

Slide # 1

Theme: God’s providential Care For His People

Outline:

Chapter 1 – Queen Vashti Deposed

Chapter 2 – Esther Becomes Queen

Chapter 3 – Haman’s Plot Against the Jews

Chapters 4-7 Esther’s Courage – Haman’s Plot Backfires

Chapter 8 The Jews Avenged

Chapter 9 The Feast of Purim Instituted

Chapter 10 Epilogue – Mordecai Exalted

Providence has a lot to do with timing – God’s timing in which things happen at just the right time to bring out a certain outcome. God does it without bypassing the normal laws of nature as is the case with a miracle where God overrules the normal laws of nature. Providence happens with the normal course of nature and yet clearly there is a sovereign hand guiding the events to just the right outcome in just the right way at just the right time.

That is what the book of Esther is all about.

In the Persian empire a wicked man by the name of Haman had become the second in command in the empire. He manipulated a plot by which all the Jews were to be killed on a certain day and he managed to get the king to sign it into law. And the law of the Persians and the Medes could not be changed.

Mordecai, the Jew, also had a high position serving in the king’s gate. But he was hated by Haman because Mordecai refused to bow before him – even though the king had commanded everyone to do so.

Mordecai’s cousin, beautiful Esther in the providence of God, ended up becoming the Queen. In her position Mordecai strongly exhorted her to go into the king and plead for the life of her people. After asking her people to fast for her she then went in to see the king – which in itself was risky because no one was allowed to see the king uninvited and the penalty for trying to do so was DEATH unless of course the king held out the golden scepter of favor.

As she went to see the king he held out the golden scepter and asked her what her petition was (5:3). She deferred and invited the king and his right hand man Haman to come to a banquet she had prepared for that day (5:4). At the banquet the king once again asked her what her petition was and she again deferred inviting the king and Haman to yet another banquet on the next day.

During that night between the 1st and the 2nd banquet the king could not sleep so he asked that the minutes of the court might be read. And there they read to him about how Mordecai had some years earlier saved his life by exposing some eunuchs that were looking to assassinate the king.

Early that next morning the king was looking for how to honor Mordecai for what he had done for him and Haman arrived at the court coming to ask the king for permission to have Mordecai hanged. Talk about timing!

The king asked Haman what should be done for the man whom the king wants to honor. And thinking the king must be talking about him Haman spouted out that in kingly fashion this man should be paraded through the streets of the capital city with loud announcements: “***Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor***” (6:9).

The king then commanded that Haman promptly do this for Mordecai the Jew. Talk about humorous irony – this is it! Haman did as the king commanded and then rushed home mourning with his head covered. There at home his wife and friends told him, “If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you will not prevail against him but will surely fall before him.” (6:13)

Wow! That was a vote of confidence – NOT!

And just that quick here came the carriers to escort Haman off to the next banquet. And that brings us to chapter 7.

It is often said that “the devil is in the details”. Well, often the devil is in the details but I want you to know that God is sovereign over all the details and that is what we find in the story of Esther.

Ultimately God’s plan cannot be destroyed no matter how favorable things might initially seem in terms of carrying out that which is at cross purposes with God’s will and plan. God is LARGE and IN CHARGE. He controls everything and we see this in the details of chapter 7.

Esther 7:1–10 (NKJV)

1 So the king and Haman went to dine with Queen Esther.

There is a lot of wining and dining in this story. This is now the fifth banquet named in this story (cf. 1:3, 5, 9, 5:4, 8).

2 And on the second day, at the banquet of wine, the king again said to Esther, “What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request, up to half the kingdom? It shall be done!”

This is now the third time the king has asked Esther what her petition is and the third time he has said it will be granted up to half the kingdom. It would seem that it would be pretty hard to deny her after promising her this time and time and time again.

3 Then Queen Esther answered and said, “If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request.

She was not asking for much – just for her life and the life of her people. That had to be staggering for the king. He didn’t see this coming, and I am sure it shocked him to hear such a request. What could it be about? He had no idea!

4 For we have been sold, my people and I, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. Had we been sold as male and female slaves, I would have held my tongue, although the enemy could never compensate for the king’s loss.”

Esther at this point lays it all out there. She and her people have been sold. She is talking about the price Haman offered to the king in exchange for the right to destroy this people and incorporate it into law.

Slide # 2**Esther 3:9 (NKJV)**

9 If it pleases the king, let a decree be written that they be destroyed, and **I will pay ten thousand talents of silver** into the hands of those who do the work, to bring it into the king’s treasuries.”

Esther 4:7 (NKJV)

7 And Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, **and the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay** into the king's treasuries to destroy the Jews.

It seems that the king initially cared very little about the loss of life involved, not so much as to even check it out. All he heard was the great sum of money that Haman would give towards this endeavor.

Slide # 3

Esther 3:15 (NKJV)

15 The couriers went out, hastened by the king's command; and the decree was proclaimed in Shushan the citadel. **So the king and Haman sat down to drink**, but the city of Shushan was perplexed.

The language that Esther used (namely "destroyed", "killed", "annihilated") was the EXACT language of the decree which was encapsulated into law and sent to all the king's provinces.

Slide # 4

Esther 3:13 (NKJV)

13 And the letters were sent by couriers into all the king's provinces, to **destroy**, to **kill**, and to **annihilate** all the Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their possessions.

But note how carefully Esther stated the matter. Remember that her husband the king is also implicated here. He signed off on this matter. He approved it. So she is carefully threading a needle here. She hardly wanted to implicate him as the one who has sold out her and her people to death – and yet in reality he too was implicated. But Esther certainly did not want to say that.

The real culprit was Haman who manipulated the king to this end. So certainly, Esther is choosing her words wisely stating it in an indefinite manner that says simply they have been sold out without initially saying who has done it.

And Esther here now indirectly identifies herself as one of the Jews.

Esther explains that had they merely been sold out to slavery she would have held her tongue. The last phrase in verse 4 translated in the NKJV as “although the enemy could never compensate for the king’s loss” is somewhat unclear. Some think she is saying that in that case it would not be worthy of bothering the king which is a flattering way of saying how important he really is.

Whatever the case, she was clearly saying that only because their lives were on the line did she take this drastic action of coming to the king in this way.

5 So King Ahasuerus answered and said to Queen Esther, “Who is he, and where is he, who would dare presume in his heart to do such a thing?”

Because Esther spoke in an ambiguous manner the king still is not clear on the details and so he asks “***Who is he, and where is he who would dare presume in his heart to do such a thing?***”

He still seems pretty oblivious to what specifically she is talking about. This perhaps is because he paid so little attention to what Haman had manipulated past him just two months earlier (cf. 3:7; 8:9). Recall, (that according to what is recorded) he didn’t even ask what people it was that Haman wanted annihilated. All he heard was dollars coming into his coffers and that was good enough. He SOLD them out all right – albeit ignorantly of the specifics.

Slide # 5

Esther 3:8–11 (NKJV)

8 Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, “There is **a certain people** scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are **different** from all other people’s, and they do not keep the king’s laws. Therefore it is not fitting for the king to let **them** remain.

9 If it pleases the king, let a decree be written that **they** be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who do the work, to bring it into the king’s treasuries.”

10 So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews.

11 And the king said to Haman, “The money and the people are given to you, to do with **them** as seems good to you.”

When you are the king you really should pay attention to detail – especially where you are looking at wiping out a whole segment of people. But apparently the details were not covered.

Apparently, the king thought they were a relatively small and insignificant people group that didn't really matter. Remember he had a vast empire with MANY different people groups – so what was one little people group? And again, all he heard was all the MONEY that Haman promised to put into his treasury. That was all he cared about.

But guess who was there listening to all this? Well, Haman! He hadn't forgotten. He knew EXACTLY whose plot it was to destroy Esther's people and he knew it was the JEWS! He knew full well they had been SOLD to be destroyed, killed, and annihilated because he was the instigator of the plan, and he was the one who had put forth the MONEY to sell them out. At this moment there was the HIGHEST of drama in the room!

Suddenly he went from thinking he was the most favored man in the kingdom by both the king and the queen to realizing he was in total jeopardy.

6 And Esther said, "The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman!" So Haman was terrified before the king and queen.

And then I think with great BOLDNESS and CONVICTION Esther said with all that was within her: "***The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman!***" (cf. 3:10; 7:6; 8:1; 9:10, 24). Wow! That was a jaw dropper! The king's prime minister has just been indicted by the queen!

Haman was in instant terror as he was implicated before the most powerful man in the world as trying to KILL the queen and her people! And he was terrified!

This word "terrified" is the same word used when David saw the angel of the LORD with a sword in his hand at Arunah's threshing floor in 1 Chron. 21:30 and was paralyzed from action because of it; it is the same word used of Daniel's intense fear when he saw the angel Gabriel in Daniel 8:17. At that time Daniel fell on his face because he was so afraid.

This is the idea of being terrified stiff. It is to be in horror and totally overcome with fear and trepidation! Haman went from being arrogantly cocky the day before to quaking in terror on the next day.

This reminds me of the lot of the wicked. When all is going well they are so cocky and have no fear of God but then SUDDENLY all can change in a moment!

Slide # 6

Psalm 73:6–9 (NKJV)

6 Therefore **pride** serves as their necklace; **Violence** covers them like a garment.

7 Their eyes bulge with **abundance**; They have more than heart could wish.

8 They **scoff and speak wickedly** concerning oppression; They **speak loftily**.

9 They set their mouth against the heavens, And their tongue walks through the earth.

Psalm 73:19 (NKJV)

19 Oh, how they are brought to **desolation, as in a moment!** They are utterly **consumed with terrors**.

7 Then the king arose in his wrath from the banquet of wine and went into the palace garden; but Haman stood before Queen Esther, pleading for his life, for he saw that evil was determined against him by the king.

Why do you think the king was suddenly so angry? I think he was putting it all together – Haman had in essence deceived him as he manipulated this through without even discussing who the people were that he was buying to have killed – including the loyal Mordecai in the king's gate. I think at this moment the king knew to some degree that he had been played and he was very angry about it.

However, there was a lot to think about. The king himself was implicated here. He himself had given permission to Haman to do as he pleased. I think he was angry about the whole situation.

But he needed to get his head around it and so he got up from the banquet and went to the palace garden. In the meantime, Haman, terrified out of his wits, is pleading for his life before Queen Esther because he saw the king was very angry and ***“he saw that evil was determined against him by the king.”***

Haman started out the day thinking this was to be the best day of his life, but now he suddenly realized his life was in jeopardy.

8 When the king returned from the palace garden to the place of the banquet of wine, Haman had fallen across the couch where Esther was. Then the king said, “Will he also assault the queen while I am in the house?” As the word left the king’s mouth, they covered Haman’s face.

What timing! Just as the king was returning from the garden here was Haman desperately pleading for his life with queen Esther and in his hysteria he had fallen across the couch where Esther was lying.

Persians (and later Greeks, Romans, and Jews) reclined on couches when they ate. – *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*

Court documents from the Assyrian period state that a man must not come closer than seven steps to one of the women in the palace.

- *HCSB*

Haman was way to close, and, in the moment, it looked to the king like he was trying to assault her. That mistake proved to be fatal.

Haman was draped over the queen’s couch in a compromising position. Presumably he was grasping at her with a desire to implore her favor. – *The Nelson Study Bible*

Immediately when the king said, “**Will he also assault the queen while I am in the house?**” the palace personnel covered Haman’s face. Throughout history it has often been customary to cover the head of a condemned prisoner.

9 Now Harbonah, one of the eunuchs, said to the king, “Look! The gallows, fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai, who spoke good on the king’s behalf, is standing at the house of Haman.” Then the king said, “Hang him on it!”

We first read about the eunuch “Harbonah” in chapter 1 where we find he was one of the eunuch’s dispatched to bring Queen Vashti before the king and his drunken friends (1:10).

True to form the king doesn’t make a lot of original decisions but seems to kind of follow the lead of those around him and their suggestions. Harbonah suggests that Haman be hung on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. Talk about poetic justice.

At this point Haman had three strikes against him.

- 1) He had manipulated the king into signing into law the killing of the queen and her people.
- 2) The king perceived Haman to be attacking the queen right in his very presence.
- 3) Haman was exposed to have been planning to kill Mordecai – the man whom the king had just honored for his great loyalty earlier in the day.

That's it! Three strikes and you are out! The king then gave the order that Haman be hung as suggested.

10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king's wrath subsided.

There is some debate as to whether Haman was hung or impaled but the result was the same either way. Gallows more literally means "stake".

Haman is an example that you reap what you sow. Sooner or later this always proves true. It is a principle throughout Scripture that cannot be avoided.

Slide # 7

Proverbs 26:27 (NKJV)

27 Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, And he who rolls a stone will have it roll back on him.

Galatians 6:7 (NKJV)

7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

A **third rail**, also known as a **live rail**, or an **electric rail** is a means of providing [electric power](#) to a railway [locomotive](#) or train. Third rail systems are often supplied from [direct current](#) electricity. To touch the third rail is deadly.

In politics they talk about the third rail as a metaphor for any issue so dangerously controversial that it is "charged" and "untouchable" to the extent that any politician who would dare try would suffer irreparable consequences.

In the Bible the Jews are the third rail.

Slide # 8

Genesis 12:3 (NKJV)

3 I will bless those who bless you, **And I will curse him who curses you;** And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Every enemy that has ever tried to destroy Israel has been destroyed.
– **Warren Wiersbe**

Just one day earlier Haman was thinking that he was in high favor with the king, the next day he led the Jew Mordecai in a triumphal procession fit for a king through the capital city.

One day earlier Haman was plotting the death of the Jew Mordecai, the next day he was pleading for his life from a Jewish queen.

One day earlier Haman was assured that he could have Mordecai killed and arranged for it to happen, the next day he was hung on those very gallows.

Haman is an extreme example that one cannot touch the “third rail” of the Bible – which is the Jews. The world has yet to fully learn this lesson, but it will come down hard on them in the Tribulation Period when the world is fully aligned against Israel. But then as they in repentance call on Jesus their Messiah He will come to their deliverance (cf. Jer. 30:7).

Then will come the great reversal. The times of the Gentiles will be over. Israel will then be the head and not the tail (cf. Deut. 28:13).

Slide # 9

Isaiah 49:23 (NKJV)

23 Kings shall be your foster fathers, And their **queens** your nursing mothers; They shall **bow down to you** with their faces to the earth, And lick up the dust of your feet. Then you will know that I am the LORD, For they shall **not be ashamed who wait for Me.**”

For those who wait for the Lord there is coming a great reversal. That is true ultimately for repentant Israel and it is true for those of us who live in the Church Age as well. God help us to be among those who WAIT upon the Lord – the great reversal is about to take place! The kingdom is coming!