

TAKING THE **WHOLE WORD** TO THE **WHOLE WORLD**

*Providence is the
HAND OF GOD IN THE GLOVE
of human events.*

DR. J. VERNON MCGEE



THRU the BIBLE

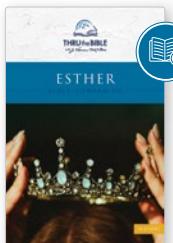


WHERE THE RUBBER MEETS THE ROAD

THE UNSEEN HAND OF HISTORY



Dr. J. Vernon McGee
THRU the BIBLE Founder



This article is an excerpt from our
[Esther Bible Companion](#).
Download the full digital booklet [here](#).

The story of Esther is a most remarkable account of how God in His providence saved His people. It's an unusual story to be included in the Bible because, as you may know, it doesn't include any reference to God—yet His fingerprints are all over it. This is the story of several million people who were disobeying God by not returning to the land of Israel as He had commanded them to. Now they're out of the will of God.

The record of these people, this large number of Jews, is the book of Esther. It's just one page out of their history; one small item of their experience, and one scrap and shred of evidence in their voluminous records. But in this little book we see God directing them by His providence. They had forgotten Him; they were far from Him, but Esther teaches the romance of His providence. That is how God directs this material universe in which we live today. In fact, it's the way He directs all of His creation.



Let's pick up the action in the throne room, palace, and banquet hall of the great king Xerxes of Media-Persia, one of the world rulers of a great world empire. He was planning a campaign against Greece at that time and had called in all the leaders of the 127 provinces of his kingdom.

Then something happened he didn't anticipate: His queen refused to come at his command. It was a family scandal, and something had to be done. So she was set aside. This king then made his campaign against Greece. He came back home, retired in absolute humiliation and defeat. His servants wanted to do something to cheer him up so they suggested a beauty contest that would bring in the most beautiful women of all the kingdom's provinces.

As we look into this story in the palace, I see nothing spiritual there. It's as godless as anything possibly could be. It's a drunken orgy that's taking place. But God's overruling it. And now we're beginning to see what this book teaches. It teaches the providence of God. And God was arranging these events so that, at the proper time, He'd have someone there to intervene on behalf of His people. God is moving the story into His rescue tomorrow.

Now we're introduced to this man, Mordecai. He belonged to the royal family of Israel, the family of Saul. He must have been a little boy at the time of his capture, but now he's grown and serving in the palace in some capacity. Mordecai cared for his cousin, Esther (whose name means "star" and who was apparently a very beautiful woman).

God's name isn't written in this story, but you'll see His fingerprints are here. And not only that but someone has defined "providence" as "the hand of God in the glove of circumstances." And, believe me, His hand's moving the glove of circumstances. And friend, that's true in your life and it's true in my life also.

Providence means "to provide." God will provide. You remember what Abraham said on top of Mount Moriah when Isaac said, "Where is the sacrifice?" Abraham said, "God will provide" (see Genesis 22:7-8). God provided two thousand years after Abraham on the top of that same ledge that goes through Jerusalem. On Golgotha, the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified. God provided a Lamb where "...the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) was offered. God provides.

Think of providence as the hand of God in the glove of human events. That means God is the backseat driver. He's the coach who calls signals to the runner on second base. That's the way providence moves. He's the unseen rudder on the ship of state. He's the pilot at the wheel during the night watch. And as someone has said, "He makes great doors swing on little hinges."

By God's providence, Esther came to the throne. And because Esther came to the throne, it enabled her to intervene and intercede on behalf of her people. And an entire people would have been exterminated at that time had she not been there. In the book of Esther, we're going to find out one night a king couldn't sleep and he didn't have any aspirin tablets, so he read some records. And it's a good thing he read them because it changed the destiny of a people.

That's providence. And we'll see God's providence come to light over and again in this book.

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IN THIS STORY, BUT YOU'LL SEE HIS
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MY TURN

- ① What do you love so far about this true story?**
- ② It happens in most every great story. Things look bleak ... but then something happens. This is God's providence at work.** Can you think of a time in your life as you look back that you now see God was at work? Describe what happened.
- ③ The setting of the book of Esther is Persia, after God commanded His people to return to Israel.** How have you seen God at work in circumstances where people were living outside His will? Was He still gracious and kind? Was He still involved? What could have been the cost? The blessing?
- ④ One of the lessons we can learn about God from Esther's story is "silence doesn't mean He's not there."** How does this reality impact your thinking about your own story? About history in general?
- ⑤ If you love history, you'll be interested to know that the events of the book of Esther (483-473 b.c.) happen during an intense season of wars in world history.** Explore online outlets for world history timelines to find out more, especially how King Xerxes impacted the world stage. Some other historical people also lived and died in this time range, including Buddha in India and Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, in Greece.
- ⑥ On the topic of God's providence:**
Read and ponder/discuss the following verses:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 50:20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Jeremiah 29:11 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job 12:23 | <input type="checkbox"/> Romans 8:28 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 103:19 | <input type="checkbox"/> Romans 11:36 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Proverbs 16:9, 33 | <input type="checkbox"/> Colossians 1:17 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Proverbs 21:1 | <input type="checkbox"/> Philippians 2:13 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Daniel 2:21 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Peter 1:3 |

How does this shape your view of God at work in our history?



NEW FORMATS INVITE NEW LISTENERS WORLDWIDE



Ray Alary
THRU the BIBLE,
Canada Executive Director

When we began our global ministry 50 years ago, listening habits were very different than they are today.

I remember the story from a family in Manus, Brazil, who got up at 5 a.m. to listen to THRU the BIBLE on the radio.

Today, we have so many other ways to listen that we don't need to get up so early. We also rarely listen to long, 30-minute blocks of programs, but instead sound bites get our attention—one-minute and five-minute programs are the norm, especially among younger audiences.

In these changing climates, we never adapt the Word, but instead just how we deliver it. With these short programs—like *Minute with McGee* that launched this year and a five-minute program that airs globally—we invite people to listen to the full 30-minute program.

And often, as we know, it's easy to get hooked. In India, one of our producers who has twice recorded the entire five-year program and who is now working on a short form program assures us that Dr. McGee's key message is not being lost.

MINUTE WITH MCGEE



For THRU the BIBLE's first decades, we delivered the program by broadcast radio. Today, many formats are available. We're all so excited about this—especially our global partners where broadcast radio is not the best option. We'll use every format we can!

One format you have at your fingertips are the new Bible Companions, which are Dr. McGee's teaching content summarized.

These have been recorded in other languages and are now heard as five-minute programs in Mongolia, Cambodia, Malaysia, and in six countries in Europe. In some countries, the short program airs in the morning and teases the full program at night. In Europe people can listen to both short and long programs on a variety of digital outlets like



YouTube—the list is endless.



In Europe, one producer told us they have over 6,000 people listening daily to the full length program on WhatsApp. Most of these listeners were introduced to THRU the BIBLE by hearing the short form program.



In all of this transition, our vision is still the same: Take the "whole Word to the whole world." Let's pray together that all formats will achieve the goal of bringing people into a closer relationship with our Savior. God can speak into anyone's heart, no matter the length of the study.

Delivery of THRU the BIBLE in a digital world opens up all kinds of new opportunities. We praise the Lord for the incredible content Dr. McGee gave us in the source material to create these new, innovative, and inviting tastes of the Living Word. Thank you for praying for the team developing these new formats.



YOU CAN EXPERIENCE A SHORT FORM VERSION OF DR. MCGEE IN ENGLISH, TOO.

Our YouVersion plans are abbreviated from the Bible Companions and are available as mini lessons to read or listen to (recorded by our own Steve Shwetz!). TB.org/YouVersion

We would like to receive THRU the BIBLE for



GIVING WHAT WE'VE GOT

So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. -2 Corinthians 9:7

Hop aboard the Bible Bus this month as we travel through 2 Corinthians and you'll hear Paul talk about the benefits believers receive when they wholeheartedly and happily give to God's work.

That's also the story we heard from a family that studies God's Word with us in Nepal. They write:

"We live in a slum area. All our family members work on the side of the river to collect sand and stone to sell for survival. The work is hard and the hours are long, but we have fullness of joy in our lives since we became believers three years ago. We are a large family and love to listen together. Afterward, we sit and count the many good things God has done in our lives. In spite of all our struggling and scarcity, we come together and contribute small gifts for the ministry. We keep offering boxes and consider ourselves blessed to take part."

What a great example. Today praise God for cheerful givers like this family and all those who provide a tank of gas or wheels for the Bible Bus as it rolls along. As we examine our hearts and our wallets, may we too give to God's Word out of a sense of abundance and gratitude.

Want to learn more about what Dr. McGee says about Christian living and giving? Download our Bible Companion for 2 Corinthians. You may be surprised by his out of the box thinking and fresh approach.

This is an example of the email our World Prayer Team receives every weekday. Together, we travel the world on our knees, interceding for one country at a time. Join us in covering the entire earth with prayer every year.

GO TO TTB.ORG/PRAY
TO SIGN UP.

J E S U S I N

Esther

WITH DR. J. VERNON MCGEE

It's remarkable that in Esther, a book of the Bible, the name of God isn't ever mentioned. Neither is prayer. And the book is never quoted in the New Testament, not even in a casual reference. The book is also named after a woman—a rarity for sure.

The beauty of the book of Esther is the romance of God's providence—how God directs our universe. In fact, it's the way He directs all of His creation.

Back in Deuteronomy 31, God outlined Israel's history for them. He told them about how Jerusalem would be destroyed, how they would be taken in the Babylonian captivity, and then it would happen again in the Roman captivity. And it actually happened that way. God says in Deuteronomy 31:18 that they were sent into captivity because of their idolatry, and now He says, "I'm going to hide My face from them."

In the book of Esther, God has hidden His face from them. But we can say, "God stands in the shadows keeping watch over His own" (see also Deuteronomy 32:10). **Though they are not in His will, we see God directing them. How? By His providence. They forgot God; they're far from Him. They didn't call on Him or praise Him. But He never left them.**

Providence is how God directs all things—both animate and inanimate, seen and unseen, good and evil—toward a worthy purpose. **Providence is the means by which God's will finally prevails.** (See Ephesians 1:11.)

So our God is running the universe today, friends. Many of us think it has slipped out from under Him, but it hasn't. Who's running it? **Well, the Lord Jesus Christ is, upholding all things by the word of His power. His hand is in the glove of human events. He's the coach on the sidelines calling signals to the runner on second base. That's the way providence moves. Jesus Christ is the unseen rudder on the ship of state. He's the pilot at the wheel during the night watch.**

God's name may not be mentioned in the book of Esther, but He's on every page, directing the events of history to accomplish His will.



Adapted from
the **Esther**
Bible Companion.
Download your
free copy [here](#).

God's Invisible Hand

This month, we will study the book of Esther. Without the mention of God or prayer or faith—what one word describes Esther? It happens to be one of my favorite words. *Providence.*

Masterful in this little study, Dr. McGee describes how Jesus **Himself is the unseen guest at every meal, the captain of the ship in this stormy drama. He protects His people from behind the curtain. He moves history along, according to His will.**

Dr. McGee said that God stands in the shadows, keeping watch over His own.

The longer I serve THRU the BIBLE, the more I "see" God's invisible hand, directing us in where we should go and providing us with the opportunities, connections, and funds necessary for the next step. We certainly couldn't have planned all the amazing things God has done—it is by His providence we are part of this story.

If you pray for the effectiveness and protection of this ministry, then you are part of God's providential care. **Together we take God's whole Word to His whole world. But let's remember, it's His world; He directs it as He wills. And we would want it no other way.**

Let this reminder encourage us that the same holds true in our personal lives. Unseen in the shadows, God keeps watch over His own. He orchestrates the details of our lives in keeping with His good and perfect will. (And we would want it no other way.)

Grateful for your partnership,



Gregg Harris
THRU the BIBLE, President

WHY STUDY ESTHER?

Join in the studies on
THRU the BIBLE MAY 19 - JUNE 1
or anytime online, by podcast,
or by mobile app.

In a time of exile when Israel had forgotten about God, the book of Esther proves that God had not forgotten about them. God's ongoing providence is on display in the least likely circumstances. A great story, and even better that it's actually true!

"Providence is God at the steering wheel of the universe. It's the way God coaches the man who is on second base. Providence means that God is behind the scenes, shifting and directing the happenings of the world. Providence is God's hand in the glove of history, and that glove will never move until He moves it." –Dr. J. Vernon McGee

PLAYERS IN OUR DRAMA

-  **ESTHER:** The new beauty queen of Persia. A Jewish orphan raised by her cousin, Mordecai.
-  **HAMAN:** Persia's top appointed official. He plots the extermination of the Jewish race.
-  **MORDECAI:** Esther's cousin. Used by God to save His people. Hated by Haman.
-  **XERXES:** King of Persia. One of the most powerful men in the world. Wants to trade up on his wife.
-  **GOD:** The Director of history, leading from the shadows, protecting His people.

KEY VERSE

"For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" -Esther 4:14

LIFE LESSONS FROM THE BOOK OF ESTHER

- **Favor changes everything.**
- **Love your life** but not unto death.
- **God is at work behind the scenes,** strategically aligning circumstances to accomplish His will.
- Sometimes you end up in the most unlikely place and are asked to do seemingly impossible feats—but **God is there with you.**

- **God has total authority over our lives,** over history, over evil.
- **Fasting and prayer** are sometimes the best things to do when faced with difficult situations.



I LOVE TO TELL THE STORY

CAN YOU SAY THAT? DO YOU LOVE TO TELL THE STORY OF HOW GOD IS AT WORK IN YOUR LIFE?

Do you love to tell the story of how you see Him at work in the world around you? Maybe there's a story in the Bible that you love to tell? Well, here's your chance to tell it!

- IN WHATEVER WAY IS YOUR BEST, SHARE YOUR
“I LOVE TO TELL THE STORY” STORY.

Email BibleBus@TTB.org, leave a message on our message line at 1-800-65-BIBLE, record a short video—whatever works for you, we will be delighted to share your joy.

“I love to tell the story of how Jesus saved me and then over the next couple years, also saved my husband, my teenagers, and my mom.

“It happened like this: My neighbor Kathy and I love to walk in the mornings and she asked if she could play *Thru the Bible* while we walked. At first I didn’t appreciate Dr. McGee’s voice, but then as the story of Jesus settled in my mind and then my heart, I learned to love that gravelly, grandfather’s voice. As we walked, I eventually began asking Kathy questions about Jesus. (Like did He really love me? And did He really die for me? And could I really be forgiven? And how do we know God has forgiven us?)

“Well, you guessed it. First, I believed on the name of Jesus and was saved (March 9, 2019) and within a year, my family also called on His name, each story a miracle. **We’re growing and changing and loving Jesus now. Thank you for continuing to tell the story—new**

• **people are listening!” From Ruth | Elmira, NY**

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