

Purpose

To demonstrate God's sovereignty and His loving care for His people

Meaning of Esther

Literally Ishtar, "a star"

Penman

Possibly Mordecai (9:29) or Ezra or Nehemiah because of the similarity of writing style

Date Written

Approximately 470 BC; Esther became Queen in 479

Setting

Esther is 30 years prior to *Nehemiah*. The story is set in Persia and the action occurs in the capital of Susa.

Key People

Esther, Mordecai, Xerxes, and Haman

Special Features

Esther is one of two books named for women (*Ruth*). In the original, no reference to God appears; but God's presence is clear throughout.

Key Verse

"If you keep quiet, deliverance will arise from some other place. Who can say but that you have been elevated to the palace for just such a time as this?" *Esther 4:14*

An Overview (10 Chapters)

- Esther Becomes Queen (1:1-2:23)
- The Jews Are Threatened (3:1-4:17)
- Esther Intercedes for the Jews (5:1-8:17)
- The Jews Are Delivered (9:1-10:3)

Major Themes

- *God's Sovereignty*: 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.
- *Racial Hatred*: Racial hatred is always sinful. We must never condone it in any form. Every person on earth has intrinsic worth because God created them in His image. Therefore, God's people must stand against racism whenever it occurs.
- *Deliverance*: 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*: 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.