

Book 17: Esther The Providence of God

Esther: Introduction

- When the Persians gave permission for the Jews to return to Jerusalem less than 60,000 people went back.
- The rest were content to stay in Babylon or Persia and most never returned to their land.
- The book of Esther takes place at this time.

- Esther is set entirely in the Kingdom of Persia – or modern day Iran.
- It is a story of God's intervention when things were at their worst.
- This book contains no actual miracles, and yet the whole story from beginning to end seems miraculous in the way it unfolds.

- This was a time when Israel rejected God. Therefore, they did not clearly hear His voice or sense His presence.
- God is not mentioned by name, though He is present throughout the book.
- Prayer is not specifically mentioned, though we see God act to save His people.

- The book of Esther gives us the origin of the Jewish holiday of Purim.
- It is the only book in the Bible to mention that festival, though Jews everywhere celebrate it annually.
- Also, the main characters, Queen Esther and her uncle Mordecai, appear nowhere else in Scripture.

Esther: A Few Facts

- This is the second of two books in Scripture named after a woman.
- Esther 8:9 is the single longest verse in the Bible.
- The arch villain, Haman, is an "Agagite", the descendant of the Amalekite kings who were notorious enemies of the Jews.

Esther: God's Providence

- The book of Esther, more than any other, illustrates the idea of

God's providence

“God's governing of all circumstances, events and free human acts, directing everything toward its appointed goal, for His own glory.”

- God is always at work and always moving us by means of circumstances and events toward His intended goals.
- We can't see the future, so we often don't understand what God is doing.
- Sometimes we look at our situation and think God doesn't care about us.

- When we get to the end of the story, we will always see that God is always faithful.
- His love and concern for us never stops.
- The book of Esther teaches us a great lesson in this truth.
- It clearly illustrates the fact that God always takes care of His people.

Esther: Outline of the Book

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| 1. Esther Becomes Queen | 1 – 2 |
| 2. Haman's Plot against the Jews | 3 – 6 |
| 3. God Saves His People | 7 - 10 |