



Main Passage: Esther 8

Theological Theme

God is present even when He is seemingly silent. He continually gives His people opportunities to do what is right and stand for Him in the world.

Introduction

- ① When was a time you felt ill-equipped to fill a role you were approached about?
- ① What kind of excuses lead us to this way of thinking?

1. The Background (Esther 1:1-12)

About thirty years after the events recorded in Haggai, we come to the events that transpired in the book of Esther. This is the story of a young Jewish girl who lived with her relative as an exile. God's people had been in exile and though some groups had returned home, Esther remained with the group left in the reigning superpower of Persia. Despite their exile, these were still God's people, and He was working out His redemptive plans on their behalf.

- ① What specific things would have been hard living as one of God's people during this period? What makes waiting particularly hard in your life?
- ① When or how have you experienced God's presence even when He seemed to be silent?
- ① Application: When have you seen God use unusual or unexpected circumstances to work in your life or the world?

2. The Plot (Esther 2:1-11; 3:1-6)

After the situation with Queen Vashti, the question of finding her replacement arose. In response, all the beautiful, young virgins of the region were brought to the palace for preparations, including a young Jewish woman named Esther.

- ❓ When was a time you've seen God use a seemingly failed or dead-end circumstance to bring glory to Himself?
- ❓ Why might Mordecai have counseled Esther to refrain from announcing her Jewish heritage?
- ❓ Application: When have you felt led to do the right thing according to God even when it meant trouble for you personally?

3. The Conclusion (Esther 4:14-17; 6:1-3; 7:1-6; 8:1-6)

With the evil plot of Haman against Mordecai and the Jews in place, the middle chapters of Esther cover details of Mordecai and Esther's response. We see how Esther planned, prayed, and fasted in preparation to speak up on behalf of her people. While this may seem like a natural situation for the queen to speak to the king about an issue near to her heart, it was not the case. In that day, no one was allowed to come before the king unless he sent for them, including the queen. To win his favor, Esther had to be wise and careful about her actions, or she could lose her life and any hope of rescuing her people.

- ❓ How might God have placed you in your exact time and situation to do His will?
- ❓ What do these events teach you about God's work that we don't see?
- ❓ Application: Where might you need to stand for the Lord, even if the earthly outcome is uncertain?

Conclusion

- ❓ Where is God calling you to take a stand for Him now? How will you respond?
- ❓ How can we as a group encourage one another toward faithfulness to God in questionable moments?
- ❓ How can you seek a gospel conversation with another person by sharing the story of Esther?