

# Esther

## Breakdown

- The book of Esther is named for the person who is the main focus of the book and is traditionally thought to have been written by Mordecai, Esther's cousin.
- The events in the book of Esther cover approximately 10 years from 483 B.C. to 473 B.C.
- Although the book of Esther appears after Nehemiah in our Bible, these events occurred in the time period between chapters 6 and 7 of the book of Ezra between the time when the first group of Israelites led by Zerubbabel returned to their land and the second group returned under the leadership of Ezra.

## Main Points

- A lot had happened to the Jews up to this point. The nation had been divided, and both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms had been taken into captivity. Even though they were no longer held in captivity, they were still under Persian rule. If all that wasn't bad enough, now a decree had been issued by the Persian king for all Jews to be annihilated.
- For the Jews, it appeared that God's covenant promises to Abraham and David had no hope of coming to pass. The Messiah would never be able to come if the entire Jewish nation were wiped out. The good news is that nothing takes God by surprise. He is always working things out for us, even though we may not be able to see it. There isn't anything that could throw God's plan of redemption off course.

## Did you know?

- At the end of a banquet, King Xerxes asked for the queen to be brought so his guests could see how beautiful she was, but Queen Vashti refused. What happened to her?
- The king chose Esther to be the new queen. What was the selection process and how long did the process take?
- Two of the palace guards were plotting to assassinate the king, but Mordecai overheard their plans. What did he do, and what happened to the guards?
- Haman was promoted to the most powerful position in the empire under the king, but he was filled with rage against Mordecai. Why was Haman so angry, and how did he retaliate against Mordecai?
- Mordecai convinced Esther to appeal to the king on behalf of the Jews, so she came up with a plan to persuade the king to change his decree, and her plan was successful. What did she do?
- Haman planned a violent death for his arch-enemy Mordecai. How did his plan backfire?

## Further Thought

- Esther asked Mordecai to gather all the Jews together to fast and pray before she approached the king. Do those things apply to us, today? How?
- Esther went forward with her plan in a strength that did not come from herself. Where did her strength come from, and what can we learn from her example?
- Esther and Mordecai were two individuals who made an impact that lasted for generations. Can we make a similar impact? How?