

## ESTHER

### (Book of Esther)

The book of Esther is one of two books which tell of life in Babylonian captivity. It is a very interesting book, full of exciting drama. Although the book never mentions God, it is apparent throughout the book that God was working in a mighty way.

Esther (also known as Hadassah---surely her Jewish name) was an orphaned girl who was raised by her cousin, Mordecai. Mordecai had come to Babylon as an exile.

Xerxes, the Babylonian king, had become angry with his wife, Vashti, because she would not come and show off her beauty to a crowd of drinking officials whom he had gathered to show off his own power and splendor. Vashti was banished and a search was to be made for a new queen in what was basically a nation-wide beauty contest.

As Esther was very beautiful, Mordecai had her entered in the contest. She received the best of treatment. The king chose her to be the new queen. But she did not let it be known that she was a Jew.

In the familiar story Mordecai incurred the wrath of a wicked and vain man named Haman, refusing to bow down and honor him. Haman plotted to kill not only Mordecai, but indeed all the Jews in the land. Desperate, Mordecai urged Esther to help by appealing to the king.

Risking her own death, Esther arranged to make her appeal to the king through a series of banquets. At the last banquet, she appealed for her life and those of her people, accusing the wicked Haman---who was present at the banquet---of trying to kill her and her people.

The ending is well known. Haman was seized and hanged on the gallows he had built for hanging Mordecai. Mordecai was elevated to a very important position in the government and the Jews were saved.