

## WEDNESDAY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

Christ Church, Crouch End Hill

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No: 39

### ESTHER CHAPTERS 7 & 8

### God's Surprising Sovereignty

#### Introduction

This is what the wicked are like—

Always carefree, they increase in wealth.

Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure;

In vain have I washed my hands in innocence. (Psalm 73: 12-13)

These words express the struggle in the heart of the psalmist. He is wrestling because he does not see justice being carried out; instead, the wicked prosper and the righteous are plagued. In similar way Esther and Mordecai have chosen to do what is right throughout the story, yet they face destruction. Haman, who is proud, angry and bitter, has been successful in plotting against the Jews. Finally, in chapter 7 Esther and Mordecai see justice taking place. However, in our lives we do not always see justice when we choose to do what is right. This is because God moves and lives outside the realm of earthly time—beyond the ticking of our clocks—beyond the turning of our calendars. The people of God must have consistent character whether or not justice prevails in this life.

#### Read Esther 7

- Give an example of a situation (in biblical or contemporary history) in which justice was served.
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- Name all the truths that were previously hidden but are now revealed in this chapter.
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- This chapter revolves around Queen Esther, King Xerxes and Haman. What might each of them be feeling at the beginning of the banquet?
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- How does Esther present her request (vv. 3-4)?
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- What thoughts and emotions might the king and Haman experience when Esther presents her request (vv.6-7)?
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Charles Swindol comments:

“All the time Haman was having the gallows built, he could see Mordecai impaled there. Now, he is condemned to die there himself. We call this irony. Theologians call it sovereignty. I call it God’s surprising sovereignty.”

- What is ironic about the events of this banquet?
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- What do verses 6-8 reveal about Haman’s character?
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- How do you see justice carried out in the lives of Esther, Mordecai and Haman?

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- What should be our motivation for doing what is right?

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## Chapter 8

### Introduction

The book of Esther shows that God brings justice in his time and in his way. Sometimes the justice comes in the way we have expected, and at other times we are surprised by God's ways. But one thing remains certain. It is that God is faithful. He will provide and care for his people. From an overwhelming opposition to the smallest concern, God continues to be faithful to us. God provides not only for Esther and Mordecai, but for all of his people. Because he has been faithful, the people respond with rejoicing and celebrating. Our response to God should be no different.

### Read Chapter 8

- List all the ways that Esther and Mordecai are rewarded by God through the actions of the king.

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- What does verses 3-6 reveal about Esther's character?

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- How does King Xerxes respond to Esther's plea (VV. 7-10)?

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- God provides for the Jews through the edict Mordecai issued in the king's name. How did the edict (vv. 11-13) provide what Esther was asking for in verses 5-6 without breaking the first edict (3:12-14)? ?

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- What is the response of the Jews to God's provision and protection (vv. 15-17)?

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- How did the response of the Jews to the first edict in chapter 4 (4:1-3, 15-16) pave the way for the events of this chapter?

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- How can we be faithful when we are waiting for God to act in our lives?

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