

Old Testament Survey

Esther

Author: Unknown Jew living in Persia during this time period (Knowledgeable about Persian and Jewish customs).

Date: Between 464 - 435 B.C. (The death of King Ahasuerus. 10:2,3 speak of him in past tense. Palace at Susa burned in 435 B.C. There is no indication of Greek influences).
The events of Esther occur from 483 B.C. ~ 473 B.C. This is between Ezra 6 & 7.

Theme: "The fortunes of Israel in unbelief - Persecuted but preserved."

Outline:

- I. Background: Esther Becomes Queen. (1,2)
- II. Haman's Plot to Annihilate the Jews. (3)
- III. Haman's Plot is Thwarted. (4 - 9:16)
- IV. Triumph of the Jews (9:17-32)

Key People: Ahasuerus, Haman, Esther, Mordecai

Key Chapters & Verses

3: Haman's plot to annihilate the Jews.

4:14 - God works through providence even when he is not acknowledged: "*And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this*"

6,7: Haman's downfall: Mordecai is honored; Haman is hanged

9: The Jews destroy their enemies & the Feast of Purim is established - Feb. 28, 473 B.C.

The name "Esther" comes from a Persian word meaning "star." Her Hebrew name is Hadassah, which means "myrtle." Esther was the niece of Mordecai, chosen to be Queen to Ahasuerus (Xerxes) who ruled Persia from 486-464 B.C. Esther was used by God to save the Jews from Haman's plot to annihilate them. Though God is never specifically mentioned in the book, His sovereign hand is clearly evident throughout it. (For that reason it has opposition to being included in the Canon of Scripture). The story is directed to the Jews that stayed in Persia instead of going back to Israel with Zerubbabel. It gives them the reason for the Feast of Purim, which is still celebrated annually among the Jews.

Detailed Outline of Esther

- I. Background: Esther becomes Queen. (1,2)
 - A. The Divorce of Vashti (1)
 - 1. The Feast of Ahasuerus (1-8)
 - 2. The Refusal of Queen Vashti (9-12)
 - 3. The Removal of Vashti as Queen (13-22)
 - B. The Marriage to Esther (2)
 - 1. The Decree of Ahasuerus (1-4)
 - 2. The Preparation of Esther (5-14)
 - 3. The Selection of Esther as Queen (15-20)
 - C. Mordecai Reveals the Plot to Murder the King (21-23)
- II. Haman's plot to annihilate the Jews. (3,4)
 - A. Haman's Plot (3:1-6)
 - B. Ahasuerus' Decree (3:10-15)
- III. Haman's Plot is Thwarted. (4 - 9:16)
 - A. The Jews Respond to the Decree (4)
 - 1. Their Lament (4:1-3)
 - 2. Mordecai's Plan (4:4-14)
 - 3. Esther's Promise (4:15-17)
 - B. Haman's Hatred (5)
 - 1. Esther's First Feast (1-8)
 - 2. Haman's Plan to Kill Mordecai (9-14)

C. Haman's Humiliation (6)

1. King Ahasuerus' Plan to Honor Mordecai (1-3)

2. Haman's Plan to Honor Himself (4-9)

3. Haman Forced to Honor Mordecai (10-14)

D. Haman's Demise (7)

1. Esther's Second Feast (1-4)

2. Haman is Condemned (5-8)

3. Haman is Hanged (9-10)

IV. Triumph of the Jews (8-9)

A. Mordecai Replaces Haman (8:1-3)

B. Ahasuerus' Decree is Countered (8:4-17)

1. Esther's Petition (8:4-6)

2. Ahasuerus' Second Decree (8:7-14)

3. Jewish Victory Over Her Enemies (8:15-9:16)

a. Initial Joy (8:15-17)

b. Victories the First Day (9:1-11)

c. Victories the Second Day (9:12-16)

C. The Feast or Purim is Established (9:17-32)

D. Mordecai's Greatness (10)