

IN &  
OUT®

# *Esther*

A MAN AND  
A WOMAN FOR  
SUCH A TIME  
AS THIS

IN & OUT<sup>®</sup>  
ESTHER  
A MAN AND A WOMAN FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

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## Banquets, Edicts, Anger, and Queens

**If you want a good story, you'll find it in the book of Esther.**

**It's a book you don't want to put down—especially if you are reading it for the first time. Because it is short and fast-moving, you're eager to see how it all turns out. You are eager to know:**

**What will happen to the hero and heroine?**

**The people?**

**The villain?**

**Will the king be deceived—a pawn of those who serve him?**

**Who will live? Who will die?**

### TAKING IT IN

While Esther has all the ingredients for a good story, what makes it even more fascinating is that it is a book of the Bible, which means it is a book “breathed” by God—inspired, recorded, and preserved for eternity. A divine work ordained by the one and only true God.

And because of that, Esther has a purpose beyond being simply a fascinating story in a quick read. God has a reason for including this book among the sixty-six that comprise the Bible. According to the book of Romans, the book of Esther, like the other portions of the Old Testament, was written for your instruction—so that you might have encouragement and hope for your life (Romans 15:4).

1. When you study God's words, seek divine insight. So begin with prayer, talking with the Author and seeking His purpose for including Esther in the Bible. As you pray, you might want to remind God of His promise to lead you and guide you into all truth. You might also ask Him to keep you on track so that you see and understand what He wants you to know.

Be careful that you don't bring any presuppositions into your study that would keep you from handling God's Word accurately. Remember, we are not to add to His words; He tells us everything we need to know, and if He doesn't tell us, we don't need to know it!

2. Now let's observe Esther 1.

- a. Cut out the Key Word Bookmark on the back cover of your workbook. On the blank side, list the following key words and how you will mark them.

On the reverse side of your bookmark, you'll see marking suggestions for some words often used in the Bible. An asterisk [\*] shows these in this workbook.

- 1) geographical locations\* and time references\*
- 2) *Ahasuerus*
- 3) *Vashti*
- 4) *banquet*
- 5) *anger*

- b. Now as you read Esther 1, mark the key words.

- c. What is the purpose of identifying and marking people? It's to help you see where they are mentioned and what God wants you to know about them. Therefore, after you mark you make a list! On "The Main Characters in the Book of Esther," in the Appendix, list in brief what you learn about Ahasuerus and Vashti. Leave space to add to your lists as you study each chapter.

There are lessons to be learned from observing the lives of others—things to imitate and sometimes things to avoid, so look for these and think about them. These are real people, not fictional characters created by man's imaginations.


- d. On your Observation Worksheet you probably noticed that some of the verse numbers are bold. This indicates where a new paragraph begins.

A paragraph consists usually of one or more sentences that are connected by a common thought or subject. When studying a book of the Bible, it is very helpful to summarize the main thought, event, or teaching of each paragraph. This is called the *theme* of the paragraph. So let's do that now.

Read your Observation Worksheet again. As you do, write the main theme of each paragraph in the left margin or below.

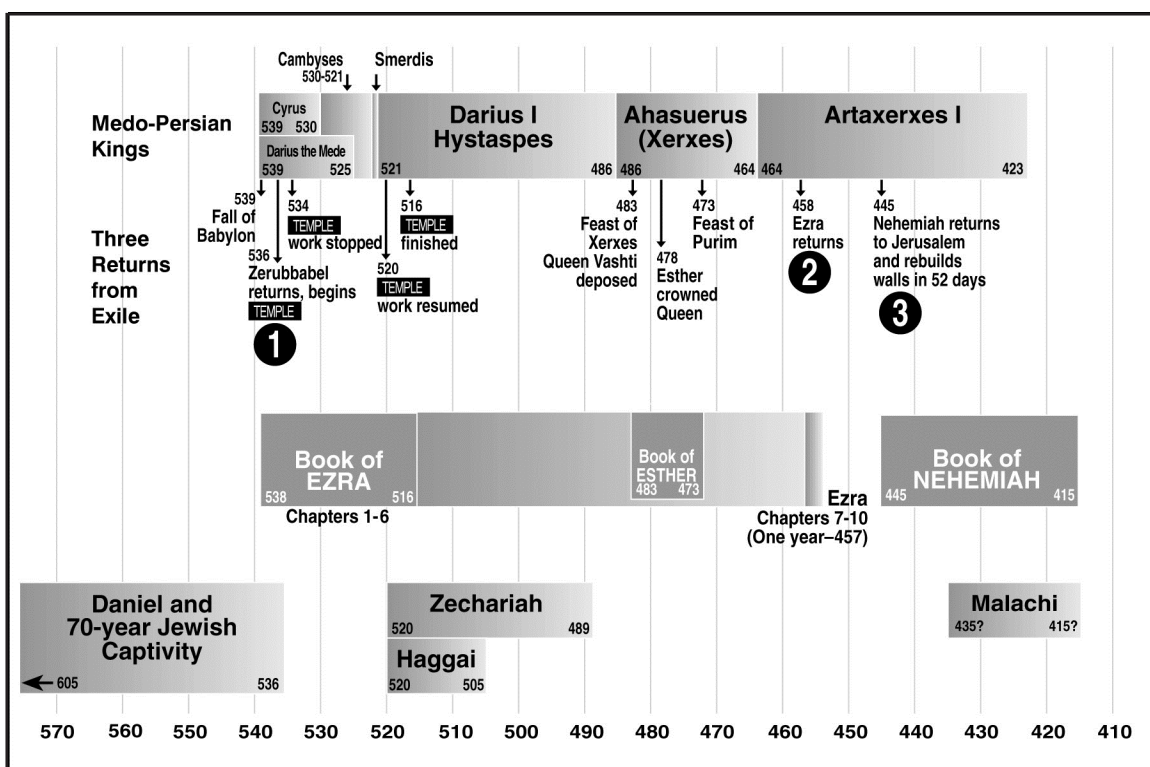
- 1) 1:1-4

- 2) 1:5-9
  - 3) 1:10-12
  - 4) 1:13-20
  - 5) 1:21-22
- e. Now you have the themes of the paragraphs, so what is the theme, the main subject or event, covered in Esther chapter 1? If you wanted to remember what this chapter is all about, how would you summarize it?
- 1) Write it out in as few words as possible. It is best to use words from the text as it will help you better remember the content of the chapter. For example: you could use the theme “A King and Queen Throw 3 Celebrations” or “Ahasuerus Gives a Banquet, Queen Vashti Refuses to Come.” While the first theme is true, the latter uses terms from the text (*banquet* rather than *celebration*) and is more specific, noting names of the key people and the problem at the second banquet.
  - 2) You will find an “Esther at a Glance” chart in the Appendix of this book. Record a theme for Esther 1 on the chart.
3. Next let’s observe Esther 2.
- a. Mark the words on your Key Word Bookmark. Also mark the following and add them to your bookmark:
    - 1) *Esther*
    - 2) *Mordecai*
    - 3) *favor*
  - b. Read Esther 2 again. This time look for the paragraph divisions (bold verse numbers), and in the margin of your worksheet, record the main event of each paragraph.

- c. Add a theme for Esther 2 to “Esther at a Glance” in the Appendix.
4. Now briefly list what you learn about Esther and Mordecai on “The Main Characters in the Book of Esther.”
5. When you marked Esther, Mordecai, and the king, you learned that the king married a Jew but didn’t know it. You also saw references to *her people*—which obviously would be Jews. Devise a way to mark references to Jews and put it on your bookmark. Some use a blue star of David like this: 

When you finish, list below what you learn from chapter 2 about the Jews, or if you want, you can put this on “The Main Characters in the Book of Esther.”

6. Finally, using the time chart, answer the questions on the next page.





- 
- a. Look at the center line. When does the book of Esther take place?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b. What empire is ruling at this time? (Look at the top line) \_\_\_\_\_
- c. What is another name for Ahasuerus? \_\_\_\_\_
- d. According to this timeline, what had already happened in Jewish history prior to the events in Esther? (Don't miss looking at the bottom line where it mentions Daniel.) List the events in the order in which they occur. "Temple" is a reference to the Jews' temple in Jerusalem.
- e. The main theme of Ezra is rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem, while the main theme of Nehemiah is rebuilding the walls around Jerusalem. Where does Esther fit chronologically into the events of these two books?
7. Read Ezra 4:1-6. Why might Mordecai have told Esther not to reveal her people?

LIVING  
IT OUT

As you studied this week, you made lists on Vashti and Esther. When you compare the lists:

1. What lessons for your life can you draw from similarities and/or differences between these two women?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. As you look at the two women, can you see anything that validates the concern of the wise men in chapter 1? From a biblical perspective is this a valid concern? Give the reason for your answer.

*O Beloved . . . doesn't this cause you to stand in awe of God and make you want to know God's Word inside out?!? Remember, it is the bread by which we live! It shows us how to live and how to view the world in which we live.*

# ESTHER 1

## Observation Worksheet

Chapter Theme \_\_\_\_\_

- NOW** it took place in the days of Ahasuerus, the Ahasuerus who reigned from India to Ethiopia over 127 provinces,
- 2 in those days as King Ahasuerus sat on his royal throne which *was* at the citadel in Susa,
  - 3 in the third year of his reign he gave a banquet for all his princes and attendants, the army *officers* of Persia and Media, the nobles and the princes of his provinces being in his presence.
  - 4 And he displayed the riches of his royal glory and the splendor of his great majesty for many days, 180 days.
  - 5 When these days were completed, the king gave a banquet lasting seven days for all the people who were present at the citadel in Susa, from the greatest to the least, in the court of the garden of the king's palace.
  - 6 *There were hangings of* fine white and violet linen held by cords of fine purple linen on silver rings and marble columns, *and* couches of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl and precious stones.
  - 7 Drinks were served in golden vessels of various kinds, and the royal wine was plentiful according to the king's bounty.
  - 8 The drinking *was done* according to the law, there was no compulsion, for so the king had given orders to each official of his household that he should do according to the desires of each person.
  - 9 Queen Vashti also gave a banquet for the women in the palace which belonged to King Ahasuerus.
  - 10 On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar and Carkas, the seven eunuchs who served in the presence of King Ahasuerus,

- 11 to bring Queen Vashti before the king with *her* royal crown in order to display her beauty to the people and the princes, for she was beautiful.
- 12 But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king’s command delivered by the eunuchs. Then the king became very angry and his wrath burned within him.
- 13 Then the king said to the wise men who understood the times—for it was the custom of the king so *to speak* before all who knew law and justice
- 14 and were close to him: Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media who had access to the king’s presence and sat in the first place in the kingdom—
- 15 “According to law, what is to be done with Queen Vashti, because she did not obey the command of King Ahasuerus *delivered* by the eunuchs?”
- 16 In the presence of the king and the princes, Memucan said, “Queen Vashti has wronged not only the king but *also* all the princes and all the peoples who are in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus.
- 17 “For the queen’s conduct will become known to all the women causing them to look with contempt on their husbands by saying, ‘King Ahasuerus commanded Queen Vashti to be brought in to his presence, but she did not come.’
- 18 “This day the ladies of Persia and Media who have heard of the queen’s conduct will speak in *the same way* to all the king’s princes, and there will be plenty of contempt and anger.
- 19 “If it pleases the king, let a royal edict be issued by him and let it be written in the laws of Persia and Media so that it cannot be repealed, that Vashti may no longer come into the presence of King Ahasuerus, and let the king give her royal position to another who is more worthy than she.

- 
- 20 “When the king’s edict which he will make is heard throughout all his kingdom, great as it is, then all women will give honor to their husbands, great and small.”
- 21 *This* word pleased the king and the princes, and the king did as Memucan proposed.
- 22 So he sent letters to all the king’s provinces, to each province according to its script and to every people according to their language, that every man should be the master in his own house and the one who speaks in the language of his own people.



## ESTHER 2

### Observation Worksheet

Chapter Theme \_\_\_\_\_

- AFTER** these things when the anger of King Ahasuerus had subsided, he remembered Vashti and what she had done and what had been decreed against her.
- 2 Then the king's attendants, who served him, said, "Let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king.
  - 3 "Let the king appoint overseers in all the provinces of his kingdom that they may gather every beautiful young virgin to the citadel of Susa, to the harem, into the custody of Hegai, the king's eunuch, who is in charge of the women; and let their cosmetics be given *them*.
  - 4 "Then let the young lady who pleases the king be queen in place of Vashti." And the matter pleased the king, and he did accordingly.
  - 5 *Now* there was at the citadel in Susa a Jew whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite,
  - 6 who had been taken into exile from Jerusalem with the captives who had been exiled with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had exiled.
  - 7 He was bringing up Hadassah, that is Esther, his uncle's daughter, for she had no father or mother. Now the young lady was beautiful of form and face, and when her father and her mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.
  - 8 So it came about when the command and decree of the king were heard and many young ladies were gathered to the citadel of Susa into the custody of Hegai, that Esther was taken to the king's palace into the custody of Hegai, who was in charge of the women.

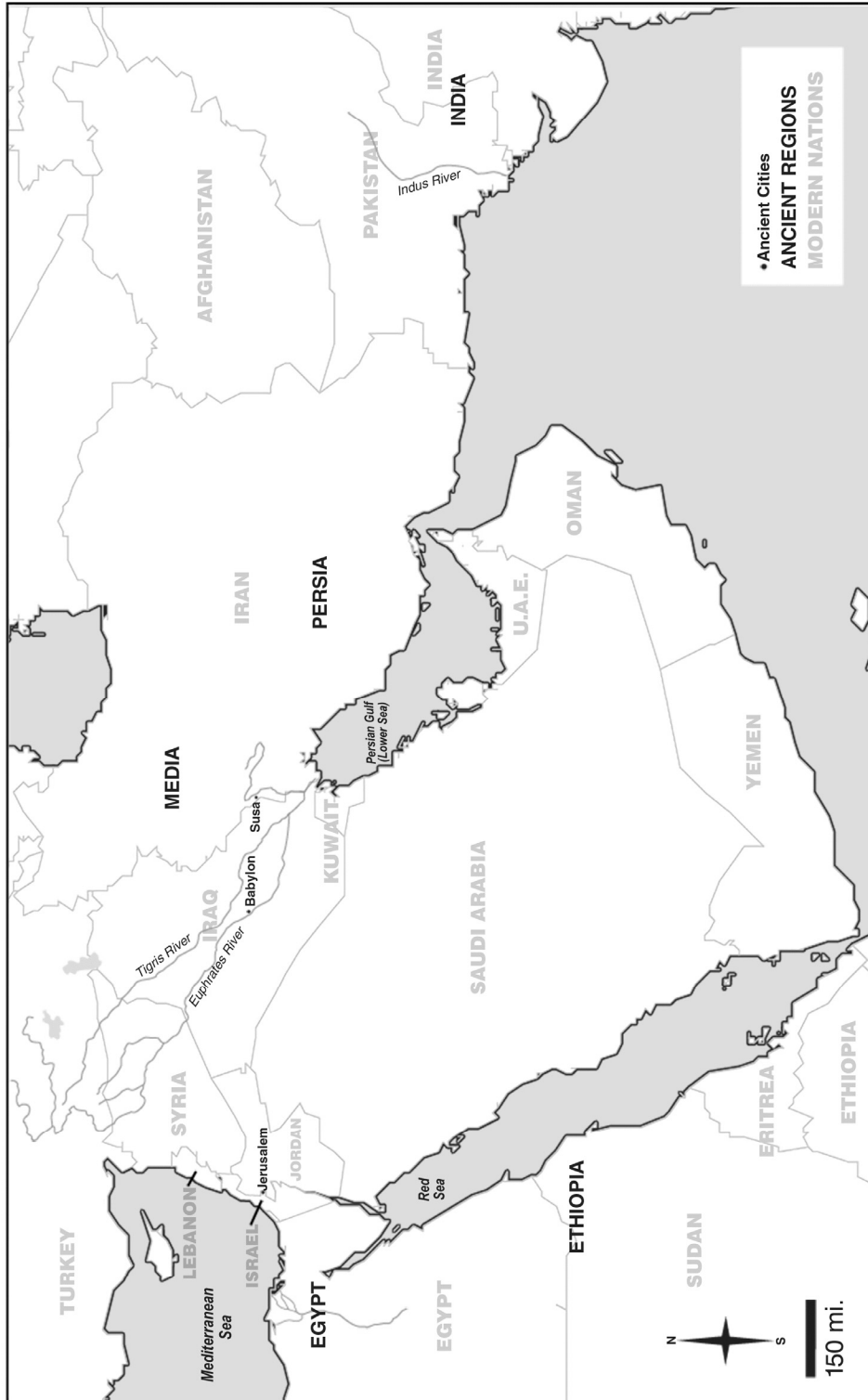
- 9 Now the young lady pleased him and found favor with him. So he quickly provided her with her cosmetics and food, gave her seven choice maids from the king's palace and transferred her and her maids to the best place in the harem.
- 10 Esther did not make known her people or her kindred, for Mordecai had instructed her that she should not make *them* known.
- 11 Every day Mordecai walked back and forth in front of the court of the harem to learn how Esther was and how she fared.
- 12 Now when the turn of each young lady came to go in to King Ahasuerus, after the end of her twelve months under the regulations for the women—for the days of their beautification were completed as follows: six months with oil of myrrh and six months with spices and the cosmetics for women—
- 13 the young lady would go in to the king in this way: anything that she desired was given her to take with her from the harem to the king's palace.
- 14 In the evening she would go in and in the morning she would return to the second harem, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the concubines. She would not again go in to the king unless the king delighted in her and she was summoned by name.
- 15 Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai who had taken her as his daughter, came to go in to the king, she did not request anything except what Hegai, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the women, advised. And Esther found favor in the eyes of all who saw her.
- 16 So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus to his royal palace in the tenth month which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.
- 17 The king loved Esther more than all the women, and she found favor and kindness with him more than all the virgins, so that he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.



- 18 Then the king gave a great banquet, Esther's banquet, for all his princes and his servants; he also made a holiday for the provinces and gave gifts according to the king's bounty.
- 19 When the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate.
- 20 Esther had not yet made known her kindred or her people, even as Mordecai had commanded her; for Esther did what Mordecai told her as she had done when under his care.
- 21 In those days, while Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's officials from those who guarded the door, became angry and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.
- 22 But the plot became known to Mordecai and he told Queen Esther, and Esther informed the king in Mordecai's name.
- 23 Now when the plot was investigated and found *to be so*, they were both hanged on a gallows; and it was written in the Book of the Chronicles in the king's presence.



**FROM INDIA TO ETHIOPIA**





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## THE MAIN CHARACTERS IN THE BOOK OF ESTHER

## THE MAIN CHARACTERS IN THE BOOK OF ESTHER

ESTHER AT A GLANCE

**Book Theme:**

		Segment Divisions	Chapter Themes
<p><b>Author:</b></p> <p><b>Date:</b></p> <p><b>Purpose:</b></p> <p><b>Key Words:</b></p>		1	
		2	
		3	
		4	
		5	
		6	
		7	
		8	
		9	
		10	





# THE TIMES OF EZRA, NEHEMIAH, AND ESTHER

