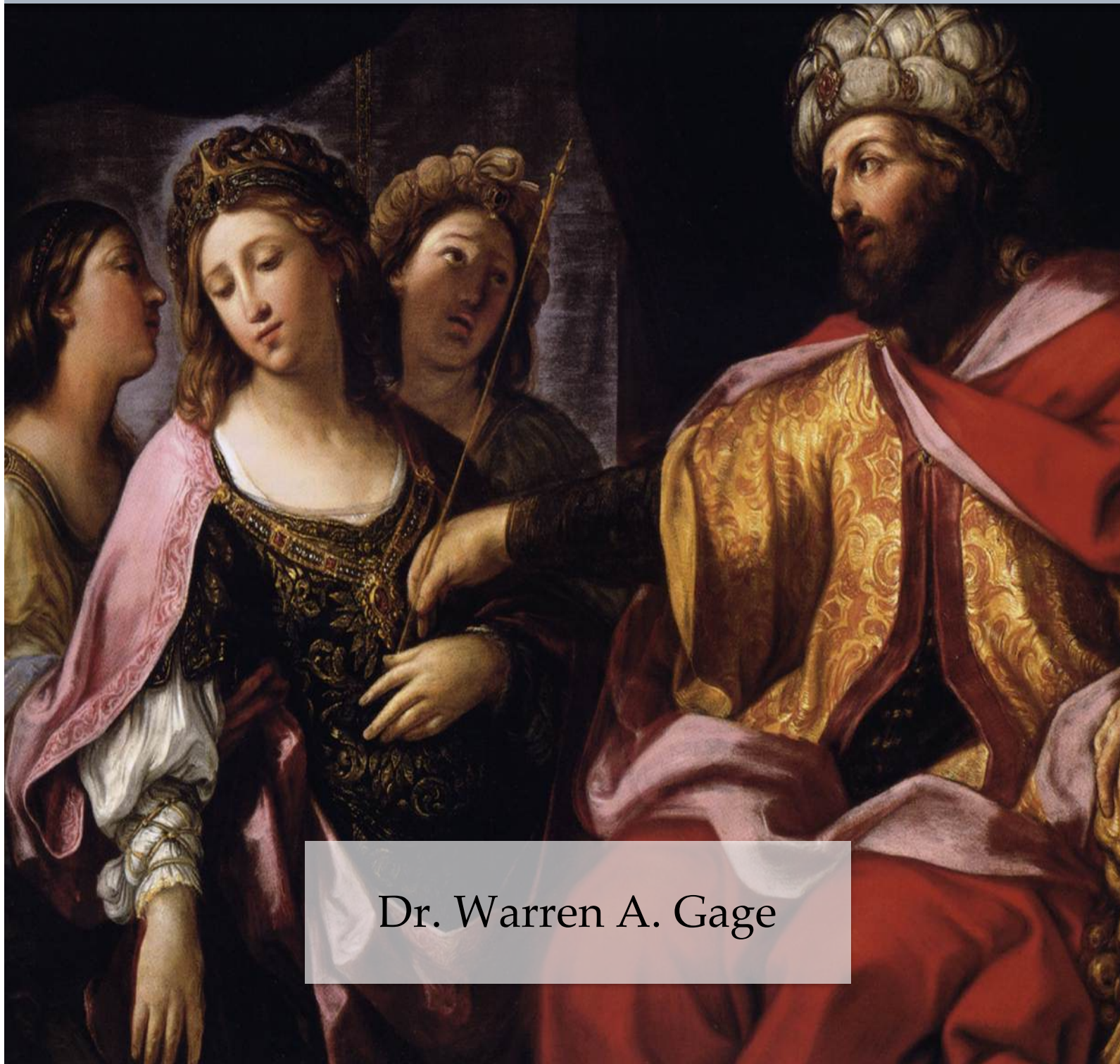




The Alexandrian Forum

THE GOSPEL OF ESTHER & MORDECAI

ESTHER 4



Dr. Warren A. Gage

Christ in all of Scripture

The Gospel of Esther & Mordecai

Esther 4

Read the Passage

¹When Mordecai learned all that had happened, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city. He cried out with a loud and bitter cry. ²He went as far as the front of the king's gate, for no one might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. ³And in every province where the king's command and decree arrived, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

⁴So Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told her, and the queen was deeply distressed. Then she sent garments to clothe Mordecai and take his sackcloth away from him, but he would not accept them. ⁵Then Esther called Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs whom he had appointed to attend her, and she gave him a command concerning Mordecai, to learn what and why this was. ⁶So Hathach went out to Mordecai in

the city square that was in front of the king's gate. ⁷And Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries to destroy the Jews. ⁸He also gave him a copy of the written decree for their destruction, which was given at Shushan, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her, and that he might command her to go in to the king to make supplication to him and plead before him for her people. ⁹So Hathach returned and told Esther the words of Mordecai.

¹⁰Then Esther spoke to Hathach, and gave him a command for Mordecai: ¹¹"All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, he has but one law: put all to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days." ¹²So they told Mordecai Esther's words.

¹³And Mordecai told them to answer Esther: "Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. ¹⁴For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

¹⁵Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai: ¹⁶"Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!"

¹⁷So Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther commanded him.



"Esther Before King Ahasuerus"
by Jacopo Tintoretto
1547-48



Gospel Preview in the Text

It was a time of great peril for the people of God. Israel had been scattered among the nations and was suffering under foreign oppression in Persia. Faithful to his covenant, God sent a son (Mordecai) and daughter of Abraham (Esther) to save his people. But God's deliverers were in great jeopardy and unjustly condemned to death. So God intervened to vindicate his servants by saving Esther and exalting Mordecai to the right hand of the royal throne. As a result of this remarkable deliverance from suffering to glory, the gospel message of the sovereignty of the Lord went out over the whole world of the Persian Empire, proclaiming God's saving mercy to both Israel and the nations and fulfilling God's covenant with Abraham. Such are the contours of God's amazing trajectory of grace.

The trajectory of grace moving from suffering (low) to glory (high) describes the stories of many biblical figures. In the deliverance of this series of biblical figures, beginning with Joseph, we see that God has ordained many echoes of the ministry of Christ. This typological precision offers profound evidence of the compositional unity of the Story of the Bible.

THE SUFFERING & GLORY OF ESTHER & MORDECAI

1. **The children of Israel were under a sentence of death, being persecuted by Hamon, chief minister to the king of Persia** (Est 3:1-15).
2. Mordecai was faithful to the king, but Hamon **was jealous** and raised up a gallows tree, **intending to have Mordecai hanged on the tree** (Est 5:9-14).
3. God raised up Esther to be the Queen of Persia. She asked the people to pray and fast for her for **three days** (Est 4:16), after which **she would venture her life for the people of God**. The king granted her a pardon and she was **delivered from death** (Est 5:1-2).
4. Hamon's jealousy was exposed, and the Great King in wrath had **Hamon hanged on the gallows tree he had intended for Mordecai** (Est 7:7-10).

THE SUFFERING & GLORY OF JESUS

1. **The children of Bethlehem were under a sentence of death, being persecuted by Herod, the king of Judea** (Matt 2:16-18).
2. Jesus was rejected by the religious leaders in Jerusalem **out of jealousy** (Matt 27:15-18). They **sought to have Jesus hanged on the tree of the cross** (Matt 27:22-23).
3. Jesus taught the **he would venture his life for the salvation of his people** (Matt 26:26-28), but that he would be **delivered from death** after **three days** (Matt 16:21).
4. Jesus was **hanged upon the tree** of the cross, **the just Jesus dying on the tree for the unjust sinners he had saved** (1 Pet 3:18).



<p>5. Mordecai was raised up in one day from condemnation to the right hand of the king. Under the seal of the king, the chief minister, Mordecai, sent letters of salvation respecting his people and many from all the nations joined the people of the Lord and became Jews (Est 8:1-17).</p>	<p>5. Jesus was raised up from death on the third day, and he ascended to the right hand of God (Mark 14:62, Acts 7:56). Letters of salvation from his apostles went out to the whole world. Many people from all nations were grafted in to the people of the covenant (Rom 11:11-24).</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Prophetic Narrative of the Gospel in the Text

1. The story of Esther and Mordecai is remarkable because together they perfectly trace out the trajectory of the ministry of suffering and glory that was the ministry of Jesus, which we have seen in Joseph, Moses, and Daniel individually, and with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego together. In this instance we recognize the familiar character of Hamon, who expresses the role of the antagonist, the serpent who would destroy the seed and thus hinder the appearance of the protagonist, the Seed of the Woman, the cosmic Redeemer (Gen 3:15, Rev 12:1-4). Both Esther and Mordecai will play the role of the Redeemer, Esther in his humility and suffering and Mordecai in his deliverance and glory.

Hamon would destroy the nation while Herod, his antitype, would destroy the male sons of Bethlehem, all to hinder the promise of a Redeemer.

2. God blessed Mordecai and aroused the enmity of Hamon, who built a gallows tree for Mordecai's humiliation by hanging. He was certainly aware that hanging on a tree would bring Mordecai under the curse of his own law (Deut 21:22-23). Hamon is a type of the religious leaders of Jerusalem, who for envy would deliver Jesus over to Pilate. Their purpose in seeking a Roman execution would be to humiliate the Savior by hanging him on the tree of the cross, likewise bringing the curse of the law upon him (Gal 3:13).
3. Esther is given the high honor in the book of being a type of Jesus in his weakness and suffering. God's providence had adorned Esther with great beauty and so made her the queen of the king Hamon served. She would have to craft a strategy to expose Hamon to her husband in such a way as to deliver her people. She would have to intervene, but she had not seen her husband in thirty days and could not approach him unbidden except on penalty of death. So she offered to venture her own life in order to save her people Israel. As an expression of her faith, she asked the Jews of Susa to fast for her and pray for three days (Est 4:16). On the third day after her resolution to die if she must, she approached the king, who delivered her from death by extending his scepter of mercy. She then undertook to take the crafty Hamon by craftiness and expose his enmity before her husband the king.



In all of this Esther is a perfect type of Jesus, who likewise ventured his life in order to save his people Israel. Jesus' moral beauty was the basis of the Lord God's extending him mercy, delivering him from death on the third day. By his wisdom the weak was made strong and the crafty was taken by craftiness (1 Cor 3:8, 19).

4. The gallows tree became itself a place of ironic deception by means of substitution. Haman intended it for Mordecai, but God intended it for Haman! Likewise the cross was intended by the Enemy for Jesus, but God intended it for the Enemy! It was a place of substitution—gospel substitution, the just in the place of the unjust (1 Pet 3:18).
5. Mordecai rounds out the gospel preview in that he too was delivered from death and raised up to the right hand of the Great King (Est 10:3). He was given the signet ring of the king's own authority (Est 8:2, cf. Hag 2:23). Letters of salvation went out over the entire inhabited world of the Persian Empire telling how the Lord had saved his people. As a result of this gospel of Purim, many of the people became Jews (Est 8:17).

Mordecai is clearly a type of Christ. Jesus too was delivered from death and exalted to the right hand of the throne of heaven. From there he authorized his apostles to send letters of deliverance and joy to the entire world. Many of the people of the nations believed the gospel and so were grafted into the Israel of God (Gal 6:16).

Gospel Takeaways from the Text

1. Redemptive history is filled with illustrations of the gospel of God among the nations. All these stories should encourage us in our suffering and embolden us in our hope of glory! We serve the Lord of life! He has ordained that we should be conformed to the same pattern of suffering and glory as his Son. It is our joy to take up our crosses with him, for we know that if we suffer with him, we will likewise be glorified with him in resurrection. Sometimes he will deliver us from our jeopardy in this life and promote the gospel of good news by our testimony of his saving power. But if need be, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, we will resolve to obey God and not man, knowing that our God can deliver us, but even if he doesn't, we will still obey him. Like Esther's brave resolve, "If I perish, I perish." For we know that our God will at last prevail. We will share his deliverance.
2. It is our testimony of deliverance, of how God ordained the salvation of his people, that is the basis for evangelism. We celebrate our deliverance from death! We have appointed seasons, like Purim, festivals of joy. The joy of Purim is gospel joy, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. This spirit of joy should characterize the churches. He has saved us! He is gracious! And all are welcome to partake of our suppers of celebration in remembrance of him!





PLEASE HELP US KEEP OUR MATERIAL FREE!

The Alexandrian Forum is a nonprofit ministry that relies on the generosity of partners like you.

Our mission is to train believers to see Jesus in every story of the Bible, set hearts aflame for the Word of God, and equip disciples to share this life-changing message with others.

Our purpose in promoting a uniquely Christ-centered method of reading the Bible is to lift up the name of Jesus, that he might draw all peoples to himself (John 12:32).

If this message has been a blessing to you, would you **consider supporting us with a tax-deductible gift of any amount** in order to help us cover our costs of providing it to you for free?

To give online, please visit:

www.AlexandrianForum.org/give

We thank you for your generosity.

Every blessing in Christ,

Dr. Warren A. Gage
President of the Alexandrian Forum



The Alexandrian Forum

THE GOSPEL OF ESTHER & MORDECAI
DR. WARREN A. GAGE

COPYRIGHT © 2019