

A Time to Stand

...for such a time as this. Esther 4:14



The King's Kingdom
Esther 1
Lesson 1

Background Information

The story of Esther's life fits between chapters 6 and 7 of Ezra, between the first return led by Zerubbabel and the second return led by Ezra. It provides the only biblical portrait of the vast majority of Jews who chose to remain in Persia rather than to respond to God's call to return to Jerusalem after Exile. Esther is the last of the historical books of the Bible, her name means "star." She was raised up by God at the right time and place to bring deliverance to the Jews in Persia.

The name of God does not appear in the entire book, in our English bibles, however hidden in the Hebrew language His name appears in acrostic four times. Harry Ironsides points out a possible reason His name is hidden might be a double one. First; in this book we have Israel following their own a self-chosen path. They chose to stay in Persia and Babylon instead of following God's command to return to Jerusalem. Second; the great subject of Esther clearly shows us God's sovereignty which is ever watching over the scattered nation through the long-drawn-out "times of the Gentiles," clearly showing all that are paying attention, that...

*...Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,
And to heed than the fat of rams.
1 Sam 15:22*

Treasures of the Heart

...for so the king had ordered all the officers of his household, that they should do according to each man's pleasure.

Esther 1:8

What are the facts? - Observation

The first step is **Observation**. Carefully **read the text** in several translations, paying close attention to the **facts**. **Mark your text**: look for repeated words, contrasts or comparisons. Look for answers to: Who? What? When? Where? Why or How? Studying a narrative requires following the key characters and paying special attention to what God says and does. Note a key verse in each section, to help you understand the main emphasis of the section?

Esther 1:1-9

1 Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus (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 the 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.

5 And when these days were completed, the king made a feast lasting seven days for all the people who were present in Shushan the citadel, from great to small, in the court of the garden of the king's palace. 6 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. 7 And they served drinks in golden vessels, each vessel being different from the other, with royal wine in abundance, according to the generosity of the king. 8 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. 9 Queen Vashti also made a feast for the women in the royal palace which belonged to King Ahasuerus.

Dig Deeper - Interpretation

The second step is **Interpretation**. This is the time to dig out your study tools, such as a bible dictionary, concordance, maps, or word study tools. Keys to correct interpretation are **context, repeated words, word definitions, patterns (similarities/differences), culture and cross-references**. **Notate** where you found it to share with the group. Interpretation answers the question, "What was the original author trying to convey?"

Esther 1:10-12

10 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, **11** 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. **12** 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.

Dig Deeper _____

Esther 1:13-22

13 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, 14 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): 15 "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?"

16 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. 17 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.' 18 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. 19 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. 20 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."

21 And the reply pleased the king and the princes, and the king did according to the word of Memucan. 22 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.

Dig Deeper _____

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Lesson

What lesson can I draw from my observations? A lesson is a general principle or basic truth drawn from the passage. **Note** the verse you took the lesson from. (aim for 10 words or less)

Esther 1:1-9 _____
verse _____

Esther 1:10-12 _____
verse _____

Esther 1:13-22 _____
verse _____

Application

Pray! – Simply state how you will apply each lesson. Is there a challenge, a command, a warning or an example? Does it point out error in my attitude or actions? What is God saying (to me) through this truth? What am I going to do practically in response to God's Word? (aim for 10 words or less)

Esther 1:1-9 _____

Esther 1:10-12 _____

Esther 1:13-22 _____

Words or repeated phrases

Repeated words help us discover the **main point**.

Getting the point!

State the "Main Point" of each section. See if you can boil down the meaning of each section into one or two words. This helps you fully understand what the author is trying to convey. (It's fun to alliterate if you want to try)

Esther 1:1-9

Esther 1:10-12

Esther 1:13-22

Main idea

Simply state the main idea of the whole passage in one or two sentences.

Title

State the main point of the entire passage in the form of a title.

Flex You Muscles

Find a New Testament example of this Old Testament truth.

Time to stand

Time to think: How will we know how to respond to life's ups and downs? God's Word is always the basis of our choices. Knowing who He is helps us face whatever circumstances we find ourselves in. **What did you learn about God, that will help you stand firm...in such a time as this?**

Radiating His Truth

Let us rejoice that the Lord reigns, and will overrule the madness or folly of mankind to promote his own glory, and the safety and happiness of his people.

Matthew Henry



