

The Book of Esther

Sunday 8/29/2004

Kids, you can go to your thing here. I was so caught up in the music. Kids can be dismissed. Go ahead. That's right. You're down there. Put him in that crib. I want to see him with a little hat on with a bottle in his mouth. By the way, if you do not have a Bible here this morning, I forgot to say this. We have Bibles back there that you can use, or you can really keep them if you do not own a Bible. John Hill is back there someplace, right here. If you need a Bible, just throw something at John here. We will get you a Bible. We want everybody to have a copy of the Word of God because we just enjoy the Bible around here. We are not much on tradition, frills, or frolic, but we do take the Bible very seriously, and we are excited about that.

As you know, we have been coming through every book of the Bible, and I have been laying out for you how those books all fit together. I have been trying to give you a cohesive understanding of the Word of God so that a year from now, when we begin to really launch into some things in the Bible, you really have a foundation. I want you to know the Bible. I have to tell you this too: it is the highlight of my week. I know it changes from time to time, but I think I enjoy more than anything else I am doing right now, getting to spend one-on-one with you guys in the Bible. As I told you when we started our church, I would spend an hour a week with anybody at all that wanted to learn the Bible, showing you how to do it. I have just had a great time going through the Bible with you folks, one-on-one, in little small groups, and with husbands and wives. Wow, it has been great. I get to see your growth. I get to see the excitement in your eyes about the Word of God. To me, that is what it is all about.

Again, if you are here and you do not even have to be a member of this church, if you are somebody who just wants to learn some things about the Bible, or maybe you are somebody that just has some questions about the Bible and you would just like to come down and sit down, you do not want to come on Thursday night to ask me those questions. Make an appointment. We will sit down and have time with God together. There is nothing in this world I like to do better than sit down with people and talk about God's Word. So that offer is an open-ended policy. You can always use that whenever you want to. That is how we learn the Bible, along with what we are doing on Sunday and on Thursday.

I. The Uniqueness of Esther

This morning, we are going to go into the Book of Esther today. The Book of Esther, without a doubt, is the strangest book in the Bible. I do not know if you know anything about the Book of Esther or not. A lot of times, if you have hung around churches or you have studied the Bible yourself, you pick up some things. You know that the Book of Esther is the only book in the Bible where God is not mentioned. It is the only book in the Bible where there is no mention or no reference to the Lord. Every book in the Bible talks about God did this or the Lord, or they talk to the Lord. In the Book of Esther, there is absolutely no reference to God anywhere. There is no reference to the Lord anywhere. It is a book that, seemingly, as far as the book is written, is totally void of any God or any concept of God.

That has led Bible scholars over the years—and I have read a number of their works over the years in learning the Bible and all the things about the Bible—and that has led a number of men to write books to question the fact that Esther should be in your Bible at all. That is so typical. When you cannot figure it out, God must be wrong. That is the mentality we have today. "I am so smart that if I cannot see it, then God obviously had to make the mistake because, man, I am so smart and so brilliant that I do not miss anything." Of course, that kind of attitude will not get you much from the Word of God. The Book of Esther, without a doubt, is not only the strangest book in the Bible, but probably one of the most unique books in the Bible.

II. Esther and the Premillennial View

A couple of weeks ago, we talked about the premillennial view of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me restate that for you. We talked about the different viewpoints that people have within different churches and organizations about Christ's coming. The premillennial return of Christ was what I told you was the Bible believer's view. That simply means that Christ is coming back, literally, visibly, after the Tribulation period, at the Second Coming of Christ, to establish the millennial reign of Christ. That is one of the key doctrines of the Bible. If you do not get that right, you will not get much of the rest of your Bible right either.

We showed you, as we started these five books—Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, and Psalms—how those five books really lay out for you the premillennial view. In fact, the Book of Esther is the book that really brings it all together. Paul, when he wrote to the churches on the issue of the Second Coming of Christ—and Paul is the writer we want to study if you want to learn how the book goes to you—then you want to focus on Paul's writings. We have talked about that before because he writes with doctrine to the church. So when you want to study the Second Coming of Christ, you go to Paul's books. When Paul deals with the issue to the church of the Second Coming of Christ, he talks about the fact that, as he says in 1 Thessalonians 5:1, he likens the coming of Christ to the times and the seasons. When you get over to Revelation 12 and 13, and a little bit farther down in 1 Thessalonians 5, he likens these times and the seasons to a woman in travail. In other words, he is saying to us that the Second Coming of Christ and God dealing with all the events that deal with the premillennial return of Christ is like a woman with child, a woman that is going to have a baby.

He told us before, the writers of the Bible said that no man knows the day and the hour. You always have people who try to predict when the Lord is coming back. All my Christian adult life, I have heard that 1988 was supposed to be the big year, and He was supposed to come back in 1988 and all of this stuff. The Bible clearly tells you that no man knows the day and the hour. There is no way that anybody in his right mind would get up and set a date for the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no way anybody who knows anything about the Bible would do that. But what Paul says is this: you may not know the day and the hour, but every believer, every child of God, everybody who is saved, has to understand the times and the seasons because it is the times and the seasons.

That is an interesting thing: time and the seasons. There are two ways in the Bible that you figure the Second Coming of Christ down to a very close margin and within the times and the seasons.

One of them is the times in the Bible. The other one are the seasons. God gave us four seasons. God gave us four times of the year to show us that things go in a cycle. Those things go in a cycle, and that cycle of the four seasons brings us around and shows us that things die and they come back, and there is an end and there is a beginning. There is an end and there is a beginning to everything in God's cycle. But that cycle is eternal in everything that God does. The Bible talks about in the book of Ecclesiastes, the winds go by a cycle. In Ecclesiastes, it talks about the water cycle with water vapor. All the rivers run into the sea, but yet the sea is not full. All through those things, if the Bible does anything clearly, it shows you that God operates in cycles. That is why the book of Ecclesiastes also said there is no new thing under the sun. History always repeats itself because it always runs in a cycle.

So when we come to the times and the seasons, Paul says, "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you." He is saying to the church, "I do not have to tell you about the times and the seasons," or "I should not have to," because if you are in the Bible and if you are saved and you are a Bible student, you ought to understand totally and completely what I am talking about today. Very frankly, the whole focal point of everything that you and I do looks forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember last week when we talked about those nine gates, and I told you gate eight and nine were double gates, the Eastern Gate and the Horse Gate. The Eastern Gate is the gate that Christ is going to go through when He enters in from the Mount of Olives at the Second Coming of Christ. That is Zechariah 14. The Horse Gate is the gate that they brought the horses in, and that is the horses found in Revelation 19, the armies that followed Him on white horses. Those two gates show us that the church needs to have a double emphasis on the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ because, as we already know, it is the theme of the Bible. Because it is the theme of the Bible, Paul says that of the times and the seasons of that period of time, "ye have no need that I write unto you."

Then he says it is like a woman in travail, a woman going to give birth. Every time a woman goes into the doctor and he says, "You are going to have a child," they always give her a due date. Very few women ever hit their due date. Some of them do, obviously, in any society, we have millions and millions of people, somebody is going to hit it sooner or later. But the norm is most people do not. I promise you, if your due date was May 12th or June 15th or whatever the case, that day for many of you came and passed. Somebody said, "Oh, we are not going to come until the 13th." It came on the 9th. You do not know for sure when that baby is coming. But you know what? You as a mother who are carrying that baby, you may not know the exact time it is going to come, but you know that it is getting close. You start telling everybody, "Do not get too far away where I cannot get a hold of you because I really feel weird."

Everybody who carries this book with them should understand and know when it gets close. In fact, the Bible is such a book when God wrote it that He tells us exactly where we are at in perspective to the Second Coming of Christ, no matter where you lived in church history. God has a job for every Christian to do at every age of church history. I have told you about this before. God has an issue that needs to be dealt with. Everybody in any place in church history that was a Bible believer and loved God and loved the Word of God, from the Word of God, is

able to figure out where they are at in relationship to the coming of Christ, figure out the issue that God has for them to deal with, figure out the prevailing spirit of the age they are living in, and then take the Word of God and successfully negotiate that spirit and negotiate around that spirit with the power of the Holy Spirit of God to preach the Gospel and do the job that God has called you to do. That is what Paul means when he says, "You have no need that I write unto you about the times and the seasons." That is what the Bible means in Revelation 12 and 13 and 1 Thessalonians 5:5 when it talks about a woman in travail.

I do not know the day and the hour that Christ is coming. I do not know that day and the hour. I do not know that. Nobody in the world knows that. But I am telling you this, based on what we are going to look at this morning, I can tell you, you better not stray far from home. Because the woman is paining to be delivered. When I am done this morning with this text and we come through some things and we look at this and we see how this fits together, hopefully, if you have any kind of spiritual insight at all, you too understand where you are at in relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is not a time in your life to be out of fellowship with God. This is not a time in your life to be away from the things of God. You are facing, without a doubt, the judgment seat of Christ. You are facing the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is not a time for a child of God to be fooling around in the world, not fully focused on the things that God wants you to do. I am giving you forewarning that you are standing in the times and the seasons, and right before this woman in travail is going to be delivered. Of course, that woman is the nation of Israel, as we will see.

With that in mind, let us look at the Book of Esther. Let us pray.

Father, we thank and praise You for all that You do for us. We ask You now, Lord, to give us a clear mind today, help us focus on the things at hand, and to deal with the Word of God through Your Spirit. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name for a sake we ask it. Amen.

III. Key Characters and Their Typology

In the Book of Esther, there are some characters that we need to look at here, and we need to define. You will want to put these in your notes as you go back in your Bible and lay all this stuff out.

1. Ahasuerus Ahasuerus is the King of Persia. In our story, he will be a type of God the Father. He is an absolute monarch. In fact, it is from Persia that we get the absolute concept of the rules, the law of the Medes and the Persians. How many times have you heard that and not maybe understood what it meant? The law of the Medes and the Persians were absolute. In other words, once a law in Persia was established, it could never be revoked. It could never be taken back. Once a law was put on the books, it could never be taken off the books. That is why the phrase "the laws of the Medes and the Persians" are used today to characterize something that is absolute and somebody that is unmovable, somebody that will not get off the spot that they are on because they are a die-hard on what they believe. We use that term today in our own society, but it goes back to King Ahasuerus, the King of Persia,

who was a type of God the Father in our story here, even though he was a Gentile king. At the time that he lived, he was an absolute monarch, just like God, only in a human sense.

2. Vashti Our next character is a lady. Her name is Vashti. Vashti in our story is a Gentile queen at the opening of this story, but she gets dethroned. She gets taken off the throne. Vashti, being taken off the throne, is a picture of the end of the times of the Gentiles. I am just giving you the characters. We are going to come back and put it all together.
3. Esther The next player is another woman, Esther. Esther is a Jewish queen. Esther will represent for us the theocratic government of the nation of Israel, the nation of Israel under theocracy in a relationship with God. She is a type of a woman found in Revelation 12 and Revelation 13.
4. Mordecai Then we have another man. His name is Mordecai. Mordecai will picture for us the Jew in the Tribulation period, who is hated and persecuted by the Antichrist.
5. Haman Our last character here, as we begin to put this book together, will be a man by the name of Haman. Haman is one of your eighteen types of the Antichrist in your Bible. You remember I told you that there are eighteen men in the Old Testament that foreshadow the coming man of sin. Haman is one of those men. He is a type of the Antichrist.

The books that we have looked at here—Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther—and the ones that we are going to look at in the next couple of weeks—Job and Psalms—these five books show you the times and the seasons. God has providentially put these books in your Bible to teach you. God uses everything in His Bible to teach you something about something. These books, in their order in the Bible, with their content and stories, as you have already seen as we have come through it a couple of weeks ago, show you the premillennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ and begin to give you an understanding of the times and the seasons. What the times and the seasons have to deal with is God ending the reign of the Gentile nations.

We talked about it, that in 2 Chronicles 36, the Jew goes into captivity. We talked about how that Jew goes into captivity twice. How he returns twice. How the first time he goes back, it is a picture, it leads to the First Coming of Christ. How the second time he goes back, it leads to the Second Coming of Christ. What we have here in this book of Esther, what we have here is a picture of the reign of the Gentile nations coming to an end and setting up the Jewish nations, which will usher in the events that we all look for in the Bible: the rapture of the church, the Tribulation period, the Second Coming of Christ, and will accommodate to the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. This material is covered from Revelation 1 through Revelation 22. It is talked about in Romans 9, Hebrews 8 and 9, and a thousand other places in your Bible.

That is how the book of Esther fits in. With the book of Esther, what we are going to see is that a... and remember now, we saw in the book of Ezra where they go back, just like they did in 1918. We saw in the book of Nehemiah where they rebuild, just like they did in 1948. Now we come to the book of Esther, and in the book of Esther, we see a Gentile queen being taken off the throne and the times of the Gentiles. A Jewish queen putting back on the throne, the establishment of the nation of Israel, and all the other events that we need to look at are found in this great book. I am going to go through them here in just a little bit, but I have got to set some stages here and I have got to define some things for you.

IV. Reason 1: God Hides Himself from Israel

I said the book of Esther was a unique book, a strange book, I think the word I used, because it does not have the name God in it. Here is why. Two reasons, two reasons, and you need to learn this. These are very important. There are two reasons that are tremendous Bible concepts why the name of God is not found in this book, and it has nothing to do with scholarship.

The first reason has to do with the nation of Israel itself. Let me just talk to you for a moment, and while I am doing that, I want you to turn over to Matthew 13. What you are going to get today, among everything else, is a lesson on how the Bible is its own dictionary. How the Bible is its own commentary. How the Bible lays itself out and interprets itself. How many times have you heard somebody say, "Well, you know what, you can interpret the Bible a thousand different ways," and that is true, you can. Somebody will say, "Well, that is just your interpretation." Well, that can be true, too. But I never take a private interpretation of the Bible, because the Bible says the Bible is not for private interpretations. I learned over the years that the Bible interprets itself. I do not have any right to tell you this means this, unless I can take you to a place in the Bible where another verse shows you that that is what it means. That is letting the Bible lay itself out.

There are two reasons why God is not found in this book, or the concept of God, the name of God. As I said, the first reason has to do with the nation of Israel, and here it comes. During the time of the Gentiles, during the time period that we have been studying, a time period that I showed you a couple of weeks back is a monumental place in history in your Bible that you have to figure out and know where it is at. During the times of the Gentiles, when God has turned His attention to Gentile nations, and God has taken the nation of Israel from the front burner, put them on the back burner, so to speak, and put the Gentiles up front, like the book of Esther, where the Gentile is on top and then she gets dethroned and the Jewish queen comes on. During the times of the Gentiles, God has hid Himself from the nation of Israel. The book of Esther represents for us that period of time when God is hiding Himself from that nation. That nation cannot find Him, and it cannot find Him because God purposely has hid Himself from His own people because of their sin.

You say, "Where do you get that from, Bob?" You get it from the Bible. I will show you. Matthew 13. We know the book of Matthew lays out for us Christ coming to the nation of Israel as the King of the Jews. We know that. We know that in that book He comes and He presents Himself to the nation of Israel at the First Coming of Christ to bring to them the establishment of the kingdom of heaven. If you were to read Matthew 1 through Matthew 11, you would find in every chapter it deals with a different aspect of Christ presenting Himself as the Jewish Messiah to the literal nation of Israel during the time period at the First Coming of Christ. You will find where He, every chapter as I said, He goes through and He fulfills everything that He is supposed to fulfill. He says to the nation of Israel, basically, "Here I am. I am your Messiah."

In Matthew 12, they reject Him. They reject Him by saying that the spirit by which He does all the miracles that He is doing is the devil's spirit. At that point, the nation of Israel makes their official rejection of the Messiah. Then a strange thing happens in Matthew 13 and continues on to Matthew 25. That strange thing comes in the form of twelve parables. There are twelve

parables that have to do with the kingdom of heaven. Those parables are told in mystery form. There has been a lot of spooky stuff about the parables. You can go out and you can find the spooky secret things of the parables, and everybody tries to make it something because people like the supernatural, even God's people like the godly supernatural stuff, which is no such thing. But we like that mystic thing, you see. Let me just bust your bubble for you. The parables are not mystic about anything. The parables are nothing more than God taking the mystery of the kingdom of heaven to the nation of Israel and putting it in a mystery form that the nation of Israel cannot get any more light.

That brings up a tremendous principle. That tremendous principle is, this is the reason why a lot of people today who reject the Bible—and by the way, when you reject the Bible, you reject God—this is why a lot of people, they cannot get anything out of the Bible. They are in the same state the nation of Israel was. The state that they are in is, once you reject the Holy Spirit of God and the book that He uses, you are up against the wall as far as getting anything from God because, just as the nation of Israel, it goes into a mystery. Then you have got to find your truth from somebody else, somewhere else, Christian bookstores, Christian this, go to this, "Well, so and so has books out." "Well, you ought to hear this guy." But you cannot go to that Bible and dig it out yourself. You are in trouble. You are in trouble. God help the man, God help the woman, they cannot go to the Word of God and find out what the Word of God is saying about where they are at in life. That is Israel's condition.

In Matthew 13 through Matthew 25, we find that the kingdom who He brought to Israel, who He wanted in the first eleven chapters of Matthew, He presented to them. They rejected, and now it goes into parables. The reason for the parables are found in Matthew 13:10-15. He tells you why He puts it into parables because Israel's heart is hardened. They have grossed their hearts, waxed hard. They will not listen to God. So God takes that kingdom under the prophecy of Isaiah and puts it into a mystery form called the parables. From this point on, God hides Himself from the nation of Israel. At this point, God begins to take from them the truth, even though they get Christ dying on the cross, even though they get up to Acts 7, there are some things that are transitioning there. As far as God's mind is concerned, as long as Israel's heart is hardened against His Son, they will get no truth.

In Matthew 13:44, which is the fifth parable, here is where you find out what we are talking about.

Matthew 13:44

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

If you would take the time—and I am going to save you the time, but you can look it up, keep me honest, do not ever believe me, I am the biggest liar you have ever found in your life. You have got to check me out all the time—the word "treasure" will be found in the Bible, defined for you as the nation of Israel. You will find that in Exodus 19:5, Psalms 135:4, and it is called a peculiar treasure. Israel is the treasure. In Matthew 13:38, you will find the Holy Spirit of God tells you that the field is the world. In Matthew 13:37, you will find that the man here is God.

What you have got here is this: the man is God who finds a treasure, Israel, and because of their rejection, He takes that treasure that He finds in a field, the world, and because of their bad attitude of heart, the Bible says He hideth. Write down Deuteronomy 31:17, Isaiah 45:15, Isaiah 54:8, Isaiah 57:17, and you will find among those verses where it says God hides Himself from Israel. No question about it. No question about it. During this time period, from Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, up to, through the times of the Gentiles, to the times that we live in right now, God has hid Himself from the nation of Israel. They cannot find Him.

That is why in the book of Esther, the book that doctrinally covers this period of time that shows you and me through a story about a king who has a Gentile bride, who dethrones the Gentile bride, and then sets up a Jewish bride with all the players in the right place—the Antichrist, Haman, Mordecai, and everything that takes place—you have a picture of the times of the Gentiles. That is why the name of God, any reference to God, is not found in the book of Esther, the most unique book in the Bible, because during that time period, God has hid Himself from the nation of Israel. Oh, that Bible is an incredible book.

V. Reason 2: The Laodicean Church Period

The second reason is this same time period when God is dealing with the nation of Israel, this same time period that deals right before the rapture of the church, and from 1918 on up to all this time when God is orchestrating the nations and putting out the Gentile nations and changing the land, the geographics of the land and putting up nations and kings to bring that nation back at the expense of the Gentile nation. We also know that this is a picture of the Laodicean church period. We know that Colossians 1 through Colossians 4 is a picture of Laodicea; five times it is mentioned in that book. We also know that that book pictures that God has been replaced with philosophy, God has been replaced with tradition, God has been replaced by the rudiments of this world.

In Revelation 3:20, it talks about this Laodicean church period, which just happens to fall historically from 1900 to the time period that we live in. Even Philip Schaff got that right. We find Christ thrown out of His own church; they do not need Him anymore. They do not need Him anymore. We find that during this time, it is hard to find God. It is hard to find God. The book of Revelation says in Revelation 3 that the Laodicean church, they have no need of God anymore. They have got everything that they need. They do not need God. They come to the place where they have thrown God out, and they are orchestrating, just like the nation of Israel. They are pretending and having a great time, but nobody reads the Bible anymore. Nobody has a relationship with God anymore. God's people are walking around like they are going to live for another million years. They have no idea of the times and the seasons. They have no idea of the urgency of this hour. Because we live in a time where God seemingly is not anywhere, but you know what? He still is. He is in a book. If you get in a book, you will find Him. You will find Him.

VI. God's Sovereignty Behind the Scenes

But yet at the same time, you will find in the book of Esther, just like you will find down through history, that even though God is not mentioned in the book of Esther, even though you find no references to the Lord or God in any way, you know what you find? You find God behind the scenes in every chapter. You find God behind every verse. You find God behind the very scenes of that book, orchestrating the events, working on people's hearts, orchestrating nations, orchestrating kings, putting everything together, and even though in this great book, you find that no mention of God. God is everywhere if you know what to look for.

It is just like today. God today has hid Himself from the nation of Israel. We live in a world just like the book of Esther that does not want the name of God associated with anything. We do not want it in our schools. We do not want it on our money. We do not want the Ten Commandments in our courthouses. We do not want nativity scenes at Christmas. We do not want, I mean, everywhere you go in the world that we live in, nobody wants anything to do with the name of God. It is true in Israel. They have a form of godliness that is so far. If you know anything about the Bible, anything about history, anything at all, do not be fooled by the religions of Israel and all this stuff. It is all political. They are a million light years from God, as are most Christians in America.

We find that even in this period of time, which the book of Esther represents for us, where God is not named, God is not mentioned. Just like in the book, He is behind every chapter orchestrating the events. God today, my friend, is behind the scenes in everything that goes on today. Everything that goes on today in this world, God is there orchestrating the events, bringing about the ups and downs of nations, kings, queens, presidents. He is setting the stage for the time for all for one purpose. That is the time that He brings the nation of Israel back to Him and He establishes the kingdom of heaven as He promised to Abraham.

I am just telling you something. You can believe me or you cannot believe me. It does not make any difference to me, but I am telling you something. When you lose the Jew in history, you lose all perspective in history. I am telling you, when you look at 2 Chronicles 36, that Jew is told to go back. Next book, he goes back, Ezra, and he goes back like he did in 1918. Next book, Nehemiah, he rebuilds like he did in 1948. Now, here we are in the book of Esther. In the book of Esther, it talks about all the aspects of it. The book of Esther is a picture of the times and the seasons and the end of the Gentiles. I will tell you what the book of Esther does for any Bible-believing Christian: it puts everything in perspective. It puts everything in perspective.

You know, we are all guilty of this, every one of us. If there is one thing that we as Christians have in common with the world, and we do, it is this: that in our daily routines of Christianity, we lose perspective of what God is and what God is doing. The world has lost it a long time ago. They have no clue. God's people ought to be the ones that have it because we have the Word of God. But even in that, the hardest thing, because we are human beings, we have emotions, and we feel things, and we hear things, and we have to make judgments and decisions and value judgments on the things that we hear. Let me say something to you. If you do not have an absolute standard in making those judgments, I told you before, your whole job as a child of God is one-fold: that is to find out what God's opinion is from this book on everything in life, and then make that your opinion.

You see, let me tell you the first thing that you got caught up in. You still think you are an American. You are not an American. No, no, no, no. The Bible says that once you became a new creature in Christ Jesus, all things are passed away, all things become new. You say, "That does not sound very patriotic." I am not talking about patriotism today. I am talking about the calling God has given you. God called you out of the world. You may live in America, but you are no longer an American. You were born as a Gentile, unless we have got some Jews in here. You were born as a Gentile. Your mother and father were Gentiles. You maybe all come from different Gentile nations. There probably is not a true American in here anywhere. You all come from Europe. You all come from Ireland. You all come from Italy. You all come from Germany. You all come from various places, down through your history, your family. You mix and match from everywhere, and you came over on a boat sometime where your forefathers did, mine did, and here you are, and you are here today, and you think you are an American. When in actuality, you are a European. The real Americans are out there running the casinos over in Kansas City, Kansas, or trying to. The real Americans are Indians.

Now I have got another shocker for you. The day you got saved, you ceased to be an American. You are now a Christian. You say, "Well, I do not think that faith." Hey, the Bible says if you are a Christian, the moment you get saved, now you are an ambassador back to this planet. I live in America. I was born in America. The day I got saved, I ceased to be an American. God called me out, but He gave me the wisdom through a book to say, "I called you out. You are no longer one of them, but I am sending you back to them with My message as My ambassador." Yes, I live in America. You say, "Would you put an American flag out?" Absolutely. She would say, "If your country went to war, would you fight?" Absolutely. I am not saying you do not follow the things and do what is right and be patriotic in that sense. I am saying in your mind, you have got to separate yourself. You know what the problem with some of you are? You cannot do that. You cannot do that. You get caught up because you do not see it as God sees it. You think when Christ showed up, He came over there in blue jeans and a shirt with a sweatband and an American flag on the top of it. No, no, no, no.

When you understand what I am talking about, you understand the greatest concept and the greatest lesson in all the Bible, other than salvation. You know what it is? The greatest lesson in all the Bible outside of you being saved and getting that message and being told that wonderful story and trusting Christ, the greatest message that you ever hear, the greatest concept you will ever learn out of that is the concept of how God looks at things.

Next week, we are having a Republican convention. A couple weeks ago, we had a Democrat. Here is the deal. The Democrats think God is on their side. Republicans think God is on their side. The Republicans say, "Well, God wants us in because we are conservative." The liberals have a different concept than God. "Well, God wants us in because we are more tolerant." Notice how I sound like John Kerry that morning. "We are tolerant." You know he had the same problem in World War II? Oh, yeah. We fought the Wehrmacht, Germans. You know what every German soldier had on his belt buckle? "God is with us." They thought God was on their side. We thought God was on our side. One hundred million boys were wounded and killed between

World War I and World War II because they thought God was on his side. Truth of the matter is, God was not on either buddy's side.

You have got to grab that concept. Oh, you want a shocker. You want one to drop your jaw, make you go home, and never want to look outside the window again? Let me tell you one. From World War I and World War II, one hundred million Gentiles were killed, slaughtered, in the Battle of the Marne, the Battle of Château-Thierry, the Battle of this one, that one, the other thing over there, World War II, Pearl Harbor, Corregidor, everything, Normandy, everything else, one hundred million Gentiles killed one way or the other, slaughtered one way or the other. You know why God did that whole thing? Because He wanted to bring His people back to His land. If you do not know that, you do not know squat about the Bible, because the Bible says in the book of Isaiah that the Gentile nations mean nothing to God. I am not kidding you.

Isaiah 40:15-17

Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.

And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering.

All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.

Jeremiah 46:28

Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the LORD: for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished.

In fact, the whole Isaiah 40 through 48 says one thing: God could care less about any Gentile nation. He says they are a drop in a bucket to Him. He says, "You know what?" He says all the nations that are before Him are as nothing. Here we are running around here. "Well, we are on the political side over here, and we are over here." God cares nothing about that. God does not care what man wins. He does not care what party you are part of. He does not care anything. All that God is concerned of is that He is behind the scenes, while we are running around like a bunch of little ants, playing our little games, doing our little things. God is orchestrating His people back to that land, and behind the scenes is setting up everything for the day that you and I have missed. The whole world has missed. It is not the day that Bush comes up and says, "Well, I got four more years." Or Kerry says, "We showed them." He cares nothing about that. He does not care about the Russians. He does not care about England. He does not care about Italy. He does not care about France. He does not care about Canada. They are nothing to Him. He cares only about His people that He has brought back, and right on the verge of making them a nation again the way they were in the Old Testament under David and Solomon. Everything else around it is nothing but for God to use to bring that about.

When we lose our perspective, when the nations lose their perspectives, I mean, imagine anybody getting up anywhere in any Gentile country and saying, "We are the greatest nation, the most powerful nation. We got a bomb load of nukes and biological weapons, and we are the

greatest nation, but we are going to use those nations to bring peace to this world because we want to do what is right, and we are a nation of freedom." God cares absolutely nothing about that because, I will tell you, every time you talk about freeing somebody, it means one hundred thousand people get killed in the process. There is only one freedom that that Bible focuses on, and that is the freedom you get when you trust Jesus Christ, your personal Savior. That is the freedom that this world is going to experience when Christ comes back and puts an end to it. Everything else is just playing games. Why? We lost our perspective. We lost our perspective.

I am telling you, the greatest lesson in all the Bible you will ever learn after the lesson of salvation is the lesson of how God views the world and the Gentile nations. You see, it does not bother me to say that because I am not a Gentile. I am a Christian. I got on the old Gospel bus a long time ago where I saw where it was going, and I do not care about those things. This whole world does not mean anything to me anymore. I know what God is doing. I know where God is going. I understand the times and the season. I know where I am at in this thing. I know where God is going. I know what God is doing. I know that God, just like the Book of Esther, cannot be found anywhere today. But He is behind every scene. He is behind every prop. He is behind every nation and every government. He is orchestrating the thing to put it together to bring about the end when Christ comes back.

Right now as we speak, I am not fighting anybody. I am not mad at anybody. I could care less. It does not bother me. You see, when you really love God in that book, as Psalms 69 says, nothing offends you. I do not care what somebody else thinks. Across this city today, there is everybody in the world getting up there and they are talking about, "Well, let us all rally together. We have got to get this guy in, or we have got to get this guy in." Everybody is fighting on the thing. Somebody is saying to me, "Bob, what guy do you want?" "We want this guy over here. We want the guy that is going to keep Christian conservative values for the family." Somebody else says, "We want the guy that is going to be broad-minded and allow everybody in." Somebody says, "What is his right?" "Bob, what are you going to do?" I am going to vote for the guy that is going to bring the Antichrist in the next day, get this thing on and get me the glory. Now, most of you think that is Kerry. I am not too sure. I do not care. I do not care. I do not care who becomes president. I do not care what who does what to who. I have got some news for you. I have said it over and over again, and I do not know if you got it yet, but I am telling you. Boys and girls, it is over. It is over. We are in the last moments of the sands, of the hourglass, of God's timetable dropping through the hourglass, and God is coming back. I do not give a flip who is president, vote the guy in that will get the Antichrist here and get me out of here.

Now, you see, the average person pastor across this congregation would think I was nuts for saying that. My God, the last prayer in your Bible, "Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus." What are you reading? You say, "What about all the unsaved people?" I cannot say anything for the unsaved people. I just want to be with Him. I know this: every unsaved person in this world has their chance. I do not know. I mean, I am not getting into that this morning, and I do not care. I just know this. I know what God is looking at. I know how God is figuring the thing, and I am telling you. I am telling you, you better get the right perspective of where you are at, because if you do not, oh, I remember in 1988, you know what? In 1988, some of you do not remember

this. Some of you were not even born then. In 1988, they were so sure in the Christian world that God was coming back. They had rallies where they passed out. Christ, I still got the book. Christ Returns in 1988. They had everything orchestrated. You know what God's people did? They went out, organized mass campaigns, organized great campaigns within churches to win everybody they could to Christ in these last moments. "Now we know He is coming back in this year. Everybody, come on, rally. Let us get Him in. The fields are white in the harvest. Let us go. Let us go." No, no, no. You know what every Christian did? You know what the big joke was afterwards? All the Christians ran up their credit cards, buying whatever they wanted because they thought they would not have to pay for it. Does God have a sense of humor or what? Those 25% interest Christians are still working it off, man. I love it. I love it.

You know what? God told me today that He was coming in the morning. I have got to be honest with you. I would not do anything different the rest of this afternoon. I would have done all week. I would get really nervous and really excited and find somebody to take Ham, Shem, and Japheth. Would you take him, Pam? You are not going to be here. Okay. Just check him, you see? Just check him. That was a trick question. Just want to see if you pass the test. You pass. You pass. You pass. Oh, you will take him? Oh.

The Book of Esther is an incredible book. Within those nine chapters, you have God dealing with the nations to bring back and establish the Jew. You have the rapture of the church. You have the first three and a half years of the Tribulation period, the rise and end of the Antichrist. Everything, just like Revelation 6, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, says. It is incredible. Watch, watch, watch this.

- Chapter 1: Vashti and the End of Gentile Times
- Chapter 2: Esther and the Reestablishment of Israel

Now, I do not know if you know it or not, but this is what Matthew 24 is all about. Now we want to turn there. Because a Jewish queen comes to the throne, a Gentile queen gets dethroned. There are virgins connected with Esther, and all of this deals with and all this is explained in the book of Matthew 24. Now, I do not know what you know about Matthew 24, but here is what you got. The disciples come to Christ and they have one question for Him. A lot of controversy during this time. A lot of things have been floating around and they have one question in Matthew 24:3: "What is going to be the sign of your coming and the end of the world?" From Matthew 24:4 to the end of the chapter is the answer to that question. During that time, you will find that everything in here deals with the nation of Israel. You will find that everything in here lays itself out in such an incredible way. Let me just read it to you. Now keep in mind, their question is, "What is going to be the sign of your coming and the end of the world?"

Matthew 24:32-35

Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:

So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

But of that day, here it comes, and of that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as it was in the days of Noah, great key, so shall it be in the coming of the Son of Man. Now here we have a parable. This parable is the answer to their question. Their question was, the same question you may be asking, the same question the whole world is asking, "When is going to be the end times and what will be the sign of thy coming?" Here is what He says. Here we go. The fig tree, the fig tree is the nation of Israel. The fig tree is the nation of Israel that you find from Matthew 21:33, another parable, that God put in the land, He planted in the land like a fig tree, and He expected that fig tree, Israel, to bear fruit. Israel did not bear fruit. Israel did not bear fruit at all. She went after other gods. She studied at times that the Gentiles come in. This is why in Mark 11, after the rejection of Christ, Christ was walking out of town, and in Mark 11:13, He sees the fig tree that is barren, a picture of Israel, and He curses that fig tree, a picture of the nation of Israel. From that point on, for 1900 years later, that tree, Israel, the fig tree is barren because God has hid Himself from them. After 1900 years, when every historian had written them off, when every history teacher laughed and scoffed when he brought up Israel, that every bonafide historian laughed and made fun of, that would never be anything, the scattered vagabond Jews, 1900 years later, on May 14th, 1948, she put forth her leaves.

Matthew 24:32

Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:

Israel became a nation in 1948. That is Matthew 24:32. That is when the fig tree put forth her leaves. He said at that time in 1948, the summer is almost over. Summer is almost over. Fall is coming, and winter is coming, and then spring is coming, and everything comes back to life in springtime. He says the summer is nigh. Likewise, when you shall see all these things, one of the greatest prophets in the New Testament, know that it is near, even at the door.

Now, I do not know if you know this or not, but just let me extend this for you a little bit. Bible, times and the seasons. I do not know the day and the hour. I would not even pretend to. If you go out of here and say, "Whatever, Alexander, he is just a date-setter." I have not dated any date. I am just telling you, times and the seasons. But do not let me stop here. I believe my Bible. Paul told me that I should not be ignorant of those times and the seasons. Now, if you are this morning, go get mad at me. In 1948, that prophecy became a fulfillment. That nation, that fig tree, put forth leaves, but no fruit.

Then I go over in Song of Solomon 2. You know what Song of Solomon 2 is? It is a picture of the rapture of the church. There is no question about it. You could not miss it in Song of Solomon 2 of your life, depending on it. Song of Solomon 2, it is a picture of the bridegroom calling for the bride, saying, "Rise, my fair one, and come away." You know what he says? When the bridegroom says to the bride, "Come away." You have to read down there. You know what he says? He says that the fig tree has green figs. Why? In 1948, she put forth her leaves. At the

rapture of the church, she has got green figs. When she goes through the Tribulation period, seven years later, and Christ comes back in the Second Coming of Christ, the fruit is now ripened, and it is ready to eat, you will find it in Revelation 6:13 and Nahum 3:12, and about forty other places in your Bible. I am telling you, I do not know the day and the hour, but I can tell you the times and the seasons by the prophecies that He wrote there about the nation of Israel. I have told you before, you lose the landmark of the nation of Israel in history, and you are lost.

When I was growing up in Christianity years ago, I started reading books on history because I knew I had to learn history. Once I got the Bible, it was settling to my heart. I began to digest, and I will never forget the greatest or the least greatest or the worst book, however you want to say it. The biggest voluminous history book that you can get is twelve volumes by a guy by the name of Will Durant. Will Durant wrote the history of civilization in twelve volumes. At the end of those twelve volumes, he had the nerve to write another book that said, "The Lessons We Need to Learn from History." You know what those twelve volumes were? One of them was called "Comparing Caesar and Christ." Another one was "Oriental Civilization." Another one was about the Renaissance. Another one was about the Great Age of Reason. One whole book was devoted on Voltaire, how he was a great mind. Twelve volumes. Twelve volumes. At the end, he brought it all together in one book that said, "These are the lessons from history." When you read that, you understood that old Will Durant, who is probably dead and burned in hell right now, and he was a bonafide historian. I mean, he was not some fruity guy out there that just wrote what he wanted, got his conspiracy theory off the Internet. No, this guy was the man, a bonafide historian who wrote on the history of civilization that could not find God if he had a laser beam and a flashlight. At the end of his volumes, after writing twelve volumes, 4,467,000 words, I counted them at the end. He did not understand anything about history.

Somebody says, "Are Will Durant's volumes on history any good?" They are excellent! What do you mean? If you want to shoot your .22 pistol in your basement, the volume on Voltaire and Reason will stop it. They will not go through those two. In those sense, they are invaluable. If you want a little target, do it when your wife is not home. Open the windows, because it smells bad afterwards, and that is not the aftershave you want to pretend you are wearing, cordite gunpowder. But if you want a target practice and you do not want it to go through the wall and kill the neighbors, Will Durant's any volume put together with another volume will stop that bullet. That is the greatest thing I have found for them.

Now on the other side of the Christian side, you have got the seven volumes by William Schaff. He writes on the history of the church. His are equally worthless. It takes five of his to stop a .22 bullet. In both cases, neither guy knew anything about history, could not find God if his life depended on it. In fact, Schaff, who is unsaved, writes his volumes on church history like God is dead. No, no, no. If you want to get the perspective on history, do not get Will Durant. Do not get Schaff. Get God's perspective. I am telling you, He said that there is a fig tree that is going to bear fruit. He says, "When that fig tree puts forth its leaves, you better watch that baby is coming."

Then He says in Matthew 24:34, "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." You know what He is saying? He is saying that the, I do not know the day and the hour, but Paul said, "I am not to be ignorant of the times and the seasons." He just narrowed it down to the times and the seasons and telling me that in 1948, that set forth a generation. The generation that was born in 1948. However long that generation goes, and there is a number of generations in the Bible. You cannot figure it out, but I am telling you this. The person, the last generation of 1948 will not die before all these things. And you ought to read them: Tribulation period, Millennium, Second Coming. All these things are coming to pass. It is over. It is at the doors. It was end of summer in 1948. When I got a Bible that tells me in 1948, she put forth her leaves at the rapture of the church. She put forth green figs and the whole concept is to bear fruit. Then in the Millennium of the Second Coming of Christ, according to Revelation 6 and Nahum 3, she bears the fruit. Then Matthew 24:34 says, "This generation shall not pass," this generation. The generation born in 1948 will not die off till all these things be fulfilled.

Here is what you have got. By one of the greatest books in the Bible, Esther, where God is not mentioned. A book that lays that thing out in such an incredible way. You know what he says? He says that probably in 1918, in God's mind, the times of the Gentiles ended with the Balfour Declaration. God, from that point on, does not care about what is going on. He cares about you and me as the body of Christ because we have a job to do. But He did not care about this or that. He does not care about the Gentile nation. He has one thing on His mind. That is not the Republican Convention next week, nor the Democratic one. Or whether Kerry rode a swift boat or a slow boat. It is not that they make any difference to Him. He is focusing on His people bringing forth fruit. He orchestrated behind the scenes when you could not find God anywhere. He orchestrated them coming back in 1918. Then rebuilding in 1948, where they put forth their leaves. At the rapture of the church, they have got green figs. When He comes back, those figs have ripened and now Israel finally bears fruit. Vashti is off the throne.

Look what happened in Esther 1. A feast in the king's garden. Seven days. Esther 1:5. With all the family in attendance. There is your family of God in the book of Ephesians. Read it down here in Esther 1:6. Fine linen, righteousness of the saints, book of Revelation. Gold, silver, precious stones, 1 Corinthians 3. You have got the rapture of the church and the judgment seat of Christ. Look at Esther 1:7. It says, "royal wine." Remember over there in John 2:1, where there was a wedding in Cana, a marriage in Cana on the third day. Remember that? Third day, third day, third day. Second Coming of Christ anytime you find it. You know what? He gets that Christ turns water into wine and everybody says, "This is the greatest wine we have ever tasted. We have never tasted anything like this before." You know why? That is a picture of the Second Coming of Christ. The water turned to wine was a picture of the wine you are going to get at the marriage supper of the Lamb. That is why it says royal wine. That is why that marriage in John 2 was a picture of the Second Coming of Christ and a marriage supper of the Lamb. All that in Chapter 1, Vashti off the throne, a Jewish queen off, rapture of the church.

➤ Chapter 3-9: Haman, Mordecai, and the Tribulation

I am telling you, the book of Esther, the reason why God is not mentioned, the first reason, is because it is dealing with the nation of Israel. It is dealing with a period of time that God has hid Himself from the nation of Israel. He shows in the book of Esther, everything you need to understand about where we are at. He shows you a Gentile queen coming off the throne, a Jewish queen coming on, end of the times of the Gentiles. He begins to show you the fulfillment of Matthew 24 of the fig tree putting forth leaves. You find the wedding, the picture of the rapture, you find the fine linen, the gold, silver, and precious stone, you find the family in attendance, everything that takes place during that period of time. Then after that, Chapter 3, up comes the man of sin, Haman, the persecuted Mordecai, type of the Jew in the Tribulation. Incredible, incredible, all in a book that according to the greatest scholarly minds in the world today should not be in your Bible. So much for scholarship.

VII. Trusting God in Darkness

A time when you do not see God seemingly doing anything. You scratch your head and you say, "Is that Christianity? Is that Christian music? Is that the way Christians are supposed to be? Is that what churches are supposed to be?" Well, they talk about God, but they do not have any answers. "How come I do not have any peace inside? How come they told me to do all this and I lost my kids? How come this and that?" Nobody. It is a very confusing time. Yet I am trying to tell you this morning, see the things from God's perspective. In a time you do not see God doing anything, you know, He is behind the scenes because God gave you a book. That book is filled with promises. See, I do not need to see God in this day and age, even though I know where to look for Him to see Him. I can cut through the stuff because I know what God promised.

There is another thing in here that I want to say before I am finished, and I am just about done. That the Book of Esther does for you. There are going to be times in your life as a Christian. If you do not hear anything else, hear this. If you do not believe anything else, believe this. There are going to be times in your life as a Christian when you cannot find God. The time is going to be so black, the heartache is going to be so bleak that you think God forsook you. I am telling you, it is true. There will be times in your life when the circumstances are so graphic that your situation seems so hopeless. You pray and you pray and you pray and you pray and you have not heard from God. I do not know what the deal is. Maybe you think you have got yourself in a mess and God is just going to come down and undo the mess. It does not work that way. But you get out there and you get extended and you say to yourself, "Where is God?" You start to doubt yourself and you start to doubt everything about yourself. You start to struggle with your relationship with God. I am telling you, I am telling you, I am telling you. Just like the Book of Esther. There will be times in your life, just like in America, just like with the Nation of Israel, that you cannot see God. I know that He is still there because I have a book that He wrote me that the promises are good, even when the frail mind and the frail emotions of Bob Alexander cannot see Him.

I have said it to you a thousand times and I will say it a thousand times again before Jesus comes back. Never doubt in the darkness what God has given you in the light. The promises of the Word of God are for you. They will keep you. You see, the problem is this. Most of God's people

have a superficial relationship with God to begin with. They do not have a relationship with God based on the promises. They have a relationship with God based on what they heard their preacher say, or the last book they read, or the weekly quarterly, or their daily bread, or some other thing. I am not saying those things are bad. I am just saying those things will not take the place of your personal relationship with the Word of God and the promise of God in your heart. You have got to have it in the day and age that we are living. I am telling you right now. When you look around and you think everybody is running around afraid of the next terrorist attack. Let me tell you something. The Nation of Israel has been living through terrorist attacks for the last 1900 years. What makes this country any better? You better get set for it. There may be some. There may be some. Do not take it personal if God kills you. When you get to heaven, go ahead and chew Him out if that is what you so desire to do. But I am telling you, you better get your head screwed on straight and realize where we are at.

You think God cares about 9/11 and the Twin Towers? We talk about all the things and there are some tragic stories. The most tragic stories to me is the fact that a lot of people probably died and went to hell. That is tragic to me, but I am telling you something. God is in the business of bringing His people back to that land. God just does not give a flip about Gentile nations and whether we do or whether we do not. If you want to get God's favor, get saved. That is the best thing I can tell you. If you do not get saved, roll the dice, baby. Roll the dice. God is on a mission. God is on a course. God is driving the bus. You either get on His bus or you walk. It is as simple as that. His bus is going to the New Jerusalem. I do not know about you. I am going. I am going.

I am telling you, there will be times in your life when you cannot see God, just like in the book of Esther, God is not mentioned. But I am telling you, the greatest comfort book in the Bible to me in those periods of time is the book of Esther. Because I see God, even though He is not mentioned, behind every chapter and every verse orchestrating the things for His honor and glory. So when the times come in your life, and let us face it, if His Son... You see, that is another perspective we learn. Or we never learn. We think because we get some little adversity or some little thing happens or something happens tragically or whatever the case may be, that we are the only ones that ever experienced that. You know why God's people do not deal with adversity the way they need to? Because deep down inside they never have really understood how God gave up His own Son on a cross. The agony God in His heart must have felt when His Son was paying the price for you. I do not mean this cruel and I do not mean it bad. But then I am like, "Why are you any better than Him? Why am I any better than Him? Why should He suffer and I not? Why should He go through the things that He had to go through, all the agony?" There is not anything in your life. We will see it next week when we get into the book of Job next week. You will see it. You will see it.

You know what? There are some things that we only understand better through suffering. I do not know how else to tell you. Somebody asked me the other day, a little baby died. There was a very tragic thing, nothing connected with us. But somebody called me on the phone. I try to be kind and gentle because I know in those circumstances, situations, it is hard. I do not ever think bad of anybody that struggles in those things. But I try to help them. Because everybody says,

"Why would God do something? Why would God take a little baby? Why would God do this? Why would God do that?" Well, I do not understand why God does what He does, but I understand this principle. The person asked me, they said, "You know what? Why would God do that?" My answer was simply this. He said, "Well, they said, God could have done a miracle." I said, "You know what? God could have done a miracle." But you know when you think about it, God could have done a miracle about His Son and saved us in other ways that it happened. He was dying on the cross, could not He? But you know what I have learned through life? Some things, some lessons are best learned through death. That is a hard thing to say. But you know what? You and I would never identify with Christ and be saved if it was not because of His death. That is why the wisest man that ever lived said in Ecclesiastes 7:2:

Ecclesiastes 7:2

It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart.

He knew that because some lessons can only be learned by you feeling the pain of somebody else dying because the Bible says that that forces you to look deep inside yourself and to really take your own reality check where you are at. Sure, God could have done it anyway. God can do anything. The bottom line is this. It is those kind of promises that get you through when nothing else will because there is no worse time in your life to think that God has left you forsaken. When you go through the deep times of your life, but the book of Esther tells you, you know what? You are never alone. Just because you cannot see Him. I have got a book that tells me He is there. Because of that, I will never doubt in the darkness what He gave me in the light. Because I know when I cannot see Him, it is me, not Him. There will never be a time out of my mouth, I cannot speak for you, where God will be wrong and I will be right. I will be wrong and He will be right. When I cannot figure it out, I will not say, "Well, that should not be in there." I will just say, "I am too stupid to see it." God is sovereign and He is a great God. He wrote a book. Why? If everybody understood the Bible and everything in it, we would all be as smart as God. If God ever somebody said, "Why did God write a book that there are so many things you cannot figure out?" Because if He wrote a book, you figure everything out, then you would never walk by faith. You would walk by sight. There are some things God will not give you in life, folks. You know why? Because He wants you to trust Him. He wants you to dig in there and get the promise that God says He will come through for you.

That is the book of Esther. What a great book. Shows me the ends of the times of the Gentiles and why God has hid Himself from the nation of Israel. Shows me why I am living where I am living today. The most exciting times in all the history of the world, as far as I am concerned, the time when we are right there before the fig tree has put forth its leaves and boy, the figs are turning green and man, they are almost ready to go. Trust Him. He will never leave you nor forsake you. Whenever you cannot find Him, wherever you cannot see Him, no matter how dark it gets in your life, no matter what the circumstances are, know this. If you are His child, He is there. He is there. He is there. You want to be a promise keeper? Forget going to the meetings. Just get in that book and keep the promises He gave you. He gave you a book that is filled with promises, and we ought to be promise keepers. We ought to take those things and put them in our

hearts and write them in our hearts and make them our promises. Without the only thing that will get you through in the darkness of the time that we live in. But I have got some good news. He is coming. Hey, He is coming, man. Some of you do not like that. Some of you, that kind of talk makes you sick in your stomach. That is your problem. Let me tell you something. I have got nothing planned today or tomorrow or the rest of my life that is not worth canceling if He wants to come right now. It is okay with me. Okay with me.

You know what? This whole thing is His. He is on course. You know, we are going to look awful stupid when we get on the other side about ten million years and look back and we actually see all of this stuff that we fretted and fought over back here. We see how stupid it was, and you get a look at that grandeur out there, boy, and you are going to see it. We are going to look at each other and we are going to say, "Boy, we were stupid, were not we, Jimmy?" Jimmy says, "I sure was." I said, "Yeah, but I saw it all the time." I just wanted you to know that. Yeah, right. Amen.

Let us pray. Father, we thank You and praise You for all You do for us. We love You so much. Oh, Father, we thank You for this great book. We look around and we see all the great things that You have done and all the great things You are doing. Yet they cannot be seen unless You have this book. God, we know that You are right.