

January 6/7, 2024
"Mordecai & Esther"
Pastor Aaron Buer



SPEND DAILY TIME WITH GOD AS YOU READ, THINK, PRAY + ACT.

2024 Challenge: Finding Jesus in the Old Testament

JANUARY: Read Luke to see how the author points back to the Old Testament

Day 1 Esther 4:1-17 | Mordecai & Esther

So Hathak went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate. Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews. Esther 4:6-7

In our text this week, two cousins Mordecai and Esther are Jewish exiles living in one of the capital cities of the most powerful Empire in the world – Persia. Persian King Xerxes doesn't know Esther is Jewish, and he chooses her as his queen. Mordecai learns of a decree from the king to kill all the Jews in Persia. The stakes are high and the future is uncertain for Esther, Mordecai and the Jewish people.

This week we will see how they follow God in this complicated situation. We will see that we too need to resolve to obey God, serve him and trust him during complicated situations. For some of us, it may be a relationship. For others, it could be challenges at work or school. But we may wonder where do we begin? What's the first best step, after we've decided to trust God?

TODAY: Begin this week by praying about your situation. Ask God for wisdom and resolve to follow, serve and trust him in it. Pray something like this, "God, I bring _____ before you. God, would you give me the wisdom to know what to do? Lord, I love you and will follow, serve and trust you as you lead."

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read [Luke 5](#). Highlight anything that refers to the Old Testament and how Jesus fulfills it. Note Jesus's healings and what he says to the paralytic man before he heals him.

Day 2 Esther 2:21-23 | Obey

During the time Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway, became angry and conspired to assassinate King Xerxes. Esther 2:21

Mordecai is sitting at the king's gate and overhears a plot to kill the Persian king. The death of the king would be an opportunity for Mordecai and the Jewish people to rise, reclaim their land and be free again. However, God's instructions in this situation were clear. God told his people to seek the peace and prosperity of the places where they were in exile ([Jeremiah 29:7](#)). In obedience to God, Mordecai immediately reports the plot and saves the king's life.

We face complicated choices too. Situations where we don't know what the right thing is to do. Maybe it's a decision we are contemplating, a relationship we are wondering if we should pursue, or something else. In these times, we may wrestle with whose opinion should matter most. Should we trust our culture's view of what's right and do what seems best for us? Or should we trust what God tells us is right? A great place to start is by asking what God has to say in his Word. We, too, need to choose to do what God says and let him be the authority and ruler of our lives.

TODAY: Take a few minutes to pray and identify a specific area where you need to obey God and his Word. If nothing jumps out at first, ask God to reveal an area to you. Then take the first step. Your first step might be telling a trusted friend or your

small group for accountability. If you are not in a small group, new groups launch this month. You can learn more and sign up [HERE](#).

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read [Luke 6](#). Highlight anything that refers to the Old Testament and how Jesus fulfills it. Note the reference to David and the Sabbath and what that means about Jesus's identity.

Day 3 Esther 4:1-14 | Serve

“For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?”

Esther 4:14

Esther is a Jew living in Persia who was selected to be the queen of the most powerful empire in the world. The king doesn't know she is Jewish and decrees that all Jews are to be killed. If she speaks up, she is likely to be killed. If she remains silent, all the Jewish people will be killed. In this complicated situation, her cousin Mordecai reminds her that her position isn't just for herself. He asks her to consider if she is placed as queen to serve at that very moment.

Our world tells us to find happiness in success, wealth, and stuff. However, Jesus calls us to something different. He says that life is found in following him and his example. It's found in service, sacrifice and loving your neighbor. We need to ask the same question Mordecai did. What if God blessed us with time, talents, a position of influence or financial resources to serve and bless others? Who knows but that we have come to these things for such a time as this?

TODAY: Jesus calls us to something deeper and better than living for ourselves. He taught his followers to serve others. Consider where you might be able to serve. Find your place to serve at Ada Bible Church or in the community [HERE](#).

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read [Luke 7](#). Highlight anything that refers to the Old Testament and how Jesus fulfills it. Note the nationalities of those whom Jesus heals and how this diversity points to the promise God made to Abraham in [Genesis 12:3](#). Also note the Old Testament passage Jesus quotes in verses 22-23.

Day 4 Mark 10:45 | Jesus in Esther

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many. Mark 10:45

Jesus doesn't appear in the Book of Esther. She lives hundreds of years before he came to earth. Yet, Esther's actions foreshadow the life of Christ in profound ways. In [Mark 10:45](#), we read that Jesus came to serve and give his life as a ransom for many. Esther uses her role as the queen of Persia to serve the Jewish people and even puts her life on the line for them ([Esther 4:16](#)).

This year in *Beyond the Weekend* we are looking for Jesus in the Old Testament. Esther is an example of what's called typology, or a type of Christ in the Old Testament. A type of Christ simply refers to a person whose life and actions point to Jesus. Throughout the year, we will see more and more of these in the Old Testament, and each time we will notice that Jesus escalates and fulfills the foreshadowing we see. For instance, Esther saved her people from physical death. Jesus offers rescue from spiritual death and eternal life to all who trust in him. Esther rose from humble beginnings to be the queen of Persia. Jesus was born in a stable and is now seated at the right hand of God.

TODAY: Commit to the 2024 Challenge of Finding Jesus in the Old Testament. Commit to the daily readings and the practice of seeing Jesus in the first two-thirds of the Bible. Read or revisit [Beyond the Weekend from January 1st](#) for more information about the challenge.

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read [Luke 8](#). Highlight anything that refers to the Old Testament and how Jesus fulfills it. Note who and what Jesus has authority over and how his authority points back to the Old Testament and his identity.

Day 5 John 1:12-13 | Trust

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God. John 1:12-13

Esther put her life on the line to save her people. Her actions point to the ultimate savior—Jesus Christ. In our passage today, we see that those who believe in Jesus are given “the right to become children of God.” To understand what that means, we have to start at the beginning.

God created the world and it was good. Yet, the first humans disobeyed God and introduced sin into the world. However, God loved us and he sent his son Jesus Christ to rescue us and pay the penalty for our sins. Jesus lived a sinless life and when he was killed on a Roman cross, he took on himself the sins of the world. Three days later, he defeated sin and death by rising from the dead.

Jesus invites us to share in his victory over sin and death. We are invited to experience the forgiveness and grace of God. We are invited to become children of God because of what Christ has done. To respond to this invitation, we need to trust in Jesus as our savior and follow him as the lord of our lives.

TODAY: If you have never made the decision to trust and follow Jesus Christ, there is no better way to start 2024. Pray something like this, “God, I know that I have sinned and disobeyed you. I put my trust in your son Jesus Christ as my savior and I choose to follow him as the lord of my life.”

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read [Luke 9](#). Highlight anything that refers to the Old Testament and how Jesus fulfills it. Note the feeding of the 5,000 and consider what Old Testament stories this points back to.