

“Seeing the Invisible Hand”

Esther 1:1-2:23

Introduction

Have you ever been in a situation where you just can't see God working or you can't figure out how He is connecting all the dots? A young Jewish girl, Esther, and her uncle, Mordecai, find themselves in this exact predicament! When King Ahasuerus of Persia disposes his former queen, he summons all of the beautiful young virgins to come before him including Esther. While it would seem that Esther and Mordecai's fate was in the hands of this fickle king, God was working through providential miracles in order to position their pathway to purpose.

During this time many Jews had compromised their covenantal values while living out their days in a foreign land. Esther and Mordecai both made spiritual compromises for what they thought were their own purposes. As the story continues we find that Esther hid her Jewish identity, which implies she was not following God's covenantal law (2:10). She even slept with the King and later married him, which was forbidden (2:15-17). Although the events surrounding Esther's succession to the throne took place in a secular environment and were perpetuated by secular choices, God's invisible hand can be seen throughout this story. He providentially positions Esther and Mordecai to act on His behalf for His glory. We later find that God allows Esther and Mordecai to uncover a plot to kill the King Ahasuerus which eventually works in their favor (2:21-23).

It is interesting to note that the book of Esther is the only book of the bible that makes no reference to God. This is not by accident; the point of the book is to watch God's providence unfold as He provides multiple pathways to accomplish His Kingdom purposes. No matter the intentions of man, God sovereignly directs Esther's story. There are undoubtedly times when you and I cannot see the hand of God, yet He is providently working to guide us to our own pathway to purpose. God's invisible hand is on the steering wheel of history and He uses the good, the bad, and the ugly to accomplish His will. We must begin to look for God in the details and conform to His will as it is revealed to us. When we are closely aligned with Him it is easier to see God at work. When we step out of His will, we invite negative consequences. However, God is still in control, He alone, is able to use our mess to produce miracles.

Getting Started

1. Have you ever personally experienced or witnessed a time when what seemed like coincidence or pure luck turned out to be the hand of God at work?
2. How do you distinguish divine providence in your life or the life of others? How can you be sure that God is the one moving you along a certain pathway?

Let's Get Personal

1. What pathway of purpose are you currently on? Is there something God is orchestrating in your own life for His Kingdom glory?
2. In this message we learned that God can work providentially despite a secular environment, secular circumstances or even spiritual compromise. Considering our own culture, what hope does this bring you?
3. Have you ever seen God move providentially despite your own sin or negative consequence?

Take the Next Step

1. What will you do differently in light of the truths you learned from this message? What is one tangible thing you can do this week to ensure that you are aligning yourself with God's purpose in your life?
2. Want to go deeper? Genesis 50:19-21; Romans 8:28; Proverbs 21:1; 16:9; 19:21; 21:30; 1Chronicles 29:10-12, Ephesians 1:11; Isaiah 45:15 & 46:8-11

Renew Your Mind

*“The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord;
He turns it wherever He wishes.” Proverbs 21:1*
