

# Book of Esther

## Synopsis



## Introduction

Book No	17
Name	Esther
Written By	Unkown may be Mordecai or Ezra
Testament	Old
Category	History
Date Written	Approx. 470 BC
Place Written	Israel
Audience	To the people of Israel
Purpose	To demonstrate God's sovereignty and his loving care for his people
History Covered	486 - 473 BC
Chapters	10
Verses	167
Key Verse	For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this? (4:14)
Key People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Esther</li> <li>❖ Mordecai</li> <li>❖ King Xerxes I</li> <li>❖ Haman</li> </ul>
Key Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Susa</li> </ul>

## Purpose of the Book

The book of Esther begins with Queen Vashti refusing to obey an order from her husband, King Xerxes. She was subsequently banished, and the search began for a new queen. The king sent out a decree to gather together all the beautiful women in the empire and bring them into the royal harem. Esther, a young Jewish woman, was one of those chosen to be in the royal harem. King Xerxes was so pleased with Esther that he made her his queen.

Meanwhile, Mordecai, Esther's older cousin, became a government official and during his tenure foiled an assassination plot. But the ambitious and self-serving Haman was appointed second-in-command in the empire. When Mordecai refused to bow in reverence to him, Haman became furious and determined to destroy Mordecai and all the Jews along with him.

To accomplish his vengeful deed, Haman deceived the king and persuaded him to issue an edict condemning the Jews to death. Mordecai told Queen Esther about this edict, and she decided to risk her life to save her people. Esther asked King Xerxes and Haman to be her guests at a banquet. During the feast, the king asked Esther what she really wanted, and he promised to give her anything. Esther simply invited both men to another banquet the next day.

That night, unable to sleep, the king was flipping through some records in the royal archives when he read of the assassination plot that Mordecai thwarted. Surprised to learn that Mordecai had never been rewarded for this deed, the king asked Haman what should be done to properly thank a hero. Haman thought the king must be talking about him, and so he described a lavish reward. The king agreed, but to Haman's shock and utter humiliation, he learned that Mordecai was the person to be so honored.

During the second banquet, the king again asked Esther what she desired. She replied that someone had plotted to destroy her and her people, and she named Haman as the culprit. Immediately the king sentenced Haman to die on the gallows that he had built for Mordecai.

In the final act of this true-life drama, Mordecai was appointed to Haman's position, and the Jews were guaranteed protection throughout the land. To celebrate this historic occasion, the Festival of Purim was established.

Because of Queen Esther's courageous act, a whole nation was saved. Seeing her God-given opportunity, she seized it! Her life made a difference. Read Esther and watch for God at work in your life. Perhaps he has prepared you to act in "such a time as this" (4:14).

### Overview

- ❖ 17<sup>th</sup> book of the BIBLE, Old Testament and 12<sup>th</sup> of the 12 historical books
- ❖ Not one time does the name of God appear in the Book of Esther.
- ❖ The providence of God is abundant throughout the book.
- ❖ The chronological span for the Book of Esther is about 10 years.
- ❖ Esther is addressed to the multitudes of Jews who did not return to Judea. They remained in voluntary exile.
- ❖ The providence of God is abundant throughout the book.
  - He ensures that Mordecai's deeds are recorded in the palace records.
  - He guides Esther's admission to the King's court.
  - He guides the timing of Esther's two feasts.
  - He is involved in Ahasuerus's insomnia and the cure he uses of it.
  - He sees that Haman's fallows will be used in an unexpected way.
  - He gives Esther great favor in the sight of the king.
  - He brings about the new decree.
  - He brings about the victory of the Jews.
- ❖ The Book of Esther fits between the 6th and 7th chapters of Ezra, utilizing 10 of the 58 years during that gap, and somewhere in the 81 year period between the return led by Ezra and the one led by Zerubbabel.
- ❖ The Jewish Feast of Purim ("puru" from the Assyrian word meaning "lot") was begun to remember the deliverance of the Jews from the destruction planned by Haman.

### Hebrew Names of GOD used in Esther

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### Revelation of JESUS CHRIST

Queen Esther is similar to Jesus in several ways. She lived in submission, dependence, and obedience to her God-given authorities Mordecai and King Ahasuerus even as the

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Lord Jesus, during His earthly ministry, lived in total submission, dependence, and obedience to His Father God.

Esther also fully identified herself with her people and fasted for three days as she interceded to God on their behalf (4:16). Hebrews 2:17 tells us that “in all things He [Jesus] had to be made like *His* brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest.” As such, He both fasted and prayed for His own (Matt. 4:2; John 17:20).

Third, Esther gave up her right to live in order to save the nation from certain death. For this she was exalted by the king. In like fashion Jesus gave up His life that a world of sinners might be saved from eternal death and was highly exalted by God (Phil. 2:5–11).

### Work of THE HOLY SPIRIT

Although the Holy Spirit is not mentioned directly, it is His work that produced in both Esther and Mordecai the deep level of humility, leading to their mutual love and loyalty (see Rom. 5:5).

The Holy Spirit also directed and energized Esther to fast for her nation and to call her people to do the same (see Rom. 8:26, 27).

### Mega Themes of Esther

#### GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY

The book of Esther tells of the circumstances that were essential to the survival of God’s people in Persia. These “circumstances” were not the result of chance but of God’s grand design. God is sovereign over every area of life.

With God in charge, we can take courage. He can guide us through the circumstances we face in our lives. We should expect God to display his power in carrying out his will. As we unite our life’s purposes to God’s purpose, we benefit from his sovereign care.

#### RACIAL HATRED

The Jews in Persia had been a minority since their deportation from Judah 100 years earlier. Haman was a descendant of King Agag, an enemy of the Jews. Lust for power and pride drove Haman to hate Mordecai, Esther’s cousin. Haman convinced the king to kill all the Jews.

Racial hatred is always sinful. We must never condone it in any form. Every person on earth has intrinsic worth because God created people in his own image. Therefore, God's people must stand against racism whenever and wherever it occurs.

### DELIVERANCE

In February or March, the Jews celebrate the Festival of Purim, which symbolizes God's deliverance. Purim means "lots," such as those used by Haman to set the date for the extermination of all Jews from Persia. But God overruled, using Queen Esther to intercede on behalf of the Jews.

Because God is in control of history, he is never frustrated by any turn of events or human action. He is able to save us from the evil of this world and deliver us from sin and death. Because we trust God, we are not to fear what people may do to us; instead, we are to be confident in God's control.

### ACTION

Faced with death, Esther and Mordecai set aside their own fear and took action. Esther risked her life by asking King Xerxes to save the Jews. They were not paralyzed by fear.

When outnumbered and powerless, it is natural for us to feel helpless. Esther and Mordecai resisted this temptation and acted with courage. It is not enough to know that God is in control; we must act with self-sacrifice and courage to follow God's guidance.

### WISDOM

The Jews were a minority in a world hostile to them. It took great wisdom for Mordecai to survive. Serving as a faithful official of the king, Mordecai took steps to understand and work with the Persian law. Yet he did not compromise his integrity.

It takes great wisdom to survive in a nonbelieving world. In a setting which is for the most part hostile to Christianity, we can demonstrate wisdom by giving respect to what is true and good and by humbly standing against what is wrong.

## Life Lessons in Esther

Truth	Lesson
<b>Growing in Godliness</b>	❖ Recognize that favor is given for a purpose. For Esther, God's favor led to

<p>As we grow in godliness, we should ask for and expectantly seek God’s favor. God extends His favor toward us in order to advance His kingdom, bless His people, and accomplish His purposes.</p>	<p>position, which led to provision and protection for His people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Realize that God places people in positions to 10:3 advance His purposes. Seek the welfare of God’s people anytime you find yourself in an advantaged position.</li> <li>❖ Know that God grants seasons of favor for His people in order to extend His kingdom. Press in to God for all that He has for you in these seasons, and give Him all the glory.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cultivating Dynamic Devotion</b></p> <p>Esther reveals the power of a life unconditionally devoted to God and His people. She risked prominent position, wealth, and her own life to intercede on behalf of God’s people. Her radical devotion saved people from annihilation by their enemies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Devote yourself to the Lord so that when your faith is tested, you will be able to rise to the challenge and stand firm. Ask others to fast and pray with you when the enemy seeks to bring destruction. Cast yourself wholly on the Lord. He is trustworthy and will never fail you.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pursuing Holiness</b></p> <p>Living holy lives means that we worship nothing and no one but the Lord. Mordecai, in the face of persecution and threats of death, models steadfastness and faithfulness to worship God alone.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Remain firm in your resolve to worship only the Lord. Recognize that others may come and try to wear you down. Resist them, and hold fast to the Lord.</li> <li>❖ Be aware that pursuing holiness and not conceding to others who may exhibit hatred or hostility is important. Be comforted, knowing God will reward you (Matt. 5:11, 12).</li> </ul>
<p><b>The Walk of Faith</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Remember that the Lord will not forget acts of service. Believe that He is able to</li> </ul>

<p>People of faith do not need to strive or seek recognition. They can rest in knowing that God, who sees all things, knows and will reward in due time (Matt. 6:1–6).</p>	<p>bring them to light in His perfect time in order to bless you and further His plans and purposes.</p>
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### Praise Points in Esther

- ❖ His sovereign control of events (2:5-8, 17, 22; 4:14; 5:1-3; 6:1; 8:8)
- ❖ His involvement in history, though his actions often go unnoticed (4:13-14)
- ❖ Brave leaders who are willing to take great risks for god (4:16)
- ❖ His justice, ultimately rewarding the faithful and punishing the wicked (7:7–9:19).

### Worship Insights in Esther

The book of Esther reminds us that God’s people will ultimately triumph over their enemies. While most Christians do not usually see themselves as having enemies, Scripture makes it clear that we do. Notice how often the psalms of David mention the worshiper’s enemies and appeal to God for deliverance. Those who worship the Lord will always face opposition from those who do not.

The New Testament recognizes that our real enemy is Satan’s army of spiritual forces. Paul also speaks of those who are “enemies of the cross of Christ” (Philippians 3:18), and John refers to “antichrists” who used to be part of the Christian community but now oppose it (1 John 2:18). So it is in Esther’s emphasis on triumph over our enemies that we see the book’s connection to worship. Worship wages war against Satan’s forces of darkness and proclaims God’s victory over them. It declares that God is in control and those who oppose his ways are destined for defeat.

- ❖ God is sovereign; he controls the affairs of the world, including the events of our life (2:5-8, 17, 22; 4:14; 5:1-3; 6:1; 8:8).
- ❖ The Lord powerfully protects his people (4:13-17; 7:3-10; 9:1-5).
- ❖ Fasting can be a helpful way to focus our thoughts on God as we seek him (4:1-3).
- ❖ God will accomplish his purposes, whether or not we comply (4:13-14).
- ❖ God may appoint us to a unique position so that we may act on his behalf (4:14).
- ❖ Wherever God places us in life, we should work to please him, for he can use us anywhere to accomplish great things for his kingdom (4:14).

- ❖ Ceremonies help us to remember and celebrate God's faithfulness to his people (8:17; 9:20-28).

## An Outline of Esther

- I. Prelude to the Story of Esther (Est\_1:1-22)**
  - A. Introduction to King Ahasuerus (Est\_1:1-9)**
  - B. Queen Vashti Dethroned (Est\_1:10-22)**
- II. Esther Becomes Queen (Est\_2:1-18)**
  - A. Plan to Select a New Queen (Est\_2:1-4)**
  - B. Introduction to Mordecai and Esther (Est\_2:5-7)**
  - C. Esther Promoted to Queen (Est\_2:8-18)**
- III. Mordecai Saves the King's Life (Est\_2:19-23)**
- IV. Haman Issues a Royal Decree to Destroy the Jews (Est\_3:1-15)**
  - A. Mordecai Defies Haman (Est\_3:1-4)**
  - B. Haman's Angry Response to Mordecai (Est\_3:5-7)**
  - C. Haman Persuades the King to Issue a Decree Against the Jews (Est\_3:8-15)**
- V. The Response of Esther and Mordecai to Haman's Plot (Est\_4:1-17)**
  - A. Mordecai and the Jews Mourn (Est\_4:1-3)**
  - B. Esther and Mordecai Debate Esther's Response (Est\_4:4-17)**
- VI. Esther Gains the King's Favor (Est\_5:1-8)**
  - A. Esther Approaches the King (Est\_5:1-5)**
  - B. Esther's First Banquet (Est\_5:6-8)**
- VII. Haman's Prideful Obsession (Est\_5:9-14)**
- VIII. The King Honors Mordecai Over Haman (Est\_6:1-14)**
  - A. The King's Sleepless Night (Est\_6:1-3)**
  - B. Haman Forced to Honor Mordecai (Est\_6:4-11)**
  - C. Haman's Downfall Predicted (Est\_6:12-14)**
- IX. Esther Defeats Haman (Est\_7:1-10)**
- X. Mordecai Issues a New Royal Decree for Jewish Self-Defense (Est\_8:1-17)**
  - A. Esther Appeals for Her People (Est\_8:1-8)**
  - B. A New Royal Decree Written by Mordecai (Est\_8:9-14)**

**C.** The Impact of Jewish Vindication (Est\_8:15-17)

**XI.** The Jews Defend Themselves (Est\_9:1-19)

**A.** Successful Defense on Adar 13 (Est\_9:1-10)

**B.** Additional Defense on Adar 14 (Est\_9:11-15)

**C.** Overlapping Days for Fighting and Feasting (Est\_9:16-19)

**XII.** Mordecai and Esther Establish Purim (Est\_9:20-32)

**A.** Mordecai's Letter Institutes Purim (Est\_9:20-28)

**B.** Queen Esther Joins Mordecai in Support of Purim (Est\_9:29-32)

**XIII.** Epilogue in Praise of Mordecai (Est\_10:1-3)