

# The Book of ESTHER

Esther happened chronologically during the Book of Ezra.  
Sometime between 486-465 BC Ezra 4:6

Originally Ezra and Nehemiah was one book in the Hebrew Bible.

- 722 BC Fall of Israel, the Northern Kingdom falls to Assyria
- 605 BC Assyria and Egypt fall to Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon
- 586 BC Temple destroyed and the Babylonian deportation and exile continues
- 539 BC Cyrus, King of Persia, defeats Babylon and allows exiles to return to Israel

## Post-Exilic Period

### 3 Groups of Exiles

- 538 BC Zerubbabel returns with Decree of Cyrus  
Exiles from Northern Kingdom (Israel) and Southern Kingdom (Judah) are allowed to return. They do not regain independence as a nation until AD 1948.  
**Esther, who doesn't return from exile, becomes Queen, and serves sometime during the 20 year reign of Xerxes (486-465 BC)** See Ezra 4:6 Xerxes is the Greek form of his Persian name Ahasuerus (Greek Septuagint translation)
- 458 BC 80 years after Zerubbabel, Ezra returns when Artaxerxes was king and finishes rebuilding the temple
- 445 BC 13 years later Nehemiah (Artaxerxes' cup bearer) returns and rebuilds the wall

## Kings of Persia

- 576-530 BC Cyrus the Great First return of exiles under Zerubbabel
- 520-486 BC Darius Restoration of the temple resumed
- 486-465 BC Ahasuerus also called Xerxes Esther was a Queen during this time
- 465-424 BC Artaxerxes Ezra 7:1 Ezra returns  
Nehemiah 2:1 20<sup>th</sup> year of King Artaxerxes Nehemiah returns to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem
- 331 BC Persia falls to the Greeks

# The Book of ESTHER

Her Persian name means “a star”

Hebrew name means Myrtle

The only book in the Bible that the name of God is not mentioned See Deut 31:17-18

Matthew Henry: “If the name of God is not here, His finger is.”

Canon Esther not settled until New Testament Period

Dead Sea Scrolls (1948) contains fragments of every OT book except Esther

## Ch 1 Queen Vasti Dethroned vs. 19

:11-12 The queen refused to be displayed before the king’s drunk guests wearing the royal crown.

:20 “all wives will honor their husbands, both great and small”

## Ch 2 Esther becomes Queen

:7 Esther was Mordecai’s first cousin whom he had raised

:10 Mordecai: “don’t reveal your heritage”

:19-23 Mordecai reports a plot against the king See 6:1-2

## Ch 3 Haman’s conspiracy against the Jews

:2 Mordecai refused to bow to Haman

:7 Haman cast lots “Pur” to set date to annihilate the Jews

:11 The king approves plan to annihilate the Jews

:13 The date is set See vs 7

## Ch 4 Esther Agrees to Help the Jews

4:14 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?”

4:16 “If I perish, I perish”

## Ch 5 Esther’s Banquet

:9 Mordecai again did not bow to Haman

:11-13 Nothing he had compensated for Mordecai’s rejection

:14 Haman had a gallows built for Mordecai

## Ch 6 The King Honors Mordecai

:2 A sleepless night of reading reminds the king about Mordecai’s warning

## Ch 7 Haman Exposed and Hanged

:1-6 Esther reports Haman’s plan

:10 Haman hanged on the gallows he had built for Mordecai

## Ch 8 Esther Saves the Jews

:7&8 Esther and Mordecai told to write the king’s decree “as they please”

:17 Many people became Jews as a result of the deliverance

## Ch 9 The Feast of Purim Instituted “Lots”

:14 Haman’s 10 sons hanged See 1 Kings 14:10 Jeroboam’s lineage cut off

:21 The annual date set From 3:6-11 The date set for annihilation of the Jews

: 24-26 The Feast of Purim

## Ch 10 Mordecai Becomes 2<sup>nd</sup> to the king Vs 3