ESTHER
EXPLAINED: Episode Summary

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1. ESSENTIALS

What Do You Need to Know First to Study Esther Well?

DATE: ***483-473 BC:*** Second Temple Period
GENRE: ***Narrative:*** Protection Within Persecution
AUTHOR: ***Unknown:*** Chroniclers of Israel's history
SETTING: ***Persia:*** Jews Dwelling Among Gentiles
PURPOSE: ***Providence:*** God's Hidden Hand
AUDIENCE: ***Persian World:*** All Peoples of Faith

2. STORYLINE

What Do You Need to Know First to Study Esther Well?

After 2nd Temple...Before Ezra

- Persian empire ruling over the Jews
- Jewish remnant in a restored Judah
- Anti-Semitic spirit alive within Persia
- Esther, Mordecai, Haman and Ahasuerus
- Crucial moment for the Jews' survival

KEY VERSES

For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

- Esther 4:14

3. THEMES & IDEAS

What Major Biblical Concepts Do We Find in Esther?

- The Hidden Providence of God
- Clash Between Pride and Humility
- Divine Placement of God's Servants
- Courageous Faith Overcoming Fear
- Poetic Justice for Evil Conspirators
- Circumstances Expose God's Plan
- Promoting Self vs Preserving Others
- Deliverance of God's Chosen People

4. STRUCTURE

What are the major sections of Esther?

CH 1-2: 1. Positioning: Esther Becomes Queen
Vashti is removed, Esther becomes Queen, and Mordecai uncovers a plot against the king

CH 3-5: 2. Persecution: Jewish People Oppressed
Mordecai refuses to bow, Haman plots to destroy the Jews, Esther appeals for her people

CH 6-7: 3. Promotion: Mordecai Honored Over Haman
Ahasuerus honors Mordecai, Haman's plot is exposed, and he is executed by his own devices

CH 8-10: 4. Preservation: God's People Protected
Haman's plot is abolished, the Jews prosper over their enemies, Purim established, Mordecai esteemed



4. STRUCTURE - EXPANDED

4. What are the major sections of Esther?

5. What do we learn about God from each of these sections?

6. What do these sections offer our Christian life?

CH 1-2: 1. POSITIONING: ESTHER BECOMES QUEEN

King Ahasuerus deposes Vashti, Esther the Jew is chosen queen, and Mordecai exposes a conspiracy against the king

CH 1: Vashti Removed as Queen
A drunken Ahasuerus summons Vashti to show her beauty; her refusal sets the book's events in motion

CH 2: Esther's Rise & Mordecai's Discovery
Esther, a Jew, replaces Vashti, chosen for her beauty; Mordecai, her cousin, discovers a conspiracy against the king

CH 3-5: 2. PERSECUTION: JEWISH PEOPLE OPPRESSED

When Mordecai won't bow, Haman plots to destroy him and his people; Esther appeals on their behalf

CH 3:1-6: Mordecai's Refusal
Mordecai refuses to bow before Haman at his promotion ceremony

CH 3:7-15: Haman's Plot
Haman instigates Jewish persecution saying they "don't keep the king's laws"

CH 4: Mordecai's Appeal
Mordecai appeals to Esther to represent her people before the king

CH 5: Esther's Appeal & Haman's Plan
Esther bravely invites the king and Haman to feast; Haman plans to hang Mordecai the next day

CH 6-7: 3. PROMOTION: MORDECAI HONORED OVER HAMAN

Ahasuerus honors Mordecai for his courage, Haman's plot is exposed and he is executed with his own devices

CH 6: Mordecai Honored
The sleepless king learns Mordecai saved his life and makes Haman honor the man he planned to kill

CH 7: Haman Exposed & Executed
Esther exposes Haman's plot at the feast; he is ironically hanged on the gallows he prepared for Mordecai

CH 8-10: 4. PRESERVATION: GOD'S PEOPLE PROTECTED

Plot against the Jews is abolished, victorious in battle over their enemies, Purim established, Mordecai memorialized

CH 8: The King's Edict Issued
Esther pleads with the king, who issues an edict allowing the Jews to defend themselves

CH 9-10: Victory, Purim & Mordecai's Legacy
The Jews defeat their enemies, Purim celebrates their deliverance, and Mordecai is highly esteemed

5. HOW ESTHER POINTS TO CHRIST

- God's providence in protecting His chosen people and preserving the Messianic Seed
- Mordecai looks out for Esther, prays for her, and helps her see God's purpose
- Esther appointed at the perfect time to willingly lay down her life for her people
- How God sovereignly leads and preserves His people in it all

