

Spoilers Ahead!

Since the Book of Esther may be unfamiliar to some of us, here is a short summary of the events. It takes place during the Achaemenid Persian period, when many of the Jews remained in Babylon and Persia as members of the royal bureaucracy.

The book of Esther relates the story of how a young Jewish woman named Hadassah (“myrtle”). After losing her parents, she was raised by her cousin Mordecai in the Persian city of Šuša. There, she took the name Esther. Jews living in places like Šuša usually had two names, their Hebrew name and a foreign name. (For example, the prophet Daniel’s foreign name was Belteshazzar.) These names usually referred to a god of the ruling people. Mordechai is a foreign name, and we do not know what his Hebrew name was.

When she was probably no more than a young teenager, she was selected to be a part of King Xerxes’s court and live in “the women’s house.” When she first was allowed into his presence, the king immediately was impressed by her and made her his queen. She still lived separately from him, but she would have had a great deal of responsibility over the women of the court.

As we will see, Mordecai and Esther played a significant part in sparing the Jews from a pogrom planned by one of the king’s advisors, Haman the Agagite. Haman’s hatred for Mordecai because Mordecai refused to bow to him fuels a plot to have the Jews all killed as disloyal. It is only through Esther’s intervention that Haman’s true motivations are revealed and the Jews are spared.

God is never mentioned in the book, and yet it shows a clear reliance upon the idea that God is watching over his chosen people. The salvation of the Jews is celebrated every year at the feast of Purim, which is held in the spring. (This year, it was March 7.)

Financial Summary

2023 Budget	\$224,885	Budget to Date	\$73,525
Weekly Budget	\$4,325	Giving to Date	\$78,907

Thank you again to all for your generous stewardship. You can give via the offering box in the back of the sanctuary, via mail, or online at bedfordroad.org/giving.



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encounter Jesus and journey together*

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- Exploring the Scriptures Together -

21 Music Team Meeting, after worship

Have a Bible question you've always wanted answered? Or a part of the Bible you wish someone would explain? Email your question or idea to **pastor@bedfordroad.org** for inclusion in our summer topical series (June 4-July 9).

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The Big Idea:

Nursery is provided 9:30-11:30am for children ages 0-3.
On the first Sunday of each month, older children stay with their families.
On all other weeks, there is an age-appropriate teaching time for children ages 4-10.