

MENTOR



ZERO WEEK

FOR LIFE

GET WRECKED

Scan the QR code to watch a 49-second clip of 1-on-1 drills, kids versus parent's edition.



Apparently, the kids in the video had called out their parents. And, as video description says, "These kids had no chance."

This semester we'll be studying the Old Testament book of *Esther*. One curious aspect of this book is that God is never mentioned—not once. However, that doesn't mean God's power and presence are absent. On the contrary, God's behind-the-scenes actions not only show the folly of human plans, but also his mighty power to save.

The irony of these things are so prevalent that Jewish scholars have considered *Esther* a literary comedy. It's not exactly a knee-slapper. It's more gallows humor—like Harry and Marv in *Home Alone* getting repeatedly tortured by an 8-year-old child.

Before we start the story of *Esther* next Week, we wanted to set our study in light of Psalm 2. This great chapter shows the stubborn and willfully disobedient hearts of **nations, peoples, & kings**. Their raging and plotting is, as the psalmist notes, **in vain**. There was never a moment that we will study that was outside of God's control.

Psalm 2 also foretells God's ultimate victory over world powers by his "**Anointed**." It's in Psalm 2 that we discover "Christ" isn't Jesus' last name, it's a title. The Greek translation of "Anointed" is "*Christos*," whereas the Hebrew translation is "*Messiah*." So, if you've ever wondered what "Christ" means, it's a transliteration meaning "Anointed."

God the Father sent Christ the Son to die for the sins of humanity. One day, Christ will return in power and glory and bring world powers to heel. That same power is at work behind the scenes in *Esther* as God **laughs** in the face of those who would seek to thwart him. **The Lord holds them in derision**—that's a fancy way of saying, "Get Wrecked!"

PSALM 2:1-4

¹ Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? ² The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, ³ "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." ⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Every Week, this section will include bonus material—articles, videos, or other resources to aid you in your understanding of the Scripture, challenge you in your development, or to encourage you in your worship.

Next Week, we want to introduce you to the book of *Esther*. This Week, however, it's important to understand where *Esther* fits. We gave a brief history in our Study Notes, but you can scan the QR code for more.



DISCUSSION

What is one skill or ability that you wish you had and why?

ICEBREAKER

1. What are the world leaders doing and against whom? (1-2)

OBSERVATION

2. What is the psalmist's description of the "people's plotting"? (1)

3. What is the heavenly response? (3-4)

4. How would you explain:

-the actions of the people?

-God's reaction?

INTERPRETATION

5. On a scale of 1-10, how aware are you of God's power and presence in your day to day life? Why that number?

APPLICATION

Our prayer is that this study will challenge you and cause you to question things. Your best resource to wrestle through such things is in the room with you. Talk to your Coach today!

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STUDY NOTES

“JUST SO HAPPENS”

The book of *Esther* takes place in Persia. If you're familiar with biblical history, then you may remember that in the Old Testament, God gave Israel the Promised Land. They failed to fully take the Land as we studied last Spring in our study of *Judges & Ruth* if you happened to participate. The period of the judges ended when Israel selected a king named Saul. Saul was a great king, but a bad servant of God. Following Saul came King David—whom you may also know from killing Goliath. He great up, became king, and ushered in Israel's “golden age.”

David's son Solomon took over when David died. He was known for having a half-heart for God such that we he died the nation of Israel split into a northern and southern kingdom. Due to increasing disobedience the Northern Kingdom (retaining the name “Israel”) was wiped off the map by the conquering nation of Assyria. The Southern Kingdom (called “Judah”) had periods of repentance here and there. They eventually descended to the point God brought punishment with the nation of Babylon. Babylon crushed Israel taking captives to live in exile. The Babylonian Exile ended when Persia conquered Babylon and eventually set the captives free to return to their homeland.

Many Israelites returned to Jerusalem. Many did not. The book of *Esther* takes place over a 10-year period, in-between waves of Israelites returning to Jerusalem, approximately 483–473BC.

This summary of the Old Testament up until the time of *Esther* covers about 1,000 years. That's 1,000 years of leaders rising and falling, nations conquering nations, and a sovereign God setting the stage for the Savior. However, be aware that, although the Bible offers insight into God's perspective in human affairs, most of the people who experienced these great turn of events would probably have described them as happenstance. This thing “just so happened” to work out the way it did. This nation “just so happened” to position itself to conquer. Etc.

We will see many seeming coincidences (the “just so happens”) in the book of *Esther*. Understand though that everything we see is in the hands of a Mighty God who is in complete control.

WHY STUDY ESTHER

This semester we'll be studying *Esther* through the lens of mentorship—examining lessons for mentors and mentees. As we'll see, mentorship looks a lot like coaching, but goes further to shape a

person's whole life and, most importantly, their legacy. Reading this, your mind may start rattling off reasons why this may not be *for you*. Reasons like:

1) *I'm helpless to change anything*—I'm too young, the world is too big. *Esther* reminds us that God can use anyone to accomplish more than we can imagine regardless of your current circumstances.

2) *I don't have a position or power*—I'm not in charge of anything. Who am I to make a difference? *Esther* reminds us that God alone holds ultimate power. Often, he doesn't use the powerful to change the world. He uses the humble.

3) *The world doesn't value what God values, especially human life*—*Esther* reminds us that God has created every person in his own image. That truth means every person deserves dignity and respect as God's precious creation.

4) *Life is hard*—there are challenges and hardships, seasons where all my time and energy go to simply surviving. In *Esther*, we'll see that God's plan often takes us *through* hardship rather than *around* it.

5) *You don't know my story*—*Esther* was poor, Jewish, an orphan, young, and female; every descriptor a major disadvantage in Persian culture. Moreover, she was thrust into a circumstance she didn't want or ask for. We study *Esther* to realize it ain't about us. It's about a God who can use us in spite of ourselves.

THE GAME PLAN

The plan is to roll through *Esther* covering as much as we can. We've had to skip a lot of verses in our study in order to maintain the story of the book of *Esther*. We're covering about a chapter a week and we encourage you to read the entire passage since we're only able to focus on a portion. That also means that there's lots of mentorship lessons that will be left on the cutting room floor. A prime example happens in chapter 2 with *Esther's* interaction with Hegai. It's a great lesson on mentorship, but there are so much in chapter 2 relevant to the plot that we don't have space to cover it. So, we'd encourage each week taking some time to discuss mentorship interactions and lessons that we weren't able to cover in our notes.

The final two weeks of our study we'll close by looking first at Psalm 22 then Matthew 28. Psalm 22 was traditionally read surrounding Purim, a Jewish celebration of the deliverance of Israel found in the book of *Esther*. It will be clear that Psalm 22 not only looks back, but it also looks forward to God's Messiah.

The very same Messiah, Jesus Christ, who gave out the marching orders for Christians everywhere in Matthew 28 with the Great Commission.