



7 | ESTHER 4:14

WITH ME IN EXILE

When everything is out of control, God is in control

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Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.

Songs

10000 Reasons

Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus

Amazing Grace My Chains Are Gone

He Will Hold Me Fast

Announcements:

GIVING: You can give over Zelle through your bank with no fees. Also, we have a new secured mailbox at the church, so you may also give by sending a check to Living Hope, 6N171 Gary Avenue, Roselle, IL 60172.

WITH ME IN EXILE

Esther 4:14

Introduction

Open your Bible to the book of Esther. We are in a series called “Safe and Secure in Jesus”. The title of our message is “With Me in Exile”.

Today we go to the story of Esther, and we remember that the Jewish nation is in exile. In the entire book, the name of God is never mentioned, but he is more prominent than ever.

We all know the story of Esther. Her Hebrew name is Hadassah. Imagine a sweet Jewish girl who is being raised in a foreign land. The people of Israel are in exile. They’ve been taken away from their homeland, Israel, and are in the midst of a 70-year captivity. Originally, Babylon sacked Israel. Now there is a new world power: the Persians. King Xerxes is on the throne. The queen of Persia is dethroned, and a search is on for a new queen. Esther is the **most unlikely of candidates**.

Winston Churchill: Unlikely Candidate

When I think of unlikely candidates, I think of Winston Churchill, the great Prime Minister of Britain. He has been called the most valuable figure in all of humanity for the 20th century. He led the western world through World War II and stood up to Hitler’s Nazi army and won.

But Churchill was not a very gifted man. In fact, he was very ordinary and average. He was an academic failure. His father gave up on him having any success in business and told him to join the army. Churchill was an ordinary man with an extraordinary passion. Through faithfulness and zeal, Churchill was elected Prime Minister and led the Great Britain and the world through “the War to End All Wars”. Such an ordinary man that did extraordinary things. What an unlikely candidate!

Introduction. I want to introduce you to another unlikely candidate to be used of God to transform the very history of the world: a young girl named Hadassah, who became queen of the ancient world. We know her better as Esther. Around 3000 years ago, the future looked as dark as ever for another nation, the Jewish nation. They faced extermination. They had no apparent political or economic power, and no voice or vote before the King of the ancient world, the Persian **King Xerxes I**, whose **Persian name** in this book is **Ahasuerus**. Xerxes I was known as Xerxes the Great. He’s actually Xerxes

the Awful, but they called him Xerxes the Great. His Persian name is Ahasuerus, his Greek name is Xerxes.

God does something amazing and exalts a young Jewish girl named Esther to a place of the highest power in the ancient world.

1. GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN EXILE (Esther 1)

We are in the most unusual time in our country. It feels like we're in exile. We may feel useless, even powerless, like we can't do anything. We find a similar situation in the life of Esther. Who could have guessed that this young Jewish girl would be exalted to the position of Queen? What we learn about Esther is that all events and circumstances are **guided by God to bring about his perfect plan**. Let's consider how Esther became Queen of Persia. In Esther 1, we are introduced to the great and powerful King Ahasuerus, also known as Xerxes I.

Esther 1:1-3 | Now in the days of Ahasuerus, the Ahasuerus who reigned from India to Ethiopia over 127 provinces,² in those days when King Ahasuerus sat on his royal throne in Susa, the citadel,³ in the third year of his reign he gave a feast for all his officials and servants. The army of Persia and Media and the nobles and governors of the provinces were before him.

The year is 843, and Xerxes is 39 years old. He rules from Asia to Africa. This is just before his epic battle against Greece later that year. He's got his nobles and generals and is very likely feasting before they go out to war.

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER RULERS (1:11-12, 16)

Queen Vashti is dethroned. The unspoken truth of this event is that God is sovereign in deposing kings and queens. Every ruler, even Satan, is accountable to God, even if they don't acknowledge it. So here in chapter 1 of Esther, we have what on a human level looks like a train wreck, yet we are going to see God uses it for his good and divine purposes.

In **Esther 1:11-12**, we find after seven days of feasting, King Xerxes summoned 7 of his eunuchs to...

Esther 1:11-12 | ...bring Queen Vashti before the king with her royal crown, in order to show the peoples and the princes her beauty, for she was lovely to look at.¹² But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command delivered by the eunuchs. At this the king became enraged, and his anger burned within him.

The author does not explain why **Vashti refused to come**, probably because the reasons were irrelevant: even the queen was expected to obey the king absolutely.


Everybody was mad. We read in **Esther 1:16**, one of the eunuchs named...

Esther 1:16 | ...Memucan said in the presence of the king and the officials, "Not only against the king has Queen Vashti done wrong, but also against all the officials and all the peoples who are in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus..."

And so he went on in **Esther 1:19**...

Esther 1:19 | “If it please the king, let a royal order go out from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes so that it may not be repealed, that Vashti is never again to come before King Ahasuerus. And let the king give her royal position to another who is better than she.”

This isn't ultimately in the hand of the king to dethrone Vashti and set up a new queen. This is about the sovereign hand of God.

 Pastor Mike, Why is it so important to recognize God's hand in the raising up of governing authorities over us?

In God's sovereignty, Esther will be the prominent girl found in the King's search for a new queen, and she will be placed at the very epicenter of the world. Though **God's name is never mentioned in the book of Esther**, we see his sovereign hand, especially in the removal of Vashti and the establishment of Esther, as queen over the most powerful nation in the world. **God is sovereign** in the raising up of kings, presidents, rulers, and that includes Esther as queen over Persia.

That means that God is in control in spite of the wicked governments in the world, and that includes our own. We read about this truth in the book of Daniel.

Daniel 2:21, God changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings.

God is carrying out his purposes. That means we need to be getting our news and our orders from the Bible, not allowing the daily news cycle to spin us into fear. Always remember, our great God is in control. Remember what the Psalmist said in Psalm 46:10.

Psalm 46:10, Be still, and know that I am God.


Remember, Jesus is King of all kings, Lord of all lords, President of all presidents. Every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess his lordship. Trust in him, even when our earthly leaders are less than trustworthy.

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN THE SEARCH (2:1-15)

We see God's sovereignty in this search for the new queen. **The search for a new queen begins!** So this set the entire kingdom in motion, from India to Africa, from East to West, and a selection of the most beautiful virgins of marriable age are brought to Susa in Persia, the capital of the world. The decree to find a new queen is given. The king's attendant announced it. He said:

Esther 2:4 | “And let the young woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti.” This pleased the king, and he did so.

The search is on. Women from everywhere are brought in. There's a year of preparation. And God sets up Esther, an ordinary Jewish girl, to be the queen of the Persian World Empire.

 Pastor Michael... When we look at Esther it's amazing that God uses ordinary people. Can you think of some ordinary people that God has used in special ways?

Yes, of course, not only was Esther an ordinary woman living in a foreign land, but she was part of a minority race held in low esteem. So much so that when later she was chosen to be queen Mordecai advised her to keep secret her Jewish nationality (2:10).

But I can think of so many ordinary people God has used in the history of the church. Most are completely unknown.

He says in **1 Corinthians 1:26-29**, “God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty... ²⁹ that no flesh should glory in his presence.”

Of course, there are prominent, but very ordinary people God has used greatly. I think of...

D.L. Moody was a shoe salesman in Chicago and became a mighty evangelist.

Evan Roberts was a young man who gave himself to prayer night and day from the for 11 years, then suddenly God brought revival to Wales and it reached all the way to England where in just one year more than 100,000 souls were saved.

Now God’s not always going to those earth-shaking things through you, but understand that God wants to use you right where you are.

On an ordinary day God chose Esther to do through her what He had planned before she was even born. If God had a plan to use an ordinary girl like Esther, I know he has a plan for my life too. We are his workmanship, his masterpiece (Ephesians 2:10)!

GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY IN FAMILY

We see God’s sovereign in the tragedy that struck Esther at an early age. We find out Esther’s parents die, and she is raised by her older cousin who becomes a father-figure to her.

Esther 2:7-8 | He [Mordecai] was bringing up Hadassah, that is Esther, the daughter of his uncle, for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman had a beautiful figure and was lovely to look at, and when her father and her mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter. ⁸ So when the king's order and his edict were proclaimed, and when many young women were gathered in Susa the citadel in custody of Hegai, Esther also was taken into the king's palace and put in custody of Hegai, who had charge of the women.

Enter Mordecai!

What do we know about Mordecai?

1) He’s very prominent in the book of Esther. Mordecai is named fifty-eight times in this book, and seven times he is identified as “a Jew” (2:5; 5:13; 6:10; 8:7; 9:29, 31; 10:3).


2) He’s living after the time of Ezra. You remember, Cyrus, King of Persia, entered Babylon in 539 and the next year gave the Jews permission to return to their land. About

50,000 responded (Ezra 1–2). In subsequent years, other Jews returned to Israel; but Mordecai chose to remain in the Persian capital.¹

3) He's raising his younger cousin Hadassah (i.e. Esther). There's a tragedy and Esther's an orphan, and Mordecai becomes a father figure.

4) Mordecai is very wise. Because of the almost universal prejudice against the Jewish people and for Esther's own preservation, her wise older cousin Mordecai instructed her not to make her ethnicity known to the king.

Esther 2:10 | Esther had not made known her people or kindred, for Mordecai had commanded her not to make it known.

 **Pastor Michael... What do we learn about God's sovereignty in our family from Esther's sad family situation?**

One thing we realize is that God uses our family situation – good or bad or awful – as part of our story to influence others. Whether you had the best family or the worst family, we can agree on this, no one has a perfect family situation.

And Esther's family situation was tragic. Here she is a poor girl in a strange land with an early death of her parents. So much suffering! Yet this is what God uses to prepare for his Kingdom purposes.

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN POSITION (2:16-3:6)

Esther's Position: Queen (2:16-17)

Esther becomes Queen of Persia! Esther is chosen above all the other women of the land to become queen over the most powerful nation of the time: Persia. She was King Xerxes bride.

Esther 2:16-17 | And when Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus, into his royal palace... ¹⁷the king loved Esther more than all the women, and she won grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins, so that he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.

No doubt it was God who caused King Xerxes heart to "love Esther more than all the women, and she won grace and favor in his sight" (2:17).

God puts Esther in the second most powerful position in the world, under the famous Xerxes the Great of the ancient world.

Mordecai's Position: Hero (2:19-23)

Mordecai appears to have no privileged court access. So being a loving, conscientious, concerned adoptive father, he regularly stationed himself near the palace gate so he could keep tabs on Esther's well-being as best he could (2:11, 21; 3:3). And this resulted in an unexpected, wonderful providential consequence.


Two of the eunuchs conspire to kill the king, and Mordecai overhears it and tells Esther. Through Esther, King Xerxes is informed, and Mordecai's heroic deed was recorded, and he is placed as a trusted advisor to the king.

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Committed*, "Be" Commentary Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1993), 85–86.

Haman's Position: Villian (3:1-6)

Then the evil enemy is introduced in chapter 3. Cue evil music... here we are introduced to **wicked Haman**, the villain! For reasons we don't know, King Xerxes promoted this man named Haman above all the princes of Persia. All were to bow down to Haman when they saw him.

Haman loved his powerful, lucrative, and exalted position. By the direct command of the king, subjects had to bow low before Haman, conceding Haman's superiority (3:2). But one man denied him that benefit, which incited in Haman a deadly rage (3:5). Apparently, Mordecai, Esther's cousin, knew something about Haman, and he refused to bow before Haman.

 **Pastor Michael... What did Mordecai know about Haman that he wouldn't bow to him?**

Haman was an **Amalekite**, one of the most bitter enemies of the Jewish people. Remember, when Israel came out of Egypt, the Amalekites attacked them in the wilderness, for which God cursed them and condemned them to extinction (Exo 17:8–16).² Later, under King Saul, the Jews were to completely exterminate the Amalekites, but King Saul let the king and probably others live. At least one descendent lived on: Haman the Amalekite. The Amalekites are sworn enemies of God and his people.

Mordecai, a Benjamite, has a genealogy that links him to King Saul's family (*cf* Esth 2:5). So for him to bow to Haman, a descendant of King Agag's family, was just too much to swallow. It would have seemed to be giving in to a hated enemy, whom God had cursed.³

Proud Haman was driven to rage by Mordecai's refusal to bow before him (3:5). This rage led Haman to seek the destruction of every Jew throughout the entire kingdom of Xerxes (3:6).

Indeed! The Scriptures report that Haman was as clever as he was evil. Haman didn't want to look like he was singling out Mordecai, so he decides not to destroy just one Jew but all Jews. Haman was the Hitler of his time.


He deceived King Ahasuerus into believing that the Jews were a danger to his rule and that he should seal an irreversible decree that would legalize their **total annihilation** (3:15). The necessary papers were drawn up, signed, sealed, and sent to every province of Persia. Haman gloated in his power and rejoiced in the soon coming destruction of the Jews. There was nothing to stop him. Nothing, except, a certain young queen that God has elevated for such a time as this!

No one is really high enough in authority to help but Esther. Look at God's sovereignty in placing her in a place of the highest influence in the Kingdom of Persia. Esther is given such privilege. She was an ordinary person. Yet God elevated her to be Queen.

In all of this we see Mordecai as the one who is mature in his faith, and he's guiding the faith of tender Esther. She is young and has so much to learn, but we see her faith grow right before our eyes.

² Iain M. Duguid, *Esther and Ruth*, ed. Richard D. Phillips and Philip Graham Ryken, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2005), 33.

³ Duguid. *Esther*, 34.

 Pastor Michael... With so much fear in the news and in our society today, how does understanding God's sovereignty bring real comfort for the Christian?

One of the most interesting mark of God's sovereignty in the book of Esther, is that **God name is not directly mentioned in the book of Esther**. His presence and guidance is assumed (through the prayers and fasting of God's people throughout the book). But his name is never mentioned. Yet God is in control, over all kings and kingdoms.

We can be encouraged knowing that "**the king's heart truly is in the hands of the Lord and he turns it wherever he will**" (Pro 21:1). These days when all eyes are on government and stimulus checks, we can rest in knowing that God appoints leaders and uses them to accomplish his plans—whether they are godly leaders or not.

God's plan and purpose is always his glory and the salvation of lost sinners coming to him and knowing him. We need to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, who is our ultimate King!

God is sovereign over all! I love what he says in Isaiah:

Isaiah 46:9, "I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me."

Amen, we now go to a wonderful moment in Esther's life, in chapter 4, where she takes full responsibility for the time and place and privilege she's given, and she goes all in for the Kingdom of God.

2. YOUR RESPONSIBILITY IN EXILE (Esther 4:14)


Esther was an ordinary Jewish girl, a minority in a foreign land. But God had exalted Esther to a place of power and authority for his own purposes. Now she was responsible to use her life as an instrument of blessing and salvation for her people.

The same God holds all of us to the same responsibility. Mordecai is told of Haman's evil plot to destroy the Jews, and he knows that his younger cousin Esther is in a place to be radically used by God. So Mordecai utters these famous words.

 Pastor Michael... can you read them?

Esther 4:13-14 | "Do not think to yourself that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. ¹⁴ For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Esther had a responsibility to speak up and save her people. But she had to decide for herself if she would be the one to take a stand for God and be used of God in that moment. And she could have said no.

 Pastor Michael... Esther was put in a place of honor and privilege in order to expand the Kingdom of God. Isn't it amazing how many resources we have for the kingdom of God? How can we be responsible with all that God has given?

Jesus clearly declared a principle that will be applied on the final day of judgment – **Luke 12:48**, To whom much is given, much is required.

It cannot be denied that the Christian in the West has been given great privilege and position. By God’s sovereign design, the Church in the United States as well as Canada, and Western Europe enjoys the greatest religious freedom, the greatest access to Scripture and theological resources, the greatest economic power, and the greatest open doors to do missions around the world.

For several decades, religious freedom has been the boast of the West. A man is free to believe as he chooses and to practice his religious convictions so long as they do not infringe upon the rights of others. Although this freedom is coming under increasing attack, we are still granted more freedom to practice our faith than any other group of Christians in the history of the world.

Christians in the West have more **Bibles**, theological **resources**, and access to **theological institutions** than all the other Christians living outside the West combined. The West abounds with Christian **publishers** and **printers**, Christian **bookstores** and media corporations, Christian **schools**, **colleges**, and **seminaries**.

Up to this point, we have had the greatest economy in the history of the world. Although the poor are found even in the most affluent societies, most sociologists and economists will say: “***If you live in the West you are rich.***” Comparing the West with the rest of the world, most of which is undeveloped, the differences are staggering.

Christians in the West have been given the greatest open door of opportunity for missions that the world has ever seen. In God’s overall plan, you are in a strategic place to serve. In His providence, God has opened a tremendous door for world missions.

Are you aware of the great privileges you have that God chose for you? You are a believer. You have a Bible. You make more money in one week than people make in a year in a lot of the rest of the world. You are rich. Like Esther, you are in a very privileged place!

Application: Don’t hold on to your riches. Give generously to Kingdom causes. Pray for the harvest. Pray for laborers, and he might make you one! Open your eyes to the harvest right where you are. Be bold. You may be the only believer that a person meets. Use this time to pray with your unsaved friends, neighbors, and family members. Use your riches in Christ to expand his Kingdom.

3. YOUR OPPORTUNITY IN EXILE (Esther 4:16)

By Esther chapter 4, it looks like everything is heading for a big train wreck. Sure, Esther is queen, but **Haman is formidable**. He’s convinced King Xerxes the Great to annihilate the Jews, and he has been deceived and gone along with it. What should Esther and the Jews in Persia do? Should they run and move back to Israel where Ezra was? Should they stay and face death? What should they do? Whenever we don’t know what to do, we should fast and pray.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRAY AND FAST

Esther and all the Jews are put in an impossible position where there is **no human solution to the problem**. They don't know it, but they have an amazing opportunity to see the hand of God in their impossible situation.

Esther 4:3-4 | ...in every province, wherever the king's command and his decree reached, there was great mourning among the Jews, with **fasting and weeping** and lamenting, and many of them lay in sackcloth and ashes.
⁴When Esther's young women and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed.

Prayer and fasting and weeping is a very godly response to trouble. What do you do when you don't know what to do? When you face the impossible? You pray!

Matthew 17:20, Jesus says: "Truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you."


All you need is mustard seed faith. When you see the impossible, realize nothing is impossible for God. What an awesome opportunity when we feel helpless. We need to pray!

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR WEAK SAINTS

Esther is deeply, deeply distressed! She needs to go before the king and inform him of Haman's plan! And she is willing, but distressed, perhaps afraid. But she knows that there is a royal law in Persia that forbids her from approaching the king. It stops her in her tracks. We read...

Esther 4:11 | "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter so that he may live."

Esther asks Mordecai to have all the Jews in Susa pray and fast for three days and nights. **Rather than jumping into action**, Esther spent time in prayer, fasting, and waiting for God to direct how and when to approach the king. I love Mordecai's encouragement to his adopted daughter: "who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (4:14). Esther desperately needed that encouragement.

 Pastor Michael... I'm grateful that God doesn't portray the people in his Word as "super saints". Esther was distressed. She needs some reassurance from her cousin Mordecai. How might these details of Esther's weakness and humanity be encouraging to us?

Esther's initial response was not one of courage. For some reason her reluctant inclination makes her—well, real. I love knowing that this godly young woman first reacted how I'm pretty sure we all would have responded too. She needed a nudge from Mordecai to rethink her tendency to play it safe. And I'm pretty sure I'd need the same encouragement should I face a similar situation.


We need each other. We can't do this alone. We are weak!

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR TOTAL SURRENDER

Now we come to Esther's response, which is a statement of epic surrender to God.

Esther 4:15-16 | Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, ¹⁶ "Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a **fast** on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and **if I perish, I perish.**"

It looks like the Jews are already praying and fasting (4:3), and Esther calls for a holy fast (which would also imply praying during the fasting). I find this so encouraging. This is the answer. When you don't know what to do, seek the Lord.

 Pastor Michael... It looks like the time of Esther is a very difficult and fearful time for God's people. It's a time where the Jews would be tempted to panic, but instead, the turn to prayer and fasting. What is the place of prayer and fasting in a time of difficulty or perceived danger?

Prayer is the ultimate confession of God's sovereignty. "All things work after the counsel of his own will" (Eph 1:11). Whatever evil is in the world, by the time it gets to you, he's working it for your good and his glory (Rom 8:28-29).

Prayer is the expression of these foundational realities of the faith life. We "walk by faith not by sight" (2 Cor 5:7). In prayer, we are coming with absolute surrender to his will.

In **fasting**, we are saying, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Deut 8:3). We are saying that we will be fed by our panic, but we will strengthen our hunger for God, and be fed and calmed by his presence.

"In your presence is fullness of joy, and at your right hand there are pleasures forevermore" (Psa 16:11).

AN OPPORTUNITY THAT CAN BE MISSED

Let's not miss Mordecai's words to Esther...

Esther 4:14 | If you are silent, God will bring deliverance from somewhere else, but you will be destroyed. How do you know you haven't been raised up in this kingdom FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS.

She needed that encouragement from her cousin Mordecai. **God can use you or use someone else, but he will accomplish his purposes.**

Esther had been exalted to the necessary position and she possessed all the necessary resources to save her people. If she sought her own self-preservation above the saving of her people, **it would not have brought God's plan to a tragic end.** God is sovereign over all things and he is directing his world to a final end (Eph 1:11). Nothing can thwart his plan. Don't miss the opportunities God gives you to be part of his Kingdom expansion.

Christ will build his church, with or without you! God does not need us, but he has granted us the privilege of working in the Great Commission. Let us not despise such a privilege and realize that God has put us right where he wants us, “for such a time as this”.

Pastor Michael... We live in a time of unrepresented prosperity and privilege. We have a wonderful heritage of the Bible in this land. But is God obligated to use us to reach the world for Christ?

If Western Christians continues to live in apathy and disobedience it will be tragic for her, but not for the work of God.

Jesus said: “I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mt 16:18).

There will be a multitude of people standing before the throne worshipping God from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation (Rev 5:9).

We as American Christians are not God’s only hope, for God has no need of man. He chooses to use us. God has promised to do a great work in the world, and he will do it with, or without us. We need to wake up to the awesome privilege of his calling and say with Esther, “If I perish, I perish.”

Romans 14:10, We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

I want to give a good account to Jesus. I want to surrender to every opportunity he gives me.

4. YOUR BLESSING IN EXILE (Esther 8)

You know what happened in the end of Esther’s story. God’s people prayed and fasted. God answered!

THE BLESSING OF ANSWERED PRAYER

Esther as we know, was granted an audience with the king. And the king answered far beyond what she expected. She could have been put to death for asking to have an audience with the king, but look at the king’s response.

Esther 5:2-3 | ...when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she won favor in his sight, and he held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter. ³ And the king said to her, “What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given you, even to the half of my kingdom.”

Remember that when you fast and pray and walk with God, and you pray his Kingdom purposes, he will give you more than you can imagine.

Ephesians 3:20, Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us.

THE BLESSING OF GOD'S ULTIMATE VICTORY

We know the story, Esther spoke up, and the king heard her and promised up to half his kingdom. She asked for a banquet with the King and with her greatest enemy: the wicked Haman.

Now we see some irony here. Haman didn't know Esther was Jewish. So Haman feels so happy that Esther has "honored" him by giving him a feast. Haman decides to ask the king for Mordecai's head, since he hates Mordecai so much.

You know what happens. Haman builds the gallows 50 cubits high in his own back yard. That's 75 feet high so everyone in for miles around will be able to see Mordecai hanging. Only you know the irony of the plot.

Esther informs King Xerxes and Haman that she's Jewish and uncovers Haman's plot to kill Xerxes queen and all her people. So then, Haman, the enemy of the Jews was put to death on the very gallows he was going to use to execute Mordecai and all of the Jews.

Esther 8:3 | Esther spoke again to the king. She fell at his feet and wept and pleaded with him to avert the evil plan of Haman the Agagite and the plot that he had devised against the Jews."

What was the king's response?

Esther 8:7-8 | Then King Ahasuerus [Xerxes] said to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, "Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows, because he intended to lay hands on the Jews..."

The king protected the Jews. God saved his people. The enemy was hanged on his own gallows.

This story of redemption in Esther, the kind of story we love so much, the kind of story that resonates with something deep, deep inside us, is a type, a shadow of the Grand Story of redemption. Just as Haman hung on his own gallows, so the devil will hang.

The devil had fixed as much as he could the anger and evil in the Roman soldiers who crucified our Lord. How Satan must have rejoiced as the Lord of glory died. "Finally! It is finished! He's given up!" But no, when Christ died we find that God "...disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him" (Col 2:15).

Christ took the gallows of death, which Satan had built for Christ, and was conquered Satan with it. Death was put to death by Christ's death! What a day of ultimate victory!

Conclusion

So let's conclude, and remember when all looks lost and dim and discouraging, God has his eternal Kingdom purposes ready for you. Are you ready for absolute surrender? We need to be still and know he is God.

We've got to give all for the kingdom. Will you step up to the plate and say, "If I perish, I perish"? Let us be "a living sacrifice". God's Kingdom work will go on in the world. The question is, will you step up and be a part of it?