



Esther: Queen of Persia

Worksheet
by Betty Ann Scott

Esther —Queen of Persia

1. Although the author of Esther is uncertain, it appears the book was written by a Jewish nationalist who was very _____ with King Ahasuerus, Persian laws and the palace of Shushan. He also had direct knowledge of the Hebrew calendar and Jewish _____. Shushan was one of the capitals of this vast Persian empire, and it was also the _____ residence of the Persian kings. This book covers approximately a _____ year period.
2. The book of Esther is about the Jewish people who decided to stay in Persia instead of returning to _____ after the 70 year period of captivity was over. Ezra and Nehemiah shares the same _____ period as Esther [Est. 3:8]. Esther was the daughter of Abihail whose family lived in Shushan, a citadel built above the city for _____. Hadassah which means “myrtle” was Esther’s real Hebrew name, while Esther is her Persian name which means “_____,” probably after the goddess of Ishtar. Although scripture is silent in how her parents died, we do know Mordecai became her _____ guardian. Mordecai was a near relative who took Esther in and loved her as his very own. Esther was _____ to him and sought his practical advice not only as a child but later as a queen. Their bond with one another was strong, and she had great _____ for her adopted father.
*See Insert A
3. King Ahasuerus was the king of _____ during this time. The Persian Empire was vast, extending from India to Ethiopia. The kingdom was divided into 120 individual regions which were broken down into _____ ruled by appointed governors. *Ahasuerus* is the Hebrew name for this king while *Xerxes* is his Greek name. Ahasuerus ruled from 486-465 B.C. [Est. 1:1-2]. He was a _____ and pompous king who conquered nations and stripped them of their riches. He also demanded high _____ and gifts from the people he conquered. He used the money to maintain his _____ lifestyle. This Ahasuerus is a different king from the ones mentioned in Ezra & Daniel.
4. In the third year of his reign, King Ahasuerus held a _____ banquet for all the princes, servants, governors, nobles and military advisors throughout his kingdom. He showed them the _____ of his kingdom, sparing no expense. During this time, Ahasuerus along with his military advisors, no doubt, planned their military strategy to defeat Greece. This banquet lasted for _____ months. Then after this, Ahasuerus made a feast for all those present in the Shushan palace which was large enough to entertain _____ of people [Est. 1:3-8]. Queen Vashti also hosted a banquet for the women in the royal house. When the king’s heart was merry with _____, he demanded that his wife show her beauty before all the drunken men. Queen Vashti refused. Although Queen Vashti lost her royal position, she left with _____ [Est. 1:9-12]. *See Insert B

5. The king was very, very angry at the queen's _____. Upon the advice of his most trusted counselors, they advised the king to dethrone Queen Vashti, lest all the women rebel and _____ their husbands [Est. 1:15, 17-20]. The king agreed to their counsel, and the decree was signed. Letters were sent throughout the _____ informing them of Queen Vashti's removal and exhorting the men to _____ over their homes [Est .1:21-22].

6. "After these things" is most likely referring to _____ years' later when Ahasuerus returned back to Shushan after his embarrassing defeat against Greece. Defeated and rejected, Ahasuerus remembers Vashti and _____ the decree he wrote against her. According to Persian law, once an edict was signed, it could not be _____. His advisors saw his struggle and suggested that a beauty contest should be held from which the king could choose another queen from among the most _____ maidens of his kingdom extending from India to Ethiopia. The king was pleased with this proposal so the edict went out and all the beautiful, young virgins were gathered together and taken to the house of the virgins where they would undergo _____ months of purification. The maiden who would _____ the king most would be chosen as his next queen [Est 2:1-4]. *See Insert C.

7. Mordecai the Jew was from the tribe of Benjamin in which his lineage could be traced from _____ all the way back to Saul's father. Mordecai had a position that gave him access to the palace for he was able to go into the court of the _____ house every day. As stated previously, Mordecai took Esther under his wing. She was not only beautiful and intelligent but deeply _____ to Mordecai. Esther was one of the maidens taken to the house of the _____ to prepare for her night with the king. Mordecai charged Esther not to reveal her _____ nationality at this time [Est.2:5-11].

8. It didn't take Esther long to capture the attention of Hegai, the chief chamberlain by her _____ and she was given special favors by him. After 12 months of purification, each maiden was given whatever she _____ to go before the king [Est. 2:12-14]. When Esther's time came to go before King Ahasuerus, she sought the _____ of Hegai, and took nothing except what Hegai told her. As Esther went before the king, she must have been very _____ for the king to pick her above all the other maidens in the kingdom. Through the providence of God, she found _____ in the king's eyes and he crowned her as the Queen of Persia. With great pomp and circumstance, the king threw a regal feast in her _____ and he distributed gifts throughout the provinces [Est. 2:15-18]. *See Insert D.

9. Esther lived a life of luxury, and she was honored and _____ as queen. She never forgot Mordecai and kept in constant contact with him through her chamberlains and her maidens. She still _____ Mordecai's command not to reveal her Jewish heritage. It was during the second gathering of virgins to the king's harem that Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate. This shows that Mordecai held a position of _____

within the palace complex. It was here that Mordecai overheard a plot to _____ the king. Mordecai relayed it to Esther and she notified King Ahasuerus in Mordecai's _____. These would-be murders were hanged, and Mordecai's loyal deed was _____ in the king's royal book of history [Est.2:21-23].

10. Haman the Agagite, the _____ of the Jewish people, becomes the favorite of the king and is elevated to a high position within the Persian court. The king who was infatuated with Haman allowed him to be _____, and the power and prestige of this honored position went to his head. When Mordecai the Jew would not bow down to him, Haman's anger turned into _____ not only toward Mordecai but the whole Jewish race. Queen Esther would soon learn how _____ Haman's power and hatred really was, and how it would _____ influence the king [Est. 3:1-2, 5-6]. *See Insert E
11. As Mordecai kept refusing to give reverence to Haman, Haman's uncontrolled _____ led him to devise a wicked plot, to deceive the king against "certain people" and to bribe the king by promising to place two _____ dollars in the king's treasury if the king would agree to his plan. The king gave Haman permission by giving Haman his signet _____ to do whatever he wished. The edict was written and then sent out by _____ to every province in the kingdom. It was a license to steal, destroy and to cause all the Jewish people to _____. The date of the massacre of all the Jews was set by the casting of _____ which fell on March 7, 473 B.C. [Est. 3:9-11, 13]. *See Insert F
12. When Mordecai heard about the edict, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes—a sign of _____. He went out into the midst of the city and then to the king's gate—crying and mourning [Est. 4:1-3]. Esther was told about Mordecai's _____, and she sent clothing to him but he refused to take the garments. Esther sent Hatach to the king's gate to find out what was causing Mordecai's _____. Mordecai told Hatach all about the king's edict. Mordecai not only had a _____ of the edict to show the queen, but told Hatach that Esther needed to go before the king to plea for her people. It was then that Esther learned about Haman's _____ plan to massacre her people [Est. 4:7-9].
13. Esther sends word back to Mordecai that if she went before King Ahasuerus without being summoned by him, she could face immediate _____. She had not seen the king in _____ days [Est. 4:11]. The climax of the book of Esther is found in Mordecai words to Queen Esther for he tells her if she does nothing, think not that you will _____ death. He was convinced that _____ would save the Jewish nation one way or the other. Mordecai wisely reminds Esther that her rise to the throne was no _____ and that she was there for such a time as this]. Now is the time for Esther to reveal her Jewish _____ [Est.4:13-14].

14. These words must have struck at the _____ of Queen Esther for she courageously sends back a message to Mordecai. She tells Mordecai three things: 1) gather together all the Jews in Shusan and fast _____ days; 2) she and her maidens will also fast; and 3) after the fast, she would go before the king and risk her _____ to plead for her people. The purpose of this fast, no doubt, involved prayer which showed Esther's _____ on God. Mordecai did what Esther requested and all the Jews of Shushan _____ along with Esther for three days. *See Insert G
15. When the fast was over, Esther made herself ready to go before the king. Esther, in her _____ robes and as stunning as ever, courageously stood at the inner gate waiting for the king to acknowledge her. Would he extend the golden scepter to her or would she be put to death for going before the king without being _____? As she waited patiently, King Ahasuerus extended the golden scepter to her and she went in before the king [Est. 5:1-2]. "What is your request?" the king asked her. With _____ and wisdom, Esther invited the king and Haman to her house for a banquet that day. At the banquet, the king asked her _____, What is your request? She invited the king and Haman to a _____ banquet the following day, and she would then tell the king her request [Est. 5:8].
16. Haman left the banquet with a _____ heart. Imagine him having dinner with the king and queen. His joy was short-lived for the scripture says Haman was "full of indignation against Mordecai" when Mordecai once again would not _____ down to him. Haman _____ put his hateful thoughts of Mordecai aside, and gathered his wife and friends to tell them about his good _____ with the king and queen. With pride and arrogance, Haman told them he was invited back by Queen Esther for a second banquet the next day. However in spite of all this, Haman could not be truly _____ as long as Mordecai the Jew was _____. So Zeresh his wife and all his friends that were with him told Haman to build _____, and then go before the king to get permission to kill Mordecai the next day. So Haman was pleased with their advice and built the gallows to _____ Mordecai [Est.5:13-14].
17. In the sovereignty of God, the king could not _____ that very night and asked for the book of chronicles to be brought to him so he could read it. That night he read how Mordecai _____ his life by revealing a plot to kill him. When King Ahasuerus learned that _____ was done for Mordecai's good deed, he inquired "who was in the court?" By the providence of God, Haman entered the court at that very _____ to talk to the king about hanging Mordecai [Est. 6:1, 4]. Before Haman could say a word, the king asked Haman's _____ on what he would do for a man who found favor in the king's sight. Thinking the king was talking about _____, Haman told the king what he would do. Little did Haman realize that his pride would soon bring his _____ [Est. 6:7-9]. *See Insert H.
18. Taking the advice of Haman, King Ahasuerus commands him to put his _____ robes on Mordecai and lead him on the king's horse throughout Shushan, announcing the

king's favor on Mordecai. Haman was mortified and _____ by this and after he completed the king's bidding, he hurried home in great _____ to tell his wife and friends what happened to him. Zeresh and his friends, now realizing that Haman was in serious trouble, predicted his impending _____ if Mordecai was of the Jewish seed. At that moment, the king's chamberlains came to take Haman to Esther's second banquet [Est. 6:13-14]. *See Insert I

19. King Ahasuerus and Haman went to the queen's banquet. For the _____ time, the king asked Esther about her petition. This time Queen Esther pleads for her life and her people by _____ the edict that was signed to exterminate her people [Esther 7:3-4]. The king becomes annoyed and wants to know who would do such a thing. With _____ and conviction, she tells him the mastermind of this evil plan is Haman. The king storms out to the palace garden probably trying to compose himself, realizing Haman had _____ him. Haman, afraid of the king's wrath, was pleading to Esther for his _____. When the king comes back into the palace, he saw Haman near his wife. The king takes the worst possible scenario and accuses Haman of _____ the queen [Est.7:6, 8-9]. To add to the king's increasing wrath, one of the king's chamberlains told the king of Haman's plan to hang _____ on the gallows he built. The tables turned on Haman. His life was condemned and justice was served for the king ordered Haman's _____ on the same gallows he prepared for Mordecai [Est.7:10].
20. The king gave Queen Esther the _____ of Haman, and Mordecai was given Haman's _____ next to the king, and Esther gave Mordecai the administration of Haman's property [Est. 8:1-2]. *See Insert J. Esther comes again before the king with tears and _____ with the king to save her people from destruction [Est. 8:4-6]. Since the king could not change his previous decree, he could issue a decree to _____ the one Haman devised. The king then gives Mordecai the authority of overseeing and distributing the new counter-decree to all the provinces. This decree gave the Jews the right to _____ themselves against their enemies [Est. 8:10-11]. *See Insert K.
21. Mordecai, now a royal _____, was dressed in the royal colors of the Persian Empire with a golden crown on his head. He was not only held in high _____ by the king but by all the people throughout the empire. As word of the new edict spread, the whole city of Shushan rejoiced with _____. The Jewish people were elated and celebrated by having a feast-like holiday throughout the kingdom. Many people became _____ because they realized that the God of the Jews was way more _____ than any of their Persian deities [Est. 8:15-17].
22. The day of the massacre of the Jews finally came — the 13th of Adar [February-March]. The Jews now had the _____ instead of their enemies, and the fear of the Jews passed over the land. Even the rulers of the provinces as well as the lieutenants, deputies and officers of the king wisely decided to _____ the Jews

because of Mordecai's great _____ among the people [Est. 9:3-4]. On that day, many enemies of the Jews were killed— 500 men in Shushan alone as well as the 10 sons of _____ were killed. Although the Jews had the right to take their enemies' spoil, they did not lay their hands on the enemies' _____ [Est. 9:10, 12].

23. Esther comes before the king again asking the king to _____ the massacre for a second day in Shushan. Esther may have heard of more _____ coming upon her people. She also asked the king to publicly hang Haman's already dead sons for all to see—a strong _____ to their enemies. The king granted both requests [Est. 9:13-15]. While Shushan had an _____ day of fighting, the rest of the provinces rested on Adar 14th after 75,000 of the enemy was slain. Shushan fought on the 14th killing another 300 men in Shushan, and the Jews rested on the 15th of Adar. The enemy was now _____, and there was much gladness and feasting within Shushan and throughout all the Persian kingdom [Est. 9:18-19]. *See Insert L
24. Mordecai wrote letters to all the providences establishing a time of feasting to commemorate the _____ deliverance of the Jews from their enemies. This day of remembrance is known as the Feast of Purim [Hebrew word for “_____”], for Haman cast lots for the date of the Jewish massacre [Est. 9:20-22; 26, 28]. Later, Queen Esther and Mordecai added _____ to this feast, and it is known as the Fast of Esther which is done the day _____ Purim — Adar 13. The Feast of Purim is celebrated yearly on Adar 14 by the Jewish people throughout the world today, and is one of the most _____ of all the Jewish holidays. It involves exchanging gifts of food and drink, giving to the _____, having a festive meal and reading the book of Esther [Est. 9:29-32]. *See Insert M
25. King Ahasuerus collected a _____ from all his subjects throughout the kingdom, maybe to fund his disastrous defeat with Greece. Chapter 10 of Esther is believed to have been written after King Ahasuerus' _____ in 465 B.C. for all his powerful deeds and exploits were written in the chronicles of the kings. Mordecai, like Joseph and Daniel were elevated to _____ royal positions within foreign Gentile kingdoms [Est. 10:1-3]. Mordecai held his position for approximately _____ years. Mordecai as well as Queen Esther were dearly loved and highly respected by all the Jews for they sought both _____ and peace for their people.
26. Although the name of God is never mentioned in the _____ verses of Esther, it was officially accepted in the canon by the early Church Fathers. God's _____ is clearly seen throughout the book in securing the victory of the Jewish people from the evil hands of Haman who was _____-inspired to destroy all the Jews throughout the Persian empire. Events like the dethroning of Vashti as queen, the king's _____ of Esther over all the other maidens, Esther being crowned queen, Mordecai's _____ of an assassination plot against the king, the sleepless night of the King Ahasuerus, Haman's fall from power, the _____ of anti-Semitism and

the Jewish victory over their enemies were all events orchestrated by God Himself. God used the wisdom of Mordecai and the courage of Esther to bring about His _____ and preservation for the Jewish people in Persia.

Conclusion: Only two books in the Bible are named after women —Ruth and Esther. These two books are held in high _____ by the Jewish people, and both of these books have Jewish feasts connected to their observances. Esther is one of the most beloved and _____ women of the Old Testament. The book of Esther is very important historically for it deals with the preservation of the Jewish people in Persia who did not return to Jerusalem during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. In God’s providential _____, He raised up two ordinary heroes —Mordecai and Esther. Through a series of God-ordained events, God strategically placed Esther in her _____ position as the Queen of Persia so she would be able to speak on behalf of her people who had no voice. Her beauty, intelligence, and _____ spirit were clearly evident as she stood before the king waiting for him to acknowledge her with his golden scepter. However, her real strength and _____ came because she sought God’s power and guidance through fasting and prayer. May Esther’s life and legacy _____ us today to be the women of God that we should be in “such a time as this.”

Inserts for the Book of Esther

Insert A

All the Women of the Bible, Herbert Lockyer, p. 52, Alexander Whyte talking about Mordecai:

Mordecai brought Esther up, and his one love in his whole life after his love for Israel and for the God of Israel, was his love for his little adopted daughter. . . He stood by and watched his sister's child lifted up in a moment from her exile and poverty, and actually made the queen of the greatest empire then standing on the face of the earth.

Insert B

Women of the Bible, Frances Vander Velde, p. 126, the removal of Vashti as queen:

The seven days of feasting are ending with great hilarity and the vain king, pleased with himself and "merry with wine," decides to climax the festivities by showing off his greatest treasure, his beautiful wife, Queen Vashti. The Queen, who is entertaining the women at a royal feast, refuses to come at the King's command and he is furious. He has been disobeyed! Following the advice of his councilors, Vashti is deposed. So Vashti leaves the grandeur of the palace in obscurity, but not in shame, for in her refusal to be disgraced she shows dignity, nobility, and respect for the national custom which does not allow its women to appear unveiled in the presence of men, least of all, drunken, revelling men. So Vashti, shining like a meteor for a moment, fades from view.

Insert C

Women of the Bible, Frances Vander Velde, p.127, regarding the young maidens' purification process:

The king agreed, and soon fair maidens from every part of the empire were brought to Shushan and were taken into the house of the virgins by eunuchs, who provided each one with oils and perfumes for their purification (2:9, 12), seven maiden attendants, and any apparel they might desire to wear for the evening that each girl went in to the King's royal apartment. The one with whom the King was the most pleased would be crowned with Vashti's crown. . . [*The young virgins not selected*] were in the morning assigned to the house of the women where they remained as the King's concubines (2:14).

Insert D

All the Women of the Bible, Herbert Locykyer, p. 52, on the king Ahasuerus' marriage to Esther:

The story of Esther as we have it in the book bearing her name is a romance of captivity in Persia, for a king set at nought Persian law and prejudice to make her his queen. The marriage of Ahasuerus to Esther, a Jewess, was against Persian law which held that one of the royal line must marry a wife belonging to the seven great Persian families.

Insert E

Women of the Bible, Frances Vander Velde, p. 129, regarding Haman's uncontrolled hatred:

Haman, the Agagite of Amalekite descent, perhaps from the royal family of that Arabian tribe, had risen to highest favor in the Persian court. The King and Haman were constantly together. The king was infatuated with his favorite that he commanded (with no obvious reason) ostentatious reverence for him. The hate of the Amalekite for the Jew had survived the centuries, and when Mordecai the Jew refused to bow before him, Haman was beside himself with anger.

Insert F

Ryrie Study Bible Expanded Edition, "Esther", p. 779, discussing the casting of lots:

First month . . . Twelfth year (Mar.-Apr. 474) more than four years after Esther had become queen. . . Haman, being very superstitious, cast the lot in order to determine the most propitious [favorable] time for carrying out his plot against the Jews. The lot fell on the twelfth month [Feb-Mar. 473], which not only gave Haman time to prepare but also, in the overruling providence of God, gave the Jews time to thwart his plan.

Insert G

Women of the Bible, Frances Vander Velde, p. 130, regarding Esther's decision to go before the king:

When he [Mordecai] insisted "who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (a challenge to every Christian since) Esther knew that she must try to save her people. Though elevation to a high position is a test of character, Esther had not forgotten her father's God, nor lost her love for her people, nor her moral courage. We see faith and trust in God in her request that the Jews of Shushan fast. . . Her own fasting is indicative of her religious convictions and of habitual devotions. With sincerity, earnestness and courage, bouyed up by faith in the power and providence of God, Esther sent the word: "I go in to the King, which is not according to the law: and if I perish I perish."

Insert H

Ruth & Esther, John MacArthur, p. 88, regarding Haman's destructive pride:

What the arrogant Haman didn't know was that years earlier, Mordecai had saved the king's life and that Mordecai's young cousin was Queen Esther! Together these two facts would cause Haman's murderous plot to quickly unravel. In fact, the tables would be utterly turned, proving that "pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18).

Insert I

Ryrie Study Bible Expanded Edition, p. 781-782 regarding God's providence in Esther's life:

It was providential that Esther apparently lost the courage to expose Haman before the king at her first banquet and so held a second one the next day. During the intervening night, the events of chapter 6 took place, making it much easier for Esther to expose Haman at the second banquet.

Insert J

Ruth & Esther, John MacArthur, p. 98, explaining the house of Haman:

The property of a traitor by Persian custom returned to the king. In this case, the king gave it to his queen, Esther, who put Mordecai in charge of it (8:2). The fate of Haman's wife, Zeresh, and his wise men is unknown (5:14; 6:12-13). Haman's ten sons later died (9:7-10).

Insert K

Ryrie Study Bible Expanded Edition, p. 784 regarding the counterdecree to Haman's decree:

Though the king could not revoke the previous decree Haman devised (cf. Dan. 6-8, 12, 15), there was no reason why a counter-decree could not be issued. Mordecai proceeded to issue such a decree with the king's approval, thereby permitting the Jews to defend themselves, kill their attackers, and take spoils on the day Haman's decree was to become effective. The counter-decree was issued on June 25, 474 B.C. and disseminated posthaste, allowing the Jews about eight months to prepare to defend themselves.

Insert L

Ruth & Esther, John MacArthur, p. 116 talking about the book of Esther:

Some cynic has quipped that there is no such thing as a happy ending. He or she obviously has never read the Book of Esther. . . Like a first-rate suspense novel, this true narrative of the Jews who remained in Persia following the exile takes the reader on an emotional roller-coaster ride. From surprise to despair and from fear to triumph, Esther records how the invisible (but powerful!) hand of God protected His people and provided great blessing for them in a foreign land.

Insert M

Ruth & Esther, John MacArthur, p. 116 discussing how the Feast of Purim came about:

How did this unlikely holiday come about? Esther's charm and beauty won the king's heart. Mordecai's honesty and wisdom won the king's gratitude. When the crisis arose, therefore, this God-fearing tandem was able to use their position and influence to make a life and death difference. The Jewish people were spared; the glory of God was revealed.