

THE BOOK OF ESTHER: GOD'S WATCH-CARE OVER THE EXILES

The events recorded in the book of Esther took place in the land of the Jews' captivity, but actually some time after their enforced bondage in that land had ended. Nearly fifty thousand of them had already returned to their land under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Jeshua (Ezra 2). However, many of the Jews remained still in the land of their captivity, not a few of them having risen to high positions there. It is about this latter group that the story of Esther tells us:

THE PLOT AGAINST GOD'S PEOPLE

Esther 1 - 3

A. The King's Problem: Read Esther 1:1-18

1. What had happened to the kingdom of Babylon about 70 years after it had conquered Jerusalem? Daniel 5:28

2. Who was now king over this area? Esther 1:1-2

3. What did his queen do when he commanded her to appear at his feast? Esther 1:10-12

4. What were the princes afraid would happen because of this? Esther 1:16-18

B. The King's Solution: Read Esther 1:19 - 2:20

1. What was to be the queen's punishment for this deed? Esther 1:19

2. What qualifications must one have to compete for the honor of becoming the new queen? Esther 2:2

1. How many were competing for this honor? Esther 2:8a

4. Who was among them? Esther 2:5-8

5. What was her attitude all during the contest? Esther 2:9, 13, 15

6. What was the outcome of the contest? Esther 2:17

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C. The Plot Against the King: Read Esther 2:21-22

1. Who made a plot against the king? Esther 2:21

2. Who discovered this plot? Esther 2:22a

3. How did the king learn of the plot? Esther 2:22b

4. What was done with the men who had made the plot? Esther 2:23a

5. Where was this incident recorded? Esther 2:23b

D. The Plot Against the Jews: Read Esther 3

1. After this, who was promoted above all the princes of the kingdom? Esther 3:1

2. How did most of the king's servants treat this man? Esther 3:2

3. Why do you suppose Mordecai refused to do this? See Exodus 20:1, 5

4. What did Haman seek to do because of Mordecai's actions? Esther 3:5-6

5. What did Haman tell the king about the Jews in order to accomplish his purpose? Esther 3:8

6. What did he offer to give the king in return for granting his request? Esther 3:9

7. What was the reaction in the city of Shushun when this request was granted? Esther 3:25b

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. What was the secret of Esther's sweet unselfishness, and of Mordecai's rock-like stand for what he thought was right? See Genesis 39:23b.

2. Could I act as commendably as they did under similar circumstances?

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