

[Providence]

Esther 1:1 – 3

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~ Our Spiritual Safari is searching for the Lord Jesus Christ on every page of Scripture; so, when we reach a book like Esther — in which the Name “*God*” does not even appear — nor is there any indirect reference to Him whatsoever — it seems as if we may have our work cut out for us. Esther is the record of the nation Israel on a self-chosen path. At the time in which we are studying, all of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity had been afforded the opportunity to return to Jerusalem under King Cyrus; and we read all about that when we studied Ezra and Nehemiah — but only a small remnant availed themselves of returning to the land at that time.

So, Esther gives the story of those who chose to remain in the prosperity and luxury of Persia after the nation had been released from captivity and permitted to return. Since God is omitted, naturally, there won’t be any prayer in Esther. This book is not quoted or even casually referred to anywhere in the New Testament. Our safari is entering a totally pagan and rank heathen court of a world monarchy which ruled the entire known world at the time in which we are studying. That makes this highly unusual.

Another unusual aspect of Esther is that it is the other of two books named for a woman in the Word of God. In Ruth, we saw the “*Romance of Redemption*” — and here we see the “*Romance of Providence!*” The people in the Book of Esther are *ALL* out of the will of God completely — make no mistake; but they aren’t beyond His care or His reach. Redemption, for them, is certainly a romance. The Bible is a love story; but we only love Him because He first loved us. Christ gave His life for us because He loves us.

We’re going to examine the way in which God directs and overrules in the lives of believers who are out of His will; and we’ll come to understand how God rules in this material universe in which we live today — and how He deals with powers and principalities that have declared themselves to be independent of His will. In fact, we’re going to see God directing all human

creation concerning interaction with His children. Naturally, it sounds a little strange to teach the providence of God — yet not mention the Name of God anywhere in this book. Well, we're still looking for the Lord Jesus on every page of Scripture in this safari; and that's how the Spirit of God is going to reveal Him.

Deuteronomy 31:¹⁸ *And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods ~*

In the Book of Esther, the Face of God is hidden from the people of Israel who had remained in Babylon post-captivity. They are out of His will in disobedience — and they are very far from a relationship with Him; but He still loves them, and He always watches over His own and protects us. We see God directing Israel by His providence all the way through Esther; even though they'll not call upon Him. It's interesting that Israel wept and could not sing when they first went into captivity, because they remembered Zion; here, they have forgotten all about Zion. Zion is in rubble and ruins at this time, and these people don't want to go back there for any reason.

Israel said, *"... may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I forget Zion!"* They forgot Zion alright — and we won't hear them talking about God now, either — because they forgot Him, too. There will be no praying, nor will they be praising God in this book. Now, the providence of God means the Lord will direct all things, animate and inanimate, seen and unseen, good and evil, towards His worthy purpose; which, by de facto, means His will shall always prevail. His kingdom ruleth overall forevermore; God is running His universe.

The Lord Jesus Christ holds said universe together; upholding all things by the Word of His power. By Him all things consist, and, by His providence, God is moving our world into our future of tomorrow. God will provide all things. When Isaac asked, *"... where is the sacrifice?"* Abraham said, *"... God will provide."* Well, God provided, friends — the Lord Jesus Christ. Providence also means the hand of God in the glove of human events. God isn't a backseat driver — He has taken command over the steering wheel of the life of a believer. God is the pilot at the joystick in an unbearable, disorienting night flight. God makes great big doors swing on very small

hinges – all of that is providence. Most people refer to it as fate, chance or luck.

Well, it isn't fate, chance or luck because those things don't exist. What does exist is the provincial leading of the True and Living God. Most so-called Christians today operate in the area of the "*permissive will*" of God – under His providence. It is very difficult to be in the direct will of God for your life. We're going to consider things in Esther that God uses for His glory; but the people whom He uses are sometimes very far out of His will. Many Christians are doing many things that God doesn't approve of today; and they wonder why they can't seem to realize the will of God for their life. Well, there's a world of difference between being guided by the direct will of God, versus the providence of God. God says, "*I will guide them by mine eyes.*" You have to be close to a person to see their eyes. If you want God to guide you directly with His eyes, you'll have to be directly in His will – completely....

¹ Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, (this is Ahasuerus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces:)

² That in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the palace,

³ In the third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his princes and his servants; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, being before him:

~ Ahasuerus is a title – not a name. This matches Xerxes in secular history. We'll consider that history as we move forward. From India to Ethiopia is the great fertile heartland of the world; and this particular king reigned over all of it. Now, this king is throwing a party in the palace and our Spiritual Safari is not only invited – we're going. This will be a party to end all parties, to be sure.

Xerxes is preparing to make a disastrous campaign against Europe according to secular history – Greece, in particular – and he is trying to

gather support for his war at the time in which we are studying — and we'll see more of that in our next report. Our Spiritual Safari attends and deals with a great event in the history of the world at this party. How can God get in on the scene when the scene is this? Did you see the Lord Jesus Christ in this report? Well, He's here and He will be there; by His providence ~

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