

The Curse Reversed: God's Surprising Work in the Book of Esther
February 6th, 2022
Jeff Bruce, Lead Pastor

Introducing Esther (1:1-10:3)

Why study Esther?

- 1. Because it builds our confidence in God's secret providence**
- 2. Because it teaches us to take God seriously (and ourselves less so)**
- 3. Because it offers hope to compromised believers**

For Further Thought and Discussion:

Getting Started:

1. What was helpful to you in this week's sermon? What didn't you understand?

Going Deeper

2. Why was Esther written (see chapter 9:20-32)? Describe the Jewish response to Esther. Why has this story been celebrated within the Jewish community? Describe the Christian response to Esther. Why have followers of Christ found it difficult to embrace this book?
3. God's name is never mentioned in the book of Esther. This appears to be a deliberate decision on the part of the author. Why would the author do this (list some possible reasons)?
4. In 9:1 we read the words, "...*the reverse occurred.*" How do these words serve as a summary statement of the book of Esther? List some of the reversals that take place throughout the book. List some of the "*coincidences*" that take place. How do these surprising reversals and coincidences point to God's work?
5. How is King Ahasuerus described at the beginning of the book (1:1-2)? How is he portrayed throughout the rest of the book? What is the author teaching us about human empires through this portrayal of the king?

Application:

6. How does the author portray Esther, Mordecai and the Jews living in Susa? How do Esther and Mordecai differ from other Jewish heroes of this period (e.g. Daniel, Nehemiah)? How is the author portraying the spiritual condition of Israel (see Deuteronomy 31:16-18; 32:20-43)? How does the book of Esther offer hope when we feel compromised in our commitment to Christ?
7. Esther shows us (1) that God is working even when we don't see him; (2) that those we fear aren't as fearsome as we think, and (3) that God is faithful to us, even when we aren't faithful to him. Which of these truths is most relevant to you right now? Why?
8. What's one thing you can do this week to apply this message?