

Manifest Destiny

Studies in Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther



The 5 Purposes of the Purpose Driven Life

- **Worship**—You were planned for God’s pleasure
- **Fellowship**—You were formed for God’s family
- **Discipleship**—You were created to become like Christ
- **Ministry**—You were shaped for serving God
- **Evangelism**—You were made for a mission

Resistance Is Futile

Introduction to Esther 4-7

Just as the Borg in Star Trek, “resistance is futile”, to their enemies, the same is true of God. The story of Esther depicts the futility of resisting God, of trying to foil His plans. Even though Esther, Mordecai, King Ahasuerus and the evil Haman are the human actors, the main character of the story, whose name is never mentioned in the book, is God. As Esther 4 opens God has put into place the human pieces and events necessary to defeat Haman’s plot to destroy His people. Throughout the Persian empire and in the capital city of Susa, confusion reigned because of Haman’s plan to annihilate the Jewish people about 11 months from then. Mordecai began to parade through the city in sackcloth

and ashes, and when Esther tried to stop him, he confronted her with her need to act. She tried to minimize the problem, but the first step to solution is to embrace reality. We must understand how bad things really are if we are to resolve a bad situation. Once Esther realized that she, too, would die, she enacted a solution, even though it carried great risk to her. Just asking for an audience with the king could have meant death for her. But she stepped forward, accepting Mordecai’s statement that God would still carry out his plan with or without her. She revealed her request to the king very gently, using 2 banquets to “soften him up” for the



Understanding how God’s destiny for us is fulfilled.

kill. When she finally revealed her wish, along with her Jewish identity and the source of the murderous plot, Haman, the king gladly granted the request. Then, in a reversal of fortune for Haman, he was ordered hanged on the very gallows that he intended for Mordecai. Such unexpected events clearly revealed the hand of God at work, and showed that against God, “resistance is futile”.

Daily Questions for Esther 4-7

(For answers to questions attend an ABF or go to www.celebrationnet.com/resources/leader resources)

<p>1. Read 4:1-3. How did Mordecai (v1-2) and the rest of the Jews (v3) react to Haman’s plan (Esther 3:13-14)?</p>	
<p>2. From 4:4-12 what was Esther’s initial response to Mordecai (v4)? What did Mordecai tell her to do when she discovered their plight (v8), and what was her reply (v9-11)? Why?</p>	
<p>3. In 4:13-17 what did Mordecai remind Esther of about her future (v13, 14) and the future of the Jews (v14)? What did she do as a result (v15)? How can we apply this?</p>	

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Esther 4-7 Study Questions (cont)

4. Based on 5:1-4 how did the king respond to Esther (v2, 3)? Why do you think this happened? What did Esther request (v4)?

5. From 5:5-8 what was Esther's 2nd request (v6-8)? Why do you think she used this approach?

6. Read 5:9-14. What was Haman's overall attitude (v9, 11-12), but what spoiled this (v9, 13)? What advice was he given and how did he respond (v14)?

7. In 6:1-9 what did the king discover (v2) and why (v1)? What did he plan as a result (v3, 5-9)? Why did Haman devise such an elaborate plan? Who was really behind all of this?

8. According to 6:10-14 what did the king instruct Haman to do (v10-11)? How did this affect Haman (v12-13), and what was his wife's answer (v13)? How can we apply her answer to us?

9. Using 7:1-6 what did Esther explain to the king (v4), and so what did she request (v3)? How did the king, Esther, and Haman respond (v5-6)?

10. From 7:7-10 what did Haman do when the king left (v7), and how did the king react (v8)? What did this lead to (v9-10)?

11. Think back on God's work in stopping Haman. What part did Esther and Mordecai play, and what part did He play? How can you apply this to a problem you are facing currently?

Scripture to Remember

“And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?”

Esther 4:14 (NAS)

Celebration Fellowship

*Reaching—
Restoring—Raising Up*

We're on the web

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Life Group Questions—Random Yet Timeless Truths—Josh 10-11

(Using questions based on today's message, Life Groups meet in homes to build supportive relationships with others at Celebration Fellowship that enable us to grow in Christ.)

1. Share a truth that you have come to live by. How did you come to believe in it?
2. Why is it so important to talk to God about a decision, even if it seems small? Why don't we do that?
3. Why is it true that matters of the heart and matters of the wallet are two areas where we are most susceptible to self-deception?
4. What are some ways we give our word to people today? What should we do when we realize we made a mistake in doing so?
5. Share with the group the biggest thing God ever did for you when you were facing a challenge. Someone share a challenge they are facing right now and pray for them.
6. Discuss anything else important to you from the message today if you have time.