



The Greek Additions to Esther

The book of Esther exists in its original form only in Hebrew but there are additions to the book that exist only in Greek. They represent the Jewish love of embellishing and explaining parts of the story that are only touched on in the original. The additions are dotted around different parts of the book of Esther so many modern translations of the book incorporate them into the original story to help them make sense.

As these additions simply add to the whole story of Esther for more information see the original guide to Esther.



How long will it take?

Reading time: About 1 hour for the whole book with the additions.

Short of time? Just read 1.1-16; 3.1-11; 6.21-7.7; 9.1-18



About the times

The most likely dates for the translation into Greek and additions are either 114-113 BC or 78-77 BC.

What were people feeling?

It is thought that Esther became important again in the minds of the people when they were ruled by a different oppressive regime, in this instance the Greek empire.



About the Author

Although very little is known about the author of Hebrew Esther, a little more is known about its Greek translator. Greek Esther 11.1 cites Lysimachus, son of Ptolemy, a resident of Jerusalem. Since Ptolemy is an Egyptian name it is likely that Lysimachus was a Greek-speaking Egyptian who wanted to make Esther available in his own tongue. The differences between the texts suggest that Lysimachus 'corrected' the text as he went, supplying more details where he felt it to be necessary.

What do we know about him?

The key question is which 'Ptolemy' was Lysimachus' father. Egypt was ruled by someone called Ptolemy from 367 BC onwards, since every descendant of Ptolemy I also took the name Ptolemy.



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