

Esther

God's Protection

The book of Esther vividly portrays God's power to work in _____ ways in spite of the _____ of the one through whom He is working.

The book of Esther is one of the most _____ books in Scripture. It reads like a dramatic novel, complete with power, sex, and violence. It is full of suspense and intrigue. The book's sudden twist of _____ at the end reads more like an Alfred Hitchcock novel than a Bible story.

Esther is one of only two books of the Bible where the name of _____ is not mentioned even one time! Neither is the _____, nor are any of the sacrifices or offerings referenced. But even though His people may have _____ Him, God did not ignore them! In their time of impending holocaust, God's _____ is clearly seen.

The events of Esther occur between the _____ return to Israel under Zerubbabel (Ezra 1–6) and the _____ return under Ezra (Ezra 7–10). Esther gives us a small glimpse of what was occurring in _____ to the Jews who had _____ the call to return to Israel after their seventy-year exile. The Jews in Persia were on the verge of being _____ when God powerfully intervened through a very hesitant and unlikely channel—a young, Jewish woman named Esther. Esther's cousin, Mordecai, summed up the situation quite well:

“For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (4:14)

The book of **Esther** can be outlined as follows:

<u>Chapters</u>	<u>Theme</u>
1–5	The Jews' _____ of Extinction
6–10	The Jews' _____ Through Esther

Some key events:

1. The king of _____, King Ahasuerus (Heb., but in Grk., Xerxes) throws a banquet for _____ days for the princes, nobles, and army officers of his realm. When that party ended, he threw a second party for seven days for _____ the people living in Susa, the capital of Persia. Toward the end of this second party, the king calls for his beautiful wife, Queen Vashti, to come in and display her beauty before all his drunken guests. She _____, perhaps due to some immodest and immoral implications related to the request. The king gets angry, and Queen Vashti is disgraced, _____, and divorced (Esth. 1:1-5,10-12,17-22).
2. When the king started _____ his queen, his attendants suggest they hold a beauty contest throughout his realm in order to find a new queen. Pleasing the king _____ was part of that contest (Esth. 2:1-4, 12-14)!
3. A young, Jewish woman named Esther is encouraged by her guardian/cousin, Mordecai, to _____ the contest, and lo and behold, she _____ (Esth. 2:17)!
4. Esther's cousin, Mordecai, overhears a plot to _____ the king and reports the plot to Esther. She quickly informs the king, giving _____ the credit (Esth. 2:21-23).
5. Haman, the king's highest ranking official, was angry that Mordecai, unlike everyone else, refused to _____ before him. So Haman devises a plan to _____, not just Mordecai, but all the Jews in Persia. The king wholeheartedly _____ to the plan (Esth. 3:1,2,5,6,13).
6. Mordecai informs Esther of Haman's plot to _____ the Jews, reminds her that she too is Jewish, and urges her to _____ for the Jews before the king (Esth. 4:13-17).
7. Esther plans a _____ for the king and for Haman, while Haman builds a 75-foot-high _____ on which to hang Mordecai (Esth. 5:1-6,12-14).
8. The king couldn't _____, so he starts reading the royal _____, discovers that Mordecai has saved his life, hears Haman in the other room, and asks him how to best _____ a man who deserves honoring. Haman, thinking that he is that man, makes his suggestions, only to find out it is Mordecai who is to be honored (Esth. 6:6-10)!

9. Esther holds her second banquet for Haman and the king. She reveals that she is a _____ and scheduled for _____. Haman _____ for his life, but ends up being _____ on the gallows meant for Mordecai (Esth. 7:3–10).
10. The king _____ Mordecai to Haman's position. And since the king's original edict couldn't be rescinded, the Jews are allowed to _____ themselves (Esth. 8:1,2,7–11,17).
11. The Jews' enemies are _____, and an annual _____, the Feast of Purim, is instituted to celebrate (Esth. 9:5,16,20–22).
12. Mordecai finds great favor with both the _____ and the _____ people (Esth. 10:3).

Excursus:

Some _____ accounts of Jewish persecution:

- 478 B.C. (Esth. 3:8–11)
- Still future (Ez. 38)

Some _____ accounts of Jewish persecution:

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| • 415 A.D. | • 1347 A.D. |
| • 418 A.D. | • 1492 A.D. |
| • 613 A.D. | • 1497 A.D. |
| • 855 A.D. | • 1543 A.D. |
| • 1099 A.D. | • 1925 A.D. |
| • 1121 A.D. | • 1942 A.D. |
| • 1180 A.D. | • 1948 A.D. |
| • 1189 A.D. | • 1967 A.D. |
| • 1227 A.D. | • 2023 A.D. |