



A BIBLE TIMES QUEEN

Esther 1–2

The Book of Esther is unique in Scripture as it is the only book in the canon that does not mention the name of God. Without mention of His name, the book absolutely reflects God's sovereignty and work through people and events in history. While anonymous, the author of Esther would have likely been a Jew living inside the palace, as details in the book suggest an intimate knowledge of Persian royal customs and the palace itself. This book reveals the story that leads to the celebration of the Jewish festival of Purim, and describes how God used Esther to rescue His people.

The events of this book occurred during the reign of Xerxes I, also called Ahasuerus. King Cyrus had already released the Jews to return to their homeland and rebuild. Many Jews, however, still lived in Babylon and prospered as God had spoken previously through the prophet Jeremiah. While Ahasuerus was a talented and brilliant politician, he lacked the morality of a few previous kings of Babylon, which is what led to the problem he faced.

Queen Vashti had been commanded to appear before a banquet, but she refused and was deposed. Later a search was ordered for a new queen to be found. Esther, or Hadassah, was one of the young women chosen to be presented to the king. Esther was a Jew, but, being warned by her cousin Mordecai, this fact was not revealed to the royal officials. For about a year, Esther was treated to daily beauty treatments until her time to appear before the king arrived. Esther was a beautiful woman and found favor with all of her attendants, as well as with King Ahasuerus, who immediately placed the crown upon her head.

Meanwhile, Mordecai had been sitting near the city gates when he overheard a conversation between two men. The men were plotting to assassinate the king. When Mordecai knew what was about to happen, he let Esther know so she could warn the king. Esther was able to inform the king of the plot and the men were hanged. Even though Esther did not know and understand God's plan, she was faithful to believe in God.