

For Such a Time as This

Summary and Goal

From Esther's story in the Bible, we learn how to seek the Lord even during those seasons of life when His hand of providence seems to be hidden. We learn to see ourselves as playing a role in God's sovereign plan for the world, and we gain the courage to accept the risk of following God, no matter the cost. As God's people, we are to find and fulfill our purpose today—for such a time as this—a purpose that must align with God's greater plan to bring salvation to the ends of the earth.

Main Passage

Esther 4

Session Outline

1. Seek the Lord even when it seems He is hidden (Esth. 4:1-7).
2. Recognize the role you play in the sovereign plan of God (Esth. 4:8-14).
3. Accept the risk associated with your purpose (Esth. 4:15-17).

Theological Theme

The Lord is working His plan even when we cannot see Him.

Christ Connection

The command to kill all the Jews threatened the fulfillment of God's promise of a Messiah-King who would bring the blessing of Abraham to the world. Even though His involvement in the story of Esther seems hidden, God was at work, creating and implementing a plan to rescue His people and set the stage for the coming of His Son.

Missional Application

God calls us to find and fulfill our purpose within His greater plan to bring salvation to the ends of the earth.

Session Plan

For Such a Time as This

Session 6

Pack Item 1: Exile and Return

Display this poster in a place that will help group members follow the storyline of Scripture, to remember where we've been and where we are going.

Pack Item 2: Exile and Return Map

Point to Susa on the map to help group members recognize the reality of this biblical story.

? For Further Discussion

Why are grieving and mourning appropriate responses to tragic circumstances?

How can they convey rather than deny trust in God during a crisis?

Introduction

Open by discussing the honest tendency we have to question God's goodness in the face of tragedy, failure, or grief (leader p. 94; PSG p. 74).

- ? What kinds of events and tragedies are most likely to make you question God's providential care over this world?
- ? What circumstances have you faced that led to this kind of questioning?

Relate the tendency to ask questions about God's character with the oppressive situation that God's people faced in the Book of Esther (leader p. 94). Then summarize the session (leader p. 95; PSG p. 75).

1. Seek the Lord even when it seems He is hidden (Esth. 4:1-7).

Explain Esther's backstory and her need to hide her Jewish identity during this period of the Persian Empire. Make note of Haman—one of King Xerxes' closest advisers who hated the Jews and plotted against them. Then read Esther 4:1-7. Comment on how Mordecai, Esther, and the Jewish people had a role to play in God's plan despite facing certain doom (leader pp. 95-96; PSG pp. 75-76).

- ? What are some indications that God's people were seeking Him, even though He seemed absent?
- ? What is the significance of taking steps to seek God even when you feel abandoned?

Say that Esther shows us what it's like to believe that in the midst of the chaotic, difficult, and overwhelming circumstances of life, we are not alone—God is there (leader p. 97; PSG p. 77).

- ? In what ways is Esther's story similar to that of many believers throughout the world?

2. Recognize the role you play in the sovereign plan of God (Esth. 4:8-14).

Read Esther 4:8-14. Explain that the arc of the story shows Esther and Mordecai have not attained their positions by accident, and yet, they still had to exercise faith. And note that the possibility of the promised Messiah also hung in the balance (leader pp. 98-99; PSG p. 78).

- Who are some people throughout history whose life circumstances and position made it possible for them to change the world?
- When have you felt like you were put somewhere “for such a time as this” to do God’s will?

Be clear that God’s promise to preserve His people did not depend on Esther, but she did act (leader p. 99). Encourage the group with the truth that God is weaving the events of our lives to prepare us and position us for usefulness in His kingdom (leader p. 99; PSG p. 79).

- What role do our past circumstances and our present position play in bringing God glory?
- What are some of the aspects of your past that you’ve seen God use to make you more effective in serving Him?

3. Accept the risk associated with your purpose (Esth. 4:15-17).

Ask a volunteer to read Esther 4:15-17. Point out that Esther acted in faith in risking her life. Explain that God chooses to use us to accomplish His plans (leader pp. 100-101; PSG p. 80). *Note Esther’s portion on Pack Item 6: No Matter the Cost. Ask the group to recall some other examples from the biblical storyline of people who risked it all for faith in God (ex. Joseph, Moses, David).*

- What are some examples of people taking risks to follow Christ?
- When have you had to risk your own welfare in doing what God called you to do?

Conclusion

State that we will pick up Esther and Mordecai’s story in the next session. Referencing Esther on **Pack Item 4: Seeing Jesus in the Exile and Return**, emphasize that God is the great Author who is weaving together this tale and is also the same Author who later sent His Son in the fullness of time to lose His own life for the sake of the world (leader p. 101; PSG p. 81). *Apply the truths of this session with “His Mission, Your Mission” (PSG p. 82).*

Point 2 Option

Read “Essential Christian Doctrine” *God’s Providence* (leader p. 99; PSG p. 79). Ask groups of 3-4 to discuss the following questions (consider writing them on a board or sheet of paper for groups to have; also available on the DVD in *The Gospel Project for Adults: Leader Pack*):

- Why are we prone to ignore God’s ongoing providence with respect to routine and mundane aspects of life (e.g., weather, traffic, daily needs, etc.)?
- Why is it important to confess God’s rule over what seems ordinary and natural as well as what seems miraculous and supernatural?

Christ Connection: The command to kill all the Jews threatened the fulfillment of God’s promise of a Messiah-King who would bring the blessing of Abraham to the world. Even though His involvement in the story of Esther seems hidden, God was at work, creating and implementing a plan to rescue His people and set the stage for the coming of His Son.

Missional Application: God calls us to find and fulfill our purpose within His greater plan to bring salvation to the ends of the earth.

Expanded Session Content

For Such a Time as This

Session 6

Background Info: Xerxes

Date of events in Esther:
483-473 B.C.

King Xerxes (Greek name; Ahasuerus, Hebrew name) reigned from 486-464 B.C., and is depicted in many musical, theatrical, and cinematic works, including *One Night with the King* and *300* as well as the video games *Assassin's Creed* and *Civilization*).

Xerxes' empire stretched over three continents (Europe, Asia, Africa), covered 2.9 million square miles, and included over 50 million people (44 percent of the world's population at the time).

Xerxes married Esther after an extensive selection process. He was known for being narcissistic, violent, volatile, and erratic.

Voices from Church History

"Many women, fortified by the grace of God, have accomplished many heroic actions...[Esther] begged the all-seeing Master of the ages, and he, seeing the meekness of her soul, rescued the people for whose sake she had faced danger."¹

—Clement of Rome
(circa 30-100)

Introduction

Have you ever experienced a time when it seemed like God was absent? When it seemed His voice went quiet? When it felt like He had abandoned you or forgotten you in your moment of need? Have you ever been tempted to question God's goodness in the face of tragedy, personal failure, or grief?

Sometimes life makes us question what God is up to, or if He is up to anything at all. Our past experiences, our emotional confusion, our theological questions, and our challenging circumstances all conspire to make God seem inaccessible.

Just watching the news—witnessing innumerable cases of abuse, poverty, oppression, injustice, and hunger—we can start to wonder if God is still active and in control of our world. It can seem almost like God is hiding.

- ? What kinds of events and tragedies are most likely to make you question God's providential care over this world?
- ? What circumstances have you faced that led to this kind of questioning?

The Book of Esther, written thousands of years ago, tells of a time when God's people were living under an oppressive regime, asking many of the same questions people in suffering do today. The narrative contains all the elements of a Hollywood screenplay—political intrigue, violence, sex, and the underdog who overcomes all odds to "win" in the end. But Esther is more than just a history lesson. This book of the Bible shows us the providential care of God for His people, even when He appears to be absent.

Session Summary

In this session we look at the first part of Esther's story. From Esther we learn how to seek the Lord even during those seasons of life when His hand of providence seems to be hidden. We learn to see ourselves as playing a role in God's sovereign plan for the world, and we gain the courage to accept the risk of following God, no matter the cost. As God's people, we are to find and fulfill our purpose today—for such a time as this—a purpose that must align with God's greater plan to bring salvation to the ends of the earth.

1. Seek the Lord even when it seems He is hidden (Esth. 4:1-7).

In our journey through the Bible, we have seen how the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires took God's people into exile. As the Persian Empire spread across the world, it became more and more difficult for God's people to maintain their Jewish identity. There were many Jews who questioned or lost their faith during these times. But God had promised to maintain a remnant of His people, and so faithful Jews passed down their heritage and faith to new generations of children.

Esther was one such child. She was an orphan, raised by her cousin, Mordecai. In addition to her difficult family situation, Esther belonged to an immigrant family, which meant she was part of a religious, racial, and cultural minority. The dominant culture in Persia was so inhospitable to Jews that Mordecai felt the need to hide her cultural identity (Esth. 2:10). Esther knew what it meant to be an outsider.

Esther was taken from Mordecai as a young girl. Selected for her physical beauty, she was forced into a marriage with a violent and unstable man. Because Xerxes was the world's most powerful ruler and because of the age gap between bride and groom, the power differential in the relationship between Xerxes and Esther was substantial.

One of Xerxes' closest advisers, Haman, hated Mordecai and he hated the Jews. He disliked their ethnicity, their culture, and their religious beliefs. Haman convinced the king that the resistance of some Jews to full assimilation into Persian culture was a threat to the Persian way of life. So he used his proximity to the king to goad him into signing an edict that called for the extermination of the Jewish people throughout the Persian Empire. The date was set when the Persian military and citizenry would be mobilized to kill Jews in every city and province in the kingdom (Esth. 3:8-13). That's where we pick up the story:

Further Commentary

Throughout the Old Testament God has promised to raise up a Messiah/Rescuer/Redeemer who would break the curse of sin, reconcile sinful people to God, bless all the people of the earth, establish a good, just, and lasting kingdom, and heal the brokenness in the world. These promises were made to Adam, to Noah, to Abraham, to Moses, and to David. According to the promises, the Messiah could only come from the nation of Israel. An obvious way for Satan to ruin God's plan of redemption was to eliminate the possibility of the Messiah ever being born. If the people of Israel could be wiped out or completely absorbed into other cultures, there would be no Messiah. The story of Esther is not the first time that Satan attempted to thwart God's plan of redemption. Hundreds of years before Xerxes, the Egyptian Pharaoh had tried to decimate the Jewish people by killing all the male Israelite children. Hundreds of years after Xerxes, King Herod of Palestine murdered all of the baby boys in Bethlehem in a futile attempt to kill the newly born Messiah, Jesus. Even though Satan isn't explicitly mentioned in the Book of Esther, we can see him scheming behind the scenes to violate God's plans and promises.

Further Commentary

“Mordecai’s response to the king’s edict was typical for his culture...All who saw him recognized his grief, especially since he ‘cried loudly and bitterly’ (lit. ‘he cried out a great cry’). The term ‘to cry out’ (Heb. *za’aq*) is often used in the OT to describe a heartbroken howl over injustice (Gen. 18:20), personal tragedy (2 Sam. 13:19), or national tragedy (Ezek. 9:8). While Mordecai would not get the king’s attention, he did get Esther’s (Esth. 4:4), which was crucial. A law prohibiting a mourner to come into the palace is not attested in the ancient sources, but in a similar vein, Nehemiah stated that he had ‘never been sad’ in King Artaxerxes’ presence before, and when asked about it by Artaxerxes he ‘was overwhelmed by fear’ (Neh. 2:1-2). Mordecai was not alone in his grief. The Jewish people in every province wept and lamented and many lay on sackcloth and ashes. In many ways Mordecai epitomizes, or is representative of, the Jewish people.”²

—Carl R. Anderson,
HCSB Study Bible

¹ *When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and he cried out with a loud and bitter cry.* ² *He went up to the entrance of the king’s gate, for no one was allowed to enter the king’s gate clothed in sackcloth.* ³ *And in every province, wherever the king’s command and his decree reached, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and many of them lay in sackcloth and ashes.*

⁴ *When Esther’s young women and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed. She sent garments to clothe Mordecai, so that he might take off his sackcloth, but he would not accept them.*

⁵ *Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king’s eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what this was and why it was.* ⁶ *Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king’s gate,* ⁷ *and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king’s treasuries for the destruction of the Jews.*

Mordecai, Esther, and the Jewish people faced certain doom. There appeared to be no way out and no way to change their circumstances. They grieved and agonized for themselves and their people. Yet God had a plan, and they all had a part to play.

When Mordecai got the news of the king’s order to kill the Jews, he was understandably upset. The Bible doesn’t gloss over real fears, real crises, real pain, and real grief. Even though he was a man of faith, Mordecai did not choose to live in denial concerning the dangerous situation he and his people were in. As word began to spread about the coming genocide, the Jewish people throughout Persia awakened to the coming threat.

Most likely, none of the Jews living in the provinces surrounding the Persian capital of Susa had ever been to Israel. They had never seen the temple nor even set foot in the promised land. But the remnant of faithful believers had preserved what they could of their faith in God. In this time of crisis, God’s people knew where to turn. They were “fasting and weeping and lamenting” (v. 3).

While neither prayers nor God are specifically mentioned, it is apparent that the people were humbling themselves before the Lord. Even though God must have seemed hard to find and hard to trust, Mordecai and many of his believing contemporaries were determined to seek after Him.

- ❓ What are some indications that God's people were seeking Him, even though He seemed absent?
- ❓ What is the significance of taking steps to seek God even when you feel abandoned?

Perhaps you too have found yourself overcome with grief or swamped by terrible circumstances. When we cannot see what God is doing, we may begin to question if He is paying attention. But He is there. Instead of dwelling on doubts and questions, we do well to reinforce our faith in His presence. We should take all of the little faith we have and call out to the great God we trust is there, even when He seems to be hidden.

The Book of Esther has little that we would classify as explicitly theological content. The story takes twists and turns, and the name of God is never mentioned. There are no explicit mentions of prayer, the law, the temple, or angels. No one receives a vision from God. There are no dramatic, “nature-defying” miracles. Esther receives no mention anywhere else in the Bible, and the book is never quoted by other biblical authors.

Nevertheless, the Book of Esther gives us an important insight into the God who keeps His promises, even when He seems to be working “behind the scenes.” The writer of Esther has skillfully woven a tale so that the unmentioned God is present in every scene and on every page. God may be “hidden,” but He is definitely there.

In many ways the Book of Esther resembles our actual lives. We may find it hard to identify with the miraculous “God-encounters” of Abraham or Moses. We haven’t seen fire fall from the sky like Elijah. We haven’t killed a giant in battle like David. But many of us have felt marginalized and forgotten like Esther. Some of us have been abused and misused. Most of us have had our doubts about whether or not God was going to come through for us.

We live in a messed-up world, and many of us have messy lives. Esther shows us what it’s like to believe that in the midst of the chaotic, difficult, and overwhelming circumstances of life, we are not alone. God is there with power and a plan and a part for us to play.

- ❓ In what ways is Esther’s story similar to that of many believers throughout the world?

Voices from Church History

“He who does not know Christ does not know God hidden in suffering... God can be found only in suffering and the cross.”³

—Martin Luther (1483-1546)

Voices from Church History

“Where we cannot trace God’s hand, we can trust His heart.”⁴

—Adrian Rogers (1931-2005)

Further Commentary

“There are three lines to Mordecai’s argument. 1) Esther herself will not be exempt from destruction under the edict, so in any event her life is in danger. 2) Mordecai reveals his own conviction that God will not permit the extinction of his people. If Esther fails, God will have another way of saving the Jews, but Esther and her immediate family will be the losers. There is here an incidental reference to one aspect of guidance. God’s purposes are not thwarted by the failure of one individual to respond positively to his leading, and the individual is truly free to refuse it, though this leads to loss rather than gain. 3) The right way forward is not in doubt. The outcome of Esther’s decision is so far-reaching that without exaggeration she is at the moment when her life’s purpose is at stake...Without explicitly spelling out in detail how he came to his convictions, Mordecai reveals that he believes in God, in God’s guidance of individual lives, and in God’s ordering of the world’s political events, irrespective of whether those who seem to have the power acknowledge him or not. This was, of course, constantly declared by the prophets of Israel (e.g., Isa. 10:8ff.; 45:1; Jer. 1:15; Ezek. 7:24), and need not come as a surprise, especially in the light of the return from exile in 538 and subsequent occasions (Ezra 1–2; 5–6). Every Jew had experienced in the history of his people the guiding and saving hand of God.”⁵

—Joyce Baldwin

2. Recognize the role you play in the sovereign plan of God (Esth. 4:8-14).

The story continues. Now Mordecai hoped that Esther would rely on her position to seek protection for the people. Mordecai recognized the role he had in God’s plan to preserve His people, and he recognized the role Esther could have as well:

⁸ Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her and command her to go to the king to beg his favor and plead with him on behalf of her people. ⁹ And Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said. ¹⁰ Then Esther spoke to Hathach and commanded him to go to Mordecai and say, ¹¹ “All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter so that he may live. But as for me, I have not been called to come in to the king these thirty days.”

¹² And they told Mordecai what Esther had said. ¹³ Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, “Do not think to yourself that in the king’s palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. ¹⁴ For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

As we have seen, beneath the surface of the Book of Esther is the undercurrent of God’s sovereign intent to act on behalf of His plan and His people. Throughout the Bible, we see that God sovereignly works in and through meaningful human choices to accomplish His purposes.

The arc of the story shows that Esther and Mordecai have not attained their positions of access to political power by accident. God put them there on purpose. But even though God had appointed and raised Esther up to be queen in the Persian Empire, she still had to make a personal choice to exercise faith and courage in order to fulfill her part in God’s plan.

This was her “defining moment” as an individual, and her choices carried massive consequences that extended far beyond what she could possibly imagine. Her life was at stake, but so also was the fate of Jewish people everywhere.

Even more importantly, the possibility of the promised Messiah also hung in the balance. Mordecai pointed out the importance of the situation in verse 14—one of the most powerful challenges in all of Scripture: “And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

- Who are some people throughout history whose life circumstances and position made it possible for them to change the world?
- When have you felt like you were put somewhere “for such a time as this” to do God’s will?

What would have happened if Esther had failed the test? Would her disobedience have crippled God’s ability to carry out His rescue plan for His people? No, because God’s promise to preserve His people did not depend on Esther. That’s why Mordecai had faith that God would intervene by some other method if Esther did not step up. Even so, Esther did not shrink back; she did not fail the test. And God used her in a powerful way.

Have you ever felt insignificant? Have you ever doubted that God could use you? It’s likely that Esther felt that way. But God had orchestrated the events of her life—even the sad and tragic and terrible moments—so that she would be in a position to make a difference for His sake.

The Bible indicates that God is doing the same in all of our lives. God is weaving the events of our lives—even the difficult and painful parts—to prepare us and position us for usefulness in His kingdom. Yet we still have to make real choices that really matter. And our decision to be obedient and faithful and to seize our defining moments can have a ripple effect and consequences far beyond what we can see or imagine.

- What role do our past circumstances and our present position play in bringing God glory?
- What are some of the aspects of your past that you’ve seen God use to make you more effective in serving Him?

99 Essential Christian Doctrines

28. God’s Providence

Providence refers to God’s continuing work and involvement in His creation. This includes, in various degrees, God’s preservation of the created order, His governance, and His care for His people (Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3; Gen. 8:21-22). Christians believe the world, and even the cosmos itself, is contingent upon God, incapable of existing apart from Him. Christians also believe in God’s personal and direct intervention in the world—as opposed to a hands-off approach to creation—that affects not only the natural order but also the individuals and events within human history.

Voices from the Church

“The King who never dies is Jesus himself, who, like Esther, was raised up at just the right moment in history (Rom. 5:6; Gal. 4:4), ‘for such a time as this’—or as Paul elsewhere says, ‘when the fullness of time had come’ (Gal. 4:4).”⁶

—Elyse Fitzpatrick

Further Commentary

“This is the first time that Esther takes the initiative, deciding that a three-day fast is called for by the dire situation she faces as she prepares for her uninvited audience with the king... This is the defining moment in Esther’s life, when she decides to identify herself with God’s people, even at the risk of her life. The author’s explicit silence about God, the covenant, and Jewish practices such as prayer seems a deliberate choice that heightens and highlights the message of God’s divine providence—his ability to act through the ordinary decisions of morally ambiguous and even pagan people. Esther’s decision to identify herself with God’s covenant people is an example to be followed in every generation. By showing all the good that came from her decision to identify with God’s covenant people, the author implicitly invites his readers to consider their own relationship with God.”⁷

—Karen Jobes,
NIV Zondervan Study Bible

3. Accept the risk associated with your purpose (Esth. 4:15-17).

What did Esther choose to do? She sent her reply back to Mordecai.

¹⁵ Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, ¹⁶ “Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish.” ¹⁷ Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

Esther had plenty of reasons to feel that God had abandoned her—she was an immigrant who hid her ethnic and cultural identity, an orphan whose closest known relative was an older cousin, and the young, secretly Jewish wife of an unstable pagan king. It is easy to see how a young girl like Esther would have struggled to maintain her faith in the middle of such painful circumstances. From Esther’s perspective, God surely seemed to be hiding.

Yet Esther risked it all for the sake of her people. Now, we’d like to think that God’s people always win. David took a risk, but God helped him, and he killed Goliath. Elijah risked his life, but God showed up and humiliated the false prophets of Baal. Gideon took risks, as did Samson, Jehoshaphat, Daniel, Deborah, and many other great Bible characters. All of them turned out to be winners like Esther. We like telling those stories *after* we know that God came through.



But do we adequately contemplate the reality of what those men and women were facing? Do we forget the fact they didn’t know the end of the story? The fear, the doubts, the shaky faith, the urge to turn back—those feelings were as real for them as they are for us.

If we choose to go all in with God—to follow Him no matter the cost—we have to acknowledge the possibility of real loss. When we read the Bible, we also see the stories of Stephen (stoned to death), the prophets (ignored, marginalized, killed), the disciples (persecuted, imprisoned, and according to Christian tradition, mostly martyred), and Jesus (crucified).

Like Esther, many of us have had tough experiences. Some have been touched by tragedy. Others have to live with the consequences of foolish choices. But God has a way of taking everything we are—our personalities, our experiences, our gifts and talents, our “baggage,” our hopes, our faith—and redeeming it all. Jesus died on the cross and was raised from the dead so that God could take broken people like us and make us useful for Him. We can know that nothing in our background or our present circumstances is outside of the sovereign power of God. He is always working, even when we can’t see him (Rom. 8:28).

While we trust God’s commitment to keep all of His promises, we still bear a responsibility to participate in His redemptive plan for this world and the people in it. Obedience matters. God *could* execute His purposes without our help, but He *won’t*. He chooses to use us to accomplish His plans (Eph. 2:10).

Faithfulness to God and His gospel might place us outside the mainstream and may even compel us to take huge risks. But the risks are worth it. We don’t have to worry, and we don’t have to fear. God is in control. We have a part to play. And we win in the end.

-  What are some examples of people taking risks to follow Christ?
-  When have you had to risk your own welfare in doing what God called you to do?

Conclusion

In the next session, we will pick up the story and see what happened to Esther and Mordecai. For now, we must stop and marvel at the beauty of this story. God, although not mentioned in this book, is the great Author who is weaving together this tale through the extraordinary lives of these people.

The same Author who tells this story is the One who later sent His Son in the fullness of time—“for such a time as this”—to lose His own life for the sake of the world.

The same Author who sent His Son now lives in you by His Spirit, and He is weaving all your past circumstances and your present position together to be part of His great plan of gathering people from every tribe, tongue, and nation around His throne, together in Christ.

CHRIST CONNECTION: The command to kill all the Jews threatened the fulfillment of God’s promise of a Messiah-King who would bring the blessing of Abraham to the world. Even though His involvement in the story of Esther seems hidden, God was at work, creating and implementing a plan to rescue His people and set the stage for the coming of His Son.



Voices from Church History

“We should every one of us consider, for what end God has put us in the place where we are? And when an opportunity offers of serving God and our generation, we must take care not to let it slip.”⁸

—John Wesley (1703-1791)



Further Commentary

“What contributions did Esther make to the image of the role of a Persian queen? In many ways she fit the typical model of a female Persian ruler. She acted prudently within the limitations of her role. Yet she also brought a distinct dimension to that role. Because of her faith in God, she dared to step outside the confines of the expected behavioral patterns of a Persian queen when the lives of God’s people were at stake. She recognized both through Mordecai’s instruction and by examination of her own experiences that God was providentially at work orchestrating her life’s circumstances. She responded courageously when she recognized her place in God’s plan. Queen Esther demonstrated that being faithful to God involved being faithful to His people. Thus, faithful to the meaning of her name, she became a shining ‘star’ for her people in a time of darkness.”⁹

—Janice Meier,
Biblical Illustrator