

Esther Outline

Introduction: Esther is just a flat out great story. It's set in the time of the exile, and tells the story of a young woman's rise to power and how she ultimately uses this power to save her people. Though placed in the History section of the Christian Bible, Esther was written late and only made it into the final section of the Hebrew Bible, and only that after much debate. The important thing with Esther isn't so much the historicity of the story, but the thematic quality of the story- the threat against the Jews; and the perennial tension every individual faces between speaking out and self-protection.

Chapter 1: King Ahaseurus, drunk, orders Queen Vashti to come to him, and when she refuses he deposes her that "every man should be a master in his own house."

Chapter 2: Introduction of Mordecai and his adopted daughter Hadasseh/Esther, Esther abducted and taken into the palace; the king makes Esther queen; Mordecai overhears plot to kill the king and, through Esther, saves the king's life

Chapter 3: Mordecai refuses to bow before Haman; Haman plots to destroy the Jews; Haman gets king to order destruction of the Jews

Chapter 4: Mordecai implores Esther to use her influence, "For such a time as this" speech

Chapter 5: Esther gets the king to grant her a banquet; Haman has gallows erected for Mordecai

Chapter 6: King remembers Mordecai's good deed to him; Haman made to honor Mordecai

Chapter 7: Esther asks king to spare the Jews; Haman hung on his own gallows

Chapter 8: King gives signet to Mordecai; laws concerning Jews destroyed

Chapter 9: Jews strike down enemies; feast of purim initiated to remember

Chapter 10: Mordecai ends second in command to the king

Stories to know: Ahaseurus' orders regarding Vashti (Chapter 1:10-22); Mordecai's speech (Chapter 4:1-17); description of the feast of Purim (Chapter 9:24-28)