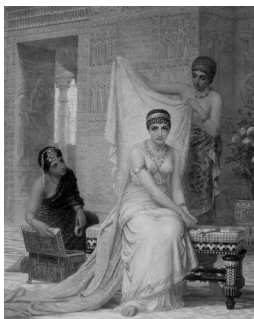

Esther

The Hidden Hand of God



- The confidence that God's people through the centuries have placed in the book of Esther has been greatly confirmed during our generation. No historian could rightly demand that every detail of the book be confirmed by outside evidence. At the same time, it is now more obvious than ever before that no statement in the book can be proven erroneous. Of the book of Esther the Christian can confidently affirm its absolute truthfulness.

- Because of centuries of disobedience to the program of God, the northern tribes in 722 B.C. and the southern tribes in 586 B.C. were deported and scattered throughout Mesopotamia and beyond. In 536 B.C., by decree of Cyrus and under the leadership of Zerubbabel, fifty thousand Jews returned to the land of Israel and began to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.

- This return from exile occurred at least fifty years before the opening scenes of Esther. Many godly Jews were unable to return with the initial expedition (like Daniel), but when the opportunity came they fulfilled the desire of their heart by returning to Jerusalem to further God's plan for His people. However, there seems to be no evidence that Mordecai or Esther had any desire to relate to the heart of God and His program in the land of promise, nor is any evidence given that they were in any way prevented from going.
- This is the best explanation as to why God's name is absent from this book of Scripture. There were Jews abroad who had become comfortable in foreign lands, having lost the desire to be in the promised land, and conceded the uniqueness of their Jewishness and prescribed Mosaic responsibilities. That the name Yahweh does not appear in the book gives the general tone of a people who had forgotten about God, concealing their true identity to make life easier for themselves.
- For all of you out there still not convinced of the sovereignty of God, concerned that it violates the freedom of man, Esther ought to move you a long way in bringing these two together. "God's sovereignty operates in such a way that our freedom and responsibility to act are not compromised, yet the end result is still exactly what God has purposed from the beginning ... what is more, God achieves his perfect goals not just through our best intentions and most self-sacrificing acts, but even through our greatest sins and compromises."

Esther

The Hidden Hand of God
Esther 1-10

Introduction: In no book of the Bible is it more obvious that God is the hero of the Old Testament than in the book of Esther. Without one mention of the name of God, He is far from absent. His behind-the-scenes orchestration of the events build confidence to every believing reader that God's plans cannot be thwarted. The lesson through the life of Esther is not is God at work, but in His working out of His plans will we hide from Him, or stand up for Him?

The Story We Want to Hear

The Story We Need to Hear

Taking comfort with strangers

Heroes with misplaced loyalties

Fearful, concealed, weak commitment

The Story God Writes

God works alone

God works in our failures

GOD: LIFE LESSONS

JESUS CHRIST: LIFE FOCUS

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GOD: LIFE LESSONS

God is never on vacation.

We need to laugh more and fear less the systems that oppose God and seem to be winning.

God uses the foolish to shame the wise.

What looks weak and bleak is often God's setup for great deliverance.

God cares most about His reputation.

We need to put our respectable reputation aside and stand up for the glory of God.

JESUS CHRIST: LIFE FOCUS

Jesus Christ: He is the great rescuer of His people. In Jesus we celebrate the full and final redemption over our greatest oppressor - sin. He has gone to the King on our behalf, and the decree to set us free has been issued. Will we stand with Him or conceal our real identity?