

# THE BIBLICAL WILD

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most interesting pieces of Holy Scripture. It's only of only two books of the Bible that are named after women. It's also a very short book of the Bible; ten short chapters. And finally, it's a book of the Bible that never even mentions the name of God. The story of Ester is a story of a Jewish woman who is in Babylonian captivity, who has no parents, and is adopted by her cousin Mordecai, who becomes her stepfather. She lives her life into adulthood and we encounter Ester in a moment when the King has summoned his wife to come before him in the court and she has refused. The King is not happy about this, and so he banishes his wife and begins a process of trying to decide who will be his new queen. Ultimately, Ester becomes that queen, with the help of her stepfather Mordecai. There's a deception going on here, for both Mordecai and Ester do not reveal to the King that Ester is Jewish. So there's a crossing of genetic and hereditary boundaries, there's a crossing of classes; all is kept hidden from the King and all seems to be going well. Along comes Haman, one of the nobles in the kingdom, and he's expecting Mordecai to bow down before him, but Mordecai refuses. Being angered, Haman decides that he is going to get back in a very serious way for this. So he requests of the King that all of the Jews in the land be killed. The King complies with the request, and the order is issued. Mordecai, realizing what he has done, tears his clothes and goes about wailing across the whole town, and then he and Ester encounter one another, and the story is exchanged, and Ester is put in the position now as the queen of needing to do something about it. Mordecai puts an expectation upon her that she will violate the King's expectations, and she will go directly to the King without the King's invitation, and make a plea to save the Jewish people. She says "Even though it's against the law, I will do it. If I perish, I perish." And so she goes before the King who listens to her requests and asks "What is your petition, oh my queen?" And she says that "You spare all of my people, and you spare me as well." While he's shocked by what is happened, and wonders how this occurred, when he discovers the treachery that has been involved. Then the gallows that had been built for Mordecai by Haman, now become the gallows on which Haman is hung himself. Twists and turns in the plot in the story, all never invoking the power of God's name, praying to God, even mentioning God's presence in their lives. The question that Ester presents for us is how is it that a people, who are people of faith, people of covenant, and people of promise, how is it that they reach a point, where they don't even call upon God's name? Acomtators have had over the centuries, and continue to have multiple opinions about this. Some would say that it's an indication that the Jews in captivity are now at a point of being so secularized, that they no longer see God as being important or necessary in their lives. Others, and I would be one of those, believe that this is a story that illustrates the depth of spirit, the depth of spirituality, the depth of faith, that Ester has. For she understands that she is to be a partner with God, that she has responsibilities of obedience and faithfulness in keeping her end of the bargain with the

WEEK XXVI: Ester 4 – Job 9 / Psalm 148

From Psalm 146. Let us pray.

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul! I will praise the Lord as long as I live I will sing praises to my God all my life long. Amen.

I'm Todd Ousley, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan and this is the Biblical Wild, pioneers in the Christian wilderness. The book of Ester is one of the

covenant. And so she becomes a partner with God. She takes on the role to help save her people. The questions we must ask ourselves as we study the book of Ester is:

1 - How do we partner with God?

2 - What level of risk are we willing to take to save ourselves, save our people, and to do the work and the will of God?

May God bless you, and I will see you next week on the Biblical Wild.