

# Marriage Series #8 - Esther & Ahasuerus

by Don McClure

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*The marriage of Ahasuerus and Esther illustrates the sovereignty of God in the midst of worldly men's actions and the importance of humility and love in relationships.*

**Duration:** 1:00:06

**Scripture:** Esther 4:14, Proverbs 3:5

**Topics:** "Destiny in Relationships", "Humility in Marriage"

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## Description

Don McClure explores the marriage of Esther and Ahasuerus, emphasizing the lessons that can be drawn from their contrasting personalities and the challenges they faced. He highlights how Esther's humility and willingness to surrender to God's plan ultimately led to her becoming a pivotal figure in saving her people, contrasting her approach with that of Vashti, who responded to Ahasuerus's arrogance with pride. The sermon underscores the importance of personal surrender, prayer, and patience in relationships, suggesting that true strength in marriage comes from humility and understanding one's destiny. McClure encourages listeners to recognize their purpose and the divine plan in their lives, regardless of their circumstances.

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## Transcript

There's been so many marriages in the Bible to learn from, and so we've been looking at marriages, and hopefully the lessons of them go way beyond marriage, and just teach us all some practical things on any relationship, just marriage being the most intimate of human relationships and oftentimes the most difficult, and if you can learn a lesson in that, you can learn something to apply anywhere. Tonight I want to look, if you'll turn to the book of Esther, at one of the most interesting marriages in the Bible, I suppose, or there's interest in all ways, and in all of them I'm sure, but the marriage of Ahasuerus and Esther, and looking at this at this couple, they've got an awful lot to learn from, and particularly when you look at this marriage and realize how different these two people are. Maybe some of you are in a marriage where you're married to somebody like Ahasuerus, he's an unbeliever, a guy that is totally, I think as we'll see, he's quite an impetuous guy, he just does things on a fling, gets himself into a lot of trouble, and the nation with him at times, and a guy that's quite insensitive, quite unaware of people around him, to say the least, I think we'll pick up some of that, and somebody that, certainly a difficult marriage, for sure, and maybe some of you tonight are in difficult relationships, maybe not even a marriage, but there's just a difficulty, there's things that are painful, there's things that just seem almost impossible for you, and wonder how in the world am I ever going to get in or through or around or out of this sort of a thing, and I think there's a lot

of great lessons here that we can learn from.

Just a little background as you're turning to the book of Esther, but on it is that Esther of course married a man as the Jews called him, Ahasuerus, the secular world, and knows him better by his Greek name, King Xerxes I. He ruled Persia from 486 to 465 BC. As chapter 1, verse 1 tells us, at the time that he ruled, he ruled all the way from India to Ethiopia, some 127 provinces he was in control over, but his great struggle in his life, and typical of most worldly men, no matter what they've got, it usually isn't enough, and he had one great passion of his life, one that his father, Darius I, who when you look back previously at Ezra and Nehemiah, you come in around him, but it's something that his father, one thing he had never been able to do that Ahasuerus or King Xerxes, the secular name for him, Ahasuerus being the Hebrew name, but it's something that he had never accomplished was that he wanted to conquer Greece, about the one thing in the world that he longed to have. His father didn't get it and he wanted to have it, and but it's something here as the book opens we find Ahasuerus where he's gathered together all of his princes from around the whole of the Persian empire, the entire realm, some 127 provinces, and he's brought them together for a six-month feast, a six-month party.

Of course back then it was quite a little traveling thing just to get some place in the first place, but by the time they arrived, of course they're all princes, they're all nobles, and they've got a lifestyle that they're pretty used to having, each one of them in their own provinces, a great power and authority and prestige. Well here Ahasuerus being the king of it all, as he gathers them all together, they had some party that went on for some 180 days, and it's something that probably during this time they no doubt as they feasted, but they probably also did a lot of business, whatever they may have to do in those days, one of which was probably planning the soon coming that happened shortly after this attempt to invade and overtake Greece. But it here is there was only a short time after this great feast that he had that they attempted their battle with Greece.

As this is ending up though, they come down to perhaps all the businesses done, all the various meetings and things have been going on for some period of time, they have this grand feast that was just purely party from one end to the other for the last seven days of this. They gathered them all together and they're about all to go home and say, hey, before we go we're going to have a feast better than anything we've had so far, just endless party for the last seven days. So that's what they're doing.

And as it's coming towards the end of that, it tells us there in these days that their king Ahasuerus, he's drinking a little too much, and they're all partying quite a bit. And he finds there that a little bit drunk he decides because his wife Vashti was such a beautiful woman, that he'd kind of show her off to the rest of the drunken princes around as they're kind of maybe boasting and laughing and partying and carry on as people can do. But there as he goes and he calls for Vashti to come and parade herself around before all these princes, she refused to be made public spectacle.

She says, no way, I'm not going to have anything to do with that. And she just stayed back. Well, now all of a sudden they had quite a problem.

He gathers together his counselors, he starts to sober up quick there as he gets the Medes and the Persians all together there and they are the of his counselors there of them all saying, what in the world do we do? Well, they start talking amongst themselves and they realize, as it says in verse 16, well, Queen Vashti is not only wrong with King, but also the princes and all the people who are in the provinces of the King Ahasuerus. For the Queen's behavior will be known to all women so that they will despise their

husbands in their eyes. And they will report King Ahasuerus commanded Queen Vashti to be brought in before him, but she did not come.

Well, this very day, the noble ladies of Persian media will say to all the King's officials that they have heard the behavior of the Queen, thus there'll be excessive contempt and wrath. If it pleases the King, let a royal decree go out from him and let it be recorded in the laws of the Persians and Medes that it will not be altered. That Vashti shall come no more before King Ahasuerus and let the King give a royal position to another better than she.

The King's decree which he will make is proclaimed throughout his empire for it is great. All wives will honor their husbands, both great and small. And the reply pleases the King and the princes, and the King did according to the word.

But here what happened is they get all these counselors together, they realize, oh man, he went there and in a drunken moment, he called for Vashti and said, come on in. And she says, no, I'm not coming. All these princes, all these guys sitting around saying, oh man, this is good.

This looks real bad. I mean, here now they were ending this feast. They've had six months, this thing building and building, this great thing, and now it's coming down to the end of this whole thing.

And as they're just about at the end of it, the King kind of really takes this great, bring her on in. I want you guys all to see my wife before we go. And she says, no, she's not coming.

And now all these men panic. They realize, man, what are our wives going to do if the Queen, if Queen Vashti to the King, the only one in the world, the one who has the authority of all the Medes and the Persians, who sets law and who rules the world, if he says to do something and she says no, every woman in the world is going to now have contempt for her husband. This is a bad day for marriage.

This is a bad day for every home. We're in real trouble. And as worldly men are, because so often the nature isn't to stop and say, wait a minute, I'm half drunk and I was stupid.

I'm wrong. I shouldn't have ever done that. No wife should ever be some sort of a toy to show off and ridicule and make fun of.

And because of his own arrogance or his own pride or whatever it was, they're a hazardous, he's in a jam and unable to humble himself and just simply say, I shouldn't have done that. And being able to even maybe send word to Vashti and maybe even say to the men of the kingdom, hey, we do have another alternative here. We could love them, but that didn't cross his mind.

We could be kind. We could be thoughtful. We could realize women aren't for public ridicule and humor and some sort of a thing like that.

And because that didn't even cross his mind, he only had one other alternative. And that is we've got to teach him a lesson here. And so the Edi goes out, she's through, she's done.

And one of the things that as soon as the king put a signet on that, it now became law and not only and not even the king, as it says in verse 19, if it pleases the king, let a royal decree go out from him and let it be recorded in the laws of the Persians and the Medes so that it will not be altered. This is what happened with the laws. There was only one thing more powerful than the king himself.

And that is once the king made a law, not even the king could reverse it. And once he made this decision, even if the next day he realized, oh man, when the guy sobers up, realized what happened, he couldn't reverse it. And all the rest of them said, yes, this is a good law.

This is a good law. I sure don't want to go home to my wife without a law like this. And we go home without her, with her picking up on, you know, what Vashti did here, we're going to be in real trouble.

And so there he signs a decree. He's an impulsive man. He was a pretty headstrong sort of a guy.

And probably thinking, well, we've got a Grecian invasion to do. We've got a battle ahead of us, you know, and let's get on and be men. And so in his own way, you know, he signed the thing, banished Vashti to ever come into his presence again.

He'd never lay eyes on her nor her on him again. And out the law, the decree went and went throughout the nation. And here, I suppose, one of the early potential women's lib movements got stopped in its tracks.

It's interesting. I don't want to get into it. I'm into it.

How did I do this? But the thing is, as worldly people, it's watching, you know, I mean, the Bible is such a wonderful tool on how a marriage ought to be, how relations ought to be, the responsibility we are to love one another. Well, the world knows so little of love, knows so little of what it is, on how a relationship ought to be built and strengthened, that it just has to fashion its own ways of proceeding, its own ways of resolving things. And here, as you look at Vashti and you realize this woman, she's married to a proud man, to an arrogant man.

And all she really did is follow suit. When she got to where she thought she might be strong enough or proud enough or arrogant, she gave him back the same thing he'd given her. You're going to try to run me, are you, fella? No, you're not.

And she turns back and she says, I'm not putting up with it. And so she comes back in her own pride and she comes back in her own arrogance and says, if it's fair for you, it's fair for me. And the battle of the sexes, the lines are drawn.

And this has gone through history. It's one of the great problems we have today, I think, because men aren't men of God. They aren't ones who know at all what it is to love their wife as Christ of the church, because so few homes are this way.

Women are just gaining forces, retaliating, saying, hey, I don't have to put up with this. And whether they should or not, I don't know. What we're all to do is put up with what God wants.

Because a man isn't putting up with what God wants. Is a woman free from putting up with God wants? And of course, nobody is free from that. We're all to do what he wants.

He wasn't, she wasn't, both worldly and there they set it. And that's the world in which we, of course, still live in, isn't it? But here at any rate, Ahasuerus goes out in between chapter one and chapter two of the book of Esther. Secular history fills in some of the blanks for us.

But as he goes out to attempt at this time, after this big meeting that he had for six months with his leadership, he goes out to conquer Greece. His armies, according to secular history, were superior to the

Grecian armies at this time. But in a succession of famous, well-recorded secular historians of the battle that went on, their military might was actually broken.

And Ahasuerus returned back a defeated man, a beaten man. And then when he got back, his chapter two carries on. And after these things, when the wrath of the king had subsided and he gets back home from his defeat, he finds himself remembering Vashti.

Looking back, he's losing other things and then he remembers her. But this decree that he had made and finding there at that time, he's missing the companionship, missing somebody. And so he finds himself, though, with his decree, he can't do anything about it.

It's bigger than him. It's set. It's done.

And so his counselors come up with an idea. Let's just have an all-Persia beauty contest. Let's just go throughout the entire kingdom, through the entire realm.

And chapter two, verse two, the king's servants who attended him said, let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king and let the king appoint officers, all the provinces of his kingdom, some 127, that they may gather all the beautiful young virgins and, you know, and bring them into Sasan and into the women. So he quarters there. And so they got they're hiring out these guys that go out and he says, you spy out each one of the provinces and, you know, put them on the government payroll to go find the most beautiful woman in the entire land.

And you can read through the chapter. It was quite a beauty contest. Once they selected out their group and these appointed officers all went out to get what they could find, the most beautiful young virgins there throughout all the land of Persia.

They gathered them and they brought them back. And then it was something that they went through quite a process. It tells us in chapter two, verse 12, each young woman's turn when it came to going to King Ahasuerus, after she had completed 12 months preparation according to the regulations for the women.

And thus were the days of her preparation, a portion, six months with oil of myrrh, six months with perfumes and preparations for beautifying women. And here it's something, all these oil and perfume treatments are going on day after day for some six months, just kind of, it's kind of like tenderizing meat or something here, I don't know. But they're fixing, they said, we're going to get them fixed up as beautiful as the oils and the myrrh and the perfumes and the stuff we got.

And they spent a year. This was just the one, all of the contestants kind of, of this beauty contest. And you know, we'd gathered them all together and they spend one year just getting ready to go meet the king, to have him just say, well, no thanks.

And, or whatever it was, but they prepared each one for the king. And it's interesting as this is kind of going on, just watching in a sense, destiny. Because as we look at it now, we know when you're picking up the book of Esther, this is destiny that's happening.

God who works in mysterious ways, his wonders to perform is what exactly what he's doing here. While worldly men are fashioning their own way, as the Bible says, God even uses the cursed things to praise him. And, and the way that, that things can be so different and so worldly and so carnal.

And yet God is, you know, bringing people together here, really through destiny is what's happening. As this marriage is, is coming together. As the officer comes out, finds, you know, Esther out there somewhere in one of the provinces, says, boy, she's beautiful, brings her on in.

And here she's in this glorified harem of sorts, just in all this preparation. She, of course, had no choice. After all, this was one king, as the whole nation found out a little earlier, you don't displease the guy.

And you, who knows what'll happen. But if you disobey the king, it might cost you your life. And so here is the officer comes and you're coming.

The king might want you, we don't know. We'll take a shot at it. And whether you want it or not, on you came.

And, but yet in the whole process, God is really working. Why it was that Esther's parents stayed some 50 years earlier, they were all released to leave and to go back to Israel. Go back to Jerusalem, amazingly, of all of the hundreds of thousands of them that were brought into captivity years earlier, when they were all released, only 50,000 of them went back.

Of course, the story, well, it was accurate, is that Jerusalem had been burned with fire. The city was destroyed. It was all rubble.

The book of Nehemiah tells us about all that. And they were, by this time, they'd settled down in Persia. They'd settled down there.

And a lot of them had made their homes there. They'd raised their family there, had all their relationships kind of around. And when the Lord released them, said, you can go back.

For some reason, their Esther's parents didn't want to go. They then died. And all of Esther's family had died.

And she had a cousin named Mordecai, obviously older, because it tells us here in the book of Esther that he took her as his daughter and loved her as a daughter, though they were actually cousins. But here, this beauty contest was the way that this whole thing seemed to happen. And Hazarus, all he was really looking for was just looks.

And as you get into the book, you find out he was pretty insensitive. And that seemed to be all he cared about. His values were, I want somebody to parade around.

That's, of course, what he wanted the first time with Vashti. And he wanted to bring in this beautiful queen to show her off. Well, he hadn't changed much.

And yet through this, God brings along and creates this beautiful young Jewess and setting it up for her to be the next queen of Persia. And here, as you watch the story develop, here she had her cousin, Mordecai, who was there as the gatekeeper there at the palace. And so every day he comes in and he checks on her.

And also in verse 10 of chapter 2, it says Esther had not revealed her people or kindred for Mordecai or charged her not to reveal it. Every day Mordecai paced in front of the women's quarters to learn of Esther's welfare and what was happening to her. And here, so her cousin Mordecai, he's out watching out over all this, taking care of everything, checking on her day by day.

And as all of this is progressing, he says, don't tell anybody what your nationality is. They've always throughout history been a rather persecuted people. He says, it just won't be healthy.

We're the lower class, definitely, and the slaves originally, only a generation earlier to the Persians. So let's not bring that up. But then there it tells us though, that as she went in before the king and interestingly enough, in verse 15, it says now when the turn came of Esther, the daughter of Abner, the uncle of Mordecai who had taken her as his daughter to go into the king, she requested nothing but what Haggai, the king's eunuch, the custodian of the women advised.

And Esther obtained favor in the sight of all who saw her. Here, no doubt, such a, when you look at her and you just, the little things you pick up about her, such a classy woman, such a stylish woman. I don't mean that in the worldly sense.

There was just a class about her. She was just herself, though quite beautiful. It wasn't one that she tried to parade herself or say, I want this or I want that or demanding.

She just looked and her attitude was, well, if this is my destiny, if this is what's to happen, I don't have to do anything about it. It'll happen. And there she just, the custodian of all the eunuchs there and of all these women, she said, well, all of them got to pick whatever they wanted to wear, any jewelry, any robes, anything they could.

And she just said, well, I don't care. It's not up to me. Whatever you think.

And so in she went and the way she lived, obviously, all the other servants liked her. All the other ones looked around and thought, boy, wouldn't it be wonderful if she would end up to be the queen. And no doubt.

And then as soon as she was brought in before the king, it says in verse 16, so Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus into his royal palace in the 10th month, which is the month of Tebeth, of the seventh year of his reign. And the king loved Esther more than all the other women. And she obtained grace and favor in more than all the virgins.

So he set the royal crown upon her head and he made her queen instead of Ashti. Made quite a feast for her. And on they went into this marriage.

You know, marriage first is something where I think an important thing to realize. A lot of people look at their marriage or they look at our relationships that you have in anything in life, not just marriage, but as we're looking at it tonight, they happen in all sorts of ways, don't they? If you go in a lot of places in the world right now, a lot of people, their marriage is their parents did it. Parents, you know, just when they were born, they made an agreement.

Well, here, you know, give you this or that. And here's my daughter and here, you know, or whatever. And they just made the deal.

And the child just grew up always just you're going to marry so and so. And other places in the world, I mean, marriages happen through all sorts of things. A lot of people, they're just bought.

They're just bartered away. And a lot of people enter into marriage just to get out of a bad situation in the home. There's all sorts of various reasons.

And our culture, of course, people choose. And I don't know that it's any better in one sense at all. I mean, that honestly, it's one to where when you look at our divorce rate, it sure doesn't say much for the ability to choose.

We're in trouble. The thing is, though, is that ultimately once we're in it, destiny, I think, is set. Something there to where within somebody's heart or life, okay, it's set, it's done, it's happened.

Now I'm going to make the best of it. Whether I was running away, whether it was dealt, whether there was a king's edict that just says, bring in the most beautiful and I'm going to pick one or whatever else it is that happens is the day that you're married, you're married. The day that it's set, we ought to look at it with all of our heart, it's set, it's done.

What I was thinking at the time, who knows? I've got some dear friends. Well, you'd know them at least by reputation, not by name, but a lot of you would anyway. Mike and Sandy McIntosh, but I don't think they mind this because they talk about it quite openly themselves.

They met each other at a party. In fact, she literally met him. He was from, and I think playing some instrument down on Balboa Island, holding a tin cup, playing around half drunk.

And for some reason she liked it. For the life of me, I can't understand why I've heard him try to sing. It's a disservice to society.

But it's something to where there he was, he's quite entertaining as a human being though, but somehow or another within a few days, these two and just partying around, pack up and they ran off to Las Vegas and got married in a matter of days. And here, you know, then you kind of start waking up. And here it was something to where her father was a pretty well-to-do guy.

And when he found out what his daughter had done, and he tries to help Mike get into something, make some sort of living. Mike was just kind of bumming around. He'd sold used cars, but his father just tried, well, he found out what his daughter, I mean, what did you do? You know, and hi, mom, dad, I'm married.

And here are these people, they're looking at this long hair hippie. And she was a girl, she went through private college, girls college back east, and was raised with all the finest. And she kind of grew up under a highly structured life and all the prim and proper and well-to-do type of a thing.

And boy, when she broke free of that, she broke real free. And then she comes home with him. Well, her dad tried to make the best of it and bless his heart, but it's something they were Christians too.

Mike was the farthest thing in the world from it and dealing drugs. And here he is where they helped him buy a house. Mike couldn't, didn't have any way to do it, any credit, any money, anything.

But well, let's get our daughter going and hope they can maybe make it through this. And Mike told me on how that all the guys, he went and he sold used cars as his job. But when all the men at eight o'clock in the morning went out with their briefcases and got in their cars and drove away, he went and he bought himself a briefcase, didn't know what to do with one.

He just put his lunch in there and his comic books. That's what he did. And he went off to the auto dealer where he sold cars so he could look like a businessman with his, you know, live in a neighborhood, a businessman, let's try to look like one.

Well, the marriage didn't work too good. They ended up after a couple children getting a divorce and off they went. And after that though, Mike comes to Christ.

And here's Sandy, she'd had so much to do that she couldn't, she was sick of him. She was done with him. That says he was finally free of this terrible mistake.

And, but as long as he goes and he comes to Christ and then he meets this other girl. When I met him, he was engaged to another girl and God spoke to him, said, go back to your wife. He prayed about it.

Next thing you know, he felt like God, the destiny had been set. God wanted this. He went back and he shared with her and she, you know, was spiritually backslidden herself.

And he shared, she didn't believe any of this. She wondered what was going on, but she watched him and watched him. Began to realize that something was going on.

And of course the story ended up with, you know, both their lives wonderfully, you know, turned around. They got remarried and they have five children now. But the, the amazing thing, and I mean, this is 20 years ago they got remarried and, but the wonderful thing is to watch God when somebody just, okay, God, destiny, what is it? What do you have for me? And here Esther, she just took it.

I'm sure, it doesn't say for a moment she wanted this marriage. There's no suggestion of it. I think she was such a quality human being that I doubt if she did.

She knew what manner of man, you know, this King was. The whole nation knew about the edict, knew about the drunken party, knew about the thing that had happened. And here she's coming along and brought into a thing like this.

And for about the first five years, it doesn't tell us anything about what happened, but it appears probably to have gone along just fine. Until about five years into this marriage, tensions came quite, they burst on the scene. At this time there was a prime minister within Persia there, the chief right-hand man of Ahasuerus, whose name was Haman.

And Haman was a guy there, he was an Amalekite, a descendant of King Agag, a man incidentally who earlier back in the book of First Samuel, remember when Saul was king over Israel, he was commissioned by God. Samuel had sent him out and said, you're to go out and fight with the Amalekites and you're to destroy all of them, every man and woman and child. You're to go out and you're to destroy every animal.

You're to absolutely annihilate them as a nation. This had gone on way back from long before, back in Exodus, I believe 17. There's a story there where it tells us just as the children of Israel were just about to go into Canaan, just about to go into the promised land, right in the borders of it, just overlooking it.

It says, then came Amalek and fought with Israel and refined him. And Moses said to Joshua, choose out men and go fight with Amalek. Tomorrow Aaron and her and I, we will go up to the mountain of God with the rod of God in my hand.

And there as they went up, you may recall the story that it says as Moses held up the rod that Israel prevailed. But when he was tired and the rod was down, it says Amalek prevailed. And so Aaron and her stood one on the right, one on the left, and they held up his arms and they fought through the battle.

And there Israel won the battle through the day as Moses lifted up that rod of a surrendered life to God. But Amalek was beaten. Interestingly enough though, the Lord told Moses at that time, he says, write this down as a memorial in a book.

He says, for Israel will do battle with Amalek from generation to generation. And they did. Amalek was like a vicious, rabid dog.

He was a descendant of Esau, Amalek was. He was a pitcher in the Bible of the flesh who, who absolutely opposed anything that was spiritual. And every time the children of Israel seemed to almost get to where God wanted them throughout all the old Testament, amazing.

You'll see Amalek all of a sudden appear viciously like a rabid dog to destroy them. He would attack them viciously. Well, here, you know, a descendant of Amalek, one that Saul was commissioned to kill all of them, but he didn't kill King Agag.

And they're just one of them though. Oh, we had a great victory, almost got it all, but he didn't finish the job. And then a descendant of his comes along, Haman, appears in Persia of all places, generations later, but he's risen now to a place of being prime minister in, in, in Persia.

And there, as he was prime minister, it tells us here in the book on how he had one edict. One thing he wanted as prime minister, when he came into a room, everybody bowed down. And everybody did, but one man, Mordecai, who was a Jew who worshiped none but God.

And that was something that though everybody else worshiped him, Haman looked there and he was incensed. It just drove him crazy. He'd come in, and here was this gatekeeper who wouldn't pay him homage, who wouldn't give him this respect.

And so he found himself, it just got under his cross so bad, he decided one way or another, I want to kill him. And then it grew within him. And he realized he wouldn't be content just killing Mordecai.

He says the nation's filled with people like this. And so he devises a plot where he goes to Ahasuerus. And he says, look, he says, you know, there is a bunch of people in our land here who don't understand our laws and don't obey the laws of the Medes and the Persians.

They have their own God and they have their own way of living. They don't fit here. And then we need to deal with them.

And if you'll give me permission, I will give 10,000 talents of silver into the king's treasury. Just if you'll give me the joy of just eliminating out of this country and just to strengthen it, stabilize it, one nation under Ahasuerus. That's what we'll be.

And we'll get rid of these other pathetic people. And so there, you know, Ahasuerus, again, just kind of a non-thinking man, just talked into things in a moment's fling. He says, okay, he signs the edict.

And as soon as it became law, the moment he did that, you couldn't stop it. You couldn't reverse it. It was set.

It was done. He couldn't stop it. And then here is all this is set in place.

Mordecai, when he hears about it, he immediately goes out and he's fasting. He puts on sackcloth. He's outside the king's gate, as close as a man could get.

Here's a Jew realizing that now the edict was signed, that all the Jews and all of the Persian empire were to be destroyed. This guy, some Hitler descendant, Hitler descended from him, who knows. But somehow or another, here this man who wants to wipe out all of the Jews in the world.

And here is Mordecai ends up there in sackcloth and ashes. He's out in the middle of the city and he's wailing loudly and bitterly at this whole edict that's come down. And then when Esther hears about it, she sends a message out with a set of nice clean clothes for him and tells him what's going on.

Well, he sends a message back. She says, don't you know what's going on? The edict's been signed. Things are all set.

They're done. And then, though, as they're all fasting and praying, he comes to Esther and he says, Esther, you've got to go in before the king. You've got to talk to him.

You can get through to him if anybody can. She said, I can't get to him. He's been for 30 days.

He's been inside of his private area that nobody can go into. And if you go into it under the penalty, you're dead immediately. And you know, this guy doesn't like to be upset.

He's got this bad history and all. And if you go in there and it's against the law and the moment you come in, you're dead. Unless as they're about to kill you, the king lifts up his scepter and then they stop.

And and he you know, you can live maybe as he'll check into it. But usually they wouldn't even check into it. So I can't go in there.

And then, of course, as he, you know, tells her in chapter four, verse 13, he says, Mordecai, I told them to tell Esther, do you not think your heart in your heart that you would escape the king's palace more than any of all the Jews? And of course, this wasn't only the Jews there in this city in Shushan. This was this would have been Israel. This would have been all those in Jerusalem.

This would have been because the Persian Empire, 127 provinces, one of which at this point, it was all under the kingdom of Persia's power and authority. They'd all been killed. But here it's something there to where he tells her then in verse 14, for if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place.

But if you and your father's house, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this. And here, this marriage, you know, that maybe Esther at this point wondering, what am I doing here? To me, I mean, when you look at Esther, she's a quality person.

She's a profound human being. As you watch her through this book and you look at this guy Ahasuerus, a worldly man, a carnal man, a selfish man, a guy there that he, you know, just a thoughtless man. You know, what he did, the way he handled himself, he was just a spoiled, you know, fourth or fifth generation, or not that third or fourth generation king who just known what it was to be spoiled from his birth.

Whatever the king wants, the king gets. And when he was born, he was born a prince with the world already promised at his feet, and he was selfish. He was shallow.

And here, this woman thinking on one hand, it's maybe nice to go from being a pauper to a wealthy woman overnight, but that was it. After that, then to be married to this man, you wonder what in the world's going on. And, but the thing though that happened is, is that it started with destiny, but in order to hold this marriage together, and I think most marriages, they start really with destiny.

How you end up getting together when you look back through the years. We were, I was 21 when we got married, and it's funny, I look at a lot of people that, you know, when you get up to about 28 or 29 or 30, I meet a lot of people at that age and they're talking about getting married, so I'm not getting married. And say, why? So I got to think about this.

See, when you, if you wait till you're in your late 20s to get married, you're smart enough usually to know you shouldn't. You know, fortunately, see, I got married at a time I had no idea what I was going into. I was too stupid and dumb and young and everything, and I tell people, hey, get married young.

You know, get married while you're dumb. If you wait until you think you're smart, you know, you'll realize, oh boy, I should check this out, make this, but if you grow up together a lot of times, and that's kind of, you know, what, I'm not making yearly suggestions to anybody at all, but I mean, something though, I mean, destiny usually throws people together, but what keeps them together, I think one of the first things here that Esther had to find, the secret of the strength of her marriage, was first of all, it was just personal surrender. Here was something now that Esther was confronted with the same thing Vashti was.

In a sense, she had to go before him. Oh, the story is very different, but at the same time, it isn't. On one hand, I mean, here Vashti, I mean, why should I go before him? I don't, why, there's no reason, and that arrogant, proud guy, and trying to run everything, well, here he is, still just as arrogant, still just as proud, and, but the difference, there's a great difference between Vashti and Esther.

Esther, Vashti just met it with an equal dosage of pride, and because he was bigger, and stronger, and king, he won, and when he won, and they both lost, didn't they? But here there was something where Esther came along, and with humility, and with surrender. She realized if this marriage is going to go on, if destiny is going to go on, it's going to require the loss of my life, the willingness of me to give it up, the willingness of me to lay my life down, and to realize that destiny was written all over. Who knows if for this very reason I'm not alive, for this very hour, something that I think a lot of people, that every, every human being, every Christian, God has you alive for a reason.

You're on this planet for a reason, and God's no respecter of persons, and your reason for being alive is as important as any other human being. I believe that with all my heart. The only difference to me between any human being, one and the other, is that somebody knows it and the other doesn't.

That's about it. There's no big people or little people. There's no important people or unimportant people.

There's no people that are created for, you know, one role or another, though the roles are all different. Every single one of us, just as much as when an auto manufacturer puts together a car, every part that's there for enough, for a specific reason. It's got something there.

He doesn't just say, oh, let's put on a fifth wheel on the hood, you know, or something. If it doesn't serve a purpose, they don't make it. They're not that foolish.

If it's something that, oh, let's put two steering wheels in the back seat, since we maybe got some, they don't do that. And if men, when they design something and they put something together, are that smart

about it, how much more is God, when He created you and He put you here. He put you here for a reason. He put you here with His great genius in His mind, in His plan. The only thing is that's different about people is that clicks with some people. Some people, it settles in and they realize that's it.

I don't know what the specifics of it is now. Let's see where it goes. Here maybe as young Esther was being, one guy comes into town one day and says, you're pretty, come with me.

She probably may, I don't want to go with you. I don't care to be a part of some jerk's harem. I don't care to join any beauty contest.

It's not in my world. But there through the processes of life, she's drawn in, but there this woman, as things came on, one day it clicked. As her cousin Mordecai spoke to her.

And there she was, you know, in the palace having a nice life, maybe things going on, all of a sudden the message came through loud and clear. Esther, you're alive for a reason. And your marriage is for a reason.

Your home is for a reason. There's a destiny here way beyond anything either one of us. It's bigger than our ability to comprehend it.

It's our business to surrender to it. And it clicked. But to do it, it had to be personal sacrifice.

She had to be one to be willing to go in before this arrogant, proud, selfish human being and to look at him. And he was. You know, I mean, here later on, well, I'll get to it later on.

Well, I'll mention it now I guess. I don't know if I'll think of it later. But here when they're having dinner in Haman's there, she set this whole thing up.

And they'd been married now for years. He actually not even, he did not even know what nationality she was. He signed a decree to have every Jew in the country killed, not even knowing his own wife was a Jew.

I mean, this sounds like your typical husband, doesn't it? I mean, this guy didn't ask her too many questions, you know, he just never thought of it. They didn't have too deep or profound of a relationship, obviously, did they? Hi, honey. By the way, where were you born? I never asked you.

What kind of national personality or nationality are you? Never even crossed his mind. You know, he knew so little about her. But I mean, just a guy without a brain in his head that didn't think of it, never crossed his mind.

Probably a little typical. And everything in you rises up to want to give him a piece of your mind. Vashti.

That's how you're going to settle it. Well, that's the way a lot of people do it. They don't get far.

But Esther, as she did it, she instead of arrogance and pride, she humbled herself before God. She surrendered herself. Then she prayed, had everyone else around her pray and pray and pray.

Then, amazingly, patience. Because the thing that happened then is it happened in chapter five, verse one. It says, Now it happened on the third day that Esther put on her royal robes, and she stood in the inner court of the king's palace, across from the king's house, and while the king sat on his royal throne in

the royal house facing the entrance of the house.

And so it was that the king saw Esther standing in the court that she found favor in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. And Esther went near, and she touched the top of the scepter. And the king said to her, What do you wish, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given you up to half of my kingdom.

Here is this woman, again, I mean, it's so different than Vashti. There, I mean, so often, the flesh has something in us, we're just sick and tired. Why do we have to tolerate human beings like this? Here's this woman, you could think, Why do I have to be married to a guy like this? This guy, you sit around the joint there in the royal court, in the royal outfits, in his royal throne, you know, and who he thinks he is, and I'm married to him.

Maybe some of you feel that way sometime. But the, and you feel like, I don't need to put up with this. Esther did.

She went in, I mean, when you think of this, I got to go in and touch the top of this guy's scepter. This is the weirdest, arrogant thing in the world. But she went through with it.

And there she came in, because you see, her pride, it wasn't there. The Vashti was gone. That nature, there was something in here.

So rather than having pride, she wanted a marriage. Rather than having pride, she wanted a home. Rather than having pride, she wanted destiny to be fulfilled.

What am I here for, God? And there she knew only too well what she was there for now. And so as she went in, there she stood. And interestingly enough, when he asked, What do you want? Instead of, at that point, just blurting it out, saying, Here's what I want.

You know, and the, and the whole thing, she, she says, Well, I'd like to have dinner with you. I'd like you and Haman. I'd like to invite you two to dinner.

He probably looked at her and said, You are willing to risk your life for dinner? You know, and then he says, We'll come. You know, I mean, here it is. Rather than sitting there and blurting it all out, you would think, Ah, quick, he's open.

He says, Have the kingdom. You know, and, and there she just, rather than that, she, another piece of wisdom a lot of women could learn from. She realized, Well, before I really get to this thing, let's feed him.

Let's feed the guy. You know, just to get a little food in his stomach, have him sit down, relax, and then we'll talk. And a great amount of wisdom was there.

She just, she invites him over to dinner. And verse four, If the pleas of the king let the king and Haman come today to a banquet, I've prepared. So they come on over.

They, he grabs Haman and the two of them go over to the banquet. And it says in verse seven, then while they're there together a second time there, that he asked, Well, what is it that you want? And she says in verse eight, Well, now, now they're having a banquet together. If I found favor in your sight and said the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, then let the king and Haman come to the banquet, which I prepare for them.

And tomorrow I will do as the king said. She now looks here. He's asked her again.

What do you want? She said, I have to have a meal tomorrow again. Okay. Maybe you've been to cooking class.

What's going on here? You know, I mean, I probably wondered what in the world is this woman want, but she's being so patient. He comes, you know, first he's got the opening. She has, she, no, it's not right yet.

Here. She asked him a second time. He asked the second time, what do you want? What can I do for you? But for some reason, there's a check in her spirit.

She says, I'd like to do this again tomorrow. You may look and wonder what in the world, and I'm sure he probably wondered the age old question, what in the world makes women tick, you know, and things. But here it's something to where all she knew is there must have been some check in her spirit on this thing.

And, uh, so he says, okay. And, uh, uh, then the thing that happens is in between this meal, Haman goes home. He goes to all, he goes home to his friends and he tells them all guests where I've been today.

I had a special banquet, just the three of us. There was just myself. And there was a hazardous and Esther.

She invited three of us together as can't believe this. You know, they just invited a special private banquet. And, uh, but as he's leaving this thing, of course he walks by and everybody bows down, but more to care.

He was so excited. It looks more to care. He's always bummed out again.

One thing he wants, he can't have. He goes home and his wife says, look, don't get upset about this. And he says, oh, by the way, I admit it.

We're having another banquet tomorrow. She's invited the three of us back. Wow.

This must be some special thing. His wife says, why don't you just, when the King asked you what you would like tomorrow, why don't you just say you'd like a more decay? I did. He says, that's it.

And as a matter of fact, you know, they decide to build a 75 foot gallows to hang him. This guy, he raises, he just realized, boy, I got it go so good for me. He sets the whole thing up.

And so he builds this huge ballot, you know, gallows, and then figures at the beginning of this little banquet that he's got with the two of them the next day, uh, that, uh, they will, uh, have a, he'll just ask, you know, for more decay to be killed. But there it tells us chapter six. It says that night the King couldn't sleep.

And so one was commanded to bring the book of the records of the Chronicles and to be read before the King. And probably so boring. In other words, it's just all the Chronicles, all the stuff that goes on the kingdom.

I can't sleep. Read it to me. Probably so boring figure.

I'll fall asleep listening to it. But it was found written that more decay. I had told, uh, a big 10 and terrorists, two of the young King, uh, the King's eunuchs and doorkeepers who had sought to lay hands with the King.

That's by the way, I skipped over that, but back in chapter two, there was a, uh, thing that went on to where two of the King's men wanted to kill him. More decay. I heard about it and reported it.

They checked it out and found out it was so, and Adam hanged. Well, here, this guy has risks. He's there.

Just listen. He says, read to me. And so he's laying in bed.

They're reading to him and he realized, wow, that's right. More decay saved my life. He says, by the way, what did we ever do for him? He checks her.

He said, we never did anything for him. He says, oh man, he says, who's out in the court right now. And they check says, who's in who, you know, who's who's running the country.

Who's run the world right now. And they said, well, they check out and he says, Heyman's on duty. She's telling him to come on in here.

Heyman comes walking and you look at destiny. I mean, you know, this book, of course, every one of our lives, whether we know it or not, it's written all over it. But Heyman walks in and the King says to him and he says, Heyman, what should a guy do King when there's somebody he's just really grateful for and he wants to honor him.

Heyman's thinking, oh man, this is so exciting. I don't know what to say King, but I got a couple ideas. Why don't you get the King's royal robe and horse and everything and go get the guy.

He just acted like he doesn't, you know, he's Heyman sure it's himself. It says there and he says, and deck him out and have parade him through the streets and says, so does the King for a man whom he wants to honor. And Asher says, that sounds pretty good.

Go get all the robes. And he says, you go over to Mordecai's house and put him on the horse and take him through town and tell everybody you can Heyman here. He's got the gallows.

They're just finishing the blast nails in this thing that he's planning on hanging him on the next morning. And instead he's out parading him through town. You can imagine this guy coming home and say, oh honey, I ate something real bad for dinner.

I don't know what I was served there, but I got a real bad case indigestion, you know, is here. He comes home after parading him around and his wife said, how was it today, honey? Oh, bad day, you know? And, uh, but here he parades him, you know, all around. Then it's banquet time.

He comes walking into this thing, not knowing what the world's going on. There's a hazardous and there's, uh, Esther in this, you know, and the three of them having lunch together. And it comes around that now it's time that if the King asked her again, by the way, honey, what was it you wanted in the half of my kingdom? And she said, well, I've got something I need to ask you.

A judgment has come down against my people. And you signed to kill them all. And a terrible thing has been done a wicked thing.

And, uh, I don't know what to do about this. And here is, he says, oh, well, who are your people? Well, the Jews. You're Jewish.

Oh, hi, honey. Well, I mean, here he, and, uh, uh, and he's in Haman, of course, you can imagine this guy. I mean, his indigestion just turned into a bad ulcer as he's sitting there, listening there, the whole thing he's plotted, you know, against and come to find Mordecai.

He was planning on hanging is the cousin of the queen sitting right there. You can imagine her looking over and says, hi, Haman. And, uh, by the way, Mordecai is my cousin.

And, uh, uh, but here as, uh, he then does this, you know, uh, it's got this thing all planned out. He looks over at Mordecai, I mean, over at Haman and he's angry. He's absolutely incensed.

And he gets up in his anger. He walks out of the room for a minute. And as he walks out, Haman throws himself over on, on Esther says, Esther, you got to save my life.

You can't let this happen. And then he walks back in while Esther's probably trying to get away from him. And, uh, and as he's, uh, you know, chapter seven, verse six, you know, or where is it down there? It says, oh, in verse eight, it says that when the king returned from the palace of the, uh, of the banquet wine, Haman had fallen across the couch where Esther was.

And the king said, will he also assault the queen while I'm in the house? And as the word left the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. He looks in there and he's good. I mean, talk about destiny.

I mean, you're this guy he's pleading with her and he trips and he falls on top of her on the couch. And he walks in and sees this guy there on his wife. And he says, well, are you going to assault my wife and my presence? And then they cover his face and haul him off.

And they're trying to figure out what to do. And, uh, verse nine, chapter seven says now, uh, Harbonah, one of the eunuchs said to the king, well, look, the gallows are 50 feet high, which Haman made for Mordecai, uh, who spoke good on the king's behalf and standing in the house of Haman. And then the king said, hang him on it.

And, uh, and then of course the rest is history. The thing that happened is that because he, it was a law, he couldn't reverse the law. He did send out and make sure all of Israel that they were armed.

I mean, it was something where they could all be killed. And he says they can all arm themselves on this day and they can prepare to fight back. If anybody attempts to kill him, he couldn't change the edict that said, okay, you can do it.

But the thing that happened on that day is that 75,000 Persians were killed, not Israel. The nation thrived. And, uh, but the thing is, of course, behind this thing is you look at this marriage, you look at this thing and on how a whole world was affected by a marriage and by a woman who knew the, the, the wonderful though destiny may be forced her into it.

Though one day she woke up in this thing and all right, I'm married to him, but what do I do? Then God taught her, you know, it's personal surrender and it's prayer and it's patience. Wait till the time's right. Wait until the events are right.

And that's of course true with any relationship, isn't it? But they're the wonderful thing. I mean, you see the difference there between Esther and Vashti and she butted heads with him and he won. And they, and anytime that happens, of course you both lose.

But when somebody there, it goes both ways. It may be the husband, you know, that both people ultimately is through surrender and pair and prayer and patience. That's what, what gets it.

That's what holds it together. How they come together is destiny. It's bigger than all of us.

But when we accept it and say, okay, God, what do we do now? That's the secret of great relationships and a great story, isn't it? Father, we just thank you for your word tonight. Lord, teach us in our lives. Lord, I ask that every one of us you'd teach us that we have a destiny.

When you created us, there wasn't some mistake on the assembly line. There wasn't just some malfunction on the, in some designer's table. Lord, in your mind, in your heart, you had a call.

And Lord, I just pray that you would raise every one of our sights. Lord, in all of our lives, in our marriages, in every relationship, Lord, into the potential of our life, the call of our life, that just as much as you fashioned us is for a plan. But Lord, to know it and to fulfill it requires the same thing it required of Jesus to fulfill his destiny, Abraham to fulfill his destiny, Esther to fulfill hers.

The personal surrender, the humility before God and man, to be able to humble ourselves before one another. And then, Lord, when we can do it, if we can humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord, he'll lift us up. Lord, help us to realize one of the great secrets of strengthening all of our relationships in this life is through humility.

And then, Lord, as we maybe find ourselves in a relationship with someone who we love and care for that doesn't even know you, they're hardened to you. They're a king or queen in their own world and aren't interested at all. We think they're hard and could care less.

But Lord, as we humble ourselves before you and before them, and Lord, we let our life live before them, and we know what it is to pray and to pray and to pray for them, and then for patience that the hour that you would open up the door to say, Now speak, and have it come, Lord, in such a way as that you'll keep them up at night, we'll be unaware of it, you'll be preparing their heart for the whole thing, just as Esther, though the door was opened by man, somehow or another she knew, well, he's listening, but he's not ready. Then the next time, well, he's listening again, but I don't think he's ready. And then as he spent that sleepless night, the next day you had prepared his heart, and he was ready.

Lord, that we would learn these great secrets, and in it our lives are strengthened, our destinies fulfilled, and our relationships are blessed. God, your word is so different than the world, but teach us that we may grow, be used for your glory. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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