

Time

- 3rd - 12th yr. of reign of Ahasuerus (**1:3...3:7**), 9-10 yrs., 483-474 BC
 - Ahasuerus = Xerxes - 486-464 B.C. - Persian ruler
 - Called "the Great." Son of Darius Hystaspis.
 - His son Artaxerses I (Artaxerxes Longimanus)
- The events of Esther occur during the c. 58 yr. gap between **Ezra ch6** and **ch7 (6:15, 518 BC...7:8, 458 BC)**.

Object

- Show God's providential care of his people **4:14**
The name of God does not occur in Esther. But, this accords with the thrust of the book pointing to the Unseen Power active in human affairs. The turn of events causes one to ask WHY these happened WHEN they did the WAY they did; WHO brought it about and for what purpose or end?
- Origin of the feast of Purim - **9:20-32**, esp. **vv26,32**

Author: unknown

Five principle characters:

1. Ahasuerus, the King = Xerxes I, 486-464 BC, **1:1,2**
2. Vashti - the Queen, **1:9**
3. Esther - Mordecai's cousin, **2:7,15**
4. Mordecai - Esther's cousin and guardian, **2:7,15,20**
5. Haman - chief official under Ahasuerus, **3:1,2**

Contents

This is a simple reading exercise. Read the book and complete the information below. This will give a brief synopsis of the contents. The first one is given as an example.

1:1-9 - The King's feast

1:10-12 - _____

1:13-22 - _____

2:1-4 - _____

2:5-18 - _____

2:19-23 - _____

3:1-6 - _____

3:7-15 - _____

4:1-17 - _____

5:1-3 - _____

5:4-8 - _____

5:9-14 - _____

6:1-14 - _____

7:1-6 - _____

7:7-10 - _____

8:1-17 - _____

9:1-19 - _____

9:20-32 - _____

10:1-3 - _____

Chapter 1

1. Review your synopsis (in lesson one) of chapter one. (three divisions)
2. Who are the principal characters in chapter one? _____
3. Make notes to discuss how the events of chapter one “get the wheels turning” for the critical events that will develop as the story unfolds. Consider the *people*, the *atmosphere*, the *timing*, etc. _____

Chapter 2

1. Review your synopsis (in lesson one) of chapter two. This will give a brief synopsis of its contents. (three divisions)
2. Who are the two principal characters introduced in chapter two? Note whatever information that is provided about that them that plays into the developing of the story. _____

3. What event is recorded toward the end of chapter two that later becomes pivotal to the story? _____

4. Note how these events, if isolated, may seem like happenstance, but came to play a vital role in the successful outcome to the potential disaster this story relates. Define “providence” as it relates to Divine providence. _____

Chapter 3

1. Review your synopsis (in lesson one) of chapter three. This will give a brief synopsis of its contents. (two divisions)
2. Who is the fifth pivotal character introduced in chapter three? _____

3. What event fills him with rage and why does it affect him this way?

4. What is his plan to satisfy his rage and how does he persuade the king to support his plan? _____

5. If he had been successful, how would this have impacted the rest of Biblical history? _____

Chapter 4

1. Review your synopsis (in lesson one) of chapter four. What is this chapter about? _____

2. How did the queen learn about the plot against her people? _____

3. Why was she hesitant to go to the king about it? _____

4. How did her cousin persuade her? Note especially the statement at the end of verse 14. _____

Chapter 5

1. Review your synopsis (in lesson one) of chapter five. This will give a brief synopsis of its contents. (three divisions)

2. When the king favorably received Esther, asked what was troubling her, and offered to grant any request she had, did she tell the king about the plot against her people? _____ What was her request at this first time? _____

3. Note how the events of the first half of this chapter set the stage for the events of the second half. Coincidence?

Chapter 6

1. Review your synopsis (in lesson one) of chapter six. What is this chapter about? _____

2. For thought: What if the king had slept well that night? What if Haman had arrived 30 minutes earlier? How would either of these affected the turn of events following?
3. What is the reason Haman's wife and wise men believed that Haman's future may be very dark? _____
4. What might account for their view? _____

Chapter 7

1. Review your synopsis (in lesson one) of chapter seven. This will give a brief synopsis of its contents. (two divisions)
2. Note the timing of events that sealed Haman's certain and immediate judgment, **vv7-10**.
3. Read **Psa 10:1-6**.

Chapter 8

1. Review your synopsis (in lesson one) of chapter four. What is this chapter about? _____
2. Observe the chronological notations in **8:1...9**. Compare **3:12**. How much time between the decree to destroy the Jews and the decree to allow them to defend themselves? _____
3. What was Esther's first request of the king to avoid the Jews destruction (**vv5,6**)? _____
Why could he not grant this request? _____
4. Since he could not grant her first request, what did the king do to allow Esther to save her people? _____
What was the result, **v9f**? _____

Chapter 9

1. Review your synopsis (in lesson one) of chapter nine. This will give a brief synopsis of its contents. (two divisions)
 2. What terms are used in the text to describe those who assaulted the Jews? **vv1,2,5,16,22** _____

 3. Why did some assist instead of assault the Jews? **vv3,4** _____

 4. Ten men the Jews killed are singled out for mention. Who are they (not their names, but what they have in common)? **vv7-10** _____
 5. What is the difference in what the Jews in the city of Susa were allowed to do and those in the rural areas? _____

- This explains the two days set aside to be observed annually.
6. What was this two day annual feast called? _____

Chapter 10

1. Review your synopsis (in lesson one) of chapter ten. What is this chapter about? _____
2. What is the difference in how King Ahasuerus and Haman used their authority and how Mordecai used his? _____

Compare **Mt 20:25-28**.