

Esther

March 26, 2023

Esther: "The Preserver of the Nation" (4:14).

Isa 54:17 No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper.

The Book of Esther is about how an orphan saved a Nation. It is the only book in Scripture in which the name of God is not mentioned once.

Background:

Esther is set about 55 - 65 years after the end of the Babylonian exile of the Jewish people. The narrative occurs in Susa, in the court of King Ahasuerus (better known as Xerxes) who ruled the Persian Empire from 486 - 465 BC. Susa was located about 150 miles north of the Persian Gulf, near the western border of modern-day Iran. Cyrus took Susa from the Elamites probably not long before he conquered Babylon in 539 BC. Darius I, father of Ahasuerus, made Susa the main capital of the Persian Empire. The book was likely composed sometime between 400 - 200 BC, primarily to explain the origins of the Jewish festival Purim.

Summary:

Esther functions like a play, using irony, tragedy, and comedy. It can be divided into two acts: In the first half of the book (Esther 1–5), the danger to the Jews escalates, while in the second half (Esther 6–10), they are delivered.

At the beginning of the book, King Ahasuerus sends for his wife, but she refuses to come (1). He decides to find a different wife, which leads to Esther becoming queen. Soon after, Mordecai thwarts an assassination plot against the king (2). But when Mordecai refuses to bow before Haman, a high-ranking government official, Haman is infuriated and convinces the king to sign an edict decreeing death for all Jews, claiming that they are disloyal to the crown. Haman does this slyly without naming the Jews directly (3). Learning of the plot, Mordecai pleads with Esther to speak to the king on the Jews' behalf. She initially hesitates, fearing for her life, but she ultimately agrees to approach the king (4). Esther risks her life by entering the king's inner court uninvited, but King Ahasuerus responds favorably. Esther invites both him and Haman to a banquet (5). The two men attend the banquet, but Esther chooses not to reveal her request, instead inviting the men to a second banquet. The first act ends with Haman plotting the death of Mordecai.

At the beginning of the second act, the king realizes that Mordecai has not been rewarded for saving his life. Through a comical turnabout, Haman himself is forced to honor Mordecai in the public square (6). The second banquet then takes place, where Esther asks the king to save the Jews, including herself, from annihilation. When the king asks who is behind the threat, Esther identifies Haman, who is executed on the same gallows that he had built to kill Mordecai (7).

The king then gives Haman's estate to Esther and gives Mordecai the king's own signet ring, effectively allowing the Jews to strike down their enemies, who had since arisen in droves due to the genocidal edict (9:1). The entire city celebrates, and many people openly declare their Jewishness. Mordecai gains power throughout the empire, and he instructs the Jews to remember these events with an annual celebration called Purim (8 - 9). The book concludes with a notation that Mordecai had assumed the place of highest-ranking official to the king, Haman's former role (10).

Ezra	Restoration of the temple	Religious
Nehemiah	Reconstruction of the city walls	Political
Esther	Preservation of the House of Judah	National

The word "Purim" means "dice." It was wicked Haman who used dice to set a date for the extermination of the Jews from the Persian Empire on the thirteenth of Adar. God delivered the Jews from the destructive plot. Purim is one of three feasts celebrating deliverance.

1. Hanukkah—Feast of the deliverance of Judaism.
2. Purim—The deliverance of the Jews is celebrated.
3. Passover—Deliverance from the slavery of Egypt and the Death Angel.

Christ Seen: Jesus is revealed in the book of Esther in very specific ways.

Esther foreshadows Jesus as deliverer and mediator for God's people (Lk 24:27, 44; Jn 5:39, 46).

Father to the Fatherless. Mordecai took his orphaned niece after her parent's deaths, to care for her as her father, guardian, and helper (Est 2:7, 11, 20)

Jesus takes us in, so God becomes our Father (Eph 1:5; Rom 8:13, 23; 9:4)

Isa 9:6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; ... And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

Esther had come from a place of family deficiency yet was called to a place of royalty.

Jesus grew up being known as the child conceived out of wedlock having come from place of family deficiency yet called to a place of royalty.

Esther put her position of royalty on the line to save Israel (4:11).

Jesus surrendered his position in heaven to rescue humanity. Jesus identifies with man and becomes our advocate. Esther agrees with Mordecai's appeal to her, she appealed to the king as an advocate of the Jews who were falling under terrible persecution.

What does it mean to be an advocate?

Webster Dictionary defines it as the one who pleads the cause of another; one who defends or maintains a cause or proposal; and the one who supports or promotes the interests of a cause or group.

The English word Advocate is also translated from the Greek word "parakleton", which means "helper, adviser, or counselor." It means the one who advocates offer support, strength, and counsel and intercede when necessary. An advocate will ensure a person has the tools to make an informed decision; it is not about making the decision for the person.

Typology in Esther - Christ is typified in the person of Mordecai:

They both had, mortal enemies.

Haman hated Mordecai and planned to kill him (5:9;13).

The Pharisees and other high-ranking Jews hated Jesus and planned to kill him (Mt 12:14).

They both had a triumphant ride into a city (Est 6:11, Mt 21:1-11)

But they both triumphed over their enemies (Est 7:9-10, Mt 28:6).

The King elevated Mordecai, he received authority, and became great among the Jews. He sought the welfare of his people and spoke peace to them (Est 10:3).

God elevated Jesus to His right hand and has given Him all authority (Mt 28:18). Jesus came to rescue His people and to give them peace with God (Rom 5:1).

Mordecai sent letters throughout Babylon to proclaim the news of the salvation of the Jews (9).

Jesus commissioned His disciples into all nations to share the gospel (Mt 28:19).

Mordecai is the cousin of Esther who cares for her.

1. He is Esther's Kinsman Redeemer as Christ is our Kinsman Redeemer.

2. He pays her debts and assumes responsibility for her. Mordecai shows mercy in adopting Esther. Christ did the same for us in receiving us into the family of God Eph 1:7 Mordecai was faithful to the king as Christ was faithful to His Father's will.

3. Mordecai was hated & despised, so was Jesus. Mordecai was severely tested and so was Jesus (Mt 4:1-11).

4. Mordecai was of the tribe of Benjamin which means "son of my right hand." He reminds us of Christ who is at the right hand of God the Father.

Haman is a picture of the Anti-Christ who opposes and endeavor to destroy God's people.

Haman is the only one branded with the title "The Jews Enemy" (3:10; 7:6; 8:1; 9:10, 14).

HE SIGNED MY DEED

He signed my deed with His atoning blood.

He ever lives to make His promise good.

Though all the hosts of hell march in to make a second claim,

They all march out at the mention of His name.

They all march out at the mention of His name.

They all march out at the mention of His name.

.....Jesus