

Esther

Esther 4:13-16

Introduction: This lesson is as much a lesson on the Lord's providence as it is on the book of Esther (Est. 4:13-16). Mordecai, Queen Esther's cousin and guardian, understood that if Esther did not act to save the Jews, God would still save His people from extinction, but there was no guarantee that anyone they knew would survive. Mordecai asked, "*Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?*"

- 1) Things may not be as it seems.
- 2) God may be using you (i.e. Esther).

I. A man named Haman (Chapter 3)

A. An Agagite by the name of Haman had become such of favorite of King Ahasuerus that not only was he placed in the King's administration as the prime minister but a decree was issued that everyone in the kingdom was to pay homage to Haman by "bending the knee" when he passed by.

B. However, Mordecai refused to bend the knee for Haman.

C. Haman was so outraged at Mordecai that he determined to set his wrath against all Jews (Est. 3:5-6). (These weren't Jewish people anymore to Haman; they were the people of Mordecai!)

D. For Mordecai's insult, Haman goes to the king to have him unwittingly destroy all the Jews (Est. 3:8-10).

E. The decree was issued that in 11 months hence, on the 13th day of the 12th month, all Jews on earth would be slain (Est. 3:13).

II. The appeal

A. Mordecai was exchanging communication with Esther via a servant. He insisted that she appeal to the king on behalf of her people (Est. 4:7-8). However, Esther was scared to address the king for fear of death. When Mordecai makes it clear she will die one way or the other she agrees to approach the king. "*I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!*" (Est. 4:17)

B. Three days later, Esther enters the Kings court uninvited. Not only did the king hold up his golden scepter but he permits her to make a request that he will grant (Est. 5:3). At this point, all she has to do is say, "O King, I want you to save my people." Instead, she invites the King and Haman to dinner.

C. At the dinner, the King again asks her to make a request up to half the kingdom. Again, she hesitates and invites them to dinner the next night.

1. Maybe she was afraid the King would say no to her request.
2. Maybe she got choked up when the moment came.

D. The king knows Esther would not risk her life for a dinner engagement so he agrees to the next dinner.

III. The next 24 hours

A. On the way home Haman sees Mordecai. Again, Mordecai does not bow to him. Haman is outraged. He calls his wife and friends to recite his greatness in wealth, in his family and in his service to the king. Yet, one thing was not right to him (Est. 5:12-13). The solution to Haman's problem was simple to his wife and friends (Est. 5:14).

B. That night the King couldn't sleep so he stays up all night having his chronicles read to him. When they come to the account where Mordecai had earlier foiled an attempt on the King's life, the King determines to officially thank Mordecai for his good deed.

C. While the King is thinking how to honor Mordecai for his good deed, Haman comes in early to request permission to have Mordecai hung. But before Haman has a chance to ask, the king wants Haman's advice (Est. 6:6-10).

1. I can't but help wonder if the Lord has a sense of humor here.

2. Haman thought the king wanted to honor himself. So he answered in a manner of how he would want to be honored only to learn the king wanted to honor Mordecai.

3. To top it off, the King wanted Haman to do just what he advised for Mordecai.

D. Haman returns home mortified (Mortecaied ?). He tells his wife and friends all that happened (Est. 6:13). Their response was interesting. They must have come to realize that Mordecai was Jewish and if so, Haman would "*surely fall before him.*" Just then, Haman is whisked away to the banquet.

IV. The main course

A. At the banquet, the King repeats for the third time for her to make her request. The time had come for Esther to make her request (Est. 7:3-10).

B. Just as quick as Haman's life ended, Mordecai was lifted up to the vacant place that Haman left. As the new prime minister, Mordecai still had a problem. How does one undo a law that cannot be undone? By law the Jews were still scheduled to die on the 13th day of the 12th month.

C. Long story short, Mordecai issued a law ordering all Jews to take up arms in their own defense on the 13th day of the 12th month. If anyone tried to kill them, they were allowed to return the favor.

D. When the day came, everyone that attempted to kill a Jew was killed himself and there was a great deliverance.

V. God's Providence

A. How did Mordecai manage to become the prime minister with the ability to issue a law that would counteract the decree Haman had put out?

B. What would have happened if Haman had Mordecai executed before Esther worked up enough courage to make her appeal to the king?

C. What would have happened if Haman had arrived an hour earlier and before the king got to the account of how Mordecai saved the king's life in the chronicles?

D. What would have happened if the king was tired and slept through that fateful night?

E. How did the king forget to honor Mordecai for saving his life? Seems very similar to the way the Butler forgot about Joseph in jail for two years.

F. What would have happened if Esther was too scared for her life to ask the king to save her people?

G. What are the odds that a Jewish girl would be queen of a foreign country and have the favor of the king to bring his wrath upon Haman and save the Jewish race from extinction?

H. Was it coincidental that the young little orphan girl was more beautiful than all the ladies in the realm which propelled her to become queen?

I. Did God have anything to do with any of these events?

Conclusion: Likewise, is it just coincidental that you and I have become the persons we are today? I cannot believe that all the circumstances in our lives which shape, mold, direct and guide us when we were once crude and wicked coincidentally prepared us to be ready for the eternal harvest to come. Are all the things that happen in our lives accidents by mere chance? Or is it more reasonable to believe that the hand of God works in our lives today? We might not see how He works in our lives. But do you believe He is there for you? Things are not as they seem! Will you give your life to His divine guidance? Will you follow Him? May God help you to come and walk in the path which leads to eternal life and peace.