

## **“The Book of Esther” (Route 66)**

All right, let’s turn in our Bibles to the Book of Esther... Over the past TWO SUNDAYS, we have CAMPED-OUT in the Book of Daniel... (If you WEREN’T with us, I encourage you to go back and check out those studies on your own)...

But—AS A REFRESHER—Babylon invaded the SOUTHERN KINGDOM of Judah on THREE SEPARATE OCCASIONS...

And, Daniel and his friends were taken to Babylon... during the FIRST PHASE of the INVASION (around 605 BC)... And—WHILE IN BABYLON—Daniel and his friends PROSPER and are PROMOTED... Daniel Chapter 1 tells us that:

**“God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom... Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.” – “in all matters of wisdom and understanding... [the king]... found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in... his realm.”** And, **“Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus.”**

So, Daniel serves in Babylon for SO LONG—about 70 YEARS, in all—that he actually survives THROUGH the Babylonian Empire and INTO the Persian Empire...

Now, the prophet JEREMIAH had said that: **“After seventy years [were] completed at Babylon,”** God would VISIT His people, and **“cause [them] to return to”** Jerusalem.

It was through ISAIAH, that God had NAMED **“Cyrus,”** saying he shall say: **“to Jerusalem, ‘You shall be built,’ and to the temple, ‘Your foundation shall be laid.’”**

REMARKABLY—in a FULFILLMENT of this PROPHECY, in 538 BC—Ezra Chapter 1 opens by saying: **“in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus... so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom... saying... ‘the LORD God of heaven... has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem...’ – So, “Who is among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem... and build the house of the LORD God of Israel...”**

But even though the Jews were ALLOWED to go BACK to Jerusalem and BUILD the temple... only a SMALL PORTION of actually return—about 60,000 of them... from around TWO MILLION... MOST of them STAY in PERSIA... Now, WHY would that be?

If we remember—back in Jeremiah 29—God had TOLD His people—while they were in BABYLON—to **“Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and... daughters... that you may be increased there, and not diminished.”**

And it seems as though God’s people had, indeed, become **COMFORTABLE** in Babylon. – Dr. Graham Scroggie writes: *“Most of [the] captives [around this time would have been] born in*

*Babylon... and the conditions of life... were such as to **dis**-incline them from crossing the desert to [start] over again in the land of their fathers.” It was about a 900-MILE JOURNEY...*

Another author adds: *“In the days of... Esther, the land of Judah was regarded as a wild and backward place.”*

Jon Courson writes: *“In Psalm 37, the people asked ‘How shall we sing the LORD’s song in a foreign land?’ But apparently, they had learned to sing the song of Babylon.”* – He says: *“This is most likely the reason there is no mention of God in the Book of Esther.”*

Which has LONG been one of the OBSERVATIONS about this Book... In fact, the Book of Esther has been called *“The most **un**-Christian book in the Old Testament.”*

Now, Dr. Graham Scroggie says: *“That is both true and UN-true.”* – He says: *“God is in [this book in] **mystery**, though not... manifestation.”* – Another author says: *“The imprint of God [is] [all] throughout [the Book of Esther].”*

Again, Jon Courson writes: *“There is no mention of hell, heaven, prayer, or faith... [yet] Esther is a story of the providence of God... Even though God’s people are faithless, God cares about them passionately, and is committed to them unquestionably.”*

So, all that is to say... the Book of Esther CENTERS ON the Jewish people who **REMAIN** in **PERSIA** after their countrymen return to Jerusalem to build the temple in the days of Ezra... This book is described as: *“A graphic narrative of how God’s people are preserved from ruin in the fifth century BC.”*

We don’t know—for SURE—who wrote the Book of Esther... CHRONOLOGICALLY, it falls between EZRA Chapters 6 & 7... It spans about 20 years, from 484 to 465 BC...

It’s been suggested that EZRA may have written the book, or perhaps Mordecai (who we’ll see this morning)... One article states:

*“[This] narrative owes much... to **Persian** records. Evidence... is seen in details, such as the names of Haman’s sons... Esther being called ‘**the** queen,’ Mordecai being called ‘the Jew.’ There are references to Persian etiquette... Persian customs & phrases are explained, and the Persian king Ahasuerus is referred to over 180 times” in this story...*

It’s interesting... In the Persian Capital of Persepolis, they have records which refer to an official named ‘**MAR**-deku,’ which is BELIEVED to be the ‘**Mordecai**’ from this book... and, he is specifically mentioned as SERVING under king Ahasuerus...

So, let’s DIVE-RIGHT-IN... What I’m gonna do is provide an OVERVIEW... and then, we’ll PAUSE toward the end, and draw-out some applications together...

Chapter 1, Verse 1, says it: **“came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus (this was the Ahasuerus who reigned over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, from India to Ethiopia)...”**

David Guzik writes: *“This King... is well known to history, though more commonly under [his GREEK] name Xerxes. He inherited the vast Persian Empire from his father, Darius I (mentioned in Ezra, Daniel, & Haggai)... these circumstances [are] extremely well attested... In its day, the Persian Empire... covered what we call... Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Jordan, Lebanon, Israel... parts of modern-day Egypt, Sudan, Libya, and Arabia.”* – It was HUGE.

Chapter 1 tells of a FEAST the king holds... Verse 10 says, **“when the [king’s heart] was merry with wine, he commands”** that **“Vashti”—his QUEEN—come “before [him]... in order to show her beauty to the people and... officials, for she was beautiful to behold.”**

**“But,”** Verse 12 says, **“Queen Vashti refused to come at the king’s command... therefore the king was furious...”** – In Verse 15, he says: **“What shall we do to Queen Vashti... because she did not obey the command of [the] King...”**

In Verse 19, his ADVISORS say: **“let a royal decree go out... that Vashti shall come no more before King Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal position to another...”** – So—in Chapter 2—King Ahasuerus is looking for a NEW QUEEN...

Verse 5 says: **“In Shushan the citadel there was a certain Jew whose name was Mordecai...”** – SHUSHAN was the WINTER CAPITAL of the Persian empire, and the CITADEL was the palace of the kings... Verse 7 says that this Mordecai:

**“had brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle’s daughter, for she had neither father nor mother.”** – And, **“The young woman was lovely and beautiful. When her father and mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.”** – So, they’re COUSINS...

Verse 8 says: **“when the king’s... decree [was] heard... Esther was also taken to the king’s palace...”** – And Verse 17 says that: **“The king loved Esther more than all the other women... so he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.”**

So, this YOUNG JEWISH ORPHAN becomes THE NEW QUEEN over the most powerful empire in the world at that time... HOWEVER, Verse 10 says:

**“Esther had not revealed her people or [her] family,”** to anyone... because **“Mordecai had charged her not to reveal it.”** So – at THIS POINT—nobody knows that Esther is JEWISH... (and that becomes extremely important later)...

Verse 21 says: **“In those days, while Mordecai sat within the king’s gate, two of the king’s eunuchs... sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.”** – And this, **“matter became known to Mordecai, who told Queen Esther, and Esther informed the king in Mordecai’s name.”**

Verse 23 says: **“it was confirmed, and both were hanged on a gallows; and it was written in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king.”** – So, MORDECAI is—**HONESTLY**—looking-out for the KING... But—in Chapter 3... THE PLOT THICKENS... Verse 1 says:

**“After these things King Ahasuerus promoted” a guy named “Haman,” who was “the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him and set his seat above all the princes who were with him. And all the king’s servants who were within the king’s gate bowed and paid homage to Haman... But Mordecai would not bow or pay homage.” – And, Verse 5 says:**

**“When Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow or pay... homage, Haman was filled with wrath. BUT,” Verse 6 says... Haman did NOT “lay hands on Mordecai... for they had told [Haman] of the people of Mordecai. [So] Instead, Haman sought to destroy all the Jews who were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus—the people of Mordecai.”**

Now—to add INSULT to INJURY—I wanna SKIP AHEAD and INSERT something here from Chapter SIX... There comes a night—**LATER** in the story—when the King **CAN’T SLEEP**...

And, he asks that they **“bring the book of the records of the chronicles; [to be] read before the king. And it was found written that Mordecai had told of”** the two eunuchs **“who had sought to lay hands on”** the king... And so, **“the king said...**

**‘What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?’ And [they]... said, ‘Nothing.’ – “So, the king said, ‘Who is in the court?’ – Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the... palace...” – And the king said, “Let [Haman] come in.”**

**“So... the king asked him, ‘What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?’ – Now Haman thought in his heart, “Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?” – Haman thinks the king is talking about HIM!**

And so: **“Haman answered the king... ‘let a royal robe be brought which the king has worn, and a horse on which the king has ridden...” – “Then parade [the man] on horseback through the city square...” – And “the king said...” – ‘That’s a GREAT IDEA!’**

Do this **“for Mordecai the Jew!”** – And Haman proceeds to take **“the robe and the horse, [and]... led [Mordecai] on horseback through the city square...”** – And afterward, Haman goes to his house, **“mourning...”** – I mean, he is just BUMMED-OUT!

In Chapter 5—Haman’s WIFE and FRIENDS say: **“Let a gallows be made,”** and let **“Mordecai be hanged on it.”** – This **“thing pleased Haman; so he had the gallows made.”**

Now—BACK in Chapter 3—Haman CONSPIRES, and SAYS to the king, in Verse 8: **“There is a certain people [in] your kingdom; their laws are different from all other peoples’, and they do not keep the king’s laws. Therefore, it is not fitting for the king to let them remain. If it pleases the king, let a decree be written that they be destroyed...”**

And **“the king took his signet ring... gave it to Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. And... said... do... as seems good to you.”** – Verse 13 says: **“letters were sent... into all the king’s provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day...”**

Now, Chapter 4, Verse 1 says: **“When Mordecai” HEARD all of this, “he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes... He cried out with a loud and bitter cry.”** – Mordecai TELLS Esther: **“Do not think... that you will escape in the king’s palace any more than all the other Jews.”** – And, here’s the MOST FAMOUS PASSAGE from the Book of Esther...

Mordecai SAYS to Esther—in Chapter 4:14—**“if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”** – And, I love Esther’s reply... She says—in Verse 16 of Chapter 4:

**“Gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me... And... I will go to the king... which is against the law...”** – But she says: **“if I perish, I perish!”**

See—back in Verse 11—Esther explained **“that any man or woman who goes”** to the court of the king, **“who has not been called, he has but one law: put all to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter.”**

She says: **“I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days.”** – So, Esther KNOWS that she is RISKING HER LIFE to GO BEFORE THE KING!

But, Chapter 5, Verse 2, says: **“when the king saw... Esther... she found favor in his sight, and the king held... the golden scepter...”**

**“And the king said to her: “What do you wish, Queen Esther? What is your request?” – “So Esther answered,” in Verse 4: “If it pleases the king, let the king and Haman come today to the banquet that I have prepared.”**

Now, Haman hears about this... he goes out **“joyful... with a glad heart...”** – He calls **“for his friends and his wife...”** And: **“Haman told them of his great riches... everything in which the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the officials and servants of the king.”** – And: **“Besides... Queen Esther invited no one but me to come... with the king to the banquet... she prepared...”**

Chapter 7 says: **“Haman went to dine with Queen Esther.”** – **“the king... said to Esther [again], “What is your petition? – What is your request, up to half the kingdom?”**

Esther said: **“Let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request. For we have been sold, my people and I, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated.”**

**“So King Ahasuerus... said to... Esther, “Who is he, and where is he, who would dare presume in his heart to do such a thing?” And Esther said, “The adversary and enemy is... HAMAN!” So Haman [is] terrified before the king and queen.”** – I’m sure he was!

**“The king arose in his wrath,” and Haman fell “across the couch where Esther was. [And] the king said, “Will he also assault the queen!?” – “One of the eunuchs, said... “Look!”**

**The gallows... which Haman made for Mordecai, who spoke good on the king's behalf..." – And "the king said, "Hang [Haman] on it!" So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai."**

In Chapter 8, the king permits **"the Jews who were in every city to gather together and protect their lives—to destroy, kill, and annihilate... any people... who would assault them... And... the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a holiday... many of the people of the land BECAME Jews..."** as the RESULT of this! – Verse 15 says:

**"Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel... with a... crown... and a garment of fine linen..." – Chapter 9 says: "All the officials of the provinces, the satraps, the governors... all those doing the king's work, helped the Jews, because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them. For Mordecai was great in the king's palace, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces... this man Mordecai became increasingly prominent."**

In fact, The Feast of Purim is CELEBRATED—to THIS day—in honor of the Jews' DELIVERANCE on this occasion... The Book concludes by saying:

**"All the acts of his power and his might, and the account of the greatness of Mordecai... are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia? For Mordecai the Jew was second to King Ahasuerus, and was great among the Jews and well received by... his brethren, seeking the good of his people and speaking peace to all his countrymen."** – It's an INCREDIBLE story!

Now, one of the IMMEDIATE LESSONS we draw-out of the Book of Esther is the **PROVIDENCE** of God... That **"all things"** [as we're told] truly DO **"work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."**

That can't just be the **"STUFF"** of Sunday morning sermons... while—in REAL time—we COMPLAIN, and FRET, and WORRY, and DOUBT, and QUESTION...

When Mordecai says that **"deliverance IS going to come from SOMEWHERE..."** – Mordecai KNOWS that the promises of God are SURE & CERTAIN, and that God is GOOD...

And, he KNEW that—EVEN IF ESTHER DID NOTHING—that **"relief and deliverance... for the Jews... [WOULD STILL] arise... from" SOMEWHERE... BECAUSE he is certain GOD'S PROMISES WILL COME TO PASS...**

Now, what Mordecai DOESN'T KNOW... is whether or not ESTHER will BE the INSTRUMENT THROUGH WHOM God WORKS... to bring-ABOUT this deliverance... He says: **"who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"**

David Guzik writes: *"This [same] principle applies to us... God... puts us in a place for a reason, and we need the courage and wisdom to see that reason and to walk in it."*

Charles Spurgeon said: *“In dark times God [wants to make] lamps with which to remove the gloom. Martin Luther [sits] by his hearth... when the Pope [sells]... indulgences... John Calvin quietly [studies while] false doctrine is... rife... A young [person] is here this morning – I do not know [where] he is, but I pray [that] the Lord make this... an [invitation] to him, starting him on his life-work. I feel [like] Samuel at Bethlehem, seeking for David, to anoint him with a horn of oil in the name of the Lord. You have been wishing for another position, or PLACE, where you could do something for Jesus: **do not wish anything of the kind... serve Him where you are.**”*

There’s an expression: *“If not me, WHO? – And, if not now, WHEN?”* – The Book of Esther **POWERFULLY** ILLUSTRATES this... and—in the MARRIAGE of the **ENCOURAGEMENT** of Mordecai, and the **FAITH** of ESTHER—GOD’S DELIVERANCE is accomplished for His people...

Now, ANOTHER thing to highlight... is how our **SIN WILL FIND US OUT**... There’s a **DETAIL** about Haman which—if we’re NOT students of the Bible—could slip past us

**FIVE** TIMES in this book... Haman is called **“the son of Hammedatha the Agagite,”** or just **“Haman the Agagite.”** – Now, why is that a **BIG DEAL**?

ALL THE WAY BACK in 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel Chapter 15... God tells the **FIRST KING SAUL** to **“Go and attack Amalek,”** because—in Exodus 17—the Amalekites were the **VERY FIRST PEOPLE** to **ATTACK** the Children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt.

David Guzik writes: *“The Amalekites attacked the weakest and most vulnerable of the Children of Israel. They did this for no reason [other than] violence and greed. God hates it when the strong take cruel advantage over the weak—especially when the weak are His people.”* – So, God tells Saul to:

**“utterly destroy all that [the Amalekites] have... [to] not spare them...”** – We read: **“Saul attacked the Amalekites... [but] took Agag king of the Amalekites alive... [They] spared Agag... and all that was good... they were unwilling to utterly destroy them.”**

Now, SAMUEL SHOWS UP, and he’s like: **“The LORD sent you on a mission [to]... ‘utterly destroy... the Amalekites... Why... did you not obey the voice of the LORD?’”**

Saul says: **“I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.”** – Saul’s like, *“I OBEYED... AND I DIDN’T DO IT!”*

Now, here’s what’s **INTERESTING**... in 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel Chapter 1... A young man comes to David to **REPORT** how a **BATTLE** has gone with king Saul and his son, Jonathan...

And, David asks him: **“How do you know that Saul and Jonathan... are dead?”** – **“the young man... [says]: ‘As I happened... to be on Mount Gilboa, there was Saul, leaning on his spear; and... [he said] to me.’”**

**“Please stand over me and kill me, for anguish has come upon me, but my life still remains...”** – So, the young man says: **“I stood over him and killed him...”**

But BEFORE HE DOES, Saul asks him: **“Who are you?”** – And the young man says: **“I am an Amalekite.”** – Saul was KILLED by ONE OF THE PEOPLE he had been TOLD to utterly DESTROY, and he was **UNWILLING** TO DO IT...

NOW... the HAMAN we read about in ESTHER—who wants to **ANNIHILATE THE JEWS**—is an ‘Agagite,’ he is a DESCENDANT of the KING that SAUL LEFT ALIVE!

This VERY SAME **PHENOMENON** happened with the Children of Isreal... when they came into the Promised Land... TIME and TIME AGAIN, God tells them to COMPLETELY DRIVE-OUT the inhabitants of the land, saying:

**“If you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land... then it shall be that those whom you let remain shall be irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides... they shall harass you in the land where you dwell.”**

TIME and TIME again we read that the Children of Israel did **NOT** drive-out the inhabitants of the land, and—TIME and TIME again—it was **THOSE** PEOPLE who rose-up and OPPRESSED them... [this is a picture of how the **FLESH** works]...

The Bible teaches us to be VERY DRASTIC when it comes to sin... Jesus says: **“If your... eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you... if your... hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you...”** – We’re to **“make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”**

We’re not supposed to try and **NEGOTIATE** with sin, or to **PEACEFULLY CO-EXIST**... We’re not supposed to **FEED** it... We are to **UTTERLY DESTROY IT**... We’re to **STARVE** it... And—**WHEN WE DON’T**—Numbers 32 says: **“be [certain] your sin will find you out.”** – F.B. Meyer said:

*“Sin is like a BOOMERANG.”* – John Trapp says: *“Punishment will overtake [us].”* – David Guzik writes: *“Saul’s failure to deal with Amalek... results in [Saul’s] undoing, with an Amalekite delivering [his] death-blow. When we fail to deal with the flesh as God prompts us, we can expect [the same] area of the flesh to come back and deliver some deadly strikes.”*

Now, having spent LAST week talking about the Prophecies of Daniel... I think we **HAVE**—in Haman—another **“pre-figure”** of the coming world leader known as the Antichrist...

Haman’s not just ANNOYED with Mordecai... He doesn’t just want to just MAKE HIS LIFE MISERABLE... Haman wants to **COMPLETELY DESTROY ALL of MORDECAI’S PEOPLE**—to **ANNIHILATE** the JEWS...

Which is EXACTLY what historical figures like Antiochus Epiphanes tried to do, or Adolf Hitler, and Josef Stalin... **AND** it’s EXACTLY what the Antichrist will attempt to do... it’s **ALSO** a SENTIMENT that is RAPIDLY on the RISE in the world today.



**WHY** this INSANE HATRED from Haman AGAINST the Jews? – On a HUMAN LEVEL—we could say that Haman is CONSUMED with PRIDE & JEALOUSY because Mordecai WON’T bow-down to him, and Mordecai is promoted when Haman is NOT...

I WOULD SUGGEST there is MORE going on here... In Revelation Chapter 12... John sees a “**sign**” in the heavens... He sees “**a great, fiery red dragon**”—who we KNOW is Satan, from Revelation 12:9...

John says this dragon is waiting to devour “**a male Child who [is] to rule all nations with a rod of iron**”—which are CLEAR Messianic references— “**as soon as [the Child is] born.**” – This is a PICTURE of SATAN... waiting to DESTROY JESUS as SOON AS HE IS BORN!

ALL THE WAY BACK in Genesis Chapter 3—God promises that a “**seed of the woman**” will CRUSH the serpent’s head—SATAN... Now, this isn’t a reference to ALL of Eve’s descendants, or HUMANITY in GENERAL...

But a SPECIFIC—SINGULAR—MALE DESCENDANT who will **DESTROY Satan**... By Genesis Chapter 12... this promise gets A LITTLE MORE SPECIFIC...

God says to ABRAHAM... “**in YOUR seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.**” – And, we KNOW that this is a reference to Jesus from Galatians Chapter 3...

This promise then passes to ONE of Abraham’s sons, ISAAC... THEN it passes to ONE of Isaac’s sons, JACOB... THEN, it comes to ONE of Jacob’s SONS—Judah... And—by 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 7—God promises KING DAVID it will be HIS “**seed.**”

And, throughout scripture... we SEE Satan trying to STOP God’s plan of sending a Deliverer by **DESTROYING THE PEOPLE** through whom God says Messiah will come...

- \* In Genesis 6, he attempts to POLLUTE the ENTIRE human gene pool...
- \* In Exodus, it’s Pharaoh’s attempt to KILL the Hebrew male children...
- \* Once the Israelites are in Hebron, there is ATTACK after ATTACK against God’s people...

And, WHO are the Jews in Persia? – SPECIFICALLY... they are the Jews of the Southern Kingdom... of the **Tribe of Judah**... from where the Messiah had been prophesied...

NOW that they are all gathered together in ONE PLACE... we see that HAMAN is ANOTHER ATTEMPT of Satan to DESTROY the Jewish people, and STOP MESSIAH from being born!

Matthew Henry writes: “*Pharaoh, [and Haman] and later Herod... sufficiently prove... [to be] agents for the great red dragon, who stands to devour the man-child as soon as it was born...*” – He adds that Haman’s decree MOST LIKELY includes: “*those [Jews] that had returned to [the land of Jerusalem], for that [land] was now a province of [the Persian] kingdom.*”

The Book of Esther ISN’T just the attempt of an ANGRY, BITTER PERSON to wipe-out the Jewish people... it is a **SATANIC PLOT** to STOP THE MESSIAH from being born...

Now, somebody could ask, “*Well, Kevin... Now that Jesus has been born... WHAT is the **POINT** of Satan trying to wipe-out the Jews today?*” – Well, think of all the END-TIMES SCENARIOS that are SPECIFICALLY RELATED to **ISRAEL**...

God can’t MIRACULOUSLY STEP-IN and DEFEND ISRAEL, if ISRAEL doesn’t exist...  
Jesus can’t REIGN and RULE FROM JERSUALEM if JERUSALEM doesn’t exist...

In the same way that Satan wanted to STOP the **BIRTH** of Jesus the FIRST TIME... He wants to **STOP THE RETURN OF JESUS a SECOND TIME**... And he’s attempting to do it THE SAME WAY today... by making it so that GOD **CAN’T** FULFILL BIBLE PROPHECY...

ONE MORE THING... It’s a **COOL PICTURE**... **IN** this story... Ahasuerus is the KING... Esther is his BRIDE... HAMAN is CALLED the “**The adversary and enemy...**” – And the KING ARISES “**in his WRATH,**” and ultimately USES what the enemy DEvised AGAINST HIM... Haman is HANGED on his OWN GALLOWS...

Well, JESUS is our KING... the CHURCH is His BRIDE... we have an ADVERSARY and ENEMY in the devil... Jesus will RETURN IN HIS WRATH...

And, Jesus ULTIMATELY USED the enemy’s OWN device AGAINST him... On the cross, Jesus “**disarmed principalities and powers, making a public spectacle of them...**” – Paul says” “**which none of the rulers of this age knew; for [if they] had... known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.**”

That’s a reference to SATAN, and the POWERS OF DARKNESS... Thinking they were DOING AWAY WITH the Messiah—God’s promised “**SEED.**” – INSTEAD... Jesus TURNED THE TABLES on them... they were—*essentially*—HANGED on their OWN GALLOWS!

The Book of Esther is a REMARKABLE PICTURE of the PROVIDENTIAL DELIVERANCE of God... of His people, the Jews... and it ministers to us TODAY, as the CHURCH...

So, there you have the BOOK OF ESTHER in a NUTSHELL...

Next up, we’re gonna see the Jews RETURN TO JERUSALEM upon Cyrus’s DECREE... and EZRA will REHEARSE THEIR HISTORY for them in the Books of 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles...

Now, before we get there, we’ve got HARVEST FAIR, and a FAMILY SERVICE NEXT SUNDAY... a BAPTISM, and PASTOR’S APPRECIATION POTLUCK...

And—if you want to know how to TRULY APPRECIATE YOUR PASTOR—take the time to READ AHEAD over the Books of 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles...

And come back in TWO WEEKS, read-up, prayed-up, having STUDIED... with HEARTS PREPARED to receive God’s Word... That’s what’s AHEAD... when Route 66 continues!