

ESTHER

A WOMAN OF STRENGTH AND DIGNITY

STUDY SEVEN

What Goes Around, Comes Around

Esther 6

Even when no one seems to notice or care, God is very much alert to our situation.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

GOD does not always respond to our schedule. Often, when just a few grains of sand remain in the hourglass, God proves to us He is not aloof from our situation. Then, He acts in ways we would never expect. Like when He provides funds the day before the payment's due or when the phone rings after you figured you'd never hear back after the job interview.

Things are not always as they seem in our day just like they weren't always as they seemed for the Jews living in Susa during Esther's day.

In this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we'll explore the divinely orchestrated turn of events in one of the Bible's most adored chapters—when God humbled the proud and exalted the humble.



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Before searching the Scriptures, pray that God will guide your time in His Word and grant you the hope, correction, faith, and encouragement that your specific situation requires. Take a moment to formulate this prayer in your own words and record below.



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Study 7 • Page 1

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES
BIBLE STUDIES

What Goes Around, Comes Around

Esther 6



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Esther waited on the Lord through prayer and fasting for three days, and then, filled with His strength, she bravely “entered the inner court of the palace,” knowing the king could condemn her for intruding uninvited. Instead, thankfully, he “welcomed her and held out the gold scepter to her” (Esther 5:1–2). By God’s grace, she escaped the sentence of death, and she invited the king and Haman to a banquet that day.

Haman left the banquet puffed up with pride, but then he walked by Mordecai, who did not stand up or cower in his presence. Enraged, Haman plotted with his wife and friends to have Mordecai executed the next day on a seventy-five-foot pole.

As the sun set, a pall of doom settled over Esther’s hopes to save her people. How ominously the pole stood, like a cruel scepter raised in judgment over Mordecai’s life. Esther had escaped her sentence of death, but not Mordecai. Once the king discovered she was Mordecai’s relative and a Jew, would she be next? And yet, behind the scenes, God was providentially moving through the night in the king’s bedchamber to turn what seemed like loss into a victory only He could win.



Observation: Mordecai Honored

Use your observation skills as you read the passage.¹ Imagine the royal bedchamber of King Ahasuerus—plush tapestries, elegant furniture, and an ornately decorated bed. Put yourself in the room when Haman arrives. Hear the conversation between him and the king. Feel the irony of the moment as the king tells Haman to honor Mordecai! With this preview in mind, read [Esther 6](#) and then answer the questions below.

Which night was the author referring to in 6:1? What had just happened that day and what was supposed to happen the following day ([Esther 5:14](#))?

Why was Haman in the king’s court so early? List the ways Haman told King Ahasuerus that he should honor the man whom the king wished to honor (6:7–9).

What Goes Around, Comes Around

Esther 6

That's the way it is with God. On the eleventh hour, it seems, He steps in. He does things that you would never have expected. When no one seemed to notice and no one seemed to care, there was someone. He was very much aware. Suddenly it dawned on the king that he owed his very life and throne to this obscure Jew named Mordecai. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

After Mordecai was honored, where did he go (Esther 6:12)? Where did Haman go, and how did he respond to Mordecai's veneration (6:12–13)?

How did Zeresh and Haman's friends respond to Haman after he told them what happened (6:13)? How does this response compare to their response in 5:14?

When no one else seems to notice, God notices. When no one else remembers, God records. We're told in the Psalms He keeps our tears in a bottle. He will reward us for acts that are done in His name. So be encouraged today. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: How God Turns Events His Way

Interpretation considers the Scripture passage's historical context—the language, culture, and events that are bound by space and time. Through these events, we learn about God's character, actions, and desires for people. This leads to formulating theological principles that span space and time. We worship the God who is alive and involved in this world.

The King's Insomnia—Esther 6:1–3

Certainly, word had gotten to Mordecai about Haman's plan to impale him the next day. But we don't read that Mordecai panicked or devised some scheme to prove his loyalty to Ahasuerus. Instead, Mordecai trusted God, who silently went to work in the king's heart during the twilight hours.

What Goes Around, Comes Around

Esther 6

What principle emerges about God from how he used the king's insomnia to bring Mordecai into the king's thoughts?

Even when others fail to take notice of our situation, God sees.

A Providential Turnaround—Esther 6:4–12

As God would have it, the king's attendants ushered Haman into the king's presence to develop a plan to honor the person Haman wanted to murder.

In his commentary on Esther, Bible scholar Anthony Tomasino summarized Haman's motive behind his advice to the king:

Haman does not ask for money, power, or promotion, all of which he already possesses. Instead, he asks for the opportunity to be “king for a day.” . . . In the ancient world, clothing was closely associated with the people who wore it. . . . For Haman, wearing the king's robe meant identifying in some sense with the king himself.²

After Haman honored Mordecai according to the king's command, notice the response of both Haman and Mordecai in Esther 6:12. What can we infer about each one's character from his response? What principle can you draw from this event?

The contrast couldn't be clearer about these two officials. Had Mordecai been a proud and ambitious man, he would not have returned to his humble station at the king's gate. But he did. He did not exalt himself. Instead, he relied upon God's timing and providence.

You read nothing of vengeance in Mordecai's life. You know what I appreciate most? The silence of Mordecai. How rare are the people who can be promoted to a place of significant stature and not live for their own clippings and not crave the lights, not demand to be in the center stage, to be treated with kid gloves.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

What Goes Around, Comes Around

Esther 6

Back to the King—Esther 6:13–14

As a sort of prophecy about what was to come—for Haman and the reader—Haman’s wife and friends warned him that his end would come soon. Notice how Haman didn’t even get to respond to their warning. Where was he taken in Esther 6:14, and what thoughts might have been swimming in his head as he made his way? What principle emerges about God as He deals with Haman?

God didn’t sit still once He exalted Mordecai. The Jews throughout Persia still needed rescue. Not only did His providence keep Esther’s story moving, it orchestrated her story—and He orchestrates yours as well.



Correlation: Humility and Pride in Contrast

The contrasts between humility and pride weave through the book of Esther, and we find them in the book of Proverbs as well.

Humility

The opposite of pride and arrogance, humility means having a modest perception of one’s self. Using Bible-study tools, perform word searches for *humble* and *humility*. Scroll down to see the verses from only Proverbs. Review the verses and summarize what you learn from them.

What Goes Around, Comes Around

Esther 6

Pride

Pride is unwarranted self-confidence causing an inflated view of one's own importance, possessions, or abilities. Using your Bible-study tools, perform word searches for *pride* and *proud* in the book of Proverbs. Review the verses and summarize what you learn from them.

What goes around, comes around. Things are not as they seem. When God seems absent, He's present. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: God's Great Turnaround for You

Four overarching principles flow out of Esther 6 for you to receive and remember.

1. *When all seems lost, it isn't.* As Mordecai slept and Haman constructed his gallows, God unfolded His plan.
2. *When no one seems to notice, God does.* God used the king's insomnia to initiate Mordecai's exaltation. God is always moving to accomplish His will, even in the middle of the night.
3. *When everything seems great for our enemies, it's not.* God arranged the plans for Haman to honor Mordecai the very day Haman sought to kill Mordecai.
4. *When nothing seems just, it is.* Haman's sorrow for not receiving the king's honor didn't prevent God's plan to cease Haman's pogrom against the Jews.

Which of the principles above speaks most to you in your season of life? Do you feel like God is ignoring your struggles, or do you feel like things keep getting worse no matter how faithfully you live in obedience to God? Write a prayer expressing to God how you feel.

What Goes Around, Comes Around

Esther 6

Now summarize the hope you have drawn personally from Esther 6. How might God turn your situation around in His providential plan?

Reflective Wrap-Up

Write one sentence to *summarize* this lesson.

Write one thing to *remember* about God.

Write one way you can *respond* to God's Word.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for always noticing me and caring for me no matter my situation. I confess that life is not always as convenient as I want it to be and that I often feel like my will should be done on earth rather than Yours. But You are good, and Your ways are unsearchable. Give me strength to trust in Your goodness as You mold me into Your Son's image. In Jesus' name, amen.

ENDNOTES

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page, "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)"
2. Anthony J. Tomasino, *Esther*, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary, ed. H. Wayne House (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), 279–80.

For the 2026 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Aaron Massey, senior vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, and revised by Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 1989, 2018, 2026 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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Study 7 • Page 7

