

Commentary Notes - Esther

by Walter Beuttler

The book of Esther demonstrates the sovereignty of God in the lives of individuals and nations, and it highlights the importance of faith, trust, and prayer in the face of adversity.

Scripture: Esther 4:16

Topics: "Divine Providence", "Gods Sovereignty"

Description

Walter Beuttler preaches on the book of Esther, highlighting the divine providence woven throughout the narrative, showcasing God's ability to work through major events, trifling circumstances, and even enemies' schemes to fulfill His purpose. The story revolves around Esther, an orphaned Jewish captive chosen to be queen, paralleling the selection of the bride of Christ, emphasizing purification and acceptance. Esther's intercession with the king, risking her life, showcases God's providence in her acceptance and the unfolding events leading to the downfall of Haman. The feast of Purim commemorates the reversal of Haman's edict, symbolizing God's deliverance and the exaltation of Mordecai, demonstrating the power of divine providence.

Transcript

A. THE BOOK OF ESTHER

1. The book of Esther, of uncertain authorship, pictures the conditions of God's people during their exile in Persia
2. The time was between the period of the restoration of the temple under Zerubbabel and the return of the second group under Ezra
3. The drama of this book centers around the royal court of Susa, ("Shushan," 1:2) capital of Persia, and deals solely with the Jews of the dispersion

b in any form, the book is permeated by the idea of God acting in providence. Matthew Henry says: "If the name of God is not here His finger is"

5. As a possible reason for the absence of the name of God, the Talmud suggests Deut. 31:18. Though hiding his face, God was still interested in them but working, as it were, under a veil

B. THE MESSAGE OF THE BOOK

1. The central message of the book of Esther is divine providence - the ability of God to make all the events of human life, individual and national, fulfill his purpose

2. Specifically, the book reveals:

(1) The fact of divine providence. God is unmistakably in the events of the book, standing, as it were, unrecognized among the shadows, hidden but active

(2) The means of divine providence. God uses major events and trifling circumstances, seeming coincidences and plotting enemies, to serve his highest purpose

(3) The principles of divine providence. God in no way deviates from the nature of his being and acts in compatibility with the free will of man

(4) The power of divine providence. God made the drunkenness of Ahasuerus contribute to the crowning of Estther, and the gallows built for Mordecai to Haman's own execution

(5) The purpose of divine providence. The acts of individuals participating in the drama of Esther became mere stepping stones over which God moved toward the consummation of his purpose

3. Esther is the message of a burning bush aflame with the mysterious Presence

(With due acknowledgment to Pulpit Commentary)

FEAST OF AHASUERUS, 1:1-2:23

A. DEPOSING OF VASHTI, 1 :1-22

1. With whom in history has the Ahasuerus of 1:1 been identified? With Xerxes, king of Persia

2. Note the providential means which God uses to bring Esther to the throne in:

(1) 1:3 - An oriental king's extravagance

(2) 1:4 - Ahasuerus' characteristic ostentation

(3) 1:11 - The vanity of Ahasuerus

(4) 1:12 - The refusal of the queen

(5) 1:12 - The wrath of the king

(6) 1:13-19 - The decision of the counsellors

3. What does 1:16 emphasize concerning people in public life? That the consequences of their deeds reach as far as their influence

4. What was the purpose of the proclamation in 1:22? To prevent the women of the land from following the queen's example

B. SELECTION OF ESTHER, 2:1-23

1. Who was Esther, 2:5-7? An orphaned Jewish captive whose name was changed to the Persian name Esther (Stella)

2. Wherein is the providence of God discernible in:

(1) 2:7? In the death of Esther's parents

(2) 2:7? In her adoption by Mordecai

(3) 2:5? In Mordecai's position in the palace

(4) 2:6? In their being taken into captivity

(5) 2:7? In Esther's beauty

(6) 2:17? In Esther's acceptance by the king

3. Note how the selection of Esther parallels the selection of the bride of Christ

(1) 2:1 - The former wife (like Israel), is rejected, Acts 13:46-49, Rom. 11:15-20

(2) 2:2 - A new bride (like the church), is sought, Matt. 13:45-46

(3) 2:12 - Esther (like the church), is purified, Eph. 5:26; I John 3:3

(4) 2:17 - Esther (like the church), is accepted, Eph. 5:27; Matt. 24:40-41

(5) 2:17 - Esther's marriage (like the church), is consummated, Matt. 25:1-13; Rev. 19:7-9

4. Wherein is the providence of God seen in:

(1) 2:21? In a plot against the king's life

(2) 2:22? In the transmission of the report

(3) 2:23? In the recording of the incident

FEAST OF ESTHER, 3:1-7:10

A. CONSPIRACY OF HAMAN, 3:1-15

1. Comment on the fact that Haman was an "Agagite," 3:1: He might have been a descendant of the Amalekites whom Saul was asked to destroy

2. Wherein is the providence of God seen in 3:1-2? In the promotion of the man whom God intended to destroy

3. What means does God providentially use in:

(1) 3:2-4? Mordecai's refusal to revere Haman

(2) 3:5-6? The wrath of Haman

(3) 3:7? The casting of the lot

(4) 3:7-9? The schemes of Haman

(5) 3:12-15? The king's commandment

4. What seemed to have been the purpose of the casting of the lot in 3:7? Haman probably cast the lot to fix the lucky month and day in which to carry out his intended massacre of the Jews

B. ESTHER'S INTERCESSION, 4:1-7:10

1. Comment on "sackcloth with ashes," 4:1: This act of itself was a sign of deep grief; both combined betokened the deepest grief possible

2. Mordecai's depth of grief is evidenced by what in:

(1) 4:1? By the fact that he "went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and bitter cry"

(2) 4:4? In that he refused to put on the raiment sent to him by Esther

3. What is evident from 4:5-9? That the issuance of the king's decree had been withheld from Esther leaving her unaware of the situation

4. Note the critical points of Esther's reply in 4:10-11:

(1) No one could come into the inner court uninvited without risking death

(2) Esther had not been called and there was no way of knowing when she would be invited

5. Mordecai's urging of Esther to intercede with the king was based on three reasons. Point them out from:

(1) 4:13 - Esther herself would not escape

(2) 4:14 - Deliverance would come from elsewhere

(3) 4:14 - Her influential position was likely to have been arranged by divine providence for the purpose of saving the Jews

6. Comment on 4:16: Esther's decision involved the risk of her own life

C. ESTHER'S INTERCESSION, 4:1-7:10 (cont'd.)

1. How is divine providence seen in 5:1-5? In the acceptance of Esther by the king

2. What means does God providentially use in:

(1) 5:6-12? The preparation of a banquet

(2) 5:13-14? The preparation of the gallows

(3) 6:1? The king's sleeplessness

(4) 6:3? The neglect of a due reward

(5) 6:4-5? Haman's wicked intentions

(6) 6:6-9? Desire for self-aggrandizement

3. Comment on:

(1) 6:10-12 - Mordecai is escorted in honor through the city by his mortal enemy instead of hanging from the gallows

(2) 6:11-14 - Divine providence had set the stage for the ruin of a humiliated and dejected enemy of God's people

4. Wherein is the providence of God seen in:

(1) 7:1-2? In the king's offer

(2) 7:3-4? In Esther's petition

(3) 7:5-6? In the king's answer

(4) 7:7? In the king's wrath

(5) 7:8? In Haman's indiscretion

(6) 7:9-10? In a servant's comment

THE FEAST OF PURIM, 8:1-10:3

A. REVERSAL OF HAMAN'S EDICT, 8:1-9:19

1. In the providence of God, what takes place in:

(1) 8:1-2? Haman's position is transferred to Mordecai of which the ring is the symbol

(2) 8:3-17? Esther's petition to reverse the decree against the Jews is granted

(3) 9:1? God reversed the circumstances so that the Jews were no longer ruled, but the rulers

(4) 9:2? God caused the fear of the Jews to fall on the people to weaken their resistance

(5) 9:3-4? Mordecai is feared, honored, and "waxed greater and greater"

(6) 9:1-12? The Jews' enemies are destroyed on the very day they themselves were to be destroyed

(7) 9:12-19? The king provides Esther with the opportunity to request another day for the entire liquidation of the Jews' enemies

2. Comment on:

(1) 9:12 - The slaughter in the palace was an indication of what took place elsewhere

(2) 9:13 - The hanging of Haman's sons on Mordecai's gallows was intended to be a warning against molesting the Jews

3. Why did the Jews refrain from taking the spoil of their enemies, 9:5-16? So that they could not be accused of having killed their enemies for material gain

B. INSTITUTION OF PURIM, 9:20-10:3

1. Why was this feast so named, 9:26? Because of Pur, the lot which Haman cast, 3:7

2. For what purpose was this feast, 9:20-23? As a memorial to the great deliverance which God wrought for the Jews

3. Suggest the historical purpose of 10:1-3:

(1) To record the greatness of Mordecai

(2) To witness to the power of divin providence

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