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Perhaps you were born

ESTHER

for such a time as this

Sermon Series
26th July - 27th Sept 26

Bible Studies in Esther



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A Bible Study Series on Esther (T3 2026)

The Hidden King - The King you cannot see is still reigning

The book of Esther is one of the most unusual books in the Bible. God is never mentioned. There is no prayer recorded. No prophet speaks. No angel appears. No miracle interrupts the story. The temple is absent, Jerusalem feels far away, and God's people are scattered across the vast Persian Empire.

And yet, God is everywhere.

Esther teaches us to recognise the hidden hand of the hidden King. It shows us that God is not absent simply because he is not obvious. He is ruling over kings and kingdoms, feasts and decrees, delays and decisions, sleepless nights and sudden reversals. He is working through ordinary people, messy circumstances, human courage, political danger, and even the evil plans of his enemies.

The story begins with King Xerxes displaying his power, wealth, and glory. But as the book unfolds, the visible power of earthly kings is exposed as fragile, foolish, and insecure. Behind the throne of Persia stands the true King — unseen, unnamed, but utterly sovereign.

Esther also helps us understand what it means to live as God's people in exile. The Jews in Esther are far from the land, living under foreign rule, surrounded by a culture that does not honour the Lord. They are vulnerable, pressured, and at times hidden. Yet God has not forgotten them. He is still keeping his covenant promises. He is still preserving the people through whom the Messiah will come. He is still working for their rescue.

That makes Esther deeply relevant for us. Christians also live as “foreigners and exiles” in this world. We belong to Christ, but we wait for the fullness of his kingdom. We often face pressure to hide our identity, stay silent, seek comfort, or trust the visible powers of the world more than the unseen rule of God. Esther calls us to courage, wisdom, faithfulness, and hope.

At the centre of the book is one great truth:

Even when God seems hidden, he is sovereignly working through ordinary courage, human weakness, and surprising reversals to preserve his people and fulfil his promises.

And as Christians, we read Esther in the light of Jesus.

Esther risks her life before the throne to plead for her people. Jesus gives his life to save his people. Mordecai is raised up to seek the welfare of the Jews. Jesus is raised from the dead and now lives to intercede for us. Haman's evil plan is turned back on his own head. At the cross, the greatest evil in history becomes the place of God's greatest victory.

So as we study Esther, we are not merely reading an ancient survival story. We are learning to trust the God who rules when he seems silent, saves when his people seem helpless, and turns mourning into joy.

May this series help us see the hidden King more clearly, trust his providence more deeply, and live more courageously for Jesus in the place he has put us.

The King you cannot see is still reigning.

1. Esther 1 | Sun 26 July

The King Who Looked Powerful

Main Point

Esther 1 shows us the emptiness and insecurity of worldly power, setting the stage for us to trust the hidden King who is quietly working for the good of his people.

How this study connects to the whole series

The book of Esther begins without mentioning God, prayer, the temple, the law, Jerusalem, or the covenant. At first glance, it looks like a story about Persian politics, palace parties, drunken decisions, and royal insecurity. But that is the point. Esther teaches us to see that even when God seems absent, he is not inactive. In chapter 1, God is already preparing the way for Esther to enter the palace, even though no one in the story can see it yet.

Introduction Question

Have you ever seen someone try very hard to look powerful, impressive, or in control — but the harder they tried, the more insecure they looked?

Understanding the Passage

1. What first impressions do we get of King Xerxes and his empire in verses 1–4?
2. What do verses 5–8 reveal about the culture of the Persian palace?

3. What happens in verses 10–12, and why is Queen Vashti's refusal significant?
4. How does Xerxes respond to Vashti's refusal, and what does this reveal about him?
5. What are the king's advisers worried about in verses 13–20?
6. What is ironic or even ridiculous about the decree in verses 21–22?

7. God is not mentioned anywhere in Esther 1. So where do we begin to see his hidden hand at work?

Biblical Theology: Seeing the Bigger Story

8. How does Esther 1 contrast the kings of this world with the true King of heaven?

Application

9. Where are we tempted to be impressed, intimidated, or discouraged by worldly power today?
10. What warnings does Esther 1 give us about pride, anger, and the desire to control?

Additional Passages to Consider

Psalm 2:1–6

The nations rage and earthly rulers oppose God, but the Lord is not threatened. He reigns from heaven.

Proverbs 21:1

"The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will." This is a very helpful verse for Esther. Even Persian kings are not outside God's sovereign rule.

Daniel 4:34–35

Nebuchadnezzar learns that God's kingdom is eternal and that no earthly ruler can resist his will.

Mark 10:42–45

Jesus contrasts worldly rulers who "lord it over" others with his own servant-hearted kingship.

Romans 8:28

God works in all things for the good of those who love him. Esther helps us see that this is true even when God's work is hidden from view.

Closing Challenge

Esther 1 begins with a king who looks powerful. He has wealth, wine, officials, armies, palaces, and decrees. But by the end of the chapter, he looks foolish and insecure. One refusal exposes the fragility of his kingdom.

And that is where the book begins to teach us how to see the world properly. The powers of this world often look enormous. They can seem impressive, frightening, and immovable. But they are not ultimate. Behind the noise of human pride, behind the confusion of history, behind the decisions of rulers and the vulnerability of God's people, the hidden King is still reigning.

So do not be overawed by Xerxes. Do not be crushed by the apparent strength of the world. Do not assume God is absent simply because he is not obvious. The King you cannot see is greater than every king you can see.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,
thank you that you are the true King over all the earth. Thank you that no ruler, nation, decision, failure, or act of human pride can stop your purposes. Please forgive us for the times we are impressed by worldly power, fearful of people, or desperate to control our own little kingdoms. Teach us to trust you when you seem hidden. Help us to follow the servant-hearted kingship of Jesus, who gave his life to rescue us. And give us courage to live faithfully, knowing that you are always at work for the good of your people and the glory of your name.
Amen.

Prayer Points

2. Esther 2 | Sun 2 Aug

The Hidden Hand of God

Main Point

Esther 2 shows us that God is quietly working in hidden and painful circumstances to place his people exactly where they need to be for his saving purposes.

How this study connects to the whole series

The book of Esther is about the hidden King who rules over the visible kings of the earth. In chapter 1, King Xerxes looked powerful, but his pride and insecurity were exposed. In chapter 2, God is still not mentioned, but his providence becomes clearer. Esther is taken into the palace. Mordecai uncovers a plot. A forgotten act of loyalty is recorded in the royal chronicles. None of these events looks especially spiritual at the time, but each one will become crucial later. Esther 2 teaches us that God is not only at work in public miracles and dramatic rescues. He is also at work in ordinary decisions, painful experiences, hidden conversations, forgotten acts of faithfulness, and circumstances we do not yet understand.

Introduction Question

Have you ever looked back on something difficult or confusing and later realised God was using it in ways you could not see at the time?

Understanding the Passage

1. What is the situation at the beginning of chapter 2, and what does it reveal about King Xerxes?

2. What do we learn about Mordecai and Esther in verses 5–7?
3. What signs of God's hidden providence do we see in verses 8–11?
4. Why does Mordecai tell Esther not to reveal her Jewish identity?
5. What do verses 12–14 reveal about life in the king's harem?

6. How is Esther described in verses 15–18, and what happens to her?

7. Why is it important that Esther still keeps her family background and nationality hidden in vv. 19–20?

8. What happens in verses 21–23, and why is this detail so important?

Biblical Theology: Seeing the Bigger Story

9. How does Esther 2 fit into the bigger Bible story of exile and God's promises?

Application

10. How does this chapter help us trust God when life feels morally messy, painful, or out of our control?

11. Where might God have placed you for faithfulness, even if you do not yet know why?

Additional Passages to Consider

Genesis 50:20

Joseph tells his brothers, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good." This is one of the clearest Old Testament examples of God working through evil and painful circumstances for his saving purposes.

Proverbs 21:1

"The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will." Xerxes looks powerful, but God rules even over pagan kings.

Psalm 139:7–12

Even darkness is not dark to God. This is a beautiful passage for remembering that God is present even when he feels hidden.

Romans 8:28

God works in all things for the good of those who love him. Esther helps us see that “all things” includes confusing, hidden, painful, and morally messy circumstances.

1 Corinthians 15:58

Our labour in the Lord is not in vain. Mordecai's apparently forgotten faithfulness reminds us that God sees and remembers.

Hebrews 7:25

Jesus is the greater mediator who always lives to intercede for his people.

Closing Challenge

Esther 2 is not a neat chapter. It is not a fairy tale. It is full of exile, vulnerability, hidden identity, palace politics, moral compromise, and unrewarded faithfulness. And yet, God is working.

He is working when Esther is taken into the palace. He is working when she receives favour. He is working when Mordecai sits at the king's gate. He is working when the assassination plot is uncovered. He is working when Mordecai's loyalty is written down and then apparently forgotten.

No one in the story can see the whole picture yet. Esther does not know what is coming. Mordecai does not know what is coming. Xerxes certainly does not know what is coming. But the hidden King is already preparing the rescue of his people.

That is often how God works in our lives too. We want the full explanation now. We want the obvious miracle now. We want to see the plan now. But Esther teaches us that God is often doing his deepest work before we can recognise it. So be faithful where God has placed you. Do not despise hidden obedience. Do not assume forgotten service is wasted. Do not think God is absent just because he is quiet.

The King you cannot see is still moving the pieces. And in Christ, you can trust that his hidden hand is always wise, always good, and always working for the salvation of his people.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

thank you that you are at work even when we cannot see what you are doing. Thank you that you are sovereign over kings and nations, over hidden conversations and forgotten acts of faithfulness, over painful circumstances and uncertain futures. Please help us to trust you when life feels confusing or out of our control. Teach us to be faithful where you have placed us. Help us not to despise small acts of obedience, but to remember that you see, you know, and you never forget. Above all, thank you for Jesus, our true mediator, who gave his life to save us and now lives to intercede for us.

Amen.

Prayer Points

3. Esther 3 | Sun 9 Aug

The Enemy of God's People

Main Point

Esther 3 shows us that the enemies of God's people may appear powerful and terrifying, but even their plans are not outside the sovereign rule of the hidden King.

How this study connects to the whole series

In Esther 1, the visible king looked powerful but was exposed as foolish and insecure. In Esther 2, God quietly placed Esther in the palace and Mordecai at the king's gate before anyone knew why it mattered. In Esther 3, the crisis arrives. Haman rises to power, Mordecai refuses to bow, and a decree is issued for the destruction of the Jews.

God is still not mentioned. There is no prophet, no miracle, no angel, no visible intervention. Yet the chapter is full of clues that the hidden King is still ruling: Haman casts the lot, but the date falls almost a year away; Mordecai's identity as a Jew becomes central; and the enemy's plan unknowingly sets the stage for God's great reversal.

Introduction Question:

1. Have you ever seen a small act of faithfulness or conviction lead to much bigger consequences than expected?

Understanding The Passage:

2. What major change happens in verses 1–2, and why does it create tension?

3. Why does Mordecai refuse to kneel before Haman?
4. What does Haman's response in verses 5–6 reveal about his heart?
5. Why is Haman's hatred of the Jews bigger than a personal grudge?
6. What is the significance of casting the pur, or lot, in verse 7?
7. How does Haman describe the Jews to Xerxes in verses 8–9, and what is deceptive about it?

8. What does Xerxes' response reveal about his leadership?

9. What is the effect of the decree in verses 12–15?

Biblical Theology: Seeing the Bigger Story

10. How does Esther 3 fit into the Bible's bigger story of opposition to God's people?

11. How does this chapter point us to Jesus?

Application

12. How should Esther 3 shape the way we live as God's people today?

Additional Passages to Consider

Genesis 3:15

The first promise of the Bible's great conflict: the offspring of the woman will crush the serpent's head, but there will be hostility along the way.

Exodus 1:15–22

Pharaoh tries to destroy the Hebrew boys, but God preserves his people and raises up Moses.

Deuteronomy 25:17–19

Israel is commanded to remember Amalek's attack after the exodus. This helps explain the background to Haman the Agagite.

1 Samuel 15:7–9

Saul defeats the Amalekites but fails to fully obey God regarding Agag. This background may help us understand the significance of Haman being called an Agagite.

Proverbs 16:33

"The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD." A key verse for understanding God's hidden rule in Esther.

John 15:18–21

Jesus teaches his disciples not to be surprised if the world hates them because they belong to him.

Colossians 2:13–15

At the cross, Jesus cancels the charge against us and triumphs over the powers and authorities.

Closing Challenge

Esther 3 is frightening. Haman rises. Mordecai refuses to bow. The Jews are exposed. The lot is cast. The decree is written. The messengers go out. Death is announced across the empire.

And God is not named. But God is not absent.

The date chosen by the lot leaves time for rescue. Esther is already in the palace. Mordecai is already at the gate. Haman's hatred is real, but it is not ultimate. Xerxes' decree is terrifying, but it is not the final word.

This chapter helps us see the world clearly. The enemies of God's people may look powerful. Their plans may look unstoppable. Their accusations may sound persuasive. Their timing may feel terrifying. But the hidden King is still ruling. And we know that even more clearly than Esther did, because we stand on this side of the cross. At the cross, evil did its worst. The righteous King was condemned. The Son of God was mocked, stripped, pierced, and killed. It looked like the enemy had won.

But God turned the place of death into the place of salvation.

So do not be surprised by opposition. Do not be paralysed by fear. Do not be ashamed to belong to Christ. And do not mistake God's hiddenness for weakness. The lot may be cast into the lap, but every decision is from the Lord.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

thank you that you are sovereign over all things, even over the plans of those who oppose you and your people. Please help us not to be surprised by opposition or frightened by the power of the world. Give us courage to belong to Christ openly, wisdom to know when to speak, and faith to trust your timing when we cannot see what you are doing. Thank you that Jesus has defeated our greatest enemies through his death and resurrection. Help us to live as your faithful people under the rule of our hidden and glorious King.

Amen.

Prayer Points

4. Esther 4 | Sun 16 Aug

For Such A Time As This

Main Point

Esther 4 teaches us that because God's saving purposes cannot fail, his people must respond with courageous, costly faithfulness in the place he has put them.

How this study connects to the whole series

So far in Esther, God has been hidden but not absent. In chapter 1, the power of Xerxes was exposed as fragile and foolish. In chapter 2, Esther was quietly placed in the palace and Mordecai's unrewarded faithfulness was written in the royal records. In chapter 3, Haman's hatred became a decree of death against the Jews.

Now, in chapter 4, the crisis reaches Esther. She can no longer remain hidden. Mordecai's words force the great question of the book: **Has God placed Esther in the palace for this very moment?**

This chapter is not about heroic self-confidence. It is about providence, identity, courage, and costly identification with God's people. Esther must decide whether she will preserve her safety by silence or risk her life for the rescue of her people.

Introduction Question:

1. Can you think of a time when doing the right thing meant risking comfort, approval, security, or even your future?

Understanding the Passage

2. How does Mordecai respond when he learns of Haman's decree, and why is his response appropriate?
3. What does Esther's first response reveal about her situation inside the palace?
4. What message does Mordecai send to Esther, and why is it so urgent?
5. Why is Esther afraid to go to the king?

6. What does Mordecai mean when he says, "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape"?
7. What is the significance of Mordecai's words in verse 14: "relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place"?
8. What does Mordecai mean by "And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?"
9. How does Esther respond in verses 15–17, and what does this show us about her faith and courage?

Biblical Theology: Seeing the Bigger Story

10. How does Esther 4 fit into the Bible's bigger story of God saving his people through a mediator?

Application

11. How does this chapter help us understand courage in the Christian life?

12. Where might God be calling you to move from safe silence to faithful action?

Additional Passages to Consider

Genesis 12:1–3

God promises Abraham that through his offspring all nations will be blessed. This promise lies behind Mordecai's confidence that the Jews cannot be destroyed.

Exodus 32:30–32

Moses offers to stand in the gap for Israel after their sin with the golden calf. This helps us think about mediation and costly identification with God's people.

Psalms 46

A powerful psalm of confidence when the world seems unstable: "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."

Daniel 3:16–18

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego show courageous faith without knowing whether God will rescue them from the furnace: "But even if he does not..."

Mark 8:34–38

Jesus calls his disciples to deny themselves, take up their cross, and not be ashamed of him.

Hebrews 4:14–16

Because Jesus is our great high priest, we can approach God's throne of grace with confidence.

Closing Challenge

Esther 4 is the moment when Esther can no longer remain hidden.

The decree of death has gone out. Mordecai is mourning. The Jews are fasting and weeping. Esther is in the palace, but she is not there by accident. The question is whether she will use her position for comfort or for costly faithfulness.

Mordecai's words are both challenging and comforting: "Relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place." God's purposes will not fail. Haman cannot cancel God's promises. Xerxes cannot overthrow God's covenant. The future of God's people does not ultimately rest on Esther.

And yet Esther must act.

That is the mystery and beauty of God's providence. God does not need us, but he truly uses us. His sovereignty does not make obedience unnecessary; it makes obedience possible. Because God is faithful, we can be brave. Because God's promises cannot fail, we can risk ourselves in his service.

And as Christians, we see this most clearly in Jesus. Esther risked her life before the throne and said, "If I perish, I perish." Jesus went to the cross knowing, "I will perish, so my people may live." He is the true mediator, the greater rescuer, the King who gave himself for us.

So where has God placed you? What responsibility has he given you? Where are you tempted to stay silent because speaking or acting may cost you? Do not chase heroic greatness. Simply be faithful. Take the next obedient step. Speak the truth in love. Identify with Christ and his people. Serve where you have been placed.

Who knows? Perhaps God has placed you there for such a time as this.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,
thank you that your saving purposes cannot fail. Thank you that you are at work even when you seem hidden, and that you place your people where you want them for your good purposes. Please forgive us for the times we choose safety, comfort, or silence over faithfulness. Give us courage like Esther, confidence in your promises like Mordecai, and dependence that seeks your mercy. Thank you most of all for Jesus, our true mediator, who did not merely risk his life but gave his life so that we might live. Help us to be faithful where you have placed us, for the glory of Christ.
Amen.

Prayer Points

5. Esther 5 | Sun 23 August

Pride Before The Fall

Main Point

Esther 5 shows us that courageous faithfulness often requires patient wisdom, while the pride of God's enemies unknowingly prepares the way for their own downfall.

How this study connects to the whole series

The book of Esther keeps teaching us to trust **the hidden King**. God is not named, but he is clearly at work. In chapter 4, Esther moved from fearful silence to courageous action. She asked the Jews in Susa to fast for three days, and she resolved to approach the king: "If I perish, I perish."

Now, in chapter 5, Esther acts. But she does not rush. She approaches the king, receives mercy, and then carefully invites Xerxes and Haman to a banquet.

Instead of immediately blurting out her request, she waits. This chapter slows the story down and increases the tension.

Meanwhile, Haman is full of pride, wealth, rage, and self-importance. He thinks he is rising higher and higher, but in reality he is moving closer to judgement. The hidden King is quietly arranging the great reversal.

Introduction Question:

1. Have you ever had to wait for the right moment to say or do something important? What made waiting hard?

Understanding the Passage

2. What is significant about Esther putting on her royal robes and standing in the inner court?
3. How does the king respond to Esther, and why is this such a relief?
4. What does the king offer Esther, and what does it reveal about him?
5. Why might Esther invite the king and Haman to a banquet instead of making her request immediately?
6. How does Haman respond to being invited to Esther's banquet?

7. What does Haman boast about at home, and what does this show us about his heart?
8. Why does Haman say, "But all this gives me no satisfaction as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the king's gate"?
9. What advice do Zeresh and Haman's friends give, and what is ironic about it?

Biblical Theology: Seeing the Bigger Story

10. How does Esther 5 help us understand the Bible's theme of pride and downfall?

11. How does Esther's courage and wisdom point us toward Jesus?

Application

12. What does Esther 5 teach us about wise courage, pride, and trusting God's timing?

Additional Passages to Consider

Proverbs 16:18

"Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall." This captures Haman's condition perfectly.

Proverbs 21:1

"The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will." Esther's favour with Xerxes is not outside God's rule.

Jeremiah 9:23–24

God's people are not to boast in wisdom, strength, or riches, but in knowing the Lord.

Daniel 4:28–37

Nebuchadnezzar is humbled until he learns that heaven rules. A powerful parallel to the downfall of proud rulers.

James 4:6–10

"God opposes the proud but shows favour to the humble." This is a key New Testament lens for Haman's pride and Esther's humble courage.

Colossians 2:13–15

At the cross, God triumphs over the powers and authorities. Evil is defeated through the very instrument it thought would secure victory.

Closing Challenge

Esther 5 is full of tension.

Esther enters the inner court. The king sees her. The sceptre is extended. Her life is spared. The door opens. But instead of rushing, Esther waits. She invites the king and Haman to a banquet, and then to another banquet. Her courage is not frantic. It is patient, careful, and wise.

Haman, on the other hand, is unravelling. He has wealth, power, status, family honour, and royal access. But he cannot enjoy any of it because Mordecai will not bow. His pride makes him miserable. His bitterness makes him foolish. His hatred makes him blind. He builds a pole for Mordecai, not realising that he is preparing the place of his own judgement. And over it all, the hidden King is ruling.

God is working through Esther's courage. God is working through the delay. God is working even while Haman boasts. The enemy thinks he controls tomorrow, but God controls the night before tomorrow. In the next chapter, one sleepless night will begin the great reversal.

So learn from Esther. Be courageous, but also wise. Do not confuse patience with cowardice. Do not confuse waiting with doing nothing. Sometimes the most faithful thing you can do is take the next step and trust God with the timing. And learn from Haman. Pride is deadly. Bitterness is blinding. The craving for honour will never satisfy your soul. Bring your pride to Jesus before it destroys your joy.

Above all, trust the hidden King. He sees what you cannot see. He knows the moment you do not know. He can use delays, banquets, conversations, sleepless nights, and even the schemes of the proud to accomplish his saving purposes.

The proud may build the gallows, but the Lord writes the ending.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,
thank you that you are wise, sovereign, and good in all your timing. Thank you that you are at work even in delays, uncertainty, and danger. Please give us courage like Esther — not reckless courage, but wise and patient courage that trusts you and serves others. Please expose the pride in our hearts. Forgive us for craving honour, becoming easily offended, or allowing bitterness to rule us. Thank you for Jesus, who humbled himself to death on a cross and won the great reversal of salvation for us. Help us to trust your hidden hand and live faithfully before you.
Amen.

Prayer Points

6. Esther 6 | Sun 30 August

The Sleepless Night

Main Point

Esther 6 shows us that the hidden King can overturn evil through the smallest details, humbling the proud and remembering the forgotten faithfulness of his people.

How this study connects to the whole series

The book of Esther keeps teaching us that God is hidden, but never absent. In chapter 5, Esther acted with wise courage by inviting Xerxes and Haman to a second banquet. Haman, meanwhile, went home full of pride and rage, and built a pole on which to kill Mordecai.

But between Haman's plan and Esther's second banquet comes one sleepless night.

That sleepless night changes everything. The king cannot sleep. The royal chronicles are read. Mordecai's forgotten faithfulness is discovered. Haman arrives at exactly the wrong moment. The man who wanted to destroy Mordecai is forced to publicly honour him.

This chapter is wonderfully funny, but it is also deeply comforting. God can work through dramatic miracles, but he can also work through insomnia, timing, records, conversations, and accidental-seeming details. Esther 6 reminds us that nothing is too small for God's providence.

Introduction Question:

1. Have you ever seen one small, ordinary event completely change the direction of a situation?

Understanding the Passage

2. What happens in verse 1, and why is it so important?

3. What is discovered in the royal chronicles, and why does it matter?

4. What does the king ask in verse 3, and what does this reveal?

5. Why is Haman's arrival at the court so ironic?

6. What does Haman's answer reveal about his heart?

7. How does the king's command in verses 10–11 reverse Haman's expectations?

8. Why is the phrase "Mordecai the Jew" significant in verse 10?

9. What happens when Haman returns home, and how do Zeresh and his advisers interpret the situation?

Biblical Theology: Seeing the Bigger Story

10. How does Esther 6 fit into the Bible's bigger theme of reversal?

11. How does this chapter point us to Jesus?

Application

12. How should Esther 6 encourage and challenge us today?

Additional Passages to Consider

Proverbs 16:18

"Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall." Haman is a living picture of this proverb.

Proverbs 21:1

"The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will." God rules over Xerxes' decisions, questions, and sleeplessness.

1 Samuel 2:1–10

Hannah praises the Lord as the one who brings low and raises up. This is a wonderful Old Testament lens for Esther 6.

Psalms 121

The Lord watches over his people and neither slumbers nor sleeps. Xerxes cannot sleep, but the Lord never sleeps.

Luke 1:46–55

Mary's song celebrates the God who brings down rulers and lifts up the humble.

Philippians 2:5–11

Jesus humbles himself to death on a cross, and God exalts him to the highest place.

1 Corinthians 15:58

Our labour in the Lord is not in vain. Mordecai's forgotten faithfulness reminds us that God remembers.

Closing Challenge

Esther 6 begins with a king who cannot sleep.

That sounds ordinary. Almost boring. But in the hands of the hidden King, a sleepless night becomes the turning point of the story.

The chronicles are read. The right event is discovered. The forgotten Mordecai is remembered. Haman arrives at exactly the wrong time. The proud man who wanted honour for himself is forced to honour the man he hates. The pole is ready, but not for Mordecai. Haman's downfall has begun.

And God is still not named.

That is the beauty of Esther. God does not need to be named to be sovereign. He does not need to appear visibly in order to rule completely. He can work through insomnia, old records, awkward timing, human pride, and forgotten faithfulness. So take heart.

When your faithfulness feels unnoticed, God sees.

When evil seems to be rising, God rules.

When the proud appear untouchable, God is not intimidated.

When nothing seems to be changing, God may already be turning the story.

And look to Jesus. He was humbled more deeply than Mordecai. He was not merely forgotten; he was rejected. He was not merely threatened; he was crucified. But God raised him up and gave him the name above every name.

The hidden King is the God of reversal. He brings down the proud. He lifts up the humble. He remembers his people. And he can change everything in a single sleepless night.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

thank you that you are sovereign over every detail of our lives. Thank you that nothing is too small for your providence and nothing is too hidden for your sight. Please help us to trust you when our faithfulness seems forgotten, when evil seems strong, and when nothing appears to be changing. Humble our pride and free us from craving honour for ourselves. Thank you for Jesus, who humbled himself to death on a cross and has been exalted to the highest place. Help us to live faithfully under his gracious rule.

Amen.

Prayer Points

7. Esther 7 | Sun 6 September

Evil Exposed and Judged

Main Point

Esther 7 shows us that God's justice may seem delayed, but the hidden King will expose evil, defend his people, and bring down the proud in his perfect time.

How this study connects to the whole series

The book of Esther has been building toward this moment. In chapter 3, Haman plotted the destruction of the Jews. In chapter 4, Mordecai challenged Esther to recognise that perhaps she had come to royal position “for such a time as this.” In chapter 5, Esther courageously approached the king but waited for the right moment. In chapter 6, the great reversal began when Mordecai was honoured and Haman was humiliated.

Now, in chapter 7, Esther finally speaks. Her hidden Jewish identity becomes public. Haman's evil is exposed. Xerxes is forced to see that his trusted adviser has plotted the death of the queen and her people. And the pole Haman built for Mordecai becomes the place of Haman's own death. God is still not named, but his justice is unmistakable.

Introduction Question:

1. Have you ever seen the truth come out after being hidden for a long time? What made that moment powerful, painful, or relieving?

Understanding the Passage

2. What is the setting at the beginning of Esther 7, and why is the tension so high?

3. How does the king address Esther in verse 2, and why does this give her an opening?
4. What does Esther ask for in verses 3–4, and how does she phrase her request?
5. Why is Esther's phrase "my people" so significant?
6. How does Xerxes respond, and what does his response reveal?

7. What is the force of Esther's words: "An adversary and enemy! This vile Haman!"?

8. How does Haman respond once he is exposed?

9. What happens when the king returns, and how does this lead to Haman's downfall?

10. Why is it fitting that Haman is executed on the pole he prepared for Mordecai?

Biblical Theology: Seeing the Bigger Story

11. How does Esther 7 point us to the Bible's bigger story of judgement and salvation?

Application

12. How should Esther 7 shape our faith, courage, and hope today?

Additional Passages to Consider

Psalms 7:14–16

The wicked fall into the pit they have made, and their violence comes down on their own heads. This is a powerful parallel to Haman's downfall.

Proverbs 26:27

"Whoever digs a pit will fall into it." Haman's own plan becomes the means of his judgement.

Ecclesiastes 12:14

God will bring every deed into judgement, including every hidden thing.

Luke 12:2–3

Jesus teaches that what is hidden will be disclosed and what is concealed will be made known.

Acts 2:22–24

Human beings put Jesus to death, but God raised him according to his deliberate plan and foreknowledge. The cross is the greatest example of God ruling over evil for salvation.

Colossians 2:13–15

At the cross, God disarmed the powers and authorities and triumphed over them through Christ.

Revelation 19:1–2

God's judgements are true and just. This reminds us that final justice belongs to the Lord.

Closing Challenge

Esther 7 is the chapter where the truth finally comes out.

Esther is no longer hidden. She says, "my people." Haman is no longer hidden. He is named as the adversary and enemy. The danger is no longer hidden. The queen herself is under the sentence of death. And God's justice, though still unnamed, is no longer hidden either.

Haman came to the banquet thinking he was honoured. He leaves condemned. He built a pole for Mordecai. He dies on it himself. The proud enemy of God's people is brought down by the very scheme he prepared. This is not accidental. It is the justice of the hidden King. For us, this chapter is both warning and comfort.

It warns us that evil cannot stay hidden forever. Pride, bitterness, manipulation, hatred, and revenge may seem to succeed for a time, but they are never safe. God sees the heart. God sees the truth. God brings hidden things into the light. But it also comforts us. God's people may be vulnerable, misunderstood, falsely accused, or threatened. We may wonder why God delays. We may ask why evil is allowed to rise. Esther 7 says: the hidden King has not lost control. His justice may not come as quickly as we want, but it will come.

And we know that most clearly at the cross. There, evil seemed to win. Jesus was condemned, mocked, and nailed to a tree. But God turned that place of judgement into the place of salvation. The enemy's weapon became the instrument of God's victory.

So trust God's justice. Speak truth with courage and wisdom. Refuse the bitterness of Haman. Stand with the people of God. And remember that the hidden King will expose evil, defend his people, and bring every proud enemy low.

The pole Haman built for Mordecai became the place of Haman's judgement. The cross built for Jesus became the place of our salvation.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

thank you that you are just, wise, and sovereign. Thank you that no evil is hidden from your sight and no proud plan can overturn your purposes. Please give us courage like Esther to speak the truth wisely and to identify with your people, even when it is costly. Protect our hearts from pride, bitterness, revenge, and fear. Help us to trust your justice when wrong seems to prosper. Above all, thank you for Jesus, who bore judgement in our place and turned the cross into the place of salvation. Help us to live with confidence under his good and gracious rule.

Amen.

Prayer Points

8. Esther 8 | Sun 13 September

From Death to Life

Main Point

Esther 8 shows us that God's rescue not only delivers his people from death, but turns their fear into joy, courage, and public confidence in belonging to him.

How this study connects to the whole series

The book of Esther has been showing us the hidden King at work behind the visible kings of the earth. In chapter 7, Haman was exposed and judged. The enemy of God's people fell into the very trap he had prepared for Mordecai. But the danger is not over.

Haman is dead, but Haman's decree still stands. The law of Persia cannot simply be revoked. The Jews are still under a sentence of death. So Esther must plead again, Mordecai must write a new decree, and the Jews must be given the right to defend themselves.

Esther 8 is full of reversal: Haman's estate is given to Esther, Haman's position is given to Mordecai, the decree of death is countered by a decree of life, mourning is turned into joy, and shame is turned into honour. God is still not named, but his saving hand is everywhere.

Introduction Question:

1. Have you ever had a moment where the first big problem was solved, but there was still more that needed to be done before things were truly right?

Understanding the Passage

2. What happens to Haman's estate and position in verses 1–2, and why is this significant?

3. Why does Esther plead with the king again in verses 3–6?

4. What problem remains because of the law of the Persians and Medes?

5. What solution does the king allow Mordecai and Esther to create?

6. What details in verses 9–14 show the urgency and scale of Mordecai's decree?

7. Why is the date in verse 12 important?

8. How does Mordecai's appearance in verse 15 contrast with earlier chapters?

9. What response do the Jews have in verses 16–17?

Biblical Theology: Seeing the Bigger Story

10. How does Esther 8 fit into the bigger Bible theme of reversal from death to life?

11. How does Esther 8 point us to Jesus and the gospel?

Application

12. How should Esther 8 shape the way we live as rescued people today?

Additional Passages to Consider

Genesis 12:1–3

God promises Abraham that all nations will be blessed through him. Esther 8 hints at outsiders being drawn toward God's people.

Psalms 30:11–12

"You turned my wailing into dancing." This beautifully captures the movement from mourning to joy in Esther 8.

Isaiah 61:1–3

God promises comfort for those who mourn, beauty instead of ashes, and a garment of praise instead of despair.

John 5:24

Jesus says that whoever hears his word and believes has crossed over from death to life.

Ephesians 2:1–10

We were dead in sin, but God made us alive with Christ. This is the gospel fulfilment of death-to-life reversal.

Hebrews 7:25

Jesus always lives to intercede for his people. Esther's pleading points us to Christ's greater intercession.

1 Peter 2:9–12

God's rescued people are called to declare his praises and live honourably among the nations.

Closing Challenge

Esther 8 begins with Haman dead, but the danger still alive.

The enemy has fallen, but his decree remains. The Jews are still under threat. So Esther pleads again. Mordecai writes again. Messengers ride again. The word goes out across the empire again.

But this time, the word is not death. It is life.

The people who were mourning now rejoice. Mordecai, once dressed in sackcloth, comes out in royal robes. The Jews, once marked for destruction, are given courage to stand. And many outsiders look at God's people differently. This is the hidden King's work. He turns mourning into joy. He turns shame into honour. He turns fear into courage. He turns the day of death into the day of deliverance.

And in Jesus, he has done this for us in the deepest possible way.

We were under a greater sentence than Haman's decree. We were dead in sin and facing judgement. But Jesus stood in our place. He bore the curse. He rose from the dead. And now the word over everyone who belongs to him is not condemnation, but life.

So live as someone who has been rescued.

Pray for others. Stand firm in Christ. Rejoice in grace. Let your life display the goodness of the God who saves. And do not hide in fear as though death still has the final word.

In Christ, the decree of death has been answered by the King's word of life.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

thank you that you are the God who turns mourning into joy and death into life. Thank you that you rescued your people in Esther's day, and thank you that you have rescued us fully and finally through Jesus. Please make us people who intercede for others, stand firm in faith, rejoice in your salvation, and live openly as witnesses to your grace. Help us to trust your hidden hand when danger remains and the work is not yet finished. Thank you that in Christ the word over us is life, not condemnation.

Amen.

9. Esther 9 | Sun 20 September

Remember the Rescue

Main Point

Esther 9 shows us that the hidden King turns the day of death into a day of deliverance, and calls his rescued people to remember, rejoice, and retell his saving work.

How this study connects to the whole series

The book of Esther has been moving toward the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar. That was the day Haman had chosen by lot for the destruction of the Jews. His decree could not be revoked. The danger remained real.

But God, the hidden King, has been overturning everything. Esther has spoken. Haman has fallen. Mordecai has risen. A new decree has gone out. The Jews have been given the right to assemble and defend themselves.

Now, in chapter 9, the feared day arrives. But the day Haman planned for death becomes a day of deliverance. The enemies of the Jews are defeated. The people of God are preserved. And the feast of Purim is established so future generations will never forget that God turned their sorrow into joy and their mourning into celebration.

Introduction Question:

1. Why do you think it is important for God's people to remember and retell the stories of God's rescue?

Understanding the Passage

2. What happens on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, and why is it described as a reversal?

3. What signs of reversal do we see in verses 2–4?

4. How should we understand the violence in Esther 9?

5. Why is it repeated three times that the Jews did not lay their hands on the plunder?

6. Why are the deaths of Haman's ten sons significant?

7. Why does Esther ask for another day in Susa and for Haman's sons to be displayed?

8. What contrast do we see between the Jews in Susa and the Jews in the provinces?

9. How is Purim established, and what are the people commanded to remember?

10. Why does remembrance matter so much for God's people, especially in exile?

Biblical Theology: Seeing the Bigger Story

11. How does Esther 9 point us to Jesus and the greater rescue of the gospel?

Application

12. How should Esther 9 shape our lives as people rescued by God?

Additional Passages to Consider

Exodus 12:14–17

The Passover was established as a lasting remembrance of God's rescue from Egypt. This helps us understand the importance of Purim as a remembrance of rescue.

Deuteronomy 25:17–19

Israel is commanded to remember what Amalek did. This background helps explain the seriousness of Haman the Agagite's threat.

Psalms 30:11–12

"You turned my wailing into dancing." This beautifully captures the movement of Esther 9 from mourning to celebration.

Proverbs 16:33

"The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD." Haman cast the lot, but God ruled the outcome.

Matthew 5:43–48

Jesus calls his followers to love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them. This is essential for Christian application of Esther 9.

Romans 12:17–21

Christians are not to take revenge, but to leave room for God's wrath and overcome evil with good.

1 Corinthians 11:23–26

The Lord's Supper is a gospel act of remembrance: "For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

Closing Challenge

Esther 9 is the chapter where the dreaded day finally arrives.

For months, the thirteenth day of Adar had been hanging over the Jews like a death sentence. It was the day chosen by Haman. The day chosen by the lot. The day chosen for destruction.

But the hidden King was ruling even over the lot.

So when the day comes, the opposite happens. The Jews are not destroyed. They are delivered. Their enemies are defeated. Their fear turns to courage. Their mourning turns to joy. Their sorrow becomes celebration. And Purim is established so that every generation will remember the rescue.

That is what God's people must do: remember.

Because we forget so easily. We forget God's kindness. We forget his power. We forget his promises. We forget that the King we cannot see is still ruling the story. And as Christians, we have an even greater rescue to remember. We were under a deeper sentence of death than the Jews in Esther. We were dead in sin and facing judgement. But Jesus entered our danger. He bore our curse. He died our death. He rose for our life.

The day of death became the day of salvation.

So remember the rescue. Retell the gospel. Rejoice in grace. Share with the needy. Teach the next generation. Gather with God's people. Come to the Lord's Table with gratitude. And do not let the world train you to forget what God has done.

Haman cast the lot, but God wrote the ending.
And in Christ, the ending is life.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

thank you that you are the God who turns sorrow into joy, mourning into celebration, and death into life. Thank you that you preserved your people in Esther's day, and thank you that you have rescued us fully and finally through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Please help us to remember your grace, rejoice in your salvation, and retell your mighty works to the next generation. Keep us from revenge and bitterness, and teach us to overcome evil with good. Make our joy generous, especially toward the poor and vulnerable. And help us to live every day as people who have been rescued by Christ.

Amen.

Prayer Points

10. Esther 10 | Sun 27 September

The Servant Who Sought the Good of His People

Main Point

Esther 10 shows us that the hidden King raises up faithful servants to seek the good of his people, pointing us to Jesus, the true King who speaks peace and secures eternal welfare for all who belong to him.

How this study connects to the whole series

The book of Esther began with Xerxes displaying his greatness. The Persian king seemed powerful, wealthy, glorious, and untouchable. But as the story unfolded, his foolishness and weakness were exposed.

The book ends not by praising Xerxes, but by honouring Mordecai.

Mordecai began as a Jewish exile sitting at the king's gate. He was forgotten after saving the king's life. He was hated by Haman. He was sentenced to death. But through God's hidden providence, Mordecai is raised up to become second in rank to King Xerxes. And unlike Haman, Mordecai uses his power not for pride, revenge, or self-glory, but for the good and welfare of his people.

Esther 10 brings the book to a quiet but powerful conclusion: God has preserved his people in exile, overturned the plans of evil, and provided an advocate who seeks their peace.

Introduction Question:

1. What makes someone use power or influence well rather than selfishly?

Understanding the Passage

2. Why might the book end with a reference to Xerxes imposing tribute throughout the empire?

3. How does Mordecai's final position contrast with where he began?

4. How does Mordecai contrast with Haman?

5. What does it mean that Mordecai "worked for the good of his people"?

6. What does it mean that Mordecai “spoke up for the welfare of all the Jews”?

7. Why is it significant that Mordecai remains identified as “Mordecai the Jew”?

8. What does Esther 10 teach us about life after rescue?

9. What does Esther 10 teach us about living faithfully in exile?

Biblical Theology: Seeing the Bigger Story

10. How does Mordecai point us forward to Jesus?

11. How does Esther as a whole point us to the gospel?

Application

12. How should the ending of Esther shape our lives as God's rescued people?

Additional Passages to Consider

Genesis 12:1–3

God promises Abraham that all nations will be blessed through his offspring. Esther shows God preserving that promise in exile.

Jeremiah 29:4–7

God's people in exile are told to seek the peace and prosperity of the city where God has carried them. This helps us think about faithful life in exile.

Mark 10:42–45

Jesus teaches that true greatness is not lording power over others, but serving. Mordecai's leadership points toward this servant-hearted pattern.

Ephesians 2:8–10

We are saved by grace, not by works, but created in Christ Jesus for good works.

Philippians 2:5–11

Jesus humbles himself and is exalted by God. This is the greatest pattern of humility, service, and exaltation.

Hebrews 7:25

Jesus always lives to intercede for his people.

1 Peter 2:11–12

Christians are foreigners and exiles who are called to live such good lives among the nations that others may glorify God.

Closing Challenge

Esther ends quietly, but beautifully.

There is no fire from heaven. No angelic appearance. No visible throne of God.

No prophet stands up to explain the story. God is still unnamed.

But by now we have learned how to read the book.

The hidden King has been ruling all along.

He ruled over Vashti's refusal, Esther's rise, Mordecai's forgotten faithfulness, Haman's lot, Esther's courage, the king's sleepless night, Haman's downfall, the new decree, the Jews' deliverance, and the joy of Purim.

And now he raises up Mordecai, the Jewish exile who uses his greatness for the good of his people.

That is where Esther leaves us: with a servant who has been exalted and who speaks up for the welfare of God's people.

And that points us to Jesus.

Jesus is the true and greater servant-ruler. He humbled himself for us. He identified with us. He bore our judgement. He defeated our enemies. He rose in glory. And now he speaks for us before the Father. Our welfare, our peace, our future, our salvation are secure in him.

So as we finish Esther, do not forget the great lesson of the book:

The King you cannot see is still ruling.

The God who seems hidden is never absent.

The enemy does not get the final word.

The day of death can become the day of deliverance.

And God's rescued people are called to remember, rejoice, and live for the good of others.

So use what God has given you. Use your position, your voice, your gifts, your home, your ministry, your relationships, your influence. Do not use them like Haman, for yourself. Use them like Mordecai, for the good of God's people. And above all, use them like Jesus, in humble, sacrificial love.

The hidden King has rescued us.

Now let us live as his grateful, faithful people until he brings us home.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

thank you for the book of Esther and for the comfort that you are always at work, even when you seem hidden. Thank you that you preserved your people, overturned evil, and turned mourning into joy. Thank you most of all for Jesus, our true mediator and servant-King, who gave his life to save us and now lives to intercede for us. Please help us to use whatever influence you have given us for the good of others. Teach us to speak up for the welfare of your people, to live faithfully as exiles in this world, and to trust your sovereign hand in every circumstance. Keep our eyes fixed on Christ until the day you bring us safely home.

Amen.

