




Reflections of Christ



Esther Chapter 8

REFLECTIONS OF CHRIST

As a mother, I've experienced one of life's purest joys—the pride of seeing my children develop into strong, compassionate young adults. Just this past year, I had the joy of seeing two of my sons embark on promising career paths and another son embrace a new challenge by signing up for college. Similarly, my daughter took the road less traveled. She moved to a small town, started a family, and is now thriving while raising chickens. These milestones were shared far and wide among my friends, their joy adding to mine. Yes, this is what I do—I revel in their achievements, their trials, their resilience—because I'm a parent, and I'm unabashedly proud.

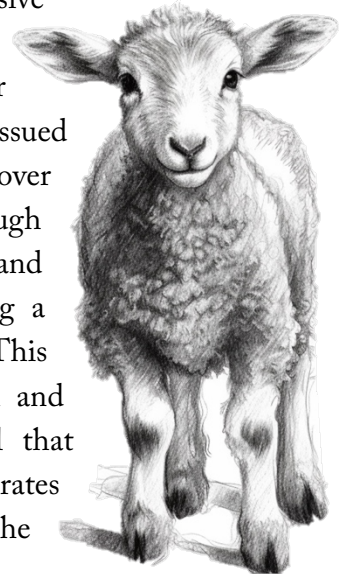
As I rejoice in the success of my children, I'm reminded that our Heavenly Father shares a similar pride in His Son. This might seem like a bold comparison, but consider this: His relationship with His Son, Jesus Christ, is adorned with the same affection, the same deep-seated love, the same pride.

When we dig into the scripture, we find this very dynamic beautifully portrayed. In the stories of faith, bravery, and redemption, we find subtle reflections of Jesus. We see these echoes of Him sprinkled

across scripture like hidden gems waiting to be discovered, which just might be my favorite part about reading the Bible. These points weave a narrative of God's deliverance and Christ's sacrifice, along with the hope of salvation that permeates both the Old and New Testaments. This careful exploration of the Book of Esther and the story of Mordecai offers rich insights into the timeless truth of God's love and mercy, reminding us once again of the profound depth and enduring relevance of these sacred texts.

1. **A Humble Servant:** Despite being a Jew in exile, Mordecai served faithfully at the king's gate. This humble service mirrors the servitude of Christ, who, despite being the King of Kings, came to earth as a servant, exemplifying humility and obedience to God's will.

2. **Deliverance During Passover:** The decisive turning point in Esther's story takes place around the time of the Passover. In Esther 3:12, Haman's decree against the Jews was issued on the 13th of Nisan, which is the eve of Passover according to Exodus 12:18. However, through divine providence, Haman's plot was foiled, and he was executed during this time, marking a significant deliverance for the Jews. This correlation underlines the themes of death and resurrection central to Passover, a festival that begins on the 14th of Nisan and commemorates God's deliverance of His people and the promise of new life.



3. **Period of Trial and Triumph:** The three-day fast can be viewed as a typology, symbolizing Jesus' death and resurrection. Just as Jesus faced death and was resurrected on the third day, so too

Esther faced the risk of death and found favor with the king on the third day, leading to a new life for the Jewish people. This correlation serves to further underscore the parallels between the narrative in Esther and Christ's redemptive work, exemplifying the ultimate victory of God's divine plan.

4. **An Unrecognized Hero:** For a considerable portion of the story, Mordecai's virtuous act of saving King Xerxes from a conspiracy goes unrecognized. This echoes Christ's time on earth during which His divine identity and purpose were not recognized, even though He was consistently revealing God's love and truth.
5. **A Reflection of the Cross:** The gallows, a seemingly dreadful symbol of impending death and defeat, played a pivotal role in the story of Esther which echoes the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. For just as the gallows stood tall, ready to fulfill Haman's wicked plans, it ultimately became the very instrument of his downfall. The parallels are striking: the enemy's scheme to crucify Mordecai was unwittingly transformed into a symbol of victory, a foreshadowing of the ultimate triumph found in the sacrificial death of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Indeed, in the most unexpected circumstances, God's sovereign hand orchestrates remarkable reversals. This offers hope, deliverance, and a profound reminder of His unwavering power to transform even the darkest moments into sources of light and redemption.
6. **Elevation to Authority and Deliverance:** Mordecai's narrative takes a dramatic turn when he is elevated from being an unrecognized hero to a position of significant authority in the Persian kingdom, appointed by Esther over Haman's estate and given the King's signet ring. This not only represents the dramatic reversal of fortunes in his personal narrative but also echoes the exaltation of Christ, who, after His resurrection, is seated at the right hand of God as per Ephesians 1:20. In this

newfound position, Mordecai issued a law permitting the Jews to defend themselves, thereby ensuring their deliverance from Haman's destructive plot. This act closely parallels the transformative work of Christ. Through His sacrifice and subsequent exaltation, He provided a pathway for humanity to be saved from the eternal consequences of sin.

7. **Adoption and Loving Kindness:** Mordecai's adoption and care of Esther, his orphaned cousin, highlights a deep sense of love and responsibility akin to God's adoptive love for us in Christ. Just as Mordecai took Esther under his wings, so too does Christ bring us into the family of God through His sacrifice.

While the events and people in this story aren't a perfect mirror of Christ—only Christ Himself could be—the similarities in this story offer us a deeper understanding of God's sovereign plan, His deliverance, and His unfailing love, all foreshadowing the coming of Jesus. Thus, as we continue to study the Book of Esther, let's view it as a portrayal of God's redemptive love in action, pointing us to the ultimate redemption found in Christ Jesus.

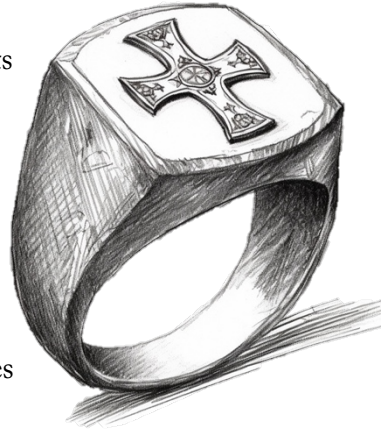
MORDECAI'S RISE TO POWER (VERSES 1-2)

After Haman's downfall, King Xerxes gives Queen Esther Haman's estate. In a further twist, Esther reveals her relationship with Mordecai, and the king extends his favor to Mordecai, giving him the signet ring that once belonged to Haman.

Esther's bravery and faith have had a profound influence on the course of events, elevating her cousin Mordecai to a position of great power. This serves as a wonderful reminder, that when we place our faith in God and bravely step into our calling, we can be influential in ways we never imagined.

Did you know?

Our modern word 'signature' has roots in the practice of using a signet ring. In ancient times, a signet ring was used to imprint a unique seal into hot wax or soft clay, serving as an unforgeable signature on official documents. So, when we sign our names today, we're participating in a tradition that dates back thousands of years!



ESTHER'S PETITION FOR HER PEOPLE (VERSES 3-6)

Even after Haman's death, his evil decree against the Jews still stands. Bravely, Esther falls before the king, weeping and pleading for the lives of her people. Esther's love for her people and her bravery are incredibly inspiring.

It's an invitation for us to intercede for those in need, to pray fervently and passionately, and to take action where we can. In our own lives, let's remember to pray for others and advocate for those who are vulnerable or in danger.

A NEW DECREE (VERSES 7-14)

King Xerxes grants Esther and Mordecai permission to write a new decree, one that allows the Jews to defend themselves against anyone who would attack them. This turn of events is a testament to God's providential care for His people.

When faced with adversity or seemingly impossible situations, it's vital to remember that our God is a God of deliverance. His ways may be surprising, but He's always working on behalf of His people.

Did you know?

The king's edict, once sealed with his signet ring, was unalterable according to Persian law. This policy was so firm that not even the king himself could repeal his own command. This can be compared to the story of Daniel in the lions' den (Daniel 6), where King Darius, even though he was favorable towards Daniel, could not change the law he had unknowingly enacted that led to Daniel's punishment. In the face of such rigid law, a new edict had to be issued to allow the Jews to defend themselves.

THE JEWS' CELEBRATION (VERSES 15-17)

The chapter concludes with a time of joy and celebration for the Jews. Instead of despair and fear, there is happiness and honor. It's a beautiful picture of how God can turn our mourning into joy.

You turned my wailing into
dancing; you removed my sack-
cloth and clothed me with joy.

(Psalm 30:11)



What gifts did the king give to Esther and Mordecai?

What final request did Esther make of the king?

What did the king tell Mordecai to do with his signet ring?

What were the Jews instructed to do on the 13th day of the twelfth month?

How many provinces were the letters addressed to?

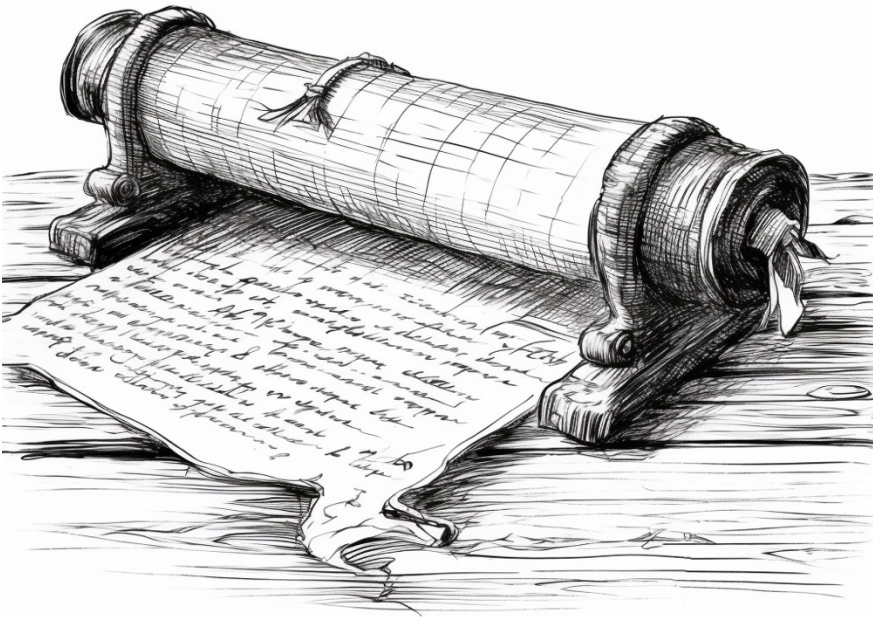
How were the letters delivered?

What was Mordecai wearing when he left the king's presence?

AS WE CLOSE THIS CHAPTER

In closing, let's pause to remember not only the power of faith, bravery, and intercessory prayer, but also the resounding echoes of Christ's redemptive work within Esther's story. From the humble service of Mordecai to the remarkable deliverance during Passover, these reflections of Christ offer us profound insights and inspiration.

As we reflect upon Esther's courage and faithfulness, let's also contemplate on these Christ-like patterns, allowing them to shape our understanding and deepen our faith. Like Esther and Mordecai, let's strive to serve humbly, pray intercessively, and trust in God's deliverance.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Esther Chapter 8

What gifts did the king give to Esther and Mordecai?

The king gave Esther the estate of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And he also gave Mordecai the signet ring he had taken back from Haman (Esther 8:1-2).

What final request did Esther make of the king?

Esther's final request of the king was to issue a new decree to counteract Haman's orders to kill the Jews. She fell at the king's feet, wept, and pleaded with him for the lives of her people (Esther 8:3-5).

What did the king tell Mordecai to do with his signet ring?

The king told Mordecai to write a decree on behalf of the Jews, as he saw fit, in the king's name and seal it with the royal signet ring. The king's ring was a symbol of his authority, and no document sealed with it could be revoked (Esther 8:7-8).

What were the Jews instructed to do on the 13th day of the 12th month?

The Jews were instructed, through the decree written by Mordecai, to gather together and protect themselves, to destroy, kill, and annihilate any armed force of any nationality or province that might attack them and their women and children,

and to plunder the property of their enemies on the 13th day of the 12th month (Esther 8:11-12).

How many provinces were the letters addressed to?

The letters were addressed to all 127 provinces of King Xerxes' kingdom, from India to Cush (Esther 8:9).

How were the letters delivered?

The letters were delivered by couriers on horseback, riding on royal horses bred from swift mares (Esther 8:10).

What was Mordecai wearing when he left the king's presence?

When Mordecai left the king's presence, he was wearing royal garments of blue and white, a large crown of gold and a purple robe of fine linen. This symbolized his new status and authority in the kingdom (Esther 8:15).