

The Book of Esther does not directly reveal the name of its author, unlike some other biblical books that clearly identify their writers. Because of this lack of explicit attribution, both Jewish and Christian traditions have offered various theories regarding the authorship of the book.

Some believe that Mordecai, a central figure in the narrative, may have authored it. Others suggest Ezra, Nehemiah, or an anonymous Jewish historian who had intimate knowledge of the Persian empire during the reign of King Ahasuerus (Xerxes I).

However, the majority view especially among Jewish scholars leans towards Mordecai as the most likely author. This is due to several factors:

1. Mordecai's Prominent Role in the Narrative

Mordecai is not only a key character in the Book of Esther, but the text also records his direct actions and communications, suggesting possible authorship. For instance, Esther 9:20-21 says:

“Mordecai recorded these things and sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far, obliging them to keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar and also the fifteenth day of the same, year by year,”
Esther 9:20-21, ESV

This passage suggests that Mordecai not only documented the events but also instituted the commemoration of the festival of Purim.

2. Access to Royal Affairs

The detailed insider knowledge regarding palace events, royal decrees, and even the internal dynamics of royal banquets and judgments, indicate that the author had access to the Persian royal court. For example, Mordecai, as one who “sat at the king’s gate” (Esther 2:19, 21), would have been well positioned to gather such information:

“Now when the virgins were gathered together the second time, Mordecai was sitting at the king’s gate... In those days,

as Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate..."

Esther 2:19, 21, ESV

This role likely placed him among the royal officials or advisors, giving him privileged insight into the empire's inner workings.

3. Preservation of the Feast of Purim

Another indicator that Mordecai may have authored the book is his instrumental role in establishing and preserving the Feast of Purim, as seen in:

"Then Queen Esther, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew gave full written authority, confirming this second letter about Purim.

Letters were sent to all the Jews, to the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, in words of peace and truth, that these days of Purim should be observed at their appointed seasons, as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther obligated them..."

Esther 9:29-31, ESV

This suggests that he not only initiated the practice but also intended for it to be recorded and remembered by future generations perhaps by authoring the very book that tells the story.

Why Is the Book of Esther Important?

Regardless of who the human author was whether Mordecai or another Jewish writer the ultimate significance of the Book of Esther lies in God's providential care for His people.

Interestingly, the book never explicitly mentions the name of God (Yahweh). However, His divine hand is evident throughout the story:

- The positioning of Esther as queen was no coincidence (Esther 2:17).
- The uncovering of the assassination plot (Esther 2:21-23).
- The king's sleepless night that led to Mordecai's promotion (Esther 6:1-11).
- The reversal of Haman's evil plan, which showcases divine justice and protection.

As Romans 8:28 later affirms:

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”

Romans 8:28, ESV

Introduction to Chapter Studies: Esther Chapters 1 & 2

- Who were the “noble women” or “royal ladies” mentioned in Esther 1:18? These were the wives and concubines of the Persian nobles, who were expected to follow Queen Vashti’s example. Her disobedience, therefore, was seen as a potential threat to household order and male authority across the empire.
- What is the “Feast of Dedication” (Purim)? The Feast of Purim is not the same as the *Feast of Dedication* (Hanukkah). Purim specifically celebrates the deliverance of the Jews from Haman’s genocidal plot, as recorded in the Book of Esther (Esther 9). It is a joyful time of reading the Megillah (the scroll of Esther), giving gifts, charity to the poor, and feasting.

Whether Mordecai or another individual wrote the Book of Esther, the most important point is the message it carries: God preserves His people, even in exile, and uses ordinary people in extraordinary ways to fulfill His purposes.

Just as Queen Esther was called to her position “for such a time as this” (Esther 4:14), so too are believers called to act with courage and faith in times of challenge.

May the Lord bless you as you study His Word.

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