

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 8TH - 9TH, 2022 // BOOK OF ESTHER

## TABLES TURNED (ESTHER 9:1-4) 9 MONTHS LATER

We fast forward to when the time came that both contradictory edicts went into effect. Where once it looked like all hope was lost, "just the opposite happened. The Jews overpowered those who hated them."

- Wherever Jews lived in Persia, they rallied together to attack their attackers.

### "NOT A SINGLE PERSON COULD WITHSTAND THEM"

Because of strong representation from Esther and Mordecai, the Jews became increasingly powerful, and "fear of them fell on every nationality."

- This "fear" wasn't about people, but about **the favor of God** on these people. **When we live as the people of God, He becomes our strength and security.**

### IT IS ALL ABOUT GOD IN US

We gain the favor of God when we relent and humbly follow His lead. When we become Christ followers, He turns the tables in our lives and ultimately gets all the glory.

- So, Jesus is our source of success. Jesus will also be our source of tension from the world. This has always been the case.

## PREEMPTIVE (ESTHER 9:5-19) "PUT ALL THEIR ENEMIES TO THE SWORD"

On the day of the edicts, the Jews preemptively "destroy[ed]" the people that were planning on killing them. They took an offensive posture from a defensive necessity.

- There's a spiritual lesson here: **when it comes to our enemy (Satan), we must "attack" first through prayer and righteous living.**

### HOW DO WE RECONCILE THIS WITH JESUS?

Jesus is the "visible image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15), meaning they're One, and we can't separate the OT and NT God. The entirety of the Word shows us that God is **just** and **merciful**.

- If we're being honest, this isn't always easy to understand. This is where **knowing the nature of God and having faith is vital.**

Haman's ancestors had been trying to wipe out the Jews for centuries (starting in Exodus), and this evil had to be neutralized.

- There is a greater lesson we learn from biblical history: **we must address the evil around us, or it will eventually come back to destroy us.**

### "THEY DID NOT SEIZE ANY PLUNDER"

After killing 500 men and the sons of Haman in Susa and 75,000 throughout Persia, the Jews didn't seize any material possessions. This shows that this wasn't out of evil gain but for the preservation of their people.

- This preemptive strike wasn't a power move; it was to save them from extinction.

### ANOTHER DAY TO "CARRY OUT TODAY'S LAW"

After hearing about the deaths in Susa, Xerxes simply asks what else Esther wants. She replies that she needs another day for the Jews to completely wipe out their adversaries.

- She also requests Haman's sons' bodies be hung on the gallows to send a message to the enemies of the Jews.

### CELEBRATING ON TWO DIFFERENT DAYS

While the rural areas had already fought their enemies and were resting, the Jews in Susa were still fighting. Because the day of the edict was extended, the celebration of the victory was as well.

- This celebration would eventually be called Purim.

## PURIM (ESTHER 9:20-32) MORDECAI RECORDED IT ALL

The letters sent out to the Jews in Persia were probably about the events leading up to the 2 edicts. The purpose was to make sure the Jews annually celebrated the relief from their enemies on the 14th and 15th days of Adar (March).

- At Purim, they would feast, give gifts, and contribute to the poor.

### WHY IT IS CALLED PURIM

V24-25 tells us that the celebration got the name because of the *Pur* (dice of sorts) that were cast to determine the day to wipe out the Jews, but the situation was turned around and came back on Haman's "head."

- Though not directly mentioned, this shows **the provision and sovereignty of God.**

### THIS WAS ALSO RECORDED IN THE IMPERIAL RECORDS

All of Persia was aware of Purim, and it was recorded in the Empire's records. This shows how powerful Esther and Mordecai had become.

- We return to the question of "How do believers live in a pagan society?" The answer relies **on obedience, and dependency on God to make a way.**

## LEGACY (ESTHER 10) SOME PEOPLE NEVER CHANGE

10:1 is a very weird insertion. The mention of a new tax probably shows that Xerxes is back to overtaxing the people he seemed to bless when he and Esther got married.

- It can also be a subtle reminder that **though all have an opportunity to be humble and change, many choose not to.**

### "MORDECAI'S GREAT RANK"

The conclusion of Esther really emphasizes the amazing turnaround in Mordecai's life. At the end, there was no one more powerful in Persia except Xerxes.

- Though God is never directly mentioned, the provision and grace of God are clear in Mordecai's story.

### AND NO MENTION OF ESTHER, OUR HEROINE?

One of the more fascinating things about this book is the omission of the real hero of this story, Esther. Maybe it reveals even more about how amazing Esther was because she is humbly omitted from the conclusion.

- Maybe there is another lesson for us: **it is not about our legacy, but God's legacy.**

### SOME LESSONS LEARNED

- God uses broken and unlikely vessels.
- God is sovereign and knows what is best for us.
- Evil will become a victim of its own devices.
- We must learn to balance loyalty to God and living as good citizens in a pagan society.

### GOD'S FAVOR

- The prayers of the righteous are effective (James 5:16). This leads us to believe that **obedience to God changes the dynamics of how we see Him move in our lives.**
- True success in this life depends on our relationship with God. **Are we repenting, praying, reading, obeying, and trusting?**

### TRUSTING ISN'T ALWAYS EASY

- Though we will not understand everything on this side of Heaven, we must know and trust the character of God.
- It's only through spending time with God and acknowledging that we are finite beings that we can learn to lean into His understanding and not ours.

### IT IS NOT ABOUT US

- We must also learn that the meaning of life is not the pursuit of self, but the pursuit of the Creator.
- The irony and beauty of God is that **when we choose to honor Him with our lives instead of ourselves, He honors us. We must decrease, and He must increase** (John 3:30).