

Topic: ___The Book of Esther

Column 1	Column 2
<p><u>Esther-</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Account in Esther ends in 473BC before Ahasuerus died by assassination (465 BC) Es 10:2 speaks of as though Ahasuerus' reign had been completed, so the earliest writing would be dated mid 5th century of the latest date would be prior to 331 BC. • The one of two OT books named after women • 17th book in the literary chronology of the Old Testament historical section • Hadassah- was the Hebrew name of Esther which came from either Persian word "star" or possibly from the name of Babylon "love goddess" Ishtar • Orphaned daughter of • Grew up in Persia with her older cousin, Mordecai who raised her as her own child (2:7, 15
<p><u>Author</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Author remains unknown, although Mordecai, Ezra, and Nehemiah have been suggested • Whoever penned Esther possessed a detailed knowledge of Persian customs, etiquette and history, plus familiarity with the palace at Shushshan (1:5-7). • In addition, he exhibited intimate knowledge of the Hebrew calendar and customs while showing a strong sense of Jewish Nationalism. This individual could possibly a persian Jew, who later moved back to Israel

<p><u>Background</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Esther occurred during the Persian period of world history, ca 539B.C. (Dan 5: 30-31) to ca. 331B.C. • Ahasuerus ruled from 486-465 B.C. • The book of Esther covers 483-473 B.C. • The events of Esther occurred during the wider time span between the first return of the Jews after the 70 years of captivity in Babylon (Dan 9:1-19) under Zerubabel (Ezra 1-6) • The second return led by Ezra, ca 458B.C. (Ezra 7-10) • The third journey led by Nehemiah from Susa to Jerusalem Neh 1-2 occurred later (ca 445B.C.)
<p><u>Key People</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Esther who replaced Vashti • Mordecai • King Xerxes I- king of Persia-married Esther and made her queen • Haman-second in command under king Xerxes; plotted to the Jews 3:1-9:25
<p><u>Chapter 1:1-22</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marriage of king Xerxes and Vashti • Royal Feast-King Ahasuerus holds a banquet for 7 days (partying king) • Drunken demand- the king grew weary with wine and demands that his queen present herself before his friends but teh queen refused • The King's edict-the king's counselors persuaded him to make a law concerning his nations marital relationships-which in effect ends his own •
<p><u>Going Deeper</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ephesians 5:21-22 • The Role of Godly Wives-Paul begins his teaching in Eph, instructing women of their roles in teh marital relationship • The Role of Godly husbands • Paul instructing men of their roles in the marital relationship, calling them to love their wives as Christ loved the church

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>God's Chosen Queen</u> <u>chap 2</u></p>	<p>Royal Job Opening- the king of Persia has deposed of his queen and now holds a national competition to find a suitable replacement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 2:1-23 • Esther was one of the candidates • An assassination plot: Mordecai uncovers ab assassination plot, and he saves the king's life. His reward however, is to be forgotten, but only for a time
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Going Deeper</u> <u>Jer 29</u></p>	<p>Jeremiah 29:1-32</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • letter to the captives: the prophet Jer wrote this letter in 597 B.C. and send this letter to the Jewish captives to encourage them and remind then that the Lord has not forgotten them • False Prophets- Jeremiah now writes that the exiles must stop listening to false prophets in their midst-for their words do not come from God
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>A Deadly Conspiracy</u> <u>chapt 3-4:17</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After Esther becomes queen, the king orders all his • Haman's plot-Haman's wrath has been stirred by Mordecai's refusal to bow down to him, and now he uses his position to carry out his hatred against the people of God. • Ancient Animosity-Haman is a descendant of king Agag, last king of the Amalekites, who were destroyed by Israel. He is still motivated by that ancient grudge • Sackcloth and Ashes: Mordecai learns of Haman's scheme to annihilate the jews and is filled with grief • Queen Esther, however has not yet learned of the plot • Esther's Dilemma- Esther realizes that to go before the Persian king without being summoned could result in her death. She also told Mordecai she has not been summoned in 30 days

<p><u>Salvation for God's People</u> <u>Chapter 5-7:10</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haman's disappointment • To Haman's shock and amazement the king commands to honor his enemy, Mordecai with the privileges Haman thought would be bestowed on himself • Reversal of Fortune • Queen Esther holds another banquet for the king and Haman, • And at this one she makes her request to save the Jews from annihilation • Haman's Downfall • In one sudden moment, the Lord turns Haman's wicked schemes away from the Jews and toward his own household
<p><u>Reviewing Key Principles</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lord may allow hardship, but He is still in control • Man's wrath does not produce God's righteousness • Pride debases a man, but humility lifts him up • God gives His people the words to speak at the right time • God's people should live above reproach • Provoking others leads to wrath • God puts us where He wants us for His specific purposes • We are responsible for obedience, and God is responsible for what follows

Questions to ponder
chapter 1

1. How did the king's drunkenness influence events in this chapter?
1. how might things have been different if he remained sober through this narrative?
2. Why did king Ahasuerus command his wife's appearance at the feast?
3. What reason might she have had for refusing?
4. how would you have responded to this command if you were queen Vashti? What other actions, if any, would you have taken?
5. In what ways were both Ahasuerus and Vashti operating as a poor model for marriage?
6. How might these events have been different if the king and queen had a godly marriage?

Chapter 2

1. If you had been in Esther's place, how would you have reacted when the king commanded you to become his concubine
2. In what way were her actions and attitude different from Vashti
3. What people came to look on Esther with favor in these passages? What part did Esther play in that process and what part did God play?
4. Why did Esther not request anything from the king's treasures when she had the opportunity?
5. What did this reveal about her character
6. How did Esther show that she was respecting the Persian king's God given authority? How did Mordecai demonstrate this through his actions?
7. In what ways can you see God's sovereign hand at work in the events of this study
8. What purpose might God have for placing you where you are at present?
9. Why did Esther not reveal the fact she was a Jew? When should a Christian make his/her faith known openly to others

Chapters
3-4:17

1. In what way did Haman deceive the king regarding the Jews? How did this happen?
2. What motivated Haman to try to annihilate the Jews? Was he justified for feeling that way?
3. If you had been a Jew in Persia at this time, how would you have reacted to Haman's decree? How would you have reacted if you had been a Gentile at the time?
4. In what way can you see God's sovereign hand guiding the events of these passages? what does this teach about His Sovereignty in the affairs of our lives?
5. What were the long-range consequences of Saul's failure to obey God's command to completely destroy the Amalejites? What does this teach about the importance of complete obedience to God?
6. How might this story have been different if Haman had treated others the way he liked being treated? How does this illustrate Jesus' commands?
7. Why did the Lord allow His people to suffer from Haman's persecution? What does this teach about suffering that Christians might face?

Chapters
5-7:10

1. Why did Esther invite king Ahasuerus and Haman to a banquet instead of asking outright to save her people?
2. How did *God* use Haman's pride against him in this story? How did his greed and desire for importance lead Mordecai being honored like a king
3. What caused the king to leave the room in fury? What caused him to condemn Haman to death when he returned?
4. What evidence do you see in these passages of *God's* sovereign control?
5. How might you have viewed these events if you have been living through them at the time.
6. if you had been in Mordecai's position, how would you have felt while being paraded around on the king's horse? How might it affected your life in the long term
7. How did *God* ultimately protect His people?
8. How did He use all of the evil that had been intended against His followers for good?

Bibliography

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