

SMALL GROUP STUDY

The Providence of God

In the book of Esther we find the Jewish people who stayed behind in the Persian Empire rather than return to Israel. They are working and living their lives apart from God. Providence places Esther, a Jew as the new queen and in a position to have the king's ear. This prominent positioning leads to her intervention when the wicked Haman plots to kill off the entire Jewish race.

Supernatural Providence (Esther 1-2)

Esther has been raised by her Uncle Mordecai after her parent's deaths. Since King Ahasuerus kicked out his queen when she displeased him, he holds a beauty contest for all the virgins of the land. Uncle Mordecai encourages Esther to enter, and she wins! She is made queen of Persia.

Discussion Questions:

- At what Jewish feast is the book of Esther read every year?
- Why do you think the name of God is never mentioned in the book of Esther?
- What events lead up to Esther being appointed as queen?
- Examine your heart: What great purpose is there in the job you do?
- What is the good and honorable thing that Mordecai did for the king but was not rewarded for years?

Satanic Plot (Esther 3-5)

Haman is over all the princes of King Ahasuerus and expects obedience and humbleness--bowing down from all. However Mordecai will not, so Haman hates him and plots to kill him. He obtains permission from the King to kill off all the Jews in the kingdom. An irrevocable edict goes out to all the land to kill all of the Jews at a given date and time.

Discussion Questions:

- What importance is it that Haman is an Agagite?
- How is Esther 4:13-14 a statement of faith in God even though God is not mentioned?
- Whose idea was it that Haman build a 75 foot gallows to hang Mordecai on?
- Why was it possible that Queen Esther could die whether she spoke up or not?

Sovereign Protection (Esther 6-10)

However, the providence of God prevails. The king has a sleepless night and reads the book of records and finds out that Mordecai is responsible for saving his life. Esther approaches the king, invites him (and Haman) to a party and reveals that she is a Jewess and that the evil Haman has plotted to kill her and all her people. Haman is arrested and hanged on the gallows he intended to hang Mordecai on and the Jewish race is saved!

Discussion Questions:

- Why was it providential that the king could not sleep?
- How did the king deal with the irrevocable edict to kill all of the Jews?
- What are the days of Purim? What are some of the practices of Purim?
- Examine your heart. Looking back on your life, where can you see the providence of God?