

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ESTHER

* If as Christians we are now under grace, why should we continue to study the Old Testament?

* Is it true that without the Old Testament, the New Testament does not make much sense?

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The BACKGROUND and CONTEXT for the book of Esther

1. The book of Esther is one of two books in the Bible named after women. Ruth was a Gentile woman who married a _____; Esther was a Jewish woman who married a _____.
2. God had warned His people that if they _____ Him, He would _____ His face from them (Deut. 31:16–18); this warning eventually became a reality in the dispersion.
3. Even though God's _____ is hidden in this book, He was certainly _____ behind the scenes to providentially preserve His chosen people.

B. WORLD EVENTS during the time of Queen Esther

1. The _____ Empire was the _____ power at the time of this writing, and the city of Susa was one of several capitals but typically the most favored, and the location of these events.
2. Half a century earlier, the Persian king Cyrus had issued a proclamation permitting the Jews to _____ to Palestine, but this was largely _____ and most of the Jews who had been born in Babylon remained.

C. The AUTHORSHIP and the DATE of Esther

1. The writer did not identify himself in the text, but he wrote as though he was an _____ of the events and very pro-_____.
2. Biblically the events recorded in the book of Esther took place between the books of _____ and _____.
3. The writer could have composed this any time after _____, the year the Jews _____ themselves and instituted the Feast of Purim (9:27-28).

D. Answering the Critics of this Canonical book

1. The problem with the book of Esther is that _____ of the titles for _____ used by the Jews are to be found, neither Elohim, Jehovah, Shaddai nor Adonai.
2. Early _____ scholars questioned its authenticity, in addition the book was also _____ found among the Dead Sea Scrolls.
3. The book of Esther has been questioned among _____ scholars because it is _____ quoted in the New Testament.

E. The SIGNIFICANCE of this Old Testament book to the Jewish people and to Christians

1. The book of Esther describes a _____ that arose in human history in the days of King Xerxes that describes the possible extermination of the _____ people throughout the land.
2. Like the book of Daniel, Esther shines forth the _____ of God, demonstrating that He is _____ in the affairs of Gentile world powers.

* What can you learn from this introduction?