



Esther (Esther 2)

Dec 16

OVERVIEW: [Esther](#)

CONTEXT: Esther is an anonymous story set some 100 years after the Exile in the Persian capital of Susa. Here a small Jewish community remains as part of the *diaspora* (the Dispersion), clusters of Jews who did not return to Jerusalem but remained abroad amongst the nations (see Pentecost, Acts 2).

The interesting thing about Esther is that God is not once mentioned (though one scholar noted His name [Yahweh] was hidden as an acrostic). Whatever may be the case, as we read the book we're meant to see God's providence, His hidden and yet superintending activity guiding the story.

TIMELINE: Esther is placed between Ezra 1–6 (Haggai and Zechariah) and Ezra 7–Nehemiah (Malachi)

Approx. Post-Exilic Leaders and Prophets and Persian Kings			
Character(s)	Prophet	King	Book
Zerubbabel (Governor) Return in __ BC	Haggai Zechariah	Cyrus II (550–529 BC) Cambyses II (529–522 BC) Darius I (522–486 BC)	Ezra 1–6
		Xerxes I (486–465 BC)	
Esther (Queen) and Mordecai (Leader)		Artaxerxes I (Ahasuerus) (c. 465–425 BC)	Esther
Ezra (Scribe) 60 years after Zerubbabel	Malachi?	Xerxes II (c. 425–424 BC)	Ezra 7–10 Malachi?
Nehemiah (Governor) 13 years after Ezra	Malachi?	Darius II (423–404 BC)	Nehemiah Malachi?

FIRST, A.M. SERMON RECAP (Zechariah 9:9–15)

- When did Zechariah prophesy and why does it matter?
- How does this prophesy speak of Jesus, the Gospel, His Kingdom?
- When Jesus came the first time he came riding on a _____. At his second coming the Bible speaks of him riding a _____. What is the difference? What does that speak to us?
- Other?

READ: Esther 2

QUESTIONS:

1. *Because of a drunken rage and his desire to show off in front of his officials, King Ahasuerus is queenless. Ch. 2 recounts how this is addressed and how Esther (vv. 1–18) and Mordecai through Esther (vv. 19–23) come to occupy the King's ear and thus set the scene for being able to deliver the Jews.*
2. How would you describe King Ahasuerus in ch.1?
3. Vv. 1–4- This “beauty contest” is actually...? What is a harem? (contrast with v. 14).
4. **Why is the story of Esther NOT a moral example?**
5. Vv. 5–11- Do you think Mordecai was happy that his relative was taken, he did care for her (v. 11)?
6. Why was Esther taken (v. 7)? Why do you think the chief eunuch showed her favour (v. 9)? Why do you think God showed Esther favour (v. 10 and 3:6)?
7. **Think about 4:14, how does a knowledge of God's providence help us live the Christian life?**
8. Vv. 12–18- Did Esther find favour with the king [wince] and why?
9. **If Esther isn't a moral example, what example is she to us? (4:16)**
10. Vv. 19–23- What platform did this then provide the Jews? How does this story factor in later in the story?
11. How do the events in chs. 1–2 find their parallel in 9–10?
12. **How is Esther a reminder that God will preserve His own?**

NEXT TIME: No LG until Jan 6, Matt 2- The Wise Men

1-2 KING OF PERSIA'S GREATNESS

BRING ME WASHTRIM

DECREE LET ALL MEN BE MASTERS OF THEIR HOMES

ESTHER BECOMES QUEEN & MORDECAI SAVES THE KING

ESTHER

9-10 MORDECAI'S GREATNESS

2 FEAST DAYS PURIM

COMMEMORATES THE JEWS' DELIVERANCE FROM DESTRUCTION

QUEEN & MORDECAI SAVE THE JEWS ENEMIES & HAMAN'S SONS

3A HAMAN ELEVATED

AGAGITE = CANAANITE

100 YEARS AFTER BABYLONIAN EXILE



MORDECAI HADASSAH (ESTHER) KING OF PERSIA HAMAN

JEWSH COMMUNITY

CURIOUS FACT:

- GOD IS NEVER MENTIONED
- INVITATION TO LOOK FOR GODS ACTIVITY
- "COINCIDENCE" & IRONIC REVERSAL

MORAL AMBIGUITY:

- A LOT OF DRINKING, SEX AND MURDER
- VIOLATION OF [TORAH] COMMANDS

THE POINT:

DESPITE EXILE, "GODS ABSENCE", AND ISRAEL'S MORAL COMPROMISE, GOD HAS NOT ABANDONED HIS PROMISES

8C MORDECAI ELEVATED

3B HAMAN'S DECREE TO KILL THE JEWS

ROLLS THE DICE

13th ADAR

PUR

BANQUET

4 ESTHER & MORDECAI PLAN TO REVERSE THE DECREE

DELIVERANCE MUST COME FROM SOMEWHERE

PERHAPS YOU'VE BECOME QUEEN FOR THIS MOMENT. IF I PERISH, I PERISH.

6 THE STORY PIVOTS

MORDECAI - I FORGOT!

LET MORDECAI BE PRAISED!

8A ESTHER & MORDECAI PLAN TO REVERSE THE DECREE

7 ESTHER'S 2ND BANQUET

HAMAN'S PLOTTED TO KILL THE JEWS!

WHAT?! WHAT?!

IMMEDIATELY AFTER

8B MORDECAI'S DECREE TO SAVE THE JEWS

15th OF ADAR

ALL JEWS CAN DEFEND THEMSELVES AND DESTROY THEIR ENEMIES!

BANQUET

