

# Bible Study Notes on the Book of Esther

## Introduction:

It is helpful to read the entire book and try to write down the main events in a short summary for each chapter. A suggested format is given below.

**Chapter 1:** King Ahasuerus deposed his wife for refusing to obey his command to show off her beauty. He issued a decree that every man must bear rule in his own house.

**Chapter 2:** Esther becomes queen after much preparation over twelve months. She did not reveal her kindred as directed by Mordecai, a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, who had brought her up.

**Chapter 3:** Haman, an Agagite, was given authority by the king over all the princes. He plotted the extermination of the Jews.

**Chapter 4:** Mordecai, through much prayer, insists upon Esther going to the king to plead on behalf of the Jewish people for their deliverance.

**Chapter 5:** Esther stood before the king to obtain the request that she asked for in receiving the king and Haman for a banquet. Haman shows his pride. He is advised by his friends and wife to hang Mordecai.

**Chapter 6:** Mordecai was honoured by the king. He was taken through the street in royal robes on a horse being guided by Haman. Haman, now humiliated, goes home to hear of his downfall by his wise men and his wife, Zeresh.

**Chapter 7:** Esther exposed Haman's plot. He was executed immediately by the king on the gallows that he had intended for Mordecai.

**Chapter 8:** The letters of Haman were reversed so that the Jews can defend themselves as decreed by king Ahasuerus.

**Chapter 9:** The Jews defend themselves being helped by the leaders in every province. The feast of Purim is instituted to celebrate the deliverance of the Jews from extermination.

**Chapter 10:** Mordecai was advanced to being second in command being much respected as a just ruler.

The events of the book of Esther take place in the reign of Ahasuerus (Greek name is Xerxes) king of Persia ruling from the city of Shushan over 127 provinces from about 485 to 465 B.C. Vashti, his wife, was deposed as queen in 482 B.C. and Esther took her place in 478 B.C. In the 12th year of king Ahasuerus' reign in 473 B.C. the Jews were saved from annihilation.

## Questions on the Book of Esther

**Introduction:** The bible study material shows questions for each chapter followed by section B showing questions that require more extensive study. You may wish to leave the section B questions for individual study. In section A it is recommended to persevere in attempting to study all the chapters with the accompanying questions where possible to help gain more understanding of this book.

### Section A

#### Chapter 1

- 1.1** What is known about Vashti, queen of Persia? See **1:11-12,15-22**.  
**1.2** Why did Vashti disobey the king's commandments? See **1:11-12**. Do you think she was justified in doing so?  
**1.3** What repercussions could have taken place if the king had not taken action over Vashti's disobedience? See **1:16-18**.  
**1.4** Do you think the king's letters showing man's place in the house is correct? See **1:20-22**.

#### Chapter 2

- 2.1** What counsel did the servants give the king? See **2:1-4**.  
**2.2** What is known of Esther's family background? See **2:5-7**.  
**2:3** How did Hegai, keeper of the women, respond to Esther? See **2:7-9**.  
**2:4** Can you see the importance of twelve months of preparation before Esther became queen? See **2:12-15**.  
**2:5** Why did Esther not reveal her kindred? See **2:10,20**.  
**2:6** What do you think Mordecai was doing each day? See **2:11, 19-23**.  
**2:7** Do you think it was essential for Esther to win the beauty contest? See **2:15-20**.

#### Chapter 3

- 3:1** Why did Mordecai refuse to bow before Haman? See **3:1-4**.  
**3:2** What evidence is shown that Haman hated the Jews? See **3:5-15**.  
**3:3** What effect do the letters sent out have on the city of Shushan? See **3:15**.

#### Chapter 4

- 4:1** How did Mordecai respond when he heard of the decree? See **4:1-3**.  
**4:2** What was Esther's response to begin with? See **4:4**.  
**4:3** What did Mordecai request Esther to do after Hatach had been sent to find out what was wrong? See **4:5-8**.  
**4:4** Why was Esther unwilling to go to the king? See **4:10-11**.  
**4:5** Do you think Mordecai's answer to Esther shows his perception of God's plan? See **4:12-14**.  
**4:6** What can we learn from Esther's intended course of action? See **4:15-17**.

#### Chapter 5

- 5:1** How did Esther prepare to meet the king? See **5:1-2** and look back at **4:16-17**.  
**5:2** What was Esther's request? See **5:3-5**.  
**5:3** What is significant about the golden sceptre of the king? See **5:2** and also **4:11** and **8:4**.  
**5:4** Why did Esther withhold her petition until the next day? See **5:4-8**.  
**5:5** What can we learn from Haman's hatred of Mordecai? See **5:9-14**.  
**5:6** What do we know of Haman's pride? See **5:10-12** and also **6:8-9**.

## Questions on the Book of Esther continued

### Chapter 6

- 6:1** How significant is the timing of the king not being able to sleep? See **6:1**.  
**6:2** What did the king find out from the record books? See **6:1-3**.  
**6:3** Discuss what is happening in Mordecai's life? See **6:6-14**.  
**6:4** Discuss what is happening in Haman's life? See **6:6-14**.  
**6:5** What are the key words found in **6:6-11**? Do they show God's attitude to his people Israel?  
**6:6** What had Haman's friends and his wife Zeresh foretold would happen to Haman? See **6:13-14**.

### Chapter 7

- 7:1** How did Esther expose Haman's wickedness? See **7: 1-6**.  
**7:2** What was going to happen to the Jewish people if Haman's decree was successful? See **7:4**.  
**7:3** What do you notice about Haman's relationship to the Jews in **7: 6**?  
See also **3:10; 7:4; 8:1; 9:10,24**.  
**7:4** How does the king respond to Esther's exposure of Haman? See **7:7-10**.  
**7:5** Discuss what we can learn from Haman's immediate execution? See **7:7-10 & Proverbs 16:18**.

### Chapter 8

- 8:1** What request was still needed from the king? See **8:1-6**.  
**8:2** Discuss what **8:3-6** can teach us about prayer?  
**8:3** How did the king help the Jews? See **8:7-14**.  
**8:4** What is significant about Mordecai's clothing? See **8:15**.  
**8:5** What had the Jews received? See **8:16**.  
**8:6** What was the result of the king's commandment and decree? See **8:7-17**.

### Chapter 9

- 9:1** What happened to the enemies of the Jews? See **9:1-15**.  
**9:2** What do we know about Mordecai's position in this vast empire of Persia? See **9:4**.  
**9:3** Is it true to say that the Jews were not greedy to gain wealth? See **9:10,15,16**.  
**9:4** What did the Jews do after they defeated their enemies? See **9:17-19**.  
**9:5** How did the Jews remember their day of deliverance? See **9:20-32**.

### Chapter 10

- 10:1** Discuss how influential Mordecai is to king Ahasuerus? See **10:1-3**  
**10:2** What does king Ahasuerus and Mordecai do to strengthen the Persian Empire? See **10:1**.  
**10:3** How did the Jews benefit whilst Mordecai was in power? See **10:3**.

## Questions on the Book of Esther continued

### Section B

1. Study the main characters in this book by studying the relevant scriptural references. Can you say what each character typifies and what can you learn from each character?

1.1 King Ahasuerus: **1-1-8,10,12-22; 2:17-18; 3:1-2,10-15; 5:1-6; 6:1-10; 7:1-10; 8:1-17; 9:12-14; 10:1-3.**

1.2 Vashti: **1:9-12, 15-22.**

1.3 Mordecai: **ch2:5-11,19-23; ch3:2-6; ch4:1-17; ch5:9,13-14; ch6:1-3,10-13; ch7:9-10; 8:1-10,15; 9:3-4,20-23,29-32; 10:2-3.**

1.4 Esther: **2:7-18,20; 4:4-17; 5:1-8; 7:1-10; 8:1,5; 9:24-25.**

1.5 Hegai: **2:8-9,15.**

1.6 Haman: **3:1-15; 5:4-14; 6:4-14; 7:1-10; 8:1,5; 9:24-25.**

2. Read the Book of Esther again and try to write down key topics that this book teaches. e.g prayer, obedience, pride, kingdom..... You could make a list of every topic with the scriptural verses such as: pride **5:11-12; 6:6-9; kingdom 1:1-4; 4:14; 10:1-3.**

3. Show how God is at work in this story and suggest why his name is not mentioned once in this short book.

4. What do we know about the Jews in Shushan? See **4:3; 8:1-17; 9:1-32.**

5. Can you see where prayer was effective for God to intervene?

6. How is God fulfilling his promises to the Jewish people in this book? You may find it helpful to read **Psalms 121:4; Genesis 12:1-3; Jeremiah 30:8-11.**

7. Suggest who wrote this book. See **9:20.**

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