

BUILD-A-BELIEVER WORKSHOPS

Ezra Nehemiah Esther

People say to me, "How do you build a church?" You don't build a church, you build a believer. As a result, the church will build itself. (John MacArthur).

Esther

Chapters Six & Seven

“Strategy”

Introduction

I love our president; but you can't deny that he sometimes mispronounces words. Take the word “nuclear,” for example, which President Bush often pronounces “nuke-u-ler.”

Comedians have had a field day with Bush's reputation for mispronunciation. The word "strategery" was first used in a Saturday Night Live sketch aired October 7, 2000. It's a play on the words “strategy” and “strategic.” Comedian Will Ferrell impersonated then candidate for president George W. Bush and used the word "strategery.” As a result, some people believe Bush actually uses the word – which he does not.

It has since been reported by White House insiders that some in the Bush administration have continued to use the term. It's not meant to be derogatory towards the President. It's meant to emphasize that, though people might make fun of him, his “strategy” worked!

Our text in Esther reveals some excellent “strategy” on the part of God. God had a very definite strategy for using Esther and Mordecai to deliver His people.

God's strategy for saving the Jews in Persia from extermination was part of a much larger strategy. It was through the nation of Israel that the Messiah was to be born – the One who would save His people from their sins.

The coming of the Messiah through Israel was itself part of an even larger strategy! The Messiah, Jesus Christ, would be the Savior of the whole world of mankind – to all those who believe on Him.

When you have an ultimate purpose in mind, and then coordinate every effort and resource towards achieving that purpose, it is called a Grand Strategy. God most decidedly has a Grand Strategy – it is to redeem lost mankind by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, Whom He sent as our Substitute and Sacrifice for sin.

God's strategy in the situation of Esther and Mordecai was part of His Grand Strategy. I submit to you, since God is no respecter of persons, and since He's on record as declaring that He loves you, that your situation in life is also part of His Grand Strategy.

We insist on believing that people like Esther and Mordecai are more significant to God than we are. *It's not true!* We are just as loved by God the Father. The happenings of our life are just as strategic in their own way.

I want to develop this a little more. We'll organize our thoughts around two points: #1 God's Grand Strategy Is Readied Behind The Scenes Of Your Situation, and #2 God's Grand Strategy Is Revealed On The Stage Of Your Situation.

#1 God's Grand Strategy Is Readied
Behind The Scenes Of Your Life
(5:9-6:14)

I'm using the words "stage" and "scenes" because this portion of the Book of Esther reads so much like a drama. In the drama that unfolds, the first thing we note is God working behind the scenes – setting everything up for the incredible final act.

[Esther 5:9](#) So Haman went out that day joyful and with a glad heart; but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, and that he did not stand or tremble before him, he was filled with indignation against Mordecai.

Haman didn't realize it, but there would always be a Mordecai of some kind in his life. Like all of us, Haman was created to know God,

and until or unless that happened, the happenings of his life would never totally satisfy him.

Esther 5:10 Nevertheless Haman restrained himself and went home, and he sent and called for his friends and his wife Zeresh.

Esther 5:11 Then Haman told them of his great riches, the multitude of his children, everything in which the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the officials and servants of the king.

Esther 5:12 Moreover Haman said, "Besides, Queen Esther invited no one but me to come in with the king to the banquet that she prepared; and tomorrow I am again invited by her, along with the king.

Haman could give quite an impressive inventory of his life in Persia. What was it worth compared to his eternal soul?

As Christians, we should be more excited about investing than inventory. Take the resources God has given you and invest them for eternity.

Esther 5:13 Yet all this avails me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

The world wants us to focus on a goal and it promises us that, once achieved, we will be satisfied and content. It's a carrot on a stick. The goal, the end, of man is to have a personal relationship with God.

Esther 5:14 Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Let a gallows be made, fifty cubits high, and in the morning suggest to the king that Mordecai be hanged on it; then go merrily with the king to the banquet." And the thing pleased Haman; so he had the gallows made.

Brutal. It's the same today. Don't tell me the world isn't just as cruel now as it was then. Not that people are building gallows upon which to hang you. But it sure feels like it when you get blindsided at work by your co-workers and find out there are all manner of evil plots against you. After all, you might be in someone's way and it's dog-eat-dog on the way up the ladder of success.

Meanwhile, King Ahasuerus couldn't get to sleep:

Esther 6:1 That night the king could not sleep. So one was commanded to bring the book of the records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king.

Esther 6:2 And it was found written that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and

Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, the doorkeepers who had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.

Esther 6:3 Then the king said, "What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?" And the king's servants who attended him said, "Nothing has been done for him."

Whether at work; or in school; or even in the Church; you won't always get the recognition you deserve. Not by men anyway. God keeps account of things, and it's His future *"Well done!"* that ought to substitute for the pats on the back you lack.

Esther 6:4 So the king said, "Who *is* in the court?" Now Haman had *just* entered the outer court of the king's palace to suggest that the king hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

Esther 6:5 The king's servants said to him, "Haman is there, standing in the court." And the king said, "Let him come in."

Timing is important to a dramatic performance. God is the director of this drama, and His sense of timing is superb. Remember that when His work in your life seems delayed. He's waiting for just the right moment to further the action.

Esther 6:6 So Haman came in, and the king asked him, "What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?" Now Haman thought in his heart, "Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?"

Esther 6:7 And Haman answered the king, "*For* the man whom the king delights to honor,

Esther 6:8 let a royal robe be brought which the king has worn, and a horse on which the king has ridden, which has a royal crest placed on its head.

Esther 6:9 Then let this robe and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that he may array the man whom the king delights to honor. Then parade him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him: 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!'"

Haman was describing a fantasy of his. In his daydreaming, he probably saw himself being paraded about like this.

What do you find yourself daydreaming about? We should exercise our minds to be *Daydream Believers* in the sense that our daydreams are about sharing the Gospel or some other spiritual activity in which we would decrease while Jesus increases.

Esther 6:10 Then the king said to Haman, "Hurry, take the robe and the horse,

as you have suggested, and do so for Mordecai the Jew who sits within the king's gate! Leave nothing undone of all that you have spoken."

Esther 6:11 So Haman took the robe and the horse, arrayed Mordecai and led him on horseback through the city square, and proclaimed before him, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!"

From elation to humiliation in nothing flat! Haman's plans were unraveling.

Esther 6:12 Afterward Mordecai went back to the king's gate. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with his head covered.

Esther 6:13 When Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him, his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you will not prevail against him but will surely fall before him."

Esther 6:14 While they *were* still talking with him, the king's eunuchs came, and hastened to bring Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared.

Wait a minute! They already knew that Mordecai was a Jew. That's how Haman's hatred for Mordecai began. A moment ago this same wife and these same friends had encouraged Haman to build a gallows upon which to hang Mordecai. Now they act as though Mordecai is invincible.

It's an example of getting worldly counsel. People often tell you what you want to hear. **Don't seek out worldly counsel!**

- being changed to bring change -

Everything is now set-up for the final act of this drama. God has been readying things behind the scenes. If you will receive it, I am suggesting that God does the same for you. He is constantly working behind the scenes, readying things for you.

You don't see it? That is usually because we think our lives too insignificant for God to be that involved. He is.

How can I be so sure? I can be sure God is working behind the scenes of my life because, in His Word, He tells me that He loves me just as much as He loves His own Son, Jesus Christ. Often Christians are referred to in the New Testament as **the beloved**. It's a way of saying we – **you** – are loved by God the Father just as Jesus is loved.

It's true – whether or not you believe it! So you might as well take God at His Word.

God's strategy is readied; then it is revealed.

#2 God's Grand Strategy Is Revealed On The Stage Of Your Situation (7:1-10)

One act remained in the Persian palace:

Esther 7:1 So the king and Haman went to dine with Queen Esther.

Esther 7:2 And on the second day, at the banquet of wine, the king again said to Esther, "What *is* your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what *is* your request, up to half the kingdom? It shall be done!"

Esther 7:3 Then Queen Esther answered and said, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request.

Esther 7:4 For we have been sold, my people and I, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. Had we been sold as male and female slaves, I would have held my tongue, although the enemy could never compensate for the king's loss."

The dialogue is so beautiful. It's heartfelt, but humble. The Holy Spirit was Esther's drama coach!

Esther 7:5 So King Ahasuerus answered and said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who would dare presume in his heart to do such a thing?"

Esther 7:6 And Esther said, "The adversary and enemy *is* this wicked Haman!" So Haman was terrified before the king and queen.

How does a guy like this get to be king? Haman suggested the extermination of the Jews; but Ahasuerus implemented it. He signed the decree.

Often you are correct in your assumption that it is hard to soar with the eagles when you work with turkeys! Your responsibility is to submit to the authority God has allowed to be placed over you – right up to the point it would cause you to disobey God.

Esther 7:7 Then the king arose in his wrath from the banquet of wine *and went* into the palace garden; but Haman stood before Queen Esther, pleading for his life, for he saw that evil was determined against him by the king.

Esther 7:8 When the king returned from the palace garden to the place of the banquet of wine, Haman had fallen across the couch where Esther was. Then the king said, "Will he also assault the queen while I *am* in the house?" As the word left the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.

Haman appears to be openly assaulting Esther. How interesting a dramatic device – since Haman had been secretly assaulting Esther by calling for the extermination of the Jews. King Ahasuerus could see, in this scene, what was plotted in secret.

There are no real secrets, you know, when dealing with God! Be sure your sin will find you out... Unless it is confessed! Then God describes it as being cast... into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19).

Esther 7:9 Now Harbonah, one of the eunuchs, said to the king, "Look! The gallows, fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai, who spoke good on the king's behalf, is standing at the house of Haman." Then the king said, "Hang him on it!"

Esther 7:10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king's wrath subsided.

In literature this is called poetic justice. In real life it's called the providence of God.

If God is readying things behind the scenes of your life, then the situations of your life are going to be the stage upon which they are revealed and acted out.

Sometimes we don't see drama unfolding in our lives because we forget our lines; or we improvise; or some other such thing. Then God says, "**Cut!**" and He works to set-up another scene for us.

Start believing He is at work. Trust His direction. Rehearse your part by studying His Word; by being in fellowship; by talking to Him; by sharing Him with others.

Applying the Word

According to George Lucas, a lot of different actors were considered for the part of Han Solo in the *Star Wars* movies. One of them was Sylvester Stallone.

He just wasn't quite right for the part!

What part are you right for in the Book of Esther? If you are an unbeliever... You are Haman in this story.

Only it's ultimately not just a story; and you are not just an actor. When they finally yell, "Cut!" it will be too late.

