

GOD WORKS IN UNGODLY TIMES

Esther 1

Appreciating the almighty—and invisible—hand of God

LET'S GET STARTED

It was the worst of times. Unlike the famous opening line of Charles Dickens' novel, *Tale of Two Cities*, there was no "best of times" for the Jews living in the Persian kingdom in Esther's day. Yet, even in such dark circumstances, God's invisible hand was at work.

In this message we will see that God is always at work, even in ungodly times. What an encouraging reminder for us today!

LET'S HEAR THE WORD

- The Holy Land had been conquered by invading armies, and most of the Jews of Israel and Judah had been deported to Babylon.
- A pagan despot ruled with absolute power.

Ecclesiastes 4:1—Again I looked and saw all the oppression that was taking place under the sun: I saw the tears of the oppressed—and they have no comforter; power was on the side of their oppressors—and they have no comforter.

- Women were treated as the property of their husbands.

Summary of Esther Chapter 1:

- Xerxes (a.k.a. Ahasuerus) threw a _____ (vv. 1-9).
- Xerxes issued a humiliating demand to his wife, _____, and she refused to comply (vv. 10-12).
- In retaliation, Xerxes _____ Vashti's title as queen (vv. 13-22).

Quotable

God is at work even in the darkest of times and even with the weakest, most mixed up people, to accomplish His sovereign purpose for His glory. . . .

—Steven J. Cole

God works powerfully, but for the most part gently and gradually.

—John Newton

If you would like to know more

Esther: A Woman of Strength and Dignity, by Charles Swindoll (Thomas Nelson, 1997)

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TAKEAWAYS FROM ESTHER CHAPTER 1

- God's purposes are not _____ during times of ungodliness.

John 5:17—Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.”

- God can cause even _____ rulers to carry out His will.

Proverbs 21:1—The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.

Isaiah 46:11—“From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do.”

- God's people are never _____ His power to save them.

Psalms 139:9-10—⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, ¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

Isaiah 59:1—Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear.

LET'S LIVE IT

Never think God's hands are tied by current events or your personal circumstances.

Never assume God can work only when good leaders are in office.

Never believe you're out of God's reach.

If you would like to speak to any of our Pastors about a spiritual need in your life, here is their contact information:

Church phone: 843.569.6745

Pastor David: Office extension 11, email: dcoleman@crowfieldbaptist.org

Pastor Gary: Office extension 14, email: gfabian@crowfieldbaptist.org

Pastor Andy: Office extension: 18, email: aanderson@crowfieldbaptist.org

You may also discover what the Bible says about how to become a Christian by visiting the following page on our website: <http://www.crowfieldbaptist.com/salvation/>