 ...

**Transition:** Now the time is right! God has all the characters in place ... and events in place. The banquet begins ... and the king's curiosity is killing him.

### **Esther 7:2-5**

"... What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be done."

7:3 Then Queen Esther replied, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me as my petition, and my people as my request;

7:4 for we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed and to be annihilated. Now if we had only been sold as slaves, men and women, I would have remained silent, for the trouble would not be commensurate with the annoyance to the king."

7:5 Then King Ahasuerus asked Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who would presume to do thus?"

A brilliant God uses wise Esther's strategy to have Haman off-guard for the event. He's off balance ... unequipped to handle what follows. Neither the king nor Haman knew Esther's nationality. But it's time to reveal that.

Esther, armed with perfect timing ... a king who can't wait to do what she asks ... declares;

### **Esther 7:6**

"... A foe and an enemy is this wicked Haman!

To say the king was shocked is an understatement!

#### Think about this

Esther has also implicated the king. He approved the slaughter of the Jews. He had signed the death warrant for his own wife. He had to find a way to save his wife and a way to save face ... all at the same time.

### **Esther 7:7a**

The king arose in his anger from drinking wine and went into the palace garden ...

### **Esther 7:7b**

"... Haman stayed to beg for his life from Queen Esther ..."

### **Esther 7:8a**

... when the king returned ... Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was.

#### Watch this

Haman began his begging on his knees ... while Esther's reclining on a couch. But Esther's probably withdrawing ... so Haman moves on to the couch to beg some more ... and it appears he's right on top of the queen in a very precarious position ...

**Esther 7:8**

“... Then the king said, “Will he even assault the queen with me in the house?” As the word went out of the king’s mouth, they covered Haman’s face.

**Transition:** One more little thing in God’s great providence ... for a servant suggested ...

➤ **A Perfect Place for an EXECUTION**

Harbonah said, “*Hey! Haman just happened to build a gallows at his house last night!*”

**Esther 7:9-10**

“... And the king said, “Hang him on it.”

7:10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai, and the king’s anger subsided.

**Psalms 103:19**

The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, And His sovereignty rules over all.