

Key to ESTHER

1. STATISTICS:

Writer, possibly Mordecai; time of writing about 525 B.C.; events of Esther occur before Nehemiah, possibly between chapters 6 and 7 of Ezra; key thought, GOD's providential care of His own; key verse, 4:14; purpose, to explain the origin of the Feast of Purim; key characters, Mordecai and Esther.

2. THEME:

Even while in exile, because of their sin and GOD's judgment, still the overruling hand of GOD covered Israel in protecting, providing care. The eventual purpose of GOD is not to be frustrated by satanically inspired plots.

3. OUTLINE:

Vashti, the queen, deposed; Esther crowned (1, 2)
Haman's plot; Esther's intervention (3-8)
The Jews defend themselves and win (9, 10)

4. SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS:

Name of GOD is not mentioned but the power of GOD is clearly seen.

Ahasuerus was King Xerxes of history whose ill-fated expedition against the Greeks in 480 B.C. is well known.

The feast in chapter 1 was in preparation for this military venture.

Shushan (Susa), 200 miles east of Babylon, was the winter residence of the Persian kings.

Actually, Esther's marriage made possible the granting of Nehemiah's request and through this, the rebuilding of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:6).

The Feast of Purim (meaning "lot") is still celebrated by the Jewish nation in remembrance of this deliverance from death.

5. OUTSTANDING TEACHINGS:

The great truth of GOD's providence finds here an illustration from history. GOD maintains a secret control over the affairs of His people, His hidden hand shifts the scenes as necessary. The eye of faith sees the divine factor in all these happenings.

The battle between good and evil is pointed up, with swift judgment for the wicked and overwhelming vindication for the just in the end of the matter.

Grace is beautifully illustrated as Esther voluntarily endangers her life and position for her people.

Satan's smouldering hatred for GOD and His people finds expression in the conflict between Haman and Mordecai.

6. INTERESTING FEATURES:

The longest verse in the Bible is 8:9.

Persia seems to have had a well organized postal system (1:22).

Mordecai takes his place along with other talented Jews who were high in governmental position in a foreign land (Daniel and Joseph). Ahasuerus was known to have an army of over a million men.

7. KEY TO UNDERSTANDING:

You will grasp the message of Esther only as you consider the background. Read the last chapters of II Kings and II Chronicles, also books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Through it all remember the unseen hand of GOD as He directs kings and nations.

~ end of Esther ~

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