



This last Sunday we finished off the book of Esther.

It's been a great six weeks as we've seen, not just doctrine explained or stated, but lived and applied. We've seen that the doctrine of God's sovereignty is not just a nice idea, but we've seen together how it works out in the depths and mess of life, through muddled people and tricky situations.

In chapters 9-10 the story finishes and the loose ends are (mostly) tied up.

We looked at the section under 3 headings:

#### **9v1-16: Reversal.**

These verses describe what happens when the initial edict was worked out along with the second edict. We noted initially that that the people and numbers mentioned in these verses are all enemies of God's people. Despite the fear of God falling upon them, a vast number still attacked the Jewish people and were still defeated. This includes Haman's unpleasantly named sons (note how God is removing all the things he boasted in earlier in the book), the 500 and 300 (for the extra day) in Susa and the 75,000 who attacked the Jewish people throughout the 127 provinces of Persia. Esther's extension of the date of edict 2 is perhaps in response to knowing that in Susa more people were planning to attack them when they ought not have.

We noted that the fact they didn't plunder (v10, v15 and v16) both shows that God's people were not in it for greed, but also that they succeeded where Saul failed - he plundered Agag rather than killing him as the Lord had told him.

#### **9v17-32: Remembering**

Joy, celebration and feasting naturally bubbled out of God rescuing them - Esther and Mordecai simply formalise this through letters to all the people. Everyone is to celebrate and remember - the whole of the kingdom (v20), all social ranks (v22) and for all generations (v28). What's to be remembered is that God is sovereign (hence the name Purim - relating back to chapter 3-4 and Haman consults the Pur - trusting in 'fate' rather than God) and that he rescues His people. We noted how God still calls on us to remember his saving acts in history and the importance of doing so to not lose track in life.

#### **10v1-3: Reigning.**

The end of the book shows Mordecai and Esther both in positions of power, using their status for the good of God's people. There has been a complete reversal in terms of status and fortunes for Mordecai. In a sense it looks like 'happily ever after', until we note 10v1. Xerxes is still in power, the people are in a better position, but they are still away from home, under foreign rule and having to pay taxes. The book ends with us longing for more - resolution - rest. We finished by looking to the time when the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world will be one as the Lord Jesus returns

What do you think have been the key lessons for you from Esther?

Why do you think we relate well to story in the bible?

How do you expect the book to end? What things in the narrative need to be tied up?

From v1-16:

- what do we see is the outcome of edict 2? Is it a success? Why does the author mention 3 times that there was no plundering?

- how would you answer someone who said to you that Esther and this second edict were barbaric?

From v17-32:

- why is Purim called Purim? What are they to remember?

- who is to celebrate it?

- why do you think the celebration needs to be 'formalised'?

- how does this remembering parallel the Lord's Supper?

From 10v1-3:

- How does the book end? Is it satisfactory?! Why?

Where is Jesus in this passage?

What 1 big thing will you take away from Esther as we finish?