

Esther #6 Macrocodes in Esther Part 2

by Chuck Missler

The book of Esther may be a macrocode, foreshadowing the book of Romans and God's plan of redemption.

Duration: 1:04:36

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 17:11, Romans 15:4, 1 Corinthians 10:11

Topics: "Esther"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the story of Moses and the rock in the Bible. He emphasizes the importance of walking in the Spirit and not giving in to the lusts of the flesh. The speaker also mentions the villain Haman from the book of Esther and the need for salvation to be just the beginning of a person's walk with God. He concludes by highlighting the consequences of Moses striking the rock instead of speaking to it, and the lesson it teaches about obedience to God's instructions.

Transcript

Well, we are in our final session on our study of the book of Esther. And the book of Esther, we really sort of covered in four sessions, but we've added two extra, as you've probably noticed. Very, very interesting book for many reasons.

The name Esther actually means, according to Cassinius, something hidden. And, of course, there's much hidden there. One of the primary things that's hidden in the book of Esther, of course, is the hand of God.

Because one of the main discoveries, as you study the book, is to realize that God's hand is on every detail. We've had a lot of fun with the book, and I feel sorry for some of you in the audience who are joining us for the first evening, because this evening is going to be kind of confusing to you, because I'm going to have to sort of presume, you know, you've been through the book of Esther. I thought about trying to review it first and so forth, but we won't use our time, effectively, if I try to go through the book, even in summary form.

But we do have a book here that was very controversial, because the name of God does not appear in the book. Martin Luther was among those that championed the idea of removing it from the Bible. But it was in the sacred scriptures, the Old Testament, as we would call it, the Hebrew scriptures, considered as the word of God, in Christ's day, and he authenticated it.

So that's enough for Christians, right there. But it also turns out, as you study the book, it turns out Martin Luther was wrong. The name of God is all through the book.

But you have to know how to look for it. I tend to overwork the phrase that I picked up from a Jewish writer, that coincidence is not a kosher word, okay? That there are no accidents in God's kingdom, is sort of the Christian version of it. Another way of expressing coincidences are when God is working undercover, you see.

One of the other things that fascinates me about the book is that it hasn't been made into a movie, to my knowledge. There is one of the most dramatic stories, just for dramatic quality, in the scripture, how this gal gets brought to the throne, Queen of the Persian Empire, at its peak. This wasn't, you know, some backwaters, second-rate outfit.

This was the ruler of the world at the time, Persian Empire. And she ends up as queen for some very, very strategic reasons, it turns out. And we have villains.

We have Haman. And we have this sort of unseen hero, Mordecai. And we see the incredible ironies throughout the book.

So just in its dramatic quality, it's a fun book to get into. Because I don't think you can sit down and read just a chapter a day. You can't put it down.

You want to find out and be sensitive to all the twists and ironies in the book. But we went through the book in four sessions, but we added one last time because I felt it would be useful to go into what would be called microcodes. Now, we're going to do something sort of related to that tonight, so let me back up a little bit.

One of the great controversies in the biblical world today are these issues of what they call Bible codes. And when you hear those controversies, they usually, what they're primarily focusing on, are a specific kind of code called an equidistant letter sequence. We talked about those last time.

I won't take you through all that again. But the main point I want to make, those are but one kind of hidden writing, attempts to include a message in some otherwise innocuous text. There are things called codes.

There are things called ciphers. They're not the same thing. But of ciphers, which what most people mean when they think of secret codes, there are transpositions and substitutions, and there are many, many different kinds.

And we took two of them last time, acrostics and equidistant letter sequences, and showed you how the name of God appears no less than eight times in the book of Esther in rather dramatic terms. And the acrostics, of course, are well known to the ancient rabbinical literature. I didn't invent them.

I just happened to come across them. I collect those things. But it turns out it's well known among the Talmudic scholars.

Of more recent discovery are the equidistant letter sequences, which have much the same effect. But the point is, all those are microcodes, codes that hang up on the letters themselves, if you will. They're microscopic.

They look at the details. And it's fascinating that the Bible is full of microcodes. And by the way, to me, the least interesting are the ELs, the equidistant letter sequences.

They create all the controversy. Let's set those controversies aside with neither a yea or a nay, and look at the rest. There are all kinds.

I've written a 515-page book that I thought I would go through very carefully with you this evening. But I suspect your enthusiasm would wane very quickly. There are another whole class of codes called macrocodes.

Think of microcodes as manipulating letters or fractions thereof. You see, that would be a microcode. And Jesus hinted that there were microcodes there.

He says, think not that I come to destroy the Torah or the prophets. I come not to destroy but to fulfill. Verily I say unto you.

That was His way of putting an underline. Verily I say unto you. Not one jot or one tittle shall pass from the law till all be fulfilled.

Now, a jot or a tittle are like an apostrophe. A tittle is a little decorative hook on one of the letters. So right then you begin to realize that there's more there.

And by the way, you'd expect that if it was the Word of God. I'm very annoyed that some very good Christian authors are attacking the concept of Bible codes in general by saying that God doesn't put things in His Word that the common man cannot understand. That's nonsense.

It is true that His central truths and His plan of redemption are absolutely impossible to miss unless you're blinded. Of course, most people without the Spirit of God are blinded, but I don't want to get into that whole theological debate. The point is, yes, indeed, the central truths are understandable to babes and so forth.

Jesus even mentions that. But it would surprise me if an infinite God gave us His Word and that it was totally fathomable by a finite man. It doesn't surprise me to discover that no matter how much you study it, you continually find further secrets hidden behind the rest.

Or is it Proverbs 25, too? That it's God's role to hide things. It's the privilege of kings to search them out. So there are hidden things in there.

I say, gee, there are no secret codes in the Bible. Gee, that's funny. I thought that's what Daniel did on the handwriting on the wall.

Didn't he decipher a code that no one else could? It's right there. There's a secret code. And if you're studying cryptography, you study the history of cryptography, and any of the authoritative texts, typically David Kahn, the Codebreaker, is probably one of the most common ones.

It points out that there are forms of encryption in the Scripture, and to a student of cryptography, they're just historical oddities. But to someone who recognizes the supernatural origin of the Bible, these things are staggering in their application because they're signposts. If those are there, then there are others.

So the point is there are microcodes, but I set all that to change the subject to macrocodes. Now, what do I mean by a macrocode? And for that, let me ask you a couple of questions. How many of you in this

audience have used a computer? Okay, good.

How many of you have used a word processor? Most people today that use a computer have used a word processor, and you know that you can type things, and you can also, in addition to just putting the text together, your word processor will determine what font, whether it should be italics, where the margins are, what your tabs, all that kind of stuff, right? It turns out that most sophisticated, some of the more advanced word processors, most commonly used ones, also indulge in what are called macrocodes. For example, if you're going to sit down and send somebody a letter, there's a code you can indicate that will format it for you. If you say, no, no, no, I'm going to send a fax, it'll set up the fax for you, and so forth.

In other words, many of them are built in, the standard ones, but you also, most of them, have the ability to define your own. If you're in a company, and you do a certain thing a certain way all the time, you can put together some codes that are called by a macrocode that will do all that for you. The point is, a macrocode is a term used by computer programmers for a collection of codes, let me say a collection of microcodes, perhaps, that perform some larger task.

And some of the things that macrocodes do are outside time. For example, if you tell your computer you're going to send a fax, it already sets up the margin, sets that all up. You haven't said anything in your fax yet, but it's set that up in advance, do you follow me? Those are macrocodes.

Now, it may surprise you to discover that there are macrocodes in the Bible, and to me, they are the most provocative, and by the way, you don't need a computer for them, I'm just using the computer as a way to get the idea across. And what we're going to get into tonight is certainly not the most obvious of them, in fact, it's maybe quite conjectural, we'll get to that. But if we talk about macrocodes, one of the things they include is what biblical authors typically call a type.

That's a term you won't be comfortable with, unless you do a lot of biblical scholastic reading. The term that we use in our vocabulary more often is a model. If you build a house, and it has complicated levels, a split level or something, the architect may actually build a model so you can visualize how the spaces interact.

You build a model to represent certain aspects of that house. If you're going to build an aircraft wing, you on a computer can build a mathematical model of that wing that'll test its structure and its resonance and other things. Models, we deal with mathematical models all the time, we deal with physical models all the time.

So a type is like a model, and there are certain stories in the Bible that are models of something forthcoming. Now, perhaps the classic example, there are hundreds of them, and they're actually books published of just lists of the different types and models in Scripture. But the classic one, of course, is what the Hebrews call the Akedah, Abraham's offering of Isaac.

Now, Abraham really offered Isaac. That story in Genesis 22 isn't contrived, it actually happened. And yet, when you study that story carefully, it starts to raise all kinds of provocative questions that it also answers, in effect.

Because here Abraham's told to offer his son Isaac. You mean the Bible endorses child sacrifice? Heaven forbid, no. Well, what's going on there? We discover he's designated as the only son of Abraham.

Abraham already had Ishmael, he had two sons, at least as far as Abraham's concerned, not as far as God's concerned, for that purpose. And as we study that, first of all, Abraham gets that commandment, and the next day he takes off to fulfill it. To offer his son is an offering.

By the time you get to chapter 22, Abraham's learned his lessons, he's pretty sharp. He has a lot of stumbles earlier in the book, but by 22 he's got it together, when God says it, he's going to do it. They travel three days, turns out to be a very significant period of time.

They get to the hill that God led them to, and leave the two young men and the donkey at the base, and they go up the hill. Isaac's carrying the wood on his back and says, Abraham, where's the lamb for the offering? Abraham says, God's going to provide himself a lamb for the offering. You read that first time through, you figure he's just stalling the kid, right? Until you read carefully, God's going to provide who? Himself.

Ooh, that's interesting. By the way, he tells the two young men, we're going to come back to you. Just wait down here, I and the lad will come back to you.

So is he giving a cover story, or did he know that Isaac would have to be resurrected? He knew that Isaac would have to be resurrected, because God had promised that Isaac would have many children. God, do you want me to kill him? You've got a problem, I don't. It helps to think Jewish, you know.

And of course they get up there, and you know the story, where just at the last minute an angel stops, intervenes, and they substitute a ram, and so forth. When did Isaac die, as far as Abram's concerned? When the commandment came, Hebrews 11, 19 tells us. When was Isaac restored to him? Three days later.

Ooh, that's interesting. Is that what Paul means when he says the gospel? Is that how Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, that he was buried, and he rose again the third day according to the scriptures? The third day thing was predicted, several places. But the real point is, when you really study that narrative, you discover that another father did offer his son on that very spot 2,000 years later, and Abraham knew it.

How did he know it? How do I know he knew it? Because he names the spot. In the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen. He knew it was prophetic, and it is prophetic.

What does it tell you? Well, first of all, it tells you that God had laid out His plan long in advance, and that Jesus fulfilled all kinds of details. You can find those details in the Torah, but you can also find these details in all the requirements for the kind of sacrifice that was being made. It's an incredible study.

But the point, I'm going to get back to the narrative there, is what could be called a macrocode. It is a foreshadowing, a format, if you will, of what's coming. And there are many, many of those in the scripture.

The book of Ruth is the other classic example, where you have this interesting story, where the hero of the story is a Goel, a kinsman-redeemer, who ends up taking a Gentile bride to wife and restoring the land to Naomi. And we go through every detail, a little four-chapter book, but you cannot go through that book and exhaust it. I've taught that book many times, and every time I go through it, we find another little something that's a surprise.

How Boaz is a type of our kinsman-redeemer, Jesus Christ, and how he takes to wife a Gentile bride, and in that same act of redemption, restores Naomi, a type of Israel, to the land. And this all occurs in Bethlehem, and it's the reason that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Many people don't realize that.

And when the shepherds at Christmas see the angels singing, they're in the fields of Boaz and Ruth. And it turns out there's a prophecy that David would be king, and this book was in the time of the judges. Many people say, God gave Israel a king as an afterthought.

No, he had a king designated David. They were just impatient, so he said, you want to find out what a king's like, I'll give you Saul, and they saw what it was like. The point is, David was ordained in the book of Ruth.

But the point is, Ruth is a model foreshadowing God's plan. It's a macrocode. See, just like if I see your codes for some facts or something, the early codes will tell me its format.

I may not know its full content yet, but I've got a glimpse of what's coming. Why are they significant? Because they have to originate outside time. Moses in the Torah couldn't have written that as a foreshadowing of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ thousands of years beforehand.

He put it there because the Lord knew that. It's proof that it's inspired. That's why macrocodes, to me, are far more interesting than microcodes.

Microcodes are interesting for their own sake, perhaps, but macrocodes are fascinating because they demonstrate that these 66 books, penned by more than 40 different guys over thousands of years, are an integrated message from outside time. Why? Because the formats, the layout of the contents, are described thousands of years in advance. And there are many of those.

On and on and on. I don't want to take too much time in the generics here. I want to jump in.

But as we jump in, I want to also preface this. In all our Bible studies, we always say Acts 17 and 11 should be at the top of your notepad. This one especially.

Because by putting myself under that banner, Acts 17 and 11 is where Luke warns you not to believe anything Chuck Missler tells you, but to search the Scriptures daily to prove whether those things be so. I'm going to suggest, very tentatively, as a conjecture, that the book of Esther may also be a macrocode, meaning that in addition to the actual narrative, which happened as it's recorded, there may be some deeper issues there for our instruction. And the reason I want to get... I left this for last, because we're really out in the fringe.

And if we get through the next half hour and you don't buy it, no problem. Take that page out of your notebook, burn it, forget it, go on to more constructive things. On the other hand, I want to suggest tentatively the possibility that you are a walking book of Esther.

That Esther just might be a foreshadowing of the book of Romans. Now, I should start by pointing out that Paul, for example, makes it clear in several of his letters that historic incidents that actually happen to Israel are recorded there with the intention of teaching us and instructing us. 1 Corinthians 10, verse 11 says, Now all these things happened to them, to Israel, for a warning, and they are written down for our instruction.

Now, he's alluding there to past history of Israel. What's it got to do with us? Everything. I mean, just because it set the stage for a lot of other events? Yes, but even more than that.

They're there to teach us certain principles, certain things. Another example, Paul says in Romans chapter 15, verse 4, For whatsoever things were written for a time were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Whatsoever things.

I could argue from this verse that everything back there has a specific instructional meaning. It's like sometimes three or four levels deep. What are some examples? Well, I'll start with Jesus' parables.

They're obviously laid out for our instruction. Let's take another more controversial one, the days of Noah. We all know about the flood.

We read about the flood in chapters 7, 8, and 9, but chapter 6 we sort of gloss over. That's the reason the flood came. Why is that important? To understand the flood, yes, but there's even a more important reason.

Jesus said when he gave his confidential briefing to his disciples on his second coming, he said, As the days of Noah were, so shall the days of the coming of the Son of Man be. Which means there's a prophetic implication of the days of Noah. And so we explore that for that reason.

Of course, Abraham's offering, Isaac I've mentioned. Jonah. Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a big fish, or whale, whatever.

The point is, is that significant? You bet. For more than just the narrative that had to do with the ministry to Nineveh. Because Jesus alludes to that as a foreshadowing of his own death, burial, and resurrection.

As Jonah spent three days and three nights in the belly of the big fish, so shall the Son of Man spend three days and three nights in the belly of the earth. That gets particularly significant when you study carefully the passage of Jonah. Many scholars believe what that passage teaches, plus some allusions in the Psalms, that Jonah died.

Most of us when we read that story don't go that far. But there are scholars that defend from the Scripture the notion that he actually passed through death. And though it may be a far deeper type than many people suspect, but in any case, the Bible of course has two objectives at least.

One is of course to know God, but the other is to know ourselves. One of the reasons I believe that my wife's books are so profound is because they give us insights from the Scripture to our internal software architecture. Around that derives not just an interesting theory and theological issues, but some very practical day-to-day issues.

And if what I'm about to get into here, which is way out in the fringe, so bear with me, if it doesn't have a positive impact on your walk in Christ, scratch it. Dump it. If it does, well praise God.

And that's not Chuck Bishop, that's the Holy Spirit. Okay? So let's go cautiously. Now, one of the things that you might want to look at, this one I want you to look with me, so we get a little unsounder ground.

Turn to Deuteronomy 31. This is a core passage before you jump in the book of Esther, but let's... Deuteronomy 31, starting about verse 16, just a couple of verses here. And the Lord said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, thy people will rise up and play the harlot, after the strange gods

of the land to which they go to be among them, and will forsake me and will break my covenant which I have made with them.

Here's a prophecy that Israel is going to blow it. Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them, so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us? Verse 18, And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they have wrought in that they are turned unto other gods. Now, you say, Wow, that's pretty heavy.

The book of Hosea portrays quite clearly that there is going to come a time that God will set Israel aside. He told them to name His child Lo-Ami, not My people. The good news in Hosea is the day will come when He'll once again take them up as His people.

That's the big mistake that many churches make. They dwell on the fact that Israel is set aside. They fail to perceive that Israel has a destiny.

Prophetically, God has yet to fulfill many promises there. And Paul, among others, spends three chapters in his definition of theology called the book of Romans. Chapters 9, 10, and 11 he hammers away that God's not through with Israel yet.

They've got an incredible time ahead of them. But the book of Esther occurs at a time when they are technically set aside and yet, is God turned His back on them totally? No. He's invisible behind the scenes still watching over His people.

That should be comforting. That should be comforting. When you think that God isn't paying attention to you, you're wrong.

And one of the things, one of the messages of the book of Esther is even when His people were not walking in faith, God was behind the scenes in a fascinating, with incredible detail, making sure that they would not be wiped out. And that's the real, one of the main messages. Anyway, when we jump into chapter 1 of Esther, we quickly discover King Azarias, which is not a name.

It's a title, by the way. So we don't know his name. Most scholars believe he was King Xerxes.

But the exact identity of the king isn't important in the narrative. So we see him in there only by his title. In the same sense that Caesar or Kaiser or Tsar are titles, not names.

The word actually means venerable father. That's sort of the flavor of it. Now, we're going to encounter this whole narrative.

The first thing that we sort of wonder, what does the king represent? It's interesting. You might turn with me to Psalm 8. There's some identities here that I want to work up slowly with you. But let's turn to Psalm 8. Great Psalm.

Verse 4. You recall this from the songs. Now, in the ultimate sense, this of course refers to Christ. But in the denotative sense, it refers to man himself.

You might say, gee, Jack, you're exaggerating. No, no. Turn to Genesis 1, verse 26.

When man was created, God said, let us make man in our image after our likeness and let them, Mr. and Mrs. Man, have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle and over all the earth and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So one of the first tentative suggestions is I'm going to suggest you and I are probably in the shoes of that king. You and I are intended to have authority over some domain.

This gets into, to really develop this, we should talk a little bit more how we're put together. We have faculties of consciousness. And this gets into the whole model of hardware and software.

I'm talking software architecture here. I'm not talking about our physical body. That's simply the residence we dwell in.

But within that we have a consciousness, we have a will, we have choices to make, we have a volition. So it's through those instruments that we exercise dominion over ourselves. We'll develop this a little further as we go.

But there's something else that we lack. We're designed to lack it, actually. We have a need for communion.

And there is a function behind our conscious life. I'm going to suggest to you that's going to be pictured here by Esther, the queen. A source of comfort and counsel.

Private, intimate fellowship. And when a king without a queen dies, that's the end of the dynasty. So the queen suggests immortality, in effect, to the dynasty.

Now, if we assume that the king may be alluding to the soul of man, his mind, his emotions, and his will, in the text of Esther, then the capital is his, let's say his body, his immediate sphere of influence, in which the decisions are initially carried out. The empire itself would be that influence extended. If you look at this as concentric circles, it may get the idea across.

And the queen is our guiding spirit, the source of fellowship, refreshment, and communion. Now, as we get into the story, we learn there's going to be two characters that are the key characters, in a sense. One is Mordecai.

Mordecai is the descendant of David's grace. Remember that story where the guy was cursing and stoning David, the men wanted to kill him, he says, no, God has appointed him to curse me, let him curse me. And he was spared by David's gesture of grace.

This guy was a son of Kish, from whom Mordecai descended. So Mordecai, strangely enough, is a descendant of Saul, his family. Kish was the same family from which King Saul came from.

Now, we then run into Haman. I want to talk a little more about Haman, but he, of course, is the sinister figure of the plot. And Mordecai and Haman are the two protagonists, in a sense, in the story.

Of course, in a sense, I'm going to suggest to you that Haman's mortal enemy is the Holy Spirit. And I'm going to suggest that Mordecai may be in that, in some sense, that role. And one of the questions that's constantly going to be imposed upon us is who's in control? Who's in control of the throne? Is it Haman? Or is it Mordecai? And the problem in Esther's how do you get Haman's influence curtailed and Mordecai in control? And that's the plot.

And we want to understand how that happens. Now, chapter 1 in the book of Esther, of course, deals with the fall of man, in effect, where he... How did man fall? By pride. First question, when did Adam actually fall? And I'm going to suggest he didn't fall when Eve ate the fruit.

He fell when he chose to assert the supremacy of emotion, that is, the love of his wife, over the revelation of his spirit, which God had given him. The violation of the function of the spirit by asserting the supremacy of his soul is the basic fallacy of humanism. It's this reversal of man's nature that is trying to make his reason superior to revelation.

That's the hallmark of humanism ever since. Now, the king was not content to display the authority that was properly his, but, lifted up by pride, he foolishly sends for his queen to display her before the crowd. In a sense, he's violating the private, intimate communion that were available to him.

Of course, she refused. And instead of facing his foolish pride, what does he do? He yields to the lies of his counselors and he ends up placing himself under the unalterable laws. Now, I think that's kind of interesting because there is a law of sin and death.

When Adam chose the desire of his heart over fellowship with God, human spirit became dark and unresponsive and man entered upon that lonely restlessness that has characterized man ever since. He became a soulish being, governed only by his mind, his emotions, his own will, his own ego, sitting on the throne of his kingdom, brooking no opposition. The highest authority he knows is his self.

He obviously has lost the joy, the insights that were available before and he's helpless to reverse this fact. He's helpless to reverse this fact on his own because he's blinded. This, of course, is the explanation for all the misery and helplessness and folly and evil and injustice sin and life as we know it today.

Now, chapter 2 then, in Esther, begins the story of redeeming grace. The king vainly searches for someone to fill the void of the missing queen and Carl Jung, if you'll excuse this quote, he's an Austrian psychologist, he points out that man suffers from the neurosis of emptiness, in his vocabulary. When God goes, the goal goes.

When the goal goes, purpose goes. When the purpose goes, meaning goes. And when meaning goes, life goes dead on our hands.

That's their highest insight. Now, as he starts searching, we find the two big characters surface. One is Mordecai the Jew.

The fact that Mordecai is a Jew is significant. Remember John 4, the woman in the well? What did Jesus tell her? Salvation is of what? Salvation is of the Jews. And, by the way, the word Mordecai means a little man.

It's a suggestion of humility right off the bat. And I'm going to suggest, tentatively, it's a possibility maybe he is in the role, here in some sense at least, of the Holy Spirit. His role would be to restore fellowship with God, as the Holy Spirit is, which has been lost.

And then we introduce Esther, who is Mordecai's cousin. And, again, I point out, it means something hidden. And I suspect that she represents something hidden in our nature.

And I don't mean our soul. Now, psychology is powerless to go beyond the soul level. Psychology attempts to understand human behavior from the outside, looking in, and you can't.

And any software designer knows that. You can't reverse compilation. You can't imply intent.

What determines the behavior of a computer is not the hardware. You can know everything about it. It doesn't do any good.

You need to know the software. And you can't infer the architecture from its external behavior. That's why you can buy software to store and use it all you like, but you can't compromise it in the sense of decompiling it.

And so that's one reason psychology is destined to frustration, because it can't go deeper than the soul level. And the Scripture tells you that, Hebrews 4.12. Only the Word of God can discern between the soul and the spirit, the inner core. But I suggest that Esther may represent something hidden, something deeper.

And, of course, she's adopted by Mordecai. And how interesting it is, in Romans 8.15, we are adopted by whom? Oh, Romans 8.15. Let's get into it. Turn to Romans 8. And you might put a little mark there, because we may come back to this general area of Romans many, many times.

But in Romans 8.15, Paul says, For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Daddy, Abba, Father. Abba, the intimate form, the Father. Now, we have the search for the queen, and, of course, the king is not aware that Mordecai is moving.

The king had no right to this girl. She was Jewish, not Persian. But he didn't know that.

In verse 19 of chapter 2, he's at the gate. Mordecai's at the gate. Not at the palace yet.

He's a judge, but not yet in the place of control. And we have this strange plot occur where the adversaries of the king are, it says, hanged, but we know from the real text that it's impaled, nailed on a tree. How interesting it is.

Colossians chapter 2 talks about our sins being nailed to that cross. The handwriting of ordinances that was against us and all that. I'm running out of time, so I can't take these fun little detours, so we'll keep moving.

And all this whole incident in chapter 2 where Mordecai reveals his plot against the king and these two assailants get killed are recorded in a book, and we have a book like that ourselves. By the way, if Christianity was nothing more than becoming saved and that we can go to heaven when we die, the book of Esther could end right there. But it doesn't.

There's far more to deal here. This is not the end. It's not even the beginning of the end.

It's the end of the beginning. And we get into the whole plot as it starts to unravel, and there's many lessons here that may be quite disturbing because God intends to work in the life of this king and I suggest he wants to work the same work in each of us that he worked in that king. And that's the reason I'm indulging this little side view of this book.

Chapter 3, we now have the villain. And I think I mentioned that Orthodox Jews always hiss and stamp their feet whenever Haman's mentioned. Please don't do that.

It'll screw up the tape recording, but you get the idea. You remember that Saul was commissioned to destroy all the Amalekites. So we go back to 1 Samuel 15 and so forth.

And Agag was the king of the Amalekites and Haman is a descendant of Agag. Amalek was the descendant of Esau who becomes, in effect, and he was the first and becomes the persistent type of evil against Israel. And it becomes an idiom for the principle of evil.

1 Samuel 15 can be in your notes, Exodus 17 in your notes. We won't go through the whole thing in detail here. But Israel had just enjoyed, in Exodus 17, the rock, they were out of water, the rock was struck with Moses' staff, water came out, they were just enjoying this incredible refreshment by God.

In fact, Paul in 1 Corinthians 10, 4 says that rock was whom? Jesus Christ. Now he's drawing an idiomatic parallel here. There was a real rock, don't misunderstand.

But he says in a sense that rock was Christ because He's our source of living water. You notice it had to be smitten for the water to come out. Now the same action occurs later in their wanderings where God says speak to the rock to give them water.

By then Moses is upset for other reasons and he strikes the rock the second time and for that he gets put in the penalty box and does not get the end of the promised land. Now he's ruled these people for 40 years. He didn't ask for the job.

And he screwed up. God says fine Moses, you can see it from a distance but you will not be able to enter because you didn't do what I told you to do. Boy, you want evidence that God means what He says and says what He means.

Study that event. Now one of the provocative things, if he'd done what God had asked him to do then the model, the macro code, see the macro code was fractured because we had two living water events. The first was smitten, the other one wasn't.

See, he comes back first to be smitten. The second coming is not to be smitten. He blew the model in a sense.

Follow me? But anyway, let's move on. Back to the first time when the rock was smitten, the water comes. It says right after that, that's when Amalek fought with Israel and Rephidim.

Whenever you've had a marvelous working of the Spirit, watch out. Israel just had this incredible experience of the water and that's when the enemy, the flesh, attacked them. It says in Galatians 5, Paul comments on this in effect, says, This I say, that walking in the Spirit ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

For the flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. These are contrary one to another so that you cannot do the things that you would. Now how does one deal with the flesh? How did they deal with the Amalekites? They had to fight them.

If you look at Exodus 17, you know how they fought them. And it's not just Exodus 17. You'll discover that whenever Israel fought the Amalekites in the flesh, they got clobbered.

And whenever they fought them with lowliness of mind and trusting in faith, the Amalekites got clobbered. The whole book of Judges, you can tell whether they're going to win or lose by what's their attitude going in. If they try to do it in their own strength, they don't make it.

And that's why I think the model here is intended. Now, the only way the flesh ... The flesh doesn't get cast out like demons with all my apologies to some of my charismatic friends. You don't cast out flesh.

Flesh has to be crucified. And the book of Esther isn't resolved until Haman and his ten sons are not only killed, hung on a tree. That's what you got to do with your flesh if my perception of Esther is correct.

Romans 8.13 says, For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die, but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live. Colossians 3.5 says, Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth fornication, cleanliness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry. You read through Paul's letters.

Boy, and the book of Romans especially. The struggle with the flesh is the struggle, I believe, that is being modeled for us in the book of Esther. Now, in Numbers 14, Israel disobeyed the word of the Lord, presumed to go up to the hilltop against the Malachites and meet their foes.

And then the Malachites came down and discomfited them even to Hormah. See, the minute we go out of God's order, we're dog meat. Balaam predicts the doom of his haughty foe when he says in Numbers 24, verse 20, he says, this is ten chapters later, he predicts the doom of the Malachites.

And when he looked upon Amalek, he took up this parable and said, Amalek was the first of the nations, but his latter end shall be that he shall perish forever. Moses also is extended in Deuteronomy 25, verses 17 through 19. You can follow me if you like.

Deuteronomy 25, verses 17 through 19. Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way when ye were come forth out of Egypt, how he met thee by the way and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee when thou wast faint and weary, and ye feared not God. Therefore it shall be, when the Lord thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

And then five interesting words. Thou shalt not forget it. There's something here more than just Amalek involved.

And again, I say the book of Judges, chapters 5, 6, and 10 and some others. Now, Saul was commissioned to go and wipe out all the Amalekites in 1 Samuel 15. And spare them not, he says.

If Saul had been true to God's command, the whole book of Esther would have been unnecessary. But because he didn't, there was a descendant by the name of Haman that put at jeopardy the entire nation of Israel. Not just those in Susa, the capital, but including those who were trying to rebuild a temple in the book of Ezra and Nehemiah.

In a sense, their God's primary focus. So sin unjudged will result in trouble later. Now, we're going to move from the Torah period we just talked about, 600 years, when a royal Amalekite and a descendant of the house of Saul confront each other, Mordecai and Haman.

That's what makes Esther very exciting. And Haman gets to the king and he's the prime minister and he's the big cheese. And everybody bows down except one guy.

One lone, small, old, stubborn man. God by the name of Mordecai. He chose to be politically incorrect.

I do want to draw upon Ironside. He says this so well. It was this spirit that sustained Noah in his testimony against the corrupt, sin-loving world that mocked him when he built his barge in his driveway.

I think that's my translation. It was this confidence of faith that Moses forsook Egypt. It was in this energy of faith that Caleb took on the Nephilim, the Amalekites and the Anakim.

It was this chutzpah that led Gideon's war with lamps and pitchers and David's fight with an armored giant with a shepherd's sling and stones. It was this confidence that caused Daniel to open his Babylonian windows towards Jerusalem to pray and to drive Paul in his life of ordeal into devotion to his Lord. It was the same spirit that Athanasius suffered banishment rather than to bow to the Arianism of the times.

Savonarola that defied the licentious and avaricious officials of the church and state. That Martin Luther uttered his mighty no in the presence of the emperor and the bishops of the empire. And it goes on a whole list here.

I won't go through all of them. That Knotts caused a queen to tremble. That the covenanters chose rather to be hunted as beasts in the field rather than own the spiritual authority of degenerate kings and bishops.

And then Hebrews 11 verse 32 and following. Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, backed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead, raised to life again.

Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, moreover bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned.

They were sawn asunder. They were tempted. They were slain with a sword.

They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted and tormented. They wandered in deserts and in mountains and in dens and caves of the earth, of whom the world was not worthy. That's all out of Hebrews 11 verse 32 and following.

So this is the tension between Mordecai and Haman. It's going to emerge in the book here. Now Haman, as long as Haman was at the sea of power, the whole kingdom would be affected by his evil designs.

And also the communion of the king and queen would be affected. There could be no peace while Haman's near the throne. And the king, of course, is unaware of Haman's character.

And so Haman is his trusted and loyal friend. So the king's eyes have to be opened. And Mordecai's goal is to find a way to get his eyes opened.

And his only approach to the king, of course, is through Esther the queen. But Haman begins not with Mordecai, but with the periphery, with his people. The Jews represent the evidence that God is at work.

And, of course, we get into the whole business of casting the lot to determine the day which they'd all be killed. We get into a whole superstition thing here. I'll set that aside for now.

It's interesting, who controls the lot? The dice, throwing the dice? Einstein says God does not play dice. Absolutely right, because if he did, he'd win. If God plays dice, it's a fixed game.

Now one of the questions we ask ourselves from time to time is God really concerned about your welfare? Boy, even in the throw of the dice here is evidence that he is watching out for his people. And all fear, I don't know what you're going through right now, but all fear is a distrust in the goodness of God. If you know that God loves you, that God cares about you personally, you specifically, then fear should evaporate.

Fear is a form of a lack of faith. Chapter 3, then of course we have a threat to the throne and the wealth. We have the counsel of the flesh, if you will, versus the counsel of the spirit.

And who's in control there? Obviously Haman is, the flesh. By the way, nothing can be done in your life except by your will, so you can't pass the buck. But are you listening to the flesh or the spirit is the issue that's being driven here.

Was the king sincere? Obviously. Sincerity is never any defense against error. Romans 6 points out that we're either instruments of righteousness or unrighteousness.

I'm just trying to move through the book here roughly as we go. The king committed to evil forces, but evil forces often went with the authority to go far beyond our desires. And that's partly what Haman was here.

And that can happen to all of us if we're victims of our own dedication. Now, one of the questions you and I need to ask ourselves, if we're in the king's shoes, have we become under the influence of our prime minister, the flesh? That's the issue. And if so, the result will be perplexity, confusion, and despair, exactly like it was in Esther in chapter 3. The king never meant it to be so, but as long as he's unaware of the nature of Haman, he'll be unaware of his condition and unable to correct it.

Chapter 4, Mordecai starts to act. And all hope for deliverance relies entirely on the initiatives of God, not the king or really anyone else there. And only Mordecai really understands the situation.

He knows that the situation will not only wipe out all the Jews throughout the entire kingdom, but it'll all touch the very throne itself. And by the way, it's kind of interesting that the servant that passes the message to Mordecai and so forth is called Hathak, which is a personal term for the truth, which I think is kind of interesting. And you all remember the dramatic thing where Mordecai points out to Esther that she's called for such a time as this.

If she chooses not to do this, God will find another way, but this is her opportunity to intervene on the destiny of her people. And God is never hindered by man's failure, and she, of course, rises to the task and goes forward. There's a three days and three nights thing there, which is very provocative, which, of course, echoes Genesis 22, as we suggested earlier.

And all of this needs to be recognized that the predicament of the Jews in the book of Esther, they're under the sentence of death, the unalterable sentence of death. The fact that it's unalterable becomes a problem later. That's why there's such a strange remedy.

You and I are in the same shoes. We are under the unalterable sentence of death, but for God's redemption. From here, I would make the comparison with Lazarus.

Now, Lazarus was dead, but Jesus called Lazarus forth, right? Lazarus went through three phases. We all know he was raised, but more than that. He comes out of the tomb, he was raised but defeated.

He was tied up in his grave clothes. Jesus calls him, release him, let him go. He first was dead, then he was defeated until he got rid of his grave clothes, and then he was dangerous.

Because in the next chapter, the Pharisees had to plot to kill Lazarus. Couldn't have him rocking around. He was dangerous.

And that's our challenge. You and I say, gee, I've accepted Jesus Christ, I'm alive again. Praise God.

But are you crumbled with your grave clothes? Is there baggage you have to get rid of in order to be dangerous? That's what you're called. You're called to wander around in your grave clothes. But anyway, moving on.

Chapter 5, we have after the third day. There's a garment change and some other things, and I'll let you play with this. By the time I'm through, you'll either buy this thing and go through it yourself or forget it, whichever way.

We have, obviously, Haman's pride is revealed here in this chapter. And as a result, he prepares his own undoing. He builds this scaffolding.

They call it a gallows in the English, but actually it's a crucifixion implement. I'm fascinated how God seems to have a finely tuned sense of irony. While this Amalekite is boasting over the anticipated death of the descendant of Kish, the drama begins to turn.

We get to Chapter 6. There's a sleepless night that changes the course of history because the king can't sleep. He's reading at night, and he discovers this thing that Mordecai did for him years ago, and he realizes nothing's ever been done for him. If Mordecai had been rewarded when he turned in those assassins back in Chapter 2, you know, a little pat on the back, and it would have been forgotten.

No, he was not rewarded. I believe that's the hand of God. It was overlooked.

Why? Because now's the time it can have giant leverage. The king wakes up. In fact, hey, this guy saved my life.

Nothing's ever done for him. Then you have this incredible scene with Haman where he runs into Haman the next morning. What should a guy do for someone that the king really wants to honor? And Haman thinks, ah, it's me, of course.

Well, and he goes through this whole litany of exciting things. The king says, hey, that's great. I want you to get Mordecai.

Ah, yeah. And it's one of these incredible scenes. But God's hand, don't tell me God doesn't have a sense of humor.

And so there's obviously a real parallel here because Mordecai did a very daring deed for the king long before. Jesus Christ did the most daring deed of all history by standing in your place and mine. And that's the thing.

It can't come from some recited creed or some academic study. The day will come if it hasn't yet. It'll hit you like a ton of bricks, what God himself did, becoming a man, and standing in your shoes that you might live.

You are a brand plucked from the burning, and he owns you. Now, if you're his, and you have no right to a life over which he would not approve. Anyway, he invites him to go through this, and we have this incredible twist there.

And if you want to put a little reference in your notes, put Romans 12, 1 and 2, where you should present your bodies as a living sacrifice and so forth. You see, the flesh can memorize scripture. It can teach Sunday school.

It can distribute tracts. It can give large gifts of money. It can sing solos in church.

It can teach a Bible class. The flesh can apologize after a fashion. It can repent to some extent, and it can suffer with a martyred heir.

But there's one thing the flesh will never do. That's surrender. Surrender.

The lesson in Esther is that he has to be nailed, literally. And chapter 7 is the great climax, last supper, Haman's last supper. Where finally the king, in outrage, says, Who is he, and where is he that would presume to do this? Esther says, The foe and enemy is wicked Haman.

And the king immediately makes her adversary his. And Haman's goose is cooked. And that's the problem you and I have in our life, where there's some problem in your life that needs to be nailed.

And eradicating the prime minister of your life is no casual decision. It involves a lot of changes. And it's always a shock to discover that it's not somebody else's thoughtlessness, but your own selfishness.

That's the issue. It's not their malice. It's your lovelessness.

It isn't somebody else's fickleness. It's your jealousy. It isn't our own pretentious attitude of self-confidence, self-trust, or maybe even self-pity or self-excuse.

That's the real problem, self. We can talk about the rich or the ruler, but I'm running out of time, so I better just wrap this up. We always hiss at Haman.

We can't imagine this deceitful scoundrel becomes the villain of the piece. And yet our heart, we learn from the Scripture, is incurably wicked. Everything that Haman did is our own hearts.

Jesus also explained, those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart, and they defile a man. From out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man, and not eating with unwashed hands or whatever.

No amount of education or culture, or even self-restraint or self-righteousness, will eradicate this evil. It's in our nature. It requires what? Totally new birth.

Totally new birth. So anyway, Haman gets the sentence of death. He deserves to nail him to that tree.

You can put Romans 6.11 in your notes, and we'll keep moving. And of course, he's executed on his own apparatus. David even wrote in the Psalms, he says, Behold, he traveleth in iniquity.

He hath conceived mischief. He brought forth falsehood. He made a pit, and digged it, and has fallen into the ditch which he had made.

His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own height. So, Haman certainly is an illustration, not a type of the Antichrist, or tart the way you will. And whenever you see a cross in Scripture, it's always there for one purpose.

And that's to put an evil man to death. You say, Jesus wasn't evil. Yes, He was.

He was in your shoes. Jesus didn't defend Himself before Pilate. Why? Because He couldn't.

He wasn't guilty, but we are, and He's in our shoes. Anyway, we need to nail to that tree our own jealousy, self-pity, self-will, resentment, what have you. Well, Chapter 8, of course, the right man comes in.

Mordecai was in the book from the beginning, but only he's now brought before the king. And the soul has to be recognized that the spirit has to rule in every area. But that's something that we don't know ourselves, but the Holy Spirit will help.

And even the house of Haman has to be turned over to Him, as the house of Haman was turned over to Mordecai before it's all over. Because the threat of the old law still hangs over the kingdom. Gee, they've got this big celebration.

Haman's dead. The witch is dead. Let's all sing.

No, not finished yet. The sentence of death, the irrevocable sentence of death is still in all the nations. What are they allowed to do? They're given the resources to fight it, but they have to fight it.

It isn't automatic. Don't stand there and just rain showers of blessings. No, it's a warfare.

This law can never be broken. It curses everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. Galatians 3.10, Deuteronomy 27.6, and so forth.

But just like in that chapter, when Esther came again, He extended the scepter of grace. You and I have had that scepter of grace extended to us. And I'm going to suggest to you the plight of Esther's people is analogous to all the unsaved men and women on the earth.

Conscious of being under the judgment of God, the curse of the broken law hanging over their heads, but God can say, as He did in Job, Deliver him from going down to the pit. I found a ransom. And of course, obviously, Jesus is that ransom.

And I can go through a lot of parallels here. They're pretty obvious, and we're running out of time, so let me just try to wrap this up here. A couple of other major things.

It's interesting that even the king, when he gives them power, he's helpless to revoke the law. He has a readiness to admit it, and all self-effort is useless. So he puts that in the hands of whom? Esther and Mordecai to resolve the problem.

And he makes no attempt at self-effort. See, the law of the Spirit never eliminates the law of sin and death. It simply superimposes upon it a higher power.

And that's exactly what happens in the Book of Esther. And you can go through all of that. And let's just keep moving here.

A couple of other key points, and you'll get the idea. Chapter 9, the day finally arrives. And there's a day for all of us when head knowledge has to be superseded by the illumination of the Holy Spirit and that moment of truth, as we might call it.

The parallels become very obvious. I want to get to the slaying of the ten sons of Haman. I left that for this.

We didn't go into detail then. But they're listed, and in the Hebrew, in the Masoretic Text, they're listed strangely. They're listed in two columns.

And the name. And it's very strange the way it's laid out. First one is Parashan Datha, which turns out to mean the curious self.

Dalphan, the weeping self. Asbatha means the assembled self. Paratha, the generous self.

Adalia, the weak self. Eredatha, the strong self. Parmashta, the preeminent self.

And so on. The bold self, the dignified self, the pure self. In other words, read this this way.

Here are the ten sons of Haman. Curious self, the busy body. The weeping self, self-pity.

Assembled self, the one that's self-mobilized. The generous, or self-sufficient, if you will. Paratha was the generous self.

The spendthriftness, impulsive self-indulgence. I won't ask for a show of hands on any of these. We'll just keep going on.

Adalia, the weak self. Self-consciousness, inferiority. The strong self, assertiveness, insist upon one's own way.

The preeminent self, ambition, desire for preeminence over others. The bold self, imprudence. The dignified self, pride, haughtiness, sense of superiority.

The pure self, worst of all, of all of these. The worst of all of these is what? The pure self, self-righteous. You know, stand back, you know.

All of these were put to death. Not just Haman, but his descendants. And that ended the house of Amalek.

And there's a whole bunch of things that have parallels. I'll let you dig those out because I'm running out of time here. But there are steps to victory.

Let me just go through those. The exposure of Haman. That's the first step.

They had to expose Haman, and they did. There's no justification or euthanasia for the flesh. You're talking about perfidy, treachery, and subtlety.

Now exposed. Haman's exposed. Then the next step is that the knowledge of a new decree be exposed.

That's the next step that happens. They're set free from the old decree. It's no longer up to them to do their best.

We have new life in Christ. We trust Him to do His best through us. But the final thing is we have to impale Haman's son on the cross.

And his sons. And you can't have two masters. One prevents the others.

Well, we can go more and more through this. It's kind of interesting. It took Enoch 65 years before he learned to walk with God.

I hope it doesn't take us that long. And he walked about 300 years with God. I love the way Reach Seddon suggests this.

Until one day God just said to him, Come on, Enoch. Come on home with me. It's too far to go back.

Chapter 10 wraps up in just a few verses. The same king and kingdom is there that the book began with. Same king and kingdom the book began with.

But Haman's out. Mordecai is in. And what a difference.

Until the Spirit is granted control, there's no peace and no welfare for the kingdom. And that's exactly what Paul says in Galatians 2.20. I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live.

Not I, but Christ lives in me. Now, I have suggested something here that is speculative. Does it make sense? Is it right? Gee, Chuck, is that right or wrong? I don't know.

It doesn't matter what I know. You have to decide yourself. Now, what you do with this thought, go back through the book of Esther and judge for yourself.

You may come to the conclusion, This is kind of speculative. I don't buy it. Fine.

Pitch it. No problem. Because the truth of God doesn't rely on this particular conjecture from the book of Esther.

Don't misunderstand me. On the other hand, if it fits, then take its lessons to heart. But, here's the test.

How do you tell whether some code is valid or not? Very simple. There's only one real protection. And that's called the whole counsel of God.

If this fits your understanding of the total scripture, well, then it fits. And it's instructive. If it doesn't fit, or if you try to press it too far, your protection is the whole counsel.

This fits or doesn't fit to the extent it profiles the epistles of Paul. In many ways, not in every way, but in many ways it does. And in that sense, it's instructive.

As you read this incredible drama, the problem of Haman wasn't simple. It was complicated. And there's a strange business here.

The king could say, Hey, he's a bad guy. Heck with that. We'll just nullify that decree and that's over.

No, he couldn't do that. Why? Well, he couldn't for legal reasons there, but there's another lesson here for all of us. Our Christian walk is a walk of warfare.

Our songs talk about crossing over the Jordan, which sort of implies going to heaven. I hope not. When they crossed the Jordan, they had their hands full.

There were wars. There were enemies. There are no enemies in heaven.

Now, what is crossing the Jordan? Something else going on. Something else going on there. And the whole book of Joshua is about that, and I won't go through that here.

It's a commentary on the book of Joshua. But the point is, we need to understand the good news that the victory is ours, the good news that when Christ is in control, hey, it's a done deal. The question is, do we allow Him to be in control? Or do we keep taking over from Him? Do we really walk by the Spirit? That's a good cliché.

Do we really do that? And do we really, daily, mortify the flesh? That's not a once and for all thing. That's not a sawdust trail decision kind of thing. Salvation may be, praise God.

That's not an end. That's not a... The tragedy in the Christian church is that's not the climax. That's the beginning.

It's one of the things that bothers me about many of these things we do. Gee, you know, 20 people came down that night to the Lord Jesus Christ. That's great, praise God.

That's the beginning for them. That's a start, not the end. It's the beginning of a walk.

Are you saved? Yeah. What have you done with it? What's happening in your life? Is it evidenced in your life? And that's not a one-time thing, some magic potion or formula or something. No, that's a day-to-day warfare.

The good news is, you've got the victory in hand if you abide in Christ. Let's stand for a closing word of prayer. And let's bow our hearts.

Well, Father, we just thank You for Your Word. We delight in its drama. We delight in the ironies.

We delight in observing Your fingerprints on all the circumstances and all the details. What a joy it is. What a joy we celebrate.

And yet, Father, we also begin to discern some deeper lessons here for us, lessons that apply to us tomorrow, next week and next month, and not just the enjoyment of a drama of thousands of years ago. We do pray, Father, that through Your Holy Spirit You would help illuminate Your truths. We thank You, Father, that whatsoever things are written before time were written for our learning, that we through the comfort and patience of the Scriptures might have hope.

We thank You, Father, that You've given us this combat manual. We pray, Father, that You would instruct us. Oh, more than that, Father, we pray not only for discernment, Father, we pray for resolve.

Help us, Father, to mortify the deeds of our flesh. Help us to identify those things that offend You, Father, and help us, Father, to root them out of our lives. Help us, Father, to give a testimony to Jesus Christ by the rearrangement of our priorities.

We just thank You, Father, that You are a God that has given us victory. And we thank You, Father, that You have paid the ransom that we might be free. We thank You for a gift that's so unspeakable we can hardly contain it.

But we do ask, Father, that You, through Your Spirit and through Your Word, would help us to walk more boldly, more effectively in such a way that pleases You as we commit ourselves this night into Your hands in the name of Yeshua, our Lord and Savior, our Kinsman Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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