

Esther

Purpose: God providentially works in the lives of individuals to preserve his people and uphold his plan.

- “Though the name of God be not in this book, the finger of God is shown by minute events for the bringing about his people’s deliverance”¹

I. Act I: The Setting (1-2)

- a. Queen Vashti Removed (1)
- b. Queen Esther Chosen (2)
- c. King Ahasuerus Preserved (3)

II. Act II: The Scheme (3-7)

- a. Haman’s Plot Devised (3-4)
- b. Haman’s Plot Implodes (5-7)

III. Act III: The Solution (8-10)

- a. The Sanctioned Defense of the Jewish People (8)
- b. The Successful Victory of the Jewish People (9:1-19)
- c. The Observed Festival of the Jewish People (9:20-32)

¹ Henry, Matthew, and Thomas Scott. 1997. [Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary](#). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems.

Mark Dever wrote a list of some of the “coincidental” or “chance” happenings in the book of Esther:²

- Esther just happens to be Jewish, and she just happens to be beautiful.
- Esther just happens to be favored by the king.
- Mordecai just happens to overhear the plot against the king's life.
- A report of this just happens to be written in the king's chronicles.
- Haman just happens to notice that Mordecai does not kneel down before him and he just happens to find out that Mordecai is a Jew.
- When Haman plots his revenge, the dice just happen to indicate that the date for exacting revenge is put off for almost a year!
- Esther happens to get the king's approval to speak, but then she happens to put off her request for another day.
- Her deferral just happens to send Haman out by Mordecai one more time, which just happens to cause him to recount it to his friends.
- They, in turn, just happen to encourage him to build a scaffold immediately!
- So Haman just happens to be excited to approach the king early the next morning.
- It just so happens that the previous night, the mighty king could not command a moment's sleep, and he just happened to have had a book brought to him that recounted Mordecai's deed.
- He then happened to ask whether Mordecai had been rewarded, to which his attendants happened to know the answer. Simply consider for a moment the fact that Mordecai happened not to have been rewarded for having saved the king's life. How unusual this must have been! Someone who saved the king's life never rewarded? I wonder if Mordecai ever chafed under that:
- "Doesn't he realize what I did for him?" Well, it all just happened.
- Anyhow, Haman happens to approach the king just when the king is wondering how Mordecai should be honored.
- Later on, the king happens to return to the queen just when Haman happens to be pleading with Esther in a way that can be misconstrued.
- The gallows Haman built for Mordecai just happens to be ready when King Xerxes wants to hang Haman.

“The narrative of Esther is striking both in its lack of any explicit reference to God (the only such book in the Bible) and in its clear witness to the work of God in the details of life. No one can question that some unusual things happened in the lives of Mordecai and Esther, and some readers may consider their ability to avoid death as good luck or chance. However, the book's placement within the biblical context of kingdom hope makes absolutely clear that behind the scenes God was providentially orchestrating events to bring about his will in the lives of his people.”³

² Dever, *The Message of the Old Testament*, pp. 455-456.

³ Smith, Gary V, in *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About - A Survey of Jesus' Bible.*, ed. DeRouchie, Jason S., p. 422.