

Digging into God's Word

Esther

written by: Shelli Locke

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Digging Into the Word

I am so glad you are taking time to dig into the Word of God. What an amazing opportunity we have to grow in our understanding of God Himself and learn about the life and sacrifice of Christ. I hope you enjoy taking time to go verse by verse and chapter by chapter. I pray that you will grow in your faith and experience the love of the Savior whose biggest desire is to have a relationship with you.

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank Bradie Peeples for designing the cover of this study. Her gifts and talents are greatly appreciated!

Sources

For all 'Bible Notes', I used my study Bible which is the ***Holman Christian Standard Bible***. All websites used are noted within the text for additional study resources.

God Bless!

Book of Esther

Esther was likely written between 465-331 B.C. by a Persian Jew well acquainted with court life as well as with the history and culture of the period. It is written to the Jewish community living during the Diaspora since the events recorded center around the lives of Jews dwelling in exile in Persia. However, God uses experiences of a few to speak to all future generations who face similar dangers and difficulties. The events recorded in Esther likely occurred during the reign of the Persian king Bhasuerus, the son of Darius I, who ruled from 486-465/64 B.C., a time within the Achaemenid period of the biblical history (559-330 B.C.)- Bible Notes

[Who was Esther in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Chapters 1-2: The Setting for God's Deliverance-The Transition from Vashti to Esther

Chapter 1: The Feast of Ahasuerus

Vs. 1- Who is king and what regions did he rule?

(Bible Notes- Ahasuerus (Hb of Persian *Khshayarsha*, identified more commonly by the Greek name Xerxes I), reigned as king over Persia 486-465 B.C. (cp. Ezra 4:6).

Vs. 2- Where was his royal home?

Vs. 3- What was the purpose of the royal feast he had during his third year?

Vs. 4- Now that is a party! How long did it last and what was his intention?

Vs. 5- The king also held another banquet. How long did it last and who could attend?

Vs. 6- What details are given about the luxury of this event?

Vs. 7-8- What details are given about this banquet?

Vs. 9- What did Queen Vashti do?

Vs. 10-22: The disobedience of Vashti and her removal from the royal court:

Vs. 10-11- On the seventh day, after a week of drinking, what did the king tell his servants to do and why?

Vs. 12- What issue arises and causes the king to become furious?

(Bible Notes- Only eunuchs (castrated males) were permitted contact with the harem because of proving the legitimacy of any offspring coming from the king's wife or concubine. The detail in naming these men points to the historicity of the account. The king's request for Queen Vashti to come with her royal crown would most naturally mean that he wanted her to appear at her best and fitting her station as queen. Vashti refused to come at the king's command.)

Vs. 13-15- Who does the king turn to and why?

Vs. 16-20- Memucan, a trusted official, gives his opinion as to what should be done. What does he suggest and what is his reasoning?

Vs. 21-22- The king approved this proposal. Who received these letters and what did the letters say?

Chapter 2: The plan to choose a new queen:

Vs. 1-4- Once the king's anger subsided, what plan was devised to find another queen?

Vs. 5-6- Who is introduced and where is he from?

[Who was Mordecai in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](https://www.gotquestions.org/Who-was-Mordecai.html)

How did he end up in Persia?

Vs. 7- How is he related to Esther?

Vs. 8- What do we learn here?

(Bible Notes-The words *Esther was taken* seem to point more to the possibility that Esther was taken forcibly from her foster parent's home.)

Vs. 9- Hagai, the one in charge of the women, really liked Esther. What did he do for her?

Vs. 10- What did Mordecai order Esther not to do?

Vs. 11- How did Mordechai keep in contact with Esther?

Vs. 12-20: The selection of Esther as queen:

Vs. 12- What were the requirements for women before they were taken to the king?

Vs. 13-14- What was the standard procedure when a young woman went to the king?

Vs. 15-17- What happened when Esther was called before the king?

Vs. 18- What did the king do in her honor?

Vs. 19-23- Keeping her Jewish heritage a secret, Esther would still see Mordecai at the courtyard. What event took place outside the king's gate that Mordecai quickly told Esther about?

What did Esther do?

What happened to the two men when this was verified?

Chapter 3-4- The Plot Against the Jews)

Chapter 3: Haman's Pride and Treachery

Vs. 1- Who is introduced and what was his position?

[Who was Haman the Agagite? | GotQuestions.org](#)

(Bible Notes- According to Jewish tradition, he was a descendant of Agag, who was an enemy of Israel during the reign of King Saul (8:3,5; 9:24; cp. 1 Sm 15:7-33). The Amalekites, a nomadic people living in the southern desert region, frequently raided and killed the Israelites. They were the first nation to go to war with Israel after the exodus (Ex 17:8-16; Dt. 25:17-19) and had long been enemies of the Jews-so much so that Saul lost the kingdom when he disobeyed God's command and failed to destroy the Amalekites (1 Sm 15:1-9, 23).

Vs. 2- What kind of action was required by citizens when they were in his presence?

Vs. 3-4- Mordecai's refusal to bow down became apparent to other staff. What did they do after confronting him, and what information was divulged?

Vs. 5-6- How did Haman react to Mordecai's disobedience and what did he decide to do?

Vs. 7-15- Haman's Decree for the Destruction of the Jews:

Vs. 7- In the king's 12th year, Haman is having Pur cast before him. What month did it fall on?

Vs. 8-9-What did he propose should happen in this month and why?

(Bible Notes- Pur (Hb, “lot”) is a Hebrew form of *puru*, an Akkadian word meaning “lot or fate” and referring to a small clay or glass cube with dots or an inscription on each side of the cube. These lots were cast during “the first month” of the year to determine the best days for important events (3:7). Haman was casting lots to determine the day of their destruction at his hand. The lot fell “on the twelfth month, the month Adar” (i.e., March or April 474 B.C.), only a month before the next celebration of Passover (Est 3:7).

What did he offer to the royal treasury for this plan?

Vs. 10-11- How did the king respond?

Vs. 12-13- Scribes were immediately ordered to write this into law in every language and script to everyone in the province. What did these letters inform all province leaders?

Vs. 14-15- The text says that Haman and the king sat down for a drink, but how were the citizens of Susa reacting?

Chapter 4: Mordecai's Search for an Intercessor to the king:

Vs. 1- How did Mordecai react to this edict?

Vs. 3- How were the Jewish people in the provinces reacting?

[What is the meaning of sackcloth and ashes? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Vs. 2-4- Mordecai made it to the King's Gate but in sack cloth could go no further. Who makes Esther aware of this situation and what does she do?

Vs. 5- Who helps Esther and Mordecai communicate?

Vs. 6-8- What does Mordecai explain to Hathach and what help does he ask for Esther?

Vs. 9-11- Hathach explains everything to Esther. She has a valid concern. What is the problem?

Vs. 12-13- The messenger reported Esther's response to Mordecai. What did Mordecai want her to know?

Vs. 14- These are profound statements Mordecai makes here. What does he say?

Vs. 15-17- What was Esther's reply?

[What is the connection between prayer and fasting? | GotQuestions.org](#)

(Chapters 5-7- The Plan for Deliverance)

Chapter 5: Esther's Approach to the King:

Vs. 1-3- After three days of prayer, Esther dresses in her royal clothing and approaches the king. How does he react?

Vs. 4- What did she request of the king?

Vs. 5-8- The king summons Haman and they join her at her banquet. Again, the king tells her she can have anything she asks for, even half the kingdom. What does she request?

(Bible Notes- Esther's delay in making her request was not without purpose. Because of the delicate nature of implicating the king's highest official, she doubtless wanted a more private setting than the open court. She also knew the centrality of feasts to Persian culture. The guest of a feast would be naturally inclined to acquiesce to the wishes of his hostess-exactly what Esther needed. Although there was some risk in putting off her mission and requesting an investment of the king's time yet again, one cannot dismiss the divine providence guiding every step. There were other details-unknown to Esther but guided by God Himself-still to go into play.)

Vs. 9- Haman is living his best life until he meets Mordecai at the King's Gate. What happened?

Vs. 10-12- Haman controls his anger, heads home, and gathers his wife and friends to join him. What all did he want the people to know about him?

Vs. 13- Despite all of this, who causes him to remain unsatisfied and why?

Vs. 14- What did his wife and friends suggest he do?

Chapter 6: The Honoring of Mordecai by the Adversary Haman:

Vs. 1- The king couldn't sleep so what did he order?

(Bible Notes- The book recording daily events (Hb *zikkaron*, “protocol, memorial, reminder, chronicles”; lit “book of remembrances”; cp 2:23; 10:2; Ezra 4:15; 6:1-4; Mal 3:16) contained officially authorized accounts written by court historians on scrolls of papyrus or leather-the royal archive of the king’s personal history.)

Vs. 2- What story did they read about?

Vs. 3- What did the king ask?

What did the attendant reveal?

Vs. 4-5- Who did the king end up discussing this matter with and what did he ask him?

Vs. 6-9- Expecting this honor for himself, what wonderful ideas does he suggest?

Vs. 10-11- What transpires?

Vs. 12-13- Utterly mortified, what did Haman rush home to tell his wife and friends about and what was their reply?

Vs. 14- They were interrupted by the king’s eunuch. What did he do?

Chapter 7:

Vs. 1-4- At dinner, the king asked Esther, again, to make her request known. What did she ask?

Vs. 5- What does the king ask?

Vs. 6- How does Esther respond?

Vs. 7-8- How did Haman react?

How did the king react?

Vs.9- Haman's face was quickly covered and what does Harbona inform the king?

What was the king's command?

(Chapter 8 – Chapter 9: The Reward of Divine Deliverance)

Chapter 8: The Jews Freedom to Defend Themselves:

Vs. 1-2- What immediate changes were made at Haman's demise?

Vs. 3-6- There is a bigger issue at hand so Esther, in desperation and fear, approaches the king again. What does she say?

Vs. 7-8- The king addresses both Esther and Mordecai. What does he give them permission to do?

Why couldn't they just revoke the previous decree sent out by Haman?

(Bible Notes- Esther moved forward to circumvent Haman's deadly assault on the Jews. Knowing that Persian laws could not be repealed or changed, she suggested the issuing of another edict. She did not blame the king for the earlier edict but placed all the blame on Haman.)

Vs. 9- Who wrote and who directed this new edict?

Who received this edict?

(Bible Notes- Though the timing of this transition is not specified other than the immediate execution of Haman, the time elapsing between the edict of Haman (April 17, 474 B.C.) and the new edict issued by Mordecai on the twenty-third day of the third month (June 25, 474 B.C.) was two months and 10 days.)

Vs. 11-12- What did this new edict make clear?

Vs. 15-17- How had Mordecai's status changed?

How did some ethnic groups respond?

Chapter 9:

Vs. 1-2- The day of the Jew's destruction arrived, but instead of destroying the Jews, thanks to Esther, Mordecai, and the king, what happened?

Vs. 3-4- Who aided the Jews and why?

Vs. 5-10- Who was killed in Susa?

(Bible Notes- In defending themselves, the Jews sought to remove the threat of those who wished to harm them. They were dealing with an enemy who had been given the license to exterminate them, making their actions not only necessary but justified. Yet, despite their permission to do so, they did not seize any plunder (cp. vv. 15-16), underscoring their motivation as self-preservation and not looting.)

Vs. 11-13- The king approaches Esther about the battles and asks if she has any other requests. What was her request?

Vs. 14-15- The king honors her requests. What happened in Susa on the 14th day of Adar?

Vs. 16- How many enemies of the Jews were killed throughout all provinces?

Vs. 17- Why did the 14th day of Adar become a day of feasting and rejoicing?

Vs. 18- What was different in the city of Susa?

Vs. 20-32: The Institution of the Festival of Purim

[What is the Feast of Purim? | GotQuestions.org](http://www.gotquestions.org/Purim.html)

Vs. 20-22- Mordecai sent letters to Jews in all provinces ordering everyone to celebrate the 14th and 15th days of Adar every year. Why?

Vs. 23-26- Why is this day of celebration called Purim?

Vs. 26-28- This is a sacred remembrance for Jews everywhere. Explain why Jews commemorate these days every year:

Vs. 29-32- Why were these dates and customs written into historical records?

Chapter 10: An Epilogue of Mordecai:

Vs. 1-3- What is noted about Mordecai and his legacy?

(Bible Notes- Ahasuerus had fought a war with Greece costly in resources and lives, and he lost (479 B.C.). Mordecai, as second only to King Ahasuerus, probably had a role to play in implementing this policy, giving him a unique place in Jewish history (cp. Daniel in Babylon (Dn. 2:48; 5:29) and Joseph in Egypt (Gn. 41:43) and making him an example of how God raised up heroic leaders to the highest positions even in pagan courts in order to deliver His people.)

[Book of Esther Summary: A Complete Animated Overview](#)