

A SURVEY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT:

Esther

“A Divine Chess Game”

Title: _____

- Unlike many of the other books in the Old Testament, this book has only been known as Esther.
- Esther and Ruth are the only two books of the Bible named after women.
- Important fact:
 - This is the only book of the Bible in which _____ name is not mentioned.

Summary: The unseen but obvious hand of God foresees and forestalls Satan’s antagonizing of His people.

Author: _____

- Other men have been proposed as possible authors, including Nehemiah and Ezra, due to the authorship of their own books.
- I believe Mordecai is a better and more logical choice for two reasons.
 - He was clearly an eyewitness of these events.
 - He was capable of creating a written record of the events (9:20-23; 29-32).
- The book was probably written by Mordecai and _____ to commemorate the first observance of the Feast of Purim (lots).

Key People:

- Mordecai
- Esther
- King _____
- Haman

Background and Setting:

- King Ahasuerus (commonly believed to be the same as Xerxes.)
 - Began ruling around 486 BC.
 - Planned and executed an invasion of _____ three years later in 483 BC. The events of Esther 1 must have taken place during this time.
 - After being defeated, he returned home four years later around 479 BC, allowing the rest of the story to unfold.

Date: _____

- Following the traditional dates that associate Ahasuerus with Xerxes 1, we can assign a date for the events in Esther as being roughly from 486-470 BC.
- The actual writing would have taken place at the same time.

Key Word:

- _____
 - Although there is no mention of God in the book of Esther, His chosen people form the center of the plot.
 - To be a Jew was dangerous at a time when political opinion could be easily swayed against you.
 - From the events in Esther, we discover that the Jews obviously maintained a unique lifestyle even though they were in the captivity.
- _____
 - Haman, as is typical of truly superstitious people, did not lay his plans against Mordecai without determining a _____ day by casting lots.
 - At the end of the story, Mordecai and Esther proclaimed that the Jews should remember that day with a feast.
 - The Feast of Purim is still celebrated today.

Key Doctrines: _____

- Genesis 12:3, “And I will bless them that bless thee and curse them that curse thee.”
- Haman was clearly Satan’s tool for attempting to destroy Israel.
- God clearly fulfilled His promise to curse those that cursed Israel when He destroyed not just Haman but also his family.
- The Abrahamic Covenant still applies.

Overview:

- Introduction (1:1-22)
 - Ahasuerus’ celebrations
 - Vashti’s rejection as queen
- Selection of a new Queen (2:1-20)
 - Introduction of Esther and Mordecai
 - Esther earns the king’s favor
- Mordecai reveals a plot against the king (2:21-23).
- Haman’s Plot (3:1-15)
 - Introduction of Haman
 - Haman becomes bitter against Mordecai
 - Haman develops a plan to kill all Jews
- Mordecai and Esther’s plan (4:1-5:14)
 - Fasting in Shushan
 - Esther invites Haman and the king to a banquet.
 - Haman plots Mordecai’s immediate death.
- The king honors Mordecai (6:1-14)
- Esther’s petition motivates the king to help the Jews (7:1-9:16).
 - Haman’s plot is revealed.
 - Haman is executed on the gallows he designed for Mordecai.
 - The king promotes Mordecai.

- The king enables Mordecai and Esther to counteract Haman's intentions.
 - The Jews defend themselves.
- The Feast of Purim (9:17-32)
 - The fourteenth day of the twelfth month is made a day of rest and celebration to commemorate God's deliverance.
 - Esther's command is written in a book.
- The greatness of Mordecai (10:1-3)

Challenges to Esther:

- Why is God not mentioned anywhere in the book?
- Does this apparent absence threaten the truth of the book?
- The simple answer is no. Why not?
 - The events of Esther are clearly orchestrated by the Divine hand even though His name is never mentioned.
 - The book contrasts two types of God's people.
 - Esther – who was oblivious to God's hand and had to be directed into the path of His will.
 - Mordecai – who quickly realized that God had provided a possible solution before the problem had materialized.

Application: Remember that God works all things for *good* to those who love Him!