

Read Esther 9:20-10:3

The remainder of the book of Esther describes how these two celebrations were adopted as an annual custom of the Jews and are still celebrated to this day. The Festival of Purim commemorates a time when the Jews gained relief from their enemies, when their sorrow was turned into gladness and their mourning into joy.

These days would be remembered and kept from generation to generation and celebrated by every family throughout the provinces and cities of the empire. The Festival of Purim would never cease to be celebrated among the Jews, nor would the memory of what happened ever die out among their descendants.

Mordecai the Jew became the prime minister, with authority only next to that of King Xerxes himself. He was very great among the Jews, who held him in high esteem, because he continued to work for the good of his people and to speak up for the welfare of all their descendants.

Esther is memorialized because she was sovereignly placed in a unique position involving great risk which called for heroic courage on her part to stand up and be willing to die for the sake of her people, the Jews.

As the original Jewish readers read this book, they would have been struck by the way God was sovereignly protecting them, often when they did not even know it. Many things in the Book of Esther happened that were beyond anyone's control except that of God, who oversees history. And the Book of Esther is filled with irony, with ways in which events turned out unexpectedly and in favor of God's people. Queen Vashti, a Persian, was deposed so that Esther, a Jew, could become queen and save her people. Haman, once exalted, was brought low, and Mordecai and the Jews, once hated, were exalted and honored. A decree/law that would have wiped out the Jews was overruled by another law which led to the destruction of nearly 76,000 enemies of the Jews. No wonder Purim was celebrated yearly with such rejoicing: to help the Jews remember that God is in control and that people should faithfully worship and serve their great God.

Although God's name is not mentioned in this book, His presence and power are clearly seen throughout as He provides deliverance for His people through a series of designed "coincidences." They were His people, and He would protect them from the hatred of the people (inspired by the devil) which sought to exterminate them. God is the Author of all history, even if He does not sign His name at the bottom of every page.