

“Never Waste a Crisis”

Esther 1-4

East Berlin Community Church

Pastor Keith A. Mosebrook

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Introduction:

- Politicians understand the maxim: *“Never waste a crisis!”*
- Our spouses understand the maxim too
- All of us face crises in life.
- Popularity and high esteem of the book of Esther by the Jews
- Historical background of Esther
 - Trace the world rulers from Daniel’s time to Esther’s
 - Archeological information regarding Xerxes, Esther, and Mordecai

God “Never Wastes a Crisis” !

A. God uses crisis to confront Spiritual Complacency!

1. Her **CONDITION?**

a. **She’s still living in Persia**

- 1) The prophetic warning to leave Babylon and return.
 - Jeremiah 29:10-- *“For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.”*
- 2) Living separate in Persia?
 - Esther 3:8-- *“There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from all other people’s, and they do not keep the king’s laws. Therefore it is not fitting for the king to let them remain.”*

b. **Willingness to compromise morally and spiritually in order to live well in Persia**

- 1) Deposing of Queen Vashti—Esther 1
- 2) **Willingness to commit adultery and marry a pagan.**
 - Esther 2:1-9-- *“After these things, when the wrath of King Ahasuerus subsided, he remembered Vashti, what she had done, and what had been decreed against her. Then the king’s servants who attended him said: “Let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king; and let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather all the beautiful young virgins to Shushan the citadel, into the women’s quarters, under the custody of Hegai the king’s eunuch, custodian of the women. And let beauty preparations be given them. Then let the young woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti.” This thing pleased the king, and he did so. In Shushan the citadel there was a certain Jew whose name was Mordecai the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite. Kish had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captives who had been captured with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away. And Mordecai had brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle’s daughter, for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman was lovely and beautiful. When her father and mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter. So it was, when the king’s command and decree were heard, and when many young women were gathered at Shushan the citadel, under the custody of Hegai, that Esther also was taken to the king’s palace, into the care of Hegai the custodian of the women. Now the young woman pleased him, and she obtained his favor; so he readily gave beauty preparations to her, besides her allowance. Then seven choice maidservants were provided for her from the king’s palace, and he moved her and her maidservants to the best place in the house of the women.”*

- Esther 2:14-- *“In the evening she went, and in the morning she returned to the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king’s eunuch who kept the concubines. She would not go in to the king again unless the king delighted in her and called for her by name.”*

3) **Esther is NO Danielle.** No *“purposing in her heart not to defile herself”*

c. **Conceals her identity as belonging to God’s chosen people.**

- Esther 2:10-- *“Esther had not revealed her people or family, for Mordecai had charged her not to reveal it.”*
- Esther 2:19-20-- *“When virgins were gathered together a second time, Mordecai sat within the king’s gate. Now Esther had not revealed her family and her people, just as Mordecai had charged her, for Esther obeyed the command of Mordecai as when she was brought up by him.”*

d. **No mention of God in the book.** Not one prayer is recorded. No mention of the Law or any religious observances.

2. The **CRISIS**—The feud between Haman and Mordecai

a. **The Cause of the Feud**

- Esther 3:1-6-- *“After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, 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, for so the king had commanded concerning him. But Mordecai would not bow or pay homage. Then the king’s servants who were within the king’s gate said to Mordecai, “Why do you transgress the king’s command?” Now it happened, when they spoke to him daily and he would not listen to them, that they told it to Haman, to see whether Mordecai’s words would stand; for Mordecai had told them that he was a Jew. When Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow or pay him homage, Haman was filled with wrath. But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone, for they had told him of the people of Mordecai. Instead, Haman sought to destroy all the Jews who were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus—the people of Mordecai.”*

b. **The Plan of Haman to annihilate the Jews**

- Esther 3:7-15-- *“In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur (that is, the lot), before Haman to determine the day and the month, until it fell on the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, “There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from all other people’s, 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 I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who do the work, to bring it into the king’s treasuries.” So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. And the king said to Haman, “The money and the people are given to you, to do with them as seems good to you.” Then the king’s scribes were called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and a decree was written according to all that Haman commanded—to the king’s satraps, to the governors who were over each province, to the officials of all people, to every province according to its script, and to every people in their language. In the name of King Ahasuerus it was written, and sealed with the king’s signet ring. And the letters were sent by couriers 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, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their possessions. A copy of the document was to be issued as law in every province, being published for all people, that they should be ready for that day. The couriers went out, hastened by the king’s command; and the decree was proclaimed in Shushan the citadel. So the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Shushan was perplexed.”*
- Esther 3:13-- *“destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their possessions.”*

3. The CONFRONTATION

a. The crisis humbles them

- Esther 4:1-3-- *“When Mordecai learned all that had happened, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city. He cried out with a loud and bitter cry. He went as far as the front of the king’s gate, for no one might enter the king’s gate clothed with sackcloth. And in every province where the king’s command and decree arrived, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.”*
- 2 Chronicles 7:14-- *“if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”*

b. The crisis makes it impossible for her to remain neutral

- Esther 4:4-14-- *“So Esther’s maids and eunuchs came and told her, and the queen was deeply distressed. Then she sent garments to clothe Mordecai and take his sackcloth away from him, but he would not accept them. Then Esther called Hathach, one of the king’s eunuchs whom he had appointed to attend her, and she gave him a command concerning Mordecai, to learn what and why this was. So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the city square that was in front of the king’s gate. And Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king’s treasuries to destroy the Jews. He also gave him a copy of the written decree for their destruction, which was given at Shushan, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her, and that he might command her to go in to the king to make supplication to him and plead before him for her people. So Hathach returned and told Esther the words of Mordecai. Then Esther spoke to Hathach, and gave him a command for Mordecai: “All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to 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, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days.” So they told Mordecai Esther’s words. And Mordecai told them to answer Esther: “Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king’s palace any more than all the other Jews. For 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?”*

c. Esther takes a spiritual stand, identifying with her people and willing to risk her life in order to save them.

- Esther 4:15-17-- *“Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai: “Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!” So Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther commanded him.”*

B. God uses crisis to demonstrate His Providential Care!

1. Great Truth: We have a God in Heaven who cares for us!

He may be HIDDEN and SILENT, but He never stops working behind the scenes, orchestrating our lives and caring for us.

2. Mordecai’s Observation

- Esther 4:14-- *“For 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?”*

3. The “Happenstances” in the story of Esther

4. These "Happenstances" just didn't happen, but clearly show God's providential care for his people!

Application for us today?

1. **God uses crisis to shake us from our spiritual complacency.**
 - Romans 12:1-2-- *"present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."*
2. **God uses crisis to deepen our faith in Him.**