

9. The “book of truth” is mentioned in v.21. To which attribute of God does this seem connected?

10. Like Daniel, we have received a vision of the future through Revelation 21-22. How does this shape our own endurance while we long for the eternal Promised Land?

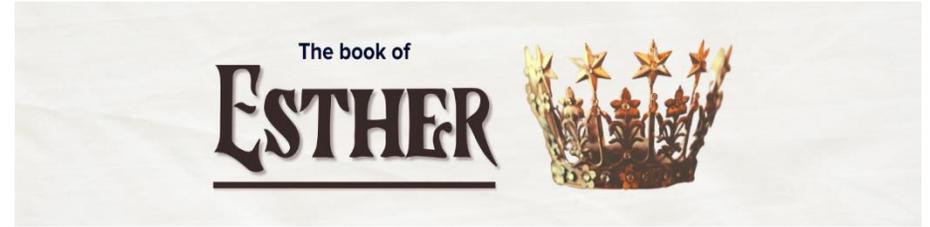


Prayer

How does this passage shape the way you pray for yourself?

How does this passage shape the way you pray for others?

How does this passage move you to praise God?



The New Queen in Town | Esther 2:1-18

Study Guide 2 for sermon on 10/4/20



Introduction

Most of us want life to be clear and clean and simple. We want obvious answers to difficult questions - and we want them to resolve peacefully and without any problems. But life isn't like that now, and it wasn't like that for Israel while they lived in exile. They were ruled by a pagan king, Ahasuerus, and Jewish men and women needed to wrestle through decisions about how to survive and honor the LORD at the same time. Esther's ascension as queen isn't the “rags to riches” we often think about. Instead, her favor with God and the king reflect God's guiding hand, at work silently in the background.



Overview

Context: King Ahasuerus wakes up to remember he has banished Queen Vashti and needs to find a new queen. What better way to choose, than by having a kingdom-wide beauty contest? Over the course of the following months, Esther stands out from the crowd and is chosen as the new Queen.



Engage

1. What does 2:1 tell you about King Ahasuerus' state of mind when he issues his commands in chapter 1?
2. Esther 2:5 tells us Mordecai is a distant relative of Kish, from the tribe of Benjamin. What other famous character from the OT was a son of Kish? Why do you think this matters?
(See 1 Samuel 9:1)
3. What do we learn about Esther in 2:5-7 and the culture in which she grew up?
4. When and why have you felt weak and powerless? Have you experienced anything reminiscent of the weakness and marginalization of the people of God in the situation of Mordecai and Esther?
5. Mordecai encourages Esther to hide her ethnicity from King Ahasuerus. Why would he give her this advice? Do you think this was good advice or not?
6. Reading the descriptions of Esther's preparation to join the King's harem is somewhat uncomfortable for today's readers. Thankfully, we cannot identify with that. What does this have to teach us about the ways God uses even unjust systems to accomplish his sovereign purposes?
7. As you reflect on Esther 1 & 2, where do you see God's hand at work, silently behind the scenes? Similarly, where in your own life can you look back and see the same thing?