

Message Notes

March 26, 2023 - Ken Wilson

The Book of Esther: God Working in the Shadows *A Survey of the Bible*

Context: Who, When, Where, and Why?

- Who composed Esther?
- When did he write?
- Where were he and his audience?
- Why was he writing?

Content: How and What?

- How is Esther organized?

A The splendor of the Persian king + Two banquets (1:1-8)

B Esther becomes Queen + Mordecai saves the king (1:9-2:20 + 2:21-23)

C Haman elevated to power (3:1-6)

D Haman's decree to destroy the Jewish people (3:7-15)

E Esther and Mordecai's plan to reverse the decree (4:1-17)

F Esther's 1st banquet + Haman plans Mordecai's execution (5:1-8 + 5:9-14)

PIVOT: Haman humiliated & Mordecai exalted (6:1-14)

F' Esther's 2nd banquet + Haman executed instead of Mordecai (7:1-10)

E' Esther and Mordecai plan to reverse the decree (8:1-8)

D' Mordecai's counter-decree to save the Jewish people [8:9-14]

C' Mordecai elevated to power (8:15-17)

B' Queen Esther and Mordecai save the Jewish people (9:1-19)

A' Two feasts + The splendor of Mordecai (9:20-32 + 10:1-3)

- What is the message of Esther?

Conviction: So What?

- What should we believe?
 - God is faithful in spite of our unfaithfulness.
 - Ultimately God will deliver His people from all threats and harm.
 - The opposition of the world is terrifying and requires courage and wisdom.
 - The victory of God's people is guaranteed.
 - God is working, even when we don't see it.
- How should we behave?
 - **Live distinctive lives** of Christian Witness in a hostile world.
 - **Courageously trust God** no matter where you find yourself.
 - **Celebrate** when God delivers you.
- Where does this fit?
 - A continuation of the story of God's faithfulness **during** His people's failure.
 - A narrative that acknowledges the reality of opposition to God's work and plan for our lives.
 - *An example of the often-hidden work of God in our lives to further His Plan.*

Next Steps

- **Honestly** evaluate your life to see if you have capitulated to the culture.
- Look closely to see where you need deliverance.
- Trust God to deliver you in keeping with advancing His purposes.

This Week's Growth Guide

God's Word is both central and critical to your spiritual growth. We invite you to utilize the Growth Guide during the week to further your application of the Truth from the message.

- **Monday** - Esther 1:10-22
- **Tuesday** - Esther 2:8-20
- **Wednesday** - Esther 2:21-3:15
- **Thursday** - Esther 5:1-14
- **Friday** - Esther 7:1-6; 9:1-10

Home Church Questions

- Read Esther 5:9-6:14.
- Was there anything new or insightful in this message?
- Was there anything you know you can or should immediately apply?
- What did you struggle with in this message? What did not make sense or caused you to evaluate your own life more deeply?
- How would your life personally, or the life of your family be different if you fully live out the truths in this message?
- Ken presented a relatively negative picture of Mordecai and Esther based on contrasts with Daniel in similar circumstances. Do you agree with this negative evaluation? What biblical evidence is there to see them more positively?
- How does it change the message of the book if we see Mordecai and Esther through a negative lens, or see them as morally ambiguous, or as role models of courage and wisdom?
- Is the Bible generally more about role models or God's story of grace? What is the balance?
- God is obviously orchestrating events, and yet the people of God must fight in chapter 9. What lessons can we draw from this observation?
- What lessons might we learn about celebrations from this book?

Finances

Weekly Budget	31,390
Giving For 03/12	49,433
Giving For 03/19	26,718
YTD Budget	1,192,810
Giving	1,252,222
OVER/(UNDER)	59,412

Crucifixion Dinner

April 7 | 6:30 p.m.

Mark your calendars to join us on Good Friday as we remember together what Christ did on the cross through the Crucifixion Dinner. Child care for ages 6 and under by texting Shanna at 501-336-0332.

New to Fellowship?

We are so glad that you joined the Fellowship Family to worship this morning. If you are joining us for the first time or have been checking us out for a few weeks, we are excited you are here and would love to meet you. Please fill out the "Connect Card" and bring it to the Connection Center in the Atrium, we would love to say "hi" and give you a gift.

Men's Muster | April 21-23 | Shepherd of the Ozarks

Whether in a Home Church or not, we encourage you to deepen your connection at Fellowship by attending Men's Muster. Grab some bacon and stop by the Muster table in the atrium to meet some of the men's ministry team. Scholarships are available by emailing men@fellowshipconway.org. Cost is \$169 for men and \$85 for young men 17 and under. For more information and to register, go to fellowshipconway.org/register.

Easter Offering 2023

Easter Sunday we will take up a special missions offering for our October Operation Christmas Child Packing Party. The Gospel boxes we will pack that evening will go to children in difficult areas to reach people with the gospel. You can also give online at fellowshipconway.org/give.

Grill Out and Silent Auction | April 12 | 5:30 -8:00 p.m.

Fellowship Student and College Ministries would like to invite you and your entire family to our youth and college mission trip fundraiser, Wednesday, April 12, 5:30-8:00 p.m. Free dinner (grilled hamburgers and hotdogs), child care provided (birth thru pre-school by RSVP, text Shanna at 501-336-0332), games, and great opportunities to support our 70 youth and college missionaries this summer. Plan now to join us!

Fellowship 101

We invite you to join us Sunday, April 16, 9:00 a.m. to learn more about Fellowship. This is a great opportunity to learn about our mission, values, and ministries. If you're new to Fellowship, join us in the conference room (first floor) to hear what God is doing and where He is taking us. You will meet some of our ministry leaders and ask questions. Register at fellowshipconway.org/register.

Fellowship Women's Brunch

Ladies, plan to join us April 29 here at Fellowship for the Fellowship Women's Brunch. Child care will be provided. More details to come!