

## Esther #6



### **GOD IN THE SHADOWS**

*ESTHER*

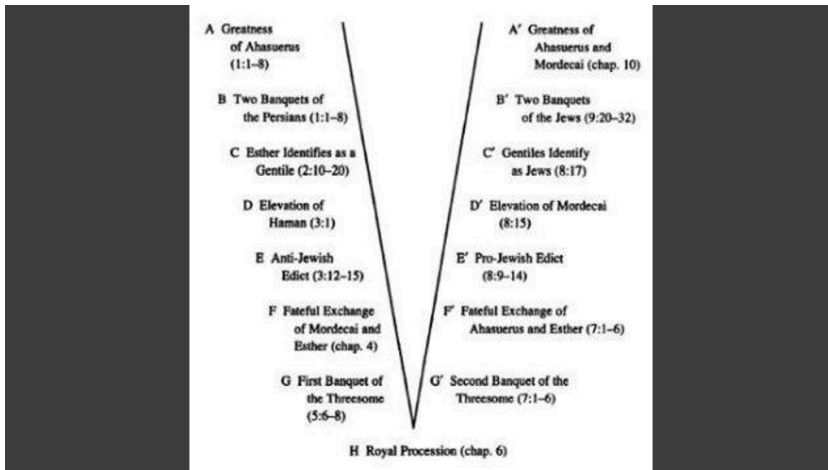
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Let's catch up to the previous sermons over the Book of Esther:

The king had a party and ended up banishing his queen. Esther becomes the new queen. Like Esther, we are also foreigners in a foreign land: God is always in the shadows.

Haman is the bad guy: the Agagite. He doesn't like Mordecai because he won't bow down to his power. He puts in a plan to kill not just Mordecai but all the Jews with him.



Next, Mordecai learns of the plot and starts mourning at the city gates where Esther will hear him.

**Esther 5:13** he sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. **14** For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family

will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?"

Mordecai trusts deliverance and he wants to join God by encouraging Esther to act similarly by fasting to save the Jews. She has a plan: a banquet for the king and Haman.

We see Haman's **pride** (which leads him to make a plan to kill Mordecai) and Mordecai's **humility**. But it so happens that the king at that very time hears of when Mordecai rescued his life by thwarting a plan to kill the king. Xerxes wants to honor Mordecai at the very moment Haman wanted to kill him.



Esther and the king are sitting at a banquet. We don't know if Esther knows about the royal procession to honor Mordecai but I think she did. Either way, she can see God's plan to act. We don't know how many banquets she planned but she sees this as the best time to speak up.



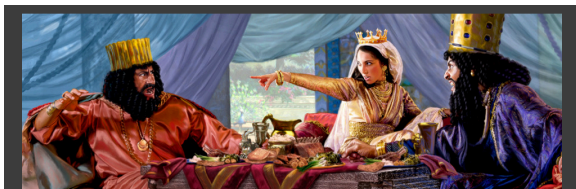
**3** Then Queen Esther answered, “If I have found favor with you, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, grant me my life—this is my petition. And spare my people—this is my request. **4** For I and my people have been sold to be destroyed, killed and annihilated. If we had

merely been sold as male and female slaves, I would have kept quiet, because no such distress would justify disturbing the king.<sup>[a]</sup>”

**5** King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, “Who is he? Where is he—the man who has dared to do such a thing?”



**6** Esther said, “An adversary and enemy! This vile Haman!”



This is the epic soap-opera moment...

**7** The king got up in a rage, left his wine and went out into the palace garden. But Haman, realizing that the king had already decided his fate, stayed behind to beg Queen Esther for his life.

**8** Just as the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was reclining.

The king exclaimed, “Will he even molest the queen while she is with me in the house?”



As soon as the word left the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. **9** Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs attending the king, said, "A pole reaching to a height of fifty cubits[b] stands by Haman's house. He had it set up for Mordecai, who spoke up to help the king."

The king said, "Impale him on it!"

**10** So they impaled Haman on the pole he had set up for Mordecai. Then the king's fury subsided.



We see Esther's calculated face and Xerxes's shock and the fear reaction of Haman when his sin is exposed. He wanted to murder because he felt disrespected. He begs for mercy.

Haman is gone and there are 3 more chapters.

## Chapter 8: The Royal Edict

The king gives Haman's house to Esther, his signet ring to Mordecai (symbol of authority). Esther comes before the king once more time to ask for the decree to be revoked. Instead, Xerxes asks the Esther and Mordecai create their own decree as they saw fit.

They created a decree the Jews to defend themselves against anyone who comes against them. The decree is sent out quickly by the fastest horses.

**Esther 8:17** In every province and in every city to which the edict of the king came, there was joy and gladness among the Jews, with feasting and celebrating. And *many people of other nationalities became Jews because fear of the Jews had seized them.*

Foreigners were given the opportunity to become a part of the Jews: I used to think this was an exclusive faith but we can see from Esther that foreigners can become through circumcision or marriage. This also happened with Daniel and Joseph where foreigners are given a home.

## Chapter 9: Deliverance and Celebration (Purim)

Jews defeat their enemies but they don't plunder them. This is a call back to Saul: you can look this up (Saul plundering the Amalekites). Mordecai recorded the events and a call to have these events celebrated annually.

**Esther 9:20** Mordecai recorded these events, and he sent letters to all the Jews throughout the provinces of King Xerxes, near and far, **21** to have them celebrate annually the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar **22** as the time when the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month when their sorrow was turned into joy and their mourning into a day of celebration. He wrote them to observe the days as days of feasting and joy and giving presents of food to one another and gifts to the poor.

## Chapter 10: Mordecai 2<sup>nd</sup> in Command

Purim still happens today with a few changes: they celebrate the day they were delivered from certain destruction. They observed these days with feasting and gifts:



The masks are in this feast because God is masked in the story: We can see he is in the shadows. Esther also had to wear a mask until she revealed herself.

This is a little like Halloween: people dress up, sometimes in scary costumes.

### Two Banquets of the Persians

### Two Banquets of the Jews

#### Two Banquets of the Persians

- Exclusive for only the elite
- 180 Days 7 Days
- Centered on celebrating the Power and wealth of king Xerxes
- The feasting is focused on alcohol and personal indulgence

#### Two Banquets of the Jews

- Encouraged for all People
- 1 Day and 1 Day
- Centered on gratitude and rest
- The feasting is focused on food and giving to the poor



You can see the differences between these two ways of celebrations: This made me think about how I celebrate. Notice that in the Jewish feasts, there is food and wine but the focus is not on overindulgence.

Why do You Celebrate?

How do You Celebrate?

There were a lot of house parties in the early church: should we bring them back? What are the motives for this?

The Jewish banquet are focused on gratitude and giving to others.

THE FEASTS OF THE LORD		
FEAST	DATE	SIGNIFICANCE
PASSOVER	Nisan 14 Spring	Passover speaks of redemption. Christ the Passover Lamb has been slain for us.
UNLEAVENED BREAD	Nisan 15 Spring	Unleavened Bread speaks of sanctification. He was set apart. His body would not decay in the grave.
FIRSTFRUITS	Nisan 16 Spring	Firstfruits speaks of resurrection. Death could not hold her for. On the third day Jesus rose triumphantly from the grave.
WEEKS	50 days after Firstfruits Spring	Weeks/Shavuot speaks of origination. The coming of the Holy Spirit inaugurated the New Covenant and Church Age.
TRUMPETS	Tishri 1 (new moon) Fall	Trumpets depicts the Rapture of the Church and the judgment of the wicked.
YOM KIPPUR	Tishri 10 Fall	Yom Kippur/Day of Atonement points to a great host of people, Jews and Gentiles, who will be saved when Jesus physically returns to the earth.
TABERNACLES	Tishri 15 Fall	Tabernacles speaks of the day when the Son of God will tabernacle among men, wipe away every tear, and bring in the "golden age" which men have dreamed of since time immemorial.

Two Banquets of the  
Persians

Self

Indulgence

Two Banquets of the  
Jews

























Gratitude

Giving

## Top Christian Holidays

























Christmas — December 25  
Easter — March or April  
Palm Sunday — March or April  
Good Friday — March or April  
Pentecost\* — May or June  
Ascension Day — May June  
Epiphany — February or March  
All Saints' — Day; November 1

God wants to celebrate and wants us to remember his deliverance.

 Christmas	 New Years Eve	 Thanksgiving
 Independence Day (United St...	 Memorial Day	 Veterans Day
 Martin Luther King Day	 Valentine's Day	 Halloween
 Labor Day	 Mother's Day	 St. Patrick's Day
 Cinco de Mayo	 Easter	 Columbus Day
 April Fools' Day	 New Orleans Mardi Gras	 Presidents Day
 Black History Month	 Earth Day	 Flag Day
 Groundhog Day	 New Orleans Jazz & Heritage ...	 Juneteenth

There are 24 holidays in the US: We can see 5 instances of Christian roots, often masked by worldliness.

There is St. Valentines and St. Patricks, even Halloween (All Hallow's Eve). We see God in the shadows in these.

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Why do I Celebrate?

How do I Celebrate?

Esther and Mordicai helped the people thrive in a foreign land.

Esther and Mordecai, Despite Persecution, Help the Jewish People Thrive in a Foreign Land

It's an underdog story: When reading this story, Esther is taken into exile and distinguished for their excellent work and rise to second in command and use their authority to help their people thrive in a foreign land.

<u>Esther</u>	<u>Daniel</u>	<u>Joseph</u>
Taken into exile	Taken into Exile	Sold into slavery
Is distinguished for their excellent work	Is distinguished for his excellent work	Is distinguished for his excellent work
Rises to 2nd in command	Rises to 2nd in command	Rises to 2nd in command
Uses authority to help Jewish people flourish in a foreign land	Uses authority to help Jewish people flourish in a foreign land	Uses authority to help Jewish people flourish in a foreign land

This reminds me of Daniel: he is in exile, rises to second in command, and uses this authority to help his people thrive. Joseph is also like this.

### Saint Patrick



### St. Patrick

At 16 years old was captured from his home in Wales and carried off, as a slave to Ireland  
Escaped from captivity and found passage home  
Entered monastery at Lerins for two years  
Entered monastery at Auxerre for fourteen years  
Ordained as a bishop. Embarked on mission to Ireland  
Formed over 300 churches and is credited with baptizing over 100,000 people in Ireland

Even if the numbers are inflated, it's still crazy impressive! He returns back to the place where he was in chains to preach the Gospel.

### St. Patrick

Captured into slavery  
Is distinguished for his excellent work  
Rises to the rank of Bishop  
Uses authority to help the Gospel flourish in a foreign land

The beginning is the same: they are in chains.

Where are You in Chains?

Who are You Chained to?

“Radical Evangelism” is a great sermon by Michael Cosineau where he tells us we should look for the places we are in chains and see how we can use these situations to further the kingdom of God.

Esther was chains to the king, Mordecai was in chains, Daniel was in chains to Nebucaneizer and his 3 friends,

Joseph was changed to Egypt and Pharaoh.

Based on Esther, here are my questions:

Where are You Distinguished  
for Excellence?

Where Have You Been Given  
Authority?

The reality is that we might have been given authority that God wants to use.

My own example is my daughter Leah: I have authority as her father and I want the Gospel to flourish in her life. There is no formula for this: But I can tell you that God is always working and if you watch for him, you may have your current position for such a time as this.