

**BIBLE SYNTHESIS II**  
(Bible Survey)

**Introduction to Esther**

For the Time Line of major events during this post-exilic period, see Introduction to Nehemiah.

**1. Author:**

Unknown.

Josephus thought Mordecai wrote the book, although Esther 10:2-3 may exclude this possibility.

**2. Addressees:**

Post-exilic Israelites

**3. Date:**

(1) Of coverage:

In the third to twelfth years of Xerxes (483-471 B.C.). This is the time of the events recorded in the book of Esther. It would fit between the 6th and 7th chapters of Ezra.

(2) Of writing:

Undoubtedly written after the reign of Xerxes (486-465 B.C.), for his reign is spoken of in the past tense (10:2). Although it probably was not written too long after that time, for the writer shows an intimate knowledge of the events of Xerxes' reign and of the palace in Shushan. This was destroyed by fire in 435 B.C. Purely Persian words and names appear in the book, and its Hebrew style closely resembles that of Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Chronicles, further evidence that it was written at that time.

**4. Circumstances:**

(1) To record the establishment of the Feast of Purim among the Jews (Esther 9:26), observed about the first of March.

(2) To show how Divine Providence overrules all things. Even in a distant country, God's people are still in His hands. Since they are in this distant country and not in the land of Promise, the Name of God does not appear in the book. Prayer, worship, the Temple, all these are all omitted. There is no reference at all made to these.

(3) To give its readers an idea of life as it was inside Persia during this period.

## 5. Relationship to Other Books:

Its relationship to Esther and Nehemiah: It took place and was written during this same period in the history of the Persian Empire.

## 6. Theme:

The principal lesson of the book is seen in the life of Esther:

- (1) Submission: Esther's obedience and submission to do that which was right, regardless of the consequences (Esther 4:16).
- (2) Action: Even though in luxurious circumstances, Esther had to act *boldly* and *immediately* in order to save her people, and herself.

## 7. Key Passage:

Esther 4:16

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## THE BOOK OF ESTHER A BOOK OF FEASTS

### There are 7 feasts in the book of Esther:

1. The 180-day feast of Ahasuerus (Xerxes) with the princes and servants of his provinces —1:1–4
2. The 7-day feast of Ahasuerus for those of the palace —1:5–22
3. The feast held by Vashti for the women —1:9
4. The feast held for Esther when she was chosen to be queen —2:18
5. Esther's first feast for the king and Haman —5:4–6
6. Esther's second feast for the king and Haman —5:8; 7:1–10
7. The Feast of Purim — a feast of the Jews —9:20–32

## Contrasting the Opening and the Closing Feasts of the Book of Esther

<b>Feast of Ahasuerus — Esther 1</b>	<b>Feast of Purim — Esther 9</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A people of worldly importance: A world ruler —1:1</li> <li>2. Much pomp —1:2</li> <li>3. Power — 1:3</li> <li>4. Pride — 1:4</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Was this celebrated by "important" people? No, it was a dispersed people. — 2:8</li> <li>2. Was there pomp? No.</li> <li>3. Where was the power of the Jews? They were weak and vulnerable. But God! — 8:17; 9:2-4</li> <li>4. There was no pride either. —9:19, 22</li> </ol>
<p style="text-align: center;">This was a time for the Persians to plan their campaign against Greece. An idolatrous nation, they planned without God.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">This feast preceded a great defeat.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">This was the beginning of the end for the Persian Empire. It was a turning point in the history of the world.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The great Persian nation is now extinct, though Iran is considered by many of our day to be Persia. So are the Greek Empire and the powerful Roman Empire no longer in existence.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">We see here: Self-indulgence (wine, drunkenness).</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">This was a memorial festival in celebration of a great victory. It was a victory over those who would have destroyed them. This was the <i>real</i> battle, not the battle of the Persians and Greeks.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">This feast followed a great victory.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">This was a turning point in the history of the Jews. It meant new life for them. Mordecai, a Jew, was in charge instead of the wicked Haman.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Though they are a people who are few in number, the Jews are still very evidently in existence today.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">We see selflessness here — 9:19, 22.</p>

**Bible Synthesis II**  
**OUTLINE OF ESTHER**

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|---|-----------------------|
| <b>1. Esther Becomes Queen</b>                    | <b>—Esther 1 — 2</b>  |
| <b>2. Esther Saves Her People</b>                 | <b>—Esther 3 — 7</b>  |
| <b>3. Esther Puts Mordecai Over Haman’s House</b> | <b>—Esther 8 — 10</b> |
| (1) Promotion of Mordecai                         | —8:1–17               |
| (2) Revenge of the Jews                           | —9:1–19               |
| (3) Institution of Purim                          | —9:20–32              |
| (4) Authority of Mordecai                         | —10:1–3               |