

Queen for A Day Such as This

Studies in the Book of Esther

"Strategy"

Introduction

Comedians had a field day with President George W. Bush's reputation for mispronunciation. Take the word "nuclear," for example. President Bush pronounced it "nuke-u-ler."

October 7, 2000, on *Saturday Night Live*, Will Ferrell impersonated then candidate for president George W. Bush and used the word "strategy." As a result, some people believe Bush actually used the word – which he did not.

Our text in Esther reveals some excellent "strategy" on the part of God. We've seen that even though Mordecai and Esther did not start out walking with God, the Lord had moves and counter-moves that put them in a position to decide whether to be used by Him, or not.

God would save His people, with or without Esther and Mordecai. They might as well get on board with His strategy.

We're picking up in the midst of the story. Queen Esther had just invited the king and Haman to a banquet. Haman was feeling quite special.

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.

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*. You should 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.

Wow. *I'd sleep with one eye open if Zeresh was my wife.*

Brutal. But 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."

The lack of sleep was from God; it was part of His strategy. Maybe Ahaseurs regularly read from the "records of the chronicles," or maybe God put it on his heart. God was at work in the night.

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."

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!"

Haman's plans were unraveling, just as God's providence was being revealed.

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. Their counsel is both "Yes" and "No."

Don't seek out worldly counsel.

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.

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."

This is God speaking through Esther. She's only been walking in obedience to God for a very short time, but she speaks with spiritual finesse. Wherever you are in your walk, God can speak through you to others.

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.

I like Harbonah. He has a small but significant part. That describes most of us. What I get from him is that he was attentive. Even though living probably confined within the palace, he knew all about Haman's gallows. When the king needed advice, he was able to give it insightfully.

A lot of ministry can take place if you will learn to pay closer attention. A lot of ministry suffers when you don't pay close enough attention.

My goal, throughout these studies in Esther, is that you see God's providence at work, without it violating anyone's free will choices.

God's will, **will** be done; but we are not mere robots, determined by God to act certain ways with no choices.

In the end, it's best to agree with God, and walk in obedience.