

# Esther, the Power of Divine Providence

by Walter Beuttler

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*God's providence is His ability to make all events fulfill His purpose, even in troubles and difficult circumstances.*

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 31:18, Esther 4:14, Esther 10:3, Psalm 75:5, Psalm 76:10, Proverbs 21:1, Zechariah 4:8

**Topics:** "Divine Providence", "Gods Sovereignty"

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## Description

Walter Beuttler preaches on the power of God's providence as seen in the Book of Esther, where God's hand is evident despite His name not being mentioned. The sermon emphasizes how God works behind the scenes, even in troubling times, to fulfill His purpose. Through the examples of Esther, Mordecai, and King Ahasuerus, Beuttler illustrates how God orchestrates events, uses small and ordinary circumstances, and even misfortunes to accomplish His will. The sermon concludes with a call to recognize God's sovereignty in all aspects of life, trusting that every detail, big or small, is a steppingstone towards fulfilling His purpose.

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## Transcript

I have received help and encouragement from this amazing book about the "power of God's providence." The Book of Esther is amazing in a number of respects. One of them is that the name of God is not mentioned once. At the same time, the book is saturated with God.

This also suggests to us that even the events in our own lives may be saturated and controlled by God - even our troubles. When we speak of the power of "divine providence;" which is the ability of God to make all events, whatever transpires in our lives, even the troublesome things that come our way, to fulfill His purpose. In case I have made this too complicated, I am speaking of the ability of God to make all events fulfill His purpose.

This is the message of this book. Another thing that is very conspicuous in this book, namely God is, as it were, hiding His face from His people. Yet, while He hides His face, He is still interested in them, and works in the shadows of events, unseen, unrecognized, but ever working on behalf of His people. This is also true of us. Many times shadows flip over our lives like a cloud, and yet God is in those very shadows, still at work on our behalf to fulfill His purpose.

"I will surely hide My face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned to other gods." Deuteronomy 31:18

God's people had disobeyed and disregarded His laws, until finally He had to hide His face, as it were, and take them into the captivity. Even in captivity, God was still actively preserving His people even though all that time, His face was turned away from them.

Consider Zechariah: He was born in the Babylonian captivity. His name means "Our God Remembers." Apparently Zechariah's parents kept their faith during the Babylonian captivity while the vast majority of the people were satisfied in Babylon. They adjusted to its culture. They did not want, and did not return to Jerusalem at the end of the captivity. Most of them stayed in Babylon, save Zechariah's parents, who kept their faith.

The parents of Zechariah named their boy, "Our God Remembers." This was true because God did remember His people in the captivity. He raised up prophets like Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and a deliverer in Cyrus. Though His face, as it were, looked away from them, still He was working, and at work with His hands on their behalf. In other words, God was standing in the shadows unnoticed, unseen, yet still at work on behalf of His people.

Regarding this providence, God employed the most ordinary means to accomplish His purpose. This is one of the great things of this book. Have you ever noticed how the power of God is at times exercised in the most trifling, insignificant circumstances?

Quite some years ago, I was teaching in a camp in New York. The Lord had been dealing with me for three days to go to France, and I did not want to go. I told the Lord why I did not want to go. I said, "Lord, I am German and the Germans have been historical enemies. The French would not want me of all people. Besides, I do not have the money." So I had two good reasons: No money, and this historical state of enmity.

One evening, the evangelist got up before he spoke and said, "Now friends, before I speak I have to tell you something. This morning while I was in prayer, the Lord spoke to my heart and told me to take up an offering for Brother Beuttler, and the offering must be no less than \$500." I sat in the congregation and heard it. When I heard it, I was afraid that I would have to go to France.

So I walked out into the woods. Later, they handed me something like \$580. The round-trip fare to Paris at that time cost \$552, so I had the fare and a little extra. I said, "Well Lord, that is nice of You, but I have no contact, where would I start?"

A pastor from Philadelphia called me and said, "Brother Beuttler, how would you like an Italian spaghetti dinner?" I asked, "what is the purpose?" He said, "I have a friend from France and I would like you to meet him." This French man said (he spoke good English), "Brother Beuttler, I heard about you, have you ever thought of coming to France?" I said, "the thought has crossed my mind, but I have no contact."

He said, "I am the secretary of the Assemblies of God, and I can arrange a visit for you." I was caught. Here was a trifling circumstance, an invitation to an Italian spaghetti dinner, and then this casual conversation. God was in the providential arrangement. I still was afraid of this German-French feeling. When I got to France, I got a big surprise.

Before I started they said, "Brother Beuttler, say as little about your American background as possible. Try not to mention America. Do refer to the fact that you are German." That puzzled me. It was the daughter of the house who interpreted for me that said that, so I said, "How is that? Americans came over to liberate

France. The Germans had come to defeat it."

She said, "I will tell you, we have no respect for Americans. When the Germans occupied France, they were hard taskmasters, but we respected them, but we have no respect for Americans." The important thing is that God uses trifling circumstances to accomplish His will.

"Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me unto you. For who has despised the day of small things? For they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth." Zechariah 4:8-10

Those returning from the Babylonian captivity were to rebuild the temple. That is to say, they were to build a new temple. In Haggai, the people lacked interest. They thought they did not have sufficient means, so God sent Haggai the prophet, to stir up the zeal and the spirit of the people. Actually, their zeal had been diverted to their own houses. They were interested in their own places, so Haggai was sent to stir them to build the house of the Lord. They had complained and were discouraged. This is what Zechariah is referring to.

Their discouragement arose from the fact that the new temple that they were to build did not compare in glory and magnificence, to the temple of Solomon. They thought their temple was too insignificant. So the Lord gives the promise that Zerubbabel will lay the foundation, and that his own hands will also finish it. In the preceding verses, for instance in verse 6, God gives the means:

"Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, says the Lord of hosts. Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel, you shall become a plain." Zechariah 4:6-7

Here is both the local, and the future aspect. We are only considering the local aspect. The building of this temple, though it did not compare to that of Solomon's, was an enormous task for those who had just returned from Babylon. They thought it could not be done, as they did not have the means to finish it. So God says, "Zerubbabel shall lay the foundation, and own hands shall also finish it." Notice again in verse 7, "Who are you, O great mountain?"

This building of the temple was a great insurmountable mountain, inconceivable of completion. Yet the Lord said, "Who are you, O great mountain?...you will become a plain." In other words, God promised these people that the work would be finished "not by might, not by power, but by the might, incentive, and grace of the Spirit of God."

In verse 10, "For who has despised the day of small things." This temple was small compared to Solomon's, which the older men remembered. They said, "This does not compare to what we have known." Therefore, the Lord said, "Are you despising the day of small things?" The Lord uses small things, as well as great things, to accomplish His purpose. We will follow this power of divine providence operating in three individuals, as they overlap.

First, we will look at Esther in relation to the power of the Lord's providence in action.

"And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter; for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter." Esther 2:7

The Lord has a long-range program for His people. Years ahead, He looked at this time of captivity. He saw this great Persian king, Ahasuerus, with a very pretty wife. You get this from the first chapter. The Lord had to do something to deliver His people, as the Jews were in danger of their lives, because of the scheming of Haman.

God foresaw this and needed a means of saving His people from the hands of the Persians, lest they be exterminated. So He had His eyes on a little girl in Israel whose name was Esther. She had neither father nor mother, which tells us that her parents had died, and Mordecai took her into his home.

When they were taken captive in the days of King Zedekiah, Esther and Mordecai went up to the captivity. In His amazing providence, the Lord caused Esther to become queen of the mighty realm of Persia, in order to save His people. The book of Esther is the record of how He accomplished this by taking an orphan girl, a Jewess, and making her queen of Persia for no other purpose than to be the key of the salvation of the Jews. The Lord used her physical beauty as a factor in her becoming queen, because King Ahasuerus wanted a beauty, and God had a girl to provide this.

The Lord used the death of her parents, as He needed Mordecai to take her with him up into the captivity. Sometimes, misfortune is used by God to promote His purpose. This is in verse 6, "Who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity." Here is a girl with a very unfortunate event. Not only is she an orphan, but now she is also a captive. Before Esther could become a liberator in the hands of "divine providence," she had to become a captive. Some of us would like to be used by God in delivering other people from whatever problem they have, but we ourselves first have to become a prisoner of the Lord Jesus.

Paul was in a Roman jail. He did not write his letters and say, "I Paul, the prisoner of those so and so Romans." No. The Roman's put him into a jail, but he said, "I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ." There is quite a difference. So Esther, in the hand of providence, had to become a prisoner in order to become a queen. How God takes the most mundane circumstances and brings about huge events for His glory! In verse 5, I have rearranged this to turn it around for a logical sequence.

"Now in Shushan, the palace, there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai." Esther 2:5

Mordecai was in Shushan, the palace, and so was very near to the king. God used Mordecai's position, perhaps a keeper of the gate, to bring about the ultimate deliverance of His people. The Kingdom of King Ahasuerus stretched from India to Ethiopia. This was an enormous realm over which this captive orphan girl became queen.

"The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turns it whithersoever He will." Proverbs 21:1

We are not giving thought to predestination, but rather to recognize the fact that the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, and He turns it whithersoever He will. In other words, God has control of the hearts of rulers, and He causes rulers to do what God wants done to fulfill His own purpose. We should not press beyond this.

When John Foster Dulles was Secretary of State, he made an awesome mistake that cost the United States, not only prestige, but defeat in the chess game of politics in the world. Egypt asked John Foster Dulles to have the United States build what is known today as the Aswan Dam. John Foster Dulles had an

argument with Nasser, Dulles became angered and snapped at Nasser, "America is not going to build your dam."

So Nasser turned away and asked the Russians. You have read many times of the Russian penetration of the Middle East. The Mediterranean today is more of a Russian name than a Western name, especially the United States. Russia is pouring arms and equipment into the Middle East. It was John Foster Dulles who opened up the gates for Russia by his rash statement turning Nasser down. The United States could be in Egypt, but instead it is Russia. I would say that God had a hand in this rash statement, because God is shaping world affairs.

Daniel says, "He does according to His will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth." Ezekiel tells us, concerning God speaking, "I will overturn, and overturn, and overturn until He comes, whose right it is to reign." So God is acting in providence even in the hearts of kings causing them to act and react in accordance with His purpose. The ultimate government, the highest government of this world, is not in Washington, nor in Moscow, nor in Peking. That government rests before the throne of God.

Let us look at Esther 1:12. The king had a sense of vanity. He wanted to show his wife off. She was pretty, so he asked her to come and display herself, so he could say, "Here is the queen." But the queen refused.

"But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by his chamberlains: therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him." Esther 1:12

This was the work of God. What queen would not be glad to display her attire and her beauty, before thousands of princes. This would be the logical, or normal thing. God, in the power of His providence, caused the queen to refuse the invitation. She refused the command of the king to provoke the wrath of the king so a break would come between the king and the queen. Here God is using the wrath of the king to bring about the fulfillment of His purpose.

"Surely the wrath of man shall praise You." Psalms 76:10

The Lord can even use the wrath of man to bring glory to Him. The next time we become angry, do not say, "I am glorifying the Lord." That would be a misapplication. But here, Ahasuerus is angry with his queen. She refused, and as a consequence, was deposed. This was in the providence of God. God, in the power of His providence, can remove people from the highest position, if need be, to achieve His purpose. You can think here of King Saul,

"The Lord has sought Him a man after His own heart." And God took the kingdom from him and deposed Saul. Do you remember Judas where it says, "And his bishopric let another take?" God removes people from positions. In regards to Solomon, "I will rend the kingdom out of his hands," and the kingdom became divided. We would be amazed, if we could see all that God is doing in the world, when we think people are doing it.

"Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck. For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he puts down one, and sets up another." Psalms 75:5-7

I often think of this in relation to myself. "Lift not up your horn on high," or, "Speak not with a stiff neck." I am thinking of an individual that has been a thorn in my side for many years, an individual who has hurt

me many times, "That Beuttler!" This person had an attitude toward me for many years, of a snobbish nature. He was riding a high horse of conceit, a sense of superiority, being somebody. God, not long ago has taken that person and.... Now, I dare not gloat. I know my Bible too well for that.

He spoke to me recently with great dismay and I tried to comfort him. Remember Edom? Edom was judged because of her attitude. When God chastised Israel, Edom was very irrespective. "Lift not your horn on high." God brings people down. He also brings some up and puts them in high positions.

"He raised up the poor out of the dust, and lifted up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's and He has set the world upon them." I Samuel 2:8

God takes those who have nothing, the despised, the rejected, the ignored, and takes them up from the dunghill and sets them among princes. And God also reaches up to the princes and brings them down. As we read in the Psalms, "None can stay His hand and say, What do You? For power belongs to the Lord." In Esther 2:21, there is a plot. You know what a plot is, a sinister scheme.

"In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door, were wroth, and sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. And the thing was known to Mordecai, who told it to Esther the queen; and Esther certified the king thereof in Mordecai's name. And when inquisition was made of the matter, it was found out; therefore they were both hanged on a tree; and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king." Esther 2:21-23

They had plotted to destroy the king, which the Lord used as a means to bring about His purpose. All these acts are steppingstones of divine providence. A plot to kill the king was turned into a steppingstone for God. The report of Mordecai to Esther, and hers to the king, was a steppingstone for God. The hanging of the two on a tree was a steppingstone of divine providence to fulfill His purpose. God can use anything as a means to fulfill His purpose.

In Esther 3:1-3 we have a reference to a promotion. The king had promoted Haman and had others bow down to him. Mordecai, the Jew, refused to bow down. This refusal was a steppingstone of divine providence. If you want some encouragement, look at Esther 6:1. An oversight finally got to the king.

"On that night could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king." Esther 6:1

I am often awakened at the same time, in the middle of the night. I finally discovered it was God's signal for me to get up to spend time with Him. It is like the Lord saying, "Beuttler, you have had enough sleep, get up and look to Me." The Lord can use even sleeplessness, as He did in this case, to promote His purpose.

The king did what many do, he got a book and the chronicles were read to him. They found what Mordecai had done and the king discovered some neglect and said, "What honor and dignity has been done to Mordecai for this?" Then the king's servants said, "There is nothing done for him." Here Mordecai was neglected. He did not receive credit or reward.

Have you ever been neglected or did not receive what was due to you? Certainly this man deserved a reward. He saved the king's life, but nothing was done. Have you ever experienced when no one thinks of you, and you feel that they should, but they do not? Here God used the fact that Mordecai had been

ignored. God can even use our not being adequately rewarded, or our being neglected can be used as a steppingstone for divine providence to move up.

"And the king said, Who is in the court? Now Haman was come into the outward court of the king's house, to speak to the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him." Esther 6:4

The king said, "Who is in the court?" The king said something ought to be done for Mordecai. "Who is coming?" Haman is coming. Haman was coming to get Mordecai hung, and the king was at that moment thinking what reward could be given to Mordecai. This is a divine arrangement.

Haman comes, and the king says to him, "What should be done for a man whom the king wants to honor?" The timing of this thing! Haman thought quickly, "Is there anyone in the kingdom but me, who deserves any honor? He must be thinking of me." So he said, "Let him ride on the king's horse in the king's robe, and take him through the city, and have everyone bow down to him." He made the request for himself. God put him in a trap!

And the king said to Haman, "All right, do so to Mordecai." He must have been struck by lightning. They put a robe on Mordecai, and Haman had to take him through the city and have the people fall down and bow before Mordecai. The conceit of this Haman, the humiliation which God had brought. Think of it, the power of divine providence!

I had something like that happen to me in the Marshall Islands a few years ago. I am talking about providence. I arrived in the capitol, a small town, and discovered the missionary had left for the states and I was stranded there. I did not know where I was to go. I got myself a hotel, and I thought, "Well here I am." I went to the store to buy a few things to eat. I had no idea where I was to go. I said, "Lord, help me to make some contact with someone."

Here was a lady, apparently an American shopping. I walked up to her and asked her where to buy something, a flashlight or something. She said, "You will not find it in this place, but I can tell you where to go." Then she continued, "By the way, have you just arrived from America?"

I said, "Yes, may I ask your name?"

She answered, "I am Mrs. so and so from the Assembly of God." I asked, "Would you perchance be an A/G missionary?" She said, "Yes, we were sent here from Springfield." There was my contact, and in the same evening, I preached. God, in His providence brought us together on a Pacific island. Neither one knew the other. There I was looking for a flashlight, she was looking for something else. We got together. Talk about providence!

Mordecai is talking to Esther:

"For if you altogether hold your peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but you and your father's house shall be destroyed: and who knows whether you are come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Esther 4:14

God had a purpose in all of these events, namely, the deliverance of the Jews. In God's providence, this little orphan girl, Esther, was come to this place, at this time, under the leadership of divine providence to accomplish a great purpose in Persia. Now, the last chapter:

"For Mordecai the Jew was next to the king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed." Esther 10:3

Prior to this, Haman was next to the king, but Haman was now hung and Mordecai was next to the king. Haman had prepared gallows for Mordecai and he, himself, got hung on them. We have to be careful that we do not make gallows for other people, because God can see to it that we will hang there.

God had in mind that His ultimate goal of making the Jews respected, wealthy, and giving them peace in their captivity. This was God's great objective. To move toward it, He used the death of the parents of a little girl. He used the orphan status being taken in by Mordecai. He used the captivity to get her to Persia. He caused the queen to reject the king's request. He caused the queen to be deposed.

He made a way for Esther to be on the throne, and used her as a mighty instrument. Not only did He use the king's wrath, and the sleepless night, and the beautiful timing in all sorts of incidents. God was stepping along on all sorts of steppingstones, small things and great things, working secretly, unknown, unseen. God placed His stones of providential circumstances, great and small, small and great, in the proper timing, and moved the little orphan girl up to the throne.

This was a mighty display of the power of divine providence. I would assume that the object of this panorama is to give us a greater faith and confidence in the sovereignty and power of divine providence so that we would not despise the small things. Big doors often swing on small hinges, the least recognized and most inconspicuous incidents in our lives contribute to God's purpose for us, and become steppingstones for God in the accomplishment of His purpose.

Father, as we consider these things, we are over-awed by Your power. Help us to recognize Your hand in the circumstances of our lives, even as it is written, "All things work together for good to those who love the Lord," that we might be conformed unto the image of his Son. Father, with this Book of Esther, give us a great awe of Thee, a recognition of Your power and wisdom, and a submission to You even in our most troublesome circumstances knowing that all things that touch our lives are stepping stones for You in the accomplishment of Your purpose, however unknown that might be.

It is Your purpose just the same. So Father, teach us to be confident, to keep faith knowing that You are God, so that in all our turbulence, we can be still in our hearts and spirit knowing that You, and You alone, are God indeed. For Your Name sake we ask it.

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