



Main Point: Though the books of Ezra and Nehemiah document the glorious return of the exiled Jews to their homeland, the sad reality is the vast majority of God's people chose to defy the commands of God by remaining in foreign lands. Even though this group of people found themselves outside the will of God and in danger of annihilation on the account of their disobedience, the book of Esther illustrates God's providential hand of protection at work, in spite of His people, not because of them. Because of His providence "God's People are Positioned", "God's People are Protected", and "God's People are Preserved".

Furthermore, it's important to point out that nowhere in this book will you find mention of God, miracles, signs & wonders, the supernatural, or prayer. It seems clear from a simple reading of this book that, in refusing to return to the land, these Jews were also rejecting the God of their land. And yet, though not mentioned by name, it's undeniable that God's fingerprints remain all over the story of Esther.

Finally, the book of Esther is important because it practically emphasizes a powerful characteristic of God.... His grace. Though the people had rejected and forgotten the God who had done so much on their behalf, this book practically illustrates the reality that God had not turned His back or forgotten them. The story of Esther teaches us that, in addition to judgment, it is "the kindness (grace) of God that leads a man into repentance".

Providence: "the means by which God directs all things; both alive & lifeless, seen & unseen, good & evil towards a worthy purpose, which means His will must finally prevail." "The hand of God in the glove of human events."

1. Providence: Gods People Positioned.... Esther 1-2

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| a. God Removes Queen Vashti | Esther 1 |
| b. God Crowns Queen Esther | Esther 2:1-18 |
| c. God Grants Mordecai Favor | Esther 2:19-23 |

2. Providence: Gods People Protected.... Esther 3-7

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| a. Demonic Plot Hatched by Haman | Esther 3:1-15 |
| b. God Protects His People | Esther |
| - The Plan is Formed | Esther 4:1-17 |
| - The Plot is Enacted | Esther 5:1-8 |
| - Stories Ironic Twist | Esther 5:9-6:14 |
| - The Threat is Neutralized | Esther 7 |

3. Providence: Gods People Preserved.... Esther 8-10

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| a. God's People Receive Protection | Esther 8 |
| b. God's People Destroy Their Enemies | Esther 9:1-17 |
| c. God's People Celebrate Deliverance | Esther 9:18-10:3 |



Day 1: Drunken Stupidity.....

Esther 1 // THINKING POINTS: (1). Do you think King Xerxes would have chosen to embarrass his wife Vashti if he had been sober? (2). From this passage do you believe it was Xerxes intention to get hammered when he began drinking? (3). What can you learn about drinking and the dangers that come along with drunkenness

Day 2: No God - No Rest.....

Esther 2 // THINKING POINTS: (1). Since Esther was a Jew, in what ways are the decisions made by Mordecai in direct contradiction to the Law of God? (2). Because they were both living outside the will of God, what was Mordecai's reaction to this process in verse 11? (3). What is the basic difference when we include God in our decisions and when we decide to act independent of His involvement?

Day 3: Disobediences Baby.....

Esther 3 // THINKING POINTS: (1). In 1st Samuel 15:8 we're told the "Agagites" were the royal family of the "Amalekites".... why is this significant to our story? (2). Because Saul refused to obey the commands of the Lord, God's people are in danger of extermination..... what lesson can you learn concerning disobedience? (3). Ultimately, why should we obey the commands of the Lord?

Day 4: New Digs.....

Esther 4 // THINKING POINTS: (1). After learning of the decree that placed a death sentence on the Jews, Mordecai tears his clothes and weeps.... what death sentence has been placed upon all mankind? (2). Esther's initial reaction was to clothe Mordecai in some new clothes, why does Mordecai reject them and what do these clothes represent in a spiritual sense? (3) In what way have you looked for religion to save?

Day 5: Sowing the Gallows.....

Esther 7 // THINKING POINTS: (1). In what way do you find this story ironic? (2). What lesson can we learn from Haman being hung on the same gallows he intended to hang Mordecai? (3). In what ways do we "reap the results" of the "sins we've sown"?

Day 6: Second Degree.....

Esther 8 // THINKING POINTS: (1). The decree for the Jews to be killed could not be reversed.... what was the remedy? (2). What was the only way the Jews could escape the death produced by the first decree? (3). How is this a picture of salvation?

DEVOTIONS

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