

ESTHER

Last of the Old Testament Historical Books

One of only 2 books in the bible named after women (Ruth)

Written in Persia around 470 B.C.

-possibly by Mordecai, Ezra or Nehemiah

Comes after Nehemiah in the bible but took place about 30 years prior

Written in the form of a short story similar to the Book of Ruth

Gives us a picture of the Jews in exile and of how Esther became the queen of Ahasuerus (Xerxes),

-She risks her life in order to save the Jews from destruction.

The word "God" never appears in the book.

In the book of Nehemiah, we talked about how God puts people in positions of influence for a reason

-No better example of that in the bible than this story about Esther and Mordecai

The story opens with King Ahasuerus throwing a huge royal 7 day banquet

-Him and all his pals are having a great time and have had a little to drink

-He tells his servants to bring his queen, Vashti, in so that everyone can see how beautiful she is

-Apparently, she didn't feel like being put on display and refuses the king's command

-this is something that is not done

-in most cases, you would pay with your life for that

The king is furious and banishes her from the kingdom

-he puts out a decree to find a new queen

One of the young virgins brought to the king's harem as a candidate was Esther

-she is being taken care of by her uncle, Mordecai, because her parents are both dead

-She is very beautiful and immediately finds favor with the king

-she does not tell him that she is a Jew

If you have ever wondered why it takes women so long to put their makeup on, here is the root of the problem

- after the candidates were gathered into the harem, they were treated with oils, myrrh, cosmetics and lotions for 12 months
- these treatments probably did to these women what photo-shop does to cover models today

Esther becomes queen

- shortly after, her uncle Mordecai, hears of an assassination plot against the king
- he tells Esther, who in turn, informs the king
- the would-be assassins are hanged on the gallows

A guy named Haman gets promoted to a position of authority by the king

- everyone was to bow down in homage to him
- Mordecai doesn't because he is a Jew
 - same reason that Daniel didn't bow to Nebuchadnezzar's statue
 - Haman gets mad and decides to wipe out all the Jews
 - he deceives the king into signing a law saying that all Jews should be destroyed
 - says there is a group of people within the land who don't follow his laws
 - Mordecai finds out and tells his niece, Esther, who is a Jew and just so happens to be queen
 - he wants Esther to confront the king about it
 - she is scared because if you approach the king without him extending his scepter to you, you are executed.

-Mordecai tells her something interesting:

-Probably the most popular verse from Esther:

[Est 4:14](#) "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?"

God will get His plans accomplished

- He does not put all His hope into one person
- we are much too unpredictable and sinful for that
- whether we allow Him to use us or someone else is up to us

So if He doesn't need us, why does He use us at all

-I think the answer is found in Ephesians 2:10

Eph 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

-For each one of us, God has prepared good works for us to do in this life
-not to impress Him or to work our way into heaven
-but for our benefit

1Co 3:12 Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

1Co 3:13 each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is *to be* revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.

1Co 3:14 If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward.

1Co 3:15 If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

-we are given opportunities throughout life to accomplish things for God that will earn us eternal rewards

-I have often wondered how many of these opportunities I walk right by each day while I am caught up in the rat race of life

Jesus said

Rev 22:12 "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is with Me*, to render to every man according to what he has done.

So, long story short:

-Esther intercedes

-the king extends his scepter to her

-she asks the king and Haman to come to a special banquet

-The night before the banquet, King Ahasuerus is reading through some records and discovers that Mordecai was never honored for saving his life

-Haman just so happens to be on his way in to talk to the king about hanging Mordecai

-Before he can, the king asks him:

Est 6:6 So Haman came in and the king said to him, "What is to be done for the man whom the king desires to honor?" And Haman said to himself, "Whom would the king desire to honor more than me?"

-so Haman comes up with this lavish reward because he assumes the king is talking about him

-wear a royal robe, ride the king's horse, be paraded through the streets

-and the king says to him:

Est 6:10 Then the king said to Haman, "Take quickly the robes and the horse as you have said, and do so for Mordecai the Jew, who is sitting at the king's gate; do not fall short in anything of all that you have said."

-so now he has to publicly do all this for Mordecai, the man he planned to hang

-Esther explains to the king that she is a Jew and that Haman planned to have them all killed

-Haman winds up swinging on the gallows he built for Mordecai

-Mordecai gets promoted

-The Jews are not only freed, but honored in the kingdom

Esther closes with the Jews defeating their enemies and Mordecai rising to second in command under king Ahasuerus

Jesus Types:

Typically, foreshadowings of Christ come in the forms of men

-but sometimes they come in other forms: rocks, manna, serpent on a pole

-but here it is in the person of Esther

-she was a Jew but was also royalty

-Christ also had 2 natures: Human and divine

-She interceded with the king for the life of her people

-Christ intercedes day and night before the Father on our behalf

-Esther put herself in harm's way, even risking death, to rescue her people

-Just as Jesus was willing to die for His people

Php 2:6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

Php 2:7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men.

Php 2:8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.