



---

---

## Lesson 159

### Esther Saves the Jews – Part 1

---

---

#### Story Elements

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Text:</b> Esther 1:1-3:6</li><li>• <b>Setting:</b> circa 483-473, in Susa, Persia</li><li>• <b>Main Characters:</b> God, Esther, Vashti, Haman, Mordecai, and Ahaseurus</li><li>• <b>Plot:</b> Esther's courage saves her people from certain destruction.</li><li>• <b>Key word(s):</b> “for such a _____ as this” (4:14)</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Climax:</b> Esther 4:16 <i>Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.</i></li></ul> |
|---|--|

---

#### Background

1. Chronologically, Esther's story takes place after Zerubbabel returned with the first colony to Jerusalem and before \_\_\_\_\_ returned with the second colony, i.e., between Ezra 6:22 and 7:1

---

#### Vashti's Propriety

2. (1:1-9) King Ahaseurus (Persian: *Kshayarsha*; Greek: *Xerxes*) hosted a grand party for all his nobles and civil leaders that lasted for \_\_\_\_\_ days. When the days were completed, a final 7-day feast was hosted for the people of Susa.
  - (a) (1:10-12) On the final day of the final feast, Ahaseurus summoned Queen Vashti to appear before the men and “shew the people and the princes her beauty;” Vashti refused. Such a request was against royal decorum - a queen was not to be subjected to \_\_\_\_\_ gawking.
  - (b) (1:13-22) Vashti's refusal angered the king, and his counselors suggested immediate action lest the queen's actions cause all the \_\_\_\_\_ of Persia to despise their husbands. Vashti was divorced, and the search began for a new queen.

---

#### Esther's Promotion

3. (2:1-4) All the governors of all the provinces were instructed to recruit the most beautiful young women for the royal harem, the most beautiful of which would become the new \_\_\_\_\_ of Persia.
4. (2:5-7) In Susa lived a Jewish captive, Mordecai, who had been brought to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar.
  - (a) Mordecai had raised his cousin Hadassah because she was an orphan. Hadassah's Persian name was \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (b) (2:8-20) Esther was chosen to become part of the royal harem, and later, she was chosen by Ahaseurus to replace Vashti and to become the chief wife – the queen. Esther, according to the counsel of Mordecai, kept her ethnicity a secret. Unlike Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, Mordecai chose to keep his Jewish roots a secret. Why do you think he did this? \_\_\_\_\_
5. (2:21-23) Esther's position soon became helpful as she was able to warn Ahaseurus of a plot to assassinate him based on information \_\_\_\_\_ had intercepted.

---

## Haman's Plot

6. (3:1-4) One of Ahaseurus' officials, Haman the Agagite, advanced in title and position, and all were commanded to pay homage.
  - (a) But Mordecai refused, probably because of the age-old rivalry between Saul and Agag (1 Sam 15) and the animosity between the \_\_\_\_\_ and the Hebrews (Ex. 17:8-16).
  - (b) (3:5-6) Haman was infuriated by Mordecai's actions, and when he learned Mordecai was a Jew, he sought a way to \_\_\_\_\_ all the Jews throughout the kingdom.

## ...To Be Continued...

---

## Application

7. Esther is an unusual book in the Bible because God's name is never mentioned. In fact, other than the mention of \_\_\_\_\_ in 4:16, the book seems devoid of any religious connotations. But what is obvious to the believer is the providence of God – God's control of events in order to accomplish his decrees. God had promised to preserve the Jews (Gen. 17:1-8), and his promises are kept.
8. In obedience to the second commandment, Mordecai refused to bow to Haman.<sup>1</sup> In this, he showed holy \_\_\_\_\_, which was an important virtue in the religious lives of the Jews in captivity. Christians today live in perilous times, and we must likewise cultivate holy resolve in the face of adversity.

**2 Timothy 3:1** *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come....* **12** *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution...* **14** *But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of...*

9. Haman hated the Jews because he was an Amalekite (cf. Deu. 25:17-19). Saul was commanded to destroy the Amalekites, but his disobedience jeopardized the entire Jewish race some 550 years later. Note: our lives often touch the lives of others in ways we could never imagine – for good or \_\_\_\_\_.

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

---

**Answer Key:** Key word(s): "time" • 1. Ezra • 2. 180; a) public; b) wives • 3. queen • 4. a) Esther; b) Antisemitism was growing during Persian rule. • 5. Mordecai • 6. a) Amalekites; b) exterminate • 7. fasting • 8. resolve • 9. bad

**How to use this worksheet for personal Bible study:** (1) Read the Bible passage given in the **Story Elements** section. (2) Read through the worksheet and try to fill in the blanks without looking at the **Answer Key**. (3) Check your answers with the key and make the necessary corrections. Keep in mind that some answers are a matter of opinion, and often more than one answer is correct. (4) Write down your own thoughts, applications, and questions for further study in the **Notes** section.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Had the homage been a simple token of civil respect, Mordecai would not have refused it; but the Persian kings demanded a sort of adoration, which, it is well known, even the Greeks reckoned it degradation to express. As Xerxes, in the height of his favoritism, had commanded the same honors to be given to the minister as to himself, this was the ground of Mordecai's refusal." From: Jamieson, Robert, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown. *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*. Vol. 1. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997. Print.