

Parson to Person (The Book of Esther)

Have you ever had a Bible passage just reach up the page and grab hold of you directly?

I mean, has that chapter and verse ever spoken so perfectly and well to your current dilemma, so comprehensively and accurately, that you feel like that paper-and-print barrier of culture and history just doesn't exist—that the written Word of God has crossed the distance of time and geography, answered you as if you lived back then or as if it were written today?

John 3:16 is such a passage. Philippians 4:6–7 (“Be anxious for nothing...”) is another. It's not just that they are relevant to the 21st century—ALL Scripture is God-breathed and inerrant and sufficient to every time and circumstance. Rather, these super-relevant sections of the Bible actually match us today so closely that they break what is called “the fourth wall” of media, as if the characters in the Bible started literally talking ABOUT the audience. When the fourth wall is breached, the characters in a movie or a book turn and face the viewers or readers. They join the audience in watching that movie or reading that book.

Esther and Mordecai are “fourth wall breaking” characters. They are more like us than like typical bible characters: they don't hear the audible voice of God; they don't see supernatural miracles like handwriting on the wall or angelic interventions. They don't even seem like Bible people; we assume because they are upright, observant Jews that like Christians today they are

reading the Word of God and praying, but we see no concrete, measurable divine interventions...much as we often feel today.

That is why the call of Esther resonates with us today. She faced a fight like we face. She faced it without specific resources apart from the Torah and her faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. She faced it with wisdom, common sense, courage, all of which emanated *from* her faith in God.

If we doubt this, we would have to question why her account is in the inerrant, inspired Word of God. Since we do not question why it is in the Word of God, we ought not doubt that we are to learn from and even emulate these believers in God who jump off the pages of the biblical book of Esther.

Consider the dilemma that the Jews faced...not so different than what Israel faces today:

¹When Mordecai learned all that had happened, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city. He cried out with a loud and bitter cry. ²He went as far as the front of the king's gate, for no one *might* enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. ³And in every province where the king's command and decree arrived, *there was* great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

⁴So Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told her, and the queen was deeply distressed. Then she sent garments to clothe Mordecai and take his sackcloth away from him, but he would not accept *them*. ⁵Then Esther called Hathach, *one* of the king's

eunuchs whom he had appointed to attend her, and she gave him a command concerning Mordecai, to learn what and why this *was*. ⁶ So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the city square that *was* in front of the king's gate. ⁷ And Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries to destroy the Jews. ⁸ He also gave him a copy of the written decree for their destruction, which was given at Shushan, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her, and that he might command her to go in to the king to make supplication to him and plead before him for her people. ⁹ So Hathach returned and told Esther the words of Mordecai.

¹⁰ Then Esther spoke to Hathach, and gave him a command for Mordecai: ¹¹ "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, *he has* but one law: put *all* to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days." ¹² So they told Mordecai Esther's words.

¹³ And Mordecai told *them* to answer Esther: "Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. ¹⁴ For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet

who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this?”

¹⁵ Then Esther told *them* to reply to Mordecai: ¹⁶ “Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which *is* against the law; and if I perish, I perish!”

¹⁷ So Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther commanded him. (Esther 4:1–17 NKJV)

For the next several opportunities I have to preach and teach, I will be asking us to learn from this book, since “all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come” (I Corinthians 10:11). Ask questions with me like these:

- * How did God’s people attract hostility from outsiders?
- * How was that hostility handled?
- * How did God respond?
- * How did the results glorify God?
- * How did the results advance His prophetic timetable?

I know these messages from Esther will edify, convict, and encourage you! Join us! I love you all in the Lord Jesus’ Name.

Pastor Jason