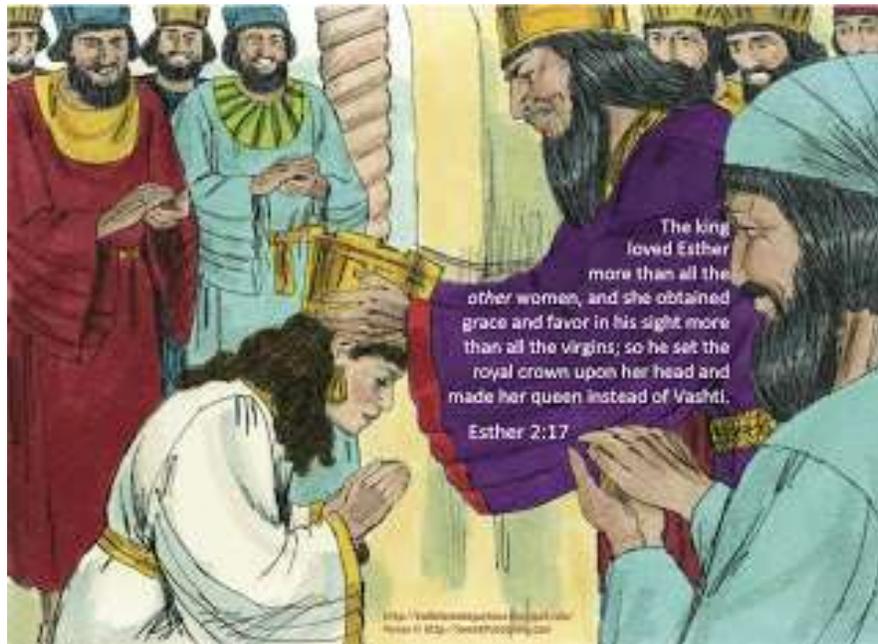


# The Story of ESTHER

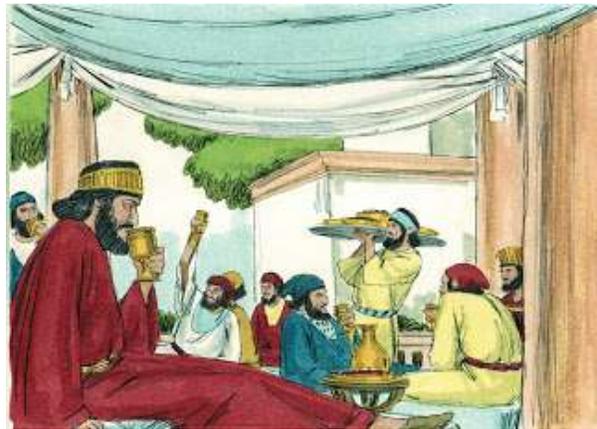


# LESSON 1

## Vashti is Removed ~ Esther is Made Queen

*Esther 1 – 2:18*

When King Ahasuerus (also known as Xerxes) had been king for 3 years, he had a feast for his princes and servants. He showed them how great his kingdom was. It lasted 180 days! When that feast was over, he had another feast that lasted 7 days. His queen, Queen Vashti, had a feast for the women in the royal palace. On the seventh day, the king was feeling happy and told some men to bring in Queen Vashti to him, wearing her crown, so he could show his friends how beautiful she was.



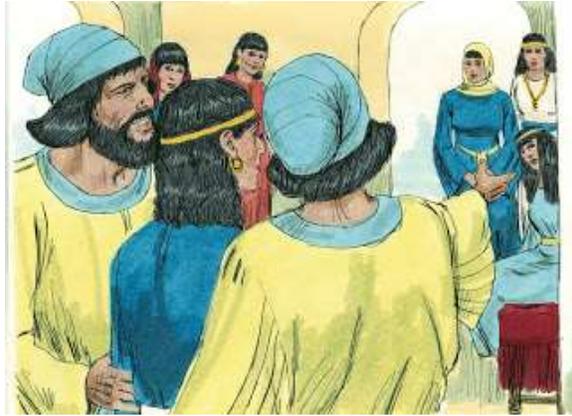
But, the queen refused to go to the king and he was angry! Nobody refuses the king! King



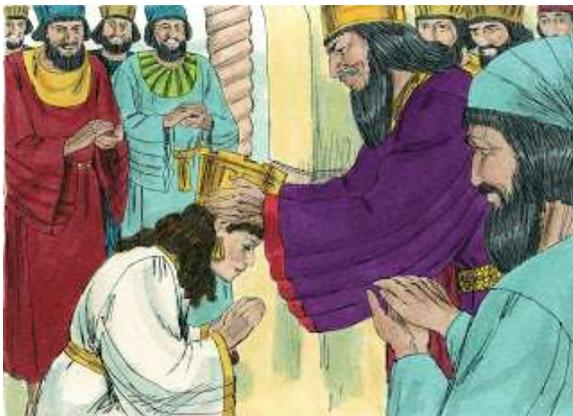
Ahasuerus asked his wise men what he should do for this insult. They told him that she not only wronged the king, but the princes and the people. Her refusal would be known to all the women in the province, and then they will look down on their own husbands.

The wise men told the king to make a new decree. If the queen would not come to the king, then the king would give her royal position to another that deserved it more. So, King Ahasuerus sent out letters to the provinces in their own languages.

The king's servants gathered all the beautiful young women for the king to choose a new queen. Mordecai was raising his cousin, Esther (his uncle's daughter [2:7]), because her parents had been killed. She was beautiful. She was taken with the other women for the king to see, and he liked her. King Ahasuerus moved her to the best place for the women in the palace. But she did not tell the king about her people. Mordecai had told her not to mention that her family was Jewish.



Every day Mordecai walked in front of where the women were so he could learn how Esther was. It took the women a whole year to get ready to present themselves before King Ahasuerus! Once a woman went before the king, she couldn't go before him again, unless HE called for her by name.



The king loved Esther more than all the other women. (2:16) King Ahasuerus put the crown on her head and made her the queen, instead of Vashti. He made a great feast and called it the "Feast of Esther".

# QUESTIONS

## Vashti is Removed ~ Esther is Made Queen

*Esther 1 - 2:18*

1. What did King Ahasuerus invite his princes and servants to?  
(1:3)

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2. Did King Ahasuerus like Queen Vashti refusing to come to his feast? (1:12)

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3. It took the women a whole \_\_\_\_\_ to get ready to present themselves to the king.

4. Why did King Ahasuerus pick Esther to be queen? (2:17)

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5. What secret did Esther keep from the king? (2:20)

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## LESSON 2

### Difficult Times for Mordecai & Esther

*Esther 2:19 – 4:14*

After a time, when Mordecai was sitting out by the gate, he overheard 2 of the king's doorkeepers talking. Their names were Teresh and Bigtan. They were angry at the king and were plotting to kill him!

Mordecai told Queen Esther about this and she told King Ahasuerus what Mordecai had told her. When an investigation was done, the doorkeepers were both hanged! No one ever thanked Mordecai for stopping the plot to kill the king.



After that, Haman was made second in command to the king.

Meanwhile, Haman loved to be praised by men! When Haman would walk in the king's gate, everyone bowed to him...except for Mordecai. He knew that God doesn't want us to bow before anyone



except Him. Remember the commandment, *Thou shalt have no other gods before me?* This made Haman so angry, and when he found out that Mordecai was a Jew, Haman decided to kill *all* the Jews!

Haman convinced King Ahasuerus to make a new decree (law) to kill the Jews for not keeping the king's laws. Haman told King Ahasuerus their laws were different and it wasn't right to have their own laws. So King Ahasuerus gave his signet ring to Haman so he could write a new decree, which they sent out into the provinces. What Haman did not know, was that Esther herself was a Jew. Can you see how hatred can cause people to do terrible things?



The Jews mourned this new law, especially Mordecai. Queen Esther was very upset when she heard and sent one of her men to ask Mordecai why this had happened. Mordecai explained everything and asked her to go before the king and plead with him for her people. Except there was one

problem ~ everyone knew there was a law about going in to see the king, uninvited. If King Ahasuerus did not hold out his scepter to you when you entered, you would die. Queen Esther had not been called to see the king for a month.

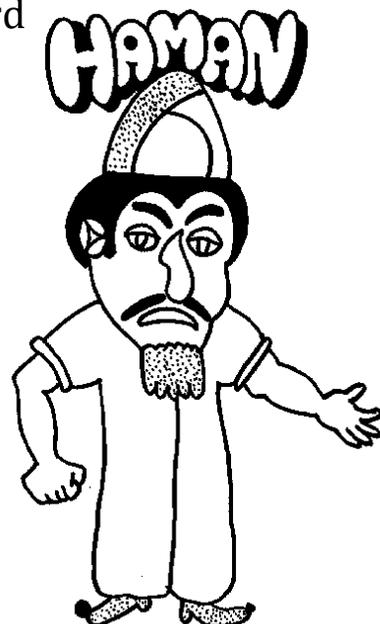


# QUESTIONS

## Difficult Times for Mordecai & Esther

*Esther 2:19 – 4:14*

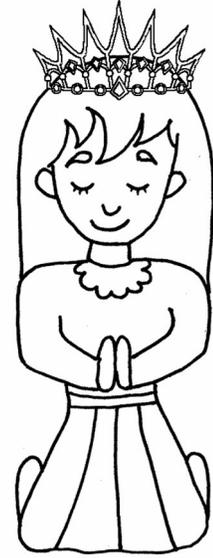
1. Mordecai overheard \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ plotting to kill the king! (2:21)
2. Did the king thank Mordecai for saving his life? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Why did Haman refuse to bow down to Haman?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What evil plot did Haman convince the king to carry out against the Jews? (3:9)  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What did the Jews do when they heard about the new law? (4:3)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Esther risks and prays for her life and the salvation of her people. She has the courage to go and see the King. She invites the King and Haman to a feast two nights in a row. At the second banquet she confesses that she is a Jew and foils Haman's plans to kill her people.

# ESTHER the QUEEN

## Anagram



### Word List:

Brave, Haman, crown, fasting, jealousy,  
Jewish, Mordecai, prayer, queen, saved,

aberv \_\_\_\_\_

ehijsw \_\_\_\_\_

eenqu \_\_\_\_\_

aeprry \_\_\_\_\_

acdeimor \_\_\_\_\_

adesv \_\_\_\_\_

cnorw \_\_\_\_\_

afjinst \_\_\_\_\_

aejlosry \_\_\_\_\_

aamhn



# LESSON 3

## Esther's Banquet

*Esther 4:14 – 6*

Queen Esther told Mordecai to have all the Jews fast (not eat or drink) for 3 days. She would also do this with her maids. And then ... she would go into the king, and if he didn't hold out the scepter, she would die.



On the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, she put on her robes and went in to the king's court. When King Ahasuerus saw her, he held out his scepter! She went close to the scepter and touched it. Think about how she must have been feeling. Her heart had to be racing and she must have been scared, but she did it! King

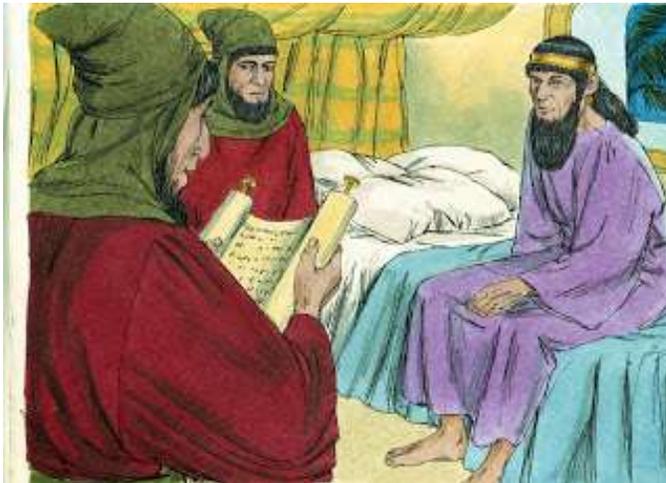
Ahasuerus asked her "What do you wish, Queen Esther? Anything you want, up to half of the kingdom, I will give it to you."

She asked if the king and Haman would come to a banquet that she had made ready that *very day*. King Ahasuerus called Haman to come quickly and they went to the banquet.



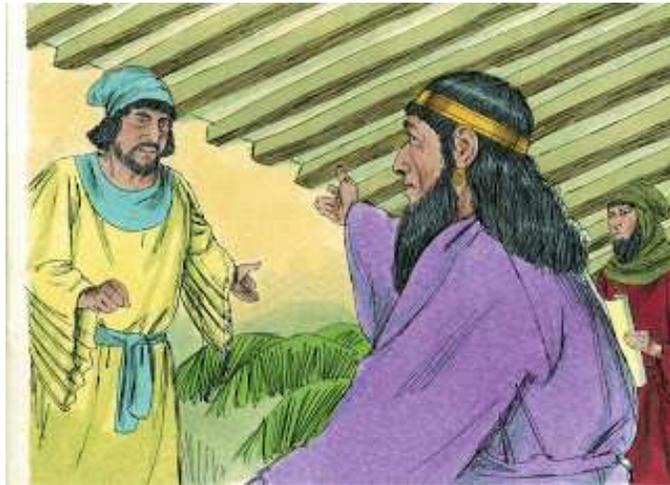
While they ate, King Ahasuerus asked Queen Esther what her petition was. Queen Esther replied to King Ahasuerus that she would like them to come to a banquet *again* the next day.

Haman went home that night and bragged to his wife and friends about his position with the king and his power. Haman told them about how Queen Esther had a banquet just for him and the king! But he told them “I just can’t stand to see that Jew, Mordecai, sitting at the king’s gate not bowing down to me.” So, Haman's wife and friends suggested that he build a gallows and hang Mordecai on it. Haman liked the idea, so he started building it.



That night, King Ahasuerus couldn’t sleep, so he had the records book brought to him. He read about Mordecai saving him from the two gate keepers that had planned to kill him. King Ahasuerus asked his servants what had been done as a “thank you” and they told him that nothing had been done.

Haman had just come to the court, so King Ahasuerus told him to enter. The king asked Haman what he thought should be done to honour someone that helped the king. Haman answered King Ahasuerus that the person should be permitted to wear royal



robes and a crown, while riding on a horse that the king had ridden. Then, parade him around in the city calling out to everyone that, “The king is honouring this man!”



Haman thought the king would do all this for *him* – after all, Haman thought, who else could he possibly want to honour? But King Ahasuerus told Haman to do it all for *Mordecai*! Even worse, Haman was the one that had to lead the horse and tell everyone that this man

(Mordecai) is being honoured by the king! Haman was so upset!

After he had finished parading Mordecai through the city, he went home to mourn, and covered his head with sackcloth. His wife and wise men told Haman that if Mordecai was a Jew, then surely he was in trouble! And then, right as they finished talking, Haman was called to go to the next banquet with the king and queen.

# QUESTIONS

## Esther's Banquet

*Esther 4:14 - 6*

1. Esther asked Mordecai and all the people to \_\_\_\_\_  
for \_\_\_\_\_ days, before she went in to the king. (4:15-16)
2. Esther had to go before the king – but if he didn't hold out  
the \_\_\_\_\_ to her, then she would be put to  
\_\_\_\_\_. (5:2)
3. What did Haman start to build for Mordecai? (5:14)  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What did Haman think should be done for the person the king  
would want to honour? (6:7-9)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Who did the king decide to honour instead? (6:10)  
\_\_\_\_\_



# LESSON 4

## Salvation Comes for Esther and Her People!

*Esther 7 - 10*

So again, during this banquet, King Ahasuerus asked Queen Esther what she wanted ~ he would give her up to half of the kingdom! Queen Esther told King Ahasuerus "If I have found favour with you, please spare me and my people from the decree of death for the Jews." The king asked her who would dare to do such a thing, and she told the king, "The wicked man is Haman!"

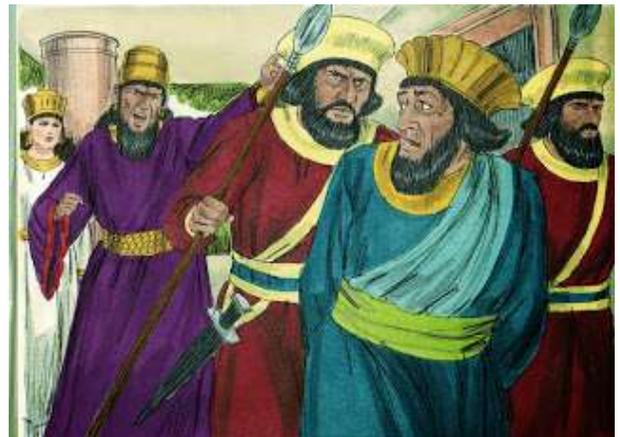


King Ahasuerus was so angry, he went to the garden to think, and while he was in the garden, Haman begged Queen Esther to save



him. Haman fell across the couch just when King Ahasuerus came back in and that made the king even angrier! King Ahasuerus shouted "Now you will attack my queen also?!"

One of the servants saw the gallows Haman had made, and told King Ahasuerus they were being built for Mordecai. The king said, "Hang Haman on it!" So, they hanged Haman instead!



King Ahasuerus gave Mordecai his signet ring and gave him Haman's position (second in command, after the king!) And Queen Esther once again went to see the king. King Ahasuerus held out his scepter



and she explained about the law Haman had made about killing the Jews. King Ahasuerus told Mordecai to "Write out a new law and seal it with my signet ring so that no one else can change the law, and your people will be saved."

And that document was sent out into all the provinces. The Jews were saved!! The Jews were so happy about their salvation, that they held a feast and had a party. They also sent "portions", or gifts, of food to the poor.

Of course, WE know that it was *God* who saved the Jew's, working through Queen Esther, Mordecai, and King Ahasuerus.



The End

# LESSON 5

## How the Jews Celebrate Purim Today



Purim means “lot” (as by means of a broken piece) from the root word “to crush, or bring to nought”. Haman certainly tried to crush, or bring to nought, the Jewish people, and yet he himself was brought to nought – being hanged on the same gallows he build for Mordecai!

Purim is celebrated with a lighthearted and fun attitude, and is happy festival. It’s really a celebration of how all through the ages the Jews have encountered many “Haman’s” who have sought to destroy them, and yet God has saved them time and time again from total destruction.

While there are some non-scriptural traditions that are followed during the Feast of Purim, the main ones are taken directly from the Bible.

In Esther 9:22 it reads...

*“As the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day: that they should make them **days of feasting** and joy, and of **sending portions one to another**, and **gifts to the poor.**”*

And in Esther 9:26-28 it reads...

*“Wherefore they called these days Purim after the name of Pur. Therefore for all the words of this letter, and of that which they had seen concerning this matter, and which had come unto them, The Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so as it should not fail, that they would **keep these two days** according to their writing, and according to their appointed time **every year**; And that these days **should be remembered** and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and that **these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them.**”*

# THE FOUR MITZVOT OF PURIM

Jewish tradition says that there are four things that Jews *must* do during the celebration of Purim. Mitzvot means “commandment”, or “duty to be fulfilled”.

## 1. Give Gifts to the Poor



Just as they did in the days of Queen Esther, Jews today give gifts to the poor during Purim. The gifts will usually be money, but other gifts are acceptable as well.

## 2. Read/Listen the Megillah



All those 6 years old and up must listen carefully to the reading of the account (or story) of Esther during the Feast of Purim. This account is called the Megillah. It is simply the story of Esther, and we read it each year during our daily bible readings, don't we? One fun thing that Jewish children do is to make lots of noise every time they hear the name “Haman” during the reading. This is meant to drown out the name of that wicked man! Children make groggers, or “noise makers” to prepare for this special reading.

## 3. Give Food Gifts to One Another



The idea of giving food gifts to one another is to ensure that no one is without a feast during Purim. Both the giving of gifts to the poor and the food gifts to one another, recall the love that Mordecai and Queen Esther stirred up among all Jews...for they had to work together to defend themselves from the evil decree of Haman.

## 4. Make a Feast

Again, just as they did during Queen Esther's day, the Jews prepare a meal to share with family and friends, in memory of the feast that was prepared to celebrate the salvation of the Jews from Haman's wicked plot to destroy them. For some Jews it also represents the banquet Queen Esther held for King Ahasuerus and Haman, in that it was there that their process of salvation began – with Haman's wicked plot being exposed.



# THE FOOD OF PURIM

## Hamantaschen

The most popular food served during Purim is a triangle-shaped cookie with filling inside, usually poppy seeds.

The word hamantaschen literally means “Haman’s pockets”. The cookie is supposed to represent Haman’s pockets, and the poppy seeds represent the bribe money stuffed in Haman’s pockets. Today, there are many different ways to make hamantaschen, with many different fillings. Can you guess what filling will be in the hamantaschen for *our* CHC Purim feast?

In Israel, the cookies are known as Oznei Haman meaning “Haman’s ears” in Hebrew, which some say comes from the old practice of cutting off a criminal’s ears before hanging him. *Yuck!*



Another popular interpretation is that they represent Haman’s hat. Three-cornered hats were very popular at the time in Medieval Europe, when an artist painted the wicked Haman wearing a three-cornered hat.

## Turkey

It is popular to eat turkey during Purim. One reason is that we are told at the beginning of Esther that King Ahazuerus reigned from India (‘Hodu’ in Hebrew) to Ethiopia (‘Kush’ in Hebrew). Because ‘hodu’ is also the Hebrew word for a turkey, the custom of eating turkey on Purim developed.

## Beans and Lentils

Beans, lentils, seeds, and cereals are eaten during Purim to honour Queen Esther’s diet. It is assumed she ate only beans & seeds, etc. to avoid eating the meat that would not have been properly prepared according to Jewish law.



## **Challah Bread**

Challah is a popular Jewish sweet bread. Challah is braided, and so during Purim the challahs are made especially long to represent the rope that Haman was hanged on.

