



STOP 17: Esther

PURPOSE: To demonstrate God's sovereignty and his loving care for his people

AUTHOR: Unknown. Possibly Mordecai (9:29). Some have suggested Ezra or Nehemiah because of the similarity of the writing style.

ORIGINAL AUDIENCE: The people of Israel

SETTING: Although Esther follows Nehemiah in the Bible, its events are about 30 years prior to those recorded in Nehemiah. The story is set in the Persian Empire, and most of the action takes place in the king's palace in Susa, the Persian capital.

DATE WRITTEN: Approximately 470 B.C. (Esther became queen in 479.)

KEY VERSE:

Esther 4:14 “For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, *then* shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this?”

KEY PEOPLE: Esther, Mordecai, King Xerxes I, Haman

KEY PLACE: The king's palace in Susa, Persia

UNIQUE CHARACTERISTIC: The word “God” is not mentioned at all in this entire book of the Bible.



Esther Swooning Before The King

OUTLINE:

1. Esther _____ (1:1—2:23)
2. The Jews are _____ (3:1—4:17)
3. Esther _____ for the Jews (5:1—8:17)
4. The Jews are delivered (9:1—10:3)

“Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which *is* not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.”

(Esther 4:16)

CHRIST IN NEHEMIAH:

Esther, willing to sacrifice herself for her people as a type of Christ.

MEGATHEMES

THEME	EXPLANATION	IMPORTANCE
God's Sovereignty	The book of Esther tells of the circumstances that were essential to the survival of God's people in Persia. These "circumstances" were not the result of chance but of God's grand design. God is sovereign over every area of life.	With God in charge, we can take courage. He can guide us through the circumstances we face in our lives. We should expect God to display his power in carrying out his will. As we unite our life's purposes to God's purpose, we benefit from his sovereign care.
Racial Hatred	The Jews in Persia had been a minority since their deportation from Judah 100 years earlier. Haman was a descendant of King Agag, an enemy of the Jews. Lust for power and pride drove Haman to hate Mordecai, Esther's cousin. Haman convinced the king to kill all the Jews.	Racial hatred is always sinful. We must never condone it in any form. Every person on earth has intrinsic worth because God created people in his own image. Therefore, God's people must stand against racism whenever and wherever it occurs.
Deliverance	In February or March, the Jews celebrate the Festival of Purim, which symbolizes God's deliverance. <i>Purim</i> means "lots," such as those used by Haman to set the date for the extermination of all Jews from Persia. But God overruled, using Queen Esther to intercede on behalf of the Jews.	Because God is in control of history, he is never frustrated by any turn of events or human action. He is able to save us from the evil of this world and deliver us from sin and death. Because we trust God, we are not to fear what people may do to us; instead, we are to be confident in God's control.
Action	Faced with death, Esther and Mordecai set aside their own fear and took action. Esther risked her life by asking King Xerxes to save the Jews.	When outnumbered and powerless, it is natural for us to feel helpless. Esther and Mordecai resisted this temptation and acted with courage. It is not enough to know that God is in control; we must act with self-sacrifice and courage to follow God's guidance.
Wisdom	The Jews were a minority in a world hostile to them. It took great wisdom for Mordecai to survive. Serving as a faithful official of the king, Mordecai took steps to understand and work within the Persian law. Yet he did not compromise his integrity.	It takes great wisdom to survive in a non-believing world. In a setting which is for the most part hostile to Christianity, we can demonstrate wisdom by giving respect to what is true and good and by humbly standing against what is wrong.

HAMAN

- I. **Hated Mordecai**
- II. **Hated Mordecai's people**
- III. **Had an exalted opinion of himself**
- IV. **Clever and conniving**
- V. **Hung on his own gallows**