

A close-up photograph of a golden chess king piece standing on a black and white checkered chessboard. The king piece is the central focus, with its crown-like top and tiered body clearly visible. The background is filled with other chess pieces, including pawns and knights, which are out of focus, creating a sense of depth. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the metallic texture of the king piece. The word "ESTHER" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the middle of the image, centered over the king piece.

# ESTHER

**We will be a congregation who knows, honors, and reads the Bible.**

***“I grasp the story of the Bible, respect it as authoritative, know how to read it, and actually read it.”***

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Deuteronomy
- 1+2 Samuel
- 1+2 Kings
- Nehemiah
- **Esther**
- Psalms
- Isaiah
- Amos

- Matthew
- Acts
- Romans
- 1 Corinthians
- Galatians
- Philemon
- Hebrews
- James
- Revelation

- 2000 – Abraham born
- 1900 – Joseph sold in Egyptian slavery
- 1500 – Moses born
- 1450 – Exodus from Egypt + Law Covenant given
- 1400 – Moses dies + Israel enters Canaan
- 1376–1050 – Joshua dies + era of judges
- 1050 – Monarchy begins w/Saul
- 1011 – David as king
- 971–931 – Solomon as king
- 931 – Kingdom is divided into two, N and S
- 722 – Samaria destroyed by Assyria, exile of N. Kingdom
- 586 – Jerusalem destroyed by Babylon, exile of S. Kingdom

# Four Stages of the Covenant

## **OLD COVENANT (TESTAMENT)**

Abraham's Covenant – (Gen 12:1-3) –

Blessing to the world through one family.

Moses' Covenant – (Dt 28-30) –

The family is rescued from Egypt and made into a nation

David's Covenant – (2Sm 7:12-13) –

The line of King David identified as blessing-carrier

## **NEW COVENANT (TESTAMENT)**

New Covenant – (Jer 31:31-37) –

Enablement of blessing (Jesus' Covenant)

## Moses' Covenant (Dt 28-30) –

The family is rescued from Egypt and made into a nation

***When you go into the Promised Land, follow God's law.***

- Obedience: Blessing & Life
- Disobedience: Punishment & Death
- Prediction: Moses says, “Based on what I've seen in the wilderness, y'all heading back to slavery eventually.”
- Promise: BUT! ... good news! God won't break His promise to bring blessing to the world through you.

# Timeline of Exile

- 2000 – Abraham born
- 1500 – Moses born
- 1011 – David as king of Israel
- 722 – Samaria destroyed by Assyria, exile of N. Kingdom
- 587/586 – Jerusalem destroyed by Babylon, exile of S. Kingdom
- 539 – King Cyrus of Persia conquers Babylon
- 538 – (50k) Jewish exiles return to Judea
- 483-473 – Events of Esther under Xerxes
- 458 – Artaxerxes allows Ezra to go back to Jerusalem (rebuild the temple)
- 455-433 – Artaxerxes allows Nehemiah to return as governor of Judea (rebuild the city walls)





# Esther 101

-Ezra and Nehemiah are historical books that show what the community who went back was like.

-Esther is about the people who decide not to go back but to stay in exile (483-473)

-Many Jewish exiles did not want to return home

-Main Characters:

(1) Esther: Jewish beauty queen who finds courage

(2) Mordecai: wise Jewish cousin who thwarts two death threats

(3) Xerxes: powerful but manipulatable king who's drunk a lot

(4) Haman: diabolical archvillain who takes the L

# Esther 101

-Genre: Historical narrative. History is not priority, theology is. The stories are accurate, not objective.

*A* -Esther is the only book in the Bible where God is NEVER mentioned.

-It's a literary technique beckoning us to find God in the undeniable "coincidences" of life.

-Interpretive key: Esther is a dramatic story about how God is at work behind the scenes, turning the plans of the wicked against them and accomplishing His will, through the most unlikely people in the most unlikely places.



# Esther was not a devout Jew.

1. She stayed in exile.
2. She hides the fact that she is a Jew (2:10, 2:20)
3. She accepts the probability of a life as one of the king's mistresses.
4. When she wins, she marries a non-Jew.

# Interpretive key

Esther is a dramatic story about how God is at work behind the schemes, turning the plans of the wicked against them and accomplishing His will through the most unlikely people in the most unlikely places.

# Mordecai

- Esther's cousin
- Benjamite Jew, King Saul's line
- Raises Esther
- Has govt. job as court official who oversees a gate
- Loyal, thwarts a death attempt.

## Esther 3:1-2, 5-7

Some time later King Xerxes promoted Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite over all the other nobles, making him the most powerful official in the empire. All the king's officials would bow down before Haman to show him respect whenever he passed by, for so the king had commanded. But Mordecai refused to bow down or show him respect ...

When Haman saw that Mordecai would not bow down or show him respect, he was filled with rage. He had learned of Mordecai's nationality, so he decided it was not enough to lay hands on Mordecai alone.

## Esther 3:1-2, 5-7

Instead, he looked for a way to destroy all the Jews throughout the entire empire of Xerxes. So in the month of April, during the twelfth year of King Xerxes' reign, lots were cast in Haman's presence (the lots were called purim) to determine the best day and month to take action. And the day selected was March 7, nearly a year later.



## Esther 4:11

“All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—all alike are to be put to death ... I myself have not been called to come in to the king for thirty days.”

## Esther 4:13-14

Mordecai sent this reply to Esther: “Don’t think for a moment that because you’re in the palace you will escape when all other Jews are killed. If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?”

## Esther 4:15-17

Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: “Go and gather together all the Jews of Susa and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will do the same. And then, though it is against the law, I will go in to see the king. If I must die, I must die.” So Mordecai went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

## Esther 5:1-2

On the third day of the fast, Esther put on her royal robes and entered the inner court of the palace, just across from the king's hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne, facing the entrance. When he saw Queen Esther standing there in the inner court, he welcomed her and held out the gold scepter to her.

# Coincidence or God-incidence?

An unimportant orphan refugee of non-royal birth who hides her identity just so happens to win an international beauty competition to become queen and gain unprecedented access to the king right before her people face total extermination ...

# Coincidence or God-incidence?

The usually drunk + moody king just so happens to be in a good mood on the day the queen visits to plead for her people even though he just so happened to forgot about her for a month and also had a track record for flexing on queens who forgot their place ...

## Coincidence or God-incidence?

A low-level government official just so happens to be in the right place at the right time and overhears an assassination attempt that saves the king's life ... but also that same pompous King just so happens to forget to honor the hero until the night before the execution of that same low-level government official when the King just so happens to have a scary dream that wakes him, and he just so happens to pick a bedtime story that reminds him that the low-level official saved his life, and he just so happens to remember he never did anything to honor him, and so he just so happens to honor him the next morning seconds before he is executed which saves his life, and it just so happens that the arch-villain who planned to kill him has to lead the low-level official in the parade on a pony and he hates it ...

# Coincidence or God-incidence?

You were born in this time and live in this city...



# Coincidence or God-incidence?

You are here this morning at church hearing this sermon....