

Esther 6-10 - God Working Out His Purpose

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We're in the Book of Esther. The nation of Israel came into the land through the leadership of Joshua, and lived in the land, led after the death of Joshua, by men and one woman who were referred to as Judges. Then after a few hundred years, they began to long for a king, and God allowed them to have a king, in fact, several kings. But during the time of the kings, the people became disobedient and walked away from God.

And God was patient with them for a long, long time. But eventually He allowed the nation of Babylon to come and conquer them. And actually, it started with the nation of Assyria, who conquered the northern kingdom of Israel. And then Assyria got conquered by Babylon and Babylon eventually came and conquered the nation of Judah in the south.

And so they were taken captive for a period of 70 years. After which the Lord moved upon one of the Persian kings to allow the Jews to return home to rebuild the temple. Later on they were allowed to rebuild the city walls. These are the things that we read about and studied in Ezra and Nehemiah.

Now just because the people were allowed to return home doesn't mean that they all did. Obviously, when you live in an area for a while you get very accustomed to things. And the people got very accustomed to living in the Persian Empire and many people stayed. And the characters that come up in the Book of Esther are some that stayed.

This is a long time after people, the Jews, had been allowed to return to their homeland, whoever wanted to go. But there's a man by the name of Mordecai, his niece by the name of Esther, which was her Persian name, who had stayed in the land. And Esther was a beautiful, beautiful young woman.

After the king got angry at his queen because she disobeyed him, his advisors encouraged him to gather a fresh harem of young girls. And from that harem, potentially to choose a replacement for the king that he had deposed. Esther was chosen to be part of that harem because she was a lovely young woman. And she impressed the king so much, he made her his queen.

The king, and this is our cast of characters, is named Ahasuerus or Xerxes. He is the king of the Medo-Persian Empire. The Medes and the Persians, a collective conglomeration conquered the Babylonian empire. And he is a powerful king from the standpoint of how much territory he rules over.

The one of the other characters in our story that we were introduced to in the first five chapters, is a man by the name of Haman. He's a descendant of the people we know as the Amalekites. He's also royalty, a descendant of Amalekite royalty, and that's why he's referred to as an Agagite. The Agag was a title for their royalty. He's a vengeful and egotistical man and he's an advisor to the king. We have then Esther our, the beautiful Jewish girl that as I said, was added to the king's harem. And then we have Mordecai, Esther's uncle.

Interesting, every time we come up to Esther and Mordecai, I always think about our dumb cats. But 10 years ago, some of you may know, we still have one of them. We have a ten year old cat. Her name is Essie, but she was originally... We got her with her brother. And we...And my kids wanted to name them Esther and Mordecai. And so we called them Essie and Morty for short. And Morty's not with us anymore. He, I don't know where Morty is. He went off in search of a family, I guess. But Essie is still with us, and I forget sometimes that her given name was Esther.

But this is not about cats. This is about real true characters. And Haman hated Mordecai. Mostly just because Mordecai, knowing that Haman was an Amalekite, he refused to bow down to him or pay him homage in any way. And so, Haman plotted to destroy not just Mordecai, but all of the Jewish people.

And Haman told the king that there were some people scattered in his kingdom who it was not beneficial to him to allow them to live. And he basically asked for the king's permission to eradicate them, to commit genocide. And the king gave him permission. And that was obviously a sad situation. But he then wrote a government issued edict stating that the Jews would be eliminated on a particular day.

Now Mordecai, persuaded Esther to speak to the king on behalf of the Jewish people. And he reminded her of her unique place. Not only in the palace there, but in history. And essentially he, in one of the most beautiful biblical passages frankly that there is, Mordecai speaks of the purposeful timing of her coming to this place of being queen. And he said to her, who knows but that you have come to this position just for this circumstance or this situation. And in other words, he was saying, your beauty, your God given beauty is for more than just

tantalizing the king. And that God has brought you to this place for just such a time as this. And he encouraged her not to let those things go to waste.

Esther of course, knew that going into the king to speak to him without being summoned could potentially result in her death. Because in those...In the Persian kingdom, anyone who came before a king without an invitation could be executed if the king did not extend to them his scepter.

And so before making this plea with the king, Esther called for a fast among the Jewish people. She and her maidens also did the same, fasted for 3 days. And after that she put on her royal robes and approached the king and sought an audience with him and she was received into his presence.

And after that she asked a request of the king that he and Haman would come to a feast she had prepared. And after that first day of feasting the king asked her, what is it that you want? And she said, let me ask one more thing, that you and Haman would come again tomorrow for another feast. And so they... And that's essentially where we left the first 5 chapters. Except that it ended with Haman going home quite happy about receiving an invitation to a banquet or a feast offered by the queen. And being the only person to have been given that invitation.

But he was galled by the fact that when he left the palace there was Mordecai, who again, wouldn't even recognize him. Wouldn't bow, wouldn't pay homage or respect in any way. So he went home, spoke to his family and friends who encouraged him to build a gallows on his property, so that he might go in the next morning and ask the king to give Mordecai to him, that he might put him to death on that gallows.

And that's where we left and that is where we pick up the story. Esther chapter 6 is fascinating because this is where it gets good.

It says,

"¹ On that night the king could not sleep. And he gave orders to bring the book of memorable deeds, the chronicles, and they were read before the king. ² And it was found written how Mordecai had told about Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, who guarded the threshold, and who had sought to lay hands on (or assassinate) King Ahasuerus." (ESV)

This is an interesting section. Stop just for a moment. Even though the book of Esther, and we brought this out last week, does not mention God, this is one of

those interesting passages in this book because it is a, I believe, a remarkable example of God's providence in the midst of this thing.

Now it says that King Ahasuerus couldn't sleep. Now rather than trying countless other alternatives to finding a place of rest, counting sheep. I don't know if they counted their gold. I don't know what kings back in those days did. But I'm sure there were a lot of things he could have done. But he did something that you might do, and that he got up to read.

But instead of reading himself, how would you like to be one of the servants of the king? The king can't sleep, so neither do you. So he calls for one of his servants to just grab the archives of the kingly books, if you will, and to read to him. And again, rather than doing any other countless number of things to possibly try to get to sleep, he decided to have someone read out loud to him.

Next, this is interesting, the person who chose the book could have brought, I suppose, any of the records of the kingdom, but he just happened to bring this specific book. And that book could have been opened to probably any page before the king maybe yawned and nodded off. But it was open to this exact story about how Mordecai saved the king from an assassination plot.

And lastly, as if all that isn't weird enough, all of this happened the night before Haman was going to come in and ask the king to give him Mordecai so he could kill him. Now that may sound like an incredible series of coincidences to you, but I think not. I think that God guided the process, providentially, every step along the way. And I think that's one of the things that the book of Esther shows us.

But it says here in verse 3 that, "...*the king (then) said, (Well,) "What honor or distinction has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?" (And) The king's young men who attended him said, "Nothing has been done for him."* ⁴ *And the king said, "Who is in the court?" (Well, obviously it's morning now.) Now Haman had just entered (the court) the outer court (that is) of the king's palace to speak to the king about having Mordecai hanged on the gallows that he had prepared for him. (Crazy timing, huh?)*

⁵ And the king's young man told him, Haman is there, standing in the court." And the king said, "Let him come in." ⁶ So Haman came in, and the king said to him, (obviously, before Haman could begin to speak) "What should be done to the man whom the king delights to honor?" And Haman (thought) to himself, (well,) "Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?" (He's obviously wants me to... He's going to do something pretty spectacular for me. He's going

to make this good here.) *And Haman said to the king, "For the man whom the king delights to honor, (Let me think) ⁸ let royal robes be brought, which the king has worn, and the horse that the king has ridden, and on whose head a royal crown is set.*

⁹ And let the robes and the horse be handed over to one of the king's most noble officials. (and) Let them dress the man whom the king delights to honor, and let them lead him on the horse through the square of the city, proclaiming before him: "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor."' ¹⁰ *Then the king said to Haman, (I like that. He says,) "Hurry; take the robes and the horse, (as) you have said, and do so to Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king's gate. Leave out nothing that you have mentioned."*

Can you imagine? Talk about crestfallen. Right? This guy came in to ask for Mordecai's head and now he's going to have to honor the man) *"¹¹ So Haman took the robes and the horse, and he dressed Mordecai and led him through the square of the city, proclaiming before him, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor."*

¹² Then Mordecai returned to the king's gate. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning ...with his head covered. (In mourning. Isn't that interesting? That word is usually reserved for when there's been a death. Yeah. And something died, didn't it? Yeah, but it wasn't what Haman thought. So,) ¹³ ...Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him. (and) Then his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of the Jewish people, you will not overcome him but will surely fall before him."

Isn't that great when you have people just telling you good news like that? Especially your wife. She's basically saying to him, dude, you're toast if this guy ends up being a Jew. And that's what the king called him Mordecai the Jew. It's like, dude, you are in deep yogurt. Yeah.

And it says, *"¹⁴ While they were yet talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hurried to bring Haman to the feast that Esther prepared."*

Feast two, day two; Esther 7.

"¹ So the king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther. ² And on the second day, as they were drinking wine after the feast, the king again said to Esther, "What is your wish, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled." (And) ³ Then

Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be granted me for my wish, and my people for my request. 4 For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. If we have been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have been silent, for our affliction is not to be compared with the loss to the king." 5 Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, "Who is he and where is he, who has dared to do this?" 6 And Esther said, "A foe and (an) enemy! This wicked Haman!" (And) Haman was terrified before the king and the queen.

7 And the king arose in his wrath from the wine-drinking and went into the palace garden, but Haman stayed to beg for his life from Queen Esther, for he saw that harm was determined against him by the king. 8 And the king returned from the palace garden to the place where they were drinking wine, as Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was. And the king said, "Will he even assault the queen in my presence, in my own house?" As the word left the mouth of the king, they covered Haman's face."

Now you know what the king went out in the garden to don't you? To go get some guards to come and cover his head and carry him off. Because even as the king was speaking... By the way, the Jews had a tradition, it's not a tradition. I think it's probably a little bit more folklore. But they used to say that there was an angel in the room that pushed Haman over onto the queen just as the king was entering back into the room. In fact, they even said it was Gabriel, who gave him a little shove. I don't know. Not sure where they got that information. But there you go. Bible doesn't say so. Would have been cool though, to be an angel though and do stuff like that. I think, anyway. Don't you think?

I mean, I've always thought about those things that happened in the Bible that just shouldn't have happened. Like when the Egyptians were coming; the Egyptian army was coming after the people of Israel when they were going through the Red Sea? (Exodus 14:24-25) Remember it said that their wheels start falling off their chariots. And I'm just thinking there's angels yanking wheels off, which I thought would be great fun. I was like, Lord, I'd like to sign up for that, thank you.

Verse 9 says, "Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, "Moreover, the gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, is standing at Haman's house, fifty cubits high." And the king said, (Great) "Hang him on that." 10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the wrath of the king abated."

There's a beautiful Psalm, I don't have it memorized, but it speaks how the pit that the evil man digs, he'll fall into himself. (Psalm 7:15) And that's really what we see here in the book of Esther, is it not? I mean, these evil plans that this man concocts against Mordecai and the Jews, actually come upon him.

Chapter 8,

"¹ On that day, King Ahasuerus gave to Queen Esther the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. (Notice what Haman is referred to there.) And Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had told what he was to her. (In other words, family.) ² And the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman. (So now Mordecai, literally, is master over the house of his enemy.)

³ Then 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." Stop there for a moment.

You might say, well, what's going on here now? I thought Haman was dead. He is. But remember the king foolishly gave his signet ring to Haman and wrote an edict with the king's scribe saying that the Jews could be attacked on this particular day and annihilated by the other people of the kingdom. And just because Haman is gone doesn't mean that edict is gone.

And in fact, in the Persian kingdom whenever a king made an edict, it was set in stone and it could not be reversed, ever. So, how you like that? I never thought that was a smart rule to have exactly. I've always thought when you're going to do rules, you're going to make rules, make sure your rules serve you and not you, your rules. You know what I mean?

And this is one of those things where... Because we all make dumb rules. And everybody needs the ability to go back and go, you know what? That was a really dumb rule. Let's not do that. And, but in the Persian kingdom, they couldn't do it. Once a king established an edict, that's it. Done. That's the only thing happening.

So, it says in verse 4, *"When the king held out the golden scepter to Esther, (So, obviously she took her life in her hands a second time here.) Esther rose and stood before the king. ⁵ And she said, "If it please the king, and if I have found favor in his sight, and if the thing seems right before the king, and I am pleasing in his eyes, let an order be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman the*

Agagite, the son of Hammadetha, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the provinces of the king.

6 For how can I bear to see the calamity that is coming to my people? Or how can I bear to see the destruction of my kindred?" Then King Ahasuerus 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. 8 But you may write as you please with regard to the Jews, in the name of the king, and seal it with the king's ring, for an edict written in the name of the king and sealed with the king's ring cannot be revoked."

What is he saying? He's saying, I'm giving you again, you've got my signet ring. Now, yes, there was an edict written on the destruction of the Jew, now you write anything you want to, to maybe countermand that. I can't say no, that's not an edict any longer. But, come up with something. So, he's basically giving them freedom to do whatever to try to respond to this situation.

Verse 9 says,

"The king's scribes were summoned at that time, in the third month, which is the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day. And an edict was written, according to all that Mordecai commanded concerning the Jews, to the satraps and the governors and the officials of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, 127 provinces, to each province in its own script and to each people in its own language, and also to the Jews in their script and their language. 10 And he wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed it with the king's signet ring. (And) Then he sent the letters by mounted couriers riding on swift horses that were used in the king's service, bred from the royal stud, 11 saying that the king allowed the Jews who were in every city to gather and defend their lives, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate any armed force of any people or province that might attack them, children and women included, and to plunder their goods, 12 on one day throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. 13 A copy of what was written was to be issued as a decree (to) every province, being publicly displayed to all peoples, and the Jews were to be ready on that day to take vengeance on their enemies."

Now, you need to understand something about the kingdom, the Medo-Persian kingdom. Remember, these are not just Medes and Persians living in this kingdom. These are people from all the surrounding lands. I mean, it says from India to Ethiopia, which is meant to say, this is a huge area covering more than one continent. And so, there are many people groups that the Babylonians and

later on the Medes and Persians conquered who were enemies of Israel from years and years back.

So here's these enemies of Israel who are living in the Medo-Persian Empire who get this here, this first edict saying, on this day, the king says, wipe out the Jews that are all thinking, yeah! this, these are our enemies from way back. And they probably have these huge ancient axes to grind with these people. And so they figure this is great. And in other words, there was rampant anti-Semitism operating within the Medo-Persian Empire. And there's plenty of people. They don't care whether Haman is still alive. They're bound and determined to carry out this edict and wipe out the Jewish people.

And this is people, yet another chance of the enemy, and I'm not talking about enemy as in man. I'm talking about spiritual enemies. This is another satanic response of Satan in an attempt to wipe out God's people. And to destroy the purposes of God and the promises of God.

I mean, Satan's been trying to do that from the very beginning. From the very first temptation of Adam and Eve and on through the kings. I mean, the kings of Israel and particularly those of the Davidic line through whom the Messiah would come. And then even when Messiah was born, the satanic edict of Herod. Kill all the baby boys in and around Bethlehem. (Matthew 2:16) This has been going on for a long time. And Satan wants nothing more, but to eliminate every possibility of the promises of God coming to fruition. And he will try it every opportunity.

Now, there's something else that you need to know that Satan is very actively attempting to do. In addition to trying to thwart the very promises of God, which, by the way, he can't do. But he'll keep trying. He will try desperately to get you individually to stop trusting and hoping in the promises of God. Because if the promises can't change, maybe the promised can change their mind. And that's you.

The promiser is never going to change. Right? But the promised you and me, the church, we can lose hope. We can lose the vision. We can lose sight of it. We can stop living for the promise. We can stop living with our heart and our hopes directed to the promises of God. We can do it for lots of different reasons. The enemy can have... He has lots of triggers he can pull related to getting you and I to neglect or release the promises of God.

It can come from flat out discouragement. We see so many discouraging things. And finally we just throw in the towel and give up and say, well, you know

what, this is all a bunch of hoey. Or we can just get busy and distracted and stop thinking about the promises of God.

Honestly, one of the promises of God that I think the church... Well I think there's several we need to get back to. But one of them is living our lives every day under the promise that Christ is returning. We forget about it! We just go on with our lives! We just go on. And then all of a sudden we'll sing something about, he's coming again, or something. And it's almost like we get reminded, like, oh yeah! Yeah! Coming again! Forgot about that. Oh! Forgot about that! We are never supposed to let go of that.

We forget about the role the Holy Spirit is supposed to play in our lives. We forget. Or we lose sight of it. The church in 2,000 years has largely let go of God's promises related to the Holy Spirit. The power that He promised us. The ability to overcome; to be more than conquerors, victorious in His name. To walk in the gifts and the power of the Holy Spirit.

We've let go of those things. We've released them. We've stopped hanging on to them. And that's a, and that's a great work of the enemy. And we need to recognize that it's a work of the enemy. We need to go back and refresh our hearts on the promises of God.

I used to love the way Corrie Ten Boom would talk about the promises of God in her book, *Tramp for the Lord*. She would talk about how Satan would come and tell her that, none of these promises were hers to take. And in so doing, he would say to her that she was a pauper. He says... She would say, Satan would constantly tell me I'm, I have nothing. I have nothing to depend on. And she says, I go to God's Word like it was my checkbook. And I would write down the promises of God and rip out that check and lay it out there and say, there, I have an unlimited source.

And she says that's what the enemy was constantly trying to do with her and in her ministry. Was get her to believe that the promises of God weren't applicable to her. Or just weren't going to be hers to enjoy or whatever. And she said, "I'd have to constantly go back and remind myself, this is what the Bible says, this is God's promise! He promised me! And then to stand on it. Right? Not just to recognize it's a promise, put your feet on it and get comfortable there. And say, God, I am standing on this promise! And I'm not moving from this place! I like that. I think God likes it too. When His children stand on His promises and hold Him to His word. I think God thinks that's pretty cool.

So, did I finish verse 13? I think I did. Maybe I even did 14. I'll read 14 again anyway.

"So the couriers, mounted on their swift horses that were used in the king's service, rode out hurriedly, urged by the king's command. And the decree was issued in the Susa the citadel.

15 Then Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal robes of blue and white, with a great golden crown and a robe of fine linen and purple, and the city of Susa shouted and rejoiced. 16 The Jews had light and gladness and joy and honor. 17 And in every province and in every city, wherever the king's command and his edict reached, there was gladness and joy among the Jews, a feast and a holiday. And many from the peoples of the country declared themselves Jews, for fear of the of the Jews had fallen on them."

And frankly, it's hard to know whether this means that they claim to be Jews just because they were afraid of the Jews. Or if they literally became proselytes to Judaism. Either way there was a huge shift of thought related to the Jews happening in the kingdom.

Chapter 9,

"1 Now in the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's command and edict were about to be carried out, (This is the one that Haman had originally written.) on the very day when the enemies of the Jews hoped to gain the mastery over them, the reverse occurred: the Jews gained mastery over those who hated them. 2 The Jews gathered in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on those who sought their harm. And no one could stand against them, for the fear of them had fallen on all peoples. (And that is the work of the Lord.) 3 All the officials of the provinces and the satraps and the governors and the royal agents also helped the Jews, for the fear of Mordecai had fallen on them. (In other words, all these political officials were there to help the Jews because they knew that the number two man in the kingdom was now a Jew.)

4 For Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces, for the man Mordecai grew more and more powerful. 5 The Jews struck all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying them, and did as they pleased to those who hated them. 6 In Susa the citadel itself the Jews killed and destroyed 500 men, 7 and also killed, (and here's some really fun things to pronounce,) Parshandatha and Dalphon and Aspatha 8 and Poratha and Adalia and Aridatha 9 and (then that one too) Parmashta and Arisai and

Aridai and Vaizatha, (the ten sons of...What names!) 10 the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews, but they laid no hand on the plunder."

That's an interesting comment that you should take note of. Which means, the Jews had no interest in financial gain. There was plunder to be had because these people who were killed obviously left the stuff behind, but the Jews didn't want it.

"11 That very day the number of those killed in Susa the citadel was reported to the king. 12 And the king said to Queen Esther, "In Susa the citadel the Jews have killed and destroyed 500 men and also the ten sons of Haman. What then have they done in the rest of the king's provinces!" Now what is your wish? It shall be granted you. And what further is your request? It shall be fulfilled." 13 And Esther said, "If it please the king, let the Jews who are in Susa be allowed tomorrow also to do according to this day's edict. And let the ten sons of Haman be hanged on the gallows." (Meaning publicly displayed; they've already been killed)

14 So the king commanded this to be done. A decree was issued in Susa, and the ten sons of Haman were hanged. 15 The Jews who were in Susa gathered also on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and they killed 300 men in Susa, (that's on this additional day granted by the king to avenge themselves) but they laid no hands on the plunder.

16 Now the rest of the Jews who were in the king's provinces also gathered to defend their lives, and got relief from their enemies and killed (look at this,) 75,000 of those who hated them, but they laid no hands on the plunder. 17 This was on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar, and on the fourteenth day they rested and made that day of feasting and gladness."

Because they didn't have time to get the word that the thing was going to be extended another day, these people in these outlying areas. They were given their day. They had a heyday. And then they rested on the following day. But the people in Susa in the citadel, they got word that they were given yet another day to eliminate their enemies. And they did on that 14th day, as you're about to hear.

It says in verse 19, I'm sorry, verse 18, *"But the Jews who were in Susa gathered on the thirteenth day and on the fourteenth, and rested on the fifteenth day, making that a day of feasting and gladness.*

19 Therefore the Jews of the villages, who live in the rural towns, hold the fourteenth day of the month of Adar as a day (of) gladness and feasting, as a holiday, and as a day on which they send gifts of food to one another.

20 And Mordecai recorded these things and sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far, 21 obliging them to keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar and also the fifteenth day of the same, year by year, 22 as the days on which the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month that had been turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, days of sending gifts of food to one another and gifts to the poor.

23 So the Jews accepted what they had started to do, and what Mordecai had written to them. 24 For Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammadatha, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur (that is, cast lots), to crush and destroy them. 25 But when it came before the king, he gave orders in writing that his evil plan that he had devised against the Jews should return on his own head, and that he and his son should be hanged on the gallows.

26 Therefore they called these days Purim, after the term Pur. Therefore, because of all that was written in this letter, and of what they had faced in this matter, and of what had happened to them, 27 the Jews firmly obligated themselves and their offspring and all who joined them, that without fail they would keep these two days according to what was written and at the time appointed every year, 28 that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, in every clan, province, and city, and that these days of Purim should never fall into disuse among the Jews, nor should the commemoration of these days cease among their descendants.

29 Then Queen Esther, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew gave full written authority, confirming this second letter about Purim. 30 Letters were sent to all the Jews, to the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, in words of peace and truth, 31 that these days of Purim should be observed at (all) appointed seasons, as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther obligated them, and as they had obligated themselves and their offspring, with regard to their fasts and their lamenting. 32 The command of (Queen) Esther confirmed these practices of Purim, and it was recorded in writing."

And then these last Esther chapter 10, you'll notice is just a very small 3 verses. And it simply ends with this,

"¹ King Ahasuerus imposed tax on the land and on the coastlands of the sea. ² And all the acts of his power and might, and the full account of the high honor of Mordecai, to which the king advanced him, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia? ³ For Mordecai the Jew was second in rank to King Ahasuerus, and he was great among the Jews and popular with the multitude of his brothers, for he sought the welfare of his people and he spoke peace to all his people."

Interesting, isn't it, that we see such an incredible work that is done by these 2 Jews, Esther and Mordecai, for the sake of the Jewish people in the place that God had put them.

Now, what I want to end with here this evening is, I want to give you essentially 6 lessons that I think we can take away. These are take away lessons. So let's put our notes up here, Six lessons from the book of Esther.

Six lessons from the book of Esther

And what's interesting about the Book of Esther is, it's a story. It's basically a story. And stories confirm what we are taught elsewhere in the Scripture.

One of the things we have to be careful with when it comes to stories in the Bible, are assuming that because the story is there, that whatever is in the story is something we are being taught. Right? If that were the case, then all of us men would have a harem I suppose, if we could.

But that's just something that was going on in the Medo-Persian Empire. It was, I mean, it happened among the Jews as well among their kings. But obviously, just because it's in the story doesn't mean it's something that's being taught for us.

There's also a story in 1 Samuel, that talks about how King Saul went to a witch, a medium to try to bring forth the spirit of Samuel to consult him. (1 Samuel 28) I've had people point to that passage and say, see, it shows right there, that this is something we can do. Well, no, that's just in the story. Okay? That doesn't mean that it's taught. Right?

So when it comes to the Book of Esther, we have to be careful drawing conclusions from it that are based solely on the story itself. Does that make sense? What we have to do is we have to understand that Queen, or the story of Queen Esther, confirms things that we see elsewhere in the Word of God. But

they're taught us in other passages of Scripture. They are confirmed or exemplified in these stories.

Okay so having said that, here's the first thing I think that we learned, through this study or this reading of the Book of Esther.

Six lessons from the book of Esther

- God wants to work through YOU

And that is, God wants to work through YOU.

Esther was a beautiful young woman. She wasn't highly educated that we know of. She just, she was really, really pretty. And some women get that and some don't. But, her beauty ended up being something that God used. And we all don't have the same gift. But whatever gifts we have, God wants to use. God wants to use you. He wants to use you in His plan and along with His purposes.

And sometimes they're weird. I mean, I wouldn't have picked for Esther to be part of a harem. Right? To be married to a pagan king, but in God's providential plan to save the Jews from extermination, this was His purpose. And this was His plan. And sometimes God's plan, it's something you cock your head at a little bit. And go, huh,? Okay. Wouldn't have ever picked it myself. But God wants to use you, your life, your gifting, your abilities. Very important.

Six lessons from the book of Esther

- God wants to work through YOU
- “God moments” can change/save lives

Within the context of that, the second thing is that, “God moments” can change and save lives.

We call these, God moments. This is a... It's not a biblical term by any stretch. Something probably is fairly recent. We call God moments those times in our lives when God orchestrates a meeting, or a connection, or an event where He allows us to serve Him in a rather unique and an amazing sort of a way.

Sometimes somebody will be sitting on a bus and they get seated next to someone, or on an airplane with whom they get to share the Gospel. And they just say, wow, that was really a God moment. And that just simply means the Lord orchestrated an opportunity. And that's something that the Book of Esther

shows us. God orchestrates opportunities. It's our responsibility to be open and responsive to those opportunities to be used.

Now, this book shows us that sometimes, and we'll get into this as one of our other points. Sometimes those opportunities can be dangerous ones. Right? And that's really the third point.

Six lessons from the book of Esther

- God wants to work through YOU
- “God moments” can change/save lives
- Courage is often required

Sometimes, and this is a lesson, Courage is often required when it comes to that whole idea of God working through you and Him creating those God moments. Sometimes those God moments are couched in these situations which might otherwise seem dangerous. And you have to be willing.

Esther had to be willing. She wasn't really willing at first. When Mordecai sent word to her and said, hey, this is what happened with this Haman character. You need to go and talk to the king. She was like, hey, you know as well as I do, you can't just waltz into the king's presence. I'm the queen, but I can't even do that. If he doesn't extend the scepter to me, I'm dead!

Well, I don't know if you've ever been faced with a situation where your actions could result in your death. And it's kind of a 50 50 thing. He could extend the scepter or not. And if he does, great! But if he doesn't, you're dead! And courage...

I remember reading in the first chapters of Joshua, where God said, again and again to Joshua, be strong and courageous. When God repeats something like that over and over again, I don't think He's wasting His breath. I think Joshua probably needed that reminder. Hey, be strong and courageous. Be strong and courageous. Josh, be strong and courageous. I'm with you. I'm going with you, and so forth.

Six lessons from the book of Esther

- God wants to work through YOU
- “God moments” can change/save lives
- Courage is often required
- Fasting and prayer is the key to victory

Next that we learn from this thing, fourthly, is that Fasting and prayer is a key to the victory.

And this is something that I think is another one of those things that we've lost largely in the body of Christ. The whole idea of fasting and prayer. Fasting along with prayer. I mean, it's tough enough to get people to pray. Fasting is yet a further and deeper sort of an aspect of prayer.

And if we are wondering among ourselves why we seem to not have as many victories as we otherwise should, we'll read the Bible and think, well, gee, why aren't we being victorious like them? Well, maybe we're not praying and fasting like they did. And there was a 3 day fast in this book.

Six lessons from the book of Esther

- God wants to work through YOU
- “God moments” can change/save lives
- Courage is often required
- Fasting and prayer is the key to victory
- Obedience is required

When all these things come together, the fifth thing we learn is that Obedience is required.

Courage, sure. But then finally, obedience. To just obey. I'm going to do this because the Lord... I see that the Lord has orchestrated my life for me to serve Him in this way and I'm going to obey. I'm going to obey. And I'm going to keep obeying." And obey God and don't let go of obedience. Don't turn to the right or to the left, to use a biblical phrase. But keep pressing on, keep walking in obedience to God.

And then lastly, something that we learn elsewhere in the Scripture.

Six lessons from the book of Esther

- God wants to work through YOU
- “God moments” can change/save lives
- Courage is often required
- Fasting and prayer is the key to victory
- Obedience is required
- God works all things for His purpose

And we see here in Esther is that, God works all things for His purpose. I mean, this is something the Bible tells us elsewhere. But again, we see exemplified that God works all things together according to the purpose of His will for those that love Him and are His called, His called and chosen ones. (Romans 8:28)

That includes you tonight. You are among His called and chosen ones and God is going to work out His purpose and His plan. He's going to.

He's going to work it out. And that's a promise that you and I need to really lay hold of. So, the Book of Esther, good reminder. Good story. Good stuff.