

# The Book of Esther

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## **Resources:**

### **Helping Books:**

Fr. Tadros Yacoub Malaty: Esther/English

<https://ukmidcopts.org/download/253/>

Fr. Tadros Yacoub Malaty: Esther /Arabic

[https://www.stminahamilton.ca/download/Books/Bible%20Commentary%20-%20Fr.%20Tadros%20AR/019\\_Esther%20-%20Arabic%20-%20Fr.%20Tadros%20Yacoub%20Malaty.pdf](https://www.stminahamilton.ca/download/Books/Bible%20Commentary%20-%20Fr.%20Tadros%20AR/019_Esther%20-%20Arabic%20-%20Fr.%20Tadros%20Yacoub%20Malaty.pdf)

Esther - Arabic - Fr Antonios Fekry/ Arabic

[https://www.stminahamilton.ca/download/Books/Bible%20Commentary%20-%20Fr.%20Antonios%20AR/019\\_Esther%20-%20Arabic%20-%20Fr.%20Antonios%20Fekry.pdf](https://www.stminahamilton.ca/download/Books/Bible%20Commentary%20-%20Fr.%20Antonios%20AR/019_Esther%20-%20Arabic%20-%20Fr.%20Antonios%20Fekry.pdf)

<https://calvarycurriculum.com/ot-1kings-esther/>

### **Audio/video explanation of the Book: Fr. Dawood Lamey: Arabic [ 16 videos]**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=prBIJ722IzA&list=PLq23SJ7v0I1W0YsIZd6vDOol6N4YENEEh>

### **Audio Explanation by Fr. Father Anthony Messeh at St Marks Coptic Orthodox Church of Washington DC / English:**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ManBM\\_9N7oU&t=182s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ManBM_9N7oU&t=182s)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iscDQgdSZIc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KAefWYyDB-30>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ubu1bTKrcls>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80a2LPhGCZM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UcwqcJ3BA6k>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=972gmlyhNfl>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eigwazz5tJc>

### **Video Resources;**

**Bible project/ Esther** [ there is a reason for which they say that there is no mention of God and that is :the Jews separated the first 9 chapters that the last 6 Chapters;

During the Purim; the book of Esther was read in front of all and the names of the glorified God was red;

Jews celebrated with Gentiles and because of that the celebration turned into mockery and loud not typically holy celebration; So out of respect to the Holy name of God they moved the parts that had God's name to the end of the Book

Additionally; Out of Wisdom Mordecai moved those parts to the end as he was serving in countries that does not glorify God; and did not want to trigger or irritate the Persian against the Jews. And for all of the above reasons there is the Annex of Esther [ Chapters 10:5--- till Chapter 16]

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/esther/>

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**Movie of Esther:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RqMzMjaHyGY>

**The story in comic illustration [ for servants to add to their PPT if they desire]**

<https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/esther-1/>

<https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/esther-2/>

<https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/esther-3/>

<https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/bpa-esther/>

<https://www.freebibleimages.org/search/?book=Esther>

**Online games / questions:**

<https://www.quia.com/fc/854876.html>

<https://www.quia.com/mc/854876.html>

<https://www.quia.com/cc/854876.html>

**Chronology in Esther**

The events of Esther unfold over a period of 10 years.

Reference	Event	Month	Day	Year of Ahasuerus's Reign	Year
1:3	Ahasuerus holds his banquets			3	483 B.C.
2:16	Esther goes to Ahasuerus	10		7	479
3:7	Haman casts his lots	1		12	474
3:12	Haman issues his decree	1	13	12	474
3:13	Date planned for annihilation of the Jews	12	13	13	473
8:9	Mordecai issues his decree	3	23	13	473
8:12; 9:1	Day upon which Jews could defend themselves from attack	12	13	13	473
9:6-10, 20-22	Ten sons of Haman executed; Feast of Purim celebrated	12	14, 15	13	473



Kingdom of Elah.

Elam eventually came under the domination of the Persian Empire. The Persians ruled their vast empire from three capital cities, including the ancient city of Susa in Elam. Thus, it was in Susa that Esther became the new queen of Persia and thwarted Haman's plans to destroy the Jews. It was also in Susa where Nehemiah served as cupbearer to King Artaxerxes of Persia before receiving permission to travel to Jerusalem to rebuild it (Nehemiah 1



The Persian Empire Map.

In 539 B.C., Cyrus the Great of Persia defeated the Babylonians, and a year later he decreed that the Judeans who had been sent into exile were allowed to return home and rebuild the Temple (2 Chronicles 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-2). Under the leadership of Zerubbabel, a small contingent of Judeans made the long journey and re-established Judea as a very small district in the much larger Persian province called 'Beyond the River'. This vast empire was the world of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Queen Esther.

- Ruins at Shush



• Location of Susa on the map/ satellite

<https://www.openbible.info/geo/ancient/a033b84/susa>

# The Book of Esther

## Old Testament /

### Book of Esther /Lesson 1

### Introduction to the book

## Lesson 1

### Introduction to the book:

- The book tells a true story of how God saved his people from Perishing while they were in captivity away from their land. In land of Persia where King Ahasuerus who ruled over 127 provinces from India to Ethiopia
- God allowed a young lady named 'Hadassah', the name of the myrtle tree [ that is her Hebrew name] to become a queen; later named Esther:
- 'Esther', the fatherless girl, born in the land of captivity, whom God used for the salvation of His people from the evil plot of the tyrant 'Haman', which almost brought the whole Jewish people in the states of Media and Persia to perdition.
- Esther belongs to the period after the Babylonian exile, when Persia had replaced Babylon as the ruling power. The story is set in Susa, one of the Persian capitals, during the reign of King Ahasuerus, better known by his Greek name, Xerxes I (486–464 B.C.). Some Jews had returned to Jerusalem, where they enjoyed a reasonable amount of control over their own affairs. Others, like Esther and Mordecai, were still in exile. As a minority group, the Jews were viewed with suspicion and sometimes faced threats to their existence.
- Esther was written to explain the origin of the Feast of Purim and to ensure that it would be observed by all future generations of the Jewish people (9:28). It has clearly achieved this purpose, since Jews have continued to observe Purim to the present day. The book of Esther is read as part of the celebration of Purim.
- This book testifies to God the "Pantocrator" Who is always in control; changes evil against his sons and daughters to Goodness and salvation. He does that through His own people. It also tells the story of how His faithful people fasted and prayed and trusted God to save them and He did.

### Writer of the book

It came in the 'Talmud' that this book was written by the great Synagogue (led by Ezra the scribe). According to St. Augustine, Ezra was the author of this book; whereas many other fathers, among whom was St. Clement of Alexandria, believe what was proclaimed by the Jewish Historian Josephus, that it was written by 'Mordecai' himself.

### When was the book Written?

As is clear from the book itself, it was written shortly after the era of king 'Ahasuerus' (Xerxes 486-465 B.C.

The events of this episode took place during the period between the first return of the Jews from captivity, under the leadership of Zerubbabel, and the second return under the leadership Ezra. It confirms that God, in His salvation work, proclaims His care, even for those who refused to return to Jerusalem together with Zerubbabel.

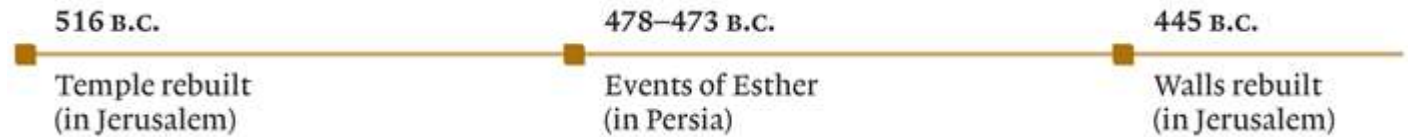
The events described in the book of Esther take place during the Persian Empire between the late 5th century and early 4th century B.C.E.

## Location/ timeline where it all happens:

The kingdom of Persia and Media

Shushan the Citadel [ the palace of king Ahasuerus]

## Timeline of the Events:



## The Persian Empire at the Time of Esther

c. 479 B.C.

Long before Esther’s time, the people of Israel and Judah (later called Jews) had been dispersed throughout the Near East by the Assyrians and the Babylonians. Eventually the Persians absorbed nearly all of these lands into their empire, which reached its greatest extent during the time of Esther. Thus, Haman’s plot to exterminate all Jews throughout the Persian Empire would have annihilated virtually all of the Jewish people, and Esther’s daring actions saved the whole nation from complete destruction.



## Main Characters of the Book

### **Esther:**

It is claimed that the name 'Esther' is of an old Indian origin, meaning, (little lady), then moved to mean (a star) in Persian. She most probably was given this name after being chosen as a queen. Her Hebrew name was 'Hadassah', the name of the myrtle tree.

'Esther', the daughter of 'Abihail', of the tribe of Benjamin, was born in the land of captivity, then brought by her cousin 'Mordecai' who adopted her, to Shushan, the capital of Persia (Iran).

### **King Ahasuerus:**

The King of Persia and Media is Xerxes [a title means king similar to Pharaoh] he was son of Darius, known for his fiery and loosely nature, as is demonstrated by the two banquets he held, one to proclaim his intention to wage war against the Greeks, and the other after his return to forget about his failure and losses in that campaign.

### **Haman:**

The prime minister of Persia and Media has issued a royal decree to annihilate all the Jews present all over the kingdom. But the watching eye of God worked to save His people on the hands of queen Esther and Mordecai; And, it so happened that 'Haman' was hanged by the same gallows he has prepared for Mordecai. God was glorified in His people, and the oracle of the psalmist is realized, saying:

"The wicked plots against the just, and gnashes at him with his teeth. The Lord laughs at him, for He sees that his day is coming" (Psalm 37: 12, 13).

### **Mordecai:**

a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, named Mordecai son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, who had been carried into exile from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, among those taken captive with Jehoiachin king of Judah. Mordecai had a cousin named Hadassah, whom he had brought up because she had neither father nor mother. This young woman, who was also known as Esther, had a lovely figure and was beautiful. Mordecai had taken her as his own daughter when her father and mother died."

## **General overview/ Structure of the book:**

Esther is divided into 5 parts.

Chapters 1-2 describe Esther's coronation.

3-6 detail Haman's plot and Mordecai's rise to power.

7-8 record Haman's demise and the Jewish people's deliverance.

Chapters 9-10 [part of 10] conclude with liberation and celebration.

Annex of Esther: [part of 10] -11- 16

## Another Overview the Division of the Book: [studied here]

	<b>Part 1</b>	<b>Chapters</b>	<b>Representing</b>
1	The banquet of King Ahasuerus	1 – 2	The joy of the mortal world
2	The banquet of queen Esther	3 – 7	The banquet of the cross
3	The banquet of the feast of Purim	8 – 10	the joyful collective resurrection.

An introduction to the feast of **Purim** [ Details on Chapters 8-10]

- Preparation for the feast of Purim Chapter 8
- Celebration of the feast of Purim Chapter 9
- The greatness of Mordecai Chapter 10

In the Septuagint version includes an annex to the book of Esther, that was not in the Hebrew text; constituting mostly prayers, messages, and dreams. St. Jerome included it in his Latin translation of the book. This annex embraced the following parts:

### Annex to the book of Esther

	<b>Part 2</b>	<b>Chapters</b>
1	A dream by Mordecai	11
2	the plot against the king	12
3	the royal decree against Jews	13
4	the prayer of Esther	14
5	the request of Mordecai from Esther	15
6	the request of Esther from Ahasuerus	15
7	The royal decree to save the Jews	16

### Servants Preparation instructions:

- Pray, read the chapters in the bible and the lesson thoroughly.
- Within the lesson you will find actual verses of the chapter and explanation of the part
- Make sure to use the maps and the intro info [from lesson1] for all the upcoming lessons as reminder.
- **Attention glitter** is an ice breaker and intro to the lesson, use your discretion for age appropriation; if it does not suit your class age try tweaking it a bit to fit
- There are **activities and crafts**; they are meant to engage the class and have them pay more attention; , use your discretion for age appropriation; if it does not suit your class age try tweaking it a bit to fit
- Announce the **Lesson goal** and have the kids point out where is the goal in the passages you read together.
- There are video resources/ games resources at the intro [from lesson1] make sure to incorporate some for each lesson.
- Questions and assignment at the end: you don't need to do all of them, but you can use them either during class for checking on comprehension/ or at the beginning of the next class for revision/ as a home work or at the end of the book as a competition assignment with rewards.

## Book of Esther /Lesson 1 continued The banquet of king Ahasuerus

### Chapter outline:

Lesson 1	Start by the introduction above	
Chapter 1	The banquet of king Ahasuerus	Verses 1 - 9
	The king demands the attendance of queen Vashti	Verses 10 - 12
	Queen Vashti dethroned	Verses 13 - 22

### Summary of the Chapter:

In chapter one of Esther, the king gave a big party [ Banquet] . He wanted his wife, the queen, to come so he could show off her beauty to everyone. She refused to come. This made the king very angry. The king met with his advisors and decided that Vashti would no longer be queen; a new queen would be chosen to replace her.

### Memory Verse:

'He who guards his mouth preserve his life' Proverbs 13:3

### Lesson Goal:

Be wise, don't be easily angry for wisdom built its house

### Lesson Time:

## Esther 1:1-9

### The banquet of king Ahasuerus

**1** Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus<sup>[a]</sup> (this *was* the Ahasuerus who reigned over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, from India to Ethiopia), **2** in those days when King Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which *was* in Shushan<sup>[b]</sup> the <sup>[c]</sup>citadel, **3** *that* in the third year of his reign he made a feast for all his officials and servants—the powers of Persia and Media, the nobles, and the princes of the provinces *being* before him— **4** when he showed the riches of his

glorious kingdom and the splendor of his excellent majesty for many days, one hundred and eighty days *in all*.

<sup>5</sup> And when these days were completed, the king made a feast lasting seven days for all the people who were present in <sup>d</sup>Shushan the <sup>e</sup>citadel, from great to small, in the court of the garden of the king's palace. <sup>6</sup> *There were white and blue linen curtains fastened with cords of fine linen and purple on silver rods and marble pillars; and the couches were of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of alabaster, turquoise, and white and black marble.* <sup>7</sup> And they served drinks in golden vessels, each vessel being different from the other, with royal wine in abundance, according to the <sup>g</sup>generosity of the king. <sup>8</sup> In accordance with the law, the drinking was not compulsory; for so the king had ordered all the officers of his household, that they should do according to each man's pleasure.

<sup>9</sup> Queen Vashti also made a feast for the women *in the royal palace which belonged to King Ahasuerus.*

As the **kingdom of Media and Persia** became great and defeated the kingdom of Babylon, the Jews who were taken into captivity to Babylon, became under the authority of Media and Persia. The dominion of that kingdom extended from India to Ethiopia, covering over 127 provinces; including the land of Egypt, which was occupied by emperor Xerxes, after his father's failure to overcome it.

King Ahasuerus held a great banquet to show off the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the splendor of his majesty:

The banquet was a collective feast lasting seven days for all the people who were present in Shushan the citadel, from great to small, held in the gardens of the king's palace.

Queen Vashti also held a feast for the women in her quarters in the royal palace.

It is good to celebrate different and various successful circumstances in our life the most important thing is to learn to glorify God and not to celebrate in any inappropriate way; remember: [Be wise, don't be easily angry for wisdom built its house](#)

## Esther 1:10-12

### The king demands the attendance of queen Vashti

<sup>10</sup> On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, seven eunuchs who served in the presence of King Ahasuerus, <sup>11</sup> to bring Queen Vashti before the king, *wearing her royal crown*, in order to show her beauty to the people and the officials, for she *was beautiful to behold*. <sup>12</sup> But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command *brought by his eunuchs*; therefore, the king was furious, and his anger burned within him.

PS: **Eunuchs** was a title given to the court officials in Persia and Egypt

The King Ahasuerus of Persia and Media is Xerxes [a title means king similar to Pharaoh] he was son of Darius, known for his fiery and loosely nature, he was tough and in anger he would make quick not well studied decisions. He had his Banquet celebrating his kingdom and its vastest borders; he became drunk; and requested the Queen to come to his banquet wearing her crown to show off her beauty to his leaders; This was in appropriate; therefore, the Queen Vashti refused to obey the king orders and go to his banquet. The King became furious at her disobedience

### **There are several Not wise morals here:**

Remember; **Be wise, don't be easily angry for wisdom built its house**

- 1- The King becoming drunk
- 2- Making a wrong decision to bring his wife to show her beauty to strangers
- 3- Not respecting his wife decision not to come
- 4- Becoming angry and furious

#### **1- The King becoming drunk**

- **The bible discourages the use of Alcohol/wine and of becoming drunk:**

*Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly. At the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse things”*

(Proverb 23: 31, 32)

*“It is not for kings, ... to drink wine, nor for princes intoxicating drink, lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the justice of all the afflicted”* (Proverb 31: 4, 5).

Getting drunk is not for the sons and daughters of God; the result on doing that was clear from the king's actions, all of his other decisions that night were a consequence of being drunk.

#### **2 -Making a wrong decision to bring his wife to show her beauty to strangers**

This was not appropriate for a king to do; this is the queen; she should be preserved and respected.

It would not be befitting of us to show off the beauty of our inner 'Vashti' to others; Namely, to parade our works of righteousness and virtues to get human glory, instead of keeping our (queen) within us, and not having her beauty shown, except to her Groom, the Lord Jesus.

#### **3 - Not respecting his wife decision not to come**

The king should have respected his wife's [the queen] decision, but because of the effect of the wine he did not realize the mistake he did but also did worse as we will see later.

#### 4 - Becoming angry and furious

The bible says his anger burned within him. The affect of anger is worse on the angry person.

Remember; [Be wise, don't be easily angry for wisdom built its house](#)

## Esther 1:13-22

### Queen Vashti dethroned

<sup>13</sup> Then the king said to the wise men who understood the times (for this *was* the king's manner toward all who knew law and justice, <sup>14</sup> those closest to him *being* Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, who had access to the king's presence, *and* who ranked highest in the kingdom): <sup>15</sup> "What *shall we* do to Queen Vashti, according to law, because she did not obey the command of King Ahasuerus *brought to her* by the eunuchs?"

<sup>16</sup> And Memucan answered before the king and the princes: "Queen Vashti has not only wronged the king, but also all the princes, and all the people who *are* in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus. <sup>17</sup> For the queen's behavior will become known to all women, so that they will despise their husbands in their eyes, when they report, 'King Ahasuerus commanded Queen Vashti to be brought in before him, but she did not come.' <sup>18</sup> This very day the *noble* ladies of Persia and Media will say to all the king's officials that they have heard of the behavior of the queen. Thus *there will be* excessive contempt and wrath. <sup>19</sup> If it pleases the king, let a royal decree go out from him, and let it be recorded in the laws of the Persians and the Medes, so that it will not be altered, that Vashti shall come no more before King Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal position to another who is better than she. <sup>20</sup> When the king's decree which he will make is proclaimed throughout all his empire (for it is great), all wives will honor their husbands, both great and small."

<sup>21</sup> And the reply pleased the king and the princes, and the king did according to the word of Memucan. <sup>22</sup> Then he sent letters to all the king's provinces, to each province in its own script, and to every people in their own language, that each man should be master in his own house, and speak in the language of his own people.

#### = The Kings' Anger

Having refused to come at the king's command, "the king was furious" (12). He moved from great love and admiration of his wife the queen, to have instead fire burning within him toward her.

It is wise not to get angry over everything and not to make decisions while Angry; take time in praying and calming down first so that the consequences would not be hard.

The king sought the counsel of the wise men who understood the times, and know law and justice one of those counselors, who said before the king and the princes: *“Queen Vashti has not only wronged the king, but also all the princes and all the people who are in the provinces of king Ahasuerus. For the queen’s behavior will become known to all women, so that they will despise their husbands in their eyes”* (16, 17). And he counseled the king to dethrone her and give her royal position to another who is better than she.

= **The Counsel of not Wise Men**

Memucan counted Vashti’s behavior as a breaking up of the law of nature, and that of the family, which would make man lose his authority over his wife, and the wife despise her husband in her eyes; **assuming that it is the law that support the dominion of man over his wife, and not perceiving that the wise leadership of man within his household, does not draw its strength from laws and commands, as much as from the spirit of the giving love;** according to the words of the apostle Paul, saying: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it; ... Nevertheless, let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself” (Ephesians 5: 25, 33).

= **Application:**

The bible truly teaches that husband is responsible for his wife with love and care just as Jesus Christ had loved the church and put himself for the church to be crucified out of His Love for the church. The same is required from the husband words his wife. Remember the king had made a wrong decision that was selfish and not respecting his wife to start with. [Be wise, don’t be easily angry for wisdom built its house](#)

= **Final decision**

- The king’s final decision is to dethrone Queen Vashti give her royal position to another who is better than she.

**Conclusion:**

God’s plan was to save His people by having Esther becoming the queen instead of Vashti so that when the danger is close, she will intercede on behalf of her people to the king.

**Prayer:** Pray That God will give you wisdom and not to angry over everything, pray for anyone whom you know gets angry easily that God would give them wisdom

## Questions on the lesson »

### Application Questions

What is queen Vashti's offenses? ([1:12-13, 16-17](#))

Why was queen Vashti deposed? ([1:16-17, 19](#))

What is the character of queen Vashti? ([1:12](#))

### Exegetical Questions

Why was Esther chosen to be the new queen?

Who was Esther?

Who was Xerxes' advisor when he decided to depose Vashti?

What did Vashti do that led to her being deposed?

### Group Discussion Questions

What do you think was the reason behind Vashti's refusal to come to the king's banquet? ([1:10-12](#))

Do you think the king's advisers were right in suggesting that he depose Vashti? ([1:13-19](#))

How do you think Vashti felt about being deposed? ([1:20](#))

## **Assignments on Esther 1**

Please read Esther 1 and answer the following questions.

1. Skim the book of Esther and state the theme.
2. Who was the king? Where did he reign – 1:1,2?
3. For whom did the king make a feast? What was the purpose? How long did it last – 1:3-5?
4. Describe how the palace was furnished for the feast in 1:5-7.
5. Who was Vashti? What request did the king make of her? Why – 1:9-11?
6. How did Vashti respond? How did the king react – 1:12? (Think: Do you believe Vashti's action was justified? Explain.)
7. Whom did the king consult regarding the matter? What did he ask them – 1:13-15?
8. Who answered? What concern did he express – 1:16-18?
9. What did he advise the king to decree? What purpose would this serve – 1:19,20?
10. What was special about royal decrees among the Persians and Medes (v19)? What did the king decide to do – 1:21,22?