

Providence Esther

Providence Introduction

- We don't always see it. We usually don't notice.
- We may not know how or why, but
- God is always working.
 - *John 5:17 (NIV) ... Jesus said ..., "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working."*
 - *(NLT) .. Jesus replied, "My Father is always working, and so am I."*

Providence Definition

- *Although **providence** is not a biblical term, both the OT and NT set forth an understanding of God's gracious outworking of the divine purpose ... The world and humanity are not ruled by chance or by fate but by God, who directs history and creation toward an ultimate goal. **Providence** therefore refers to God's superintending activity over human actions and human history, bringing creation to its divinely determined goal.*
 - *The Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*

Providence The Book of Esther

- This is the second book in the Bible named after a woman.
- In it, God is not mentioned by any name or title.
- Prayer is not mentioned, though fasting is and probably implies it.
- Author: Anonymous
- Subject Matter: The Story behind the Feast of Purim
- Time Period: Approximately 486 – 485 B.C., the generation before the events of Ezra-Nehemiah.
- Key verse: Esther 4:14

Providence The Big Idea of the Book

- God never stops working.
- When he seems least visible and you feel you need him most – he may be most active of all.

Providence The Book of Esther

- Four Main Characters:
 - Ahasuerus (Xerxes) King of Persia
 - Haman the Agagite, committed Jew-hater
 - Mordecai the Jew
 - Hadassah, or Esther, his young cousin who becomes Queen

Providence Esther 1

- Read 1:1-3, 10-15 and 19

Providence Esther 2

- Read 2:1-7, 16-17 and 19-23
- The king and various royal big shots think they are in charge.
- They are not. God is in charge.

Providence Esther 3

- Read 3:1-2 and 5-11
- A decree goes out that on a certain day the Jews should be destroyed.
- Haman thinks he is in charge.
- He is not. God is in charge.

Providence Esther 4

- Read 4:1-17
- Remember that 4:14 is our key verse.

Providence Esther 5

- Esther comes before the king and he holds out the golden scepter.
- She invites the king and Haman to a banquet that she has prepared.
- Haman's arrogance reaches new heights. Read 5:9-14

Providence Esther 6

- Read 6:1-11
- The tables are beginning to turn.

Providence Esther 7

- Read 7:1-10

Providence Esther 8

- Read 8:1-3, 7-12 and 15-17

Providence Esther 9

- Read 9:23-31

Providence Esther 10

- Read 10:1-3
- God was in charge.

History Repeating Itself

- Rudolf Hoess, Commandant of the Auschwitz Death Camp in Poland
- Conflicting reports in the 1940s put the death toll at Auschwitz anywhere from 1.5 – 5 million, mostly Jews.
- The British captain over the team that caught him was a Jew.

- When accused of murdering 3 ½ million people, Hoess answered,
- "No. Only 2 ½ million – the rest died from disease and starvation."
- Auschwitz, April 16, 1947. Like Haman, he was hanged on his own gallows.
- Haman might have warned him.

- God was in charge.
- A year later, Israel became an independent state.

Providence Conclusions

- God was in charge in the days of Esther and Mordecai.
- God was in charge when the plans of the Nazis all fell apart.
- God is in charge today.
- Providence Conclusions
- **Providence ... refers to God's superintending activity over human actions and human history, bringing creation to its divinely determined goal.**
 - *The Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*

 - *Galatians 4:4-5* ⁴But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

- Are we willing to trust him in a world threatened by terrorism and chaos?
- Are we willing to trust him in the personal circumstances that matter to us most?

- Are we willing to accept the fact that God still has a plan.
- Are we willing to accept the fact that he has decided to include us in it?

- Esther, the Jewish orphan, was made Queen of Persia because God's plan included her in that place and time.
- His plan here and now includes you.
- Are you ready for that?

- God never stops working.
- When he seems least visible and you feel you need him most – he may be most active of all.