

Key Verse

Who knows, if perhaps if you were made queen for such a time as this?

Esther 4:14

Theme

The culture of the Persian empire emphasized fate and chance. The events that transpired during the book of Esther left no doubt of God's sovereignty.
God acts on our behalf! God will never be defeated!

Esther Notes

Back Story

The events of Esther occur in a 57 year gap between Ezra 6 & 7. In Ezra 6, King Darius of Persia decreed the temple be rebuilt in Jerusalem. Mordecai & Esther ignored prophetic calls to return to Jerusalem. Isaiah & Jeremiah urged a yet-to-be exiled nation to come up out of Babylon.

After King Darius dies, his son Xerxes ruled for 20 years & this is where the story of Esther takes place.



Fun Facts

- ♥ Author: Unkown
- ♥ Time: 485-465 B.C. during King Xerxes reign.
- ♥ Place: city of Susa
- ♥ Culture: Persian Empire
- ♥ Purim Feast established.

- 1 Mordecai is mirror-image of Haman.
- 2 Haman is prototype of those who oppose God.
- 3 The book of Esther never mentions God.
- 4 The book of Esther records 1 of the earliest accounts of antisemitism.
- 5 Many gentiles become proselytes- converts to Jewish faith.
- 6 No copies of Esther found in Dead Sea Scrolls (yet).
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- 8 The book of Esther is a chiasm- using mirror-imaging to tell a story.
- 9 Purim (Feast of Lots) is established.
- 10 Chag Purim Sameach! Happy Purim!

Characters

Esther

- Jewish orphan from tribe of Benjamin.
- Esther is her Persian name meaning star.
- Haddassah is her Hebrew name meaning myrtle.

Mordecai

- Esther's cousin & supporter.
- His great-grandfather, Kish, deported by King Nebuchadnezzar around 597 B.C.

Xerxes

- AKA: Ahasuerus
- Ruled 21 years over 127 provinces.
- His son Artaxerxes is believed to be Vashti's son.

Haman

- King Xerxes highest officiant.
- Organized 1 of the earliest accounts of antisemitism.
- His casting of lots is the namesake of Purim.

Mirror-Images

Opening declarations of Xerxes glory ↔ Closing declarations of Mordecai's glory

2 Feasts celebrating Persian glory. ↔ 2 Feasts celebrating Jewish victory.

Haman is promoted. ↔ Mordecai is promoted.

Haman's decree to destroy Jews. ↔ Mordecai's decree to save Jews.

Esther's 1st Feast = Happy Haman ↔ Esther's 2nd Feast = Condemned Haman

Haman celebrates. ↔ Haman grieves.

Mordecai is honored.

Literary Elements



3 Acts
1. Set-Up: (1:1-2:20)
Description of need for God's deliverance & Esther placed in providence.
2. The Drama (2:21-3)
Climax: Jews marked for death.
3. The Conclusion: (4-9)
Jews are saved.

Foreshadowing
(Hint of future events.)
1. The recording of Mordecai saving the King in book of history.
2. Casting of Lots = Purim.
3. Mordecai says, "Perhaps you were born for such a time as this" to Esther.
4. Friends warn Haman that his pursuit of Mordecai will be fatal.

Irony
(Events are contrary to what's expected.)
1. Haman is impaled on pole he built to impale Mordecai.
2. Haman is ordered to honor Mordecai in manner he wanted king to honor him.
3. Mordecai replaces Haman in King's highest position.

Poetic Justice
Haman is executed on pole he built to execute Mordecai & the villain receives his just reward.

Climax
Peak action: Chapter 5-7

Plot Twists
Mordecai is honored & Jews become the conquerors instead of the exterminated.



God Sightings



Queen Vashti's refusal sets up opening for Esther to become Queen.

The king selecting beautiful Esther to be his king from all the women makes her rise to power possible

The king chooses a Jewess to be his Queen & Esther has the opportunity to help her people.

Mordecai overhears plot to kill the king which will later play a key role in saving the Jewish people.

The casting of Lots give the Jews time to save themselves. This is the celebration of Purim.

Esther is in fact born for such a time as this.

King Xerxes accepts Esther without an invitation & grants her wish for a banquet.

King couldn't sleep & had history read to him which happened to be Mordecai's action to save him.

King Xerxes walked in at right time to see Haman on Esther's couch which further angered him.

The Jews overpower their enemies & are ultimately saved.

Although God is never mentioned directly in the book of Esther, His presence is undeniable. God is the supreme ruler of all creation. He has the authority to intervene and act in any situation. He does not and will not fail.

