

Esther: A Lesson on Divine Providence
Theme: How God's divine providence affects our lives.
Esther 4:10-14

Introduction:

- A. Providence can be illustrated like a father planning a family trip:
 - 1. He decides when and where his family will vacation.
 - a. Each family member reacts differently because they have their own interests.
 - b. Nevertheless, the father goes through that which he wants to accomplish for his family.
 - 2. He makes all the necessary preparations to ensure that the trip is successful.
 - a. He involves his family and other third parties (travel agency, car rental, etc.) to ensure all the details are in place for their arrival and vacation.
 - b. Even with hiccups (flight delays, lost baggage, etc.) the vacation comes and goes just as was planned.
 - 3. *When listing ALL the details that made the trip possible some of those details might seem out of place and unnecessary, but after taking a step back to see "the big picture" we see the beauty of providence used to accomplish the desired trip.*
- B. Divine providence is much like our illustration:
 - 1. God created a master plan to redeem fallen man: before the foundation of the world. **Eph. 1:3ff**
 - 2. He worked through and sometimes superseded the laws of nature to accomplish His plan.
 - 3. He raised up vessels of honor and dishonor in the form of servants and kings (cp. **Rom. 9:14-24**) and their associated free will and used them as time marched forward to the "fullness of time." **Mk. 1:15; Eph. 1:10**
- C. Each event – or segment within history – within this grand master plan – may be broken down in which we see the microscopic details of His divine providence unfolding.
 - 1. One such illustration is found in the Book of Esther.
 - 2. In this book we see a multitude of details in the lives of various individuals – all interwoven within a larger story ... the salvation of the Jews.
 - 3. This salvation of the Jews – in like fashion – was also a sub plot the great "scheme of redemption."
- D. This story – among so many other illustrations revealed throughout Scripture – gives us many practical blessings:
 - 1. To know that through His grand plan – He cares for us each day.
 - 2. That we can by faith see the bigger picture – well beyond our own immediate circumstances – knowing we are but a part of God's plan to bring about our salvation and His glory.

Discussion:

- I. **ESTHER: A LESSON ON GOD'S DIVINE PROVIDENCE**
 - A. At the king's banquet: Vashti refuses the king and loses her crown. **Ch. 1**
 - B. In the search throughout 127 provinces many beautiful virgins – including a Jew named Esther – is chosen to see who would replace Vashti. **Ch. 2:1-7**
 - C. Esther finds favor with both the eunuch in charge of the women, then the king ... chosen as queen to replace Vashti. **Ch. 2:8-20**
 - D. In the meantime Mordecai sat daily at the king's gate upon which one day he heard of a plot to kill the king. The king had his deed recorded in the Book of Chronicles. **Ch. 2:21-23**
 - E. Around this time Haman – one of the king's servants – was promoted over all princes in the kingdom. **Ch. 3**
 - 1. Mordecai refused to bow down and pay homage to Haman.
 - 2. The result: complete annihilation to all Jews throughout the empire.
 - F. Mordecai tells Esther: "who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?" **Ch. 4:14**

- G. Esther makes plans to intercede while – upon her request – all the Jews in Susa fast and pray for her for three days before she goes – unannounced to the king – to make her request. **Ch. 4:15-17**
 - 1. She requests a banquet to honor Haman.
 - 2. Haman still not happy and until his wife urges him to build a gallows (75ft high!) for Mordecai's death the following morning (the urgency in building the gallows overnight!).
- H. That very night the king could not sleep. **Ch. 6**
 - 1. The Book of Chronicles is read in which is remembered Mordecai's good deed which saved the king.
 - 2. The king learns Mordecai was not properly honored and asks Haman – who happened to just come to the king (to ask of Mordecai's death!) – how the king could honor a person (thinking the king was speaking of himself!).
- I. The king orders to have Haman honor Mordecai! **Ch. 6:11**
- J. Esther makes plea on behalf of Jews. **Ch. 7:3-4**
- K. Haman (and sons) hung by gallows made for Mordecai. **Ch. 7:8-9**
- L. Mordecai promoted to 2nd only to the king. **Ch. 8:2**
- M. King makes decree for Jews to defend/annihilate anyone who attacked them on that day. **Ch. 8:12**
 - 1. All Jews and people rejoice, many become Jews. **Ch. 8:17**
 - 2. Jews defend themselves (fear upon the people from decree, etc.). **Ch. 9**
- N. Feast of Purim made/commanded to be celebrated by Mordecai and Queen Esther. **Ch. 9:20-21, 26, 29**

II. PRACTICAL LESSONS AND BLESSINGS OF TRUSTING IN GOD'S PROVIDENCE

A. Lessons:

- 1. While man has free will and chooses his own way, God's sovereignty His creation is unquestioned. **Prov. 16:9; Prov. 20:24**
- 2. All things together for good to those who love Him: **Rom. 8:28**
- 3. God's blessings are not just noted when He saves from trials, but when He keeps us safe from them!

Dr. John Witherspoon, signer of the Declaration of Independence and president of the College of New Jersey, which became Princeton University, lived at Tusculum, a country seat at Rocky Hill, about two miles from the college, and drove every day to his duties as teacher and president. One day a neighbor came excitedly into his study at the college and said, "Dr. Witherspoon, you must join me in giving thanks to God for his extraordinary providence in saving my life, for as I was driving from Rocky Hill the horse ran away and the buggy was smashed to pieces on the rocks, but I escaped unharmed!"

"Why," answered Dr. Witherspoon, "I can tell you a far more remarkable providence than that. I have driven over that road hundreds of times. My horse never ran away, my buggy never was smashed, I was never hurt."

B. Blessings:

- 1. The purpose of God's providence? To reveal Himself (**Rom. 9:17**) to the world as God.
- 2. Closely linked is God's promise to care for those who lean upon Him. **Matt. 6:26-33**
 - a. How would we know to place our trust in an Almighty, but invisible, God unless He reveals Himself and makes Himself known?
 - b. Only when we see the mighty power of God are we able to choose to place our trust in Him and His everlasting promises!

Conclusion:

- A. Seek God and His kingdom and He will always provide for you. **Matt. 6:30-33**