

Feast of Purím

Story of Esther

Elohim is not mentioned in the Book of Esther even once. But Esther was clear that in this particular situation, a heavenly response was needed for an earthly situation. Esther needed direction. When we need Elohim's grace, fasting and prayer opens the portals for spiritual growth, removes distractions and places us on a path to humility.

CHAPTER 4:1-17
ESTHER'S MISSION
BECOMES CLEAR

Mordechai tears his clothes and puts on sackcloth and ashes as a sign of public mourning. Mordechai sends a copy of the decree to Esther and asks her to intercede with the king.

Esther replies that to approach the king without being summoned is to risk death. Mordechai tells her that she has no choice. Esther tells Mordechai to ask the Jews to fast and pray for three days before she will approach the king.

1 When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry;

2 And came even before the king's gate: for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth.

3 And in every province,
whithersoever the king's
commandment and his decree
came, there was great mourning
among the Jews, and fasting, and
weeping, and wailing; and many lay
in sackcloth and ashes.

4 So Esther's maids and her chamberlains came and told it her. Then was the queen exceedingly grieved; and she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai, and to take away his sackcloth from him: but he received it not.

5 Then called Esther for Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend upon her, and gave him a commandment to Mordecai, to know what it was, and why it was.

6 So Hatach went forth to Mordecai
unto the street of the city, which was
before the king's gate.

7 And Mordecai told him of all that had
happened unto him, and of the sum of
the money that Haman had promised
to pay to the king's treasuries for the
Jews, to destroy them.

8 Also he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them, to shew it unto Esther, and to declare it unto her, and to charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people.

9 And Hatach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai.

10 Again Esther spake unto Hatach, and gave him commandment unto Mordecai;

11 All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.

12 And they told to Mordecai
Esther's words.

13 Then Mordecai commanded to
answer Esther, Think not with
thyself that thou shalt escape in the
king's house, more than all the Jews.

14 For if thou altogether holdest thy
peace at this time, then shall there
enlargement and deliverance arise to the
Jews from another place; but thou and
thy father's house shall be destroyed:
and who knoweth whether thou art come
to the kingdom for such a time as this?

15 Then Esther bade them return
Mordecai this answer,

16 Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

17 So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

Esther was willing to die to
save her people. Sometimes
we must stand in courage,
even when it is not popular
to do so, and risk it all.

CHAPTER 5: 1-14
ESTHER'S STRATEGY,
HAMAN'S FURY

King Achashverosh receives Esther and grants her virtually any request. Esther's request: that the king and Haman join her at a banquet. After the banquet, Haman sees Mordechai who once again refuses to bow. When Zeresh, Haman's wife, suggests that Mordechai be hung, the gallows are prepared.

1 Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house: and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the gate of the house.

2 And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight: and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.

3 Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? and what is thy request? it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom.

4 And Esther answered, If it seem good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him.

5 Then the king said, Cause Haman to make haste, that he may do as Esther hath said. So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

6 And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed.

7 Then answered Esther, and said, My petition and my request is;

8 If I have found favour in the sight of the king,
and if it please the king to grant my petition,
and to perform my request, let the king and
Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare
for them, and I will do to morrow as the king
hath said.

9 Then went Haman forth that day joyful and
with a glad heart: but when Haman saw
Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not
up, nor moved for him, he was full of indignation
against Mordecai.

10 Nevertheless Haman refrained himself:
and when he came home, he sent and called
for his friends, and Zeresh his wife.

11 And Haman told them of the glory of his
riches, and the multitude of his children,
and all the things wherein the king had
promoted him, and how he had advanced
him above the princes and servants of the
king.

12 Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to morrow am I invited unto her also with the king.

13 Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.

14 Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and to morrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon: then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made.

CHAPTER 6: 1-10
THE REVERSAL BEGINS

The king can't sleep and asks to hear the royal chronicles. For the first time, the king learns of the assassination plot that Mordecai had revealed. That same night, Haman comes to see the king about hanging Mordecai.

Before Haman can speak,
the king tells Haman to honor
Mordecai by dressing him in royal
garments, to place him on a royal
stallion and to personally lead him
through the streets of
Shushan, capital of Persia.

1 On that night could not the king sleep,
and he commanded to bring the book of
records of the chronicles; and they were
read before the king.

2 And it was found written, that
Mordecai had told of Bigthana and
Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains,
the keepers of the door, who sought to
lay hand on the king Ahasuerus.

3 And the king said, What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him.

4 And the king said, Who is in the court? Now Haman was come into the outward court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

5 And the king's servants said unto him,
Behold, Haman standeth in the court.
And the king said, Let him come in.

6 So Haman came in. And the king said
unto him, What shall be done unto the
man whom the king delighteth to
honour? Now Haman thought in his
heart, To whom would the king delight to
do honour more than to myself?

7 And Haman answered the king, For
the man whom the king delighteth to
honour,

8 Let the royal apparel be brought
which the king useth to wear, and the
horse that the king rideth upon, and the
crown royal which is set upon his head:

9 And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

10 Then the king said to Haman,
Make haste, and take the
apparel and the horse, as thou
hast said, and do even so to
Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth
at the king's gate: let nothing
fail of all that thou hast spoken.

CHAPTER 7:1-8

REVERSAL OF FORTUNE

At the second banquet, Esther reveals her identity and announces that she and her people are about to be murdered. Esther identifies Haman as her arch enemy. The king has Haman hung on the gallows that had been prepared for Mordecai.

1 So the king and Haman came to
banquet with Esther the queen.

2 And the king said again unto Esther on
the second day at the banquet of wine,
What is thy petition, queen Esther? and
it shall be granted thee: and what is thy
request? and it shall be performed, even
to the half of the kingdom.

3 Then Esther the queen answered and said,
If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and
if it please the king, let my life be given me at
my petition, and my people at my request:

4 For we are sold, I and my people, to be
destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if
we had been sold for bondmen and
bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although
the enemy could not countervail the king's
damage.

5 Then the king Ahasuerus answered
and said unto Esther the queen,
Who is he, and where is he, that durst
presume in his heart to do so?

6 And Esther said, The adversary
and enemy is this wicked Haman.
Then Haman was afraid before the
king and the queen.

7 And the king arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath went into the palace garden: and Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen; for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king.

8 Then the king returned out of the palace garden into the place of the banquet of wine; and Haman was fallen upon the bed whereon Esther was. Then said the king, Will he force the queen also before me in the house? As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.

CHAPTER 8:1-11
THE REVERSAL IS
COMPLETE

Mordecai is named prime minister
to replace Haman. A second
royal
edict is put in place, empowering
the Jews to fight and kill anyone
who would try to harm
them.

1 On that day did the king Ahasuerus give the house of Haman the Jews' enemy unto Esther the queen. And Mordecai came before the king; for Esther had told what he was unto her.

2 And the king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it unto Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

3 And Esther spake yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet, and besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite, and his device that he had devised against the Jews.

4 Then the king held out the golden sceptre toward Esther. So Esther arose, and stood before the king,

5 And said, If it please the king, and if I have found favour in his sight, and the thing seem right before the king, and I be pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews which are in all the king's provinces:

6 For how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?

7 Then the king Ahasuerus said unto Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew, Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and him they have hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews.

8 Write ye also for the Jews, as
it liketh you, in the king's name,
and seal it with the king's ring:
for the writing which is written
in the king's name, and sealed
with the king's ring, may no man
reverse.

9 Then were the king's scribes called at that time in the third month, that is, the month Sivan, on the three and twentieth day thereof; and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded unto the Jews, and to the lieutenants, and the deputies and rulers of the provinces which are from India unto Ethiopia, an hundred twenty and seven provinces, unto every province according to the writing thereof, and unto every people after their language, and to the Jews according to their writing, and according to their language.

10 And he wrote in the king Ahasuerus' name,
and sealed it with the king's ring, and sent
letters by posts on horseback, and riders on
mules, camels, and young dromedaries:

11 Wherein the king granted the Jews which were
in every city to gather themselves together, and
to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to
cause to perish, all the power of the people and
province that would assault them, both little
ones and women, and to take the spoil of them
for a prey,

CHAPTER 9:18-22
THE HOLIDAY OF
PURIM

On the 13th of Adar, a day that had been designated for Jewish destruction, the Jews are victorious over their enemies. The 10 sons of Haman are hung. The 14th and 15th of Adar are designated to celebrate the salvation.

These are the days of
Purim. Mordecai initiates the
Purim practices -- consisting of a
festive meal, the exchange of gifts,
of food, and the giving of
monetary
gifts to the poor.

18 But the Jews that were at Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth day thereof, and on the fourteenth thereof; and on the fifteenth day of the same they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

19 Therefore the Jews of the villages, that dwelt in the unwalled towns, made the fourteenth day of the month Adar a day of gladness and feasting, and a good day, and of sending portions one to another.

20 And Mordecai wrote these things,
and sent letters unto all the Jews that
were in all the provinces of the king
Ahasuerus, both nigh and far,

21 To stablsh this among them, that
they should keep the fourteenth day of
the month Adar, and the fifteenth day
of the same, yearly,

22 As the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day: that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor.

CHAPTER 10
MORDECAI AND
PERSIA

Persia, with
Mordecai as prime minister,
flourishes. The role of Mordechai in
the history of the Persian Empire is
recorded in the king's chronicles.

1 And the king Ahasuerus laid a tribute
upon the land, and upon the isles of the
sea.

2 And all the acts of his power and of
his might, and the declaration of the
greatness of Mordecai, whereunto the
king advanced him, are they not written
in the book of the chronicles of the
kings of Media and Persia?

3 For Mordecai the Jew was next
unto king Ahasuerus, and great
among the Jews, and accepted of
the multitude of his brethren,
seeking the wealth of his people,
and speaking peace to all his
seed.

Elohim demands obedience

Esther's obedience saved her people from death. The reality is that Esther didn't know what would happen when she approached the king. She acted in obedience and by doing so she saved a nation and received the best. We don't get a pass on this one.

No part of our lives is untouched. Elohim is in control of every aspect, whether we want him to be or not, and there is nothing that is not subject to him. And, the best thing we can do for our lives is to search for and surrender to his will.

We are given divine moments
to alter circumstances

As believers, there are no such things as accidents or coincidences. Elohim's timing is providential. Esther's divine moment of providence came by accepting her responsibility to go to the king.

Elohim will use you only if
you're ready—or he will find
someone else.