

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD AND OUR MOMENT

The Book of Esther

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When a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark, you don't throw away the ticket and jump off. You sit still and trust the engineer
– Corrie Ten Boom

Introduction:

AUTHORSHIP –

PURPOSE –

- Esther highlights the _____ of God...his ability to always provide for his people.
- Esther highlights the _____ of God...his steadfast presence with his people.

ITS PLACE IN THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE –

Philippians 2:12-13 – ¹² Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Definitions:

- God's sovereignty is his _____ and _____ to do all that he decides to do.
 - Psalm 135:6** – *Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps.*
 - Romans 9:21** – *Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?*
- Divine providence is sovereignty in the service of wise _____. With wisdom and love, God cares for and directs all things in the universe.
 - Providence over all of time (Isaiah 46:10)
 - Providence over the physical world (Matthew 5:45b)
 - Providence over the affairs of nations (Psalm 66:7b)
 - Providence over human purpose (Galatians 1:15)
- How does God accomplish things according to his providence?
 - To ensure that His purposes are fulfilled, God governs the affairs of men and works through the _____ order of things. This refers to the laws of nature and human choices.
 - The things we would call laws of nature are only laws because God _____ them.
- What about man's free will? How does that factor in to God's providence?
 - Consider the tension of Acts 26:14 where both free will and divine providence are in view.
 - God is not the author of sin, nor does he tempt anyone (James 1:13), but God obviously allows sin and its consequences in order for him to providentially _____ his good purposes.

Providence Seen in Scripture:

- The term **providence** is never used in Scripture but the reality of it fills the pages of our Bibles.
 - Consider the stories of Joseph in Egypt or of Judas Iscariot or of the book of Esther.
 - The wife who refused to obey her husband (Esther 1:10-12)

- ii. Choosing a new queen and saving the king (Esther 2:14, 16-17, 21-22)
- iii. Haman's evil plot against the Jews (Esther 3:13-15)
- iv. Mordecai and Esther recognize the moment (Esther 4:13-14)
- v. The scepter of grace and the nobility of Esther (Esther 5:1-2)
- vi. When a king could not sleep at night (Esther 6:6-9)
- vii. Haman – dining with the king then hanging from the gallows (Esther 7:2-8)
- viii. The king's message of hope (Esther 8:10-11, 17)
- ix. The Feast of Purim (Esther 9:20-22; 10:3)

Conclusion:

1. Esther most clearly belongs in the canon of Scripture. The story of Israel's salvation from Haman parallels with Israel's salvation in Egypt. But there are also beautiful pictures of Christ here for us.
 - a. **The shadow and substance** → Esther entered into the "inner court of the king's palace" and was accepted into his presence with favor (Est. 4:16, 5:2). Jesus entered the true holy of holies in heaven and was accepted into the Father's presence to sit at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb. 9:24, 10:12).
 - b. **The shadow and substance** → Esther's acceptance by the king meant the salvation of her people plus many Gentiles turning in faith as well (Est. 8:17). Jesus' acceptance by the Father meant the salvation for Israel (Matt. 15:24) plus many Gentiles turning (and are turning) in faith to the true God (Acts 11:18).
2. God is at work to accomplish his good purpose that more might be saved? How are you responding in your moment?
3. Are you _____ to his providential work in and through you? (Isaiah 6:8, *Romans 12:1*)
4. Are you _____ to his providential work in and through you? (Esther 4:16, Luke 12:4-5)
5. What if you and I _____ in a moment to participate in God's good plan? (Esther 4:14a, Phil 1:6)