

What is the Feast of Purim?

- Purim is a Jewish holiday which commemorates the saving of the Jewish people from Haman, an a Persian Empire official who was planning to kill all the Jews, as recounted in the Book of Esther. Haman was the royal vizier to King Ahasuerus, and he planned to kill all the Jews in the empire.
- The jolly Jewish holiday of Purim is celebrated every year on the 14th of the Hebrew month of Adar (late winter/early spring). Purim 2021 begins on Thursday night, February 25 and continues through Friday, February 26, (extending through Sunday in Jerusalem).

The Who, Where, Why and What of Esther

- Who wrote the book? We don't know. Most likely a Jew familiar with the Persian Court. The book is named after the "Star" of the book Haddasah, later named Esther.
- Where are we in time? 483-473 BC, during the first half of Xerxes reign. During this time period, Jews who had returned to Judah were working to reestablish temple worship, according to the Law of Moses. Esther and Mordecai and many other Jews, chose not to return to Judah.
- The book was written no earlier than 470 BC and no later than 424 BC, during the reign of Xerxes, son of Artaxerxes.

What is the Feast of Purim?

- On Purim, children—and some adventurous adults too—traditionally dress in costumes, an allusion to God's hand in the Purim miracle, which was disguised by natural events.
- There are 4 Mitzvahs – (a deed performed to fulfill a command)
 1. Read or hear the story
 2. Give to the needy
 3. Send gifts to friends
 4. Feast

The Who, Where, Why and What of Esther

- Why Esther important?
- Esther is the only book in the bible not to mention the name of God.
- But that is not to say that God was absent. His presence permeates much of the story, as though He were behind the scenes coordinating "coincidences" and circumstances to make His will happen.
- Much like the book of Ruth, this book stands as one of the most skillfully written biblical books.
- Haman was a descendent of Aga, king of Amalekites

The Who, Where, Why and What of Esther

- What is the purpose of the book of Esther?
- Primary purpose is to relate the origins of the feast of Purim.
- The greater theme is the sovereignty and faithfulness of God.
- Look at the “coincidences” that fill the book.
 - ✓ Vashti is deposed – drunk king, moral queen
 - ✓ Esther is chosen – beauty pagent proposed

The Who, Where, Why and What of Esther

- What’s the big idea?
- Our God is sovereign, working in the dark times.
- When Esther was taken to the harem...
- When the king dictated ruin, when evil was poised to triumph...
- When Esther needed to approach the king ... God was at work.

The Who, Where, Why and What of Esther

- ✓ Esther gains favour, wins pagent, king smitten
- ✓ Mordecai hears of plot, they believe Esther
- ✓ King accepts plot to murder Jews
- ✓ Esther accepted before king
- ✓ King cant sleep, records are read
- ✓ Section on Mordecai saving the king read
- ✓ Haman walks in at that moment
- ✓ Haman falls begging as King walks in

Some Principles to Apply

- Must we always obey our governing authorities?
 - 1:11 - We must give to God the things that are God’s and to Cesare the things that are Cesare’s.
- Insignificant events can be part of God’s sovereign plan – Esther harem, Mordecai forgotten, Esther risks her life to approach the king
- The book of Esther is a “type” of God’s eternal plan of redemption. Evil will appear to be winning, but God still sits on the throne, WE WIN!