



## DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS

Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

January 31, 2024



Photo: Our Daily Bread

# STRANGE PLACES

*Who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?*

Esther 4:14

**READ Esther 2:3-4, 12-17**

*God, why is this happening? Is this really your plan for us?*

As a husband and a dad of young children, those questions and more swirled in my mind as I wrestled with a serious cancer diagnosis. What's more, our family had just served with a missions team that had seen many children receive Jesus as their Savior. God had been bringing forth evident fruit. There was so much joy. And now *this*?

Esther likely poured out questions and prayers to God after she was plucked from a loving home and thrust into a strange new world (Esther 2:8). Her cousin Mordecai had raised her as his own daughter after she'd been orphaned (v. 7). But then she was placed in a king's harem and eventually elevated to serve as his queen (v. 17). Mordecai was understandably concerned about what "was happening to" Esther (v. 11). But in time, the two realized that God had called her to be in a place of great power "for such a time as this" (4:14)—a place that allowed for her people to be saved from destruction (chs. 7–8).

It's evident that God providentially placed Esther in a strange place as part of His perfect plan. He did the same with me. As I endured a lengthy battle with cancer, I was privileged to share my faith with many, many patients and caregivers. What strange place has He led you to? Trust Him. He's good, and so are His plans (Romans 11:33–36).

**By Tom Felten**

### PRAY & REFLECT

**Dear God, help me to trust You even when I don't understand what You're doing. Amen**

When has God led you to a strange place? Why can you trust in His perfect plans?

### SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

"In the Lord's hand the king's heart is a stream of water that he channels toward all who please him," says Proverbs 21:1. The book of Esther shows God doing exactly that. The villain Haman sought to destroy God's exiled people (Esther 3:8-9). But God "channeled" the heart of the king to show favor to Esther and to her fellow Jewish citizens. Yet the book never mentions the name of God. Why is it in the Bible? Precisely because it shows the character and sovereignty of God, who loves His people even when they're far from Him. – By **Tim Gustafson**

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